OPPORTUNITIES OF MUSLIM FEMALE SOCIO-POLITICAL INTERACTION IN SHARIAH LEGISLATION IN THE NORTHERN NIGERIAN PROVINCES.

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A mini-thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in the Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape.

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Keywords.

Hausa

Women

Islam

Reforms

Shari'ah

Religion

Tradition

Culture

Wahhabism

Gender

Abstract.

This paper identifies the reasons for the lack of Hausa women's political participation and how women can self-determine regarding social change within their patriarchal societies, by focusing on the socio-cultural factors of religion, age, marital status, and education. The research method is literature based - field research concerning the social realities of Hausa women, interviews with Hausa women regarding their interpretations of their socio-political realities and the interpretation of religious material. Interpretations of Islamic scholars of the socio-religious material of the Qur'an and ahadith addressed in its historical sphere yet contemporary environment.

Findings within the variables were

(a) that although Hausa follow the Maliki school of Islamic thought, the infiltration of Wahhabism permeates the religious ideology and culture influencing the position of women;

(b) age determines the position of women within Hausa communities and accords them respect and greater freedom of movement once post-menopausal;

(c) most adult women are between marriage and divorce and usually in polygamous relationships, as the rate of divorce increases more women fear being financially destitute and socially outcast as prostitutes[1] for seeking financial security;

(d) education for girls differs from that of boys but there is an increase in the attendance at Islamiyyah schools which serves as a contemporary method to promote gender ideologies. These results are not unique to Hausa communities, but are a construct of the realm of male dominance and tyranny. There is much emphasis on the natural and biological differences between the sexes and the elaboration of prejudice through social and political institutions.

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[1] The Hausa term for prostitute is karuwai but it includes single women who support themselves financially, widows and divorced women. Thus any woman without male supervision is considered karuwai.

The results indicate that women's positions are peripheral and therefore they possess little power in the patriarchal and occupation determinant society. Although Hausa women received suffrage in 1978, it was received with opposition from groups in northern Nigeria. (Neft & Levine, 1997:364) Women receive little information, education and restricted movement for fear that they would desert the community. The primary position of women is to reproduce in order to increase population numbers in order to seek legitimate self-government. The community structure is based on Islamic expectations of social behaviour for men and women where women are removed from society in order to allow men to maintain control and visibility. The results suggest that women can change their positions, gain greater social mobility and political participation if women had greater knowledge of Islam and understood the need for gender cohesion.

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DECLARATION.

I declare that *Opportunities of Muslim female socio-political interaction in the Shariah legislated in the Northern Nigerian provinces,* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: **Wendy Martin - Isaacs.**

Signed.

Date. 5 September, 2002.

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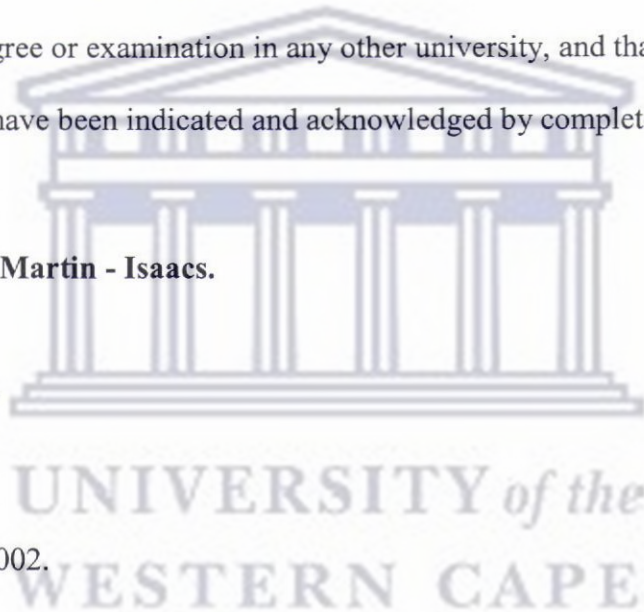
Research Question.

What are the socio-political realities of Hausa women in northern Nigeria? How can Muslim women universally change their patriarchal traditional environments to accommodate their need for recognition as spiritual and intellectual equals? Can women legitimately[1] deviate from what is traditional and religiously prescribed as their occupations?

Background Information.

The Shari'ah crisis in northern Nigeria indicates the interest of the religious fundamentalist groups to dictate to the populace the laws of Islam. Although the implementation and the desire to impose full Shari'ah is dubious[2] and seems to be sought by emirs and governors, it illustrates an interest of Muslim populations to govern through their own social system of ethics. Cultural interpretations ratified by Islamic principles curb women from participating within a public sphere.[3] The orthodoxy within Islam wants women married, reproductive and silent observers. The interpretations of the abilities and positions of women within Shari'ah reflect the understanding of the role of women as central yet silent and submissive figures within family structures. (Afkhami, 1996:9-10; Gellner, 1994:25-26)

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[1] Islam followers prescribe to the Shari'ah as a recognised form of jurisprudence. The Shari'ah evolved in the 13th century espouses the rules and expectations in the Qur'an and the Hadith and prescribes social, economic and political norms for socialisation. It is the expectation of all Muslims to adhere to the Shari'ah.

[2] Claims have been made by journalists and Christians living in northern Nigeria that the practice and threat of instituting Shari'ah is to intimidate minority groups and Christians residing there and alter the voting patterns. The Obasanjo-led government has reduced the powers and influences of the emirs and governors in northern Nigeria.

[3] The implementation of Shari'ah in Zamfara on 27 January 2000, forced single women to marry within 3 months or lose employment. Economic crisis underlies these ordinances where employment proves to be the most visible indicator of economic decline.

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The paper does not seek to establish whether full Shari'ah is implemented or not but to indicate that a Muslim population isolated in their ignorance and fear of victimisation[4] chose rule by Islamic jurisprudence supported by their religious texts. Shari'ah is ambiguous regarding social realities and opposing interested parties can validate their claims using the Islamic Law.

Firstly, Shari'ah highlights the position and roles of women, allowing fundamentalist groups to validate dehumanising women, ignoring the existence and needs of children and oblivious to the psychological costs that their interpretations render. Secondly, the obsession with sexual perversion and moral laxity for men, actions claimed by religious groups enshrined in the law of Islam[5]. (Ahmed, 1992:180-183; Gellner, 1994:26) The religious groups armed with limited knowledge and selected tenets wish to subvert a traditional populace into a position of cultural and patriarchal stasis obsessing over veils and domesticity.

The essence of the Shari'ah crisis in northern Nigeria demonstrates that culture and Islam cannot be detached, Islam has developed an organic relationship with culture and neither transcends the other. The culture and traditions of the Hausa population are projected through the socio-political system in northern Nigeria tainted with the colonial legacy. The Victorian social construct restricted female employment and opposed female political participation – a pattern that continues in Nigeria. The poor, not only through economic disadvantages, but also through narrow social experiences most acutely feel the disadvantages of being a female. Elasticity, regarding socio-political movement, increases with class and constricts with declining access to resources. In traditional societies men exercise control over one another through self-criticism and force women to control one another through mental torture. (Thiam, 1991:75; Neft & Levine, 1997:365; Gellner, 1994:27; Oyo, 2000: http://www.saartjie.co.za) Men exercise misogyny within society but the filtering of

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[4] People never oppose regulations and laws if they fear violent reprisals. In Islamic societies, challenges to authority are assumed to be challenges to Islam.

[5] Men are entitled and expected to be promiscuous and sexually active. However women should remain chaste.

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the information is through women who implement and support the social complexities. Women have confused their submissive cultural positions as a traditional privilege and a rite of passage.

The system of bori practitioners[6] is as a result of the merging of tradition and Islam amongst the Hausa, who continue to practice in direct opposition to the religious clergy[7]. Islam was introduced in northern Nigeria amongst the Hausa populations as a mythical sect and the appeal of Sufism drew parallels to the Hausa socio-political parameters. (Trimingham, 1968:18-19) The challenge to mysticism arose from the religious scholars who supported literal and fundamentalist adoption of Islamic texts.[8]

The present Shari'ah crisis demonstrates the power and control that religious groups wish to exercise over the population, and Muslim males wanting to control the movement and lifestyles of women. Compliance and complicity of the religious text interpretations and the renewed interest in religious law serves to change the position and roles of Hausa women in northern Nigeria. The discriminatory abuses encouraged by colonial administrations between African groups and their genders, is construed as traditional and cultural positions and roles for women. The division of a society through sexual segregation restricts communication and a sense of identity. (Thiam, 1991:121; Gellner, 1994:30)

The complexities of the cultural-religious situation in Hausa society indicates that no system of relationships is static but constantly conforming to adapt to internal and

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[6] Bori practitioners are traditional healers and praise singers where women dominate this institution. Powell et al state that it predates Islam and that it is an extension of the patron-client relationship.

[7] Religious clergy educated in Saudi Arabia absorb the Wahhabi belief system that frowns upon the veneration of saints and ancestors. Bori practitioners appeal to all classes in Hausa society where they also perform a soothsaying role.

[8] The religious scholars who initially opposed mystical practices were from wealthy and influential families within northern Nigeria as they possessed the money to send sons abroad to be educated. Predominantly it was the wealthier families that had literate sons.

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external influences, and this includes Islamic Law. Shari'ah drafted around historical cultural events illustrates that contemporary innovations to the law should be accommodated and debated[9]. (An-Na'im, 1996:57) A challenge to human understanding does not constitute heresy nor faith repudiated.

History is a cyclical process but there is progression through re-evaluation of past experiences. (Simon, 1996:25-39; Armstrong, 2000:20-30) The constantly loop of socio-political changes amongst Hausa has elevated the interests of women beyond their households toward self-interests and to participate in decision-making. Religion is used to buffer women's ascendancy using cultural norms and concepts. Women need to define themselves in order to realise their needs and worth in order that their social environment improves. To illustrate, at present electoral promises remain just that, the promise by the Obesanjo campaign to reserve 30% of the offices for women has yet to materialise. (Oyo, 2000:http://www.saartjie.co.za)

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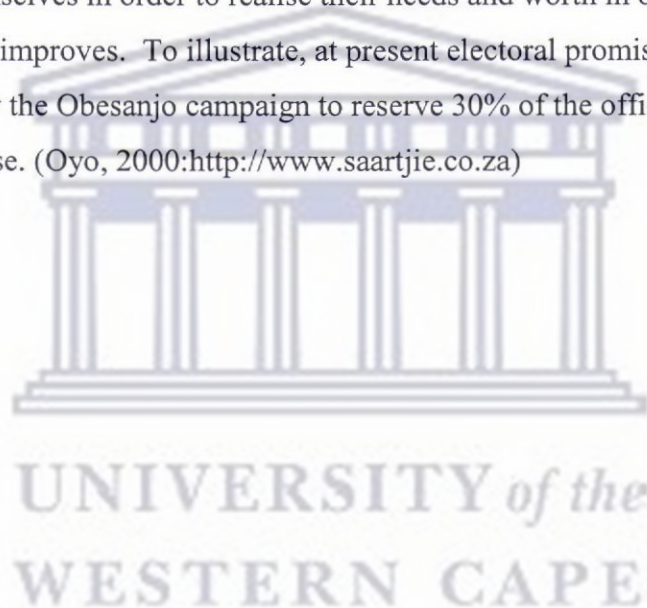
[9] When Shari'ah was codified there were several external influences other than Islamic thought, namely Hellenic and Sassanid social ideologies, as well as pre-Islamic ideas that affected Muslim theologians.

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Literature Review.

The literature used forms two distinct groups but there are areas of interconnection particularly the concept of Islam. The first group of literature focuses on the social and economic realities of Hausa women in northern Nigeria as a result of the Hausa-Islamic traditions. The seclusion practices (khulle)[10] are designed to prevent women from associating with men other than their family members and to uphold the belief that men and women need to have separate spheres of orientation. The reality is that Hausa women are victims of their social realities regarding marriage, socialisation and education. Changes are recommended on several levels; firstly through poverty alleviation and education through international aid programmes, secondly through government intervention. (Togunde, 1999:280; Agheyisi, 1985:144) Thirdly through knowledge of Islamic texts and the roles dictated for women. The second group of literature deals with educating women in terms of Islam. These authors want to empower women and develop female identities. Both groups of literature fail to bridge the gap between tradition, religion and presenting challenges rather than tolerance. The social reality depicted in the literature is disjointed and follows a linear path of either history, culture, religious and secular politics.

The Islamic female authors do not observe the traditional-religious sphere within which the Hausa operate. African female authors take their positions of submissiveness as a given, as if the present lifestyle is a customary normative. Other than Amina Mama, female authors overlook external cultural influences on Hausa cultural norms that dictate female inferiority. Foreign intervention that attempts to benefit women is often stigmatised as an attempt to "westernise" their population; resulting in sabotaged attempts or men undertake the ventures eliminating the participation of women. (Black, 1991:1; Calvert & Calvert, 1996:237-240; Handelman, 1996:78-90) Changes can only be successfully undertaken if they are

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[10] Khulle , also known as purdah, is the position whereby women never leave the confines of their house and only occupy their day with domestic duties and child minding. The practice differs amongst Muslims in regions and social status, but is not an Islamic requirement and does not appear in the Qur'an.

accepted by the society and when it does not interfere with the daily lives of Hausa populations. The education of children is one such example, where Islamic schools are more successful at drawing numbers than government schools. This is not based solely on the virtue of religion but simply that Islamic schools operating only for a few hours, four days a week. Children can continue their role within the domestic framework. (Pellow, 1997:590-610; Togunde, 1999:283-290)

The literature shortfall is to what extent Hausa women understand Islam and the merging of religious-traditional normative. There is scant information on whether Hausa women question the validity of particular traditions and the social reality, particularly education and the public sphere. Male children utilise the secular school education provided by the government, but a decline in the standard of education has resulted in parents (especially mothers) of not enrolling their children. In traditional society women are often relegated to domestic spheres and held inferior due to psychological variations. It is often mentioned in the literature that young girls when presented with the opportunity to attend tertiary institutions are coerced into areas of domestic issues rather than the natural sciences and humanities. (Thiam, 1991:70-80; Hay & Stichter, 1984:37-50; Nweke, 1985:201-207) Children, particularly girls, form an intrinsic part in the economics of Hausa women, as khulle prevents the social and physical movement of women, children fill the spatial void to promote wares. (Robson, 2000:180-185; Soyinka, 1996:50; VerEecke, 1993:217-220)

Education forms an intrinsic part within social change and adaptation. Feminist Muslim authors refer to the necessary changes that need to be undertaken in order to change the situation of women in Islam dominated areas. There is agreement amongst the majority of Muslim writers that changes must occur within the parameters of Islam. However secular Muslim authors[11] use an iconoclastic approach that is rejected and questioned by most Muslim women. Their work is not understood by, nor is it filtered to poorly educated groups. These groups, under the influence of authoritative clergy, would not reject their socio-religious situations altogether. (Ahmed, 1992:20-30; Duval, 1998:45-68; Watson, 1994:130-135) Although the positions and roles of women in these areas may predate the arrival of Islam, the

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[11] Fatima Mernissi, Nawal El-Saadawi and Leila Ahmed.

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contemporary position of women remains in stasis. (Engineer, 1996:20-31; Siddiqi, 1984:10-17) The patriarchal structures adopted and modified Islam to ratify their positions as authoritative and dogmatic, to hinder changes sought by junior males and females. (Tillion, 1983:61-74) Domination of socio-economic discipline by patriarchs is sought within Islamic texts but the rights of women to inherit and chose a suitor are ignored. Feminist authors have successfully demonstrated the selective use of Islamic literature.

Much of the literature focuses on the traditional aspects of the Hausa rather than the Islamic influences on the contemporary and neo- tradition. Secular authors seldom make reference to female positions within their literature other than to donate a few pages to the "colourful" traditions of Hausa women. The Hausa society continues in a cyclical path due to clan isolation structure that discourages intimate interaction between groups. Association with others remain at levels of politics and economics and seldom social. Within clan structure, association remains within gender segregation where familial men and women (inclusive of husbands and wives) do not interact on social levels and refrain from doing so due to the restrictions and accepted norms.[12] Due to the confinement of women, the only source of information that exists is that from familial men and gossip where although mostly distorted and vague, innuendoes are the sole means of social identification and network communication available. (Tillion, 1983: 65-70; Robson, 2000:190-195; Thiam, 1991:43-50; Kandiyoti, 1997:185-193)

Islam defines female identification within patriarchal societies and women are then accorded respect and social position. An ambivalent situation confronts women where they are respected as mothers and wives but segregated and ultimately confined due to their sexuality. The feminist authors argue that these ambivalent points in Islamic societies where women are venerated yet abused due to interpretations.

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[12] Men often speak of the hardships their wives endure but feel helpless to intervene due to perception of social expectation and positions of women. Secondly a man intervening on behalf of a woman is deemed weak and different; again the fear of isolation in opposing conformity.

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Aisha's[13] responses to the Companions of the Prophet in defense of women and Zin al-Din remain elusive and not circulated.[14] (Robson, 2000:199-201; Bogert, 1995:33-34; Hilsum, 1998:33; Afshar, 1996: 50-70; Ambah, 1995:1) Although the majority of Nigerian Hausa do not explore socio-religious literature, ideas of female subjection permeate the society through Islamiyyah schools and the Haj[15] performed by nationals visiting and studying in Saudi Arabia.

Few authors link African traditional society and the permeation of Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia. There is merely an excepted norm amongst several authors that traditionalism is static not attuned to new ideas and philosophies. The Wahhabi school of Islamic thought has permeated northern Nigeria and Hausa culture through the dissemination of its literature and cultural constructs. Wahhabism infiltrated and modified old prevailing norms and traditions through its interpretation of Islam, implying that Wahhabism is Islam and vice versa.[16] (O'Brien, 2000: http://www.iupjournals.org.; Shaaban, 1996:61-70) An irony exists with bori practitioners who travel to Saudi Arabia on pilgrimage and disseminate their traditional culture amongst Saudi Arabian nationals especially women due to gender segregation. Although conservative and fundamentalist interpreters of Islam in northern Nigeria ridicule the bori practice as satanic and primitive, it appeals to women in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.[17] (O'Brien, 2000: http://www.iupjournals.org.; Pellow, 1997:600-612; Trimingham, 1968:58-67)

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[13] Aisha was the youngest wife of Mohammed. (P.B.U.H.)

[14] Aisha's response to the companions of the Prophet are claims made by individuals who accompanied Mohammed against women equating them with donkeys and dogs in interrupting men's prayer rituals and refuted by Aisha, Mohammed's wife.

[15] Haj is a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina performed by Muslims globally. It is one of the duties of believers (men and women) and needs to be performed at least once.

[16] Wahhabism is the dominant Islamic school of Though in Saudi Arabia, but through extensive finances has permeated other Islamic areas in Asia, particularly Afghanistan and Indonesia, and Africa. It supports puritanical and fundamentalist views of Islam instructing social, political and economic life.

[17] Women unhappy with the restrictions of the legal system and the repression within the social and domestic lives seek to change their situations through spiritual means.

Religion is fundamentally important to the lifestyles of Hausa women, and changes embarked upon must occur within the parameters of Islam. The patron-client relationships that exist between women in Nigeria could form the basis of female emancipation. A group of wealthy influential women could inform and educate other women through reciprocation of praise and adulation. The Hadith and the Qur'an support the equal status of men and women in Islam, and requires that men and women both seek knowledge. (Engineer, 1996:24-40; Siddiqi, 1984:13-32; Ahmed, 1992:60-65) Hence a women cannot be denied that which is required within her religion, the problem exists that most women are not aware because of high illiteracy amongst Hausa women. (Rai, 1996:25-39; Roald, 1998:3-10; Okome, 2000: http://www.icaap.org.)

In the private sphere Hausa women earn money regardless of khulle but the accumulation of money is not for financial independence and social advancement. Instead it maintains the household or serves as dowry payment and therefore women remain in their positions, hidden and misinformed. Hausa women who enter a political and prominent social arena are stigmatised with the karuwai phenomenon.[18] (Agheyisi, 1985:145-150; Alfa & Aluko, 1985:161-162) Women enter these arenas on secular terms and with secular interests and challenge issues debated in the developed secular countries rather than focusing on issues of regional cultural and religious importance.

It appears that previous studies illustrate the aspect of social reality for Hausa women but neglect to provide or present oppressed women with an opportunity to change the banal and stagnant lifecycle. The Muslim states in northern Nigeria are poorer than southern states where Christianity and traditional religions are prominent. (Robson, 2000:184-190; Adeleke, 2001:1; Perchenock, 1985:92-100) Ideally the answers are

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The bori practitioner provides the spiritual aid and medicinal oddities as an alternative yet private solution.

[18] Education limits a woman's chances of marriage, she would be older due to the completion of education and the social perception that she would be difficult and disobedient. An older single woman would be accused of sexual deviancy.

within the religion that elevates their positions but the praxis yields subjugation and inferiority.[19] The better option would be for older Hausa women who have financial security and social recognition, through her husband's status, to inform and educate other women through group organisations.[20] Regurgitating historical facts, donor programmes and ideology will not improve the social praxis of women nor ease movement into the public sphere. Women need to form cohesive groups with knowledge of their socio-political rights and Islam in order to challenge social norms.

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[19] A Hausa girl is constantly told by her parents that she is half that of her brothers. This view must be a distortion of the inheritance factor in Islam that requires that a girl receives half that which her brother inherits, as opposed to nothing.

[20] Older women have less to lose, they are post-menopausal therefore they are no longer considered attractive and are not confined to their houses. She is possibly in an unhappy polygamous marriage and divorce would bring relief. Alternatively she could return to her paternal home and receive emotional and psychological support from her family.

Introduction.

The purpose of the paper is twofold, firstly to establish the social praxis of Hausa women in northern Nigeria and secondly to determine in which manner Muslim women can change their social realities using Islam and notions of gender cohesion. Although most of the information available of alternative ahadith and Quran interpretations are from Middle Eastern educated female authors, the similar socio-traditional structures within African and Middle Eastern societies serves to aid Hausa women in modifying their social praxis. Hausa women can envelop the full spectrum of Islamic texts that grants access to private and public spheres within their social realities.

Hausa women experience triple oppression, firstly being women, secondly due to the traditional class position and thirdly of Islamic beliefs. There is a plethora of literature that instructs the government to place greater emphasis on female socio-political participation, and allocate resources and legislate in order to facilitate these changes. The few women who occupy high-level positions within the socio-political arena are instructive that they are not feminists and do not actively seek to tackle female issues.[21] Wealthy and middle-class women are socialised to relate to wealthy and middle-class men rather than women. Class distinction and identity is stronger amongst women than men as women are constantly promoted as commodities of value rather than as individuals deserving merit. (Thiam, 1991:30-43; Togunde, 1999:279; Toyo, 1999: http://www.uct.ac.za/org/agi/newslet/vo4/nigel.htm) My focus is with working class and middle class[22] groups within Hausa society particularly the

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[21] I assume this to be a fear response as professional women in traditional societies are often targeted if they promote the secular view of female independence such as divorce, estrangement, and vocalising issues of physical abuse. In most traditional societies it remains acceptable to physically abuse women and children.

[22] Middle class groups in African societies are largely a creation of the state bureaucracy. These middle class groups lack the ambition, education and the financial restraint that textual definition provides as the basis of middle class mentality.

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evolving social behaviour within these two groups. The elite and poorest social groups are self-interested, operating independently of societal needs but for different reasons. The elite exists independently through their control of markets, political and other power institutions. The poor exist in isolation of accessing the power institutions, becoming disinterested and disillusioned in both.

The position of the Nigerian woman is traditionally the domestic sphere as she is deemed too frivolous and emotive to participate in the socio-political arena. The political arena has defined women as a peripheral majority yet women continue to support these governmental structures. (Yusuf, 1985:215) Women[23] who excel in academics, politics and social organisation strive to identify with men rather than as successful women. Class stratification and the role of patrimonialism[24] cleaves the society where lower social groups are defined as single units and not individuals. Elite women in urban areas experience greater spatial movement, as well as individual recognition often linked to the position of the family or spouse, than poorer women in rural areas where the strictest form of seclusion occurs. (Mustafa, 1985:250-251; Nweke, 1985:205-207; Okome, 2001: http://www.jendajournal.com)

Declining standards of living and the level of state corruption has led to the rise in religious fervour amongst the Hausa. In Islamic societies, fundamentalist groups appeal to the proletariat and the peasant groups proposing social and political solutions and social elevation based on Shari'ah principles. The religious zeal appeals due to immediate delivery of certain fundamentals (food and safety) and particularly the eradication of social scourges (prostitutes, drug addicts and criminals)[25]. However the appeal of these groups to the glory of religion is the profound repudiation of

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[23] Educated women make the twofold error of firstly, not promoting themselves as role-models to other women and secondly, insisting on promoting themselves as secular defined individuals devoid of gender.

[24] Patrimonialism is a patron-client relationship where a wealth influential patron will offer individuals or group certain favours and in return the client spreads word of his generosity and wealth or supports the patron in terms of political candidacy.

[25] The changes sought by fundamentalist groups are often temporary and immediate. There are no solutions to long term social and political problems.

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scholars as claimant of absolute and corrupt polities. (Gellner, 1994:26-27) However the Shari'ah doesn't offer much freedom for Hausa women as many of the provisions can be traced to adat.[26] (Engineer, 1996:20) Another problem exists with Wahhabi religious and cultural permeation brought about by religious scholars educated and sponsored in Saudi Arabia. Therefore a proliferation of religious students with Wahhabi interpretations of Islam re-enter Hausa society and reinterpret the socio-religious structures, where the Wahhabi interpretation of the female position is one of subservience and control. Women must maintain a position of seclusion and isolation so as not to deviate from respectability. (Salem, 2001: http://www.metimes.com; VerEecke, 1993:217-220; Ahmed, 1992:45-50)

Religious scholars possess scant knowledge of social realities nor are they equipped with economic and social participation solutions. Wahhabism thrives in Saudi Arabia due to the wealth generated by oil. It remains an artificial economy, based on petroleum and expatriate labour and knowledge, whereas similar affluence is not present in northern Nigeria. For this reason Wahhabi realism are not practical particularly the practice of female seclusion that undermines the economy and social progression. (O'Brein, 2001: http://www.iupjournals.org; Komolafe, 2000:- ; VerEecke, 1993:217-220)

In the paper I will discuss the social realities of Hausa women and the restrictions that are presently eroding their society in terms of religion, age, marital status and education. High population growth, illiteracy and declining standards serve to degrade the society and therefore the position of women. The fundamentalist rationale serves as a vehicle by which women can break from the secular-traditional aspect that permeates Nigerian politics. Hausa women need to realise that men will not make the political and social changes for them, there is no desire by the dominant to reduce his sphere of control over those whom he subjects.

The paper divided in two parts, firstly there are factors that subject Hausa women and cement their positions within their communities and renders them the peripheral gender of social relations. Secondly the paper deals with organisations and methods

[26] Adat is the pre-Islamic Arab practices.

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used in order to change the position of Hausa women which is determined by men but perpetuated by women. The method I offer as a solution is a combination of the group empathy strategy[27] and the moral and legal support of Islamic texts. Contemporary thoughts and ideas are needed regarding major decisions concerning socio-political criteria, and adhering to the same prescription utilised by state structures, women can initiate considerable changes for themselves.

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[27] During the Chinese Revolution cadres encouraged women to form small groups in order to speak of their ordeals and psychological and physical persecutions. It was a method used to turn women away from the traditional medieval structures of Chinese cultures and to support the movement of Mao Tse-Tung.

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Part I.

Chapter 1.

Religion and Culture.

The Hausa population follows an Islamic doctrine, but the religious practice is entwined with the security of traditional and inherited values that have permeated the Hausa culture over time. Women are defined within the limitations of the traditions and religion and cannot find solace in either. Islamic fundamentalist groups define Islam in terms of restraint and religious observance, rather than proposing solutions to the sphere of isolation and economic distress due to the gender spatial realities. There is a fanaticism regarding religious and cultural observance and a closure of ranks for communities rather than propelling populations forward in terms of social, intellectual and economic abilities. Emphasis on traditional positions of women is the foundation of the social construct and religious interpretation.

Islam rises above power yet forms an integral part of political authority, and generally appears in two forms, as a scripture and opium to ecstasy. The first, appealing to the wealthy and powerful, the latter to the impoverished, illiterate populations. (Gellner, 1994:17-18) The appeal of traditions, culture and religion serve as beacons of identity and security providing members with a sense of belonging. Security is a fundamental part of self-identity, yet Hausa women are denied any form of security within their social parameters. Patriarchal structures serve to divide genders in order to strengthen authoritative dominant positions. As the locus of socio-political power moved from the village to the centralised nation-state, so women were removed from the decision-making processes and from a sphere of influence with their communities. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:xiv) Restrictions exist for both sexes but women are equated with slaves defined through lineage.

The Islamic faith recommends marriage for all and Hausa assume the institution as a rite of passage. Both sexes are subjected to prearranged marriages, girls are often sold into marriages if their parents are poor and there are no family members of marriageable age. (Neft & Levine, 1997:368; Hay & Stichter, 1984:5) Most men

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marry once they have sought financially security or completed their studies, often at age twenty. Others marry while studying abroad leaving their new wives, after consummating the marriage, behind with his family to adapt to her new inferior position within an unknown household. Polygamy, sanctioned by Islam and promoted by Hausa traditional socialisation, is widespread but the jealousy that exists between co-wives prevents and hinders solidarity and mutual empathy and emotive comprehension. This social practice isolates the female from the security of her maternal family and exposes her to the hostility of her in-laws without the physical and emotional support of her spouse. This norm exists amongst all patriarchal groups and Islam ratifies the position therefore legitimising the practice.

Marriage within patriarchal cultural constructs, although sanctioned by Islam, serves as a control and isolation mechanism for the interests of elders. Although marriage serves to boost the population numbers of a clan structure, it socially removes either spouse rather than instituting a bond. Marriage isolates the male and female from each other through family and communal intervention, where either is not entitled to enter the other's spatial reality, in several ways.

Firstly, outsiders control the institution of marriage not those entering it. A spouse is chosen, there is no emotional bond nor is one allowed to develop prior the union, thus no opportunity exists for either spouse to acquaint themselves with the individual they must co-habit. With the occurring union, either person is denied the opportunity to learn of their partner as the social praxis of family or community divides them. Each is torn from the other, and the insistence of sexual activity by the families serves to further divide the couple.[28]

Secondly, the age difference between Hausa spouses ranges from ten years, and ascending, rendering communication and social identification unlikely. Spouses of

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[28] A bedsheet of the wedding night serves as proof of the virginity of the girl, and of the man's ability to be sexually responsive. Although the latter is harder to prove, the blood on the sheet can save or destroy the marriage and the reputation of the bride. Once a bride is repudiated, it is difficult for her to remarry due to the social stigma attached to her position.

the same generation share social and historical reality, restricting communication and reducing responsiveness. An adult man marrying a child bride cannot respect nor admire someone that young, nor does common ground of maturity and social awareness exist. Her age dictates her position and her intellectual capacity to that of an adult renders no comparison. These factors hinder the development of interaction, tolerance and friendship and serves to undermine the marriage. A successful marriage cannot develop within this framework, and the adult simply detaches himself from his wife in search of company and friendship, and often a new wife. The child bride views her husband as another parent, not a relationship of friendship and self-identity. The expectations of either and the realisations disappoint both spouses and hence no development occurs within the marriage.

Thirdly, the interference of family and community destroy the relationships within marriages. Men are not encouraged to help their wives merely to discipline and undermine them, women are encouraged to be submissive and dutiful. A relationship of master and servant develops rather than one of unity and support. The bride's in-laws, usually the mother-in-law, ridicule and subject the wife in response to the subjection suffered by her when she herself was a young bride. Filial bonds take cognisance over conjugal bonds reducing interests and relations between spouses. The emotional and supportive bond within the marriage never develops and hence security and comfort never materialises for either spouse. The marriage renders neither friendship nor psychological understanding, further isolating individuals within their union.

Finally, divorce is a constant threat and further undermines the security of spousal relationships. A husband can divorce his wife for not producing sons, and infertility regardless that these two factors are the responsibility of men. A woman remains the property of her husband three months after repudiation. (Afshar, 1996:28) With the despondency of the initial marriage, men enter polygamous unions arising from social expectations of several children and wealth, disinterested and misinformed of the true nature of a union.

The inequalities within Hausa marriage are ratified through Islamic edicts and institutionalised through religious groups and socialisation. (Afshar, 1996:26)

Patriarchal structures are instrumental in establishing patterns of domination, every relationship consists of domination and subservience. The individuals within these structures strive to dominate and submit others within their relationships, fathers over mothers and sons, mothers over children, daughters-in-law, and patriarchs over all.

> "Marriage is a kind of slavery, for the wife becomes the slave of her husband, and it's her duty absolutely to obey him in everything he requires of her, except what is contrary to the laws of Islam."
>
> (Al-Ghazzali {1058-1111C.E.})

When the practices of Hausa traditionalism do not draw parallels with Islam, the religion must succumb to culture and male interests. Whenever an Islamic tenet elevates the status of women and grants them a sliver of independence, men reject or ignore the tenet claiming that the time for such adaptations are premature, or that such suggestions are contrary to tradition.[29]. The discriminatory edicts against women allows for certain religious mobs to vent extreme aggression, hostility and violence against women as realisation exists that their abuses are tolerated and sanctioned by authorities. (Ahmed, 1992:50) Women fear proclaiming an independent view contrary to the ambitions and opinions of religious groups and do not vocalise their opinions. Men, on the other hand, are reluctant to support female initiatives due to the marauding religious groups.

Innovations to the religion are curtailed through fear and intimidation. Islamic fundamental groups obsess in restraining women and men from social integration, and discourage interaction with foreign groups and foreign women for marriage. Outsiders are viewed with suspicion and hostility and accused of introducing new ideas and social degradation. (Ahmed, 1992:231) Scriptural interpretations appeal to

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[29] Saudi Arabia is one such state where any suggested changes to the positions of women within their society in accordance with Islam is rebuked with cultural norms and understanding. In Nigeria, female subjection occurred under Islam, colonialism and continues within contemporary political ideology.

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the patriarchal kin unit offering personal happiness and fulfilment, but manifest as an existence based on contribution and servitude. (Gellner, 1994:19)

The concept of female genital mutilation is considered a rite of passage for Muslim women within cultural constructs, legitimacy claimed in Qur'anic verse that exists ironically in Biblical script too.[30] Although the practice that utilises knives and serrated can lids in performing the procedure it is not vital to the paper but of interest is the psychological repercussions it presents to women. Implications of prostitution and virtue, chastity and morality and honour all serve to portray the image of women as simply a reproductive organ and a disposable entity. (Neft & Levine, 1997:373) The procedure renders women subservient and powerless, fearful and receptive to gossip of their morality. Women possess no feature other than to maintain silence, endure pain and embrace abuse. That only women perform this procedure deems women as an isolated group tortured by those that should serve as guides and protectors. The practice of genital mutilation appears to be an unfolding series of events of the disappointment that women bring to the social arena. The birth of a girl is not a joyous event but the beginning of a disappointing journey for all those that interact with her, including herself. The mutilation serves a dual purpose of physically sewing and sealing the sexual organ, but also the psychological measure of silencing the female from expression and degradation.

One of the ideals of Islam is property ownership, and the appeal to propertied wealthy and influential individuals serve to accelerate the motivations of fundamentalist groups. Access to property provides access to social status and financial security. (Ahmed, 1996:12) Culture and religion are bound in a macabre manner where religion ratifies private ownership but culture expounds on who has access to property. Widows and divorced women have reduced status and lack access to property, the land of a husband reverts to his parents and kin's possession[31]. Women

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[30] The story of Hagar (handmaiden to Sara) and Sara (wife of Abraham) where claim is made that in their confrontation Sara is claimed to have performed fgm upon Hagar before banishing her. There are several interpretations of this story.

[31] This is contrary to Islam that states that women should inherit and own property. Although this is a cultural construct in most African societies, it uses Islam to

do not inherit; they form part of inheritable property. The widow becomes the property of the eldest male in the male lineage of the deceased husband[32]. (Neft & Levine, 1997:368) The other characteristic of property ownership is that it can be treated and dispensed at will, thus men can discipline their wives and discard them. Violence against women is widespread, seldom reported and rarely prosecuted, men justify violence through religion and cultural constraints. Reference to the Qur'an sanctions men in disciplining their wives, similarly in Nigerian penal law, a man is entitled to "discipline" his wife and children. (Neft & Levine, 1997:372) Physical abuse including rape (not considered a criminal act if perpetrated by a husband upon his wife) are part of social relations within Hausa communities and occur most often within polygamous marriages. If Islam accords status to one woman (the first wife) then why would other women choose to be in a marriage where they receive little if any social recognition? The assumption is that women who become co-wives do so as no better alternatives exist. Often young girls from poor rural families become secondary wives[33], as social status within Muslim polygamous marriages pertains to the first wife.

The primary role of women in Islam, coupled with Hausa cultural constructs, is motherhood and domesticity, therefore instituting a relationship of dependency. There is rejection of knowledge by Islamic groups[34] and patriarchs interpret it as corruptive to the morality of women. The restriction of knowledge allowed to women directly limits the amounts of knowledge men receive. Emphasis of natural duties by

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promote argument against women receiving remuneration from male estates and assets.

[32] Muslim men are ignorant that they are entitled to make a will in order to distribute their assets, but religious clergy dictates that shari'ah decides on how the estate will be distributed. Parvez, a 14th century jurist thinker, stated that Islamic law only arbitrates over what is left of the estate after the deceased has allocated 1/3 of his estate to whomever he chooses.

[33] Secondary and junior wives serve as handmaidens and servants to older wives.

[34] Fundamentalist religious groups maintain the system of taqlid (unthinking imitation) rather than ijtihad (creative interpretation) in order to control social movement.

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Islamic religious groups and patriarchal power interests meant that Hausa women have the highest fertility rate amongst Nigerian women, 6.6 children per woman, granted that Hausa populated areas are also the poorest states in Nigeria. (Neft & Levine, 1997:369) These states possess the lowest literacy rates and highest population growth, and an endemic feature of patriarchal Islamic cultural constructs. Socially, educationally and economically backward, Muslim communities are easily manipulated and controlled by orthodox clergy who thrive on emotive issues rather than emerging social, economic and political realities.(Ahmed, 1992:231; Engineer, 1996:168-170)

Religion and culture with Hausa society serves to isolate and submit individuals to groups and powerful patriarchs within power structures. Cultural traditions and interpretations of Islam serve to break and hijack the potential relationship that should exist or develop between spouses, their children and their social unit. Muslim societies lack the vibrancy of socialisation and tend toward political desolation and social oppression. Deprivation of individuality and dignity are common phenomenon of oppression and control. In marriage, neither spouse identifies with the other on an emotive, intellectual and spatial level; religion serves to cement this form of disjointed relationship[35]. Constant reference to the superiority of the mother to a son is presumed to define this relationship, as paramount to any other that will develop. Yet the separation of gender through spatial realities prevents men from developing their familial relationships, thus the society exists in individual and mental isolation. Knowledge restriction for women leads to subservience of women but covert control of men.

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[35] The prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) claimed that marriage was a bonding of two souls, therefore it seems an oddity that Islam promotes separate social orientations between familial genders.

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Chapter 2.

Marital Status.

Hausa women become wives and mothers at a young age, as many women do within Islamic countries. Claims by traditional authorities are that marriage at a young age preserves family honour in an environment where violent social relations are endemic. For a Hausa woman marriage is an aspiration, and motherhood a prerequisite of identity and social status. Many are married into polygamous unions with constant power struggles, or reside with their in-laws where tense and hostile relationships develop. In Islamic-traditionalist societies, the concepts of marriage and motherhood are the sole accomplishments of women, to fulfil household chores and often contribute financially to the household.

Men rarely contribute to domestic work regardless that women are employed in other fields[36]. (Agheyisi, 1985:149) Hausa women, in comparison to other cultural groups in Nigeria, are restricted from performing all domestic tasks as the practice of khulle limits movement outside the home. Men and women[37] not restricted by khulle perform tasks such as collecting wood, water (many houses now possess wells in their courtyards) and trading goods. The complexity of economic and financial relations reduces the impetus that women have on attaining social status and wealth accumulation. Avenues produced are solely for the financial benefit of men, reluctant to share this sphere where women are viewed as competitors.

Marital expectations from Hausa wives include subservience, total obedience and orders from their husbands. A man is entitled to discipline his wife and demand sexual relations if it pleases him. The experience of mental and physical exploitation of Hausa women occurs across classes degrading the gender relationship, enslaving women within their social environment. (Aluko & Alfa, 1985:170-173) They are

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[36] The collective Nigerian society support employment and spatial segregation, where men refuse to perform domestic chores and women are marginalised in terms of employment.

[37] Pre-pubescent and post-menopausal women have free movement and are not subjected to khulle.

considered as cattle, to be led, herded and controlled. The threat of gossip and eventual divorce[38] deters women from rebelling and defiance. In order to establish a power relationship within the domestic sphere a senior wife commands respect over co-wives, children and servants, similarly a mother arranges her son's first wedding and selects a spouse, yet throughout his marriage seeks to undermine the relationship between her son and her daughter-in-law. She refuses to surrender the little power and control that she has over her son, the only asset and investment she possesses. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:49)

Hausa society is linked to large families and financial realities. The misconception is that large families aid in labour contribution by facilitating economic growth within a household. Women view large families as security from divorce, gossip and financial destitution. However the lack of education and essential skills limits the scope of employment opportunities restricts social mobility and access to information and resources. A cycle emerges in which the poverty, induced through ignorance, misinformation and poor women producing large families, can only be alleviated through extra labour. The source of labour is not to be employed labour but familial labour therefore recycling the future low wage sustainability. Women are trapped in the cycle that they perpetuate and ironically perceive as the solution to their insecure impoverished lives.

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[38] The triple pronouncement of divorce is said to be forbidden in Islam according to a hadith expounded by Mahmud bin Labid, yet forms part of the contemporary religious law.

Trauma and Mental Isolation.

Hausa women exist in isolation of their families and spouses, suffering mentally and physically from birth to death. Women although supported by men enforce the cycle of trauma. Due to the social praxis that divides men and women, women jealously compete for the limited resources their families, spouses and communities provide in terms of money, time and social position. Women present themselves as opportunists to the persecution of other women, constantly undermining rather than supporting their gender.

The age differences and social alienation of gender relations creates little common ground for spouses and scant emotional attachment of benevolence and respect. Men show neither or little interest in the distress of their wives nor any sympathy; men often refuse to donate blood to aid their haemorrhaging wives during childbirth complaining of lack of female ablution. The social pressure from family and society restricts men from engaging in social and personal relations with their wives other than in power relations[39]. (Biddlecom, 1998:2; Rai, 1996:25-30; Yusuf, 1985:212-216)

Silence is a virtuous and admirable trait amongst Hausa women, even during pregnancy[40]. Girls, fourteen years and older, return to their maternal homes during their first pregnancy as hospital births are avoided. Endurance of labour pains in silence often results in detrimental consequences to the mother and child. (Alti-Muazu, 1985:178-179) Hospital admittance goes contrary to Hausa Islamic values of where foreign men can view the body of a female. Khulle prevents women from seeking medical assistance from hospitals, as leaving the house requires the permission of the husband who is reluctant to agree regardless of the health

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[39] The prevailing notion that women are expendable and suspect creatures.

[40] This is possibly contrived Islamic ideology where scholars claimed that silence and invisibility were ideal characteristics sought in a woman.

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implications. Vaginal fistulas resulting from the gishiri-cut[41] are indicative of the numerous birthing complications experienced by girls too young to be engaging in sexual and productive activities.

These traumatic experiences erode the confidence of Hausa women, firstly the physical trauma of fistulas results in incontinence, and secondly the failure to produce more children summarily leads to divorce. Alternatively, another woman[42] enters the marital home and marital relations sour where the afflicted woman is reneged. In order to avoid the latter consequences, women concede to endless breeding, spousal subservience and abuse. Large families indicate the virility of the man therefore contraception is avoided and allows freedom from male authority. (Afshar, 1996:194; Hay & Stichter, 1984:7-9) Although the male instigates divorce, women bear the stigma of marital failure and blame. Women must surrender their children when divorced and obliged to return to their maternal homes[43]. (Mir-Hosseini, 1997:196-197)

Divorce presents several problems for Hausa women. The stigma, lack of family support be it emotional and financial and a lack of financial resources, all serve to keep women in their marriages. The constant threat of divorce forces women to

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[41] The gishiri-cut is performed by a midwife, during a difficult labour a cut is made in the vaginal wall damaging the bladder and the perianal nerve resulting in the inability to control the flow of urine an faecal matter.

[42] Neo-religious beliefs claim that polygamy serves to maintain male sexual interest but the Qur'an defines its usage within certain contexts under social upheaval where such recourse is necessary to sustain the environment.

[43] The triple divorce in one sitting, practised in Hausa society, was prohibited until the period of Hazrat 'Umar who enforced it again. This practice adds to the social stress and tension that exists between women along with no alimony payment after the period of iddah forces women into financial destitution. These practices are not in accordance with the spirit of Islam. The prophet felt that divorce was the most disapproved action of what was socially acceptable and that if need be done, then it should be done with kindness and not in anger. Ironically, the triple-divorce procedure can be implemented even if the male is inebriated. (Engineer, 1996:170)

accept and accommodate their husband's whims. In Hausa socialisation, a divorced woman has failed as a wife and a mother. Divorced and widowed are not culturally separate concepts demonstrating the social rejection of women not controlled by male authority. The financial burden on poor families to maintain a returning divorced or widowed daughter is extreme. If a woman has sought divorce or simply left her husband, as often happens when living in the urban areas, the husband remarries or keeps a concubine, a wife returns to her family in the rural area with her children. A source of revenue is vital to maintain family members, and often lacking technical skills, women attempt to sell their handmade crafts and foodstuffs. Government tolerance of discriminatory religious and cultural practices in the form of lower wages and harassment forces women into self-employment. (Neft & Levine, 1997:365; Hay & Stichter, 1984:37)

Older women in polygamous marriages leave their husbands simply because the new wife receives more money, more attention and her children receive greater financial and emotional support. Older wives are nudged from the house along with their children in order to alleviate the economic burden of the husband. Alternatively the older wife is expected to contribute financially to the household in order that the younger and more beautiful wife can maintain seclusion. In this manner seclusion is considered the realm of the young and beautiful, women who are of childbearing years, and not of older menopausal wives. Female economic participation of older wives is less threatening to the husband and his ego. It affords the husband to pamper his young wife, but economic participation of the young wife is a threat of adultery and a proclamation of potential divorce. (Afshar, 1996:148; VerEecke, 1993:217-220)

Neither a Shari'ah-based society nor a secular society with medieval ideologies and practices can ameliorate the situation of Hausa women within their marital and social communities. The misogyny within traditional constructs promotes the subservient and invisible gender positions. (Thiam, 1991:121) Women perform no role in the decision-making process and restricted in achieving public socio-political positions. (Neft & Levine, 1997:366) However no construct is static, through socialisation and historical events, ideology is subject to mutation. Circumventing the law is the preoccupation of those wishing to maintain their positions of power and influence. In patriarchal societies, men are alienated and women oppressed but all subjected to the

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patriarch. The ego of man defines the limited realm of women subliminally stating that women possess power that men cannot control.

Khulle (seclusion)

Khulle is a control mechanism instituted by men but initiated through women to control the movements of women. Women guard their morality through dress and social restriction, yet men perceive their own behaviour as correct and above reproach never conceding to a specific social code. Women are prevented from private emancipation into the public sphere through the social code of seclusion. Failure to observe seclusion presents women as social pariahs.

Khulle presents various guises amongst Hausa women, as not all can maintain a position of total seclusion due to poverty and social status. Variations of khulle and its social sequence are most visible amongst successful market participants. Those who enter the market have been married several years, matured in age and have several children. Women first entering the market operate within parameters of social acceptability, thus constraints exists as to what is sold and where. They are restricted to selling pottery, jewellery and foodstuff (raw and cooked) as the product must be manufactured or sold from home in order for women to observe a form of seclusion. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:37) Total seclusion as observed amongst wealthy elite classes and wives of religious scholars cannot exist amongst women who need to contribute to their spouse's income. Aspiration of absolute seclusion is perceived as an avenue of superiority and virtue not as a perception of isolation and deprivation.

Once women attain a sustainable and favourable income there is disassociation from the public sphere and a retreat to the private sphere. The results of market success are ambiguous. On the one hand, women retreat into seclusion in order to elevate their social status and to prevent gossip of their moral rectitude. On the other, it is a method to prevent women from great financial gain. Seclusion prevents women from establishing a large market and eliminates market expansion. Profit potential is limited created by the patriarchal establishment and maintained with cultural constraints through female rectitude.

Cultural attitudes constrain economic development due to prevailing attitudes of women in domestic and reproductive spheres and psychologically in positions of servitude and obedience. Economic success by women is viewed as an infringement on the male sphere of dominance and independence and men retaliate in a negative manner through ideological constraints. (Afshar, 1996:119-120) Amongst the elite, women are least interested in accessing the market as their needs are catered to and they already possess assets that secure their positions within their societies and marriages. The poorest women cannot adhere to khulle, firstly it amounts to economic suicide, instead these women perform the tasks that khulle-practising women cannot. Secondly, poor women aid their husbands in agricultural tasks as harvesters and labourers never as sole producers. The socio-religious aspect prevents women amongst the lower classes from economic independence, as this phenomenon threatens the patriarchal system of control and the control men possess over women.

Wollstonecraft[44] stated that in order for women to participate within a public sphere the lower classes of women have to fill the role of domesticity for middle-class women. (Mayer, 1996:107-110) Her claim that movement from the private to the public sphere was best suited to the middle class woman than other social groups of women. I concur but draw attention to the position of peasants and working class Hausa women in northern Nigeria. Unlike the European scenario in which Wollstonecraft based her theory, there is a need to understand that Hausa women possess skills that working class European women lacked and therefore could not participate within the market.

In support of Wollstonecraft suggestion of female co-operation, a need for money precipitates migration to the urban areas, where young girls are often sent to married women as domestic help ranging from household chores to selling wares to customers. It establishes an opportunity for the wife to observe khulle, establish and concentrate on her business enterprises and social realm, and the girl is no longer a financial burden to her parents. (Afshar, 1996:127) Married Hausa women in

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[44] Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) asserted that intellectual companionship was the ideal of marriage and recommended equality in terms of education and socio-political opportunities for both sexes.

suburban areas have little privacy but observe khulle. The spatial movement within urban areas is less than that in the rural areas due to the size of the houses, often a single room. (Aluko & Alfa, 1985:167-173; Neft & Levine, 1997:48-62)

Wages paid to migrants are low as the assumption that families are self-supporting through subsistence activities, a remarkable transferral of colonial innovations to societal innovation in ratifying patriarchal structures. A demonstration of power maintenance that the patriarch possesses in the rural area to whom the son in the urban area is obliged to respect and obey through his limited economic choice.

The changes within khulle demonstrate the modifications needed by society in order that it functions efficiently. It supports the notion that religion and culture constantly change and neither remains static questioning the historical arrangement of traditions. The cycle of poverty and ignorance hinders women from realising and participating within an economic sphere to develop social ascendancy.
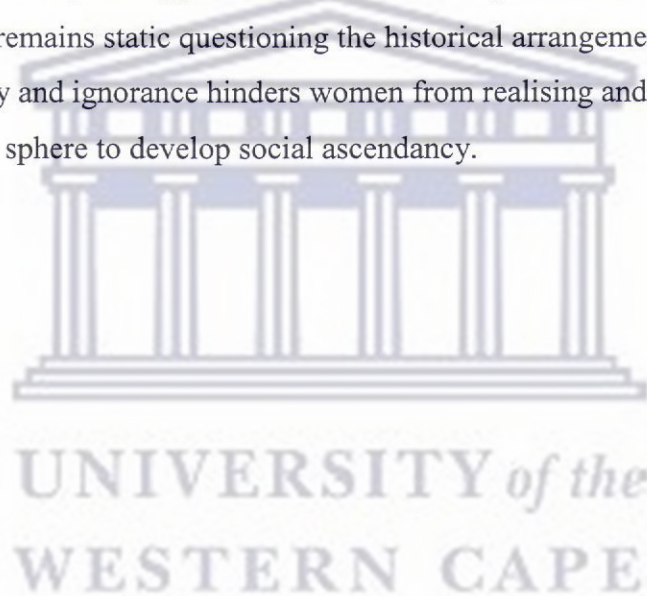
Chapter 3.

Education.

The religious education that exists for girls, encourages a direction of thought that engenders the position of religion as correct and immovable. It enforces a domestic and submissive position for women as a divine, respectable and unquestionable. Establishment Islam seeks to eradicate the influence of secular education if it opposes the result that power structures wish to accomplish. Marginalisation of female education creates a limited resource of information from mother to child particularly sons and subverts ideas of social opposition. (Ahmed, 1992:230; Majid, 1998:321-330; Kandiyoti, 1997:191-192; Handelman, 1996:70) Fundamentalist groups that offer distorted religious education do not comprehend the cultural complexities and social ramifications resulting from their parochial religious interpretations. These groups lack the intellectual and philosophical capacities to determine modifications and adaptations that need exist in order to propel social changes and relations between men and women.

As in all African societies, the focus amongst parents lies with their male children receiving education and attaining success. Female children simply help their mothers with domestic duties and married off at the earliest opportunity. Female children seldom develop the emotional and psychological bonds and relationships with their parents that male children experience, especially with their mothers. Boys are a source of pride, girls a source of family honour and an unfortunate expense. Parents are reluctant to pay for a girl's education as she will marry out of her family and the money lost. An incentive of free education by donor agencies for girls encourages Hausa mothers to educate their daughters. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:56-60; Neft & Levine, 1997:120-132)

The declining standards in secular schools due to limited cash flow, allows for boys to receive only primary education[45]. Girls are often removed from school, although

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[45] Males experience social pressure in three areas; one is in school attendance, two in career choice and thirdly in their choice of bride. The first two are not strictly enforced where it is often left as a prerogative to the son whether he wishes to

government legislation prohibits this practice, in order to help with the family business. Prepubescent girls roam freely without social discrimination, and therefore act as mediums to promote and sell. (Robson, 2000:194-198; http://www.iupjournals.org/africatoday/afr46-3.html.; Kandiyoti, 1997:191; Halstead, 1991:264-265)

complete his education, the career choice is dependant upon informal networks of kin and what is presently available. In the third category his male relations will decide. In other Muslim societies, often the women find a suitable first spouse for their children.

Wahhabism and Female Education.

The infiltration of Wahhabi thought into Hausa communities is best viewed in the educational structures for women. The Wahhabi movement experienced a revival due to theGulf War resulting in more conservative measures for women.[46] This revival strengthened and legitimised the Saud dynasty in a period when the government was ridiculed for supporting and accommodating Western powers. Wahhabists literally interpret the Qur'an and the ahadith and conformity for the Muslim community is determined by Wahhabi ulema within such an environment. Thus the correct behaviour for women is face veiling[47] and separation from unrelated males. Women must maintain their homes, reproduce and submit to their related males[48]. (Doumato, 1996:138; Mir-Hosseini, 1997:21-30; Calvert & Calvert, 1996:52-60) The Wahhabi rationale of social mobility parallels that of the Hausa communities and hence therefore religious and social acceptance. However these social characteristics have become those of the Hausa and cultural permeation has occurred. This is most evident with Wahhabi rejection of saints and martyrs and Hausa religious rejection of bori practitioners although customary acceptance of soothsayers and praise singers persists. Another aspect of Wahhabism is the reluctance to educate females other than in areas of domesticity and child-rearing claiming this as a natural position of women in Muslim society[49]. A third aspect regards mobility, women may not travel without

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[46] Several wealthy Saudi women drove cars in Riyadh in order to promote the issue that chauffeurs were costly and unnecessary, instead the reaction proved disastrous to all the women involved who were accused of prostitution. The incident proved advantageous to the government who wished to divert attention from US troops on Saudi soil.

[47] Niquab was legally enforced in Saudi Arabia in the 1950s.

[48] Amongst certain groups women may not unveil before unrelated females.

[49] Fundamentalist communalist Muslims follow religion blindly, though selectively. It is their opinion that medieval jurists wrote of and solved social problems centuries before and these issues do not need to be reviewed. For these group there is greater emphasis on ritual than on the solutions that Islam raises regarding social issues.

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the approval of their spouses or male relatives, and she may not acquire a passport without male permission.

Islamiyyah schools[50] providing an Islamic-based education enrol more girls than secular schools, operate only four days a week, maintain hours compatible to family entrepreneurial interests, and only offer four years of schooling with an emphasis on female roles and positions of domesticity and reproduction. Natural science education is restricted to males[51] but religious classes are expected of women. Hausa social-tradition defines proper wives to be of limited knowledge and education, men prefer to have absolute control of their wives and children.

The restriction of women in all spheres of socialisation, according to Islamic groups, renders a utopian society free of vice and social disparities of wealth and poverty. Islamic groups reject secular education and knowledge of foreign social environments. Although these fundamentalist groups illustrate the problems and corruption of their societies, they possess illusionary social projections and are vague as how they intend accomplishing social virtue and which concepts to define within their social environments, if they possessed political power. (Ahmed, 1992:229; Yusuf, 1985:212-216; Weiss, 1994:129; Mama, 1995:15-18; Halstead, 1991:270)

The abuses suffered by women and children and the laws that sanction these social realities serve to cement the mental degeneration and breakdown of the traditionalist society. The pretext of these discriminatory laws is to uphold the morality of the household and community yet the expectation exists that these abuses are suffered in silence in respect and loyalty for the religion and patriarchal structure. By restricting information to women, social groups assume that virtue and social hierarchical structures can be maintained. To repudiate these cultural practices are claimed as ignorance by the controlling structures and a lack of understanding as to how things have always been done around here.

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[50] When Muslim women received the vote in 1978, campaigners had to mobilise women at grassroots level, establishing Islamia schools.

[51] Secular Nigerian learning institutions restrict female students from accessing the natural sciences.

Conclusion

The reality for Hausa women (lower middle class and working class social groups) rural and urban is of servitude, tolerance and isolation. The fear of repudiation and the dependency relationship developed through social parameters exists to maintain women in their inferior and passive position. Existing in isolation within their gender group and removed from the resources of education, wealth, personal security and often donor programmes creates an arena of social competition. As the contemporary economy continues to marginalise and deprive the poorer sections of society, so females are further removed from resources and the opportunities to improve their positions in society.

Part II.

Chapter 4.

Gender Cohesion

Writers of political philosophy considered women part of the private rather than the public sphere of socio-political activities. Aristotle, Marsillius, Rousseau et al, considered the role of women to be private and domestic so that men could pursue their interests in the public sphere. Men financially sustained women and children and therefore determined the public interests for all his dependants. (Black, 1991:2; Rai, 1996:26) A precedent set by Wollstonecraft[52] changed the perception that women needed to be concerned with domestic affairs and lacked the mental capabilities to comprehend political participation. She stated that, "ignorance was a frail base for virtue", yet men expected women to be organised in this manner in order to preserve society. (Wollstonecraft in Black, 1991:2) She drew parallels of the tyranny of kings to the tyranny of husbands and set a precedent in philosophical thinking of women as weak and feeble-minded. Wollstonecraft stated that political emancipation of women would improve the lives of men and women since the unequal relationship developed around assumptions of natural differences and lopsided institutions.

> "…if woman be allowed to have an immortal soul, she must
> have, as the employment of life, an understanding to
> improve."
>
> (Wollstonecraft in Black, 1991:2)

Women had become victims of historical and social arrangements through institutions of religion and public life. (Black, 1991:1-2; Rai, 1996:28-29; Mama, 1995:25-30) No political change could occur if the private relationship is not restructured, and private restructuring requires a change in the institutions of governmental structures. Under secular constitutions all citizens are equal before the law, but personal law in

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[52] Wollstonecraft is criticised in entertaining the advancement of middle-class women, defending their role in public and governmental structures, yet marginalising the impoverished man and woman.

any religion encourages an unequal relationship and women always receive the unfavourable part in the relationship. In traditional societies, gender justice is long overdue. As women are viewed as a symbol of Islamic identity and cultural purity, their appearance, behaviour and activities are monitored and scrutinised for manifestations of cultural penetration and invasion.

In Hausa communities, the tyranny of the husband prevents women from occupying any realm other than the private and domestic sphere. In order to change their socio-political positions, Hausa women need to mobilise and interact on an intimate level. Women must realise that there is not a need to communicate and organise on the same level as men. There is value in the problems that women face, solely on a personal and psychological level preceding whether there can be assumptions and aspirations of the modifications in governmental and state structures. Women cannot depend on men to change their social circumstances, and neither should they rely on the strength of individuals. At present, women find solace in their limited knowledge and in their children, yet both can aid women in changing their positions and roles. Although the latter will take longer to bring about the acute changes needed, the ramifications for female participation would be stronger.[53] Social change is motivated by ideological and physical strength and not on the compassion of male guardians, whether governmental or familial. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:140-141)

Organisations claiming to represent female interests in Nigeria claim to have little apolitical ambitions, perhaps as an attempt at avoiding scrutiny by the regime. Political parties that differ in the agenda and interests of the governmental structures[54] are threatened and coerced, and the threats of returning women to the traditional position of subordinates place the organisations in a precarious position. The National Council of Women's Societies encourages women to support legislation of the government regardless that it puts women on the periphery of socio-political

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[53] Jesuit psyche claimed that when children are encouraged to think within a specific indoctrinated framework of socialisation before they are seven years of age, they will adhere to those expectations and values into adulthood.

[54] In Nigeria, the governors take their cue from the president in appointing commissioners and arranging the cabinet.

activities. These inept groups expect that women contribute to the society in a covert manner and not to expect recognition or appraisal. (Mustafa, 1985:245; Mir-Hosseini, 1997:26-32; VerEecke, 1993:218) Little emphasis is placed on the value of female labour contribution activities notwithstanding other women exacerbating the social conditioning. Women need to change their own perceptions of their social conditions before expecting men to sympathise with their peripheral positions.

Prejudice and religious-traditional intolerance do not exist in isolation of social realities. Within social groups, authoritative structures strive to maintain power and control through violent subjection. This social suppression is legitimated through religion and traditions, concepts that claim legitimacy based on time. Religious-cultural invasions create a neo-traditionalism that claims stasis based on a false reality. Economic power and religious/traditional authority parallels political authority. (Hay & Stichter, 1984:140) As long as women lack positions of authority, they lack access to power. A predominantly traditional Muslim society interprets bold feminism as a method of destroying the culture and society. It seems ironic that seeking to be a respected member of society would undermine the value of a cultural system.[55] Criticising theology is interpreted by religious group as criticism of Islam which it is not, theology is not only divinely inspired but a social construction of interpretation and social reality. Political rationale stereotyping maintains a system of control and respect, where the stereotyping of women serves to control and exploit an entire society, not only the women. (Mustafa, 1985:242; Mir-Hosseini, 1997:82-90; VerEecke, 1993:220; Mama, 1995:63-65)

> "From her earliest youth, a girl is subjected to a barrage of
> images, myths and stereotypes portraying her as physically,
> mentally and spiritually weak, limited in options and forced
> to seek a man to look after her."
>
> - (Renee Pittin, Organising for the
> Future, p.233.)

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[55] It seems sacrilegious to think that an old cultural system is prehistoric and outdated and needs to be eliminated. The psychology exists that the oppressed often uphold the values of their oppressors and view themselves as unworthy and inferior.

Organisation occurs due to the self-interests of individuals seeking others to ratify and support their ambitions. Men organise themselves in order to protest grievances that personally affect them. Women, however organise along issues of supporting men and socio-political systems never along self-interest issues. Women organisation is seen as the support structure for men, male ambitions and social interests. Where men liberate themselves and self-determine women support male liberation not that of women.

The argument exists that female liberation occurs after the liberation expectations of men but that the present situation never yields social and political conditions conducive to such interests.[56] Women must momentarily remain supportive to the ambitions of the men and the social situation rather than promote female self-interests. Although the male interest is to liberate himself from the circumstance that subject him, he is reluctant to surrender his power over those that he subjects (such as his wife/wives and children), defending and claiming this unequal relationship as traditional values and cultural identity. Therefore an attempt by subjects (women) to liberate themselves is deemed a threat to culture and traditional values. (Pittin, 1985:232-233; Mir-Hosseini, 1997:68-79) To prevent women from mobilising, they are discouraged from speaking in public and voicing grievances. (Perchenock, 1985:85; Hoodfar, 1997:220-231; Waylen, 1996:8-10)

Organisation must occur within the framework of social parameters of a Muslim territory. Too many feminist organisations are concerned with the lack of access to political power but few seek to deal with the personal oppression experiences. There is emphasis on rights rather than development for women's personal advancement and identity. Women should work within their communities for progressive reforms and codification of Islamic laws[57]. Developing countries have strong class divisions and

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[56] In patriarchal societies where disgruntled movements wished to change the nature of government, women were asked to halt their claims on political participation and liberty as their social situations were not that important.

[57] Islamic laws are generally progressive though in practice it has suffered deviations from the initially interpretations of early Islam.

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thus class differences between the women are greater. Development and affluence allows wealthier classes to resist living with in-laws who undermine the strength of marriages and isolate the new bride. A nuclear household prevents the intrusion of in-laws through new social realities of privacy and family cohesion. It is evident why orthodox religious scholars reject innovations (bidha).

Robson claims that Hausa women move about at night[58], when their domestic tasks are complete, men return from the fields and markets monitor female movement. (Robson, 2000:184-190; VerEecke, 1993:218) During this period of movement, veiled women and children visit other women within their homes. Hausa women leave their homes to engage in crafts and pottery projects in order to learn new techniques, and gain the acquaintance of other women. Opportunities such as these should be utilised to engage women in discussion, sharing social realities and honing perceptions. Physical proximity to their homes allows community-based groups to engage women on issues of social welfare. Organisations should be led by politically experienced, middle class women committed to organising poor women, affording them opportunities to participate and inform themselves of local politics[59]. (Calvert & Calvert, 1996:88-89)

The controlled movement of females limits their access to medical facilities and communal organisations, justified by males as protecting women from the gaze of men[60]. It is most likely to prevent women from encountering other women in similar depressed situations. After all women are permitted to visit physicians once the gishiri cuts strain normal social relationship[61]. Health facilities broaden the aspect of

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[58] These nocturnal movements are unique to this Islamic community.

[59] Surveys show that low-income women joining these organisations experienced increased political awareness.

[60] Hellenic, Macedon and Roman social constructs prevented women from leaving their houses without their husbands' permission. Transferral of literature as well as colonisation by these three groups possibly introduced new ideas to Islamic ideology and social reality.

[61] Women who experienced the gishiri-cuts leak urine and faecal matter due to the damaged peri-anal muscles.

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mobility and provide information to women rousing fear in men that females would simply run off. Once women are no longer considered desirable, the religious-cultural construct ceases to apply. It is at this stage that women should adopt leadership roles once social restrictions no longer pertain to them. (Alti-Muazu, 1985:179-183; Iweribor, 1985:175-177; Hay & Stichter, 1984:74-78)

Shared and familiar life experiences are manifestations of the oppression that women experience within the isolation and discord of the marital home. (Pittin, 1985:232; Zack-Williams, 1985:61-67) Common experiences lead to the proliferation of knowledge, a development of understanding and empathy that allows victims to gain psychological and social strength. Women need to understand the differences within religion, customs and culture moulded as a whole in terms of gender identity. Women should question why they are identified as a collective and not individuals as men.

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Chapter 5.

Globalisation

Globalisation has had a profound effect on Islamic regions and particularly the position of women and their access to information. The transfer of information across continents through newspapers and particularly television has breached the confines of the most guarded Muslim households providing women with information and insight into foreign lifestyles[62]. The donor nations (Western and Islamic) also influence the social environment within communities with development programmes and religious education.

The introduction of news agencies such as CNN and BBC has allowed women to develop their own political opinions. Previously women held the same political opinions as that of their male kin, the isolation of the domestic realm prevented women from accessing political and social issues affecting their lives. Middle class families mimic the actions of the wealthier groups by educating their children (both sons and daughters) as far as attempting to send their daughters to colleges[63].

Structural Adjustment Programmes have had a detrimental effect on women insisting that governments limit spending, where firstly social services are sacrificed instead the constructs of male pride and issues such as the military. Secondly, the cuts undermine the public sector where women comprise the majority of nurses and teachers. Misunderstanding and misconceptions of the national market where subsidies are directed evade women as cultural restrictions prevent them from participating at that level. (Calvert & Calvert, 1996:244-248) Development programmes, such as that conducted by UNICEF and WHO, particularly population

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[62] Television has also provided access for the poorer groups of society a glimpse into the lives of wealthier groups within their own societies and countries. Lower social groups attempt to mimic certain actions of the wealthier groups in order to improve their own social status.

[63] In Nigeria (and other Islamic states) women tend toward domestic courses rather than academic courses, and even then opt for soft academic areas such as language and home economics.

planning programmes, runs parallel to status elevation of women within their societies. The availability of running water and electricity has reduced the amount of time women are occupied with domestic chores and the contemporary lifestyle offers challenges to the ordered traditional routines. Development programmes alert women to the need for social services. (Weiss, 1994:129-130; Waylen, 1996:9-10)

The growth of Shar'iah in the formal legal structures[64] promotes a growth in women-initiated and women-run social and political movements, mimicked in other Muslim states and regions. (Salem, 2001:1) These movements serve as an outlet for the growing populations of literate men and women who desire a greater participation in society. (Weiss, 1994:129) Authoritarian Islamic governments often curtail the movements of members of these socio-political groups inadvertently allowing a fundamentalist group to monopolise the society. Technological advancement in communication and transport enables the varying socio-political movements to maintain contact and relay information. Alternatively, many of the groups offer sanctuary to leadership from other regions as well as an organ by which information can be relayed when state security hinders or controls the mediums of conventional communication. (Ahmed and Donnan, 1994:17-18; Waylen, 1996:7-11; Mama, 1995:50)

Political parties hijack the process of female social progression by encouraging females to become literate and educated and to emancipate themselves from a domestic environment. Women gain employment within the state apparatus and establish themselves in certain senior government positions[65]. (Bogert, 1995:33-34; Calvert & Calvert, 1996:39-42; Mama, 1995:48-56) The reality presents a picture of cultural authority and social manipulation. In the political environment governments encourage women to pursue literacy and tertiary education in the two-fold guise of political support. Firstly, the education received through state sponsored educational services promotes the virtues of the ruling political party. Secondly, women hesitate supporting other political groups that do not espouse the notions of the ruling party

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[64] These political movements are encouraged by the conservative Islamic donors, often countries such as Saudi Arabia.

[65] This system of female social integration occurred in the Ba'ath party in Iraq.

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that promoted female social integration. In the social environment women, as mothers, pass the information to their children and other relatives in their households. By offering women "soft" positions[66] within the government that reflect the traditional roles, women perceive the ruling party as promoting the interests of women and fully integrating them into society. Often these parties enfranchise women in order to maintain their political authority within the government[67].

Although women presently occupy better social positions in most Muslim societies than generations before them, the system of government maintains the position of male authority over female activity. Changes in the areas of literacy and employment serve to benefit males rather than females. Women contribute their earnings to the household but have little or no say in the decision-making process[68]. Women must realise the manipulation that is used to promote their "liberation" and whether it is merely a farcical act in sustaining the life of political parties that offer little economic or social recourse. In such socio-political systems, women remain trapped and viewed as possessions where their behaviour remains the focus and interest of men. Female liberation allows for financial relief on the part of males, but offers women little in terms of entering powerful positions where decision-making occurs. On the other hand, the ruling parties' fear losing support from traditional male structures that define the institution of employment as the domain of males. Generations of adult males change their voting patterns due to socio-political realities particularly concerning economic interests, future generations display little affinity to outdated government structures. Organisations claiming to further the positions and treatment of women are controlled by the ruling party, with clandestine support from many male

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[66] Women receive positions within Arts and Language, never positions of political authority such as internal affairs or economics.

[67] The Communists in Afghanistan first used this method in an Islamic state in the 1970s.

[68] The Qur'an states that women can dispose of their income as they wish and that men are the sole providers of households. Yet although in a private household the male is dominant according to tradition and religion, a secular notion of female financial contribution is accepted by society.

traditional authorities, undermine other religious groups and secularism rather than displaying interest in the abuse of women.

The facilitation of the electronic media allows women to identify on socio-political issues removing them from their personal position of mental isolation. Penetrating and realising female mental isolation is the initial step to mobilising women. Common realisation eliminates the fear and snowballs into the anger that morphs social cohesion.

.Chapter 6.

The Organisation of Hausa Women at Grassroots Level.

The organisation of women is imperative in the realisation of social circumstances, but avenues are needed in order to facilitate social changes. Three forms of icons are identified, historical figures, writers and bori practitioners. Although Nigeria feminism falls short of that in the Middle East, one learns by example and using experiences of women in other states experiencing similar personal and social issues, position women universally in an advantageous position[69].

Movements need a central figure (preferably historical) that challenges the normative traditional and religious position and radiates the possibilities of socio-political changes. Nana Asma'u, daughter of the jihadist Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) provided a figure of social change in the Sokoto Caliphate. (Roald, 1998:2-4) Although she never actively participated in the governmental structures in Sokoto, she nonetheless encouraged women to inform themselves of their socio-political environment, stressing the importance of education for women who dedicated a major portion of their day to child-rearing. Nana Asma'u realised that women played a significant part in the knowledge acquired by their children. She sought women who supported her intellectual approach forming the Yan Taru movement that initiated group solidarity to encourage the educational development of women.

Several female Muslim fictional authors' stress changes within the institutions of family and marriage, utilising contemporary ideas of liberalism and feminism, and grafting it to the pre-modern Islamic paradigm. The female characters are individuals, strong and determined and do not observe positions as paragons of culture and society but admirable followers of Islam.[70] There is emphasis on creating characters as strong

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[69] Iranian and Egyptian feminists set precedents for Muslim women universally, such as Nawal El-Saadawi, Reza Afshari etc.

[70] The importance of individuals such as Nana Asmau is that she serves as a reality model, her method of socio-political change is achievable. Rather than using icons such as Ayeesha bint Abu Bakr who cannot serve as realistic ambitious notions but rather as ephemeral paragons.

as the prophet's wives, rather than subservient persecuted individuals that offer support and prayer yet are invisible and ignored by their society.

Gellner stated that there are two levels of religion within Islam and the contextual lower level occupied by the Hausa women exercising bori practitioners. The lower form (or spiritual ecstasy)[71], older than the higher form of Islam and steeped in superstition and reverence of individuals (ancestor or saint), cementing the relations between women and their access to spiritual enlightenment. (Gellner, 1994:34-45; Pellow, 1997:589-592) The bori practitioner fulfils a spiritual and emotional role for women that an imam, within the higher form of Islam as opposed to the lower form occupied by the bori practitioner, can only marginally fulfil for men. Bori links the past with saints and ancestors that presents an enigmatic quintessence unattainable for the living and the present. Time and misinterpretations[72] blur the historical realities of the spiritual beings that symbolise paragons of strength, bravery and purity. Iconic symbolism as social and spiritual strength that high Islam in Hausa culture fails to provide women, elevates the bori to serve a twofold role in uniting women around powerful female heroism inspiring personal worth and dignity.[73] Rather than promoting the experience as a private and spiritual act, enrapture it with social and contemporary reality. In this manner, political identities proliferate within the common medium and therefore a common understanding of central issues. (Pellow, 1997:594; Trimingham, 1968:138; Siddiqi, 1984:70-85)

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[71] Spiritual ecstasy is deemed offensive and heretic to the orthodox clergy within Islam. It appeals to the poor and women within society, those who lack access to the socio-political environment. The hypnotic state produced by singing and chanting allows the faithful to succumb to astral pleasure and escape the physical and mental torture experienced in daily life.

[72] Historical figures are often portrayed as valiant, brave and morally righteous. Sordid details of their biographies are erased giving them divine status.

[73] The rejection of bori practitioners by the Wahhabi scripturalists ('yan Izala) in Hausa society is similar to the rejection of Sufi beliefs that spread Islam in Africa, the rejection spurred by the philosopher Al-Ghazzali of 12th century Iran.

Women possess the key to an enlightened society, group organisation aids in most receiving the information that indirectly passes to the children. A patriarchal structure is unlikely to support any changes sought by an oppressed group due to the change it would induce in the pyramid of social hierarchy. (Thiam, 1991:20-24; Shaaban, 1996:61-65; An-Na'im, 1996:53-55) If women seek socio-political changes, eventually other groups will seek greater liberties, creating a domino effect of social desires encompassing political identities. Women therefore need a religious median that the patriarchal system or the state structure cannot refute and reject.

> "It is our duty as Muslim women to have a say in the politics of our country and the politics that shape our lives as women. Politics is not only the realm of men, as many men want to propagate. On the contrary, it has been made our primary concern throughout Islamic history since 1500 years ago, when the women gave the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) their vote (Baiya) personally. We were equally addressed, and were equal partners in matters of the state. This is however, not the notion most Muslim men carry. Somewhere, the perception of women being only bodies fit for the kitchen or the bed lingers in the back of their heads."

<div align="right">(Leader in Ikwan, Duval, 1998:58)</div>

Groups that place emphasis on their cultural heritage draw on religion allowing it to form the basis of the culture whereby separation of culture and religion becomes difficult. (Doumato, 1996:136; Mayer, 1996:110-112; Kandiyoti, 1997:190; Engineer, 1996:167; Siddiqi, 1984:5-12) Women who are removed from access to religious knowledge (most African Muslim women are illiterate and receive most religious information from their male relatives) are not in a position to question nor understand the complexities of religious cultural merging.

The Shari'ah offers a female definitive position within family law as a single expectation without deviation as if females are voids of identity. It seems odd that contemporary fundamentalists construe the Shari'ah as static yet history indicates that Shari'ah has changed and modified over the centuries in order to accommodate social and political patterns and experiences. Contemporary African fundamentalists claim a literal and primitive understanding of Islamic Law possibly due to their life

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experiences as individuals who have not experienced extreme social and political upheavals such as war and victimisation.[74] (Engineer, 1996:168; An-Na'im, 1996:51-60; Bogert, 1995:33-34; Siddiqi, 1984:30-47)

There is a link in women's position to cultural authenticity and through strength of religion to government or emir legitimacy. Women's rights are hijacked in political shifts and in defining the culture of the community and state.

Sex is a powerful weapon used against females who veer from cultural norms where rape of supporters is tantamount to fouling the leader[75]. The fear of rape within traditional groups is great as women fear rejection by their husbands and families, forced from their communal unit without financial and emotional support. The issue of honour is primary to traditional Islamic women where the family is tainted if a related female is raped and ostracised. However no battle is won without sacrifice and women have to realise that men who wish to maintain a position of power are not likely to accept a rearrangement silently. Males from a poorer section of society are least likely to surrender the only power they possess – that over their women and children. Initial social changes must occur at middle-class levels where women have support from families and spouses. Wollstonecraft stated that middle-class women needed to mobilise and change their situations as they are in a better position than other social levels to do so. (Iweribor, 1985:175; http://www.africapolicy.org/index.shtml.; Engineer, 1996:170-173; Ahmed, 1992:85-100)

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[74] Iranian conservative mullahs initially belligerent of women remaining in a private sphere were forced to incorporate women into the public sphere when labour shortages were experienced due to the Iran-Iraq war. The emerging social reality alters the population ratio forcing literalists to reinterpret their social environment.

[75] Several of Benazir Bhutto's supporters were raped and sodomised in order to demonstrate their disapproval of her political campaigns and incursions on male territory. Although they couldn't physically access Bhutto, humiliating her support base was seen as a personal attack.

Chapter 7.

Ibn Khaldun's notion of asabiyah.

Ibn Khaldun promoted the concepts of political identity, the middle class and the cycle of socio-political development within Islamic communities. Although he never mentioned the participation of women in a public sphere[76], his works offer women concepts useful in promoting their social upliftment. The existence of asabiyah[77] and religion serve as moderating forces in socio-political development and vital in breaking the cycle of social degradation and moral decay. Yet, if religion exists as a suppressive agent to social cohesion and gender relations, then the progression of civilisation is stifled. Although Ibn Khaldun's asabiyah demonstrates the movement of social development and cohesion in the creation of urbanisation and a state structure under a monarch, it demonstrates the lack of social cohesion amongst women and therefore a lack in societal development.

According to Ibn Khaldun, religion is vital to social progression and civilisation, that interaction stabilises the political development. Islam influences the private and public space and guides social and political relationships. To promote socio-political development, social development must undergo asabiyah, defined as the social glue that binds individuals within a group, giving them identity and value. It is the basic factor in explaining the history of humanity, a natural phenomenon promoting the growth of civilisation. Evolving socio-economic circumstances promote the growth of asabiyah,[78] with social cohesion greatest amongst those who experience depressed economies. Development of society and its moral growth is dependent upon this kith and kin cohesion and the medium of religion. (Gellner, 1994:26-27; Simon, 1996:68-71; Trimingham, 1968:136)

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[76] Ibn Khaldun followed the Aristotlean school of thought, yet offered opinions on the value of marriage whereas Aristotle considered women to be inept and inferior and that nature demanded women to be subservient to men.

[77] Asabiyah is kith, kin and social cohesion.

[78] Ibn Khaldun claims that asabiyah brings about social cohesion and political development but that economic prosperity cleaves a society and destroys communal development therefore reducing the notion of asabiyah.

Civilisation resulting from the growth of the urban population leads to the proliferation of military structures that formulate and preserve the state. It cements a system of male dominated social classes where the clergy and the military are the land-owning elite[79]. (Gellner, 1996:7-12; Ahmed, 1992:40-45) Clientelism pervaded cultural societies with the formation of governmental power structures formed along lines of existing cultural-ethnic alliances, and personal trust. A familial traditional aristocracy dominated Nigerian Islamism through control of amassed resources contributed to theologian education and judiciary employment.

> "Saudi Arabia has become a potent source of cultural influence
> and the centre of political and economic power to which many
> Hausa look for a model of development."
>
> (O'Brein, 2001:http://www.iupjounals.org.)

Because women did not form part of a governing structure within familial bodies in Saudi Arabia nor in Hausa society, their political absence continued into the institutions of government and religious authority[80]. The Saudi Arabia influence parallels the political interests of Hausa clergy wishing to maintain their positions of authority and influence, realising that instituting Shari'ah legislation would propel them into the higher echelons of political power constructs. (Gellner, 1996:26-28; Hay & Stichter, 1984:161; O'Brein, 2000:http://www.iupjournals.org.)

Social development is dependent upon the emotional and intellectual growth of women, rather than pursuing a medieval construction of female contriteness. Without their active participation within the public and the private sphere[81], there exists little

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[79] Ibn Khaldun states that there are several stages to the development of society, monarchy and clergy and that social and political development is a cyclical process.

[80] Nigeria experienced lengthy military rule that reduced and discouraged political participation and mobilisation amongst civilians.

[81] Women in Islamic countries possess no authority in the private nor public sphere. Although women are denied access to a public sphere on the basis of spiritual pollution, they neither possess control within a private sphere where their fathers,

chance of social cohesion beyond the façade of high religion[82]. Ibn Khaldun places great emphasis on the social need to belong and solidarity of members of a group. Female solidarity strengthens the social construct as it provides psychological and economic independence[83]. (Duval, 1998:55; Weiss, 1994:129-130) This concept further expands on the individual, and the position occupied within a group, ranging from clan position to the position of marriage[84]. For Ibn Khaldun social emphasis resides within dependence and complement rather than domination and submission, in that society develops at the base level of marriage extends to familial relations and the formation of clan social structure of interaction. (Simon, 1996:78-89) There is an emphasis on the equality of people in their relationships though Ibn Khaldun supported the notion of individual political leadership based on charisma.

The notion of asabiyah expounds that women need social cohesion and interaction in order to develop solidarity aiding social progression. Social development runs parallel to religion, and spiritual progression aided by a charismatic leader heightens the social cohesion and asabiyah. (Simon, 1996:45-56) Yet, fundamentalist groups continue to undermine this natural phenomenon insisting on gender separation and

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husbands and elder brothers possess powers of life and death over their movements and interactions.

[82] The high form of Islam (as discussed by Gellner) offers little comfort for the oppressed masses, who perceive fiqh (jurisprudence) as interacting on different levels for different social classes. Unlike the spiritual form (bori) the high form offers no recourse and outlet from social and economic hardship but advocates tolerance and acceptance of social reality.

[83] The Ikwan group in Egypt consists of women affiliated to the Muslim Brothers. They are well educated, several multi-lingual, and serve as role-models for Islamic women who encourage women to inform themselves of the reality of their social environment and to question their positions rather than succumbing to and accepting it.

[84] For Ibn Khaldun the idea of marriage served more than simply as a means to reproduce, it also benefitted the individuals in comfort and spiritual growth. He does not emphasise the dominance of a husband over a wife, rather companionship and mental growth.

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alienation as important to a pious ritual profuse life. (Komolafe, 2000:2-3; Robson, 2000:189-190; Togunde, 1999:279; Watson, 1994:147) Fundamentalist notions of relegating women to the private sphere separate and silent, is an unnatural disposition rendering negative social growth within society. Religious fundamentalism engenders power, domination and a retreat to medieval past. It promotes a system of complacency and servitude where authoritative bodies are aware of the mental laxity promoted by submissive females and negative female stereotypes. A true sense of asabiyah cannot develop in a submissive society or community, and although religious groups present the façade of large-scale support from all sectors, the majority remain politically ignorant and passive.

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Chapter 8.

Textual Interpretation.

I have not attempted to redefine and reinterpret the texts of the Qur'an and the ahadith, but the relevance of female authors who reinterpreted the texts serve as inspiration of hope and identity to other Muslim females. I wished to utilise female interpretations of the texts in order to demonstrate how women identify with Islam. The ahadith is the explanation of the Qu'ran and holds strong authority in Islamic theology. The importance that women need identify is that alternative societal roles do not challenge belief and faith. The conclusions show that cultural-gender bias exists in the reinterpretation of Islamic texts and not religion that dictated a position of female inferiority[85]. (Shaaban, 1996:63-64; An-Na'im, 1996:57-58; Kandiyoti, 1997:189; Engineer, 1996:51) Traditions and cultural adherence and observance demonstrate the position of female servitude comparative to positions of slavery[86]. (Shaaban, 1996:67; Soyinka, 1996:139-141)

Islamic feminist writers identify two areas of prejudice against women often justified through religious texts, firstly the creation myth and secondly the role that women occupy in society and public/private space. Islamic text interpreters face a different challenge to Christian interpreters, the former face a cultural prejudice to textual changes whereas the latter confronted with literal dogmatic interpretations within the texts[87]. For the majority of women who uphold Islam as a central focus in their lives, secular Islamic interpreter authors do not represent realistic alternative understandings for the religion.

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[85] Men who perform women's duties and vice versa are far superior to others.

[86] Dresscodes are a good example of pre-Islamic influence where the perception is that which predates Islam and has similar expectations within the religion remains apparent within the society.

[87] Literary text interpretations of the models of reformation and reconstructuion where loyalists, revisionists and sublimationists are considered to be reformers of the texts (Bible and Qu'ran) whereas those who reject the texts such as rejectionists and liberationists are considered reconstructors.

The ambiguity of religious texts depends on the understanding and differences of the interpreters who each display their distinctive biographies dependent on their class, status and personality[88]. (Roald, 1998:19-21; Kandiyoti, 1997:189) Muhammed Al-Ghazzali and Abd al-Halim Abu Shaqqa both claim that the reason for women's oppression is due to the ignorance of Islam on many levels in society. Several reformist authors of the ahadith cite many distortions, several misogynist hadith are considered forgeries, specifically those contained in the collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim where much of their works are on equal footing with the Qu'ran. (Roald, 1998:27) The ahadith considered authentic are categorised as hasan (good) and daif (weak). (Roald, 1998:21-23; Ahmed, 1992:4-5) Female Islamic scholars, Amina Wadud-Muhsin and Riffat Hassan, best demonstrate a reformist alternative to understanding the Qu'ran, focusing on the gender of the texts and the translation of particular words promoting the inferiority of females[89].

As mentioned earlier the degradation of women within Islamic texts is due to the pre-Islamic patriarchal societies, and secondly the earlier interpreters of the texts would have done so under misogynist guises. The negative ahadith of women went unquestioned simply because of social realities and the position of women within it. According to Hassan religious texts have added to this subjection such that:

1. that God's primary creation is man and not woman;
2. that woman is responsible for the expulsion from Eden, and therefore all females are daughters of Eve and regarded with suspicion and contempt; and
3. that women were created for men, making her presence instrumental and not fundamental. (Roald, 1998:25-27; Siddiqi, 1984:15-18; Engineer, 1996:20-33; 160-170)

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[88] The first women to have commented on the Qu'ran was A'isha Abd ar-Rahman, claiming that the Qu'ran serves merely as a spiritual guide not a text of historical facts, and that it is necessary to understand the Qu'ran in terms of context, time and place.

[89] Hassan stated that the creation myth has promoted female inferiority and sinful, linking it with parallel beliefs in Christian doctrine on the negative role and position of women.

Wahdud-Muhsin shares literary opinions with Hassan regarding the creation myth but further ascertains that much earlier Islamic history incorporated Talmudic and thus Christian accounts of texts.

> Treat women kindly. The woman has been created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is in the upper region. If you try to make it straight, you will break it, and if you leave it as it is, it will remain curved. So treat women kindly. (Al-Bukhari, 1984: 346(4); Muslim, 1971: 752(2)

Wadud-Muhsin and Hassan reject the authenticity of this hadith[90] (ahad) questioning the validity remonstrating the term Adam[91] used in the Qu'ran bequeathing both male and female. If the ahadith serve to expound the tenets of the Qu 'ran, then why does the Qu' ran, fail to mention this Roman-Christian form of creation. Wadud-Muhsin further claims that the Qu'ran does not state creation began with the singularity that is a man, there is no gender specific. (Roald, 1998:32-33; Ahmed, 1992:4-5; Engineer, 1996:165-170; Majid, 1998:321-362; Siddiqi, 1984:29-35; Doi, 1996:12-15) Linguistic understanding in terms of grammar and conceptualisation, further beckons the question of why gender specific only occurs when the concept of power relations arises. In terms of who preceded and who possesses interpreted as gender specific.

> "That He did create in pairs, - male and female,
> from a seed when lodged (in its place).
>
> (Q, LIII:45-46.)

This verse demonstrates that the Qu'ran does not proclaim male creation preceding female, nor that a female was the resultant creation of male anatomy. Traditional ulema ignore the contexts and select specific verses from the Qu'ran to substantiate

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[90] The Eve (Hawwa) hadith was related by a single person Abu Hurayra and accepted as authentic by orthodox clergy.

[91] In Hebrew "Adam" means "from the soil".

their views[92]. Jurists give credence to doubtful traditions than to clear statement in the Qu'ran in order that they envision women as a inferior normative.

The second factor of Islamic text interpretation deals with stifled female progression claiming that women are mothers first and foremost, and that any form of employment, knowledge[93] and wealth accumulation[94] be regarded as secondary. Again the use of power relations in which women are denied access to resources in the form of knowledge, economics and association[95] in order to maintain a societal structure in favour of authoritarianism and ignorance.

> "And play your role by being in your houses
>
> and do not keep exhibiting your beauty and decorations
>
> like what used to happen in the Jahilliyyah period.
>
> (Doi, 1996:21)

As earlier discussed, information is passed from the mother to child, and by maintaining the ignorance of the mother[96] and the arrogance of the father, the flow of information is slowed and distorted. Instead the relationship of fear and power is generated, where men seek to usurp power from the patriarch and females seek to indirectly manipulate their male relatives in order that they too gain a position of

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[92] The section of verse,"that men are a degree above women" yet the preceding verse is ignored reiterating the equality of rights.

[93] The Shari'ah regards men and women as intellectual and spiritual equals.

[94] The Qu'ran states that men shall benefit from what they earn and women shall benefit from what they earn.

[95] A woman can earn independently of her husband and father categorically stated in the Qu'ran. The women companions of the Prophet partook in activities ranging from combat, religion to politics. All the Prophet's wives possessed skills such as medicine, surgery and calligraphy. Byzantine and Persian influences permeated Islamic interpretations reducing social participation of women.

[96] Muslim women are permitted to pursue any form of education they desire with the exception that it be segregated. The Prophet does not mention what women may and may not learn.

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power for themselves. (Engineer, 1996:70-90; Hilsum, 1998:33; Joseph, 1997:64-70; Siddiqi, 1984-68-75)

Relegating women to a primary position allows resources to be restricted to those that have always possessed power. The patriarchal cultural systems that preceded Islam maintained their authority and social structures after Islam permeated their socialisation and cultural environments. The male dominated cultural structures pervaded scholarly religious interpretations, and possible manipulations of these texts[97]. Influences from settled Macedonians, Greeks, Jewish merchants and Roman legions constructed a misogynist society within North Africa and central Asia[98]. (Ahmed, 1992:27-30; Thiam, 1991:68-90) As females already maintained a minor position within the social structures, the Islamic texts were manipulated to accommodate the continuing servitude of women[99]. Granting women access to resources, meant granting access to power and information that would change the social structure of the community[100].

Wadud-Muhsin states that there is no system of hierarchy regarding the value of either men or women within the Qu'ran, and secondly that the Qu'ran does not strictly delineate roles for either men or women that must be followed. She rejects the notion that men are special that only men were prophets basing her argument that women too received revelations[101]. A prophet, simply defined, was a gifted individual and gender irrelevant. The argument follows that such statements promote the ideology that men

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[97] This accounts for all religious forms in the Middle East, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

[98] These cultures and belief systems possessed forms of purdah and domestic relegation for women.

[99] Tuaregs in North Africa refuse to abide by certain tenet in the Qu'ran particularly that dealing with marriage and property rights. Tuareg marriage is familial and property rights exist only for men.

[100] Hellenic, Persian and Roman culture refused to incorporate women into the public arena, women were confined with handmaidens. The parallels to contemporary Islamic communities are stark.

[101] Sarah, the wife of Abraham, received revelations, as did the daughters of Lot.

must interpret and proselytise. This belief coincides with Judaism and Christianity both advocating male authoritative religious interpretations. Wadud-Muhsin and Hassan advocate that the Qu'ran mentions female childbearing as a distinction not a role and this should not deny women their right to participate in the public sphere. (Roald, 1998:36; Ahmed, 1992:7-12; Doi, 1996:25,140-143)

All religions[102] recognise the need for childbearing in order to boost followers and political supporters for leaders/groups utilising religious texts. Political leaders and interested parties align their interests to religious texts making the religion obligatory to the social and political interests. Alternatively, for communities the desire to bear children boosted the wealth of the patriarch as a labour and economic source.

For female interpreters of the Islamic texts, there is a need for the Qu'ran to be reviewed. Responsibility should be taken by those that propagate religious interpretations and questions should be asked of those that question certain tenets of the Qu'ran and the ahadith, why they do not question the validity of passages regarding females. (Roald, 1998:36-38; Ahmed, 1992:15-16; Engineer, 1996:100-110; Doi, 1996:5-12) I wish to add that regardless of whether changes are made to the interpretation of passages, it would still be rejected by certain clergy, who support autocratic rulers and abusive households as a prerequisite for their positions of power.[103] In contemporary societies women experience marginalisation through culture claims that predate the religion, and therefore undermine any attempt at social change. Those offering different interpretations are considered heretics and fatwas issued against their literature, family and persons. In regions where resources are

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[102] Political interests claiming to defend religion required large and dispensable armies made possible by the use of religious texts to produce innumerable offspring.

[103] On a similar note, racists seldom compromise the rigidity of their Christian belief that black persons are inferior based on certain Biblical texts. Many claim that the superiority of Caucasians is promoted by God in that Adam was created with a blush therefore rendering him Caucasian.

limited, there is unlikely to be support for a system of interpretation that allows more people access to an already stretched economic base.[104]

Veiling is also relevant to the social reality of Muslim women, for many the veil liberates and demonstrates their right to move outside their homes[105]. Most do not deny its religious relevance nor question its cultural origin. Although several feminist authors dispute the necessity to enshroud and claim it is distortion of the Qur'an, it is accepted by women as a vital part of their identity and modesty[106]. (Watson, 1994:147; Ahmed, 1992:17; Engineer, 1996:85-86; Doi, 1996:100-117; Bogart, 1995:33-34; Shaaban, 1996:74-75)

Nazira al-Din claimed that physical veiling is not a requirement, that anonymity begets suspicion and disgrace, but in the climate of misguided contemporary Islam it favours feminist groups wishing to improve the social positions of women to benefit from anonymity under the guise of modesty. (Shaaban, 1996:66-69) The emphasis of veiling comprises a larger socio-political area in the minds and perceived authority of traditional and patriarchal structures than the simple effort of removing a shroud. The anonymity and serfdom produced by nondescript forms does not encompass morality. Women should discover, inform and educate themselves under the cover and security of the veil. It maintains the social distance required of men, and women can discover their identities before seeking to compare and equalise themselves, socially and

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[104] This behaviour is evident in all Islamic countries where a cultural group is given precedence and access to resources (their language is preferential) over other groups regardless that they all practice Islam.

[105] Iranian women claimed the right to public movement by defending the need to wear the chador. Zin al-Din and several interpreters of the ayas of female dresscodes state that women need not cover their faces, hands as the need to lower their gazes would be redundant.

[106] In a broad sense the "not displaying adornments and charms" prevents women being viewed as sexual objects and to hide their jewelry, a view promoted by contemporary feminists. Women deserve to maintain dignity and individuality rather than a social perception. The context of the verse also relates that women's breasts were visible and a dresscode introduced as promotion of dignity and respect.

politically, alongside males in these traditional societies. It is a global ideological trend that women expound upon their status to alleviate the social, intellectual and economic poverty that pervades societies, communities and states. Women can contribute to their liberation from abuse and ignorance, but the process accelerated by communal and legislative support. (Engineer, 1996:30-40; Doumato, 1996:135-160; Enabulele, 1985:187-194)

Chapter 9.

The Secular Approach.

An alternative feminist approach of liberating women in Islamic societies is a secular
model. Several authors such as Fatima Mernissi, Nawal El-Saadawi and Reza Afshari
argue that women cannot be liberated under the guise of Islam. However, I feel that
women cannot free themselves using a "Westernised" system that of which they are
misinformed and suspicious. The secular approach is most successful with elite and
upper-middle class groups with personal and material interests in maintaining ties
with Western exposure[107] and political ideologies.

In theory the secularist notion of iconoclasm and liberation are intertwined and offer
the only solution to female servitude in Islamic states. What many secular authors fail
to realise is the strength of traditional attitudes amongst the poor subjected by the
wealthy minority group of landowners and political elite. In traditional societies,
landowners and political elites fuse relationships through marriage in order to curtail
access to limited resources. Landowners subject the communities on their lands to
their traditional practices and normative restricting access, movement and support of
agencies unrelated to, or challenges to elites. Subjected and subverted societies
steeped into traditionalism and fear maintain strict religious observance and
oppressive tactics amongst their communities and families in order to fulfil
generations of family loyalties to perceived benefactors[108]. (Afshar, 1996:25-50; An-
Na'im, 1996:51-60; Calvert & Calvert, 1996:123-130)

Political elites adhere to iconoclasm as a means to obtain greater access to power
institutions, but fall short of encouraging lower social groups to attempt similar

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[107] Benazir Bhutto appeared in USA and European newspapers more regularly than
other Islamic leaders. She appeared to display Western interests and aspirations
giving Western women the appearance that she was a strong Islamic woman.
[108] Communities are threatened with expulsion and assault if they veer from
traditional norms or if they seek legal objection to their social predicaments. In
Kaduna, northern Nigeria, Hausa women found legal recourse useless in reclaiming
their farms from pedagogues and landowners.

actions that could undermine landowner political interests. Maintaining control of power institutions requires that groups become gate-keepers to religious interpretations and knowledge, restricting reinterpretations and preventing intellectuals from undermining their authoritative patriarchal systems. Similar threats of Western incursions arouse defences of foreign traditional and cultural invasion and seek a return of their male dominance. It is therefore a group phenomenon wanting to maintain hold over as large a population possible. It seems odd to argue then for egalitarianism and individual rights when traditional groups do not recognise these identities and concepts.

The secularist notion of feminism asks women to liberate themselves through political insight without realising that the male population is neither informed nor liberated. The political insight emphasising political right rather than realising that developmental needs precede such a venture. Males receive a distorted political and parochial information through state newspapers controlled by authoritarian regimes[109]. Secondly males fear the regime and their ignorance maintains the power structures and the plethora of religious glory seekers. In a hierarchical society where the male members in the family control the movement of women, are secularist feminists asking that women should set a precedent for the men? How is the subordinate to demonstrate superior insight to the dominant group of men?

Laws governing personal and family matters are important to women as they create the boundaries for and the rules by which women can self-determine and negotiate for themselves. A support system can loosen ties of patriarchy over women at various levels of female socialisation and emerging realities. No particular group but a network of autonomous groups achieving singularity and mass cohesion can transform socio-political barriers into feasible strategies to uplift women. (Shaheed, 1996:92-99)

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[109] European women experienced earlier emancipation as compared to counterparts in the U.S.A. where until 1950s women still travelled on their husband's and father's passports, similarly to movement structures in Islamic territories.

Concepts of gender equality and individualism arose in response to the capitalist market economy and the emergence of a modern state with aggrieved populations. (Ahmed, 1992:50-55; Afshar, 1996:1-10; Engineer, 1996:42) The West developed an epistemological break between the notions of religion and the development of their society and state, but the same social developments are not identified in Islamic territories. Fundamentalist notions supported by large ignorant poor populations rejecting imperialism, allows them only perceived alternative as a movement to a glorious past of religious control where social equality existed and social vice obliterated. Governments respond to fundamentalist groups with minimalist support in order to maintain political reign, but does not attempt to reorder society and move into contemporary modern politics[110].

Failure to recognise the social relationship of fiefdom and vast economic and intellectual cleavages in Islamic regions illustrate the failure of secularist feminists in assuming to use contemporary intellectual notions in isolated and peripheral hierarchical traditional societies. The Islamic normative systems legitimises the traditional power structures and socio-economic trends eliminating new socio-political resolutions. Questioning traditional normative (regardless of social inequalities) parallels criticism to Islam is part of the social ordering and lifestyle determinant, it is impossible to separate religion from the socio-political ordering of society and the state.

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[110] Zia ul-Haq responded to religious interests in Pakistan in order to legitimate his claim to political power sequestering the movement of women and promoting an environment of misogyny.

Conclusion.

The hierarchy of socio-political order in the religious-traditional Hausa construct, prevents Hausa women from participating within their social and political institutions. The marginalisation of women within Islam compounded by the Victorian attitudes of British colonialists, in Africa and the Middle East, further degraded the position and perception of women within their societies and families. Hausa women have slowly surrendered public and political participation to accommodate and legitimise the Islamic normative system in northern Nigeria. Power structures in northern Nigeria seek to legitimise their positions of authority through a fundamentalist adoption of religious text that parallels their inherent patriarchy. In this manner a large portion of the population cannot benefit from this Islamic system of power distribution.

African women are most politically active at the base of the power pyramid and particularly when the political institutions fuse with social and economic activities. When the political arena is communal, women are influential through gossip and through pillow-talk but when the arena arrangement is formal and bureaucratic, recourse for women disappears. To interact on the formal political arena, women need access to education and employment, providing access to information alerting them to socio-political obstacles in contemporary politics. This lack of political involvement and the lack of decision-making participation relegate women to a position of inferiority, ignorance and complacency.

African women's organisations need to bridge the gap between men and women, and serve as a source of leadership and political guidance. Fear of political entrapment and arbitrary arrest are inevitable in societies compounded with suspicion, jealousy and veracity regarding limited resources. Martyrs to a cause strengthen group-solidarity and gain wider recognition than the simple initial communal recognition, snowballing into allocation of greater socio-political recognition and access to foreign if not resources. Governments that form women's organisations often depoliticise their roles making them ineffective in promoting social issues. These organisations reinvent methods to encourage women to maintain a passive political role should bear

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responsibility for social decline[111]. These organisations encourage men to embrace Western ideas, technology and economic development but women must maintain tradition and rebuke Western norms. The traditional position of women is fashioned upon an ossified colonial mould that is a misrepresentation of African lifestyles.

Peasant populations in Africa, although the largest social group and often the economic powerhouses of their states, are politically inactive, bound by the system of patriarchy and clientelism. Potentially a political destabilising group in any political system, their socio-political strengths erodes through the patriarchal structures and traditional notions of control and subjugation. Hausa women isolated within traditional structures and neo-religious concepts that dictate their decline in the public sphere.

Social degradation and economic stress force people to retreat into cultural identities although many of the identities are fabrications of idealised norms. Modern Muslim intellectuals are more ideologically and politically defensive fearing accusations of cultural and religious treason from social groups. There is little attempt at a epistemological break, instead of reordering societies there is a cycle of redefining Islam making any suggestions at changing social anathema, redundant.

Hausa women can only change their socio-political paralysis by using knowledge and therefore "weapons" that are available to them, understood and respected by the broader population and power structures. The lack of education and information makes a secular approach to liberation an impossible and dangerous option for women trapped in a social cycle of male control. Women must resort to using Islam to change their positions and roles as this presents the safest and culturally acceptable approach. There should be a realisation by oppressed and marginalized women that power is never rendered voluntarily.

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[111] Nigerian gender-based organisations encourage women to accept more labour related tasks such as cleaning streets in Abuja and taking on greater domestic responsibility yet maintaining a subservient and passive position.

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