

Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures  
Polish Academy of Sciences

**Hemispheres**  
**Studies**  
**on Cultures**  
**and Societies**

**No. 27**

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[askon@askon.waw.pl](mailto:askon@askon.waw.pl)

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## Transnational Media Flows and Contra-Flows: Shifting Paradigms in South-South Entertainment Flows

### Abstract

The media cultural imperialism theory suggests a movement of media products (TV, music, films, magazines, newspapers, internet) from predominantly Anglo-Western North to non-Western South. Such movement, it is claimed, has the tendency of suppressing local production and creating a dependency on imported media products. Yet within the last decade a new counter-flow of media products started manifesting itself. Southern nations became centers of production and distribution of media products that are consumed and often appropriated in the same Southern zones. This paper explores this process of contra-flow in media consumption and production, using the youth entertainment industries of music and filmmaking in Kano, northern Nigeria.

### Introduction

Over the last decades media in all forms, transnational flows of representative identities and the globalization of American entertainment ethos have combined to create a climate of mistrust for either globalization as a concept, or Americanization not only Muslim countries and communities, but also in traditional societies. Thus what is of further significance is the way media is used to construct identities and share these constructs with communities sharing these identities. Obviously then, the usage of identity-construct kits from different communities may communicate different conceptions of the communities and consequently lead to misrepresentation of identities. And yet, the desire for globalized acceptance – even if the “globalized” is localized to acceptance beyond the immediate community – leads to experimentation of various forms of acceptance of representational identities beyond the immediate localized communities. This is the scenario that creates issues of the role of entertainment in such communities.

Academic responses to various facets of global entertainment have changed drastically over the last forty years, reflecting for the most part huge changes in technology, media infrastructure, and entertainment content.<sup>1</sup> This naturally led to development of theories of imitation – with the view that availability of new communication technologies would enable developing countries to imitate the West in a process of modernization.

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<sup>1</sup> Johanna Blakely, *Entertainment Goes Global: Mass Culture in a Transforming World*, Lear Center Entertainment Goes Global Project, Norman Lear Center. Annenberg: USC, 2001.

Thus two contrasting attitudes towards globalization can be found.<sup>2</sup> The first is expressed by cultural theorists who welcome globalization as a means for the reinforcement of international dialogue. It enables minorities to gain attention beyond national borders. An opposing point of view stresses the threat that globalization poses to democracies and international politics, aiming at limiting the influence of worldwide capitalism. Both these views at least concur a certain degree of weakness in recipient systems as a result of the transnational flow of influences. What needs to be determined is the extent to which the recipient systems – I do not accept Curran’s term of “nation-state”; such entities are too complex to be treated as single – are transformed.

Indeed Media and Cultural Studies’ theories of globalization tended to focus attention on the role of mass media in the society,<sup>3</sup> how they are communicated and preserved in transnational context. Another focus is on how people appropriate media, and which identities they create with the new transformed media.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, industrialization and modernization both entail the spread of common sets of behaviors and attitudes within the context of economic change.<sup>5</sup> However, the globalization of culture also takes place independent of whatever economic changes are occurring in a particular region or society. Traditionally, the transmission of culture across societies was facilitated by two main media: migration and literacy. People learned about other cultures either through movement of the people from one place to the other, or by reading about other cultures and adopting or adapting what they learned. These traditional media could, under certain circumstances, be effective means for the transmission of cultures across the globe.

### **A global symphony in five movements**

There is no social system that can remain insulated or isolated from the dynamics of global media eddies, especially a society making a transition from a traditional society to a cosmopolitan one. In studying the eddy of transfusion of media messages from various locations to others, four distinct terms, often used

<sup>2</sup> James Curran, Myung-Jin Park (eds.), *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, London: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Sznajder Beck, Rainer Winter (eds.), *Global America? The Cultural Consequences of Globalization*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See particularly Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, “The Global and the Local in International Communications”, in: *Mass Media and Society* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds.) London: Arnold, 1996; Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976; Oliver J. Boyd-Barrett, “Media Imperialism: Towards an International Framework for an Analysis of Media Systems”, in: J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott, *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> Orlando Patterson, “Global Culture and the American Cosmos”, Paper No. 2, in: Orlando Patterson, *Ecumenical America: Global Culture and the American Cosmos*, *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1994, p. 103–117.

interchangeably, emerge: globalization, transglobalization, transnationalism, and glocalization.<sup>6</sup>

International communications research has given the word globalization an everyday feel.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Globalization and its variants tended to be seen as offshoots of cultural imperialism which sees the dominance of economic and media influences from developed countries – principally the United States – to developing countries.<sup>8</sup> For instance, there is the view that that “the flowering of such theories is a reflection of the fact that globalization is of great concern to, and enormous significance for, much of the world’s population”.<sup>9</sup>

From this argument it is clear that economic bases – trades and services – dominate the main theoretical and critical thinking about globalization. This is because “globalization is inextricably linked to the current workings of capital on a global basis; in this regard it extends the earlier logics of empire, trade, and political dominion in many parts of the world”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Roland Robertson’s popularization of the term, ‘glocalization’. See Roland Robertson, “Comments on the ‘Global Triad’ and ‘Glocalization’”, in: *Globalization and Indigenous Culture*, Nobutaka Inoue (ed.), Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1997: <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/global/index.html> (accessed 20.03.2009).

<sup>7</sup> See Doobo Shim, “Hybridity and the Rise of Korean Popular Culture in Asia”, *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2006, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> For debates about cultural imperialism, see: Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, Armonk: International Arts & Science Press, 1976; Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Are America*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977; John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism”, in: *Transnational Corporations and World Order: Readings in International Political Economy*, G. Modelski (ed.), San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1979; Ali Mohammadi, “Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Identity”, in: J. Downing, A. Mohammadi and A. Sreberny-Mohammadi (eds.), *Questioning the Media: A Critical Introduction*, London: Sage, 1995, p. 362–378; Cees J. Hamelink, *Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications*, New York: Longman, 1983; Tom L. McPhail, *Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and Communication*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987; Armand Mattleart, *Mapping World Communication: War, Progress, Culture*, Translated by Susan Emanuel and James A. Cohen, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> George Ritzer points out that a number of theories have dealt with the growth of globalization, especially when focusing on globalization in the realm of consumption. See George Ritzer, “The Globalization of Nothing”, *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Summer–Fall 2003, p. 189–190; Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King (eds.), *Globalization, Knowledge and Society*, London: Sage, 1990; Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1992; Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991; Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalization?*, Cambridge: Polity, 2000; Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping our Lives*, New York: Routledge, 2000; Douglas Kellner, “Theorizing Globalization”, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 20, 2002, p. 285–305.

<sup>10</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination”, *Public Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2000, p. 3.

Closely related to this is transglobalization, which connotes similar transborder movements, but without the baggage of economic forces. Consequently, transglobal focus suggests a “phenomenon that spans the gaps of distance, culture, race, language, economics, and heritage. It is a tale of twentieth century cultures mixing with each other in an unprecedented way”.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, while George Ritzer’s “globalization of nothing”<sup>12</sup> had a firm economic base in globalization, transglobal provides clues to other forms of engagement across cultures and societies beside economic forces. Indeed Karin Evan’s “unprecedented way” of “cultures mixing” provides avenues for consideration of media parenting of popular culture from developed countries to developing countries; for as Raka Shome argued, in presenting a case for a diasporic “cultural intersection”, with softening boundaries and the growth of global economy, we are all in some way cultural hybrids (although some of us more than others) influenced by transglobal movements of media, of ideas, of peoples, of cultures.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed such cultural intersections were midwifed by transglobal broadcasting channels that transcend national – and cultural – boundaries – bringing media models and matrixes to societies often radically different from their starting points. In this case then media itself becomes a diasporic element.

Transglobalization at the same time differs from Randolph Bourne’s popularization of Transnationalism, a concept which focuses on the heightened interconnectivity between people – rather than just messages created by people and shared across the world as in transglobalization – all around the world and the loosening of boundaries between countries – a focus which had a main emphasis on migrations and creation of new social clusters as a result of this interconnectivity.<sup>14</sup> This concept was further fully explored in the edited works of Smith and Guarnizo<sup>15</sup> and lends further credibility to the idea of cosmopolitanism of transnational concepts. Debates about Transnationalism and ‘crisis of the national state’ reveal a penetration of national cultures and political systems of by global and driving forces. In this process, “the nation-state is seen as weakened “above” by transitional capital, global media and emergent supra-national political institutions.<sup>16</sup> From below, they lead to new liberatory practices and spaces such as cultural hybridity.

These new liberatory practices as well as the cultural hybridity mediated by flow of media images and forms across the borders were promising enough to many

<sup>11</sup> Karin Evans, *The Lost Daughters of China: Abandoned Girls, their Journey to America, and the Search for a Missing Past*, New York: Penguin Putnam, 2000, p. 3. See also Helena Grice, “Transracial Adoption Narratives: Prospects and Perspectives”, *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2005, p. 125.

<sup>12</sup> Ritzer, *The Globalization of Nothing...*, p. 189–190.

<sup>13</sup> Raka Shome, “Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon: An ‘Other’ View”, in: *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, John Lucaites, Sally Caudill and Celeste M Condit (eds.), New York: Guilford Press, 1999, p. 601.

<sup>14</sup> Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America”, *Atlantic Monthly*, No. 118, July 1916.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, “Locations of Transnationalism”, in: *Transnationalism from Below*, Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (eds.), New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

developing countries as catalysts of new media identities which hybridizes a global pattern with a local flow.<sup>17</sup> Thus Transnational calls attention to the cultural and political projects of nation-states as they vie for hegemony in relations with other nation-states, with their citizens and “aliens.” This cultural-political dimension of transnationalism is signaled by its resonance with nationalism as a cultural and political project, whereas globalization implies more abstract, less institutionalized, and less intentional processes occurring without reference to nations, e.g. technological developments in mass international communication and the impersonal dynamics of global popular and mass culture, global finance, and the world environment.<sup>18</sup>

Lending force to the critical discourse was the emergence of Glocalization, a social and cultural technique that seemed to have been germinated on the pages of *Harvard Business Review* in the late 1980s. As the most cogent priest of the concept, Roland Robertson recalled, “the articles written in that period of the late ‘80s by Japanese economists sometimes employed the word ‘glocalization’, which is usually rendered in Japanese – and excuse my pronunciation – as *dochakuka*... [which] ...means the simultaneity – the co-presence – of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies?”<sup>19</sup>

This early application of an essentially industrial marketing process to cultural discourse by Robertson was further elucidated by subsequent writers, including Wayne Gabardi who further argues that glocalization is marked by the development of diverse, overlapping fields of global-local linkages.<sup>20</sup>

Yet still other perspectives provide bases for a new interpretation of media messaging in traditional societies; in effect, Glocalization forces. For instance, Pico Iyer reminisces in *Video Nights in Kathamandu* that, he was surprised by the recurrence of ‘Western’ culture as integral to Asian media and popular cultures – illustrated by posters of Rambo on walls of local buildings, UK band U2’s bootlegged tapes and knock-off Levis jeans.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For more theories on this, see: Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Culture Economy”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 7, 1990, p. 295–310; Frederick Buell, *National Culture and the New Global System*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1994; James Clifford, “Traveling Cultures”, in: *Cultural Studies*, Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (eds.), New York: Routledge, 1992; Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation”, in: *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), New York: Routledge, 1990; Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections*, London: Routledge, 1996; Ulf Hannerz, “Flows, Boundaries and Hybrids: Keywords in Transnational Anthropology”, *Research Program on Transnational Communities*, Working Paper No. 2, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Kearney, “The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism”, *Annual Review Anthropol*, Vol. 24, 1995, p. 549.

<sup>19</sup> Robertson, “Comments on the ‘Global Triad’...”.

<sup>20</sup> Wayne Gabardi, *Negotiating Postmodernism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 33–34.

<sup>21</sup> From Richard Kadrey’s review: *Video Night in Kathmandu*. *Whole Earth Review*, Winter 1989: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1510/is\\_n65/ai\\_8151763/?tag=content;coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1510/is_n65/ai_8151763/?tag=content;coll) (accessed 5.10.2009).

These incidences of essentially consumer cultural grafting lend support to the globalization agenda as examples of the pervasive intrusion of Western society in the economic ecology of developing countries. Yet my main focus is not economic, but media cultural engagement; in particular how media messages from one locale are reproduced in another, radically different, locale. Arjun Appadurai, noting from Pico Iyer's cultural travelogue through much of Asia, suggests caution in interpreting the impact of transfusion of Western material culture in indigenous communities. For instance, commenting from Iyer, he notes that in the process of Philippine popular art purveyor's rendition of American popular songs, and in their attempt to be "disturbingly faithfully to the original than they are in the United States today, an entire nation seems to have learned to mimic Kenny Rogers and the Lennon sisters, like a vast Asian Motown chorus".<sup>22</sup>

It is clear therefore that more than material artifacts are needed to complete the global hybridity of media products; and that indeed a base resistance is in place to limit the extent of the hybridity. Aping American popular culture is not quite the same as *being* American. It is for this reason that I prefer the phrase *Media Domestication* as more reflective of the process in which transglobal media messages provide a matrix for reenactment of the same messages in traditional societies, especially when such reenactment limits itself to sensual stimuli of the messages, devoid, if possible, from the spiritual antecedents of the original.

Media domestication is not necessarily a new concept in media studies; there are at least two ways it has been used as a process of media adaptation to local circumstances. First, the term has been used to refer to views that the foreign news stories in the United States are sifted to make them relevant to Americans or American interests, with the same themes and topics as domestic news; "when the topics are distinctive they are given interpretations that apply to American values."<sup>23</sup> Media domestication is an integral part of the international political economy. Secondly the term was used to refer to ownership of information and communication technologies by essentially younger people as part of the domestic consumer culture in Singapore, China and South Korea.<sup>24</sup>

However my main focus in this paper is on how media messages from both global non-West are consumed and subsequently appropriated and domesticated by film audiences and film practitioners in developing countries. The paper uses the Hausa video film industry in northern Nigeria as specific case study. In the analysis, the paper focuses on the catalytic role played by media technologies – not just the messages – in this process of appropriation.

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<sup>22</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*..., p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Chin-Chuan Lee, "Global Event, National Prism", in: *Global Media Spectacle: News War over Hong Kong*, Chin-Chuan Lee, Joseph Man Chan, Zhongdand Pan and Clement Y.K. So (eds.), Albany: CUNY, 2002, p. 297.

<sup>24</sup> See: Sun Lim, "Children, Technology and Media Domestication in Singapore, China and South Korea", Paper presented at *Asia-Pacific Childhoods Conference*, Singapore, 17–20 July 2006.

### Media contra-flows and non-Western film audiences

Despite the claims by Tomlinson that the term ‘cultural imperialism’ has no specific universal meaning due to different interpretations of ‘imperialism’ and ‘culture’,<sup>25</sup> Tomlinson, however, presented ‘four ways – actually, five, but we can dispose of the first one quite briefly – to talk about cultural imperialism.’<sup>26</sup> From a variety of perspectives, Tomlinson argues that there is no single accepted conception of cultural imperialism; there is, instead, a variety of interpretations and meanings of the terms that construct the concept. Despite this ambiguity, however, one of the varieties given by Tomlinson, media imperialism, pivots around the accusation that Anglo-Western media products are consumed in non-Western societies, and thus suppressing local production and creating dependency on the Western varieties – from popular culture, to television programs and newspapers and magazines.<sup>27</sup> In this argument, media-cultural imperialism is a sub-set of the general system of imperialism, since cultural outputs are also ideological and profit-oriented to the larger system.<sup>28</sup>

Further, even within the developing countries themselves, there are media entertainers who see the perfection of their craft in terms of Westernization. For instance, Ali Nuhu, the Hausa-speaking actor who pioneered the Hindi-to-Hausa cloning technique justifies Westernization of Hausa video film on the basis of progress and modernity. He was quoted in an interview 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 imitate 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”.<sup>29</sup>

This “Westernization is modernization” paradigm of Hausa video filmmakers was not only individual filmmaker’ perceptions of media power from the West, but was also facilitated by lack of transnational media broadcasts from Africa. As Mytton, Teer-Tomaselli and Tudesq noted, most non-African content in African television programming is not targeted at African audiences, which is due to technical inabilities to produce more local contents. There is thus too much reliance on transnational content programming.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism*...

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> See: Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1973.

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Schiller, “Not yet the post-imperialist era”, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1991, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Hausa video film star, Ali Nuhu, *Ra’ayi*, Vol. 1, No. 1, February 2005:7, Niamey, Republic of Niger (translated from Hausa by the author).

<sup>30</sup> Graham Mytton, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and André-Jean Tudesq, “Transnational Television in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in: *Transnational Television Worldwide: Towards a New Media Order*, Jean K. Chalaby (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2005, p. 100.

Similar trends were noted in the Egyptian film industry where a prominent Egyptian film critic argued that Egyptian media content programming are predominantly Western in their outlook, even if using Egyptian scripts and set designs.<sup>31</sup>

Thus with the onslaught of media parenting all over developing countries, it was inevitable that filmmakers try to imitate metropolitan models of telling stories to their communities, often using the same templates to enhance what they consider the universal appeal of their craft. This would therefore seem to support the various perspectives of media imperialism in which Anglo-Western media becomes a template in the production of media services in developing countries.

Yet over the last two decades, the picture is turning out to be less clear. This is because of the emergence of 'media power-blocks' within the global South that produce and distribute media products which supplant the Anglo-Western media productions in the same South zones. In this way, inter-regional influences prove extremely effective in transmitting media values from one country to another, leading to the emergence of media contra-flows. In this regard, Daya Kishan Thussu noted that this is an evidence that global media traffic is not just one way, even though it is disproportionately towards non-Western directions. Thus new networks from the Southern urban creative centers of Cairo, Hong Kong and Mumbai represent what could be called 'subaltern flows'.<sup>32</sup>

Such global traffic therefore leads to the emergence of counter, or contra-flows of media influences, often absorbed by audiences sharing the same cultural resonance. Thus "in the era of globalisation, the one-way vertical flow has given way to multiple and horizontal flows, as subaltern [contra-flow] media content providers have emerged to service an ever growing geo-cultural market".<sup>33</sup>

South America is a regional cluster with considerable progress in television drama production and export. However, the GDP of a country in the region determines the inter-regional exchange of programs, despite strongly binding linguistic and cultural norms. For instance, in analyzing South American Television flows in the 1990s, it was discovered that countries with lower GDPs (Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay) imported but did not export content programming. Expectedly, wealthier nations (Brazil, Argentina) rarely import regional programs, and if they do, it would be from Mexico or Hispanic networks in the US.<sup>34</sup>

Further, it has been argued that the international presence of Brazilian telenovelas has challenged the traditional debate over cultural imperialism and the North-South

<sup>31</sup> Samir Farid, "Surat al-insan al-Misri 'ala al-shasha bayn al-aflam al-istihlakiyya wa-al-aflam al-fanniyya." (*The Image of the Egyptian on the Screen between Commercial and Artistic Films*), in: *al-Insan al-Misri 'ala al-shasha* (The Egyptian on the Screen), Hashim al-Nahas (ed.), Cairo: al-Hay' al-'Amm li-l-Kitab, 1986, p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> Daya Kishan Thussu, "Mapping Global Media Flow and Contra-Flow", in: *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*, Daya K. Thussu (ed.), London: Routledge, 2007, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Falkenheim B Chmielewski, "Asymmetries Reconfigured: South American Television Flows in the 1990s.", *Canadian Journal of Communication*, North America, Vol. 25, January 2000: <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1155/1074> (accessed 29.03.2009), p. 8.

flow of media products.<sup>35</sup> This contra-flow of media products is further illustrated by the export potentials of the telenovela which were exported to Egypt, Russia, China, Africa, as well as throughout Europe.<sup>36</sup>

Further media contra-flow influences are reflected in the popularity of “Hallyu Korean wave” – the significant increase in the popularity of South Korean entertainment and culture starting in the 1990s in China, Taiwan, and Japan, and which “has become a new trend since the late 1990’s and its typical aspects seem to have reached the Philippines since 2003, especially through soap opera, so called “Koreanovela.”<sup>37</sup> This wave started with the regional distribution of Korean cultural products was begun with trendy dramas, then, extended to popular songs, movies, with the growth of Korean media markets. 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. Now the term, “hallyu” seems to connote the influence of Korean social and cultural aspects such as clothes, fashion, and technological goods among the Asian countries.<sup>38</sup>

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. 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 very soon, 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.<sup>39</sup>

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

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<sup>35</sup> See Cacilda Rêgo, M. and Antonio C. La Pastina, “Brazil and the Globalization of Telenovelas”, in: *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*, Daya K. Thussu (ed.), New York: Routledge, 2007, p. 89–103.

<sup>36</sup> O. H. Benavides, *Drugs, Thugs, and Divas: Telenovelas and Narco-Dramas in Latin America*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Dong Hwan Kwon, “Is It too Early to Talk about ‘Hallyu’ in the Philippines? Koreanovela and its Reception among Filipino Audience”, in: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Space and Public Sphere in Asia 2006*, Seoul: Institute of Communication, Arts and Technology (iCat) Hallym University, 2006, p. 257.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Jane O. Vinculado, “Asia Invades the Philippines: Asian Soap Operas and Philippine Television Programming”, in: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Space and Public Sphere in Asia 2006*, Seoul: Institute of Communication, Arts and Technology (iCat) Hallym University, 2006, p. 234–239.

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.<sup>40</sup>

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”.<sup>41</sup> 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 reported that most of respondents indicated that they emotionally engaged more with Japanese dramas than they did with Western or Taiwanese dramas.<sup>42</sup>

Further, his respondents explained 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.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly enough, 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 and Tudesq noted that the rapid and successful development of the more popular and successful francophone transnational television stations in Africa has resulted from France’s own political and cultural approach, which among other things seeks to extend and strengthen co-operation between countries that have the French language in common.<sup>44</sup>

For Anglophone African countries, transnational television comes in the form of South Africa’s cable services of MNet, MultiChoice and its subsidiary, DSTV. But with a subscription of USD60, these services are essentially limited to elites – or those with enough interest to break out of traditional home-based media fare. In effect, it is paying for the privilege of accessing American programs – the starting point!

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>41</sup> Dong Hwan Kwon, “Is It too Early to Talk about ‘Hallyu’...” p. 262.

<sup>42</sup> Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 147.

<sup>43</sup> See for instance the arguments offered by Joseph D. Straubhaar, “Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity”, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1991.

<sup>44</sup> Mytton, Teer-Tomaselli, Tudesq, *Transnational Television...*, p. 101.

### Contra-flows of Hindi films as global movements

My next site of analysis in the media contra-flow exploration is the popularity of commercial Hindi masala films, spawned by Mumbai-based industry of Bollywood. Brian Larkin observes that despite the successful dislodging of Hollywood in the global arena, there have little studies on why Indian films achieved such success.<sup>45</sup> Hindi films outside India are absorbed in two ways: the first was by audiences who simply prefer them to Western films; and the second was by popular culture purveyors, especially filmmakers, who appropriate Hindi films as local variants – using the same storyline structure.

Studies done in the area of re-enactments of Hindi films outside India and especially by non-Indian audiences would seem to indicate three countries where such practices were previously prevalent: Pakistan<sup>46</sup> Turkey<sup>47</sup> and in the case of Hindi film music, Greece,<sup>48</sup> Indonesia<sup>49</sup> and Egypt.<sup>50</sup>

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”.<sup>51</sup> 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 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

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<sup>45</sup> Brian Larkin, “Itineraries of Indian Cinema: African Videos, Bollywood, and Global Media” in: *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (eds.), New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Samira Khan, “Popularity of Hindi Movies in Indonesia” (compiled for Esther van de Belt, 2003): [http://tamanbollywood.singcat.com/artikel/bollywood\\_in\\_indonesia.shtml](http://tamanbollywood.singcat.com/artikel/bollywood_in_indonesia.shtml) (accessed 13.10.2004).

<sup>47</sup> Ahmet Gürata, “Re-presenting and Remaking Indian Cinema in Turkey”, paper presented at the conference on *Indian Cinema Circuits: Diasporas, Peripheries and Beyond*, held 25 and 26 June 2009 at the University of Westminster, Regent Campus, London; Ahmet Gürata, “‘The Road to Vagrancy’: Translation and Reception of Indian Cinema in Turkey”, *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, Vol. 1, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Helen Abadzi, *Hindi Films of the 50s in Greece: The Latest Chapter of a Long Dialogue*: [http://www.sangeetmahal.com/journal\\_hindi\\_films\\_greece.asp](http://www.sangeetmahal.com/journal_hindi_films_greece.asp) (accessed 4.10.2009).

<sup>49</sup> Bettina David, “Intimate Neighbors: Bollywood, *Dangdut* Music, and Globalizing Modernities in Indonesia”, in: *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance*, Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 179–199.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Armbrust, “The Ubiquitous Nonpresence of India: Peripheral Visions from Egyptian Popular Culture”, in: *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance*, Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Larkin, “Itineraries of Indian Cinema...”, p. 173.

where it can claim to present a social imagination “about here and about us,” then the artifact and the audiences it addresses have a non-resident relationship.<sup>52</sup>

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. Perhaps the first and natural direct influence of Hindi cinema was in Pakistan which established its own film industry in about 1929 and which subsequently came to be referred to as Lollywood. Pakistan’s first indigenous film was *Teri Yaad* (dir. Daud Chand, 1948). The power and influence of Hindi films in the region provided the Pakistani filmmakers with a template to imitate either Bollywood films or their techniques. Thus, according to Omar Khan, more and more Lollywood producers found that plagiarism was the easiest and most effective way of making a fortune and thus when the import of Indian films was stopped in the 1950’s, the copycats simply went wild churning out carbon copy remakes of popular Indian films and releasing them shamelessly as “original” work in Pakistan.<sup>53</sup>

Considering the bitter acrimony that ensued in the separation of India into what eventually became Pakistan and Bangladesh, it was surprising that the emotional grammar of Hindi films was spoken and understood in Muslim Pakistan. This is more as the Hindi film genre is inevitably tied to the Hindu religion. According to Amitabh Bachan, perhaps the most visible Hindi modern film performer, most Hindi film stories revolved around the epics of the Ramayan and the Mahabharat, the main epic sources of Hindu religion, which explains why there is so much idolization.<sup>54</sup>

Thus while Islam does not feature too strongly in Pakistani cinema, the emotional grammar of the classic domestic conflict reflective of Hindi family dramas provided strong fodder for domestic conflict enactment and resolution. It is significant that early Lollywood films contain strong ideological messages about nationhood and independence, with strong “anti-Western” messaging.

In Greece, as in Pakistan, Hindi films of 1945–1965 were extremely popular in a society dealing with economic devastation, “illiteracy, limited life expectancy, and low status for women.” In such depressed circumstances, Hindi films provided an escape, especially as the plots of the movies resonated with the wounded Greek psyche. Suffering women, street children who had to drop out of school, jealous sisters-in-law, vengeful mothers-in-law, interdependencies, betrayals, and frequent unhappy ends “resonated with the difficult choices of poorly educated Greek people

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<sup>52</sup> Adrian M. Athique, “The Global Dispersal of Media: Locating Non-Resident Audiences for Indian Films”, in: *Medi@sia: Global Mediation In and Out of Context*, T. Holden and T. Scrase (eds.), London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 188–206.

<sup>53</sup> Omar Khan, “Loose Cannons, Dangerous Curves and Levitating Holy Scriptures! Part 1 – Lollywood’s Veiled Underbelly”, The Hotspot Online, January 2005: <http://www.thehotspotonline.com/bollymoviespot/Lollywood/LollyCult.htm> (accessed 07.07.2005).

<sup>54</sup> Amitabh Bachan, “Amitabh Bachan on Charlie Rose”, transcript of an interview aired on April 19, 2005 on Twenty Onwards Media, and posted on April 28, 2005: [http://twentyonwards.blogspot.com/twenty\\_onwards/2005/04/amitabh\\_bachan\\_2.html](http://twentyonwards.blogspot.com/twenty_onwards/2005/04/amitabh_bachan_2.html). (accessed 27.09.2009).

subsisting in large cities. In particular, the characters appealed to poor women. The maidservants and factory workers saw themselves depicted on the movie screen, hoping for deliverance. Maybe the rich young man would marry the poor beautiful girl who worked at his house. Maybe lost relatives would appear to take care of the abandoned street child who sang so beautifully”.<sup>55</sup>

The appeal of Hindi films to Greek audiences was such that the producers eventually ended up imitating Hindi success recipes. The result was Greek films with 8–12 songs (mainly set in bouzouki night-club scenes) and tragic plots and titles. To lure the audiences of Hindi films, Greek titles were sometimes almost indistinguishable. The Hindi-to-Greek film technique, however, focused more attention on the musical elements, creating a new genre of Greek popular music called *Indoprepi* (Hindi-style). The Greek intellectual class, with centuries of inherited critical tradition did not take kindly to the plagiarism of Hindi popular culture, and serious backlash ensued against such practice. As noted by a critic, “the drawn-out and bothersome Indian music which accompanies these sad creations also tends to become our national music... It is not permissible, when we fight to stand in the geographical space of Europe to have become a spiritual colony of India”.<sup>56</sup>

South-East Asia can be considered “Indian-belt” with cultures and religions cutting across the borders. Making the border leap was the unstoppable Hindi film, for as Sonia Trikha indicated, Hindi films are the “rage in Indonesia” where songs from Hindi films are dubbed in local language, Bahasa Indonesia.<sup>57</sup> This is not surprising because most Indonesians, especially those who live in the island of Java (about 60% of Indonesian population lived there), have a Hindu background. Their culture, dances, language (base on Sanskrit), philosophy, and their traditional ceremonies, all reflect this Hindu influence in their lives which has come to be a mix between Hinduism and Islam (Sufism).<sup>58</sup>

A convergence of cultures therefore favors the presence of Hindi films in Indonesia which had a long history of showing Hindi films.

Further acculturative influences of the Hindi cinema is in Malaysia, which can be considered part of Muslim Asia. Malaysia, with a large concentration of ethnic Indian residents who attract the Bollywood films also falls into the same cinematic mold as Indonesian audiences. In discussing this, Manik Mehta observes the firm grip of Bollywood films on Malaysian cinema-goers, evidenced by the fact that although the “average Malaysians... do not understand Hindi (though subtitles help them)... they can very well relate to the films and their characters”.<sup>59</sup>

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

<sup>55</sup> Abadzi, *Hindi Films of the 50s in Greece...*

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>57</sup> Sonia Trikha, “Road to Indonesia’s Heart Lies through Bollywood’s Films”, *Indian Express Newspapers*, 21.01.2001: [http://www.indoindians.com/bollywood\\_passport2ina.htm](http://www.indoindians.com/bollywood_passport2ina.htm) (accessed 15.01.2006).

<sup>58</sup> Khan, “Popularity of Hindi Movies in Indonesia...”.

<sup>59</sup> Manik Mehta, “Bollywood Fever Gripping Malaysia”, August 2003: <http://movies.indiainfo.com/features/bollymalaysia.html> (accessed 05.02.2004).

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”.<sup>60</sup>

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”.<sup>61</sup>

In Tibet, Ann Morcom notes that although Bollywood, especially its music is far from standard fare in Tibetan nightclubs, there is however, an increasing interest in reproducing Bollywood dances and Hindi songs which were sometimes performed in groups by the staff dancing troupes at nightclubs (*nangma* bars), who usually learn from VCDs, imitating dance moves. These troupes perform very much in the style of Tibetan dance created by the state and spread from the 1950s, now rearticulated with meanings of desirable modernity. They almost invariably perform Bollywood with a similar body language, which “results in a performance that is stiff, unsensual and overly modest compared to original Bollywood. They also tend to have dead-pan facial expressions”.<sup>62</sup>

In the old Soviet Union, although audiences were aware that the entertainment philosophy of Hindi films was steeped in the Hindu religious culture, this did not deter Soviet audiences, essentially because the early Hindi films in Soviet Union, especially in Moscow, in the 1950s were seen as socialist messaging. India was a newly independent nation with socialist leanings; Russia was in the grip of the cold war, closed off from the West and the two countries began diplomatic and trade relations. The early Hindi films, with their nominally socialist outlook were very alluring to audiences raised on diets of official socialist realism. Subsequently Hindi films became the most popular cultural export between the two countries. And the first and biggest film star was Raj Kapoor. His film, *Awara* (1952), was dubbed in Russian as *Brojyaga*.

The popularity of Kapoor’s filmmaking in technique in the Soviet Union also led to *Shree 420* (1955), and an Indo-Soviet co-production, *Pardesi* (1957) by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Russian director Vasili Pronin. By the time Kapoor did *Mera Naam Joker* in 1970, interest was beginning to fade, accelerated by the end of the Cold War in November 1990. Nevertheless, Hindi film stars were still popular in Russia, as attested by Amitabh Bachan who told an interviewer: “when I first went to Moscow for the first time, I was received by Russian female fans, who were actually dressed in our Indian dress and wore the bindi and the jewelry and everything, and spoke Hindi, which is our language. And said that they were going to university to study the language so that they could follow our films. Remarkable. Very astonishing”.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Armbrust, “The Ubiquitous Nonpresence of India...”, p. 212.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>62</sup> Ann Morcom, “Bollywood, Tibet, and the Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Global Modernity”, *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009, p. 155–156.

<sup>63</sup> Bachan, “Amitabh Bachan on Charlie Rose...”

Hindi cinema still retains its appeal in the Russia that emerged out of the Soviet Union after 1990, with stars such as Shahrukh Khan appealing to both young and older audiences. For instance, Elena Igorevna Doroshenko notes that Indian cinema in Russia, even after the long period of “silence,” still holds promise and has a future as cultural and political ties between India and Russia grow closer again with Indian films playing a significant role. For example, when the Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, visited Mumbai at the end of December 2010, he met Shahrukh Khan and mentioned the first Indian film he had ever seen back in the 1970s.<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup> Further acceptance of Bollywood 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”.<sup>66</sup>

In Ghana, audiences of Hindi films perceive India as a spiritual space or a sacred land, ‘full of magical, occult, and esoteric forces.’ 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.<sup>67</sup>

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. 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* (House-Master Records, 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

<sup>64</sup> Elena Igorevna Doroshenko, “In Russia, Shah Rukh Khan Is The ‘New’ Raj Kapoor”, *The Weekend Leader*, Vol. 3, Issue 45, 9.11.2012: <http://www.theweekendleader.com/Culture/1368/russia%E2%80%99s-new-love.html> (accessed 13.11.2012).

<sup>65</sup> Laura Fair, “Making Love in the Indian Ocean: Hindi Films, Zanzibari Audiences, and the Construction of Romance in the 1950s and 1960s”, in: Jennifer Cole and Lynn M. Thomas (eds.), *Love in Africa*, 58-82, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 60.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>67</sup> Albert K. Wuaku, *Tapping into Hindu Powers: Krishna and Shiva Worship in Ghana*, Unpublished PhD, Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto, 2004, p. 127–128.

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.<sup>68</sup>

In Senegal, a “francophone country without an Indian expatriate community”,<sup>69</sup> Gwenda Vander Steene records that obsession with Hindi cinema by the local population (or ‘Indophiles’ as she refers to them) who prefer Bollywood films was because of values which are, according to some Indophiles, highly regarded in Senegalese society and can also be found in Bollywood 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 Bollywood shows how they actually would like to see themselves: it is a Senegalese ideal projected in Bollywood film<sup>70</sup> – a recurrent argument and rationale for identifying with Hindi films in African communities.

In all these cases of the internalization of the Hindi film, 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.

### **Bollywood comes to Kano**

Indian films were shown in cinemas of Kano, northern Nigeria to enthusiastic Muslim audiences from Nigerian independence in 1960 by resident Lebanese cinema-owners. The first Hindi film shown in Kano’s Palace cinema in November 1960 was *Changez Khan* (dir. Kedar Kapoor, 1957). This opened the floodgates with more Hindi films being shown on all screens in Kano.

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

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<sup>68</sup> Sony Achiba profile: <http://www.sonyachiba.s5.com/> (accessed 15.02.2012).

<sup>69</sup> Gwenda Vander Steene, “‘Hindu’ Dance Groups and Indophilie in Senegal: The Imagination of the Exotic Other”, in: John C. Hawley, *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 117–148.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

films on video tapes targeted at home viewers. For instance, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Kano alone screened 1,176 Hindi films on its television network from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1977 when the first Hindi film was shown (*Aan Baan*, dir. Prakash Mehra, 1972) to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003. 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 cultural norms (shy women with lots of jewelry and draped in Muslim hijab, male heroes with Muslim dresses including turbans, and riding horses, etc.). By mid-1980s, these dewy-eyed boys (and less girls) have created two youth entertainment industries based on Hindi film templates.<sup>71</sup>

The first was the emergence of Muslim singers who call themselves ‘Kungiyar Ushaqu Indiya’ (Society for the Lovers of India), an approximation of the Senegalese youthful fans of Hindi films whom Gwenda Vander Steene call ‘Indophiles’ and who specialized in *soirées indous* (“Hindu evenings”) that create *dance indou* based on Hindi film dance routines.

The Ushaqu in Kano do not dance, but based their entire performance setlists on devotional songs, focusing attention on singing the praises of the Prophet Muhammad, using the *bandiri* (frame drum) to accompany the singing. In their performances, they employ the meter of the songs from popular Hindi films.<sup>72</sup> For instance, Brian Larkin noted that “they take a particular Indian film, such as *Kabhi Kabhie (Love Is Life)*, dir. Yash Chopra, 1976) and divide up the songs between them, each one responsible for translating a different song from the film into a Hausa praise song. Then during the performance the singers take turns competing with one another for the best performance”.<sup>73</sup>

By the time their popularity waned in the 2000s, they had recorded 48 compact cassettes containing 355 songs – each based on the meter of a Hindi film song.<sup>74</sup> Table 1 shows how 10 of their songs were copied from a Hindi film.

<sup>71</sup> Abdalla Uba Adamu, “Media Parenting and Construction of Media Identities in Northern Nigerian Muslim Hausa Video Films”, in: John Middleton and Kimani Njogu (eds.), *The Media and the Construction of African Identities*, London: International African Institute/Twanzega Communications, 2009.

<sup>72</sup> For more details on this group, see: Abdalla Uba Adamu, “The Muse’s Journey: Transcultural Translators and the Domestication of Music in Hausa Popular Culture”, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, June 2010; Abdalla Uba Adamu, “The Hindi Cinema Factor in Hausa Video Film Soundtracks”, in: *Global Soundtracks: The Culture of World Film Music*, Mark Slobin (ed.), Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

<sup>73</sup> Brian Larkin, “Bandiri Music, Globalization, and Urban Experience in Nigeria”, *Social Text* 81, Vol. 22, No. 4, Winter 2004, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> Data based on field work. I purchased the tapes from the group in the city of Kano, northern Nigeria in 2009, and transcribed the songs on each tape. As part of another project, I employed the assistance of Hausa fluent speakers of Hindi language who are also knowledgeable about Hindi film songs to correlate the Hausa versions of the Ushaqu songs with the Hindi film originals. I then traced most of the 355 songs on YouTube to validate their titles.

**Table 1. Ushaqu Hindi film song Hausa appropriations**

S/N	Hindi Film	Hindi Film Song	Ushaqu Hausa Appropriation
1.	Aap Ki Khatir (dir. Sudhendhu Roy, 1977)	Bambai Se aaya mera dost	Dangi duk mu zazzo gun da ake begen Manzo [Brethren, let's gather to praise the Prophet]
2.	Bobby (dir. Raj Kapoor, 1973)	Naa Chahoon Sona Chandi	Na damu, ni na damu [I am concerned, I am concerned]
3.	Prem Qaidi (dir. K. Muralimohana Rao, 1991)	Tere In Galon Pe	Ka rike Ma'aiki na ka da ka daina [Hold fast to my Prophet, don't stop]
4.	Jung Baaz (dir. Mehul Kumar, 1989)	Naam hai mera Nina Ninjo	Dan Amina nake so [I yearn for the son of Amina (Prophet's mother)]
5.	Thanedaar (dir. Raj N. Sippy, 1990)	Jina hai to has ke jiyo	Al Musdafa mai san sa fa Allahu zai sa shi Aljanna [The Prophet, whoever so loves him will enter paradise]
6.	Ram Bharose (dir. Anand Sagar, 1977)	Chalo Bhai Ran Bharose	Tunani na yabo zan yi gurin Al Musdafa [I am going to Praise the Prophet]
7.	Vishwatma (dir. Rajiv Rai 1992)	Saat Samundar	Ni fa na ce na amince in har an ce Musdafa [I totally accept, when you utter the Prophet's name]
8.	Mother India (dir. Mehboob Khan, 1957)	Dukh bhare din bite re bhaiya	Muktari Abin biya [Let's follow only the Prophet]
9.	Aradhana (dir. Shakti Samanta, 1969)	Roop Tera Mastana	Mu yi, mu yi, yabon shi, zo, zo [Come, come, let's praise him]
10.	Amar Deep (dir. R. Krishnamurthy and K. Vijayan, 1979)	Jali Lo Dim Tana	Ya Rasulu sallallah [Oh, Messenger Allah Blessed]

The Ushaqu Hausa versions try to approximate the meter of the original Hindi film song, often using onomatopoeic harmonies, without necessarily trying to directly translate the original Hindi lyrics into Hausa.

The second youth entertainment industry spawned by Muslim Hausa attachment to Hindi films was a video film industry which officially started in March 1990 with the release of a VHS cassette film called *Turmin Danya* (The Draw, dir. Salisu Galadanchi). It was a conflict in a Hausa traditional ruling about succession to the throne, with romance thrown in for good measure. Within a couple years a whole

industry has emerged and by 1999 the industry was tagged ‘Kanywood’ in a Hausa language magazine created to cater for the industry. It is instructive to note that this is the first labeling of a video film industry in Africa. This is because the larger Nigerian film industry, ‘Nollywood’ was coined only in 2002 by a newspaper columnist Norimitsu Onishi in a *New York Times* column of 16th September 2002.<sup>75</sup>

Kanywood films are based on three sub-plot elements: forced marriage, gender rivalry, singing and dancing. These elements characterize, by and large, Hindi commercial cinema. The first theater of Hausa youth cinema was an inevitable rebellion against *auren dole* – the romanticized forced marriage scenario. This is a theme well played-out in thousands of Hindi films. The second formulaic structure of the Hausa video film is a refinement of the *auren dole* theme – a love triangle where either two girls love the same boy, or two boys love the same girl, with parents or guardians opposing. Both these formulaic patterns, are of course, adopted from Hindi cinema, which is why Hausa video film makers latch on them due to what they perceive as cultural similarities. The third defining characteristic of the Hausa video film is the song and dance, especially from 2000 to 2008. This became a necessary vehicle for the expression of the love, conflict (and often violence as a means of conflict resolution or enforcement of turf territoriality, with the turf often always being a girl as an object of desire).

Considering the historical antecedent preference for Hindi films among the Hausa, it was not surprising therefore that the Hausa video film industry sought its creative templates from Hindi film culture. The transformation of the Hausa video film to a Hindi film clone started from 1995 with Mr. USA Galadima’s *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* (Pains of Love), produced under the auspices of the Nigerian Film Corporation, Jos.<sup>76</sup> The video film was based on the Hindi film, *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye* (dir. Rama Rao Tatineni, 1983). Before its cinema release, it was premiered to a select private audience in a video store in Kano in 1996, and the overwhelming audience response was that it was too Hindi and too adult to be accepted in a Hausa culture as a video film; more so since it was also the first Hausa video film with body contacts between genders. This was probably what informed the decision not to release it commercially, and restricting its viewing to cinema showings only. However, in 1999 Sarauniya Films in Kano released the trailer of a new video film, *Sangaya* (My Lover, dir. Aminu Muhammad Sabo). It contained catchy tunes, and most importantly a tightly controlled choreography which heightened anticipation for the film which was to be released in early 2000.

Noting the anticipation for *Sangaya*, raised by the trailer, Almah Films in Jos decided to pipe it at the post by immediately releasing *Hanzari* (Haste, dir. Magaji

<sup>75</sup> Norimitsu Onishi, “Step Aside, L.A. and Bombay, for Nollywood”: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/16/world/step-aside-la-and-bombay-for-nollywood.html> (accessed 19.02.2003).

<sup>76</sup> Jos has a long tradition of Indian cinema – indeed almost all the Indian video imports in the 2002 NFVCB *Directory* were by Plateau (Jos) Cinemas – and differs from Kano in one fundamental respect: it offered matinee shows due to its numerous in-door cinemas, whereas Kano cinemas screen films only at night. The constant barrage of Indian films in Jos metropolis thus created a new wave of video makers with Indian filming mindset.

Mijinyawa) a video based on Hindi comedy film *Do Jasoos* (dir. Naresh Kumar, Dimple Films, 1975). The significance of this video was not that it was the second direct Hindi-to-Hausa adaptation, but its mimicking of the *Sangaya* dance routines with 15 dancers – 10 male and five female in a choreography that echoes the original Hindi film *Do Jasoos*.<sup>77</sup>

The race then, had started. In the stampede that followed, no one was focusing attention too much on serious storylines or drama with Nigerian appeal or even African; the focus was on creating video films for Hausa-speaking audience that clone the Hindi films which the audience was already addicted to. In many interviews with popular culture press, the producers claimed that they were trying to wean away Hausa audiences from their addiction to Hindi films by providing readily digestible alternatives that frame the *same* Hindi central storylines, but within a more African setting.

Subsequently each producer was attempting to upstage the other in the appropriation game, trying to prove that his video film could produce a better Hindi adaptation than others.<sup>78</sup> Thus HRB Studios in Kano released *Abin Sirri Ne* (Mystery, dir. Tijjani Ibrahim) in 1999, based on *Judwaa* (dir. David Dhawan, 1997). This was followed by Tijjani Ibrahim's *Dijengala* (female nickname) in 1999 which entered the Hausa entertainment history as the first Australian-to-Hindi-to-Hausa appropriation. *Dijengala* was based on Hindi film *Khoon Bhari Maang* (dir. Rakesh Roshan, 1988), which itself was based on Australian mini-TV series soap opera, *Return to Eden* (dirs. Karen Arthur and Kevin James Dobson, 1983).

The three studios<sup>79</sup> that spearheaded the Hindi-to-Hausa adaptation technique were merely sustaining the tradition of direct copying initiated in the industry by well-respected directors such as the late Tijjani Ibrahim who favored not only direct Hindi-to-Hausa conversion, exemplified by his *Mujadala* (Pious Woman, based on *Dillagi*, dir. Sunny Deol, 1999) and *Badali* (Transformation, based on *Hum Hai Rahi Pyar Ki*, dir. Mahesh Bhatt, 1993) but also Hindi motifs (especially romantic storylines). For instance, he stated in an interview that "...although my films are almost always love stories, they also contain other plot elements. Also most of the viewers of our video films are housewives, who prefer these kinds of stories".<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> It also introduced Hausa-speaking actor Ali Nuhu, a non-ethnic Hausa minority from Gombe, in northern Nigeria, to the general audience of the Hausa video film. Ali Nuhu, later to be the most prominent star in the Hausa video film industry, and nicknamed variously Shahrukh Khan or Salman Khan, after the popular Indian film stars, a tag he gleefully accepts (interview with Ali Nuhu, *Fim*, March 2000, p. 15–16). His main contribution to the Hausa video film industry was that he eventually became the most aggressive proponent of the Hindi-to-Hausa adaptation video film technique.

<sup>78</sup> In the Kanywood film industry, producers have more power than directors, as the latter were hired by the producers. Films are often cast exactly the way the producer wants them. Even listing of films in the various Censorship Board directories mainly give the producer's names against film titles, rather than directors'.

<sup>79</sup> Almah Productions in Jos with *Hanzari*; and in Kano, HRB with *Abin Sirri Ne* and HB with *Dijengala*.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with *Fim*, Kaduna, Nigeria, September 2002, p. 20.

This filmmaking rationale draws a direct parallel in Indonesia, in that the audience for Hausa video films, as for Hindi films in Indonesia, share remarkable similarity, for according to Samira Khan, Hindi movies are mostly watched by females in Indonesia, “however there are of course many males who love them but not as many as females... Although there are many people that love Hindi movies here, there are still many people including youngsters who don’t like it. That is usually because of many scenes, the monotone themes, and the story. It makes them think that they are stupid and that the movies are un-educational”.<sup>81</sup>

Hausa film director Tijjani Ibrahim’s open endorsement of the Hindi makeover, using then young up-and-coming stars to appeal to Hausa housewives and schoolgirls confirmed on the genre a degree of respectability.

In 2000 Ibrahimawa Studios in Kano released *Akasi* (Opposite, dir. Ishaq Sidi Ishaq). It was based on one of the most popular Hindi films to Hausa audience.<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, a market suddenly opened in using Hindi film themes and storylines in Hausa video films. The *Sangaya* revolution provided a perfect opportunity for endorsing this because of the availability of a multi-instrument sound synthesizer which made it possible to re-enact the complex soundtrack along Hindi film soundtrack lines.

Thus the main creative mechanism adopted by the new wave of Hausa video filmmakers is to appropriate Hindi films, remaking them into Hausa copies, often complete with storylines, or appropriating songs and choreography from various Hindi films. In the few cases where the producers come up with original scripts, they nevertheless rely on Hindi film motifs – both in the storylines and in the production process – to increase the appeal of their films to Hausa audience already fed on Hindi films leading to what is called *Indiyanci* (Bollywood appropriation) to reflect the main mechanism of this cluster of young, and essentially urban, Hausa filmmakers.<sup>83</sup> The industry itself refers to such appropriations as “wankiya” (washing off). Thus the Hausa video films that started to emerge from 2000 were often collages of about three or four Hindi films, essentially done to mask the identity of the actual Hindi films appropriated.

A vibrant youth entertainment film and music industry thus became established in northern Nigeria and which released hundreds of video films consumed locally and in the neighboring Niger Republic. Fig. 1 shows the official number of Hausa video films available to 2008.

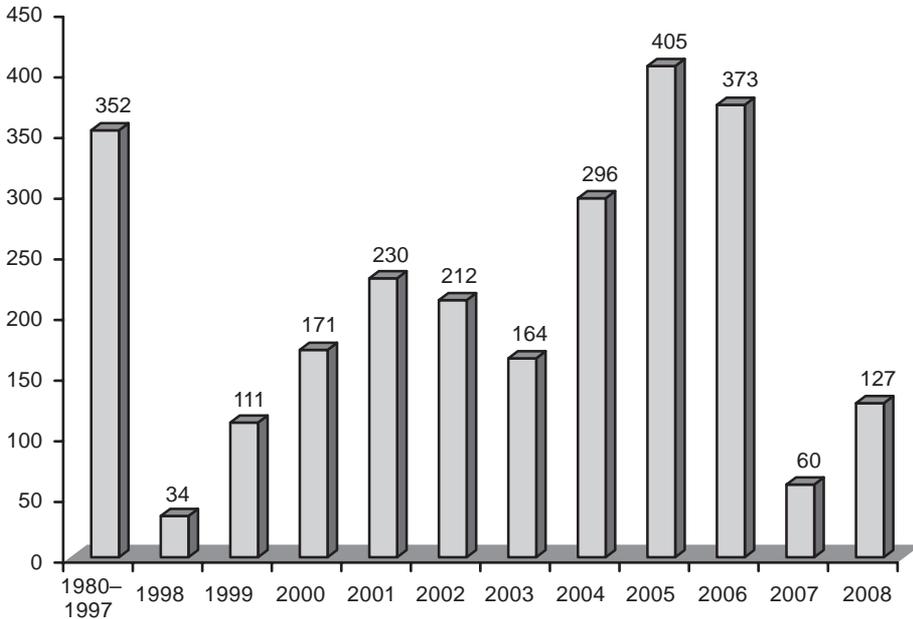
The figures from 1980 to 1997 were seen as ‘unofficial’ (based on claims by producers of their existence) because these films were not regulated through the official channels; but this was because official censoring of video films in Nigeria started in 1996. While many factors can be attributed to the fluctuations in the

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<sup>81</sup> Khan, “Popularity of Hindi Movies in Indonesia...”.

<sup>82</sup> *Sanam Bewafa* (dir. Saawan Kumar Tak, 1991).

<sup>83</sup> In a similar way, Helen Abadzi quotes the term “Indoprepi” to reflect the influence of Hindi film songs on the development of Greek popular music.



**Fig. 1. Distribution of Hausa video films over the years**

productions, yet the sharp drop in 2006 can mostly be attributed to a scandal involving a popular Hausa film actress, Maryama “Hiyana” Usman which affected film production, such that in its coverage of the scandal, *Fim* magazine of September 2007 devoted an entire issue to the detailing how “Maryam Hiyana has killed the Hausa video film industry.”

By 2010 the Hausa video film had almost reverted back to its less spectacular beginnings in March 1990. Under new tougher and more stringent censorship regime, filmmakers took the option of leaving Kanywood and migrating to other commercial hubs in northern Nigeria to make more profitable films than bucolic folktales that would not have the same commercial success as in the films involving cutting and pasting transnational influences in their styles to create an urban Hausa film – which the public culture rejected precisely because of its transnational pretensions.

A survey of Hausa video films released to the market from 2001 to 2003 indicates that some 124 were intertextual appropriations of one Hindi film or other in various formations. A sample of 10 is shown in Table 2.<sup>84</sup>

An analysis of the main list of 124 shows that 77 of the Hausa video films were directly based on the storylines of a corresponding Hindi film, while 30 adapted the

<sup>84</sup> This table is based on the entire range of intertextual relationships between Indian films and the corresponding Hausa video films; some were shot-by-shot remakes, others used the Hindi songs and thematically re-arranged them using Hausa lyrics, or borrowed scenes here and there; yet others used artwork (poster and editing techniques) from Hindi films, and finally, some use similar special effects to create similar scenes from Indian films.

**Table 2. A sample of Hindi films appropriated into Hausa video film**

S/N	Hausa Video Film	Hindi film Original	Appropriated
1.	Ma'amala [Transactions]	Anjaam (dir. Rahul Rawail, 1994)	Storyline
2.	Bunkasa [Prominence]	Anmol (dir. Ketan Desai, 1993)	Storyline
3.	Jirwaye [Trickling Down]	Azaad (dir. Pramod Chakravorty, 1978)	Scenes
4.	Danshi [Damp]	Baazigar (dir. Abbas-Mustan, 1993)	Storyline
5.	Masakin Kauna [Vessel of Love]	Betaab (dir. Rahul Rawail, 1983)	Storyline
6.	Almuru [Dusk]	Bhoot (dir. Ram Gopal, 2003)	Storyline
7.	Hubba [Mausoleum]	Chaaht (dir. Mahesh Bhatt, 1996)	Storyline
8.	Ayaah [Verse]	Chandni (dir. Yash Chopra, 1989)	Storyline
9.	Furuci [Utterance]	Chori Chori Chupke Chupke (dirs. Abbas Alibhai Burmawalla and Mastan Alibhai Burmawalla, 2001)	Storyline
10.	Dhalal [non-Hausa word]	Dalaal (dir. Partho Ghosh, 1993)	Title

songs, 17 used various scenes and one simply used the title of the equivalent Hindi film. It is interesting to note that the Indian producers themselves predominantly look towards Hollywood for “inspiration”. As sarcastically stated by two reviewers: “We are going to let you into a secret. Do you know how films are made? It’s simple. The essential tools of a Bollywood film-maker are a television set, a video cassette player and several prints of the latest Hollywood hits. You thought he needed an original script, film stars, lights and a camera? No way! Take a look at some of Bollywood’s biggest hits and misses. Most of them have been lifted, in whole or part, from Hollywood hits – old and new”.<sup>85</sup>

This is supported by my extensive study of Internet web sites purporting to reveal Hollywood films that had been “lifted”, “ripped-off” or “inspired” into Hindi films. A survey of such sites from 2002 to 2004 reveals at least 77 Hollywood films converted into Hindi masala films.<sup>86</sup> Further, Blair Orfall reproduced an interview with an Indian film producer who claimed that “easily 60 percent of movies – almost one film that releases every week – is either blatantly copied or inspired by some fairly big American film. In addition to that, I’m going to stick my neck out and say a good 10 to 15 percent are borrowed from non-American

<sup>85</sup> Sandeep Unnithan and Deepa Deosthalee, “The great Bollywood rip-off”, *The India Express*, 16.01.1998: <http://www.expressindia.com/news/ie/daily/19980116/01650964.html> (accessed 22.10.2001).

<sup>86</sup> A more recent listing is given at: <http://pranshu.hubpages.com/hub/a-complete-list-of-bollywood-movies-copied-from-hollywood-plain-plagiarism> (accessed 25.05.2012).

sources. And maybe 25 percent – I’m not even comfortable saying 25 percent – is original”.<sup>87</sup>

Hindi filmmakers justify appropriating Hollywood in their films, for according to the columnist Vikramdeep Johal, “the floodgates, so to speak, opened in the 70s, when our film-makers began to steal Hollywood stories with gay abandon. *The Godfather* became *Dharmatma*, *The Magnificent Seven* was turned into *Khotey Sikkey*, *The Exorcist* into *Jadu Tona*, *Some Like it Hot* became *Rafoo Chakkar* etc... Today, most film-makers openly acknowledge the sources of their films and consider it a matter of great pride to be involved with the rehash of a famous film, thereby uniquely combining “inspiration “ with “perspiration””.<sup>88</sup>

Hausa video filmmakers in northern Nigeria justify appropriating Bollywood films because, they see cultural similarities in the Hindi films. As a noted Hausa filmmaker stated, “our culture (Muslim Hausa) is similar to Indian culture, the difference being in fashion and make-up only. We used to watch the films and note the things we should change such that when a typical Hausa person can relate to it as his culture, rather than shunning it. Thus we adapt what we can to suit our culture and religion. If any scene is neutral on these two issues, we leave it as it is”.<sup>89</sup>

In Turkey, as in Hindi films, appropriation of various sources into a singular Turkish film was very common. According to Gürata, in 1972 Turkey ranked third among major film-producing countries, with 301 movies. Almost 90 per cent of these movies, however, were remakes, adaptations or spin-offs: in other words, they were based on novels, plays, films and even film reviews or publicity materials of foreign origin. “The notion of plagiarism in Turkey is not identical with that prevalent in the West... Furthermore, the appropriation of material whose sources (filmic or non-filmic) are almost impossible to identify, rendered proper legal procedures unnecessary for the filmmakers”.<sup>90</sup>

The main creative source of appropriation by Turkish filmmakers, however, were Hindi films. This is because Indian films were modified and adapted into the local context by the local distributors, exhibitors or censorship bodies. These modifications took the form of various programming and translation methods from trimming to dubbing. Furthermore, certain scenes were removed or in some cases performances or acts featuring local stars were inserted into the original prints.<sup>91</sup>

Hausa video filmmakers, unlike Bollywood filmmakers rarely openly acknowledge the sources of their films; but like Turkish filmmakers change the names of the

<sup>87</sup> Blair Orfall, “Bollywood Retakes: Literary Adaptation and Appropriation in Contemporary Hindi Cinema”, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oregon, 2009, p. 91.

<sup>88</sup> Vikramdeep Johal, “Plagiarism as an art-form”, *The Tribute* (India) Sunday Reading, 18 November 1998: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/1998/98nov08/sunday/bollywood.htm> (accessed 29.07.2001).

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Hausa video film scriptwriter and filmmaker, Abubakar Baballe Hayatu, *Fim* magazine (Kaduna, Nigeria), November 2002, p. 47.

<sup>90</sup> Ahmet Gürata, “Translating Modernity: Remakes in Turkish Cinema”, in: *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, edited by Eleftheriotis, Dimitris and Gary Needham, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006, p. 242.

<sup>91</sup> Gürata, “Re-presenting and Remaking Indian Cinema in Turkey...”, p. 3.

original Hindi films to a more local equivalent.<sup>92</sup> There are undoubtedly many films produced that are unique, original and rooted in local realities. However the convergent similarities with Indian social culture makes simple appropriation of Hindi films and their transformation into Hausa copies much easier.

### **Nollywood and its contra-flows**

So far I have talked about the contra-flows of global images in cinema and how images move and are domesticated from one locality to another. The emergence of the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood from 1992 sets up another contra-flow center, this time in Africa, which sees the consumption of Nollywood films in Africa and other Black nations. This generated so much interest that a whole conference was dedicated to Nollywood at the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany in May 2009. Titled *Nollywood and Beyond: Nollywood and Beyond: Transnational Dimensions of the African Video Industry*, the conference gathered many Nollywood scholars in one place to discuss the diasporic movement of Nigerian films across the world.<sup>93</sup> All the papers relate in one way or other this pervasive influence. Heike Becker, for instance explored why: “Nollywood productions apparently appealed particularly to university students and young professionals. Going by the anecdotes I kept hearing over the next year or so, the films were not only a popular source of entertainment but had also begun to shape speech patterns and habitus, in a Bourdieuan sense, of young, highly-educated people”.<sup>94</sup>

In Sierra Leone, Oumar Farouk Sesay reports that for a traumatized post-Sierra Leone looking for an absolution, Nigerian films with their surreal themes and religious overtones are like a panacea to the ills of our society. Themes like witchcraft-”underworld” and family feud strike a chord with the Sierra Leonean audience... The phenomena of Nigeria films have gone beyond entertainment, it has affected the way we live, our perception and interaction with our environment.<sup>95</sup>

Similarly, in Kampala, Uganda, not only has Nollywood become a powerful visual phenomena, it was also inspiring music compositions. As noted by Serunjogi: “the Nigerian movies’ story-line is a brew of conflict, revenge, trials and tribulations that

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<sup>92</sup> Although this does not always work. The names of Hindi films appropriated into Hausa are not translated directly; they are often given titles that have actually nothing to do with the original Hindi film. Examples include *Khusufi* (eclipse, dir. Ali Nuhu, 2007) which was based on *Taal* (music, dir. Subhash Ghai, 1999) and *Abin Sirri Ne* (Mysterious) based on *Judwaa* (‘twins’, dir. David Dhawan, 1997).

<sup>93</sup> The proceedings are published in Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome (eds.), *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Heike Becker, “Nollywood in Urban Southern Africa: Nigerian Video Films and their Audiences in Cape Town and Windhoek”, Paper presented at the conference *Nollywood and Beyond: Nollywood and Beyond: Transnational Dimensions of the African Video Industry*, Mainz: Johannes Gutenberg University, May 2009, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Oumar Farouk Sesay, “Sierra Leone: Nigeria Films – Beyond the Euphoria”, *Concord Times* (Freetown), 13.12.2003: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200312151029.html> (accessed 18.12.2003).

is keeping hundreds of Kampalans glued before their TV sets for several hours on end. Such films have so swayed popular culture and even inspired one of Kampala's most popular songs, *Ekinigeria*".<sup>96</sup>

In Ghana, Nollywood was seen as a threat to the Ghanaian film industry due to its massive popularity and general preference for Nigerian films by Ghanaian audiences. In Malawi, Kang'ombe reports that film viewers in the country prefer Nigerian movies to Western films. Demand for Western movies of the James Bond and Clint Eastwood type have declined dramatically within a period of two years since the West African movies were introduced in Malawi. Lack of vivid theme that Africans can identify with in most of the Western films has been identified as the most important reason for the trend.<sup>97</sup>

In Tanzania, Matthias Krings reports how Nigerian Nollywood films between 2003 to 2006 were extremely popular and subsequently served as a template for the development of the Tanzanian 'Bongowood' film industry. The popularity of Nigerian films was seen in the light of the fact that Nigerian films, considered as African films, matched the social and cultural realities of everyday life in Tanzania was the most popular explanation for the success of Nollywood films in Tanzania.<sup>98</sup>

Thus for some Tanzanian filmmakers, 'Nigeria – or rather Nollywood – is still the promised land of African video filmmaking'.<sup>99</sup> This is not therefore surprising considering that films tend to be culture-specific. Hollywood films are not produced with African audiences in mind, consequently they do not connect with African cultural universe. Hollywood films are absorbed in African communities simply because there was no alternative – until now. Nigerian films provide the necessary contra-flow stream needed by African cinema audiences. In this process, Nollywood then become the next point of regional power in cinema studies; setting the standards and providing the template. The circle then closes.

## Conclusion

In the first exploratory study of the Hausa video films in the early 1990s when the video films started acquiring their transnational characteristics, Brian Larkin advocated a concept of *parallel modernities* to explain the Hausa-Hindi links in the Hausa popular culture. This framework was used to refer to "co-existence in space and time of multiple economic, religious and cultural flows that are often subsumed within the term 'modernity'".<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Titus Serunjogi, "Ugandans Say", *New Vision* (Kampala), 29.07.2005: <http://business.highbeam.com/3548/article-1G1-134686360/ugandans-say> (accessed 3.08.2005).

<sup>97</sup> Paul Kang'ombe, "Movie Fanatics Scramble for West African Movies", *Malawi Standard* (Blantyre), 16.08.2004: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200408161225.html> (accessed 22.12.2005).

<sup>98</sup> Matthias Krings, "Nollywood Goes East: The Localization of Nigerian Video Films in Tanzania", in: Mahir Saul and Ralph A. Austen (eds.), *Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution*, p. 74–91, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010, p. 76.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>100</sup> Brian Larkin, "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities", *Africa*, Vol. 67, No. 3, 1997, p. 407.

Larkin's use of *parallel modernities* as an explanation for the Hausa video film development is premised upon the application of theories of media effects, particularly television programming, on Hausa viewers. Thus in seeing the Hausa film maker's imitative absorption of Hindi film cinema technique in Hausa popular culture, Larkin assumes that Hausa filmmakers and their audience "participate in the imagined realities of *other cultures* as part of their daily lives".<sup>101</sup> Yet this presumes a cultural entertainment vacuum among the Hausa, and this is not the case. Hausa popular culture had always had strong dosage of drama, miming, singing and dancing, long before contact with non-African popular culture. When Hindi cinema brought these elements to the visual medium, they merely reaffirmed a visual cultural lineage.

Similarly, Hausa society had had to deal with the embedded issues of *auren dole*, or what I prefer as *soyayyar dole* (forced love), again long before the intrusion of Hindi cinema in urban northern Nigeria. Hausa film makers merely reproduce Western cinematic techniques in telling the same old stories from their communities. The contra-flow, therefore, transcends visual mimicry; but reflects a sharing of cultural commonalities and memory facilitated by common religious subscription packaged in various forms of popular culture. With the exception of Ghanaian Hindu worship – a process that actually waned – other center centers of Hindi film contra-flow influences latch on social dynamics of family life and structures and readily absorb their resonance, rather than the gamut of Indian social realities. Significantly, when Hindi films jettisoned their traditional family-drama structure and became more Westernized, they lost their contra-flow appeal to Southern nations because these same nations had access to the Western media products; same as the Indian entertainers.

This is demonstrated by the total deconstruction of Hindi cinema as a base of cinematic influence in Africa and its substitution with the Nigerian English-language film industry, Nollywood. This video cinema represented a wake-up call not only for African audiences, but also for Black diaspora who readily see the reflection of the African and Black realities – rather than Hindi romantic fantasies – they deal with on a constant basis. Nollywood therefore becomes a new contra-flow center of cinematic gravity that pulls – and energizes – other Southern nations, especially in Africa.

I want to therefore contribute to the debate by suggesting *concurrent modernities* to explain the behavior of Muslim Hausa video filmmakers in their use of Hindi film motif in their video films. Both Hausa and Hindi filmmakers are subject to the same social antecedents rooted in Islamicate societies. In this, I argue that none of these conceptions of modernities – parallel and alternative – as applicable to the cinematic development of young urban Hausa film makers took into consideration the violent intrusion of small media technologies that helped to create *media identities* – rather than *social identities* divorced from the religious, political and economic transnational.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibidem.

Before the Hausa youth acquired these new technologies, they relied on Hindi films to reproduce their realities. When they acquired the technologies, they started telling the same stories – in their own cinematic languages.

Thus recent global movement of the media clearly shows that the traditional patterns and flows have charted new directions. It is no longer sufficient to discuss the flow of media from the West to “less-West” audiences. The development of media mediated popular culture has seen a paradigm shift in the flow of media in Middle East and Africa, and enabled the development of new horizontal networks of media influences, rather than the traditional vertical networks.

It is certainly exciting time for media and cultural studies as we all look forward to the next contra-flow clusters emerging.