

A Discourse Analysis of Cine-Politics from a Religious and Ethnic Viewpoint

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Abstract

Cinema has a significant impact on the lives of people in this contemporary world. To interact with people of differed communities, cinematic representation of varied ethnic communities plays a vital role in determining the image that the world perceives of them. This study attempts to look into three aspects: First being the nationalism discourse through films in the cinema of the third world countries. Secondly, it analyses the negative representation of various ethnic minority groups by Hollywood and how it directly influences their perspective. Finally, it inquires into the ethnic cinema created by these groups to re-establish their image employing a progressive representation of their in-groups.

Keywords: Cine-Politics; religious, ethnic; film industry; cinema; poetic genre

Introduction

American cinema has a significant impact on the ideals of the race around the world, both as film agents as well as on social concerns. Owing to its film industry and literature on racial issues in film education, American films and its studies will be on the focus in this study, especially in comparison with ethnic cinema to analyze the impact each has on one another as well as on the audiences.

Like other forms of mass media, cinema portrays symbols and inferences which not only mobilizes beliefs, traditions, discourses and elements of specific popular culture. It also frames the nationalizing structure by affecting the popular culture by altering and developing these. Walsh (1996) characterizes these implications as being the “national imaginary”. Hence, incorporation of these symbols into the actual movement of nationalism is enabled through the activities of national cinema.

This paper aims to highlight how cinema plays an active role in constructing and reconstructing the nationalism, which is fundamental in portraying the religious politics of a nation.

Since it is nearly impossible for us to know each one else, so as to interact with people of differed communities, hence the cinematic representation of these various ethnic communities play an essential role in determining the image perceived by the world of those diverse ethnic communities. In this context, the word ‘ethnic’ can be used to term masses or communities who

are linked through race, religion, history, who aim to develop a political identity for an entire nation. Hence, religion is no longer considered to be a belief but also linked with a movement of liberation or assertion into power. Cinema, therefore, is a necessary form of media representation and plays a vital role in representing the cultural and ethnic stereotypes of multiple communities. It is through cinema that the maximum effect is created on the minds of the people.

This occurrence can also be explained by shedding light on the identity politics within a nation, which can be defined as a sense of belonging to a particular set of individuals that can stir emotions of nationalism among them. Here, the role of cinema can be seen to be very dynamic in identifying the sense of belongingness that can be achieved through linkage of beliefs and symbols with national identity.

Cinema plays a significant role in the construction and reconstruction of the notion of identification of a state which helps to define and develop the geographical, ideological and cultural boundaries of it while influencing a plethora of population unifying them by arousing sentiments of homogenous nationality and thus creating a united front (Juergensmeyer, 1996). These formulations are intricately linked through psychological attributes on the collective consciousness of the population (Shohat and Stam, 1994).

Hence this paper would also attempt to analyse the stereotyped representation of different minority communities in the cinema of western countries, especially Hollywood, as well as look into the ethnic cinema of these groups, developed in order to combat the negative stereotypes created by Hollywood and reaffirming their image into the world.

Literature review

One of the significant works in relation to the religious nationalism in cinema is in rethinking the Third World Cinema (2003), edited by Anthony R. Guneratne and Wamal Dissanayake which deals with notions about its theory as well as its various impacts on the cinematic reconstruction and practices of postcolonial nations in the process of development. It portrays a politicized tri-continental approach of cinema development in continents such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America wherein issues such as ethnicity, national identity, and other social issues are highlighted. There are talks about films from respected directors around the world such as Ousmane Sembène, Satyajit Ray, Fernando Solanas, Tomás Gutierrez Alea, and Nelson Pereira dos Santos, also popular sophisticated cultural and politically significant texts of the 1960s and 1970s which aptly represent the various movements prevalent in these states. It analyzes the third world cinema as well as its theory reflected in the matters of the critical spotlight. More importantly, it talks about some of the most difficult questions posed by these countries in the globalisation era, and how to coexist in such a world, which suggests for new methodologies and reconstruction of the ones already existing, at the same time, emphasis being laid on the polishing of the film-making occurrence in an ever-changing third world. It includes case studies from countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, Argentina, Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Ghana, and India. In assigning this category to the third world cinema, the spectators' reception became part of that assignation and the proposal that it was also possible to read "first" or "second" cinema (cinema which was not revolutionary in its representation even though it highlighted the alienation of third world subjects) on a third cinema's perspective. However, despite the reduction in stark differences between oppressive colonizer and oppressed colonial subject, a large number of the intellectuals, organizers, and filmmakers participated in it with some reservations and worked in solidarity with ongoing revolutionary activity in places like Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the Philippines. Eventually, at the start of the twenty-first century, there was a

growing retrospective of the practices in third cinema, which kept a check of postcolonial theories, globalization, and the evolution of what could be recognized as a world media system.

In Hollywood's discourse of movies, a particular group of individuals have often been represented as malicious. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2001) by Jack G. Shaheen is a comprehensive study of nearly a thousand movies which attempts to highlight the tendency to portray Muslim Arabs as the Public Enemy who are wicked, brutal, cold-hearted, uncivilized - who aim to terrorize the civilized Westerners. Shaheen tries to examine and understand how such a stereotype has prevailed and why it came into being at the first place, successfully growing and spreading into the industry, and how this perception of Arabs as an evil group of individuals could be changed. Thus, the fact that sometimes the most prudent of postcolonial powers come to an end, in western view. Such as the nature of the analysis raises questions as the writer and film critic attempts postcolonial "unpacking" - and especially on the films, the interpretation of certain conclusions, and from practice.

Another book, *Evil Arabs in American Popular Film* (2006) by Tim Jon Semmerling, talks about the same issue. Semmerling in the portrayal of American cinema reveals, more since 1973, about how Americans and orientalist are dreadful about the Arabs. He wants to prove that Americans have given its filmmakers materials in which the myths scare the other, the other ideologies and preserves its identity of Arabs as that with a demon. His analysis of "The Exorcist" can be considered to be the weakest because it is the most farfetched. One might consider it to be a distinct plot of spiritual good versus evil; Semmerling distorts into an orientalist tale, trying to prove with numerous strained suggestions that the demon is an Arab entity which takes possession of the young girl (Regan). "This demon may confuse the audience because it is not clad with the apparent costume of the 'Arab kit,'" he says. He links most of his interpretation on the Iraq Prologue - deleted from the original film but restored in the 2000 DVD release. The analysis of the rest of the movie can be stated to be more persuasive in the form of postcolonial criticism, highlighting the portrayal of the Arab world as either exotic; demonic, threatening the stability of America's self-perception as being most potent; or engaged in a morally victorious in battle. In his concluding chapter, he talks about the portrayal of Saddam Hussein in "South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut", which is shown in a controversial light since Saddam is depicted as having a homosexual relationship with Satan, furthermore portraying Arabs as evil and also asking America to get a reality check.

There is an exclusive book on the relationship between cinema and religion, that is, *Religion and Film: Cinema and the recreation of the world* (2004) by Brent Plate. Moreover, there is also a series of studies of both movies and books by Plate in order to bring together the aspects of religious studies and film studies while highlighting the effects of film on religious attitudes, as well as how ancient myths and traditions influence the film-making process, its perception as well as its interpretation. It shows how Religions and films are similar in the impact which they cause on the audience as both functions by recreating the world known to the audience and then demonstrating that alternative version to their viewers/worshippers. In his monograph, he argues on the similarity of religion and film and their typical construction of narratives through analogy. For cinema, he uses cases from a vast arena of multiples such as Hollywood blockbusters, independents, international art houses as well as experimental films to broaden his aspect of the study. This work is not a comprehensive study but rather provokes further analysis. He shows the similarity between religion and film as they both often have similar cultural significance and narratives of the construct. He also talks about the fact that while drawing relations between the aspects, it is also essential to examine how ritual movements function vertically or horizontally, that is, wither hierarchical or egalitarian manner reveals several aspects such as identity and gender roles. In the final chapter of the book, Plate draws the outline

portrayed by the media on religion. Afterwards, film and religion often merge into one another as the media now helps (or influence) people to make sense of evil and good. Throughout the book, Plate gives a thorough explanation of his ideas and urges to study them further, making this book a sort of catalyst for new research on the topic.

Lina Khatib's *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World* (2006) not only attempts to examine Hollywood representations of the Middle East but also how Arabs portray themselves in cinema, in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, including aspects such as politics and conflicts emerging in the subcontinent through a discourse of study on 70 movies between 1980 and 2005. Lina Khatib's *Filming the New Middle East: Politics at the Hollywood and Arab World Cinemas* (2006) attempts to evaluate Hollywood representations of the Middle East and also takes measures to examine the way Arabs perceive themselves in cinema, in countries including Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, including issues like politics and conflicts that arise in the subcontinent. The year of 1980 is known to be a marker in the development of film, especially in the Arab world. She talks about the portrayal of American soldiers as 'good' and Arabs being 'evil' by being portrayed either as a corrupt sheikh or a terrorist. Even though being equipped with postcolonial theories of various stripes and colours, this book showcases a different perspective of the binary opposition and essentialism of an East-West discourse that Khatib attempted not to indulge in by pitting Arab films against Hollywood films. She also talks about how gender plays a role in this portrayal as well, pointing the Arabs as evil and Americans being good. Female melodramas are pitted up against male action movies where political and cultural stances often seen to be clashing are also talked about. She studies the cinematic depictions of major political issues, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Gulf War, with particular emphasis on Islamic fundamentalism. She explores fictional portrayals of major policy issues, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Gulf War, with a specific focus on Islamic fundamentalism. Focus is often shed on cinema's role as a significant component of generating a feeling of nationalism among the masses in the U.S. and the Arab world. She establishes similarities among the seemingly different cinemas and portrays not only the construction of the Orient by the Occident, but also Orient's representation of itself in these films in representing self and others and depicting its exhaustion by various internal and external conflicts.

Roy Armes, in one of his major works, *Third World Film Making and the West* (1987), suggests that during the 1960s "the steady development of industrialization combined with growing national awareness led almost imperceptibly to a belief, which came to be widely held, that an era of socialist revolution was dawning throughout the Third World." Part of this belief could be attributed to Cuban resistance during an invasion orchestrated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, and the success of Algerian nationalists after eight years of armed struggle against French rule in 1962.

From the late 1950s until the early 1960s, many third world writers and filmmakers were found operating within their own national systems but closely linked to a global uprising against colonial and imperialist colonialism worldwide. Third cinema frequently takes a realistic approach synonymous with cinema vérité or Italian neorealism at times.

Delimitation of the study

The scope of the paper encompasses disciplines of Film Studies, International Relations, World History, Gender Studies, Literary Studies, Politics and Society, History and Literary theories. The characterization of the Third World Countries in these books and movies, in the long run, provide further information into the position and function of these countries in their Post-

Colonial nation itself as well as in the World. Furthermore, it gives a closer look at how ethnic communities functioned as basic units of the society, and how existing societal and cultural norms impact the functioning of the country as a whole. Furthermore, it provides a closer look on how ethnic communities within these countries influenced the politics of the nation through cinema and functioned as basic units of the society, and how existing societal and cultural norms impact the functioning of the politics as a whole. Moreover, one can focus on cultural ideologies, sense of individualism and community, power theories and social relations and their importance in influencing the person's identity in a nation. The research will help consider how political equality and difference weaves its way using not only into these works but in our lives as well, questioning whether individuals of a post colonial nation associated as "different" to West - "the other", is a difference or rather a disadvantage. This research will also help grasp the complexities of religion-specific spatial constructs and intra-household dynamics prevalent during this time period and its consequent effects on the lives of these individuals of the said countries.

Statement of the problem

The decolonization of most of the third world country resulted in the formation of their own governments; as a result of which, their own cinema was formed. These films, was a representative of these country's own religious nationalization as many of the sentiments were provoked through them. Most of these third world countries, especially the Arab World, were represented in a negative fashion, which turned out to be a popular culture among the masses. This sense of feeling among the popular of a country often resulted in a religious nationalization, even though this can be attributed to other reasons as well.

Objectives of the study

In the light of a critical reading of selected contemporary books on the cinema culture in the third world countries, as well as analysing its relation with the religious politics and nationalism within these countries and a study of relevant literature the study will try to comprehend the portrayal and the development of the personality and nature of the cinema culture in the light of religious nationalism in the socio-political setting of the era post-colonialism in these countries, taking into consideration on how political spaces and social constructs take part in the development. The study can also be understood in a more precise and comprehensive manner by dividing it into various sub-parts such as bio-fiction, power discourse while taking the status of the Western countries in opposition to the stereotyped representation of minority communities in Hollywood.

Significance of the study

This study attempts to investigate the interrelation between politics and cinema while observing religious discourse. By studying selected movies based on the above-mentioned theme, this study aims to contextualize how the cinema of a nation is developed through the impact of religious politics, and how this development is affected by different components. Based upon a critical reading of the chosen contemporary literary works on the topic and a survey of relevant literature the study will attempt to understand the characterization and the construction of the identity of individuals in the country, while also analysing its effect on politics of a country. The study can also be understood in a more precise and comprehensive manner by dividing it into various sub-parts such as the discourse of different third world countries while taking the influence of cinema on the politics of the nations. It also lays special focus on how the cinematic representation of any minority community in cinema can undermine its own rationale as well as how these communities develop their own form of cinema to enhance their image representation.

Limitation of the study

The scope of the study is, however, limited to solely understanding the effect of cinema on the religious politics of some specific third world countries, so to say in the period just before their freedom from foreign control, especially after 1910, and thereby limiting itself to the socio-political context of 20th century Third World Countries alone. Moreover, the study focuses mainly on the representation of minority ethnic groups in Hollywood as well as their own cinema, not laying focus on other representation aspects.

Research questions

Since this paper attempts to study the portrayal of the characterization and the construction of the identity of individuals in the country, while also analysing it's an effect on religious politics of a country through cinematic depiction while studying the discourse of the same in the third world countries, the paper will pose the following research questions, which will, in turn, serve as the argument for the study-

1. How do different third world countries differ in the portrayal of religious nationalism in the cinema of their respective countries?
2. How does a stereotyped representation of certain ethnic groups in the cinema of other countries directly influence its own?

Methodology

A comparative study by reading books of different authors on the various issues to be tackled in this study, as well as studying movies to analyse plot, characters, theme and other counterparts required to support the arguments made during the study.

Through the research methodology mentioned below, this study seeks to contextualize my research within the theoretical and multidisciplinary framework that has most significantly influenced this project.

Using the theoretical framework of religious spaces, this study shall attempt to highlight how the construction and subsequent portrayal of these countries occur in the cinema of other nations as well as on its own, intrinsically linked to religious politics specific spatial perspectives. With pieces of evidence from the books on Arab World, this study will attempt to understand how the various perspective is represented to portray the identity of Arabs in Hollywood, as well as in its own cinema, which is always pushed and pulled by forces both internal and external, affected by the religious and political landscape in multifaceted ways and subsequently how the social/economic unit to which they belong at multiple scales from the notion of country's own identity to its identity in the world which in turn, dictate who they are.

Furthermore, inspired by the ideas of the various scholars who have written articles on the religious politics in the third world countries, this study will explore how power discourses weave their way into the portrayal of characters and themes in the films with the characterization of these matters which further defines the identity of the individuals as well as determines how the notion of religious nationalism emerges and takes its force into the politics of a country. The portrayal of construction and characteristics of each of the third world countries including The Middle East and Africa, Latin America, The Indian Subcontinent, East and Southeast Asia, when studied through discourse analysis, through various books which deal with these subjects. And how it is only much later that they use their new-found power derived from the knowledge that they gain, are they able to question the existing power structures. Furthermore, this study will also use some of the scholar's views on religious and political landscapes and spacing, often interlinked to show how this construct impacts not only country's own identity dynamics and

way of life, but also directly impacts its role in the world, their social standing and the identity that is associated with them.

This study shall also trace the discourse of the cinema through decades looking into how socio-political changes in their respective countries affected the lives of the population especially their religious, cultural and social sphere, resulting in a journey towards modernity, education, knowledge and emancipation, which these developing countries had to go through then used a tool to question the center. This will be done by considering how the characters change, grow and develop in the films made and shown in the country as well as outside and shall be substantiated with the help of an intensive study of secondary sources, especially those written about the same, to understand the socio-political context of the literary works and how they impacted not only the portrayal of the identity in the world of cinema but also in reality.

The entire study will be aided by a number of primary sources to further the arguments put forth. Firstly, this study shall look into the portrayal of construction and characteristics of each of the third world countries including The Middle East and Africa, Latin America, The Indian Subcontinent, East and Southeast Asia, when studied through discourse analysis. This will help to grasp how the religious nationalism prevailed in the countries developed and how the notion of identity was structured amongst its masses. Secondly, through the study of books written by native writers which portray the representation of a certain group of individuals, namely Arabs in Hollywood as well as its own cinema, which would help us understand how a country's identity is formed with respect to the entire world's perception as well as how it affect its own identity in itself. Finally, this study will look into screenplays for cinema written by these third world countries themselves, a contentious marker of its population's participation in the cultural milieu- a true deviation from the norm.

With a close reading of these primary sources, this study will try and deduce to what extent of the portrayal of the masses of a certain ethnicity in the cinema is accurate, and whether conceptualizing these character's identities in relation to political spaces and power relations has been a conscious choice, where these authors stemming from the ethical capitalist thought, have not only celebrated the terrorizing activities and 'evil' works traditionally associated with these ethnic groups but also, in turn, use it as a subversive tool to challenge the value accorded to them by the world.

Illustration of national and religious identity through national cinema

Western dominance over cinema has most visible shreds of evidence in film distribution around the world, mapped out by histories focusing on the discourses of the same while analysing film culture in the world, hence, the cinema of the third world countries often gets squashed under the weight of influence of Hollywood (Armes, 1987). In order to understand the significance of third world countries, it is important to first look at its national cinema, then further look into the portrayal of religious nationalism in the cinema of their respective countries. This chapter would, therefore, consider the national film industries of the Third World, in four major groupings: in Latin America, three on Asia, and one on Africa and the Middle East.

The film distribution has been mostly dominated by western influence, around the world; hence it doesn't create much surprise when the cinema of different countries is compared to Hollywood. Though the commercial industries of the Far East are enormous, it is also anonymous. Film as an entity is created for local consumption as it is usually in the local language, but the trend of subtitles has broadened its consumption and made them available for

wider audiences. It is important to look at the cinema of different nations in order to understand their culture, religious, political and social discourse of different nations

The Indian Subcontinent

Indian society is a mixture of various ethnic and religious groups, as well as different classes and sects. As observed by Peter Sellar in “The Party”, most of the Indians are secure about their identity. Hence this civilised notion of identity among Indians majorly enables them to accommodate diverse communities together. People could then choose between their identities or favour one over others. But the tolerance of various communities also limited the freedom an individual possessed while choosing his identity because being a part of any religious community meant following its own customs, ideals and trajectories hence framing the identity discourse of an individual in itself. India’s secularism has often made swinging pendulum movements, where sometimes rights of communities are favoured over individual rights. While accommodation and tolerance are qualities that are often considered necessary for the polity to be secular. Indian nationalism then claimed to include people from all background, irrespective of caste or creed basing it on the principles of pluralistic philosophy. This comprehensive nationalism was taken to be synonymous with secularism. Hence the identity of being Indian can also be seen as being secular. Legitimising of this claim then lead to the inclusion of several castes and creed into the being of Indian nationalism, yet it failed to create a sense of security among the Muslim groups, ultimately leading to the formation of Pakistan.

Early 20th century brought in the trend in cinema in the Indian subcontinent, which was fueled by the Indian nationalism movement. In its early days, it was largely restricted to metropolitan cities. Even in its earliest days, the filmmakers had to face competition with American and British cinema makers, hence fuelling a sense of nationalism (Benegal, 2007). The following two decades saw the underlined need to bring about the reforms in Hindu society. The sound came in the 1930s, and by then India had successfully established its cinema as a major entertainment industry. At this time, Congress had decided to make ‘Hindustani’ as the official language of the country; hence the films made in Hindustani had to reflect the traits of being an Indian. The film production was then carried out in either Bombay (Mumbai) or Calcutta (Kolkata) where Hindi was not the commonly spoken language. The films then tried to use a language which would not be isolating certain groups, but rather should be comprehensible to a large number of populations.

The major issue faced by Indian cinema was the managing subjects of contemporary nature. Creating a film in Hindustani meant that an environment and cultural representation needed to be created which would be widely accepted by the population. But this feature neglected a large part of the population in its discourse, hence narrowing the diversity of a country with rich ethnic diversities. Characters were represented in a generalised and standardised way that would not identify them with any recognizable features (Armes, 1987). The division was largely stereotypical, and they were either wealthy or poor, in an urban setting or a rural one and were mostly recognized by the social setting they belonged to. In most cases, they were represented as being middle class or rich North Indian. The only first name was given to them in order to avoid the mention of caste from which they belonged. The only other identification was their religion. The representation of masses by cinema was similar to the one adopted by the nationalism movement terming them on the basis of their religion. Regional films showed more pieces of evidence of realism because of their basis in a local setting. Many of these films are often recreated in Bollywood to be made accessible to a larger proportion of masses with some changed made accordingly to be more inclusive in its discourse. Stories told were made like parables and heroic stories rather than realistic narratives, a trend which is still relevant in today’s

cinema. But the Indian audience is not deterred by the lack of realism portrayed, as cinema is often seen as a platform to escape from reality.

The purpose of representation of reality in the world isn't necessarily to provide entertainment to the audience, as they want to feel a different world altogether, hence the popular cinema of India has created a particular kind of mode for itself. The films thus made legitimized the social norms and values accepted traditionally that restored the virtue of the family and its dominance over the individual (Thobani, 2014). Indian Cinema portrayed the normalized, accepted notions and traditions within the society. The family social of Hindu was synonymous of Muslim family social. The representation of the Muslim community in the genre of social Muslim was depicted in a flattering image, being cultivated and existentially feudal, extolling virtues of friendship, loyalty and family honour. Post-independence, many films had the dominant theme of Hindu and Muslim being brothers. Movies such as *Parosi* (1946) and *Hamrahi* (1944) portrayed themes of this twin brotherhood. Interestingly, the politics of separation responsible for the creation of Pakistan did not find its place in the Indian cinema. Though, found in the 50s reflecting ideological opposition. The film *Dewar* depicted partition as a family threat. Artists like writers and poets who belonged to established associations like IPTA played important role in the creation of cinema, thus resulting in more culturally rich movies thus contributing to the Golden era of cinema, as it is called today. PC Joshi played a major role in these series of events.

Manto, Ali Sardar Jafri, Kaifi Azami, Abbas and many others played a significant role in projecting a more secular cinematic outlook (Bengal, 2005). Post events of Independence as Partition, large chunks of Muslim majority migrated to Pakistan. Increased ambivalence towards the Muslim community was a devastating consequence of the same, even though Indian Muslims were given a choice to join either nation. Since their allegiance was not mandatory to India, their nationalism was often needed to be reaffirmed. Hence, while depicting them in films, a lot of self-censorships and awkward formality was practiced, showcasing them as being sensible and devout. A part of this was linked to the political correctness and a desire to be not offensive. During the era of Nehru, there was a trend to create an image of a secular Muslim, especially in the films written by progressive writers. For instance, in the film, *Dhool ke Phool* (1959), an old Muslim adopts an abandoned child whose religious antecedents are not known. He sings a song: You would not be either a Muslim or a Hindu, you are a son of a man and shall be a human (*Tu Hindu Banega Na Musalman Banega, Insaan ki Aulad hai, Insaan Banega*). A great deal of tokenism was in it. Diversity within the Muslim community was not depicted, nor was people from minority groups showcased in a negative light. Representation of Christian was shown to be devout, good-hearted and kind individuals, but always drunk. Large crosses around their necks are shown till today. Communal harmony became a necessary portrayal in the fifties and sixties, as cinema became a force that was socially integrative. Films which showed elements of national integrity received National Awards. The relations between Hindu and Muslim were difficult to be depicted without sanitising, though such obligation was not present in regional cinema. For states like Kerala, where a large majority of the Muslim population was residing, the portrayal of relations between different communities became far more credible. Many stories were also based around inter-community love affairs. Kerala did not experience the trauma of partition like some of the northern states; hence many accounts were not taken into consideration as these films did not seek to represent India as a whole.

Muslims in Kerala hence did not feel the insecurity and trouble in relocating their identity as some of the states in North India did, still reeling from the trauma caused due to partition. By contrast, Hindi Cinema was self-consciously secular in its depiction. In its attempt to create a sense of security among the minority groups, Indian Cinema then tried a paternal play role to represent a secular state. Consequently, however benign it may have appeared, the secularism of

Hindi Cinema, to a large extent, reflected the secularism of Indian state. This popular representation of minorities existed until the 50s and the 60s. From the 70s, a new trend began as Indian Cinema could now tackle the issues of partition, which was considered a sore subject in the eras before (Benegal, 2007). Two important events marked the onset of this new era. The creation of state established film production and the creation of a new nation Bangladesh which was separated from Pakistan in 1971. The latter event made it possible for the creation of movies which dealt with the partition in a more realistic lens such as the film *Garam Hawa*.

During the time of independence, Indian cinema was unregulated and largely market-oriented. The growth of cinema in the country was possible to a great extent because of the development of new urban townships as well as migration to cities, owing to industrialization and other new models of developments issued in the country. The audience complexion evolved subsequently. Earlier the middle class was the arbitrator of taste, but now a new class of people had emerged including the working class and the immigrants from the countryside, who began to play a significant role in determining the aesthetics of film culture in the country. Films now needed to be centered on this fragment of society as they represented the audience's largest proportion. (Thobani, 2014).

A new trend of popular cinema emerged to fulfil the demands of this biggest segment of the audience. In the popular cinema, Muslims were not placed at the centre of focus. They could only figure in the genre known as the 'Muslim Social'. *Garam Hawa* was the first movie to showcase the realistic events of the Partition's aftermath for the Muslims. The movies before *Garam Hawa* portrayed the Muslims in a token way, so they were naturally separated from the community, effectively making them the other. Despite being nationalistically affirmative in its portrayal, *Garam Hawa* was for a long time, the only movie to address the notions of Muslim identity in post-Partition India. Ironically, a fraction of the Muslim population appealed to the government to put a ban on the movie; hence it was only broadcasted on television. Bangladesh's independence was mostly responsible for the creation of a new trend of representation in Indian cinema. However, the first film which represented the issue of the Hindu-Muslim divide was a mini-series based on Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas* by Govind Nahalini in 1987. Though it was not a feature film, it was nonetheless telecasted despite facing many objections.

However, society does not become completely tolerant of cinematic portrayals of religion and faith by prolonged and consistent religious architecture of films. Religion is an immensely controversial topic in India because there is a small threshold for 'hurting religious sensitivities' and 'intolerance,' because seen in the context of communal wars leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths in different physical realities and events. The point here is that the homogenisation of national cinema attempts to cover the diversity of Indian cinema, and discursively constructs Bombay cinema as paradigmatic of Indian cinema. (Benegal, 2007) Against this, there is a suggestion of the urgency of pluralizing the idea of a national cinema in India.

Cinema is indispensable to state and nation formation, hence by analysing the key sociopolitical and aesthetic strategies deployed in cinematic depictions of the Gujarat genocide of the 21st century. Movies such as *Dev* (2004), *Parzania* (2007), *Firaaq* (2008) and *Road to Sangam* (2009) reflect how communism is reflected in cinema, and influences the political and religious situation in a nation. Many scholars have defined art, cinema as politically challenging, if not actually subversive, of the status quo in relation to commercial cinema, studying films reveals a surprising convergence between these cinemas in their treatment of the collective violence, (Bengal, 2005). The films chosen for the study portray overall narrative plots, as well as there exists a number of specific scenes from these texts, which highlight the fact that the two cinemas do not have much

difference in their underlying assumptions regarding the identity aspect of the nation or its real subject including gender politics; and demonstrating the Muslims and Islam as being the source of a deadly threat to the nation-state. Moreover, whereas the impact of cinema in shaping particular constructs of nation and state has been recognized by media scholarship, with their subsequent forms of gendered and class identity in their discourse, then very less attention has been provided to the relation between cinema and religious identity. We can then see how films expose cinematic space as a place for the interpretation of a religiosity steeped in the convergence of the domain of the spiritual with the political as national (un)belonging in modern India (Juergensmeyer, 1996).

Movies such as *Uri* (2019) are released to promote nationalism sentiments in the crowd, usually before elections in order for the government to show off their achievements and influence the public. The era of 1990s, 2000s and 2010s have seen many nationalist movies such as *Chak De India*, *Bhag Milka Bhag* and so on. Movies play a major role in controlling the narrative of a situation hence is often used as an important tool in Indian politics.

East Asia

The invention of the motion picture which was first seen in Shanghai on 11 August 1896-coincided with one of the most disastrous periods of Chinese history. The origins of cinema in Japan began in the 1930s with the onset of *Daitoa eiga* and were greatly influenced by the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and World War II (1941–45) and was largely known as East Asian Cinema. This term was derived from the term *Daitoa kyoeiken* also known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Yau Shuk-ting, Kinnia, 2009).

While formulating its national policy, several new cinema associations were formed by the Japanese filmmakers including *Manei* [the Manchurian Film Association], *Zhonghua Dianying* [the China United Film Company] and *Nanyo Eiga Kyokai* [the Association of South Asian Motion Pictures]. (Yau Shuk-ting, Kinnia, 2009) *Manei* was established to develop the relationship between the two countries and its main function included efforts to educate and guide their population along with serving them with entertainment. It also took efforts to train local directors and actors and took measures to develop the local film industry for the same. But after the commencement of the war, the film industry of Manchuria was taken over by the Chinese and hence came to be known as *Changchun Film Studio*.

During the 1930s, the film distribution of Japan was limited to a few regions in East Asia; namely, occupied regions in China, Manchuria, colonial Taiwan and Korea, but the intended audiences for these movies were mainly Japanese. They did not believe in banning Hollywood in the region, but rather advocated the ideals of developing its own film industry to such an extent that it could compete with the Western industries on a global level. But even after all the efforts taken to create its technical expertise, Japanese filmmakers were aware of the fact that their audience was limited to the Asian regions because of a number of factors including cultural difference, which was one of the biggest factors. For large parts of East Asian territories, these films failed to create its impact because a majority of its population was highly uneducated and could not understand the artistic liberation followed in the movies, on the contrary, these films were highly appreciated in areas such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaya which housed a group known as the *Huaqiu*, a group of wealthy elites which provided market and capital, and it was because of this same group that the Japanese filmmakers were confident that the only ticket to success of cinema in East Asian territories is through China, as a result of which a large amount of capital was invested into excelling the film industry based on the occupied territories in the Chinese territory.

The Daitoa eiga was driven by three ambitions, which included creating a large scale film industry's excellent that it could compete with Hollywood into the world market, for which an Asian market has to be formed which was accepting towards the Japanese industry. The main aim of this industry was to spread Japan's ideals and culture through the distribution of its movies. But they were mainly driven by a desire to uplift themselves in the world industry and as a result of which worked hard to gain expertise in the field as well as maintained close relations with other Asian industries. Censorship was introduced to Japan in the 1950s by the GHQ and was restricted to a number of developments which couldn't be carried out with its proceedings. But it was revived by the global success of *Rashomon*, in 1951 in the Venice Film Festival where the Japanese film industry regained its popularity in the global market. Subsequently bigger associations such as the Southeast Asian Motion Picture Producers' Association and the Southeast Asian Film Festival were created for the growth and developments of the film industries in Asian regions, which was later renamed in 1983 to the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in the Asia-Pacific, and the Asia-Pacific Film Festival (Armes, 1987).

The collaboration between the film industries of Japan and Hong Kong are of great significance in the history of East Asian film industry. It was also the reason for the establishment of the Hong Kong film industry, later. The main reason for the establishment of a connection between various film industries of the region can be articulated to market and economy, and though these connections were formulated during the wartime period, it was again reignited in the post-war era. After the commencement of World War II, the world saw great technological advancements. At the same time, the tensions between the capitalist and communist countries were growing, which lead to an increase in the alliances being formed between different countries. Being from the same ideological standpoint also meant that the countries invested in each other and as a result of which the film industry of East Asia was seeing great advancements in the world market. This also meant that they had to produce films to propagate one form of ideology over another, and as we have seen in the context of other countries as well, digital media causes the most difference in one's ideology, and therefore this media form was a very significant one in this era.

South East Asia

Cinema in South East Asia has a rich history and a very fertile present, with increasing popularity and critical recognition around the world. Even if its influence has not been much prominent in the regions around, it had gained considerable recognition around the world in recent years. The historic win by Thai director, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, of the prestigious Palme d'Or at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival, the first South-East Asian filmmaker to be thus honoured, is a much-cited case in point that was widely framed in international commentary as a watershed moment of global arrival for South-East Asian cinemas (Brown, 2010). It has also gained popularity in regards to scholarly grounds as people all around the world have been taking an active interest in the cinematic works and culture of South East Asia. The universal lack of English in the cinema of the region had been discussed by David Hanan in 2011, as being one of the only available sources of the region, in his work "Film in South East Asia: Views from the Region". But the past decade has seen many developments in this area as a large number of university courses, websites, blogs, conferences, books and festivals have emerged on the subject. Out of these publications, two of them specifically talk critically about the region's cinema which is independent in its discourse. What this concept of independent cinema means is that instead of films being made in commercial industries, it has largely been made outside it, which subsequently leads into being one of the major features in the revitalizing process of South-Eastern film industry and the culture of Asia. Independent cinema of South East Asia has not only resulted in uplifting its status internationally, but has also developed the cultural and social quotient while providing international recognition to several cinemas in the sector such as

Thailand's Apichatpong and Pen-ek Ratanaruang, the Philippines's Brillante Mendoza and Lav Diaz, Malaysia's Amir Muhammad and Yasmin Ahmad, and Singapore's Roystan Tan (Farmer, 2012).

Independent films of south-east Asia could then be seen as a socio-cultural movement in itself, as this led to massive recognition around the world as well as look into the various transformations that the world has been through in the recent decades. Baumgärtel refers in his introductory essay about South-East Asian independent cinema as an 'imagined world', and this concept was brought in by studying Anderson's 1991 essay on imagined communities. He links this notion to the prominence of print media in an earlier decade, wherein it had a massive influence as being people's only medium to express their thoughts, narratives, news, stories etc. It is then highlighted by him that the growth of independent cinema in the region could be directly proportional to the growing political displeasure across the region, it could then be said that religious and cultural discourse was now becoming more dominant than a political one, as the cinematic success of films was used as a popular medium to express one's opinions on the political subjects, mostly using a cultural context.

It is important to notice that although these independent films were often seen as being politically sparked or highly utopian, it also coincided with the dissident character that this region's indie cinema represented while not avoiding the context of turning the attention of large oriental masses towards its social, cultural, historical discourses in the region. The validation of the same has been only possible because of investment from various cultural, historical, religious, economic, technological, aesthetic etc. contributions for the emergence of South-East Asian cinema gaining its recognition not only in its regional surroundings but around the world in the global market.

Another very important factor for the growing popularity of South-East Asian cinema can be articulated to the Digital media. The emergence and prominence of digital media have resulted in the circulation of power of cinema to a number of individual rather than concentrating it on the hands of few. It has also resulted in much taking control of the creation of cinema, thus leading to mass production as well as the distribution of films in the region, which leads to the circulation of an idea or thought being spread to the population on large fields. But it is to be noted that the film building equipment and technological expenses are quite high, which often restricts individuals from making use of them to create films; hence it explains why middle-range income countries in the nation like Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar have invested more into indie films which have turned out to be cheaper in creation as well as production, as opposed to nations such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines (Farmer, 2012). This process of film making culture by the masses has led to a trend of progressive democratization which essentially mean that iconographic representation, as well as personal expressionism, are conclusive to the indie film making process in the region. Digital media has also caused a number of challenges for the traditional cinematic industry as it is more adept and easy to spread its content with.

Is it, one thing to develop and create films and another altogether to spread it across regions in order to gain views and comments on the same, the influence of digital media has only been increasing in the subsequent years. State censorship has been high in many regions in the subcontinent, which had caused heavy censor on movies or leading them to be banned altogether. One instance of this can be seen in the censorship activity of Post - Soeharto Indonesia in the movie *Chants of Lotus* (2007), a movie directed by four women which were heavily censored because of its content as it spoke explicitly about female sexuality and was seen as being a catalyst to reformist moments against the state.

Apart from state regression, another important phenomenon which restricts the distribution of independent cinema in the region can be articulated to the more indirect opposition faced by the same. There are little exhibition options for these films to be featured not being in the shadow of conservationist operators running these centres; hence many of these films have low chances of being circulated through Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), Video Compact Disc (VCD) in the multiplex platforms of various neighbourhoods. But the relative ease of availability and affordability of the digital cinema has made its distribution easier as it does not receive a similar amount of restrictions that the traditional cinema has to go through, by being circulated through a number of platforms such as festivals, film societies, screening clubs and so on. It has also triggered an increase in trend of piracy as a form of distribution of content across the region, forming the concept of a grey or 'shadow market' (Armes, 1987).

The edited works of the cinema are consists of different voices and perspectives in their discourse with different style and patterns in it. They are more diverse and have more details and aptness when compared to work by a single author. The Diversification dynamics of cinema has then been explored by a number of filmmakers in order to form creative works which were successful in its distribution. Studying this form of cinema includes a detailed analysis of newspapers, articles, archives and documents, which results in a dynamic combination of voices of various ideals, and also enhances the cultural spheres of South-East Asian film industry. While describing his notions of the movement of South-East Asian cinema leading to an 'imagined world', Baumgärtel describes it as not being under the influence of a sphere uninfluenced by the rules or regulations of that region's state, though the films portray the culture of indie films in a narrow national frame.

The national factor becomes an important phenomenon of the South East Asian cinema though it is seen to be dissent or reflexive in the context of independent cinema in other regions, and it is seen as contestation or engagement rather than seeming like a mere representation discourse. Exploration of a transnational character in the cinema is an important development for the South East Asian Cinema, as it highlights the cultural exchange is happening in the region.

Latin America

Latin America is a group of 20 countries and 14 dependencies, where romantic languages such as Spanish and Portuguese are predominantly spoken (Armes, 1987).

The early period of silent cinema in Latin America which roughly stretches from 1896 to 1920, was heavily obscured by wars and other catastrophic socio-political events and later was shone down with the charisma and popularity of introduction and development of sound cinema which marked the "Golden Ages" of the 1940s and 1950s, then the onset of radio and television in the years 1960s and 1970s. (López, 2000). This discourse can seem to be somewhat ideal to Latin America's tales of modernity as well as those of foreign technological advancement reflecting their own and ideological domination and insufficient imitation or contemporary narratives representing global platforms. In its earliest years, a number of complex mediations with the world can be seen along with a number of changes that occurred in the internal lands of this group of nations which later facilitated the reception and development of sound cinema along with other media. These changes, which reflected the advancing nature of modernity in Latin America also affected the notion of self and other imagined communities, which can be seen extensively by the kind of national cinema produced in the subcontinent.

The new technological advancements seen in the early twentieth century contributed extensively for the promotion of the national identity of an imagined community. It was also important to

create a balance between indigenous traditions and foreign influences while fulfilling the desire of balancing nationalistic goals and desires as well as international aspirations.

Latin America had seen the alignment between cinema and people in power being wealthy or the government itself, since the earliest times, thus reflecting the nationalist project adopted by the same. The first photographic films made in Mexico, for instance, did not include images of landscapes or routine in streets but was minutely structured and orchestrated views of Porfirio Diaz and events surrounding his shot in 1898, post the reelection of his fourth presidential term. Similarly, the first films made in Bolivia were also created in light of the power dynamics of the officials (López, 2000). But in Mexico, the relationship between the elites in power and cinema, developed in the initial years was short-lived. The shutting down of the exhibition sites of Mexico City resulted in the mobility of the cinematic experience, as now, the pioneers travelled across the length of the nation and took the cinema with them also adding elements to entice regional audiences. It set in motion the lives of audiences in small cities and towns as their activities were then centred around cinematic premiers such as Sunday mass, local celebrations as well as factory workers. The nature of cinematic representation also changed subsequently to cater to the needs of the growing audiences and thus, cinema took a different turn, portraying the lives of everyday people rather than focusing on technology and modernity. Though this resulted in self-recognition of individuals, it also led to the creation of a tradition based image of the nation and did not reflect its modern and capital side.

In 1910, filmmakers in Mexico, Argentina and Chile competed fiercely in order to document the religious festivities in their nation to captivate and motivate their audiences. But these sudden outbursts of patriotism often drifted the attention from ongoing occurrences to shift towards serving their nation with intense newfound nationalism. Theatre as an art form was prominent among the urban elites in Latin America. These prominences then lead the filmmakers to use many of these narratives to make them into feature films. This activity was especially found in the cinema of Argentina with popular films such as Mario Gallo's *La Revolucion de Mayo*, wherein current events of the time are reflected in films to present into the nation. What is peculiar about this movie is that it has no definite narrative in its discourse and in order to understand the film, one needs to have sufficient information on its historical context as well as knowledge on recent proceedings before the film was released to audiences. Similarly, the film *La creacion del himn* was made to honour the creation of national anthem. Humberto Cairo's *Nobleza gaucha* portrays nationalism in a very different light showcasing its countryside elements as well as the contradictions of the time (López, 2000). Also, national narratives were also often linked with heroic figures or events in order to ignite feelings of passion and nationalistic fervour among individuals. In Brazil, in addition to these events, movies depicted a contrast between urban and rural lives in the country. Cultural element is often used as a key factor while facilitating historical discourse and present positivism together, to give rise to a new sense of belongingness for its inhabitants.

In nations of Chile, Bolivia and Columbia, a new trend was found wherein a global trend was followed using imported themes rather than focusing on transnational elements but it later returned to its themes of national feature, while not abandoning its earlier themes. While accessing movies of Chile, we can conclude that these films were heavily based on the themes of nationless, almost obsessively as many of the citizens at the time were immigrants. The films made during the Mexican Revolution were different as they aroused very extreme kind of nationalism among the audiences. Alva brother's movie *Insurreccion de Mexico* showed these elements in a comprehensive light and as a result, became a very successful feature. But later in 1916, it turned back to narrative style mostly because of pressure from Carranza government in

an attempt to improve the image of the nation (Armes, 1987). Then two elements emerged in this process; one was nationalism itself, other was the influence of Italian melodrama.

In order to form an intrinsic linkage between nationalistic model and foreign influences, the cinema in Latin America underwent a number of changes throughout the decades since its emergence. It experimented with many different elements, such as using themes of national history while involving it with themes of modernity and westernization. Cinema was a key feature of Latin America in its representation of both nationalism as well as globalisation. Though technology was also a very relevant and important phenomenon cinema reflected more elements of strong nationalistic discourses of modernity. While analysing the cinematic situation of the entire continent, one can conclude that even though some regional differences are present, cinematic representation depicted the motion of change for various situations like a shift from rural to urban spheres of life as well as displacements caused through immigration and war. The constant struggle of a developing continent between maintaining the historical traditions and adopting global innovations or modernity is evident through this comparative study. Throughout the continent, the filmmakers had to face two massive challenges in the twentieth century, them being the two world wars and the US filmmakers taking control of the Latin America Cinema for their own profit.

Africa

African Cinema was established in a period which transitioned from anti-colonial to post-independence nationalism. Nationalism in Africa can be articulated to two major spaces which are inclusive of two principles, first being the political critique of the nation, and other is the critique of cultures within the nation. The second part of the statement is particularly important because of a number of reasons ranging from the colonialism of the continent, the cultural discrimination faced during the era to the process of cultural fragmentation experienced by various ethnic groups during the decolonization or the process of independence (Tcheuyap, 2011). Hence, the African filmmakers have been particularly invested in rebuilding a sense of cultural nationalism in their inhabitants and to preserve their cultural heritage, and consequently have taken active steps to ensure this task by including a number of African legends, aesthetics, ideals and philosophical notions into their works. But even though the notions of cultural nationalism are intrinsic and diverse in its own outset, it often coincides with political processes of the nation thus creating a drift in the formation of identity of individuals in a post-independent continent.

According to Anderson, sovereignty is an essential part of the recognition of a nation in the world. But the term sovereignty had received a very different meaning post-independence of African regions, which was initially thought to be independence from a dominant rule and later gained the meaning of self-reliance and governance while uplifting national interests of the nations in the region. The notion of nation-building can also be seen in Gito the Ungrateful, which can be analysed with reference to the idea of imagined communities given by Anderson. Understanding the administrative units which the Africans had inherited post-independence was one of the major tasks faced by them. This also led to tensions among the various nations as a new conflict had arisen of their identity being a colonial progeny or revival of nations. Hence the films made during this era tried to capture notions of being an independent sovereign while also establishing the ideals to form the identity to be an African.

It is very interesting to note that the contemporary directors, many of whom have not witnessed the horrors and the tragedies of colonialism, do not feel the need to political align themselves to the notions and the occurrences of the same. These filmmakers then try to experiment with new forms of art, genres, forms and themes, often omitting the said notions on nationalism,

nationhood, race and identity. Sarah Maldoror's film *Sambizanga* (1972) talks about Angolan liberation while reflecting its nationalism aesthetics. Diawara's essay essentially raises a question asking if the new movies of Africa are truly African in their discourse. This essay then highlights the plurality of identity of being an African, which is a very relevant struggle; many Africans face in their day to day life. But then another question arose, questioning the meaning of what then constituted African cinema. George Sadoul defined it as being written, directed, acted, and produced etc. by Africans. This definition is very problematic in itself as many of the films made in the past fifty years have been financed by external sources; also, it causes confusion related to essentialism, racial or geographical connotations.

It is almost impossible to discuss nationalism in African Cinema without talking about colonialism. Cinema came around the instance when Europe was at the pinnacle of its industrial revolution, and as a result of which saw its colonies such as those in Africa to be highly uncivilized and since they had the control over representation, Africans were then shown to be uncivilized and highly dependent upon the European authorities to develop themselves and their continent. These trends then influenced the Africans to make their cinema in such a manner that culture became their national and representing their cultural identity to become synonymous to their political nationalism. Cinema then came to be closely associated with nation formation. In many of the countries, cinema was an integral part of their political struggle, to arouse feelings of passion and intense nationalism among the masses. The practice of viewing cinema as an institution for social reformation a political upheaval as a result of an institutional framework. Displaying the Africans of the continent became an important factor in cinema construction, but it was ironic that the same power they tried to fight their decolonization struggle from, became the same medium which funded their projects (Tcheuyap, 2011). African tales and traditional narratives became the leading source of movie making for the African film industry. These narrativised films, along with the critical study of the scholarship laid down the foundation of how the Africans perceived themselves, and their broadcast on international forums displayed an exotic representation of the continent.

The Middle East

The notion 'Arab' has become a synonym often for Islamic fundamentalism in contemporary culture, from films to social theory. (Khatib, 2009) Post-2011, a number of events such as the Iraq War, the Palestinian issue etc. have led to disguising Islamic fundamentalism as being synonymous to terrorism. Many different myths have contextualized a set of binaries in the notion of East-West. This notion has also been immensely guided by the theories of scholars such as Samuel Huntington who has talked about the Clash of Civilizations with special reference to East-West territories of the world. While scholars such as Fred Halliday was written against these notions while labelling west as unnecessarily tried to subjugate Islamic territories into being terrorists and threat to the world.

While looking at the cinema of Egypt, we can see that its notion of depicting history is selective as the identity discourse for the same is quite complex. It combines Asian with African, Muslim with Pharaohnic and Arab.(Abdullah, 2000) And although none of these identities constitutes the Egyptian identity, still the idea of Egyptian nationalism is built upon the combination of them all. The majority of the population of Egypt confirms to Islam as their primary identification, but the influx of Islamic Fundamentalism has failed to contribute to the creation of Egypt as a nation. Balibar argues that when national identity begins to integrate religious identity, it ends up replacing it, forcing it to become 'nationalized' (1991: 95). The primary reason for this phenomenon is that it creates tension between the segments that constitute the principles of the national integral and religious community. Hence it might create some sense of

uneasiness among the minority groups which consider their identity to be majorly linked with its religious affiliations.

The representation of fundamentalism in Egyptian Cinema is therefore associated with major tensions with its national politics as Egypt is stuck between practising its Islam in moderation as well as its struggle with curbing a strong political force being fundamentalism (Armes, 1987). Although it perceives Islam as being good, it does not condemn other religions and believes in appropriating the elements from the west which it sees as being good, thus supporting modernism while respecting its traditions and rejecting extremist tendencies.

Since nations do not exist on their own, they are created with the existing ethnic and religious groups already present in the subcontinent. This notion then encourages the inclusion of the minority groups into the core of the national identity for the masses. However, the films usually depict fundamentalists being intolerant towards other religions, thus staining the reputation of the Middle East in the eyes of the world. But it is to be noted that although Egypt is a culmination of various ethnic and religious groups, it is in no way secular and this politics of the nation is highly dependent upon the Islam majority. The *Terrorist* (1994) showcases the story of Ali, who dreams of building an Islamic nation free from all the non-fundamentalist infidels as well as the Christians. In the movie, Ali is shown to talk to Hani about his utopian views and is shocked to find out that he is a Christian, as he always perceived Hani to be a good person. This movie made attempts to deconstruct the notion of ideal fundamentalist world, and highlight how fundamentalists themselves decide the notions of good and evil on the proceedings of the world around them.

Nationalism advocated in the Egyptian Cinema can be seen as being hegemonic as many of the authoritarian leaders often use the notion of homogenous community and national integrity to repress their heterogeneous population in the pretence of building a positive image of the nation. Balibar (1991) argues that nationalism is an ideology built upon the symbolic difference between ourselves and foreigners, be they inside or outside. The concept of nation is very tricky as it often masks the identity to be linked with pasts, forcing the population to either cling to it or erase it completely. And since cinema is used to strengthen the feelings of national and ethnic identity among its masses, they tend to essentialism the concept of nation.

The fundamentalist portrayal is perceived by the Egyptian government as being a danger to nationalism and democracy. *Nasser: The Story of a Man, a Story of a Nation* (1998) depicts Nasser punishing the Islamic fundamentalists after they were caught conspiring against him. Another film, *Birds of Darkness* (1995) portrays the way fundamentalists have been treated at present. Thus the representation of the depiction and punishment of the fundamentalists are seen as being in binary opposition to the government, where the government is seen to look good, fighting against the evil. The movie *Terrorism and Barbecue* showcase the negative attributes of the government, even though it subtly blames the fundamentalists for the inconveniences. Thus the representation of fundamentalists in the Egyptian cinema can be seen along with the themes of internal and external characteristics of what being a fundamentalist would entail. Another important factor in concluding is that both Egyptian cinema as well as Hollywood use their minority communities to highlight their respective national identities.

Influence of negative picture of minority communities

In the process of representing certain ethnic groups as well as the formation of racial and ethnic stereotypes, media plays a dominant role as it is through media representation different groups from the perspectives of one another (Ross, 2014). The task of knowing people around the

world or interacting with them is almost impossible, hence media does the mission of bringing different communities and groups closer as the information or the perspective we form about different ethnic groups are often mediated by the representation in media. Cinema is an important form of media representation and plays a vital role in the description of cultural and ethnic stereotypes of multiple communities as it is through cinema, the maximum effect is created on the minds of the people.

The representational problems in cinema especially in Hollywood of different ethnic groups such as Arabs, Asians, Latina etc. have caused racial stereotypes about the same because of the misrepresentation of the minority segments of the society in different countries and hence has led to the creation of a dominant line of research in terms of ethnicity and cinema representation (Ross, 2014). Many of the scholars have penned down theories which can be seen as being essential to the cinematic representation of these minority groups. Foucault and Hall's works can be seen which would help to theorize the connections between the mediated constructions of identity displayed through cinema and structural inequalities of power in the world thus repressing how big of a role cinema has played in constructing stereotypes about race and ethnicity.

One of the reasons for this can be attributed the Cinema's tendency to develop a stereotype and continuation of the same representation to such an extent that it becomes normalised and can influence the way an individual perceives an entire community. While analysing the representation of different ethnic groups, it can be seen that much of the research been conducted on the field focuses on the representation of different ethnic communities through Western perspective, and the outlook through non-Western societies is rare. This paper makes attempts to refer a few of those stereotypes, but the lack of literature limits this study on ethnic groups and their cinematic representation to some extent, especially with respect to Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

It is crucial to develop an understanding on the characteristic of the film industry as a whole rather than just focusing on its entertainment prospect in order to develop an understanding as to why stereotypical representations are reproduced, as the different occupational structures, as well as routines, form a dominant role of framing the content we see and hear in cinema. In Hollywood, it is the lack of representation within the ranks of media producers that has led to the formation of stereotypes and a lack of diversity in entertainment media content. (Erigha, 2015) She cites studies that show Hollywood to be a predominantly white sphere, where racial and ethnic minorities are highly underrepresented in various roles, including acting, writing, and directing: Black filmmakers addressed only 7% of all theatrically released Hollywood films between 2000 and 2011; more than half of theatrical films had casts that were 10% or less minority, and writing occupations showed similar patterns of White over-representation and minority under-representation. (ibid., p. 81) This is important to note because the structural differences and inequalities in the media production directly affect the on-screen representation of different communities. A study made by Smith and Choueiti in 2011, show that when the production team of a film is scarcely diverse, it leads to a poor and stereotyped representation of these minority groups but at the same time when there is greater diversity behind the screens, it leads to a more empowered and accurate depiction of these groups in the films. This issue is not limited to under-representation in terms of numbers but also in terms of quality, reflecting the types of roles exhibited by the people.

Most of the times, the part played by the ethnic minorities in the cinema industry is narrowed down to specific roles and genres. Actors are cast in roles which are highly stereotyped or are in accordance with their racial prejudice while the directors and writers are recruited for works

specific to their ethnic genres. This job recruitment is so dominant, especially in Hollywood, that it is difficult to locate these people of ethnic minority belonging in some core agencies or major art production studios. The annual study made by the Directors Guild of America in 2018 shows a downward graph on the representation of different minority groups in cinema, a number very less than it has ever been since 2013. Since cinema plays such an important role in the lives of people and can create a lasting difference to shape one's perspective of diverse ethnic and social groups, it is important to carefully study and examine the role played by Cinema as a media form in production as well as the creation of racial and ethnic stereotypes and also analysing the effects it has on these stereotyped groups (Ross, 2017).

While looking at the different films made, which are inclusive of people of minority groups, it can be seen that the cinematic representation of the same has been very unfavourable and stereotyped. Hollywood's problematic depiction of Native Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic and Latino minorities, has been a conflicted subject for research for many researchers. Many scholars have written about problems in the way cinema depicts immigration as a form of threat to the society and subsequently leads to the framing of relations with different ethnic communities in the form of "us" and "them" which increases the notion of otherization and increases the power of the dominant group in the society.

There is an increase in the representation of ethnic minority groups in different media platforms like cinema, news, drama, and video games, although much of this has been negative. The perspective of the people plays a huge role in determining what the people might inherit from the distorted image of different ethnic groups displayed to them. For instance, the representation of Blacks in American news media predominantly portrays them as being violent, whereas their representation in movies and entertainment in television shows has developed with time. Similarly, even though the representation of Latinas in dramas has improved subsequently, their portrayal in a sitcom is petty much the same. Therefore, the audience which only follows one form of media will get a biased view of the discourse of a particular ethnic group. Thus we can conclude that the distortion created in an individual's mind regarding any ethnic group is mostly due to the kind exposure he has to the different media platforms.

Most of the stereotypes produced in the news media are often reproduced in the entertainment sector, mainly in cinema but also in other popular media forms such as television, comedy, reality show, video games etc. A study conducted by Terry in 2011 highlights that all ten television shows aired on the USA had at least one African American participant in them (Ross, 2014). Most of these participants fit into the stereotypes formed around them. The characters played by them often seem to engage in arguments, conflicts and disagreements, and many times are also seen to be involved in physical violence. Similar adaptations can be seen in the portrayal of Black characters in Hollywood too. It then can be said that the remarkable augmentation of negative stereotypes by a genre plays a dominant role in moulding the nature and content of pop culture in the world.

One of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States of America (USA) is constituted by the Latinos. Even though they comprise about 16% of the population, their presentation in cinema and popular media is less than 10%. Depictions of Latinos in cinema culture are often narrowed down to crime drama or sitcoms, thus creating a very stereotyped view of a narrow character for the group. But throughout the years, the US audiences have demanded more inclusive and diverse films, thus leading to a more diversified production of cinema in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and class have been created. But even then a lot of homogenizing discourses as well as clashing stereotypes such as associating Latinas with tropical that is linking

them exclusively with bright colours, loud voices, brown or olive skin tone, sexual readiness and exoticism remained highly present in many of the cinematic discourses.

These patterns of casting and representation of the different ethnic communities highlight the notion of 'otherization' in the popular media, but it is important to note that this is a prevailing trend not just in the USA but in the cinema industries of other nations as well. In the Ethiopian popular films, Chinese characters are often depicted in a negative light as being the evil 'other'. This trend is very similar to the notions of the stereotyped otherization of being an African in the USA. Similar otherization of the Chinese population can also be seen in the Spanish Cinema as a result of their migration of China, where they are often represented as being a threat to the Spanish lifestyle. While analysing the film industry of Manila, a racially hierarchical view of the Filipinos and other minority groups can be found. Here, the Filipinos are privileged because of them being fair-skinned, while the depiction of Indians and Koreans who are darker in complexion are treated as underprivileged marginalized groups.

Many of the studies conducted on the topic lay its focus on the overtly negative stereotypes created in the forefront, but some of the scholars have spoken about the otherization effect which conceals a kind of positive stereotype being formed. Analysis of the famous film, *Kawai* (2005) shows Asian American stereotypes and portrays this in a negative light of racial hostilities and violence inflicted towards them. In the past sixty years of US cinema industry, the portrayal of Roma communities has been portrayed to be overtly negative in the sense that they have often been represented as the ethnic other and when seen in the light of correct political representation, as the misunderstood Gypsies. Although their description has been varied from being feared to pity, they have always been seen as outsiders and separate from the overall societal construct. This explains the fact that the cinematic representation of the characters and tones depicting different communities can be diverse in its discourse. However, it still frames their identity in one-dimensional prospect as being the other.

Most of the research on ethnicity and stereotype has laid down its focus on either the misrepresentation or the lack of any representation of the minority communities in popular media, but little research has been done on the media produced by the ethnic minorities which would portray multiple perspectives on the discourse of the relationship between cinema and stereotypes regarding minority groups (Ross, 2017). Hence we can see that the study of the ethnic audiences is minimal, as little to no efforts have been taken to understand how they use their media platforms for the propagation of their image representation. But these ethnic groups have made use of cinema in a very creative lens, combating the negative stereotype framed against them and providing a counter-narrative to lay out their own self-representation to celebrate their own cultures and traditions. This form of ethnic representation has resulted in elevating the identity of these communities as it helps them provide a positive image for themselves in opposition to the negative stereotype created for them, thus strengthening their sense of pride and comforts in the identity they harbour. But the negative aspect of ethnic cinema cannot be ignored, just like with mainstream cinema, ethnic cinema has resulted in the isolation of certain groups like people with lighter skin complexion are often compared to the ones with a darker complexion. Thus we can see that even in the case of ethnic cinema, the intersection of various ethnic groups can result in the favouritism of the identity of one group over others. Researchers have also said that ethnic cinema can also result in pausing the relations between different ethnic groups by implementing representations that are limited in their discourse.

An analysis on New Zealand's Pacific cinema industry highlights the notion of an oversimplification of the identity of the communities present in the nation. This is usually a

result of celebrating the traditions and the practices of some communities while disregarding those of others. They often favoured the identities of the migrants more than New Zealand born individuals; this resulted in creating a rift between communities. But the Pacific filmmakers have understood this notion and have taken significant steps to rectify this situation. The media has also made many efforts in the same context. A television show which aimed to include Pacific identities were not intricately embedded in traditional aspects while a magazine which portrayed a character which was Polynesian but was mostly inclusive of the Pacific masses identified as Māori. The interview conducted with the Pacific producers indicated that they wished to represent “brown” culture and its stories through “brown” ways, but it does not determine clearly on how the Pacific nature could be genuinely showcased. So, for instance, a belief in Pacific identity’s roots in an ancestral homeland ruled in scripts and representations of grass skirts, sand, and palm trees and ruled out those of the urban Pacific Rim. (Ross, 2017) Thus, it can be concluded that by laying emphasis on the identity of the ethnic minority in specific ways, the ethnic cinema then failed itself by falling back on the existing stereotypes, including the racial ones.

Many researchers and scholars have raised doubts on the extent to which ethnic cinema industry could provide a counter-narrative to the mainstream cinema or whether it is just a variation of the same. A study made by Moran in 2006 consisted of content analysis of mainstream cinema and Spanish language television channels revealed that the ethnic industry followed the conventions of mainstream media, the only difference being the language in which it was conveyed. Their story types, plots, structures, presentation styles, focus etc. remained highly similar.

This then mentions the fact that it is very unconventional to assume that ethnic cinema would only focus on progressive representations of their ethnic or cultural groups but rather indulge in a topic related to mainstream cinema as well. It is then confirmed that cinema content is shaped by a number of factors, the ethnicity of the producers just being a segment of it. The audience is one of the biggest factors influencing the content of the films being created. Many of the black producers in America have produced films which confirmed to the stereotypes surrounding the Africa Americans because the broader audience of USA had those expectations from the plot of the movie.

Ethnic audiences also play a significant role in formulating stereotypes and their representation. By demanding a more progressive image of their community, they can formulate structural brackets for producers work. In the USA the cultural production of the works by the Black filmmakers as well as other Black artists have been highly pressurised by framing a positive and authentic image for the group and hence has restricted their creative domain and experiments with the existing dominant stereotypes.

The ability of the audience to influence the work concerning the appropriation of various stereotypes is a highly unexplored research realm. In this contemporary generation of high social media influence, the audience is not only the consumers but also play a huge role in the creation process and the engagement with the popular media, thus blurring the boundaries between their role as a member of the audience and content producer. Then other media platforms such as videos on YouTube play an essential role in this new era of race representation. One such example of this is the Naija brothers, who are Nigeria born, USA based African hip hop artists who gained recognition for songs and parodies representing their culture as well as the dominant stereotypes surrounding them. Their popularity and success, therefore, portray the way proliferation of new media channels, like YouTube which is user-made and promoted, can create channels of power to artists of ethnic minority groups to produce, consume and interact with

audiences on an informal platform. But at the same time, it is also a dominant fact that the mainstream cinema, which is independent of ethnic institutions, does not indicate a lack of stereotypical representation in its discourse. Thus the absence of stereotypical images can neither be guaranteed by the ethnic identity of the producers nor by the indolence of filmmakers from the mainstream cinematic institutions.

Some of the ethnic cinema filmmakers have restricted themselves to portray only the identity they depict considering a narrow view of their audience, especially in terms of the language. Thus the cultural identity of the individuals is staged in a way that it privileges language. Using an ethnic minority language for the production or broadcasting a film is seen by many scholars as a significant product of cultural revival and its maintenance. Still, on the other hand, it can also form a threshold to determine the authenticity which governs whether someone belongs to a community or not (Ross, 2017). This can be seen in the context of the Japanese-American community residing in the USA, which produces films in Japanese but has shown reduced proficiency rates among the later Japanese American generations but this has not stopped them from creating their work in Japanese instead of English.

Ethnic cinema plays a vital role in formulating as well as reinforcing socio-cultural belongingness among the masses as it reflects their social identity and self-categorization. Individuals often get into the process of identifying and adopting collective identities based on in-group prototype confirming procedures. A study made by Mora and Kang in 2016 demonstrates that the self-importance and ethnic concurrence among their respondents had increased subsequently when their identity as second-plus generation Latina or Latino has been recognized. But at the same time, there was a massive decline in their self-worth when their identity was seen in more significant brackets of Mexican, Cuban, or Puerto Rican.

The numerous case studies included in the chapter suggests that the range of ethnic representation present in the ethnic cinema industry is quite high and is in accordance with the demands of different ethnic groups often determine their daily realities. A cinematic depiction of various ethnic audiences being broad and inclusive of identities in its discourse is an essential factor to negate the stereotypes formed around them. Although the ethnic cinema could not combat with the negativities of stereotypes developed by the mainstream cinema, it is an essential medium for addressable of these negative images conjured for them to nurture and create their positive vision for their audiences. These alternative mediated spaces can help improve group vitality, boost collective ethnic pride, and increase willingness to engage in ethnic performance for minority groups. (Ramasubramanian, 2017)

Ethnic cinema by minority communities to counter negative stereotypes

Cinema has massive influence in society and its people, therefore are significant lenses through which people of different ethnic and social groups learn about one another, yet many films continue to make characters and themes around ethnic and racial stereotypes, which often create conflict among masses. Initially, the representation of ethnic minority groups in cinema was typically marginalized and overlooked. And as soon as their representation in cinema became prevalent, it was overshadowed by narrow stereotyped roles such as exotic Latina, aggressive Black or the model Asian migrant portrayed as the problematic “other” causing conflict in the society and inferior to the dominant group. (Ross, 2017)

Ethnic Cinema is the cinema produced by and for ethnic minority groups and essentially provides them with a positive representation of their image and form a counter-narrative to the stereotypical portrayal of the ethnic groups demonstrated by the cinema industries such as

Hollywood but can be inclined to restrict typecasting and stereotype. The pervasiveness of these stereotyped representations across the cinema of multiple sectors is a result of lack of ethnic minority media producers, social constructs of the society, norms and values, commercial drivers and complex media production processes. (Ross, 2019) Even though the impact caused by them is difficult to measure, is very significant. Cinema plays a crucial part in moulding collective identities among communities and therefore by stereotyping certain groups, the image of these groups are distorted for the audiences. Several pieces of evidence have suggested that this distorted image created by the cinematic representation of minority groups can not only be a hostile agent between people towards other ethnic groups and could also lower down the self-esteem of the minority group. As a result, the study on ways to negate stereotypes and advocacy of more positive representation in the cinema is essential.

The process of representation is so complex that in order to understand cinema's role in stereotyping, we need to first understand the audience and their role with cinema; hence it does not end with the publication of the films. Only a few studies are present for studying audience in ethnic minority audiences, which is not an easy process. The most primitive traditions of cinema-inspired research, which were more focused on the impact of cinema barely on audiences. They were thus portraying cinema as being an all-powerful institution which inflicted a force on the audience which would imprint any message with its direct effects. But a theoretical understanding of audiences since then and an alternative way to approach the perspective on the audience as being more active and involved in their interaction as well as interpretation on the media.

Audiences are active meaning producers; this can be said by analysing the meaning formation practices used by an audience whose meanings are often embedded in cinema. It cannot be assumed that the purpose intended by the filmmakers is the same one interpreted by their viewers. The daily activities of the viewers are not in order, hence cannot be categorised in order. The mere movement of television usage by the audience does not make them viewers, but the people's interaction with the same is very complicated that is there is a certain level of difference in the amount of attention paid, watching style, and feeling connection like empathy toward the film. Viewers of cinema cannot be categorized into homogenous groups or being discrete, which watching films, being in isolation and separating everything else from their lives. Categorizing people into separate groups by choice of any particular genre or medium like ethnic grouping is then seen problematic just the way isolation of cinema from everyday lives of the audience. People do not depend on a singular form of cinema throughout their lives, but keep on switching between different kinds and thus form interpretations from the difference as well as familiarity experienced by them on various socio-cultural circumstances. Cultural implications, including stereotypes, are developed due to the complications in people's day to day lives of which cinema is just a part of the experience.

But shreds of evidence have proven that cinema does play some part in shaping the collective identity and their attitudes in the groups. Many in the audience have a tendency to believe the representation of different people and their cultures to be a true one, especially the ones whom they have little to no resources to interact with in real life. For instance, many Caucasian individuals believe in the stereotyped representation of Latinos depicted in the movies more than those who have no direct interaction with the same, in this context people whom more time watching different movies believe in them more than those who have limited access to films. Similarly, the audiences of cinema hold much more negative approach towards African Americans than the ones who do not view them as much. Thus there emerged a need for the development of theoretical models that would then result in the complicated way in which

cinema demonstrates positive as well as negative societal effects in their discourse in a simultaneous fashion.

Apart from playing a critical factor in developing people's attitude about one another, the cinema also plays some role in formulating beliefs and ideals about oneself and their ethnic groups, although mostly in a negative light. Many scholars have attributed to the fact that exposure to stereotypes portrayed in cinema and films, can lower the image of the self and could also distort the view of one's own ethnic group. A study conducted in the USA in 2017 to analyze the stereotypical representation of Latino and Black Americans in the cinematic industry over the last twenty years concluded that Latinos and Blacks had developed mixed feelings regarding their one in-group. The study indicated that the continuous negative representation of their ethnic groups have caused Latinos and the blacks to feel reduced sentiments of warmth and attachment towards their in-group. In contrast, a positive image of the same has aroused feelings of warmth and passion towards their in-groups (Ross, 2019). Negative representations of ethnic groups can, therefore, act as a tangible threat to the identity of ethnic minority groups. There is a dire need for the promotion of positive image in the cinematic representation of different ethnic minority groups as well as laying limitations on their negative depictions. Cinema can also play a significant role in shaping the support for social policy.

Conclusion

In summary, the scholarship on cinema displays not only the vexing pervasiveness achieved through ethnic and racial stereotyping in the cinematic representation of minority groups but also the critical significance of promotion of progressive image as well as combating against negative portrayal through cinema. But an important question which arises is how to challenge these negative stereotypical representations to change them. Some have insisted that the emergence of digital media could pose as an effective challenge by providing spaces to produce a counter-narrative, base-level story as well as content's democratization received from a diverse and broader range of producers or content makers.

For instance, the artistic practices online, offer platforms to individuals to create films which are more diverse in terms of race, gender and ethnicity as compared to mainstream cinema industries. Millennials, irrespective of their race or ethnicity are bound to refer to the cinematic representation of different ethnic minority groups, whom they have little to no means to interact with, to understand their characteristics as opposed to someone from older generations. This trend is only increasing with the growing popularity of the internet, which provides various alternative platforms for cinematic content through different channels such as YouTube, social media etc. It, in turn, influences many traditional filmmakers to be more inclusive of various diverse cultural and ethnic groups to compete for attention from the audience.

Cinema can both propagate as well as negate racial and ethnic stereotypes formed against minority groups, and there is enough potential for cinema to highlight a positive image to mitigate the effect of social stereotypes. Exposure to counter-narrative, which plays an active role in negating the stereotypes in cinema tends to increase self-esteem among in-groups and lays a positive impact on them. Film studies then become a significant effort which helps the younger generation to understand and address prejudice and racial bias, take efforts to spread progressive representation of diverse ethnic communities and promote more enhanced understandings of identity and social groups. Evidently, more analysis and research into methods to battle against stereotypes and foster more positive portrayals in the media is crucial.

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