

Private Sphere, Public *Wahala*¹: Gender and Delineation of *Intimisphäre* in Muslim Hausa Video Films

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Abstract

This paper draws attention to the core challenges faced by globalization of media identities in traditional African societies. It specifically focuses attention on the delineation of female space in Nigerian Muslim Hausa entertainment ethos with particular reference to Hausa video films. The increasing availability of media technologies to Muslim Hausa youth has provided them with a template to re-define the boundaries between the genders in popular culture of a Muslim society where strict separation of the genders in clearly defined spaces is the norm. This redefinition is through massively popular video films. Using cinematic techniques based on Hindi film templates, the portrayal of gender spaces has brought the creative impetus of video filmmakers in direct collision with the Muslim religious establishment that seeks to reinforce the Islamic Shari’ a in public space. The main focus of the paper is on visual re-enactment of the Hausa Muslim woman’s *intimisphäre* in a public arena—commoditized in theaters, cinemas and consumer media products such as CDs and VHS tapes.

Introduction and Context

In Hausa (northern Nigeria) popular culture, the traditional *tatsuniya* folktale provides the quintessential template around which the Hausa mindset is displayed in public discourse.² As the fountainhead of Hausa oral literature it provides a filmic canvas on the life of a Bahaushe (ethnic Hausa) in a traditional society. Aimed mainly, but not exclusively, at children, the *tatsuniya* is an oral script aimed at drawing attention to the salient aspects of Hausa cultural life and how to live it in a moralist manner. Further, it is necessarily a female space, for as argued by Ousseina Alidou (2002b, p.139),

In Hausa tradition, the oldest woman of the household or neighborhood—the grandmother—is the “master” storyteller. Her advanced age is a symbol of a deep experiential understanding of life as it unfolds in its many facets across time and she is culturally regarded as an important source of knowledge production, preservation, and transmission. This matriarch becomes the mediator/transmitter of knowledge and information across generations... She uses her skills of storytelling to artistically convey information to younger generations about the culture and worldview, norms and values, morals and expectations. Her relationship with her younger audience of girls and boys...puts her in a position to educate, through her *tatsuniya*, about taboo topics such as sexuality, and shame and honor, that culturally prevent parents and children from addressing with one another.

Thus devoid of male space, the *tatsuniya* necessarily becomes a script on how to live a good life devoid of threatening corruptions. Strongly didactic and linear (without

¹ “wahala” is a frequently used Hausa word among filmmakers. In its original linguistic term it means “difficulty”; however, in critical discourse it is used to mean “furor” or “botheration”.

² My focus on orality is restricted to popular culture, rather than the whole gamut of oral literature which might encompass historical accounts, heroic epics, riddles and jokes, proverbs, etc.

subtle sub-plot developments considering the relatively younger age of the audience), it connects a straight line between what is good and what is bad and the consequences of stepping out of the line. The central meter for measuring the “correctness” and morality of a *tatsuniya* is the extent to which it rewards the good and punishes the bad. Its linearity ensures the absence of sexually moral conflict resolution scenes which present moral dilemmas for the unseen audiences. In cases where such conflicts exist—for instance theft situations—the narrator simply summarizes the scene. The reason for the linearity as well as the deletion, as it were, of conflict resolution scenes is attributed to Islam. As Ousseina Alidou (2002 p. 244), building up on the earlier works of Skinner (1980) and Starratt (1996) points out,

The impact of Islam on oral literary production in Hausa culture has been multifold. First, the inception of Islam in Hausa culture infused the themes, style, and language of Hausa oral literature with an Islamic ethos and aesthetics. Its mode of characterization also took a turn towards a more Islamic conception of personal conduct that defines a person as "good" or "evil" Furthermore, many modern Hausa epics and folktales contain metaphorical allusions to spaces relevant to Islamic history and experiences.

The imaginative structure of the *tatsuniya* does not stop merely at narrative styles; it often builds complex plot elements using metaphoric characterizations. Animals thus feature prominently, with Gizo, the spider, taking the role of the principal character, although alternating between being good and being bad. One would even imagine traditional Hausa *tatsuniya* tellers using computer animation for their stories—for the animations used in Hollywood cinematic offerings such as *Madagascar*, *Racing Stripes*, *Shark Tale*, *Shrek*, *Antz*, *Finding Nemo*—all aimed at metaphorically exploring the human psyche superimposed on the animal kingdom—could be seen as perfect renditions of the Hausa *tatsuniya* using the power of modern media technologies. A good example of this multiform structure is the Hausa folk tale of *The Gazelle has Married a Human*, in which a gazelle transforms into a beautiful maiden and entices a young man to marry her and live with her parents. When she is sent to the vegetable garden to fetch a vegetable for soup, she transforms into gazelle again, calls all her fellow animals and get seriously down with song and dance routines—a bit like scenes from the Hollywood film, *The Lion King*.

A study of the thematic classifications of the *tatsuniya* by Ahmad (2002) reveals plot elements that, interestingly, resonates with commercial Hindi film plots and created creative convergence points for Hausa video filmmakers to use the *tatsuniya* plot elements, if not the direct stories, couched in a Hindi film masala frame. These themes according to Ahmad (2002) include unfair treatment of members of the family which sees various family conflicts focusing on favoritism (as for example in the *Kogin Bagaja* folktale), unfair or wicked treatment of children (*Labarin Janna da Jannalo*), and disobedience to parents (*The girl who refuses to marry any suitor with a scar*). This is supplemented by the second theme of the tales, which included reprehensible behavior of the ruling class or those in positions of authority. Sub-themes included forced marriage (*Labarin Tasalla da Zangina*), arrogance by members of the ruling elite (*The daughter of a snake and a prince*), oppression (*A leper and a wicked Waziri and a Malam*). Other themes deal with deceptiveness, personal virtues and virtuous behavior. For further embellishment, some of tales in the *tatsuniya* repertoire contain elements of performance arts where the storylines merges into a series of songs—often with a refrain—to further add drama to the story. The

songs in Hausa folktales, however, are controlled by the gender spaces that characterize the stories. It is either boys, or girls dancing; rarely a mixture of the two.

The coming of Islam to Hausaland in about 1250 (Adamu 1999) lent a more religious coloration to the folktales and further reinforced the moral aura of their themes. The reinforcement of separate spaces for the genders in Islam consequently reflect the gender-space specificity of the Hausa *tatsuniya*. The gender space is described and clearly delineated—and this further underscores the moral imperative of the *tatsuniya* narrator who often improvises on the stories. Thus within this framework, the *tatsuniya* scripts do not provide for the exploration of the female *intimisphäre*, but for the reinforcement of gender stratification of a male dominated society. This antecedent gender space limitation of the Hausa folktale mindset would come under serious challenge from the visualization of the Hausa folktales when transition is made to video medium.

Traditional Hausa Cultural Mindset

The central engine of the Hausa popular culture as outlined in the antecedent Hausa folktale is the Hausa cultural mindset. The typical—or as typical as can be—Hausa mindset is characterized by about nine behavioral attributes, as argued by Kirk-Greene (1973). These included *amana* (strictly friendliness, but used to refer to trust), *karamci* (open-handed generosity) *hakuri* (patience), *hankali* (good sense), *mutunci* (self-esteem), *hikima* (wisdom), *adalci* (fairness) *gaskiya* (truthfulness), *kunya* (modesty, self-deprecation, humble, acknowledges others' opinion over his own), *ladabi* (respect self and respects others; also considerate of others, both older and younger).

Other typological profiles by Alhassan et al (1982) revealed additional attributes which included *zumunta* (community spirit), *riikon addini* (adhering to religious tenets and being guided by them with attributes such as truth), *dattako* (gentlemanliness), *kawaici* (tactfulness), *rashin tsegumi* (no idle talk), *kama sana'a* (engaging one in gainful employment), and *juriya da jarumta* (fortitude, courage and bravery).

When Hausa drama, especially as shown on Television, evolved in the 1960s these mindset qualities became the main focus of the storylines of the more popular series, reflecting an often bucolic or simplified urban lifestyles. Taking CTV 67 based in Kano and operating from 1983, its “situation comedies” revolve around scams and tricksters. These include, “*Sabon Dan Mogori*”, “*Kuliya*”, and “*Hankaka*”. The first, “*Sabon Dan Mogori*,” features a major protagonist who might be considered a lovable rogue. The second, *Kuliya*, centers, around a roguish family. The third, “*Hankaka*,” features a larger than life hero who regularly defeats rogues. As Louise M. Bourgault (1992 p. 2) pointed out,

Aesthetically, these “situation comedies” are very satisfying. Shot in rural areas they have authenticity as well as visual charm. Spoken in Hausa, they possess a verbal richness typical of the traditional tales told in West Africa. For example, many of the characters of the Hausa dramas bear metaphorical names, epithets which give an insight into their personalities. The name *Hankaka* literally means “crow”; and the name *Buguzum* suggests a strong person who beats or thrashes others...Equally important to their success is resemblance of these “situation comedies” to the trickster and moral tales common throughout much of Africa. From observing the producers and actors develop these programs, and from watching audiences react to them, it becomes imminently clear that these “situation comedies” derive from the

indigenous folktale tradition. And like oral tales, they serve to instruct, explain, advocate and reinforce Hausa values, as well as to entertain.

It is this reinforcement of Hausa values that would become a standard benchmark in creating critical reaction to more experimental cinematic styles by the Hausa when the shift was made from Television series into video film dramas.

Space – The Final Frontier: Hausa Atrium, Conjugal Space and Habermas

Television became to northern Nigeria in 1962 with the establishment of the Radio Television Kaduna (RTK) in Kaduna, which started relaying their programs to Kano in 1963. Due to the inadequate coverage of the whole State by RTK, the Kano State Government established an alternative television station in 1976 known as Kano State Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and sent nine foundation staff for Extension Training on attachment to Radio Television Kaduna. However, in May 1977 the then military Government took over all the regional television stations via the promulgation of Decree 24 and created Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) with its base in Lagos. The Decree which took effect retrospectively from April 1976 brought all the ten existing television stations under the control of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Television stations were later established in the remaining state capitals where none existed before, including Kano State which established CTV 67 in 1983.

A strong feature of the NTA Kano when it started were domestic drama series sponsored by companies manufacturing essentially household products—detergents, food seasoning, bedding materials, various lotions. These companies included Peterson Zachonis, Lever Brothers, GBO, etc. Aimed exclusively at the female space, these drama series, in promoting the goods and services of their sponsors, merely reinforced the traditional configuration of the Hausa spatial structure—with jingles and advertisements always showing women washing clothes and dishes, cooking the food and serving the food to the husbands who appreciatively salute the wife's excellent cooking. And in searching for storylines to emphasize the domesticity of the drama series, the producers used the same plot structure of the Hausa folktales and adopted the methodologies of their storylines. However, whereas the verbal tales rely on the audience to imagine the spaces described by the narrator, the availability of communication technologies now made it possible for a paradigm shift from orality to visuality. In translating Hausa oral culture to Hausa visual culture, drama series producers faced a central problem of protecting the sacredness of the female conjugal *intimisphäre*. This was facilitated actually by the structure of a typical traditional household.

The Hausa household, or *gida*, is the fundamental unit of residence, production, distribution, transmission, and reproduction. The *gida* is essentially a family farming unit and, at its mature stage, can contain multiple families of more than one generation with the family units of the household head, his married sons, and their children (Arnould 1984). Thus the

Hausa vernacular architecture incorporates principles of Hausa social and spatial organization. Walled on the outside, with a gradation of space from public on the outside to private on the inside...expressing the gendering of space—the importance of sequestering women. The result of increased concern with visual privacy was evidenced in Hausa architecture by high compound walls pierced only by doors to the *zaure* (entrance hall) (Pellow, 2002:150).

Central to this structure is the *tsakar gida*, an atrium which in other housing types would serve as a rather largish living room. The *zaure* leads to a corridor that ends in the atrium. And as Prussin (1986:212) also observed, “the door openings become visual foci, and all interaction becomes concentrated around these points in space. The doorways are staggered, preventing any direct view into the entrance way”. This barrier serves to protect the *tsakar gida*, from non-accredited viewing. The atrium itself is a private space, but public to accredited members of the household or those they allow; essentially female guests. Male guests are received in the *zaure* chamber.

The Hausa TV drama series strongly reinforced the image of the Hausa family structure—with clearly delineated spaces for the genders. The filming technique not only emphasizes this spatial division, but it also imposes it on viewers—who subsequently came to approve it. Domestic scenes were mainly shot outdoors—in the *tsakar gida*, or at the frontage of the House immediately outside the *zaure*—with little emphasis on bedroom scenes. Hausa TV drama series utilize the atrium as their salons where discussions—not matter their nature—take place not only between legal occupants of the household, but also their accredited guests. The latter have no access to the conjugal family space, and the atrium is used to receive such guests. Even though the atrium is a public space—as distinct from the conjugal space of the inner chambers of bedrooms—it is still a private space in a typical Hausa Muslim household because non-accredited members of the outside public need special permission to occupy such family atrium. Indeed, even neighbors who needed to fix the roof of their own houses—and who in the process might have a direct line of sight of the family atrium of a neighboring household—are demanded by cultural conventions to announce their intention of climbing the roofs of their *own* houses for repairs for a certain period. This will enable members of surrounding households to vacate their *own* atrium—retreating into the conjugal space. This way the sanctity of the female space—for all these precautions serve to uphold the value of female space—is maintained. New methods of filming which is based on both Hindi and American cinematic styles necessitate a reconfiguration of the female private sphere in video films, often in visual contexts that radically differ from the TV drama series.

The critical theory propounded by Jürgen Habermas in his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) provides a convenient framework for further understanding the division between the private and public spaces, and most especially in Muslim communities where the distance imposed by space between genders in public is strongly enforced. The particular appeal of this critical theory is in providing an analytical base that offers an opportunity to determine the impact of extraneous variables in the delineation of space in traditional societies. At the same time, it provides an insight into the application of the critical theory in a traditional society negotiating a redefinition of its public spaces within the context of media globalization.

I would wish to make it clear, however, that in this study, I focus attention on the visual media re-enactment of the female private space in an Islamicate environment,³

³ I adopt Asma Afsaruddin’s (1999) usage of Marshall Hodgson’s term *Islamicate* (1974:1:58-59), for the subsequent “modern” period (roughly from the 19th century on) to describe societies which maintain and/or have consciously adopted at least the public symbols of adherence to traditional Islamic beliefs and practices.

and the critical reaction of such process from the properly constituted representatives of the public sphere. As Nilüfer Göle (2002:174) notes,

The public visibility of Islam and the specific gender, corporeal, and spatial practices underpinning it trigger new ways of imagining a collective self and common space that are distinct from the Western liberal self and progressive politics.

Such public visibility includes breaking the conjugal space barrier by video cameras to film an essentially conjugal family space and bring it to the attention of the public. In this therefore I do not focus attention on participation of Hausa Muslim women in negotiating what I refer to as “space chasm” that separate their private and public spheres in their attempts to be part of the Hausa Muslim economic system.

The “public sphere” to which Habermas refers encompasses the various venues where citizens communicate freely with each other through democratic forums (including newspapers and magazines, assemblies, salons, coffee houses, etc.), which emerged with the formation of a free society out of the nation-state in 18th century Europe. The public sphere in its original form functioned ideally as a mediator between the private sphere of the people (including family and work) and the national authority, which engaged in arbitrary politics, although in our application dealing specifically with the sub-national issue of Muslim laws of female identity in northern Nigeria.

The public sphere exists between the private sphere and the public authority. The participants are privatized individuals, who are independent from the public authority, enjoying cultural products and discussing about them. As the institutionalized places for discussion such as salon, coffee house and theater increased, the places for family became more privatized and the consciousness about privacy strengthened more.

“As soon as privatized individuals in their capacity as human beings ceased to communicate merely about their subjectivity but rather in their capacity as property-owners desired to influence public power in their common interest, the humanity of the literary public sphere served to increase the effectiveness of the public sphere in the political realm.” (Habermas 1989:56)

Public opinion produced in public sphere started to have an influence on legislating law, which overarched the monarchic power and became the universalized. Further,

Included in the private realm was the authentic ‘public sphere’, for it was a public sector constituted by private people. Within the realm that was the preserve of private people we therefore distinguish again between private and public spheres. The private sphere comprised of civil society in the narrower sense, that is to say, the realm of commodity exchange and of social labour; imbedded in it was the family with its interior domain (*Intimosphäre*). (Habermas 1989:30)

Habermas himself even gives a schematic structure of the division between the private realm and the sphere of public authority (1989:30).

Private Realm	Sphere of Public Authority	
Civil society (realm of commodity exchange and social labor)	Public realm in the political sphere	State (realm of the 'police')
	Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press)	
Conjugal family's internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	(market of culture products) 'Town'	Court (courtly-noble society)

Thus as Talal Asad (2003) pointed out, the terms “public” and “private” form a basic pair of categories in modern liberal society. It is central to the law, and crucial to the ways in which liberties are protected. These modern categories are integral to Western capitalist society, and they have a history that is coterminous with it. A central meaning of “private” has to do with private property, while “public” space is essentially one that depends on the presence of depersonalized state authority.

While Habermas was primarily interested in “rational-critical” communication as the ideal standard of modernity, he identified its practical emergence with the intermediate space of coffee-houses and salons, where private citizens could assemble as a public, between the private space and personalized authority of kin and the public realm marked by the theatre of royal and religious ritual. It was set apart from those by communication that had to be convincing without the external support of the authority of the speaker.

What further contributes to the need for the demarcation of the public and private in Muslim northern Nigeria is the perception of the text in public affairs. For instance, Hausa tales are didactic, linear and sermonizing. Operating within the context of the Muslim Hausa mindset, it became a Herculean task to create a more “modern” concept of literary expression by the colonial administration in northern Nigeria. For instance, in requesting Muslims to write simplified indigenous language novellas for use in colonial-era primary schools in northern Nigeria in 1932, it was noted by Dr. Rupert East, the Svengali of northern Nigerian literature,

“...the first difficulty was to persuade these Mallams that the thing was worth doing. The influence of Islam produces an extremely serious-minded type of person. The art of writing moreover, being intimately connected in his mind with his religion, is not to be treated lightly. Since the religious revival at the beginning of the last (19th) century, nearly all the original work produced by Northern Nigerian authors has been either purely religious or written with a strong religious motive. Most of it was written in Arabic, which, like Latin in Medieval Europe, was considered a more worthy medium of any work of importance than the mother tongue. “ (East, 1936 p. 350).

This Islamic influence retains its hold on the northern Nigeria Hausa Muslim polity such at all discourse—whether private or public—is subject to Islamic injunctions. When the video film replaced the novel as a more powerful—and subsequently more influential—mode of social interpretation, the morality of the messages became a central focus. A necessary problem faced by the video film makers in Muslim northern Nigeria is the reconciliation of the radically different modes of storytelling

they adopt for their societies. A typical film storyline carries with it elements of conflict and ways of resolving the conflict. For the message to come out clearly, “unpalatable” scenes must be created, and as the story unfolds, contradictions and conflicts are sorted out. In essence, the private—conjugal family configuration—is made public. When the Hausa video industry was formed, it focused attention on exploring family tensions in a melodramatic fashion. It is this exploration of family spaces that brought the fore the tense relationship between the private and public spaces in Hausa cultural life.

The Hausa Video Film Industry

Hausa video film production started in 1990 with *Turmin Danya* in Kano. By 2000 a video film industry had been formed with three main storyline characteristics – love triangle (where two boys court the same girl; or two wives fight over the single husband), *auren dole* (where a girl or boy is forced to marry someone not of their choice), and song and dance (over 98% of Hausa video films must contain at least two to three song and dance routines). All these elements were directly copied from Hindi cinema which the Hausa had been exposed to through Television stations in cosmopolitan cities of Kano, Kaduna and Jos, and also cinema theater releases of Hindi commercial cinema directly imported by Lebanese residents in northern Nigeria. By mid 1990s the Hindi cinema changed and departing from its cultural roots, adopted a more globalized blend of Hindu religion and Americanization. When Hausa filmmakers started full production from 2000, they tilted towards the same direction as Hindi filmmakers. As Jyotika (2003:2) observes:

Despite its permeating Indian culture, Hindi cinema's stylistic conventions are paradoxically in complete disjunction from everyday reality: the films use dialogues instead of speech, costumes rather than clothes, sets and exotic settings, and lavish song and dance routines—hardly everyday familiar surroundings. Within the mise-enscène, this nonspecificity of address distances Hindi films from “authentic” portrayals of Indian life. Regional markers of costume, dress, and culture are either erased or deployed arbitrarily, and elements from different regions are mixed to figure as signs of cosmopolitan culture that account for a particular type of kitsch, the insignia of Hindi films. Even though they abide by other realist conventions, such as cause-and effect linear narratives, continuity editing, and spatial/temporal unity, the films show scant regard for looking “authentic” or bearing a similitude to realism.

Commenting further on the production values and styles of Hindi films, Ganti (2004:48) points out that

The dominant tone about the Bombay film industry and filmmaking in general is that most films produced in India are escapist, frivolous, formulaic; for "mere entertainment" and not "meaningful" or "artistic" enough.

Hausa video film industry merely echoes these production values—targeting themselves at non-cerebral part of the market with a strong dosage of surrealism spiced with lots of mixed gender song and dance which often include structured choreography. For instance taking singing and dancing motif alone, the predominance of song and dance routines in Hausa video films is shown Fig. 1 which indicates the numbers of Hausa video films with song and dance routines as a main element in officially registered Hausa video films from 1997 to 2001.⁴

⁴ Based on analysis of 615 Hausa video films as listed in NFVCB (2002).

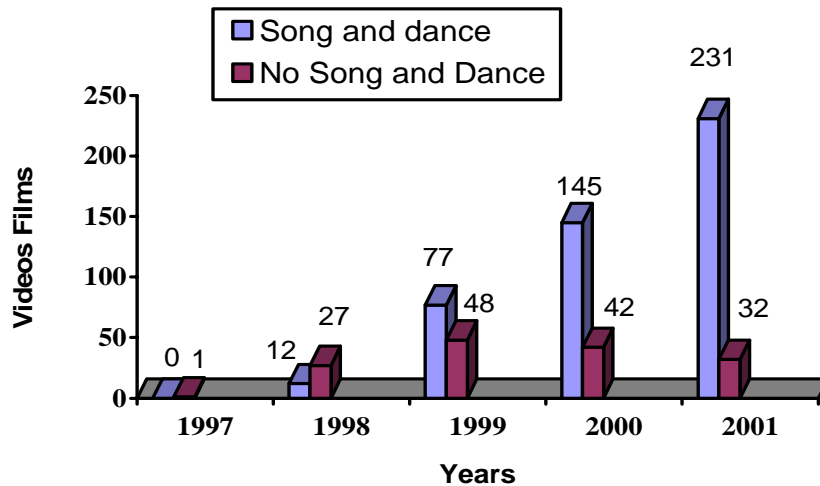


Fig. 1: Song and dance occurrences in Hausa video films

The development of Hausa video film lead to two strands of critical reaction—*wahala*—from the northern Nigerian Islamicate environment that brought to fore the sharp divisions between private and public sphere in Muslim popular culture. The first was at the mid-section of industry – in the mid-1990s – where the main focus was the seeming intrusion of the female *intimiphäre* by revealing scenes that are exclusively conjugal to the family. The four video films that triggered the critical reaction were *Saliha?*, *Alkaki Kwikwiyo*, *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka* and *Malam Karkata*. The second strand of critical reaction against Hausa video film and their violation of the female private space was in the clutch of video films that were released post-Shari’a. These video films rely mainly on female erotica by emphasizing female body structures especially in dance sequences—in defiance of the Shari’a legal code that sought to impose stronger moral modes of behavior. I will look at the first strand.

Hausa Filmmakers and the Cultural and Religious Establishments

The first Hausa films that started to draw the ire of the culturalist establishment were *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* in 1995, and *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* in 1998. Both were directed by late Mr. USA Galadima, a veteran non-ethnic Hausa director trained in the United States, and based in Jos. Both were shot with Betacam and not the VHS format that was to become standard for Hausa home video films. However, although *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* was subsequently released on VHS, *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* was never released on video. Each of these films were accused of being too adult for the conservative Hausa audience.

Soyayya Kunar Zuci is a story of lovers who eloped to escape their parents opposition to their friendship. While on the run, the girl becomes pregnant, with tragic consequences. It was the process of the girl getting pregnant, obviously involving some form of nudity that created the most concern to the cinema audience when it was screened in 1995. Defending her role in the film, the leading actress Aisha Bashir stated in an interview:

“This is just drama (not real life), and if you know what you are doing (as a character) you should know that (the scenes depicted in the film) are not part of our culture. Our purpose in the film is to warn our people about these kinds of behaviors (elopement and unwanted pregnancy) which are typical of *Turawa* (white people). Our people should respect their

culture...*Soyayya Kunar Zuci* is my best film and I am proud of it." Interview with Aisha Bashir, *Fim*, March 1999 p. 7).

Soyayya Kunar Zuci also entered into the Hausa video film industry in being the first video film to be patterned on the loose plot elements of a Hindi film (based on *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye*, released in 1983). Its other distinction, not surprising considering that it was actually sponsored by the National Film Corporation, Jos, included receiving an award at the 2001 FESPACO (Panafrikan Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou) at Burkina Faso.

Alhaki Kwikwiyo was released in December 1998. The video film was based on a woman's empowerment novel of the same name by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu of Kano. It chronicles the story of a woman whose husband was not happy with the fact that she gave birth to five girls; he would have preferred boys. He decided to divorce her and subsequently married two younger wives, one after the other. The central themes of the film are two—*kishi*, and the empowerment of the divorced "senior" wife. It was in the way the principal character interacted with his wives, and the fact that their *kishi* was explored principally through their competition for his sexual attentions that earned the film the label of *batsa* (obscene).⁵ According to a viewer:

"This film is good and an improvement. But there are three places that need to be censored for the general release of the tape. First was the scene where Alhaji and his wife were shown on bed together. Second where one of the wives was seen giving her houseboy a massage in an adulterous situation. Third where a flash of the pant of one of the wives was shown in a domestic violence scene. If they remove these scenes it can be suitable for general audience. But if they don't, then it is not proper to take it to our homes for children to see." If they restrict it only to cinema, there is no problem." A viewer, at Kofar Mata Stadium after the premier showing of *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*, *Fim*, March 1999 p. 9).

Incidentally, *Alhaki* is also the first Hausa film shown at the 12th New York African Film Festival organized by the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater and the African Film Festival on 24th and 27th April, 2005. Before *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* was released on tape, already the news of the film's content had spread throughout northern Nigeria. Cassette dealers in Kaduna were the first to react against the film when one of them stated:

"We will not sell this tape (*Alhaki Kwikwiyo*) when they release it because it goes against our culture and religion. It is clear there is some form of nudity in the film, and in our position as Muslims, it is prohibited for us to make films with nudity. We have told the producers if they want us to distribute the film, they have to remove a lot of things (nudity)." Mustapha Mai Kaset, Kaduna, in an interview with *Fim*, March 1999 p. 12.

However, in almost rapid succession three video films were released that all proved catalytic to the establishment of hitherto unheard of censorship mechanisms essentially to safeguard the female sanctity. The specific video films to attract the wrath of the Muslim scholars were *Saliha?*, *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka* and *Malam Kartata*. The first two were both released in 1999, while the third, produced, but never released in 2000, was a more serious adult-themed drama. I will now look at the evolution of

⁵ Strictly, "*batsa*" means obscenity – whether in language or behavior. It is a generic term for any behavior that has sexual overtones, and can include both soft and hard core of pornography; although in the context of *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*, it refers to the numerous scenes in which the principal character either touches his wives or appear semi-naked with them on beds, or where one of the wives was seen massaging her houseboy.

each of these films and how they contributed to the critical discourse on the impact of globalized medium of messaging in a traditional society.

Saliha?

Both the religious and Government establishments had, up till 2001, largely ignored the home video film phenomena. Indeed except for children, youth and housewives, the entire Hausa home video remained largely ignored by the large sections of the critical civil society. The Muslim scholar community took notice of the industry only when *Saliha?* was released in 1999 in Kaduna. The video was widely condemned as ridiculing Islam and the Muslim female, especially her *hijab*—the head covering. According to the video's blurb:

Saliha? is a Hausa home video portraying the importance Hausa culture attaches to the preservation of the virginity of female child before marriage.

Saliha? chronicles the life of a deeply conservative and apparently religious Hausa Muslim girl constantly clothed in *hijab* (the Muslim female head covering) to further accentuate her modesty and piety. After she got married she passed on to her husband a sexually transmitted disease (not AIDS)—clearly indicating that despite her religiosity, she must have been sexually promiscuous at one not too distant stage. Plate 1 shows scenes from the video film.



Plate 1: Double Faces of Piety – Saliha as pious (left), and joyfully canoodling with a lover after a “farewell” activity, three days before getting married (right)

In an advertorial to the video film in July 1999 the producer explained his motive by insisting that he wanted to draw attention to the need for *istabra'i*, a waiting period which a Muslim woman who had lived a free lifestyle must undergo before getting married, and which in the character in the story did not observe.⁶ The video film was released to the public on Sunday 13th July 1999 in Kaduna. On Tuesday 27th July 1999 the producer, el-Saeed Yakubu Lere received a letter from a previously unknown group of “Muslim Brothers” from Tudun Wada area of Kaduna under the leadership of a Suleiman Asad who had apparently passed a *fatwa* of death sentence on the producer and the director of the video film. The group promised to carry out the death sentence unless the producer withdraws the video film from the market and issue a public apology. The group insisted that the video film has disgraced Islam and particularly the Muslim hijab. The emergence of hitherto unknown group calling

⁶ Advertorial, “Fim ‘din *Saliha?* Ya Ciri Tuta”, *Fim*, July 1999 p.29.

themselves “‘Yan’uwa Musulmi” (Muslim brothers) caused some confusion because the label is often associated with the Shiites in northern Nigeria. It later emerged that the “death squad” was merely using the label Muslim Brothers as an indication of their solidarity in Islam, rather than being connected in anyway with the Shiite brotherhood in Kaduna or Nigeria at large.

Other Muslim scholars in Kaduna condemned the video film on its inappropriateness and a direct insult to Islam and the female private sphere via the hijab. They all concur that even if the producers wanted to demonstrate that there are some girls with such salacious behaviors, using an apparently pious Muslim girl to convey the message was wrong because it gives an impression that girls in hijab are hypocrites.⁷

The furor that the video created was to a large extent caused by the fact that the video was, like almost all Hausa video films, split into two parts. Part 1 was first released and told the story up to Saliha’s nuptial night, when her husband was bitterly disappointed to discover she was not a virgin (the video did not explore whether he was also as “pure” as he expected her to be – reflecting a moral burden on the female character, at the exclusion of the male, in most Hausa video films), and to cap it, a few days later he discovered he had contracted a sexually transmitted disease. Tests at the laboratory showed he contracted it from her.

The release of this section of the entire drama only in Part I of the video, which did not of course show how it was resolved, gave the impression that apparently pious girls (thus the question mark on her name, *Saliha*, which meant *pious* and is also a common Muslim Hausa name) are not all they seemed to be. Thus the audience did not wait to watch part two of the drama before pouncing on the producer and the director.

In Part 2 of the video, which was hurriedly released to complete the story, the producers provided flashback scenes about how Saliha lived her life before the marriage. It would appear that despite the piety she was a “loose” girl, with a boyfriend from whom she contracted the disease. Yet if anything, it only confirmed to the critical audience the *hijab*, a symbol of sacredness, has been profaned. In a direct quotation in an interview, the producer was recorded as saying:

“I did not produce the video with the intention of causing any controversy, and Allah is my witness. I am (therefore) seeking His forgiveness for any mistakes that are in the video.” (*Fim*, November 1999 p. 22).

A year later, in retrospective bravado, the producer denied this statement in another interview with *Fim* in which he stated,

“I can’t recall seeking for any forgiveness over this video (*Saliha?*). What happened was that those who issued death sentence on us actually demanded an explanation about our motives in making the video. I explained myself in radio interviews. What I did was that after the furor generated by the video, I consulted learned Muslim scholars about accusations against me and the my motives for doing the video. All the scholars I consulted assured me that if I were killed on these reasons alone, it would be murder, which is contrary to Islamic ruling on such

⁷ Survey by *Fim* magazine on the furor generated by Saliha? and reported in *Fim*, November 1999 pp 23. The report also contains contents of the actual death letter to the producer of the video.

issues. So I am saying if they had killed me, I would have died a martyr.” (El-Saeed Yakubu Lere, Producer, *Saliha?* in interview with *Fim*, December 2000 p. 59).

The death sentence was eventually removed. If anything, the incidence awakened the Muslim community to the fact the Hausa home video can be used a medium of messaging—and the message may not always be what they want. Viewer reaction was equally furious, as typified by this angry correspondent to a magazine:

“Before the appearance of *Saliha?* young girls and women who loved wearing hijab became tarred with the same paintbrush as those who don’t like hijab. Night or day, whenever a girl or woman with a hijab is sighted, you often hear sniggers of “*Saliha?*”, indicating a hypocrite. Almost at once, many women stopped wearing the hijab, for fear of being equated with *Saliha* of the film *Saliha?* Similarly, those who are not Muslims, and who hate Islam will now seize the opportunity to label all Muslim women hypocrites, especially as the film is produced by an insider (i.e. a Muslim)”. (Hajiya Ali, *Tauraruwa* magazine Letters page, August 1999, p. 2).

Like in most controversies, there was some support for *Saliha?*, as indicated by the following letter’s page correspondent:

“The critics claimed that *Saliha?* was to meant to disgrace the hijab. In my view this is not so. People seem to forget this is *drama*. Also the title says *Saliha?*, the ? is a query...the critics are just being selfish, otherwise the film illuminates us about ugly dogs biting hardest, because all those holier-than-thou types may have a secret or two to hide. And yet they are threatening to kill the producer! Why? For just producing a film? I recently heard him explaining himself in *Jakar Magori* (a Radio Nigeria, Kaduna program). I really pity him.” (Abdulganiyu A. Ango, *Fim* magazine letter’s page, December 1999 p. 7).

Eventually the furor died down, but it served as a bitter lesson to other producers, since no other film appeared that seem to cast integrity on the Muslim female. It also shows clearly the clash that is likely to occur when media technologies are used in a powerful way to portray social issues. The refusal of the critics to distinguish between drama and real life show the balance of credibility needed in using media technologies in visual messaging in traditional societies.

Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka (JYFH)

While controversy over *Saliha?* was still raging, another video with religious theme was released also in 1999 in Kano. This was *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka*, a devastating comedic take on Hausa Muslim scholar mendicants, and at the core a cautionary tale about trusting Muslim scholars without accrediting their knowledge or authority. It portrays the machinations of some Muslim scholars in their relationship to society, but particularly to women.

It focuses on the chronicles of a wandering marabout, “Al-Sheikh Ibro” (played by Rabilu Musa Danlasan, a comedian), with a shallow knowledge of Islam, and yet portraying himself as a scholar of immense knowledge, and preying on gullible citizens, especially women who want him to give them charms and chants to ward off a husbands intending or resident co-wife (*kishiya*). This mendicant was counterbalanced by a more knowledgeable Malam who corrects the mistakes of the charlatan “Sheikh”.

While the video film narrates his escapades in a typical community, the trigger that caused furor was a song and dance sequence in the film, the *Rawar Salawaitu* (the *Salawaitu* dance), a particularly energetic dance which was led by the Sheikh himself.

The dance was performed by five women who came to the Malam seeking chants and charms. The Malam insists on the dance as part of his consultation fees. The dance involves the entire body, especially the derriere, shaken vigorously and suggestively. Even the camera artwork was rigged to focus exclusively on the breasts and derriere of the women dancers. In one of the scenes, he became so sexually aroused that he was seen battling with a raging penile erection (“gora”⁸) after a sexually arousing dance from one his women visitors, as seen in a screenshot from the film in Plate 2.



Plate 2: *Al-Sheikh Ibro, caricaturing a Hausa Muslim Malam (left) and dealing with a raging sexual arousal during Rawar Salawaitu (the Salawaitu dance) in Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka (right)*

Even the characters’ dressing, mode of speech and instruments of religious worship such as the ridiculously over-sized rosary (“carbi”) beads (left image in Plate 2) which is referred to as *firgita jahili* (frighten an illiterate) is a caricature of a Muslim Malam.

JYFH generated a lot of debates in Kano, principally among those who felt that the Hausa Muslim Malam, a revered member of the civil society, has been desecrated.⁹ Typical reactions included:

“In his video film, *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka*, he made women dance, and the dance was not appropriate. Malam Ibro, you should be aware that children and youth watch these films and they can imitate what they see. I hope you will correct in future. And you should stop using swear words in your films, it is not appropriate, because you are supposed to be teachers, not destroyers of good manners.” (Ibrahim Muazzam Yusuf, *Fim*, July 2000 p. 5).

And

“*Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka* is disgraceful. Has the film elevated or downgraded Islam? What does “Salawaitu” mean? Where did they get the word? If we call the women who did the (Salawaitu) dance prostitutes, are we wrong? Please take care for the future!” (Abubakar Usman, *Fim*, October 2000, p. 5)

The religious establishment did not specifically react against the film, simply because they were not even aware of it—since they rarely watch such films. However in an interview, the producer of the film (an actor who appears in the film as being the more rational Malam than Ibro’s charlatan Sheikh Ibro, and who himself is a well-versed Islamic scholar) depended it:

⁸ A knobby stick or club – a perfect metaphor for a penile erection.

⁹ The forum for expressing these views were public gatherings, radio phone-in shows on Radio Kano, Radio Freedom, and Hausa popular culture magazines such as *Garkuwa*, *Fim*, *Annashuwa*, *Nishadi* etc.

“Despite the complaints of viewers about JYFH, it is my best film because of two reasons. First it has brought me out as an actor. Secondly I want to express my concern about the way some Mallams behave, and we used the film to illustrate the dangers of ignorant Mallams.” Interview with Malam Dare, *Garkuwa*, December 2000 p. 38.

His defense for the film remained consistent, as he further clarified in another interview three years after the film was released:

“Sure I have heard (the furor against the film), and they are still at it. It is however a mistake for people to condemn the film. I have tried several times to draw the attention of people towards this ignorance about the role of film in social messaging. We have portrayed the wealthy, the poor, the ignorant, the rulers. We have shown the good and bad attributes of each of these class of people. So what is surprising when we portray Muslim scholars? There are bad ones as well as good ones among them. Thus when you show a disease, you should also show its cure. And everything that Ibro did in the film *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka*, there are some Muslim scholars in our communities with these kinds of behaviors (Interview with Auwalu Idris (aka Malam Dare), *Fim*, August 2002, p. 21).

The fact that the Hausa Muslim scholar community had never commented on the Hausa film industry was essentially because they did not see it as a culturally threatening influence. Islamic culture has been strongly entrenched in the mindset of the Hausa such that if years of media parenting with Hindi film bombardment did not produce a community of idol-worshippers (despite cramming thousands of Hindi film soundtracks which paid tribute, one way or other, to Hindi idols), then certainly the Hausa home video would not. The industry came to their notice only when it challenged their moral space. More was to come with the public screening of *Malam Karkata* in 2000.

Malam Karkata

With the public outcry about JYFH still ringing, the third catalytic video film appeared. This was *Malam Karkata* (2000, Kano) which was first (and only) shown at Wapa Cinema, Kano in April 2000—few months before the Shari’a was re-launched—and created the first conduit to censorship in Kano by attracting widespread condemnation from the patrons because of its seemingly sexual innuendos and suggestions. This was more so in a polity already sensitized to Shari’a and religiosity.

Malam Karkata explored an adult situation in which gullible Hausa housewives in their search for chants and charms to either dominate their husband’s co-wives or their husbands (or both), were manipulated by marabouts. The Malam in the film always insists on sexual gratification from his female clients. In the course of his nefarious activities, he contracted HIV/AIDS. The title of the film is itself a direct sexual reference to a sexual position, thus geared towards revealing the activities of such marabouts. The video film is an attempt to highlight the issue of sexual harassment in Hausa societies and how women are taken advantage of by unscrupulous marabouts. It also contained a message about HIV/AIDS.

Reaction to the film in Kano was immensely negative, and the cinema did not screen it again. As a result of this reaction, the film was never released for general viewing. The film was seen as another firing salvo at the credibility of the Muslim scholar community. However, in an interview with *Tauraruwa* (September 2000 p. 12), the Executive Producer explained that the film was targeted at adult audience, and was in

fact based on real true life story, rather than fiction—proving that truth is stranger than fiction.

Similarly, in another interview, the principal character of the film, who played the role of Malam Karkata, Alhaji Kasimu Yero, a veteran TV drama star, explained his involvement thus:

“How can I regret my role in this film (that has been banned by marketers)? We had good intentions in doing the film. The film is about a godless Malam, Karkata, who uses his position to sexually abuse vulnerable women who come to him for spiritual consultations. We balanced his character in the same film with the life of a God-fearing Malam who always admonishes and advises women coming to him seeking chants and charms to harm their husbands or their husbands’ other wives, informing his clients that he did not learn such things in his studies. What is wrong with this message? At the end of the film Malam Karkata contracted HIV/AIDS from an infected girl, and his life entered into a real doldrums. Here, we want to warn Muslim teachers that beside this terrible sin of unlawful sex which will be severely punished by Allah, they are also endangering their health with their lust”. Kasimu Yero defends his role in *Malam Karkata*.” Interview, *Fim*, October 2000, p. 46).

In any event, *Malam Karkata* was never released commercially. Interestingly, the same storyline was used by a producer in Sokoto and a film, *Nasaba*, was made in 2004. In *Nasaba*, instead of a Malam sexually abusing his client, his role was taken over by a witchdoctor (*boka*)—a move to deconstruct the role of *boka* in Hausa societies.¹⁰

Global Lure, Local Wahala – Westernization and Hausa Female Film Star

As I noted earlier, two strands brought to fore the private-public debate in Hausa video films. I have dealt with the first—exploring the inner space of the conjugal private sphere—which appeared in video films in the virtual infancy of the Hausa video film industry. The second critical reaction was centered around the increasing Westernization of the Hausa video film female, especially in dress modes during song and dance sequences. In Islam the female herself is a private sphere, since there are strict rules governing her dressing—which has a range depending on the cultural climate of the community.

In 2001 the core Muslim States in northern Nigeria re-introduced the Islamic Shari’a as a legal code. The first contact of clash between the new public sphere of Shari’a and popular culture was in the video film industry. What triggered the concern was the increasing perceived violation of the sacredness of the female private sphere as visually depicted in the new crop of Hausa video films that started to emerge from 2000. In this, the civil society—as representatives of the public sphere—drew upon various core Islamic injunctions against such trespass. In Islam, the first criterion of private life was that a person may choose to keep certain matters concealed from and inaccessible to others. This criterion implies a prohibition on search and investigation,

¹⁰ The *boka* and the *Malam* are the main spiritual consultants in Hausa spiritual world, at least for women who seem to go to either for chants (to a *Malam*) or charms (to a *boka*, as well as *Malam*) to obtain some powers to control over either a rival co-wife, or a husband. For detailed analysis of *boka* Hausa films, as well as Hausa life, see Mathias Krings (2003) *Possession Rituals and Video Dramas: Some Remarks on Stock Characters in Hausa Performing Arts*, in A.U. Adamu et al (eds)(2004), *The Hausa Home Video: Technology, Economy and Society*, Kano, Nigeria, Center for Hausa Cultural Studies; Mathias Krings (1997) *Embodying the Other. Reflections on the Bori Pantheon*, *Borno Museum Society Newsletter* 32&33: 17-29.

and a prohibition on the dissemination of personal information and matters of the private sphere. Both have been clearly stated in the Qur'an (Surat Al-Hujrat, 49:12):

O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Indeed even the name of the Surat, *Al-Hujrat*, or Inner Apartments, is an allusion to the inner and private soul of the believer—a sanctuary that should be free from trespass, either by voices or by cameras. Further, the Qur'an not only admonishes against prying into each other's personal spheres, but also forbids any dissemination of such information (Surat Nur, 24:19):

Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not.

It is clear therefore more experimental filmmaking among Muslim Hausa would have to negotiate these core prohibitions about the sacredness of the private, and often, conjugal sphere. This was more so because by 2000, and under a global media snow storm, Hausa filmmakers had started exploring various globalized configurations of behavior that have what was seen as direct diluting influences on core Muslim Hausa mindsets. Alarm bells started ringing about the possible influence of new media technologies and behavioral modification. This is reflected in a few comments made either in public or in popular culture magazines—in essence, the Habermasian salons—in northern Nigeria:

“We the fans of Hausa video films have come to realize that it is the producers and the directors that are responsible for the corruption of culture and religion in these films. You know very well that every section of a woman is private. For instance, they are fond of allowing actresses without head covering, and straightening their hair; also making them wear skimpy Western dresses which reveal their body shapes, etc. In our awareness and education, we know these behaviors are immensely contrary to Islam. Don't such actresses ever think of the Day of Judgment? Don't forget their claims that they educating or delivering vital social message. Is this how you educate – by corrupting Islamic injunctions? Please look into this and take remediate measures immediately.” Aisha D. Muhammad Gamawa, Bauchi, *Fim*, Letter Page, March 2004 p. 6.

“In Islam there is no provision for a woman to appear onstage as an actress, especially young maidens are of marriageable age. The old Hausa TV dramas had women, but they are all mature. Thus filmmaking is not a profession for a Muslim girl. It is better for them to enter into caring professions.” Ustaz Umar Sani Fagge, during a special lecture on Hausa films, Sunday 6th August, 2000, Kano.

“Quite frankly, you have spoiled your films with copying Indians especially with regards to their songs and dances...In Sokoto viewers have started ignoring Kano (Hausa) films because they have become Indiyawan Kano (Kano Indians).” Halima Umar, Sokoto State, Letters page, *Tauraruwa*, Vol 4 No 6 September 2000 p. 7.

“How can a person, claiming to be Hausa, producing a film for Hausa people copy Indian and European cultural norms, and claims they are his culture? Film production (among Muslims) is good because it an easy medium for delivering social message, but the way they are doing it now is mistake.” Yusuf Muhammad Shitu, Kaduna Polytechnic, Zaria, in *Annur*, August 2001, p. 24

Hausa video filmmakers focus on the female *intimisphäre* as a tapestry to painting the what the filmmakers perceive to be the sexuality of essentially urban, transnational and globalized Hausa woman. A series of video films led the way in this. *Sauran Kiris* was the first Hausa video film to attempt an onscreen kiss in a bedroom. *Jalli* uses many bedroom scenes, with a husband and wife characters taking their clothes off and lying down on the bed as the scene fades to black. In *Daren Farko* a bride complains to the husband about lack of sexual attention. *Kumbo* has a scene in which the male and female principal characters were shown putting their clothes back on clearly after having “slept” with each other. *Gidauniya* was as explicit as could be in showing an attempted rape-scene. *Bakar Inuwa* has a host of adulterous scenes, with the lead “adulterer” clearly relishing his role after each bout of sexual activity. *Nasaba* shows principal characters repeatedly entering a hut for sex.

In exploring the female private sphere, the sexual focus of these Hausa video films merely replicate the early Hindi film experiments with exploring human sexuality. Examples include the romantic scene between Rani Mukherjee and Bachchan in *Yuva*; Priyanka Chopra kissing Akshay Kuma in *Andaaz*, and Karishma Kapoor kissing Aamir Khan in *Raja Hindustani*. As further observed by Saibal Chatterjee (2005 p.1) of these tendencies in Hindi cinema,

The expression of sexual desire has come out of the Bollywood closet. Over the past year, Hindi films have dealt with lesbian lovers, gay men, oversexed priests, cuckolded husbands, spouse-swappers, nymphomaniacs and other perceived deviants. And all this has happened in the comfort zone of the usually status quoist mainstream cinema.

And while the Hausa video film is still far from exploring alternative sexualities, the appearance of a video film poster in 2004 signaled the way. This was the shooting and editing, but not the release of *Dabdala* in 2004. *Dabdala* became significant in Hausa video film history because it was the first Hausa home video which allegedly focused on lesbian love theme.¹¹ Indeed the Hausa word *dabdala*, originally the name of a long tethering rope tied to the neck of a colt, was a Hausa street slang for lesbian love. However, within few days of the poster being pasted on walls in Kano, a magazine, *Mudubi* (March/April 2004 p. 2) focusing on Hausa home video, devoted half a page on the video which was yet to be released and revealed its alleged lesbian focus. This drew attention to the video which it would not have had since both the producer and the director, as well as the leading characters were total unknowns. The Kano State Censorship Board moved in swiftly to request the producer to appear before its Magistrate Mobile Court. Both the producer and the director went into hiding, and issued statements that they will not release the video. However, when the heat died down, they suggested they may re-title the video either *Awarwaro* or *Taro*—indicating their intention to eventually release it.¹²

¹¹ The poster, announcing the arrival of the video, was plastered all over video tape stores in Kano in February 2004. The furor against the poster—containing as it did, a clear lesbian tagline, with three women in a suggestive, at least to Hausa society, position—was so strong that it was reported to the Kano State Censorship Board, which ordered the producer to appear before it, which he refused. Producers who provided technical assistance during the editing of the video later claim that it was not actually a lesbian story as such; and that the producer used the poster artwork and a tantalizing lesbian theme to generate interest in the video and boost sales when released.

¹² Information accurate as of March 2004. It will, of course, has to pass the moral hurdles of the National Film and Censorship Board, Abuja, and the Kano State Censorships Board if it is to have a license which will make it possible to be sold. It will also have to pass the formidable barrier of the Kano State Cassette Dealers Association—the organization that actually initiated censorship in Kano,

Indeed by 2001 the Hausa video film was merely a reproduction of a Hindi film, which itself is a mere reproduction of a Hollywood film. The core cultural values of Hausa societies, as reflected in old Hausa Television dramas completely disappeared, and a more Westernized mode of story telling with emphasis on female sexuality became more common. A typical example of a comment is shown in the following observation:

“The biggest problem of the films is the types of dresses worn by the stars...You will see a girl during a song wearing “dude” clothing typical of Westerners, with shirt and trousers. It is wrong for a pure Hausa girl, with her rich cultural heritage, to appear in non-Islamic clothing...We should not borrow mode of dressing from any other ethnic group because we have our own...Why can't we use ours? We should promote our culture in Hausa films.” Suleiman Ishaq, Farmer, Katsina, in *Annur*, June/July 2002, p. 25

The filmmakers defend their art by pointing out that they are merely reflecting society. Mansura Isah, a Yoruba girl living in Kano and the most visible of the erotic dancers, suggested that such dances reflect changing times by arguing that

“It's modernization. They may not approve, but they still like it, you understand? It's modernity. We are only reflecting what is happening in the real world. You will see young girls and boys in real life going to a party and getting down; well we are only showing how they do it. And I can tell you the audience like the way we get down in the films. If not, they would not have bought them. If a film is to show all the girls in *hijab* (Islamic dressing) and no getting down, I swear the film will flop...But if you make a trailer of a film showing nubile girls dancing and getting down, the audience will whoop with approval; yet those who abuse us are those who will go the market and buy the films.” Mansura Isah, defending her craft, *Mudubi*, July August 2005, No 11, p. 7).

Thus the Hausa filmmakers have noted that films that are traditional to Hausa societies simply do not sell as well as those with heavy doses of Westernization, no matter how defined (but most especially in song and dances which is an opportunity to show off cleavages in both spheres of the female body). A typical retort to the criticisms by the Islamicate establishment is by Dan Azumi Baba, a novelist turned into filmmaker and the producer of *Badakala* who argued:

“The Hausa viewing audience contribute significantly to encouraging us (filmmakers) to adopt Westernization in Hausa films. This they do through refusal to buy films that do not have these elements, because despite all their criticisms, they still rush out to buy these films.” Dan Azumi Baba, columnist, *Fim*, June 2005 p. 3.

Dan Azumi then narrated how he spent almost one million naira on a religious film, *Judah*, and which flopped. Because of this, he vowed never to do such films again, and instead, focus on the films that will “bring home the bacon” (ibid). In a follow-up to this article, he continued in July 2005 by arguing that any attempt to make a Hausa video film about “real world” issues—such as corruption in the polity, ineptness of the Muslim scholar environment, prosecution of the poor, inefficiency of public services—would only led to a flop because not only will the filmmaker be subjected to prosecution by the injured party, audience will also not buy. It is for this reason that Hausa video filmmakers

from whom the government took a cue and formed the Censorships Board. *Dabdala* would most likely end up as an underground tape, and may kick start the Hausa video soft porn sub-market.

“...decided to focus on romance and its related issues because you can communicate your message without any problem at all. Further we can enhance such stories with songs to entertain. That way no one is the wiser.” Dan Azumi Baba, *Fim*, July 2005, p. 3.

To demonstrate his new resolve, he produced *Lancika*, one of the most criticized Hausa video films in 2005 due to its alleged sleaze and salacity—and high curiosity factor—and further resolved to produce a film on any issue (emphasis being on *any*, to suggest including “no go areas” of sexuality) so long as he is paid adequately. Thus as the filmmakers themselves keep insisting, Hausa home video is not about messaging, but about entertainment. As Ali Nuhu, an extremely successful commercial non-ethnic Hausa filmmaker stated in an interview,

“I am a film maker because I want to entertain. You often hear viewers claiming they want a video that shows (Hausa) culture, and yet when you do such video they just leave you with it (and don’t buy it). This year a video was released that showed pure Hausa culture, but it was not commercially successful. In fact a viewer had the cheek to write to a magazine to complain about the video; would that be an encouragement for the producer?” Ni Don Nishadantarwa Na Ke Yi (“I am in it for entertainment only), Interview with Ali Nuhu, *Annashuwa*, December 2002, p. 31.

These views and perspectives clearly indicate the chasm that separates the private and public spheres in Hausa popular culture. The insistence on Islamization of video film by culturalist establishment merely reflects Qur’anic injunctions noted earlier.

And it is for this reason that the Kano State Censorship establishment was created in 2001 in addition to the one at the national level in Abuja – to safeguard the culture and mindset of Hausa viewers in Hausa video films (Kano State, 2001). It should be pointed out that the censorship mechanism in Kano had never insisted that its values must be acceptable to other non-Hausa or non-Muslim parts of northern Nigeria. Its main focus and influence is in Kano. Thus a film produced outside Kano can be marketed and sold outside Kano without necessarily being subjected to the Kano State Censorship mechanism.

What further contributes to the need for the demarcation of the public and private in Muslim northern Nigeria is the perception of the text in public affairs. For instance, Hausa tales are didactic, linear and sermonizing. Operating within the context of the Muslim Hausa mindset, it became a Herculean task to create a more “modern” concept of literary expression by the colonial administration in northern Nigeria. For instance, in requesting Muslims to write simplified indigenous language novellas for use in colonial-era primary schools in northern Nigeria in 1932, it was noted by Dr. Rupert East, the Svengali of northern Nigerian literature,

“...the first difficulty was to persuade these Mallams that the thing was worth doing. The influence of Islam produces an extremely serious-minded type of person. The art of writing moreover, being intimately connected in his mind with his religion, is not to be treated lightly. Since the religious revival at the beginning of the last (19th) century, nearly all the original work produced by Northern Nigerian authors has been either purely religious or written with a strong religious motive. Most of it was written in Arabic, which, like Latin in Medieval Europe, was considered a more worthy medium of any work of importance than the mother tongue. “ (East, 1936 p. 350).

This Islamic influence retains its hold on the northern Nigeria Hausa Muslim polity such at all discourse—whether private or public—is subject to Islamic injunctions.

When the home video replaced the novel as a more powerful—and subsequently more influential—mode of social interpretation, the morality of the messages became a central focus. A necessary problem faced by the home video filmmakers in Muslim northern Nigeria is the reconciliation of the radically different modes of storytelling they adopt for their societies. A typical film storyline carries with it elements of conflict and ways of resolving the conflict. For the message to come out clearly, “unpalatable” scenes must be created, and as the story unfolds, contradictions and conflicts are sorted out. Not so in Hausa tales where the plot development is transparent and linear.

The 1990s saw a rapid transformation of the Hindi cinema and this had echoes on Hausa video film industry because these changes came at a time when the Hausa video film was beginning to define itself. Hindi cinema’s biggest hits of the 1990s were lavish musical fantasias on the intimately related themes of romance and family obligation, with *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (ripped-off from a Lollywood film, *Ghar Pyara Ghar*, and converted in some scenes to Hausa video film, *Kudiri*) and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (ripped into Hausa as *Sharadi*) setting new high-water marks at the Indian box office. These glossy *filmi* (musical) operettas broke new ground thematically in at least one respect: they insisted self-consciously on bedrock conventions of Hindi cinema that in the past would have been comfortably taken for granted. According to Chute (2000),

A succinct explanation of the shift that had occurred is offered by screenwriter-turned-lyricist Javed Akhtar, who helped create the “angry young man” persona of Amitabh Bachchan in the action scripts he co-wrote for *Zanjeer* (*Chains*, ‘73) and *Dewaar* (*The Wall*, ‘75), and who regards the movies of the so-called Hindu Family Values school as the first “really new formula” to emerge in Hindi cinema since the ‘70s. In an interview with Nasreen Munni Kabir, published in her book *Talking Films* (Oxford India, ‘00), Akhtar describes an “onslaught of consumerism” that in the 1990s “brought Indian society to the point where we are feeling slightly lost. We talk of a cultural invasion, an excess of Westernization, of a loss of family values ... But on the other hand, what’s the alternative? Do I go back to the village? Western culture and glitter are very attractive. So DSooraj Barjatya’s *Maine Pyar Kiya DI Love Someone*,’89d and *Aapke Hain Koun...*! D’94d offer the solution: a happy marriage between the two worlds. I can have everything offered by modernization and still hold on to family values and tradition.” David Chute (2000), Hindu Family, online at <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Island/3102/hfv.htm>

In a similar way, the most commercially successful Hausa video filmmakers see their success reflected in the Westernization of their craft. Ali Nuhu, the Hausa-speaking actor (and later producer and director) who pioneered the Hindi-to-Hausa cloning technique justifies Westernization of Hausa video film on the basis of progress and modernity. In an interview granted in Niger Republic, he justifies cloning American and Hindi films by arguing that

“The political systems in Nigeria and Niger Republic are based on Western models. Why didn’t these countries create their own unique political systems? The Western society is the most progressive in the world, and everyone is trying to copy them. Even Arabs, who are strongly attached to their religion and culture, are now aping Americans, in their mode of dress and other things. It is modernity, and you must go with the times, or you will be left behind.” Interview with Ali Nuhu, *Ra’ayi*, Vol 1 No 1, February 2005, p. 7.

To reflect this “Westernization is Modernization” paradigm, Hausa video filmmakers rely on non-ethnic Hausa female stars to appear in erotically stimulating Western dresses of tight revealing jeans and blouses during song and dance routines. Thus

even if the main storyline has what is referred to as “ma’ana” (meaningful) indicating that it might have a serious message, the filmmakers have to use sex to sell the film through dressing the female stars in revealing Western dresses. Examples include *Guda* and *Rukuni*, whose song and dance sequence is show in screenshot in Plate 1.



Plate 1 – “Erotica” in Hausa video film – *Guda* (l) and *Rukuni* (r)

However, mindful of the criticisms of the Islamicate traditionalists, and aware of the censorship of “indecent scenes”, the stars in the same song and dance routine change costumes to appeal to as wide sexual spectrum as possible. In some cases, filmmakers often cock a snook at the Islamicate establishment by including provocative song and dance routines that show both Western and Islamic dressing. This particular approach was used in almost all the song and dance routines, with a typical example shown in the screenshot of “Kachancala” in the video film *Makamashi* in Plate 2.



Plate 2 . Erotic and tradition—faces of Hausa video film song and dance in *Makamashi*

The preferred Western mode of dressing the female stars in the screenshots of two typical films has led to criticisms from the Islamicate establishment. A typical example of a comment is shown in the following comment:

“The biggest problem of the films is the types of dresses worn by the stars...You will see a girl during a song wearing “dude” clothing typical of Westerners, with shirt and trousers. It is wrong for a pure Hausa girl, with her rich cultural heritage, to appear in non-Islamic clothing...We should not borrow mode of dressing from any other ethnic group because we have our own...Why can’t we use ours? We should promote our culture in Hausa films.” Suleiman Ishaq, Farmer, Katsina, in *Annur*, June/July 2002, p. 25

Even the “Islamization” songs—where the female stars wear what might be called Islamic clothing during the song and dance routines—was not without its criticisms because it was seen as disrespectful of the Islamic mode of dressing which encourages modesty, for a girl to be seen singing and dancing in the same clothes that were designed to foster piety. As noted by a correspondent in *Fim* letter’s page

“See how (film producers) use cultures alien to Islam and Hausa in their films such as partying, without due regard to Islamic and Hausa cultural orientations...See how they dress up beautiful girls in tight-fitting that show off their nakedness clearly; are you bowing to the Jews or copying them?...I am appealing to our filmmakers to stop copying the culture of other people because those we copy do not copy us” Hashim Abdullahi Tanko Malam-Madori, letters page, *Fim*, January 2005 p. 9.

The Westernization principle of the Hausa video film stars further reflects itself in their way the appear on magazine stories and covers—emphasizing their globalized clothing as a means of communicating urban credibility. Some of them are shown in Plate 3 in their film appeal.



Abba El-Mustapha Mansura Isa and Co in *Tufafi*
(Courtesy *Fim*, July 2005)



Mansura Isah
(Courtesy *Mudubi*, August 2005)

Plate 3. Typical attire of Hausa-speaking song and dance video film stars, 2005

Ironically, the re-introduction of Shari’a legal system in Kano in 2000 seemed to have provoked the Hausa film makers into exploring areas of sexuality more daring than before in their song and dance routines. Consequently song and dance sequences with strong emphasis on the female cleavages—and the more “see through” the better—began to feature, despite a Censorship Board established to excise such scenes before commercial release. The main problem the filmmakers faced was getting ethnic Hausa girls to appear in the more erotic song and dances. Such girls are often bound by the Hausa mindset of *kunya* (bashfulness) and while they can appear in “family value”

scenes and indeed even song and dances (and dressed in Western clothes, as noted earlier), there was an unwillingness to accept more daring dresses.¹³ What emerges thus was the willingness of Hausa girls to appear in Westernized and sexualized roles in Hausa video films, against the backlash of strongly Islamicate society. This unwillingness of many of the mainstream Muslim ethnic Hausa girls to accept erotically suggestive roles—or dresses—created a massive market for non-ethnic Hausanized, but Muslim female artistes who readily accept the roles since they were not hampered by the same traditionalist mindset as ethnic Hausa Muslim girls.¹⁴ Hindi cinema stars heading towards the same direction included Rakhi Sawant who had

“...no problems with frontal nudity if the script demands it. In fact I wore a red, almost transparent panty for *Khamosh* but the scene was cut because the Censor Board thought it was too hot for Indian audiences.” Pam Bhandari, “Rakhi Sewant planning bold shows in the big screen – fed up of censor of sex” *India Daily*, Sep. 4, 2005.

Hausa video film stars who adopt similar creative approaches—performing whatever the script demands. Other women appear in sexually suggestive roles, although not in the singing and dancing. These included Ummi Nuhu in *Iyaka* and Sa’ima Mohammed in *Gambiza*. However, even for liberated girls, the heat can get too much. Mansura Isah, the most erotically provocative dancer in Hausa video film industry tried to absolve herself from her screen actions by stating, in an interview about her erotic performances:

“I swear it is not my fault. It’s the directors’ fault. I often feel too intimidated to talk back to any director who wants me to do something in their film, even though we are aware of our rights and we know what is decent and what is not. But if we refuse to do what they want they get annoyed with us, insisting that we had been paid already. So we must do what they want, but it is not my fault.” Mansura Isah, erotic dancer in Hausa video films, exonerating herself, *Fim*, February 2005, p. 29.

By the middle of 2005 Mansura Isah had become an erotic icon in Hausa video film industry—as much as Madhuri Dixit was for the Hindi film industry—guaranteed massive sales in any film she performs the song and dance, judging by her performances in *Guda*, *Tashi*, *Jari Hujja*, *Rukuni*, *Numfashi*, and *Farin Wata*. The last film actually attracted the wrath of a popular Muslim preacher in Kano city, Sheikh Jafar who condemned the film in a sermon (and which boosted expectation of the film because up till then only the film’s trailer was released) and forced the director (Nura Hussein) to delete the scenes deemed offending. He however defending the video film thus:

“...the (Western design) clothes the actress wear in my film (*Farin Wata*) are also worn by the daughters of the important people in their houses. We are just drawing attention to these bad habits (of Western dressing) in our films.” *Fim*, February 2005 p. 48.

¹³ This was reflected in the flak Abida Mohammed received over a “shake ‘em all” dance routine in *Kauna* (2000), and which prevented her (and other girls like her) from agreeing to do such suggestive dance routines in the future.

¹⁴ I make this distinction because discussions with producers, directors and artistes in the Hausa film industry opinions were expressed that mainstream “pure” Hausa, Fulani or Kanuri Muslim girls will not accept sexually provocative roles in Hausa video films because of the powerful control exerted on them by their conservative mindset.

Ironically, this defense by an artist only further drew the ire of the Islamicate establishment. This is because as the director noted, the Western clothes are indeed worn by young girls—in *their houses*; in their *private* sphere. The re-enactment of this private sphere on visual medium in a public arena (cinema, market, personalized commodities such as CDs and VHS tapes) only further emphasizes the tensions between female *intimisphäre* and public spaces of reproduction. For as Kadivar (2003:3) argued,

The individual, in his or her private space—which we call home—is on his own, and away from the public eye. There, he or she would be free to act, even though it may be a sin. There is only one condition to this freedom, which is that it cannot harm anyone else. That is all.

Mansura Isah attributed her popularity to her ability to respond to the script in an interview about her massive appeal among producers:

“I think maybe this might be attributed to the way I dance and the Western clothes I always wear. But I am pretty sure I am damned good actress and people love me for it. However, some of my fans have started scolding me about the way I dress. I have therefore stopped appearing in those dresses, and I have also started telling directors that I have reduced seductive dancing. I have morally re-aligned myself .” Mansura Isah, Hausa-speaking video film actress, *Mudubi* July/August 2005, No 11 p. 7).

This moral re-alignment was part of a massive media campaign by the Kano State Government in a moral crusade program as part of the Shari’a implementation called *A Daidata Sahu*, which seeks to rekindle the sense of responsibility and a respect for rules of engagement in an Islamicate environment. Clearly then the boundaries between private and public spaces in Hausa video films are about to be re-negotiated.

Conclusions

As Chris Philo (2004) pointed out, commodity exchange and social labor, while normally taken as activities played out on a broader (public) canvas, are within Habermasian matrix, regarded as essentially the concerns of the private individuals who effect and experience them; in which case, these dimensions of civil society are tracked to the (inter-)personal relations, events and practices where they are ultimately ‘real’. At this level, they parallel the more obviously private concerns of the family’s ‘internal space’, to do with affairs of the heart and hearth, all being taken as essentially private matters, individualized and contained. Philo (2004:6) then argues that

Yet, in Hagerman’s schema, the point is that these private concerns *do* translate into the (emerging) public sphere, as the just-mentioned (inter-)personal relations and the like *become*, in effect, the subject-matter, or at the least the prompts, for public debate, whether in a more cultural-literary or more political (politicised) vein.

Thus in the Habermasian matrix, private concerns need public spaces. This is more so because

the impression is of private individuals starting to bring their concerns, about commodity exchange, social labour, heart and hearth, into the public debates, or rather into debates held collectively between such individuals in a range of ‘sites’ away from the family home. In the process, public opinion about such concerns is formed, abstracting away from specific instances to more generalised claims with wider relevance, and so the private is transformed into the public (as concerns are shared, pontificated over, solutions proposed,

recommendations made). Thus a public sphere is constituted that, through being vocalised, circulated and in short 'publicised' (another key Habermasian concept), gains the potential to influence 'the sphere of public authority' (the state, together with its 'police' function)" (ibid).

In effect this means that cultural reproduction as depicted in Hausa video films re-enact the conjugal spaces of the family—as distinct from even the private-public (or quasi-public) space of the *tsakar gida* and provides a commodity exchange—film and its messages—that became a public concern—away from the conjugal space to State authority (in the example of Hausa video film, emphasized by the introduction of Shari'a and censorship laws on video films). Critical reaction about the depiction of the Hausa Muslim female conjugal spaces started in popular press in northern Nigeria, drawing the attention of the government, which set up a censorship board, complete with an implementation mechanism of police and magistrate courts, to prosecute film producers who violated the conjugal space (interpreted as showing "immoral scenes") in Hausa video films.

The sensuality in these Hausa video films, however, is shocking only because of the Islamicate environment the filmmakers found themselves. Under conventional Western filmmaking techniques, they would not even attract any attention. In an Islamic society, however, expressions of intimacy, especially between the genders is certain to lead to sermons and condemnations. Further, the intrusion of the filmmakers' into the sacred Muslim Hausa woman's inner private sphere (*intimisphäre*) uses a filming technique that violets the Islamic principles of female private sphere. Further, it is clear that a long running-battle between youth sexuality and implementation of Shari'a would not produce the kind of moral codes the Islamicate environment envisages through censorship mechanism.

In cautioning the use of this theoretical framework in contemporary analysis of gender spaces particularly in Muslim world, Hanita Brand (2003, p. 84-85) argued that the very dichotomy between the public and the private spheres needs some modification. This is because in between the public and the private are several layers of society that are more private than public but contain elements of both. These layers are especially pertinent with regard to women, as they may turn out to be the only extra-private, or semi-public, spheres that women occupy.

In using the private/public theoretical construct, I draw inspiration from the application of the theory empirically in a study of women and spaces in Sudan as developed in the concept of Salma Nageeb's Neo-harem (Nageeb, 2002; Nageeb, 2004), which explains the gender specific ways in which women experience the process of Islamization. Salma Nageeb developed this theoretical concept—essentially an extension of Habermasian private/public dichotomy—in studying how two, quite contrasting, groups of women restructure the use of female space in Sudan. While Salma Nageeb's study is rooted in re-mapping the use of physical gender space, in my study I focus on the virtual space segregation of the genders, which indeed in Muslim societies, translates into physical space delineations, and its consequences for the critical public sphere.

Consequently in Muslim Hausa societies, as in the Middle Eastern societies Brand referred to, the participation of women in public affairs is governed by two layers. The first layer refers to their biological bodies which in Islam is *al'aura* (*intimisphäre*), including their voices. When going abroad, such *intimisphäre* should

be well covered, although with a varying degree of interpretations of the extent of the coverage of the body acre across the Muslim world. The second layer of female space is her virtual lair, or inner apartment (*hujrat*), which again is not a public space and is non-representational in any form, reflecting, as it does, the scenario created by Hanita Brand in her description of the physical dwellings of Middle-Eastern societies. The transgressions of these layers by Hausa video filmmakers seemed to have created a tension between media globalization and tradition in Muslim popular culture.

This view has been roundly critiqued, mostly for narrowness as sexist, classist, Eurocentric, and illiberal by modern standards (see Calhoun, 1992). These critiques pertain more to how Habermas tied this conception of a public sphere so tightly and specifically to modernization, and that to rationality, than to the essential identification of the emergence of new public spheres around communications relatively freed from demands of ritual representation, particularly of mystical authority. Nevertheless, in broader comparative terms, Habermas draws attention to communication freed from status and its ritual representation; his key insight was that this is not limited to private spheres of conscience, the market, or intimacy but can take on a public life characteristic of a bourgeois public sphere (Anderson, 2003).

Further introduced by Hanna Papanek (1973) and Cynthia Nelson (1974) to place a sociological ground under discussions of honor and shame in traditional settings, the public/private distinction opened up the private world of sentiment and expression, particularly women's, but to the relative neglect of the public sphere that new media make increasingly permeable to the circulation of messages from more restricted realms, diluting and in some cases challenging the authority to represent.

What demarcates the public from the private undoubtedly depends on a complex set of cultural, political, and economic factors, and as a result of the interaction between such factors the line of demarcation inevitably has had to shift. From among the cultural factors, religion stands out as one of the most decisive components in delimiting the two spheres. Religions distinctly recognize and sanction a sphere of private action for individuals. In Western religions—that is, the Abrahamic traditions—human identity and individuality are emphasized through the recognition and sanctioning of private life (Kadivar, 2003).

Thus it is significant that the categories of the public and private derived from Western discourse often mean different things. Discussing Islamic discourse in the Arab context, Nazih Ayubi (1995) has argued that public space or the public sphere is not conventionally equivalent to the political civic realm of public debate, conscious collective action, and citizenship as understood in Western democratic theory. Rather, Islamic authorities have historically interpreted the public not in contrast to a “free” privatized realm of conscience and religion, but instead as the space for “symbolic display, of interaction rituals and personal ties, of physical proximity coexisting with social distance” in contrast to a private sphere that is in effect defined as a residual—what is left over after the public is defined. For Tajbakhsh (2003), the public sphere is above all a space for the “collective enforcement of public morals” rather than necessarily political.

Similarly, Jon W. Anderson (2003) has argued that for well over a generation, the public sphere of Islam has been an arena of contest in which activists and militants

brought forth challenges to traditional interpretative practices and authority to speak for Islam, especially to articulate its social interests and political agendas. Further, as Gaffney (1994) also noted in analyzing Islamic preaching in Egypt, opening the social field to new spokespeople—in our case, Hausa filmmakers—and new discursive practices not only challenges authority long since thought settled to interpret what religion requires, but also blurs boundaries between public and private discourse and fosters new habits of production.

Media figure in this process in several crucial respects. First, they devolve access to consumption by more people on more occasions. Passage into media conveys previously “private” or highly situated discourses from interactive contexts to public display, where they are reattached to a public world and return as information conveyed through new media technologies with different habits of reception. Detached from traditional modes of production, they become messages in a world of messages. (Anderson 2003).

Islamic jurisprudence as noted earlier, fully acknowledges the sanctity of the private domain: there is ample admonition against prying into the affairs of others; preventive measures can be found that guarantee the privacy of personal information and positively support individual rights to property and promote freedom in determining one’s course of life. There can be no doubt that Islamic law can fully accommodate the notion of the private domain. The debate lies at delimiting the private domain from what is regarded as public.

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