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Introduction

In an interview with the Indian magazine Tehelka, Martha Nussbaum explained her view that India since Nehru has failed to create a culture at the grassroots level, that can nourish a culture of democracy. The state was mainly concerned with building a strong economy, which has until now proved successful. At the same time, the cultural void at the grassroots level has been filled by mainly fundamentalist views, most of them of religious background. In her last book (2007) she points out that India can look at one of its cultural heroes Tagore for directions to a grassroots democratic culture. In that same interview however, she also said that Bollywood (or today’s popular Hindi cinema) could serve this function at the moment. ‘And Bollywood, of course, has great possibilities, if it would use that power.’¹ This raises many questions. One of them is that popular Hindi films are made for entertainment, and are often perceived as nothing but a temporary escape from daily misery and boredom. How can such a commercial entertainment industry help to nurture a political climate?

However, Nussbaum’s suggestion finds support by a growing body of literature on the relation between popular culture and politics. One of the viewpoints is that of cultural citizenship. In this dissertation, cultural citizenship roughly describes the construction of citizenship on the level of popular culture. Citizenship is then understood in two ways. One is the more formal sense; being a member of a political community. The second is about the experience of that membership.

This double meaning makes sense if we understand the nation as community that is for a large part ‘imagined’ (Anderson, 1985). The members of a community will never meet all the other members face to face. Although citizens have an official status as citizen of a country, the concept of the nation to which they belong is an imagined one. Being a citizen of a nation-state in a formal sense might not be enough to have a sense of belonging to that nation as a community. The formal aspects (its laws and regulations) definitely can form part of that belonging, but one also needs an imagination of that nation as a community one wants to be part of. What are the characteristics of a nation? What are its roots? Whose are its real inhabitants? People’s (shared) imaginations give answers to this kind of questions.

Therefore in this dissertation I will understand the nation in two ways. First as a *nation-state*, the formal political community with borders, passports and a law. Secondly, when I use just the word *nation*, I refer to it in the sense just described, as an imagined community. The experience of being part of that imagined community, as called *belonging*.

But this implies that other communities can be frames for belonging as well. Especially in today’s globalizing (or post-national, post-modern) world, the nation has become a problematic frame of reference for people to belong to. People we know as terrorists, being able to give their life for a transnational (or transcendental) community while killing fellow citizens, would be the most striking example of this problem of belonging.

This dissertation claims that our sense of belonging these days is strongly influenced and constructed by the images and narratives that come under popular culture. This is not a one-way-relationship. The ‘users’ of popular culture (viewers, readers, audiences, etc.) have a strong power over what meaning the media hold for them. Following Hermes (2005), popular culture invites people to processes of bonding and community building and reflection on that bonding. How people respond to these invitations she calls cultural citizenship.

For many in India, the main invitation comes from Hindi cinema or the culture industry called Bollywood. It plays an important role in the imagination of Indian citizens about their place in society and the world. Cultural citizenship is therefore an interesting concept for studying today’s Hindi cinema, and Hindi cinema in return a great case study for understanding cultural citizenship and its relation to contemporary belonging.

From a humanistic perspective, it is necessary to study the creation of this cultural citizenship in the light of cosmopolitanism. The latter concept is often invoked as a form of belonging that is especially suitable for today’s globalized world. In one sense, cosmopolitanism means a global belonging (belonging to humanity as a whole) that surpasses possibly violent differences between nations or other identities. India has been an arena for all kinds of identity-politics throughout its history. The rise of India as a nation since the late 1940s, can be seen as an attempt to surpass differences based on caste, religion, etc. into a singular national democratic community. ‘Unity in diversity’, is the national motto that kids still learn in school to stress this project.

Bearing in mind the frequent outbursts of communal violence within the country (The 1992 destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya being one of the most striking examples), it needs
little explanation to say that the nation-project has never meant an eradication of sub-national tensions.

In this line it is questionable if cosmopolitanism can be a solution to these problems. However, if reframed in a less communitarian way, cosmopolitanism could still serve as a fruitful inspiration for dealing with confused identities in a mixed up world.

The research question is:

Does Bollywood help to construct cosmopolitanism amongst Indian urban youth, and if so, what does this mean for the understanding of cosmopolitanism?

The dissertation is mainly a theoretical exploration of the previous concepts, and an attempt to combine the different fields of thinking. On the other hand, a theoretical exploration of a relation between people and their ways of making sense of the world, is only meaningful if it is, at least on a minimal level, inspired by the experiences of real human beings. I have therefore added a qualitative component to the dissertation, which will be confronted with the theoretical perspectives formed in the first chapters. After putting these parts together I will formulate a view on cosmopolitanism which is hopefully refreshing and constructive for the urgent but often largely ‘utopic’ debates on globalization.

The dissertation consists largely of two parts. The first three chapters form the theoretical framework, and the second three chapters form the analysis of the Hindi film industry as an arena of cultural citizenship.

Chapter one will be an exploration of the methodology and quality of this dissertation.

In chapter two I will start with an exploration of how cosmopolitanism can be understood in a way that it fits ideas of globalization and a more postmodern outlook on this process.

Chapter three deals with the concept of cultural citizenship. I will understand it as a process of belonging, and show that it helps understanding the role of popular culture for the process of belonging in a globalizing world.

Chapter four will focus specifically on how Hindi cinema caters this process of belonging through popular culture, since cultural citizenship remains an abstract sociological concept. By introducing the concept of the imagined viewer I hope to establish an interesting link between the actual experiences of viewers and the larger processes of globalization.
Chapter five describes the changes in the Hindi film industry due to globalization and analyzes what this might entail for the way the viewer is being imagined on the side of the industry.

Chapter six then investigates how young urban viewers in India are creating their sense of belonging by using Hindi cinema. It asks what the communities of viewers are that these viewers imagine, and how this relates to their experience of the national and the global. In the last chapter the outcomes of chapter five and six will be compared and put into seen in perspective of cosmopolitanism as described in chapter two.

This dissertation should foremost be seen as an attempt to bring popular culture theory into the field of humanistics, where the stress on meaning has had a strong bias towards the study of ‘high culture’, since its complexity would offer better material for ‘working through’ the complexity of life itself. I am therefore aware that the theoretical explorations of film and popular culture lack depth where they should have gained it. This is all the more reason to further work out the link between the different disciplines.

I have also mainly tried to engage with studies from India itself, which has proved to be a very vibrant field in addition to the classical western studies about the subject. As a researcher it is self-confronting to suddenly be part of a western tradition, about which much Indian based research is very critical. Of course, what is western and what is Indian is a construction in itself, and no one is free of bias. Therefore, there might be nothing as valuable as an attempt to dialogue between people with stark differences. I hope this dissertation is a relevant contribution to that ideal.
1. Research design and quality

This chapter will explain and the objective, methodology and quality of this dissertation.

1.1. Objective

The research question used is the following.

*Does Bollywood help to construct cosmopolitanism amongst Indian urban youth, and if so, what does this mean for the understanding of cosmopolitanism?*

An earlier used version of the question just focused on the kind of belonging that was constructed through Bollywood, but cosmopolitanism later turned out to be a more suitable specification, since this concept is often invoked when describing belonging in the context of globalization. It increases the relevance for debates on these topics, particularly in the field of humanistics.

The research question consists of several sub questions.

1. What is cosmopolitanism? (chapter two)
2. How does Bollywood as an example of popular culture construct belonging? (chapters three, four and five)
3. What kind of belonging is constructed by Indian urban youth? (chapter six)
4. Is this belonging of a cosmopolitan quality? (chapter seven)

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze how Bollywood (as an example of today’s popular culture) plays a role in constructing belonging in a globalizing Indian metropolitan environment. This belonging will be qualitatively ‘assessed’ along the lines of cosmopolitanism, since this adds an in my view necessary normative aspect to the analyses. This is therefore also a case study of cultural citizenship, which is a growing field of theory that explores how popular culture is growingly offering identity and community in a world where previous structures like the nation are being questioned and disrupted.

The dissertation has therefore mainly a theoretical relevance, for as well the field of cultural citizenship, as for humanistics. For cultural citizenship, it is a further exploration of how the construction of belonging actually works in a concrete example. For humanistics, it is an attempt to bring in new perspectives on identity formation and belonging, especially the
perspective of popular culture. It is an attempt to take this large arena of daily life serious in a way that it is not directly seen as being the commercial and perverted version of ‘high culture’.

Whereas the practical relevance of the dissertation is of less importance, the use of the open interview method brings in the actual young viewers’ experiences of a film industry, that often claims to be neutral and ‘just bringing entertainment’. An analysis of these experiences could have implications for how popular culture is organized (inter-) nationally.

1.2. Concepts
An important part of this dissertation is the exploration of different concepts, so giving a definition beforehand that is being used throughout, is misleading. Most of the definitions of these concepts have been developed throughout the dissertation, especially in chapters two, three and four. However, I will give some basic background on the most important concepts.

Bollywood: Throughout the chapters I have alternately used the terms Bollywood, Hindi cinema and Hindi film industry. It will become clear in chapter five that these are not completely similar. Bollywood generally stands for the Hindi cinema that is made in Bombay (Mumbai). But for example in the West, Bollywood is often seen as synonymous for any film coming from India. Besides that, even some Hindi cinema that is made in Mumbai today might be different from what in India is generally understood as Bollywood, since Bollywood stands for a specific kind of Hindi cinema there. I have still used the word Bollywood though, since it is commonly used in the daily life of the youth, and it has strong connotations with globalization, which is a main focus of this dissertation.

Cosmopolitanism: The definition of cosmopolitanism is topic of big debate. This will be treated extensively in chapter two. In most views it is related to questions of identity and belonging to a community that has global dimensions, for example by seeing oneself as a ‘citizen of the world’. I will formulate a critical perspective on some of these views, and define cosmopolitanism in a more postmodern way, by seeing it as a ‘heterotopian attitude’.

Indian urban youth: The reason for choosing the urban youth of India as subjects has various reasons. The first is that they are very close witnesses of all the changes that are happening currently in the Hindi film industry. They are the ones with access to different cinematic forms and experiences (multiplexes, DVD’s, etc.) because of their economic background. Secondly, the urban youth are generally able to communicate better in English, which made it possible for me to work without a translator. The third reason is that I had good access to this group because of my internship at that time at one of the colleges in the city of Bangalore.
I have chosen youth in the age group of 15-24, since these are youth who are in the process of making choices regarding their studies and career. Globalization, cinema and belonging play an important role in the formation of belonging of these youth in several respects. Going abroad for studies for example, is an issue in the lives of these youth and a topic highly imagined through popular Bollywood cinema.

**Belonging:** In my perspective, belonging is about the subjective dimension of citizenship: the feeling of community that one can have with respect to (or irrespective of) one’s nation/country. Psychologically, belonging can mean much more than this, and refers to a state of well-being that comes from having an identity that is well grounded into a community (for example: one can have meaningful experiences of belonging to nature). Here this aspect of feeling well is not so much addressed, since we are more concerned with the sources of community that lie at the basis of these feelings, especially the nation and popular culture. The process of constructing belonging through popular culture is explored through the concept of cultural citizenship.

### 1.3. Methodology

The dissertation should be seen as a *casestudy* of Bollywood to critically assess the possibility of cosmopolitan belonging through popular culture. The casestudy is done with different forms of analysis, as I have visualized in the figure below. (based on Yin, 1984)

The first part (chapters two, three, four and five) is a theoretical *literature review* of cosmopolitanism, how the construction of belonging can happen through popular culture, and Bollywood cinema in particular. For this I had to get involved with disciplines that I was not well informed about, mainly popular culture and film theory. Since I was introduced in these disciplines mainly by Hermes’ book on cultural citizenship (2005), I wanted to make sure to not be biased by the constraints of a specific perspective within popular culture theory. For that I have first schooled myself more generally by studying more general works like Storey’s overview of British popular culture theory (1994), Buckland on film studies (1994) and perspectives on Indian popular culture like Pinney’s (2001). I am aware that especially my knowledge of film studies has been insufficient to deal with the themes I touch upon, especially in chapter four. A study of classic works like those of Christian Metz (1982) and Laura Mulvey (1989) would have enhanced my ability to position my work in the broader perspective of film theory. It is therefore a strong wish to continue this project more comprehensively at a later stage.
When it comes to the theory on Indian film and Bollywood I have tried to move beyond basing myself on direct available theory (in Dutch libraries), and get hold of decent theory.
that in India is considered to be standard work for study (eg. Prasad, 1998). The help of Ashish Rajadhyaksha and the librarians of the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore has been of great importance here. I have also paid a visit to the most comprehensive library on film studies in India, which is part of the National Film Archives in Pune. This visit, unfortunately due to visa limitations much too short, has given new theoretical insights that I hadn't been able to find before.

One more helpful means of ‘getting into’ Indian film theory was my participation at the National Conference for Psychology and Cinema, coincidently held at the College where I was doing my internship.

I have enhanced the theoretical analysis in chapter five (on Bollywood) by adding observations arising from participative observation. For the duration of eight months I spent time in Bangalore observing and experiencing the presence of Bollywood and cinema in many ways. I have read newspapers and magazines, watched movies, spent time in a video rental store talking with visitors and the owner, and most of all, spoken with people about cinema. All this was done as a part of my daily life, casually, without presenting myself as a researcher. At home, I would jot down notes and observations which could be useful for my research.

Chapter six is all based on material from the open interview method, as presented by Maso & Smaling (1998), and analyzed with the software Atlas.ti. About the open interview method I will explain more in the next paragraph under subjectivity. The interviews consisted of one group interview and seven individual interviews. The group interview was meant to bring up the different themes and topics that talking about Bollywood would entail. Partially based on this interview, and on the theory, I have created ten questions and subsequent hypotheses that form possible answers to these questions (see appendix A). Normally, when using Atlas.ti, the goal is to confront the data (interviews) with hypotheses till a degree of saturation has been reached (the point where one can expect no more falsifications of a specific hypothesis). For that it is mostly necessary to have at least fifteen to twenty interviews. Due to time constraints (a considerable amount of time has gone to literature review) I have only been able to carry out seven interviews. The hypotheses can therefore not be considered to be generalizable. Instead I have used them to map out the variety of experiences that come under watching Bollywood movies, and mapped them in different themes. I have repeated the confrontation with the data and the hypotheses several times. Especially when an interview gave rise to a new hypotheses, I confronted this new hypotheses as well with the previously analyzed interviews as well. In retrospect, the amount of hypotheses might have been on the high end.
Only when a hypotheses was addressed in more than half of the interviews, I have used them as a basis for general statements. But looking back, Atlas.ti might not have been the most ideal means of analysis. Therefore I have chosen to analyze the interviews also manually by reading each interview again and structuring them according to chosen themes. In this way I believe to have fully done justice to the different experiences youth can have. I have added an overview of the hypotheses and the theme-wise analyzed interviews as appendices. I have chosen to use a general starting question for the interviews in order for all possible important experiences to come to the fore. The question that I started with was ‘What does watching Bollywood movies mean to you?’ During the interview I would keep a topic list with me to focus on certain aspects of Bollywood that were of specific interest, for example globalization, changes in the movies and the imagined viewer (see chapter 4).

1.4. Quality
Generally the quality of research is enhanced with the increase of its objectivity. Objectivity however, is never fully attained; it is a so-called contra factual regulative principle. According to Maso and Smaling, qualitative research is objective when it does justice to the object or subject of investigation. This happens by trying to let the subject ‘speak for itself’ without being deformed by the researcher. (Maso & Smaling, 1998: 66) I will now explain how I have tried to do this, using the themes of reliability, validity and (inter)subjectivity. But before that it needs to be said that some difficulty turned out to be inherent in the subject of study, Bollywood. Looking back, I know to have been hugely influenced by western preconceptions. Bollywood was Bollywood, and couldn’t be much more than a few standardized and highly predictable movies, making it a clearly demarcated area of research. Of course, from previous visits to India I knew about the ‘hugeness’ of this cinema², but not about the complexity yet. Now, Bollywood is a world in itself, and writing a dissertation ‘about Bollywood’ seems just as grand a project as writing one ‘about Hollywood’ or ‘about world cinema’. Bollywood has become more than a case for a case study, it is worth a life work. But, similarly to Maso & Smaling stating that doing justice to a subject also entails doing justice to its changeability (Ibid.), I hope to have done justice to my changing idea of Bollywood in chapter five’s overview of the history of Hindi cinema.

² Most studies estimate that around 1000 films are made each year in India. Films in Hindi comprise of around one third of this.
Reliability

Reliability (Dutch: betrouwbaarheid) refers to the (virtual) repeatability for other researchers with the possibility of giving the same results. It is specifically the external reliability that is of importance here; the repeatability of the whole research for others, including methods and results. I have tried to enhance the reliability by keeping an audit trail where all the steps taken have been recorded. In diverse memos in Atlas.ti I have noted what the ideas were behind the formulation of different hypotheses for example. In a notebook I have recorded different thoughts on which concepts to use, some of which I have also recorded on a digital mp3-player.

Further, I have recorded all the interviews with a digital mp3-player, and copied these to a computer. After that I have transcribed the interviews in written word, which makes it possible for the interviews to be analyzed in different ways by different people.

On the part of the theory I have clearly tried to separate the views of the writers from my own. I structured the literature theme-wise in different documents (eg. popular culture, cultural citizenship, Bollywood), and I summarized each book/article, after which I wrote my own thoughts and commentary in a different color.

All these documents can be obtained if needed.

Validity

The validity of a research project generally stands for the absence of systematic and unsystematic errors. Internal validity then is about the validity of the arguments and reasoning that have lead to the conclusions. I have tried to enhance this internal validity in the following ways.

Firstly, I have tried to engage with the subject as intense as possible, what some call ‘prolonged engagement’ (Yin, 1984). Bollywood was a new phenomenon to me, and only by ‘hanging around’ in Bangalore for quite some time I could understand dimensions otherwise not understood through literature. An example of this would be the fact that film stars appear a lot in commercials and billboards in public places. I have also tried to speak with people of different backgrounds about their experiences with Bollywood, which made me realize there is a small sub group of upper-class youth I met in a nightclub that look down upon Bollywood as something like a sad example of Indian copy-behavior.
Secondly, besides working my way through theory in the library, I have tried to gather context-material, such as films, magazines, business reports and newspaper articles. I have also taken photos of the way Bollywood can be observed in public spaces (billboards, posters, t-shirts, cinemas, etc.). I have tried to see as many different films as possible, and made sure they were of different ‘quality’ and background in order to get a broader understanding of the specific place of Bollywood in the wider Indian film context. For example, when travelling I watched cinema in different languages (Telugu, Tamil), I rented DVD’s of old movies and what is considered art cinema (Satyajit Ray), and I bought some dvd’s of movies in Bhojpuri (a different kind of Hindi). I kept an overview of all the movies watched, including some commentaries and interpretations, so I could separate my idea of a movie from others’.

Thirdly, when choosing the interviewees I have tried to include a variety of youth. Boys and girls, of different ages in the chosen age group, with different interests in school. Although it is still a very small portion of youth, I have tried to include ‘extreme cases’ like youth that are very much ‘into’ Bollywood, and some who claimed to hate it.

Lastly, I have often confronted my own ideas and conclusions with my partner Kriti, who helped me to explain Bollywood in its wide variety. Some of my preconceptions were proven wrong because of her lifelong experience with this cinema. By letting her read the chapters I wrote, we were able to track down flaws in the argumentation.

The external validity (the possibility of generalizing the conclusions to other dimensions than those chosen in this project) is not very high. The dissertation deals very specifically with Bollywood. It could be that some inference of conclusions is possible about the interviews for other youth in India, but this needs to be further worked out by doing more interviews. The interviews have mainly served as an addition to the analysis of Bollywood, and an indicator of the variety in which certain themes are experienced.

The cultural analysis of Bollywood in its political and economical context however (as done in chapter 5), deals with processes of globalization that are at work in other countries and cinemas all over the world. Generalization (transferability) on the basis of analogy could be done here. A liberalization of cinema as it is observed in India will definitely have similarities with cinemas in other countries, but the context then needs to be explicitly addressed. It would be an error to think Bollywood plays a same role for the urban youth in India as it would in Britain, or that Bollywood would play the same role for India as Dutch cinema would for The Netherlands. India being one of the largest growing economies in the world makes Bollywood
a very unique case on its own. Similarly, a specific study of different viewers or different cinemas would be more informing than generalizing from the conclusions here.

Another way in which I have tried to build the external validity, is by creating a weblog (bollymark.blogspot.nl). On this blog I have written some of the discoveries and insights in a more popular fashion for a general audience, together with random personal associations on Bollywood. Currently, the weblog is part of a larger network of weblogs that write on Indian culture. It has elicited some reactions from people in different parts of the world, who shared their ideas with me on the topic.

Subjectivity

A third dimension in the quality of this dissertation is formed by my attitude as a researcher/interviewer. According to Maso and Smaling, subjectivity can be used positively for research, instead of seeing it is a hindrance for objectivity. A researcher can never eliminate or neutralize himself, so its better to make use of the subjectivity.

My subjectivity has played an important role, especially during the interviews. Important to mention is the question why a white man from Holland comes to India to study Bollywood needed to be explained. For most interviewees it was strange why I had an interest in Bollywood first of all. (Later on I started seeing this as an important dimension of their experience of Bollywood as well; as a cinema not interesting for firangs (foreigners)). An opening up on my behalf; by explaining why I thought Bollywood was interesting, was always clearly appreciated by the interviewees. As one of them said: ‘Well, even people like you come all the way here, so Bollywood must have something to offer the world.’

On the other hand was my being a foreigner a perfect role to play for inviting interviewees to talk more. I could ‘play dumb’ by asking them to elaborate on mundane movie-things like songs, and stories of famous movies that normally everyone would know. I am convinced it was especially their re-telling of things considered to be normal that gave the most interesting information. Kiran claimed that it had made her question what she previously thought was ‘just Bollywood’.

During the interviews I have always tried to keep a balance between ‘distance’ and ‘involvement’. Sometimes it was necessary to make the atmosphere of the interview a little more light and less official, by explaining my own interest in Bollywood; for example the movies I liked. This was especially necessary since all the interviewees showed strong resistance to the interview being recorded. I explained it was just for my own record, but it sometimes took a while for the atmosphere to ‘loosen up’.
Another part of positively used subjectivity is mentioned by Maso and Smaling as *insight in oneself*. (Idem: 80) A good insight in one’s motivations for the research and one’s interpretations of what is being said, is helpful in analyzing the data more objectively. For me it was helpful to write down before starting the research what my preconceptions were about Bollywood and Indian cinema. After having made these clear it became easier to ask neutral and open questions. Looking back at those prejudices now it is great to see how they have changed.  

Another way of using the insight in myself was by asking myself what movies meant to me, how I create imagined viewers, how I think an image of Holland is created in Dutch movies, etc. In this way it became easier for me to understand how it could be for the interviewees. It also helped to tone down my theoretical ‘obsession’ with a deeper meaning of cinema: belonging and citizenship. By thinking of my own experiences with cinema, most of which is also an experience of ‘just entertainment’, it helped to understand the interviewees when they expressed the critique that you shouldn’t take it too serious. There is a tendency for film theorists to think of films only in terms of ideology or nationalism and hence tend to forget that these things are perhaps just side-effects.

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3 A few of these were for example: Bollywood films have simplistic narratives, youth all want to be like their heroes, the films are nationalist.
2. Cosmopolitanism

‘We are cultural citizens adrift.’ (Miller, 2007: 76)

This chapter will briefly discuss the concept of citizenship and its relationship with cosmopolitanism, in the context of globalization. Cosmopolitanism is an answer to the growing problems with the citizenship-idea, but its formulation needs to be done with care. The in this chapter defined idea of cosmopolitanism will serve as a background for the rest of the chapters, and will return in the last chapter when concluding.

2.1. Citizenship and globalization

In general, citizenship refers to membership of a particular political community. As a citizen one is a member of a nation-state, connected through a number of rights and obligations. Among these entitlements we generally discern civil, political and social rights, a distinction well-known because of the work of T.H. Marshall (1950). The first two roughly concern the right to be protected by a state, and the right to participate in its political affairs (for example by voting). By connecting citizenship with social class, Marshall argued that social inequalities were the cause of inequalities on the first two levels of citizenship. So, it was necessary to formulate social rights, in order for underprivileged classes to belong more fully to society. The conception of citizenship as being a member of a community through rights and obligations is generally referred to as formal or legal citizenship.

Besides that, in most social and cultural theory, citizenship is seen as political citizenship, which refers to being a (politically) active member of a society.

But citizenship can be seen as more than having a legal status or being active in a political community. If we take one of B. Turners (1994) definitions of citizenship as example, this becomes clear. He sees citizenship as ‘a set of practices which constitute individuals as competent members of a community’ (Turner, 1994: 159). Members of a community are not simply born, they have to be ‘formed’ as well. For example, citizens need to be ‘nourished’ by ideas of the characteristics of the nation, its morals, its history, etc. These issues are not clearly defined matters, but areas of debate. And of course, especially in a democracy, the question is to what extent the authority is responsible for this.

According to Carens (2000), citizenship also has a psychological dimension. Carens says that a strong sense of belonging of a citizen to its political community could generate a strong
social cohesion. One who feels strongly about his or her country might be more inclined to participate in political activities (at whichever level) than someone who feels less belonging to that same country. It is arguable however to what extent social cohesion is an indicator for functioning citizenship, since one could also say that internal diversity or even conflict is necessary for democratic improvement. Despite discussions like the latter, it is clear that being a member of a political community has a strong subjective dimension.

For Marshall, the most important context of citizenship was that of the nation-state. But in today’s world, the nation-state, and correspondingly the nation as an imagined community, are being pressurized. People increasingly live in networks that are globally organized, and are in varying degrees out of the nation’s control. Besides economic globalization, a growing number of people migrating to other countries and an increasing global flow of social and cultural interaction have put the question of national citizenship on the agenda. Because, what is the nature of citizenship when a person is member of a particular state, but has affiliations with other nations (or cultures) as well? In The Netherlands this debate has fired strongly specially around the topic of ‘dual citizenship’, and of course the well-known ‘multicultural society’.

These processes can probably best be described within the container term globalization, or ‘the g-word’ (Miller, 2001). However, one needs to define this word carefully in order to make its use significant. It is clear that there is at least a growing interdependence of nations all over the globe, which is not even such a new process. The more important job is to identify in which way and form these movements are circling the globe. In our context, what happens if we use the concept of citizenship against this background of globalization? Where do we belong if the citizens of a nation are more and more connected to people from other nations, virtual or real? Are other frames of belonging becoming more important than the nation? Or more generally put: how can people belong somewhere today, when the nation is an unstable environment?

But, maybe there isn’t really a problem. From a the perspective of legal citizenship (and to a lesser extent also for political citizenship), citizenship is defined by the nation one lives in,

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4 Peter Sloterdijk (2006) has shown, from a more philosophical point of view, how today’s globalization is related to the ‘invention’ of a human self-understanding that is based on a ‘worldview’, where the global sphere is its basic form. Since Columbus sailed around the world, the globe has for the first time become a round place where all points are ‘of equal value’. This meant a fundamental change in the understanding of our position in space. (Sloterdijk: 2006: 28)
and one has to live by its rules and regulations. Globalization does affect the authority of a
nation over its citizens, but with new regulations we could adjust to the global tensions.
These critics don’t believe that political commitment of people can be arranged on larger
levels, such as Europe or the World itself, and stress the importance of smaller sovereign
communities. The debates over these more formal questions are huge, and should be left aside
for the time being.

The issue for now is that whatever the effects of globalization might be for the formal and
legal aspects of citizenship, at the ‘psychological’ or subjective dimension, we can surely say
there are big changes happening.

It is the more qualitative dimension of citizenship that I call belonging, where globalization
leaves its traces. Belonging refers to people’s subjective sense of membership to a
community, to people’s sense of identity. The nation is one of those communities.
How this subjective sense of community is shaped or constructed, especially in relation to
popular culture, will be treated in the next chapter. But for the moment, I would like to delve
further on the fact already mentioned that growing flows of cultural and social interaction
challenge people’s ideas about who they are and what their relation is to the people around
them, the nation and even the world.

Many inhabitants of the world are increasingly being confronted with images from or about
other parts of the world. Youngsters growing up in today’s media-environment have seen a
much larger amount of pictures and videos about faraway worlds than, let’s say, just 20 years
ago. Because of the internet, the access to diverse images has increased, whereas before the
digital generation, people had to do with newspapers, news programs, and movies.

The question arises in this context what this means to the feeling of belonging. Does living in
an environment that offers links with many parts of the world, also make people feel they
belong to that world-as-a-whole? In other words, do youngsters these days see themselves as
citizens of the world, or cosmopolitans?

According to a study mentioned by Manschot & Suransky (2005) they do. At least, the
educated European youngsters that were asked to write about their identity. In the stories
these youngsters narrate it is evident that the nation and the state are not the final contexts for
constructing identity. Everyone is aware that global dynamics have become part of their own
private lives. Manschot & Suransky state that, although these youth also experience fears that
come with these new dynamics (for example new outbursts of violent nationalism), it is hope
for a world full of diversity and respect for other cultures that dominates their self understanding. (Manschot & Suransky, 2005: 65) According to them it is a cosmopolitan education, that embraces and develops the values of diversity and respect, which is becoming therefore more important today.

A few questions can be asked to enhance these findings for the purpose of this dissertation. Although education is unquestionably very important in teaching youth to cope with new dynamics, it might be equally significant to investigate the role of popular media. These popular media are increasingly available and present in the life-worlds of youngsters, and, compared to schooling, they are a less formal context of identity construction. This does not mean that it is a place with less power dynamics, but it is a place freedom of choice is a highly valued guiding principle. What this means needs to be explored later on. Secondly, the experience of the new global dynamics might be very different when questions of belonging were asked to youngsters living in a different place and context in the world. It is imaginable that the European youth have a vision of ‘the world’ that is at least partially biased by the colonial history of ‘going out and exploring’. What would this mean on the ‘other side’ of the planet? How do youngsters in a country that has been colonized experience the new global images?

When trying to answer these questions, we first need to take a closer look at the concepts that were introduced. How can we understand cosmopolitanism as a kind of belonging? Does this mean that everyone becomes a member of one big community called ‘world’? After that we need to look at the specific relationship between belonging and popular culture / media. This is done in the next chapter by discussing the concept of cultural citizenship.

2.2. Cosmopolitanism and the human community

There is a growing interest in the concept of world citizenship, or cosmopolitanism, as an answer to the issues of belonging in a globalizing world. A core idea of cosmopolitanism is that humanity as a whole has to be seen as an important part of people’s identity. People’s identities consist of different ‘circles’ or ‘horizons’ of affiliation, of which, as said, the nation is a strong one. Cosmopolitanism claims that an important cause of conflict and violence is created if people have a sense of identity that is based on only one of these circles, or if one of the circles is considered to be superior over others.

When people think identity has to be built first and foremost on their being ‘Indian’, then a person of Pakistani origin is automatically seen as someone with the wrong identity. A
remedy to this explosive single-mindedness would be a cultivation of the idea that people share a similar identity, which is a shared humanity, or belonging to a single moral human community. After all, or first of all, we are all human beings. Next to this, it is important to realize that all people have more categories to build an identity on, which Amartya Sen (2006) calls *plural affiliations*. The problem arises when people believe that one of these affiliations is considered to be above history and above context. Then this affiliation becomes holy and therefore untouchable. And when someone does touch upon a circle, for example by claiming other circles are equally valuable, there is conflict.

Martha Nussbaum has been a major promoter of this idea of cosmopolitanism. She bases her views on the stoic idea that people are born in two communities; one is the local community, the second is the ‘community of human argument and aspiration.’ (Nussbaum, 1997: 52) The first allegiance should be towards this moral community of humanity at large, then to the local one. This doesn’t mean one should stop giving up local affiliations. Because, Nussbaum says, the world would be better off if everyone took more care of their direct surroundings than if they would consider themselves as global people without a fixed location.

So, cosmopolitanism means that wherever we live, we should always be aware that we are part of one humanity. ‘In other words, we need not give up our special affections and identifications, whether national or ethnic or religious; but we should work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, showing respect for the human wherever it occurs, and allowing that respect to constrain our national or local politics.’ (Idem: 60-61) Now, for Nussbaum, this shared ‘humanness’ is formed by the capacity for reason and aspiration for justice and goodness. It is therefore important to always be aware of these shared capacities in our fellow human beings.

Two things are important for cultivating a cosmopolitan attitude, according to Nussbaum.\(^5\) The first is *knowledge of other nations and cultures*, which makes a cross-cultural inquiry possible. It teaches us the relativity of different ways of life, and the ‘non-naturalness’ of one’s own. It is possible that other equally relevant ways of living life are just as valid. Another part is what she calls *narrative imagination*. This means that ‘we must also cultivate in ourselves a capacity for sympathetic imagination that will enable us to comprehend the motives and

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\(^5\) Nussbaum mainly talks about formal education here, but we can argue that the same goes for non-formal education or even non-educational, day-to-day practices of learning.
choices of people different from ourselves, seeing them not as forbiddingly alien and other, but as sharing many problems and possibilities with us. Differences of religion, gender, race, class and national origin make the task of understanding harder, since these differences shape not only the practical choices people face but also their “insides”, their desires, thoughts, and ways of looking at the world. Here the arts play a vital role, cultivating powers of imagination that are essential to citizenship.’ (Idem: 85)

A special role in cultivating this capacity is put aside for more complex works of literature. Nussbaum says that this narrative art is able to make us wonder about others, and see that they are ‘spacious and deep’ and worthy of respect, just like ourselves. It is this wonder that is a basis for compassion for others. Everyone who has read a good novel (especially the examples Nussbaum mentions, which are about the socially marginalized or discriminated), will agree that it has helped them understand and soften up prejudices. But the big question to be asked is if this effect can only be established by what is often called ‘high art’. Isn’t low-brow art, or popular culture, able to make one open the eyes to and grow sympathy for people very different from oneself? Considering the ‘everywhere-ness’ of popular media in today’s public and private spaces, this questions is extra relevant.

Nussbaum gives the impression that cosmopolitanism is something set aside for people with a thorough education that has taught us about the great intellectual achievement from all over the world. This sounds almost like Matthew Arnold’s old fashioned definition of culture as civilization, as ‘the best that has been said and thought in the world’. (quoted in Storey, 1994) It would therefore, in today’s mediated world, be an interesting issue to find out how popular culture could help in (1). teaching people about ‘the other’, and (2). cultivating a narrative imagination. But before doing that, it is necessary to ask a few critical questions regarding the concept of cosmopolitanism.

2.3. Beyond local vs. global?
Cosmopolitanism is a normative concept. It stands for the hope (and belief) that people will be able to have an identity that forms the basis for overcoming differences that cause conflicts. It is a dream of being citizens of one world, and not just of different nations. A very praiseworthy dream, but of course also one that needs to be scrutinized carefully, before being ‘believed in’.

A problematic point with cosmopolitan inspired projects is the formulation of what belongs to
the global and what to the local. For the global to be a commonplace of human identity, one ring that binds us all, it needs to be clear what this ‘global’ consists of. As said, for Nussbaum, it is a shared human capacity for reasoning and a striving towards ‘the good’. This suggests the global is a universal static, and the local is a place of difference.

More postmodern critique of this duality entails that the global and the local are both embedded in discourses, and therefore both places of difference. The meaning of the global differs from one person to another. Even stronger, the local and the global can be seen as both products of modernist thought, and therefore unsuitable for describing the more chaotic situation of today’s world. Studying the cultures of South-Asian diasporas, Jigna Desai (2004) shows how the transnational might be a more suitable way of describing contemporary culture formations, which changes the meaning of global and local. “Global and local are not mutually exclusive predetermined units, but shifting lenses that recognize multiple and enmeshed scales of analysis.” (Desai, 2004: 24) According to her, many ideas of the global and local (or national) are infused with colonial history. “Although scholars have debated how best to comprehend the recent processes of globalization and their subsequent impact on nation-states and transnational migrations, the models for understanding global relations often have been either totalizing or celebratory.” (Idem: 13) The transnational therefore stands for a heterogeneous place where all different formations of local and global, national and international, etc. come into being. It is a trope for understanding how people, especially the diasporas who live somewhere in between or beyond, are constructing images about nation, the local, or home and the world. It is a zone of contestation.

To some, the transnational is the place where new authentic belonging is created. (Appadurai, 1996). It is in cultural flows that are not rooted in national discourses, that new global belonging is created. The end of the nation-state is celebrated as the welcoming of areas of belonging that are not connected to geography. But this fails to acknowledge the extremely important role that nation-states have played (and are playing) in what we know as globalization. Historically it has often been the national wish for expansion or enrichment that has driven international and global relations. One could say: without the nation there is no global. To give an example, after 9/11 the United States have supported narratives about a de-rooted and global ‘axis of evil’ that had to be destroyed. Here we see the global created in the interest of the national.

This means that it is dangerous to uncritically celebrate the global, or the transnational, as a
new area of belonging and identity. There is always a multiplicity of powers at play that have a stake in deciding in what is local, what is national and what is global. But instead of treating the global and the local as fixed categories that influence each other, we have to treat them as notions that are in themselves constructions in complex networks of power.

Another point is of importance here. Just as the global and the local are subject to (national) interests, the national is just as less a clear-cut entity. As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, Benedict Anderson (1989) argues that the nation itself is an imagined community. Simply because of the fact that the members of the community ‘nation’ will never meet all of each other face to face, it has to be an imagined group. This does not mean it is imaginary, as in: illusionary. It has an imagined nature, but this nature has very real consequences.

Now, if the nation is an imagined community, then humanity, seen as a group to belong to, has to be imagined even more. The nation often at least has a state with concrete boundaries to be ‘rooted’ in. Humanity doesn’t have a world government as its structure, except for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights perhaps. It still is a difficult group to belong to, since it doesn’t have other groups to relate to.

We have to consider the possibility that there might not be a ‘new framework of belonging’. Perhaps living in a globalized world, means having to live with the fact that belonging is fundamentally problematic.

Nevertheless, since we are concerned with belonging (as a subjective dimension of citizenship) the global and the local can still be major concepts that are used in people’s self understanding. Even though philosophically (and for policymakers as well) they might be highly problematic concepts, for the experience of people’s identities they can be very vital. It becomes crucial then to reframe cosmopolitanism at this level. Maybe it is not the right way forward to search for a new kind of belonging in this world in new formations of the local and the global that suit the new globalized situation. Instead of formulating new definitions of what can be seen as universal humanity (or the national or the global), it might be better to focus on the way people are actually using these categories. It

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6 It has to be noted that the nation and the state are two different things, and there is much debate on how these co-exist, and which one precedes over the other. See for example Appiah, 1997. For now that debate will be left aside, and the focus shifts on the nation as an important construction in people’s sense of identity and belonging.
might be more the attitude of persons which has a cosmopolitan quality or not, whether they see themselves as members of one human community or not.

2.4. Heterotopian cosmopolitanism

Gianni Vattimo has, in a different context, also been critical of the global or humanity as becoming one large framework for belonging. These attempts to integrate humanity into one whole, can be seen another modernist attempt to grasp a fundamentally diverse reality into one comprehensible category. In this sense, cosmopolitanism can be seen a new grand narrative (Lyotard), which explains the way forward for humanity as a way towards one world of enlightened world citizens.

Vattimo states that a postmodern outlook is what is needed now, and that this is strongly related to the rise of today’s media society. His argument is that the media have not made our world more coherent and transparent, but on the contrary more chaotic and complex. Because of the unlimited ways that mass media is portraying reality, we are becoming aware of the postmodern condition, which means that there is no such thing as reality or the real world that can be portrayed, but that the real rather exists in its diverse portrayals about itself. Reality exists through the unlimited veils that foreground it and hide it at the same time. It is the fundamental complexity of being in the world that ‘shows itself’ through the multiple forms of media. But this experience of complexity should, instead of confusing, be seen as our hope for emancipation. Emancipation to him is then not the (Marxian and Hegelian) ideal of the human being rising above his slavery of ideology, but rather an emancipation of the human being who is freed of the modernist belief that there is something like a reality or ideal state of being which we have to find (through science). (Vattimo, 1998: 23)

It is especially the mass media that have brought to light the fact that human life is fundamentally heterogeneous. In the context of art, he claims the aesthetic experience (what we feel/believe/think to be beautiful) has always been thought of as a kind of utopia. For Vattimo, the aesthetic experience is clearly an experience of a human being who recognizes himself as part of a state of being where the world is seen as a whole that makes sense, when the human being experiences himself being freed from ‘earthly’ chains and instead is part of humanity as a whole. Now, since the rise of the mass media, an awareness is growing of the enormous plurality of human life, different individuals, different groups, each with their own idea of beauty and good. The postmodern aesthetic experience must therefore be thought of

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7 I would like to point out here that today’s popular ‘reality shows’ should be seen as examples of the media industry that becomes aware of its reality producing quality, and therefore trying to find new formats that play with the conceptions of reality and show.
as a *heterotopia*, an experience of community that presents itself as a plurality. Community itself is then not experienced as one coherent structure, but as a world that is in itself diverse. Plurality is then the normative criteria. According to Vattimo, and others, culture necessarily needs to reflect this plurality.⁸

Agreeing with Vattimo that looking for unity and coherence might not be the way ‘forward’ today, what could be a ‘heterotopian formulation’ of cosmopolitanism? It means at least that we have to be careful in simply stating that the global should be our main affiliation. In a postmodern condition, our relation with the world and with fellow human beings is equally threatened as improved when thought of in terms of coherent communities. Instead, we could see cosmopolitanism as an attitude that wants to move beyond the duality of global and local and holds plurality as a value. This attitude can be individual, or shared by a group. Someone can be considered a cosmopolite, when he or she is always and ever willing to admit that things might be different. This is a courageous attitude, because it requires living with radical uncertainty. Heterotopian cosmopolitanism refrains from finding a new coherent idea of community to which we can belong in the new globalized world. Instead it realizes that we live in a time of asymmetry, where differences remain differences and stability is always disrupted. Accepting this situation of difference, making choices, and at the same time being aware they are choices (as a person can be aware of choosing to speak a dialect), that is cosmopolitanism. Globalization is a disruption, and heterotopian cosmopolitanism is living with that disruption.

This resembles the version of cosmopolitanism formulated by Ghanaian philosopher Appiah. (2007) He defines cosmopolitanism more as a sentiment, one that recognizes the fact that everyone is rooted in some local community, but that all are living in a different one that can be equally valuable to them. Being a cosmopolitan in that sense doesn’t exclude the possibility of being a patriot as well; one can be proud of ones heritage as long as that person never states his heritage is of a fundamental higher quality than the heritage of others, or

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⁸ For Vattimo it is especially art that has the capacity to make us aware of this postmodern condition, and teach us how to live in it. Art can give us an experience of shock, that takes us out of our modernist conceptions of ‘the world’ and leaves us with an experience that things can always be seen as fundamentally different. Besides that, the notion of art itself is changing. Although he believes that mass media are incapable of really reflecting plurality – they have to be recognizable and easy to digest in order to be sold – he thinks the line between mass media and art is becoming thinner. Being a member of the postmodern *spectacle society*, one is constantly confronted with multiple worlds and communities. In the next chapters it will extensively be addressed, how popular culture (cinema in particular) has the capacity to ‘enroll’ people into a process of reconfiguring community, as art does with shock.
makes ones heritage synonymous with the heritage of the whole of humankind. Although I would like to go a step further, and state that cosmopolitanism means admitting it has become unclear what it is that belongs to the local heritage oneself, and what it is that belongs to the local heritage of another. Wasn’t globalization the process of mixing these things up a bit?

Figure 2. Cosmopolitanism as: a) global community, b) heterotopia

But to stay with Nussbaum, for the cosmopolitan sensibility and the value of plurality to grow, it definitely comes in handy to meet others who are crucially different. But this needs to be done in a manner that does justice to both. Cosmopolitanism needs to first and foremost have an arena where people can meet and develop a sympathetic understanding towards each other, whether in person, virtual or through popular culture. This meeting of people happens in many ways, but many will agree that an enormous role in today’s society is given to the media and popular culture. Castells (2000) description of the network society is apt here. He claims networks are becoming the main building blocks of a globalizing society. It is through digital networks (whether they are financial, cultural or political) that people are connecting to each other. These networks make it possible to have connections to others wherever they are.

In India, the cinema known as Bollywood plays a major role here. An Indian youngster living in Bangalore for example has met a variety of people in his life, living in a city that is often described as cosmopolitan (which here mostly means ‘comprising of a great variety of nationalities’ or ‘international’) But the views of that youngster about many of those others are absolutely formed in part by the movies he sees on Sunday or after college. The ‘westerner’ is one of those others. The cornerstone for cosmopolitanism would now be to see if the westerner ‘meets’ this youngster in a way that does justice to both of them. But this
counts also for his or her ideas (imaginations, narratives) about India, about Bangalore and about the world are for a great deal shaped by the heroes and villains who star on the screen in the dark.

It is for these reason that an understanding of cosmopolitanism can be enhanced by turning to the theory of cultural citizenship, which has focused specifically on the creation of a sense of belonging through (popular) culture.
3. Cultural citizenship and belonging

“... cinema in India is crucially linked with the production of cultural citizenship. Cinema was the first institution to permit Indians to participate as citizens irrespective of caste and other differences.” (Dissanayake & Moti Gokulsing, 2004: 2)

3.1. The ‘cultural’ in citizenship

According to the writers on cultural citizenship, it is within ‘culture’ that new horizons of belonging are created. The views are of course very different, depending on how culture is being used. They vary from culture in the shape of media, to popular culture, traditional culture, ethnic cultures or neoliberal culture.

Laurence Pawley (2002) has given an overview of the main strands within cultural citizenship discourse. He identifies three main groups of thought. The first is called *multicultural citizenship*, which is about granting equal citizenship to groups of people with different cultural/ethnic backgrounds. Ideas about enhancing cultural citizenship have to do with improving political participation. In this first strand Pawley places people like Kymlicka and Rosaldo, more from the field of political theory. They both believe that the granting of special rights to special cultural ‘subgroups’ can bring fuller citizenship.9

The second group can be identified with *cultural product and citizenship*, where one is concerned with studying the production of and access to cultural artifacts. Amongst today’s most studied cultural artifacts are of course the media; the news, internet, music and popular cinema. Here Pawley claims that enhancing cultural citizenship is done by for example regulating the production of cultural products in a way that it becomes more democratic, and allows for more diversity. In this group we find a bigger influence from cultural studies; people like Miller and Van Zoonen. These people have backgrounds in cultural studies, and are concerned with the analysis how popular culture relates to citizenship. It is within this field that this dissertation will mainly move, so I will come back to some of the constituents later.

9 Pawley claims that the danger with this line of thought is a hidden universalism. The ‘western’ liberal individual can in the end be seen as the true subject, the true bearer of rights, albeit from different backgrounds.
Pawley calls the third, more sociological strand of thought *communicative cultural citizenship*. He sees it as a strand that moves beyond and integrates the previous two strands.

In communicative cultural citizenship, culture is seen as the area of our daily communications. From voting to buying a bread, everything is cultural, but at the same time also political. Political power is not just in the public arena, but part of everyday life.

This further deconstruction between culture and politics, and between private and public, means that is more difficult to indicate policies. Because, how do you influence and regulate people talking in their homes? That is why he for example mentions Delanty (2003), who has a very processual account of cultural citizenship; it is more a *learning process* where we can slowly learn to live more democratically together. It is with Stevenson (1999) that Pawley stresses the importance of the creation of a public space that allows for diversity, in order for cultural citizenship to flourish. Stevenson thinks mass culture can have the effect of killing the creativity of the individual. He hopes for a more experimental kind of culture. “The arrival of more niche-marketed cultures has not yet displaced some of the predictable and conformist features of mass culture.” (Stevenson, 1999: 6)

The most important contribution besides his clear categorization is Pawley’s view of *cultural citizenship as a process* instead of an end result. This means that belonging is not a state of being to be achieved, but more a quality of life that can be enhanced or undermined. In a world that continually changes it is more worthwhile to speak of degrees of belonging, than of belonging as something to have or not. It becomes interesting to analyze how much people feel they belong to a community, in relation to another community.

Another issue that needs attention is the question of *diversity*. For Pawley the process of citizenship in the end leads to a more inclusive society, if diversity is a guiding principle in the policies. By strongly stressing the work of Stevenson, he shows that a society with ‘more cultural citizenship’ is one that allows for diversity, and, through the public sphere, is able to make many different people belong.

It is questionable though, if this process towards more diversity also needs a popular culture that *reflects* this diversity. Some even say that the products of popular culture necessarily subvert diversity, in order for it to become popular!

Since we are here concerned with the specific role contemporary Hindi cinema plays, we will now look more deeply into the relation between cultural citizenship and popular culture.
3.2. Cultural citizenship and popular culture

For understanding the relation between cultural citizenship and popular culture, two contributors are especially interesting, Joke Hermes and Toby Miller. The second has mainly written about news media, the first about popular culture in the sense of what used to be considered ‘low culture’, soap series, sitcoms, computer games and detective novels. Both will help come to an understanding of what cultural citizenship entails.

3.2.1. Hermes: the power of the people

Joke Hermes (1998, 2005) has produced substantial work on cultural citizenship in relation to popular culture. Her project is mainly to make us take popular culture serious, and therefore at the same time deflate the arrogance of ‘high culture’ as the only bearer of authentic meaning. Building strongly on the work of John Fiske, Hermes believes in the positive power of popular culture as a constructive force. Precisely because of the fact that it is based on a logic of consumption (a program wants viewers who watch it), it has the power to draw people together. It is however not a revolutionary force per se, which functions as ‘the power of the people’. Although it might sometimes instigate a small revolution (some Hindi movies have definitely done so), mostly it doesn’t. The constructive power of popular culture lies in its ability to make people bond and get them engaged. Hermes argues that popular culture is a realm which offers possibilities for people to re-invent themselves, and cultural citizenship is then the way in which people do that. She defines cultural citizenship therefore as “the process of bonding and community building, and reflection on that bonding, that is implied in partaking of the text-related practices of reading, consuming, celebrating, and criticizing offered in the realm of (popular) culture.” (Hermes, 2005: 10)

So, by taking part in enjoying (or disliking) popular culture, there is a process of bonding and community building. But, cultural citizenship is not only an unconscious process, as according to Hermes it involves an element of reflection on that bonding as well. In addition, she states how much of the cultural citizenship is a routine activity, a simple day-to-day use of popular culture.

This bonding-power of popular culture is especially strong in today’s postmodern world, says Hermes. She also refers to the national sovereignty as problematic (Hermes, 1998). People are part of different but sometimes overlapping communities, only one of which is ideally the

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10 It is with the same purpose that some have chosen to use the term public culture instead of popular culture, for the latter is too closely related to a non-popular or elite culture. See for example Pinney (2001) or Sarkar (2008).
national (political) culture. Therefore, Hermes wants to see nation more as a procedural, than as a substantial concept. The idea of ‘the national’ changes over time, and is, contrary to what many nationalists like us to believe, not a fixed set of practices and values. Cultural citizenship starts to appear as the process in which people reposition themselves continually within their different communities. Now, how does this happen?

The process

Hermes says her definition of cultural citizenship does not say how popular culture offers a sense of bonding and community. But according to her, this is not possible, since it does so in a multitude of ways. It is “an open invitation to belong” (Ibidem: 11). Although she also says that the link between popular culture and culture citizenship lies in the field of narratives; the stories people tell about themselves related to the stories seen on the screen or in the book. She gives three different terms for these narrative processes, namely usable stories, fictional rehearsal and working through. They stand for the ways people use the narratives of popular culture to reflect on their own lives. Although unrealistic and often highly dramatized, the stories that are offered can be used to compare and evaluate one’s own life, or fantasize about strategies to cope with situations that one might land in, and it offers us frameworks to interpret what is happening in the world.

At the same time it happens in more ways than these more narrative psychological processes of audiences. She says that popular culture is not just a big collection of cultural texts to be interpreted, but it is a “huge piece of fabric, pulled in different directions by the many parties involved: producers, advertisers, readers, critics, activists, and legislators. While holding onto the fabric, it is also what they fight over. The fighting, the holding onto, and the claiming of the fabric are all of interest here. Popular culture is not a mere “web of meaning,” nor is cultural citizenship a state of being. For audience members, (...) a material claim to belong and to be recognized as a co-owner is involved. Cultural citizenship is taking responsibility for (one’s piece of) popular culture.” (Idem: 16) So, here cultural citizenship turns out to be a matter of responsibility and ownership as well. It helps people making claims about where they belong and where they do not belong. In other words, people fight over what is ‘theirs’ and what is ‘of others’. This explains for example the great anger sometimes shown by Indian
cinemagoers when a movie is disappointing to them. With hissing sounds and sometimes by throwing stuff at the screen this disappointment is actively expressed.\textsuperscript{11}

Lastly, Hermes makes an important point about the quality of cultural citizenship as well. Although not wanting to make normative statements about today’s situation of cultural citizenship, it is clear that she envisions a world where people are \textit{more serious} about popular culture. Enhancing cultural citizenship is done by increasing the importance of popular culture in our daily understandings. If we increase to talk and listen to others about the programs we love, the matches we watch, it will help us to understand each other, and understand better who we are. This increased “popular culture literacy” is a “democratic imperative”. (Idem: 159)

Figure 3. \textit{A relation between globalization and citizenship}

\textsuperscript{11} At the time of writing, Indian weblogs are full with resentment over the academy award winning movie \textit{Slumdog Millionaire} (2008), which is felt as misrepresenting India as just a place of slums and shiny buildings, and nothing in between.
Power issues

Hermes’ account of cultural citizenship leaves us with a positive understanding of what others could see as degrading mass culture. It also leaves us with a slightly fuzzy idea of how cultural citizenship happens. We would be more convinced of the constructive power of popular culture if the process through which bonding and commitment (and reflection on that bonding) were explained in further and concrete detail. Even though it is done in many ways.

This ‘fuzziness’ could be related to her idea of power. Clearly Hermes doesn’t want to see the audiences as powerless, but rather as very productive in the processes of consuming, etc. That is why she sees power in the following manner. “When power is conceptualized as a productive force, as Foucault suggests, and not just as repression, our dealings with commercial popular culture can be understood as much more than the brainwashing and exploitation of those who did not stay in school long enough.” (Idem: 10)

Hermes claims that it is not so that the belonging and commitment in popular culture is a specific kind of political power in itself. “While it allows political issues to be raised, the very strength of popular culture is that it is not a manifesto. Popular culture suggests, it implies, it ironizes. It functions much like the chorus in classical Greek drama. It makes the presence known of those who are not in positions of direct political or economic power. … There is a push-and-pull here between manipulation by the industry, by dominant ideology, and by regrouping on the part of those who are being manipulated. Popular culture hides rather than foregrounds itself as a domain of political and ideological struggle.” (Idem: 11)

With this vision of power, her view of popular culture becomes very broad. Popular is seen as “for and of the people” (Idem: 4) and culture as “both how we understand the world, as where and how we live our lives, and the production of artifacts that amuse or move us, that have us thinking about who we are and how “being” is done.” (Ibidem)

It is agreeable that commercial popular culture is much more than the brainwashing-effect the Marxian Frankfurter Schule has so strongly defended. Thinkers like Adorno, Benjamin and Horkheimer have warned against the dangers of mass culture being an enormous unifying force, trying to suppress all difference into a capitalist status quo.

But Hermes’ seems to do almost the opposite. Popular culture becomes almost everything we do as humans to make sense of our world, a sort of neutral zone where people have the power to make the sense and meanings they want. Although she mentions a ‘push-and-pull between manipulators and the manipulated’ her focus is entirely on the latter. All power to the people.
Perhaps for rhetoric reasons, but for our understanding of what is going on, it is unfortunately too simplistic. Because the fact that, like Hermes says herself, popular culture rather hides than foregrounds the political and ideological aspects, could also be seen as the powerful outsmarting the people again.

This critique is similar to Ien Ang’s (1996) critique of John Fiske. She says that when he formulates his view of popular culture as per definition containing countercultures against the dominant powers, he still uses power in a very top-down manner. According to her, in today’s postmodern globalized world, power should more be seen as a chaotic force. Chaotic is not seen as opposed to order, but much more as preceding order. It is therefore that she says we don’t have to deconstruct the ‘passive’ audience anymore, but rather see in which way “they have to be active in order to produce any meaning at all out of the overdose of images thrown before us.” (Ang, 1996: 13) Her concept of the ‘active audience’ is one that is both subject and object of postmodern consumer culture at the same time. It makes its own meaning, but is also subject to controlling powers over which it has no control.

In other words, for understanding the role of popular culture in the construction of cultural citizenship, it is important to have a clear view of the power of this construction. Who is in charge of the construction, and to what extent?

3.2.2. Miller: the power of the ones in power

Interestingly, Hermes positions her own views against those of Toby Miller (1993, 1998). Miller can be placed on the other side of a top-down power line. According to him, citizenship (and similarly cultural citizenship) is especially a realm of subjection. He states that “the civic cultural subject – the citizen – is produced as a polite and obedient servant of etiquette, within limited definitions of acceptable behaviour” (Miller, 1993: 223, quoted in Hermes, 2005: 6). For Hermes, this disciplining has its value as a daily vice, like hypocrisy or jealousy also sometimes have. It serves as a bringer of possibilities.

But this dismissal of Miller’s point is too easy. In his latest work (which Hermes couldn’t have read before her remarks about him), he illustrates widely how the disciplining happens in American news media. He thinks the media, especially the news on television, are sustaining an image of America that is clean and without internal conflict. In order for the media to sustain democratic cultural citizenship, it has to be in the hands of people that have democracy and diversity amongst their guiding principles. Cultural citizenship is enhanced according to Miller if there is freedom “from prohibition and freedom to act via political, economic, and media capacities.” (Idem: 73) But at the moment, the media is mainly run by
reactionary Christian neoliberals, who have great interest in a widespread image of America as one nation under God. For this it has to filter out facts that distort this image, for example information about the possible dubious role of the US government around 9/11. “In terms of knowledge of the events of September 11 and subsequent invasions, the population knew less about the world and its own government than seems possible. … Goodbye discourse and the active audience, hullo ideology and the passive recipient.” (Miller, 2007: 108-110)

It is another job to assess if Miller is completely right in his depressing analysis of the American news media. But he brings in an important factor of the relationship between cultural citizenship and popular culture, namely the side of the producers, media makers, etc. He shows how these parties can be very powerful in determining what is being shown and what not, in other words, how the local, the national and the global are being represented. Even though Hermes brings this side in the huge piece of fabric that popular culture is, she does not seem to be very interested in the analysis of the powers this side holds over the images that eventually come to the screen or on the papers. Her interest is with the viewers and readers. In a liberal country like The Netherlands, where she is from and bases her research, the situation is probably such that it can more easily sustain an image of audiences very actively participating in the practices of popular culture. But when we move our attention to other countries 12 ; much larger contexts of popular culture, we have to take these ‘others’ definitely into account. Not directly as a top over down, but rather as a very powerful co-player. The political power is very much an important stakeholder in popular culture that cannot be dismissed. Or in the words of Miller: “We need to interrogate the absences that commercial dictates produce, even as we acknowledge the importance of the quotidian [daily mundane life, MB] to the lived experience of citizenship.” (Idem: 24)

3.3. Bonding, but also separation.

Hermes has given an important vision of what meaning(s) popular culture can hold for people. It has the power to draw people together in diverse ways and rebuild their frames of belonging. Cultural citizenship is a process of belonging through popular culture. Belonging

12 The Chinese version of Google is a very illustrative extreme example here, where searches for ‘Tiananmen Square’ or ‘Falun Gong’ at the time of writing of this chapter still give significantly different results than in the .com-version of the site. Also, bloggers who write pieces on the internet that might be interpreted as anti-government, are regularly taken and put into prison. The 2004 Shi Tao - case is most striking, where Microsoft handed over details of the source to the Chinese government, so he could be taken into custody.
is an active, constructed sense of membership to multiple communities. This activity is however not completely in the control of the viewer. There are other forces in play as well. With the critique of Miller we can be more nuanced about the beautiful power of popular culture to bring people together. By the forces of the creators of that popular culture, it also has the power to separate and create images of (evil) others. Some of the American news channels mentioned by Miller, had a very strong interest in making the people bond to their version of the US Nation. This could not be done without creating a discursive other, an enemy rather, who is not ‘like them’. For one who has followed the news in the last few years, it is not difficult to guess who these discursive enemies are.

In other words, if popular culture has the power to make people bond and commit and also reflect on that bonding and commitment, it would be a mistake not to look at the separation that could also be happening. This is crucial when we are interested in the idea of cosmopolitanism formulated in the previous chapter. For seen in this way, popular culture could also nurture an imagination of new others, new enemies, that are crucially different from ‘us’, and perhaps not even human at all.

The question still remains if this re-creation of community happens in a way that it serves our ideal of cosmopolitanism. Does it help us, as Vattimo suggests, become aware of human plurality? It might be, that the active community-project that happens in popular culture has the effect of people becoming aware of their own community-creating activity, and hence develop a flexibility. But that could be wishful thinking.

In the next chapter we will take cinema in general, and contemporary Hindi cinema specifically, as a case study for answering the questions above. But in a way that hopefully does more justice to the different powers in the ‘huge piece of fabric’ that Hermes talks about.
4. Cinematic belonging: the imagined viewer

“I am inserting a rather more live political dimension to what is otherwise a relatively straightforward phenomenon: that real-life readers and viewers of any text at some level usually try to comprehend and put in place some abstracted category of ‘who this text is meant for’, and engage with this category as part and parcel of any textual reading.” (Rajadhyaksha, 2003: 279)

Cinema is known for its specific power of drawing people’s attention. Theoretical explorations of this power range from perspectives that stress a brainwashing-effect, to the now more famous ideas of an active audience that constructs its own meaning out of a film. The range of studies of the relation between film and politics, film and the nation/state, film and citizenship, is quite enormous. It is imperative to therefore make difficult choices. Since we generally perceive cinema as a relation between the film on one side and the viewer on the other, the research has focused on either one of these poles. But in this chapter I will show that in order to understand cinema as a source of belonging, it is more interesting to theorize on an interaction between the film and the viewer – a space in between the two poles. I will formulate an attempt to theorize this more contextual process, with the concept of the imagined viewer. But before going into that, it is helpful to first give an insight in the theory of the film and of the viewer.

4.1. The problem of film as text

Most Indian film theory is concerned with the content analysis of movies; it is about film as a text that represents ‘reality’ in a certain way. Finding the meaning (or ideology) of a film or genre of films is a very dubious enterprise. Depending on the framework of analysis, a different ideology could be found. In the words of film scholar Buckland: “One of the biggest problems (…) is being able to establish a causal link between a film and its social and historical context. … Invasion of the Body Snatchers can be read as either supporting or opposing American Cold War ideology. … The answer genre critics give to these questions…

13 As said, most of the previous theory on cultural citizenship is mainly based on research in western (American, Eastern-European) contexts. Recently, there has been increasing interest in cultural citizenship as a way of understanding the importance of popular culture in India. This research doesn’t just concern cinema, but also game shows and music programs on television. Since the specific link with cinema is a minor field, will use insights from different fields.
are plausible but not conclusive. Additional work needs to be carried out into the cultural meanings of the cinema.” (Buckland, 1998: 100-101)

In a recent article, Wimal Dissanayake (2008) has tried to shift from text analysis by saying that cinema in general reflects the social-political situation of a time, but in a paradoxical way. Here he also introduces cultural citizenship as ‘the cultural production of citizenship.’ (Dissanayake, 2008: 84) Compared with national citizenship, which focuses more on citizens as individual units, cultural citizenship places more emphasis on shared understandings and imaginaries. In other words, it creates a social reality for people to use in understanding the world around. Cinema has always played a big role in creating this social reality. “The contradictions and ambivalences associated with the Indian state, find expression in its cinema.” (Idem: 86)

According to him, cinema imagines and reflects the important cultural changes of a certain time. This in turn gives people a social reality, images and narratives that provide people with material to understand society. Cinema puts themes on the map that are apparently important and have to be dealt with.

He shows for example how, especially since the nineties, the global aspect has become an important factor in the themes of Hindi cinema. Confronted with new global forces, this part of experience has to be incorporated into the narratives and images.

But it remains unclear what that projected social reality or cultural citizenship means to the people who are watching the movies. Dissanayake doesn’t talk about the way these themes are dealt with, and what that might entail for the viewers. What do people do with this social reality?

For example, does the avenging woman genre of the eighties also lead to a more open attitude

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14 ‘The move away’ from text analysis is done in a few new and very interesting ways. Worth mentioning here is especially the work of Lawrence Liang (2005). He argues that besides moving away from just studying film as text, which are shown in particular spaces, but analyze it as a practice with spatial dimensions, it is more true to today’s form of cinema which is highly networked and diverse and cannot be confined to its images on screen anymore.

‘There can, arguably, be no distinct account of cinema or cinematic spaces, which is not at the same time an account of the history of the city, of the experiences of modernity and of the conflicts that define the very occupation of these spaces. (…) The movement from an examination of cinematic spaces to a larger idea of cinematic practices may entail a shift into a larger spatial history, one that foregrounds the importance of space in relation to the larger histories of the state and the public sphere. A history of spectatorship for instance does not merely provide us with a way of engaging with what people see, and how people see, but also with stories of crowds, of their interaction with each other, with the space in which the film was screened and how this may have bearing on their interaction with the screen.’ (Liang, 2005: 368)
towards female agency amongst the audiences? Do women who watch these movies suddenly feel part of a community they did not belong to before? Or, if movies are more reflecting the ‘signs of the times’, as Dissanayake also suggests, is a movie then not much more then a sort of general depiction of what lives amongst the people? And, for the purpose of this dissertation, does the new global imagery in the cinema since the nineties help people recognize a common humanity in different other earthlings?

Too many questions. Let us therefore now take a closer look at the activity of audiences.

4.2. The active audience

The concept of the ‘active audience’ is, at least in the field of science, a common starting point. This concept says that the messages, images or ideology of movies don’t penetrate our brains silently, but viewers have a ‘shield’ of interpretation between the moving images and their own beliefs.\footnote{A striking counterexample would be Bandhu (2001) who claims that current Hindi movies are purveyors of neo-colonial consciousness, which directly results in mental slavery and exploitation. This happens mainly by a western juxtaposition in the films between tradition and modernity, which viewers simply consume and ‘believe’. It has however been demonstrated by many writers how ‘western’ symbols and languages are incorporated into the Indian context in very paradoxical ways.}

Interestingly there is little extensive research on the meaning-making activity of film spectators in India, especially not of the qualitative sort. Banaji (2006) interviewed groups of young viewers in Bombay and London about their tastes and their opinions concerning the movies and the images they portray. She concludes that these opinions are as diverse as the people themselves, and it is not such that specific movies have specific opinions as a result. It is even so that a movie might have a different impact when watched at different times or in different social settings.

This is a rather unsurprising result. Different people have different opinions. This doesn’t mean that a study of people’s opinions on the representations in movies is unimportant. It is very valid to see how for example a stereotypical representation of foreigners in Bollywood movies is appreciated by viewers. But the opinions people have when they discuss film, are but one of the ways in which movies ‘interact’ with viewers.

If we would shift the focus of analysis away from opinions to meanings we enter a level of human experience that is in a sense more embedded in social context. Opinions are definitely formed in a social context, but they are generally considered to be an expression of individuality. This also counts for meanings to a certain extent, but psychologically, something gets meaning only when it is experienced as being related to a larger context.
Meaning includes opinions, but it also includes experiences, emotions, feelings, etc. Baumeister (1999) explains how something is experienced as meaningful when things (events, emotions, etc.) are experienced as connected, as if together in one web of meaning.

Verstappen (2003) has come closer to this approach in her research with young Dutch Hindu viewers of Bollywood movies (Most of the Hindu population in Holland migrated from Surinam, after originally having come from India to Surinam). By asking them why watching Bollywood is so important to them, the result was one of great variety, but there were striking similarities as well. It did not have to do with a lost bonding with India, a country with which they had almost no connection whatsoever anymore, but the main appeal of the movies was the portrayal of the families and the Hindu culture. Although portrayed in an excessive way, and different from their reality, the portrayals came closer to their Hindu family situations then the general Dutch or Hollywood movie. Verstappen concludes that most of these youth watch Bollywood to ‘feel normal’ in an environment that is different from theirs. One could say that the movies present them with a community of people with similar family circumstances, which makes them feel less as an outsider. Even though they say they are not Indians, they still belong to a group of people that share certain qualities.

Now we are getting closer to an idea of how people use films for an idea of community and belonging. Verstappen’s research shows how Hindustani youth in Holland use movies to connect with a community that has certain cultural traits, that most others in their environment do not have. But the communities they resort to when talking about the movies are the ones already at hand, for example their families. When focusing mainly on the experiences of viewers, films appear rather as ‘reinforcers’ of a belonging that was already there. A problem that remains is the ability to understand if cinema has a specific community building capacity of its own. Can it create a kind of belonging that is specifically cinematic? For this it is necessary to shift to seeing cinema as more than just a combination of movies and viewers, but as a social institutions.

4.3. The imagined viewer
I argue that it is mainly through what we can call the imagined viewer that cinema-as-an-institution constructs belonging.

Shortly and simply, the process works as follows. A movie (or movies) is always made for a certain kind (or certain kinds) of audience(s) in mind, which is the person to which the movie
speaks. In this sense, a movie produces a certain audience, for example ‘the Indian’, ‘the educated Dutch’ or ‘the reflective, critical individual’. A film ‘projects’ this viewer on the seat in the cinema, and the viewer can sit in that chair and be that imagined viewer for some time. The institution of cinema needs the viewer to play a certain role, for it to function. It needs the actual viewer to be the imagined viewer. For the viewer this offers a category of belonging, that they can be part of or not. But what kind of belonging is that?

This can be further explored with Althusser’s (1970) idea of *interpellation*. Interpellation could shortly be summarized as ‘one becomes a subject when spoken to as one’. People can only become subjects (rational self-conscious individuals) when they learn this in a social context. According to Althusser, the subject is a role that is forced upon a person, by living in social institutions. These institutions (educational, family, religious, political, cultural, etc.) represent a certain hegemonic ideology, and on behalf of that ideology they make an appeal to subjects in order for them to be incorporated into that ideology. When a police officer shouts ‘hey you!’, one would immediately realize ‘this means me’. And it is more than that, because one realizes he is someone under the jurisdiction of the law, a citizen of the nation that the police officer represents. In this way, a subject is directly incorporated in a belonging to the greater body. Ideology in this sense, is not something that is embodied by ideas, beliefs and representations in people’s minds, but rather in actions and behaviours of people which are governed by the their position in material circumstances. It is in the way people are positioned towards each other that ideology finds expression.

Cinema could also be seen as an Ideological State Apparatus that represents a hegemony, and on behalf of that, shouts ‘hey you’ to the viewer. Cinema can then be seen as a representative of the hegemonic ideology of a society at a certain time. A propagandist film would be the most ideal example of this.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha (2003) has applied this process to cinema, by explaining how filmmaking per definition relies on the assumption of an *idealized viewer*. The set up of watching a film is such that there is an assumption of a relation between the screen and an individual subject-viewer. In other words, filmmakers cannot but think of an idealized viewer to whom they address the movie. This idealized viewer that was in mind of the makers of the movie, makes the *actual viewers* inscribe themselves into that idealized category. According to him, this is because filmmaking these days strongly relies on the fact that there is a *frontal address*. This means, using the famous theory of looks by Laura Mulvey, that the basic set-up
is that between the frame (on screen), which is the look of the camera, and the look of the actual spectator in front of that screen. Now, a frame narrates the story in such a way that it mostly does not allow for many different viewpoints, unlike in a theatre with a play. The camera ‘decides’ where to look. This means that the viewer in the cinema can inscribe themselves into the role of the idealized viewer. “Inscribed viewers, in other words, permit actual ones to disclaim, negate or renounce – in Freudian terms disavow – the fact that it is always and at all times within the duration of a film they who are watching it.” (Rajadhyaksha, 2003: 280)

But becoming that idealized viewer is not something that completely escapes the consciousness of the audience. By entering a cinema hall, a viewer can enter into a category that was designed for the purpose of watching the movie. One can ‘forget’ himself, and ‘become’ someone else, which is not per definition the protagonist of the movie. It can be a different version of oneself as well. This has a liberating effect, since it makes a viewer aware of the fact that he is free to choose to become part of this idealized category or not. For example in a horror movie, when the movie gets too scary, the viewer may want to fall back into the position of actual viewer to protect the ego from extreme fear. ‘It is just a movie’. The process of engaging with the idealized viewer, makes the actual viewer aware that he is a subject with the ability of engaging with the screen in his/her own way. So, rather than identifying with the protagonist onscreen, the viewer identifies with himself as an act of perception. A movie gives the option of going along with the inscribed viewer, and becoming someone who is possibly different from who one was. In this way, the movie has the ‘effect’ of making the viewer into a subject, a person-in-becoming. Rajadhyaksha says that in this way the movie-experience is similar to democracy, it ‘bestows rights’ on the viewer, in our case the right to be a viewer with an own, and possibly, different perspective.

16 The process is comparable with the current developments around web 2.0, for example the video site youtube.com. Beg able to put a video on a website that is available to everyone in the world with an internet-connection, makes one ‘inscribe’ in a category of someone who is possibly read by everyone, someone ‘famous’. This awareness will definitely have an impact on what a user will put on the net. Even though most films are hardly watched, there will still be viewers from parts of the world that would otherwise (with vcr, or through print media) never be reached. By making use of the Youtube.com interface, one cannot but become aware of one’s position in a global context and reflect on that position in a certain way.

17 According to Rajadhyaksha, this viewing-experience is specifically related to the Indian situation, which explains the resistance of Indian viewers to the Hollywood form of representation. Hollywood ‘realist’ cinema is based on the fact that the inscribed viewer and the actual viewer have to be one and the same. For understanding realism, it is important to be ‘real’ in front of the screen. Hollywood cinema’s narratives often make the viewer aware that it is ‘they’ who are watching. For understanding Indian movies often fragmented and ‘fantastic’ narratives, this is not so much the case.
“At this level, therefore, when the viewer purchases a ticket, enters the auditorium and ‘releases’ the film saying ‘I am here’ (‘I am present… I help it to be born’), what the cinema is also doing is to incarnate one of the most fundamental, even if ambiguous at times, rights of democracy.” (Idem: 283)

This adds depth to Althusser’s process of interpellation. Where the latter stresses the process of embodying viewers into a larger ideological framework, Rajadhyaksha theorizes how cinema at the same time makes the viewer become aware of himself as a subject, as someone-spoken-to and with the power to speak back. The fantasy of cinema makes the actual reality of the viewers (as being real people in real contexts) an issue.18 The interesting thing about this process is, that it has to escape the viewer in a sense, in order for it to become an area for new ‘horizons of belonging’.19 This means that a movie ‘works’, if the actual viewer can ‘become’ the idealized viewer, at least for some time. The process of belonging might lie less in a rational and conscious activity of the audience in relation to the texts of a film, and more in a relation it has with cinema itself. When entering a cinema hall, one enters a practice, that makes one play a role. The role of the one that the film is shot for, and the hall is built around. This role is a powerful role, because filmmakers know the consequences of an uninvolved audience for their financial results. And audiences know that filmmakers know. And filmmakers know that audiences know that.. etc.

This double (or double double) process of incorporating the subject and at the same time making the subject aware of its incorporation, is a very minute description of Hermes’ definition of cultural citizenship – as bonding/commitment and reflection on that bonding/commitment. With this as an explanation of the bonding power of cinema, I want to leave Rajadhyaksha’s fascinating combination of political and film theory, and take off in a different direction, in the direction of the experiences of the actual viewers.

18 It is worth noting that this idea about what happens in a cinema hall, strongly correlates with what viewers say about watching movies. It accounts for the escapist element of the movie-experience (to be in a ‘dreamworld’ for some time), but also for the immediate reaction of most viewers to relate the movie to reality as they know it. In that sense, it explains how the ‘ir-reality’ of movies have the capacity of making the reality of their lives come to the fore. Fantasy makes reality exist.

19 This is probably the reason why Nayar (2006) says that films should primarily be seen as entertainment, instead of carriers of ideology. (Nayar, 2006: 48-49) Cinema is more than a cognitive or emotional activity, it is a physical activity of entering into an institution that does an appeal to you as a viewer. An interesting question would therefore also be if people experience a different appeal in the cinema then at home, where the private confines of the house make someone feel a different appeal than sitting with strangers in a public space.
Besides finding themselves in an institutional push-and-pull of viewer-subjectivity, there is also a conscious activity of viewers on the content or quality of the idealized viewer. As Rajadhyaksha mentioned, actual viewers have the tendency to discuss the issue of 'who the movie is made for'. In addition we could say, that an important dimension from the perspective of cultural citizenship, is the fact that this idealized viewer is imagined by the actual viewers to have certain characteristics, certain abilities.

I want to call this dimension of the viewer the imagined viewer, since it is the imagination on all sides of the cinematic spectrum (producers, actors, viewers, etc.) that imagine the qualities of this viewer. And it is over these qualities that the different parts in the cinematic institution seem to be fighting. For whom should a movie be made? What should producers expect from their audiences, and vice versa? Should the viewer be imagined as Indian? As intelligent or impressionable? As rich or poor?

I'd like to flesh out the imagined viewer in order for it to become a more usable concept. For this dissertation, the focus will be on the imagined viewer of the actual viewer, the ones in front of the screen. Based on the previous theory and interviews, we could identify three varieties of the imagined viewer. They should be seen as happening in variable order, or even simultaneously.

1) When viewers are invited to inscribe themselves into an idealized viewer, the viewers will form an image of this idealized viewer being the general audience. This is the image viewers have of the general ‘who’ a movie is made for.

2) But since there is an immediate process of becoming conscious of oneself as possibly different, the viewer will imagine himself as a viewer with possibly different characteristics then the general audience.

3) Then the awareness of this process will probably also make the actual viewer imagine the viewer as it is imagined by the other side – the filmmakers, producers, etc. How do viewers think they are perceived by the people ‘behind’ the screen? This is therefore an imagination of an imagination.

These three typologies will be used as basis for the analysis of the interviews in chapter six.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual viewer</th>
<th>The real person sitting in front of the screen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Idealized viewer</td>
<td>The supposed viewer on which the cinema is based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inscribed viewer</td>
<td>The actual viewer ‘playing the role’ of the idealized viewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagined viewer</td>
<td>The qualities ascribed to the idealized viewer, by the actual viewer.</td>
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4.4. Back to cosmopolitanism

This process now gives an entry into analyzing cinema from the perspective of cosmopolitanism. With globalization, Hindi film and its audiences might have changed drastically. The interesting question now is, how this affects the way viewers imagine themselves and others, with respect to globalization.

If cinema, as described above, has the simultaneous power to make a person be part of an imagined viewer community and be apart from it as well, then this could definitely help to sustain the cosmopolitan attitude as defined in chapter two. Fixed viewer categories could be created and transgressed at the same time.

Moorti’s work on regional game shows in Tamil Nadu supports this suspicion. She claims that globalization has given rise to neither cultural imperialism, nor a conservative regional/local response. Instead, the format of the participative game show gives the audiences the ability to interact on the border of the global and the regional in new ways that are hard to pin down in binary categories. By using a mix of local and global stereotypes, the game shows are able to fashion what Moorti calls a ‘cosmopolitan Tamil identity’. Local and global at the same time. “By renegotiating the boundaries of the global and the regional, these programmes are able to hail the viewer simultaneously as a cosmopolitan and a vernacular subject.” (Moorti, 2004: 550)

Clearly, the question for the coming chapters should be: does Bollywood offer the same possibility?

In the next chapter the purpose is to find out how contemporary Hindi cinema has changed in ‘producing’ audiences. Has it opened up the possibility for diverse audiences, and for a respect of different audiences towards the ‘other audience’? Does it offer a global viewership that is not narrowed down by local constraints?

Secondly, it is necessary to investigate amongst viewers themselves how they imagine themselves and others as audiences. How do they feel spoken to? To whom do they think movies speak? Is there scope for plurality? Is there scope of respect for the difference of other audiences?
Scene from Rang de Basanti. Picture courtesy of planetguru.com
5. Analysis 1: Bollywood

Signs of changing horizons

‘Indianness is a cinematic notion. Cinema is the only artform that is informing us about ‘who we are’ in a communicable way’ (K. Hariharan, filmmaker/actor, at National Conference for Psychology and Cinema, Bangalore, February 2008)

“Increasingly, Hindi cinema is turning into a party of the rich, and the rest of India is invited as voyeurs.” (Deshpande, 2008: 192)

It is impossible to give a full overview of the history of Hindi cinema, let alone Indian cinema. A few people have tried to cover the historical width of the world’s largest film industry, which has inevitably lead to critique of the chosen timeframes and demarcations. Therefore this chapter will give a short overview of the changes, and then will focus on a few of the most recent changes in the Bollywood film industry. This we can only do by placing the film industry in relation to some large changes in the political economy of India in general, and the urban life in particular. In the light of the vision of cinematic belonging through the imagined viewer, as formulated in the previous chapter, the focus will be on the changes in the place and role of the viewer/spectator. But before getting into that, for the reader uninformed about Hindi cinema and Bollywood, I will present a small historical overview.

5.1. A very short history

The film medium was introduced in India in 1896 by an operator of the Lumiere brothers from Paris, by showing the famous ‘Cinematography’. In these early days film screenings were mainly an elite activity, since the film material was often of American import. It was not until 1912 that the first full length Indian movie was shown named Pundalik, and in1913 it was ‘the father of Indian film’, Dundiraj Govind (Dadasaheb) Phalke who made what is generally seen as the first Indian film, Raja Harischandra. Phalke was inspired by a screening of The Life of Christ, and based on that he wanted to make a similar film for the Indian audience. Raja Harischandra was a silent mythological movie, that was meant to reach a large indigenous audience. Phalke, part of the swadeshi movement, was a fighter for Indian independence from the British, and believed in self-sufficiency.
Since the early 1930s sound entered into the world of cinema. This marked the start of the ‘talkies’ era, referring to the biggest studio of those days, Bombay Talkies. The movies we still know of those days showed an interest in social issues like caste, class and division between men and women.

Hindi cinema since 1940 is often referred to as ‘the Golden Age’, the time in which Indian cinema really started booming. Big heroes like Nargis, Madhubala, Dilip Kapurk, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand are still remembered as timeless icons.

From 1947 to 1950 India was in a process of becoming independent, with as a major turning point the inauguration of the Constitution on January 26th, 1950. Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru started the process of the thorough modernization of India based on the ideology of socialist planning. Nationwide education programs, stimulation of national economic activities and the building of big construction like dams, and power plants were aimed at making India a strong and modern first world country of citizens. The movies of these days reflect the spirit of an India wanting to be a nation proud of its workers, and in a socialist manner, distrusting the corruptive power of capitalists. *Shree 420* (1955) is about a Charlie Chaplin-esque poor village man, who sets off to the big city to fulfill his dreams. There he realizes how the lust for money has changed the city into a domain of greedy and inhuman people. His nationalism is best represented through the classic lines of a hugely popular song in the movie: ‘*Mera joota hai Japani, yeh patloon Inglistani, sar pe lal topi Rusi, phir bhi dil hai Hindustani.*’ (My shoes are Japanese, These pants are from England, The red hat on my head is Russian, but still, my heart is Indian.)

Probably due to the influence of the western tendency to analyze movies from a psychoanalytic point of view, the Indian nation has often been symbolized in the mother figure in films. The mother that protects her sons who are so different. The ultimate nationalist portrayal of this should be by Nargis in *Mother India* (1957). She is shown as a woman with a strong pride in handwork on the field, and a strong feeling for communal unity. When her free spirited son Bhiju, the one she loves most, ends up being a disgrace to the village, she kills him out of respect for the women in the village.

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20 The role model of this planning was the Russian socialist model. Interestingly, the movies of these days found a wide audience in Russia. They are known for their specific anti-capitalist mood. The rich guys are the bad guys…
In order to cater for the extremely large audience that Indians comprised, movies took on the form that Hindi movies are famous for: the all-in spectacles, that include romance, family drama, action, comedy and not to forget the famous song and dance sequences. This formula-film could guarantee that any group had something to recognize and go for. This does not mean that every film was a success. The movies have always had to find a balance between convention and a little bit of innovation. For reasons not always known, a movie that violated the expectations of an audience would flop and run into huge financial losses.

In the 1970s India saw a period of political and economical difficulties. Nehru’s project of modernization was apparently not without failure, with extreme poverty, high unemployment, and a food crisis. Prime minister Indira Ghandi asked the president to declare a state of Emergency, in order to push through large repair-policies. Madhava Prasad says that India saw a fragmentation of national consensus. Cinematically this resulted in different filmic genres: developmentalist state realism, identification-oriented realism of middle class, aesthetic of mobilization. (Prasad, in: Dwyer & Patel, 2002) They were mostly movies about the hardship of living in a city, and this thematic is most famously characterized by superstar Amitabh Bachchan in his ‘angry young man’ archetype. Deewaar (1975) tells the story of two brothers, one a policeman, the other a lonely rebel against the corruption of the capitalists. The mostly romantic movies of the period before had turned into dark and violent cinema, that show individuals struggling with pent up anger on the one hand and the call of the civil/normal on the other. Bachchan inspired a whole range of new stars representing this Indian Robin Hood, like Mithun Chakraborty and Anil Kapoor.

By the end of the 80s, Hindi cinema was in a crisis. Ticket sales went down, there were mainly only men visiting the halls, and the state of the technologies was in bad shape. Besides, television had been introduced to the homes, so a large part of the middle and upper classes, who could afford one, stayed at home to have their entertainment served there.

In India’s political and economic history, the early nineties have been of great importance to the country’s situation and self-perception. The changes largely go under the name of The Reform, or The New Economic Policy. Under Prime minister Narasimha Rao and Finance minister Manmohan Singh (the current Prime minister), a policy of radical liberalization and privatization was pushed through from 1991 onwards. Enormous tax reductions were enforced and previously state-owned enterprises or off-limits family enterprises (like the film business) could enter into the world of private sector industries; there was the liberalization of
foreign direct investment and foreign portfolio investment; and many subsidies were cut down, mainly in agriculture. India opened its borders to the possibilities of a globalizing world economy.

Of course, the media landscape saw huge changes because of these reforms. The state-owned television network Doordarshan (DD) got competition with many commercial stations like Star and ZEETV. In the words of an informant: ‘the amount of television channels changed overnight from three to thirty’.

Another effect of the reform was an enormous increase in Indians going abroad for study, work and living. It is roughly estimated that between 15 and 40 million Indians are working in countries very different from their ‘motherland’, which gives new questions about identity and ‘Indianness’. This diaspora has therefore become a new market for the distribution of movies. Besides that, amongst the richer NRI’s there have been big sponsors for the film industry for example by funding a part of the production.

For the film industry the liberalization offered huge possibilities for funding by teaming up with a growing advertisement industry. Besides that, the new economic spirit of free market enterprise brings with it an ideal of entrepreneurship in the imagination of the Indian citizens. India sees an extreme growth in the middle-class society, a group of people with more to money to spend and more time to ‘be entertained’.

In the face of the growing influence of Hollywood cinema, Hindi cinema reinvents itself by employing the slightly mocking term Bollywood which appeared to be an extremely catchy identification in the world markets.

The movies of the nineties are clearly inspired by these new ‘cosmopolitan NRI’s’, the spirit of entrepreneurship, and the questions this poses to identity, values and tradition. The new hero of the Hindi movie is often a young and extremely rich NRI who has made it abroad, living a glamorous life of luxury and pleasure (not rarely surrounded by the white flesh of European girls). When faced with the pulls of tradition (marrying a girl chosen by parents) an identity conflict follows that leads him through a confrontation with his hidden or forgotten Indianness, and after lots of misery he finds himself purified of western influence, and back in the comforting arms of the (Hindu) family. The movies are mainly feel good celebrations of family life, even if they don’t deal with the whole NRI-issue. *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun?* (Who

am I to you, 1994), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Sometimes something happens, 1998) and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (Sometimes happiness, sometimes sadness, 2001) are the blockbusters that have impressed millions of viewers with this melodrama of the superrich. It is with the culmination of Hindi cinema into Bollywood that we will end the historical overview now. The most recent developments, roughly since the millennium, will be treated in paragraph 5.4.

5.2. A national cinema

Most research on Indian cinema has focused itself on the dominant Hindi cinema, and recently on the Hindi cinema called Bollywood. This is definitely due to the fact that Hindi cinema, like it’s language in the nation, has been dominant within Indian cinema. About a third of all the movies was produced in Mumbai.

After Independence, Hindi was pronounced the national language of India. Therefore, Hindi cinema could perfectly figure as a national cinema, for instigating national feelings and loyalty.

It is not a surprise then, that Hindi cinema has mostly been analyzed as a national cinema, functioning as a purveyor of national consciousness, or a keeper of national unity. Perhaps it could possibly do so perfectly per definition, since the medium was aimed at large groups of people, always a highly diverse audience. For finding this groups approval it was necessary to cater to differences, but at the same time create a unity, which is often naturally that of the Indian nation.

Jyotika Virdi (2003) has demonstrated perfectly how the narratives of movies perform this function, by subsuming fractions and tensions of the country under one narrative whole. “Popular Hindi films locate these fractures within the nation by projecting a national edifice and the rumblings against it. The nation not only subsumes personal identities but also collectivities identified by class, gender, sexuality, community and caste, although social movements centered around these threaten the hierarchies (feudal, capitalist, and patriarchal) maintained by the nation state. Hindi films explore the tensions these collectivities generate, even openly articulate their conflicts within the nation; they offer a glimmer of change – and then contain it.” (Virdi, 2003: 206)

It has often been demonstrated in film analyses how this containment-effect, or subsumption of differences, has been carried out. The figure of the western, white woman in Hindi cinema forms a great example. Many movies have one of those ‘www’s’ hovering around the hero
and heroine, often representing a danger, a threat. Geetanjali Gangoli has shown how the representation of this white woman has changed over time, but always kept its function of preserving that what is Indian. In the 60s and early 70s the white woman was a vamp, showing female agency and sexual freedom. She was most prominently portrayed as a dancer in a stripclub, who tries to win over the hero’s love. She portrayed sexual agency; something generally not concerned praiseworthy for an Indian woman. If the attraction between the two was serious, than one of them always had to be punished to re-establish the narrative – and moral – order. Sometimes a mother would punish her hero-son, or the vamp would die in a painful accident. The hero would learn his lesson, and the moral framework was restored. Over time, the white woman was more and more presented as a sort of heroine as well, although never without losing her status of morally less valuable protagonist. Until in the 90s, when Gangoli says that due to changing norms within India the western woman is represented by the Indian heroine herself. She embodies the free spirit and ‘wildness’ that is associated with a western woman, often picked up by living in the West, but along the movie she has to re-learn what it takes to be a proper Indian woman/wife. It is now the Indian girls that are allowed to party and get drunk, but not without making big mistakes that will make them sorry for their ‘mistake’. In Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, during the first half of the movie we meet a ‘westernised’ girl in love with the hero. She wears a t-shirt, jeans and plays basketball; a tomboyish type. The hero sees her just as a friend, a playmate, and doesn’t recognize her burning desire. It is only in the second half, where she undergoes a transformation into an obedient and servant motherly type, wearing a saree, not being able to win the basketball game anymore, that the hero discovers his own love for her. The independent woman makes way for a more traditional one, but not without driving in the hero’s big jeep to his luxurious villa. Yes, the movies show changing morals for Indian women, but in the words of Gangoli: “…the terms of reference continue to be set by the Indian/Hindu male. The subjectivity of the Anglo-Indian woman appears to be irrelevant. (...) In more recent films, the globalised Indian remains Hindu, and the ideal woman combines the sensuality of the vamp that has always been seen as a western characteristic with the chastity of the wife figure.” (Gangoli, 2001: 157)

It is clear how a red line through Hindi popular cinemas history has been a preservation of something Indian. Of course, immediately this makes us aware of the precariousness

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22 Asha Kasbekar (2001) has interestingly noted how this provides people to enjoy these ‘hidden pleasure’ without having to feel guilty, since the erotic act was necessary for the ‘greater good’.

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definition of this Indianness. For, what is Indian? It can be argued that Hindi cinema has especially since the 90s shown a celebration of Indianness that is similar to a specific North-Indian, Punjabi, Hindu culture. It shows in the ceremonies that are shown, the dialect that is used, the locations, etc. This has lead to a popularization of certain ‘Punjabi’ practices in places abroad (The 1994 blockbuster *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* has popularized the practice of hiding the *jooti*, the shoes of the groom somewhere during the three day wedding ceremony.). But there has always been a resistance to what is called the invasion of the culture from the north, especially in the southern states.

Notwithstanding this resistance, which is undoubtedly an extremely important factor when discussing national identity, a reasonable amount of Hindi blockbusters have made their way into far corners of the nation.

**5.3. The fight over the nation**

Interestingly however, the state has always been in dubious spirits towards the power of popular cinema to create the Indian citizen. Especially Nehru wasn’t much of a believer in the power of commercial cinema, and therefore in 1980, the state set up the National Film Development Corporation which was mainly aimed at promoting and developing *good cinema*. This good cinema was based upon exemplary icons such as Satyajit Ray, who made an enlightened art cinema that catered to individual rationality and freedom of thought. This, it was believed, was the basis of a good citizenship. Popular cinema from that perspective couldn’t be much more than catering to regional and traditional sentiments. On the other hand, the state representatives have realized the powerful reach of the medium, and tried using it for example by playing the national anthem and showing the flag before the start of every movie.

But overall, popular Hindi cinema has been seen by representatives of the state as an escapist form of entertainment, that has to be monitored carefully not to disrupt the spirits of the people. The Central Board of Film Certification (the ‘Censor Board’) was set up to provide films in advance with a rating and certificate. Often this doesn’t go without major cuts and hassle between Board and filmmakers.

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23 At the Conference on Cinema and Psychology in Bangalore, February 2008, filmmaker Hariharan explained how he experiences the Censor Board as still being ruled by the colonial mindset, since it is this mindset which perceives cinema as a dangerous force that corrupts the citizens mind with cheap sentiment.
India and Shah Rukh Khan about his alleged bad influence on youth because of his habit of smoking in public, is one more example of a government trying to keep its grip.24

In spite of the fact that Hindi cinema was back on the map in the nineties, nationally and globally, for many analysts, Bollywood means a downfall in quality. By catering to so many with a smooth masala, it is said to compromise on interesting topics that could mean something for society. A main complaint is the fact that the movies simplify every aspect of Indian culture into a more vulgar version of it. The debates could largely be summarized as revolving around the question if the movies still portray Indian culture or not.

“When the Nargis [name of protagonist, MB] of Mother India shot down her beloved but errant son to protect another woman and the collective honour of the village, she acted as the custodian of dharma and paid an emotional price for it. She enjoyed emotional and psychological autonomy. But Mother India’s celluloid daughters have been robbed precisely of this autonomy in the name of tradition attired in a seductively modern grab.” (Mailthili Rao, 2003: 114)

Nevertheless, even the recent movies can to be seen as an attempt to create unity where there is growing confusion and diversity. In that sense they are still nationalist, and not different from before. The fight is between the different opponents is rather about what counts as Indian and what not. And what can content is suitable for an Indian and which not? Like the earlier mentioned Censor Board, which believes in an impressionable and slightly dumb audience, a lot of theory also assumes that the decadence of Bollywood would somehow be bad influence for the people.

These discussions over content and viewers are extremely important in the process of belonging, since they are directly discussions about identity politics. But the question is, if cinema has the capacity at all to create the Indian citizen, as the supporters of good cinema believe.

Lawrence Liang (2003) has demonstrated that, when moving away from an analysis of film as text (as discussed in the previous chapter), but by looking more at cinema as a practice, we see other dynamics at play. He shows that cinema is, just as much as a project of nation-building, also a project of modernization. And in a country as plural as India, this project is bound to fail.

He argues that besides moving away from just studying film as text, which are shown in particular spaces, but analyze it as a practice with spatial dimensions, it is more true to today’s form of cinema which is highly networked and diverse and cannot be confined to its images on screen anymore.

‘There can, arguably, be no distinct account of cinema or cinematic spaces, which is not at the same time an account of the history of the city, of the experiences of modernity and of the conflicts that define the very occupation of these spaces. (...) The movement from an examination of cinematic spaces to a larger idea of cinematic practices may entail a shift into a larger spatial history, one that foregrounds the importance of space in relation to the larger histories of the state and the public sphere. A history of spectatorship for instance does not merely provide us with a way of engaging with what people see, and how people see, but also with stories of crowds, of their interaction with each other, with the space in which the film was screened and how this may have bearing on their interaction with the screen.’ (Liang, 2005: 368)

Studied in this way, cinema most certainly is a story of belonging. Cinema as a practice is a zone where larger power differences in society are fought over. Liang claims that it is not just a reflection of these bigger powers, but it has its own ways of fighting these battles. Especially since the Emergency in the 70s, which marked the start of a period of critiquing the big Nehruvian project of building the modern nation. In this project it was necessary that the people of India started seeing themselves as free individuals, rather than people marked by religion, caste, gender, etc. People had to be disincorporated of their older selves, and incorporated into a new selves, the citizens of civil society. However, according to Liang and many others, this citizenship was clearly not available to everyone. The institutions that make up a modern India, the law apparatus, the democratic bureaucracy, were especially accessible for English speaking, middle-class, upper-caste, Hindu males. The project of disincorporation immediately creates a discursive other, the illegal, non-citizen who refuses to ‘shed its social excess’.

‘Thus, while citizenship and modernity are normatively constructed as highly desirable, and the grand project wills everyone into a state of modernity, there arises from the start a clear lack or inability for the bulk of the population to occupy this space. So what happens when people fall off these official maps and plans? How do they find their way back into official memory and create for themselves avenues of participation. I would suggest there lies a great deal of work to be done on engaging with how people create vibrant spaces outside of official
plans through which they participate, and more often than not these spaces are marked by their high degree of illegality. (373)

It is cinema which has offered one of these vibrant spaces where people can find a way of participating. It is these spaces that Chatterjee calls political society as opposed to the civil society of the elite-citizen.

But Liang follows, that this political society is something that happens mainly through the activities off-screen, in the theatre, on the street. Necessarily, these activities have to be of a semi-legal nature, since a legal way of being a film-spectator would not accord with the codes laid out by law. People can make their claim of existence by using the available structures in a creative way.

In other words, by trying to create the modern citizen-viewer, there was also the rise of non-modern, non-citizen. Paradoxically, we could say that it is exactly this non-citizen, that the government is always trying to ‘protect’ from moral degradation. But it might be exactly their status as second-class Indian that explains the popularity of movies that are without ‘taste’ and without ‘quality’. It is this kind of cinema that offers the non-citizen a space to participate in public.

Besides, going back to the entry point of film narratives, it must be noted that Hindi cinema has definitely put the discussion of Indianness on a public/popular agenda. We can say that however its formulation, people have become aware of being a person that is Indian. Jyotika Virdi says that this is a very important factor. Although the nation is constantly secured in movies, they do question the nature of this nation. “Given any narrative’s demand for conflict, Hindi films use this effectively to challenge and reveal problems within the hegemonic ideal of nation. And although the nation is vigorously reinstated through forceful rhetoric, the films certainly question, or at least spell out, its precarious nature.” (Virdi, 2003: 211)

This power of interrogating the status quo must have become especially crucial in recent times, when globalization has speed up and increased the forces interrogating the solidness of the nation. Therefore it is necessary to zoom in on the most recent changes now, and investigate how this has affected the public space that is offered to the film viewer.

5.4. Recent changes in the industry: serious business
The last decade of Hindi cinema is a period that is still quite under-examined. Most analyses are still based on the bollywood as we know it, the nineties masala. The before described changes in the film industry haven’t slowed down in the last years. The Indian economy is
still growing, and the country is further showing its face in the international scene. There is an increasing investment of foreign capital on the one hand, and Indian companies on the other become more and more important in the international field. The most well-known example being the software, IT and ITE-services from cities as Bangalore, Hyderabad and recently also Chennai.

Filmed entertainment

The film industry has also kept re-inventing itself as a proper industry. In 1998, the film industry was finally officially awarded the industry status, under the heading of Entertainment and Media Industry (EMI). An insightful view on the changes on the way in this industry is given by a report made in collaboration by FRAMES (The chambers of commerce department for EMI) and PriceWaterhouse Coopers. The report of 2006 gives an impression of the current status of the industry, and the trends that are embarked upon in order to increase the profits of the companies involved. The report shows an industry that is literally booming, in an already booming Indian economy. According to this report, in the past media was offered in a linear way to the consumer, in the form of mass media. Presently the media is offered ‘on demand’, which produces a segmented market and niche markets. The two major trends for the future are convergence and lifestyle media. “The term convergence describes two trends: the ability of different network platforms (broadcast, satellite, cable, telecommunications) to carry similar kinds of services; and the merging of consumer devices such as telephones, televisions, or PCs.” (FICCI & PWC, 2006: 11)

The consumer is seen as the center of a network, who is well-informed about products and services and has very specific wishes. He wants to be part of the marketplace himself, not just a user. Consuming is seen as a ‘personalized media experience within a social context.’ (Idem: 8)

What does this mean for popular cinema? About the film sector the report says the following: “The Indian Filmed Entertainment industry is projected to grow from the present size of Rs. 84 billion to Rs. 175 billion by 2011, implying a 16 percent cumulative annual growth over the next five years. Indians love to watch movies. Advancements in technology are helping the Indian film industry in all the spheres – film production, film exhibition and marketing. The industry is getting increasingly corporatized. Several film production, distribution and exhibition companies are coming out with initiatives to set up more digital cinema halls in the country are already underway. This will not only improve the quality of prints and thereby
make film viewing a more pleasurable experience, but also reduce piracy of prints. More theatres across the country are getting upgraded to multiplexes.” (FICCI & PWC, 2006: 24)

This *multiplex* is a typical manifestation of the way *filmed entertainment* is being presented these days. In the year before ‘industry status’ the multiplex was introduced. It consists of multiple halls, located in a big shopping mall where restaurants, shops and entertainment comes together. Watching movies in this way has become part of a total-pack of entertainment, targeted at families who spend a day at the mall to shop, eat and enjoy themselves. The huge crowds on Sundays in any of the multiplexes in Bangalore are a clear example of this. Multiplexes are places where people come to spend their free time.

Aparna Sharma (2003) explains how besides this being a symptom of a liberalized economy, where more activities are getting commercialized, it has also created an opportunity for off-beat and art cinema to be shown for a bigger audience. Whereas single hall cinemas would only go for safe-bets, and show blockbuster Hindi movies, the multiplex can spread its risks, and show less popular movies in small halls. However, Sharma stresses how the multiplex has mostly been a phenomenon in favour of the middle and upper classes, with tickets costing at least 100 rupees, against 30 or 40, in single hall cinemas.

Another change is, that because of convergence, more and more traditionally separated businesses are networking and getting together. Lifestyle media means, that in the end all media come together at the central point, the consumer. Just to give some examples, if someone uses a mobile phone that has video-options, there are possibilities for film producers to tie up with phone providers and promote their latest films. At the same time, it is possible for the producers of technological devices to showcase their latest products in movies. Some of the current trends are mobile television or internet television. (FICCI & PWC, 2006: 12)

Besides that, a growing number of companies are themselves trying their hand in other products and services. News channels set up entertainment channels, television companies tie up with radio stations or games software producers, and the Times of India Group got into filmed entertainment in 2006, producing an English film in 2006.

**Foreign players**

Of course, the corporatization of the film industry offers tremendous possibilities for investors abroad. Hollywood movies have always had their share in the Indian (urban) theatres, catering a reasonable audience. It is estimated, in 2005, 5 percent of the tickets sold was for a
Hollywood movie. But since some time, Hollywood studios like Sony Entertainment, Disney, Warner Bros and Paramount are teaming up with Indian directors and production houses to get a share of the profit that is hidden in the huge audiences of India, by co-producing movies in Hindi. Some new Hindi film blockbusters are almost as much Hollywood as they are Bollywood. *Chandni Chowk to China* (2009) was presented as the first Bollywood Kung-fu movie, entirely produced by Warner Bros. And vice versa there are interests as well, as some Indian production houses are very keen on going global. Media-tycoon Anil Ambani’s company Reliance Big Entertainment is currently announcing deals with actors such as Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Jim Carrey, for launching films abroad. Hollywood company Dreamworks struck a deal with Disney, stating together they will distribute movies produced by Dreamworks and Reliance.

It is often mentioned however, that it is still difficult for these foreign companies to cater to the ‘local’ audiences. The film cultures are considered to be so different, that few people actually believe Hollywood is able to take over Bollywood. We have to see how this will work out, but it is clear that these new international players are there to stay. Hollywood studios still have a lot of money and knowledge to offer, which combined with the enormous crowd of film viewers in India will keep offering new tie-ups and inventive productions.

Illustration: convergence of the industry, convergence of culture?

Reebok sponsored the movie *Dhan Dhana Dhan Goal* (2007). In the film the brand is clearly visible in many scenes, and the Reebok stores in cities show big posters of the movie. One radio-commercial said: ‘Do you want the same cool shoes as the people in Goal? Go to your Reebok-store now!’ An online newspaper article says: ‘Reebok, the world’s leading sportswear brand, today unveiled their Goal Collection, showcased in the soccer based movie Goal by John, Bipasha and other stars. The new range consists of soccer apparel, footwear and accessories. The tie up with Goal is an attempt to support an upcoming sport and be the first mover in what will snowball into the big next trend: love for soccer and a sports inspired lifestyle. Targeted at the youth, Reebok's Goal collection is a fusion of sports and lifestyle and is targeted at a growing, globally sports & fashion conscious Indian market that is ready to experiment with style, concepts and ethos in what they wear and how they look.’ And even the writer of the article seems to have been sponsored by Reebok, which is not altogether surprising, since newspapers fall under the same media industry: ‘In Goal, customers will get to see Reebok's new range of apparel and sports shoes sported by the star cast that would be launched in November along with the movie. The

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key highlight of the Reebok’s Goal Collection is the Goal trainer, a high performance yet stylized shoe which can be worn by anyone practicing soccer or anyone who simply loves to wear a sporty look. (...) The Goal footwear starts at approximately Rs 3400 and the Goal apparel is available from Rs. 999 onwards at all Reebok flagship stores across India. Reebok brings the onscreen drama of the movie Goal closer and makes the feel of the game much more real through the RBK Goal collection - worn throughout the movie by John, Arshad, Boman and Bipasha.’ Now, this example is a very interesting one. Except for being about the convergence trend, it is also an example of one way globalization is influencing the themes chosen. It is interesting that in India, no doubt a country dominated by cricket as the favorite sports (although hockey is officially the national game), a movie is made that deals with the passion for soccer in the suburbs of London Southall. Clearly, this has to do with the fact that there is a huge audience for Bollywood in that part of London. But the fact that it was launched widely in the Indian metropoles, surrounded by a chain of commercial link-ups, makes one wonder about the motivations. According to the filmmakers of the bollywood industry, there must be a soccer minded market out there. But, as good marketers know, good marketing is also about creating a market. Creating a buzz around the product in order for people to start wanting it. Is Goal an attempt to try and sell soccer, the multibillion dollar industry of the West (Europe in particular)? Are we witnessing a clear-cut case of cultural imperialism? Maybe. But if that is the case, which culture is imperializing which other one then?

Movies like Goal are growingly co-productions between Indian companies and British or American ones. For a good answer to these questions, an enquiry into the decision making and cooperation on the level of production houses would be interesting then. Who decided it would be about soccer? Was it a compromise? Was it a request from Britain? Whatever the answers to these questions, the hypotheses that it is simply Western culture trying to get into the minds of Indian youth is almost surely too simplistic. For if so many Indian corporates are involved in producing these movies, then the soccer in Goal can not be easily seen as British or Western culture.

A changing public sphere

The described processes in the media and film industry, can be compared with the mediatisation situation that Elsaesser (2000) claims we have entered today. With all the convergence, the tie-ups between industries, and a greater role for the ‘media-user’/consumer, it seems as if the industry has shifted from a more hierarchal way of arranging into a more flat or networked system. Elsaesser explains how, because of the synergies that are happening, today’s media industry teams up to create experiences (in Dutch: belevenissen, ervaringen).

In a media experience, where the focus of film moves away from the actual film, and to the more physical ‘going to the theatre in the city’, where the film, the commercials, the food, the gadgets, the music, etc. comes together and forms a package of consumed experiences. The blockbuster is therefore today’s form of cinema.

Besides that, he explains another process in today’s television and media culture, which he summarizes with “the tail wags its dog, and the dog seems to like it.” (Elsaesser, 2000: 194) It means that today the audiences are fairly media-educated; they are well aware of the techniques television and commercials in particular are using to seduce the viewer. That is why self-irony is the new style, which forms a shield against critique of the viewer. By letting

28 It is not difficult to see the actuality of this experience-culture. Restaurants, theme parks, shopping centers, and even non-commercial organizations frequently use the word experience to attract new consumers/participants.
the product or brand make fun of itself, the viewer no longer has to do it and the latter can even develop positive emotions to the brand again. Another way of ‘catching’ the viewer today for commercials, is by making small stories or situations that are hardly related to the product/service or its qualities. They make the viewers guess what it is all about, and if you do, Elsaesser says it makes you feel smart, and right then, you ‘are hooked’. And if you don’t get it, you can still like the style or the image that was created just for the sake of that style or image.

In other words, today’s media creates an irony that increases the necessity of involvement of the viewer. This involvement is seen everywhere nowadays, perhaps especially in the west, but in urban India this is not much less. Today’s consumption is especially targeted at ‘create your own’, and Do It Yourself.

For Elsaesser, this is strongly related to a notion of the public sphere. The media are everywhere in the urban landscape. That stresses its paradox, they are very public, but at the same time anonymous. We never know who is really behind something we see.

The public space, itself an imagined space, is becoming imagined through the media. That public space is a paradoxical space, where anonymity and publicity are two parts of the same coin. It makes people feel part of it, but at the same time in a disconnected way.

Elsaesser mainly writes about Hollywood and its dominance in European cinemas. But, since Bollywood is working on becoming a professional global film industry, his analysis definitely points out tendencies happening currently in India. There are an increasing number of tie-ups between different players, different industries. The viewer is seen as an integral part of that mediated network, whose participation can be put to use in different ways. But where Elsaesser says that Hollywood is therefore coming ‘to the street’ I would say in India it is different. Whereas Bollywood has always been on the street in one sense (with posters everywhere, televisions and VCR’s in every tea-stall and bus, etc.) it looks more like it is now, at least partially, moving from the street and into the multiplex. So the ones who have access to that new mediated public sphere, are the ones who are able to cross the security checks in front of the shopping mall, and have the money to buy a 150 rupee ticket in the weekend. The new participative, experienced, network-mediated public sphere is especially accessible for people who speak the language of that sphere.
5.5. Recent changes in the movies.

The previous description of changes in the film industry (as part of the media and entertainment industry) forms the background of changes in movies themselves. But most studies have used films till around 2000 as their material. It would be interesting to see if the developments in the industry also had their reflection on the kind of movies being made. If this is true, it might have important consequences for cosmopolitanism, since globalization is such an important factor in explaining these developments.

Besides a further *Bollywoodisation* of the films in the last years, due to the convergence of the media landscape, we can also observe the space that is made for more diversity of films coming out. Because of the financial space there has been to experiment, producers have started to make movies for specific target audiences. A growing amount of cooperations between production houses in India and other countries (Hollywood, Britain), have resulted in specific cinema for the diasporic audiences, but also for non-Indians. The current swooping popularity of Hollywood production *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009), shot entirely in India with Indian actors, is an example of the appeal that ‘Bollywood’ might have for complete new audiences like the Dutch art-movie lover.

Another very interesting development is called *transnational cinema*, in this case movies that have been shot by Indians having lived abroad for years already. Directors like Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta make movies without the song and dance sequences, and that often touch upon social issues like homosexuality (*Fire*, 1996; *Bombay Boys*, 1998; *Bend it Like Beckham*, 2002) or child abuse (*Monsoon Wedding*, 2001). The movies are set in multicultural settings and deal specifically with identity issues related to not having a rootedness in a homeland.

Sreela Sarkar claims that *Monsoon Wedding* is an example of a movie that, on the flow of globalization and ‘diasporatic’ audiences, changes fixed categories into new hybridities. Class differences are confused, and “the film attempts to disrupt categories of nation.” (Sarkar, 2008)

The interesting thing about this transnational movie is that it is a sort of genre that finds reasonably good following in India, but especially in other countries among non-Indians. Now, the Hindi film has always had a following in other parts of the world like Russia and Africa. But unlike in those movies, the transnational film explicitly addresses the complexity of nation and identity in its narrative. Instead of presenting nation and identity silently as natural and given, these movies specifically bring forward the problematic nature of these categories. (Desai, 2004/2006)
The urban youth film

When speaking with youngsters living in the metropolitan Bangalore about their favorite films, it is also not what is considered as typically Bollywood that stands on these lists. The films mentioned are especially movies like *Dil Chahta Hai* (What the heart wants, 2001), *Rang de Basanti* (Paint it saffron, 2006) and *Life in a Metro* (2007). A few characteristics about these movies need to be mentioned. The meanings these movies hold for the youth will be examined in the following chapter.

These movies can be seen as a follow-up but also a deviation from what we have described as the 90s bollywood blockbuster. A follow-up in the sense that, importantly, the protagonists of the movies are mostly the youth, still going to college or just starting a professional career. But unlike many movies of the 90s, the relationship between the youth and their parents is not so much a topic. If it is, then it is mostly shown in the sense that parents can be either supporting or restrictive for the choices of the youth. The sacrifice that youth give for parents, so famously shown by Shah Rukh Khan in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and *K3G*, is strikingly absent in these movies. The youth are becoming more an authority for themselves instead of subjected to parents. In *Rang de Basanti* (*RDB*), one of the protagonists finds out that his father has played a significant role in an army conspiracy, which lead to the death of jet fighter pilots. Instead of being loyal to his parents, he decides to testify against him, which leads to a break in the relationship and a loss of trust. But it is in the circle of friends that he finds his bonding again. Admitted, RDB has mainly been so extremely popular because of its perceived patriotism. This movie by Rakesh Omprakash Mehra deals mainly about a group of uninvolved youth who, in a video project about historical Indian patriotic heroes, find back their commitment to the Indian nation and ultimately decide to tackle corruption and injustice by violently taking justice in their own hands. Dilip (2008) has analyzed extensively how the movie had an aftereffect that enhanced the public and political participation of large groups of youth. There were massive online discussions, and youth went for protest rallies to voice their anger about two murder cases of youth. She concludes by stating that “Rang de Basanti has helped revitalize citizenship among the youth and brought about an expansion of the public sphere in India.” (Dilip, 2008: ?) Dilip might overstate the causality here, by noting a direct effect between the film and the activities of the youth in the public sphere. But the massive appeal to the youth’s imagination cannot be ignored.

It needs to be highlighted that these patriotic sentiments were mainly aimed at young people, who need to fight the injustices within India. So it is the young that still have feelings of
justice, who need to fight the old and corrupted. Besides, the movie strongly portrays a
conflict and the resolution between people of different religions. It is their being young and
committed to fighting for a common cause, an India free of corruption, that binds the different
faiths as one.

Some Diversity
Another quality is a growth in the diversity of identities that is explored. Life in a Metro is a
mozaïque-like film, which follows the lives of six young city dwellers struggling with
maintaining a meaningful relationship. In a similar fashion, Mumbai Meri Jaan (Mumbai my
life, 2008) shows five different people coping in their own way with the psychological impact
of the terrorist attack on the train. It is shown in a way that reminds of the Hollywood film
Crash (2004), where different life stories are uninvolved until one incident binds them. It is
pastiche like movies as these that revolve around the idea of people living alongside one
another, full of stereotypical images about each other, until they are accidentally forced to
meet and redefine these images (or not). Mumbai Meri Jaan ends dramatically with a scene of
city dwellers, unknown to each other, forming a circle of hands showing how the idea of a
city, being a Mumbai-ite, can form an identity that overcomes differences of religion, etc.
Dil Chahta Hai is loved by many youths for its exuberant portrayal of friendship. It shows
again three different lives of friends, who are doing nothing but enjoying their friendship,
fighting over it, and re-uniting. All this while exploring the meaning of romantic love. An
important storyline is formed by the character of Siddharth, who falls in love with an older,
slightly alcoholic woman.

All in all, the narrative form of these films show a diversity of characters by not stressing
specifically on a single protagonist. Besides, there is the exploration of diversity of lifestyles,
expressed for example in different ways of being in a relationship, different religions, or
different ways of paying ‘respect’ to ones city. The narrative unity in these movies is often
formed by the fact that they are living in one and the same city. It is the ‘having to live
together’ which binds the differences. And it is friendship that forms the moral glue to hold
the people together.

Media awareness
Another striking feature of (most of) these films, is the central attention that media get in
these movies. It is especially the role these media play in the public imagination, the
manipulation of facts, that is a popular theme.
In RDB the rebellious youth take charge of a radio broadcasting station, to explain ‘the public’ why it was them killing the politician. They violently take over the radio to tell ‘a different truth’. In *Life in a Metro* and *Mumbai Meri Jaan* a few of the protagonists are journalists or working in the television industry. Especially the latter movie revolves around the way people are making and experiencing the ‘media-nized’ version of the train-attack. The film starts with original footage of Nehru’s Independence Speech on August 14th 1947, where he talks about an India that arises from the dark. The mediated darkness that follows in the movie, clearly makes it a film that questions the nature of the nation, and the role media play in the creation of that ‘nature’.

Badhur Bandarkars film *Page 3* (2005) is entirely about the people one can see daily on the third page of newspapers (the ‘gossip page’), and the movies tries to show a dark side of the glamorous in show business.

*The global audiences*

In the new mediated public sphere, the ‘global’ plays an significant role. Since the developments are happening cross-nationally, this public sphere has gotten a ‘global color’.

The films that are made today reflect this ‘global color’ in many different ways. About the Bollywood blockbusters from the 90s it is often said that they have catered an Indianized version of globalization, especially for the new NRI audiences. The logic behind this, is that the new wealthy audiences in the West crave for experiencing their motherland, and the traditions they have difficulty practicing in their new homes. Cinema is one of the best ways of satisfying these desires. Many films of the 90s revolve around the lives of NRI’s (often extremely rich entrepreneurs in the USA or in Britain) struggling in some way to keep up their Indian traditions. Because of a growing number of NRI’s as spectators, fetishes are created about their homeland, with great nostalgia for an imagined home that is governed by familiar and secure family ties and ritual observances that emphasize as well as enforce those ties. A favorite problem is that of the westernized daughter or son not wanting to get into an engaged marriage with a partner from India. The narrative resolution of these conflicts strongly tends to be in the favor of the ‘tradition’ that is portrayed. Few analysts disagree with the observation that it is an upper-class, upper-caste Hindu version of Indian culture that is being glorified in these films.

In a study about the heroes of these movies, Deshpande (2005) observes that the new hero is a *consumable hero*: he tends to be rich, upper-class, Punjabi and conformist in his social values, which was not so earlier. Deshpande argues that this is because Hindi cinema is growingly
financed by the rich investors, and less by the direct sales of tickets. Therefore, the movies reflect these investments. “It is only fitting, then, that this new, consumable hero wears Gap shirts and Nike sneakers, and when he dances, it is in front of McDonald's outlets in white man's land, or Hollywood studios, or swanky trains, and has white girls – not Indian peasants – dancing with him.” (Deshpande, 2005: 197)

Deshpande has another observation that needs to be mentioned here. The new hero of Bollywood is generally someone without a past and thus without a memory. Whereas many films before invested a large part of the story in historical explanations of the characters, the new heroes seem to only live in the now. The heroes no longer have something to be angry about. “Forget about being enraged by social inequalities, they do not even runaway with their beloveds in the face of parental opposition. On the contrary, like the hero in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, they celebrate their conformism as valour. But more striking still is the fact that they do not have childhoods any longer.” (Idem: 202)

The film create a world that is non-political and knows no class or caste issues. There are only family issues, that can be solved within the loving arms of tradition and God. In this way, the possible influences of cultures and constraints of different economical and political contexts are taken out of the question, and what remains is an image of tradition that lives on its own. Wherever you are.

There are very few movies that address the more political issues or problems of identity that arise out of living in a globalized world, without resolving it in a nationalist or culturalist manner. Perhaps in the more offbeat cinema, of which we have described a few in the previous paragraphs, movies like Monsoon Wedding dare to treat issues in a non-Hindustani-glorifying manner.

The question remains if this is a problem. Since there is always the audience that has to make up his or her mind about the films. As in the earlier mentioned study by Verstappen claims, the Dutch Surinamese youth watching these nineties Bollywood movies are not too much interested in the question of Indian or Hindu identity. They are just happy to see family situations that resemble theirs. But this might be explained by the fact that all these Surinamese youth were born and raised in The Netherlands, and have no connection whatsoever with India, except perhaps from stories about (great)grandparents. It might be different for youth in India who are confronted with rapid globalization and cultural change in their environment.
Vamsee Juluri shows in his fascinating study *Becoming a global audience; longing and belonging in Indian music television* (2003) how the enormous changes in the media industry have been perceived by the audience, focusing on music television. Although specifically about Music Television, his study is very applicable to cinema as well, since television and cinema in India are very closely related.

He shows how the coming of international television channels like MTV, cannot be seen as imperialism of western images and sounds, but as a very specific Indian way of adopting to this globalization. But, there is a problem in this adaptation.

Juluri says there has been a fundamental change in the way the audience is perceived by producers, since the times of liberalization in 1991. “Doordarshans audience consisted of citizen viewers (in need of modernization and some firm instruction on the merits of the ruling party), the post-liberalization television audience is being imagined as consisting of *five paise* consumers.” (Juluri, 2003: 28) The battle over attracting the attention of the viewer-as-consumer had started. Music television played an important role in this.

The main battle between Zee and DD, was fought with countdown music programs, mostly film songs. These were cheap programs to produce, and therefore a safe bet in a somewhat uncertain and undifferentiated but attractively large mass audience.

Film producers had started using the music as one of the main sources of income for their movies. Nowadays, the music is released a few weeks before the movie, sometimes even when the shooting is still happening. Music producers started also producing movies, for the sake of selling the songs. The movies would include a mega song, or item song, that has to be spectacular, sometimes costing fifty percent of the films budget. Being successful with the music, increased the chances of returning the investments, which is very difficult with box-office alone.  

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29 Doordarshan (DD) is the national television channel, and was the most important one till around 1991. Then it had to start competing with many commercial others. The same counted for the national radio broadcasting company, All India Radio. The term *five paise* stands for how much a viewer is worth if redefined in economic terms.

30 Juluri sees a change in the style of the movie songs because of this, in the sense that songs are shot in a way that makes them perfectly suitable for transportation to music television. In contrast, in older movies, songs used to be more integrated within the movie, which made it hard to choose the point where the song starts and where it ends. Also, the video material was more difficult to understand, without the context of the film. Nowadays, songs are often a style-break with the rest of the movie, for example in *Goal* (2007) or *Aaja Naachle* (2007). During the National Conference on Psychology and Cinema 2008 in Bangalore, dancer and psychoanalytic Shuma Basak said about the latter movie that the songs didn’t serve a poetic purpose anymore, showing something on a deeper level about the psychology of the characters. Whereas in the classic *Pakeezah* (1972), the songs and dances were integrated in the narrative, portraying the unexpressed emotions of love, which were not otherwise narrated in the text of the movie. Without the songs the story would stay much more superficial, whereas nowadays they are mere ‘breaks’ in the movie for entertainment.
Along with the increased tie-up between film music and television, Juluri observes that the shape and format of these programs is based on the audience as part of the ‘production’. It is the ‘voice’ of the audience that determines which songs are ranked highest every week. In this way, television creates an ‘audiencehood’, a feeling of belonging to a group of viewers. The image of the community that is created is one that is shown as ‘Indian’. But it is done in a way that it appeals to a specific kind of viewer, the viewer that has purchasing power and is able to ‘consume’. (At the time of writing, this was a minority of the Indian population, 100 million on a one billion population, but also a growing international audience of, amongst others, NRI’s.)

According to Juluri, this gives rise to a problem in the kind of ‘Indianness’ that is represented in the programs. “Television represents to audiences a sense of belonging with a community that, under capitalism and modernity, is perhaps easier to find on television rather than among the “real public”. … In other words, these programs capture audiences’ sense of need for self-representation and community that arises from the rigors of daily life in a competitive urban environment and present an appropriately sanitized worldview to impose on that environment.” (92)

During commercials and fillers, the programs are showing caricatural images of Indianness, like snake-charmers, tea-sellers, paan-wallas (sellers of chewing tobacco) and men with big curly moustaches. The typical language in the programs is something that has been called ‘Hinglish’, a mixture of Hindi and English. It uses images that could be seen as typical characteristics or stereotypes of ‘western’ watchers. It seems like the present trend for Indian media producers in representing India is to construct images that appear like they are being watched by the rest of the world – even if it is only Indian audiences that are watching them.

Juluri says that there is a sense of ‘globality’ being created among the audience. That perception is that India is becoming more in touch with the world, and is not being invaded but ‘goes out to the world’. There is an idea created that India has something to offer.

But, “[it] is profoundly troubling that the need for Indian audiences’ self-representation is done through images like snake-charmers and ethnic dancers. It not only reinforces certain images which are straight out of the colonizer’s imagination as authentic representations, but also restricts other images from acquiring the same representational value. These representations may thus constitute an emerging hegemonic globality among Indian audiences.” (117)
After having said that the globalization of Indian television is not a western dominance, he clearly regrets a loss of a typical Indian kind of representation and narrative style. The young middle class audience draw more and more upon discourses that are modern, rational and individually self-centered, instead of basing upon emotional experience. This has as an effect that these discourses become more restricted to the people who speak the language of these discourses; the young and urban educated. This marginalizes other forms of experience, or at least prevent these experiences from assuming epistemic authority.31

Summarizing Juluri’s logic, the imagined viewer of today’s music television is a young urban consumer. And in order to cater for this large audience-as-consumer, it is necessary to bring stereotypical representations that mainly fit the mindset of the paying middleclass – a mindset that is apparently formed by colonial conceptions. This is a loss of representational diversity, and therefore of viewer-diversity. Large parts of the audience are not spoken to, and, therefore also other parts of human experience.

Bearing in mind the representations generally used in blockbuster Bollywood cinema, this criticism counts for film as much as it does for the music television.

If this is true, there are serious question to be asked concerning cultural citizenship. If popular culture is everyone’s culture, shouldn’t everyone then be represented and spoken to? Is it problematic that in a globalizing country, there is just a small part of the audience that has access to a cinematic imagery that can help understand themselves as people of a country that is becoming global?

As described before, certain developments in today’s Hindi cinema – especially for the youth that Juluri talks about – might point in other directions as well. There is a certain growing diversity in representations, narratives, themes and hence imagined audiences. However, even these films specifically cater the urban youth. What about the old? What about the lower classes? These questions are essential, but cannot be dealt with extensively in this dissertation.

31 Juluri offers an interesting alternative of such different knowledge. This knowledge is according to him specifically Indian, which is emotional and relational, the idea of rasa. A rasa is seen as an emotion that is an expression of one’s true self, the essence of true reality. “According to the rasa theory, the emotional self cannot be separated from the rational self or the body either. … Thus, according to this theory, reception would be seen not in terms of a primary denotative meaning and a secondary connotative meaning, but in terms of emotional and relational experience itself.” This is in contrast with the western idea, where emotions are mainly that what happens when the ratio breaks down.

The way these different ‘knowledges’ are combined can give rise to an alternative imagining of ‘globality’. This would constitute a popular culture that is truly popular again, available for a wider Indian audience. Although his views might be a little culturalist in its essence – in western thought similar lines of thinking can be found – his attempt to offer alternative imaginings of experiencing culture is pivotal.
In the next chapter we will turn to see what the changing cinematic environment means for the discussed urban youth. For now the focus will shift to the small part of society that has this access, and see what they make of the imagery that is being presented and the audiencehood that is imagined.

5.5. Conclusion

‘Bollywood’ also signals the advent of a certain reflexivity, becoming a cinema for itself as it were, recognizing its own unique position in the world, the contrastive pleasures and values that it represents vis-à-vis Hollywood. This reflexivity is as much a form of self-awareness as it is a know-how that enables the Hindi film to reproduce itself for a market that demands its perpetuation as a source of cultural identity.’ (Prasad, 2003)

‘Bollywood’ is how the Hindi film industry has re-invented itself as a proper business. Bollywood is an industry that sells culture. Bollywoods audiences are growingly imagined as consumers, who make conscious choices which films they want to pay for and which not. This draws these audiences into a public sphere, where they are spoken to as being modern, smart individuals that have power over the industry by their purchasing power. The national identity seems to decline in its imaginative power. The young and urban identity has however risen in its imaginative power, which is an identity that is less connected to a geographical or local space. These youth could live in any city in the world. The multiplex is the perfect location where this audience can become a public and find each other, a space that is stripped of local signs, but full with international brands and air-conditioned spaces. Liang (2005) refers to these multiplexes as examples of ‘nowhereness of place’, which have to be created to masque the huge differences that are arising between viewers who are able to join the new bollywood, and the ones that don’t. The ones who are in-the-know and the ones who are out-of-the-know. (Juluri, 2003) The still largest part of the population that is not a part of the middle-class, and who cannot join in the rapid ‘opening up to the world’ that happens around the corner of the slums. They have to keep finding new ways to be represented in the public, now that cinema is offering less opportunities for these groups.

At the same time for these privileged youth a variety of representational forms is arising. It looks like Bollywood is growing over itself, and addressing its younger audiences as people.

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becoming aware of themselves as audiences who reflect on their identity and affiliations. The problem of belonging for these groups, is left more as an open question, by showing Indianness as an inherently diverse. This is an indication in favour of cosmopolitanism.

It is in contemporary theory almost a joke to say that these cinematic developments are a case of western imperialism. Especially in cultural studies one takes as a starting point at least the assumption that there is something like a local or vernacular ‘digestion’ of the global images that cross the world. But, according to some Indian scholars, even this position serves as an example of the Euro/American-centrist approach. For it would imply that the global flows often originated in the west, and were sent all over the world to be received in a multitude of local ways. In today’s world, the situation is far more complex. The production of mediated images have its origins in more places simultaneously, thanks to digitalization, and sometimes the origins are unknown to even the producers.

But at the same time it starts looking like is not so much a vertical geographical division between east and west (or north or south), but more a horizontal division between top and bottom, rich and poor. Are we witnessing a cinematic re-construction of belonging along the lines of consumer power, instead of national background? Does Bollywood sustain a society where the corporates are the new governing elite (corporatocracy; Perkins, 2004), and in doing so widen the gap between the rich and the poor? If so, then we have to be afraid that cosmopolitanism takes a huge blow here. Instead of sustaining a sympathetic understanding, it might increase the difficulty to understand a growing group of others.

Let’s turn our focus to the viewers now, in order to get a clearer answer to these questions. Maybe the youth look beyond this kind of stratification and have a different sense of belonging?
6. Analysis 2: Viewer experience

If the sense of belonging of urban youth in India is to a large extent mediated through Bollywood, it is imperative to investigate their sense of cultural and cinematic citizenship. Following the previous analysis, the next three groups of questions are to be answered when taking the experience of young viewers as material.

1. We need to see how they experience *Hindi cinema in general*. Is it experienced in terms of an industry, a business? How do they understand their relationship with this cinema? Do they see changes in the recent years? What do they understand as Bollywood cinema?

2. After this general description it is necessary to investigate the concept of the *imagined viewer*. What are the different groups of audiences in society they differentiate? What is the kind of audience they belong to, and which not? What is their view of the general Indian audience?

3. The last enquiry point is that of *the global*. In which way is Hindi cinema a global cinema? How do they see the relationship with other forms of cinema (mainly Hollywood)? Do they have clear conceptions of what is Indian and what is non-Indian (western, American, etc.) about it?

These three groups have been divided into sub-questions, and for each question hypotheses have been formulated. With the use of the atlas.ti software, eight interviews have been analyzed thoroughly.\(^{33}\) This has brought the following results.

6.1. Interpretation

1) Bollywood: mainly entertainment

*Meekasha*: *Entertainment is the main thing. I don’t go watch a movie to be inspired. The other thing can happen. If it does, it’s ok with me. Entertainment is where it starts and it ends.*

When speaking about Bollywood and Hindi cinema in general three things are most striking.

\(^{33}\) An overview of the methodology is dealt with in chapter 1, and an impression of the interview data is given in appendix B.
First of all it has to be noted that the cinema is foremost experienced as entertainment, and they often refer to Bollywood as ‘the entertainment business’ or ‘the industry’. Going to the movies is for entertainment, having fun, which you do when you get bored or need some relaxation.

And for most, because it is an entertainment industry, this means that it is not an area that needs to be questioned much. It is ‘just for fun’ and that’s it. Some of them found it initially even a little strange to have a conversation about what movies might mean to them in other areas of life, like what it would imply for their concept of India.

*Kiran:* See, bollywood is somehow beyond questioning. They make money, and they don’t claim they don’t. So somehow it goes beyond criticism.

(...) Interviewer: (...) How is it beyond criticism?

*K:* See I don’t set any standards. Bollywood can be anything. Anything can happen in bollywood. And if I go with that feeling, there is no questioning. I know for a fact that most of the films are not realistic. And they know it. It is like.. they are selling entertainment. And they don’t make anything different out of it. It is not that they say: we are a movement or something. So in that sense I don’t see it as wrong, but it might do a lot of things, more subtle, I don’t know.. I don’t have this frame of criticizing it, there is not point to it also.

See, the ethical thing.. there is always a trade-off...

Now talking about it, it makes me think, but I never questioned it. I think, oh there could be something about it. Like the whole corporate responsibility thing, should they take responsibility?

*I:* So why do you think it is you never asked this question before?

*K:* Because it never meant much. They are very subtle in that, they don’t impose values or something. There is no force in what they saying. So in that way I never seen it as a heavy part of my life or something. So I never questioned it. But now, when you ask questions about it, does it bring change? Does it influence certain things? When I think about questions like that, then I think, ooh, maybe there is something like that. And we should question that. It is worth asking the question, but I really don’t know the outcome of that.

The experience of the cinema as an industry is also expressed in a different way. Most of the youth say that they show appreciation for a movie by supporting it financially. If a movie is
good, they will see it in a cinema instead of at home, and sometimes even more than once. A good movie deserves to be ‘bought’.

*Interviewer:* Do you think Bollywood has an influence on the youth today? Or is it maybe the other way round?

*Vandana:* It is actually both ways! We are influencing Bollywood, and Bollywood influences us. These days movies are made for us, the youth. Normally adults don’t watch too many movies, so they try to cater to our interests. They have to impress us. And the movies they make for us, we pay money in the theatres...

For *Jodhaa Akbar* I felt like going again and again to pay money for it, but I couldn’t. But it didn’t work, haha.

A second striking feature is that all the interviewees expressed an happiness about the fact that recently the movies have started to become *better and more diverse*. Generally they make a distinction between movies that are just for entertainment and movies that have a deeper meaning or a message. The first type of movie is mostly seen as the quintessential Bollywood movie, the films that follow the standard masala formula. Then, the interviewees say since around the year 2000 a new type of movie has come out that is more interesting for a few reasons. The narratives of these movies have become more interesting – ‘less predictable’ –, and the themes of the movies have changed as well.

*Bhavna:* Yeah, it was just like a guy and a girl meet, fall in love and then discover that their families don’t like each other, and they have to split. It was basically the same old plot.

They mention for example that more movies have come out that touch upon social issues; deal with the life of the urban youth without being always about a suppressed romantic love; and have narrative structures that don’t follow the traditional bollywood happy end. Here Bhavna talks *Race* (2007), a movie shot entirely in South Africa:

*Bhavna:* The scenes were like Bollywood movies have entered a new era or something. It was like... cars and everything... such kind of things you don’t get to see in Bollywood at all. The kind of plot, like it was basically two brothers fighting over property and everything, but the car chases and the thinking of the whole movie, it keeps you wondering what will happen next. That’s never happened to me before with a Bollywood movie.
For a few of them, these new movies are categorized as Bollywood movies as well, since Bollywood refers to Hindi movies made in Bombay (Mumbai). But for others these new and different movies don’t really fit in their understanding of Bollywood. The categorization of Bollywood has become more diffuse because of the variety of movies coming out now.

Kiran: Bollywood was Shahrukh Khan, Kajol and Rani Mukherjee. I mean I never thought about it as movies like 15 Park Avenue. That was not bollywood. (...)And then again, what bollywood is, is changing nowadays.. There are different movies being made now, and that could also come under Bollywood. Johnny Gaddar was a different type of movie.

Another aspect of these ‘new movies’ is the fact that they have the capacity of teaching something about reality. This means that some of these movies have the ability to show social problems, or teach about Indian history. This was something that traditional Bollywood could not, since it was mostly about families.

In the group discussion, everyone agreed that, because of all this, Bollywood was a name that might not do justice to everything that is coming out under Hindi cinema now. It is a name that creates an effect by itself they said, it is not a very neutral category. An alternative mentioned was just Hindi film or Indian film.

This is also related to the observation that Bollywood stands for much more than just movies. Bollywood is related to music, television, clothing, radio, advertisements, etc. The word has a sort of power in itself, which invokes a lifestyle of wealth and glamour.

K: Yeah. The glamour, the temptations, everything was bollywood. See, the funny thing is, even the name itself creates that. See, when you say bollywood, is different from when you say Indian film, or Bombay film. It is sensationalizing by itself.

M: What does that mean, sensationalizing?

K: Creating a very starry outlook. Like you add gloss, like magazines are glossy, the word is doing that. Kind of setting something. Like a big image of grandness, it feels that way. When you think of bollywood, you think of stars, you think of money, big mansions, a posh life, etc. That’s the kind of image the word evokes. Saying Indian film or Asian film, is more like a ground word, but when you say bollywood, it becomes something more.. It’s like adding color to a Black and White movie.
The main reason for the changes that are currently happening is related to the economic changes of the country. Since India is generally doing economically well, technology is improving, and that effect cinema as well. Many said that there is more money and freedom to experiment now. Bhavna mentioned for example how Kannada movies were so bad today because there was not enough money to experiment.

The third aspect mentioned in the experience of Bollywood is the particular *Indian character* of the cinema. This is however a more complex topic to talk about than the previous ones. Agreed, except for one interviewee, nobody could imagine an India without Bollywood. This is because people would not have their entertainment anymore, and the Indian economy would suffer a huge loss since Bollywood is inextricably linked to many industries and jobs. But when asked about the what there is specifically Indian about the movies themselves, the responses are mostly paradoxical. Most claim it shows Indian culture because it deals with Indian (joint) family situations. For some of them it is especially North Indian (Panjabi) culture, and not all of Indian culture. At the same time, many agree that the recent movies reflect the crisis that is going on in Indian (family) culture due to westernization and the modern life in the cities. What it is that is specifically Indian, is not always clear and open for discussion.

When asked if the family situations in the movies are typically Indian, Bhavna answers:

‘Yes I think it so.. uh.. or actually no, they show it that way but it is not necessary that every Indian family is like that. But in general yes.’

Even though Bhavna’s own situation might be different than seen in most movies, she thinks in general the movies portray it right, and by doing so she form an opinion of what general Indian family life is like. This brings us to the second cluster of questions.

2) Imagined viewer: the Indian after all

First of all the *imagined viewer* seemed to be a concept that suits the experiences of viewers well. By talking about movies and their experience of it, all the interviewees invoked conceptions of different viewer groups or audiences to which they felt to belong or not.
The general audience

Interestingly, most of the interviewees would start formulating an idea of the general audience – the masses – having certain qualities, but mostly they don’t see themselves part of that general audience.

The general masses who watch Bollywood movies (in the masala formula style) is seen as a mass that needs escapist entertainment to ‘vent frustrations’ or escape from their daily miseries. Then movies don’t need to have a message or touch upon a social issue, since this involves thinking and questioning.

Parth: To me it might not mean that much, but to the general public, especially in the northern areas, it is a way to vent our frustrations. The dancing and everything, that’s what entertains them, that’s what appeals to them.

Although mostly admitting they also like these movies, they somehow see themselves as more demanding than this general audience. Besides admitting to enjoy these movies now and then for fun, they find other movies (the newer, or Hollywood movies) a more meaningful watch. Furthermore, they find that general audience more impressionable than themselves. This is expressed in different ways. Surabhi for example mentions that in general girls of her age are ‘too much into movies’; they want to look, walk and talk like the actresses, whereas she takes it more lightly.

The young

The communities of viewers that are imagined are often put in terms of dualities. The ones that are mostly used by the interviewees are ‘young and old’ and ‘poor and elite’. The first ones, young and old, are used mainly to state that most recent movies are specially made for the young viewers. Older people are seen as having more difficulties with today’s movies, and preferring older movies. This view is most strongly voiced by Mrinalika, when speaking about the film Rang de Basanti:

‘Some people that I spoke to who were in their mid-fifties, they did not like the movie, because it was brought out with the young people in mind. I think the future is only made of young people, and not people who are not gonna let the young people grow in whatever context they want to.’
This shows that the youth are mostly thought of as an energetic group of people with an important role to play for the future of the country. When asked to describe his generation of young film viewers, Parth says:

‘I think the fact that they want to be cool, the youth, it is a good trait. If the youth will lose its interest in looking good, staying in shape, etc. the energy level of the country will seep. Most youth of the north is not very influenced by the west. Their main resource of entertainment and inspiration is bollywood. So I would describe them as optimistic, hopeful, they can be loud, but overall very flamboyant and outgoing sort of youth.’

The poor
Another community of viewers that is being imagined is the poor versus the elite. The poor are being seen in different terms; people in the slums, the locals, uneducated or villagers. But it is a mass of people on the lower rings of society that are strongly associated with certain types of films. Mostly in the sense that these poor people have so much hardship in their lives, that they cannot take in too much intellectual complexity in a movie. All they need is sensation and fantasy to escape from reality.
Especially in Bangalore, these people are associated with Kannada cinema (the cinema in the official language of the state Karnataka), which is seen as violent and simplistic.

It is not that the lives of the richer and educated people are glorified over the less fortunate ones. On the one hand the poor are seen as impressionable and not capable of enjoying more than ‘mindless entertainment’. On the other hand, some show an interest in the specific knowledge and wisdoms of the ‘underdogs’.

Mrinalika: Yeah.. well maybe that is again a classification of the head, that the educated are supposed to do something and the poor don’t.
Interviewer: so could it be that that classification is not correct?
Mrinalika: Yes, of course! As you know, in the medical industry, we have a lot of pharmaceutical companies. But the villagers, they use all kinds of herbs and they seem to be fine. They’re not getting killed by the herbs.
Another way the them poor versus elite is being worked out, is through the theme of life in the city. Many films deal with the big contrasts of living in today’s urban India. The urban life is on the one hand contrasted with life in the village (generally more traditional and poor), but the urban life is also a contrast in itself. The poverty is experienced daily by the youth living in a city, seeing beggars and people living on the sidewalks or in slums. Living in the city, experienced through Bollywood, is mostly understood in terms of elite versus poor – the have and have-nots.

Vandana: They are now making movies for the uneducated mass. For the sidy theatres. They can’t take in a message. They would get too bored of it.

A striking absence in the interviews was the topic of religion and politics. Although these dimensions of identity leave a great mark on the public debate in newspapers and in daily life, when speaking about movies they somehow leave the scene for their brothers poor and rich.

All-Indian

In contrast to these created divisions, Bollywood is very much experienced as a cinema for all Indians, just as much as different movies cater to different groups. As Mrinalika says: ‘even a poor boy in Kerala will know the song dard-e-disco from Om Shanti Om. (...) It shows that at least in one aspect we are trying to reach out to the whole country. Without movies we would probably not relate to the poor, and not relate to the rich, or to the middle class.’

This experience, Bollywood a cinema for all Indians is a fascinating one, since clearly Bollywood is not available for all Indians. First of all because of the plain fact that only fifty percent of the country speaks Hindi. And the interviewed youth are well aware of the fact that different regions have different cinemas (Kollywood, Tollywood, etc.). Even though bollywood might be a notion that changes, and Indianness is something that is sometimes not clear, the cinema resonates strongly with an experience of national integration.

Besides that, the youth didn’t mention a sense of community with viewers abroad. The only viewers abroad mentioned are NRI’s, with whom none of the interviewees could associate positively. The NRI’s were mainly accused of arrogance and hypocrisy in their views on India. While discussing the portrayal of NRI’s in Bollywood movies, they interpret these
characters mostly as people who have lost their roots and origins, and could just as well be happy in India.

*Interviewer:* Do you think there is a specific idea about India, or what it is to be Indian, in the movies?

*Mrinalika:* Yes. Because you wouldn’t have that kind of reality if you would be sitting in the US. See, there are a lot of NRI’s. And they have a point to be made about everything. They think that they know India very well. They think they have a damn solution for every damn thing happening in India. They quote as if India is some rural micro-economy, where they have every solution to every problem. And they have negative things to say about Bollywood. But thanks to Bollywood a lot of people have jobs, we have lot of things to look forward to. And the point of being nationalistic comes out in movies like Chak De, which shows that is possible that women play hockey, and it is not just cricket cricket.

Here Bollywood comes forward as a cinema that mostly means an experience of being Indian. It becomes therefore necessary to see how these youth affiliate themselves with a global perspective when the analyze the film industry.

3) The global: the empty west

The main indicators of a global dimension in these experiences of Bollywood are Hollywood and The West.

The name Bollywood is obviously a derivative of Hollywood. This is reflected in the opinion that Bollywood is nothing more than a bad copy of Hollywood, a statement that some interviewees claim others are having – or have themselves to a certain extent. Parth mentioned how he, being a lover of American comic books, is sometimes very disappointed to see a Hindi version of Superman.

But during the interviews the main perception was that the gap between these two cinemas is on the one hand seen as becoming smaller, and on the other as becoming less relevant. Bollywood is firstly seen as becoming more advanced in its technologies and therefore able to compete with Hollywood. The stories about movies going to the Oscars, Indian producers signing contracts with foreign actors and Hollywood showing interest in Bollywood,
definitely installs a sense of pride in ‘our cinema’ with the youth. Bollywood is ‘going
global’. Interestingly, it is also perceived that Bollywood is not becoming better because of
these international tie-ups, but it does so on its own accord. Bollywood is a symbol of an India
in change, but without losing its pride.

Vandana: But there’s always a bit of India in them, whatever you do. It’s just Bollywood.
Interviewer: What do you mean by that?
Vandana: Because, even though it might be turning into a little like Hollywood, it’s just
because India is also improving in technology and gadgets. Before if we try to create a movie
like Superman or something, those special effects wouldn’t come out right and it wouldn’t be
a great thing.
(…) But now it’s totally improved. It’s not like we’re trying to imitate anyone. It’s just that
we are improving on our own.

At the same time, Hollywood is definitely considered to be cool. All the interviewees know
people who think Bollywood isn’t worth much, and love Hollywood over Bollywood
anytime. But the interviewees agree that the two cinemas in their experience can go together
fine. This is because Bollywood ‘adds something Indian’ that Hollywood could never offer.

The reason why Hollywood is not taking over, might also have to do with how the concept of
the west is being formulated by these youth. Western is mainly perceived in two things:
clothes and romance. Western stands for clothes that reveal more parts of the body than a
general Indian costume, and romance stands for the (sexual) freedom that the protagonists in
movies show in their choice of partners. The value behind this seems to be individual
freedom, or as Vandana puts it, a boldness in the lifestyle.

Interviewer: What do you think movies portray about India, or Indianness?
Vandana: Yeah, right now, a little less. They are deviating, they are becoming more bold. But
that is also because the generation is more bold. Right now the whole scene is changing. We
are becoming a little more western. At least the teenagers.

The westernness that is perceived as ‘coming to India’ is something that can quite easily be
integrated into the Bollywood movies. As Parth puts it: ‘Bollywood balances it out.’ Since
the western dimension seems to be mainly perceived in externalities, rather than in significant
political or cultural differences, there is no need to take the other part of world so serious. And when it comes to the individual freedom, this is seen as something that can be put to good use for the country.

It is therefore no wonder that a few interviewees claim that foreigners will never be able to understand what Bollywood is about. They get the externalities, but not what is ‘behind’ these.

_Meekasha: I was watching Kabhie Kushi Kabhi Kham with my brother in law, he is a foreigner, and he said, how can she dance in a miniskirt in London where it is soo cold! But I didn’t look at it that way, I said just watch it and enjoy the song. He went into the details and just couldn’t understand, but we couldn’t explain, you just have to watch it._

Furthermore, it is the perceived western sexual liberty which is something that worries some – especially the girls. In Hollywood the erotic scenes are sometimes seen as ‘groce’ (Surabhi) and ‘animal-like’ (Meekasha). But also in Bollywood, the change of the beauty ideal of the heroines towards fairer, slimmer and more naked women, is not always appreciated.

_Interviews: Is there something you would like to see change in Bollywood?_  
_Mrinalika: Yes, not so many item-numbers.³⁴ Because we sit in the cinema, with so many guys, we wouldn’t like to show ourselves like that. We like to live with self-respect. But if they would show women in full sarees, the movies wouldn’t sell. That is a normal notion. The box-office is made of men. Male dominance._

6.2 Conclusion

When asking the youth what Bollywood means to them, the general answer seems to be that it mainly means entertainment, and an appreciation of the increase in cinematic diversity. They feel their lives are being taken more serious now. They are also happy that the cinema is offering narratives that deal with social issues in a less glamorous manner.

³⁴ ‘Item-numbers’ refers to girls who show up as an extra factor in a movie, mostly during one of the songs. They don’t have much to do with the movie itself, but are known for an extra sensual performance. For many actresses, doing an item-number is a nice extra earning, but the implications for her career or image are highly discussed in the magazines.
Using the concept of the imagined viewer, bollywood mainly means a confirmation of their identities as young, middle/upperclass and Indian. There are hardly any clues which indicate a sense of cross-national belonging.

But, when asked about it further, they have no clear answer what is Indian though. It has something to do with family, but traditions are highly questioned. The imagined general audience offers a view of how the youth formulate their idea of the general people living in India. They are mostly impressionable, poor and unable to take an intellectually reflective perspective on the movies they see.

In a global perspective, Bollywood offers a sense of pride that it is improving and becoming a global player, but this is due to their own efforts. Bollywood is an Indian cinema that takes what is good in the West and balances it out. Globalization and westernization are mainly experienced as an increase in variety, as well in goods (different movies) and in lifestyles. They don’t form a real threat to their self-understandings.

It seems as if the youth imagine for themselves an important place in a society that is full of inequalities. Dealing with the world or the global dimensions of their identity is not so important then. Although when taken seriously, they show an interest in these less urgent questions.
Two excerpts from The White Tiger, by Aravind Adiga

“Rush hour in Delhi. Cars, scooters, motorbikes, autorickshaws, black taxis, jostling for space on the road. The pollution is so bad that the men on the motorbikes and scooters have a handkerchief wrapped around their faces – each time you stop at a red light, you see a row of men with black glasses and masks on their faces, as if the whole city were out on a bank heist that morning.
There was a good reason for the face masks; they say the air is so bad in Delhi that it takes ten years off a man’s life. Of course, those in the cars don’t have to breathe the outside air – it is just nice, cool, clean, air-conditioned air for us. With their tinted windows up, the cars of the rich go like dark eggs down the roads of Delhi. Every now and then an egg will crack open – a woman’s hand, dazzling with gold bangles, stretches out of an open window, flings an empty mineral water bottle onto the road – and then the window goes up, and the egg is resealed.” (Adiga, 2008: 133-134)

“Dim streetlights were glowing down onto the pavement on either side of the traffic; and in that orange-hued half-light, I could see multitudes of small, thin, grimy people squatting, waiting for a bus to take them somewhere, or with nowhere to go and about to unfurl a mattress and sleep right there. These poor bastards had come from the Darkness to Delhi to find some light – but they were still in the darkness. Hundreds of them, there seemed to be, on either side of the traffic, and their life was entirely unaffected by the jam. Were they even aware that there was a jam? We were like to separate cities – inside and outside the dark egg. I knew I was in the right city. But my father, if he were alive, would be sitting on that pavement, cooking some rice gruel for dinner, and getting ready to lie down and sleep under a street lamp, and I couldn’t stop thinking of that and recognizing his features in some beggar out there. So I was in some way out of the car too, even while I was driving it.” (Idem: 138)
7. Conclusion

We have asked the question *Does Bollywood help to construct cosmopolitanism amongst Indian urban youth, and if so, what does this mean for the understanding of cosmopolitanism?* Hereby we came to understand cosmopolitanism as an *attitude that wants to move beyond the duality of global and local and holds plurality as a value.*

We have explored the possibility of Bollywood constructing cosmopolitanism, by showing how cultural citizenship is the process of people reconstructing their sense of belonging by using popular culture. In a globalizing world, the nation as a source of community might be declining in importance and other sources of community are gaining strength, mediated through popular culture. Cinema, and specifically Hindi cinema, have this mediating power through a process that I have conceptualized as the imagined viewer. This stands for the way viewers are simultaneously being cast into a viewer community that is formed by cinema (as a practice, as an industry), and also create their own imaginations about the characteristics of different viewer communities. The detailed theoretical exploration of this power of popular culture has made clear how we have to take the role of media in the formation of identity in today’s world, very serious. It is a playing field that offers opportunities for people to define their sense of belonging on the one hand (and is therefore a source of empowerment), and on the other hand it is a very diffuse playing field where it becomes growingly unclear who is in charge of the images and meanings involved in this construction of belonging. In economic terms, popular culture is not a *level playing field.*

The analysis of Bollywood cinema has shown how this cinema has drastically changed under the influence of globalization, mainly by becoming more corporatized. Bollywood is actually a specific kind of Hindi cinema, with a great commercial appeal. It is under this name that the world has come to know cinema from India, and hence has become synonymous with Indian cinema. This has boomeranged back to India, where much cinema reinvents itself in ‘Bollywood style’, in order to become commercially successful.

At the same time a differentiation in cinematic forms can be witnessed, especially since the millennium. Movies about different themes, without the typical *masala* formula, have complicated the difference between classifications such as art films, English films or commercial films. But it needs to be said, this new ‘middle cinema’ is for a minor audience. The mainstream cinema is a cunningly produced piece of entertaining culture, where the
audience is conceived of as a participating consumer who makes choices between different products. The Bollywood entertainment industry has to keep re-inventing itself to attract the attention of the new customers, the booming middle-class urban young of India (and abroad!).

These developments are most certainly reflected in the experiences that young viewers express about Bollywood. The main concepts in understanding their cinema is that it is an entertainment industry, which is specifically aimed at the youth. From the perspective of the imagined viewer, the young viewers mainly discern the young and the old as viewer communities, and the poor versus the wealthy. The enormous popularity of the movie *Rang de Basanti* indicates, that an image of the young, educated and well-to-do are the people who have to make India’s future brighter, finds great recognition amongst these youth. The general audience, the masses, are not a community that is being associated with a brighter future of the country. They are mostly imagined as impressionable, troubled and too busy with managing a day-to-day life. It is also this young group that is most associated with understanding a global imagery, for example through ‘English’ movies and television series. Very importantly, Bollywood is a source of national pride, since it is experienced as India going out into the world, and being able to keep up with global developments. It therefore doesn’t do much harm to the coherence of the Indian nation as a whole, but it does alter the image of the communities within India. This is also indicated by the fact that these youth show considerable confusion about the meaning of “Indian”.

The conception of the non-Indian, mostly as “the Western”, is associated with stereotypical images such as modern (revealing clothing) and material wealth. This western is however not located outside India, but just as much part of India as well: the urban India, most strikingly symbolized by the multiplex theatre-cum-shopping centre. The west is a land of empty signifiers. On the other hand, the foreign viewer is imagined as someone fundamentally different from themselves. It takes an Indian to really understand Bollywood, is the motto.

All in all, for the young viewers, Bollywood supports a belonging that is non-Indian within India, a fragmentation. This is heterotopian cosmopolitanism, since it reconfigures the local and the global in an unfinished way, much like the cosmopolitan Tamil identity of Moorti (see 4.4.). They experience themselves as individuals of a changing and disrupted nation, and label this more as a possibility than as a problem. Furthermore, the youth show a high level of awareness of there specific cultural background, taste, etc. It is most probably because of, and not in spite of, the fact that Bollywood offers accessible and entertaining narratives more and
more in a self-reflexive manner that the youth are becoming aware of their positioning in the world. A changing Bollywood makes them feel belong to an Indian nation, but to a nation that is fragmented, incoherent and constantly changing. Or in other words, there is a feeling of belonging to different nations at the same time, just like Adiga’s description of the two separate cities. There is a disruption, but one that makes youth aware of their position in the world. This experience and awareness of it offers a sense of possibility and freedom. No wonder Bollywood makes the youth feel proud!

**Implications**

This case study of Bollywood has made clear that a new time is in the making, where popular culture offers very important and flexible ways of belonging that suit a changing and ever more complex world. Just where politics and religion are losing that ability to connect with today’s young generations. And this is not necessarily to be regretted. The youth are aware of the parties involved and the risks at stake. Bollywood opens up the themes and narratives that people can use for dealing with the challenges of globalization, without really being able to offer closed circuit solutions. Popular culture in today’s world needs to be open-minded in order to survive – a great breeding place for emancipation.

Humanistics should therefore take this area of human life very seriously, instead of washing it off as more decadent versions of human Existence. Popular culture might be a much more democratic answer to globalization than any new attempt to integrate the floating individuals of the world into a new brother- and sisterhood (or any other utopia). Instead it is wiser to start with the assumption that popular culture offers a plurality of possibilities for a huge diversity of people to exercise reflexivity about their position in the world. And since it is able to ‘penetrate’ into more areas of human life, it will be difficult to ignore popular culture anyway. I think therefore that this dissertation has very interesting links with the research programs Kosmopolis and BIS (Citizenship in an Intercultural Society) at the University for Humanistics, and I hope it will be of use for debate.

It also means that Humanistics (or humanist inspired thinkers and practitioners) should refrain from stressing too much on the necessity of ‘Bildung’ and the education of humans into morally more developed version of themselves. Popular culture per definition (cinema in particular) has the ability to ‘entertain’ youth in a process of reflexivity, and it is fairly

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35 Which, coincidentally, often involves a big role for classic works of art instead of popular culture. See for example Aloni (2005).
pedantic to stress that they need moral guidance in developing that reflexivity. Bollywood has shown to be able to take youth serious in ways that teachers can only dream of.

There are many ways in which this dissertation can be improved or followed up, of which I want to mention a few. First of all would it be of great help to interview other audiences, most importantly the ‘old’ and ‘poor’ that the youth are mentioning. Since Bollywood is mostly targeted at the youth with money to spend, the experiences of this cinema have to be different. If Adiga’s previous description of the growing gap between a rich elite and a poor mass is true, than it needs to be questioned how Bollywood (and popular culture) play a role in this. A second big question mark still lies behind the hypothesis that popular culture needs to reflect plurality in order to support plurality as a value (see §2.4.). The relationship between stereotypical images and the imaginations of viewers has often been researched, but less from a more qualitative perspective. Some remarks of the interviewed girls about the perceived unnatural and shameful beauty ideal of the actresses, gives rise to many questions about gender differences.

The last remark about future research is about India. My small entry into this enormous country with all its diversity and rising global significance, has forced me to ‘reconfigure’ my own sense of belonging. In the general perception as well as in serious academic spheres in the Netherlands I have come across many old fashioned ideas about India as a developing nation that is ‘not yet like us’. This is a serious mistake, probably due to our colonial heritage. The western mind might be full of universal truths about a universal humanity, but we have to stop mistaking these truths for a fundamentally heterotopic reality. I seriously encourage every academic to engage with academics from other parts of the world, and find out how some universal truths were just fitting a western European or American situation.

And about cosmopolitanism, we also have a lot to learn from India. Because it is probably just a matter of decades, before the Dutch will enjoy singing and dancing to the tunes of the new, global Bollywood.
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Books & articles


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Appendices

A. Hypotheses interviews
B. Analysis on three themes per interviewee, with quotes
C. Atlas.ti-output; codes per primary document
D. Hypotheses arranged per theme and density
A. Hypotheses interviews

H = hypothesis created beforehand (the addition a stands for a slight change)
NH = a new hypothesis, created on the basis of the interviews

1. **What do young viewers understand as Bollywood movies?**
   - **H1:** Bollywood is especially the Hindi cinema from Bombay.
   - **H1a:** Bollywood portrays mostly north-Indian (Panjabi) culture.
   - **H2:** Bollywood is perceived as becoming more loose from India, and more western.
   - **NH1:** Bollywood is appreciated for becoming more diverse.
   - **NH2:** Viewers find that the narratives of some movies are becoming more interesting.
   - **NH13:** Bollywood is mainly for entertainment.
   - **NH16:** Bollywood is seen as important for the country's economy.
   - **NH17:** Bollywood is more than just movies.
   - **NH5:** Bollywood represents a 'home'
   - **NH6:** Bollywood is seen as consisting of two main categories: 'just entertainment' and 'movies with a deeper meaning or message'
   - **NH7:** Bollywood is associated with a rich lifestyle.
   - **NH8:** Friendship and its fun are seen as important values in the recent movies.
   - **NH10:** Bollywood portrays Indian culture.
   - **NH14:** Good movies have the capacity to teach about reality and overcome stereotypes.

2. **What are the communities imagined by young viewers?**
   - **H3:** The elite and the poor.
   - **H3a:** the educated and the non-educated.
   - **H4:** Western and Indian.
   - **H5:** The urban and the villager.
   - **H6:** North and south-Indian.
   - **NH4:** They perceive a general mass that wants unrealistic entertainment to escape from their reality.
   - **NH12:** young and old
   - **NH15:** ignorant and concerned

3. **Do young viewers experience a community with viewers abroad?**
   - **H7:** There is aversion against the perceived arrogance of NRI's.
   - **H8:** Viewers feel connected to non-Indian viewers abroad through bollywood.
   - **H9:** Viewers feel connected to a global community of urban youth.

4. **As what kind of audience do viewers perceive themselves?**
   - **H10:** Bollywood makes viewers experience themselves as consumers.
   - **H10a:** viewers support a movie they like by paying money for it in a cinema
   - **H11:** As less impressionable than the general public.

5. **To whom do young viewers think Bollywood films are speaking?**
   - **H12:** They perceive that bollywood is especially a cinema for the youth.
   - **H12a:** They can relate more to more recent movies, since they are about the
youth.
NH11: Bollywood is made for all Indians.

6. What do young viewers perceive as ‘global’ about bollywood movies?
H13: Global is mainly perceived as ‘western’.
H14: Bollywood gives faith in the youth for India to become a global power.
H14a: Bollywood gives hope for the future.
H15: Bollywood is seen as becoming more western.

7. What do young viewers perceive as ‘western’ about bollywood movies?
H16: The west is the land of possibilities and freedom.
H16a: Western represents individual freedom.
H17: Western stands for freedom that has gone too far.
NH9: Western means rich.
NH18: Western means cool.
NH19: clothes and romance

8. What do young viewers perceive as ‘Indian’ about bollywood movies?
H18: Bollywood stands for an India in change, but still keeping its pride.
H19: Indian stands for family values.
H19a: Indian stands for joint family values.

9. How do viewers think Bollywood films are perceived by foreigners?
H20: Growing interest in bollywood by foreigners makes them feel getting open to the world.
H21: Foreigners don’t understand the Indianness about Bollywood.

10. How is the relation with other forms of cinema (hollywood, ‘art cinema’) experienced?
H22: Bollywood is seen as less advanced than Hollywood.
H23: Bollywood is seen as becoming more like Hollywood.
H23a: Bollywood is seen as changing for the better on its own.
H23b: Bollywood is seen as becoming able to compete with Hollywood.
NH3: With more money they think there is freedom to produce better movies.
B. Analysis on three themes per interviewee, with quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiran</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- she used to think of bollywood as the 90s masala movie, Karan Johar, glamour, rich, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- nowadays there are more other movies coming, especially for the youth. But she likes both types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the film industry is seen just entertainment and therefore not for criticizing or influencing society in some way. After thinking about it, she is changing her mind, there might be subtle influence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bollywood stands for glamour</td>
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<tr>
<td>- it is not clear anymore when a movie is bollywood and when not, similarly she is confused about when something is typically Indian.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 2. imagined viewers       |
| - nri’s and Indians       |
| - young and old           |
| - she can not imagine how foreigners will look at bollywood, cause she doesn’t know their culture. Perhaps they will think of india as happy. |
| - the all-in movies are mainly for the villagers, for the cities there are other movies now. |

| 3. the global             |
| - nri’s go to the west and then think they know what India is. (the west is not per se better) |
| - the cities are becoming more western, which makes the movies change as well and reflect the lifestyles of people in the cities. |
| - western stands mainly for rich |
Bhavna

1. general
   - movies are becoming more true to their lifestyles, not so dramatic and emotional (traditional) anymore.
   - Bollywood stands especially for something India, it can even teach about history better than education can
   - Films are all about creating the hype

2. imagined viewer
   - English speaking versus the kannadigas
   - especially the poor watch movies for escapism (kannada movies make no sense; also because there is no money to make good movies)

3. the global
   - bollywood wants to copy hollywood sometimes, but it does so in a better way these days, and without losing their own character
   - ‘bollywood is going global’, every year nominated for the Oscars
   - For today’s urban youth, hollywood and American series are considered to be cool, bollywood not.
   - she perceives hollywood as a cinema about movies and not about stars, whereas bollywood is about movies and stars
Meekasha

1. general
   - bollywood is nothing but entertainment
   - she’s not so interested in it, it’s just a part of everyday life
   - it doesn’t have to portray reality or something (example of brother in law)
   - bollywood teaches about India
   - she prefers the old movies over the new ones (all about sexuality), but these days bollywood is getting better

2. imagined viewers
   - the general audience is much influenced by the movies (clothing, etc.)
   - the movies are made for everyone, there is something for everyone
   - the bollywood entertainment movies are mainly to be watched with others

3. global
   - she would prefer hollywood over bollywood if it was the same story, technically more interesting
   - foreigners couldn’t completely understand it and know how to appreciate

Entertainment is the main thing. I don’t go watch a movie to be inspired. The other thing can happen. If it does, it’s ok with me. Entertainment is where it starts and it ends.
Mrinalika

1. general
   - she thinks movies can open your eyes, especially the latest ones.
     (taare zameen par, water.)

2. imagined viewers
   - there are many ignorant people who don’t take the chance of using
     movies for broadening their understanding of society
   - bollywood makes india one
   - the ignorant exist irrespective of education, even the educated can be
   - with friends she watched ‘timepass’ movies, cause she doesn’t want
     to be the odd one out
   - bollywood is made for all Indians
   - especially the poor people want entertainment to ‘give colour to
     their lives’
   - movies are particularly made for men and with less respect to
     women (sex sells)
   - RdB was a good movie cause the future is made up of young
     people, that’s why the old don’t get that movie. (r.131)

3. global
   - the open economy hasn’t given a more open attitude, which bothers
     her. Especially related to sexuality, although she agrees to be a little
     traditional there as well (r. 087/088)

For most people it’s entertainment. But if you look at cinema from a deeper side,
you will probably see things that you would not see in the realistic world. You
wouldn’t bother to see if a person is handicapped or mentally alright, you just put
them into a category and you pass comments about them.

But I think, since we are such an open economy, and such an open society, we
should let whatever happens on the tv, but not go oooohh and aaaaah.. You know
if you set next to guys in a cinema, the minute they see a belly of a woman, they
start whistling.
I: So why do they do that?
M: Because they are stupidly desperate for anything. They would probably go kiss
the screen if they were given the chance.
I: So that is a smart thing to do of the filmmakers?
M: Yeah! How would a movie sell without sex in it? Why do you think Shah Rukh
Khan would have danced without his shirt on in Dard-E-Disco? And why the six-
packs?
It is an industry all by itself. The look-good and look-hot industry.

I: Is there something you would like to see change in Bollywood?
M: Yes, not so many item-numbers. Because we sit in the cinema, with so many
guys, we wouldn’t like to show ourselves like that. We like to live with self-respect.
But if they would show women in full sarees, the movies wouldn’t sell. That is a
normal notion. The box-office is made of men. Male dominance.
Parth

1. general
   - bollywood spec. depicts north Indian culture
   - he prefers hollywood movies based on comic books
   - he likes bollywood when it deals with an important topic and the story is good.

2. i.v.
   - general audience needs movies to vent frustrations
   - north versus south, he expects the Bangalore audience to be more intellectual and not give so much attention to bollywood
   - the people in the south should not be so much into bollywood, but more English and regional cinema
   - the average audience is very attracted to star-dom

3. global
   - bollywood generally makes bad copies of hollywood movies. ‘they do it with pride but they screw the whole thing up.’
   - Cities are becoming more modern and ‘un-indianized’. The intellectual movies can show how you can still maintain your ‘originality’.
   - He prefers art/intellectual cinema, since he has been influenced by western literature.
   - Bollywood has helped india to become globally recognized, although it doesn’t always portray the country properly (quote: 72-79)

I think every person like me who would want to make a movie, doesn’t want to make another chick flick, with a lot of dancing, sportscars, big sets. Maybe some money minded people would want to make movies like that, but in the new generation would want something different. Like Mira Nair, she is an amazing director. And Aparna Sen. Actors like Konkona Sen, Rahul Bose.. he is an enlightened citizen, he is into rugby and all, he is an icon. He was in Mr and Mrs Iyer, a real good movie, not really Bollywood.
I: What is really Bollywood?
P: The masala kind of movie.
I: And what are the new movies?
P: A different kind of Bollywood. Art films.

I: How would you describe India’s generation of which you belong?
P: I think the fact that they want to be cool, the youth, it is a good trait. If the youth will lose its interest in looking good, staying in shape, etc. the energy level of the country will seep. Most youth of the north is not very influenced by the west. Their main resource of entertainment and inspiration is bollywood. So I would describe them as optimistic, hopeful, they can be loud, but overall very flamboyant and outgoing sort of youth. So that is what the Indian youth is about, they look up to their actors like anyone else would. WE do. They are optimisitic, they are mature, they are career oriented, some of them.. others not.. it is a mixture of opposites. Some of them are so influenced by cricket, that India is totally neclegting football. Which is not very nice. Cricket has now taken it’s toll. The new generation likes football more. It is linked with bollywood, they like the glamour, the cars, the money. The modern bollywood heroes who have that, it inspires the guys who want that. Suppose I could become that?
Surabhi

1. general
   - she likes more light, comedy movies, not about ‘big emotions’

2. i.v.
   - people who are too much into it, taking it too seriously
   - regional cinema is especially for locals/slums

3. global
   - she can watch hollywood now, it’s not ‘groce’ anymore
   - the movies are becoming more western, but also more patriotic, which is good.
   - Tourist who see the movies will think india is very patriotic.

I: Talking about kannada movies, do you watch those too?
S: Yes, but not all. They are all the same kind of movies. Guy meets girl in busstop, kuchh kuchh hota hai, and that’s it.
I: Why do you think it is like that?
S: Don’t know. Basically Kannada movies depict what is going on here, in the local areas, slums and all. Hindi movies try to depict something which goes for everyone. I don’t find many people in Christ College watching Kannada, they are mostly into hollywood or bollywood. People think it is lower status, uncool here.
I: is it for different kind of people then?
S: Yeah, maybe for people in slums, the don’t really come into bollywood and all.
Vandana

1. general
   - bollywood had a bad phase, then she liked hollywood more, but now it’s changing
   - movies with a message teach about the reality of India (history, social issues)
   - but movies don’t need to have one, if they do, it’s good
   - if movies are just comedies, you shouldn’t think of the meaning or what the maker wanted

2. i.v.
   - the general audience just want three hours of entertainment
   - these days movies are made mostly for youth (see quote)
   - Vandana defends bollywood against people who think bollywood is stereotypical and a bad rip-off of hollywood. She doesn’t approve of that india bashing, india is technologically improving now.
   - There is a large part of the audience that gets too much involved in the movies and then loses their identity
   - The regional cinema is mainly for the uneducated (see quote)

3. global
   - the movies have become more entertainment because of influence from the west
   - bollywood can not replace hollywood, cause a minority is interested in ‘going abroad’
   - today’s youth is becoming more western, which means more ‘bold’

I: Do you think Bollywood has an influence on the youth today? Or is it maybe the other way round?
V: It is actually both ways! We are influencing bollywood, and bollywood influence us. These days movies are made for us, the youth. Normally adults don’t watches to many movies, so they try to cater to our interests. They have to impress us. And the movies they make for us, we pay money in the theatres…
For Jodhaa Akbar I felt like going again and again to pay money for it, but I couldn’t. But it didn’t work, haha.
I: And what about things like lifestyle, clothes, etc.?
V: yeah yeah there is a lot of influence. Especially the language I guess. Swearwords and stuff. And now they have banned smoking and drinking in movies cause it influences us. Unless it is very necessary like in a gangster movie. So some people might get influenced because of that as well. And the clothes, yes definitely. You come to know what is trendy just by watching a movie.

V: They are now makig movies for the uneducated mass. For the sidy theatres. They can’t take in a message. They would get too bored of it. (from P1)
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17+ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
17++ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
18- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
18+ 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 1 0 3
18++ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
19- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
19+ 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1
19++ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
19a- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
19a+ 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 2 0
19a++ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
20- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
20+ 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 1 0 3
20++ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
21- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
21+ 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1
21++ 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 1
22- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
22+ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
22++ 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 1
23- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
23+ 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
23++ 1 0 0 0 0 1 0 2 0
23a- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
23a+ 0 0 0 1 0 1 0 0 2
23a++ 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 2
23b- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
23b+ 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
23b++ 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
n1- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
n1+ 2 0 0 0 1 0 0 3 0
n1++ 1 0 1 0 1 1 0 0 4
n10- 0 2 0 0 1 0 0 3 0
n10+ 1 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 3
n10++ 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 2 0
n11- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
| n11+ | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 2  |
| n11++| 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 3  |
| n12- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n12+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| n12++| 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n13- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n13+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2  |
| n13++| 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n14- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n14+ | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n14++| 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n15- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n15+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n15++| 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| n16- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n16+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n16++| 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n17- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n17+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n17++| 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3  |
| n18- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n18+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n18++| 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| n19- | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n19+ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n19++| 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n2-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n2+  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n2++ | 2  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 3  |
| n3-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n3+  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 2  | 1  |
| n3++ | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| n4-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n4+  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n4++ | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 2  | 1  |
| n5-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n5+  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n5++ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n6-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n6+  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 2  |
| n6++ | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 2  | 1  |
| n7-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n7+  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| n7++ | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 2  |
| n8-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n8+  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n8++ | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  |
| n9-  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| n9+  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| n9++ | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |

Totals 38 9 14 13 18 17 13 11 133
D. Hypotheses arranged per theme and density

1. Hindi cinema in general

Codes 4 times grounded:
NH1++: Bollywood is appreciated for becoming more diverse.

Codes 3 times grounded:
NH14++: Good movies have the capacity to teach about reality and overcome stereotypes.
NH10++: Bollywood portrays Indian culture.
NH10-: Bollywood portrays Indian culture.
NH16++: Bollywood is seen as important for the country's economy.
NH13++: Bollywood is mainly for entertainment.
NH8++: Friendship and its fun are seen as important values in the recent movies.
H10a++: viewers support a movie they like by paying money for it in a cinema
NH17++: Bollywood is more than just movies.

NH1+: Bollywood is appreciated for becoming more diverse.
NH14+: Good movies have the capacity to teach about reality and overcome stereotypes.

2 times grounded:
NH10++: Bollywood portrays Indian culture.
H1a++: Bollywood portrays mostly north-indian (panjabi) culture.
H14a++: Bollywood gives hope for the future.
NH6++: Bollywood is seen as consisting of two main categories: 'just entertainment' and 'movies with a deeper meaning or message'
NH7++: Bollywood is associated with a rich lifestyle.

NH3+: With more money they think there is freedom to produce better movies.
NH13+: Bollywood is mainly for entertainment.
NH11+: Bollywood is made for all Indians.
H19a+: Indian stands for joint family values.
NH6+: Bollywood is seen as consisting of two main categories: 'just entertainment' and 'movies with a deeper meaning or message'

2. Imagined viewer

Codes 4 times grounded
H11++: As less impressionable than the general public.

Codes 3 times grounded
NH11++: Bollywood is made for all Indians.
NH12++: young and old

Codes 2 times grounded
H7++: There is aversion against the perceived arrogance of NRI’s.
H3++: The elite and the poor.
H4++: Western and Indian.
NH4++: They perceive a general mass that wants unrealistic entertainment to escape from their reality.
H12a++: They can relate more to more recent movies, since they are about the youth.

H6+: North and south-Indian.
H11+: As less impressionable than the general public.
H10+: Bollywood makes viewers experience themselves as consumers.
H3a+: the educated and the non-educated.

H12−: They perceive that bollywood is especially a cinema for the youth.

3. The global

Codes 3 times grounded
NH19++: clothes and romance

H20+: Growing interest in bollywood by foreigners makes them feel getting open to the world.
H18+: Bollywood stands for an India in change, but still keeping its pride.

Codes 2 times grounded
H23++: Bollywood is seen as becoming more like Hollywood.
H23a++: Bollywood is seen as changing for the better on its own.
H16a++: western represents individual freedom.

H23a+: Bollywood is seen as changing for the better on its own.