

# **Critical Geopolitics and the Construction of Security in South Asia**

by

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**To my dad...**

**[Marhum Ali Ahmed Talukder]**

**Yes! I did it...**

## **Abstract**

*The study demonstrates how the security of the south Asian region, specifically within the context of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, is an epistemological question. This is especially so in how cultural and political identities are structured, how the politics and power nexus works in the region by distinguishing 'We' and 'They', and in how hegemonic power is a concern in establishing any security concept in the region. The thesis examines contemporary discourses of identity, danger, threat, and imagined community as part of a broader discussion of critical geopolitics, specifically popular geopolitics. Discourse analysis acts as a method for studying how identities are formed and transformed in a historical context, how danger and threats are securitized and how 'the other' is used to construct security concepts from South Asian perspectives. Foreign policies and security narratives are not only indispensable for examining South Asian security concepts; images and other forms of representation are also important in shaping the patterns of security, identity, security integration and social order. Popular culture and visual media, such as films and cartoons, are deeply rooted in geopolitical discourse. They can reinforce or contest geopolitical images and representations, and are able to provide a framework for interpreting and understanding geo-historical and contemporary events. Visual media are involved with learning and social mobilization and they may influence and inspire national and regional institutions to reshape the traditional structure of security in the South Asian region. The study seeks to rethink the discourses of security community and regional security integration from a critical perspective, laying down an analysis of critical security approaches to show that a broader security agenda necessitates the inclusion of various dimensions (economic, environmental, military and societal aspects) for the South Asian region. Finally, the research contributes to the field of the geographical dimensions of security emphasizing that the role of popular geopolitics is indispensable to understanding the essentially contested concept of security in South Asia.*

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## Abbreviations

AASU	All Assam Students Union
ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
AL	Awami League
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BGB	Border Guard Bangladesh
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist party
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
BSF	Border Security Force
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CBM	Confidence-Building Measures
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CASREM	Central Asia-South Asia Regional Market
CCYM	Chiring Chapori Yuva Morcha
CERN	Centre for European Nuclear Research
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CSH	Centre de Sciences Humaines
CSS	Critical Security Studies
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EEC	Essentially Contested Concept
ESC	European Security Community
EU	European Union
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
IDSAs	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

IPSC	Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOZP	Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
LAS	League of Arab States
LDCs	Least Developing Countries
LOCs	Line of Controls
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur/Southern Common Market
MG	<i>The Milli Gazette</i>
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM	National Commission for Minorities
NCR	National Capital Region
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NRI	Non-Resident Indians
OAS	Organizations of American States
OAU	Organization of African Union
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RCD	Regional Cooperation for Development
RSCT	Regional Security Complexes Theory
RSS	Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	South African Development Community
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Agreement
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
TOI	<i>The Times of India</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WOT	War on Terror
ZOPEAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Prelude: Setting the Scene

Since gaining independence in 1947, the South Asian region has witnessed numerous deadly wars, ethnic hostility, communal violence, terror attacks and insurgencies. Countries of the Sub-continent (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) still consider each other as ‘enemy other,’ and this notion of ‘enemy other’ or ‘we’ and ‘they’ has fostered violent terrorism and political instability in the region such that internal and external security has become a contentious issue with regard to the pursuit of development, peace and stability. The Sub-continent has appeared inclined towards continuous struggle with internal attacks, strife and security problems. In many cities, malls, bazaars, mosques, temples, churches, schools, hospitals, public gatherings, congregations and villages are frequently devastated by terror attacks.

The welfare of the South Asian region mainly depends upon an understanding of the complex history and legacy of conflict and contradiction among the South Asian nations. The existing public and civil institutions, military establishments, the political elites, leading social actors and civil societies apparently contribute little to the establishment of democratic norms, economic potential and security facets in the region. As such, states of the South Asian region, particularly the Sub-continent have emerged from the shared experience of forging a united movement against British rule in which people of all colours and races launched their agitation against the British, and finally won the battle to establish their own countries under the Two Nations Theory—India and Pakistan.

The location of Bangladesh in the Sub-continent is strategically important as it is surrounded by India on the north, west and east as well the Bay of Bengal and Burma (Myanmar) on the south and southeast respectively. The relationship of Bangladesh with India has been

fluctuating since its emergence in 1971 although India was a key partner to assist in its independence war. There are a lot of mutual tensions and long-standing disputes between Bangladesh and India including maritime and land boundary delimitation, erection of barbed wire fencing by India across the border of Bangladesh, its Farakka Dam that diverts much needed water from Bangladesh, and several enclave disputes across the borders of two countries. These alarming situations also increase tensions that might deteriorate the regional stability and peace at any time. In addition, Bangladesh had been a part of Pakistan and a nine-month devastating war occurred between the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan in 1971 against the atrocities and massive economic deprivation the latter committed against the former. Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Most of the South Asian scholars believe that the security concept of the region is centered between the ‘Narrowers’ and ‘Wideners’; the former, consisting mostly of neo-realists and neo-classical realists, believe in military aggression against any threats; and the latter consisting of a mix of liberal institutionalists, post-modernists, constructivists, social feminists and ecological socialists, advocate for issues affecting the individual and the communities at large (Tharu, 2007:84-5). In a narrower sense, the concept of security focuses principally on the issue of how states think about the use of force. Thus a fixed and narrow military definition of security, as the threat and use of force, is a product of a particular historical and political practice. Both sides of the debate have taken place in the 1980s and 1990s. Constructivists believe that security is socially constructed with a role of norms i.e. “shared expectations about appropriate or legitimate behavior by actors with particular identity” (McDonald, 2008:63). They also see security as “a site of negotiation and contestation in which actor compete to define the

identity and values of a particular group in such a way as to provide a foundation for political action” (McDonald, 2008:63). The central contribution of the Copenhagen School is the concept of ‘securitization’, which was first outlined by Wæver in 1995. “More specifically, securitization may be defined as a process in which an actor declares a particular issue, dynamic or actor to be an existential threat to a particular referent object” (Ibid.:69).

The study makes a connection between critical geopolitics and geo-histories to explain how geopolitical writings, geographical representations, popular geopolitics and geographical imaginations shape and construct the security discourses of the region. To date, geographical scholarship and critical geopolitical analysis have not articulated South Asian security issues extensively. Only a few geopolitical scholars have examined South Asian themes in a different way. Some, such as Sanjay Chaturvedi (1996; 1998; 2003; 2001) and Klaus Dodds (1997), have explored a few key issues on the Indian Ocean and South Asian matters.

My study employs a research methodology on discourse analysis conducted and undertaken by Klaus Dodds (1997), Jason Dittmer (2005a; 2007; 2010), Joanne Sharp (1996; 2000), James Sidaway (2002), Gertjan Dijink (1996; 1998) and Merje Kuus (2007; 2010). In the discourse analysis, I have examined political scripts, geopolitical representations, and geopolitical coding (practical geopolitics), views of scholars, academics and NGO leaders including grassroots opinions (formal geopolitics), and cartoons and films (popular geopolitics) to construct a security concept of South Asia. Each of the branches of critical geopolitics are interlinked to each other and work to construct any concept of geopolitics, say security, nation or imagined community or culture, especially in the Sub-continent.

In discourse analysis, we must know the history of space, political processes, narratives of statecraft and regional and international political game. The products of meanings, by

discourse analysis and empirical evidence, given to the world system are understood in the context of how the world political order is organized geographically and how society specifies its policy to the national regional and world order. Foreign policies and security narratives are not only indispensable for examining South Asian security concepts; images and other forms of representation (popular geopolitics, popular culture and visual media) are also important in shaping the patterns of security, identity and social order. Thus, popular culture such as films and cartoons are deeply rooted with popular geopolitics and can reinforce or contest geopolitical images and or representations. I discuss how media i.e. films (some Indian movies such as *Lagaan*, *Earth* and *Sarfarosh* on the partition and some on others on recent wars between India and Pakistan) and some specific recent cartoons (from *The Times of India* and *The Milli Gazette of New Delhi*, India) can help shape the ways in which particular political events and or processes are represented and interpreted.

I explain the geopolitical discourse of the Sub-continental security to demonstrate how the security of the South Asian region, specifically within the context of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, is an epistemological question especially with regard to how cultural and political identities are structured and how the politics and power nexus work in the region by distinguishing the ‘We’ and ‘They’, and how hegemonic power, especially the role of India, is a threat to its neighbours and remains an obstacle to establish a concerted security perception in the region. This study contributes to the study of the geographical dimensions of security, emphasizing that the role of popular culture in particular is indispensable to understanding *the essentially contested concept* of security from a South Asian perspective.

The research explores how popular culture is used as a means of communication between peoples, communities and social and political elites. How do learning processes play a critical

role in redefining and reinterpreting societal realities? The study suggests that visual media has a great role to play in contributing to the creation of knowledge, social learning and mobilization. Social interaction and societal exchanges can bring people closer such that collective and shared ideas spread to different communities in a regional setting. Through discourse analysis, my study builds up some geopolitical narratives in terms of security and identity to explore various unexamined geopolitical dimensions to produce knowledge in terms of the practice of statecraft and the power of the state. “Geography is never a natural, non-discursive phenomenon which is separate from ideology and outside politics...rather, geography as a discourse is a form of power-knowledge itself” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992:192; cf. Foucault, 1980; Ó Tuathail, 1989). Thus, my doctoral research project explicitly answers the following question: How do geographical arguments construct security narratives in South Asia?

### **1.3 Approach and Methodology**

The study largely deals with two main types of qualitative research: the oral (primarily interview-based) and the textual (written texts, documentary, films, cartoons). In seeking qualitative data, I prepared a questionnaire which did not aim to determine the attitudes and opinions of respondents but to identify the logic of their responses, differentiating the objectivity or subjectivity of their comments, and to explore how these connect to the structures, concepts and themes of my study (Creswell, 1994:145). I have collected data through interviews with key informants and focus groups. I have also used open-ended questionnaires which are less structured. They invite respondents to share their understandings, experiences and opinions. Unlike closed questions, open-ended questions demonstrate an alternative interpretation and they reveal people’s potential, their experiences and understandings that address two fundamental questions that Sayer (1992) advocates for qualitative research: “what are individuals’ particular

experiences of places and events; and how are social structures constructed, maintained or resisted” (Sayer, 1992:152). Recognizing the constructive nature of interviews, I have followed Holstein and Gubrum’s (1995:5) *Active Interview* approach in which interviews are “interpretively active, implicating meaning-making practices on the part of both interviewers and respondents.” The authors state that all interviews carry a constructive and discursive trend analyzing retrospective interpretations to remove the constraints from the interview. This approach is consistent with the paradigm of my interviews.

I interviewed scholars, academics, and NGO (Non-Government Organization) personnel of various well-known research institutes and think-tanks of the Sub-continent working on regional security, democracy and development. Most of the scholars I have interviewed belong to different fields of social sciences such as Political Science, International Relations, Military Science, Economics and Sociology, and all of their studies are mostly involved with regional security integration, transborder terrorism, economic relations, border disputes and conflict resolution. My interviews with academics, scholars and researchers are mainly focused on South Asian transborder security, security integration issues, transborder relations and the role of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

It was a bit difficult to locate and talk to the Indian scholars; some of them gave me an appointment but didn’t show up and some promised to call me back and never did. Some of the academics requested me to send prescribed questionnaire to them but they never replied following repeated queries through emails. One prominent scholar intended to see me for an interview and gave me time but he flew to Singapore without informing me while I was in the capital. Instead, in reply to my email he told me to go to Singapore to interview him (how

funny!!!). These are a few experiences, among others, I want to mention here to explain the colonial attitudes of the scholars of the region.

The selection of interviewees proceeded in three ways: first, I identified policy makers and strategists related to various public or private security research organizations of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan along with other national, regional and international groups. Second, the selection of potential contributors took place through literature reviews and different South Asian journals and newspapers. I contacted most of the interviewees earlier before I arrived in India, although I was assisted by the management of the Centre de Sciences Humaines, New Delhi to find some reputed scholars in New Delhi. Third, I felt that the views of the security scholars and academics was not enough to understand the concept of security, rather I would need to explore the views of the common people. Given this scenario, I talked with and interviewed a collection of grassroots—mostly poor, illiterate, vendors, farmers and a few school teachers along the borders of Bangladesh and India. These common people represent a vast section of the population who are segregated by the demarcation, and most of them are living across the international borderline and unfortunately cannot see each other's families. These are the people who I believe are the eyewitnesses of the irregularities and wrongdoing across the borders as they are all aware of how people cross the border illegally and how contraband items, drugs and other substances are marketed in the border areas.

The present system of politics in both Bangladesh and India are mostly urban-based and rural people, especially borderlands populations, are ignored in most cases. All political meetings and public gatherings take places most of the time in cities, districts and sub-district towns. The people living across the border have their own political and social views but they are not reflected in the national politics. Individuals who live and act in society, they need to be heard in

a democratic society. Given this scenario, I interviewed a representative section of the borderlands across the borders of both countries from a commitment to put more importance on the various viewpoints from which grassroots people can be heard. I feel that they should not be underestimated or ignored in defining security and the construction of regional security integration. I believe that the interviews have a dynamic relationship with the study to explain and engage critical encounter with scholarly views on security paradigm of South Asia. This approach does not examine mass population of the communities but often analyze from the perspective of (a) what do they understand about security of borders; (b) what does it mean for the political establishment of the region; (c) can such views be often ignored in respect of the construction of security; and (d) can such voices reach to a collective voice.

Border security also primarily needs support from the people who live across the borders and it needs a mass-level unity to construct borders. Here I have first examined what are main concerns about the border and how do they see the border? To understand geographically contiguous border communities and how they identify differences and similarities in politically-sensitive border lines and how they perceive their identity and specifically, how they construct their identity in relation to cross-community, cross-region and trans-national immigration and emigration infrastructure. I have realized that the views of the grassroots people can shape the border narratives of the South Asian region, and their experiences of socio-political change can add a new dimension to the security concepts of the region. It would work as a tool to shape the attitude of the citizens of the respective countries and the political elites about the demarcated or overlapping cultural and administrative spaces of the regional borderland. These whole bunches of interviews with the grassroots people reflect the way each of the communities across the border think of themselves and about their neighbours in border discourses. The interviews

reveal their liberal views about the borderlands and their post-colonial anxieties and uncertainties.

In the interviews I have also included a plethora of views from some second generation immigrants (grad and undergrad students) who feel proud to be Indian but still their parents didn't get any recognition or assimilated properly in the community. Sometime the second generation, especially the young girls are tortured, raped and humiliated in the locality due to identity crisis as their parents came from Bangladesh. Most of the families migrated to India in 1960s or early 1970s to their relatives and kin after the liberation war of Bangladesh, and their young generation who are born and brought up in India seemed to struggle more with the identity than middle aged or old people in the locality or elsewhere. I am not claiming that the interviews of the border people do represent the whole scenario of the borderlands but I am pretty sure that border communities from three side of Bangladesh (Bangladesh is surrounded by the Indian territory except the Bay of Bengal) will feel in the same way. The views of the grassroots people can be incorporated into the border narratives of the region and thus it is very important to recognise their understandings of who they were and who they are now and from where they had come from.

I should highlight why I look at certain areas to interview the grassroots people while there are other places too to talk to the people to take their opinion. I have researched about these locations and I found that these particular places were socially, economically and culturally integrated and people before the partition used to work there, shop there, organise community events and above all, they had close social ties and involvement for centuries. The pattern of the settlement of both sides remained the same throughout the years of partition: they largely depend for living on agro-economies, mostly people live on paddy and vegetable lands. I have

categorized the grassroots interviewees into three age categories i.e. older generation category from 60 to 80; middle age category from 34 to 42; and young age category from 20 to 22. Among them 22 per cent are female. I have interviewed them in various locations such as south-east of Bangladesh (Karimganj, Sylhet district), north-west of Bangladesh (Bhurugamari, Kurigram), Dinhata subdivision, Koch Bihar of West Bengal, India and some important parts of New Delhi.

I have also interviewed some old people (of first generation i.e. who were affected by the partition) from various groups such as tailors and a retiree from a private firm and their narrations are full of horror and violence during and after the partition. This, for instance, would put a variation between the narratives of young and old generations. The old people are more experienced and much informed about the events that made them segregated from their own home as they migrated to the place of their faith and religion. Their experiences often become a narrative structure about the colonial rule, the agony of being colonized and again to be engaged in post-colonial trauma and trajectory. The older generations are the source of history and they facilitate and frame history for the generations to come.

These interviews construct narratives for security and regional integration for the South Asian region and an analysis of border and security narratives that can be cognitive and symbolic for the geopolitical codes and foreign policy perspectives of the respective countries. Although the interviews are not unified but contain shifting and contradictory messages which can easily be articulated within the imaginations of borderless transnational society. They reflect geopolitical awareness of the grassroots people and a sense of collective nationhood that can ease a process of unification among the communities as well as a way of intergroup relations and community formation.

Most of the common people do not like to use their full names; rather they prefer to use their nicknames or their professions in the interviews. I didn't prepare any questionnaires for them, opting instead to personally note down some core questions concerning security and border trespassing. The respondents do not belong to the same categories; most of them are day labourers and farmers. Realizing possibilities of harassment, maltreatment and abuse from the local administration, I simply conversed with them and whatever words I found most important I wrote down with their permission. They requested to be anonymous in the interview due to fears of physical and or mental abuse in the future from local administrations or political parties.

I have watched more than hundred Indian movies for the study. I have bought CDs of the Bollywood movies from Danforth and Gerrard markets (little India) of Toronto and some of them from Ottawa and Montreal. Each CD costs from Can \$1 to \$1.50. In addition, I have also watched some movies on the YouTube and satellite broadcast with English sub-tittle. Some most notable movies I have also watched on the big screen in Ottawa with a circle of my community friends and families. Most of the movies I have watched were on various categories and genres ranging from love triangles, romance, comedy, tragedy, community fight, national and transnational war, melodrama, family ties, politics, corruption, lesbianism, feminism, kidnapping, trafficking of women, prostitution, religion, historical myths, various past rulers of India, environment, horror, ghosts, devils, national unity, community, patriotism to collective values.

I have tried to find out some geopolitical concepts on community, nation, region, identity, collective values in these movies as well geo-historical background from the British rule to the present era. I have repeatedly watched these movies into my leisure period, especially during the night and mostly in the weekend. I used to write down the dialogues, the role of characters,

narratives, discourses, metaphors and symbolism. I observed the setting and the background of movie, imagery, the inner meaning, satire, lampoon, history, reality, fantasy, myths, national vision and cultural articulation.

I am aware of how these movies define spaces, political concepts, resistance, people's struggle, political vision and post-colonial anxieties. I have tried to evaluate how the messages of film circulate to the mass population, political elites, and how the spectators visualize the meaning of films and how they contextualise the theme. I didn't overlook the ambiguities, tensions and interpretations of the history in their own way rather I have checked the reality of the history from books and other print materials.

I am mostly concerned with exploring the relationship between cinema and nationhood, between cinematic collective values as communities and geopolitical imaginary, between state-centric micro-level politics and larger communities' macro-level political struggle. To understand the South Asian geopolitical trends, societal practices of the region and the South Asianess of the collective populations of the region, I have divided the colonial and post-colonial era (more than 200 years) into three phases i.e. pre-independence/colonial period (the British rule), post-colonial era (pro-independence era) and past two decades (1990-2012) of the Sub-continent. I have found that these three movies, *Lagaan*, *Earth* and *Sarfarosh*, perfectly represent about a 200 year of geopolitical history and background of the Sub-continent and somehow they explain the causes of the political upheaval in the region, hatred, love, amity and enmity .

If we look at some of the issues of the movies such as the setting, illusions of motion, continuity of the episodes, narratives, stories, disseminating of the ideas, sequences of images and portrayal of protagonists, it impeccably creates a live landscape of the events that took place over the two hundred years in the region. I have explained that *Lagaan* epitomizes the

antagonism and aggression British rulers did to the people of the region. It is a portrayal of the periods of pre-independence and colonial era, while *Earth* and *Sarfarosh* represent the post-colonial era and the decades of 1990 to 2012 respectively.

Film influences millions of people by way of working as a civic tool to make people understand their legacy, and societal and political environment and also creates awareness and discourse in political and foreign policy strategies. For example, Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), not only creates a popular opinion on global warming worldwide but it also works as a discourse on the issue of environmental disaster. Similarly, Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* takes a critical look on the controversy surrounding the attacks on 9/11 and the US administration's hidden agenda on the Middle East. The film is recognized globally and has been functioning as a discourse for global hegemony and injustices of US policing over numerous international political issues.

There might be a question: why do I select these three movies among the thousands of Indian films? The answer is very simple as they represent and connect a geopolitical legacy of two hundred years of human rights abuses and tyranny of the British regime, the epic tales of the partition of the subcontinent under the Two Nations Theory and the killing and bloodshed following independence, and a detailed landscape of how the Pakistani intelligence wing allegedly creates chaos and confusion, terror attacks, violence and hostility on the soil of India. These three movies have been playing an eyewitness role with regard to past and present geopolitical anecdotes and can be understood in terms of popular geopolitics, the construction of discourse and the building of an imagined community.

Indian movies have dominated popular culture and national identity by examining various transitions and conflicts in the socio-cultural and political arena for over a century. These

movies ultimately reflect a more inclusive Indian plural society under the premise of an imagined community/nation discussing past and present events through the personal experience of contemporary characters in a way that provides the audience with a better understanding of India's past and colonial legacies while constructing discourses of unity and brotherhood despite the hatred and mistrust rooted in the minds of Indians over the last couple of centuries.

I did not select Bangladeshi and Pakistani movies because they are not as popular in the Sub-continent and their audiences are limited within the regional boundary. On the contrary, Indian movies have transcended the physical geography of India and established a market in the South Asian region and beyond. Gradually, Indian movies, especially on video have dominated the region and most of the families of Bangladesh and Pakistan are fond of watching Indian movies regularly.

As a form of popular culture and geopolitics, cartoons demonstrate a popular conscience and mass opinion to uphold the national interest and territorial integrity and engage in protest in cases where human rights violations have occurred or any undemocratic activities are pressed by state mechanisms. I have used cartoons to explain the political environment of India, political actions of Indian liberal, secular and conservative (extreme right) parties, political elites and other segments of the dominant class. Cartoons have a tremendous impact on people's mind in respect of religious, political and social issues. Through analyzing the selected cartoons, I will show how popular culture constructs discourses in state mechanisms and how political elites react to these cartoons by changing their attitudes and policies in order to keep their popularity and reputation in domestic and national politics.

There might be a question about why should I select cartoons in my study instead of other genres of popular cultures and social communications such as television, movies, photography

and painting. The answer is that cartoons manipulate people's view very fast and they have become more pervasive in social communication. Cartoons are well-known cultural symbols to enhance social awareness in humorous ways. They are more serious in tone and act as a visual metaphor and encourage looking at society critically.

I have selected two newspapers of India—*The Times of India* (TOI), a liberal English daily and *The Milli Gazette* (MG), a bi-weekly tabloid newspaper representing Indian Muslims, to analyse the political cartoons covering a period of three to four years—2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The reasons behind the selection of these two newspapers is to understand and explain two different extreme streams of opinion and views i.e., from a right wing affiliation to a secular liberal outlook. There are thousands of local, regional and national newspapers in India and each has its own agenda and objective. But I find these two newspapers especially contrasting and different in their analysis of their contents as MG has been campaigning for the empowerment and emancipation of the Muslims while TOI is liberal and regarded as the 8<sup>th</sup> largest selling newspapers in any language in the World. I intend to highlight different and contrasting views of both newspapers, from a right wing affiliation to a secular and liberal outlook. With these cartoons, I will show how this type of popular culture constructs discourses in state mechanisms and how political elites react to these cartoons by changing their methods and policies in order to keep citizens under control.

I have emphasized data from articles, debates, minutes of various meetings and summits, reports of some research commissions, seminar and workshop reports and panel discussions. As part of archive research on the topic, I used various resource centers including the libraries of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi; Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH), New Delhi; Institute of Peace and Conflict

Studies (IPCS), New Delhi; Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi; SAARC Documentation Centre, New Delhi; the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka; BRAC Resource Centre, Dhaka; and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka. I also use various websites, newspapers, annual reports and other tools to explain my arguments. In addition, I consulted with some renowned journals from North America, Europe and Asia (specifically, South Asia).

This research comprises case studies, discourse analysis, a literature review, historical events and interview data in an attempt to go beyond the “imagined box” of political process and politics across national, regional and international settings and structure. Each case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary political processes and statecraft while addressing the historic dimensions inherent in the security discourse in South Asia. The case studies represent different categories of security and identity. For each case study, I have conducted a comprehensive literature review of peer reviewed data or information issued by a recognized publishing house or institute. In addition to this literature, I review and explain arguments and debates of geopolitical scholars and security analysts, and in each case I discuss security issues and geopolitical aspects. Moreover, the themes of the case studies are connected to national and regional identity, security and threats. According to Oga (2004), there are some specific functions of case studies: a) some case studies highlight a specific and particular dramatic observation; b) some studies demonstrate or disprove theoretical hypotheses; and c) some need to be selected to anticipate variation such as intergovernmental discourse, exclusion and enclosure discourse and cultural discourse. Another dimension of the analysis is a comparative method, which involves “descriptive interpretations of numerous empirical phenomena [that] show the significant similarities and differences among a group of selected

cases” (Oga, 2004:296). These case studies will underscore the cross-cultural discourses, asymmetrical power relationships, and representations, as well as political and social structures.

Since the goal of the study is to better understand the importance of long-term security in South Asia and harmonious relations between the countries of the region, two strategies have been employed to study the security narratives and regional security model: *a) the examination of geo-historical background* and *b) discourse analysis*. The connection between critical geopolitics and geo-histories constitutes the backbone of this study in order to explain how geopolitical writings; geographical representations, popular geopolitics and the geographical imagination shape and construct the discourses of the region. I have identified some key incidents such as war, the Two Nations Theory, as well as division and demarcation, which are all essential to building a better understanding of the causes of enmity and hostility between and among the countries of the Sub-continent.

I contend that discourse analysis should be included in the canon of approaches in regional security studies. Discourse analysis mainly addresses three methodological tasks: a) to read a wide range of discursive information materials ranging from “official and unofficial documents, public speeches, surveys, newspapers in order to observe the evolution of discourse”; b) to interpret and examine “how political and social forces articulate particular discourses according to theoretical framework”; and c) “to evaluate an entire discursive formation with reference to material structure” (Ibid.:294-295; cf. Buzan et al.,1998). Thus, this study provides a method for understanding how contemporary critical geopolitical thinking works, how security discourses and narratives are designed and constructed, how social learning through popular culture and visual media are important to construct discourses for establishing norms and particular ideas on a security community, how peace and development can come together to

eliminate racial conflicts in the South Asian region, and how regional countries can respect each other and share knowledge and resources for greater security cooperation.

I will address the regional security integration, or imagined security community or interstate security relationship from different perspectives: first, in terms of how geographers understand and explain the concept of security in contemporary international relations; second, in terms of how geographers might best study regional security concepts and how popular geopolitics and popular culture contribute to foreign policy and geopolitical reasoning; and third, in terms of the possible ways in which regional security integration has contributed, or might contribute to, critical geopolitics and international relations more broadly. This study seeks to rethink the discourses of regional security from a critical perspective, laying down an analysis of critical security approaches to show that a broader security agenda necessitates the inclusion of various dimensions. Considering the arguments and representation used in the construction of security and the role of popular media, the study attempts to achieve the following specific aims and objectives:

a) It presents a critique of security concepts building upon the discourse analysis in the South Asian region and the Sub-continent itself;

b) It explains how identity, danger and threat can be examined through the popular media and how popular media can enhance social learning, a mechanism of increasing awareness among the mass population, political elites and social institutes/organizations to promote an imagined community/security community;

c) It develops a geographical thinking to construct security defining identity, threat and danger from the perspective of the South Asian region as well as to question the causes of the regional insecurity to help constitute an alternative approach;

d) It examines contemporary discussions of geopolitical representation, identity (We versus They), danger and threat and imagined community under a broader discussion of Critical Geopolitics and International Relations as well; and

e) Finally, it discusses key concepts of popular geopolitics central to critical approaches of security narratives to think differently about the future geographical study of regional security in the South Asian region.

The thesis is organized into ten chapters. Chapter 1 briefly highlights the research question and methodology elaborating on the linkages between popular geopolitics and discourse analysis in producing a geopolitical concept of security in South Asia. The question discusses the geographical dimensions of security to suggest that the role of popular culture is indispensable to understand the *essentially contested concept* of security from a South Asian perspective. Chapter 2 sets out a prelude to imagine and reframe the geopolitical map of the South Asian region along with the causes and objects of territorial demarcation of the Sub-continent, the influence of the Two Nations Theory, the emergence of Bangladesh, and the geopolitical triangle crisis between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. It presents a brief discussion of the 60-year history of geopolitical chaos and climax, including deadly war and skirmishes of the Sub-continent, highlights the basic political structure of the region as well as regional and global trends in aspects of security, threat and dangers.

Chapter 3 shifts the emphasis to an analysis of how popular geopolitics produces popular (common) sense among the different nations and communities, highlighting in particular a concept of identity—‘We’ and ‘They’ in constructing security in the region. As such, imagination, as a part of critical geopolitics, is advanced as the best tool to construct any community in a given place or region. The chapter defines security concepts, specifically

security community/complex theories from various conceptual contexts of debates and critiques. Focusing on the theory of audience, the chapter also discusses that popular culture can promote a phenomenon for political elites, institutes, organizations and civil societies as a means of communication between peoples, communities and the state itself.

Chapter 4 introduces the growth and genesis of geopolitics, outlining some of the most important concepts and trends of the field making linkages between geography, security and uncertainty. It briefly discusses the ongoing politics of the South Asian regional security concept, highlighting the fundamental structures of security communities of the world. Chapter 5 analyzes the basic concepts of popular geopolitics, outlining how popular geopolitics/popular culture is an integral part of a broader literature of critical geopolitics. It explains the importance of discourse analysis as a method, specifically focusing on the process of identity formation as one of the major themes of discourse analysis in critical geopolitics.

Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 define four fundamental concepts of critical geopolitics i.e. Geopolitical Representations of Codes, Identity and Boundary, Danger and Threat and 'Imagined Community'. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the terminology of the concept or perspective as seen through the prism of various aspects of critical geopolitics and South Asian security perspective. Each chapter features a case study introducing ideas from critical geopolitics including popular culture/media or popular geopolitics, which highlights how various critical approaches provide a better understanding of numerous aspects of discourse analysis within the range of security threats of the South Asian region. In these chapters there are plenty of references to geopolitical codes, popular culture, identity and border narratives, and how popular culture has been integrated with critical geopolitics to construct security in the South Asian perspective. These chapters examine how geographical knowledge

constructs discourses to understand security and identity debates to define South Asian security narratives.

The Concluding Chapter focuses to include economic, environment, military, and societal factors to construct South Asian security paradigms in the region. It provides an outline of the basic trends of security studies and reiterates that security studies should not be confined to International Relations. The chapter ends with a call for further research to develop a better understanding of the use of critical geopolitical concepts in interpreting new social media such as Facebook, blogs and twitters in the analysis of security issues in the South Asian region. How do popular media/popular culture reshape and construct security concepts through the adoption of social learning to translate the interests of the political elites, institutions of foreign policies and mass population of the region?

## **Chapter 2: Geopolitics and South Asia**

### **2.1 Framing an “Imagined Region” of South Asia**

The contemporary geographical literature has considered South Asia as a “geographically discrete region” (Ayoob, 1999) surrounded by natural barriers, oceans, mountains and forests. But various embodied and embedded narratives have shaped the regional perception, transborder relations and collective memory of the South Asian region. Lewis and Wigen (1997) note the derogatory Eurocentric regional nomenclature that considers South Asia “Sub-continent’. The legacy of the British regime, post-colonial anxiety and insecurities, and mostly the Two Nations Theory have shaped and reshaped the people’s memory and imagination. The identity of the region has been constructed ideally by the political elites, but identity is a construction of political and social processes, something given and fragmented (Hall, 1996). Malkki (1992:47) has rightly said, “identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorisation by others... [it] is a creolized aggregate composed through bricolage.” The ‘imagined region’ of South Asia is constituted by particular processes and practices such as cartography, geography, language, culture, religion, historical specificity, transborder economy and geopolitics, not only by universal timeless fixed entities (Singh, 2001; Lewis and Wigen, 1997).

But the framing of any region depends on the interest of the framers, geopolitical players and stakeholders, and is a normative political exercise to serve specific goals and objectives. The construction of the South Asian region is a product of ‘power-knowledge nexus’ in which different regional and global political actors are engaged in order to manage and control the

region for their benefit and interest. Hence, we cannot ignore the importance of cartography to divide the region where geography plays an important role.

Geopolitics is also a strategic mechanism that can formulate a region. Buzan and Wæver's (2003) concept of a South Asian Sub-Complex is the best example how geopolitics and world order divide the region and frame a regional geopolitical order. Explaining the distinctiveness of the region, Cohen (2009: 348) notes that "South Asia is a distinct geopolitical region, separated from surrounding realms and regions by nature, culture, social differences, politics, and to a considerable extent, religion" (Cohen, 2009:348). Before Buzan and Wæver, Saul Bernard Cohen (1963), a political geographer, defined the South Asian region. He claimed that "the concept of South Asia as an independent geopolitical region separated from surrounding strategic realms and their regional subdivisions was first advanced by this writer [Cohen himself] in 1963." He argues that "while South Asia is not, and never was, a completely unified geopolitical region, it is a distinct geographical region, possessing many cultural and human similarities and separated from the rest of Asia" (Cohen, 2009:330).

The region has some extraordinary qualities since long and "it can be neither dominated by Great Powers nor absorbed into adjoining geopolitical frameworks, although Pakistan and Myanmar, on the region's western and eastern margins, respectively, have strong links with the bordering geopolitical region" (Ibid.:348). But still great powers are included in decision making processes and policies, making plans to hold strategic resources, facilitating trade business and investment for their own benefit. Accordingly, great powers are doing the same thing in the South Asian region.

China and Myanmar are excluded from the territorial boundaries of the South Asian region and the Himalayan Mountains work as a demarcation line between South Asia and China. But one may raise a question: If China is not a part of the South Asian region then why the Indo-China border war took place in 1962 which was fought on the ownership of the borderlands by both countries. But the Maldives are included in the South Asian region, which are thousands of miles far away from India. According to some scholars, the South Asian region is culturally framed and the basis of the demarcation of the region is culture. In *Defending India*, Jaswant Singh (1999), the former external and defence minister of India, stated the British India as 'self-contained civilizational areas of the world' (Singh, 2001). The then education minister of India in the 1950s Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1959) in *India wins Freedom* has established that communal harmony and collective culture and shared values are the essence of the population of this Sub-continent. Even the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, describes the tradition of *The Discovery of India* (2004), the Indian Sub-continent boasts of its a 5000 year of cultural history and tradition (Singh, 2001). Still West Bengal and Bangladesh belong to a similar culture in various ways such as the outfits, language, rituals, food habit and folk-tradition. The Punjabis of both India and Pakistan are identical in attire, traditions, food and rituals (except some religious events). The Muslims of Pakistan and the Muslims of India are quite similar in culture, traditions and rituals. There is huge cultural affinity between and among the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Hindus in India. The People of Waziristan, a northwest mountainous region of Pakistan, are closely related with the bordering populations of Afghanistan and the people of both regions speak Pashto, Persian and rarely Urdu. Thus there is some cultural affinity between and among the populations of the South Asian region.

Religion is also one of the factors in the formation of a region. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Maldives are mostly Muslim countries. More than 160 million Muslims also live in India. Hindus also live in Bangladesh and a few Hindus and Sikhs also live in Pakistan. This religious faith can play a greater role in the formation of a region. A religious affinity also remains between Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Almost 70% people of Sri Lanka are Buddhists while the two-thirds of Bhutanese populations are also Buddhists. About 23 percent of the Bhutanese are Hindus who belong to same religion as Indian Hindus. The cultural and religious affinity of Tamil Nadu of India is equal to those of Sri Lanka.

Historical specificity sometimes becomes imperative to form a region. Lewis and Wigen (1997:199) argue that there is no confusion about Pakistan to be a part of South Asia because of “solid historical and cultural reasons, and many Pakistanis would agree with this designation.” They further elaborate that after the rise of fundamentalism and radical groups in Pakistan and frequent tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India, “many Pakistanis now are arguing that their country should be included in the primarily Islamic region centred on Southwest Asia and North Africa. For now, it is perhaps best to regard Pakistan as Janus-faced country, looking both east to South Asia and west to the “Middle East”” (Ibid.:199). Even a few organizations and websites, though they are not famous and popular in both sides of the borders of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India, have been campaigning since long for the reunification of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India. They advocate for a greater Bengal stretching out from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal including Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam of India. Historically these places were together and the British rulers conquered these places in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and put them under the Bengal Presidency, the largest British province in India.

Transborder economic interaction also works as a mechanism to establish a region, such as NAFTA for Canada, Mexico and the USA. South Asia has established its economic network called South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 and opened its borders for its member-states to do trade and business. SAARC consists of the following countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (and Afghanistan joined the SAARC in 2006). The role of the SAARC is to ease trade cooperation among the countries, but still the members face obstacles and complexity to run the business. The trade volume of the countries is less than expected, as noted on the SAARC website. “The total cumulative value of exports under SAFTA has crossed US\$2 billion but is far below the potential” (SAARC, 2013). This trade and businesses are under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) which was signed in January 2004, but it came into force in January 2006. Thus, economic and transborder business relations can play a great role to form a region.

Various western universities have established South Asian research centres and they undertake research on various countries under the name of the South Asia region. For example, the Centre of the South Asian Studies at Cambridge University identifies the South Asian region in the following way: “It is primarily responsible for promoting within the University the study of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the h[H]imalayan Kingdoms and Burma, but has also, over the last twenty years, extended its activities to include Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, the Philippines and Hong Kong.” (CSAS website, 2013). The South Asian Studies at both the University of Toronto and York University, Canada have emphasized the present SAARC countries but the South Asian centres at the University of Michigan, and the University of Virginia include Tibet as one of its member countries while the

Rutgers University and the University of California does not consider the Maldives in the South Asian region.

But it is interesting that Burma was excluded from the South Asian region, while it was a part of the British India and it was included in the Southeast Asian region (Singh, 2001). Here also we find a link of power-knowledge nexus (Ibid.) works. The British ruled the country since 1886 and Rangoon became the capital of the British Burma to link Kolkata (Calcutta) and Singapore. During the World War II, Japan occupied Burma in 1942 and British rule collapsed. In 1944, the Allied forces occupied Burma and Japanese rule ended in July 1945. The exclusion of Burma from South Asia is the result of the interest of the great powers and to include it in the Southeast region by the desire of the western allied forces to regain their colonial empire for strategic planning in the post-colonial period. “The neighbouring countries of Thailand and Burma can be expected to fall under Communist domination if a communist-dominated government controlled Indo-China. The Balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave threat” (Pentagon Papers, 1950:373). As the USA is already in the political intervention of the Southeast region thus it will facilitate to dominate Burma which is ruled by the communist military rulers. And the influence of the domino theory, failure in Vietnam and encountering communism, the USA strategically does not want to see the map of Burma with South Asia. That’s why Burma was erased from the South Asian region.

If we critically examine the various concepts behind the formation of the South Asian region, it can be said that the demarcation of geographical space and giving a particular name to it such as the British India or the Indian Sub-continent as categories in political processes and knowledge systems. The colonial mapping of the Indian-Sub-continent and the British rule in the region were the desire of the Britons who ruled the region. As Edney (1997:3) indicates, “the

creation of British India required the prior acceptance by the British of ‘India’ as signifying a specific region of the earth’s surface.” Thus the formation of the Indian Sub-Continent created by the British from the essence of knowledge of whom to rule, which space to rule and what resource to extract. So it was their imagination to demarcate, delineate, include and exclude the region. Edney further states that the map of the India’s region reflects “a rational and ordered space, that could be managed and governed in a national and ordered manner” (Ibid.:25). The British did demarcate the region through the disciplines of geography, cartography, human culture, political division and natural unity of the region.

Given the above discussion, I believe that Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (only six countries) can be an imagined South Asian community. Because they belong to similar geographical location, and most of the borders of these countries are somehow related to each other. Although Sri Lanka does not have any land boundary with India but it has maritime borders with India to the northwest. These countries have almost same historical backgrounds, and culturally they are similar to each other. In the SAARC the Maldives is included but I don’t see any significance to include the Maldives in the South Asia region as the distance of the Maldives from India is about 2154 km. The reason behind the inclusion of the Maldives in SAARC is to include Muslim population into a regional bloc and the architects to incorporate the country are Bangladesh and Pakistan.

As I have mentioned, Afghanistan has been included in SAARC in 2006 although Afghanistan is very close to Iran and the central Asia or the Gulf countries. It does not fit within the framework of the South Asian region. Earlier the country was excluded on the basis of culture, social taboos, warlords and societal practices and most importantly, its location belongs to Southwest Asia including Iran and Iraq. If we critically analyse both the Maldives and

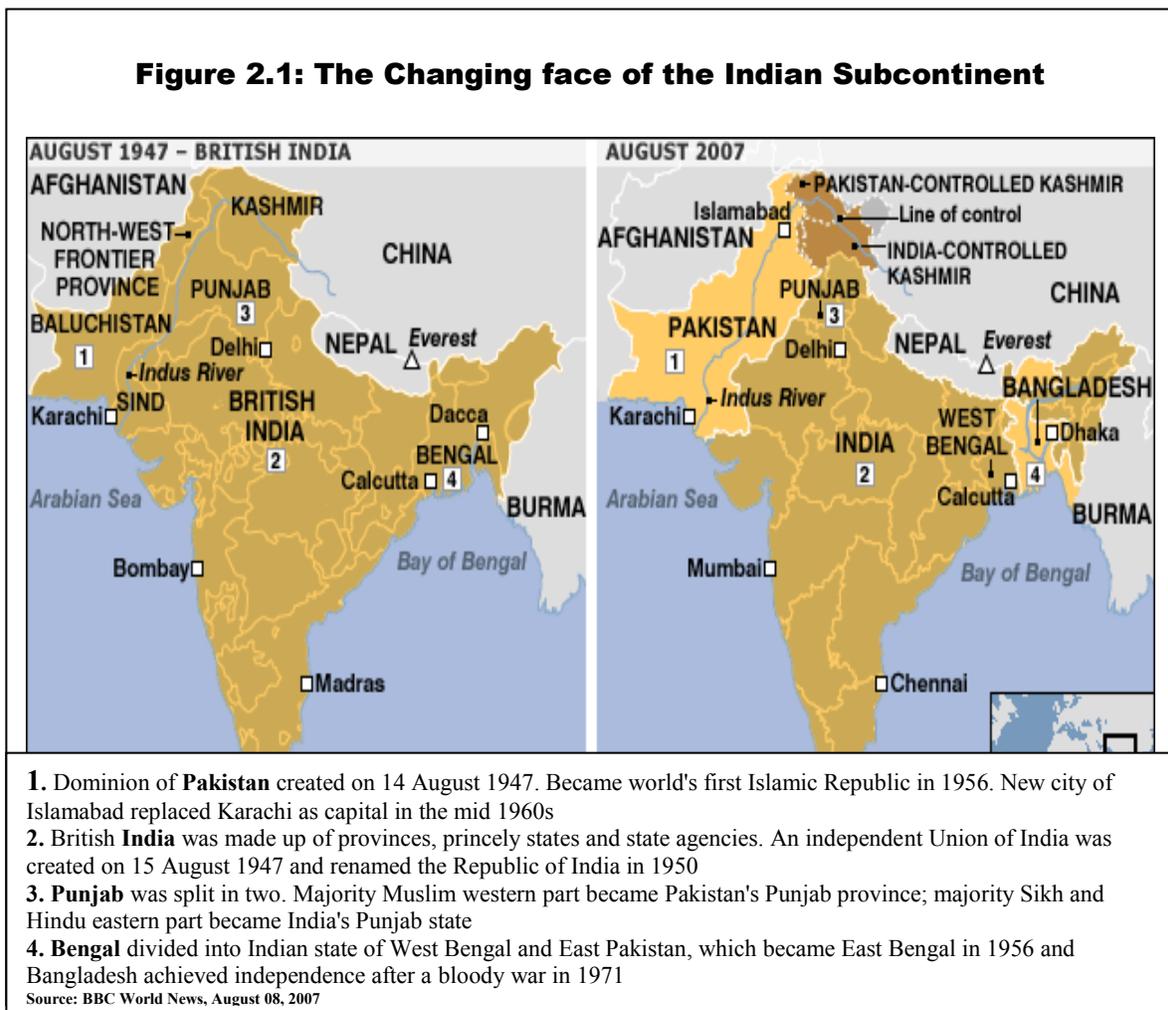
Afghanistan then they cannot be a part of South Asia neither by geographically nor by culturally but they can only be merged as Muslim populated countries in the South Asian region. But Buzan (2000) in his analysis has regarded Afghanistan as an insulator between the Gulf and South Asia, a zone that demarcates South Asia from geopolitical dynamics. I feel that Burma might be included in the South Asian region as some parts of the country is bordered with Bangladesh. In addition, it has historical linkages with the Sub-continent in trade and business and above all, during the British period farmers and labourers of India and Bangladesh used to go to Burma as seasonal workers. In addition, the southern-east part of Bangladesh is related with Rakhine state (formerly Arakan) of Burma and there is cultural and religious affinity with the populations of Cox's Bazar and that of Rakhine Muslim ethnic community.

## **2.2 The Division of the Sub-Continent: A Brief Geopolitical Sketch**

The division of the sub-continent took place after the Second World War, which quickly brought about many global changes—the most important transformation in world affairs being the end of the colonial era and the reemergence of liberty and self-determination in the form of nation-states. The War collapsed Hitler's Reich, eased the emergence of individual nations in Europe and elsewhere, initiated a new system of inter-state integration in Europe and offered hope of political stability and some economic prosperity among nations. After the war, “the Labour Party came to power in Britain and Clement Atlee became Prime Minister with a majority in Parliament after the defeat of Churchill's Conservative Party” (Shailo, 1997:iii). This new government realized it was no longer possible to hold on to British India. “In March 1946, the British Cabinet sent a mission to the sub-continent with the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence, as its leader and Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander as members” (Ibid.:iii). Their findings marked the real beginning of freedom for the Indian sub-continent, and

ultimately led to the creation of the independent countries of Pakistan and India in August 1947. The partition established India and Pakistan under the Two Nations Theory, which today are home to almost 1.3 billion people (i.e. one-fifth of the world's population).

The partition also divided the inheritance of mostly physical and financial assets left by the British regime between India and Pakistan. "Pakistan would get 17.5% of government cash reserves and sterling balances, India the rest, and in return Pakistan would cover 17.5% of the outstanding government debt" (Chapman, 2003:197). The physical assets were divided between the two countries 20 percent to 80 percent respectively, meaning that "the Food and Agriculture



Department's 425 clerk's table would be divided 340 to India and 85 to Pakistan, the 85 large tables divided 68 to India and 17 to Pakistan—and so on for the 850 chairs, 85 officer's chairs, 50 hat pegs, 6 hat pegs with mirrors, 600 inkstands, etc. that were also listed" (Chapman, 2003:197). Other companies such as financial and life insurance institutions who had clients in both countries took several years to divide their assets. One interesting asset division was between libraries and volumes of books as Chapman mentioned that "libraries were divided; in some cases alternate volumes of encyclopedias went to the two inheritors. It is even reputed that English dictionaries were torn down the middle at the letter K" (Chapman, 2003:197).

The separation of the subcontinent has wounded India and Pakistan (Figure 2.1). The division of these two nations theory sowed the seeds of mistrust, jealousy and animosity between Hindus and Muslims, which ultimately led to an unprecedented bloodshed in the world history of ethnic and communal violence (Chadda, 2007). "When the British left in 1947, the subcontinent plunged into large-scale religious violence that took over a million lives and displaced close to 12 million people who trekked to their respective religious homes and safety across the newly created international borders—Hindus to India and Muslims to Pakistan" (Ibid.:137). However, thousands of Muslims remained in various provinces of India clinging to their ancestral home. "The events of 1947 left deep scars and long memories on both sides of the India and Pakistan border" (Ibid.:137). This legacy of hatred fueled several riots in India, most notably the Gujarat Riot in 1992 over the demolition of the Babri mosque, which was allegedly built on a 16<sup>th</sup> century Hindu temple. This riot resulted in the death of more than 2000 innocent Muslims including women and children. "[T]he number of Muslims displaced from their homes and forced into relief camps went up from 50,000 to 100,000 within a few weeks. The Gujarat riots were the worst incidence of communal violence since the partition of India in 1947" (Ibid.:137).

The triangular struggle between the Congress (led by Nehru and other political elites and recognized mainly as the party of Hindus, though some Muslim elites joined the party along with thousands of their followers), the Muslim League (led by Jinnah of Pakistan and other political elites from East Bengal [Bangladesh] and India) and the British regime made it difficult to create a harmonious relationship among stakeholders, as “between the Congress and the League there needed to be accommodation and mutual tolerance” (Chapman, 2003:158). Until now, the following factors had been a source of hatred and mistrust between the two communities: the Two Nations theory, Radcliff’s boundary map for division (especially Bengal including Assam and Punjab), the fate of more than 565 small and large princely states including Jammu and Kashmir, the division of the inheritance and the human displacement from both sides. The legacy of partition turned the subcontinent into a chaotic zone, with conflicts resulting in war, riot, rape, arson, insurgency, political interference and communal instability.

When India appeared on the world map, 11 percent of the population was Muslim whereas Pakistan (formerly West Pakistan) and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) contained 13 and 30 percent of the Hindu and non-Muslim population, respectively (Chapman, 2003). As much as 24 percent of New Delhi’s population in 1951 was refugees from West Pakistan and as many as 2.1 million Hindus from East Pakistan converged in the city of Kolkata (Ibid.). Thousands of poverty stricken Muslims who were living across the frontier line crossed into their new homeland, Pakistan. Urban Muslims from all over India including elites, professionals, businessmen, service holders and rich farmers fled the country and converged in Karachi, the former capital of Pakistan. Those involved in this large-scale pilgrimage from India became known as the “Mohajirs” (Arabic word: meaning immigrants) and later joined the new government and armed forces of Pakistan. A huge section of Muslims (mostly poor) from the

Bihar region of India crossed the Indian border and took refuge in Dhaka a former East Pakistan. But the Bangladesh government didn't accept them as citizens because of their collaboration with the Pakistani armed forces during the Liberation War in 1971. The Biharis are still refugees and have been living in uncertainty for more than four decades in Bangladesh. The OIC (Organizations of Islamic Countries) and other international organizations have put forward a humanitarian appeal to the Government of Bangladesh to consider them as Bangladeshis in their adopted homeland. In addition, the OIC asked Pakistan to take them out of Bangladesh and allow them to return as Pakistani citizens. High level meetings were held in n1980s and 1990s between Bangladesh and Pakistan to solve the problem but Pakistan never reintegrated them into its own society.

Both India and Pakistan remained enemy to each other and after the independence the immediate crisis was the Kashmir issue that put both countries to stand face to face and a chaotic situation in the Sub-continent. Both countries tried to occupy the princely state of Kashmir of the region and it became the principal bone of territorial contention between India and Pakistan soon after the partition. India and Pakistan fought for the formal accession of Kashmir into their own territory. The war between two countries continued until 1949. "The UN resolution of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1948 called for the establishment of a neutral administration, and the holding of a plebiscite to determine whether the state should accede to Pakistan or India" (Chapman, 2003:192). The part of the state occupied and now administered by Pakistan is known as Azad (Free) Kashmir with a population of more than 2.5 million while India's part includes over 8 million people. Relations between India and Pakistan worsened, eventually leading to two more wars over Kashmir in 1965 and 1999. Since 1980, the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir, a mainly Muslim majority, have been fighting against India's rule, and the central government of India has been paying a huge

price, losing its soldiers and paramilitary officers in ambushes and local guerilla fights against Muslim insurgents. By the mid-1980s, tourism, which was considered a major contributor to the economy, had suffered significantly. In 1989, Indian security forces launched a severe crackdown in an attempt to stop local insurgencies. The groups fighting in Kashmir have different visions—some intend to form a union with Pakistan and are allegedly backed by Pakistani intelligence and security forces while others are committed to giving up their lives for independence. The central government of India arranged elections several times- in 1995, 1996, and 1999 in hopes of returning the state to its own administration under federal mechanism, however people responded with violence, intimidation and bloodshed. “Just like Northern Ireland for the British, Kashmir seems an insoluble problem, unless there are major concessions by all sides. Pressure from the outside—the United States, the USSR or Russia, and even the British—on this issue has at times proven counter-productive” (Chapman, 2003:267).

### **2.3 A Geopolitical Division of Pakistan: From “Two to Three” and the Birth of Bangladesh**

Ultimately Pakistan emerged with two Muslim populated zones in the sub-continent, located on opposite sides (eastern and western) of the Indian territory. The distance from East Pakistan to West Pakistan is about 2200 km and the air space and land are connected to Indian soil. The west wing took the lead and ruled both parts of the country. The east saw disparity and inequality in the distribution of wealth and power from the beginning as a small collection of West Pakistani leaders helmed the country as a whole.

In an attempt to attack the culture of the East, the leaders of West Pakistan tried to replace the Bengali language of East Pakistan with Urdu, the language of the west. This was the first seed planted by the West to aggravate the people of the east. About 99% percent of the population of East Pakistan speaks in Bangla. Chapman (2003:204-205) has rightly said, “In

1948 the Constitution Assembly ordained that Urdu together with English, would be lingua franca of Pakistan and would be used in the national assembly. Bengali was excluded as a language from the daily tokens of national identity – the coins, currency notes, postage stamps, of the new Pakistan.” In 1952, people from all walks of life came to the streets of Dhaka, the provincial capital of East Pakistan to defy the declaration of the then government. A massive agitation between the police and the common people including students ensued, resulting in dozens of deaths. These people became “the first martyrs of independence struggle. Language was the first issue to seriously threaten the integrity of the new state” (Chapman, 2003:205). Since February 2000, the United Nations has been observing International Mother Language Day globally on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February recognized this unprecedented sacrifice of the Bengali people. “The date represents the day in 1952 when students demonstrating for recognition of their language, Bangla, as one of the two national languages of the then Pakistan, were shot and killed by police in Dhaka, the capital of what is now Bangladesh” (UN website, 2012).

The stark reality is that most members of the ministerial cabinet and central administration were chosen from West Pakistan thus ignoring the interests of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and crippling its development. The new country was under military rule from the beginning while development largely took place in the west wing. The west started its campaign of suppression and exploitation, initiating intimidation tactics and threats against the east. This constant trend of abuse made East Pakistanis more agitated, which ultimately culminated in demonstrations, strikes, and protests. The east launched its own political movements, demanding equal distribution of resources and funds for the development of the east from the West Pakistani regime. The military rulers of West Pakistan did not play a constructive role in the development and equal distribution of capital and power, but crippled the future of both wings.

The people of East Pakistan have experienced irregularities at the hands of leaders from the West, and important factors gradually began to create a vacuum in the friendly relations between both parts. Among others, these include: the equal sharing of wealth, limited infrastructural development in the east, as well as no major efforts to establish industry, initiatives to explore opportunities in business, import, export or positive efforts to set up more schools, colleges and universities. The window of democracy was collapsed and the military took over the power, promulgating martial law and banning all political parties. Military dictatorship became an integrated part of state politics and Bengali politicians began to demand more autonomy. They complained that West Pakistan took all the earnings generated by the export of jute and tea from East Pakistan. Chapman's (2003:207) words are noteworthy, "the Eastern wing had become almost like a colony to the West Pakistanis. It was above all Punjabi administrators and officers who ran the province..." The large political party of East Pakistan, the Awami League (People Party) demanded regional autonomy, declaring a six-point manifesto which ultimately turned into a secession movement that included "a completely independent economy and currency, with cooperation between the wings based on their self-interest and not on central government dictates and, even defence was still to be a central matter" (Ibid.:206).

In the late 1960s the movement climaxed, and in 1968 the chief leader of the Awami League (AL), Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman was imprisoned. As a result, demonstrations, strikes and mass agitation engulfed the country, which consequently developed into a mass uprising and people's revolution. This occurred outside the control of the military dictator, and as such General Ayub Khan of West Pakistan resigned. The state was taken over by another military dictator, General Yahya Khan, who subsequently released Sheikh Mujib to participate in the parliamentary elections of the late 1970s, where Mujib won 158 out of 160 seats in a fair and

free democratic election (Ibid.). In the west, Zulfika Ali Bhutto's party, the Pakistan People's Party, won the majority of seats. The two leaders started negotiations to launch a new constitution to unite the two wings and both intended to be the prime minister of Pakistan. Though Bhutto's desire was slim, as he did not gain a dominant victory, they tried to reach an agreement. While general Yahya realized that the power might go to the elected people's representatives and as such, he announced the postponement of the National Assembly (Parliament) of Pakistan.

In East Pakistan, "Mujib called for non-cooperation and a general strike ...and Yahya nominated a new hard-man as commander in the East, General Tikka Khan" (Chapman, 2003:207). However, the military regime did not democratically pass power to the leader of the majority party of both wings, opting instead to declare martial law in East Pakistan. The Urdu-speaking Pakistani army (all from the west) came out of barracks and on the night of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1971 and began killing Bengali people at random to quell the people's movement of East Pakistan. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1971 a declaration of independence was aired from a clandestine radio station in Chittagong, (now) Bangladesh. East Pakistan's declaration of independence from West Pakistan triggered a war between the non-armed, peace loving people of East Pakistan and the armed forces of West Pakistan. The Pakistani forces started genocide, resulting in killing, raping, arson and looting from March 26, 1971 until the 16<sup>th</sup> of December of the same year.

Great streams of Bengali refugees (approximately 10 million) fled to India. Some of them, especially those who were politically affiliated, set up numerous military training camps with the help of the Indian government to train the refugees in an attempt to organize guerrilla warfare. Gradually, they began fighting against the Pakistani troops. "In the beginning of December 1971 full scale war erupted between India and Pakistan, and for the first time it was

fought both in the East and the West. In the West, Pakistan again faced defeat. In the East, the Indian forces and the *Mukti Bhaini* (Bangladeshi Guerillas) routed the Pakistanis in two weeks” (Ibid.:208). On December 16, 1971, the armed forces of Pakistan surrendered and over 93,000 personnel, including General Niazi, the commander of the east wing, were taken as prisoners of war to India.

India recognized the demands of the Bengali people and accordingly, it launched a global campaign in favour of their liberation, assisting the liberation-loving people of Bangladesh by offering them shelter, providing armed-training to the freedom fighters and a safe place to the millions of refugees on the soil of India. The separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan has had a great impact in the context of the geopolitical environment of the South Asian region, and this secession has brought some relief to the Indian government since 1971.

What I have understood from going through numerous academic and news articles and commentaries written by academics and journalists during my research period on the security matter of the South Asian region is that India has succeeded in breaking Pakistan, making it a weaker state in the region due to the following reasons: a) if India ever faces any war or skirmishes from the Pakistani side it has only to maneuver on one side i.e. from the western side and India is safe from its eastern side i.e. from Bangladesh side; b) India has strengthened its dominance over the Sub-continent in particular and the South Asian region in general; c) India has made a huge market in Bangladesh, gaining much revenue while Pakistan is left unable to even consider dominating trade and business in Bangladesh; d) India has been working to establish corridors through Bangladesh to reach its undeveloped and insurgency-prone zone of the north-eastern territory of its seven sisters (seven states), an area traditionally very difficult for India to reach in any emergency situation; e) India has gained a good friend on the world stage to

support its global initiatives in various aspects; and f) India is reportedly safe from any transborder terrorism and infiltration from the Bangladesh side as it always blames Pakistan for creating chaos, infiltration and terror attacks from Pakistan side.

Most of the political parties, namely the nationalists and the left oriented, have their different views on the participation of the Indian government in the war of liberation of Bangladesh. “The nationalists felt that India’s role was limited to bringing Bangladesh under its sphere of influence to further its economic interests and gain better access to North Eastern India. The pro-Chinese Left believed that India’s intention was to make Bangladesh a colony for importing raw materials to cater to the jute industries” (Pattanaik, 2011:74 ). Pattanaik further notes that parties representing the radical left believe that India appeared as an expansionist regional power to dominate Bangladesh while its liberation war was still in progress. “The Islamists propagated that India’s real motive was to break up Pakistan, the Muslim homeland, as the Hindus had never reconciled to the idea of an independent Islamic state” (Ibid.:74).

The breakup of Pakistan has given India an opportunity to dominate the South Asian region politically. The narrative of security in respect of India propels this fundamental concept that India’s hegemonic behaviour has been dominating the region since 1980s. The period of 1970s and 1980s is, as Malone (2011:50) described, an intermittent realism exhibited by India towards its external approaches. Malone further notes that India’s treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971; its military intervention in the Bangladesh war; its first nuclear test in 1974 and its occupation of Sikkim incorporating it into the Union are testimony to its realist approaches toward foreign affairs. In addition, India, as Pattanaik (2011) describes, closes the transit points between Nepal and India in 1988; sends the IPKE (Indian Peace Keeping Force) to Sri Lanka to

help President Jayewardene in quelling the insurgency in the late 1980s; and intervenes in the Maldives in 1988 at the request of the then president Gayoom.

New Delhi's strategic plan has long been a problem; the people of Bangladesh have mixed reactions about India's role in the region, especially with regard to Bangladesh. Some groups believe that during the colonial era, the rule of Hindu feudal lords was representative of domination and exploitation, therefore any relationship with India ideologically will turn into hegemonic by any means (Pattanaik, 2011). The contemporary major opposition party of Bangladesh claims that independence and sovereignty of the country are safe in BNP's (Bangladesh National Party) hand and not in the grip of the ruling party (i.e., AL) of the country that has a huge relation with India (Hasan, 2008).

Still both countries experience deep mistrust and suspicion. The degree of cooperation and collaboration between them varies from regime to regime and it depends on the political parties of both sides and the level of trust existing between each other.

#### **2.4 A 60 Year Geopolitical Chaos and Climax: A Triangle Geopolitical Crisis**

The following is a brief 60-year history of the underlying causes of some of the major conflicts and crises that took place in the region, specifically between Pakistan and India occasionally involving China.

**The 1962 Indo-China War:** India has also been holding enmity to China since the McMahon line was drawn between Tibet and India after independence. China rejected the treaty because it was made with Tibet. China's power and prominence is indisputable, thus India remains concerned over various regional defensive and strategic matters. Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh are disputed border areas between China and India. India claims Aksai Chin

to be of the eastern part of Jammu Kashmir state while China argues Arunachal Pradesh as being part of South Tibet.

Even in the early 1950s, there was tension and hostility between India and Pakistan over the issue of Tibet. After the Communist Revolution in 1949, China initiated a long-term process of negotiating and renegotiating its border/boundary with Lasha (Tibet), Pakistani Azad Kashmir, India and Myanmar. The Chinese even attacked India in October 1962 over the issue of the disputed territory along its 3,225-kilometer-long Himalayan border. “In the northeast the Chinese crossed the mountains into Assam, and potentially even Calcutta could have been within their reach. They halted unilaterally and again proposed negotiation” for a better atmosphere in the region (Chapman, 2003:263).

**The 1965 Indo-Pakistan War:** The 1965 Indo-Pakistan War took place between April 1965 and September 1965 and witnessed the largest gathering of armed forces from both sides. Pakistan declared war against the Indian forces in Kashmir, resulting in thousands of casualties on both sides. At that time, “East Pakistan [now Bangladesh] was technically at war with India too, but was essentially left defenseless” (Chapman, 2003:206) and India did not attack this wing of Pakistan. The United Nations (UN) negotiated a ceasefire and the subsequent issuance of the Tashkent Declaration brokered by the former USSR set aside vengeful hostilities.

**The 1984 Siachen Border Clash:** The 1984 Siachen border clash took place on the Siachen Glacier, south of the Chinese border situated at an altitude of more than 22,000 feet. India launched *Operation Meghdoot* (Cloud Messenger) on April 13, 1984, which prompted Pakistan to deploy its forces. “Estimates of combat deaths vary widely depending on the source, but at least 1,500 Pakistani and 2,000 Indian soldiers have died at elevation of 18,000 to 24,000 feet” (Chari, et al., 2007:21).

**The 1987 Brasstacks Crisis:** The Brasstacks crisis of 1987 almost led both India and Pakistan in to a fierce war. It was a large-scale exercise by India in the Punjab desert designed to test some of its newly acquired command, control, communications and intelligence capabilities suitable and ready in the event of warfare in the South Asian region (Ganguly, 2008:50; Chari, et al., 2007:42). The Pakistani military also conducted its winter military exercises very close to the area and these developments “caused growing alarm in new Delhi and set off a spiral of mutual misperceptions that continued to rising tensions between the two countries” (Ibid.:51). Quoting some critics, Ganguly claimed that after the Brasstacks crisis Pakistan took critical steps to acquire nuclear power.

**1990 Multifaceted Kashmir Crisis:** On the one hand, India claimed the 1990 Crisis was rooted in Pakistan’s support of insurgency in the Indian occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir (Ibid.:51). On the other, Pakistan criticized India for cracking down on its controlled zone of Kashmir. “Trading accusations and threats, India and Pakistan spent February, March and April of 1990 seemingly preparing for war” (Chari, *et al*, 2007:80). India deployed about 200,000 troops in Kashmir in an effort to face Pakistan and to quell internal insurgency (Ganguly 2008:52). The then Deputy National Security Adviser of the USA, Robert Gates, negotiated the crisis.

**The 1998 Nuclear Tests Drama:** In a move to stop transborder conflicts and protect sovereignty and national security, India and Pakistan sought to achieve nuclear power as a means of intimidation. Pakistanis felt they were more vulnerable in the wake of Indian hegemony in the region. As such, India tested five nuclear weapons in the Rajasthan desert on May 11 and 13, 1998, while Pakistan “detonated six nuclear devices—five to match New Delhi’s tests and one in response to India’s 1974 peaceful explosive test—at an underground facility in the Chagai Hills”

(Sagan, 2001:1064). The goal was to display their nuclear capability to the international community. “With these tests, the governments in Islamabad and New Delhi loudly announced to the world community, and especially to each other, that they both held the capability to retaliate with nuclear weapons in response to any attack” (Ibid.:1064).

**The 1999 Kargil Conflict:** The Kargil Conflict (known as the Kargil War) took place in the spring and summer of 1999 along the Line of Control also (LOC) in the Kargil district of Kashmir. This war, referred to by India as Operation Vijay (victory), eventually succeeded in rooting out the Pakistani troops and subsequently avoided the escalation to a nuclear war. The conflict began when the Indian army accused militants and *Jihadis* supporters of Kashmir independence, led by Pakistani troops, of crossing the Line of Control (which serves as the de facto border between the two states) on the Indian side located in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. “Tensions mounted over the question of when and how India might escalate the mini-war, which put the world on alert since both India and Pakistan had tested nuclear devices in May 1998 and subsequently declared themselves to be Nuclear Weapon States” (Chari, *et al*, 2007:80). As Pakistan was struggling with the war, the Pakistani military elite planned a nuclear strike on India. This compelled then US President Bill Clinton to take personal interest. “Over 1,000 Indian and Pakistani soldiers died in the conflict and Sharif’s decision to pull out was one of the major causes of the coup that overthrew his regime that October” (Sagan, 2001:1072). This conflict also proved that it was possible for breaking out a nuclear war in the region and it usually reflected a long history of enmity and hostility between India and Pakistan epitomizing the vulnerability of the vast population of the region. In addition, these political catastrophes have important regional, continental and global implications. Had the triggers of nuclear weapons, by any chance, been pulled by either one of these countries, the impact of nuclear war

would have spread outside of the region to continents, leaving a trail of economic, social and political destruction. This is why the international community interpreted these critical events with caution. Even the two super powers, the USA and USSR (now Russia) who had supported their regional clients during different periods for their own interests, struggled to stop such regional disputes. That said, a few diplomatic efforts and political statements surrounding the conflicts took place in this regard.

## **2.5 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter provides an overview of the South Asian region and the way in which the Sub-continent has become an important part in debates of regional and global security. It has discussed the causes of deep mistrust and suspicion between and among the countries of the region as well as sources of insecurity and the growth and development of regional crises. The chapter also elaborates that the region is not active in generating a genuine desire to cooperate for common goals.

The following chapter elaborates the debates and critiques on regional security integration emphasizing that popular culture can formulate narratives and discourses to structure a foundation for an imaginative/epistemic community for the South Asian region. Visual media can be involved with *learning* and *socialization*, which ultimately affects to construct discourses on border concepts, security strategies and foreign policies of the region. In addition, social learning through popular culture can create a situation gradually in constructing security concepts for the South Asian region where shared views, collective ideas and sense of community are inevitable.

### **Chapter 3: Popular Geopolitics, the Production of Popular (Common) Sense and Regional Security Integration in South Asia**

This chapter defines security concepts, specifically security community/complex, as used in various conceptual contexts of debates and critiques, and explains how popular culture and visual media interpret discourses on security integration in the prism of popular geopolitics. It seeks to broaden the meaning of the security community beyond its present definition by analyzing how popular geopolitics understands and explains regional security integration. I analyse the question of how geographical meanings of regional security communities are derived from popular culture, visual media and visual images and how the South Asian region can pursue security integration. Citing concepts of internationally recognized security scholars, this chapter argues that popular culture and visual media can work as discourses and influence foreign policy along with geopolitical codes, and can be part of regional institutions by disseminating knowledge and awareness to construct the concepts of a South Asian security community. It looks at the theory of audience and performative consumption in order to understand how the audience and fans construct their identity through popular culture and how meaning is constructed in respect of textual consumption. The chapter further emphasizes that popular culture not only contributes to a geopolitical analysis but also examines the power and politics to promote nationhood and collective ideas working as a means of communication between peoples, communities and the state itself. I also examine contemporary geographical scholarship about the phenomenon of regionalism and regional integration to review how contemporary critical geographical studies contribute to the integration discourses in global geopolitics as well as in International Relations and Security Studies.

### **3.1 Region, Transborder Integration, Geographical Scholarship and Security Community/Complex Theories**

While studying regions and the regional phenomenon of integration, it appears that most of the geographers are more interested in ‘regions’, ‘space’ and ‘place’ in particular (within a country or a given area) in terms of social relations, forms of economic growth, regional differences and uneven development. The role of uneven development and regional transformation in the dynamics of modern capitalism has involved geographers as central players in the explanation of social, economic and political changes. Most approaches to the region and regionalism made by the geographers are excessively concerned with formal analysis of a specific place however, and not with transborder, interstate or intergovernmental organizations, regional blocs or continental forums. Even in a narrow sense, “the theorization of the notion of region has been neglected” (Paasi, 2004:539). Although the establishment of the EU has encouraged geographers to research political, economic and cultural processes that cross a narrow regional, local boundary to a world of regions (Ibid.:539).

Since the mid-1980s, a resurgence of interest in regions “as material products of large scale, political, social and economic forces worked out locally in different expressions” has come to the scene (Wishart, 2004:306). Among others, Harvey (1985), Markussen (1993), Massey (1979) and Paasi (1986; 2003) provide examples of where administrative regions, political authority, composite regions such as New England and the South, social institutions and the physical environment reflect distinct characteristics.

Geographical scholarship on regional development and the distribution of resources in a place or in a given territory is mainly developed within the context of communities of remote investment and production decisions. Even borderless economic networks and vision, as part of the formation of a pan-European identity, as James Sidaway (2005) reveals, creates

contradictions and paradoxes in the local imagination that threatens local ways of livelihood involved in cross-border commerce and business. It is well known that transborder trade relations or transborder economic transactions mainly depend on the mechanisms of interstate security and safety of the movement of goods. Human geographers (but see Gilbert, 2005) so far have not highlighted the security issues in their write-ups in respect of transborder relations and interstate trade and business.

The resurrection of regionalism and theorizing its approaches are among the dominating global political trends in today's international studies. A few political geographers (such as Sidaway 2002, 1998; Poon 2001; Kuus, 2007) have touched upon the discourses of regionalism and regional integration, and some of them (such as Hussey, 1991; Murphy, 1995; Dodds, 1998; Agnew 1999; Glassman, 1999; Dalby, 2007; Poon, Sajarattanachote and Baghchi-Sen, 2006 and Medina-Nicolas, 2007) have investigated different concepts of regional integration, but not the theory itself. Most importantly, critical geopolitics is concerned and deeply engaged with the geopolitical exercise of cross-border regionalism (Sparke, 2002), Growth Triangle (Sparke et al., 2004), imagined communities (Sidaway: 1998; 2002), Supranationalism and European integration (Kuus, 2007). The bodies of their literature investigate the possibilities and processes to form territorial groups in a regional setting. Moreover, their studies critique the issue of regionalism with a few basic assumptions however they do not focus on the theorization of regionalism in the era of new world order, globalization and the global war on terror. Their writings appear to be a move away from establishing a grand theory of regionalism and regional integration under the sub-fields of critical geopolitics.

There is an emerging literature that explores and builds links between security, militarization ("war on terror") and critical geopolitics. Writers like Hannah (2006), Cowen and

Gilbert (2007), Flusty (2008), Gregory (2008), Sidaway (1998; 2002) and Pain and Smith (2008) have explicitly discussed the normalization of military power and military institutions throughout society. After the Cold War, the issue of military and military mechanism declined significantly as globalisation “confused the geographical designations of danger” (Dalby, 2008:413). But 9/11 has fueled geopolitical versions of force and coercion and “the utility of force has been reasserted by a neo-Reaganite American foreign policy using military forces in the global war on terror and the invasion of Iraq” (Ibid.:413). Even the language and narratives in operation in the war on terror have taken a new shape that explicitly speaks of a militaristic and imperialistic language with a motive of primitive accumulation and enclosure (Dalby, 2007; Boal et al., 2005).

Security in terms of external and internal threats has once again become a crucial political factor, which requires military or political strategies to combat it where the “geopolitical understandings of inside and outside are in play here, in the process militarising security matters” (Dalby, 2008: 421). The *Defense Strategy* (DS) of the US has galvanized this through statements claiming, “America is a nation at war” (2005:iv). The DS has categorized the following security threats to the US’s soil: a) traditional (military threats); b) irregular (terrorist, gangs and non-state actors); c) catastrophic (mass destruction weapons) and d) disruptive (cyber weapons, space attack). Thus, the USA has shifted from its enlarging democratic values to peripheries, with an emphasis on militarism as Dalby (2007:590) explains, “now instead of containment, the Clinton administration theme of enlarging the region of democracy has been militarised, and economic integration of the peripheral parts of the global system is now a strategic priority. Neo-conservative aspirations for regime change link directly with neo-liberal policies of economic integration.”

The essential characteristics of mainstream security or economic integration (such as NATO, the EU and SADC) are related to political, economic and cultural practices and discourse. The European security integration is a combination of security politics and regional economic integration and largely multidimensional regional strategy. Adler and Barnett (1998b:30) explain the following core values to form regional security communities—‘the depth of trust’, ‘the nature and degree of institutionalization of governance systems’, ‘mutual aid to construct collective system arrangements’ and ‘possessing a system of rules that form a collective security system’. They emphasize that pluralistic security communities comprise of a transnational region whose members are committed to maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change. Members require three characteristics of communities: a) members have shared identities, values and meanings; b) members have indirect and direct relations; and c) members exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of long term interest.

On the other hand, Buzan and Wæver (2003:41) define a security complex as “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably analysed or resolved apart from one another.” Buzan (1983; 1991; 2000) and Buzan and Wæver’s (2003) RSCT (regional security complexes theory) is now recognized as an integral part of both mainstream IR and diplomatic practices (Jones, 2008:184). “Its primary goal is to introduce a new level of analysis to IR theory, one that fits somewhere between the polarity of the super and great power competition that plays out on the global level” (Ibid.:184). The theory is defined by two kinds of relations—power relations and patterns of amity and enmity. Regional security complexes are mainly related to the regional power balance but are also part of the international system.

Similar to other regional theories, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003) suggest that security complexes are based on individual units and the international system. They highlight the essential logic of the theory where all states are organized in a global web of security interdependence. Thus, the dynamics of security complexes include the states, security perceptions, interactions, dialogues, measurements of individual security necessity and structural layout. In elaborating security complexes as subsystems, Buzan further identified three components of security complexes: a) the arrangement of units, b) the patterns of amity and enmity, and c) the distribution of power among the units. These three approaches are essential to the establishment of a regional security complex in South Asia, and if any one of these were not taken into consideration, the result would be an impasse in the security framework. According to Buzan, there should be a defined structure to the security complex and the distribution of power among its units should not be compromised by any means. The development of friendship and collaboration are the cornerstones of the security complex.

Deutsch et al.'s 1957 concept of security communities gained momentum in security studies within conventional international relations after the end of the Cold War (Tusicsny, 2007:425). Due to a sense of community and feelings of shared identity, member states no longer regard war as an effective policy tool in the classical Deutschian definition of a security community. In their landmark study, Deutsch and his colleagues explored a new conceptualization of a regional security community as "being a region, or grouping of states, that have achieved such a level of cooperation, or even integration that they simply do not consider fighting each other as a realistic possibility to resolve disputes, and stop preparing to do so" (Jones, 2008: 184-5). They developed two types of security community: a) a pluralistic security community such as "Norway and Sweden, where neither have in recent memory imagined

solving political problems by force” (Elistrup-Sangiovanni, 2006:30); and b) an amalgamated security community, as a process of political integration, which involves two or more independent political units to form one larger unit with one common government. According to Deutsch et al., a security community is a group of people engaged by a sense of community with “a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least this one point: that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of “a peaceful change”” (Deutsch et al., 1957:5). Peaceful change relates to “the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalized procedures, without resort to large-scale physical force” (Ibid.:5). Deutsch et al. (1957:29) note that “pluralistic security-communities turned out to be somewhat easier to attain and easier to preserve” because they reflect people’s support for political and social values while opposing not only large-scale interstate violence but violence within states as well. They portray the basic characteristics of what communities look like. They primarily examine both the intensity and the types of transactions within regions as potential indicators of the wellbeing of the community for a more long-term view of costs and benefits (Jones, 2008: 185).

Thus, the nature and character of complexes or communities in South Asia depend mainly on the ways in which actors analyse and implement these theories. Also significant are the ways in which they employ policies to integrate security policies and whether a common approach to strengthening peace and security in the region is taken. The South Asian region has emerged from colonial domination and suppression. South Asian security complex theory was the first case study done by Buzan and others in which their regional security complex theory was developed (Buzan and Rizvi, 1986). Domestic security is crucial to the South Asian region. Specifically, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all face homegrown terror as well as

transborder infiltration and attacks. These sub-state actors and entities are also active on a regional scale. “This non-traditional sector is substantially integrated into the interstate rivalries, and much of it is readily visible through military-political lenses” (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:124-25). Traditional security complex theory, as Buzan (2000) notes, “remains highly relevant in the post-Cold War world, both in terms of new and old conflict formations, and in terms of new and old security regimes and security communities.

Buzan (2000: 13-19) advocates for various sectors to be included in the creation of a security complex, such as economic, environmental, societal, political and military matters. With respect to South Asia, the idea of integrating these sectors is essential however they have distinct logics and “they cannot be separated operationally. Politico-military, economic and societal dynamics all operate in close relationship with each other” (Buzan, 2000:21). Such cross-sectoral coherence and patterns would lead to a dynamic security complex that could be driven by political and cultural motives.

Environmental issues are also related to pollution control, landscape, society, transborder issues and boundary. Water sharing and transborder water distribution issues, such as the water of upstream and downstream rivers located between and among Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, is a key environmental concern in Sub-continental conflict (Shailo, 2010). Security complex can easily accommodate those concerns in its structure to avoid further enmity. For instance, the hydro-politics in the Indus Basin between India and Pakistan, including the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, the sharing of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin across boundaries of Bangladesh and India, the Farakka Barrage in 1975 and other environmental transborder issues, can be considered for inclusion in the security complex. Societal sectors, such as migration, the movement of population, multicultural programs and exchanges, as well as transborder business

and trade by local populations, manifest an internal interaction which would need to be incorporated as a legitimate part of the security complex.

If we look at the European integration project, it appears that scholars, common people and Europeanists are divided over the question of integration and social amalgamation and whether merging would lead to a fundamental shift of identity, boundary and loyalty or the diminution of all the basic foundations of state functioning and mechanisms. Rationalism and social constructivism, focuses on alternative or complementary approaches for EU integration and security policy (Rieker, 2004). Rationalism (includes Neo-realists and Intergovernmentalists) “shares the assumption of states as unitary actors, and that multilateral cooperation is a result of interstate or intergovernmental bargaining ... or of an alliance made against a common threat (Ibid.:4). Neo-realism is underpinned on classical realism i.e. there is no method to identify common rules and it does believe that military power and economic benefit can only protect national interests. On the other hand “intergovernmentalism builds on the tradition of Neo-liberalism aiming at capturing the complex interdependence of states in the international system and thus departing from those who treat states as billiard balls or black boxes with fixed preference for wealth, security or power” (Moravcsik, 1993:481). Social constructivists have different views on multilateral cooperation and political and community integration. “They view cooperation as a result of social interaction and collective identity formation, nor inter-state or intergovernmental bargaining. They do not accept the idea that the interests of states are fixed and independent of social structures” (Rieker, 2004:6).

The approaches of these schools have explained the integrative processes and given a detailed description of the basic foundations of EU integration and security project, and they work to identify the institutional dynamics for a collective cooperation in contemporary Europe

(Checkel, 2006). Their approaches are also related to security and security policy. For example, the Neo-realists believe that military threats are a major issue of security, and that a state can maintain its security alone or together with its allies. Thus security policy is “then a policy of build-up and use of military force. The very essence of Neo-realism is to focus on military threats, on military instruments to limit such threats, and the role of military capacity in shaping the world order” (Rieker, 2004:6). On the other hand, Intergovernmentalists primarily emphasize economic interests over security issues and are less concerned with military threats and military invasion (Rieker, 2004). Since the 1980s, many Rationalists, who like to affiliate themselves with the Liberal school instead of engaging with the Realist school, have examined a broader definition of security and have incorporated other threats including environmental and social threats. Many Realists criticized this approach and opine that such inclusion or such a widening would make determining the concept and limit of security unfeasible (Waltz, 1991).

Given these criticisms from various schools, the Constructivists look more flexible and their approaches and definitions about security seem more realistic as they study some cultural and societal aspects of security that they call a process of securitisation. Among the group, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde are noteworthy as they explain the core-issue of regional security integration in their study on *The New Security Studies: A Framework for Analysis* (1998), emphasizing the logic of interaction and interdependence that includes economic, environmental, societal, political and military sectors in regional formation. “Their point is that security and threats are not fixed objectives, but instead are a result of social constructs. In fact, an issue becomes a threat or a security issue when it is *presented as* such by an actor– through what they call a process of securitization”(Rieker, 2004:7).

### **3.2 Popular Culture, Social Learning and Evolution of a Security Community in South Asia**

Here, I will highlight the role of popular geopolitics/popular culture in defining, constructing discourses concerning regional security community in the South Asian region. How does popular culture promote a phenomenon for the political elites, institutions, organizations and civil societies to develop a means of communication between peoples, communities, social and political elites? How do learning processes play a critical role in redefining and reinterpreting societal realities and formulating geopolitical discourses in foreign policy and geopolitical reasoning? How visual media and popular culture are involved with learning and socialization, which ultimately affects the broader concepts of institutional goals, strategies and policies of political elites. Finally, what role do visual media contribute to the creation of knowledge and the transformation of political reality through institutional and political power? This section also provides a brief idea about James Sidaway's 'Imagined Regional Communities' (2002) as well as Adler and Barnett's (1998) 'Security Communities' to focus the social construction of sovereignty and how regional communities through state-diplomacy operate in and take their forms in a system of geopolitical representations.

I am not analyzing here the concept of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003) for the South Asian region which, I think, does not adequately address the different issues of the region. The complex does not explain the role of India explicitly and as well as the role of other regional countries if they notice that India does appear as a hegemonic country within the complex, and pokes its nose or push pressure to the internal matter of other member countries. Even it didn't explain how India will fit itself not only in the South Asian region but also in the highly competitive other nuclear powers of Asia such as China. The model does not shed any light on the gap between India and Pakistan and if it

continues to widen, then what role thus India will play to make a bridge. Moreover, Buzan and Wæver did not emphasize the active participation of other smaller states of the region such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal as partners in establishing a security framework. And they feel that due to geographical reason these countries are bound to include into the complex, and thus their role as small countries have been virtually ignored (Dash, 2008).

In establishing a security complex in South Asia, Buzan and Wæver (2003) omit where to start, where to end and who should take the initiative. If India, being a hegemonic country, were to establish a security community, its neighbouring countries would not take it seriously due to the prevalence of mistrust and doubt in the subcontinent since the end of the British rule. It seems that Buzan and Wæver's model has neither been adequately conceptualized nor sufficiently integrated into the web of global politics. Basically, the complex needs a theory as well guidelines for policy-making and implementation. In their study, Buzan and Wæver depict a historical detail about the security scenario of world politics since the Cold War. The theory does not explore the role of external powers (especially the three super powers, the US, Russia and China) in the South Asian region. History indicates how policy mistakes by the super powers have created chaos through their misreading of regional situations, such as the US in Vietnam and the USSR in Afghanistan, and specifically, the involvement of both super powers in several African states (Leffler, 1992:374-84).

With respect to South Asia, the RSCT did not provide any solution to interstate conflicts, nor did it explain whether the region was structured or unstructured. The theory does not give suggestions as to who should be the main actor, what the dominant unit should be, and what form the essential structures should take. It does not explain the patterns of development in South Asia since colonization, nor does it address the development from decolonization to

conflict formation to security regime (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:470). In addition, it does not focus empirically on the role of insulators, buffers and mini-complexes while discussing the South Asian regional complex.

### **3.2.1 Sidaway's Imagined Regional Communities**

This section briefly explains James Sidaway's (2002) 'Imagined Regional Communities' to understand contemporary regionalism as a phenomenon in which sovereignty, identity and boundary/territory are constructed and confirmed. Regional integration, as Sidaway notes, has become a part of the postmodern geopolitical discourse and narratives, emphasizing how meanings and power are produced and activated through language, perception and ritual (performance). Poststructuralist approaches reconsider regional communities "as pre-given institutes, practices and actors, and inspire us to focus on how these categories are constructed and implemented" (Sidaway, 1998:552).

Established in 1980, the SADC was formed as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled states in Southern Africa known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). A later transformation occurred in 1992, shifting its role from coordination to community. The name was shortened to SADC (South African Development Community), and South Africa joined the community in 1994 (SADC website, 2012). The SADC's transition from development, coordination and conference to development community was an attempt to readjust the trend and nature of performance within the context of 'changing 'geopolitical' and 'gloeconomic' power relations' (Sidaway, 2002:73). South Africa within the SADC, as Sidaway notes, plays a hegemonic role in the group over the other member states in terms of its constitution and exercise of power and influence. Unlike the EU (where borders are open for its member-citizens), South Africa wants to erect electrified fences along the border to prevent

illegal immigration from member states, and to stop the continued flow of low-tech and some high-tech weapons across the region (Sidaway, 1998:556). In this sense, the organization is trying to construct a politics of modernity from the conjoined enterprises of colonialism and capitalism.

The discourses of sovereignty in the SADC reflect that the real business of negotiation occurs at summits and conferences, and such consultations, negotiations or mediation in the SADC construct sovereignty, and demonstrate how power and authority ultimately lead to the creation of global networks. The summits or conferences reflect the performance of the head of state, which also symbolizes power and authority.

The SADC has produced certain political ontologies of state, society and community through discourse. Sovereignty is an issue in the African model of integration, as African countries are more familiar with formal and state-centric notions of regionalism and this new kind of regionalism or new regionalism (NR), which is manufactured in Europe, confuses the newly independent countries of Africa. The growth of the SADC reflects the realist notion of regional communities, and member states are concerned primarily with the issue of a neo-realist view of sovereignty. In this context, sovereignty is regarded as a foundational concept for their survival and it can become an obstacle to regional integration, as the process of integration, as Sidaway notes, “requires that sovereignty be given up or pooled” (Sidaway, 1999:570). Here, Roxanne Lynn Doty’s words are worth mentioning: “the crisis in Africa is thus also a crisis of representation, of how to represent the fundamental means of sovereignty” (Doty, 1996:148).

Sidaway (2002) explains that the very objective of the SADC is questionable in respect of the role of South Africa: does SADC stand for hegemony versus subjugation and domination versus abuse and authority versus inferiority? The domination of South Africa in the SADC

along with its hegemonic role in the bloc “embodies a broad and complex ambivalence, related to the transformation from declared enmity to new alliance” (Sidaway, 1998:568). South Africa in the organization holds a higher profile or status in the region, and being a hegemonic country in the group it also faces hidden Foucauldian ‘resistance’ (at margins), as protests or dissents from the member-countries. SADC’s functioning, as Sidaway (1998:568) explains, reflects “inherited inequalities and the complex ambivalences of the colonial legacy.”

“The political identity of the coloniser and that of the colonized are therefore locked into an unequal, but mutual relationship” and “this particular colonial legacy has been carried over to haunt the SADC since South African adhesion” (Sidaway, 1998:568). The SADC also reflects the logic of differences. However, instead of an expansion of the logic of difference, a dissolution of differences has taken place. The SADC was established as a political response to South African threats to dominate the region. It was designed as a balance against South Africa’s intended hegemony in the region, and it “was structured so that politically no state yielded any of its sovereignty over the regional secretariat” (Sandberg and Sabel, 2003:162).

### **3.2.2 Adler and Barnett’s Security Communities**

I prefer to describe here the concept of Adler and Barnett (1998b:48-57) on the evolution of security communities in context of South Asian region. Both scholars divided the evolutive process of security into three phases—nascent, ascendant and mature—emphasizing a reasonable period of time to establish it perfectly. They advocate for social learning to underpin the security communities regionally. Social learning may occur within the institutionalized settings, and thus “institutions...may play an active role in the cultural and political selection of similar normative and epistemic understandings in different countries, and may help transmit shared understanding from generation to generation (Ibid.:48). The South Asian region cannot

accommodate the security group in a day but instead a collective identity maybe established through some processes and procedures, and for this a good amount of time is needed to motivate the people and the communities. Popular culture and visual media can play a significant role to create stages of the evolution of such communities in South Asia. During these phases, communities can transform into a process possibly leading to establish a security community in South Asia.

Adler and Barnett (1998b) advocate for social learning as crucial for creating processes for establishing norms and particular ideas on the framework of security communities. The critical role of social learning through visual media (for instance, films, televisions and cartoons) is “more than ‘adaptation’ or ‘simple learning’ ... and social learning represents the capacity and motivation of social actors to manage and even transform reality by changing their beliefs of the material and social world and their identities” (Ibid.:44). In his study on “Social Construction and Integration,” Checkel (2006) suggests the processes necessary for the development of norms through social learning include three dynamics: a) individual beliefs, which often turn into broader and shared understandings; b) larger groups sometimes face puzzles and problems without the necessary answers to resolve these or they are not able to establish a clear understanding of individual ideas that transform into broader ideas and beliefs; and c) individuals can open policy windows through social learning.

Constructivists have identified two major elements—social mobilization and social learning—in the emergence of European norms. They reveal that “non-state actors and policy networks are united in their support for norms; they then mobilize and coerce decision-makers to change state policy. Norms are not necessarily internalized by the elites” (Checkel, 2006:415). Citing an example in the activities of Greenpeace and other NGOs, he further notes how these

organizations apply pressure or create an atmosphere that counters political decisions and mechanisms. Social learning can also constitute a shared intersubjective understanding and internalize some norms for collective consumption.

Like Checkel, Adler and Barnett (1998b:40) claim that “social learning can occur at the mass level, and such changes are critical when discussing collective identities, our bias is to policy-makers and other political, economic, and intellectual elites that are most crucial for the development of new forms of social, political organization that are tied to development of a security community.” They further suggest that social learning to develop a security community can occur on three levels: First, through their interactions, transactions and social exchanges people come closer to each other and this can help build a foundation for individual and collective understandings and values. Secondly, institutionalized settings are very important to promote cultural and political “normative and epistemic understandings” of different countries that eventually may help to disseminate shared values and ideas from generation to generation. Thirdly, social learning is possible if the state’s overall condition is improved and hence core powers are significantly important to this process because “states that possess superior material power, international legitimacy, and have adopted norms and practices that are conducive to peaceful change tend to confer increased material and moral authority to the norms and practices ...thus, may also induce their political adoption and institutionalization” (Adler and Barnett, 1998b:44-45).

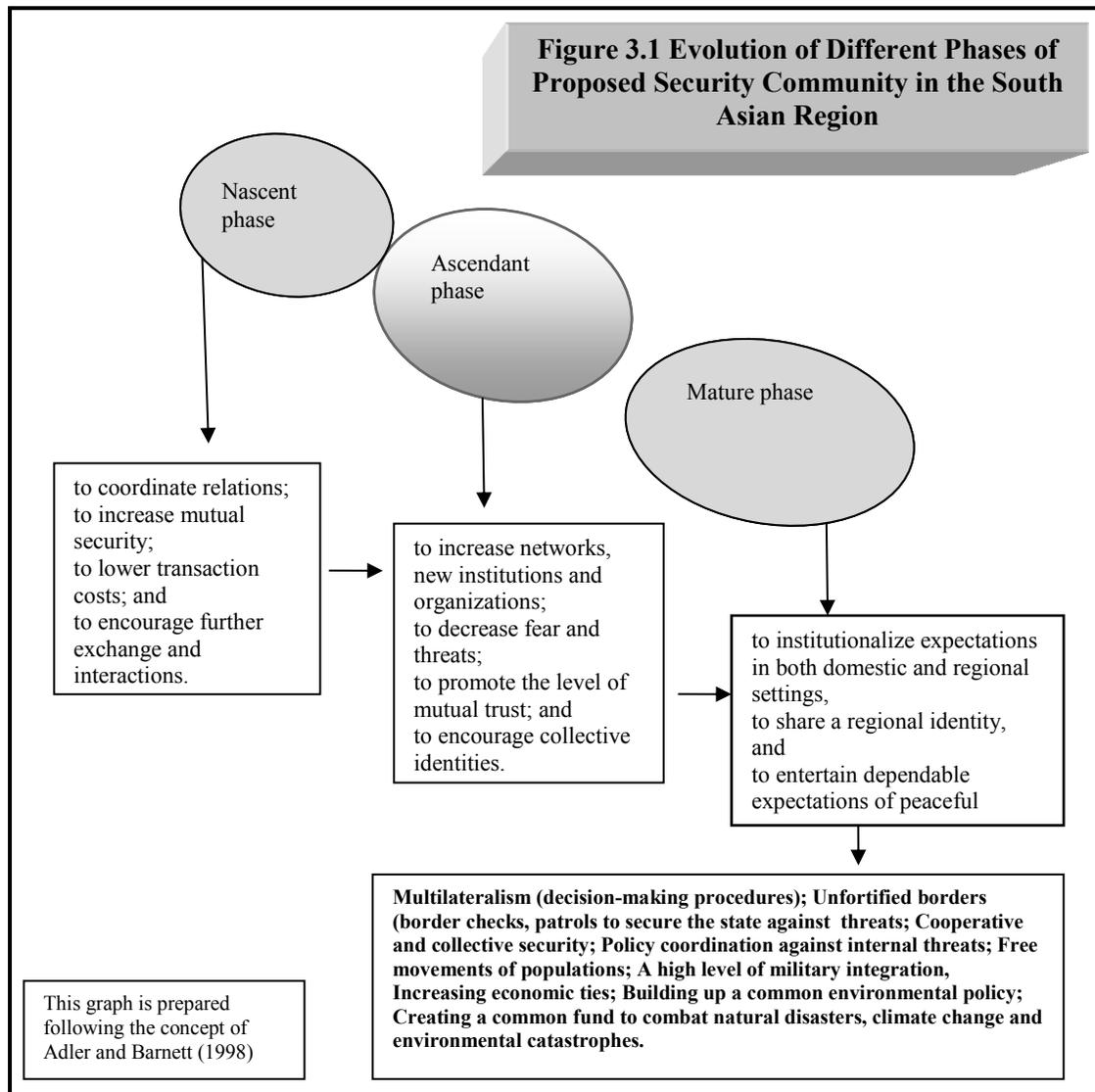
Explaining the characteristics of security communities developed by Adler and Barnett (1998), I argue that the evolutionary phases of security communities require a collective concept of the communities that can ensure the competencies of each member by defining their role and

developing a decision-making mechanism. Adler and Barnett (1998:48-57) have emphasized three different evolutionary phases to imagine a mature security community (Figure 3.1).

In the *nascent* phase member-states of the community begin to recognize that a community is necessary and desirable and member-states coordinate their relations in order ‘to increase mutual security’; ‘lower transaction costs’; and ‘encourage further exchange and interactions’. These ‘trigger mechanisms’ lead to the creation of institutions or organizations to foster their relations and interaction to develop new institutions (Adler and Barnett, 1998b). “Regional elites play a significant role in the process of reconsidering relations, and explorations of the idea begin to take place on a variety of levels, both official and unofficial” (Adler and Barnett, 1998b:38). Thus, the South Asian region, including Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, can initiate security networks that emphasize the role of SAARC to proceed among the high officials of the member country to table frameworks at the annual prime ministerial meeting of the region.

In the *ascendant* phase, new regional interactions are established among the member-states and “regional institutions are created, leading to increasingly dense networks and structures of interaction and deepening level of mutual trust” (Jones, 2008: 187). This phase will ease in peaceful change leading to the growth of certain expectations in the region and discussions of past mistakes, conflicts and contradictions to avoid such events. This involves the re-interpretation of relations, the recognition of errors and the acknowledgement of one’s own predicament to avoid further difficulties. These attempts encourage “greater regional interaction and acceptance for “certain ways of life” and moreover, “governments, security and other intergovernmental organizations, epistemic communities, social movements, and even by imaginative individuals who, placed in institutional positions of power, are able to turn their personal ideas into institutional ideas” (Adler and Barnett, 1998b:53). This phase for the South

Asian region will increase networks, institutions and organizations; decrease fear and threats; promote the level of mutual trust; and encourage collective identities (Adler and Barnett, 1998b).



In the *mature* phase, member-states are comfortable with each other, and war is extremely improbable and unpredictable at this stage. Institutions are functional in both domestic and regional settings and they share a regional identity. “There are now sufficient ‘dependable expectations of peaceful change’ that the states of the region essentially stop conceiving of the possibility of, or preparing for, war with which each other in order to settle any differences they may continue to have” (Jones, 2008:187) This phase is more balanced, more worthy and more

transparent in that it pushes countries toward an accountability of the political elites, of member-states and “there is an informal governance system based on shared meanings, and a collective identity; and while there remains conflicting interests, disagreements, and asymmetric bargaining, there is the expectation that states will practice self-restraint” (Ibid.:187). If member-states of the South Asian region reach this phase, there should not be any chaotic atmosphere between and among the members. They can easily change their fate through negotiations, trade, cultural exchange and minimizing regional environmental degradations.

### **3.2.3 An Overview of Sidaway’s Imagined Regional Communities and Adler and Barnett’s Security Communities**

Sidaway (2002) draws theories and concepts from art, film, literary, and psychoanalytic theories to explain imagined regional communities in the Southern African region. He has connected, as he claims, these theories and his analytical formats to international relations, critical geopolitics and political economy. He is in quest of building up some sorts of scripts, geopolitical texts and discourses that empirically question the role of imagined communities and thus he finds some sorts of unavoidable hegemonic representations from its strong member country, South Africa. Accordingly, he criticizes the fundamental legitimacy of its political basis and the geopolitical representations of its member countries. Sidaway notes that the SADC is a bureaucratically inefficient economic manifestation. According to him, integration discourses need to engage with more varied forms of social production beyond texts and to concentrate on the everyday life of ordinary people. As such televisions, newspapers, films, novels, cartoons, etc. shape people’s everyday life and construct political, cultural and social attitudes of a community. It is worthy to analyze, as Sidaway (2002) explains in his study, that the power-knowledge nexus in regional integration projects to inquire as to whether the inclusion of

geopolitical discourses on boundary, identity and sovereignty are essential to garnering a more comprehensive understanding of the creation of political/imaginative regional communities.

Adler and Barnett (1998) describe the following main characteristics to form a security community in a region: shared identities, values and meanings; many-sided and direct relations; reciprocity and mutual dependence; sense of community (we-feeling, trust and mutual consideration); peaceful change (resolution of social problems without any physical force); and amalgamation (the formal merger of two or more units/states into a single larger unit/state). Therefore, a security community is socially constructed, imagined and cognitive. It does not include any geographical boundary, and members of a community may not interact face-to-face with each other, but they simultaneously keep a mental image of their communion.

### **3.3 The Theory of Audience and Popular Geopolitics**

Audiences are the main strength of mass media and popular culture and they are the main driving forces to run the media, and once they ignore or turn away, the media cannot survive. Thus it is significantly important how audiences understand popular media, especially films and cartoons and how do they interpret the meanings of these media including metaphor, symbol, image, allegory, plot setting, character, dialogue, political caricature, satire, parody and lampoon. Here the theory of audiences cannot be ignored in context of understating properly the message of popular culture.

The theory of audience is an investigation of cultural studies, although a few political geographers such as Dodds and Dittmer emphasize its significance to understand the meanings of popular geopolitics. As Dodds has mentioned that there is a “need to better understand how audiences read films with a variety of ‘dispositions’ and film fans in particular interpret the popular geopolitics of film” (2006:116). Dodds (2006) claims that he does not have any intention

to amalgamate cultural studies with popular geopolitics, specifically in films but prefers to investigate popular geopolitics through the eyes of cross cultural audiences and readers. For an example, he explains the role of audience dispositions/reception on James Bond and Internet Movie Database (IMDb) and investigates how James Bond is discussed, interpreted and understood by the cross cultural audience. His aim is to explore “the future development of popular geopolitics [which according to him] depends on an engagement with the extensive literature surrounding audience research and reception” and to investigate “the role and significance of fandom” (Dodds, 2006:118).

Explaining the importance of audience reception in his study on James Bond series (including *Die Another Day*) and IMDb, Dodds postulates that how geopolitics, US-North Korean relationship as well as the symbolic empire are taking place in popular context. It generates an idea of the hegemonic behaviour of powerful countries and provides a scenario for the readers to consume its messages and meanings. Dodds emphasizes that “popular geopolitics literature needs to think through more detail how new media cultures, fandom and audience research can feed through into a more sophisticated understanding of how people (whether fans or not) view and interpret films” (2006:127). Thus, Dodds explains that “the popular geopolitics of James Bond could be seen as part of Britain’s repertoire of geopolitical traditions—Britain as global power allied with a special relationship with the United States” (Ibid.:127).

Mass media, audience and individuals’ belief are very much integrated, and mass media have been used to influence persons to communities since the post-World War I. Audiences always get attention by agency, say producers, publishers, and institutions to shape up the views of the populations (Dittmer and Larsen, 2007). According to Dittmer and Larsen, “it was during this time [the post-World War I] that the Frankfurt School began to theorize about the ‘Culture

Industry', in which culture was projected into consumers' lives by the dominant media sources of the time, namely newspapers, cinema, and radio" (2007:736). They further note that audience was "purely an object to be acted upon by those with agency, namely producers and similarly empowered individuals and institutions" (2007:736). In their study on Captain Canuck and Canadian nationalism, Dittmer and Larsen explain that Captain Canuck reflects Anglo-Canadian national identity and multiculturalism amid the Quebec separatist movement and some anxiety of American domination. "Captain Canuck serves as a cultural resource, from which other actors could pull to interpellate their own preferred identities, such as that of Canada Post, which selected a multicultural group of Canadian superheroes for a 1995 stamp collection representing Canada" (Ibid.:750). Thus, Captain Canuck is a symbolic portrayal of Canadian multifaceted superior nationalism as expressed by the audience which is less aggressive and more authentic than that of America (Ibid.). In his interview, Comely of Captain Canuck explains that "his intention with Captain Canuck was to develop a steadfast and principled national hero for his audience; selling the books, in his eyes, was necessary to support his preferred vision of national character" (Ibid.:742).

In another study, Dittmer (2008) talks about the audience interpretations of *Left Behind*, a series of fictional books that discuss about the destruction of the world and the return of Jesus Christ, and explain about the role of the fan community who consumes, understands, interprets and re-interprets the geopolitical texts of the books. He intends to focus on how far a fan community/audience accepts the lessons of the books in interpreting and performing the contemporary debates on biblical based events that lead to premillennial Christianity and devotions to sacred and Bible-inspired texts. He further emphasizes that "future studies of geopolitics can benefit by taking into account this interpretation of consumer-oriented

knowledge production and the related literature on it in Fan Studies, as these ideas can be applied to popular geopolitics beyond religion” (Dittmer, 2008:299).

In respect of audience participation in understanding the movies in the study (see Chapter 9) and cartoons (see Chapter 8) one might have raised the following two questions: a) how do audiences respond to these popular media, and b) how can these ordinary views and responses construct a collective voice or resistance in some issues pertinent to security and regional integration? To answer these two questions, I would like to add another question in respect of what differences can we expect in explaining texts from general audience perspective and academics or in another word what difference can one may expect in the processes of interpretations of texts by political elites, academic and grassroots.

If we look at the theory of audience and performative consumption about the messages of the movies (*Lagaan*, *Earth and Sarfarosh*) and cartoons for the audience and fans, one thing will be easier to understand about how meaning is constructed in line with textual consumption and how identity is made by media. Hence performative consumption is very important in a sense that how readers and popular media are engaged with and how readers’ ideas are shaped by media and how the reader performs his/her identity through consuming these media.

Bollywood produced the said three movies before the Facebook was born in 2004. There are so many blogs, reviews, people’s views on these movies in various print and electronic media. I was researching to find out any account by fans about these movies. These movies have millions of fans and admirers and viewers are not lagging behind. They opened Facebook accounts and have been sharing their views with each other on these particular movies. I have found three different accounts on *Lagaan*, *Earth and Sarfarosh*. Almost 705,601 people put their “like” mark on *Lagaan* and the number of people who talk about the movie stands at 9,386 till

June of 2013.<sup>1</sup> About 203,626 people like *Sarfarosh* while 2415 people put their views on the movie.<sup>2</sup> About 13,442 like *Earth* movie and 7 people exchange their views on it.<sup>3</sup> The insights and views of fans and audience are important to “the future development of popular geopolitics and more sophisticated understandings of audiences including fan cultures” (Dittmer and Dodds, 2008:448)

These three movies have constructed national and regional identity as well as provided geopolitical reasoning explaining how people’s imagination can lead to construct the security paradigm and security community in the region. The audience of Indian cinema, including bureaucrats, academics, political elites, members of the civil society and mass populations, has their own opinions about these movies. Films become an issue of discussion if they touch the heart of the populations. In addition, print and electronic media critics publish an overall view of the films when they were screened on theatres.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the audience/fans of Indian movies are not like those of North American or Europe. They have certain limitations as poverty, illiteracy, superstition, religious taboos have engulfed the region. Although there is enough hope if these popular media are properly made with an aim to make the population aware about humanity and dignity and certainly these media can influence in whatever way it is to build up a strong South Asian community. It would require some time to disseminate the messages to the populations. As I have discussed that the region does not have that much advantage in economic, social and political aspects; still there are a lot to do to change the structural model of the region for good

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Lagaan.Movie> (retrieved on 2nd June, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sarfarosh/112259768789713> (retrieved on 2nd June, 2013)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-1998 film/113255795352952?nr](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-1998%20film/113255795352952?nr) (retrieved on 2nd June, 2013)

governance, democracy, human rights and sustainable development. One cannot expect to see a change in audience or fans' attitude and understanding to imagine any issues collectively. Now it is important how to organize coherence across the different levels of audience and how consistency in thinking and understanding can be made in the arguments for active and creative actions. In integrating these levels, it is the need of the hour to sketch a consumption object for meaningful practices among the audience and some mechanisms to interpret the context of the said movies into political discourse and collective actions. It is necessary "to think more critically about popular culture's meanings and how they are created through the process of consumption" (Dittmer, 2010:112).

Realizing this I would like to mention here Dittmer's (2010) analysis on 'active audience interpretative processes'. He summed up problems in two categories in line with conducting research on audience interpretations i.e. the theoretical and practical. Dittmer explains the confusion and complexity in undertaking any theoretical research on audience interpretations and audiences are not coherent in their thinking, even "it is impossible for two people to have the exact same experience with a cultural text, both because these hypothetical people bring different geographies and histories to the experience..." (Dittmer, 2010:115). He further elaborates about the practical audience research which according to him is 'complex and daunting'. Giving an example of audience participation in particular form of popular culture voluntarily, one will likely have different opinions on specific cultural texts and it also depends on 'the vast geographic and temporal scope of people consuming popular culture'. Thus Adler and Barnett's advocacy for social learning is very important to establish norms and capacity building among the members of the community. Social learning and social mobilization can be a best tool to turn individual and community beliefs into collective and shared ideas.

### **3.4 Reimagining a Security Community for the South Asian Region**

The aim of this section is to assess how contemporary geographical scholarship, specifically popular geopolitics and popular culture, contribute to the understanding of the concept of security community, security integration processes and the regionalization of security in the South Asian region. I query the way in which popular culture deconstructs discourses, narratives and maps on an imagined security community in the region and how can it reimagine South Asia as a regional community. Can a security community be constructed in South Asia with people's support and consensus? How can popular culture understand and elaborate the complex connections between films, cartoons and popular geopolitics? Can popular geopolitical themes such as national identity, borders, boundaries, territories and sense of community be reflected through cinematic narratives and discourses? How can every day popular discourse assist in the construction of practical frameworks that are relevant and suitable to social and political actors in creating social phenomenon and a legitimate foundation for security dynamics? How can popular media or visual culture, especially films and cartoons, be studied to construct discourses for an imaginative community within the region? If we reimagine a security community in the South Asian region then a question might come up what it might look like

The broader field of popular geopolitics has the ability to shape common experiences, including the perception and production of identities as well as regional and world orders (Struver, 2007). However, "three geopolitical dimensions [practical, formal and popular geopolitics] are inseparable from each other and result in a spatialising of social and political issues as well as in geopolitical representations of Self and Other and ultimately, spaces and borders" (Ibid.:683). Since popular geopolitical concepts are integrated into our everyday life, they play a significant role in the production, reproduction, construction and reconstruction of

geopolitical ideas about identity, imaginative community, security and threats. “Popular geopolitics and its focus on representations of regions and people(s) deals with popular culture creating unconscious aspects of geopolitics in everyday life and resulting in a spatialising of social and political issues...popular geopolitics thus focuses on ‘characterisations’ of places (and people) in popular representations ...and that’s why regions and regionalisations are also produced within this sphere” (Struver, 2007:683).

There are so many ways in which popular culture, especially films and cartoons, can play a significant role in connecting identity, geopolitics and foreign policy as films maintain an intertextual relationship with geographical knowledge. Audiences can easily sense the (geo)political messages and meanings that are disseminated with some explanatory narratives within a variety of films ranging from Hollywood, British cinema to Bollywood movies. “Film has for a long time held a unique position in projections of identity and that these projections can provide important examples of the ways in which geopolitics is made intelligible and meaningful in the popular realm and through the ‘everyday’”(Power and Crampton, 2007:3). For example, during and after the Second World War, Hollywood produced many films engaging people’s imagination against Russophobia, where films like *Behind the Iron Curtain* (1948), *I married a Communist* (1949), *The Red Menace* (1949), *Big Jim McClain* (1952) and *My son John* (1953) narrowed the American identity while constructing discourses of danger and threat alongside the formation of a new geographical imagination. “Thus cinema was not some form of crude and unwieldy foreign policy propaganda tool but rather an important site of contestation around geopolitical meanings and scripting” (Power and Crampton, 2007:3). As such, it may raise questions about the relationship between cinema, geopolitics, the celluloid world and real global political space as films, to a lot of people, provide entertainment and amusement.

Given the above discussion, it may be said that films and cartoons are regarded as geopolitical discourses and narratives that can create new spatial framings of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’. They construct an imagined community and assist to establish regional political institutions nationally and regionally. Geopolitical representations, identity, security, danger and imagined communities are inherent elements in the structuring principles that form regions or regional integration. The discourses on identity politics and imaginative community often accelerate images and feelings as both films and cartoons are deeply interlinked with a set of socio-cultural resources that have the capability to construct meanings about the surroundings and activities in which particular people and communities are engaged. Citing Agnew and Corbridge, Berg reiterates that geopolitical discourse is not “simply a text, a speech, or a writing; it is the result of an unconscious adoption of certain rules of living, thinking and speaking ...that prescribe how one should live, think and speak” (2003:103). Thus, each and every individual ranging from the statecraft, political elites to policy makers are engaged in the production and reproduction of the Self and Others. The logic of security integration also involves relationships of power, different stakeholders, institutions, and practices as well as the nature of geographical reasoning, history and society.

Film has a unique quality as a communication medium and it can enhance the learning process faster than other available media. Film can easily motivate a vast audience and connect social events and political affairs through plots featuring love affairs and emotional parables. Bollywood has an influence regionally and can serve as a method for social learning. The innovative nature of Hindi films is evident in the way they serve as a social learning tool in combining history, culture, social values, ethics, community and politics. Bollywood has an impact on popular culture in the region and has been working for several decades to construct

discourses on identity, 'we and they', imagined community, division and unification. Though most of the Bollywood movies emphasize emotion and love affairs rather than comprehensive narratives, they still contain the power to motivate people for deeply rooted culture and traditional mythology. More recently, critics have suggested Bollywood represents "a pan Indian social reality with a potential audience of 400 million" and perhaps the Bollywood movies are "most powerful cultural artifact of modern India" (Mishra, 2008:33).

Bollywood can play the role of a parallel text to social learning. Viewers are not only simply observers who enjoy cinematic episodes on the screen. They have their own perceptions and thoughts, and viewers' responses are considered an integral part of a film's success. Audiences talk with their peers; even if the message of films touches their heart they encourage their fellow citizens to go to the theatre to enjoy the movies. In accordance with the views of Robina Mohammad, there is no doubt that Hindi cinema is powerful in shaping the imagination of Indians, both internally (national and regional parameters) and externally (i.e. diaspora). It also works to educate millions of Indian people on issues of interest and value. Thus, "Hindi cinema is produced within, and is productive of, the field of nation" (Mohammad, 2007:1019).

Being a popular culture, Indian cinema plays a significant role in disseminating cultural norms and values as Bollywood movies travel to different parts of the world including South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Australia and North America. As Gopinath (2005:94) explains, films have been an "important form of pan-Third Worldist cultural exchange between India and East and South Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe." Bollywood has established itself as "a window into the dynamics of public culture in contemporary, post-liberalization India" (Punathambekar and Kavoori, 2008:4). Bollywood's arrival on the global stage demonstrates a changing mood in state policy and works as "a network and forms of

sociality that criss-cross regional, national and transnational boundaries and affiliations.”  
(Punathambekar and Kavoori, 2008:2).

Hindi cinema projects national identity, independence and a unified voice to live and sustain. There continues to be caste stratification in India and *Dalits* and the poor are not recognized as coming together to watch any entertaining program in an open space. But Hindi cinema has created a space for them in the neighbourhood cinema hall and “Hindi cinema served to suture highly fragmented local public spheres to create a public sphere at the national scale” (Mohammad, 2007:1020). Thus “cinematic space acts as a vital node in the flow, intersection, reconfiguration, and articulation of a range of competing discourses. Discourses work in the production of subjectivity and of the social imagination—the organizing field of social practices” (Mohammad, 2007:1020).

As mentioned in Chapter 8, cartoons and specifically social and political cartoons, are considered a medium for social learning as they have a greater impact than the traditional way of conveying messages to the population. It is a process that involves the creation of visual metaphors and visual perceptions that play to the imagination of a society. It affects people psychologically and emotionally when the message of the cartoon portrays the social and political landscape, as well as contemporary pictures of society and everyday life. In India, all newspapers including dailies, weeklies, fortnightly and monthlies publish cartoons replicating the imagination of society and the people. Cartoons are an unusual form of protest and appear as public discourses to reach the population and disseminate serious messages to the public. Popular cartoons construct national and global geopolitical scripts and influence common people as well as political elites and other institutes in their development of strategies or frameworks for the betterment of the mass population. If we look at *Captain America*, it obviously focuses on

American identity, forging a culture war against other culture that might affect or influence the young generation of Americans. Created in 1940, *Captain America* analyzes the changing and symbolic shape of America and has focused on American identity since 1964 (Dittmer, 2005a). “Captain America contributes to the American geopolitical narrative by being ultimately defensive in nature. Indeed, a conceit of the American geopolitical narrative is that the American is that America only acts in the name of security, not empire” (Dittmer, 2005a:630).

Cartoonists’ works are not considered simple pieces of artwork as they generate interest, awareness, passion and people’s outrage (Plumb, 2004). For example, Steve Bell’s cartoons ridicule and belittle power and politics and highlight “the dark contours of geopolitics” and his work “lies in an appreciation of the power of the visual and the manner in which symbols are used as part of an ongoing project to probe, to ridicule and to subvert the contemporary geopolitical condition (Dodds, 2007:174; see Bell, Steve, 2003). In addition, if we look at Greenberg’s study (2002:194) on Canadian cartoonists on farmers, immigrants and the brain drain, he concludes by saying that “cartoons are normally understood by readers as satirical depictions of real events, they nevertheless draw from an available stock of public knowledge and reproduce a common-sense view of the world” (Ibid.:195). He emphasizes that the power of cartoons, such as newspaper editorials, have a significant influence over policy and decision makers. He further adds that editorial writers are particularly concerned with political elites and strategic visions, and these editorials have an important role to play in highlighting specific issues related to society and people’s welfare. Political cartoons can change policy makers as well as persuade readers towards attitudinal change (Ibid.:195). Cartoons “speak of the world in hyper-figurative terms, political cartoons are but one mode of opinion news discourse that

enables the public to actively classify, organize and interpret that what they see and experience in meaningful ways” (Dodds, 2007:195).

Finally, it can be said that social learning can play a greater role in the communities and it can gradually inject fuel in the imaginations of the mass population across the border. Thus, films and cartoons can educate the people gradually and these visual media can assist Adler and Barnett’s three evolution phases of communities. I argue that Indian movies, as discussed earlier, deal with basic characteristics of security communities advanced by Adler and Barnett and Deutsch et al. such as we-feeling, shared identity, mutual relation, reciprocation, mutual dependence, trust, peaceful change, amalgamation, sense of community and pluralism.

### **3.5 Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I have mainly emphasized that popular culture, such as films and cartoons, can construct and define the security concept of South Asia, as it shapes and reshapes the imaginations of millions of people. Cinema in India has dominated popular culture and national identity by examining various transitions and conflicts in the socio-cultural and political arena for over a century. Indian cinema (and Mumbai-based Hindi cinema for the most part), mediates ideas regarding nation, community, class and caste. It constructs discourses on national identity and assists in the formation of an imagined community. Singh suggests that Bollywood is not only a textual form but “a socially embedded set of practice...as a technology, as a commodity, and lastly, as implicated within diverse modes of sociality” (Singh, 2003:n.p).

As discussed in Chapter 9, Indian movies can construct the ideals of nationhood, while exploring the identity crisis of ‘we’ and ‘they’, as well as danger and insecurity and the creation of an imaginative nation/community, while navigating political interpretations of past and present to produce discourses for the construction of security among the South Asian nations

(especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan), and the formation of a security community.

Cartoons, as discussed in Chapter 8, also work as a geopolitical text or discourse to explain imaginative community, shared vision, political border and collective ideas. They can be seen as fundamental sources as discourses to define security and regional integration in an alternative way.

Given the above discussion, it can be said that social learning has a greater role to promote individual and collective understanding and values in the region. As well as audience and fans of popular culture and mass media can play a greater role to change the political landscape of the Sub-continent. Through learning processes people can gradually understand each other. Therefore, after a particular period of time when the region will enter into the phase of mature (the third stage as advocated by Adler and Barnett), then regional actors would share a collective identity and the states essentially would stop thinking of any war, threats and dangers (Adler and Barnett, 1998b). Thus, internal and external security, the launching of border-patrols and the permitting of the mobility of people, the framing of a common environmental policy, the creation of a common fund to combat natural disasters, climate change and environmental catastrophes, will all further increase economic growth, partnership and development.

The following chapter discusses a background of the nature and approach of security highlighting a geographical understanding of regional politics linking geopolitics, security and uncertainty along with a brief discussion of the proliferation of security concepts and political dimensions of security communities as well.

## Chapter 4: Geopolitics and Security

### 4.1 The Growth and Genesis of Geopolitics: An Overview

Within the realm of geopolitical traditions, the term geopolitics has a ‘more precise history and meaning.’ It has evolved from various propositions and debates concerning the influence of politics in determining the history of the world system, however “it was the natural environment and the geographical setting of a state which exercised the greatest influence on its destiny” (O’ Tuathail and Agnew, 1992:191). The traditional concept of geopolitics is very complex and difficult to define (Kristof, 1960), and the conventional understanding of geopolitics is mainly concerned with the physical environment including location, resources, territory and the accomplishment of foreign policy in a specific zone (O’ Tuathail and Agnew, 1992).

Traditional geopolitical analyses were concerned mainly with state politics, as national policy-makers worked to influence state mechanisms in order to integrate national sovereignty and to maintain state power as dominant within their own neighbourhood (Dalby, 1990a). Numerous geopolitical theories— Ratzel to Mackinder, Haushofer to Bowman, Spykman to Kissinger, while very different in nature, eventually produced the knowledge necessary to create the statecraft and political elites of the state power (O’ Tuathail and Agnew, 1992). Influential writers like Mahan and Ratzel were proponents of state expansion and advocated that strong states had the right to expand their territory or invade other countries to reorder borders or territory (Blout, 2001). It is said that Ratzel was an academic but as Bassin argues, he was deeply engaged in German imperial political issues with the vision to see German expansion overseas (Ibid.). Karl Haushofer broadened his ideas on *Lebensraum*, autarky, and German expansion

through the publication of various newspapers articles and radio presentations, which underpinned Nazi Germany's foreign policy and these texts eventually became integrated into the school curriculum (Blouet, 2001). After 1933 the circulation of *Geopolitik* stood at 700,000 copies a year (Ibid.).

After the second World War, the word 'geopolitics' produced an image of horror , expansion, racial extermination and aggression, as the word had been used in support for Hitler's foreign policy. As a result, writers, journalists and commentators literally avoided the use of the word and refused to analyse it further. It was during the cold war that the word "returned as a description of the global contest between the Soviet Union and the United States for influence over the states and strategic resources of the world" (O' Tuathail, 2006:1). The term was again revived in the 1970s by Henry Kissinger who, as a Jewish refugee from Germany who came to the US and held several prestigious positions in the White House, used the term 'geopolitics' to portray global power politics (O' Tuathail, 2006).

Since then, the term has been legitimized and is now used widely by political elites, strategists, academics, writers and scholars in various global and regional political contexts. Today's geopolitics is concerned with discourses "about world politics, with a particular emphasis on state competition and the geographical dimensions of power" (Ibid.:1). Therefore, as O' Tuathail and Agnew (1992:192) right say, "the study of geopolitics is the study of spatialization of international politics by core powers and hegemonic states." Geopolitics cannot be ignored as a discursive practice where world politics are differentiated, and the mechanisms of world systems are analyzed in order to characterize and distinguish the world's places, peoples and political dramas.

During the Cold War, the word “geopolitics” divided the world into two camps—capitalism versus communism— which basically created a global contest between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the 1970s Henry Kissinger, the former National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State, revived the word connecting it to the orbit of state power and so-called practices of political elites. In the late 1980s and early 1990s geopolitics was understood as a post-structuralist inspired ‘critical geopolitics’ under the intellectual guidance and research of Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby. Critical geopolitics deals with “practices and representations of territorial strategies” that form and construct identity in today’s world and produce the space for world politics. Kuus (2010:685) claims that the “term critical geopolitics was first coined by Simon Dalby (1990) in his analysis of the representational strategies of the committee on Present Danger (a conservative foreign policy interest group) in the 1970s and 1980s.” Ó Tuathail and Dalby have identified various approaches to critical geopolitics that influence our global structure and societal environment, such as: a) popular geopolitics in different mass media and communication (cinema, novels, cartoons and documentary); b) practical geopolitics, which concerns foreign policy, political institutions and different layers of bureaucracy and statehood; and c) formal geopolitics, which deals with strategic and scholarly institutes, think tanks, academia and intelligentsia. These three approaches to critical geopolitics contribute to the geopolitical map of the world, the geopolitical imagination and representations of ‘we’ and ‘they’ (Painter, 2008).

Critical geopolitics is not a study of statecraft and the great powers, instead it is “now perceived as delineating an intellectual terrain concerned with and influenced by the interaction of geography, knowledge, power and political and social institutions” (Dodds, 2005b:29). The lead authors of critical geopolitics such as John Agnew, Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby

argue that geopolitics is a discourse which investigates the relationship between power-knowledge, and social and political relations (Dodds, 2005b.).

#### **4.2 Knowing and Defining Security: The Proliferation of Concepts**

It seems that western nations have long developed their own concepts of security and its practices within the context of global politics. Definitions of security are primarily concerned with three levels: potential political, social and military threats from neighbouring countries; domestic pressure mounting internally from radical opposition that includes insurgency, terror attacks, civil unrest and ethnic clashes; and the security of their people in the face of potential hunger, diseases (including AIDS and other epidemics) and environmental disasters. During the Cold War, the concepts of security didn't receive "the serious attention accorded to the concepts of justice, freedom, equality, obligation, representation and power" (Baldwin, 1997:9). Instead it "has been used to justify suspending civil liberties, making war, and massively relocating resources during the last fifty years" (Ibid.:9). Accordingly, the concepts of security varied from country to country and different approaches of security were adopted by the individual states.

The security concepts of the post-Cold War era entail a broad spectrum of approaches to security that took shape throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War era. The non-American security debate deals with four distinctive theoretical constructs—the Copenhagen School, the Welsh School, the Paris School and the human security school. These four broad concepts are respectively: securitization, insecurity, emancipation, and humanization. Croft brands them as a 'critical quadrangle' because each "seeks to be critical in some form" and "from a critical geopolitical perspective, most seek to attach a geographical label except for 'human security'" (2008:508).

Three aspects can be identified in the contemporary narrative of security in the US. First, during the Cold War “security was defined in a narrow fashion; it was in essence about states and about the militarized nature of insecurity” (Croft, 2008:501). As Ian Thomsen wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*, “everything was simpler in the cold war for Americans... Contemporary complexity is defined and legitimized by an evolutionary metaphor: the present must be more complex than the past. Yet the flood of recent re-examinations of the Cold War period by historians does not support such a recasting of it as a period of simplicity” (Ibid.:501). Second, at the end of the Cold War security went from simplicity to complexity. The complexity was located abroad, and included wars in Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda, confrontations in the gulf, and nuclear weapons development in South Asia. Third, “scholars have sought to come to terms with the terrorist attack on New York city and Washington DC in September 2001” (Croft, 2008:501). This was constructed as the new phase of IR and international security. Reflecting on this new turn, Chris Seiple (2002:261) argues that “as in the early Cold War, the next five years are likely to establish patterns of global engagement and international relations that will define the next fifty years.” Neorealists and neoliberals fought over the meaning of security in the journal *International Security* and constructivists succeeded in becoming part of the American scholarly security studies (Croft, 2008).

The concept of security has changed for many reasons and its numerous interpretations have been created by “different historically, geographically and politically situated actors” (Fierke, 2007:42). For instance, the United States considers nuclear weapons held by another state as a threat, where the country itself is the key referent object of security; whereas the European community, among others, emphasizes mutual and larger cooperation within member states as a foremost element of security (Ibid.). Even member states of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are more secure and protected, and like the European Union (EU), they engage in dialogue and diplomacy rather than initiating violence and conflict with each other. In the Third World, typically the state works as an individual entity. It is isolated and totally reliant on self-help. After decolonization, most of the LDCs (Least Developing Countries) faced the internal insecurity of survival such as poverty, depletion of resources, environmental degradation, ethnic conflict, sub-nationalism and weak governance.

The narrow concept of security, in relation to realist approaches and the Hobbesian logic of state, focuses on the state as the referent object of security wherein it subsumes the security of its citizens/individuals by way of compromising their freedoms in exchange for protection and security (Fierke, 2007). The post-Cold War examines how ideas of human security have evolved. Concepts of security have broadened to include poverty, disease, disaster, shelter and food. The traditional concepts of security— (be they realist, liberal or socialist) —contradict with societal values and norms. As of late, international relations have begun to look into how the human security paradigm could be integrated into the international actors' agenda. G-8 summits are the best examples of such initiatives, where interest groups including civil society are actively engaged in the promotion and advancement of the human security agenda. However, many favour the inclusion of human security in a definition of national security along with an expansion of economic growth to accommodate a larger section of the population.

Proponents of sustainable security visualize other kinds of non-military threats, such as climate change, ozone depletion and global warming, which directly threaten human health and survival and are no less serious than the risk of war from developed states (See Homer-Dixon, 1999). Even as early as December 2004, when the South Asian tsunami occurred, contemporary security debates began to focus on whether the focal point of security discourses should centre

on the “war on terror” or the “tsunami”. The devastation of the tsunami left a trail of death and destruction in several countries and the issue of natural disasters was absorbed into security discourses. Natural disasters and poverty affect a larger part of the population while terrorism affects fewer people. The aftermath of events of 9/11, though exceptional, were less daunting than that of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in New Orleans and the Tsunami in 2004 (Fierke, 2007).

Certain scholars are deliberating whether to make natural disasters or terrorism a priority in security discourses and on the ways in which international actors handle such issues in a post 9/11 era. Many argue that environmental destruction and poverty are much greater threats than terrorism and terror attacks. Most of the geo-environmental scholars like Simon Dalby reiterate the call to rethink environmental security seriously, and Dalby in his book *Security and Environmental Change* (2009:7) has discussed that “security is not just about threats, armies, and government policies dealing with conflict. It now encompasses broader concerns with security, health, drugs, political violence, livelihoods and infrastructure.”

Since the beginning of the first decade of the 2000s, the globally recognized entertaining personalities such as singer Bono and Richard Curtis have launched a campaign to promote issues of human security, especially poverty, disease and death, and have advanced alternatives proposals to developed countries (especially the G-8 nations) to alleviate the perils and agonies of the world population, and to those of African nations in particular. The Live 8 Concerts that took place in July, 2005 in the G-8 states and in South Africa supported the *UK's Make Poverty History* campaign and a global call for action against poverty.

Fierke claims that climate change, environmental destruction, death and poverty have been politicized and “as these issues compete with the War on Terrorism for central place, the political nature of security is harder to ignore” (2007:31). The numbers of people who die due to

poverty are huge in comparison with those who die in terror attacks. According to the National Counterterrorism Centre (2006), 14,600 people were killed globally in 2005 at the hands of terrorists while almost 18 million people die each and every year in the world due to poverty related causes. “The War on Terrorism elevates threats to primarily Western citizens above the reality of daily starvation by children in other parts of the world” (Fierke, 2007:31).

Security is an essentially contested concept; it generates debates and critical appraisal explaining contradictions between defence and security, individual and national security, national and international security (Buzan, 1983). The security of individuals is more important in recent security discussions. Security scholars like Hampson, Fen Osler and others (2002) recognize three different concepts of human security—rights/rule-of-law, ‘safety of peoples’, and sustainable development. Within these, the referent object of security relates to the interests of the individual rather than the state itself. The contradiction between individual and state must be considered in order to ensure political collectivity. Individuals are taking numerous actions for their safety and protection against threats from the state and those it has failed to provide protection against. The range of actions however is far narrower in a country with no democracy. As such, in the US and many other western countries, individuals seek help from other industries to ensure their safety and protection (Buzan, 1983). Security at the individual level is complex and contradictory, however, Buzan suggests that there are many similarities and dissimilarities between individuals and states (Ibid.). States remain in a larger unit with a territorial boundary unlike the human organism, and states “have no standard life-cycle which progresses from birth to death [and as such] their demise does not necessarily, or even usually, result in the death of their component parts” (Ibid.:37).

Individual security is tied to national insecurity and numerous threats. As a result, states must monitor and assess the intensity of risks originating inside and outside their borders. As threats can be located anywhere and are often ambiguous, “security policy requires not only to understand the threats themselves, but also vulnerabilities of the state as an object of security” (Ibid.:89).

The following section highlights the larger context of security demonstrating the connotation of Critical Security Studies (CSS) and its political meaning and connotation.

#### **4.3 Definitions and Redefinitions of Security: an Underdeveloped Concept**

The question, “What is security?” means a lot to different scholars of critical security studies (CSS). It generates debates concerning the growth and genesis of the term “security” and its usages during different historical periods ranging from the Cold War era to the post-9/11 and so-called War on Terror (WoT). If we consider that security is an essentially contested concept (ECC) as Steve Smith (1999) claims in his analysis of twenty years of security studies, then such debates cannot be examined in linearly or in the abstract. Coined and introduced by W.B. Gallie and Buzan (1983, 1991) respectively, the phrase “contains a clear ideological or moral element and defies precise, generally accepted definition” (Fierke, 2007:34).

Security is always political and carried on by partisan ideas. It has evolved within a historical context and has been defined and redefined time and again within different circumstances wherein regimes change its essence and reshape it according to their own logic and discourse. For example, security concepts during the Cold War era were highly inconsistent and transformed continually in relation to national, regional and global events. Fierke (2007) rightly suggests that the Cold War established an overarching framework of security globally; however the concept is significantly transformed in the hands of certain western elites who have

reshaped security into a set of narrow military questions. The ethnocentric concept of western countries, especially American security concerns, has come under criticism from various quarters globally, while within the context of European economic cooperation, trade and commerce have become a means to achieve security and political collaboration. Interdependence theory has worked for European integration as it “has emphasized the decline utility of military force among European states and increasing cooperation across state ministries” (Fierke, 2007:36). In fact, the European conceptualization of security and political cooperation has underpinned a community that shares sovereignty between its member states, where each nation is largely dependent on the development of norms and institutions of mutual cooperation and security alliance.

During the Cold War, the nation-state syndrome emerged from European traditions, leaving their former colonies due to mass pressure and independence movements in the colonized countries (Ibid.). Though Western countries tried to maintain a strong hold on these countries, some critical theorists in the Marxist tradition argue that “the development of Northern nation-states has been dependent on the underdevelopment of the South” (Ibid.:38), and western states have established control and production to meet their day to day needs. The colony masters did not want their subjects to prosper in a healthy environment. After the World War II, the world witnessed the growth of nation-states, and subsequently the growth of the Cold War had prompted nation- states to get polarized. During the Cold War, Third World countries/LDCs were a breeding ground for conflict and chaos primarily due to their weak infrastructure, lack of rule of law and democracy. World super powers, mainly the USA and the former USSR, tried to divide the developing countries into two blocs, aligned with either the capitalistic West or the communist alliance. The starkly diverse political realities of the Cold War placed the Third World countries at the mercy of the two super powers “where conflicts were often subsumed by

the logic of the Cold War” (Fierke, 2007:38) and the leaders of the Third World countries “played the super powers off against one another to their own benefit” (Ibid.:38). The structural absence of governance and democracy, as well as corruption, nepotism and autocracy have left the Third World countries to the rank of collapsed, failed, emerging, developing, weak or fragile states globally. The security concerns of these countries are not a priority partly because they are not able to properly resolve their own conflicts with each other, as the historical legacy of deprivation, colonial denial and underdevelopment remain a recurrent phenomenon in their everyday life. As a result, developing country security issues are very different from those of Western countries. For example, Western security has traditionally centered on the prevention of nuclear war, deterrence, and the reduction of weapons of mass destruction while Third World countries have been shaken by over population, environmental degradation, scarcity of resources, absence of good governance and democracy, infrastructural underdevelopment and illiteracy.

The two super powers channeled funds and weapons into the Third World for their own interests. The Post-Cold War era critical scholars such as Chomsky (1999) argue that the big powers’ involvement in the developmental construction of the Third World is a form of recycled imperialism that increases hostility and chaos. The merging of borders in the European Union is an expression of greater cooperation and a reflection of the trade and business agreements that create formal integration among its member-states. But in the Third World, borders are a source of conflict, war, illegal migrations and narcotic trafficking. Borders have caused numerous ethnic wars and struggles in Third World countries and “many wars have involved conflict over national identity that easily spill over to other states and become a source of regional instability” (Fierke, 2007:39). Insecurity in LDCs is largely caused by an absence of democracy, good governance and people’s collective participation.

Over the years, the state has come to be considered as the primary referent object of security and agent, and military intervention is a means to maintain stability. The military focus of realism has worked for non-military causes in most parts of the world, and military factors have been prioritized in threat assessments and conflict resolution. Alternative security thinkers such as Olof Palme advocate for common security. In his study, *Common Security: A program for Disarmament*, Palme (1982: ix) urges the international community to pledge a commitment to “joint survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction.” Scholars like Johan Galtung (1996) and Kenneth Boulding (1978) favour the maintenance of peace, not by aggression and war, but by finding out the structural causes of insecurity and mutual cooperation. Alternative security scholars were also against the nuclear strategic dialogues in Cold War security thinking, which were based on a zero-sum concept of security favouring one’s gain over another’s loss. The post-Cold War era witnessed a proliferation of different concepts of security that sought to define, redefine, visit, revisit and reformulate them. The core question of security is whether it relates to state-centric national insecurity or the multidimensional security of the individual and his or her surroundings. Buzan (2000) broadens the concept of security from military actions to include other referents, including political, economic, societal and environmental. Ken Booth (1991:40) also proposes a broadening of the concept of security to include “all those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do.” According to Bilgin (2005:26), these constraints consist of “human rights abuse, water shortage, illiteracy, lack of access to health care and birth control, militarisation of society, environmental degradation and economic deprivation as well as armed conflict at the state and sub-state level.”

Stephen Walt (1991) criticizes the arguments put forward by Buzan and Booth, reasoning not to broaden the security concept for the following two reasons: a) if less attention is paid to

military threats, the question of security would not be eliminated however the superpower conflicts will come to an end; b) security studies will lose priority in academic study. He believes that the elasticity of the concept will create difficulties in solving problems pertinent to security matters. Walt is against addressing non-military security issues but is concerned with the potential for extra-military factors to mislead security discourses.

The following section makes linkages between geography, security and uncertainty highlighting power and politics.

#### **4.4 Geography, Security and Uncertainty**

Indeed, there is an integral relation between Geography, security and uncertainty, as “geography is about power...the geography of the world is not a product of nature but a product of histories of struggling between competing authorities over the power to organize, occupy, and administer space” (Ó Tuathail, 1996a:1). Power is always related to a territory or boundary and sometimes it goes beyond territory to become borderless. The so-called War on Terror is the best example of the post 9/11 security concept of the George W. Bush administration. With this conceptualization, it would seem that power does not know boundaries and unilaterally approves preemptive attacks anywhere in the world, whether on a sovereign country or non-state actors. Now the question arises, how are power, geography and security constituted? And how is security produced and implemented on a geographical scale? John Agnew (2002:115) claims, while disputing the common notion of power, that power always has a history: “Power is not fixed in given territorial units but changes both its character and spatial structure as different geographical scales (local, regional, nation-state, world-regional, international and global) change their relationship to one another as the political practices of the global geopolitical order changes.”

In his analysis of power, Agnew argues that the concept of political power or power relations “can serve to account for the emergence of collectivized and high-order systems of authority (e.g. regimes), governance (e.g., international institutions), and nonstate transnationalism (e.g., transnational firms, epistemic communities, and issue-networks) that regulate or provide the rules for the relations between the unit-actors in the system of structural power” (Agnew, 2005:47). Agnew further underscores that there are two fundamental types of power: a) instrumental, which “involves the capacity to make others do our will’ in relation to access to and control over goods, and b) associational, which ‘involves the power to do things by acting in concert or using institutional mediation” (Ibid.:38). Agnew’s ‘negative’ power, on one the hand, has the ability to “control, dominate, co-opt, seduce, and resent.” On the other, his ‘positive’ power reflects “the capacity to act, resist, cooperate and assent” (Ibid.:39). In his study, Agnew describes four different models of the spatiality of power in different epochs of geopolitical order, where “each of the models is closely associated with a particular set of political-economic, and technological conditions” (Agnew, 2001:119). Agnew has explores such models in order to examine and emphasize political space, geographical scale, power relations, historical importance, security and sovereignty. His study relates mainly to state-territorial and the global scales of forces reflecting a relationship between geographical scale and political practices. He reiterates that to understand political power one has to understand its geography and historical evolution as it operates across different complex core-periphery and global-local connections.

Most of the time security is concerned with a geographical territory and boundary. Security comes first when uncertainty prevails in a territory and the government is no longer able to be the sole protector of a nation against those who might harm it, either militarily or

environmentally. Security must be ensured in a given-place at any cost so that individuals and states are protected and remain peaceful and stable. Decision-makers and political elites can become overwhelmed with the dilemma of how best to secure a geographical location i.e. territory/boundary and how to preserve territorial integrity while protecting individuals and society at large. The security dilemma exists in the realm of uncertainty as “uncertainty is a house in which there are many rooms, and in some life is much less insecure than in others” (Booth and Wheeler, 2008:134).

Booth and Wheeler (2008) further explain that the security dilemma encounters two strategic predicaments between states and other actors; the first is a dilemma of interpretation of the motives, intentions and situations affecting security, where decisions makers must investigate and interpret the issues with the greatest influence over security in order to decide how best to face the situation. The second predicament is directly related to the dilemma of response in which decision makers must determine how to respond and react. Security requires a logical thought progression that works to control the consequence of any actions. If decisions are taken incorrectly or intelligence and information is not properly analyzed, any hostile response to an attack could severely damage the relations between actors and mutual hostility could continue for a long period. Limited knowledge or intelligence, a hostile attitude and a unilateral decision making process could harm the peace and stability of an attacked country or even entire region. For example, the US’s invasion of Iraq and the hunting for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was false and fabricated. This demonstrates a gap in knowledge, limited intelligence and the imbalanced decision making process of the Bush administration in relation to a weaker country, which resulted in the destabilization of peace and security in the whole Middle Eastern region (Kull et al., 2003/2004).

Given this scenario, it is clear that the dynamics of security include uncertainty, fear and confusion. This could be deemed a fear system, which is representative of “a competitive self-help system in which states fear being attacked, fear dropping in the prosperity league, fear leaving themselves open to attack, fear losing prestige, fear being oppressed by outsiders—and on and on” (Ibid.:138). If uncertainty and fear in a country are produced and insecurity and intimidation arise from its neighbours, the feeling of peace and stability cannot occur. The security dilemma then leads to an actual war, which places the countries involved in a position that cannot be reversed through negotiation or diplomatic means. However, states construct and reconstruct their operational mechanisms by advancing their own sovereign interests through foreign policies and external engagements (Kuus and Agnew, 2008). The regulation of international laws such as immigration, citizenship, environment and water resources, as well as the domestic narratives of identity, nationalism, sub-nationalism, homeland, and borders are premised on the principle of state sovereignty. Thus, a “state is not a thing-in-itself but is constituted out of the representations and practices that are associated with it” (Kuus and Agnew, 2008:97).

The emergence of globalization raises questions about the effectiveness of the role of a sovereign state as an actor and whether it is possible to regard the state as an autonomous actor. In this context, security serves as a tool to protect the space of a territorial boundary and its national identity. Globalization brings “cross-border flows of ideas, money, commodities, and people, [and] challenges the exclusive territorial authority of sovereign states” (Hudson, 1999:89). As sovereignty is challenged, this creates a space for the dichotomy of inside/outside to emerge, where the “inside is the domestic arena of politics and community; outside is characterized by anarchy and international relations” (Ibid.:89). Countries and multinational

companies push the state to re-regulate laws to further increase the mobility of capital, which affects the inner security system of a country. As such, processes of globalization create geopolitical conflict as the regulatory mechanism of a country reframes its regulations beyond the border. As extra-territoriality and jurisdictional conflicts take place, the state gives more rights to protect its interests, affecting the security and livelihood of citizens. In this context, the state re-allocates power and authority, accommodating both the interests of insiders and outsiders. In this sense, the discourse of uncertainty provides a link between geography, power, space and state-territorial boundaries. Uncertainties are sometimes compromised and disputes are settled in order to continue the flow of capital in the so-called borderless world.

Uncertainty begets threats and danger. More precisely, the discourse of such threats constitutes a national security risk by the anarchical outside, against which the state is determined to protect its border and citizens. Another matter arises with respect to security debates involving non-state actors such as individuals, groups, networks, NGOs and others. For example, environmental protection has to be negotiated for non-state actors, and the activities of peripheral and some core countries are the best example to enable such an intrusion. When a societal issue needs to be addressed with an immediate solution, the role of security becomes less important to the state. Interest groups and non-state actors or stakeholders get priority while the local social and political agenda “including domestic issues that have hitherto been defined as matters of ‘normal boring’ politics” are ignored (Kuus and Agnew, 2008:99-100).

Geography is no longer just a tool to negotiate agreements demarcating borders, as it now includes world politics, security dimensions and the unequal distribution of goods. A significant number of geographers are now involved with security issues and the analysis of world political trends following the sudden demise of the bi-polar world. “It can even attempt to anticipate

effects and make predictions. Whether we like it or not, by doing this it is performing what is essentially a political function” (Eva, 2000:116).

The following section focuses on strategic security perceptions of the higher defence and security establishment of South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in particular and South Asia in general) and how different security scholars evaluate the security policies of both India and Pakistan.

#### **4.5 The Politics of South Asian Regional Security**

South Asian security narratives are mainly connected to colonial, postcolonial and cross-cultural discourses. More specifically they are concerned with US containment policy and the fluctuation of perceptions of the Soviet threat (Wolf, 1984). As discussed earlier, concepts of security began to proliferate, particularly at the end of the Cold War, Critical Security Studies (CSS) highlighted two key aspects of the debate. The first was the expansionist agenda, which, with the end of the Cold War, sought to replace the emphasis on the state and the threat or use of force with a broader array of referent objects and sources of insecurity. The second was the critical, post-structural, constructivist and feminist challenges that have shaken the larger field of international theory over the last decades.

The regional security community theory was not a mainstream approach in International Relations (IR) in the 1950s; because every state was competing for its own interest at that time, and events throughout the globe were regarded as part of the larger capitalism/communism competition (Jones, 2008). The significance of the theory was resurrected at the end of the Cold War (Tusicsny, 2007) and the theory became a subfield of IR with the emergence of constructivism (Jones, 2008).

According to Fawcett (2008:311-320), the growth of regional institutions became part of international relations after the Second World War. Three types of regional institutions can be identified: the first refers to multipurpose institutions such as Organizations of American States (OAS) or Organization of African Union (OAU); the second to economic and transnational institutes such as the EU (European Union); and the third to security alliances such as NATO, SEATO and SANTO.

The fundamental structures of four security communities including the OSCE/ESC (European Security Community), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur/Southern Common Market) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have not yet produced any peaceful change. Most member countries of the OSCE have yet to develop expectations of peaceful change (for example, Georgia). Turkey is a member of NATO despite its inability to resolve intrastate security problems in Kurdistan and its international issues with Cyprus and the Aegean region. The ESC excluded Cyprus and accepted Greece as a member. The ESC is a strong and mature security community, and is perhaps the most prominent example of a security community in the world as its borders are not clearly defined, and any like-minded state can participate in the community (Tusicsisny, 2007:432; see Bellamy, 2004). The core values of ESC are political liberalism, democracy and rule of law, and both the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) and the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) declared the core principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Both OSCE and NATO have endorsed liberal values in their organizational behaviour. MERCOSUR of South America was created primarily through CBM (confidence-building measures) in military affairs and economic cooperation. Brazil and Argentina are the main actors in the community along with Uruguay and Paraguay. It is a loose security community as it is

experiencing political instability. For example, member states are involved in armed conflict and non-states actors are engaged in organized crime (Tusicisny, 2007:433). As such, MERCOSUR cannot be considered a security community and yet it appears to survive amidst such internal violence and the absence of rule of law. ASEAN does not aspire to become a democratic security community on the world stage. Acharya (2001) brands it as a nascent community, while Emerson predicts it could become a pluralistic security community in the future (Ibid.:433). Five members of ASEAN were engaged in intrastate conflicts during the post-Cold War and some have successfully managed these disputes.

In his study, Tusicisny (2007) evaluates the regional communities explaining that MERCOSUR and ASEAN lack interpersonal trust and are still involved in armed intrastate conflicts and disputes. ESC and NATO have attained interpersonal trust and form a coherent group. People in the ASEAN seem tolerant. ASEAN and MERCOSUR are not supportive of democratic norms. Three of the four communities support economic liberalism, however the degree to which MERCOSUR agrees with this principle is low in comparison with the rest. The level of civic engagement or social participation is higher in ASEAN than in the other communities mentioned in this analysis. Tusicisny (2007:437) suggests that MERCOSUR is a tolerant group but it is extremely lacking in interpersonal trust. “Moreover, neither political nor economic liberalism is particularly valued by the general public in South America” (Ibid.:437). But the case of ASEAN is different by having high social participation and support for economic liberalism even though the importance of democracy and the rule of law are underestimated. The degree to which interpersonal trust, intergroup tolerance and behaviour are evident remains significantly low (Ibid.:437). If we look at the other two security communities in Europe and

North America, it can be noted that their people are trustful, tolerant, market oriented and democratic.

In global politics, we find states are engaged in the occasional/temporary or permanent act of security cooperation, and such collaboration exists at the international level. Security community or integration takes place in relation to the dynamics of the political and military sectors. Some states establish security community with and among the neighbours to defend their values and sovereignty against an external threat. Fierke (2007) has mentioned that all regional security policies and projects rest on ideas, theories and various concepts pertinent to the reality of the threats. Some policies work with the traditional military centric approaches while others develop new frameworks and implementation strategies which are not related to states but concerned with human collectivities (Williams, 2008).

The concepts or models of security communities/regional security integration have been developed by eminent scholars that have dominated the discipline and the world politics for the past several decades. Among them, Buzan and Wæver's regional security complexes (2003), Deutsch et al.'s political/security- communities (1957), and Adler and Barnett's (1998) security communities are noteworthy in International Relations and Security Studies.<sup>1</sup> Buzan advocated for such an initiative in the early 1980s. His study *People, States and Fear* (1983), a milestone in mainstream security studies, projects that the prioritization of regional integration would be to the betterment of society. He highlights five sectors he believes need to be included in any security package at the local, regional or continental scale. They are—military, political, economic, societal and environmental aspects. However, Buzan does not include the feminist

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<sup>1</sup>For detailed discussion on 'security communities' and 'security complex theory', please have a look at Chapter 3.

perspective in his studies, an approach which continually surfaced in debates during the post-Cold War era. Feminist scholars such as Sandra Whitworth's (2008) feminist approaches to security inserted women and gender into security studies. The feminist perspective further enriches the underpinnings of international security policies and encourages both academics and the political elites of global politics to consider the impacts of armed conflict on women and children, as well as the significance of gender-neutral practices within international security frameworks.

In his book, *People, States and Fear*, Buzan (1983:105-15; 2000:1) introduces his security complex theory, which was first applied to South Asia and the Middle East, and later to South East Asia. He considers that the economic, environmental and societal securities are an integral part of any regional security complex. Regional security complexes are "socially constructed in the sense that they are contingent on the security practice of the actors" of various external and internal groups (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:48). Buzan and Wæver's RSCT underpins the idea of Asian security dynamics on all levels and describes how the Asian super-complex, including the South Asian sub-complex, relates to the global level, and to the USA, Russia, China and Japan more specifically. According to Buzan and Wæver (2003), the concept of security has been especially influenced by the Cold War and US institutionalization of the concept, mainly within the context of national security, in the early 1940s. They emphasize a collective development of the region through regional securitization.

The seminal yet hypothetical work of Deutsch and colleagues on the concept of security community has primarily integrated two major conditions: a 'sense of community' and 'peaceful

change'. They are however unsure as to how "these conditions might be extended over large and larger areas of the globe" (Deutsch et al., 1957: 4) and subsequently called for more extensive research. Deutsch and his Princeton colleagues preferred pluralistic communities, which they believed to be more viable "because of their durability, [and] more effective way of promoting international peace than political unions" (Elistrup-Sangiovanni, 2006:30).

According to Adler and Barnett (1998b:30), a pluralistic security community is "a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change." They emphasize certain core values in forming security communities such as, 'the depth of trust', 'the nature and degree of institutionalization of governance systems', 'mutual aid to construct collective system arrangements' and 'possessing a system of rules that form a collective security system'(Adler and Barnett, 1998b:30). Piji (1998:98) defines it as "a process of transnational class formation," while Adler and Barnett (1998b:31) define three characteristics of communities: a) members have shared identities, values and meanings; b) members have indirect and direct relations; and c) members exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of long term interest.

Adler and Barnett questioned how Deutsch's articulation would work for war communities. Peaceful change, for instance, requires certain norms to be in place to avoid war practices and "peaceful change can best be defined as neither the expectation of nor preparation for organized violence as a means to settle interstate disputes" (Adler and Barnett, 1998b:34).

Deutsch and colleagues' theory does not shed light on emerging issues, such as the longevity of the community pact may continue, at least from 10 years to 20 years; mechanisms to settle interstate conflicts; state behaviour; the function of a member state in the event of a regime change; and the process for new members wanting to integrate. Here, Deutsch's vision goes

beyond his experience, even though interstate conflicts were common in the 1950s and 1960s. Deutsch and colleagues seem to have adopted a somewhat Utopian view given that their ideal of ‘peaceful change’ made reference to those states where interstate war was unthinkable (like Canada and the US). In this sense, it would seem the theory does not apply to other states such as Iraq and Iran or Iraq and Kuwait. Deutsch et al. (1957:66) emphasized two major conditions in their theory and neither has proven to be successful in building security communities. They are: a) “the capacity of the participating political units or governments to respond to each other’s needs, messages, and actions quickly, adequately, and without resort to violence”; and b) the “compatibility of major values relevant to political decision- making.” Deutsch’s security communities are a group of people or a group of communities that analyze societal norms and values. However his concept does not focus on or explain the attitudes and behaviours of elites who are entitled to build integrated communities. If the people of the community intend to do something, their representatives in state mechanisms, parliament or caucus, can reverse or alter their popular demands.

On the contrary, Buzan’s “The Logic of Regional Security in the Post-Cold War” (2000) is an attempt to expand traditional security complex theory through the addition of new security sectors—economic, environmental and societal. He does not consider their inclusion to be obvious however it might work depending on the issue at hand. In his early theorization of the security complex, Buzan spoke in favour of an amalgamated approach to regional security analysis within a multisectoral security environment. He provided three good reasons: “First is the natural overspill between sectors, second is the way that policy-makers tend to integrate issues into a single security picture, and third, in some places, is the existence of regional

institutions that will try to make issues fit within their geopolitical framework” (Buzan, 2000:20).

In a regional context, India’s strength in forming any regional security community should not be underestimated. Recently India has emerged as an economic tiger not only in the South Asian region but also in the whole of Asia after China. India has focused on the rapid modernization of its economic, technological and military capabilities and “globalization has been embraced as an integral part of India’s economic growth, and industrial and technological transformation” (Dutta, 2009:25). India has been playing the role of hegemonic power in the region since its independence and it has intervened at certain times in some neighbouring states. In order to face challenges from its neighbours, such as Pakistan and China, India obtained nuclear bombs and long-range missiles. India’s “Look East” and “South Asia” policy now comprises a region of regions that extends widely from Southeast Asia to the Pacific and Southwest Asia to Central Asia (i.e. its horizon includes the Persian Gulf in the west to the Malacca Straits in the east and from central Asia in the north to near the equator in the south) (Shailo, 2010). “Because of India’s geostrategic location, its maritime horizon covers the entire northern arch connecting Australia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Persian Gulf region, and the African littoral up to the Cape of Good Hope as also the island states in Indian Ocean” (Shailo, 2010:137).

Alternatively, Pakistan defines security very narrowly. One might suggest that Pakistan is always suspicious of the possible threats to its security and attacks from neighbouring India. This attitude is prevalent in public discourse and has become an orthodox pattern of elite thinking in Pakistan. Thus, the theories of Buzan and Wæver and Deutsch et al. are significant to the possibility of reaching a conclusion to the evolution of such a community in the South Asian

region. Their analyses, especially their definition of major characteristics of a security community, may become key issues in the growth of such a community. Deutsch and colleagues (1957) suggest several essential conditions for the creation of an amalgamated security community: mutual compatibility of core values; a distinctive way of life; expectations of stronger economic ties; increased capabilities in political and administrative units; superior economic growth in some participating units; constant social communication links between territories and between different social tiers; a comprehensive involvement of the political elite; mobility of persons and different ranges of communications. Jones believes that any attempt to formulate a security framework in South Asia relies on the active participation of India. Quoting from Adler and Barnett, Jones suggests “the existence of powerful states that are able to project a sense of purpose, offer an idea of progress, and/or provide leadership around core issues can facilitate and stabilise this phase” (2008:188).

#### **4.6 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter discusses that security threats or discourses of threats constitute the issue of identity, which can be used to enhance the importance of a state’s sovereignty, but in the age of globalization the state is starting to lose control over its territory and sovereignty. Thus the issue of identity has emerged more explicitly in nation states, and the renewed debate over ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ evokes the question of security and threats at the local, national and regional scale. It also highlights that states absorb numerous mechanisms from national and international political systems and these systems increase insecurity. Accordingly, states are now beginning to show interest in shaping their foreign policy structures in more conducive ways. These systematic mechanisms not only give a clear picture of threats to national security but also enable states to benefit from a broader and more comprehensive view of national security and

intelligence. The chapter also discusses the politics of South Asian regional security along with some discussions on geography, security and uncertainty.

The following chapter highlights the basic concepts of popular geopolitics in order to understand the role of popular culture and visual media as geopolitical narratives and texts to construct security concepts for the South Asian region.

## Chapter 5: Critical Geopolitics and Discourse Analysis

### 5.1 Discourse Analysis and Critical Geopolitics

Agnew and Ó Tuathail define discourses as “sets of socio-cultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities” and as a “set of capabilities, an ensemble of rules by which readers/listeners and speakers/audience are able to take what they hear and construct it into meaningful organised whole” (Müller, 2008: 325; see also Agnew and Ó Tuathail, 1992:192f, Dalby 1990a:7). Discourse has become an integral part of investigating contemporary critical social science, including political geography and the discipline of international relations (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992).

Discourse, as Derek Gregory mentions, is “a specific series of representations, practices and performances through which meanings are produced, connected into networks and legitimized” (Johnston et al, 2000:180). Hajer (2006:67) also defines discourse as “an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices.” Thus, discourse is a set of ideas and concepts that construct a structure to participate in a discussion. In addition, it is a concrete system of social relations and practices that are mostly political, that constructs antagonisms and draws some boundaries between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000:4). Hence, the exercise of power is the only tool to exclude certain possibilities.

As Dalby asserts, discourses speak legitimately about the events of world affairs and “create and then specify the relationship of the speaker to the object of knowledge, the external ‘Other’ of the discourse, and in the process, delegitimize other forms of relationship” (Dalby, 1990b:174). Discourses “like grammar have a virtual and not an actual existence,” as Ó Tuathail

and Agnew (1992:193) explain, and as Dalby suggests, they are “more than simply systematic ways of speaking or knowing the world” (1990b:174). Leaders, executives, bureaucrats and officials employ geopolitical discourse to construct and represent world affairs using the concept of space. As such, global space is reimagined and rewritten by “centers of power and authority” through discourses “that are historically constructed and imposed on people.” Thus it is true that individuals frame discourses and continuously work on them in order to better understand the consequences of events. As a result, they are heavily involved in shaping policy actions to reach certain goals.

The methodology of discourse analysis within critical geopolitics is still comparatively rare, and there is no shared understanding or established content to do a discourse analysis (Müller, 2010). The “concept of discourse in critical geopolitics appears to be relatively under-theorized and its theoretical breadth and depth remain largely unexplored” (Müller, 2008:323; cf. Ó Tuathail, 2002; 2004). Thus, Ó Tuathail (2002: 606) noted that “discussion of how to formally undertake a discourse analysis of geopolitical reasoning and foreign policy is long overdue.” Attempts have been made to find a common ground for discourse analysis relatively early within the frameworks of critical geopolitics (Dalby, 1991; Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992).

Human geographers involved in the discourse analysis of critical geopolitics belong to a broad school of post-modern social sciences (Painter, 2008). Critical geopolitical writers investigate the practices of foreign policy and its geographical components, and contributed much to construct linkages between these components in order to define more precisely a geopolitical transition and an evolution of foreign policy discourses in international relations and political geography. Thus, foreign policy within international relations and political geography

are linked to a broader discussion of representation, state sovereignty, security, political identity and territory.

The early writings of Dalby (1989; 1990a; 1990b; 1991; 1993), Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992), Ó Tuathail (1998), Agnew (1996) and Dodds (1997) touch upon some directions concerning the different applications of the concept of discourse, but they are, in a sense, not sufficient in forming a broader view of discursive analysis of critical geopolitics. Moreover, they (except Dodds) conceptualize geopolitics in a brief outline; and Dodds's Antarctica project (1997) appeared to be more focused on alternative ways to examine international political space in geopolitical discourse. Their study provides a comprehensive understanding of discourse analysis in building up the initial ground work of geographical literature into an advanced geographical scholarship for further research into the domain of critical geopolitics.

To explain geopolitical discourses, I have examined different methods employed by geopolitical scholars like Jason Dittmer, Joanne Sharp, Gerald Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, Klaus Dodds, James Sidaway, Gertjan Dijkink and Merje Kuus and found that their discourse analyses are not thematically coherent and they have employed their own style to elaborate their respective studies. For example, Joanne Sharp (1996; 2006) uses popular geopolitics to conduct her research on the role of Reader's Digest in the Cold War. Explaining the geopolitical role of the *Readers Digest*, Sharp demonstrates that popular culture within an international political context can play an important role in reproducing hegemonic American political behaviour as well as other places and peoples under a power-knowledge nexus. Dittmer structures geopolitical spaces by theorizing comic books as geopolitical scripts, and Dodd's projects on cartoons, especially his well-known work on Steve Bell's cartoons explores the difference between realist and critical geopolitical interpretations on how alternative geopolitical sources such as cartoons,

films and popular magazines represent formal politics of national and international relations. Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992) reconceptualize geopolitics using the concept of discourse and emphasize that critical geographical knowledge deconstructs its own vocabulary to critically explore the forms of practical geopolitical reasoning. They have argued on US foreign policy in respect of the cold war and the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Sidaway (2002) examines the discourses of sovereignty, identity, and imagined community in the SADC to develop an understanding of its role as an example of a postcolonial interstate African entity, and specifically to look at the ways in which the power-knowledge relation is concerned with the discourses of sovereignty, identity and territorial integrity. Dodds' (1997) Antarctica project concerns the production of geopolitical discourse by considering alternative ways for international political space and accordingly, uses the Antarctica project (1997) as a case study on sovereignty and performance. Kuus (2007) uses Eastern Europe as a case study in geopolitical discourse analysis explaining that security and identity is a central dynamic in Europe's eastern enlargement. Gertjan Dijkink (1998) uses geopolitical codes in the analysis of popular representations as well as in understanding the actions of political leaders and decision makers in the state mechanisms.

As discussed, I examine some approaches within this corpus of interpretations on discourse analysis, although I do not use any of geopolitical scholars specifically for the discourse analysis. But I employ some of the major approaches to analyse discourses that draw on the recent pioneering works of human geographers. As Taylor noted, Geopolitics is a "reasoning process, a series of discourses that order the world of states" (1990:10). I have also used popular culture—both cartoons and films— and grassroots views and the discussions of academics and think-tanks as tools to conduct discourse analysis in my research. Cartoons and

films are not primarily intended as political texts, although they do have political contents, geographical imaginations, cultural space and dimensions for the construction of discourses. “There has been an explosion of interest in visual culture and power, both within and outside the discipline of geography and the social sciences has taken place the form of discourse analysis, particularly with the ideas of Foucault” (Dittmer, 2007:249).

Efforts have been made by human geographers to engage visual and popular culture theoretically within the branch of critical geopolitics. For examples, studies by Dittmer (2007, 2009), Dittmer and Larsen (2007), Dodds (1996; 2003; 2005; 2008), Sharp (1996), Cosgrove and della Dora (2005), McDonald (2006), Power and Crampton (2005), Dixon and Zonn (2005), Brooker (2001), Edwardson (2003), Klock (2002) and Nyberg (1998) and Gilmartin and Brunn, (1998) reveal how popular culture constructs power relations, geopolitical scripts and geographical imagine-graph and geo-graph. In their articles, Cosgrove and della Dora explain the ways in which visual media represents the geopolitical order and structure discourses. McDonald unfolds the “relationship between different forms of observant practices and geopolitical knowledge” while Power and Crampton argue that aspects of popular culture such as film can play the role of director on the global geopolitical screen to lead the audience in constructing a discourse of geopolitical space.

The process of identity formation is one of the major themes of discourse analysis in critical geopolitics, and it has an interrelationship with state, territory, nation and violence. David Campbell’s poststructuralist view (National Deconstruction, 1998) on the Bosnian War perfectly reflects a combination of identity, territory, state and nation to form a political community (Devetak, 2005). Thus, identities ‘involve the drawing of boundaries between ‘insiders’ and outsiders’, and require the constitution of ‘others or ‘scapegoats’ (Griggs and Howarth,

2000:55-6). Howarth and Stavrakais (2000:4) have rightly explained that “social antagonisms introduce an irreconcilable negativity in social relations. This is because they reveal the limit points in society in which social meaning is contested and cannot be stabilised. Antagonisms are thus evidence of the frontiers of a social formation.” Simon Dalby’s ‘Self’ and ‘Others’ explains how geopolitical reasoning defines security in terms of spatial exclusion and the threatening other. He asserts that “geopolitical discourse constructs worlds in terms of Self and Others, in terms of cartographically specifiable sections of political space, and in terms of military threats” (Dalby, 1993:29). Thus Dalby suggests that an external ‘other’ (force) plays an integral part in the creation of a political identity, whether it is within a state or beyond the state. To summarize, identity “is an effect forged, on the one hand, by disciplinary practices which attempt to normalize a population, giving it a sense of unity and, on the other, by exclusionary practices which attempt to secure the domestic identity through processes of spatial differentiations, and various diplomatic, military and defence practices” (Devetak, 2005:178).

## **5.2 Basic Concepts of Popular Geopolitics**

Popular geopolitics, a sub-field of critical geopolitics, refers to the every geopolitical events and discourses that involve citizen at large (Dittmer, 2010). The term ‘popular geopolitics’ as Dodds (2000:71) explains, “is used to explore how societies and states often attempt to represent the world and their position in consistent and regular ways...Formal architecture, such as monuments, and media sources, such as television, music, film, magazines and cartoons, provide resources and/or even actively construct particular vistas of world politics and specific places.” These representation or images “may reinforce hegemonic ideologies such as transnational liberalism or, in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, strong association between terrorism and Islam [not religion itself, but some fundamental and conservative Muslim terrorist

groups]” (Dodds, 2005:74). The following are the basic concepts of popular geopolitics as Dittmer explains (2010:16-22): a) Imagined Communities; b) Geopolitical Imagination; and c) Banal nationalism.

Benedict Anderson (1991:5) states that a nation "is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” It is basically a political and economic community that is imagined and constructed and members of the community feel some kind of mental affinity but they are different from regular communities as they are not meeting with each other every day and the relationships they maintain are not based on face-to-face communication. Similarly, Sidaway (2002:11) notes that “Anderson’s understanding of the rise of the nation is therefore of a certain political economy of culture, a cultural economy, based around many things, but with a special emphasis on the rise of the media and the circulation of texts that declare and regulate nationhood.” The print-capitalism had three effects as Dittmer (2010:17) acknowledges: “First it began to standardize regional dialects, creating a group of people with a recognizably common cultural characteristic (language). Second, it undermined the power of Latin-reading elites, by providing access to religiously and politically sensitive texts to the masses. Finally, and crucially for popular geopolitics, it created an avenue (or medium) through which consumers of popular texts and culture could gain common understandings of what was going on in the life of this new community, this new nation.” Thus, imagined communities mean that societies are imagined by the people themselves as part of the community. As a result a wider readership having different dialects was able to understand each other and eventually a trend of discourse emerged to the popular belief and “societies brought into existence by the use of common literature and media.”

Geopolitical imagination means, as Dittmer (2010:17) explains, a person's (or society's) constellation of taken-for-granted truths about the world and the way in which power should be utilized in that world. Imagination means "REPRESENTATIONS of other places—of peoples LANDSCAPES, CULTURE AND 'NATURES'—and the ways in which these images reflect the desires, fantasies, and perceptions of their authors and the grid of power between them and their subjects" (Gregory, 2005:372). The geopolitical imagination is an on-going process constantly at work in the "projecting of a visual order of space." Agnew reiterates that geopolitical imagination is a global vision without which one cannot explain world politics (O Tuathail and Dalby, 1998). Edward Said proposed this term in his remarkable study on *Orientalism* (1978) where he also referred to "imagined geographies," in which imagined geographies "are collection of facts and stereotypes about places in the world that together compose an individual's (or group's) world view" (Dittmer, 2010:10). There are some elaborate passages where Said highlights that imagined geographies could be traced out in material forms such as sketches, painting, cartoons, intelligence reports, travel writing and exhibitions. He also postulates that it is the situated knowledge that emphasizes the positionality of the viewing subject such as the Western authors (especially European and American) boasting of themselves as the most superior when representing the other cultures—"the West" watches and "the East" is watched. Said's term "Orientalism" is a false assumption of the West towards the Middle East. Said briefly utters his *oriental* messages in the following lines:

"My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness. . . . As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge" (1978:204).

Said also states:

"My whole point about this system is not that it is a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence — in which I do not for a moment believe — but that it operates as representations usually do, for

a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting" (1978:273).

Banal nationalism is a branch of popular geopolitics which encourages citizens to remain always allegiant to the state as well as to the nation. Citizens are reminded of their responsibilities and duties to the country and to the fellow people as well to build up an imagined sense of unity, solidarity and belongingness to each other as a strong and unified nation. Activities of banal nationalism, among others, include the hoisting the national flag, singing the national anthem, participating in international sports with national logos, and putting country symbols or renowned faces on currency, patriotic clubs and associations. But most of the western countries hoist their national flags in cars, pubs, houses and big public buildings during their national events and festivities such world and Euro soccer. People sometimes wear T-shirts that advertise specific sports team during the super bowl in the US, European soccer tournaments in the EU countries, and especially images of countries and nationalities are visible during the Olympic Games.

Actually the term “banal nationalism” is referred by Michael Billing (1995) that looks “at our own daily existence and how already established nations are reproduced over time” (Dittmer, 2010:19). Today the term is heavily used in identity formation and the analysis of critical geopolitics, especially in academic discussions. After the events of 9/11 US citizens started to use American flags, and even the manufacturers (mostly located in China) failed to sustain demands which eventually led to flag shortages (Dittmer, 2011). Some critics such as Flusty (2007) expand the banal nationalism to that of imperialism as the powerful always dominates the weaker and “thus, banal imperialism refers to the ways in which domination, a concept that most people find morally abhorrent, is naturalized within the realm of geopolitics and is rendered acceptable” (Dittmer, 2010:20).

In his work, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of writing global space* (1996a), O' Tuathail constitutes a linkage between geopolitics and visual culture urging geographers to shape the global space through visual medium. But Michael Heffernan (2000:348) criticizes O' Tuathail's vision-concept noting down that "despite its message, *Critical geopolitics* is a very textual account in which the techniques used by the cultural critics to analyze, deconstruct, and challenge visual media have no place." He further elaborates that this work does not contain "any serious analysis of precisely how specific visual images have been deployed within western geopolitics." O' Tuathail recognizes the author's criticism, acknowledging that he "could have more effectively pursued the question of visibility through an analysis of certain specific images as geopolitical texts in their own right" and looks forward to seeing how "such work will emerge in future" (O' Tuathail, 2000:389). And to him, "the vision thing, in other words, is always more than just a vision thing" (Ibid.:390).

Given the above criticism of and confession by O' Tuathail to further expand the issue of vision culture in the prism of critical geopolitics, it seems that O' Tuathail would benefit by looking more closely at the scholarship of human geographers on visual geopolitics (popular culture) in the past decade as geographers have gone further than O' Tuathail in navigating the roots of popular culture in their studies. Dittmer (2007:249) acknowledges that "there has been an explosion of interest in visual culture and power, both within and outside the discipline of geography and the social sciences has taken place the form of discourse analysis, particularly with the ideas of Foucault."

The conduct of war and peace campaign can be transformed through visual images and practices, and the people can easily comprehend the range of atrocities and horror and can attach themselves with the events immediately. Studies such as *Observant States: Geopolitics and*

*Visual Culture* (2010) edited by McDonald et al. have addressed the linkages between visual genres and geopolitics and can instantly shape people's views and opinions. The book explains that satellite TVs, satellite surveillance, cameras, computer games, cell phones, retinal scanning and other digital technologies have been shaping the contemporary geopolitical trends and people are habituated to such visual demonstrations and get connected with some kind of geopolitical truths.

Brooker, Edwardson, Klock and Nyberg highlight that how "geography is only lately joining sociology, literature, and history in analysis of the comic book medium" (Dittmer, 2007: 250). Gilmartin and Brunn examine how political cartoons on the World Conference on the Women held in Beijing in 1995 contribute to the symbolic annihilation of women and women's issues in the mass media while focusing on China's human rights record. How the Chinese ignore the depiction of women in their popular culture and how cartoonists virtually ignored women's issues and how women are treated in China reveals how power relations and social justice work in the context of geopolitics. Thus comic books, comic strips, cartoons, films and documentaries reflect the geopolitical discourse and narrative and truly work as geopolitical scripts for a wider and popular audience as well as for political elites.

### **5.3 Discourse Analysis and Geopolitical Representation of Codes, Identity and Boundary, Danger and Threat and Imagined Community**

One might have asked why I have chosen these four geopolitical concepts in my discourse analysis and what is the significance of these geopolitical terms to construct security concept for the South Asian region? The prime purpose this analysis is to define, redefine, illustrate and build up these geopolitical concepts to construct a geopolitical definition of South Asian security as well as the issue of forming a security community in the region. As such institutional processes are not only the means to formulate foreign policies of the state, historical

experience, geographical embeddedness, national identity, geopolitical imaginations, codified geopolitical traditions also play an important role (O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kolossov, 2005). The successive chapters provide an analysis of the following geopolitical concepts along with approaches to the analysis of discourses in critical geopolitics. They include: a) Geopolitical Representation of Codes; b) Identity and Boundary; c) Danger and Threat; and d) Imagined Community.

The following chapters are an attempt to explore how popular geopolitical approaches can be used in understanding identity, danger, threat and imagined community while questioning how the politics and power nexus work in the region by distinguishing 'We' and 'They' and the way in which hegemonic power is a concern for establishing any security concept in the region. The geopolitics of South Asia, specifically the Sub-continent, can properly be understood if we understand the fundamental shifts of the region since 1947. In Chapter 2, I have already discussed these issues chronologically including the inter-state drama of division, hostility, and war in the region, and as well as an endless effort between India and Pakistan to control and dominate each other for exhibiting their supremacy in the region. In subsequent four chapters, I use case studies to highlight fundamental concepts and trends of critical geopolitics to underscore how the cross-cultural narratives, asymmetrical power relationships, representations, and political and social structures are constructed and maintained in discourse analysis. The following is a brief note about the successive chapters on four geopolitical concepts:

### **5.3.1 Geopolitical Representation of Codes**

The forthcoming coming chapter on geopolitical representation of codes reflects how countries struggle to dominate each other and how they demonstrate their ability and supremacy across the region through activities of power and strength. Geopolitical codes ultimately frame a

geopolitical vision of them-and-us and “what makes geopolitical codes critically important is the contribution they provide towards understanding foreign policies making by directing us to the geopolitical component of belief systems. Thus they are helpful analytical tools in the interpretation of foreign policy action” (Guney and Gokcan, 2010:24). The chapter discusses how states conduct performative acts in respect to their aspiration to be regional hegemonic leader, and how do they use geopolitical codes to examine political discourses.

Duncan (2005:703) explains that representation is “a set of practices by which meanings are constituted and communicated. Such representational practices produce and circulate meanings among member of social groups.” Representation assists to construct reality by which people can be familiar to their world and can understand their reality, identity and social world (Ibid.:703). In the context of geopolitics, representation is not only a collection of words, texts and pictures but it constructs sovereignty, identity and self-governance through organizing and running regional blocs and participating actively in the world forum along with attending in summits, conference and press briefing. Three essential characteristics of statehood —territory, identity and sovereignty— are also associated with geopolitical representation and performance. The meaning and connotation of representation take different shapes depending on the geopolitical events and interventions taking place in three countries of the Sub-continent. The backdrop of representation requires a setting within the parameters of territory, identity and sovereignty. Territory also contains certain types of human societies.

The chapter on “Geopolitical Representation” conveys a matter of domination and hegemony along with the representation of state behaviour and its performative images nationally, regionally and globally. Summits and conferences are the real business of negotiation behind the closed doors, and consultation, negotiation and mediation are key functions of

“summitry, something it shares with the wider practice of diplomacy to which it (at least in part) belongs as a social practice” (Sidaway, 2002:72). The summits or conferences reflect the performance of heads of state which also symbolizes Foucauldian power and authority. According to Foucault, “power is not simply a relationship between partners, individuals or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others...” (Foucault, 1983:219).

### **5.3.2 Identity and Boundary**

The chapter on “Identity and Boundary” develops a broader spectrum of dangers, threats, and security in South Asia by historicizing and contextualizing the growth and genesis of security in the region. Carl Schmitt (1996) points out that the major role of the state is to differentiate friend from enemy and to establish boundaries to represent who is in and who is out. A boundary is no longer a homogenous concept, it was not created by the people on both sides of the borders but it is constructed and given. Thus boundaries are constructed, re-constructed or re-imagined and are the result of *wishes* by some powerful individuals within or outside of society. A few political elites make the decision for the sake of their short and long term benefits. As such “geopolitical boundary narratives are the means through which the boundaries, place-based identity categories, such as nations, ethnicities and enemy others, are established” (Jones, 2009:296). Jones elaborates on the concept of geopolitical boundary narratives by highlighting that they “describe the boundaries of particular categories and those inchoate categorical boundaries are reified as they are territorialized to particular places in the world” (Ibid.:296).

I have chosen a case study on “Fencing the Bangladesh Border (1986-present),” which describes the most important crises of Bangladesh and India that lasted for more than two decades. The case study analyzes the chaotic events of the South Asian geopolitical environment explaining the issue of identity i.e., ‘we’ and ‘they’ and ‘enemy other’ and friend. I will elaborate

on some important and fundamental aspects of conflict and hostility between these two countries and the processes of security, linkages between security and geopolitics, as well as regional and national security aspects. The case study is mostly concerned with the fencing the borders of Bangladesh. It shows how Bangladesh and India have been embroiled in cold conflict over the last two decades regarding various issues ranging from territorial borders, maritime boundaries, the sharing of water, the use of corridors, the build-up of embankments, trade and commerce as well as smuggling, migration, and trafficking.

India's reason behind building a fenced wall is what Campbell (1992:159) terms "a code for distinguishing the "civilized" from the "barbaric." The intensity of demarcation rose for India after the events of 9/11, and the ensuing terror alerts generated by the western media each day makes the people more fearful. In addition, as India continues to face terror-related activities from neighbouring Pakistan and its affiliated groups active in Afghanistan and Kashmir, 'the enemy other' has become a prime concern for India. 'The enemy other' is a non-state actor that no longer belongs to any particular geographical place. It is "a global and interconnected security threat to all modern sovereign states, not just those that are near the source" (Jones, 2009:296). 'The enemy other' is the result of the domino theory and containment policy as stated by Dodds (2003) during the cold war to prevent neighbouring countries from entering the communist blocs. But geopolitical boundary narratives, as Gregory (2004) describes, also include 'the enemy other' as being as an aggressive or dangerous element, and the location or particular place where they live is important.

### **5.3.3 Danger and Threat**

The upcoming chapter on Danger and Threat underscore specific political trends in India in order to expose important elements related to identity and danger as well as how they address

ambiguity in order to portray the political environment and how these relate to popular geopolitics. The chapter demonstrates how the concept of visual communication describes the social practices that help people understand profoundly the political actions of states, political elites and other segments of the dominant class. I have discussed how political cartoons are essential commentaries on social, political, economic and cultural events as in the determination of LeRoy's utterances "complicated puzzles mixing current events with analogies" (1970:39). The chapter explains how readers interpret political cartoons to construct popular discourses on identity, danger, security, control and containment. Through analyzing some selected cartoons, the chapter introduces the various aspects of critical geopolitics such as identity (we and they), danger, security, control and containment. It presents two different categories of cartoons that highlight how India practices democracy, secularism and tolerance in its state mechanisms while other minorities, especially Muslims are ignored, exploited and abused.

#### **5.3.4 Imagined Community**

The chapter on Imagined Community explains that film holds a tremendous potential and power to attract the mass population and can act as a catalyst for the initiation and development of a political movement and mobilization on a given issue. Film is a means of delivering historical evidence, popular stories, cultural trends, political views, social and religious landscapes, and aspects of daily life. It provides entertainment, laughter, fun, pleasure, personal and group amusement, joy, sadness, and excitement.

Films are a widely viewed media, and are especially popular in the sub-continent. It is a powerful tool that incorporates epic tales of nation formation and identity politics. India's film-breeding city Bollywood's appeal and influence in India is far-reaching. Hogan (2008:1) explains that as many as 11 million Indians watch Indian movies each day. There are viewers

from South Asian countries, Russia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, North America and South America. Quoting Cynthia Weber, Dodds claims that “accessing visual culture through popular films allows us to consider connections between IR theory and our everyday lives. Using popular films in this way helps us get a sense of the everyday connections between ‘the popular’ and ‘the political’”(2005:276).

Cinema creates discourses of danger and terror among the common populations, and Indians know Muslims as outsiders, although in reality and by virtue of their birth they are Indian citizens. The movies, I am going to discuss in the chapter, explore how the perceptions of about 150 million Muslims differ from local understandings and the views of the political elites and how discourses of danger work in the world’s largest and oldest democratic country. I will examine briefly how Indian film generates notions of imagined community and the concept of nationhood among the common people and disseminates fear and trauma in contemporary so-called secular India, as well as how film controls domestic views and elite perceptions on danger, terror, fear and violence. In addition, the film itself acts as a historical document as well as geopolitical texts to construct the concept of security and transborder interaction and deeper communications.

#### **5.4 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter presents a brief note on discourse analysis and critical geopolitics highlighting the contribution of human geographers to popular geopolitics and popular culture. It provides an analysis of major geopolitical concepts along with approaches to the analysis of discourses in critical geopolitics.

The following chapter explains the role of geopolitical codes of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in order to explain how these countries actively identify their allies and enemies, as

well as make foreign policy decisions within local, regional and global context. It explores how foreign policies of the Sub-continent justify geopolitical codes and how geopolitical imaginations are gradually changed in terms of power politics and material interest.

## Chapter 6: Geopolitical Representation of Codes

### 6.1 Geopolitical Codes

Codes are also used to determine how countries face their enemies and emerging threats and how they justify their actions to the public and international community. Geopolitical codes are not only employed by hegemonic or powerful countries but other small countries also formulate them for their survival and for the sake of external policy. Basically they vary from country to country based on geographical scale i.e. size, population, strategic importance, and state mechanisms. Thus national identity and national myths become a factor in identifying the geopolitical codes of a country. “Who is enemy” and “who is friend” is determined by national myths, and by foreign policies to mobilize people’s support. Taylor argues that codes “are the set of strategic assumptions a government makes about other states in forming its foreign policies” (1990:80). Accordingly, a question may arise: how are these codes explained or described? Taylor explains that the usage of codes is integral parts of geographical reasoning used by statesmen or governments which is not written on ‘tablets of stone’ but “can be inferred from its foreign policies” (Taylor, 1993b:37; cf. Dodds, 1994:198). “It is simply a matter of ‘reading’ the already legible surfaces of *international* politics” (Dodds, 1994:198). Codes are based on various departments of the state, domestic political context and existing political-economic circumstances (Ibid.).

According to Taylor (1990:12), “geopolitical reasoning produces geopolitical codes” and “the key element of such codes is the definition of state interest.” And state always justifies such codes to formulate policies to counter threats and terror. Taylor believes that geopolitical codes operate on three scales: local, regional and global. All states, as Taylor describes, have their own codes to identify threats from neighbouring countries. The geopolitical codes “refer to a set of

social representations based on national political identity, including ideas about a country's natural allies and enemies, about the essence of external threats, and about major international problems and ways to resolve them" (Guney and Gokcan, 2010:23-24).

Here, the participation of respective state into the regional and international associations reflects its geopolitical imagination and geopolitical code. Geopolitical vision shapes national identity concepts into "geographical terms and symbols" and "national identity is continuously rewritten on the basis of external events, and constructed dangers" (Ibid.:24). This is how national mythology and foreign policies relate to each other and become interlinked to redefine and reconstruct or reconceptualize security.

## **6.2 Scales of Geopolitical Codes and the Sub-continent**

This section discusses briefly the role of the geopolitical codes of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in order to explain how these countries actively identify their allies and enemies, as well as make foreign policy decisions within local, regional and global context. An understanding of geopolitical codes and representations may simply be seen as a way of clarifying the decision-making process, and two important audiences must be considered to justify geopolitical codes i.e. local and international actors.

According to Taylor and Flint (2002), geopolitical codes are comprised of five calculations: a) who is current and potential allies; b) who is existing and potential enemies; c) how the relations with political allies are nurtured and maintained; d) how to face emerging threats of enemies; and e) how to justify the above issues to the public and to the global community. For examples, the pessimistic foreign policy of India took on a new vitality with the establishment of the NAM which was a geopolitical code in the region. India has been playing a role of hegemonic power in South Asia since its independence and has intervened to some

degree in the practices and policies of its neighbouring states. In the early part of 1950s, India felt threatened and alienated by its neighbouring China and especially, Pakistan due to the Kashmir crisis in 1947-48. During that period, India's foreign policy was largely driven by its fear of the aggression by the then two super powers, the USA and USSR. Territorial integrity was India's main concern as well as other developing nation-states. India established a forum for the least developing countries (LDCs), and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) came into being in 1955, which was aimed at fighting imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism, foreign aggression and bloc politics to ensure national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries. The then Prime Minister Nehru was the founding member of the NAM, a brainchild of Yugoslavia's president Josip Tito, Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Naser, Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah and Indonesia's president Sukarno. Nehru pursued "both a practical policy of non-involvement in the Cold War, and a moral standpoint, which curiously permitted a pragmatic approach to issues, siding with major powers over specific issues if their actions were deemed worthy" (Chapman, 2003:269). India has recently engaged in regional coalitions of weaker states or minor powers to reduce the intrusion of stronger powers in its regional matters. Such initiatives, among others, include IOZP (Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace), and ASEAN's ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality).

Since 1948 Pakistan has been improving its representation regionally and globally. Pakistan believes India to be the only enemy state in the region due its huge economic growth and vast resources. The newly established central government of Pakistan realized that establishing regional and continental allies would be the best tool to protect it from India's aggression in the future. Furthermore, since independence it has cooperated with other regional and global powers to show India that it is progressing and is ready to face any threats. It had been

a permanent member of the then SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), a Southeast Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a forum that provided a collective defence to its member-countries. SEATO was established in 1955 to oppose communism in region and it was dissolved in 1977.

On the other hand, Pakistan was also a founding member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO also known as the Baghdad Pact) established in the same year with like-minded countries- Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the UK. Replicating NATO, CENTO works to maintain mutual cooperation and protection to its member-countries. But CENTO was dissolved in 1979. Pakistan signed the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) Pact in 1964 with Turkey and Iran. It was dissolved in 1979 and the organization was replaced by Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985. Pakistan is also one of the influential members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Pakistan, given that it is a Muslim nation, has strong relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan and China have had friendly relations since the 1950s. Pakistan purchases weapons from China, and China cooperates with Pakistan bilaterally. Pakistan maintains good relations with Middle Eastern countries and central Asian states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, two powerful Muslim nations in Asia.

Newly established Bangladesh is weaker than India and Pakistan. It has established a regional body and cooperates with its neighbours—India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives (and later Afghanistan joined the association). In 1985, Bangladesh was actively involved in the first regional association known as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In the context of Bangladesh, SAARC was created with a motive to act as a protective shield against any threats from India and other neighboring countries, but this

vision didn't materialize about security and transborder protection. "Members of SAARC like to see a model of their futures in ASEAN, the successful grouping of Southeast Asian states that is edging towards a common market status" (Chapman, 2003:271). To maintain a balance in the region, Bangladesh joined other regional and international organizations such as OIC, BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and D-8 or Developing 8 (including Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey). In addition, Bangladesh has been maintaining a liaison with powerful countries such as the USA, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UK, Germany and neighbouring states such as China, India, Japan so that they can perform at their best domestically, nationally and regionally.

### **6.3 Geopolitical Codes and Foreign Policy Paradigms of the Sub-continent**

To explore the geopolitical codes of the Sub-continent, it is necessary to explain how foreign policies of the Sub-continent have been framed, and how the justification of the foreign policy stance is a key component of geopolitical codes, and how geopolitical imaginations are gradually changed in terms of power politics and material interest. In the following section, I have described the foreign policy and geopolitical codes of each countries of the Sub-continent.

#### **6.3.1 Geopolitical Codes and Indian Foreign Policy**

With reference to India's foreign policy and strategic paradigms since its birth, the following major speeches and concerns maybe discussed to understand its changing geopolitical codes from non-aligned approach to hegemonic attitude towards its neighbours, and its gradual shifting from the regional leadership to the continental and global level. The Indian geopolitical codes are different in nature and direct contrast to those of Pakistan. India's extension of geopolitical codes from region to global is consistent with its desire to dominate the world politically and economically. Over the decades, Indian geopolitical codes have changed

tremendously and its foreign policy can be categorized into three phases: a) adopting a Gandhian/Nehruvian creed to reinvent idealist texture in its foreign policy in the early 1950s; b) a realist approach towards its neighbours from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s; and c) an economic reform and 'look east and west strategy' in foreign policies since 1990s (Malone, 2011).

During the early part of the Cold War, India started its journey as a preacher of non-align movement seeking common cause with other third-world countries under the Nehru regime. It virtually rejected the bipolar order of the world framing out its foreign policy that seemed moralistic to outsiders linking its national interest as congruent with global cooperation. In September 1946 Nehru reiterated:

“In the sphere of foreign affairs, India will follow an independent policy, keeping away from power politics of groupings aligned against the other” (Adhikari et al., 2008:6).

On October 17, 1960, Krishna Menon, the then chief advisor of the Nehru's regime reiterated the same belief and doctrine of Nehru in the UN General Assembly:

“We are not neutral country... We are neutral in regard to war or peace... We are not neutral in regard to domination by imperialist or other countries... We are not neutral with regard to ethical values... Neutrality is a concept that arises only in war... Therefore our position is that we are unaligned and uncommitted nation in relation to the Cold War... we do not belong to one camp or another” (Adhikari et al., 2008:6).

Nehru's foreign policy was influenced by the Gandhian philosophy as well as the idealistic approaches where he emphasized morality and ethics. He made an agreement with China titled the Sino-Indian Friendship Treaty, popularly known as the Panch Shila [Five principles] Agreement in April 1954 in order to make the non-aligned geopolitical code successful to the West. Both India and China agreed to follow the five principles (of mutual respect, non-aggression, non-interference, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence) defining the code of inter-state relations of two newly liberated and strongly republics. Nehru had accepted

this agreement in an attempt to make his non-alignment approach more applicable to contemporary 'East-versus West' showing his boldness to the international community though he faced the ideological conformation from the West.

Through this treaty India gave up its military, communication, postal services and other rights of Tibet which India inherited from the British in 1904 under the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty. On the other hand, China was the immediate beneficiary of this treaty gaining its control over Tibet while India reaps its success nominally. Tibet enjoyed the status of an independent state till the British lost its control over the Sub-continent in 1947. Soon it became a target of China and subsequently it occupied Tibet in 1950. Instead of helping its regional state, India allowed China to occupy the territory through military force undermining the obligation the British provided to India with regard to Tibet's independence. Thus, "at the regional level, the non-aligned geopolitical code suffered at the Chinese hand. The Sino-Indian 1954-Treaty exposed the hollowness of the non-aligned approach, and a failure also" (Adhikari et al., 2008:8).

If we see the role of non-alignment movement at the regional level, the Indian non-aligned neutral doctrine didn't provide any momentous success in 1950s and 1960s rather "there was acute rivalry with China for the leadership of the newly-emerged third world countries of the Asian realm, and with Pakistan, the rivalry concentrated on a number of factors, such as communalism, refugee problems, water disputes and the Kashmir" (Adhikari et al., 2008:10). It has been observed that India's foreign policy was mostly based on Pakistan (Rosenthal, 1956), and India has accumulated all of its of power to encounter Pakistan and gain superiority over its neighbours. India's so-called the Panch shila paradigm didn't work regionally to resolve political crisis with Pakistan. On the contrary, Pakistan becomes friendly with China to forge a strength campaign against Indian military power. Not only that India signed the defense treaty in 1971,

first of its kind, with the then Soviet Union titled the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation for twenty years which was basically direct contradicts with the Nehruvian geopolitical code and a sharp departure from the Panch Shila approach of peaceful coexistence between and among the countries (Adhikari et al., 2008). Here, India's geopolitical strategy somehow contradicts with its non-aligned approach, and violates its cold war doctrine. This treaty has changed the strategic dynamism in the Sub-continent and has inspired both India and Pakistan to engage in arms race. In 1971, India supported the freedom struggle of East Pakistan violating the Panch Shila principles and "India became active to make East Pakistan an independent state, and this was made possible because of the Indo-Soviet defense treaty" (Ibid.:17).

Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru, realized that India's non-aligned approach did not beget any fruitful result at the regional and global level. Moreover, the Chinese successful military invasion in 1962 and Pakistan's attack in 1965 humiliated India which caused to reshape Indian geopolitical structure as well to rethink to intervene in the realities of international power politics. Indira came to power in 1966 with a new vision of Indian foreign policy and interstate relations. "While paying tribute to her father's ideal of non-alignment, Mrs Gandhi asserted that the problems of developing countries needed to be faced 'not merely by idealism, not merely by sentimentalism, but by very clear thinking and hard-headed analysis of the situation'" (Mukherjee and Malone, 2011:89). Her statement "predicted a radical change of Indian geopolitical code from its earlier stance of peaceful coexistence to intermittent realism" (Ibid.:89). She started pursuing bold realist approach following the Indo-Soviet treaty and helped the east wing of Pakistan (East Pakistan) get liberated and intervened in the direct war in 1971 despite severe

threats from the UN and the USA. In addition, it tested a nuclear device in 1974 in response to that of China in 1964.

India seems to be more aggressive in 1970s and 1980s and has been playing a role of hegemonic power in the region and intervened to some degree in the practices and policies of its neighbouring states. For example, as Chapman (2003:192, 270) elaborates, the hegemonic behaviour of India includes such examples: a) The UN resolution of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1948 on Kashmir dispute “called for the establishment of a neutral administration, and the holding of a plebiscite to determine whether the state should accede to Pakistan or India.” India did not care for any sanctions from the UN; b) In 1961 India launched an armed invasion and annexed the four centuries old Portuguese colony of Goa into its territory; c) In 1975 India occupied the Kingdom of Sikkim as a constituent state of India; d) In 1987 India sent its troops to assist the Sri Lankan government in quelling the Tamil insurgency; e) India imposed trade sanctions and embargoes on Nepal to control its policy, and f) India controls the foreign affairs of Bhutan till 2007 under an agreement between Bhutan and India in 1949.

At the domestic level, Indira grounded down the struggle and insurgency of the Sikhs of Punjab who wanted to create an independent Khalistan in place of Punjab. Hundreds and thousands of people sacrificed their lives for this struggle. New Delhi launched a military action titled ‘Operation Blue-Star’ in June 1984 to hold the so-called freedom fighters in the Golden Temple of Punjab (Adhikari et al., 2008). India has achieved its goal to destroy the movement which was disappeared finally but the end-result was so severe that the then Prime Minister Indira was assassinated in October, 1984 by her personal Sikh body guards in her government residence in New Delhi.

The Indian foreign policy endured a radical shift in the 1990s from non-alignment and intermittent realism to a subversive pragmatic vision. This ideological change “favoured some normalization of traditionally antagonistic relationships with the neighbouring countries, a greater commitment to international institutions that might legitimize its emerging power status, a positive approach to relations with the world’s remaining superpower and, importantly, greater focus on national defence, including in the nuclear sphere” (Mukherjee and Malone, 2011:90). India’s foreign policy manifests huge changes including a good relation with China, launching the ‘Look East Policy’ in 1992, relationship with Iran and other countries of the Arab world, nuclear test in 1998, signed military agreement with Israel, supporting the USA invasion in Afghanistan, agreement with the USA in 2005, 2008 and 2010 (Ibid., 2011).

Recently India has taken a different turn in its geopolitical codes and foreign policy discourse broadening the concept of ‘strategic autonomy’ to deal with other world actors. It has widened its political space for closer relations with the USA as an important actor in a multipolar world despite a sharp protest from its populations. As the then Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna of India declared its foreign strategy in September 2009:

“Our main objective is ensuring a conducive international environment for consolidating our strategic autonomy” (Ollapally and Rajagopalan, 2011:146).

India has changed its geopolitical codes at a time when China emerges as a great power in the global and different threats posed by its two nuclear powers China and Pakistan continue to propagate. This strategic vision can give India a place in global stature and influence. Perhaps the most fundamental change we have seen in India’s relations with the USA in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to support Washington in the War on Terror and its invasion of Afghanistan to root out the Taliban in 2001. The furious tone of the USA by adopting sanctions over India’s nuclear test has relatively become normal when the Clinton administration in the late 1990s

viewed India as a growing market, and even the Kargil War in 1999 has compelled the USA to revisit its strategy over the South Asian region (Malone, 2011). Realizing the necessity of the role of India in the War on Terror and to fight China's growing influence in Asia and the world as well, the Bush administration has become friendly with India and assisted its efforts in various ways i.e. economically and militarily assuming that India is a reliable ally and a key partner in curbing terrorism in the long run in the region. "The USA has supported India's inclusion in restricted elite decision making groups in various international forums on multilateral trade, climate change and management of the international economy following the financial crisis of 2008" (Ibid.:67). The eternal desire of India to be an active veto member in the UN Security Council and eventually to involve largely with the IMF and the World Bank has become a challenge to New Delhi. Given this circumstance, India has changed its geopolitical codes in different periods, and accommodated super powers like Russia, China, the UK and France into its own circle. Nevertheless India has also established good relations with the parallel rise of countries such as Brazil, South Africa and Iran and invigorated partnership in business and trade.

Being a strong regional power, India does not afraid of any imminent nuclear attack from Pakistan. It has adopted regional geopolitical codes to influence well beyond its border. India seems more liberal on its periphery and countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar are receiving generous gesture from New Delhi (Malone, 2011). But India faces constraints as a global leader for its unsatisfactory regional role, especially in case of Pakistan that has made New Delhi's potential advancement in the world stage in jeopardy. "The stand-off between the two countries benefits a number of state actors in Pakistan, notably the armed forces and the intelligence community, so Indian advocates of 'no concessions' are echoed loudly by influential voices across the border" (Ibid.:288).

Malone (2011) has rightly said that India is more focused about its interest and economic benefit rather than defining its role globally and its foreign policy framework that has shifted in multipolar system from multilateral and in some cases bilateral diplomacy. Though India is one of the influential members of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, it did not delay to join Brazil in criticizing China for its exchange rate policies (Ibid.). Strategically, India is not yet a potential global power to handle the international affairs carefully as its power and strength are engaged with internal security responsibilities, especially Kashmir issue, fight against the Naxalite and transborder terrorism in its north-eastern region. The narrative and discourses of Indian political elites concerning security and foreign policy disseminate some inadequacy and the contents of the policy change when the geopolitical codes change.

### **6.3.2 Geopolitical Codes and Pakistani Foreign Policy**

In respect of Pakistan's foreign policy, it seems that the country's foreign engagement is dictated by national identity rather than national interest because the country came into being as an entity not in an endless fight against the British Raj but in disagreement with the Indian nationalist movement (Shaikh, 2009). The political elites and as well as religious leaders of India have painted a mental image of Pakistan as being "other" than a state struggling between democracy, militarism and fundamentalism. It is perhaps inevitable for Pakistan to construct some geopolitical codes. Since the emergence of Pakistan, it has translated its geopolitical code, 'the look west' policy, to remain strong enough militarily to defend its freedom and sovereignty against India. The 1948 Kashmir episode increased tension and insecurity in the minds of the political leaders of the newly born country. "The decision to join the Western alliance system in the 1950s restored Pakistan's sense of security, as it became a beneficiary of American largeness that included significantly military, political and economic support" (Shah, 2001:350). The

strategic relationship of the USA with Pakistan started in the early 1950s during the Cold War. Washington selected Pakistan as the most trusted ally against the Soviet Union considering its geographic closeness to the Soviet. The USA provided token support to Pakistan during the periods of mid-1949 to the early 1950s, and it viewed Pakistan as a potential component of effective ally to the policy of containment (Smith, 2011). In May 1954, the USA announced a military assistance program worth \$430 million between 1955 and 1958 to see Pakistan a militarily strong state to counter its neighbours (Ibid.). The economic base of Pakistan was established in the period of 1958 to 1968 which is considered the golden years of Pakistan under the era of President Ayub Khan (Shah, 2001).

However, the relationship of Pakistan with the USA deteriorated when the USA assisted India in the 1962 Sino-India war. Pakistani leaders became surprised to see the American actions, especially the military assistance to India, and gradually Pakistan established its relationship with China that has made its armed forces valued in international circle. Pakistan and China have long-standing ties and both are against the Indian emergence as a regional power in South Asia. This unique partnership work as a threat for India with a potential element at two-front war zones with both sides. The 1965 Indo-Pakistan War made the political elites of Pakistan more conscious about the role of the USA for its insignificant role and turned away from the United States toward China (Smith, 2011). The USA decided to cut off arms and military equipment sale to both India and Pakistan and consequently this move has prompted Pakistan to buy arms from China for its instantaneous security. Thus, the geopolitical code “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” (India is Pakistan’s enemy and India’s enemy is China and China is now Pakistan’s close friend) works for Pakistan and it took this advantage while noticing that the Chinese relations with India deteriorated following the Indo-China War in 1962. Pakistan and

China negotiated an agreement of border settlement in the Kashmir region in 1963 which made India more frustrated and angry.

In the late 1950s the USA made a secret deal with Pakistan to use its airport for some military purposes and in May 1960 the USA's secret U2 spy plane flew from Pakistan airbase to the Soviet Union to gain vital photo intelligence concerning the soviet top secret military objects. The spy plane was shot down by the Soviet and arrested the pilot with some photographs of its military establishments. The interesting thing is that Pakistan didn't know that the USA was using its soil for spying to the Soviet and accordingly, Moscow threatened Pakistan to attack for providing such a facility to the USA. Such humiliating acts made the government of Pakistan to think again over the relationship with the USA for receiving bad behaviour from its benefactor and key strategic partner. Even during the India-Pakistan war in 1971, Pakistan didn't attain expected help from the USA, and eventually the USA failed to send an aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, into the Bay of Bengal (Smith, 2011). "Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat against its longtime adversary, which led to its territorial dismemberment when East Pakistan declared its independence as Bangladesh" (Ibid.:203). While the USA imposed sanctions on Pakistan in 1998 for its nuclear test, Pakistan remains reluctant and continued its decades-long relationship with China. China didn't hesitate to assist Pakistan in various ways and even in 1992 China exported a 300-megawatt nuclear power plant and provided Islamabad with nuclear technology, weapons and scientific technical devices (Smith, 2011).

In the decade of 1980s, Pakistan was a close ally of the USA to root out the Soviet from the soil of Afghanistan and it supported the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen with full training and support and later the Taliban. The USA appreciated Pakistan's role and provided economic and military support during this period. Pakistan was a key partner when the USA invaded

Afghanistan in 2001 to root out the Taliban. At that time, the USA put a few options to Pakistan, either to support the USA or to show its loyalty to the Taliban of Afghanistan. The then president Musharraf chose the first one and became an ally of Washington in accelerating strategic cooperation in the War on Terror. Pakistan's participation in the War on Terror with the USA has eased Washington to come to the region directly with some changes in its policy objectives and strategic thinking in the region. Pakistan's joining the war shaped the geopolitical mode of the South Asian region. The decision of Pakistan gave a momentum to the post 9/11 geopolitical moves of various regional and international actors impacting the policy objective of the region.

In comparison to India, it seems that Pakistan had been an active player in the Cold War, especially, it orchestrated Washington's plan to defeat Soviet troops in Afghanistan during the period of 1979 to 1988. After more than a decade, the USA again sought Pakistan's sincere help to eliminate the Taliban government and its radical policies in Afghanistan and accordingly, it invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Both super powers played great games in two recent different periods on the soil of Afghanistan that displaced a huge heavily armed Afghan Taliban in neighbouring areas in two times. Thus, hundreds and thousands of Afghan refugees took shelter in Pakistan. This large number of refugees has increased sectarian violence and religious militancy within Pakistan. It was the USA that helped Islamic Mujahedeens during the Soviet reign in Afghanistan who thronged to Pakistan from the various parts of the world to receive training against the Soviet. "Today, these Mujahedeen groups have turned against the Western forces that nurtured and legitimized them, and are condemned and opposed as terrorists" (Shah, 2001:347).

Pakistan has shifted its foreign policy in different crucial periods, and adopted its geopolitical codes for its own interest, for example, its foreign policy has failed to accommodate

its strategic depth, rather the country is turning towards a client-patron relation with Washington. A passive foreign policy of Pakistan has satisfied the USA since 1980s, and this policy went to fulfill the demands of the USA in different times and it accommodated the request of Washington in various fields such as during the Soviet invasion and soviet exist from Kabul, the Western concerted response to vacate Iraqi occupation from Kuwait in the early 1990s, the invasion of Afghanistan again in 2001. These are the events that put Pakistan to pay heavy price in its internal security, economic growth, democracy and national development. On the other hand, since its birth Pakistan did endure setbacks from its hostile neighbour India such as the Kashmir issue in 1947-48, the India-Pakistan war in 1965, and the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. Islamabad saw its shaky relationship with Iran following the taking over of the Khomeini regime in 1979 and the formal and insignificant relation of Pakistan with its once trusted ally China in 1990s for supporting a group of Muslim insurgencies on the soil of China. Its support of anti-Israel policy has made Pakistan segregated from some Muslim countries after the Oslo peace process in 1993 (such as Egypt, Jordan and Turkey). Moreover, the affiliation of the USA with Pakistan has turned into a love-hatred relation, especially after the nuclear test in 1998, and more recently after the assassination of Bin Laden by the US Navy SEALs in 2011 in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Once a trusted ally of the USA, Pakistan received a downgrade from Washington as the country has been facing terrorism, extremism and internal violence which continue to create a chaotic condition within the country. Though Pakistan is a major ally of the USA but unfortunately it is not part of the NATO. Pakistan has the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world for which the USA is concerned and Washington does not want to see the transfer of nuclear technology to another state as well as it worries that present instability of the country

may inspire militant groups to take over these weapons. Although Pakistan's political establishment reiterates that the country's nuclear weapons are the most secure and safe in the world. Pakistan is also worried about the role of the USA to play an active role in supporting India economically and militarily.

Of late, the courtship of Pakistan with Iran has again made the USA concerned to some extent, and an Iranian-Pakistani bloc would have put the USA in jeopardy where anti-USA sentiment is growing day by day. No matter if possible Washington would use the upper hand of Saudi Arabia to control the Iranian influence on Pakistan in any strategic matter. Even, Pakistan does not play an active role to eradicate terrorism from its soil "unless it is encouraged to do so by its most important regional allies, namely Saudi Arabia and China" (Curtis, 2012:267).

Pakistan knows that the USA has been playing a dual role in the South Asian region for a long time, especially with Islamabad when it faced crises from its neighbour India and it didn't receive adequate help from the USA. Realizing the situation, Islamabad shows its loyalty to China for decades maintaining a harmonious relation with Beijing. Although Islamabad felt a kind of alienation from these two superpowers in different times and sought different political interest shaping its geopolitical codes with the diversity of its foreign policy options.

The military governments of Pakistan felt that religious sentiment is a great vehicle to motivate the imagination of the common people and they have translated religious deep belief of the mass population into national politics to grip power in the name of the religion. Mostly, the political elites of Pakistan promote a good relation with the Muslim countries, and it was the then Prime Minister Julfikar Ali Bhutto who organized a large gathering of heads of Muslim states in 1974. Pan-Islamism or Muslim brotherhood has been working as a geopolitical code in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Libya were the driving force behind

the nuclear initiative of Pakistan and strategically, the members of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) supported Pakistan to acquire nuclear power. “Pakistan’s efforts to acquire nuclear capability were also aimed at gaining the leadership of the Islamic world” (Kumar, 2011:482). In addition, Saudi Arabia relies on Pakistani soldiers to protect its kingdom including oil and gas fields, and it is learnt that if Saudi Arabia is ever attacked with the nuclear weapons, Islamabad would stand behind the country and there is speculation that Saudi Arabia has sought Pakistan’s assistance to obtain nuclear power to respond the emerging threat of its neighbouring country Iran (Lisa, 2012).

### **6.3.3 Geopolitical Codes and Bangladeshi Foreign Policy**

Being a small country in the region in terms of size, natural resources, economy and military capability, the objective of foreign policy of Bangladesh did not receive any fundamental alternations but priorities of the foreign relations have been changed in different periods. The country remains friendly decades together with different countries and regions, for example, South Asian countries, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, West Europe, the USA, the UK, Russia, Japan, China and Canada. But its relationship with India fluctuates since its birth, and in respect of diplomatic relations with Pakistan it seems that a cold war is going on between Pakistan and Bangladesh since long in some fundamental issues concerning the distribution of resources between two countries after the liberation war of Bangladesh is finished in 1971. Since long Bangladesh demands an unconditional apology from Pakistan and urges its political elites and the governments to return its assets and resources Islamabad grabbed during the war.

In comparison with Pakistan, the foreign policy of Bangladesh is more positive towards India than that of India to Bangladesh as some scholars claim, and the country has seen several

fluctuating relations with India, although the political leaders of the country i.e. secular, nationalist, right and left camps are concerned about the domination of New Delhi in the foreign policy of Bangladesh. The country itself has been in vulnerable position in comparison with the strength and economic power of India. In addition, the borders of Bangladesh which are surrounded by India, seems to be 'India locked' in line with the geographical location. The foreign policy of Bangladesh does not reflect pro-Indian or against-India syndrome but somehow it keeps a balance between two. As the then foreign minister of Bangladesh, who served the ministry from January 2007 to January 2009, has stated that "Bangladesh has always entertained some weariness of it. Unsurprisingly, 'Indo-centrism' has been a key factor in the process of policy-formulation. There has, therefore, been a tendency to use the web of other external linkages to make-up for the regional power-gap" (Malone, 2011:113).

As a great ally of the Liberation War of Bangladesh, India has been a good friend in the early 1970s as the architect of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reiterated his belief while framing the foreign policy of the country: "Friendship with India is a cornerstone of the foreign policy of Bangladesh" (Bangladesh Progress, 1972:52). The same political rhetoric was also uttered by the then prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi. "In future, the governments and people of India and Bangladesh, who share common ideals and sacrifices, would forge a relationship based on the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit" (Bhardwaj, 2008:264).

In the early 1970s, Bengali nationalism was a factor in the formulation of foreign policy of Bangladesh and the country's foreign policy paradigm was determined by the geographical realities, historical events and cultural affinities (Varian, 1984). Bangladesh was the result of the

struggle of Bengali nationalism, launched in the late 1940s, to establish a separate entity in the region. The movement of partition started when the leader of whole Pakistan (east and west) Mohammed Ali Jinnah declared that 'Urdu' would be the state language of the country in January 1948. The language movement in East Pakistan took an aggressive shape in 1952 that led gradually for an independent Bangladesh in 1971. Thus the issue of nationalism became a geopolitical code in the foreign policy of Bangladesh. The involvement of India in domestic affairs of Bangladesh and other South Asian states created mistrust and confusion among the people of the region. Specifically, the relationship of Bangladesh with India deteriorated when the former realized a manifestation of Indian hegemony in the region. The people of Bangladesh speak up several times against India on different issues but the government some time did not exhibit its annoyance. This nationalism paradigm of Bangladesh is primarily a projection in regional politics as well as a continued effort to show its influence in Bangladesh's foreign policy.

In the aftermath of the War of Liberation, though Dhaka pursued an India-positive foreign policy but this warming relations gradually developed disagreement on some vital issues of the country such as water sharing, border issues, trade and business. After the assassination of the then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib in 1975, the foreign policy of Bangladesh has changed tremendously and the military regimes of the country became hostile with India. The successive regimes used Islam as one of the tools to rule the country and employed anti-Indian sentiment in policy issues that facilitated to win the heart of the mass populations.

In the successive decades the military regimes remained friendly with Saudi Arabia, Arab Emirates and other Muslim world. The foreign policy adopted during the period of the late 1970s and the 1980s were based on Muslim brotherhood/pan-Islamism and the military rulers

used this geopolitical code in their politics and trade and businesses with the Middle Eastern countries. This geopolitical policies i.e. anti-India or no-more-with India has given the regimes an upper hand from China, and Beijing became a close friend of Bangladesh (Bhardwaj, 2003). General Zia of the military government took bilateral issues of both countries to the Organization of the Islamic Countries (OIC) in May, 1976 in Istanbul and at the Colombo Summit of the non-aligned countries in August 1976 and in the 31<sup>st</sup> session of UN general Assembly in November in the same year (Ibid.).

As discussed above, Bangladesh had different foreign policy priorities and adopted geopolitical codes for decades together for its own interest. It is no exaggeration that the foreign policy of Bangladesh was mainly focused on India due to the following reasons i.e. economic and political benefit and transborder security and military threats. The foreign policy narratives of the country reflects a picture of social, political, religious and regional dynamics on the one side, and on the other, these policies do not have that much impact regionally and globally due to its weak governance, violent politics, political difference and regional tensions.

Bangladesh's foreign policy has long been facing challenges on how to accommodate two regional powers, China and India together and how to balance the relations between these two giants simultaneously while Bangladesh needs both of them to implement its different political and development agenda. The general trend of the country is that when the pro-liberation party (such as Awami League) comes to the power, it adopts an India-biased policy while other nationalist parties (such as Bangladesh Nationalist Party) maintain an attitude of mistrust to India employing a counterbalancing strategy (Chakma, 2012). These two parties have been in the power alternatively for more than 25 years and the remaining period (i.e. about 17 years) by the military rulers. During the late 1970s, "the Zia regime cultivated closer ties with

China, Pakistan and Muslim countries as countervailing weight to ease New Delhi's pressure and hostility. Dhaka's action raised security concerns in New Delhi and went against India's long-held regional strategy" (Chakma, 2012:8)

In the early part of the last decade, Bangladesh supported the initiatives of the USA on the War on Terror but didn't provide any physical help in response to Washington's repeated request to establish a temporary airbase in Dhaka to pound military attack on Afghanistan as needed. While the war on terror is going on in the region and Afghanistan is being attacked simultaneously by the USA, Bangladesh began its economic diplomacy towards the Southeast Asia and East Asia. It is the BNP government that took initiatives to go beyond the region for economic and political diplomacy.

The December 2002 is the milestone for Bangladesh as the country's foreign relations took a new turn with the bilateral visits by the highest political representations from Bangladesh, Thailand, China and Myanmar. "These visits signified the emphasis on diplomatic and economic ties with the countries in East and Southeast Asia compared with traditional links with India and other SAARC countries" (Hussain, 2005:1). In addition, high level ministerial and high ranking official meetings took place between Bangladesh, Singapore and Vietnam in 2004 and 2005. This shift of foreign policy has been defined as the 'policy of looking east', 'move to east' and 'new directions in foreign policy' (Ibid.). It has raised some questions from different quarters as why did Bangladesh select these Southeast Asian countries to do business and why does this sudden change in the country's foreign policy? Will this attitude ultimately affect the Indo-Bangla relations? As I discussed above, the BNP government always takes initiatives to supersede India in economic and political diplomacy and this policy of 'looking east' during the period of 2001 to 2006 while the BNP had been in power. Thus, the BNP seeks its geopolitical

codes beyond its normal relation with the South Asian region. Interestingly, when the Awami League came to the power in 2009 it has started again making liaison with India and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went to New Delhi in January 2010 to meet with the Indian prime minister. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came to Dhaka in September 2011 to carry forward the agenda they discussed in 2010. Thus it can be said that the foreign policy strategy of Bangladesh changes frequently due to the ideologies of the political parties who run the country.

#### **6.4 Geopolitical Representations and Foreign Policies of the Sub-Continent**

Terming the functions of summits and conferences as a geopolitical representations and performances, Sidaway (2002:72) notes,

Summits also exist to demonstrate the authority, and therefore something of the power, of the head of the state and of his or her agents – as the ultimate mediators of the ‘national’ in a form of mutual recognition (by other such representatives).

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have participated in summits, conferences and treaties since the partition and communicate about mutual problems, and develop policies through the institutional setting of different types. But in most cases their goals are somewhat difficult to attain and harder to implement, especially regarding issues like terrorism, water-sharing of the rivers, border disputes and infiltration. There are numerous efforts and negotiations still take place between and among the political actors of the Sub-continent but there are apparently no consensus concerning the following issues: maritime boundary disputes between Bangladesh and India in the Bay of Bengal and India and Pakistan in the Arabian Sea; land boundary conflicts between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan; hydrology problems in the Indus Basin between Pakistan and India; facilitating Asian highways across the borders of Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar; water sharing impasse in the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin; infiltration and insurgency; transnational and national terrorism; infiltration and illicit migration; Kashmir

insurgency; human trafficking and trafficking of small arms and ammunition and transborder conflicts; and absence of a nuclear proliferation treaty between India and Pakistan (Shailo, 2010; 2011; 2012).

At the level of summits and conferences, India and Pakistan usually show their utmost willingness to develop policies and approaches to solve bilateral problems, including terrorism, but in reality the summit proposals hardly take any shape for a rapid implementation. Thus criticism takes place about the importance of holding such expensive meetings and summits, especially for the heads of states, ministers or high officials from foreign, commerce and interior ministries of India and Pakistan. However, the issue is simple: it is a process to construct sovereignty through performance and to show the differential positions of both regional super powers to their citizens in particular and other global actors in general. At the same time these geopolitical narratives construct foreign policies and identify how diplomacy, geopolitical codes and representation are combined in the statements and charters.

Below are the extracts from statements and charters on the geopolitical codes and representations of the Sub-continent and how these narratives are interpreted and how power, influence and politics tailor the immediate situation and the public opinions.

*Extract 1*

The following is an excerpt of a statement by the foreign minister of Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a joint press briefing with his counterpart in New Delhi on 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

...If the 21st century is going to be the century for the Asian subcontinent, we have to see, are we ready for that?  
... And we also recognize that both of us [India and Pakistan] are victims of terrorism. India and Pakistan have had a number of incidents that are serious and we have to jointly combat this menace and common threat.

... We also recognize that the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism which is in place is an important institutional mechanism ...<sup>1</sup>

In the above statements, Pakistan's foreign minister presents his country as cooperative and friendly and highlights that India has a stake in Pakistan's progress in the one hand, and on the other, Pakistan is also committed to support India's progress and development. Basically this high level conference reflects the state's willingness to overcome disappointment, strains, tensions, terrorism and even armed conflicts. The minister also puts emphasize on the formulation of joint anti- terrorism mechanism to combat the internal and external terror attacks in both countries.

#### *Extract 2*

The following keynote address was made by India's Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao at the symposium on the Future of India-Pakistan Relations organized by the Pakistan Studies Program at Jamia Milia Islamia (University) in New Delhi on October 19, 2010. The statement epitomizes India's strength and future vision and the manner by which it exhibits its strengths and power to its neighbours.

Of course, there is the engulfing deficit of trust between the two countries that needs to be bridged. This needs to be done both at the government and people to people level.

... The future of India-Pakistan relations, as I see it, must be predicated on such a win-win situation where everybody has a stake in furthering the cause of peace and good neighbourly relations.

... However, as an eternal optimist and someone who believes in the power of people to shape their destiny I feel it is incumbent on all of us to strive and achieve a peaceful and mutually reinforcing relationship that will unlock the true potential of more than a billion people for their betterment.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** Website of Ministry of External Affairs, India: Retrieved on 15, December, 2010:  
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530314437>

“A Joint Press Conference by External Affairs Minister of India and Foreign Minister of Pakistan (November 26, 2008)

<sup>2</sup> **Source:** Website of Ministry of External Affairs, India: Retrieved on 16, December, 2010:  
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530116574>

“Keynote Address by Foreign Secretary Smt. Nirupama Rao at the Symposium on “The Future of India-Pakistan Relations,” (October 19, 2010)

*Extract 3*

The then Indian finance minister Pranab Mukherjee [Now the President of India] reiterated during the signing of the agreement between the Bangladesh and India (*The Daily Star*, August 08, 2010). The minister also said the following:

“Security cooperation is an area which has engaged the attention of both our countries, given our common desire to root out the forces of extremism and terrorism from our midst. Insurgents and insurgent groups have the potential to affect our relations. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to tackle this menace and we will continue to be closely engaged.”

*Extract 4*

The then Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani stressed the need for cooperation and collective effort to make the Developing 8 forum (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey) a success. Being a non-Muslim country, India is not included in this group and this forum belongs to Muslim countries. The summit was held in Kuala Lumpur on July 8, 2008. The prime minister uttered the following:

The D-8 can become a model of progress, development, cooperation and partnership. This organization has a great promise with more than 930 million people and vast natural resources. ... The top most priority of my Government, which is democratically elected and enjoys overwhelming mandate of the people, is economic development for poverty alleviation in Pakistan. This overarching objective determines our economic reform process.<sup>3</sup>

*Extract 5*

The Indian prime minister's statement on the EU-Summit held on November 06, 2009:

... We reviewed the situation in Afghanistan, and Pakistan and emphasized the need for concerted international action to combat terrorism. We have agreed to work towards early finalization of the agreement between EUROPOL and India. We also reviewed the situation in West Asia, Iran, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and discussed other regional issues.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Source: *Contemporary Issues in South Asia: Documents*, 2009, an address by Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Gilani on “Pakistan on Developing -8” at Kuala Lumpur on July 8, 2008, published by Institute for Defence Studies, New Delhi, pages: 263-64

<sup>4</sup>Source: Website of Ministry of External Affairs, India (Retrieved on 17, December, 2010: “[Indian ] Prime Minister’s Statement to the Press on India-EU Summit” <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530115288>

*Extract 6*

Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are also signatories of the SAARC:

The SAARC charter states that —

...Convinced that regional cooperation among the countries of SOUTH ASIA is mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary for promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the peoples of the region.

...Recognising that increased cooperation, contacts and exchanges among the countries of the region will contribute to the promotion of friendship and understanding among their peoples.<sup>5</sup>

*Extract 7*

The BIMSTEC Summit Declaration where Bangladesh and India are also signatories:

...Realizing that globalization has brought about increased opportunity for economic and social development, and that increasing complexity of economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world highlights the need for concerted regional efforts to respond to these challenges,

...Convinced that through our close cooperation we can maximize the potential of our capabilities and resource endowments for economic and social development of our states and peoples,

Recognising the threat that terrorism poses to peace, stability and economic progress in the region, emphasise the need for close cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism and transnational crimes.<sup>6</sup>

The aforesaid statements and the clauses of charters are testimony to their commitment and participation in geopolitical actions as well as their participation in the world political structure. They reflect geopolitical representations and performance, particularly how the countries of the sub-continent have come out of a deep-seated colonial format to an international limelight where they are actively engaged in the world political system as well as confirming their sovereignty, values and strengths to the international political body. In this sense, it would

<sup>5</sup> **Source:** SAARC Charter, retrieved on January 01, 2010 <http://www.saarc-sec.org/SAARC-Charter/5/>

<sup>6</sup> **Source:** BIMSTEC Summit Declaration, retrieved on January 01, 2010: [http://www.bimstec.org/bimstec\\_documents.html](http://www.bimstec.org/bimstec_documents.html)

not be an exaggeration to say that India and Pakistan have been trying to reveal the functioning of their institutions and discourses on sovereignty, territory and identity and how they relate to the inscription of state powers and geopolitical representation.

This geopolitical rhetoric, in the above, of India is an attempt to show their strengths, stimulate their foreign and domestic policies and demonstrate a political gesture to the external actors of the globe that India is really trying to cooperate with its next-door countries. But in the summits or other bilateral/trilateral or one-on-one meetings, India keeps profitable items of mutual interest on its plate so that they can negotiate and make further gains in the days ahead with its neighbours. India uses such geopolitical tools to show the country's good intention to work collectively at domestic and regional levels. If we review the statements mentioned above, it seems India is optimistic about the promotion of peace in the region as it claims that its political visions are liberal and positive. Some actions and statements however definitely reflect an aura of hegemonic behaviour. As political pundits observe, India does not intend to resolve its bilateral and trilateral disputes with its neighbouring countries, even though its foreign policies and contemporary geopolitical narratives highlight "the objective of a peaceful, stable and prosperous neighborhood. [India] continues to attach the highest priority to close and good neighborly political economic and cultural relations with its neighbour...this should be carried out 'on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect'" (Malone, 2011:103).

Pakistan does not have the same inclination to build a good relationship with India. Pakistan's geopolitical gestures and words tend to challenge the political superiority of India. Still, there are many unsolved emerging issues as Malone (2011:109, 110) notes, "Kashmir remains at the crux of tortured relationship between India and Pakistan." Malone further highlights that "the growing asymmetry in economic performance, as well as in geostrategic

significance builds in a powerful structural dimension to Pakistan's resentments" (Malone, 2011:110). Political analysts observe that Pakistan's present political position and its geostrategic structures are genuinely anti-Indian although its foreign policies remarkably advocate for a congenial atmosphere in the region. Here Cohen's (2001, cf. Malone, 2011) words are noteworthy, "India and Pakistan are two countries in the region that suffer from an allergy to each other." Incidents like the Kargil operation of 1999, the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight by Pakistani-backed terrorists in December 1999, terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, a suicide car bomb attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul in July 2008, and the Mumbai Attack in November 2008 are testimonies of Pakistani motives and India's attempts to place responsibility on the shoulder of Pakistan (Malone, 2011).

In geopolitical actions and races, Bangladesh lags behind "at the margins of power" in comparison to both India and Pakistan. A newly emerging country has been struggling between democracy and military rules since its birth, although Bangladesh connects itself to the regional and global geopolitics amidst its internal political tensions, slow economic growth, environmental degradation and overpopulation.

Thus it may be said that India and Pakistan operate in a system of geopolitical representations, and the bleak colonial ideologies have transformed into visions of development and economic growth in the context of a new array of regional and global power. For more than sixty years, there is rivalry and hostility relation between India and Pakistan, and for decades together various governments of both countries attempted to explore negotiation and the third party participation like the World Bank initiated to resolve the Indus water problems in 1960 resulted less success to ensure peaceful solutions to outstanding problems (Malone, 2011). Although some initiatives adopted by both countries have been under process to increase

economic relations, and India's role in this regard is not that much pioneering because India is more sensitive about its security and domestic development.

## **6.5 Summary of the Chapter**

Geopolitical representations of codes reflect a way of clarifying the actions and decision-making processes of the political leaders, and the structural explanation is that the political leaders or state machines use various codes and means of representation over time and they change them when they require. The changing dynamics of geopolitical codes and narratives depend on the opportunities and constraints they have been facing in the domain of power relations. The justification of these actions is structured by regional and global geopolitical trends. The geopolitical codes of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have changed in the past twenty years, and they are not constant in nature because of the changing patterns of the global geopolitics as well as of the regional polity.

Geopolitical codes are dynamic and possess constant changes in line with foreign policies of a state. "What makes geopolitical codes critically important is the contribution they provide towards understanding foreign policy making... Thus, they are helpful in analytical tools in the interpretations of foreign policy actions" (Guney and Gokcan, 2010:24). National identity and national myths determine the geopolitical code of a country, and the branding of an enemy i.e. others with the portrayal of evil or vicious is based on some national myths and stories that underpin the strategies of foreign policies. "These geopolitical codes that ultimately shape geopolitical vision need at least a them-and-us distinction and emotional attachment to a place, they certainly involve a societal dimension" (Ibid.:24).

The narratives of foreign policies, speeches of political elites and foreign policy strategy of the Sub-continent are somehow consistent years together in some aspects, on the one hand,

and the emergence of a new range of challenges comes up on the other. Changes that take place in geopolitical codes and foreign policy strategies are the reflection of new forms of conflict and chaos between the two regional nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, and a geopolitical tension remains years together across the countries of the South Asian region. India is a regional hegemonic power facing obstacles from its neighbours and it happens due to its geopolitical codes, political rhetoric and lack of dynamism. The foreign policy discourses of the Sub-continent encompass geopolitical context and illustrate the role of geopolitical agents, especially the political establishment, to construct their own rhetoric to define security. These geopolitical codes and representations can play a greater role to emphasis upon allies and adversaries to make a framework to construct security and formulate regional collective voice on security and transborder peace.

The next section narrates how border narratives demarcate the population and how identities are split, and how segregation creates danger and threat in the imagination of the people and how people are divided branding themselves with an idea of “we” and “they.”

## **Chapter 7: Identity and Boundary**

### **7.1 Border Narratives and the Sub-continent**

Borders have been regarded as an important component of the international system in understanding contemporary economic, cultural, social and geopolitical debates (Diener and Hagen, 2009). Borders, as Anderson (1996) states, are not a merely a line of demarcation on the map but core elements to understand the political life of the respective populations. It has evolved throughout history but traditionally we regard it as “the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social and economic spaces” (Newman, 2006:144). Borders not only distinguish social entities but explain how social groups and their identities are governed and constructed.

The border of Bangladesh and India, the longest border in the South Asian region, is perceived as a cause of conflict and social disorder when the latter has started fencing across the borders of Bangladesh. According to Chandran and Rajmohan, “...the idea of borders by those people who live across or cross them is an important factor in the use and the abuse of borders in South Asia” (2007:121). The fencing of borders of Bangladesh is a crucial geopolitical shift of India as once it assisted Bangladesh in its liberation war, and now India considers Bangladesh as a) an enemy outside of the border and b) a threat as a part of the global war on terror. This political ideology has led India to erect fences which is a further demarcation line on the borders after the independence of the Sub-continent in 1947. The cultural ties of both sides of the border were so strong that once the people of West Bengal resisted this act of securitisation on the border of Bangladesh and now the people are convinced to go with the so-called war on terror

(Jones, 2009). Thus a question may arise: How do people of the border zones of Bangladesh and India look at their identities in relation to their borders and states?

The chapter is not concerned here with the hegemonic behaviour of India towards its neighbours by creating fence, and it does not have any intention to contest the immigration policies of India, instead I have examined how is border arranged, constructed and imagined, and mostly how cultural ties and imaginations of the local people are shattered by fencing of the borders. How do political discourses of India construct narratives on the enemy as a threat allowing the rapid expansion of previously resisted and controversial security project? The construction of fences created local grievances among communities of both sides, although some tribal states of India such as the populations of Meghalaya perceive the fence as an enclosure of their own territoriality and sovereignty and stripping away their freedom of mobility (McDuie-Ra, 2012). Thus, the central government of India, as the Meghalians believe, constructs fences to restrict their movements in their own locality as well as to their neighbours with whom they are psychologically and culturally linked (Ibid.). They believe that such isolation will lead further chaos and disorder in the border communities. McDuie-Ra further explains that “perhaps the boundaries between local communities on both sides of the border are more fluid and relations are less suspicious owing to a past of ongoing interaction on a personal level. Isolation seems a far more persistent insecurity in the slopes than infiltration or terrorism” (2012:182).

Interviews, of the borderland people in this chapter, suggest that the fencing of the Bangladesh-India is a territorial partitioning of the Sub-continent, although India once considered the border of Bangladesh as friendlier borders after its independence from Pakistan. But the boundary discourses of India has excluded Bangladesh as a friend and branded it as enemy other. The history of both borders was soft and porous, although “by the end of 2007,

2535 kilometres of barbed wire fencing were completed along the Bangladesh border and 3250 kilometres of roads have been constructed to facilitate the movement of Indian Security Forces (BSF)” (Jones, 2009:293). What is needed, as the interviewees explain, is to include the views and practices of grassroots population into border narratives and reproduce discourses that will provide the social, political and cultural framework in examining the contemporary meanings of boundaries and address the anxieties and grievances they have been going through. Prokkola (2009:22) has rightly said that “borderland identity is continuously narrativized and performed through the available social and cultural discourses”.

It seems that boundary discourses of India do not evaluate the people living on the other side of the borders and ignore different experiences of the communities across the border in order to reveal the social meanings of boundaries and identity. If such a phenomenon continues in relation to border, people, place, identity and culture, then transborder disunity will take place in various aspects. Accordingly, boundary narratives should include everyday experiences and social practices of the borderland populations and thus, a very careful listening to their cultural and social experiences could provide an avenue to process and construct discourses on borders and boundaries. The border identity is not fixed as a single category but it constantly transforms in line with how socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion are constructed and reframed. Moreover, “people can identify simultaneously with their local surroundings, national territory and transnational entities and networks as well” (Prokkola, 2009:34).

This chapter discusses a case study on fencing across the border of Bangladesh which describes the most important crisis of Bangladesh and India that lasted for more than two decades. The borders of both Bangladesh and India are open and porous, and the demarcation of the border is ill-defined and illogical. The people living around the borderlands have in the past

shown their utmost frustration over the delineation that divides one's home between the two countries. Bangladeshis and Indians frequently move across the border because they feel they belong to both sides. Chandran and Rajmohan (2007:120) explain that "numerous references have been made to the border between India and Bangladesh and how it has divided villages, streets and in certain areas, even houses." For instance, some may spend the night in their homes in Bangladesh and they spend the day in India to farm as their cultivable land remains across the border.

The Case study develops a brief background to the division of the subcontinent and the manner in which Indian political elites legitimized the process of border fencing in Bangladesh, and how the governments of Bangladesh have long denied India's allegations of aiding the insurgency, infiltration and cross-border terrorism. In attempting to answer these questions, this following case study is organized as follows: First, it reviews the relationship between Bangladesh and India, highlighting the issues underlying the decades-long conflict between the two that prompted the erection of a fence along the border of Bangladesh. Second, it highlights "Operation Pushback" and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) campaign to drive out illegal Bangladeshi migrants from India. Third, it discusses some scholarly security narratives come out of the interviews from the academics, scholars and researchers from the Sub-continent that focuses on the role of SAARC, transborder terrorism, economic interaction and border disputes. Fourth, it discusses a relationship between Bangladesh and West Bengal (a province) of India explaining the situation of the populations of the borderlands as well about people living along the border who do not care for any demarcation line as their houses and agricultural lands are divided between the two countries. Finally, it explains how people's common views and imaginations, every day popular life and popular perception about security, the border and

transborder interaction can be regarded as popular narratives and geopolitical texts that work as discourses to formulate foreign policy and the geopolitical codes of the Sub-continent. Moreover, it also suggests that the fencing of neighbours is a denial of friendship, a demarcation between friends and foes, and above all, a neo-containment policy that promotes social-seclusion while refusing the age-old adage “love thy neighbours.”

## **7.2 A Case Study of Fencing the Borders of Bangladesh: Division of Cultural and Linguistic Affinity**

The Two Nations theory, Radcliffe’s boundary map for division (especially, Bengal including Assam and Punjab), the fate of more than 565 small and large princely states including Jammu and Kashmir, the divided inheritance, and the human displacement from both sides remain a source of hatred and mistrust among the communities of the Sub-continent. The British recruited English lawyer Sir Cyril Radcliffe as the chair of Boundary Commissions to divide the territory of the Sub-continent. The commission was set up on June 30, 1947 and Radcliffe arrived in New Delhi on July 8 to draw the lines within six weeks (Chapman, 2003). The Radcliffe Line was declared on 17 August, 1947 demarcating 175,000 square miles (Ibid.). The legacy of partition has turned the subcontinent into a chaotic zone of war, riot, rape, arson, insurgency, political interference and communal instability.

As a unified country during the British regime, India shares its border mainly with Bangladesh and Pakistan internally and with Bhutan, China, Nepal and Myanmar regionally. These borders run through rivers, jungles, mountains, villages, fields and farmland. Five Indian states—West Bengal, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Assam and Tripura, border with Bangladesh, sharing an area of 4,095 km including 2,979-km of land and 1,116-km of riverine zones. “There are 51 Bangladesh enclaves covering an area of 7,110 acres in India, 111 Indian enclaves covering 17, 150 acres in Bangladesh ... There are more than 2,800 acres of Indian land under

adverse possession by Bangladesh and more than 2,100 acres of Bangladeshi land under adverse possession by India” (Chandran and Rajmohan, 2007:119).

There exists a kind of cultural and linguistic affinity between Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal. The people of both parts speak the same language and share the same cultural heritage and traditions even though their religious beliefs and faith differ. They eat the same foods, celebrate the same festivities (including the Bengali New Year), and women wear the same *saris* (Figure 5.4). Before the partition in 1947, Kolkata of West Bengal was regarded as a hub of literature, culture, education and heritage. People from East Bengal (Bangladesh) went to Kolkata for higher education and most the prominent leaders of East and West Bengal lived in Kolkata. It was the location where the leaders of both East and West Bengal organized the resistance against the British regime.

The people of greater Bengal resisted British plans to divide Bengal in 1905 and organized the *Swadeshi* movement (part of the Indian independence movement). The province of Bengal was divided in 1947 and the secular trend of East Bengal gradually lost its vitality due to the influence of Pakistani religious sentiment. In the late 1960s, the motto of the independence movement of Bangladesh was “Buddhist, Christians, Hindus and Muslim, we are all Bengali.” The cultural and social bridge between the two wings of Bengal was so strong that the people of West Bengal once resisted the fenced wall along the border of Bangladesh. The Parliament of India decided to fence Bangladesh in 1986 but work progressed slowly. Only 5 per cent of the border had been fenced by 2002 (Chakrobarty et al.,1997).

Fencing can reduce transborder terrorism, smuggling and illegal migration but it cannot stop the activities all together given that terrorists, migrants and smugglers will certainly find other ways to cross the border. The fencing of borders occurs in other countries. For example,

the US erected a 550-km fence along the border of Mexico and plans to build an additional 575-kms and Israel fenced a 700-km area in the West Bank of Palestine (Jones, 2009). Israel still faces transborder terrorism and US's attempts to prevent illegal migrants from crossing the US-Mexico barrier have been unsuccessful.

India is mainly concerned with transborder terrorism and the illegal movement of arms and ammunitions coming from neighbouring countries. These present a great threat to the security of the Indian states and its citizens, and India has already shed much blood due to terror attacks. At the same time, drugs, contraband and other items coming across the border illegally from India are sold on the Bangladeshi market, and negatively affect small businesses and local enterprises. Most of the sought terrorists of Bangladesh hide out in various urban and sub-urban areas of India. Security forces in both countries have exchanged a list containing the identities of the wanted-terrorists and have agreed to arrest these individuals and deport them to their respective countries.

Ranabir explains, “[F]or you, it is migration, for them, the border means coming and going – *asha jawa* [Bengali word]” (Ramachandran, 2005:16). Ranabir's study on transborder migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal portrays the harsh reality of people living along the border of Bangladesh and India. These people cross the border on a daily basis seeking food and work and thus do not want the barrier in their land.

The poor and deprived sections of the population always cross the border. Many women and children are lured by human traffickers offering the promise of better jobs. Ranabir also explains the pattern of illegal migration, suggesting that the movement of workers, especially seasonal workers within Bengal, has existed for an indefinite period of time. Bangladeshi migrants work as cheap labourers mainly in rural areas for the rich and middle-class farmers of

Assam and West Bengal, and sometimes they cultivate unoccupied lands. There is a preconceived notion that wages in India are much better than those in Bangladesh (Samaddar, 1999). For example, workers earn around 40 to 45 percent more when the Indian currency is converted into Bangladeshi money, which justifies the emphasis on the border crossing.

### **7.3 Decades-Long Cold Conflicts and Border Disputes between Bangladesh and India**

The various areas of the border are locations of outstanding disputes, where border guards from the two countries, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India sometime exchange fire on some occasions to each other (Figure 7.3). The victims are always innocent civilians across the border areas of both sides. The BGB protested against the erection of fences numerous times in various locations close to the Bangladesh border, alleging that India did not conform to international border regulations and the 1975-border treaty and that the fencing was taking place under the jurisdiction of Bangladesh. The boundary dispute between India and Bangladesh turned sour in April 2001 when both countries were involved in a mini battle around the village of Padua on the border of Meghalaya and Tamabil, Sylhet district of Bangladesh (Shailo, 2011). The construction of a footpath by the Indian border forces came to the attention of the BGB and they tried to halt the work as it was being constructed in a disputed area. “The conflict lasted for four days, leaving 16 Indian and 3 Bangladeshi soldiers dead. In addition 243 people were killed across the border by the exchange of gunfire which led to the displacement of 10,000 Bangladeshis and 1000 Indians” (Ibid.:29).

India has minimized or resolved its maritime boundary disputes with most of its maritime neighbours including Myanmar (Burma), but not with both Bangladesh and Pakistan. However, due to India’s unwillingness to cooperate with the sharing of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin, Bangladesh is now facing potential environmental disasters. For example, India’s Farakka

Barrage has changed the geomorphology and the hydrology of Bangladesh by artificially creating floods (by opening the sluice gate) throughout the southern part of Bangladesh (Shailo, 2010). Recently, the proposed erection of India's Tipaimukh Hydro Power Dam over the river Barak has further deteriorated their relationship when Bangladesh urged India not to construct the dam as it could cause adverse impacts on Bangladesh, specifically concerning the Surma and Kushiara rivers which could eventually run dry.

The notion of fencing the border was touted for decades until the BJP government took the idea seriously and started work in 2002 (Figure 7.1 and 7.2). Bangladesh protested the fencing of its border locally regionally and globally. Even in the SAARC summits of the member countries, the government of Bangladesh has dialogued with the high level officials including the prime minister of India to stop such illegal fencing. After the fall of the BJP, the Congress took responsibility for the project, and has since spent almost US\$4 billion to fence large sections of its border with Bangladesh. The Department of Border Management was established by the Congress in 2004 to monitor and implement the work. India's political elites were seriously concerned about several major issues accusing Bangladesh of using the borders to facilitate terror activities on Indian soil while helping the insurgency in the north-eastern territory. The allegations include: a) insurgent groups or so-called liberating forces operating in the north-eastern territory of the seven sisters (seven states of India) were using the soil of Bangladesh for anti-India activities. India even claimed that the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan used Bangladeshi operatives or middlepersons/agents to assist the insurgents in launching terror activities in the north-eastern part of India; b) the existence of a flow of illegal immigration from Bangladesh, where individuals crossing the border were swarming Indian cities to find employment and participate in illicit and anti-state activities; and c) the BSF alleged that the

smuggling of cattle and contraband items was an everyday phenomenon across the border. The governments of Bangladesh have long denied such allegations and refuse the claims by India about aiding the insurgency and cross-border terrorism. On the contrary, Bangladesh maintains a good relation with India and has been working to fulfill the following demands to ensure a more conducive atmosphere between the two countries: a) ensuring the demarcation of disputed border areas between Bangladesh and India by ratifying the historic Indira-Mujib Agreement (1974) on demarcation the border and enclaves; b) refraining to erect the Tipaimukh dam in the upper



Figure 7.1 BSF (Border Security Force) guards the Bangladesh border inside the fencing

Source: BBC, 28 January, 2006



Figure 7.2 A view of the erection of fences across the Bangladesh border

Source: BBC, 28 January, 2006

streams of the Barak River; c) undertaking the necessary measures to ensure the free movement of enclave residents, especially the populations of Angarpota and Dohogram; d) stopping the push of Bengali-speaking Indians inside the border of Bangladesh; e) ceasing the flow of drugs and other addictive tablets/peels including *phensidyl* (a cough syrup used for intoxication); f) rooting out the local illegal drug industry established across the border of India to supply hand-made drugs and other substances for Bangladeshi consumers; and g) stopping the killing of Bangladeshi citizens as well as the BSF's frequent intrusion into the borders of Bangladesh in violation of international border laws.

Raman Srivastava, the Director General of the BSF of India, stated that the task of barbed fencing the border of Bangladesh is scheduled to be finished by March, 2010. He claimed, “the Barbed wire fencing would be very effective to check trans-border movement of terrorist, infiltration and border crimes” (CNN-IBN, 2009: November 24) (Figure 5.5; Figure 5.6). An article published in the daily *New Nation* (of Bangladesh) on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2010 reported that “cattle smuggling has become a thriving business for smugglers of both Bangladesh and India with the quantum of money transaction being over 15, 000 crore per year.” Other reports show that almost 15,000 cattle are smuggled into Bangladesh per month and smugglers usually pay BDTK 500 to 1000 per cow to customs officials. More than 100 illegal cattle traders are killed each year by the border security forces (Biswas, 2010).

#### **7.4 Illegal Bangladeshis and “Operation Pushback”: BJP’s Political Campaign**

Since the 1980s, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other like-minded nationalist organizations, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have been campaigning to expel illegal Bangladeshi migrants from Indian soil. Their campaign gained momentum in the 1990s when the national executive committee of the BJP passed a resolution to drive out Bangladeshi migrants stating that over 15 million Bangladeshi people had entered India within a few years and that this “constitute[d] a serious strain on the national economy, a severe stress on the national society and withal, a serious threat to the stability and security of the country” (BJP, 1992:April, 30).

“Operation Pushback” and “Action Plan” were launched in New Delhi in 1992 with the goal of arresting and deporting illegal Bangladeshi Muslims to different locations along the Bangladeshi border. The nabbing of migrants actually started at a smaller scale in 1990 in New Delhi. However, at the onset of Operation Pushback, the government expelled thousands of

illegal Bangladeshi Muslims living in close proximity to the border states of India. The state chalked out a three-step plan based on the principles of detection, identification and deportation (Shailo, 2011). Government delegates even granted extra power and authority to the Police forces and the FRRO (Foreigners' Regional Registration Office) in New Delhi. Initially, the BGB agreed to accept a small number of people but when the Indian government gathered huge numbers of people in the border areas, the government of Bangladesh refused to accept them. Thus both countries began a heated dialogue regarding "push in" and "push back." Dhaka declared that all deportees were probably Bengali speaking Indian nationals. The former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Manzurul Karim, claimed: "We are trying to verify who they really are. We are awaiting details. They must be Indian Bengalis" (*The Hindustan Times*, 1992:15 September). The former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Mustafizur Rahman, reiterated the message: "We will not accept [the deportees] unless the Indian authorities provide documents that they are our citizens" (*The Hindustan Times*, 1992: 18 September).

The BJP campaign to drive out Bangladeshi illegal migrants received tremendous coverage by the print and electronic media throughout India and many influential central leaders of the BJP "were reported to regard the campaign as a long-term component of the party's electoral platform. Some even regarded the issue as having the potential to overtake the Ram Temple issue as a national strategy for political mobilization" (Gillan, 2008:78). The party organized a big rally in Kolkata in April 1993 and issued a threat that party workers and other sympathetic organizations would begin to expel Bangladeshi migrants if the ruling Congress government did not take action on the matter. They went even further by putting up posters in New Delhi proclaiming a "declaration of war" against "Bangladeshi illegal migrants." (Gillan, 2008:78). Following the victory of the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition in the Maharashtra state in 1995,



Figure 7.3 Most of the time border security personnel of both countries exchange fire to each other  
**Source:** BBC, 28 January, 2006



Figure 7.4 The people of the border areas gathered at Makrahat of the Indian side to have glimpses of their relatives in Bangladesh. They are mostly poor and they see each other once a year under a tight security, specifically on the eve of Bengali New Year.  
**Source:** *The Telegraph* (of Kolkata), April 14, 2010

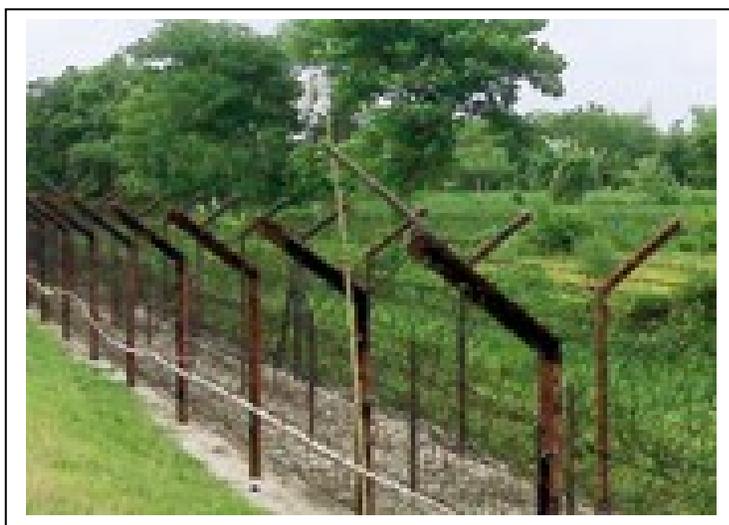


Figure 7.5 The fencing-wall that has divided the village of Fulbari of Nadia of India.  
**Source:** *The Telegraph* (of Kolkata), August 09, 2010

Bal Thackeray, the Sena leader, warned Bangladeshis they would be driven out if they didn't vacate themselves willfully from the city of Mumbai. In 1997, the Sena-BJP government arrested as many as 1635 Bangladeshis for deportation to Bangladesh. According to Sena's sources at

that time the city housed over 300,000 illegal Bangladeshi migrants. Most Hindu refugees sought asylum while Muslim migrants were regarded as “infiltrators.” “While the BJP was in power, it announced a 13 billion rupees project to fence the entire border of Bangladesh, which they expected to finish by 2007” (Shailo, 2011:31).



Figure 7.6 BGB recovered huge contrabands items smuggled from the Indian side of the border on 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011

Source: RTNN.net, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2011

Some political analysts assert that a majority of the migrants were Hindus who had fled Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971. India at that time received about 10 million refugees from various parts of Bangladesh. After the war ended, most Hindus who belonged to the poor, middle and upper classes didn't return to Bangladesh, thinking instead that they might have a better life and greater opportunities in India. The deprived sections of Bangladesh, especially non-Muslims (Hindus) and workers usually through the border areas of India including Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya and large urban cities such as Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata (*The Hindustan Times*, 1992:15 September). They find employment as construction workers, street hawkers, domestic labourers, rag pickers, rickshaw drivers, farm-workers and restaurant workers.

They were also being encouraged by friends and relatives already living in India to leave Bangladesh and find a better location for their livelihood and survival. This happened due to prevailing conditions of massive unemployment, poverty, shortages of food, ethnic and religious marginalization, erosion, floods, monsoons and political instability in Bangladesh. Migrants cross the border into India, sometimes illegally, and often with the help of agents who act as middle persons in negotiating with customs officials or in managing/bribing border guards at various crossing points. After arriving, they receive help from family members, fellow community members or friends who had already settled in India (*The Hindustan Times*, 1992:18 September).

India's activities of nabbing, arresting and deportation received media attention at home and abroad. International human rights organizations condemned the Indian government's actions and urged the two countries to cooperate in finding a solution to the issue of illegal migration. The situation worsened when news of brutality and physical torture surfaced in the media and it is learnt that "Muslim deportees had their heads shaved and their meager belongings burnt in front of them before being cast out of Indian territory through the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal" (Gillan, 2002:75). When asked why the deportees were tortured and their utensils, clothes and bedding burned, a BSF officer replied, "so that they can tell people there that nothing can be brought back. We are even burning their money [emphasis added]." He added that the "deportees were to be soundly thrashed before the final shove" (Lin and Madan, 1995:8-9). In view of this the government of Bangladesh called on the High Commissioner of India to protest the illegal pushback of Indian nationals into the territory of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh parliament unanimously passed a resolution condemning the actions of the Indian

government, claiming that such atrocities were illegal, unilateral, and unfortunate and against all international law (*The Hindustan Times*, 1992:25 November).

With the help other political groups, the youth in the neighbouring states of India mobilized a concerted campaign against the Bangladeshis to drive them out. For example, in mid-April of 2005, an Assamese youth group named Chiring Chapori Yuva Morcha (CCYM) sent hundreds and thousands of SMS (short text message) to the mass population urging them to “save nation, save identity. Let’s take an oath - no food, no job, no shelter to Bangladeshis” (Shailo, 2011:32). In another instance, activist members of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) took a stand against Bangladeshi migrants by campaigning door to door asking people not to shelter them (Ramachandran, 2002:324). It is alleged that the deportation processes were unfair and that the actions of the police were irritating and coarse. Human rights organizations in India demanded an investigation into such arbitrary and abusive methods (including sexual assaults, by the police force to nab and deport Bangladeshis to the borders (Ramachandran, 2005).

### **7.5 Transborder Security, the State of West Bengal of India and Bangladesh**

During the 30 year reign of the left-wing government of West Bengal over the state, it was not serious to fence the border alongside Bangladesh, but the reality of terrorism changed its attitude. Concern over insurgency and infiltration into the north-eastern territory and other hub cities of India led them to take serious steps towards curbing terrorism. After 9/11, terror groups were vast and could easily attack any location via their agents and like-minded non-state actors. In 2002, Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee of West Bengal accused of Madrashes (Islamic schools) to support terrorism within the state. In 2005, he argued that the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI, was operating terror activities across the border of Bangladesh (Jones, 2009).

The 2001 election in Bangladesh saw the revival of Islamic politics in the country when Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote joined a coalition to form a majority government and these parties were given two ministerial posts of the cabinet (Ibid.). The revival of religious parties in Bangladesh made the Indian government more concerned over the security of its land and citizens. Indian political elites were suspicious of the situation.

The present pro-liberation government of Bangladesh is trying to maintain a good relationship with India and its neighbouring states. To appease Delhi's wrath and to demonstrate its cooperation with India, the present government made a series of gestures. Among them: a) it arrested a number of influential ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) and other north-eastern territory leaders who had been hiding in Bangladesh for a couple of years, and handed them over to India while some remain in jail awaiting deportation. The Indian government responded positively by congratulating Bangladesh on its heroic action; b) it signed a US\$ 1 billion loan agreement with India in August 2010 to realize 14 projects, which include infrastructural development, river dredging, and the purchasing of energy from India. Despite criticism from opposition parties including the BNP (Bangladesh nationalist Party), Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ignored the political parties' demands to cancel the agreement. This loan will be used to build roads to give India access to its troubled north-eastern territory through Bangladesh. In exchange Bangladesh will gain transit through India, Nepal and Bhutan; and c) Both Bangladesh and India have agreed to open the border to a border hat (transborder market/bazaar) on the Bangladesh and Meghalaya (India) border in order to increase cooperation between the people on both sides of the border.

## **7.6 Transborder Terrorism, the Role of SAARC and Security Narratives of the Sub-continent**

SAARC, however, has not proven itself effective in the time since its inception in 1985. It has even allegedly failed in achieving its well-defined goals and “falls far short of being an instrument for furthering regional unity” (Chapman, 2003:322). The organization has not taken any bold initiatives to resolve internal security and conflicts between member states, including issues of border disputes and border security between Bangladesh and India, infiltration, internal terror attacks and transborder terrorism in Bangladesh, India Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The SAARC summit in 2009 did highlight the issue of regional and global terrorism but failed to reach consensus as to how to tackle it. If internal and external security issues are resolved by SAARC initiatives, economic ties and partnership might gain momentum. India and Pakistan are devastated by the on-going terror attacks that frequently break or delay progress with regard to negotiations, dialogues and overtures between both countries.

SAARC as a mechanism is a very limited in taking forward economic and security issues (Shailo, 2010). But each country within SAARC wants to cooperate with each other. SAARC is largely seen as a redundant mechanism and political mistrust and lack of honesty are the two most important things that damage relations; India and Pakistan are no exception. India is exploring possibilities to increase friendship with its neighbouring countries. Bilaterally India has good relations during the Parvez Musharraf regime and the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) led by Prime Minister Dr. Singh’s government during the period of 2004 to 2007. Political will on both sides is required to run SAARC actively. In respect of SAARC, economic and national security issues are prominent in its charters for the member-countries but it does not advocate and take initiatives to form a security alliance sub-regionally or regionally.

Any regional security integration or a formation of security community in South Asia needs to be organized not only by maintaining economic treaties and settlements but ecological, cultural and societal issues must be considered as they are an integral component in pushing countries and communities towards cooperation within regional security framework. These days, actors behind any regional cooperation are no longer states, as there are so many stakeholders such as political elites, civil societies, think tanks, NGOs, different types of institutions, organizations, people's movements and mass populations.

South Asian security scholars and academics have their own concepts and ideas about the formulation of South Asian security concepts and they regularly organize workshops and seminars on the issues and provide lectures and speeches in different organizations in the region. Their security narratives include various issues ranging from regional security integration, the role of SAARC, terror attacks, border disputes, crossing the Line of Control, partition, colonial legacies, water sharing, embankments, role of popular culture to trust building. The role of different institutions, such as SAARC, cannot be ignored in South Asian security integration. Over the long term, national and regional institutions can have an influence and profound effect on actors' strategies, policies and planning. The scholars, I have interviewed below, believe that South Asian regional institutions can construct any framework for security alliance and imagined community through a process of interaction, liaisons, exchanges of views and dialogues, cultural exchanges and deeper communication with political parties, civil societies and NGOs and different stakeholders. .

While interviewing on the transborder security concepts of the region, Dr. Basudeb Chaudhuri, Director of the Centre de Sciences Humaines, New Delhi, explains that the biggest hurdle about the relationship between countries of the sub-continent is the differing perceptions

that communities have of each other. “In South Asia, these create different identities establishing some myths and reality and thus society creates its politics and culture”, he added. Economic inequality is also a major problem in South Asian countries which increases tensions in all countries, even though India’s growth is higher than other countries in the region. People have a role to play in developing their own consciousness and an understanding of others is a very important element for eradicating conflicts and other chaos in order to reach peace and security. Presently India has a good relation with Bangladesh. Regionally India is a big power economically and Indian job markets should be more open to Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Movement should be free between the nations of South Asia and people want to see a free market in south Asian countries. India is doing business with China and it can increase its volume with Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka too.

Chaudhuri further added that security integration should be established between countries of the region and that the European Union is the best example for such integration. South Asians can also do the same through dialogue and communication. More Travel, cultural tours, relationships with NGOs, education and research and could have a great impact on the integration process. The fact that the SAARC University in the region has its faculties in various member-countries is a bonus. The concept of SAARC University is good and the region needs more like-minded institutes and finally the visa process should be more liberal.

Shedding light on transborder security and regional integration, Major General (Retd.) Dipankar Banerjee, Director at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi explains that the main concern of India is terrorism; South Asia has been experiencing threats from terrorism and Pakistan’s national policy of developing terrorist organizations should be reviewed. Indeed, acts of aggression do not bring stability in the region. India feels that the flow

of Illegal migrants from Bangladesh into its cities justifies creating a fencing wall across the Bangladesh border. “It is a great issue; terrorism, drug and human trafficking are prevailing across the borders, we have to construct fence bordering Pakistan too in the Kashmir zone and fencing is the great thing to protect from terrorists,” he added. Banerjee explained that as a mechanism SAARC is a successful effort to work in the region but its secretariat is extremely weak. In respect to security integration, the fundamental issue is the perception of security and threat from each other, which creates suspicion that can’t be overcome. Thus human contact is necessary from all levels including education, research, trade, science and technology.

Saleem Hashmi Arshi, Senior Research Analyst at the Institute of Regional Studies and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the National Defense University (NDU)-Islamabad, interprets the concept of security a bit differently. She suggests that Pakistan needs to look first at its own internal security mechanisms which are more important for any regional security establishment. Being a victim of militancy, where its people are being killed by suicide bombs and other forms of terrorism, Pakistan can jointly work with other states to come up with solutions. While Pakistan will continue to deal with terrorism inside its boundaries, the external dimension of the security problem can be dealt with through multilateral engagement, trust and cooperation. Sri Lanka and India can share their experiences in dealing with insurgencies with Pakistan, and Pakistan can share its information with other states about Islamic jihad and militancy with other states.

Highlighting the disputes between India and Pakistan and on security aspects, Arshi explains that there were many efforts in the past to address disputes which could be solved in two ways: First, freeze the disputes and look for a joint security mechanism or, second, solve the dispute and come up with a joint mechanism so that no dispute arises in the future. It is no secret

that non-state actors planned an attack against India, but to link the attack with the ISI is too complicated and will not serve any purpose. The important thing is that the Pakistani state is taking serious note of these militants' activities and that Pakistani soil is not being used for such purposes. "She explains that SAARC in its present position is not fulfilling its commitment due to restriction on political/bilateral issues and since most problems in South Asia are bilateral and political in nature, the conflicts remain between the states. SAARC can discuss other non-political issues as long as member states revitalize the forum with economic, environmental and other issues and, at the same time, take rigorous bilateral engagements to solve political problems.

Lt. General (Retd.) Vinayak Patankar, visiting fellow of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi said that security between India and Pakistan is a complex dimension and is not only about territorial security but relates to ideology as well as history. "There are more things to do rather than fighting with each other which will take time to be solved." The sharing of water, the issue of the Farakkah dam, and water systems of the entire region need to include riparian countries in the dialogue.

Huma Yusuf, a journalist and columnist of *The Daily Dawn*, a widely circulated English daily of Pakistan, clarifies that any security community or regional security treaty needs to include all South Asian regional partners including Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and both India and Pakistan should play a more important role in making it happen. Still there are so many problems between the two countries that need to be addressed in order to establish good relations—such as the Kashmir dispute and fighting over the sharing and distribution of the Indus water. The Indus Water Treaty has held until now, but there are tensions over its feasibility and a potential war over water too. She further added that Pakistan can contribute to regional

security by containing the militancy and other terrorist groups within its borders. Attacks launched from the northwestern territory of Pakistan are destabilizing the whole region, and troublemakers from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian states are taking refuge there.

Dr. Moonis Ahmar, Professor at the Department of International Relations at the University of Karachi, Pakistan, postulates that mistrust, suspicion, paranoia and retrogressive approaches are practiced by almost all South Asian countries and particularly by India and Pakistan on issues of security pact or alliance, which are critical elements for pursuing a common security architecture in the region. Ahmar, who is also Director, Program on Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, notes that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat and the Secretary General are unable to play a dynamic role for meaningful cooperation in economics and other areas. He further added that as long as there are structural contradictions in SAARC and the two major members would be unable to play a vital role for peace, stability and regional cooperation.

Explaining the South Asian geopolitical dimension and strategic importance, Salma Malik, Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, said that the South Asian region owes largely to its shared geography and culture, and what Buzan and Wæver call the patterns of enmity, rather than amity (i.e. each country tends to be the enemy rather than be friendly). There is, in spite of a greater potential, very little common trade, exchange of goods, services and human resources, either because they don't care to explore this greater potential- or they are not aware of it. Furthermore, SAARC as the sole common regional body has not been able to bridge this gap. There is of course a trust deficit shared not only between India and Pakistan but also with the other five neighbours (six if

we include Afghanistan). As for SAARC, it has the potential to do a lot more in terms of cooperation. However, so long as member states are marred by trust deficits and mutual animosities, there is very little chance to improve relations. However, even the most contentious of issues are either irreconcilable or impossible to negotiate. The solution lies in changing rigid mindsets, rising above losing face, and appeasing certain domestic constituencies.

While discussing about the security of both India and Pakistan a pool of young researchers (Rekha Chakraborti, Sonali Huria, Ragnath Sharma and Devyani Srivastava) at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, explain that the concept of security has recently been changed, and now entails energy security, food security, human security, etc. Economic development in India, particularly massive urbanization, has displaced a lot of people in many places and has jeopardized their security and survival. Regarding India's domination in the region, they claim that India cannot directly play any role in Pakistan, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh. However, India has interests in Nepal and as well as it has some involvement with these three countries. India also provides humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka.

Highlighting the role of India and its hegemonic attitude across the South Asian region, Arvind Gupta, a former diplomat of India and presently Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) said that it is the time to initiate dialogues on security issues and “ we have to look at beyond narrow boxes and a people centric good understanding and self-awareness is to be created putting aside the colonial legacies, politics of identity, mistrust and hostility. We find difficult to improve our images to some extent, we need people to people interaction to establish a security community in the region.” He further added that the colonial masters have divided the people and he does not think that India is practicing

any hegemony. “As many as 80% per cent of Indians depend on 20 rupees per day so it is difficult to believe that India has an attitude of domination and hegemonic culture,” Gupta added.

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik, a research fellow at the IDSA, highlights that India defines security with respect to China mostly and not with its neighbouring countries. The security concept of South Asia is a bit problematic and member-states should come together to discuss the problems such as human smuggling, climate change, environmental disasters and economic troubles.

Capt. Alok Bansal who is on deputation at the IDSA, highlighted that the member-countries of South Asia have been suffering from identity crisis, which hinders development and mutual harmony. It is our prime task to define ourselves and our religion and there must be cohabitation of all races and religion in South Asian countries. Pakistan should work more intently on forging a stabilized and pluralistic democratic model and there should be co-existence between the Shiites and the Sunnis. Alternative ideas for an effective South Asian model include: economic cooperation, economic union, movement of goods and migration and mutual cooperation.

From the above discussions and debates, it is revealed that the scholars mentioned above believe that a mutual understanding, trust building measures, deeper communication and cultural exchanges are the best tools to understand each other, and as such the political region and national institutions such as the SAARC and foreign/ external and home/interior ministries, can play a greater role in accommodating people’s views and imaginations into their policy formulation on security and transborder issues. Moreover, these institutions can play a significant role in easing the movement of the people and flows of goods, so that a deeper understanding and communication can build a bridge between and among the people. They also mentioned that

colonial legacies, lack of democratic trends, inadequate infrastructural development and economic crises have pushed the region in the path of destruction and damages.

The respondent scholars have some kind of ability to influence or inspire the respective governments, and most of the bureaucrats of foreign offices of the region make linkages with them for fresh ideas on foreign policies. Thus their ideas and perspectives are also noteworthy as they disseminate their ideas through seminars or write-ups. They believe that India is not playing a greater role with respect to regional countries to minimizing the misunderstandings and confusions between and among the countries on the one hand. On the other hand, Pakistan cannot trust India by any means and feels unable to move forward with India and its unsatisfactory bilateral dispensation. The main impediments India and Pakistan now face are internal (Maoist and Naxalites) insurgency terror attacks, conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis, and the Taliban's assaults, which seem to be the greatest challenge for both countries' security, domestic development and economic growth.

### **7.7 People's Imaginations, Popular Narratives and Geopolitical Scripts**

The section develops a geopolitical reflection on how borders are demarcated and operated within a complex system of hostility and enmity and how people are segregated from each other and how the movement of people and flow of goods are obstructed. I question the way in which the border demarcation is imagined and how socio-cultural relations are opposed through the border as a line of control. How are the everyday practices of the people prohibited by separating them from their own land and relatives? It also explains how the experiences of border through popular imagination and popular narratives on the segregation can play a role of scripts and elements concerning geopolitical codes and foreign policy strategies.

I have interviewed a number of common people across the border of Bangladesh and India to explain the issue of border-trespassing as well as the movement of people to India and Bangladesh in order to highlight certain security aspects of both countries. Interviews indicate that people, mostly common and illiterate from both sides of the border, are less concerned with punishment or penalty by the administration in crossing the international border illegally, as they feel that crossing the border is like walking from one village to another. As I mentioned earlier, the locals cross the border to make money and to visit with their relatives.

In addition, I interviewed several residents of India who were born and raised in India but whose parents came from Bangladesh in search of a better life and to stay with relatives in India. Many of the victims are female students who were abused by local people before fleeing to stay in a safe place like New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and other big cities. Here, I have discussed how the discourse of 'we' and 'they' persists among the same communities and same races (especially as both communities are Hindus) and though these people are living together within a boundary, society segregated them - constructing a demarcation line between the people. So these individuals who migrated from Bangladesh also feel like strangers within their own community (as their language culture, religion are same). These interviews also focused on the tragedy of emigration and people's flight to a better and prosperous life as well as the severe measures taken by the border administration to reduce the illegal movement of people and other illegal trafficking including goods, contraband items, women and children.

I felt the interviewees (common people) from both sides had some preconceived ideas. They seemed unable to come out of the boxes they imagined and are living within a traditional concept of living and surviving. Most of them do not understand what the word 'border' means? And most of the interviewees felt that to cross the border was not a crime but a right to see

members of their own community with whom they are related. It is their belief that for their survival and livelihood, they should be able to cross the border. Finally, they believe that this demarcation of the border is constructed, political and semiotic.

**[All of the following interviews are translated from Bengali to English by the author]**

**[Interviewee:** A village farmer, age: 60; he has three sons, two daughters.  
Interview date: August 20, 2009/Place-Karimganj, Sylhet, Bangladesh and located at the border of Assam, India]

**Author:** *Do you work in Indian paddy fields? How long do you stay there?*

**Farmer:** We cross the border when Indian farmers call us to work for their paddy fields; we go together [with other people from the locality] and we work there for a couple of months i.e. our work is totally seasonal. We come back again and we stay with our family and do normal work here.

**Author:** *Why would you like to go to India?*

**Farmer:** Most of the time we don't have jobs here so why should we stay here idle, starving and doing nothing. They are like our own people. We only respond to their call to work for them in India. That's all. I am an illiterate man, I need work for survival. We are not staying in India and that is not my place to live.

A Bangladeshi from Kasba, Comilla district who moved to New Delhi 20 years ago and works in the shrine of great Sufi Nizamuddin (of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) had the following to say:

**[Interviewee:** A devotee of shrine, Age: Approximately 42.  
Interview date: July 1, 2009; Place-Shrine of Nizamuddin, New Delhi, India]

**Author:** *How long are you staying here in New Delhi?*

**Shrine Devotee:** More than 20 years, I am serving this holy place.

**Author:** *Is it difficult to stay here without papers?*

**Shrine Devotee:** It is not very easy to stay here, the police come here to find out the illegal migrants from the neighbouring countries. When the police come, we try to hide out and go somewhere to escape arrest.

In various universities of New Delhi and surrounding areas including the National Capital Region (NCR), there are a lot of Bangladeshi-Indian residents (their families are originally from Bangladesh). Looking for a country that is safe to live and has a common religion, most of them (mainly Hindus) arrived after the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 and others had arrived in

the 1980s and 1990s. Bangladeshi-Indian residents are not happy with the present government because their parents are still not recognized as residents by the Indian government. Even some of their elderly family members have not received a resident permit and are excluded from the voter list. The following statement from a student at Jawaharlal Nehru University conveys a sense of frustration and uncertainty experienced by many:

[**Interviewee:** Female, MA student, Age: 22

Interview date: June 20, 2009; Place- Jawaharlal Nehru University Campus, New Delhi, India]

**Author:** *Are you an Indian?*

**Female student** (requested to be anonymous): Yes, I am, but my parents are from Bangladesh.

**Author:** *Do you and your family face any threat from your fellow neighbours?*

**Female student:** My family is originally from Bangladesh and I was born in Assam, a state [province] where most of the Hindus are from Bangladesh. My parents arrived here after the liberation war of Bangladesh.

I feel proud to be an Indian to share the glory and gloom of this country. But when I look at my family, especially my parents and grand-parents, then I feel inferior due to their present status in the society that does not value them as they are still regarded as Bangladeshi migrants. The local people point fingers towards us. This is humiliating, shameful and unacceptable.

A female student at Delhi University admitted to being abused several times because her family is from Bangladesh. Her parents came to Tripura of India and bought a house of her relatives and lived there for two and a half decades. They were well-off from having sold properties and wealth in Bangladesh which was huge money in India. She narrates her journey of trauma experienced from her abuse by the local Indian youths she considers are xenophobic:

[**Interviewee:** Female, BA student, Age: 20

Interview date: June 21, 2009; Place- Jawaharlal Nehru University Campus, New Delhi, India]

**Author:** *Are you an Indian?*

**Female student** (requested to be anonymous): Yes, I am, but my parents are from Bangladesh.

**Author:** *Did you face any challenges in your locality to grow up? Do the local people harass your parents?*

**Female student:** Due to the campaigns by some aggressive Hindu nationalist parties against the Bangladeshi Hindu migrants in Tripura, my family suffered a lot. I am abused several times by the local youngsters and I was threatened with death if I do not spend the night with them. I had no choice, I left Tripura where I was brought up and raised. Now I am here in New Delhi. My parents usually come here to see me.

Is this a life being alienated from my family for a couple of years? It's a hell for me. I cry at night. Nobody listens to me. And I don't know for how long I will be leading this life. It is ridiculous that local security forces, including the police, are not helping us as they also treat us as outsiders. This is a great game and I do not know when it is going to end.

Bangladeshi people from the borderlands have a negative attitude towards India and its border security forces. They feel that borders reflect exploitation and an exhibition of power. Border security forces are corrupt because they assist those engaged in unlawful business such as smuggling, trafficking, contraband items, narcotics, substances and more. A village leader spoke of his feeling of distress concerning the borderlands:

[**Interviewee:** A village leader, Age: 67

Interview date: July 30, 2009; Place- Bhurugamari, Kurigram, Bangladesh]

**Author:** *How do the BSF (Border Security Force) treat your local people?*

**Leader:** India always attacks us, their soldiers come to our land and they steal paddy and corn off our land. They take out our vegetables, cattle, fruits and abuse us verbally and warn us not to cross the border.

**Author:** *Do you or your local people trespass the border?*

**Leader:** Why should we go there? We have everything here. This is nothing but to demonstrate their muscles to us to show that they are bigger and stronger than us. Yes, we are inferior in all respects. Our border guards also do not take action if we lodge complaints to them. We are very unlucky and ill-fated.

Elderly city dwellers living far from the borderlands blame the British for the adverse socio-economic impacts brought about by partition, and the so-called divide and rule mentality has created a different identity among two major communities, Hindus and Muslims. Moti Lal, aged 75 from Kolkata, who now lives in the suburb of New Delhi with his daughter recounts his experience of partition while living in Noakahli, Bangladesh, his ancestral land:

[**Interviewee:** Retired employee of a private firm, Age: 75  
Interview date: June 23, 2009; Place-Khan Market, New Delhi]

**Author:** *What was your feeling when you heard that the British would leave the Sub-continent?*

**Retired Employee:** I was so happy to hear the news that the British would be leaving this land. My father was also a comrade who participated in the movement aimed at ousting the English. I went to the local bazaar with my father and we, all Hindu-Muslim, celebrated the event together by distributing *Rasagulla* (a little ball like sweet dish) to each other.

**Author:** *Did you find any identity crisis at that time?*

**Retired Employee:** Not at all. We were cheering with each other at the beginning. But after a few days, the village was rampaged and there was a riot between the Hindus and the Muslims and we left the British East Bengal (now Bangladesh). I can remember only that event, and it was like a war between two communities.

**Author:** *Do you feel any crisis in your identity here in India?*

**Retired Employee:** Yes, of course! We are not treated properly when we landed here. But now my children and grand kids are facing the problems we have had earlier in 1950s and 1960s.

An elderly man aged 80 from Bihar, India who presently lives in Bangladesh shares a similar *experience*.

[**Interviewee:** Retired tailor, Age: 80,  
Interview date: July 24, Place- Mohammadpur Bihari Colony, Dhaka]

**Author:** *Did you suffer anything when you were leaving behind your homeland?*

**Tailor:** I would never forget the Hindus; they killed our relatives, abused our family members and they burnt our houses. We had to leave our birthplace along with a group of Muslims for a land where I knew Muslims were living.

**Author:** *Did you find Bangladesh more comfortable than the country you used to live?*

**Tailor:** We came here to Bangladesh (East Pakistan) with sad memories, but still we are here like dogs and cats. "Even dogs and cats get attention from their owners, but we are not getting consideration from anywhere." That is the tragedy of being born a Muslim in India. I don't have any passport, I can't go to my birthplace where I grew up and where my grandfather's grave is located. But I don't know how long I will survive here...I am going to die someday, maybe soon.

I have interviewed two high school teachers from both sides of border (Bangladesh and India) who are in their mid-thirties. The following is a statement by the Bangladeshi who is a teacher in Bhurugamari, Kurigram which is located in the northern part of Bangladesh very close to the borderlands of India:

[**Interviewee:** High School Teacher of Bhurangamari, Kurigram, Bangladesh, Age 35  
Interview date: July 30, Place- Shahi Bazar, Bhurangamari]

**Author:** *What is your opinion about the allegations India is making about the issues like border crossing, smuggling, illegal arms and trafficking?*

**Teacher:** Bangladesh is not a violent country and is not harbouring any terror activities as India claims. We are a soft, liberal and tolerant nation and we never cross our limitations, and we know the codes of ethics—what should be done and what shouldn't. India criticizes us unnecessarily and guns down our people each and every day while they cross the borders to meet with their relatives.

**Author:** *Do you see any Indian crossing the border?*

**Teacher:** We see a lot of Indians cross the border for illegal businesses and enter into our country and sell their goods including contraband items. Unfortunately, our border security guards ease their way to come into Bangladesh by taking bribes from them. This is the reality, sir. Who is going to judge them? Our government does know a little but if it knows anything they can't take any action...people are corrupt everywhere. People will laugh at you if you go do some voluntary work to save our plunging society...

A teacher from Koch Bihar of India comments on blame-game between both countries and states that:

[**Interviewee:** High School Teacher of Dinhatra subdivison, Koch Bihar, West Bengal, India, Age: 34, Interview date: July 31, Place- Dinhatra, Koch Bihar]

**Author:** *What do you think about Bangladesh? Do you feel that terror attacks in India come across the border of Bangladesh side?*

**Teacher:** Bangladesh is not bad, and it was never terrible to us. People are good. For a couple of years India has been targeted by terrorist attacks; the Indian government believes that Pakistani intelligence is involved with these attacks and that most of the attacks are planned in Bangladesh, in which the ISI is the sole actor and that some Bangladeshi terrorist groups are helping them out. We feel a bit panicky after the Mumbai attack in 2008 that our soil might bleed again if the government does not take any precaution.

**Author:** *Is there any relation Bangladesh is maintaining with the Maoist and Naxalites?*

**Teacher:** I am also concerned with the Maoist and Naxalites as they killed us in broad daylight. Now, Bangladesh is not a threat at all, but our people are the most dangerous for our survival. They indiscriminately kill our elderly, our mothers, brothers, sisters and our wives. They are very strong. Our government should try for any kind of agreement with them; otherwise India will be another "Afghanistan".

Given the above views/opinions from the different strata of social life of both countries, it was revealed that the collective memory of the population living on both sides of the border

reflects the tales of their much pain and agonies. The Bangladeshi people, mostly from the border side, feel themselves to be segregated from the people they once belonged with. Their relatives, caught between the demarcation of the border and the erection of the fences by the Indian government, feel lost to their own land of ancestors.

The border between the populations of both sides stays in people's every day minds and lives, and this is somehow illogical to think to get stopped at the border and cannot cross the line of demarcation. This border remains same along with its length and width and in the same place through time in their living memory but since the fencing of the border system, representation and demarcation produces some changing meanings to the people of the borderlands as their identity has changed. This fencing shapes people's lives, forms of socio-spatial identification, and consists of transitions of language, culture and ethnicity.

The conversation with the commoners reveals that they want a transboundary identity putting aside the barriers and obstacle in their cultural and traditional ways of life. They are in favour of cross-border movement to catalyse their cross-border economic networks and manage their heterogeneous national identity. They believe that political borders should not be imposed on their cultural and traditional bonding with exclusion, fear and ambiguity. Thus, a tension lies at the heart of border-space which inspires on the one hand practices of control and on the other a production of inside and outside distinction.

Given the above, it seems that boundaries cannot be understood as a fixed product of the state mechanisms, rather it's a social process that influences people's imaginations and popular concept. The state-centered system of territories and boundaries largely depends on how we understand geography of an area and cartographical divisions of land and how knowledge is produced and defined to understand nation-system. But the logic of individual entity that helps

formulate togetherness, national myths and popular imagination, play an important role in changing meanings of boundaries and manifestation of territoriality.

## **7.8 Summary of the Chapter**

The construction of fences along the border of Bangladesh is linked with the relation between boundaries and identity. India's fencing has changed the security paradigm of the Sub-continent and even it has tremendously influenced the geopolitical scripts of economic and foreign policies of the respective countries. Since the 9/11, the border narratives in South Asia have taken a new dimension and the geopolitical codes of sovereignty and territory have also changed in state policies of the South Asian region. Thus, the term 'security' in its conventional geopolitical connotation has undergone a dramatic change, and the events of September 11 have forced so many countries, especially India to adopt and enforce measures to root out terror networks inside and outside of the country. India has been accusing Pakistan of imparting training to non-state actors to carry out terror acts on Indian soil (Chandran and Rajmohan, 2007). Following the attacks on the Twin Towers, President Bush's rhetoric 'the enemy other' became vividly clear to the world. His sentiments were echoed by some of the world's most controversial leaders such as Ariel Sharon of Israel, Tony Blair of the UK, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India (Jones, 2009).

The interviews with the security scholars of the Sub-continent believe that political elites should be more positive towards establishing a well-developed relationship and mutual affinity between and among the countries of the South Asian region. The first condition they suggest is to resolve mutual disputes and long-awaited border demarcation to reach a consensus in the region for promoting peace, development and democratic growth. And the second condition is to make strong regional institutions to better serve the people and to promulgate laws that would ease the

bureaucratic bottlenecks and red-tape in transborder economic transaction and movement of the people and goods. They claim that visas should not be required for the people of the South Asian region to move from one country to another country. A few of the interviewees seem to be biased and prefer to uphold the images of their respective countries and they passionately narrate the supremacy of their country. They really did not like to criticize their own country or to explore the issues that need to be mutually resolved by the respective stakeholders of the region.

Explaining the ideas and conversations of the common populations I interviewed, it seems that millions of people, who live across the border or cross the border intentionally or unintentionally, have a greater role in local, regional and global politics. Unlike the population of the heartland of both Bangladesh and India, the people of the borderlands perceive borders and security differently. “Borders are seen as an artificial imposition and a historical anomaly. Their argument is: why should some imaginary line strengthened by posts and pillars in the last 50 to 200 years limit the movement that has been in progress for the last 2,000 years?” (Chandran and Rajmohan, 2007:121). Borders are not regarded as a matter of mapping or categorizing or a topic of demarcation rather activates forces to negotiate and understand socio-spatial realities. Therefore, fencing, bordering or re-bordering create new modes of inclusion and exclusion as well the destruction of cultural practices. This demarcation or segregation do not limit the landscape of the border area but also it manifests in social and cultural fields as well as in the foreign and security policies of both governments but it also reflected “in movies, novels, memorials, ceremonies and public events, which are expressions of narratives connected with boundaries, and border conflicts as well as definitions of the other” (Albert, 2009:63).

The concept of security with respect to both Bangladeshi and Indian borderland concepts differs from each other. The interviewees from the Indian side look somehow egoists who boast

of their superior culture and society, and claim that they are unique, modern, secular and democratic. On the other hand, Bangladeshis believe that India is unfriendly, uncooperative and unwelcoming and has been suppressing Bangladeshis by not coming together to negotiate mutual conflicts and disputes that have been continuing for decades together. Some of the interviewees have noted that Bangladesh is traditional rather than secular and conventional rather than rigid; though a few religious parties are using politics to turn the country into an anti-liberal society. They are few and are not properly organized.

India's motive to fence the border of Bangladesh, as Jones (2009) states, resulted for two important shifts in the discourse of global War on Terror – enemy other and evils that live outside of the modern and secular India and enemy other as a global threat that transcends the narrow geography of a specific place. The War on Terror has an impact on many nations of the world, specifically it has given an extra precaution to India as it has been facing terror attacks from various sides of its huge borders. “In the West Bengal borderlands, these fears are exacerbated because there is the perception that they are indeed near the source of threat” (Jones, 2009:301). Since the birth of Bangladesh, the relationship of India with the country has been fluctuating, even the WoT has added a new dimension to India's campaign against its neighbouring countries. India has alleged several times that Bangladesh, with the help of ISI (Pakistani Intelligence), gives shelter to some of the leaders of its separatist groups who are hiding in Bangladesh. As such the friendship of both countries has been in mistrust and confusion and the decade-long attitude towards each other as ‘We’ and ‘They’ remains unchanged. Thus, the discourse of global War on Terror and global security concern has changed the geopolitical boundary narratives of the sub-continent and the events of 9/11 have forced India to take three rapid actions — a) to adopt resolutions that require security forces to take

extra caution including extensive surveillance of individuals suspected of terrorism and intercepting phone calls; b) to increase the security relationship and intelligence sharing with the USA; and c) to fence off the borders of its territories including the Pakistan borders in the areas of Punjab and Kashmir (Ibid., 2009).

India has been facing violence and conflicts between different groups and tensions between religious communities since its birth. Its prime concern is to combat terrorist groups that are active inside and outside of India and are adversely affecting its economic growth, progress and development. India's main goal is to root out the terror networks. Even some political elites believe that insurgency in various states (provinces) of India and India's internal leftist attacks on civilians and paramilitaries including Maoists and Naxalites, are financed and supported by some neighbouring countries including Pakistan and China.

This case study sketches out a new discourse on border security and changing nature of popular view and ideological intents of the populations on security, border movement and identity. It has highlighted the issue on how the people living across the borders do imagine their borderlands and how do the border population of different identities recognize the concept of borders and security. Paasi (1999) has noted that meanings of communities and territorial boundaries are related with people's experience that assists to construct narratives, dialogues, stories and myths. He further added that "it is through narrative that people come to know, understand and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives that they constitute social identities" (Ibid., 2009:75). Boundary narratives do not exist only in the border areas but it transcends the popular media, novel, cartoon, TVs and print media. Thus, it seems that their belief, thought, views, stories, experiences and popular myth can work as geopolitical texts and

popular narratives that construct the concepts of security and geopolitical codes in foreign policies of the Sub-continent.

The following section focuses how political cartoons affect public discourse and debates and how they underscore specific political trends in order to expose important elements related to identity and danger and how they understand profoundly the political actions of states, political elites and other segments of the dominant class, especially in respect of the South Asian political perspectives.

## Chapter 8: Danger and Threat

### 8.1 Cartoon: A Geopolitical Narrative

“The joy in a political cartoon derives from the joy of sticking pins into fools and villains or watching others doing it.” (Najjar, 2007:255; cf. Charles Press, 1981)

The term ‘cartoon’ began in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to denote a humorous or satirical sketch/caricature published in newspapers and magazines (Kleeman, 2006:144). Political or editorial cartoons emerged in Britain in the early 1840s when the UK’s *Punch* magazine published a full-page satirical drawing titled “Mr. Punch’s pencillings” (Ibid.:145). “The British satirical monthly *Punch* used it as a title for a series of humorous illustrations lambasting the government’s plan for a new lavish Parliament building and contrasting this lavishness with the extreme poverty of many ordinary people” (El Refaie, 2009:185). Cartoons present complex issues in a simple way “by employing the devices of caricature, analogy and ludicrous juxtaposition to sharpen the public’s view of contemporary issues” (Kleeman, 2006:144). A form of visual media, cartoons constitute a “popular form of political satire and social commentary, they often take on a much more serious function in developing countries” (Ibid.:145). Cartoons are widely researched and analysed in countries like Britain, Denmark, Estonia, the United States and the Arabic-speaking world to discern “how certain geographical understandings of regional and global politics were mobilized” (Dittmer and Dodds, 2008:443).

The question may arise why do I select specifically political cartoons in my study and how do they serve as geopolitical text and narratives to focus danger and threat? This chapter basically addresses this issue and employs political cartoons as a visual discourse to understand and explain identity, security, threat and social values. The illustration of political cartoons is

constructed in line with how society as a whole, or a mosaic of different groups, interrogate, accept, examine or interpret the intended message and how this relates to the needs of the present and future. Thus, “political cartoons not only grasp the way in which visual discourse conveys social experience, but cartoons also help constitute the subjectivities and identities of social subjects, their relations, and the field in which they exist” (Greenberg, 2002:185).

Political cartoonists focus on events that impact society politically, economically, culturally or religiously and political cartoons “serve as running commentary on social change and in many instances seek to provoke a reassessment of existing social attitudes” (Kleeman, 2006:147). Political cartoons affect public discourse and debate (Ibid.) and “the cartoonist is part of that linking process which connects the general public to its political leaders—a give-and-take rough and tumble out of which comes what the pollsters call public opinion” (Najjar, 2007:255).

Political cartoons are meta-narratives for discourse on any social behaviour, social episodes and social order “which offer[s] newsreaders condensed claims or mini-narratives about putative “problem” conditions and draw upon, and reinforce, taken for granted meanings of the world” (Greenberg, 2002:182). Readers discuss the hidden meaning of cartoons to buddies, colleagues, family members, and to members of the community. Readers often enjoy discussing cartoons in group chats and debates and try to comprehend the political climate of the event with which cartoons are mostly focused and highlighted.

Cartoons idealize the world, putting readers within a discursive context that assists the construction of mental images to frame “phenomena by situating the “problem” in question within the context of everyday life. In this way, cartoons exploit “universal values” as a means of persuading readers to identify with an image and its intended messages” (Greenberg, 2002:182). Thus cartoon-discourses are considered “mental frameworks” related to various conceptions of

the world—political and social— that shape and modify courses to action for individuals as well as groups (Ibid.). Edy (1999) has rightly said that visual news discourse examines versions of past as well as present conditions that relate societies to their own history.

## **8.2 Types of Cartoons**

Although it is difficult to differentiate cartoons by characteristics, nature or genres (Kleeman, 2006:147), cartoons are mainly categorized into the following: the editorial (political) cartoon, the gag (or pocket) cartoon, the caricature and the comic strip.

### **8.2a The Political Cartoon**

Political cartoons are usually published on the editorial page, post-editorial, op-ed (opinion-editorial), and/or commentary section of a newspaper illustrating events concerning political matters, political communiqués, bilateral or trilateral meetings, summit resolutions, terrorist attacks, national security, as well as other interesting, emerging and debatable issues. It is a means for running commentaries on issues of debate, controversial political decisions or execution seeking “a reassessment of existing social attitudes and values” (Ibid.:147).

Occasionally, political cartoons construct “a very specific genre, with its own history, distinctive styles, conventions and communicative purposes” and although they are “not always humorous, they do generally contain an element of irony or at least something incongruous or surprising” (El Refaie, 2009:184). Cartoons at times ridicule, satirize, criticize, condemn and protest anything that is detrimental to the well-being of the people; they demonstrate a popular conscience to uphold the national interest and territorial integrity; and engage in protest in cases when human right violations take place or any undemocratic activities are pressed by the state mechanisms. Cartoons sometime speak about renowned personalities or individuals of the state mechanism or civil societies or nationally or internationally reputed individuals or events that

dominate the entire spectrum of political and social debates. Like television, photography and painting, cartoons can have a tremendous impact on people's religious and political perceptions.

Political cartoons mostly function on two distinctive levels: First, they construct an imaginary story of a reality (i.e. 'a make-belief world') and second, they refer to 'real-life events and characters' which are more abstract and conceptual (El Refaie, 2009:186). These two levels of understanding are embedded/masked in metaphors and symbols that encourage people to map the current political situation and interpret public affairs, political events and the acts of politicians. Such a unique combination of reality and imagination sets cartoons apart from photographs and illustrative drawings in newspapers. For instance, cartoons belonging to the genre of comics are different in taste and texture: comics are a form of communication that, having sequential art, express a narration of events while cartoons tend to project some serious messages. "Political cartoons are often able to expose a certain kind of essential truth, which can encourage viewers to see things from a new angle" (Ibid.:186). They can be "quite diverse but most employ symbolism/visual metaphors and caricatures to explain often-complex political and/or social issues in a humorous or satirical manner" (Ibid.:186). Whatever is the style, they are a powerful instrument in shaping the parameters of public discourse and debate.

### **8.2b Gag, Caricature and Comic Strip**

Gag (or pocket cartoons) are tools that speak of an article or news with relatively small drawing. The format of the drawing relates with the news item or some specific theme of the article. Peter Arno is considered the originator of this genre of cartooning (Kleeman, 2006:147). "Caricatures are artworks that exaggerate or distort the features and characteristics (or the basic essence) of a persons to create a readily identifiable visual likeness...[they] represent a form of portraiture whereas cartoons focus on communicating social or political opinion" (Kleeman,

2006:147).“A series separate pictures to illustrate a story are known as comic strips. These maybe for more enjoyment or they may have a role similar to political and editorial cartoons” (Ibid.:148). The comic strip *Captain America* is a good example of American popular culture.

### **8.3 Geopolitical Literatures on Cartoons**

Some political geographers such as Dodds (1996; 1998; 2007) and Dittmer (2005a; 2007) have written extensively on political cartoons and popular culture with particular focus on visual dimension such as cartoons and films. Dodds visualizes Steve Bell’s cartoon as an ‘anti-geopolitical eye’ that represents, contests, propagates and protests political affairs such as the Falklands War in 1982, the crisis of Bosnia during the period of 1992-95 and George W Bush’s handling of the 9/11 crisis in the US (cf. Dodds, 1996; 1998). Bell knows cartoons are not only eye-soothing to the minds of the people but they generate enthusiasm, participation and mostly agitation (Plumb, 2004). “Bell uses many cultural references in his cartoons. Superheroes have featured regularly or at least the iconography of superhero comic trips” (Ibid.:432). Dodds further notes that Bell’s cartoons focus primarily on visual referencing and symbolism, such as the visualization of cultural groups in the changing geopolitical world, especially the so-called war on terror (Dodds, 2007). In his studies, Dodds examination of a number of Bell’s cartoons helped him demonstrate “how the themes of exclusionary identities and cultural homogenization are implicated in the construction of geopolitical frameworks. The cartoons of Bell assisted to expose the inadequacy of the western geopolitical framework towards Bosnia and the moral distancing that this framework involved” (Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 1998:11). Bell’s cartoons communicated to a wider western audience that the so-called war on terror (especially the Iraq War) was to occupy oil resources and establish hegemony over the Middle Eastern and North African Muslim countries. The US war in Iraq has divided the people in the US and Dick

Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell have succeeded in having former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other allied countries on their side, which was vividly expressed in Bell's cartoons. As Bell explains, "he [Bell] could have sought to belittle the British prime Minister and use the cartoons to infer that Blair's support for the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003 was partly to blame motivating the four alleged bombers" (Dodds, 2007:166) Analyzing some of Bell's cartoons published in the early 2000s, Dodds further mentions, "Bell's work offers important insights to those seeking to critically comprehend some of the ongoing visual and political consequences of 9/11 and the declaration by the Bush administration of a long-term 'War on Terror'" (Ibid.:166).

Dodds mainly emphasizes on the role of cartoons, especially Bell's ability to sketch society, politics, global political structure and geopolitical crises. Bell projects the so-called heroism in destroying places and people by super heroes ranging from Tony Blair to President George W. Bush and from Al-Qaeda to the London bombers in 2006. His pen paints the geograph of the present geopolitics. Dodds presents Bell's ideas through the prism of geopolitics in the most widely read and discussed articles about critical geopolitics and the role of visual media, they are: a) "The 1982 Falklands War and a critical geopolitical eye: Steve Bell and the If. . . cartoons" (1996); b) "Enframing Bosnia: The geopolitical iconography of Steve Bell (1998); and "Steve Bell's Eye: Cartoons, Geopolitics and the Visualization of the 'War on Terror'" (2007).

In one of the sub-chapters of his book, "Cartoons and the anti-geopolitical eye," (2005), Dodds adopts the term "anti-geopolitical eye" used by Gearóid Ó Tuathail to explain how best images and news (news article) can question the "dominant relations of power, knowledge and truth." Ó Tuathail argues that the award-winning British journalist Maggie O'Kane's anti-

geopolitical eye presents horrors and trauma that reflects “upon geographies of moral responsibility (proximity and distance) in foreign policy discourse.”

Human geographer Jason Dittmer has contributed numerous scholarly studies on cartoons and comic series which are relevant to geopolitics and national identity, pride and hubris. His studies highlight various effects of the comic series on popular and geopolitical scripts, in particular how they institutionalize American identity and national pride. In his study, “Captain America's Empire: Reflections on Identity, Popular Culture, and Post-9/11 Geopolitics”(2010), Dittmer uses the event of 9/11 to discuss the characters in the *Captain America* comic book and to integrate various trends of theory to study popular culture identity and geopolitics in the visual landscape of America (Dittmer, 2010: 626). According to him, *Captain America* disseminates to a wider audience the following message: (a) the meaning of America and the symbol of Americana or American hegemony and how this way of thinking is reestablished to individual readers through the means of territorial metaphors; (b) the images of territory and landscape somehow contributes to forming a national identity and territorial bonding among US citizens; and (c) constructing geopolitical narratives on hegemony and American domination (Ibid.:641).

Dittmer’s study on “Comic book visualities: a methodological manifesto on geography, montage and Narration” (2009) demonstrates that geographers can promote the role of visual means as a textual narration. The focus on comic books “has served as a corrective to literary geography’s over-focus on textual reading and visual culture’s emphasis on photography, cinema and other forms that bear the ‘reality effect’” (Dittmer, 2009:234). He explains that geographers should further think about this form of visibility as “it could provide the language for comprehending and communicating a variety of phenomena across the discipline” (Ibid.:235).

Dittmer underscores the valuable contribution that comic books make in promoting geopolitical discourses to structuring worldviews. His paper, “The Tyranny of the Serial: Popular Geopolitics, the Nation, and Comic Book Discourse” (2007), epitomizes how the medium of comic books can engage intimately to structure the discourses as well as how popular culture can shape geographic imaginaries.

The following sections explain why do I select two newspapers of India only to analyse cartoons and what is the reason behind to select two cartoonists, Ajit Ninan of *The Times of India* and Yusuf Munna, among the hundreds and thousands of cartoonists (in India), and what is the significance to analyse the following cartoons to discuss the geopolitical text and how do they connect to the larger geographical scholarship as well as scholarly literature on geopolitics, security, danger and threat. It also explains the analytical methods of cartoons to interpret them as geopolitical narratives.

#### **8.4 Cartoonists, Cartoon Interpretations and Popular Culture**

In this study I have selected 23 cartoons taken from two different newspapers of India—*The Times of India* (TOI), a daily English newspaper and *The Milli Gazette* (MG), fortnightly tabloid newspaper. The TOI is a self-declared liberal newspaper and is regarded as the 8<sup>th</sup> largest selling newspapers in any language in the world. The MG is a bi-weekly Indian Muslim leading English tabloid devoted to uphold the rights, empowerment and emancipation of the Muslims in India.

I have chosen cartoons by Ajit Ninan of TOI and Yusuf Munna of MG to give insights on political climate of a society as well as how one can speak up against power and authority. Their cartoons appear in the newspapers as geopolitical texts and narratives and they highlight the issues that are related with danger, threat, exclusion and inclusion. I have examined a lot of

newspapers including tabloids, weekly and biweekly to select cartoons for the study but I have found Ninan and Munna's cartoons more appropriate to my research theme, especially both newspapers serve different beliefs and ideology of the society. Both cartoonists are also different in their thought and belief. Ninan of TOI is a talented, famous, articulate, imaginative and nationally recognized cartoonist in India. A born cartoonist inspired by his uncle (renowned cartoonist Abu Abraham) and with *The Punch* and *The New Yorker* since his childhood, Ninan has been successful in sketching some of the decades-long controversial political, socio-economic and religious issues in India. I have decided to use his valuable and thoughtful cartoons in my study to highlight issues of identity and danger, 'we' and 'they' and political trends in regional geopolitical environment and unfinished political game between two nuclear powers. The following is a blog-cum interview with Ninan by an unknown blogger/tweeter, Abhijit Bhaduri published on September 20, 2009 and titled "Meet Cartoonist Ajit Ninan". The following is an excerpt:

I grab the newspaper and head straight for Ajit Ninan's cartoon. I look for two elements of wit in a cartoon—the visual and verbal. Ninan excels in both. With most cartoonists one lands up choosing between two. Ninan started his career with FD Stewarts—an agency in Chennai [the capital city of Tamil Nadu, a southern provincial state of India] before they transferred him to Delhi. While in Delhi, Ninan started contributing to *Target*, a magazine for children run by the India Today group. That led to an offer to join the media group as cartoonist and illustrator...He is now with *The Times of India* as their Chief Graphics Consultant.

Nephew of the cartoonist Abu Abraham (1924-2002), Ninan grew up in Hyderabad. Once he was suspended from Hyderabad Public School when he drew cartoons of his teachers. According to Ajit, "That allowed me to sit in the library and go through stacks of *Punch* and *New Yorker* cartoons. Cartoonists James Thurber and Arnold Roth were my inspiration. As a kid I spent many doing detailed sketches of machines and turbines. My love for these gadgets showed up when I drew Moochhwalla (person having moustache) who used hi-tech inspired gadgets like *Katchem Krime Komputer* – which was a dig at the Ku Klux Klan."

Born in Gorakhpur of Uttar Pradesh, Munna is a young cartoonist working with the Hindi weekly *Kanti*, New Delhi. The bi-weekly *MilliGazette* publishes his cartoons on a regular basis. In addition, he contributes to the *Hindustan Express*, *Quami Aawaz*. Of late, news portal [www.twocircles.com](http://www.twocircles.com) is also using his cartoons of similar nature. Munna acquired a diploma in photography from Gorakhpur University in 1999.

### **8.5 Methods to Analysis the Cartoons: a Critical Geopolitical Text**

The upcoming sections analyze 23 cartoons of both Ajit Ninan and Yusuf Munna to reflect on the interpretation of critical geopolitical events and explain how cartoons are used as a medium and a platform for exploring key debates in political geography. These cartoons are mostly based on political issues in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Of late, political geographers like Dodds and Dittmer use cartoons critically to explain geographical events and argue political debates and provide insights into constructing cultural and popular geopolitics. They use the Falklands War and Bush's War on Terror to illustrate and interpret events, people, places, social issues and national agendas. Dodds (2007) focuses on visual media (cartoons and films) of the US and its primary interest to disseminate its message to a huge population, especially during the post 9/11 War on Terror. "Cartoons, amongst other visual mechanisms, were used for ideological representation, the inculcation of morals and values, and the promotion of political discourse not only in colonial and imperial projects but also throughout the Cold War and into the present day" (Hammett and Mather, 2011: 105; cf. Dittmer, 2007). Press (1981:14) rightly says that most political cartoons are "designed to influence viewers with regard to specific political events of the day."

Borrowing the methods of Orayb Aref Najjar (2007), Elisabeth El Refaie (2009), Charles Press (1981) in analyzing the South Asian cartoons concerning security and danger, I have

devised the following framework (Table 8.1A) to analyse the selected cartoons and construct political debates and geopolitical discourses each belonging to one of the following three layers of interpretations. But one question may arise: How does this method connect to Dodds and Dittmer and other geopoliticians and how does it relate to popular geopolitics? And why have I chosen these three critics to review the following cartoons as geopolitical texts and narratives? The answer is simple and quite logical. I have found that Dodds and Dittmer have analysed a plethora of cartoons in their scholarly write-ups but they do not specify any methodology to interpret their cartoons and to my knowledge they do not identify how they analysed the core messages of their cartoons and how they serve the purpose of geopolitical texts and narratives.

**Table 8.1 A Methods of Cartoon Interpretations**

**1 # Cognitive, Normative and Affective/Achieving Real World image**

- Using the setting to place the character in their social and political context
- Using costume to disseminate information on societal class
- Examining the situation to address the problems
- Conveying the message of *we should do*, *They say—I say* formula to describe the situation
- Creating a situation for the readers to feel about their cherished goal

**2 # Artistic Analysis/Recognizing Displayed Emotions**

- Leveling
- Sharpening
- Symbolism
- Metaphor
- Analogy
- Caricature (exaggeration/facial expressions)

**3 # Interpretation and Construction**

- Text-image-time relations
- Initiating connection between the image and political debate (i.e. readers would go back to interpretative process)
- Establishing popular culture
- Constructing geopolitical discourse

Redesigned following the models of Najjar (2007), El Refaie (2009), Charles Press (1981)

By reviewing the analysis of the cartoons and comics done by Dodds and Dittmer in their various studies, I have explored some basic elements in their interpretations that correspond to the interpretative methods of cartoons employed by three scholars Orayb Aref Najjar, Elisabeth El Refaie and Charles Press in their respective articles.

As we see, the interpretation of cartoons by Dodds and especially Steve Bell's cartoons have been used to investigate geopolitical issues. Bell's cartoons range from the 1982 Falklands War, the Bosnian crisis of 1992-5 and the Bush administration's response to the tragedy of 9/11. In interpreting Bell's cartoons, Dodds argues that "cartoons can question and even transgress dominant relations of knowledge, truth and power" (2005:93; see Berg, 2003). By interpreting Bell's cartoons, through an *anti-geopolitical eye*, Dodds presents the dominant geopolitical representations of global political affairs while affirming that "political cartoons and images can be deployed as 'geopolitical texts', which eliminate or even subvert particular political practices such as foreign policy decision-making" (Ibid.:93). In most of the articles on comic books and cartoons, Dittmer shows visual representations of American landscape, American identity and American nationalism in the comic serials of *Captain America* and *Watchmen* in order to focus on the issues of "political legitimacy and the structuring of geopolitical space...and the concept of nation itself" (2007:247).

Dodds describes that Steve's "shocking portrayals of death and destruction helped restore 'Bosnia' for example, refused to our universe of obligation" (Dodds, 2005:93). In his article on "Enframing Bosnia: The geopolitical iconography of Steve Bell," Dodds explores the geopolitical iconography of Steve Bell, asserting that visual images, as a part of critical geopolitics and cultural geography, interact with historical context and that Bell employed "icons and symbols to represent ethnic nationalism, violent wars and the subsequent reaction of the

international community” (Dodds, 1998: 170). Like Dodds, Dittmer also illustrates three important geopolitical ideas through his analysis of the serial cartoon of *Captain America*: a) the meaning of America and its relations to each citizen through symbols; b) the landscape image of America contributing to a territorial integrity among its citizens; and c) American geopolitical narratives (2005:641).

Both writers have interpreted the cartoons through the use of symbols, metaphors, analogy, place, character, political context, societal class, imagination, text-image-time relations, iconography, popular culture and the construction of geopolitical discourse. They both use popular culture artifacts like Captain America and the iconography of Steve Bell on Bosnia to employ geopolitical images as a form of analysis not only for the purpose of academic interpretation but also for the construction of discourse. Bell’s cartoons therefore work as geopolitical scripts in two ways, as: a) influenced policy options and b) public support for intervention (Dodds, 1998).

Given this scenario, I must say that both Dodds and Dittmer have used many of the same elements and methodology, consciously or unconsciously, as Najjar, El Refaie and Press use in their interpretation of cartoons and images. The methodological elements include: imaginations, the relation of characters with a social connotation; addressing the political problems and crisis, normative statements through cartoons and images, the use of metaphors, analogy, symbolism, caricature, image-time relations, communication between political elites and the common people, popular geography and power relations, and finally the establishment of geopolitical discourses. Dodds reiterates that “cartoons help to deconstruct the political agenda of political elites, national security bureaucracies and military offences” (2005:93).

The methodology (Table 8.1A) explores the varied and multiple layers and external and internal meanings of the selected cartoons in order to further understand and examine geopolitical discourses and draw the reader's attention to "the political, psychological as well as the artistic attributes of the cartoons" (Najjar, 2007: 265). El Refaie's model (2009) to interpret cartoons includes the following: a) to seek real-world reference and assess the message and narratives of the cartoons; b) to read text-image-time relations; c) to initiate a connection (metaphorical/symbolical) between the cartoon and a political debate and dispute; and d) to imagine an interpretative process to construct a geopolitical discourse and to see cartoons as a political narrative. In his classic work, "The Political Cartoon," Press (1981) provides some devices for interpreting cartoons and explains why cartoons work at all levels. The devices for cognitive, normative and affective assist to understand the cartoons more effectively and challenges the readers to explore their significance in order to view the present and emerging situation of the socio-political events of any society and geopolitical aspects of a state or a given region. Exploring these devices of interpretation, Press (1981) demonstrates the following: First, cartoonists "try to present an element of reality, which they sell to the reader as "the essence of truth" in which they are showing what is happening to their "cherished community." Second, they suggest through their artistry what we should do on behalf of "the deserving," and third, they create a mood that tells us "how we should be feeling about what is happening"" (Najjar, 2007:260; cf. Press, Charles, 1981: 62).

Press (1981) states that the cognitive category examines the following elements: i) the setting of the cartoon and how the socio-political contexts are located in the image; ii) how characters are described and sketched, and iii) how costumes are ornamented on the characters which ultimately initiates a thought process. Costumes are an integral part of the image by way

of conveying information on status, rank and class of the characters and to “place the characters within their interpretive community” (Najjar, 2007:260; Fish, 1989). “The model also examines the situation portrayed to get at the nature of the problem being explored” (Najjar, 2007:261).

The Normative model in analyzing each cartoon explores how a cartoonist wants to convey his/her messages and the process behind the image and “the model determines whether a given artist uses the “they say, I say” formula that Press (1981) identifies (Najjar, 2007:261). In other words, the model narrates “the difference between a cartoonist’s belief or perception of how the situation should be and what it actually is” (Najjar, 2007, 261). The model investigates whether the cartoon reflects state or societal affairs or whether it satirizes or ridicules an issue critically. Press (1981:75) believes that cartoonists “may criticize in a humorous and playful way or in a way that projects hatred and loathing.” The artists have the liberty of choosing their characters and of using imagery, metaphor, setting, symbol, and costumes and they reflect the shadow of the situation communicating their moods with the characters (Najjar, 2007, 262).

In the artistic model, “the cartoon’s codes” need to be analyzed by the following techniques: leveling, sharpening, symbolism, analogy and exaggeration/caricature (Harrison, 2002-2003). Harrison states that “an understanding of the impact of cartoons rests on an appreciation of the cartoon code, how and why it works the way it does (2002-2003:1). Defining the techniques, Najjar (2007: 262) explains: a) leveling develops visual communication i.e., the cartoonists give some dimensions to the images from different sizes, forms and shades to different textures. The cartoonist drastically levels the image with different dimensions (2-dimensional/3-dimensional) with an allusion to texture, shade and shape; b) sharpening is the “process in which some items are strategically eliminated to highlight the remaining features,” such as to eliminate something or reduce something i.e. sometimes the cartoonist strategically

reduces body features such as wrinkles and increases the head, nose, brow, eyes or mouth; c) exaggeration/caricature is the distortion of the essence of a person or thing to overstate an easily identifiable visual feature. For instance, body, dress, office works, other responsibilities, etc. are presented differently; d) symbolism is used to picture an abstract concept or to use a recognized symbol to correspond ideas such as an elephant or Pope's hat that represents the Republican and also the Vatican; and e) analogy "involves two things; directly or indirectly comparing a situation or event with a historical or fictional event."

The interpretive model assimilates the readers' senses to generate an idea about the cartoon linking the characters with the ongoing political situation and the cartoonist brings the readers closer to his/her concepts to create a 'make-believe' world. The cartoonist provides information and directs the readers to various historical issues, figures, characters, legacies and captions of the cartoon, which shape the consciousness of society. Giarelli and Tulman (2003: 945) explain that cartoon images are an important tool for investigating and studying public discourses as well as for the analyzing constructed images, which "differ from other kinds of data because cartoonists may intend to stimulate multiple interpretations among readers."

### **8.6 Construction of Identity: 'We' and 'They' (Exclusion and Inclusion)**

Munna's two cartoons—Figure 8.1 "Anti-minority action" and Figure 8.2 "Hands up, or I will shoot" in MG symbolically represent the whole Muslim population of India who are prime targets for finger pointing and intimidation regarding any terror activities, violence, arson, killings and bombings. Both cartoons represent a conventional view of Muslims in Indian society portraying them as agents of foreign or neighbouring countries. Both cartoons serve as a means of protest against societal mechanisms that band Muslims as terrorists and criminals. Munna sketches terrorism and violence. The cartoon titled "Anti-minority action" is an allegory of a

bomb blasts that took place in Bengaluru, Karnataka state of India in 2008 killing one person and injuring 20 others. The main suspect is Abdul Nasser Madani, a Kerala based People's Democratic Party leader who was denied bail after the Karnataka police informed the court that Madani played a crucial role in the blasts, although he denied police allegations. Another cartoon "Hands up or I will shoot" symbolizes the critical role of the Indian government in excluding Muslims from the society. The cartoon specifies that the government machineries sometimes jail and kill Muslim militants through the so-called cross-fires, while Hindu militant groups receive government support and walk freely even after committing terror activities. They radical "Hindutva" parties include the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Shiv Sena (SHS). The cartoons describe that the government of India has been exercising double standards with respect to the Muslims while it remains passive to other extreme religious parties.

In Figure 8.3 "Minorities Protection Force," Ninan of TOI speaks of the minority people (including Muslims) as a whole in India. He does not specify any minority community such as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, *Dalits*, Persians, Zoroastrians and others. In the cartoon, security forces try to find out the location of the minorities by searching a large Indian atlas. They have amalgamated the minority with the majority, and in some cases minorities within the minorities. The cartoonist criticizes the role of the Indian government, in particular a national body called "The National Commission for Minorities" (NCM) or Minority Commission in 1993, which is mandated to evaluate the progress of the development of minorities. The NCM makes recommendations regarding the protection of minorities' interest by the central provincial government and looks into specific areas to safeguard them from any harm and deprivation. The cartoon clarifies that despite government initiatives to promote their interests and well-being, the

security forces have taken extra measures to find out where they live in case they revolt, protest or take to the streets in pressing their demands to their rights as enshrined in the Act of 1993. The cartoon depicts that security forces are confused to locate the minority on the atlas. According to a report published in TwoCircle net (10 March 2010), the NCM received 2,268 complaints from different walks of life during 2008-09. Complaints ranged from law and order, economic matters, cultural and civil rights, wealth and property, religion based bullying and harassment and compensation for victims of riots.

Ninan's cartoons are pluralistic in trend and contain visions that capture the reality of Indian society. In his cartoon, Figure 8.4 "Emergency Session-NASA," he describes how Indian soil is tattered by numerous violence, killing, arson and kidnapping by the Naxalites (Maoist rebels), who are active in more than 180 districts within ten Indian states and occupy about 40 per cent of India's geographical areas. The Naxalites are a militant, far-left radical and ultra-communist group operating under the shadow of an organizational umbrella. They usually target tribes, police, feudal lords and government workers and spawn rural rebellion as a means to campaign for improved land rights and employment for the neglected and deprived section of poor farmers, labourers and workers. A report in *The New York Times* (October 31, 2009) is rightly states that "India's Maoist rebels are now present in 20 states and have killed more than 900 Indian security officers...India's rapid economic growth has made it an emerging global power but also deepened stark inequalities in society."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared the Naxalites as the most serious internal threat to India's national security. Moreover, India has been facing a decades-long insurgency within its seven states, a region comprising the contiguous states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The insurgents are well-armed and

supported by the local populations who have been fighting against the Indian security and armed forces for their independence. The inhabitants of these states are mostly tribal people.

Ninan's depiction of the Naxalites shows that the whole society is divided; "they"—the Naxalites—who are Indian citizens (by birth) are considered to be terrorists as they have used arms and weapons to kill police, para-military forces and innocent civilians indiscriminately. Thus the Naxalites "they" and the government "we" are at war.

At the cognitive level, "Anti-minority action," and "Hands up, or I will shoot" reflect some particular events within the socio-political reality of India. Muslims are not trusted in the mainstream society buildings, although only a few segregated events occurring within the last couple of decades made the Muslim's identity vulnerable. The Muslim population in India stands at 150 million (it is the official census but Muslims believe that the numbers to much more higher). According to Munna, only a few individuals, or possibly extremists, have been involved in terror activities in India. The whole community should not be singled out by the actions of a small minority of extremists. The backdrop of Figure 8.1 is a symbol of the Hindu *Swastika*, an ancient religious icon of the Indus Valley and was also used by Nazi Germany in the 1930s. The Hindus often use this icon in *yantras* and religious occasions. The cartoonist creates a stage where the state chief of Karnataka of India holding a sign titled "Law & Order" instructs his police forces to arrest the Muslim political leader Madani from Kerala state. The background is very simple; it claims that Karnataka state is against the Muslim terrorists. Following the Babri Mosque demolition (1992) and the Gordha Train Explosion (2002), the Gujarat authority has helped kill thousands of innocent Muslims. The images such as police uniforms, the chief minister of Karnataka clad in national dresses, *Swastika* and *Trishula* all indicate a Hindu



Figure 8.1 1-15 September 2010



Figure 8.2 1-15 September 2010

environment where Muslims are targeted to be caught and punished. Figure 8.2 is an attempt to portray the dual role of the administration where Muslims are always humiliated, killed or used as scapegoats for their alleged extremism whereas Hindu extremists are mostly ignored.

Figure 8.3 discusses the role of government forces to protect minorities and serve their interests. On the contrary, the forces that are set out to protect minorities cannot locate their geographical location. In the image, police forces are seen in uniform, well-equipped with pistols and bullets, an Indian atlas, a table and an empty chair and their task is to report to their superior who is supposed to arrive at the office and retrieve the report. But nothing was achieved by the police forces and they failed to recognize the minorities. Figure 4 highlights an emergency meeting to discuss the attacks by the Naxalites across India. The cartoon shows people attending the meeting brainstorming the issue of Naxalites and some carrying a ledger book. Some are wearing *dhoti* (worn by local and national political leaders) and others wearing complete suits. The image describes how the emergency meeting might take some urgent decisions.

These four images describe the societal and political context of the issue, in particular the construction of identity and how society is divided between “We” and “They”. The images perfectly describe the class and ranks of the individuals giving messages of identity crises to a wider audience. These four cartoons are based on a Normative Model i.e. cartoonists are not influencing the readers, rather they are softening their messages by employing “ought” or “should”. They affirm how things should or ought to be and how people value the messages. The readers should have understood the meaning of the images i.e., right or wrong, good or bad depending on the shared values and collective norms of society. The cartoonists are aware of the normative model when sketching their images for a wider readership.

10 Oct 2008, 1248 hrs IST



A minority there is in a majority here, a majority here is in a minority there and both are minorities here. Crazy!

Figure 8.3

18 Dec 2008, 0953 hrs IST



...Not the US space agency. It's Naxal Affected States Association meeting to discuss the pounding.

Figure 8.4

At the affective level, these four images are descriptive and self-explanatory. They do not offer any solutions or alternative ideas but create a situation by which the readers are influenced. The readers are annoyed by the activities of the Naxalites (Figure 8.4) as their activities put the country in jeopardy and some readers, especially minorities, are eagerly waiting to have their interests and demands honoured and respected in accordance with the Universal Human Rights Declaration.

### **8.7 Establishing Identity through Folkloric Symbol**

Cartoonist Munna has dipped into the reality of society by depicting the characteristics and dual role of some political leaders who are always critical of Muslims in India. The artist uses costumes and dress that reflect their antagonistic characters. The Muslims of India always wear a traditional simple dress (i.e., *pajama* and *punjabi*) and show beard on the chin and cheek such as in cartoons Figure 8.5- “Jail..Reserved.Preservation.” The cartoonist also depicts the dresses of “Saffron Terror,” a phrase that is used to describe Hindu nationalist extreme groups in India who perpetrate bomb blasts and other terror and violence activities across the country. Their alleged activities include, among others, a series of Malegaon bomb blasts in 2008, Mecca Masjid bombing (in Hyderabad), 2007, Samjhauta Express bombing, 2007 and Ajmer Sharif Dargah blast, 2007. The cartoonist also makes a caricature of the chief of Shiv Sena (Shivsainikis) who opposes the migration of Muslims and Bangladeshi illegal workers to Mumbai. He also threatened to abuse and damage the South Indians unless they left the city of Mumbai. He is a fanatic and controversial figure and is regarded as an architect of Pan-Indianism and his party Shiv Sena has been campaigning to remove Muslims from Indian soil. The cartoon, Figure 8.7- “No Saffron Terror! No Saffron Terror!” is an indication of how this radical Hindu terrorist party exercises terror activities against minorities, especially to Muslims and other

ethnic groups in India. The cartoon explains that if a person of any colour and faith shakes hands with the saffron people (yellow is the colour of the Shiv Sena), then he/she is saved from any harm. The cartoonist highlights that all activities by the Saffron people are vindictive and malicious (compared as hate crime) and go against the Indian constitution i.e. secularism (showing a fair and liberal attitude towards religion and tolerance to the opinions and practices of other groups, minorities, races, tribal groups and sub-nations). The cartoonist sends the message that wherever there are Saffron people, there is terror.

The cartoon, Figure 8.8- “Baba [guru] bless me so that I may uproot terrorism” satirizes the spiritual guru of India ironically sitting on a pile of skulls and bones, teaching anti-religious ideals and blessing his devotees who eagerly intend to uproot terrorism in the society. The cartoon itself is an allegory of two conflicting characters of Hindu religious gurus who, despite instructing his devotees to do good deeds, silently approves anti-Muslim activities. In the image it is evident that the guru holding a *Trishula* (a Hindu-Buddhist religious symbol) blesses his disciple who bends down his head to the legs of the guru. The *Trishula* means “three spears” in *Sanskrit* and *Pali* which means creation, maintenance and destruction as well as past, present and future. The Hindu god Shiva is said to have used the *Trishula* to destroy the three worlds—the physical world, the world of the forefathers and the world of the mind. The faces in Figure 7.9- “PAK VIPS” are inscribed on the backdrop; most of them are allegedly involved with terror activities in India and the Indian occupied-Kashmir region. According to the cartoonist, the faces are the mastermind of any attack in India and he sketched their dresses along with their physical formation, especially their faces and the way they cover their body. The image highlights their exclusive clothing which reflects their cultural beliefs and religious affiliation. In many societies clothing continues to reflect religion, faith, social status and modesty. Clothing includes head

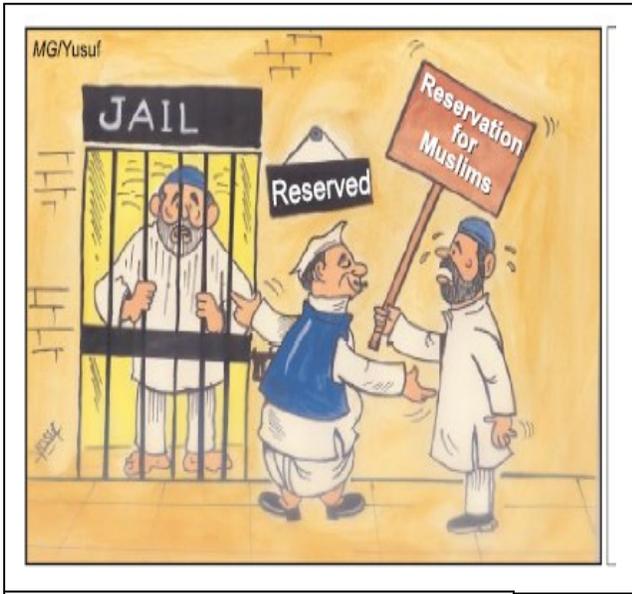


Figure 8.5 16-31 October 2009



Figure 8.6 1-15 January 2010

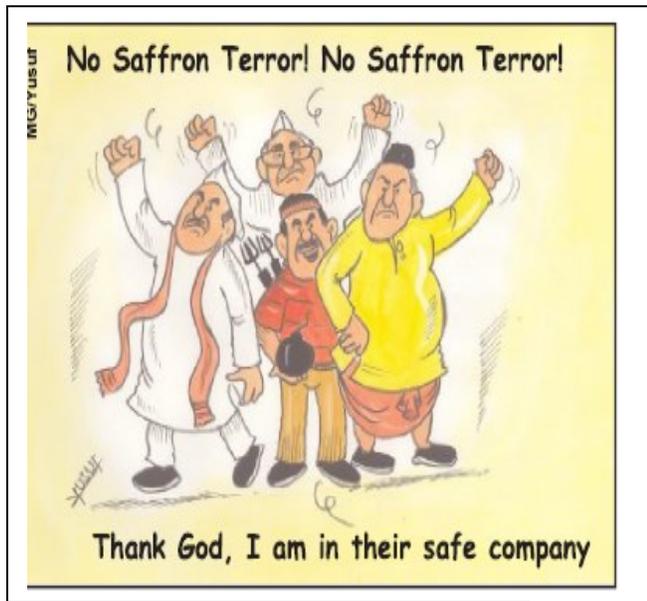


Figure 8.7 16-30 September 2010



Figure 8.8 16-30 April 2010

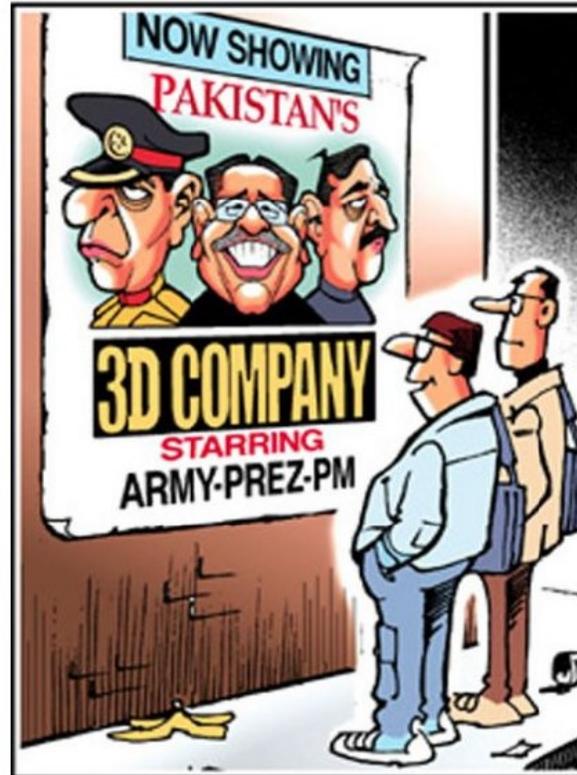
4 Jun 2009, 1601 hrs IST



It's time the world granted Pakistan MFN status—Most Feared Nation.

Figure 8.9

13 Jan 2009, 1337 hrs IST



It can bag Oscars—superb acting. 3D is for Dumb, Dumber, Dumbest..

Figure 8.10

cap, turban and other religious symbols such as beard, mustache, hair, etc. The VIPs are Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar, Masood, Dawood, Kyani, Zardari, Gillani, ISI, Hafiz and Salahuddin. The cartoonist does not like President Zardari, Prime Minister Gillani, Army Chief Kyani and the ISI of Pakistan because of their alleged role in orchestrating terrorism in India. The caption finally states that “It’s time the world granted Pakistan MFN status—Most Feared Nation.”

In the aforesaid cartoons, both cartoonists have used folkloric symbols to explain the popular beliefs, oral history, tradition and ethos of cultures, sub-cultures and groups such as the *Trishula*, saffron colour, religious guru, *bhakti* (taking blessings), guru-disciple traditions, images of the creation and destruction by Hindu mythical gods, religious/ritual cloths and costumes, putting prayer beads (*mala*) around the neck, etc.. Ninan portrays natural dresses of the most wanted terrorists as well as the executive heads and army people of Pakistan.

Thus these images sketch some cultural and traditional symbols of Hindu and Muslims cultures. The costumes worn by the most wanted terrorists of the world such as Osama, Mullah Omar and others and as well Hindu religious leaders, are symbolic in meaning. These patterns of dresses have separated the aforesaid groups into between “we” and “they” and produced a threat of danger and destruction to fellow citizens of India including Hindus and Muslims.

### **8.8 Geopolitical Narratives: Imagining ‘Danger’ and ‘Threat’ and ‘Identity’ through Ninan’s Eye: Caricaturing the Mumbai Attack and the WoT, Pakistan-India Relations and the Role of the USA**

Ninan’s cartoons serve as a cultural product that connects readers of all ages, to the political elites and state machineries, and helps revisit the sub-continental myths and legacies. Apprehending the danger of vengeful attacks from India, Pakistan continues to develop its nuclear power whereas, knowing Pakistan’s evil motive and trans-border terrorism, India has been trying to dominate the South Asian region including Pakistan to exercise its power. Being a

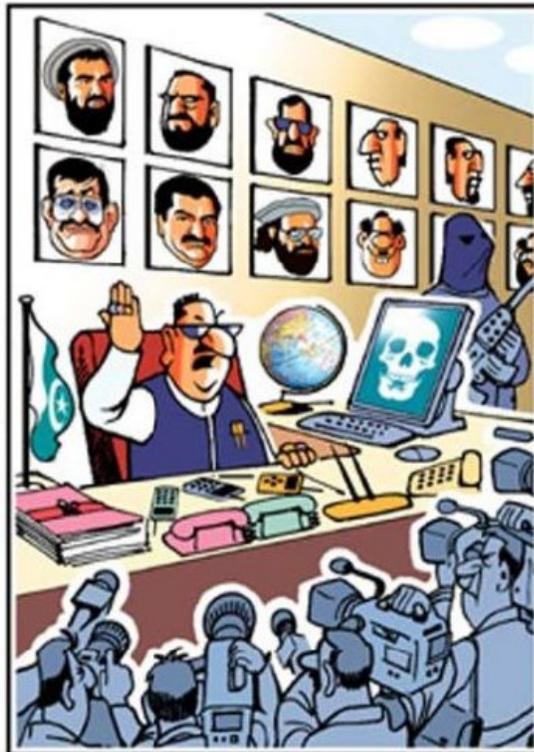
2 Feb 2009, 1420 hrs IST



Pak's reply to our 26-11 dossier...  
I think they need 5 more days to act.

Figure 8.11

12 Dec 2008, 1615 hrs IST



We can't hand them over to India.  
Our economy is run by these FIIs—  
Fidayeen Institutional Investors.

Figure 8.12

regional hegemonic country, India has been liaising with other global powers including the USA, Russia, France and Britain to rally regional and global support and has been lobbying support from the USA to win a permanent post in the UN Security Council. Here, Ninan's cartoons crucially discuss territoriality, identity, nationhood, danger, terrorism, infiltration, insurgency and radicalism.

In his cartoons, Ninan explains about worsening relations between India and Pakistan after the Mumbai Attack on 26 November, 2008. India accuses Pakistan of hatching the plans by the ISI and other Pakistani militant groups. Details of the attack have slowly been emerging after the capture of one of the militants involved in the attack who is a citizen of Pakistan. Pakistan denies any involvement in the attack. His cartoons have revealed some realities of Pakistan; namely, that currently Pakistan is very weak due to its political instability, insurgency, conflict between the executive and judiciary branches and lack of cooperation between government and bureaucrats. In addition, Pakistani armed forces control a significant portion of state mechanisms including political decisions-making in the country. Since 1947, Pakistan has been ruled mainly by the armed forces and when civilian governments are ruled by the armed forces and whenever they engage in corruption, the army quickly grabs the power.

Ninan brands Pakistan's Army chief, President and Prime Minister in Figure 8.10 as "3D Company" i.e. "3D is for Dumb, Dumber, Dumbest..." Here the cartoonist condemns the role of the three executive branches of the state and compares them with the dumbest people in Pakistani politics. Indeed, the ISI plays a significant role in running the internal and external affairs of Pakistan and has gradually turned into a very powerful organ inside state mechanisms. There are also allegations that the ISI has sustained a close liaison with the Taliban and other

radical and fundamental religious groups of Pakistan, India and Kashmir. Pakistan denies the ISI's power in running the country or administering terror activities in and around India.

Satirizing Pakistan's political actions, the artist demonstrates how the Indian government was given a substantial amount of evidence alleging that Pakistan masterminded the attack, and that no action was taken against the criminals. On the other hand, the CIA reviews the Mumbai attack with a few recommendations keeping a balance between two countries so that their report does not confront Pakistan.

The cartoon in Figure 8.13 titled 26-11 i.e. "It's embarrassing, Pakistan must agree to undergo a lie-detector-test" reflects the people's view on the suspicious role played by Pakistan in the Mumbai attack. Most Indians believe that Pakistan has been trying to destabilize the country by a civil war between Muslims and Hindus. The Indian MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) supports accusations that the President, Prime Minister, Army and ISI organized this attack, which explains why the artist claims that only a lie-detector test can tell whether these four super heroes of Pakistan are telling the truth. Pakistan's procrastination on the issue may prove that it wants to delay the investigation and let the issue die. The cartoon in Figure 8.11 titled "Pak's reply to our 26-11 dossier...I think they need 5 more days to act" reflects the same motive.

Even his cartoon in Figure 8.12 titled "We can't hand them over to India. Our economy is run by these FIIS—Fidayeen Institutional Investors" visualizes a press conference organized by the Pak administration following the Mumbai attack declaring that they cannot hand over to India the masterminds of the Mumbai attack because Pakistan is getting funds from the Fidayeen, a term referring to militant groups who are engaged in voluntary activities in the Arab world. If Pakistan, as Ninan observes, hands them over to India, it might lose its financial flow

from the Middle East or the Arab World. This cartoon shows some reluctance from the Pakistani administration in holding accountable the attackers active in and out of Pakistan.

Ninan also seems unhappy about India's handling of the tragic events of 26/11 (Mumbai attack) and appears to take the attack seriously. There are rumors suggesting that India might take military action against Pakistan (possibly nuclear) which could jeopardize the whole political foundation of the South Asian region. The cartoon symbolically satirizes the prime minister of India, Dr. Singh, by showing him walking on stage during the republic day parade (a national Indian festivity celebrated on 26<sup>th</sup> of January) equipped with arms and ammunitions and showing his determination to fight against the attackers (the stage was named "26-11" in Figure-8.13).

It is widely accepted that Pakistan believes in three "As"—Allah (the sovereign God, power), Armed forces and America. These three "As" have a lot of influence in the social, cultural and political life of Pakistan. Military rulers such as General Zia-ul-Huq (1978-98) and General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) adopted numerous rules and regulations including a set of Islamic laws in order to please the religious people and stay in power for as long as possible. Their so-called religious-cum-military sentiments have encouraged fanaticism and insurgency in Pakistan and across the region. Besides, the USA's role in the 1980s of organizing Afghan Mujahedeen in Pakistan and providing them with training facilities, money and weapons to remove the Soviets from Afghanistan created a breeding ground for terror in both countries. The production and exportation of terror have spread all over the world. During the period when the Soviets were driven out of Afghanistan, the ISI was entrusted with the responsibilities to jointly work with the Mujahedeen, the CIA, and the civil and military administrations of Pakistan. Thus

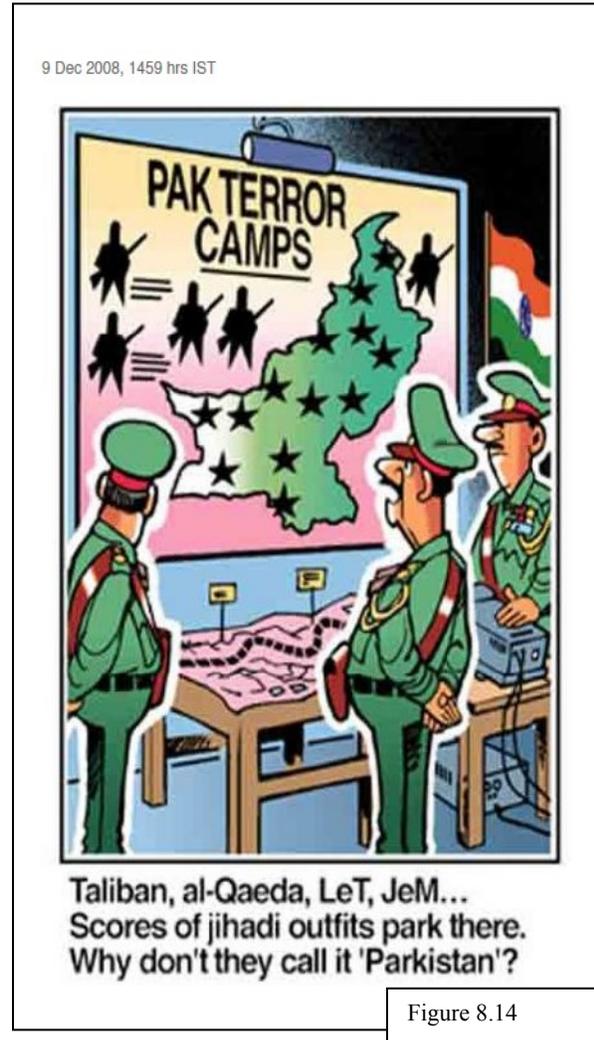
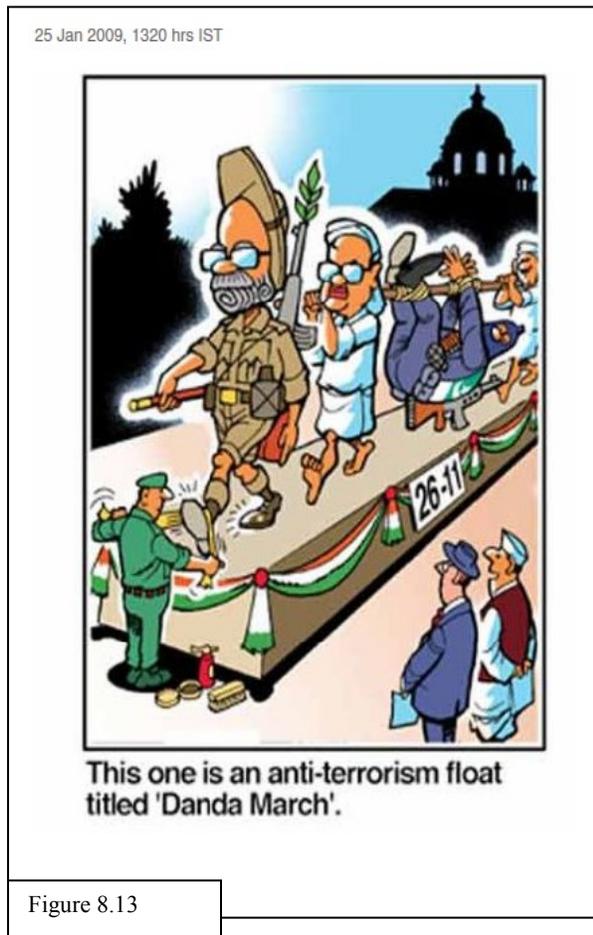
the ISI has emerged as an unparalleled and most trusted organization of Pakistan as well as to the USA and other Middle East countries including Saudi Arabia.

Ajit's cartoons have explained these simple realities elaborating how terrorism enters into India. In his cartoon in Figure-8.14 titled "Pak Terror Camps/Taliban, al-Qaeda, let, JeM...Scores of jihadi outfits park there. Why don't call it 'Parkistan'?", Ninan notes that the Pakistani soil has become a safe haven for all sorts of criminal and fundamental groups; and because most of them have already chosen to "stay" (to "park") Pakistan should be identified as "Parkistan". The word "PARK" is a metaphor Ninan uses to brand Pakistan as a country that is a terror-shelter or a rendezvous for terrorists. The country should be called "Parkistan" [not Pakistan] because it supports other fundamental groups and organizations in running their activities with the help of the ISI.

Ninan is shocked by the events of 26/11 (the Mumbai attack in 2008) and most of his cartoons portray geopolitical imaginations which serve to influence a wider readership. He considers Pakistan as a threat that shatters the harmony of the country as well as its economic growth and prosperity. I have used in the following paragraphs most of the cartoons he produced after the 26/11 event in India. In Figure- 8.15, the image called "What terror training camps? These are just normal schools for normal kids" is an indication that the Pak governments are inclined to impart training of its citizens to exercise terror in India. Also a lady in the playground is teaching students standing beside a blackboard inscribing "INDIA IS THE ENEMY." In the cartoon the Prime Minister of India Dr. Singh is asking to Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousaf Gilani "What terror training camps"? Gilani replies, "These are just normal schools for normal kids." The image shows people in the playground carrying guns and are trained to take any

action including infiltration, bombing and terrorizing. Ninan believes that Pakistan's role in exporting terror to India has created a schism between Hindus and Muslims in India.

The cartoonist is attentive to the World Cricket Cup, which was held in the South Asian region including Bangladesh, India and Pakistan for the first time in the history (i.e. February 19<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2011). Despite heavy pleading by the Pakistani government, the International Cricket Council (ICC) board did not allow it to co-host the event due to security and safety of the



cricket players. The cartoonist uses the stadium as a metaphor for the training of terrorism because the ICC boycotted the games in Pakistan. His caption in Figure 18 “Once the world

boycotts sports in Pak, we close our camps and shift to stadiums to train for war games” is a testimony of how Pakistan is in a fragile condition.

In his cartoon Figure 8.17 titled “Obama CIRCUS,” Ninan criticizes the role of the USA in combating terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the image, Obama forms a club consisting of China, India, Russia, Central Asia, US and Saudi Arabia which is compared with a “CIRCUS” which is nothing but a fake show to the world population. Ninan believes that Obama acts like a joker in a drama on terror hunting which does not show any fruitful impact in the South Asian region. China and Russia have the power to oppose any action Obama takes in the Security Council. Thus his so-called War on Terror against Afghanistan and Pakistan is nothing but a false demonstration on the world stage. Obama’s campaign against terrorism after President Bush’s declared War on Terror is being questioned on a global scale and the image sheds doubt on the nature and purpose of the USA’s involvement in combating terrorism. In the cartoon Obama is dancing and holding the flags of all six countries and is equipped with arms and ammunitions meaning that, although he is campaigning against terrorism but he is also killing innocent people through wars such as in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ninan mocks the president by belittling his role in the war on terror. This image works as a geopolitical picture for Asia which is a volatile continent that is home to four nuclear powers—Russia, China, India and Pakistan—and two emerging nuclear powers North Korea and Iran.

Ninan is aware of the consequences to the hostilities between India and Pakistan and visualizes good relations so that the region could host friendly and stable nations. He believes that talks and dialogues are the best tools to appease anger and anxiety between the two countries. Thus the only alternative is to hold regular meetings and dialogues at the highest political levels as well as at the bureaucratic level. The captions in Figure 8.18 such as INDO-

PAK: tete-a-tete, SEMINAR ON TERROR ATTACKS, INDO-PAK TALKS highlights the importance of mutual relations between these two nuke countries through meetings, dialogues and summits held by the heads of state or senior political elites in government. Political observers of the region, however criticize the weak effort to hold such meetings. The cartoon Tete-a-Tete specifies how both countries have yet to sit face to face to reach a consensus and solve their emerging disputes and unsolved issues. Both are required to be friendly and open-minded in order to avoid all kinds of rigidity and reluctance to reach an agreement of stability and peace.

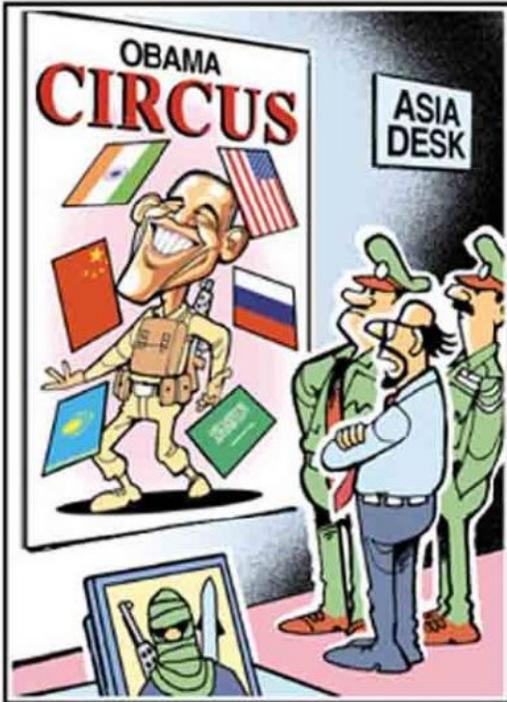


Figure 8.15



Figure 8.16

3 Apr 2009, 1250 hrs IST



His new club to fight Af-Pak terror. **CIRCUS** is for China, India, Russia, Central Asia, US and Saudi Arabia.

Figure 8.17

16 Jun 2009, 1445 hrs IST



Cossack dance fits in best — lock arms, kick the boots and avoid meeting face to face.

Figure 8.18

17 Dec 2008, 0952 hrs IST



An Austrian grenade assembled in Pakistan, tested in China and bought in Dhaka by this Afghan.

Figure 8.19



Figure 8.20

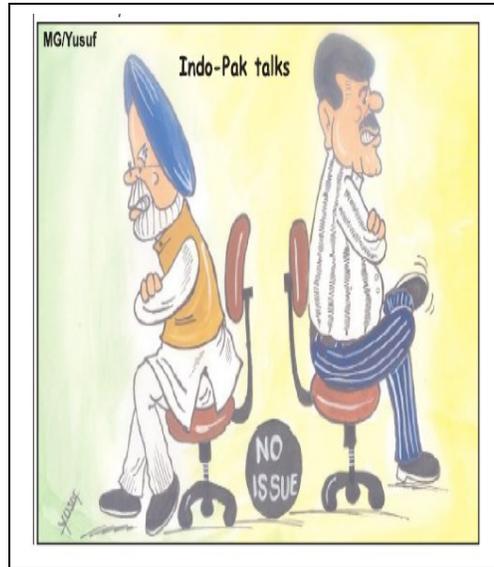


Figure 8.21 1-15 March 2010

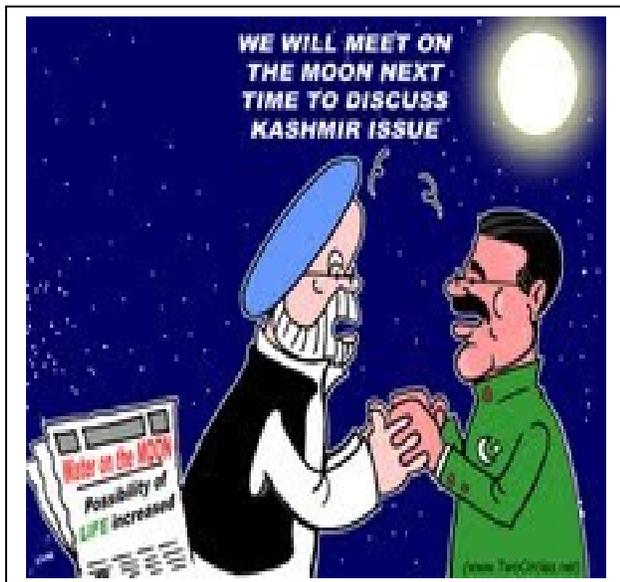


Figure 8.22



Figure 8.23

Here, Ninan is very critical of the Pakistani gesture regarding talks and negotiations in which so many stakeholders are associated because Pakistan cannot do anything with the consent of these stakeholders and beneficiaries. People can easily understand that the cartoons discussed above are satirical depictions of real events. The cartoonist uses symbolism, metaphor, and analogy to convey the real characters of the political leaders and, especially through their facial caricatures, exposes the inner motives of the leaders of Pakistan and India. Ninan uses the word 3D (dumb, dumber and dumbest) to highlight the mental retardedness of the Pakistani leaders—i.e. the president, prime minister and army chief. Does it mean that they are really dumb? Not necessarily but he wants to convey the message to the readers through metaphors by branding them with the word ‘dumb’. It means that the three chief individuals of Pakistan refuse to listen to any body and work for the establishment of good relations between and among the neighbouring countries. The portrayal of the ISI through symbolism is unique, and readers of any age in India can easily recognize the role of the ISI who allegedly run the terror groups. The image conveys that the ISI terror organizations like LeT, JeM, Jud, IM are standing firmly with arms and ammunition.

The metaphor, symbolism, analogy, caption and other forms of disseminating messages provides clues to “the preferred meaning and the types of outcomes or consequences that the artist feels may legitimately result from the activity, issue or event depicted” (Greenberg, 2002:184). Ninan employs these techniques to use as a framework for inclusion or exclusion and framing metaphor, symbolism and analogy to reveal the character of social reality, and warns of an emerging danger. In Figure 8.13, Figure 8.14, Figure 8.15, Figure 8.16, and Figure 8.17, the artist uses metaphors to construct an analogy between two things or ideas and his analogy plays a significant role in identifying place, culture and people such as in facial perceptions or

comparisons or similes and allegories. The cartoonist uses metaphors, symbolism and analogy in most of the above mentioned images and the captions for each image highlight real events such as the Mumbai attack being hatched in Antarctica; Pakistan being the nucleus of terror and exporting terrorism throughout the world; Pakistan being run by the Middle Eastern funds; the Mumbai Attack parade being led by the prime minister of India; Pakistan being put on a lie-detector test for the Mumbai attack; Pakistan being called “Parkistan” for giving shelter to terrorists; the stadium being called terror training camps; Obama being compared to a clown; and the faces of two reluctant prime ministers of India and Pakistan reflecting their passive activities.

Ninan also uses *caricature* in all of his images to artistically represent the characteristics of the individuals or features that are the focus of his sketches in order to exaggerate their characters and portrait. This graphic conveys the message instantly and is also regarded as a visual metaphor and cultural symbols with humour, satire and irony. “Caricatures tend to represent the more permanent traits of physiognomy and particular facial tics; apparently, it is often mouth, the eyes and the eyebrows that function as the most important signals of identity (El Refaie, 2009: 192). The caricatures of President Zardari, Prime Minister Dr. Singh, Prime Minister Gillani, Army Chief Keyani, and other recognized faces such as Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar are immediately recognized because of some analogy in sketching their faces. The styles of caricature also show ‘leveling’ i.e. some dimensions of shape, size and form along with ‘sharpening’ which reduces, increases or eliminates body features including the head, nose, and brows. The artist also employs leveling and sharpening of the images in order to influence peoples’ perception and imagination.

## 8.9 Neighbouring Countries and Finger-Pointing to Locate Terror and Danger

Ninan and Munna make some references to Bangladesh that are worth mentioning. Ninan supports the government of India's claim that Bangladesh has terror camps inside its boundary where insurgents get financial support or training for terror activities in various parts of India, especially in the region of the seven sisters. India claims that the ISI is actively involved with such activities in Bangladesh. But Dhaka denies of any involvement in supporting terror activities in India, and accuses India of concocting false claims. Dhaka challenges the Indian authorities to prove that Bangladesh is perpetrating such heinous activities in the region. In the image in Figure 8.19 titled "An Austrian grenade assembled in Pakistan, tested in China and bought in Dhaka by this Afghan," Ninan describes a mechanized version of Indian intelligence, RAW, which tells a story about how grenades make their way into India. He holds Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Bangladesh responsible for creating chaos inside India. Ninan believes that these countries are interested in launching terror attacks in India for the following reasons: a) Pakistan is a permanent enemy of India; b) China has had border disputes with India since the 1960s and fought a war in 1962 in which China was allegedly involved in an insurgency in India's north-eastern territory; c) Bangladesh has a lot of disputes with India over various issues including land border, maritime boundary, water-sharing of the Ganges, building embankment, illegal trafficking across the border, etc.; and d) Afghan Mujahedeen are partnered with insurgents of Indian occupied Kashmir to liberate them from the so-called autocratic rule of India.

Munna touches a realistic picture of immigration policy in India. Since the 1990s, the Indian ultra-nationalist parties including the governments have been launching campaigns against illegal migrants of Bangladesh and have moved them out from the cities of Mumbai and

Delhi. They are the poor Bangladeshi Muslim people who are forced to cross the border in search of employment in the cities and its peripheries. They are not the real threat for terrorism in India but the issue of identity has compelled some Hindu nationalistic parties to remove them from the cities as a precautionary measure in case they become permanent residents of India. After a certain period they would certainly be voting for the Congress, a liberal party that supports the interests of the Muslims. But the Hindu nationalist parties dislike the increasing support for the Congress in the election.

In Figure 8.20, Munna sketches a Kangaroo representing the census authority carrying many nationals during the 2010 census which include Burmese (Myanmarian), Tibetans, Bhutanese, Sri Lankans, Nepalese and Chinese. However, Bangladeshis are left out of the voter list because of their religious faith. Munna projects the reality that in the name of secularism, Indian governments take measures only against illegal poor Muslim workers, and not other faiths that are crowding the metropolitan cities of India. His cartoon “You Look like a Bangladeshi” is testimony to this reality.

Films, television, documentaries and social networks have been playing a great role in making political and social figures more familiar to a wider audience. Print media also contributes by creating political figures to present to the mass population. As Colin Seymour-Ure notes, “we know better what politicians look like than when relied on the press...and perhaps we therefore expect higher standards of caricature from the cartoonists” (2001:348). Cartoonists can easily convince their readers by sketching the caricatures of the highest ranked political personalities including the president, prime minister, party chiefs and even international political figures including Us President Obama, Israel’s Sharon and President George W. Bush.

By examining the third layer of Table 8.1A as a means to interpret and construct certain discourses on security and danger, the aforementioned cartoons provide a stream of social and political commentary concerning security, danger, identity crises and yet “they are artistic works, they demand a layered interpretation that gets at the symbolism that may lurk in the artistry image, in the captions, or in the relationship between cartoonist and his or her interpretive community” (Najjar, 2007:255). The very nature and genre of cartoons, their day to day message dissemination, and their simple but regular publication enhance their role as arbiters of political opinions in any given society (Ibid.). Fish (1989:141) describes how the cartoons by Ninan and Munna convey messages to an interpretive community that consist not of individuals but a group of people:

[Interpretive communities as] a point of view or way of organizing experience that shared individuals in the sense that its assumed distinctions, categories of understanding, and stipulations of relevance and irrelevance were the content of the consciousness of community members who were no longer individuals...Community-constituted interpreters would, in their turn, constitute, more or less in agreement, the same text, although the sameness would not be attributable to the self-identity of the text, but to the communal nature of interpretive act.

Ninan and Munna’s cartoons, in particular the interpretation of the events, captions, text, symbols, metaphors and leveling and sharpening of images—along with a their goal to depict real world images through employing cognitive, normative and affective methods—has shook the interpretive community, especially the political, social academic and mass population. For example, Ninan’s images on the Mumbai attack (see Figure 8.11, Figure 8.13, Figure 8.15 and Figure 8.17) are clearly understood by individuals, groups and the ‘interpretive community’ because he presents the facts on the Mumbai attack, including the geographical area, and aftermaths of the events and the process of investigation. Thus all the aforesaid images are descriptive, linking an image-time relation and connecting political debates through the popular

imagination of the mass people. Thus the cartoons assist in analyzing popular geopolitics to construct the discourse of identity of the self and other.

Unlike Ajit, Munna's images are one sided because they focus on the interest of the minorities, especially the Muslims of India, which, in turn, promote the mobilization of the minority communities. His visual medium reflects the everyday politics of India as well the representation of transnational politics that are central to popular geopolitics. When he talks about the USA, the role of the Muslim World, Sharon, Bush and Modi, he covers domestic and international politics to comprehend the discursive production of popular geopolitics.

It is worth mentioning that the electronic media of India has been broadcasting a cartoon network (titled Cartoon Network) since 1995 as a partner channel with the American based company Turner Classic Movies (formerly TNT). As of July 2001, the "Cartoon Network India" became a 24-hour channel broadcasting to other neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Pakistan also began broadcasting a cartoon network in 2004. Young generations of the South Asian region are now interested in watching cartoons on TV as comic strips are popular among the youths.

### **8.10 Summary of the Chapter:**

Since the media discourse acts "as a product of societal and institutional practices" as Hakam, 2009 notes, and therefore cartoons by both TOI and MG can be regarded as a medium for disseminating products of discourses to both society and political elites. Both TOI and MG cartoons construct contemporary discourses by shaping people's imagination, and the cartoons they produce are a reflection of the ideology behind the newspapers; often free speech is restricted in South Asia (but India has some partial freedom of speech) or an individual's opinions are influenced by the collective opinion of the population. Unlike European cartoonist

Steve Bell, publications of both Ninanand Munna are scrutinized by the editorial board. Usually artists have to follow newspaper guidelines or some dictations by their superiors/bosses and they must obtain approval before the cartoons are published. As mentioned above, both newspapers are not ideologically the same and have contrasting and conflicting views. The style by which TOI handles the cartoons contradicts with MG and vice versa.

In the cartoons, the question of identity is reflected in the images. These cartoons work as a geopolitical text that reflects Indian society, which is divided in respect to religion and faith under the Two Nations Theory during the partition. The Hindus in India view Muslims as a burden to their economic growth and societal development, and especially to internal and external security. The Muslims in India are treated unfairly by society and they are allegedly deprived of many facilities a citizen requires to live and survive.

Like films, cartoons are a tool used to influence geopolitical imaginations, and have been used as geopolitical scripts in various countries, especially the US. For example, the US government or its ideological allies distributed a series of comic books to the less literate population, especially to the young generation in order to disseminate their messages about the crisis and conflict of the Cold War (Dittmer, 2007). For instance, the CIA targeted American citizens to get their supports during the Nicaragua civil war by explaining the oppression of the Nicaraguan communist military authority:

In 1983, it [the CIA] had paid to produce and distribute a comic book entitled “Freedom Fighter’s Manual,” a self-described “practical guide to liberate Nicaragua from oppression and misery by paralyzing the military–industrial complex of the traitorous Marxist state without having to use special tools and with minimal risk for the combatant”.

The comic book urged readers to sabotage the Nicaraguan economy by calling in sick, goofing off on their jobs, throwing tools into sewers, leaving lights and water taps on, telephoning false hotel reservations, dropping typewriters, and stealing and hiding key documents . . . The comic

book also included detailed instructions on making Molotov cocktails, which, it suggested, could be thrown at fuel depots and police offices (Bovard, 2004).

The CIA undertook a grand project to distribute more comic books of different nature to Middle Eastern adolescents to train them on issues like numerous positive lessons, developing ideas of role models and improving their education as well (US Government 2005). The objective of the CIA project was to reach the community, especially the younger generation and achieve long term peace and stability. Egypt-based AK Comic also published comic strips titled “Middle East Heroes” in English and Arabic, where the heroes are stronger than those of the American comic books. They also project the image of their region as soft, moderate, and media friendly. They also feature female super heroes (heroines) showing their chivalry and sense of adventure as the equals of their male counterparts. Another reason to project women as such in the books is to consider the number and size of readers who are mostly female in Arab countries in comparison with American comic book readership where women’s participation is numerous. The following is a BBC (2005) commentary on the comic strips:

The heroes’ enemies include the United Liberation Force and the Zios Army, who are “still clinging to their extreme views”. Both enemies want complete control of the City of All Faiths. Mr. Nashar [the creator of the comics] said that this was “not deliberate— but it’s hard not to be inspired by what is going on. It’s part of our life—art from life, and life from art,” he said.

Another comic book called *The 99* has engulfed the imagination of the Arab world as it has been working as a form of popular geopolitics. Naif Al-Mutawa, a Kuwaiti businessman and creator of the comic strip, disseminates a message of tolerance, peace and positive aspects of Islam to young generations of the Arab world. “His superhero characters will be based on an Islamic archetype: by combining individual Muslim virtues—everything from wisdom to

generosity—they build collective power that is ultimately an expression of the divine” (Fattah 2006:8).

Ninan’s cartoons cover caricatures, symbols, metaphors and texts that convey popular geopolitical views and elucidate how visual images explain numerous regional geopolitical issues concerning dangers and threats with regard to issues like the Mumbai attack, India-Pakistan relations, infiltration across LOCs, trans-border terrorism and trading of small arms and ammunitions. His cartoons also reflect the role of the US in the post-9/11 attacks and the way in which the Obama administration dominates South Asian regional politics. He focuses especially on radicalism, fundamentalism and the war on terror in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Ninan’s images present a conflicting and contrasting characterization of Pakistan and India while explaining how both countries have been at war with since 1947.

Munna is pessimistic about the arrival of a peaceful resolution in the near future in India-occupied Kashmir, where, since the 1980s thousands of people have been sacrificing their lives for the sake of establishing regional autonomy. He is not optimistic regarding problems between India and Pakistan. His cartoons captioned, “We will meet on the Moon next time to discuss Kashmir issue” (Figure 8.22) and “Indo-Pak talks” (Figure 8.21) highlight the fact that Indian Prime Minister Dr. Singh and Prime Minister Gillani lack the initiative to resolve their bilateral problems. In another cartoon, Munna mocks the Muslim World (Figure 8.23) for its alleged association with the western world, including the USA. It suggests that rather than performing their prayers towards Makkah, the holiest site for the Muslim *Ummah*, Muslims direct their prayer to the USA. According to Munna, the Muslim World has lost its ethical and religious sentiments by building a more solid relationship with the USA.

The above discussion provides a detailed analysis of the cartoons and explains the characteristics of the images to discuss how this genre of popular culture can construct discourses and narratives on South Asian security aspects. They can reach the people very fast and initiate any campaign to mobilize people's perception to develop a societal cause. For example, the Danish cartoon on Prophet Muhammad (first published in September, 2005) created a significant reaction in the Muslim world as well as in the Muslim diaspora in North America and Europe.

In the study, the two different categories of cartoons highlight how India practices democracy, secularism and tolerance in its state mechanisms while other minorities, especially Muslims and *Dalits*, are ignored in practicing their own rights while being exploited and abused socially. I also describe how cartoons underscore specific political trends in explaining danger and threat, and the ways in which cartoons address ambiguity in order to portray the political environment of India.

The following chapter discusses how the Indian movies explore identity and nation formation and how they generate notions of danger and circulates and disseminates fear and trauma in contemporary so-called secular India and how popular cinema of India constantly reflects a diversity of popular views and geopolitical representations of regional politics and regions.

## Chapter 9: Imagined Community

### 9.1 Popular Culture, Indian Films and Imagined Community

The study of film by human geographers is a “logical extension of the line of inquiry and thought” and “film offers geographers a realm of knowledge which combines multiple perspective, imagination, art, objective, and subjective qualities, geographic information and geographical imagination” (Lukinbeal and Zimmermann, 2006:316). American geographer J.K. Wright (1947: 10) emphasizes that “terra incognita,” the combined study of ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ areas which, according to him, may be called “geosophy’, existed in the “books of travel, in magazines and newspapers, in many a page of fiction and poetry, and on many a canvas.” This term was reexamined by D. Lowenthal (1961) who concludes that “geography includes a person’s perception, imagination, and subjective view of reality: sometimes termed the geography of mind or one’s personal geography” (Lukinbeal and Zimmermann, 2006:316). Imagination and personal perception play an important role in geographical studies because “not all geography derives from the earth itself; some springs from our idea of the earth. The concept of geography within the mind can at times be easier for people to adjust to and thus be more important than the supposedly real geography of the earth. Man has the aptitude of being able to live by the notion of reality which may be more real than reality itself” (Watson, 1969:10)

Indian cinema has exceeded every other film industry in the world with respect to audience and since the 1990s has captured the attention of academic enquiry in India and abroad. May, 1998, marked an important time in the history of Indian film when the government recognized it as an industry and it achieved formal industry status three years later in 2001 (Desai and Dudrah, 2008:13). In a South Asian context, film and documentaries are used to explore identity, nation formation, and especially structures of national identity. For example,

certain Bollywood movies created by the Indian film industry in Mumbai have inspired the masses to better understand themselves, they have also widened the gap between Hindu and Muslim identity by narrating their faiths (i.e., Muslims and Hindus/We and They). A few movies released in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s disseminate specific messages pertaining to identity and threat and security. Some of these include: *Mission Kashmir* (2000), *Refugee* (2000), *Bombay* (1995), *Roja* (1992), *Border* (1997), *Lakshya (Kargil War)* (2003), *Prem Pujari [1965 War]* (1965), *Vijeta [1971 War]* (1982).

Of late, Indian Hindi movies have merged into mainstream cinema worldwide and have even captured the attention of the American Academy Awards (also known as the Oscars). Among others, *Monsoon Wedding*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Bollywood/Hollywood*, *Fire*, *Earth*, *Water*, *My Name is Khan* have captured the imagination of the western people (Ibid, 1). Indian cinema has recently become a focus of study and analysis by western critics and South Asian movie analysts. “For decades, the Hindi popular cinema has had an appeal beyond South Asia. It has an enthusiastic following in the so-called South Asian diaspora, the communities of South Asian origin residing all over the world, including the West” (Pauwels, 2007:1).

This section examines how sub-continental history is discussed in contemporary Indian cinema with a particular focus on three recent films—*Earth*, *Lagaan* and *Sarfarosh*—that explore their relationship with the historical periods of insecurity, danger and identity. It discusses the complex ways in which the Indian entertainment industry i.e. global Bollywood frames and reframes relationships between geography, cultural identities and political discourses. Lichtner and Bandyopadhyaya (2008:437) have rightly noted that “one film (*Earth*) shuns the conventions of Bollywood cinema while the other (*Lagaan*) embraces them; one promotes an

openly left-wing political agenda and interpretation of history while the other oscillates between Marxist overtones and a very conservative image of society; one targets an elite high-brow Indian and international audience while the other tries to court India's masses." *Lagaan* is concerned with past events of colonial rule and the long-desired partition of the sub-continent. It also provides a re-interpretation of British torture and brutal rule in the colonized sub-continent, which gradually roused sentiments of independence and Indian nationalism. On the other hand, *Earth* revisited the unspeakable sufferings of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who left their homeland to a newly constructed country triggered violence, killing, arson, pillage and rape and resulted in a combined effort to find unity and strength for their survival.

One may ask a question why I have selected Indian movies only to discuss about the topic of *imagined community* while the other two countries (Bangladesh and Pakistan) of the Sub-continent also produce movies. Thus, these movies should be in the discussion too. The answer is very simple: the movies of Bangladesh and Pakistan do not have tremendous influences on the society as a whole and they have limited spectators within the boundary. The heroes and heroines of both countries are not highly acclaimed and not that much popular as those of the Bollywood. In addition, the producers of Bangladesh and Pakistan make movies concentrating mostly on the popular themes of their own countries keeping in mind the commercial benefit and their narrow interest only; although some films have nation-building discourses. But most of the Indian movies reflect South Asian issues and they earned reputation in the region for their diversity, socio-cultural matrix and indigenous themes as well the presentation and approaches of sites, settings and scenes are eye-catching.

The name "Bollywood" based in Mumbai, a business hub of India, is a combination of two words: "Bo" from Bombay (the previous name of Mumbai) and "llywood" from Hollywood.

The term Bollywood was incepted in the 1970s when India's film production industry surpassed Hollywood to become a world leader in terms of film production. Bollywood along with other regional film industries produced more than one thousand movies annually. The first Indian film, titled *Raja Harishchandra* (King Harishchandra) was screened in 1914 during the World War I and was the first silent feature movie in British India (Gulzar and Chatterji, 2003). The first Indian sound film was *Alam Ara* (The Light of the World) directed by Ardeshir Irani in 1931, which was a major commercial success.

The government of India is realizing the influence of Indian cinema overseas; Non-Resident Indians (NRI) and their cultures around the world are inspired especially by the glamour of Indian girls, romantic, melodrama, comedy, horror and supernatural films and folk-tale dances. The content of Indian commercial movies is sometimes borrowed from Hollywood stories, dialogues and settings. As film is a reflection of a society's advancement and growth, Indian movies inadequately reflect suffering and poor living conditions of populations in the country. The real Indian filmic *masala* (genres) are hybrid versions of imitations, and some of them, being far from reality, are almost Utopian. They are "best considered as hybrid forms, sometimes borrowing from one another, sometimes quoting each other and frequently blending together" (Desai and Dudrah, 2008:13).

Since the 1990s the Indian film industry underwent a massive change due to a gradual rise of the urban middle class. Also, Bollywood movies have fascinated Indians and the South Asian diaspora in more than sixty countries (Basu, 2010:49). The entire film industry of India earned about 14.6 million rupees from overseas in 1998 that figure rose to 4 billion rupees and by 2003 it reached close to 7 billion (Ibid.:50). According to Basu:

In India, popular cinema has consistently reflected the diversity of the pluralist community... The stories they tell are often silly, the plots formulaic, the characterizations superficial, the action

predictable, but they are made and watched by members of every community in India...The film world embodies the very idea of diversity in the in which it is organized, staffed, and financed—and in the stories tell (Basu, 2010:50).

Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (Tax): *Once Upon a Time in India* (2001), Deepa Mehta's *Earth* (1998) and John Matthew Matthan's *Sarfarosh* (1999) are the primary examples of how movies portray Indian nationhood, identity crisis, national integration, terror, danger and imaginative communities. India has always struggled with the following issues of nationhood—building up imperial loyalties to the Queen (i.e. the British regime that once occupied the subcontinent for over two hundred years) and constructing its own national identities after the invasions of the Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Mongols, Afghans and Moguls. India's main initiative is to build a pluralist society accommodating various races and ethnic groups including the large Muslim minority.

India underwent several challenges in the 1990s, particularly the various ethnic conflicts and racial problems that have divided the nation. The emergence of the right-wing party and its like-minded camps in the late 1980s and early 1990s appears to be an ominous sign in the Gandhian philosophy of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence/no harm to anybody), and has triggered violence, division, ethnic cleansing, an issue of 'we' and 'they', danger and threatened the basic rights of living. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP/Indian People's Party), Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS/National Swayam Volunteers' Association), Viswa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Orgainzation) along with other small and local groups launched a movement in 1990 campaigning for the demolition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Babri Masjid (mosque), which was allegedly built on a 16<sup>th</sup> century Hindu temple. "The movement reached its climax with the violent destruction of the Masjid on December 6, 1992, which sparked widespread communal riots throughout India in its aftermath" (Lichtner and Bandyopadhyaya, 2008:431). This riot killed more

than 2000 innocent Muslims, including women and children. The events of the 1990s may be compared with those of 1947 during the partition that left deep wounds and long memories of hatred and mistrust on both sides of the India-Pakistan border.

Tensions further increased when the former Prime Minister of India V.P. Singh used the Mandal Commission report to assist and provide support to various minority groups including the *dalits* (the untouchable), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) including Muslims and the Scheduled Tribes (Ibid.). The commission strongly recommends that these groups be allowed access to higher education and employment in order to improve their socio-economic conditions. But this initiative created anger and frustration within the high caste Hindu societies as well on school campuses where some young students tried self-immolation as a means of protest. Accordingly, “atrocities against members of these groups increased markedly during the middle of the 1990s” (Ibid.:432). The BJP came to power in 1998 by a landslide victory strengthening the vision of the Hindutva (Hindu-ness), which created a division of ‘We and They’ and “victims of the Hindutva movement (Muslims and *dalits*) and the campaign’s opponents (left-liberal politicians and intellectuals) began a renewed search for the meanings of Indian “nationhood,” turning to history for this critical reexamination” (Ibid.:433). Even the BJP tried to revise Indian history text books by adding Muslims as foreign invaders and undermining the contributions of other religious and minority communities in Indian society and, in doing so, omitting the very fact that Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated in 1948 by a right-wing Hindu extremists and fanatics (Ibid.).

## **9.2 Geopolitics and American Films**

Much of the themes in Hollywood films support American ultra-nationalism and masculinity over weakness and filthiness by providing various ways to solve (geo)political

uncertainty and “very uncertain nature of America itself, through building moral geographies and making clear the lines of division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Power and Crampton, 2007:6).

Critics believe that American movies function as an ideological state apparatus following the genesis of the Manichean nature of geopolitical discourse (Ibid.:6).

As Dodds (2005:77) notes, American and European cinema has contributed in shaping a public opinion and identity and governments along with military and political elites have maintained a close relationship with film companies in order to propagate ideologies of the day to the masses. Citing an example of D.W. Griffith’s film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), Dodds claims that it constructs a particular narrative of American nationality and Americanized statehood in North America. It is a reflection of American white supremacy that undermines other cultures and races in America. As Ó Tuathail (1994:540) rightly says, “*The Birth of a Nation* portrays the Ku Klux Klan as the saviours of the white race, as defenders of the virtue of white women, and as representatives of the Christian civilization, a civilization under threat from the innate primitism [sic] and uncontrollable sexual appetite of emancipated African-Americans.” Some film makers produce their own concept of heroism, national identity and conflict between good and evil without liaising with US political elites. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1965) is the best example of a movie that can be “interpreted as highly political in the manner by which they seek to represent ‘frontier America’, individual heroism and the struggle between good and evil” (Dodds, 2005:77; Short, 1991:178-96).

By examining Soviet cinema under Joseph Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s, it seems that the Soviet Communist Party funded some films and documentaries to use as propaganda to convey its message to the mass population. Movies like “*October*” (1927) followed by a stream of films in the 1930s such as *Two Captains* as well as documentaries depicting the Arctic

exploits of Soviet pilots” motivated Soviet citizens to explore and to conquer the North Pole (Dodds, 2005:77). The celluloid demonstrated the communist state under Stalin’s regime could handle any responsibility and face any natural or man-made challenges. “These films helped to construct particular political and cultural identities linked to national prestige and socio-economic development” (Ibid.:77). The communist party of the USSR approved some productions that replicated historical epics such as *Ivan the Terrible* (1942 and 1946) and anti-American movies such as *Court of Honour* (1949) in order to inform Russian citizens about the dangers and threats of US ideologies (Ibid.:77-8).

Hollywood movies cover various issues on national land border, identity, segregation, and space of otherization, restriction of movement of the population (from Mexico to the USA) and white supremacy. Realizing the ‘major shift in the mood of American idealism’, Elena dell’Agnese investigated roughly 30 North American films on the US-Mexico border issue over a period of 65 years. Her article, “The US-Mexico Border in American Films,” highlights the cross border experiences of South and North and the everyday practices, beliefs and geopolitical imagination of common people. It presents several ways of depicting the border: borderland, boundary, demarcation, white supremacy, separation between two borders, identity, fundamental divide between the Haves and Haves not and ‘we’ and ‘they’. She concludes that “together they form a powerful geopolitical representation of Self and Other.” Other films being discussed are: *South of the Border* (1939, dir. Sherman), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960, dir. Sturges), *The Professionals* (1966, dir. Brookes), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996, dir. Rodrigues), *Pito Perez se va de bracer* (1947, dir. Riera) and *Border Incident* (1949, dir. Mann).

US movies also challenge national mythologies of the American West (Old West or Wild West) interlinking a more critical engagement with the history of Euro-American imperial

expansion and cinematic narration on the construction of Indians and Indian territory, nation, and ethnic identity. Michael J Shapiro's Hollywood films, *The Pledge* (2001, dir. Sean Penn) and *Paris, Texas* (1984, dir. Wim Wenders) scrutinize the US government for disarming and displacing Mexicans and removing their sovereign territories and nationhood (Power and Crampton, 2007). In his study, Shapiro explores "the ways in which films about the West construct particular geopolitical spaces, reconstruct a sense of 'international relations', represent certain landscapes or reflect upon the fixity or fluidity of borders and boundaries" (Power and Crampton, 2007:7).

Hollywood movies document the past and work as a kind of modern-day geopolitician as Power and Crampton claim in their study. They present an intertextual relationship between movies and WWII and the Second Gulf War in 2003 by explaining that today's Hollywood films "fulfills the role of geopolitician in producing a pictorial representation of international politics" (Power and Crampton, 2007:7) and "construct particular geopolitical spaces, reconstruct a sense of 'international relations', represent certain landscapes or reflect upon the fixity or fluidity of borders and boundaries" (Ibid.:7). The article explores how movies reveal geopolitical narrations and contemporary geopolitical space. The study also provides a special discussion on *Saving Private Ryan* "in an attempt to understand further how movies figure in the popular political imagination as ways of imaging and enframing global political change" (Power and Crampton, 2007:7).

Genres and characteristics of American cinema vary from time to time reflecting the reality of social norms and people's aspiration "to be Americanized." The US's aim to rule, police, and oversee the world political administrations is not exception. The James Bond series (1962-67) construct a particular geographic location and geographical framing and explores "the

detail of the filming process in order to understand more carefully the filmic constructions of spaces, danger, threat, domesticity and exoticism” (Power and Crampton, 2007:8).

In the United States, wars were fought twice—on the real battle field and on celluloid, as Dodds reiterates (2005:78). The relationship between the government, especially the military establishment, and the film companies is always good and the picturesque “reel” has a tremendous influence on the “real” fight because movies catch the vitality of the war sending the celluloid images to the mass population to influence public opinion. Even Hitler’s Germany cooperated closely with film makers on some specific agenda and for over the last ninety seven years, the US government has cooperated with Hollywood, such as former president Roosevelt’s request to the Wilson administration to cast 2, 500 mariners in the movie, *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915).

After the US was attacked in Pearl Harbor in 1941, the reputation of the Roosevelt administration came under attack. To change the public mood president Roosevelt approved the lease of several planes, ships and other army machines to make a film called *Air Force*, which was released in 1943. The film reassures Americans by demonstrating that the USA is able to resist any attack by the Japanese on its domestic territory. *The Victory Through Air Power* (1942) and *Why We Fight* (1942-43) was a tremendous effort by the US administration to exhibit the strength and power of the US army and revitalize the morale of the US troops and inform the public about the US’s involvement in the conflict with Japan.

Realizing the impact of Hollywood in the people’s mind and imagination, the US military department opened a PR office in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles in post-WWII to monitor and establish relations ranging from army equipment to having soldiers to participate in the film making process. But the relationship between the US military and Hollywood deteriorated in the

1960s during the decade long Vietnam War. People's resistance and campaigns against the Vietnam War created a moral dilemma between Hollywood and the military establishment. More than 58,000 thousand American servicemen/women died in the war and military records show that many are still missing (MIAs/Missing in Actions). 'Vietnam Syndrome' was coined in the 1970s in response to fears among American political elites that the humiliation in South East Asia had caused widespread feelings of depression, guilt and loss of moral purpose" (Dodds, 2005:80).

Films like, *The Longest Day* (1961), *The Green Berets* (1968), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Hamburger Hill* (1985), *Platoon* (1986), *Born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July* (1995), *Top Gun* (1986), *Courage Under Fire* (1996), *The Siege* (1998) and others underscore the geopolitical representations of world politics and American hegemony over the world system. As Dodds mentions (2005:83), Hollywood has produced some movies that reflect 'nostalgic representations' of the events that influenced the contemporary American imagination such as *Pearl Harbour* (2001) [the Second World War], *Apollo 13* [US-Soviet space race] (1995), *Air Force One* [former Soviet terrorists] (1995), *Independence Day* [alien invasion] (1996), *Outbreak* [Disease] (1995), and *The Rock* [weapons of mass destruction] (1996). Thus it can be said that "the popular movie cultures generated by Hollywood clearly have a tremendous impact in terms of audience figures, and revenue generation" (Dodds, 2005:83).

These renowned American films highlight the contemporary geopolitics with much emphasize on American defense establishment, US military forces, tactical and operational capabilities as well they disseminate the messages of America's ability, power, strategy and world leadership. The narratives they use in their movies reflect, most of the time, crucial policies of their statesmen, a geopolitical landscape of their empire to combat any threats and

dangers from inside and outside of their boundary. These movies explore how statesmen and generals evaluate the political situation and strategic policies of the country and how did the USA handle with such geopolitical changing environment constructing security narratives, political rhetoric and geopolitical discourses.

### **9.3 *Earth, Lagaan and Sarfarosh*: Popular Culture, Identity and Re-imagining Community**

These three movies reflect a more inclusive Indian plural society discussing past events through the personal experience of contemporary characters in a way that provides the audience members with a better understanding of India's past and colonial legacies while constructing discourses of unity and brotherhood despite the hatred and mistrust rooted in the minds of Indians over the last couple of centuries (Figure 9.1).

The film *Earth* begins with Lenny (Maia Sethna), a young girl suffering from polio, who narrates the story through her adult voice (Shabana Azmi) recalling "Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, who had lived together as one entity for centuries, started to clamor for pieces of India themselves. The arbitrary line of division the British would draw to carve up India in August 1947 would scar the subcontinent forever." She belongs to a wealthy Parsi family in the area who had been maintaining a neutral position during the partition. Shanta (Nandita Das), Lenny's Hindu nanny is very popular in the local park as she won the heart of many poor-working class suitors—Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Shanta responded to one Muslim, Hassan the masseur and denied the love of another Muslim ice-candy man, Dil Nawaz (Aamir Khan) by name. When a train laden with murdered and decapitated bodies of Muslim men, women and children arrived in Lahore from Gurdaspur of Indian Punjab where Dil Nawaz found his sister's body decomposed. This heinous act by the Sikhs caused Muslims to riot against Sikhs and Hindus. The events of partition caused this group of friends to turn violent against to each other.

Memories, experiences and narratives of *Earth* bring the audience back to what Gregory calls *colonial present* which “is painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present” (Bhabha, 1994:63). These experiences and narratives deconstruct and historicize postcolonial identities. “It is the site of cinema where the language of violence on the scale seen during the partition, particularly when represented visually, will bear some burden of comparison to the “greatest of all human tragedies” (Barenscoot, 2006:1-2). Deepa Mehta reveals different images of partition in India and Pakistan,

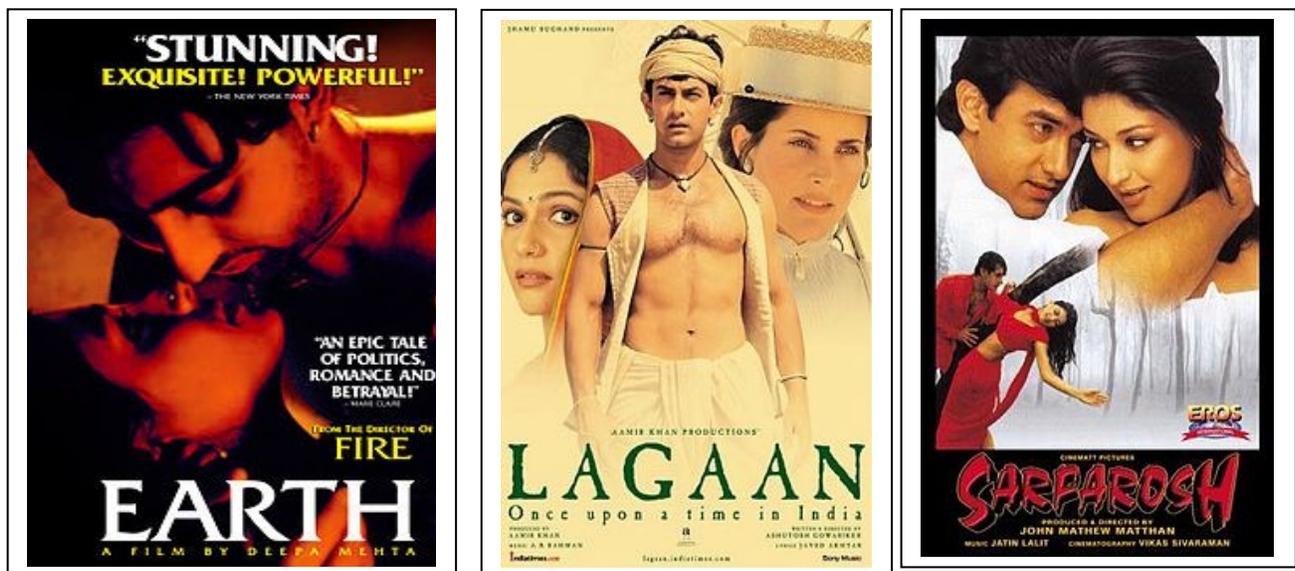


Figure 9.1 Posters of discussed movies: *Earth*, *Lagaan* and *Sarfarosh*

particularly the violence in Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis communities. Constructing discourses on nation, nationhood, danger and “other” and influenced by the Subaltern philosophies, Mehta sets her film in Lahore and shows the period before partition to be a place of peace and harmony among the different communities. But during partition people were the scapegoats of fabricated political tensions and Lahore lost its purity, thereby plunging into civil war.

The young Lenny, the chief protagonist in the film who witnesses the turmoil, resulting from partition during childhood discusses the series of events as an adult that permits Mehta, the director of the film, to bridge between history and present. A sharp debate occurs in Lenny's parents' house between a Sikh guest and a British bureaucrat about the British bringing back syphilis in India—"there is no syphilis in India until the British came." Therefore, *Earth* discusses the complex historical issues but current politically charged discourses too. Here are some dialogues that create discourses on nation, identity, danger and Other.

**(Shanta)** I have heard before the British gives us independence, they will dig a long canal, one side independent India and another side Pakistan. If they want two countries, that is what they will do, right, Madam? There was no syphilis in India until the British came.

**(Sikh)** The bastards, they break my country into two pieces and hand it to us and say, "Happy Independence."

Millions of Hindus will run from Pakistan and millions of Muslims from Hindustan.

**(Sikh)** I am not going anywhere (Amritsar), Lahore is my home.

**(Muslim)** Listen, one India is divided; all Muslims left on the wrong side of the division line will have their balls cut off.

**(Muslim)** We have lived together like brothers for centuries, we share the same language, food, and enemies and they are ready to use it against us Muslims.

**(Muslim)** Our Holy Quran lies in their [Sikhs] Golden Temple in Amritsar. The Sikhs faith came about to bring Hindus and Muslims close.

**(Muslim)** Some independence they give us soaked in our brother's blood.

*(Translated from Hindi by the author)*

The film explicitly constructs discourses on identity and a plural society by arguing that contemporary India can easily resolve its many divisions and dogmas that are rooted from the legacy of the partition. "Mehta's premise, critical of the British but also of the Indian elite, is tantamount to advocating better relations between Hindus and Muslims, and therefore between India and Pakistan" (Lichtner and Bandyopadhyaya, 2008:441). The film itself is a discourse on borders and identity by exploring how a collective identity formation can be constructed in the

post-separation era of India, Pakistan and now Bangladesh. Collective identity, nationalism, and boundaries are the forces behind the political and ethical inclusion and exclusion of people by which they can “learn to include some within, and exclude others from, their bounded communities” (Linklater, 1996:280). Political boundary and demarcation are an important elements in *Earth* and the film shows how togetherness the people of the bounded communities understand their separateness and how once togetherness is then broken due to the demarcation into their land. The film explains exactly what Peter Marten says that “a new geography maybe emerging: one that is about the reconstitution of identity and place...it may in fact be a geography where our prior texts concerning spatial association in social, cultural and political life have to be rewritten” (Ackleson, 2000:162). Thus the film highlights that nationalism and collective identity are the result of the process of “bordering, excluding and differentiating against the Other” and such boundaries “are a metaphor of containment that proclaim identity and difference” (Ibid.:165).

*Lagaan* received an Oscar nomination in the category of best foreign language film at the 2002 Academy Awards and it achieved an extraordinary box –office success at home and abroad. In July 2004, it was listed at number 14 among the “50 films to see before you die” in a special program on Britain’s TV Channel 4. The film is based on a cricket tournament in 1893 between the framers of Champaner of India and the army contingent of a local British cantonment. This fictional story is staged in a colonial backdrop of traditional Indian rural setting in central India, an area presently known as Madhya Pradesh (Central State). The villagers, who are mainly Krishnan (a Hindu god) devotees, are pious and hard-working people who depend on cattle and cultivation. The villagers of the locality have been facing droughts for years together. Captain Russell, the head of the cantonment, is a cruel dictator to the locality as well as to the

Rajas (kings) of princely states of the surrounding area. The British Captain always treats villagers as subjects and curses Rajas, ruling them with the iron fist. He exploits villagers and Rajas and humiliates them considerably. On one occasion during a luncheon he forces Raja Puran Singh to eat meat knowing that he is a vegetarian. When he increases taxes in Champner, the villagers cry out for leniency. Russell manipulates them into playing a cricket tournament with his team of British soldiers; if his team loses, the province will be exempt from paying taxes for three years. If the villagers lose, they will pay triple *Lagaan*. Bhuvan, the hero and young rebel against the British regime, accepts the bet and forms a team comprised of mostly Hindus as well as one Muslim, one Sikh and one Dalit (untouchable). He trained with his fellow teammates and got help of one sympathetic British lady Elizabeth who happens to be Russell's sister. She helped the villagers learn how to play cricket and in the end Russell and his team lost. Humiliated, the central British authority left the village and withdrew the local cantonment.

The film is a discussion of how the colonized triumphed over the colonizers and how the colonized can survive for several years without paying taxes to the *raja* and the British Empire. Thus small village is an allegory of India as a whole, and all the characters in the cricket team of Bhuvan belong to subaltern classes. Even Bhuvan, an apprentice cricket captain of the village team, selected one Muslim, one Sikh and one *Dalit* (his name is Kachra meaning literally garbage, rubbish, litter or waste) to be members on the team.

Villagers in the film are the representation of a power-cycle nexus and various degrees of power and domination are at work in Champner to build up a strong and strategic alliance “where socially differentiated individuals with different interests and motivations come together as a community to resist the current oppression of the white ‘other’” (Chakraborty, 2004:557). Here the norms of popular culture are vividly presented—the issue of identity. Villagers

identified by demarcating the line between the insiders and the outsiders. Bhuvan, the chief protagonist, captures the heart of the village and unites people under his leadership. The formation of a cricket team in the locality and villagers' defining unity by challenging the whites, "the other," creates a vision of an "imagined community" that is determined to change its fate by removing the oppression of the "white" ruler. *Lagaan* also speaks of many "others" such as the white outsiders (British soldiers), the other racial whites (the representatives of the British East India Company), the Raja (the feudal lord of the area), the white sympathizing lady of the villagers (sister of Russell), the marginalized group (the villagers), the other gender (women), faith based individuals (Muslim and Sikh), and the untouchable. It is a combination of complex relationships for an imagined society that thrives to protect its right, even the exemption of taxes for three years. The solidarity or togetherness is essential in forming an imagined community in spite of all creeds and racial problems and *Lagaan* highlights this truth.

In terms of their own survival and upholding the identity images of the villagers of Champaner as well as the whole state, cricket became an instrument for mobilizing vast populations and national sentiments. Although the team's technique to eliminate the British from the locality was nothing extraordinary, Bhuvan speaks of contentious issues regarding British rule, the feudal administration, colonialism, racism and brutality.

*Lagaan* has contributed to show how a popular sport/culture unites the whole community of the village. Bhuvan compares cricket with the game of *gilli-danda* which is a popular game played traditionally in India. Thus *Lagaan* bridges the popular culture and politics.

Both *Earth and Lagaan* use the past history of colonial rule to construct an image of identity that exhibits Indian chivalry and solidarity. "Lagaan is indeed progressive, the moral and political structure of this new and enlightened order is distinctively conservative...Earth, which

seems to be more left-wing, more critical of Indian politics” (Lichtner and Bandyopadhyaya, 2008: 446).

Similarly *Sarfarosh* (1999) reflects issues of identity, nation formation, partition legacy, India-Pak conflicting relations and examines Muslim identity in a post-partition India and South Asia. John Mathew Mattan’s *Sarfarosh*, was released at a time when India was agitated by Pakistan’s war on the Mountain of Kargil. Critics termed it as “a timely comment on Pak-sponsored terrorism India” (Das, 1999:4). The Indian government withdrew an entertainment tax for three months in order to boost the image of the Indian Army and Air Force operations that have literally foiled the Pak (ISI)-sponsored infiltrations in the Mountain of Kargil (*The Hindustan Times*, June, 1999).

*Sarfarosh* tells a story of conflicting ideologies of identity, and how Pakistani intelligence (ISI) recruits Muslim people to create instability within the territory of India. The film discusses how, on one occasion, a Pakistani top military official orders the carrying out of a proxy-war in India. The film shows how Muslims fleeing India during the partition were forced to find a place to live, while refused to identify as members of the Pakistani nation. In the film, those who left India for Pakistan 50 years following independence are still regarded as refugees (*muhajir*). Even those Muslims who left Pakistan for India are misunderstood particularly for their faith and belief. They are either judge by Indian Hindus them as being Pakistani agents or are treated as second class citizens within their ancestral homeland. Because police officer Inspector, Salim (Mukesh Rishi) is a Muslim, the police department suspects that he is siding with Muslim criminals, and so Salim is scrutinized and surveilled by his co-workers. His Muslimness is a fundamental question and concern in the story. Inspector Salim loses his courage and complains to the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ajay Singh Rathod (Aamir Khan), a middle class

Hindu asking to have his name removed from the investigation. Salim comments harshly: “It is a sin to be a poor in this country (India) and to be a poor individual like me is a also great sin.”

Thus Salim believes he is being treated unfairly and discriminated.

When Salim hands over the case to the ACP Rathod, he narrates to Salim the brutality and cruelty he and his family underwent, these experiences led him to be a police officer. Here, Rathod “articulates predicament as being not discrimination—a systematic problem—but rather about belonging—an existential problem” (Fazila-Yacoobali, 2002:185).

The following are dialogues between Rathod and Salim (translated from Hindi by the author):

**Rathod:** The reason behind telling you all this is not that I am concerned with my home, not at all—but I am concerned with my country (*yeh meray mulk ka muamela hai*).

**Salim:** What, these are not related to my country too?

**Rathod:** Maybe not. That’s the reason you’re running away from your duties. I consider my country as my home and I don’t need any Salim to save my country.

**Salim:** Go and save your country and save your own home. What necessity of me is there then?

**Rathod:** No, I really need Salim. I need not only one Salim but ten Salims to save this home (country).

**Salim:** Not only ten, you will find ten thousand if you can trust them. Don’t ever try to say to anybody that this country is not his home (or does not belong to him).

**Rathod:** I will never say it. I will never.

*(translated from Hindi by the author)*

The conversation between these two police officers is very symbolic in the film. Both share a love for the homeland, and are determined to save the country from any wrongdoing by the perpetrators. But both individuals are viewed by society as being different in identity and faith. That’s why Rathod repeatedly tries to prove that he (Salim) genuinely loves this country and his root is India. Rathod manipulates Salim’s Muslim identity, and subsequently reminds him that India is not his country by replying “maybe not.” All Muslims in India face allegations

from various quarters of society and it is the partition that had implanted an imagined identity of the Muslims in the minds of hundreds and thousands of Hindus in India.

The film outlines the infiltration of arms and ammunition from Pakistan by the direction of the ISI into the Indian border, especially the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, India. Bala Thakur, a criminal and gun-seller, delivers the arms and ammunitions to Veeran, a forest tribal leader who wants to establish his rule and hegemony in the region. He and his gang looted and massacred a wedding bus at Chandrapur to destabilize the country, and the political elites right away assigned the investigation to the Mumbai Police Crime Branch. ACP Rathod searches for links between the underground Mafia sects (and other hostile organizations), the gun-business, local criminal gangs and Chandrapur massacre.

Rathod meets with his girlfriend, Seema (Sonali Bendre) at a concert given by a renowned Pakistani vocalist Gulfam Hassan (Naseeruddin Shah). Gulfam was brought up as an Indian and migrated to Pakistan after the partition. He is confused about his identity because he is not considered to be a Pakistani in Pakistan, and, instead, is given the nickname *muhajir* (meaning refugee). After fifty years of partition he is not a Pakistani at all. Gulfam laments as he remembers his past ancestral aristocracy as a feudal lord. Seema and Rathod are really impressed by the singer's enchanting quality of singing. Thus Rathod became a loyal fan of Gulfam and they established a good relationship. Finally, the investigative team grabbed the criminal gangs and revealed that Gulfam to be the mastermind behind the intrusion of arms and ammunition into India at the request of the ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence). He later confesses to committing this heinous crime in order to please the Pakistani authority and to integrate more easily into mainstream society in Pakistan. The complexity of the film and dramatic tensions start when a renowned artist who should be polite, gentle and compassionate instead is affiliated

with brutality, killing and unnecessary violence. The following conversation between the ACP Rathod and Gulfam reveal many issues of identity, belonging and legacy:

**Gulfam:** In this place you are standing and ruling us today, this is the place where my ancestors ruled. This is the place (*haveli/home*) where I grew up learning music. Our ancestors ruled here and all of a sudden we were forced to leave our home like a herd of goats and overnight we became displaced (homeless), this is of course sin. To strip away all possessions from someone is a sin, and to make one an orphan is also a sin. Whatever done to us fifty years ago was also a sin.

**Rathod:** Yes, yes...that was a sin. But whatever happened to you (whatever you went through) was because of the partition of the country. And you were not the only one who faced this disaster as millions of people were killed, became homeless and were turned into orphan, and this happened to the population across borders.

...Partition was not good news for us. It is a painful, tragic chapter and a nightmare. But whenever we maneuver to rise up to forget this sorrow, you and your comrades create new chaos, and refresh old wounds.

**Gulfam:** We will continue to do so and our wounds are so deep and profound that they are not going very easily...each and every time when we send our weapons only in retaliation for the wounds and pain that you have inflicted on us and our community/nation.

**Rathod:** What the hell are you talking about Gulfam Hassan!!! What are you talking about? What is your community/nation? If you specify Muslims then there are a lot more? More Muslims are living in Hindustan [India] than in Pakistan.

The bullets you're throwing are not asking anybody about the religion before he/she is killed. Even fellow Muslims are being killed by those bullets and they are not helping your community out by any means, Gulfam.

*(translated from Hindi by the author).*

The aforesaid discussion in the film is testimony to how partition has divided people of the same ancestral background regarding issues of identity. Coming from an aristocratic family Gulfam has struggled to maintain his identity. These complexities and mental agonies compelled him to become an agent of the ISI to initiate chaos and disorder and in doing so his identity in Pakistan can be maintained. One question may come out of it: why does Gulfam participate in a proxy war (i.e., between Pakistan and India) and between two-nations ( i.e., Hindus and Muslims).

**Gulfam:** The Muslims went to Pakistan expecting it to be their own country as hundreds and thousands Muslims live there. They are calling us *muhajir* (refugee) instead of giving us a seat beside them. "Pachas saal guzar gaiye magar aaj bhi hum muhajir heyen, Pakistani nahin" [I have used here one line from the Hindi version of Gulfam's part of the dialogue to show how pathetic

and pitiful it is that after fifty years of independence they are not Pakistani as even today he is recognized as a *muhajirs*, not Pakistani.]

**Gulfam:** Here the role of the politicians seems to be pimps who constructed a (demarcation) line on this earth and the ignorants (common illiterate people) of both sides were given “azadi”/freedom to decide which ass (using local slang) will have control over the throne. “We the vulnerable are left nowhere.”

*(translated from Hindi by the author).*

*Safaroosh* depicts a detailed picture of Gulfam’s mental agonies who, like hundred and thousands of Indian Muslim migrating to Pakistan, is not accepted by mainstream society. He and millions of others in that category are discriminated against gentle, polite and renowned singer Gulfam is now perceived as being a danger and threat to society.

Two other Muslim characters in the film, Sultan and Haji, are members of an underground crime and terrorist network that trade AK-47s supplied by the ISI. Sultan was involved in criminal activities and escaped himself from a police chase while he leaving India. He was shot dead by an ISI agent in Rajasthan for fleeing the country and not finishing his tasks given by the ISI. Haji’s character in the film is of a typical Muslim. Haji, a businessman wearing a safari-suit (which is typically worn in South Asia) prays at the same mosque as Police Inspector Salim does. He tries to bribe Police Inspector Salim in the following conversation:

**Haji:** It is a matter of sadness that a Muslim brother supports the unbelievers against us.

**Salim:** Do you even understand the very meaning of the word, Muslim?

**Haji:** Yes, the people who follow Islam.

**Salim:** No, it is not that. Muslim/*Musalman* means pure and firm faith. It means those whose faith remains absolute in all circumstances and whose faith is as strong as mighty rock and pure as the morning dew. Tell me, is your faith like this? And you talk of being a Muslim?

**Haji:**... Look Salim Mian!..our motto is to live and let the people live. We tried to explain the same thing to ACP Rathod. We were ready to give him 5 lakh rupees.

*(translated from Hindi by the author).*

The aforesaid dialogues between *Salim and Rathod* and *Salim and Haji* as well as between *Rathod and Gulfam* and *Gulfam and Salim* highlight some complex issues of transnationalism, homeland, national identity, imagined community, terrorism for the sake of community and the

legacy of revenge and vengeance. Haji, a sympathizer of the Muslim community, favours smuggling arms and weapons to create chaos in India and destabilize the whole country. Singer Gulfam, an ISI agent, represents homelessness in both India (his homeland) and Pakistan (his adopted country). As Gulfam uttered: “We will continue to do so (terror acts) and our wounds are so deep and profound that they are not going very easily.”

The characters in film, especially ACP Rathod, Police Inspector Salim, singer Gulfam, businessman Haji and gang member Sultan use the words *quam* (community/ethnic group), *mulk* (country) and *ghar* (home) repeatedly and these words have specific connotations. “*Qaum* can be translated as nation, a people, a race, tribe or sect, and it can be used for a non-territorial identity, such as in this case, the Muslim *quam*” (Fazila-Yacoobali, 2002:188). Haji does not recognize the land of India as his *mulk* (country) but constantly identifies himself as *qaum* (community). He often says the word *qaum* (i.e. Muslim *community*) while talking to Salim in the mosque, and Salim rejects the identity of the Muslim community and utters boldly in Hindi: *mai tumhare tarha nahin hoon* (I am not like you guys). Salim favours to tell country (India) as a whole, not the community (in a narrow sense) and believes in a pluralistic society. On the contrary, Haji is determined and seems happy to be identified as a member of the Muslim community. His belief in *mulk* is very fragile and works against the country by smuggling arms and ammunition supplied by the ISI. Salim, an honest police officer, prefers his own ethics and is guided by the spirit of nationalism and a greater unity of different communities, tribes and religious factions.

The film shows that *quam* and *mulk* are different in meaning and connotation; *mulk* is a sovereign and territorial entity and *quam* is a non-territorial identity. ACP Rathod and Inspector Salim emphasize a modern India of different sub-nations and communities and advocate for a modern and secular India. On the flip side Gulfam, Haji and Sultan struggle against Indian

modernity and secular trends by creating an atmosphere of confusion in the democratic land. The partition has divided family and kinship; Sultan, Haji, Gulfam and others' homes are in India and Pakistan. Their identity is divided, as are notions of home and hearth because their relatives are in Pakistan so they are treated unfairly in India. The event at Ayodhya mosque in 1992 is the best example where Hindus killed hundreds and thousands of Muslims and displaced them from their home. But to be a Muslim is a curse to the Indians and are always a source of suspicion and marked as Pakistani and Pakistani-sympathizers. As Fazila-Yacoobali (2002:197) rightly puts, “*Sarfarosh* makes a lesson of distinguishing Pakistan as not a ‘homeland’ for all Muslims. Countering chants like *Jao Pakistan ya Kabarasthan* (Go to Pakistan or to your grave) that accompanied, say, the destruction of the *Babri Masjid* in 1992, the film is emphatic that there is no Pakistan for Muslims of India to go to.” The gruesome example of suspicion and doubt always seeps into the imagination of Indian society when Inspector Salim is relieved of his responsibilities. He simply contends:

*Es Muluk me garib hona ek gunah hai aur garib mujh jaisa aur bhi bara gunah hai* (It is a great sin to be poor and to be a poor person like me is the greatest sin).

Salim chose to be a police officer in the city for his and his family's well-being and security (the film didn't mention anything about his family), but is discriminated against and scrutinized by senior officers at the department. He is sincere and devoted to his duties in all aspects and chases criminals who happen to be fellow Muslims. Thus, he prefers to be a true Indian rather than a Muslim. It seems that his nationalistic outlooks are not properly valued by the department, and the Gandhian philosophy of *Ahimsa* (as an Indian values...do not harm or kindness towards all) is ignored in the case of Salim who represents the Muslim community.

#### 9.4 Universalism Versus “Clash of Civilization” in Indian Cinema: an Epic Tale of Identity

These films support India’s integrity and nationalistic outlook but hundreds of other Indian movies do not consider the Gandhian philosophy and ethics, and, on the contrary, depict violence, aggression and chaos. The narratives of Indian cinema, mostly in the discussed films, focus on the notion of duty and obligation, a universal philosophy that Gandhi believed. But the post-9/11 media in the United States reiterates that violence and terrorism in the Western world is the result of cultural differences and religious faiths. This is not a clash of civilizations, instead it is a common fact that humans are essentially violent and aggressive. Gandhi, as Juluri mentions, rejected the notion “that violence was caused by cultural differences, or “clash of civilizations,” and also questioned the belief that nature or human nature is innately violent” (Juluri, 2008:120). Gandhi’s faith lies in the absence of violence, and an individual’s thoughts, words and actions must be guided under peaceful norms, but a large number of Indian movies do not reflect this trend. The narratives in the discussed films express unity by ignoring all creeds, faiths and religious sentiments under the guise of one nation and one identity (i.e. the Indian or the *Bharatis*). The words like nation, identity, *quam* (nation) and *muluk* (country), work as an identity and a unified platform of different religions acknowledging that the human beliefs are so influential which can easily transform a nation to a better society. The People of Lahore in *Earth* know that they will be divided and new flags of two different countries will be hoisted, although Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Persians are living harmoniously and are akin to each other. Even when riots erupted the fellow Muslims guarded the Sikh families in fear of any attack by other faiths. *Lagaan* too paints a picture of a unified community by showing people of different faiths as members of the Cricket team. *Sarfarosh* reflects how identity is important for a community to pass on to his/her next progenies.

These three movies value a united identity and a nationalistic attitude which refutes the thesis of “clash of civilization” by demonstrating that religious differences between Hindus and Muslims are not the problem, instead greed for money, power and rule create conflict and antagonisms. These films construct an image of identity, togetherness and plural society emphasizing that Hindus and Muslims are Indians but some legacies and emotional memories despite works when discrimination and exclusion are practiced.

### **9.5 The Exotic, the Marginalized, the Demonized: the Muslim Other and Identity**

As a nation India has been thriving to define its identity in the post-colonial era as a secular, multiethnic, diverse, pluralistic society, despite the following major events: the demolition of the Babri Mosque and killing of the Muslim People in Gujarat in 1992 and the killing of the members of the Sikh minority, especially in New Delhi, after the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. However, some critics like Khilnani intend to boast about India’s distinct quality and particular characterization, including the strength “to transform invasion into accommodation, rupture into continuity, division into diversity” (Khilnani, 1997:xvi). During the early decades of independence, the Congress government had tried to maintain unity in diversity and a sense of Indianness among its different sub-nations and races but ideals of togetherness were collapsed by various conflicts and chaos. “While these conflicts have taken multiple forms ranging from the ethnic and the linguistic to the caste-based, particularly significant among these have been the frequent eruptions of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims” (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:132). According to a report released by the National Integration Council (2005), between 2000 and 2005 India experienced an annual average of 800 communal incidents of various types ranging from bullying, local clash to full-scale riots such as the one in Gujarat in 2000 that resulted in the death, destruction and

widespread displacement of hundreds and thousands of Muslims under the shadow of ethnic cleansing (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:132).

Such coercive actions against ethnicity have reasonably undermined India's cautiously constructed concept of identity, pluralism and secularism that were founded in the postcolonial state under the leadership of Nehru, the former prime minister of India. Despite flourishing into a modern India, since the 1990s radical Hinduism or Hindutva has divided the nation on some specific issues and its influence manifests in a number of social and political institutions (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:132). The Hindi film industry which has resisted separatism over the past fifty years, and it has played a significant role overcoming all contradictions and distortions to become a major catalyst in national consolidation and building and sustaining unity in diversity. Bollywood is often considered to be the social microcosm of India where Hindus, Muslims and Christians work in an industry that produces 150 to 200 films per year (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008). In the Bollywood industry "not only Muslims comparatively well-represented within its ranks and in the form of writers, lyricists, composers, and directors, but that "some of the most popular film stars of Hindi cinema, both male and female, have been Muslim" (Ibid.:133; Ganti, 2004:23).

It is sometimes said that Muslims dominate Hindi films in various aspects and the industry is one of few institutions in India that does not marginalize Muslims. They even enjoy some success and popularity (Ganti, 2004:24). In some commercial Hindi movies Muslims are portrayed as 'the Other' and the cinematic Othering of Muslims "has occurred through a variety of strategies of representation ranging from exoticization and marginalization to demonization, that are widely recognized by anthropologists as critical to the production and maintenance of social and cultural difference" (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:134). For the last fifty years Hindi

cinema has portrayed the Muslim community as exotic, marginalized and demonized because it represents ultra-nationalistic attitudes, showing the Mughal rulers as invaders before the British came to the power. Even the pre and post-independence periods (1940s to 1960s) of Hindi cinema portrayed Muslims as the exotic other, such as *Pukar* (1939), *Tansen* (1944), *Humayun* (1945), *Shahjehan* (1946), *Baiju Bawara* (1952), *Anarkali* (1953), *Mirza Ghalib* (1954), *Jahan Ara* (1964), *Noorjehan* (1967), and *Mughal-e- Azam* (1960). The stories in these films are mostly related to the Mughal Empire, along with its sweet hearts and other court and palace personalities. The films depict the lavish life, mannerisms and etiquette of the Muslim Mughal court aristocracy, representing “Muslims only as members of the ruling class who generally spoke, dressed, and behaved differently from the norm, they rendered them a group distinct and separate from the mainstream” (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:136).

A thematic shift had occurred in Hindi cinema during the 1970s and 1980s when casting of Muslim characters in film was limited; thus a trend of marginalization emerged in relation to the Muslim community. The films represent Muslim characters in certain stereotypic occupations such as tailor, *qawali* singer, uncle, quack doctors (practitioners of traditional herbal medicine), family friend, temple-men, counselor and labourer. They wear certain kinds of outfits which are prominent, recognizable and identifiable. For example, Pran in *Zanjeer* (1973) is a typical Muslim with henna-dyed hair and wearing a *Salwar Kameez* (a dress like pajama and girl’s top) ; Rishi Kapoor in *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) is a *qawali* singer and Amitabh Bachan in *Coolie* (1983) wears number “786” on his shirt, a number that is very precious and sacred to the Muslim community [this numerological number is the combination of a few Arabic words used to admire the Creator (Allah)].

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when the campaign of BJP against Muslims and favouring Hindutva shook the entire country, Indian cinema had shown some stereotypical Muslim characters and ignored their social status and ethos; even the secular image of India had disappeared in the story line. Kazmi rightly says that “the characterization of Muslims is delineated in terms of abstractions. They emerge as stereotypes represented by well-defined signs of speech, appearance, dress, social and religious practice... ignored are the real life [of] men and women with distinct class positions, social backgrounds and individual dispositions” (Kazmi, 1994: 230-40). Hence Indian cinema has systematically shifted its secular ideology in support of the Hindutva creed to please the BJP and its allies as well as illiterate Hindus who are the prime spectators of Indian cinema. The systematic exclusion or othering of Muslims continued through a process of marginalization and their voices and long legacies of suppression and hatred are not part of the popular narratives.

Indian movies of the 1990s and 2000s have emerged as nationalistic in nature, what Salam (2005) mentions “in the shadow of saffron” [a party colour of the BJP, a fundamentalist Indian opposition party in the parliament]. In most of the box-office hit movies, Muslim characters appear as the antagonists such as by engaging in conspiracies with outsiders especially with Pakistan; hatching plots of terrorism on Indian soil; running mafia rings or underground don in the city or working with a hit man, demolishing some slums and creating chaos in the city. For example, the following movies portray Muslims in a negative way: as criminals in *Farz* (2001) and *Angaar* (1992), corrupt and immoral power-hungry politicians in *Bas Itna sa Khawab hai* (2001), misguided and corrupt police personnel in *Shool* (1999), villains in *Love Ke Liye Kuch bhi Karega* (2001), and brutal Pakistani attackers in *Border* (1997) and *LoC Kargil* (2003). These films resonate with Hindutva through masculine and anti-Pakistani sentiments.

Some of the above-mentioned movies including *Mission Kashmir* (2000) didn't show the reasons behind orchestrating violence, terrorism, aggression and establishing militancy in the region and nor did they focus on the political complexities and experiences of the Kashmiri people on both sides. "Instead, their narratives tend to identify terrorism almost exclusively as the result of the evil machinations of India's neighbour and archival Pakistan, carried out by infiltrators or misguided local [Muslim] recruits" (Chadha and Kavoori, 2008:142). The word Pakistan in the film characterizes a villain, transgressor and great enemy of India and thus Muslims in India are either of Pakistani agents, supporters or recruited thugs. *Sarfarosh*, *Mission Kashmir* and *Ma Tujeh Salaam* (2002) are films where Muslim characters are determined to show their loyalty to India; even good and honest Muslim al-Baksh dies as a martyr in *Ma Tujeh Salaam*. It is not only are Muslim characters that are suppressed in Indian movies. Other protagonists of Christian and Sikh faiths are also being portrayed in a typical manner. Christian characters often appear as drunken, addicted and sick, and names like Robert and Michael are generally given to male characters whereas dancers, bad girls and prostitutes are given the names Mona and Lilly. Sikh characters are also presented as illogical and short-sighted whereas Parsis are absent-minded buffoons, "while Muslims have been variously exoticized, marginalized, and demonized within the master narrative of commercial Hindi films" (Ibid.:143).

## **9.6 Indian Films, Geopolitical Text and Public Opinion**

Of late, human geographers and International Relations scholars have shown an immense interest in popular culture, especially film and its impact on the analysis of war, warfare strategies, statecrafts, diplomacy, people's common ideology and global political environment. I have already discussed above about the influence of the American cinema as well as its relation with the US administration and the military establishment. Now IR scholars and political

geographers have started to “explore how filmic contexts might be used to illuminate foundational theories in IR such as realism, idealism and social and constructivism” (Dodds, 2008a:1622).

*Sarfarosh*, which was released after the Kargil War (1998), became a box-office hit and helped shape public discourses on the country’s historically difficult relationship with Pakistan and reflections of geopolitical complexity with its regional partners. It has therefore been a key political issue in the domain of identity and nationhood. *Lagaan* and *Earth* explore a number of themes by demonstrating how Britain divided the nations and demarcated the border and sustaining social and geopolitical meanings. But it cannot be denied that a portion of Hindus and Muslims also wanted to divide themselves for a better future for their upcoming generation. How has the partition sown a plant of hatred and enmity in the hearts of hundreds and millions of Muslim and Hindus across both borders? How has *Sarfarosh* produced the notion in the popular realm that Hindus are terrorized and in real danger whereas Muslims are dangerous villain liaising with the Pakistani ISI and agency that creates insecurity, disorder and vulnerability to terror attacks at any time?

The emergence of terrorism in India and its surrounding countries is not a new phenomenon; before 9/11 took place it remained a recurrent national problem. But none can deny the fact that following attack on the Twin Towers an immediate interest in terrorism has grown in the cultural, political and academic fields as Jackson rightly notes, “it is now one of the fastest expanding areas of research in the western academic world” (Jackson, 2007:225). Cox (1981) states that many studies on terrorism are state centric and policy oriented, and focus on defeating terrorist activities. It is now time to “explore further the contours of this particular academic field, but also to articulate new intellectual agendas associated with epistemological

and political agendas” (Dodds, 2008:229). Although in its infancy, critical terrorism studies (CTS) are timely; they use cultural issues to identify the root causes of terrorism, and visual culture (especially films and documentaries) can interpret acts of terrorism, strategies, places and locations (Dodds, 2008:229).

Bollywood has released numerous movies on terrorism and the following are the top ten Indian movies dealing with terrorism in recent years: *Sarfarosh*, *Roja*, *Bombay*, *Dil se*, *Maachis*, *Fiza*, *Mission Kashmir*, *The Hero*, *A Wednesday*, *Black Friday* (*The shocking truth behind the '93 Bombay Blasts*). Terrorist acts in Kashmir in the late 1980s, Rajiv Gandhi's (the former Prime Minister of India) assassination in 1991, the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, serial blasts in Mumbai in 1993, the Kargil War in 1998, the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the Mumbai Attack in 2009 has prompted Indian film makers to create a new genre of film on terrorism and violence. Most of the major cities in India have experienced terror attacks, riots and/or violence. Terrorism has become a focal point of people's discussion and debate, and Indian film makers exploit terrorism to draw people's attention to identity crisis issues and for commercial purposes.

In the Bollywood top 10 terrorism movies, terrorist characters are known by community members. Manisha Koirala, a beautiful local girl in *Dil Se*, and Tulip Joshi in *Dhokka* played the role of a suicide bomber similar to the notorious terror attacks in other parts of the world, such as on the Palestine/Israel border, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Alexandria, Somalia and Chechnya. *Maachis* (1996) narrates the face of terrorism in Punjab in the 1980s when people fought for an independent Khalistan for the Sikh people, *Black Friday* graphically depicts the 1993 serial bomb-blasts in Mumbai and similarly *Roja*, *Mission Kashmir* and *Fana* explain the politically charged reality of the Kashmir issue.

Terrorism/or the representation of danger and fear emerged in Hindi films in Subash Ghai's *Karma* (1986), which focused on the trend of terror acts in and around Kashmir. Then came Santosh Sivan's Tamil movie *The Terrorist* (1999) that shows how a 19-year old women was sent to assassinate a leader in South Asia Through a suicide bombing. *Zameen* (2003) is based on the hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight 814 by terrorists and *Tango Charlie* (2005) is based on the following three different terrorist events where Indian soldiers and paramilitary fight to bring back order and peace: a) Northeastern part of India where Assamese guerillas fight are fighting to bring order and peace; b) the state of Bengal and Andra Pradesh to counter the Naxalites rebels; and c) the state of Kashmir where the Kargil War between India and Pakistan took place. *Roja* portrays a common view on the Kashmir crisis which is how the Kashmiri militants engage in terror activities and fight against Indian soldiers for the liberty of their soil. *Bombay* is a love story between a Hindu youth and a Muslim girl caught in a ferocious communal riot and bloodbath, and later emerges united and safe. *Dil Se* is a wonderful story of love and hatred. A girl called Meghna working as a brainwashed terrorist falls in love with a reporter who goes to a Northern territory of India to cover the rebel activities. Meghna is caught between two fires—her human side (love) and her deadly mission (terrorism). *Maachis* takes a different look at emotions, insecurity, joy and grief and especially the duality of being compassionate, caring and loving versus being brutal, cruel and revengeful.

*Fiza* is a tragic story of a girl in search of her brother who disappeared during the communal riots of 1992-93 in India. *Mission Kashmir* deals with terrible stories of Kashmir where brutality, killing and revenge take place vis a vis episodes of love and hope emerging in the minds of the protagonists. *The Hero: Love story of a Spy* is a unique chronicle of an army intelligence officer, Arun Kumar, who is deployed by the Indian Secret Service Agency (RAW)

across the Kashmir border to gather information about infiltration and terrorist activities in Pakistan. He meets a young lady in the village and recruits one of his spy networks whom he sent to work as a maidservant in the house of a Pakistani Colonel. Later, when her identity is revealed, the girl named Reshma escapes to Canada. Arun goes to Canada and foils the Pakistani terrorists' plans at getting a nuclear bomb from Canada [but it is an error of the director that Canada is not branded as a nuclear power country in the world and it does have any nuclear bomb to sell to any country]. *A Wednesday* shows how a common person attempts to kill the four incarcerated terrorists who threaten the Police Commissioner with the possibility of setting off six bombs that are situated in different areas of Mumbai.

Indian movies, especially Bollywood and Tamil, disseminate the ideas and representations of terrorism through visual media covering millions of Indians from poor labourers and farmers to the middle class, academics, researchers, youth, political workers and elites and, above all the government bureaucrats of all ministries including foreign and external affairs. IR scholars have documented how films “can be used to consider not only how certain ‘myths’ about the international system are perpetuated on the widescreen, but also in this case to think about how certain individuals and regions are considered to be ‘terrorist’ in name and substance (Dodds, 2008:230-1). The words of Lacy (2003: 614) are worthy in this regard:

The Cinema becomes a space where ‘common sense’ ideas about global politics and history are reproduced and where stories about what is acceptable behaviour from states and individuals are naturalized and legitimated. It is a space where myth about history and the origins of the states are told to a populist audience, one can think of contemporary war films—such as *U571* and *We Were Soldiers*—that rewrite history into one where historical and normal ambiguity is replaced with certainty.

Films provide spectators with clues about terrorism, and make people familiar with its real picture. *Sarfarosh* is a good example of a contemporary movie on terrorism, danger, fear and

identity crisis. It illustrates the distinct characters of the terrorists, their relations with underground terror networks and desires to create instability. They also like to attract media attention to their cause and organization. For example, *The Hero: Love story of a Spy* reveals the real landscape of the atrocities made by terrorists and how they manage to link with other terrorist networks to harm people.

For many years terrorism has been a much discussed issue in India. Violence, riot, killing, arson, assassination and slaughter are recurring problems in India. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)-2, over the period of 1998 to 2004, India has experienced 784 terrorist incidents causing 3,008 deaths: namely, 378 bombings, 298 armed assaults, 52 assassinations, 35 arson and 20 hostage situations. “The Naxalite movement, said to be active in 125 districts in 12 states of India, with an estimated armed cadres of about 18,000, is not a law and order problem to be dealt with by the failed strategy of strong police action by state governments” (Borooah, 2009:93) . Explaining the socio-political condition of the north-east zone of India, Hussain (2004:1) states that “India’s northeast is one of the South Asia’s hottest trouble spots, not simply because the region has as many as 30 armed insurgent organizations operating and fighting the Indian state, but because trans-border linkages that these groups have, and strategic alliances among them, have acted as force multipliers and have made the conflict dynamics all the more intricate.”

Violence is an integral part of the gangster, action-thriller, mafia-centered and Hindu-Muslim conflict movies. However, “neither Indian cinema, nor the real world it is situated in, are free of violence, either in the form of direct aggression, or in more direct, structural forms” (Juluri, 2008: 117). The question arises: does the violence in contemporary Indian cinema reflect the societal disharmony or communalism or discrimination between the Haves and Have-nots?

Do film makers in India support Gandhi's message of non-violence? These questions if asked to any Indian, they will probably reply, No.

Different genres of regional and domestic politics are reflected in Indian films. For instance, colonial abuse, post-colonial deprivation, identity crisis between communities and communal disharmony are the subjects of Indian cinema and audiences take narratives and discourses on danger and fear to heart. The point I am making is that most Indian movies on terrorism touch upon the reality of danger and fear and provide the audience a detailed account of techniques of their terror related activities.

Despite a continued hostility, bullying, and threatening between the two rival nuclear powers, Pakistan is enormously is heavily influenced by Bollywood, as shown by the posters and billboards on displaying advertisements and pictures of heroes and heroines of Indian movies (Figure 9.2). In explaining the influence of film and media in the region, Salma Malik, Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, suggests that media plays an important role. Traditional print and electronic media play up to both sides of the conflict. However, the media by and large has been bipartisan. Entertainment, such as popular cinema, drama and television production influences the public through the power of narrative. South Asian audiences adore popular cinema and television in general and the countries' improving and worsening relations are likewise reflected through the cinema lens. However, cinema in Pakistan took a drastic plunge after the 1980s when Bollywood flourished transnationally. For instance, *Main Hoon Na* highlights the mending of relations between the two neighbours; stereotypes in *Ghaddar* et al, shows Pakistanis depicted in very traditional garbs and projecting negativity; and even Yash Chopra's *Veer Zara* was poorly made.

Pakistani director Sabiha Sumar's *Khamosh Pani* depicts many issues that relate to partition and find resonance in the contemporary scenario.

Dodds (2008:232) identifies four themes that explore popular representations of terrorism in Hollywood movies and these could be used to discuss popular representations in Indian films. First, “the nature and motivations of terrorists need to be considered because there are a number of examples we could point out to where film makers have considered how people and groups are empowered to commit acts of terrorist violence.” Second, “the object of attack is important to contemplate,” because some Indian movies, as mentioned earlier, exhibit scenes of death and destruction brought by attacks that killed hundreds of people. *Black Friday* is the best example showing killings in New Delhi in the early 1990s. Third, “the use of geographical location to locate and even explain why terrorism happens is significant.” Fourth, states should respond quickly to acts of terrorism to quell threats showing further violence.

Given the above, these are discussed in further detail below:

The first focus is to fantasize how terrorists organize themselves and how they manage money and other logistics to attack civilians as well as important government and public places and sites. Since the 1980s the central government of India has been facing strong pressure from its different states such as Punjab. The province has been struggling to create an independent country called Khalistan and the rise of the Sikh insurgency was a great challenge for the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the mid-1980s. The movie, *Maachis*, depicts a story of a neighbourhood youth that becomes a ferocious terrorist with a deadly vengeance. The movie looks back at Punjab and is a film about an ordinary individual that turns into an unpredictable human to appease his wrath. *Sarfarosh* is also an epic tale of terrorists who are determined to



It is unprecedented to watch posters and billboards on display in Pakistan projecting the pictures of heroes and heroines of Indian movies. Even, the Islamic way of Pakistani life does not believe in watching movies although it has become a popular culture of the country. Source: FP (March 15, 2010 & Bharatwaves.com: 10 Feb. 2008)

**Figure 9.2 Posters and billboards on display in Pakistan projecting the pictures of heroes and heroines of Indian movies**

harm Indians creating a reign of terror throughout the country and how Pakistani intelligence works with them to achieve their evil plan.

The second focus is to emphasize on the object of attack within the terror related movie. All terror targets in the discussed movies are important places. In *Mission Kashmir* they target the holy shrines in order to create chaos in the crowded-areas of devotees. In *Dil Se*, Meghna the main female protagonist and a member of a terrorist group goes to Delhi to assassinate the prime minister on the republic day. Her boyfriend, Amar, tries to stop her but eventually Amar is arrested and later he escapes. Again Amar meets with Meghna and pleads her to stop the terror activities. Amar tries to hug Meghna but because she is carrying a bomb in her vest, she yells in

fear of the bomb's explosion. Amar whispers, "If you don't come with me then take me with you." The bomb then explodes killing both of them.

The third focus is to consider the location of events (i.e. and the geographical source of action). Delhi was a threat in *Dil Se* and the terrorists selected the place due its metropolitan character. In *Sarfarosh*, the film explores how the source of terrorism is Pakistan and how it recruits terrorists from India. The film shows that, being once a united country, India is now divided and Pakistan takes revenge by employing terror attacks. In the Kashmir insurgency, India alleges that Pakistan has an upper hand in fueling the insurgency. In *Dil Se*, *Mission Kashmir* and *Sarfarosh*, Pakistan sponsors terrorism in India and creates a terror syndicate via the Middle East to work on India.

The fourth focus is to examine how the movies portray terror activities particularly whether they support or discourage them. In *Maachis*, an innocent Punjabi (Sikh) youth joins ranks with a network of terrorists as a means to retaliate against the injustices and discriminations done to him by a corrupt regime. The plot is set to assassinate Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and the youth protagonist, like other terrorists, is sometime kind and cruel in his determination. He had experienced trauma over the atrocities done in Punjab and Delhi that left thousands of innocent Sikhs dead and thousands of families displaced. He meets the great boss of militants who just crossed the border assisting the militants to take more action. In the movie, a campaign is launched restoring peace and stability in Punjab.

Now the question may arise how the Pakistanis react when they watch the dialogues concerning regional hegemony of India and as well the geopolitical landscape of their identity and national pride in movies, and even when they find that India's film industry has put less effort to strengthen the relationship between two countries for decades. The Pakistanis basically

are deprived of the rule of law and good governance and troublesome Pakistan has failed to secure its democracy and peace over the years, and of late, the country is divided between religious and secular sentiments. The entertainment mechanisms in the country did not flourish in comparison with the Bollywood. Although most of the Pakistanis do not attest the narratives Bollywood movies are using and they are not convinced to India's claims.

The theatres of Pakistan turn crowded when Indian movies get released and they mostly watch the movies as part of their entertainment (Figure 9.2). India's films are the testimonies of their liberal and democratic attitudes. "India's national identity began to strengthen in the 1960s, jingoistic films began to emerge" (*The New York Times*, August 16, 2012). Indian movies are widely seen in Pakistan and the demands of local films are going down. The Pakistan film industry has been urging the government to make a 90 per cent cut in the screen of Indian movies to rescue the sunken domestic film industry (BHNN, 2012).

Considering the above, it may be said that Indian cinema has captured the genres of terrorism and created an image of danger and fear in the minds of millions of people. Terrorism creates fear among the people, and accordingly, popular culture works as an influential media to represent terrorism in Indian cinema. As Dodds rightly notes, critical geopolitics have "already initiated about how the understandings of global politics are embedded within comic books, cartoons, film, and other forms of media" (Dodds: 2008:241). Critics, mostly Indian diaspora scholars in the USA and England, are reviewing and engaging critically to understand how popular culture depicts danger, identity of 'us' and 'them', politics, security and nation building. Thus film has become a "mimetic of the real world" by providing an important political space for confrontation and encounter for viewers while fostering a renewed interest in popular ideas about global political space to contest, protest, reinforce or reshape foreign policy discourses and

‘practices of political elites’. To some extent, there is growing recognition that cinema and geopolitics are interdisciplinary in nature and that the reality/representation discourse has been minimized in such a way that film reproduces reality in the guise of ideology. As Rosalyn Deutsch comments:

visual...images...can only be rescued from idealist doctrines and seen as social in the first instance if, released from the grip of determinism, they are recognized, as other cultural objects have been, as representations. Neither autonomous in the aestheticist sense—embodiments of transcendental aesthetic ideas—nor social because they are produced by external society, representations are not objects at all but social relations, themselves productive of meaning and subjectivity (1991:8).

Accordingly, like Hollywood movies, Indian films also develop and maintain linkages with other global media corporations as “Bollywood films and film music are gradually moving out of the “South Asian” diasporic market into American or British public culture more broadly” (Punathambekar and Kavoori, 2008:8). NRI (non-resident Indians) also play a great role in India’s quest to see monetary returns flowing into the mainstream economic growth of India. Bollywood employs more than 2.5 million people and sells over 4 billion tickets (Thussu, 2008).

Table 9.1A Top Six Film Producing Nations

Country	1974	1984	1994	2004
India	432	829	754	946
United States	242	366	635	611
Japan	333	333	251	310
China and Hong Kong	146	253	340	276
France	234	161	115	203
UK	88	44	70	132

Source: Screen Digest, June 2005

India is within the world’s top six film producing nations and over the past three decades it has produced more films annually than other countries in the world (Table 9.1A).

Given the above discussion, it is apparent that films are considered geopolitical narratives and geo-historical texts, and can be employed to understand popular culture as well as to define geopolitical discourses. Indian film creates meanings through narratives and the raw images, dialogues, settings, story interpret historical contexts and provide an understanding of political, social and cultural connotations. It sheds light from the colonial era to multi-focal perspectives of present Indian societal values. Such an analysis goes beyond the text to suggest new insights establishing interconnections of colonial politics, popular culture and political awareness to shape mass opinion impacting the popular consciousness of the populations.

### **9.7 The Hegemonic Role and the Bollywood**

Of late, the hegemonic role of Bollywood cannot be ignored. Bollywood provides narratives with socio-political messages not only for the audiences who are watching the movies but they generate discourses for political, intellectual, social, academic and media elites. Such messages are rooted in the political narratives aiming at the vast majority of the population as well as targeting the political elites to develop their political agenda.

Quoting Hansen, Ganti (2012) has pointed out that the responsibility of ‘civilizing’ the Indian masses mostly depend on state institutions, political elites and middle classes. After the independence, as he described, national leaders produced more paternalist discourse where the ignorance and superstition of the mass populations became main hindrances to national development. Thus media have played a greater role to work as a catalyst inside and outside of India, especially films play a remarkable role as trans-textual and trans-cultural texts. As such “Bollywood productions have increasingly been seen as iconic of India’s global ambitions, and described as major source of cultural capital in the mediation of the global” (Athique, 2011:6).

Most of the Indian films are not based on their own culture but they “continue to lend and borrow motifs from other cultures, both proximate and exotic. This is indicative, perhaps, of a different notion of how culture works” in Indian cinema (Athique, 2011:17). As I discussed, various genres of Indian films have a great impact on the governments, political gurus, media moguls, academics, researchers and above all on mass populations of the region. The region has experienced a lot of turmoil and upheavals, say political, religious, ethnic as well as superstitions and taboos which are the main factors in achieving sustainable development in the region. This popular media, especially film, has reached all sections of society in South Asia including politicians, corporate people, NGOs, academics, bureaucrats and young generations. The spectators of the films in the region are connected with a formation of geopolitical imaginations, collective values and mutual cooperation.

The facility of internet world or online digging has given the region a new momentum as people can see the world within a blink of eye. Social media (such as Email, Facebook, Twitter, blog, YouTube, SMS texts) and mass media and popular culture (such as TVs, films, newspapers, photographs, cartoons, music) have made people more conscious and awareness about their identity and class cautiousness. On the cell phone, users can easily look at trails of films, easily see the listing of TV serials and dramas, read newspaper, can easily debate on specific cartoons and send them from one hand to another and to thousand hands shortly, and thus this availability of internet made the media world more accessible to the mass populations in the region.

Throughout the region, Bollywood movies offer their audiences an understanding of culture, rituals, nation, danger, threats, identity and messages of peace and reconciliations. For example, “from the 1940s to the 1980s, [it] was an era in which the commercial cinema

overwhelmingly dominated public culture in India, as well as being the era of partition, strident nation-building, and at least half a dozen declared and undeclared wars in the region” (Athique, 2008:478). Mostly, the partition was an issue in the Indian cinema prior to the 1990s. The decade of 1990s and the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bollywood movies are concentrating on war, terror, danger, migration, human rights, empowering the disadvantaged populations and mostly national building and promotion of peace within and beyond the border.

The respective governments of India have tried to influence the Bollywood and even if we look at the trajectories of two decades, the right wing previous BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) government in 1998-2004 capitalized the fame of Bollywood by proclaiming it as ‘a transmitter of timeless Hindu values’ while the present Manmohan Singh’s Congress Party regarded Indian film as ‘a modern avatar of India’s rich syncretic culture’ (Athique, 2011). The present Indian Prime Minister repeatedly claimed on 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2007:

“No other institution has been as successful in achieving the emotional integration of this vast and diverse land of ours as our film industry has been... This unique mix of conversational Hindi from across the country, popularized by the film industry, has become the thread that weaves us all together as Indians” (Ibid.:8)

I can mention here that in the late 1990s and in the early decade of this century J.P. Dutta’s trilogy *Border* (1997), *Refugee* (2000) and *LOC Kargil War* (2003) epitomize the Indian version of war, especially to assist the political rhetoric of the BJP, military-buildup of both India and Pakistan, Kashmir crisis, terrorism (Athique, 2008). Through *Border* and *Refugee*, Dutta, as he claims, promotes a message of peace between India and Pakistan, although his *Border* provoked violent agitations in Muslim communities at home and abroad which they think of a kind of violation and misrepresentations of Muslim faith and religion. But Dutta notes that “I am trying

to tackle a serious bilateral issue here. At least I have the guts to bring up such a sensitive subject in a mainstream Hindi film” (Athique, 2008:496).

Bollywood’s engagement at home and abroad, especially in the region is remarkable. It not only touches the upper middle class, middle class, low middle class families and mass populations but messages go simultaneously to the political elites and bureaucrats who design strategy for foreign policy and regional relations. Rahimulla Yusufzai’s words can be mentioned here: “the popularity of Indian films like *Roja*, *Border*, *Mission Kashmir* and *Refugee* in the Pakistani home video market. These films which depict the Indian view of Kashmir Issue, are being secretly rented after a ban by the government... Video stores in Islamabad [of Pakistan] report brisk demand for Bollywood films, including the ‘anti-Pakistani’ ones” (Athique, 2008:497-98).

I am not talking about each and every movie of Bollywood that may contribute to the development of the regional relations, interstate security but it can, if properly designed and produced, promote more solidarity and collective values among the communities of the region. *Lagaan*, *Earth* and *Sarfarosh* are the best examples to play a great role in formulating political discourse and democratic reforms in the Sub-continent as well as in campaigning against terrorism and violence. Other movies, such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) are worthy to mention here. It is a film on a penniless Mumbai slum boy’s horrific story by a British Director Danny Boyle who chooses all the characters from India and non-resident Indians. The film received 10 Oscar Awards accumulating fame and reputation in far off USA and Canada, including the UK. Thus a good and constructive movie on national and region security and cooperation issues can have a greater impact on its immediate neighbours like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

The effect of Bollywood can be seen as changing tools in promoting regional cooperation and collective action. Films are not only an entertainment device but rather a vocal media for contestation around geopolitical meaning and scripting. In addition, they actively facilitate political strategies and geopolitical knowledge. Finally, it can work as a matrix of soft power either to contest political agenda that goes against the mass population or to accommodate support from the grassroots to enhance cultural integrity on a varied set of agenda ranging from collective nationhood, regional integration to shared values.

### **9.8 Summary of the Chapter**

The aforesaid three films connect a legacy of two hundred years of human rights abuses experienced by the Indian sub-continent: the brutality and tyranny of the British regime, the partitioning of the sub-continent along with the emergence of new nation-states (India and Pakistan); and the continuation of wars, brutality, violence and terrorism between India and Pakistan following the partition (including the 1998 Kargil War). The films reveal the characteristics of the sub-continent, especially its people and politics. It may seem that each episode in the film is different but thematically they are interlinked and connected. The themes of the movies include: a) winning a Cricket match against the British regime by using unity as a social tool. The mix of Indians (mostly Hindus, Muslims, Christians, minorities and *Dalits*) epitomizes the picture of imagined community as well as a reflection of nationhood and obviously it sends a message that the united sub-continent can succeed in producing counter-colonial agitation (the movie *Lagaan* echoes this predicament in the film as a geopolitical text and discourse); b) the combined movement against the British regime for freedom demonstrates an unprecedented way of campaigning to achieve this goal. There was a concerted effort to

remove the British by all political parties, civil societies, students, academics and professionals including religious sects, farmers and workers. They succeeded by working under one big umbrella of freedom. The movie, *Earth* portrays a harmonious relation among various communities before partition takes place, and suddenly the atmosphere in society changes, as killing, arson, rape and looting take place and the taste of freedom fades away. The film is regarded as a historical text and discourse that unearths the reality of the so-called aftermath of freedom; and c) the launching of a war against Pakistan vis`-a-vis` Pakistan's war against India where people of the same colour, land and terrain of heritage fight each other. *Sarfarosh* provides a detailed landscape of how Pakistani intelligence recruited Indian Muslims to wage a proxy war against India and destabilize the country. In 1998, both countries launched a war that resulted in a significant loss of soldiers, ammunitions and finance. The film is considered a mental "cartography" of the hatred and hostility of both countries.

Indian movies can be understood in terms of popular geopolitics, through the construction of discourses and the building of an "imagined community"/nation. Indian film and cinema therefore deal with geopolitical representations of regional politics and regions. The popular culture and narratives produced by Bollywood clearly have a tremendous impact in terms of audience and revenue generation. Dodds (2005:82) has rightly suggested, "films can be a very rich and varied source for political geographers as well as film critics due to the wide spread distribution of particular production and the massive audience potential...the connections between image and real-life international political behaviour continue, often focusing on the manner in which films depict certain individuals and groups (e.g. Muslims) as threats to or enemies..." He further contends that there exist a number of examples where governments and political elites have used cinema to manipulate public opinion to build an image, especially

during periods war and crisis. As I mentioned earlier, *Sarfarosh*, released in 1999 after the Kargil War, is a good example of such manipulation. The government even removed taxes on movie ticket sales in order to catch the public mind and “imaginography” in an attempt to justify the loss of soldiers and finance invested in the war.

The chapter discusses how meanings are derived and understood from images and narratives of films and how they work for constructing discourses for an imagined community and nation building in the South Asian region. It explains how the discussed films provide a sense of territorial bonding that has been in the Sub-continent for centuries together. They also discuss that if the territorial differentiation of South Asian nations seems productive but still the communities of the region feel one kind of attachment between and among themselves. These films discuss how socio-cultural and regional differences are (re)produced and how geographical meanings of imaginative community or regional integration are understood. Though territorial boundaries or constructed borders of the Sub-continent made people isolated from each other, but still they nourish the bonding once they belonged and they imagine a collective feeling of belonging to a community and its values. The characters, dialogues, debates and discussions in the aforesaid three movies reflect discourses of collectivity and togetherness which are being considered an integral part to form an imaginative community and thus, members can easily think in the collective ‘we’.

The following chapter explains how security is defined and redefines, and how popular culture and visual media are inevitable to construct discourses to institute an imagined security community in the South Asian region.

## Chapter 10: Conclusion

### 10.1 Rewriting Security for South Asia

My field research in New Delhi (India) and Dhaka (Bangladesh) helped me gain a textured perspective on the general conception of security in both India and Bangladesh. I interviewed some scholars, academics and researchers of Pakistan to know how the political elites of Pakistan interpret security and determine the common concepts of the Pakistanis about India. I conducted a series of interviews with a cross section of people from India, and my key question was: How do the people of India define security and perceive their own security and national security? It seems that most of them are concerned with the security of the individual in particular and society as a whole. They do not sense or predict a nuclear attack or a war by the two rivals, Pakistan and China. On the contrary, they worry about national and transnational insurgency/terrorism, which is becoming a recurring phenomenon in the Indian political and social scene.

On the other hand, the concept of security is different in Bangladesh. Interview data with respondents within representative sections of society suggest that security is based on emancipation i.e., alleviation of poverty, reducing illiteracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and accessing facilities like shelters, food and health. They are not afraid of India as a threat but they believe that India creates/would create some geopolitical environment to control or influence Bangladesh and its neighbours. They have cited, for example, some issues of mutual interest and emerging issues pertinent to sovereignty, security and survival—namely water sharing, land and border disputes, maritime boundary, floods, and embankments, deforestation, trade, migration, mobility and so on. Pakistan defines security very narrowly, and has adopted a

narrow vision of envisaging the possibility of security threats and attacks from its neighbour India. This attitude is prevalent in public discourse, and has become an orthodox pattern of elite thinking in Pakistan. After the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan has been constantly fighting with its northwestern front to wipe out insurgency and some areas of Pakistan have turned into a breeding ground for terrorism. Now, the number one priority of the country is to disarm the Taliban and restore security across the country.

By generalizing the interview data of both neighbouring countries, it becomes evident that people construct or deconstruct their own safety, security, threats and dangers. It varies from community to community, society to society and nation to nation. People form their own identity of “we” and “they”, and this is precisely a societal logic underlying the construction of social and political identities. The ‘taken-for-granted geographies of security’ in the South Asian region underlines a possibility of change in definition and structural domain. The realist trends could be replaced by a liberal attitude as the era of force and aggression do not fit with the contemporary political trends. As I mentioned in the early part of the study, the security concept of South Asia is centered between the Narrowers (realists, neo-realists, and neo-classical realists) and the Wideners (the Constructivists) and sometimes both countries become more aggressive to each other in severe events, especially in the wake of the Kargil War (1999) and the Mumbai Attack (2009), when the world felt that there must be some kind of nuclear retaliation from either of the sides, and either India or Pakistan could trigger the nuclear weapons within a blink of an eye.

The core themes of security “can be found in the fear of the unknown (foreign) and in the desire for certainty” (Laitinen, 2003:27-28). Throughout history security policies have evolved mainly to protect societies and states from predatory neighbours. Traditional security policies have focused heavily on defending peoples and their economic interest by military means

(Prirages and DeGeest, 2004). At its most fundamental level, the term security entailed the protection of a population and territory against organized force. In the traditional Westphalian system, the sovereignty of states was considered a prohibition against foreign intervention. The normative principle focuses on the basic liberties of an individual thus any threats and violations cannot go unchallenged, and the international community has a responsibility to intervene to prevent such atrocities. Views on security were shaped by experiences of colonialism and neocolonialism and by the complex process through which internal and external forces combined to dominate and subjugate people.

The South Asian security perspectives might involve economic, environmental, militarily and societal sectors to reformulate the security paradigm bilaterally, trilaterally or regionally. The following can be considered to define a security paradigm of the South Asian region.

First, security can be redefined and reconstructed in terms of economic criteria. An economic globalizing dynamic is the main factor that brings countries, mostly neighbours, closer to each other which Barnet (1981) terms as a global interdependence. Since the inception of SAARC, South Asian countries have not shown any desire of signing a trade agreement. India has several bilateral trade agreements with Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. But it has restricted some trade relations with Bangladesh and Pakistan by putting some barriers on the crossborder movement of goods. The member-countries envisaged to initiate a free trade zone (South Asian Free Trade Area [SAFTA]) within the regional boundaries. An acceleration of economic cooperation took place in 1991 with the establishment of a study on Trade, Manufactures and Services (TMS) for the region. In 1995, the Council of Ministers agreed to set up SAFTA and after a long negotiation it was signed on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004 covering 1.6 billion

people. The agreement came into force in 2006. After this agreement, SAARC members have been enjoying reduction of custom duty from India.

Second, the concept of security can be reformulated in respect of human security. While the concept of human security has earlier roots, its recent prominence comes from the 1994 *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The report elaborates a definition of human security: “forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards” (UNDP 1994: 22-23). The report has helped solidify the concept of human security, although recognition of people’s security independent of state security is nothing new (Axworthy, 2001). Hampson (2002) asserts that the concept of ‘security’ can be defined as the absence of threat to the core human values, including the most basic human values, the physical safety of the individual. While writing in the context of Latin America, Jorge Nef (1991), a pioneering scholar, warns of the danger of human insecurity and urges maintaining the economic, social and political well-being of the individual and the individual is the receiver rather than the state. The idea of human security has become the central issue of the EU, United Nations and Group of Eight (G8). They have softened the realist security paradigm and (specifically the EU) paved the way for the inclusion of non-traditional security agenda since the early 1990s (Dosch, 2003: 489). The United Nations Development Program has fostered the term, human security (Ibid.: 489). In respect of the Sub-continent, millions of people suffer from insecurity. Ethnic conflicts in both India (Muslims, *Dalits*, tribal) and Pakistan (the *Shiites* and the *Ahmadiyahs*) and poverty stricken-people of the Sub-continent and lack of human rights,

injustice and fair trial is alarming for any developing and advanced nation. Thus security should be considered in human aspects too.

Third, the environment is an important aspect of human security and any threats to human security includes environmental degradation. However, environment as a security issue is not widely accepted and has not received enough attention either by the governments or the public in the South Asian region. Global warming, erosion, water scarcity, drought, floods, climatic hazards and other disasters might be issues requiring consideration in a broad regional discussion of security. All low-lying states such as Bangladesh, Netherlands, Maldives and Egypt would be adversely affected by global warming and its rises in sea level. But some states might benefit from global warming, for example those with extensive territory now under permafrost (Canada, Russia, Greenland). Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have also been facing environmental disasters and the root of disasters is regional not local. Indian waters from Punjab and other tributaries often cause floods in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and Bangladesh is dependent on upstream states including India to meet its water needs (Chapman, 2003). The Farakka Barrage built in India on the Ganges has made the northern part of Bangladesh a desert and peoples are gradually becoming climate refugees. Infrastructural development and economic growth in India entail huge dams, embankments, roads and highways throughout the country that affect the environment as well the local people's homes and farming land which eventually forces them out to live as internally displaced populations (IDPs). Thus any security pact taking environmental issues as a priority would reduce the negative effects in national life.

Buzan (2000:18) affirms that the countries involved in the security pact do not consider environment as an issue and "there is no overall reason to expect environmental issues to manifest primarily, or even strongly in regional form, though they may sometimes do so." It is

obvious that environmental impacts not only affect the country itself but the whole geographical region. Buzan (2000) cites an example of crises of water with problems of the distribution of water in various places of the world where the environment must come first, such as Bangladesh-India-Nepal, Israel-Palestine, the Euphrates Valley, the Aral Sea; and with pollution such as the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Or it could happen due to air pollution such as problems of sulphur dioxide in Europe (Ibid.). Like Buzan, Dodds (1998a:726-7) explains that transboundary environmental issues have received priority and provoked more intensive forms of cooperation between and among states to combat such environmental disasters. The Antarctic Treaty System and seven southern hemispheric countries (Argentina, Australia, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay and Brazil) are noteworthy. They have agreed to: a) enhance southern hemispheric environmental interest; and b) facilitate scientific and technical collaboration on common areas of environment.

Fourth, the concept of security in the Sub-continent may include the issue of arms control and the theme of non-proliferation. The problem of nuclear non-proliferation has become an issue of anxiety in the region and antagonism and hostility between India and Pakistan might escalate nuclear war, as some pundits suggested, at any time for any causes accidentally. Both parties are holding various initiatives, meetings and dialogues to reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons in the region. They have already signed a declaration in 1999 in Lahore in which the two countries agreed to take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

Fifth, the Sub-continent can expand security in terms of societal aspects such as friendship and alliances with ethnic units/groups within the country. The ethnic conflicts that made the Sub-continent a disastrous zone might generate some brighter hope in the country.

Instigating deep interactions between and among Hindus/Muslims/Sikhs/Dalits in India, the Shiites and the Sunnis in Pakistan and the tribal/Hindus/Muslims in Bangladesh would be a best method to keep the country and region more peaceful and stable. In addition, the Sub-continent can drive for more engagement in cultural aspects such as sports (cricket, soccer, and SAARC inter-state game), cultural programs (musical programs, dances, competition in literary programs), and education and training (exchange of students, providing SAARC scholarships and cross-country tour).

## **10.2 Popular Geopolitics, Security Community and the South Asian Region**

Film, as explained in Chapter 9, can be seen as a cultural reproduction of the geopolitical realm and popular sources to investigate national identity, a complex web of ‘we’ and ‘they’ and border demarcation narratives. It can play a role for social learning that can easily generate awareness and consciousness among the various communities of a given region. Most of the Bollywood films have a South Asian notion examining or revisiting national identity and regional collective and shared values, and work as ‘practices and representations of territorial strategies’ to define national and regional identity paradigm. The studied three movies, *Earth*, *Lagaan* and *Sarfarosh* and 23 cartoons discuss the critical geopolitical issues such as identity, demarcation, security, collective views, place, cartography, geopolitical history and geopolitical realms.

The role of places has been prominent in the aforesaid movies which reflect Dodds’ (2007) explanation of popular geopolitics and popular culture. He discussed three stages of places in his study on “James Bond and the Early Cold War Films.” Looking at his methods on the importance of places, I have discussed the following: First, the city of Lahore (the second largest city of Pakistan) in *Earth* before the partition had been vibrant and lively where people of

all races were so friendly that some youths of various faiths fell in love with a Persian nanny. They used to chat together, work together and dine together. Lahore served as a place where all communities used to consider it as their own home but later it was devastated by the partition. The background of *Lagaan* was a place called Champaner (now in the state of Gujarat, India) where the images of the Victorian British Raj were portrayed. Here the popular revolution of the Indian Sub-continent has symbolically discussed. The background of *Sarfarosh* is the Line of Control (LOC) across the borders of India and Pakistan. These places provide here the background of different political landscapes as well as they operate “to draw attention to prevailing dangers and threats” (Dodds, 2007:90). Second, these places narrate geopolitical texts and histories to shape the identity and perception of regional unity and challenges to form collective views and shared values. Third, these places were cartographically demarcated by the British, putting the millions on the altar of destruction and devastations. Hence, popular geopolitics creates ‘different spatial settings’ in order to show “how popular and political cultures interact with one another and associated geographical representations of global political space” (Ibid.:91).

Movies, cartoons and grassroots views in the study reflect different aspects of critical geopolitics as espoused by Ó Tuathail and Dalby (1998:3-7) in their introduction to *Rethinking Geopolitics*. They include:

a) Unlike traditional geopolitics that comprises narratives of wise men of statecraft which is narrow in nature, critical geopolitics involves making one national identity, “establishing a boundary with an outside and converting diverse places into a unitary space. It also involves forging scattered and heterogeneous histories into a transcendent and providential duration” (Ibid.:3). Accordingly, critical geopolitics constructs nation’s pace and nation time, imaginary

community, homogenization of nation-space and pedagogization of history. Thus these movies, cartoons and grassroots' views provide counter-narratives of security, nation, collective action and imaginative community. The said films have minutely defined these narratives where geopolitical imagination and the issue of imagined community have been portrayed. Cartoons also construct territoriality, border concepts and a boundary between 'secure inside and an anarchic outside'. Grassroots' views also explain conventional geopolitical inter-state relations and provide shared values on transborder movements.

b) The main role of critical geopolitics is focus to 'boundary-drawing practices that characterize the everyday life of states' and "how certain conceptual spatializations of identity, nationhood and danger manifest themselves across the landscape of states and how certain political, social, and physical geographies in turn enframe...self and other, security and danger, proximity and distance, indifference and responsibility (Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 1998:4). The discussed films and cartoons provide such insights into the construction of nation and community representing banal nationalism and integrated views on certain issues that lead to an imagined community.

c) These movies also epitomize the 'three- fold typology of geopolitical reasoning' i.e. practical, formal and popular geopolitics that are depicted in backgrounds, plot-settings, place and dialogues of the movies. These three geopolitical representations have been found as a manifestation of relative theories and practices by statecrafts, academics/thinkers and popular narratives in the movies.

d) These movies and cartoons are situated in a time period of two hundred years containing important events and geopolitical milestones that have been described in the narrative structures based on popular geopolitics.

Thus it may be said that the said movies and cartoons further reiterate the importance of territory and geographical relationship within regional and global politics. The multiple identities of different communities can lay out a collective identity that can cross over national boundaries and identities. There are some basic characteristics to establish a political or security community and they include: shared identities, values and meaning, direct relations, face-to-face encounter and relations in numerous settings, long-term interest, obligation and responsibility (Adler and Barnett, 1998b). If such interest-based behaviour continues to exist in communities then states can embed a set of social relations that ultimately will lead to imagine and construct a political/security community. Thus, the role of social learning cannot be ignored and it would certainly assist the mass populations including political elites and wise men of statecraft to define and redefine the real picture of societal involvement. In this respect, as Adler and Barnett explain, “social learning is more than “adaptation” ...represents the capacity and motivation of social actors to manage and even transform reality by changing their beliefs of the material and social world and their identities” (Ibid.:43-4).

### **10.3 Objectives of Analysis**

The objects of analysis in this study are not to directly theorize the concepts of identities and threats, rather I have chosen to examine representations of threat and identity (in four conceptual aspects of critical geopolitics) to rethink the aspects of security in South Asian perspectives. As critical geopolitics is not a theory, rather a poststructuralist approach, it cannot provide the answer to geopolitical problems but can explore the undercurrents of the politics and practices of the actors (Kuus, 2010).

I have demonstrated that there is a strong link between films/cartoons, geography and identity and the study has established that popular narratives including films, cartoons and

grassroots' views and geo-histories of the sub-continent can lay out the concept of security in the region. Many analyses of the study came from sources like films, cartoons, grassroots views and historical and geopolitical literatures. I have demonstrated that there are linkages between geopolitics, popular culture and identity.

It can easily be said that films can reimagine the deeper meaning of security community, and as such *imagination*, as a part of popular geopolitics, is the best tool to construct any community in a given place or region. Movies like *Earth*, *Lagaan* and *Sarfarosh* feature some of the most important elements of security where the paradigms of framing an 'imagined community', regional identity and nationhood in the Sub-continent are contextualized. Anderson's (1991) "imagined community" means that members do not know each other, but common identities or shared-values are essential to the maintenance of a sense of community without any face-to-face interaction or physical communication. Eventually, a political community can create an awareness that can easily overcome the possibility of interstate war or conflict.

Any sense of community can take place through non-violent means. The members of such a regional community—political elites, civil societies and the mass population— share similar values and a non-violent attitude that is characterized by a superior ethical perception that encourages the growth of mutual trust and confidence building not only between the member states but among groups of member states and between ordinary members of community. Clearly, Sidaway was inspired by Anderson's concept of nations as imagined communities. In his study, Sidaway (2002) provides an illustration of southern African regional communities as imaginary landscapes examining the discourses of sovereignty, identity, and political or imagined community in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Through the

film, art and literary theories, he figures out an epistemological search for constructing an alternative perception of 'community' for Africa. He seeks to develop an understanding of its role as an example of a postcolonial interstate African entity, and specifically to look at the ways in which the power-knowledge relation is concerned with the discourses of sovereignty, identity and territorial integrity.

Both Anderson's (1991) and Sidaway's (2002) concept to form an imagined community with shared identity, collective values, 'we feeling' and 'no negotiation with sovereignty' is not an easy task for the South Asian region. It needs a political transition between and among the communities of the region. So, the question may arise: is it happening soon in South Asia? Is South Asia, specifically, ready to embrace it? Does South Asia require any waiting period to establish it? I think, Adler and Barnett's (1998) three phases of Security Communities (see Chapter 3) can work in this regard. Both the nascent and the ascendant phases can initiate to develop a ground of mutual trust. Foreign policy and regional affairs of the region can begin to reinterpret the conflicts of the past and a process of reconciliation can take a debut. Thus, gradually, the communities can enter into the final stage, the mature phase, and the region would:

- a) enjoy a high degree of trust;
- b) share a collective regional identity;
- c) initiate multilateralism (decision-making procedures) for the common interest of the members through 'consensual mechanisms that automatically incorporate the interest of all members';
- d) kick off unfortified borders (although regular border checks and patrols 'to secure the state against threats other than an organized military invasion');
- e) uphold cooperative and collective security (cooperative in dealing with security problems that arise within the community and collective in dealing with problems that occur from outside of the community);
- f) frame out policies to look at internal

threats that may arise anytime; g) ease free movements of populations; and h) undertake a high level of military integration if needed for any threats.

Films and cartoons have the ability to reconstruct a South Asian vision, the meaning of South Asianess as well as a collective identity. They work as geopolitical narratives and serve as a voice to connect South Asian collectivity as well as promote ideas that transmit through individuals to create territorial collective feelings. As a dominant media in society, films can contribute to territorial bonding among citizens of the imagined communities of the region and construct South Asian geopolitical reasoning. A film or a cartoon or a newspaper headline can work as popular representations of geopolitics, which in turn can influence one's approval or opposition to foreign policy.

Popular culture and visual media are an integral part in terms of shaping national and regional politics. Explaining this reality, the study has explicitly discussed that popular media and the narratives of the grassroots people can be used as discourses to further refine the foreign policies and geopolitical codes of the Sub-continent. It has illustrated how the media contribute to the representation and interpretation of political trends of South Asia, and how media can be used to interpret social and political trends of the region to construct discourse and as well as projection and reinforcement of particular national and transnational identities and ideologies. Thus, the discussed films not only describe the myths and reality of the regions but they firmly explain the national identity, collective voice, mutual trust and regional integrity. In this way, they are able to influence the discourses and narratives of foreign policies and security strategies by reinforcing the idea of an imaginative community, shared values and feelings of togetherness.

As discussed in Chapter 3, audiences are an important part to conceptualise geopolitical imaginations as they construct and reconstruct their identity through popular culture. While films

talk about contemporary issues and political stuffs, it is imperative that popular geopolitics needs to engage different scenarios of meanings to better understand how audiences and film fans in particular interpret and consume narratives of films (Dodds, 2006). Visual media may act as a source of learning and perception throughout the gradual processes of security integration in the region. Thus, social learning, through popular culture and visual media, can boost up capacity building and collective political behaviour of the social elites in particular and the mass population in general. “Social learning plays a critical role in the emergence of security communities ... that typically occur in organizational settings, and core power” (Adler and Barnett, 1998b:44). In the South Asian perspective, visual media could gradually create an atmosphere for the communities of the region to redefine the concept of security as well as to construct a collective security community across the region. We cannot think of any miracle taking place soon when it comes to establishing any security community, but people’s perception and collective political identity must be upheld to proceed with such a big project of security community in the South Asian region.

Social learning cannot influence the mass population within a shortest period of time; it would certainly take a long period for actors, communities and others to foster an imagined sense that *‘we’ as a community* across the borders to share collective identity, values and ideas. The role of visual media must be recognized as a medium of social learning and it has a great role as discourses and geopolitical texts to play in further influencing political scripts, foreign policy narratives and political discourses, and thus the role of popular geopolitics cannot be ignored in reimagining the region and constructing discourses to formulate geopolitical codes and foreign policy strategies in framing a security community in the South Asian region.

The foreign and security policies of the Sub-continent are bound to accommodate people's views and popular culture, and constructions of the geopolitical codes and reasoning depend on the popular views of the nation they belong to. These visual media deliver some reality of mass population's perception in some ways "to understand their position both within a larger collective identity and within an even broader geopolitical narrative, or script" (Dittmer, 2005a:626). As a dominant media in society, film can contribute to territorial bonding and citizens of the 'imagined communities' of South Asia and construct South Asian geopolitical reasoning.

Chapter 6 discusses the role of the geopolitical codes of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in order to explain how these countries actively identify their allies and enemies, as well as their alliances and regional forums. Such codes are also used to determine how these countries face their enemies and emerging threats and how they justify their actions to the public and the international community. This geopolitical code ultimately frames a geopolitical vision of "them-and-us, distinction and emotional attachment to a place...in this way ideological reference to national values, as well as to strategic concerns about resources and economics, become important in the formation of geopolitical vision" (Guney and Gokcan, 2010:24).

Chapter 7 addresses questions associated with inclusion and exclusion-'We' (Us) and 'They' (Them)- in border and boundary narratives as these issues are deeply embedded in contemporary regimes of knowledge and in our everyday discourse and action. The borderlands of Bangladesh and India are located between different socially constructed spaces, and the people in between are stuck as their movements are obstructed. A very common function of boundaries is to protect people, define national identity and to defend sovereignty. Fear, danger and terror are reasons for erecting this barrier, legitimizing the social construction of identity.

Chapter 8 describes how cartoons visualize ‘danger’ and ‘threat’ and how popular culture provides insight into the construction of identity and how cartoons reflect geopolitical trends of the Sub-continent. In the study, cartoons examine social phenomenon and construct different modes of discourses that are likely to register different kinds of interpretations for their audience and societal actors including the political elites. Cartoons describe how minorities, especially the Muslims, *Dalits*, tribal and other ethnic groups in India are abused and excluded. The cartoonists use symbolism, metaphor, and analogy to convey the real characters of the political leaders, and especially the facial caricatures of the individuals in order to expose the inner motives of the leaders of Pakistan and India.

Chapter 9 examines how films are used to explore identity, nation formation, and especially structures to create an *imagined community*. It examines the role of films in constructing the ideals of nationhood, exploring the identity crisis of ‘we’ and ‘they’, investigating danger and insecurity. The chapter creates an imagined community/nation and interprets political past and present to produce discourses for constructing security among the South Asian nations (especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan). It explains the multifaceted relationships between the characters of the film, historic values and the dialogues and debates of the characters that work as a source of political discourses in nation building, transborder security and an imagined community.

The study demonstrates how the security of the South Asian region (specifically within the context of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) is an epistemological question especially with regards to how cultural and political identities are structured and how the politics and power nexus work in the region distinguishing the ‘We’ and ‘They’, and how hegemonic power is a concern in establishing any security concept in the region. The concepts of *Representations and*

*Geopolitical Codes, Identity and Border, Danger and Threat and Imagined Community* in the study have emerged as geopolitical discourses. The four prime concepts are fundamental to understanding the security concept of South Asia. The region cannot ignore the people in power nor the scripts, performances and foreign policies of political elites whose responsibility is to protect the territory and its sovereignty and overseas relations. The academics, scholars and intelligentsia of South Asia are also playing a great role in assisting the statecraft and strategic dimensions of political elites, while South Asian popular culture describes the social practices that help people understand profoundly the political behaviours of the states, political elites and other segments of the dominant class.

#### **10.4 Contribution of the Study to Other Cognate Social Sciences**

To what extent can this South Asian regional security study continue to contribute to the broader geographical scholarship and other cognate social sciences? The thematic structure of security integration/community has long been discussed in political science, international relations and security studies. European integration theory has played a pioneering role with its indigenous theoretical culture in regional integration approaches. A key message of European debates is that one model/approach may be irrelevant to another.

My study of the South Asian security community has focused attention on the conceptual lenses of critical geopolitics as an institutionalized venue for a negotiation of interests and identities. It has made an argument about how discursive methods can generate insightful work on regional integration. It asks the perennial question of how political actors imagine the region and how communities on different sides of borders visualize their own region and whether they can imagine themselves in ways that foster solidarity and collective values to support a security concept.

The alternative approach of my study of South Asian regional integration combines critical geopolitics, cultural studies, security studies, boundary narratives and popular policy to secure analytical leverage. It opens up questions such as: how are imaginative communities framed across borders? Can popular discourses construct a security paradigm? Do popular culture and mass media (including new social media) influence political leaders? How are popular culture, especially films viewed and understood by different audience segments? Can social learning and social mobilizations work effectively in different layers of political administration? How does popular culture educate mass populations? How do political leaders react to popular geopolitics and reshape their political agenda in the context of the popular media?

Building on the role of popular geopolitics in explaining identity, danger, security and imagined community, the study discusses how popular media, especially films and cartoons can be used to analyse discourses and multiple dimensions of security. As well, it clarifies how popular media promote social learning along domestic and regional boundaries to disseminate knowledge among the members of the imagined communities, and how these visual media and popular culture influence geopolitical codes and narratives of foreign policy issues of the Sub-continent. The study determines that popular media/popular culture can reshape and construct security concepts through adopting social learning to translate the interests of the political elites, regional institutes and foreign policies of the region.

This study offers an alternative approach to conventional theories on security integration processes in that it critiques and explains the contemporary security integration theories of Buzan and Wæver, Adler and Barnett, and Deutsch and his colleagues. It explores options to broaden the social reach of discourse and to integrate varied forms of social production beyond texts.

Everyday representation of life and action has a significant role in popular geopolitical representations of territory, statecraft and identity politics. The impact of their influence on generating public opinion and collective solidarity in constructing narratives on security cannot be ignored.

The study interviewed two categories of people from the communities of the Sub-continent, viz. grassroots people and the elites of the region, to create a conceptual map about security across borders, border movement, the fencing of borders and issues related to regional security, the role of SAARC, and obstacles to establishing a security community in the region. It reveals how grassroots people frame their views, how they imagine a community, and how they feel about fencing across the border that has demarcated their livelihoods and cultural ties. Here, the study touches on an important contemporary question about how socio-spatial inclusions and exclusions are constructed, reproduced and framed against the contemporary theoretical framework of state-centred views on boundary and borderland identity. The study selects individual sagas and stories of the border people to detect their spatial identity and reveal the social meanings of boundaries, identity and security in local daily life.

These interviews reveal narratives reflecting a regional sense of togetherness which is rooted in cross-border interaction. Their views construct discourses on security integration and frame narratives on geopolitical imaginations, geopolitical codes and strategies. I did not get the opportunity to interview anyone from the India-Pakistan borderlands. But work such as Upadhyaya's (2012) field report highlight anxieties and difficulties the borderland populations of India-Pakistan have been facing. Upadhyaya explains the sad stories of the people who live across the borders, highlighting the division of their lands, cultural ties and working space. The difficulties and concerns of the populations of India and Pakistan are very similar to those on the

Bangladesh-India borders. They are the victims of border-constructions that are constantly reproduced through local as well as outside agents and groups.

The elite interviews of the study reflected critiques of the present regional integration processes of the South Asian region. They set out to provide a multi-dimensional view of the region, integration paradigms, and other ways of viewing post-colonial anxieties to formulate a sustainable regional security community. The grassroots interviews reflect the essence of the core messages explained in the Chapter 9. For example, Gulmaf in *Sarfarosh* laments that his identity is divided between India and Pakistan. He moved to Pakistan and still he does not have any identity and he is regarded as a refugee. In *Earth*, similar narratives of anxieties and uncertainties are visible. For instance, a character in the movie repeats: “Listen, once India is divided; all Muslims left on the wrong side of the division line will have their balls cut off.” “We have lived together like brothers for centuries, we share the same language, food, and enemies and they are ready to use it against us Muslims.” If we look at the elite interviews, it seems that their views are also echoed in the conversations of the characters in the movies. They discussed regional integration, nation, association, enmity and amity, friendship, solidarity and country. These terms found in the dialogues of characters such as Ratod, Salim and Gulfam in *Sarfarosh*, some Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu characters in both *Earth* and *Lagaan* who talk about the region, nation, collective values, solidarity and concerted efforts of the communities. Clearly, the construction of a security community must take account of the will of grassroots people, along with scholarly and elite views.

Like other social scientists, few human geographers/geopolitical scholars have contributed much to the study of security and regional integration processes. Exceptions include Dalby (1993; 1995), Dodds (1998), Sidaway (2002) and Kuus (2002; 2004; 2011). Dalby (1993)

suggests that critical geopolitics cannot solve geopolitical problems but rather it can explain geopolitical trends through discourse analysis, and clarify how geopolitical imaginations are intertwined into the web of the world political system. Dalby (1993; 1995) emphasizes the importance of the geographical specifications of security discourses in contemporary security studies. Dodds (1998a) studies the geopolitics of regionalism within the Valdivia Group in the Southern Hemisphere and criticizes the respective states for not including important stakeholders in the processes and the debates of regional integration and environmental policies. But it does not provide any argument on how to make the political elites more conscious of environmental degradation in the region. Moreover, Dodds did not discuss the role of grassroots people who work as catalysts to challenge environmental degradation.

Sidaway's (2002) case study of regional integration within SADC searches for scripts, geopolitical texts and discourses that empirically question the role of imagined communities. He finds some unavoidable hegemonic representations from its strongest member country, South Africa, which hinder the smooth functioning of the regional community. Accordingly, he criticizes the fundamental legitimacy of its political foundation and the geopolitical representations of its member countries. But he does not analyse the integration processes and mechanisms in the context of Africa thoroughly, nor does he highlight the role of popular geopolitics in focusing geopolitical representations and performance.

Kuus (2004) criticizes the security discourses adopted by western intellectuals, especially in Washington and Brussels, towards EU candidate states such as Estonia. She emphasizes that groups, individuals and grassroots people should be included in the process of constructing security. Criticizing the role the EU, Kuus claims that it depends on Estonian intellectuals whose knowledge is largely concerned with the western scripts of statecraft, and who mostly ignore the

participation of groups and individuals in regional integration processes. She questions how the discourses of security are reframed by Estonian scholars and academics to ignore the common voice of the country. In another study on regional expertise and European Union, Kuus (2011) criticizes the role of EU professionals in respect of producing and disseminating geographical knowledge about places and regions. She laments the hegemonic role the EU has been playing and its constant effort to Europeanize knowledge and asks how ‘these processes operate’ smoothly putting other discourses aside in framing regional integration. Kuus doesn’t highlight how to involve grassroots opinion and other traditional approaches in broader European paradigms of integration and how these narratives can contribute to the integration processes of the EU.

The special issue of *Geopolitics* (2007, Vol. 12 (4)) is a better contribution to regional integration studies and certainly it attempts to evaluate emerging regional orders as well as to survey the ‘variety of mechanisms’ to produce regions within the paradigm of the global order. Geopolitical scholars have critiqued and analysed various disciplines in order to provide a detailed analysis of the contemporary debates around regions and global geopolitical order. Basically, the whole issue shows “how the combination of territorial representations with social or cultural stereotypes serves to construct new and geopolitically ambivalent regional identities of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, that may then develop into a solid frame of reference for political action” (Albert and Reuber, 2007: 553).

But the issue is neither pure geographical scholarship on regions and regionality, nor does it solely deal with Political Geography/Critical Geopolitics in explaining new perspectives on regions in a global system. It can be regarded as an anthology to analyse the proliferation of regional communities in recent years to discuss an ambiguous relationship between

regionalisation, globalization, MNCs, member states and other stakeholders. Most of the writers in the issue have borrowed the concept of region and regionality from other disciplines. Some contributors (such as Postel-Vinay, Kessler, Helming and Slocum-Bradley) elaborate theories and empirical examples in such a way that the essence of political geography/critical geopolitics has been overlooked and the necessity of a critical geopolitics has been played down. These authors don't provide any geopolitical frameworks to study regional integration processes and mechanisms, although they shed some light on aspects of regional integration projects that may make them more effective. Such *hybrid* interpretations of regions and regional order can further develop the discipline of political geography and add a new dimension to the arena of international relations and security studies.

Studies of popular geopolitics and popular culture, for example Dittmer's (2005a; 2007; 2010) and Dittmer and Larsen's (2007) analysis of super-heroes, Captain Canuck or Captain America, banal nationalism and banal imperialism, and Dodds' (1996; 1997; 1998a; 1998b; 2006; 2007) Falklands war, geopolitical eye and Steve Bell's cartoons, enframing Bosnia, James Bond and, IMDb have contributed much to the properties of discourses as strategic resources of representation and narratives for describing place, nation, nationalism, empire, hegemony and subaltern identity and anti-geopolitics. But these contributions do not exhaust what is required to frame a regional security integration paradigm. Rather, they provide some thematic materials to constitute a geopolitical imagination which is a part and parcel of constructing an 'imaginative' community in a given region. Their narratives of national identity and pride, 'identity formation and multiculturalism', 'cultural resources', 'superhero', 'Argentine national self-identity', 'identity and territory' and 'territorial grievances and uncertainties' can be used as geopolitical metaphors to explain different meanings and understandings of contemporary regional

integration projects. Dittmer's (2005b) study of NATO, the EU and Central Europe is a good example of studying the role of print media in (re)constructing the concept of Central Europe and in understanding the social and political processes involved in drawing 'boundaries of inclusion and exclusion'.

Two examples can be offered in response to possible critics who argue that if popular media possess such a huge influence on the mass population of the region, why, for instance, does India erect fences along the border of Bangladesh. Why did popular media fail to undermine support for this?

a) A study by Jensen and Oster (2009), on the power of TV on women's status in 180 villages of India, has shown that cable TV has reduced domestic violence towards women and increased women's autonomy in family life. Women's participation in household decision making has further increased the enrollment of young children in school.

b) A talk-show on the Indian cable TV network IBN-CNN, hosted on June 19, 2013, revealed that new social media and popular culture are having a greater impact in shaping the agenda of political parties.<sup>1</sup> The talk-show interviewed political activists (of ruling and opposition parties), and eminent representatives of society in line with a survey by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). The survey revealed that as many as 160 constituencies out of 543 seats of the Indian parliament were likely to be highly influenced by social media, and 66 constituencies would be moderately influenced in the forthcoming parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ibnlive.in.com/videos/400190/ftn-can-social-media-influence-political-agenda.html>

What kind of lessons for other regional integration bodies can be learned from this study of South Asian security integration? In brief:

a) The creation of a regional security community does not require prior political ties among the states, nor pre-existent physical or cultural legacies. Any region has to continue its institutional efforts to form its own collective identity beyond the national level which is crucial for achieving peace, development and prosperity;

b) Popular geopolitics and popular culture can reframe people, places and political events to popularize the values of a regional security community and they can contribute to the formation of a regional identity and shared values to generate the willingness to form a community;

c) Transborder communities are the main protagonists in regional integration processes and they should be familiar with what is going on around them. Thus popular culture and mass media can play an important role at the very first stage of integration initiatives. They can, if widely circulated within the communities, shape and influence personal and public opinion both nationally and regionally;

d) Films can contribute to a particular geographical representation of a given country, nation and region, to forming a sense of identity and integrity. They can project visual representations of borders, borderlands, demarcated boundaries and the movements of population across borders. Together they can be narratives to construct a geopolitical representation of self and other;

e) Popular media can play as catalysts to construct discourses to challenge the traditional security concepts and the influence of material powers of states, corporate interests and institutions associated with anti-people and anti-development sentiments. They can create

political resistance at a territorial level and influence foreign policies and geopolitical codes in favour of communities' integration in a given region;

f) Forms of popular culture such as cartoons can produce mostly regional narratives to interpret the behaviour of political parties, political elites and contemporary political events. They are open-ended to contest particular visual and textual representations of the dominant political structure and can portray the role of the subject and the question of their positioning in constructing discourses to frame transborder concerns;

g) Films can connect the imagination of the mass population to constitute geopolitical discourses on social processes that construct and deconstruct the world. They can frame various narratives on geopolitical imaginations highlighting danger and threats in society;

h) Popular views (i.e. grassroots views) can frame discourses to change the political agenda of a given region and reshape the behaviour of a regional political establishment;

i) Non-state actors such as academics, scholars and members of think-tanks can play a role in constructing identities regionally that go beyond physical borders and psychological barriers.

j) Social learning and mobilization through popular media can foster regional solidarity and collective ideas. Cross-border imaginations, constructed through popular culture, integrate good and evil together and reconcile past misdeeds to offer better futures for the transborder communities.

k) Popular media can gradually establish an imaginative community through disseminating messages to the transborder communities of a given region. They can downplay negative and damaging news and highlight positive events for the sake of security and development of communities.

After more than 75 years of the project, the integration theories in EU are still controversial and apparently remain with flaws and in a state of paradigmatic conflict. There is no unified version of EU theory and no consensus is made on major theories, processes, analytical and logical perspectives. Rather most of the structural bases are in questions such as supranationalism and multilevel governance, citizenship and immigration, each of which needs further investigation to deal with contemporary problems and confusions. In such a condition, where theories are in competition and no unified methodology is working adequately then a greater degree of shared disciplinary norms might be working while scholars and academics of integration studies would be encouraged to build upon its previous works and theories. Under such circumstances, my thesis will be a unique case study for greater accumulation of knowledge where various theoretical and discursive methods complement each other rather than arguing constantly to make unsustainable grand theories.

This study contributes to the disciplines of international relations and security studies and may encourage students of global politics and international relations to consider how popular culture and visual media can inform the most contemporary important debates around regional security integration. It has lessons specifically for South Asian students, researchers and regional security advocates. The study has attempted to refine understanding and outlooks by identifying issues pertinent to identity, 'we' and 'they', danger, threats and imagined community, all of which are integral parts of the construction of security in the region. Future research will need to incorporate other local and national institutions such as parliaments, political parties, civil societies, NGOs, national courts and mass populations to broaden the understanding and interactions among the various groups of the populations and day to day institutional relations.

Thus my study can serve as an alternative explanatory case study for other global security integration projects that are concerned with analysis of this region.

By highlighting the above issues, I do not claim that these are the only challenges facing today's human geographers in the study of regional security communities. Further research is needed to build a better understanding of critical geopolitical concepts and the way in which domestic and international factors interact with the analysis of security issues from a South Asian perspective; how discourses specify the interest of the stakeholders in the South Asian regional security community; and how interests are mediated through political institutions. However, this study represents a good starting point for analysing the concept of a South Asian security community through popular media.

### **10.5 Future Directions in Research**

Much work remains to be done in terms of spelling out how popular geopolitics can be extended into studies of the new social media, especially Twitter, blogs and Facebook, as they influence the various organizations, institutions, civil society, mass populations and interest groups at national and regional levels. It is important that scholars of critical geopolitics broaden their horizon of research, particularly given the notable examples of people moving from traditional media to new social media and networking to engage in collective action and resistance. The Arab Spring (Huang, 2011), the Moldova elections 2009 (Lysenkor and Desouza, 2012) and Iran's democratic movements (Khiabany and Sreberny, 2007) are good examples where these media have played a greater role.

Can new social media foster relations and generate political activism between geographically and politically disparate communities in the Sub-continent? To what extent can these along with traditional popular geopolitics be considered political discourses in the

construction of a security paradigm for the South Asian region and as a tool for *social learning and mobilization*? As mentioned, Jensen and Oster's (2009) study and the talk-show on IBN-CNN (2013) are the best examples to explain that new social and mass media have the ability to change people's perceptions as well as the personal and collective behaviour of the population. They can affect the mood and support of voters in the upcoming (2014) parliamentary elections of India. The interviewees acknowledged that the new social media can influence the behaviour of populations as well as the agenda of political parties.

The research, in this thesis, helps fill a gap in contemporary security literature and can serve as a future reference in the context of South Asian regional integration frameworks. It yields new knowledge in particular and critical inquiry and thinking in general into the regional security literature to fill a gap in the contemporary scholarship of security. It will hopefully provide a basis for future security researchers to dismantle disciplinary boundaries in understanding security concepts and to accommodate various branches of cognate social sciences to bridge the gap between and among international relations, security studies and human geography.

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