Transcultural Connections

Hindi Films, Transborder Fandom and Muslim Hausa Audiences in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

The virtual addiction of Muslim Hausa youth to Indian films has a long history, which stretched to the first Indian films screen in northern Nigerian cinemas in the 1960s. The cultural convergence between what the Hausa see as representations of Indian cultural behavior – in terms of social mores, dressing, social interaction – all served to create what they perceive as a convergence between Indian 'culure' and Muslim Hausa culture. This paper traces the evolutionary attachment of the Hausa to Indian films and culture. In particular, it traces the various ways through Hausa youth use various devices to adopt, or adapt Indian popoular culture to suit their own re-worked creative pursuits. As a study of transnational fandom, it provides vital insight into how cultural spaces are collapsed, despite spatial and religious spaces.

Introduction

From 1960 when Lebanese merchants who owned cinemas in northern Nigeria started screening Hindi films, the fan culture of such films was immediately established. The Muslim Hausa of northern Nigeria favors Hindi films because of what they consider cultural resonance between the Indians they see on the screen and their own social and often cultural realities. The availability of Hollywood cinema, and later, Nollywood, the Nigerian cinema, has not made

any impact in the turning away the fannish clamoring of Hindi films in northern Nigeria. Indeed, their consumption, and even cinematic appropriation by Hausa filmmakers as local remakes, creates a contra-flow of dated cultural imperialism theories in that the eddies and flows, as well as the adoption and consumption of Hindi films by the Hausa provides a new site of investigation of the same cultural imperialism theories that seemed to have been heavily criticized (e.g. Tomlinson, 1991).

   This paper explores the development of border-crossing fandoms with regards to the audience consumption of Hindi-language films among northern Nigerian Muslim Hausa fans of these films. Studies in this area (e.g. Darling-Wolf, 2004; Kaori & Eun-Jeung, 2007; Jung, 2011) tend to draw attention to fannish activities of media consumers in contiguous countries of Asia, sharing either borders or racial, religious and cultural roots. There have not been many studies of what can be called 'trans-oceanic' fannish consumption of such media products, especially from Asia to Africa. A pioneering study by Larkin (1997) only focused attention to textual consumption of Hindi film products, while Adamu (2010) focused attention on intertextuality of Hindi film appropriation into local versions by Hausa filmmakers. Further, the collection of essays edited by John Hawley, *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean cosmopolitanisms* (Indiana, 2008) presents fascinating perspective on the influence of India in Africa, but little attention to fandom of Indian popular culture products (e.g. Steene in the same volume). This paper specifically maps and analyzes Hindi film fannish activities in terms of how young Muslim Hausa of northern Nigeria use Hindi films as templates for their own localized entertainment, as well as form social clusters based on affinity to Indian film stars. In looking at the transnational flows of media between India and Nigeria, I am concerned less with the psychology of fan behavior at an individual level, and more at a group, or what can be called political economy levels that see the translation of fannish behavior into an economic activity. This perspective seeks neither to redeem nor condemn fans, but rather to situate them within their myriad contexts – not only sociopolitical and economic, but equally popular and fan cultural, sexual, gender, and so on, that jumps across non-contiguous cultural borders.

Media Fandom

Studies of media fandom tended to focus on dedicated communities of fans of particular media events, particular films in various forms. Such devoted fan behavior leads to creation of various modes of interaction both with imaginary

of the film, as well as formation of social networks within the subculture of the fans. As Geraghty (2015, p. 1) noted, 'indeed, we are now accustomed in fan studies to stating that the productivity of fans and their related fan practices represents an appropriate and worthy text to study just as much as the media text to which they are related or inspired.'

In seeking to clarify categories of fans, Jenkins (1992, p. 12) suggests that the term 'fan' has religious origins, pointing at devotees offering temple services, before transforming into the description of someone possessed. This antecedent religious root of the fan creates an individual who subsequently became uncritical and unwavering in a particular belief or behavior. It is the media, however, that brings out the idea of a fan as a devotee to a particular expression of creativity by either an individual or groups of individuals. Subsequent emergence of fannish activities therefore cut across the broad spectrum of creativity and reveal a continuum of fan behavior that swings from extremely psychotic to mild bemusement; and from casual to dedicated. Generally, therefore, fandom is, as Sandvoss (2005, p. 8) noted, 'the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text in the form of books, television shows, films, or music, as well as popular texts in a broader sense such as sports teams and popular icons and stars ranging from athletes and musicians to actors.'

There are multiple dimensions of fandom, and these have been 'examined from a variety of disciplines such as communication, sociology, history, and psychology . . . interestingly, the focus of each area of research has also differed.' (Reysen and Lloyd, 2012, p. 293). My focus on popular media consumption and fan behavior is rooted in communication studies that attempt to map out the spread of a particular behavior within certain audience circles. If fannish behavior is devotion to a pleasure-inducing media product, then inevitably many people are fans of one media product or other.

Matt Hills, one of the theorists of fandom, baldly states that 'everybody knows what a 'fan' is. It's somebody who is obsessed with a particular star, celebrity, film, TV programme, band; somebody who can produce reams of information on their object of fandom, and can quote their favoured lines or lyrics, chapter and verse.' (p. 2003, p. viii). Articulating such behavior within the realm of academic theories, however, proves problematic.

Despite Matt Hills' difficulty in finding a more acceptable definition of the fandom phenomena – 'my argument is that fan cultures cannot be pinned down through singular theoretical approaches or singular definitions (2003, p. viii) – Sandvoss (2005) takes the difficult task of defining 'fandom' as 'the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text' (Sandvoss 2005, p. 8); for as he further states, 'this definition mirrored a level

of uncertainty. While we all have a sense of who fans are, conceptualizing the textual basis of their fandom seems far more difficult.' (Sandvoss, 2007, p. 22). This is more so as the bases for fandom are not restricted to only one type or media, or even any media at all – fandom could be based on a product (film, music, literature, fashion), skill (sports), amorphous activity (ideology, movement), or simple act being human (famous and infamous celebrities, etc.). Thus, articulating a single theory to capture fandom is an exercise fraught with academic uncertainties due to the fluid nature of the very concept of fandom itself.

The rapid spread of media products from the main centers of production to other parts of the world has channeled a new focus of fan studies to the 'notion of "global" media text and internationally dispersed audiences' (Harrington & Bielby, 2007, p. 180) and the subsequent

> construction of a new sense of the "global" under renewed conditions of modernization. The "global," in this sense, does not necessarily have to be seen as meanings about things . . . that are "worldwide" in a geographical sense, but as meanings about things . . . that can be seen as "universal".
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> JULURI, 2003, P. 120

While such main centers of production are usually Hollywood in the United States, the development of media industries, particularly film industry in multiple sites has also created centers of media dispersal leading to what is commonly referred to as 'contra-flow' (Thussu, 2007), which sees a departure from what Straubhaar (1999) calls 'assymetrical interdependence'. This is illustrated by "Hallyu Korean wave" – the significant increase in the popularity of South Korean entertainment and culture starting in the 1990s. As Martin Roll (2006, p. 38) noted,

> South Korean pop culture "Hallyu" – embracing fashion, music and film – is rapidly becoming an export success for South Korea. The rise in popularity of Korean pop culture led the Chinese media to call it the "Korean wave" in 2001. The wave or Hallyu has spread to Southeast Asia and lately to Japan where it has had a strong impact.

The arrival of Hallyu as media contra-flow from Korea to Philippines since 2003 through "Koreanovela" (Kwon, 2007; Tuk, 2012) prompted an international conference on the impact of Hallyu on the Philippines, such that the term seems to connote the influence of Korean social and cultural aspects such as clothes, fashion, and technological goods among the Asian countries.

(Kwon, 2007, p. 258). The export of Korean popular media contents has continually expanded even to Singapore, Vietnam and Mongolia, which is beyond East Asia to South East Asia.

Yet regional studies of media influences indicate that a cultural resonance is often created from a media-rich country to another country sharing similar norms and values, and it is certainly cultural resonance at play in the spread and acceptance of the Hallyu. For instance, the phenomenal Taiwanese soap opera hit *Meteor Garden* in 2003 has transformed the face of Philippine programming. It paved the way for the influx of Asian dramas from Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Dubbed in Filipino (the local language), these *chinovelas* (a play of words from the words *Chino* meaning Chinese and *telenovela*, derived from the soap opera format of Latin American countries) is common fare on Philippine television, with about one or two of them occupying the primetime schedules of the top networks and some appearing in non-prime time slots like daytime and weekend timeslots (Vinculado, 2006).

This "Asian media invasion" was welcomed by Vinculado's respondents, for as she further reported, in terms of cultural affinity, respondents feel that they can relate to the physical characteristics of the characters, being Asian and exposed to the physicality of the actors in their everyday lives. Since some Filipinos look like the characters, they are not alien to them compared to the Caucasian-looking characters in the Latin telenovelas. Respondents also feel a cultural connection to the settings used in the programs and not in the way we expect (Vinculado, 2006, p. 238).

However, "cultural affinity" soon translates into "cultural proximity" in explaining the inter-regional spread of Korean media products especially to China and Taiwan. Dong Hwan Kwon quotes studies that analyzed the contents of widely accepted Korean television dramas among East Asian countries for commonalities of acceptance. The analysis revealed that "Korean dramas that have been widely accepted in Asia contain the Confucian values that are close to Chinese culture" (Kwon, 2006, p. 262). This was premised on common culture and value systems between Korean and Chinese.

Similar trends were noted with regards to the popularity of Japanese drama series in Taiwan. For instance, Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) reported that most of respondents in a survey indicated that they emotionally engaged more with Japanese dramas than they did with Western or Taiwanese dramas. Further, his respondents explained that that the ways of expressing love in Japanese dramas which are delicate and elegant are much more culturally acceptable than those of American dramas, and human relations between family and lovers also look more culturally proximate to Taiwan. This proximity allows Taiwan audiences to relate to Japanese dramas more easily.

Thus, countries sharing common cultural proximity find it easier to provide "oppositional resistance" to media programming from non-proximity sources. This is further facilitated by the inclusion of linguistic commonalities even within linguistic clusters and groups (see for instance arguments given by Straubhaar, 1991, and expanded in La & Straubhaar, 2005). Colonized countries often feel they share the same linguistic – and therefore cultural – spaces with the metropolitan countries, thus partaking in the latter's transnational programs. This is illustrated, for instance, by African Francophone countries where, as Mytton, Teer-Tomaselli & Tudesq (2005, p. 101) noted that the rapid development of the more popular and successful francophone transnational television stations can be attributed to the French political and cultural approach, which among other things seeks to extend and strengthen co-operation between countries that have the French language in common.

Further, there are descriptions of eddies and flows of transcultural media flows on regional and global bases that generate fandom away from the center of production. Empirical investigations of such transcultural fandom seemed more vivid in the Far East. In Japan, for instance, Morimoto (2011) explored Japanese female fandom of Hong Kong stars that arose in the mid-1980s and peaked in the late 1990s. She argues that this fandom was unique among non-diasporic, transnational audiences of Hong Kong cinema for its female composition and its star-centeredness, which together constitute an alternative lens through which to comprehend the meanings and implications of transcultural media fandom. This 'immersion' of the fan culture clearly combines political economy of production and fandom, and reflects what Straubhaar (2009) perceives as the idea of audiences actively searching for cultural proximity in cultural goods, to reincorporate the role of audiences in the media imperialism debate.

The 'universalism' alluded by Juluri (2003) announced the death knell of the cultural imperialism theory – for media flows are no longer seen in terms of dominance from the more powerful to the less powerful who blindly ape the 'superior' media products. Flows are now more universal, rather than suppressive, thanks in part to what Anthony Giddens labeled "agency" in debates about postcolonial African mediated entertainment forms. Giddens (1984) proposed the idea of agency and structure in sociological theory to explain human behavior. Agency generally refers to micro-level, individual human actors, but it can also refer to collectivities of that act. Structure usually refers to large-scale social structures, but it can also refer to micro structures, such as those involved in human interaction.

Thus, in what emerged as "structuration theory" which focuses on the mutual constitution of structure and agency, Giddens argues that structure and

agency are a duality that cannot be conceived of apart from one another. Human practices are 'recursive – that is, through their activities, individuals create both their consciousness and the structural conditions that make their activities possible' (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Because social actors are reflexive and monitor the ongoing flow of activities and structural conditions, they adapt their actions to their evolving understandings. Thus, social scientific knowledge of society will change human activities. Giddens calls this dialectical relationship between social scientific knowledge and human practices the double hermeneutic.

Consequently, actors continually develop routines that give them a sense of security and that enable them to deal efficiently with their social lives. While their motives provide the plan of action, it is these routine practices that determine what shape the action will take. Giddens emphasizes that actors have power to shape their own actions but that the consequences of actions are often unintended. Structure is the rules and resources that give similar social practices a systemic form. Only through the activities of human actors can structure exist.

It is this power to shape actions – agency – that counterbalances the media imperialism theory in African media-mediated entertainment forms; for it reverses the notion of passive absorption by African audiences, and puts control into selection, acquisition and engagement of any media product in the hands of audiences.

It is within this framework of Hill's 'non-theory of fandom' and media contra-flows that I situate the fandom of Hausa youth who are obsessed with Hindi cinema, and display their fandom not merely as pleasure-inducing processes, but also as viable economic means of generating income from their fandom.

In the Absence of Indians. . . .

The travels of Hindi films were initially mediated by migrations of Indians across the globe, where the films played a role in producing "diaspora belonging, cultural knowledge, and even language training" (Larkin, 2003, p. 173). The Indian diasporic attachment to Hindi films as a form of reconnecting back to India provides their host communities with opportunities to partake in Hindi film fantasies – either at entertainment level as just another form of "other" entertainment, or in severe cases, provide templates for domestications to host popular culture. Thus Hindi films are patronized on a global scale by what Athique (2006) defined as "non-resident" audiences. In this regard, an audience might be considered "resident" under conditions where viewers perceive

what is on-screen (in terms of either fantastic or "realist" representation) as coterminous with the society in which they live. When a media artifact operates outside of an environment where it can claim to present a social imagination "about here and about us" (Athique, 2006, p. 191), then the artifact and the audiences it addresses have a non-resident relationship.

The spectacular nature of the Hindi film seems to have influence on the entertainment ecology of many parts of the world – both in where Indians constitute a percentage of the population, to where there were few Indians both as residents as well as entrepreneurs.

In Egypt, Hindi films, though not massively popular with elite class, nevertheless were accepted mass culture due to similarities in the customs and traditions of the two peoples such as honor and protectiveness towards women. Consequently, the "secret to the success of Indian films in Egypt is that they portray a common life of both the Indian and the Egyptian, with only trivial differences attributable to environmental factors" (Armbrust, 2008, p. 212).

Despite these views, however, Walter Armbrust analyzes that India has had a long, though not always welcome, presence in Egyptian film culture. Egyptian filmmakers and most elites disparage Indian cinema, and "this is consistent with the more generalized attitude about things Indian. "Hindi" in everyday language labels things that are strange, silly, or just plain dumb" (Armbrust, 2008, p. 201).

Turkey also became smitten with Hindi films through *Awaara*. The film was released in February 1955 in Istanbul and became an instant it, leading to repeated releases of the same print. Due to this success, Gürata (2010) notes that over 100 Hindi films were shown in Istanbul between 1952 and 1962. *Awaara* was successful in Turkey not only due to its melodramatic cinematic appeal, but also due to the title song "Awaara hoon" and which was played throughout Turkey as a top selling record, "and was performed by a number of Turkish singers who circulated it as a Turkish record in music markets" (Gürata, 2010, p. 83) making it part of Turkish folk culture, played with traditional instruments at weddings and other ceremonies, including official functions.

> Prior to the massive importation of Hindi films in Turkey, the Egyptian cinema was in vogue. The liberalization of the trade process which enabled more Indian films to be imported into Turkey was encouraged as "distributors perceived these as substitutes for Egyptian films, whose influence officials were anxious to curtail".
>
> GÜRATA, 2010, P. 69

In Zanzibar, fans stressed the educative potential of Hindi films, which "opened their eyes" to new ways of thinking about life's possibilities as well

as new strategies for coping with life's heartbreaks and constraints (Fair, 2009, p. 60). Further acceptance of Hindi films was also because such films developed themes and issues in ways that were far more relevant to East African life than those dreamed up by Hollywood. Thus "the lessons on love that people took from Hindi films were . . . far more resonant with local social life" (ibid.).

In Ghana, audiences of Hindi films perceive India as a spiritual space or a sacred land, "full of magical, occult, and esoteric forces" (Wuaku, 2009, p. 128). These views were reinforced by Hindi cinema, for as Albert Wuaku further explained, the appeal of Hinduism in Ghana can in part be explained by the fact that India, its birthplace is an "outside" world. But this appeal is also strong because of the influence of narratives of Ghanaian people's actual encounters with powerful Hindu spirits, gods and esoteric truths in India. Indian films, popular theatre, and Western texts on Hindu mysticism that found their way to Ghana, reinforced the narratives. The result was the belief that there must be something very spiritual or magical about India and its religions and people curious and eager to explore these easily turn to Hindu religious traditions (Wuaku, 2009). The power of the imagery in Hindi films, coupled with returnee Ghanaian WWII soldiers who served in the British Army in Asia served to create an African Hindu Ministry in Southern Ghana.

Younger and more contemporary Ghanaian audiences prefer a different path. The musician, Sony Achiba, for instance, entered into African music history by creating first High-life/Hindi film music fusion, a genre he calls *Hip-Dia*, and performed in rap form on two individual CDs, *Indian Ocean 1&2*, *Indian Ocean 3* (Achiba, 2006). Accompanying these CD releases were YouTube video clips of Sony Achiba and dancers performing songs from the CDs wearing full Indian costumes. Even his name is a homage to transnational media and show business: "Sony" is taken from the Sony Corporation, while "Achiba" stands for Action, Compassion, Humble or Honest, Irresistible, Blessed and, Achiever (Achiba, 2012). He has refused to reveal his actual given name, preferring the media nomenclature he created for himself.

In Senegal, a "francophone country without an Indian expatriate community" Gwenda Vander Steene (2008, p. 118) records that obsession with Hindi cinema by the local population (or "Indophiles" as she refers to them) who prefer Hindi films was because of values which are, according to some Indophiles, highly regarded in Senegalese society and can also be found in such films: such as respect for elders and marriage, piousness, and respect for women. The importance of family networks and living in an extended family is also mentioned as a strong similarity. The appreciation of values such as respect for elders or the extended family also relates to a preference for older films. More recent films are often criticized (especially by older Indophiles) for imitating Hollywood and for their "deteriorating" values. The fact that Senegalese

appreciate this aspect of Hindi cinema shows how they actually would like to see themselves: it is a Senegalese ideal projected in Hindi film (Steene, 2008, p. 121) – a recurrent argument and rationale for identifying with Hindi films in African communities.

In all these cases of audience rapture and often internalization of Hindi film and Hindu identity, it should be pointed out that the main focus was on their popularity as entertainment from another country, and in some cases, their cultural resonance with the local audiences. The large numbers of Non-Resident Indians (NRI) living in many countries ensured the continuous presence of Hindi films which often arouse the curiosity of non-Indians. Further, in the cases of the popularity of Hindi films indicated above, some common elements seem to be discernible between the countries and India itself. Thus the Hindi films exported and made popular in other countries were either steeped in ideological bondage (Greece and Soviet Union), artistic inclinations (Egypt) or cultural affinity (Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia) with India. Further, collaborations, as they were, were focused on exploring areas of artistic cinematic representations.

Hindi Film Factor in Hausa Popular Culture

The main cinematic interest of the Muslim Hausa of northern Nigeria was the Hindi cinema which was brought to northern Nigeria by resident Lebanese distributors after independence from Britain in 1960. From 1945, when the first cinema, Rio was opened in Kano, to 1960, film distribution was exclusively controlled by the Lebanese merchants who sought to entertain the few British colonials and other imported non-Muslim workers in northern Nigeria by showing principally American and British films.

Despite strict spatial segregation (from 1903 when the British conquered the territory to 1960) which saw living spaces delineated by race – with the British occupying the Government Reserved Areas (GRAs) that were off-limits to locals, except for the hired help, the British did acknowledge that the locals (i.e. Muslim Hausa) maybe interested in the new entertainment medium, and as such special days were kept aside for Hausa audience in the three theaters then available and which were located in the GRAs. The British, however, were not keen in seeing films from either the Arab world, particularly Egypt with its radical political cinema, or any other Muslim country that might give the natives some revolutionary ideas. Indeed, there was no attempt to either develop any local film industry, or even provide African-themed entertainment for the locals.[2]

After 1960s there were few attempts to show cinema from the Arab world, as well as Pakistan, due to what the distributors believe to be common religious culture between Middle East and Muslim northern Nigeria, now that the British had left and the places – and residences – taken over by the new African elites. However, these were not popular with the Hausa audience, since they were not religious dramas, but reflect the culture of the Arabs – which the Muslim Hausa were quick to separate from Islamic culture. And although the Hausa share quite a lot with the Arabs (especially in terms of dress, food and language),[3] nevertheless they had different entertainment mindsets, and as such these Arab films did not go down well. Interestingly, while there was a well-established Egyptian Cultural Center in Kano, the Arab films screened by the resident Lebanese film distributors were from Egypt, with a lot of historical and political themes dealing with life and culture of Egypt, which do not interest the local audiences.

Experimental Hindi films were screened by the Lebanese cinema owners from November 1960, and proved immediately massively popular, and the Lebanese thus found a perfect formula for entertaining Hausa audience. Subsequently, throughout urban clusters of northern Nigeria, from Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Bauchi, Azare, Maiduguri, and Sokoto, Lebanese film distribution of Hindi films in principally Lebanese controlled theaters ensured a massive parenting of essentially masala Hindi film genre and storyline, and most especially the song and dance routines, on urban Hausa audience.

From 1960s all the way to the 1990s Hindi cinema enjoyed significant exposure and patronage among Hausa youth. Films such as *Raaste Ka Patthar* (1972), *Waqt* (1965) *Rani Rupmati* (1957), *Dost* (1974) *Nagin* (1976), *Hercules* (1964), *Jaal* (1952), *Sangeeta* (1950), *Charas* (1976), *Kranti* (1979), *Dharmatama* (1975), *Loafer* (1974), *Amar Deep* (1958) *Dharam Karam* (1975) and countless others became the staple entertainment diet of Hausa urban youth, as well as provincial cinemas. It subsequently provided a template for future young Hausa filmmakers.

However, although the Hindi cinema was popular, the actual process of going to the cinema to watch it was still associated with a furtive activity. As Larkin (2008, p. 124) pointed out,

> The introduction of cinema theaters in colonial Kano inaugurated a series of controversies among urban Hausa. It upset gendered and racial divisions of public space by creating new modes of sociability and offered new, Western-derived forms of leisure based on a technological apparatus that was religiously questionable. These controversies can be seen as moments of struggle in the reterritorialization of urban space,

the attempt to reassert Hausa moral values in the face of an encroaching colonial modernity.

Consequently, the Muslim Hausa conservative society considered cinema going a roguish activity that only the rowdy and troublesome (*'yan iska*, which include drug users, prostitutes, loiterers, and other underbelly of the society) go to. Women were – and still are – definitely excluded – and if a woman did attend, then she was seen as a *karuwa* (prostitute). Women and girls therefore had no entertainment except at home. This all changed, however, when in the mid-1976 a television station, the Nigerian Television Network Authority's NTA Kano, was established. The network was also established in other States of the Nigerian federation.

Subsequently, the biggest boom for Hindi cinema in Northern Nigeria was in the 1970s when state television houses (as distinct from Federal broadcasting networks) started operating and became the outlet for readily available Hindi films on video tapes targeted at home viewers. For instance, figures obtained the records of the NTA Kano, which was owned by the Federal Government, showed that the station alone screened 1,176 Hindi films on its television network from 2nd October 1977 when the first Hindi film was shown (*Aan Baan*, dir. Prakash Mehra, 1972) to 6th June 2003. This was significant in the sense that the screening of the foreign films was supported by the government, at a time when the government was attempting to encourage local films. However, such attempts did not come to fruition because of the expenses required to produce a film; a limitation which led to the development of video film industries in most African countries.

At the time of starting the Hindi film appearance on Hausa television houses, young school boys and girls aged seven or less became avid watchers of the films and gradually absorbed templates of behavior from screen heroes they thought share similar behavioral patterns. By early 1990s they had become novelists, moving to the video film arena towards the end of the decade.

Commercial Hindi films therefore served as fundamental templates around which Hausa fannish behavior evolved. This became expressed in so many forms of both popular and religious cultures throughout Muslim northern Nigeria. These include Sufi religious *qasida* (poem), a film industry, pop music, Hindi language acquisition and use, and the formation of fan clubs that revolved around cult following of popular Hindi film starts, particularly the Khan family. I will briefly explain how each of these constitute a fannish behavior in order to provide a general overview.

Patterns of Hausa Bollywood Fandom

The shared common Middle-Eastern heritage, introduced through contact with Islam created a shared corridor of convergence similarities between the broad outlines of Hausa and Hindi social cultures and mores. Parental authority, role of women including social exclusion and segregation, gender rivalries over affairs of the heart, all became common points that the Hausa identified as reflecting their social climate in Hindi films. The Hausa, however, have remained Muslim, despite clusters of traditionalists who stuck to ancestral religion, and consequently identify only with Indian Muslim behaviors, carefully excluding the idolatry of mainstream Hindi films. As Brian Larkin (1997, pp. 412-413) also observed:

> Most obvious are the many visual affinities between Indian and Hausa culture. Men in Indian films, for instance, often dress in long kaftans similar to the Hausa *dogon riga*, over which they wear long waistcoats, much like the Hausa *palmaran.* Women are also dressed in long saris and scarves which veil their heads and accord with Hausa ideas of feminine decorum. The iconography of Indian 'tradition', such as marriage celebrations, food, village life and so on, even when different from Hausa culture, provides a similar cultural background that is frequently in opposition to the spread of 'westernisation'.

It is this cultural convergence that provided the main basis for the Muslim Hausa addiction to Hindi films and media fandom. The fact that this influence was 'Eastern' rather than 'Western' made the process of fandom more palatable, and less subject to government restrictions. Western popular culture, particularly American Hiphop and fashion, including personal style choices such as hair cuts (fashioned after famous footballers), were strongly frowned up as being decadent. And yet the increasingly metrosexual – groomed, fashionable, stylish, urban – orientations of new breed of Indian film stars such as Hrithik Roshan, Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Arjun Rampal, Salman Khan, etc.

Ushaq'u Indiya (*Lovers of India*)
The Hausa Hindi fandom was made by religious singers, performing the Islamic *qasida* in the mid-1970s. The most prominent of these were Ushaqu Indiya (lovers of India). Although they were devotional, focusing attention on singing the praises of the Prophet Muhammad, they were unique in that they use the meter of songs from traditional popular Hausa music and substitute the lyrics

of these songs with words indicating their almost ecstatic love for the Prophet Muhammad. However, with the increasingly popularity of Hindi film song soundtrack, and the mimicking of these songs by young Hausa, Ushaqu Indiya changed their setlists to focus on adapting Hindi film music and substituting the Hindi lyrics with Hausa lyrics, praising the Prophet Muhammad. Table 1 is a small sample from over 200 Hindi film song appropriations by the group, based on intertextual analysis of their archival recordings obtained during fieldwork.

TABLE 1   *Hindi film appropriation by Ushaq'u Indiya (Lovers of India)*

Hindi film	Film song	Ushaq'u Indiya Hausa appropriation
Rakshak (dir. Ashok Honda, 1996)	***Kuchi Kuchi***	***Kuchi Muchi***
Rakshak (dir. Ashok Honda, 1996)	***Sundara Sundara***	***Zahra-Zahra*** gun ki nazo bara
Yash (dir. Sharad Sharan, 1996)	***Subah Subah*** Jab Khidki Khole	***Zuma-Zuma*** mai gardi
Lahu Ke Do Rang (dir. Mehul Kumar, 1997)	***Hasino*** Ko Aate Hai	***Hassan*** da Hussain Jikokin Nabiyna
Dil (dir. Indra Kuma, 1990)	Humne Ghar Chho***da Hai***	Manzon Allah ***Dahe***
Anari (dir. K. Muralimohana Rao, 1993)	Deewana Main ***Deewana***	Rasulu Abin ***dubana***
Kala sona (dir. Ravikant Nagaich, 1975)	***Se Sun*** Sun Kasam Se	***Sannu*** Mai Yassarabu dan Kabilar Arabu
Coolie No. 1 (dir. David Dhawan, 1995)	***Goriya*** Churana Mera Jiya	***Godiya*** muke wa sarki daya
Raghuveer (dir. K. Pappu, 1995)	***O Jaaneman*** Chehra Tera Jadoo Koi Jaadu	***Na zo neman*** tsari ceto
Raja (dir. Indra Kuma, 1995)	***Akhiyan milay*** kabhi akhiyan churay	***Ka ki yaye*** Manzo mu Kaki yaye kushensa
Johny I Love You (dir. Rakesh Kumar, 1982)	***Kabhi Kabhi*** Bejban Partbat	***Kabi – kabi*** Annabi mu in ka ki shi za ka sha wuya
Boxer (dir. Raj N. Sippy, 1984)	***Janu- na janu*** kabse Tumko pyar	***Yanu-na yanu*** na ba wani tamkarka
Hum (dir. Mukul S. Anand, 1991)	***Juma – Chumma*** de-de	***Zuma – zumar*** bege mun sha
Abe Hayat (dir. Ramanlal Desai, 1955)	***Main Gari***bon Ka Dil	***Na gari*** muke yabo Shugaban Al'umma
Shaan (dir. Ramesh Sippy, 1980)	***Jaanu*** Meri Jaan Main Tere Qurbaan	***Jani*** – babuja ba tamkar kur'an

Notably, the Ushaq'u Indiya singers rely significantly on onomatopoeia to appropriate equivalent word elements from the Hindi film songs to adapt to Hausa poetics. For example, "Kuci-Kuci" from the film *Rakshak* became "Kuci Muci" in Hausa (you eat, we also eat). Thus Ushaq'u singers and poets also use vocal harmony from Hindi film songs to create equivalent renditions in Hausa. These renditions, of course, are not 'direct' in the sense that there is no semantic relationship between the Hausa versions and the Hindi originals – in fact Ushaq'u were not trying to "translate" the Hindi songs; rather, they exploit the meters of Hindi songs to publicize their art among an audience already enamored with Hindi film songs. Like all the other songs in their repertoire, the songs are not based on attempts to translate the original meanings of the titles of the Hindi film songs; rather refrains, chorus, and main lines are identified and their Hausa substitutes used in rendering the original song. Thus the double meaning of 'interpretation' (Newmark 1991, p. 35), which is both the technical term for *spoken* translation but also hints at the act of transformation that occurs in the example I have given here, comes to the fore in the Ushaq'u singers' translations of Hindi film songs as fan devoted behavior.

Hausa Language Novelists and Hindi Films

The success of Ushaqu Indiya in using Hindi film songs as templates for localized performances, inspired many Hausa language novelists. The novels were predominantly, though not exclusively, romantic narratives with the central theme of either rebellion against parental authority or fatalistic acceptance on the choice of life partner for mainly the female protagonists. Hausa women, often in purdah seclusion and bombarded with Hindi films on television. The early Hausa writers in 1980s where mostly women. Their adoption of Hindi film plot elements as the template for some of their early novels inspired the intertextual process of appropriating Hindi films and converting them to Hausa settings. Table 2 shows a sample of these appropriations, based on both close reading of the novels and watching the original Hindi films.

Thus in addition to using similar motifs to Hindi films (forced marriage, co-wife rivalry and love triangles) in their novels, there were also few Hausa novelists base their stories directly on Hindi films as shown in Table 1, which is based on fieldwork in northern Nigeria in 2008.

The Hausa film industry, established as a video film genre in 1990, became another point of convergence of Hindi film fannish behavior. Early on in the development of the industry, Hindi films started to provide a template on which to weave Hausa video film storylines. The transformation of the Hausa video film, however, to a Hindi film clone started from 1995 with Mr. USA Galadima's *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* (Pains of the Heart) produced under the auspices of the Nigerian Film Corporation, Jos. The video film was based on the

TABLE 2   *Hausa novels inspired by Hindi films*

S/N	Novel (author)	Hindi film appropriated
1.	Soyayya Gamon Jini (Hamza A Bichi)	Ek Duuje Ke Liye (dir. K. Balachander, 1981)
2.	Sarkakkiyar Soyayya (Mairo Yusuf)	Yeh Vada Raha (dir. Kapil Kapoor, 1982)
3.	Rashin Sani (Bala Anas Babinlata)	Dostana (dir. Raj Khosla, 1980)
4.	Alkawarin Allah (Bilkisu Ado Bayero)	Romance (dir. Ramanand Sagar, 1983)
5.	Raina Fansa (Aminu Abdu Na'inna)	Jeet (dir. Adurthi Subba Rao, 1972)
6.	Wa Ya San Gobe (Bilkisu Ahmad Funtuwa)	Silsila (dir. Yash Chopra, 1981)
7.	Anisa (Abubakar Ishaq)	Dil (dir. Indira Kumar, 1990)
8.	Labarin So (Zuwaira Isa)	Gumrah (dir. Mahesh Bhatt, 1993)
9.	Hamida (Maryam Kabir Mashi)	Dil Laga Liya Maine (dir. Kundan Shah, 2002)
10.	Kawaici (Sadiya Garba Yakasai)	Dharkan (dir. Dharmesh Darshan, 2000)

Hindi film, *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye* (dir. Tatineni Rama Rao, 1983). The appropriation was so successful that other directors also started copying Hindi films into Hausa.

With the availability of the synthesizer keyboards such as the Casiotone MT-140 and Yamaha PSR series, as well as pirated music making software such as Fruity Loops Reason 3.0, and editing software such as Adobe Audition, the Hausa video film acquired a more transnational pop focus and outlook creating what I call Hausa Technopop music – a genre of music that departed considerably from its antecedent African acoustic roots, and embraced Hindi film melodies exclusively, if retaining Hausa language lyrics.

This follows a trajectory similar to the evolution of Indonesian popular music, *dangdut*, "a hybrid pop music extremely popular among the lower classes that incorporates musical elements from Western pop, Hindi film music, and indigenous Malay tunes" (David, 2008, p. 179). In Indonesia Hindi films were shown after independence in 1945 as entertainment for Indian troops that were part of the English contingent. Subsequently, the films were shown massively on local television and thus they eventually served as a model for the development of Indonesian films – just as the Hausa video filmmakers adopt Hindi film templates in their films, in addition to appropriating many Hindi films directly into Hausa language versions.

While a lot of the songs in the Hausa video films were original to the films, yet quite a sizeable are direct appropriations of the Hindi film soundtracks – even if the Hausa main film is not based on a Hindi film. This in effect means that a Hausa video film can have two sources of Hindi film "creative inspiration" – a film for the storyline (and fight sequences), and songs from a different film. Table 3 lists the Hindi inspirations for few of the 128 Hausa video films

TABLE 3   *Hindi as Hausa film songs*

Hausa film	Playback song	Hindi film	Playback song
Hisabi	Zo Mu Sha Giya	Gundaraj (dir. Guddu Dhanoa, 1995)	Mena Meri Mena Meri
Hisabi	Don Allah Taho Rausaya	Angrakshak (dir. Ravi Raja Pinisetty, 1995)	Ham Tumse Na Hi
Alaqa	Duk Abin Da Na Yi	Suhaag (dir. Balwant Bhatt,1940)	Gore Gore Gore Gore
Alaqa	Sha Bege	Mann (dir. Indra Kumar, 1999)	Mera Mann
Darasi	Tunanin Raina	Mann (dir. Indra Kumar, 1999)	Tinak Tini Tana
Farmaki	Suriki Mai Kyau	Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham... (dir. Karan Johar, 2001)	Surat Huwa Mat Dam
Shaida	Na Fi Ki Yi Ƙauri	Darr (dir. Yash Chopra, 1993)	Jadoo Tere Magal
Gudun Hijira	Ga Wani Abu Na Damun Shi	Josh (dir. A Karim, 1950)	Hari Hari Hari
Gudun Hijira	Ina Ka ke Ya Masoyi Na	Mast (dir. Ram Gopal Varma, 1999)	Ruki Ruki
Gudun Hijira	Gudun Hijra	Dhadkan (dir. Dharmesh Darshan, 2000)	Dil Ne He Ka Ha He Dil Se
Ibro Dan Indiya	Sahiba Sahiba	Rakshak (dir. Ashok Honda, 1996)	Sundara San
Aniya	Ga mu Muna Soy Ayya	Josh (dir. A Karim, 1950)	Hari HariHari
Tasiri 2	Kar Ki Ji Komai	Wardaat (dir. Ravikant Nagaich, 1981)	Baban Jayi
Ummul Khairi	Ina Wahala	Mohabbat (dir. Reema Rakesh Nath, 1997)	Mohabbat Ti He
Kasaita	Ni Na San Ba Ki Da Haufi	Major Saab (dir. Tinnu Anand, 1998)	Ekta He Pal Pal Tumse
Darasi	Duk Girma Na Sai Kin Sa Na Yi	Hogi Pyaar Ki Jeet (dir. P. Vasu, 1999)	Ho Dee Bana

appropriated from Hindi films. This was based on analysis of 615 Hausa home videos and discussions with producers, cast, crew and editors from 2000 to 2003 during fieldwork for a larger study.

As indicated, some of the Hausa versions often have more than one song appropriated from the Hindi original, such as in *Gudun Hijira* and *Hisabi*.

There is a marked difference in the translation styles used between the earlier discussed Ushaqu Indiya performers and Hausa video filmmakers. Whereas the Ushaqu singers attempt a poetic vocal harmony between the source sound and treating it as text, and target sound, Hausa video filmmakers use only the musical harmonies of the source sound, ignoring its textual properties. In fact, in my repertoire of over 50 re-renderings I could locate only one track from the Hindi film, *Zameer* (dir. Ravi Chopra, 1975) which had onomatopoeic property with its corresponding Hausa version, *Leila/Layla*, which are both common female names among Muslim Hausa. In a way, therefore, the Hindi film songs in Hausa video films are cover versions rendered locally. The originals do not simply disappear because a local one is available – for the purpose was not to displace the transnational originals; but to prove prowess in copying the transnational songs. The Hindi originals are increasingly becoming available on DVDs stuffed with often over 100 songs in MP3 format and sold for less than US$ 1 if one bargains hard enough from street media vendors selling them in push carts and wheel barrows.

Thus besides providing templates for storylines, Hindi films provide Hausa home video makers with similar templates for the songs they use in their videos. The technique often involves picking up the thematic elements of the main Hindi film song, and then substituting with Hausa lyrics – creating translation equivalency. Consequently, anyone familiar with the Hindi film song element will easily discern the film from the Hausa home video equivalent.

Learning Hindi and the Cult of Khan

The Hausa fannish behavior regarding Hindi cinema was taken a notch higher with the appearance, in 2003, of what was possibly the first Hausa-Hindi language primer in which a Hausa author, Nazeer Abdullahi Magoga published *Fassarar Indiyanchi a Saukake – Hindi Language Made Easy* as shown in Fig. 1.

The author is pictured wearing Hausa cap among Bollywood super stars on the covers of the books. Like most Hausa, the author equates "Hindi" with *Indian*, not acknowledging that India is a political expression comprising many ethnic and language groups. For instance, 14 languages are mentioned in the constitution of India. There is thus no singular "Indian" language as such, much as there is no singular "Nigerian" language.

FIGURE 1   *Hausa-Hindi phrase books.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR

These books become all the more significant in that they are the first books in Hausa language that show the vivid effects of media parenting. It is thus through the books that we learn the meanings of some of the titles of 47 popular Hindi films such as *Sholay* (*gobara*, fire outbreak), *Kabhi-Kabhie* (*wani sa'in*, other times), *Agni Sakshi* (*zazzafar shaida*, strong evidence), *Darr* (*tsoro*, fear), *Yaraana* (*abota*, friendship), *Dillagi* (*zabin zuciya*, heart's choice), *Maine Pyar Kiya* (*na faɗa cikin soyayya*, fallen in love) and others. Volume 1 also contains the complete transliteration of Hindi lyrics translated into Romanized Hausa, of *Maine Pyar Kiya* and *Kabhi-Khabie*.

Magoga started working on the first volume, *Fassar Indiyanchi,* in 1996, and when the Hausa video film boom started in 2000 he published the book. He has three others planned; a second volume of the books which takes the language acquisition to the next level – focusing on culture and customs of India (or more precisely, Hindu). The other two books are "song books", *Fassarar Wakokin Indiya* (Translations of Hindi Film Songs) in two volumes; but paucity of funds delayed the publication.

In an interview I held with Magoga on March 19, 2004 in Kano, northern Nigeria, the author narrated how he became deeply interested in learning the Hindi language from watching thousands of Hindi films, and subsequently conceived of the idea of writing a series of phrase books on Hindi language. In 2005 he was given a one-hour slot on Radio Kano FM during which he presents *Mu Kewaya Indiya* [Let us visit India], a program in which he translates Hindi

film songs into Hausa. His fluency in Hindi language was such that in 2007 it attracted BBC World Service, London, which held a live-on-air interview with him about his life with an Indian journalist, Indu Shekhar Sinha, in Hindi. This attracted so much attention in India that the BBC Delhi office sent a crew to interview Magoga in Kano in July 2008. The crew was led by Rupa Jha who recorded the entire interview in Hindi language at the Tahir Guest Palace hotel in Kano and which was broadcast in India. Subsequently Magoga became a singer in Kano, holding concerts ("majalisi") during which he sings the praises of venerated Sufi saints as well as local politicians in Hindi (often dressing in Indian clothes). He was also given a slot at Farin Wata, an independent Television Studio in Kano during which he presents a "request program" in which viewers request for historical details of a particular film and request a particular song. The screen shots in Fig. 2 shows how Magoga dresses for the part.

By 2012 Magoga has been given a series of slots in various radio and TV stations across northern Nigeria where he translates Hindi lyrics into Hausa and holds continuous fluent conversation in Hindi with phone-in listeners. He also became a singer, releasing an album in September 2012 which contains various Islamic devotional and political songs in Hausa and Hindi.

The success of Magoga as a transcultural connector generated an instant boom of Hindi film fandom among Hausa youth from 2012, eventually leading to the formation of an umbrella fan group, Bollywood Fans Nigeria associations, based in Kano, northern Nigeria. As a group of dedicated fans, they engage in a variety of activities at community levels aimed at promoting their fan worship of Hindi film starts, particularly Shah Rukh Khan. Indeed, based on this fanatic devotion to Khan, they chose to affix 'Khan' to their names, thus we have Nazir Khan, Mustapha Khan, etc. Forming clusters of fans of essentially Khan family of filmmakers of India, the Hausa Bollywood fans form sub-clusters at street levels, with each ward and street having a complete executive structure. Bonded by their fanatic devotion to Hindi film stars, they create new focus for youth activities, engaging in Bollywood dancing competition, miming.

FIGURE 2   *Nazeer Magoga presenting "Bollywood Stan" in a local TV studio.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR

I have had the opportunity to attend one of their occasions, and almost everyone dressed up in an Indian dress, complete with turban. They communicate mainly in a mixture of Hindi (or at least the Hindi film version) and Hausa language. They also hold awards during which they chose the best Hindi film year. The highlight of their activities in 2016 came when the local multiplex, FilmHouse, in Kano screened Shah Rukh Khan's Fan (dir. Maneesh Sharma, 2015). Many members of the Bollywood Fans of Nigeria association screen printed a T-shirt of the film, posed with posters of the film at the venue. Figs 3 and 4 celebrate the event.

When Shah Rukh Khan acknowledged Bollywood Fans pictures in his Twitter handle with 'Thank You Nigeria', it made their day that their hero at least is aware of their existence.

FIGURE 3   *Shah Rukh Khan's local 'Fan' merchandise.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR

FIGURE 4   *Shah Rukh Khan's fans at local multiplex, Kano, Nigeria.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR

Conclusion

I would like to base my conclusion on the typology of fannish audience behavior outlined by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, p. 141) who 'identified a synchronic and diachronic continuum' that maps out fannish behavior. This continuum encompasses the 'consumer', 'fan', 'cultist', 'enthusiast', and 'petty producer'. This continuum not only describes the varieties of fan behavior, but interestingly maps out the entire spectrum of Hausa fannish activities.

Starting with the 'consumer', Hausa fans of Hindi films from the early 1960s devoted themselves to the consumption of the films and identifying cultural markers that were similar to their own. These markers included dressing, social mores, and significantly, treatment of women, all of which the early Hindi films reflect a more or less conservative culture. These cultural similarities created a resonance in the Hausa audiences of these films, leading to the formation of the first fan clusters. However, unlike fans of Western film and TV shows, the Hausa did not form clusters of conventions, merchandizing or other politically economic activities to promote their Fanship. Neither was there any pretensions to literary acquisition of the fictional characters; again, in contrast to Western cult TV fans, who focus on 'ideas and imagination' (Jancovich & Hunt, 2004, p. 35). As they further noted, fans' 'persistent interest in scripts and the ways in which they develop characters and story lines shows the insistence on literary values, as does the concern with the devices and techniques of storytelling.' Hausa fans of Hindi films do not exhibit such literary interest in the films they consume.

The emergence of the enthusiast as a fan was further indicated in Hausa audiences in the way they started to intertextually adapt elements of the films they watch, and rework them as part of their own entertainment culture. Although Ushaqu Indiya made this process famous, it had longer roots when various Islamiyya school pupils started to adapt the Hindi soundtrack meter to poems composed in the praises of Prophet Muhammad in Kano and its environs. This was what actually triggered the more professional interest by Ushaqu performers, leading to enthusiastic adaptation of over 100 Hindi film songs as songs of praise.

The merchandizing of fannish icons, as done in the case of Kano and Shah Rukh Khan, was the first time in the Kano Hindi film fandom that a merchandise was marketed to promote fan activity, falling to the category of 'petty producer'. As Beatty (2016, p. 115) noted with regards to Harry Potter fanship, 'for a franchise to enjoy longevity, there needs to be a range of goods that allow for ongoing engagement that accommodate changing expectations as the individual matures.' The limitations of what can be called the 'technologies of

commerce' in the political economy of northern Nigeria limited the concretization of fan adoration in economic terms.

What emerged from the fannish adoration of Hindi films among the Hausa is the astute transformation of adoration to commerce, but without the prominent visibility of the fan objective. This subtle subversion of the object of fan worship – in which clearly a fannish activity is engaged without direct reference to the fannish object – perhaps reflects the emergence of what I can call 'subversive fandom' in the continuum of fannish behaviors. This describes a situation, aptly captured by Hausa fans of Hindi films, in which the object of the adoration becomes subservient to the economic needs of the fan, and indeed, becomes obscured.

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