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Child Labor in Southern Nigeria: 1880s to 1955

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Child Labor in Southern Nigeria: 1880s to 1955

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The dissertation evaluates changes in child labor practices in the Southern Provinces of Nigeria during the colonial period from the 1880s to the 1950s. The argument concludes that child labor was part of a socializing, educational, and survival strategy prior to colonial conquest. British policies influenced by civilizing mission ideology and indirect rule fundamentally altered the relationship between children and their families. Child labor in Nigeria's cultural context was neither completely exploitative nor beneficial, but had the capacity to affect children in both ways depending on specific circumstances. Child labor initially existed in the context of the kinship group, but during the first half of the twentieth century child labor increasingly became an independent strategy outside the confines of the kinship environment, which was a direct result of social and economic change. The research underscores the central position of child labor in the Nigerian economy and the British colonial agenda. Towards the end of colonial rule, child labor issues composed part of the anti-colonial movement as it assisted discontent elites to gain support beyond coastal cities.

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Introduction

Child labor has received increasing interest around the world since the 1980s as activists and researchers grapple with the reasons for child labor and how it might be possible to eradicate it in the developing world. In recent years historians have given the concept of child history, childhood, and child labor increasing attention. Yet the majority of historical research pertains to developed countries whereas regions under the most scrutiny for using child labor in the present have an under-researched history in this regard.[1] Childhood history as a concept presents challenges regardless of geographical location but in terms of the developing world and Africa those challenges are further multiplied by a dual problem with sources. The majority of documentation on children in the British colonial record includes adults' perceptions of children written mostly by colonial officials. Yet British officials were particularly interested in social welfare policies, which resulted in a plethora of documentation related to child labor including social welfare reports, juvenile delinquency, remand homes, hawking, pawning, child slavery, and petitions to the colonial government. The dissertation relies on approximately ten thousand pages of files from national and local archives and newspapers from Nigeria.

Child labor presents challenges to the historian beyond finding and deciphering children's experiences from the sources. Contemporary moral suasion related to child labor tends to skew our perceptions of the history of child labor. The problem extends beyond the current Western universalism versus cultural relativism debates. Life in Nigeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was neither easy nor an egalitarian utopia. Whereas life was difficult, it included the full range of distress and happiness that accompanied life around the world at the time. Children's experiences in Nigeria existed at the center of this reality and although one may believe they lived in an unfair or exploitative society it was no more unfair or exploitative than any other geographical region. The opportunities and challenges of growing up in Nigeria during the 1920s and 1930s varied little from African American or immigrant children's labor experiences during the same period in the United States although the cultural context and reasons for child labor differed.

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[1] Beverly Grier, "Child Labor and Africanist Scholarship: A Critical Overview," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Sep. 2004): 1-25. Grier acknowledges the scarcity of research on child labor in Africa and further suggests that our knowledge of social history including gender, patriarchy, and economy are limited owing to this deficit.

The most pertinent question to answer is why should the historian care about the history of childhood or child labor specifically? Proponents of child history often focus answers to this question on the acculturation and development of children as it affects them in adult life. Biographers have often used childhood experiences to explain adult character; however, it is only in the last ten years that historians have begun to evaluate age as a historical category of analysis.[2] Many historians of childhood rely on an analysis similar to gender studies; however, researchers have pointed out the similarities and differences. Whereas these questions raise some interesting conclusions, there are important reasons to evaluate the history of child labor and children beyond a quasi post-modern argument that seems to suggest they are important because they existed; nor does child labor history need to be narrated as a disconnected experience from mainstream economic and social history.

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[2] A number of journals and online resources have shifted focus to the history of children. George Mason University and The University of Missouri-Kansas City started an online resource of primary resources for children in world history at http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/ (accessed May 15, 2012). The University of Massachusetts launched the Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth in 2008 published by John Hopkins Press and available on Project Muse at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_youth_and_childhood/ (accessed May 15, 2012).

Child labor history in Nigeria offers an important way to evaluate economic and social changes that occurred during the colonial period. The subject offers important insights because children were at the center of the colonial agenda. Child labor was a significant component in the economy of the colonial protectorate. Educated children gained key positions in the indirect rule political structure. Child delinquents negotiated the duress of poverty with new colonial methods of social punishment. Children acculturated to a changing society via social institutions such as the Boy Scouts, which appeared in Nigeria shortly after its inception in Great Britain. Children participated in the full range of the colonial experience including slavery, forced labor, pawnship, urban development, rural agricultural labor and so on.[3] Furthermore colonial officials expressed a particular obsession with child health and social welfare. In many ways the 'civilizing mission' or the justification for colonial administrators' perceived moral superiority resided in how they believed they protected and guided the development of the next generation.

In spite of the source challenges and whereas there are few books that address child labor in Nigeria, historiography directly and indirectly deals with the childhood experience. This project engages a large range of historiography for both theoretical concepts and to draw connections with the broad historical narrative. The challenge is to place the historical moment in its social and cultural context without distorting the narrative by leaving the reader with a decidedly negative or positive view of child labor. Each of those two extremes miserably fails the test of scrutiny. Whereas conditions in specific historical moments bring to life the lived experiences of children, it is important to bear in mind changes overtime in child labor practices. Specific historical conditions need to be reconciled with the *longe durée* of economic and social history in Nigeria.

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[3] Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, "'The Loads Are Heavier than Usual': Forced Labor by Women and Children in the Central Province, Gold Coast (Colonial Ghana), ca. 1900-1940," *African Economic History* No. 30 (2002): 31-51. Akurang-Parry's conclusions on child labor in Ghana were not a marginal experience but research on Nigeria will show a certain level of continuity in the effects of colonialism on child labor practices.

Historical studies of the colonial United States, Great Britain, and Russia have shown that child labor was an important part of pre-industrial societies through institutions of slavery, apprenticeship, and household production. The dissertation argues that there is an important difference between child labor and child wage labor in which poverty was not the primary driving force for child labor neither did child labor mean children were unable to acquire an education. Child labor constituted part of the education and socializing process for many children during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Nigeria. The dissertation argues that child labor includes a range of activities from beneficial to abusive practices. The project also engages ideas concerning childhood and what that means to industrial, post-industrial, and developing societies. Establishing definitions for child labor and childhood reveal the range of historiography and theoretical issues pertinent to the subject. This introduction evaluates the basic underlying conceptualizations and the connections between poverty and economic theory. After the basic theoretical issues have been outlined, specific attention will be placed on the role of child labor in labor history with a particular emphasis on what this means in terms of Nigerian economic and social history.

The key arguments are as follows. Child labor in Nigeria including specific institutions such as pawnship and hawking had the capacity to be beneficial or exploitative. Child labor and education were not separate institutions but closely connected in such a way that labor and education were indistinguishable activities. Cultural context will bear out this relationship by examining the use of education in Nigerian societies, such as apprenticeships, and how they appropriated European style education to their uses. Children were more than re-actors in labor activities but displayed a level of agency in escaping abusive practices and petitioning the colonial government for change. Children's participation in colonial education and missionary labor positioned children as conduits of social change and not merely receivers of a supposed dominant foreign culture. Children in Nigerian society, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, occupied a key position in the economic activities of families and provided kinship groups with wealth and economic stability. Finally, despite British intentions to transform Nigerian society via the "civilizing mission," Nigerian families and their children conformed to or disregarded colonial law as it suited their purposes.

CHILDHOOD AND COMPETING DEFINITIONS

In order to establish a common ground of understanding, several terms need to be defined and general theories related to children must be explored. What is childhood? Who are children or perhaps more specifically what people are included in the category of childhood? What is child labor? Understanding the answers to these questions underpin childhood and child labor theories. They also include a degree of bias in the sense that these terms relate to specific historical periods associated with European and American history. Whereas at first it may appear to be a case of semantics, the way in which these terms are connected to specific historical and cultural moments can lead to erroneous perceptions of the identity, responsibility, and characteristics of children who lived in various historical periods and geographical regions.

Defining childhood presents contemporary researchers and social activists with a complex problem that leads to specific political ideologies in terms of public policy. Theoretical ideas concerning childhood divide into two basic camps. There are those who argue childhood is a universally understood category of the life cycle and others who believe childhood is culturally relative and cannot be separated from social environments. The Universalist approach relates closely to modernization theory and the idea that western civilization is the preferred model to which all other developing countries should seek to attain. According to this model, childhood must be a uniform experience of child development and children who lack the same level of health care, education, or leisure time as middle class children in developed countries are disadvantaged and should be protected by the international community. The universalist approach tends to ignore time and place in that it fails to account for how social welfare in Europe and the US developed divisions of childhood and adolescence – a relatively modern development.

The cultural relativist approach rejects the idea that there is a "universal way of being a child."[4] This theory argues that cultural and social environment determine what childhood means and that cultural differences must be respected. Social activists would label this a 'hands off' approach where normative ideas coming from developed countries should not dictate child labor policies in the developing world. Yet this does not mean those who support the idea of cultural relativism fail to draw comparisons between developed and developing countries. These researchers generally compare children in different countries according to class and how particular kinds of institutions and social relations lead to child development and opportunities for social mobility.[5] Yet within these two broad political positions resides a variety of approaches to understanding the childhood experience.

There are three basic approaches to how researchers have attempted to define or categorize the childhood experience and they can be labeled the agency, interactionist, and protective approaches.[6] Agency refers to the concept of the degree to which children can influence their course in life is tied to their economic and social environment. Cultural relativism focus on ways in which a child's agency can be increased rather than policies designed to undermine specific cultural practices. Universalists tend to favor the protective approach and suggest that children must be protected because they cannot develop knowledge and skills without the guidance of adults. The protective approach not only limits the importance of children's agency but questions the ability of a child to even have agency or that it is even desirable. The interactionist approach is closely related to the agency approach where the goal is for children to be active participants in their upbringing and decision makers in the process; however, under the guidance of parents and adults.

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[4] William E. Myers, "The Right Rights? Child Labor in a Globalizing World," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 575 (May, 2001): 38-55; G.K. Leiten, *Children, Structure, and Agency: Realities Across the Developing World* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.

[5] Leiten, 5-6.

[6] Leiten, xiv-xvi. Leiten named a fourth approach, the participatory approach, but it arrives at similar conclusions that children be engaged in the family as equal members rather than as a subgroup that requires only protection until they are mature.

The approaches to childhood directly affect how child labor is understood, defined and perceived. Cultural relativism argues that child labor is a part of society's culture and must be respected rather than vilified. According to this view, child labor also offers avenues for children to express agency and to be active participants in life choices and household production.[7] On the other hand, Universalists view child labor as an institution that violates the duties of parents or guardians to protect children from exploitation. They view child labor as an activity that denies children their rights because they do not possess the power of protection or to better their position. Universalists believe the concept of childhood should include specific characteristics which are denied to children who participate in child labor activities. Universalists definition of childhood as a universal experience underpins this position because they fail to acknowledge the difference between child labor history in Europe and the United States, which was dominated by industrial labor, and the types of labor that engaged children in the developing world.

The universalist and cultural relativist approaches possess endemic problems partly owing to an attempt to prove the other wrong. The universalist approach suggests cultural differences are meaningless in terms of what childhood ought to be and in what activities children ought to participate. In the same way relativists denounce attempts to arrive at broad conclusions related to what childhood is and what kind of, if any, child labor practices children ought to participate. In both cases, the relativist would accept any definition or as many definitions as there are cultures in the world.[8] Each position presents serious problems for the historian. The universalist rejects the importance of place and time whereas the relativist tends to ignore the need to find some broad trends and context to how individual localities fit into the larger historical narrative. In short, placing the concept of childhood and child labor in historical context with a close evaluation of the data presents an opportunity to recognize local cultures as well as tie those experiences to the broad historical narrative. Yet the fundamental problem, in terms of child labor, for each of these approaches resides in fundamental errors with definition; however, before outlining specific definitions for child labor, historical issues associated with the concept of childhood and society that must be evaluated.

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[7] Loretta Elizabeth Bass, *Child Labor in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004).

In recent years, historians have been conceptualizing the use of age as a historical category. These historians view childhood as an important aspect of social history which should be analyzed as a historical category in the same way as gender.[9] A key element in the discussion relates to agency. By showing the agency of children in their historical environment, researchers make the argument that childhood needs to be included in an evaluation of social history.[10] In many ways, the focus on age as a historical category is an extension of grass roots social history where the focus has gone beyond the experience of workers to their children's experience. Age as a historical category seeks to transcend the marginalization of children to show how they expressed their desires and interacted with historical events.

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[8] Leiten, xiv-xvi.

[9] The journal, *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, seeks to use age as an historical category.

Age also places significant focus on ideas about power which are similar to the use of gender in historical analysis. Yet there is a key difference between age and gender because age is a process where power can be gained, whereas gender remains more concrete – gender is static but age changes over the course of life.[11] Yet at the same time when evaluating historical periods neither age nor gender are static categories. Age categories, similar to gender, are imbued with cultural assumptions, meanings and values. Age carries implicit assumptions about immaturity, irresponsibility, and development in the same ways gender carried specific assumptions in various historical periods and cultures. As much as age relates to identity, especially in terms of specific historical situations, it does not define identity in the same concrete way as gender.

In terms of United States history, major events and legal rights are closely connected to age, such as voting rights, driving, drinking age and so on.[12] Even the qualification to run for Congress or the office of President is tied in part to age. Therefore, age as a historical category involves looking at how age overtime influences identity and access to power. Age is a system of power organized around hierarchical lines. The implications of this are that the experience of childhood must be understood in terms of hierarchy and patriarchy. At the same time, age throughout historical time periods is always modified by class, ethnicity, gender, nationality and religion;[13] however, depending on location these elements bear different levels of importance. Yet the difficulty is in conceptualizing how age or childhood can be used as a historical category beyond the United States and Europe.

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[10] Mary Jo. Maynes, "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth,* Vol. 1 no.1 (2008); 114-124, 116.

[11] Steven Mintz, "Reflections on Age as a Category of Historical Analysis," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 1 no.1 (2008); 91-94, 91.

[12] Mintz, 91-94, 91-92.

Researchers' attempts to define childhood led to the notion that childhood is something children do,[14] or in other words, childhood is a process by which children become adults. The process is a dynamic one with different stages of development in which the responsibilities of the child increase with age. Defining childhood in this way acknowledges the central purpose of childhood as a period during which children are acculturated and trained to be productive members of society. The productivity of children to society does not necessarily begin once adulthood is achieved but depending on culture can commence much earlier. The definition also allows for a variance among cultures in terms of how children are socialized and learn necessary social rules and educational skills to be successful as producers and parents. Western ideology tends to limit the acceptable range of ways by which children learn to be productive members of society according to social norms and value judgments. The definition of childhood used here suggests there are multiple ways, depending on culture and social environment, to achieve childhood development.

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[13] Mintz, 91-94.
[14] Leiten, 5.

Western culture tends to divide child development into a set of categories that roughly follows school grades from elementary children to secondary adolescent education. Age rather than performance or mental acuity often determines children's progress. Nigerian culture also includes a system of progression to monitor and evaluate the development of children through childhood and adolescence to adulthood.[15] The Igbo of eastern Nigeria and the Yoruba of western Nigeria used a system of age grades and social clubs to acculturate, educate, and train children to be productive members of society. Evaluating the role of age grades in Nigerian history suggests the interconnected role between education, labor, and childhood. It also illustrates how analyzing changes in the activities of children overtime led to new ideas about child training and development throughout the colonial period. The final measure of adulthood in Nigerian societies was not age specifically often but marriage, which was the ultimate sign of maturity and productivity.

The division of age-groups or age grades in pre-colonial Nigerian societies varied by ethnic group but they tended to be quite rigid in that they were generally divided in groups of three to four years or in some cases two year intervals.[16] Age continued to be an important category of status and authority into adulthood. The age grade system was used for "community development, educational purposes, citizenship training in general or for purely political activities."[17] For the Afikpo of eastern Nigeria, age for boys was divided between infancy, the two to five age group, and the growing up stage from five or six to adulthood. During the growing up period, boys and girls were initiated into society at particular ages through a series of public rites associated with specific secret societies.[18] Age grades show how age in pre-colonial Nigerian society was an important category that defined childhood development and the relationships between individuals and their responsibilities to the local community.

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[15] S. S. Obidi, *Culture and Education in Nigeria: An Historical Analysis* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2005).

[16] A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 19; S. S. Obidi, *Culture and Education in Nigeria: An Historical Analysis* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2005).

[17] Fafunwa, 19.

Age as a historical category has viability in Nigerian history owing to pre-colonial social conditions and changes in those ideas overtime. Whereas Nigerian societies maintained an important focus on age into the post independence period, the categories of age and defining characteristics of childhood development represent a range of ideas which included local customs and the influence of western education and ideology. The types of labor and educational activities of children were no longer tied soley to family status but class and formal European style education increased in importance. In many cases, the divide between rural and urban Nigeria partly reflected a difference in childhood experience and access to education. Age categories in rural towns tended to follow more closely to local custom whereas urban areas, according to class, depended on a hybrid of local custom and European influence to determine the specific roles of children in terms of education and community.

Owing to contestations between Nigerians and the colonial government, determining the ages of children in the documents is a challenging task. The colonial government based age estimates on guesses by colonial officials and medical examinations by doctors. Colonial officials often estimated the ages of girls to be less and the ages of boys to be higher. Victorian gender ideals informed the age estimates as colonial officials, as part of the 'civilizing mission,' sought to protect the virtue of young girls. On the other hand, it was often in the colonial administrations interest to exaggerate the ages of boys – particularly in terms of forced labor and punishments. Nigerians approached the issue with an opposite agenda which tended to decrease the ages of boys and increase the ages of girls. Increasing the ages of girls allowed parents and guardians to avoid child marriage legislation and to avoid hawking restrictions. Nigerians also tended to give boys lower ages to avoid prison sentences for child offenders. Nigerians used age as a way to resist the colonial system of labor and punishment.

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[18] Simon Ottenberg, *Boyhood Rituals in an African Society: An Interpretation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989).

The main limitation in conceptualizing age as a historical category beyond the United States and Europe relates to how those regions perceive the developing world. The United States and Europe tend to divide childhood from adulthood as firmly as Victorians divided the worlds of men and women.[19] These divisions can lead to fundamental misperceptions of children in developing countries which are marginalized based on geographical location and western notions of what they believe a childhood experience should include. Yet the call to expand the history of childhood beyond national geographies to broader understandings[20] falls victim to the universalist approach where local conditions play a secondary role to some of the broad perceptions and misperceptions popularized by western ideology. The misperceptions of childhood in terms of historical periods need to be outlined in order to quantify the problems inherent with this type of analysis.

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[19] Paula Fass, "The World is at our Door: Why Historians of Children and Childhood Should Open Up," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 1 no.1 (2008); 11-31, 16.
[20] Fass, 11.

Perceptions concerning childhood are closely connected to modernization ideology. If children are indeed at the center of their societies because they are central to the continuation of society,[21] then it becomes clear the role of the definition of childhood is a test of a modern society versus one that remains backwards. Common categories of analysis for developing countries include the type of political organization, levels of corruption, and the economic system. Countries that fail to meet the expectations of the West tend to be viewed as less than modern. Yet childhood also dominates a large part in this discussion. Health care, child mortality rates, and child labor are all categories of analysis which often lead a country to be labeled backwards. The idea of what is modern depends largely on stereotypes created by western societies that do not always apply to countries outside of Europe and the United States because those ideas are closely related to specific historical experiences.

The connection between a western concept of modern society and childhood is a historically constructed phenomenon. Characteristics of what childhood should be do not reflect global conditions but specific historical shifts in cultural expectations within western countries. In the United States, the 1920s led to a shift in the definition of childhood. A good childhood in the 1920s became associated with happiness. This is not to say that parents did not seek to give their children happiness but childhood was not specifically defined as a period of happiness.[22] The shift in defining a good childhood by the level of happiness partly corresponded to a change in children as being a part of public life to an exclusive fixture of the private sphere. It also reflected progressive reforms in terms of social welfare and child psychology in the post-World War II years. In the context of Nigerian culture, an infant was considered a child of the household and a growing child was a child who belonged to the community.[23] It appears pre-colonial Nigerian communities approached childhood without the public and private divisions of many European societies.

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[21] Fass, 15.

Definitions of childhood and the ideal characteristics of a good childhood cannot be removed from the social economic environment. Childhood is an important category of historical analysis because it represents one of the main categories through which to trace and understand social change overtime. Western perceptions of childhood reflect specific normative choices in western countries and are not the only ‘good’ model for child development. These ideas of childhood are deeply rooted in specific socio-economic institutions that developed overtime. Child labor offers a way to evaluate social and economic changes in developing countries and to understand the roots of ideas about childhood including how these ideas have been constructed overtime as part of a hierarchical and patriarchic society.

Arguments mirroring the universalist and relativist interpretations of child labor are prevalent throughout Nigerian colonial history although colonial administrators and

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[22] Peter N. Stearns, “Defining Happy Childhoods Assessing a Recent Change,” *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 3 no.2 (2010); 165-186, 167.
[23] Fafunwa, 19; Ottenberg, 135.

Nigerian families used different ways of expressing ideas about how children fit into society. Indirect rule called for a partially relativist approach to children in that local cultures and customs were supposed to be respected so that indigenous social institutions implemented colonial policy. At the same time, the basic tenants of the 'civilizing mission' called for an application of what colonial officials believed were universal characteristics of a civilized society. Chapters three and four address this issue in detail by showing how shifts in colonial policy related to child labor revealed the inherent conflict between indirect rule and the 'civilizing mission'; a conflict that led to uneven policies and resistance by children and parents to British hegemony.

CHILD LABOR DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Child labor conjures images of abuse and exploitation; however, the origin of these images is important to define child labor in a global context. Western ideology tends to drive the term's definition and what activities are included in child labor. More importantly the defining characteristics of child labor are connected to historical experiences in the West. Child labor became common among discussions of factory labor where children worked long hours and in many cases were exploited, which included physical and mental injury. Child labor during the Industrial Revolution would be better categorized as child wage labor, which was a rare experience for people living in the developing world, especially in Africa where colonial governments promoted raw material and cash crop production over industrialization. Evaluating child labor activities prior to the Industrial Revolution reveals that child labor is neither new nor should it be solely defined by the experience of industrialization but rather child labor in factories was one historical period of child labor in the west. Therefore, child labor should be broadly defined by including a range of all the possible work related activities of children from beneficial activities related to skill learning to exploitative work that leads to harmful consequences.[24]

A broad definition of child labor forces scholars and activists to abandon the solely negative characterization given to child labor. Child labor must be redefined in a manner consistent with historical data in the broadest sense and also in a way that avoids a definition based on western ideology alone and modernization theory. Evaluating child labor across labor activities suggests child labor did not emerge as an exploitative practice during the Industrial Revolution nor was child labor ever a universally negative or positive practice in any given society at any moment in time. Redefining child labor in this way offers a means to historically evaluate changes in childhood over a long period of time as they relate to social and economic changes.[25] Whereas child labor's definition must include a wide range of activities, it does not mean exploitative practices should be disregarded or beneficial activities vilified.

Child labor activities can be divided into three basic categories including direct, indirect and alternative types of work. Direct child labor includes all activities a child performs associated with the production or sale of goods or services. Indirect child labor represents activities a child performs by which another member of the household becomes free to participate in activities related to the production or sale of goods and services. Alternative child labor includes choices that free children from the process of the production or sale of goods and services in order that they may more efficiently participate in those activities at a later time. Each of these categories will be evaluated individually with historical examples as well as economic labor theory to support the categorizations. First, however, it is necessary to outline the historiography of child labor in order to show how child labor has been a persistent fixture in all societies. After defining child labor activities overtime, it is then possible to explain how the three categories listed above offer a tool for understanding the role of child labor in society and economy as well as how changes in child labor practices occurred. The model also permits an analysis of child labor beyond western definitions tied to a single historical period.

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[24] Eric V. Edmonds, and Nina Pavcnik, "Child Labor in the Global Economy," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter 2005): 199-220. Edmonds and Pavcnik, two economists, support a redefinition of child labor along similar lines although their argument predominantly depends on current circumstances.

[25] Dickson Eyoh, "Differentiating Communities in Central Nigeria: Political and Economic Change in Colonial Lafia, Nigeria, 1900-1950," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1997): 493-517. Eyoh places precedence on the influence of colonial policy on changes in economic practices. The argument here is that Eyoh overemphasized change to the detriment of continuity. Evaluating the role of children in the Nigerian economy balances out the presentation by showing how cultural practices such as pawnship indicate a degree of continuity with adaptation not solely driven by colonial policy.

In the last fifteen years historians researching the Colonial United States, Great Britain, and Russia have shown how child labor in factories developed out of pre-industrial labor activities. By using the work of anthropologists and archaeologists, the model can be extended further into the past. The historical data underscores changes in the western concept of childhood as well as shifts in ideas about what kind of labor activities children participate in rather than the emergence of children as workers. The danger in the analysis is to arrive at a superior versus inferior conclusion where the western model is viewed as the only appropriate modern ideal and where developing countries become a pariah for backwardness. Close attention to the social and economic context of these developments leads to a conclusion where cultural choices about what society should look like bear significant weight on the analysis. Perhaps even more importantly, the colonial experience negatively affected many developing countries in terms of economic exploitation and was a tool for underdevelopment. In many instances current issues of child labor exploitation in Nigeria can be partly tied to the affects of the colonial experience.

Recent research on child labor has shown that contrary to misperceptions associated with the Industrial Revolution, child labor existed in various forms far back in historical and anthropological evidence. Ruth Wallis Herndon's *Children Bound to Labor* argues that child labor's origins began with the pauper apprenticeship system in New England. Herndon's work is one of the few that extend the study of child labor to the pre-industrial US. In addition, Herndon could have begun earlier with the role of children in the agricultural family based economy. Early industrial history in the United States began with women who migrated to towns in garment industries. Eventually men were hired as foremen and women and children performed various tasks in those early factories.[26] Boris Gorshkov makes similar arguments for Russian history for the second half of the 1800s.[27] In addition, even when the United States and Great Britain sought to pass child labor legislation in response to industrial abuses, they made a point to protect the rights of families to use the labor of their children in agricultural work.

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[26] Ruth Wallis Herndon, and John E. Murray, *Children Bound to Labor: The Pauper Apprentice System in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); see also Rhoda Cahn and William Cahn, *No Time for School, No Time for Play; the Story of Child Labor in America* (New York: J. Messner, 1972); Elizabeth H. Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation in the Southern Textile States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939); Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[27] Boris B. Gorshkov, *New labor History: Worker Identity and Experience in Russia, 1840-1918*, (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2002).

The historical overview of child labor activities provides a basic groundwork for using the categories of direct, indirect, and alternative child labor activities to understand changes in child labor and how they relate to social and economic conditions. Direct child labor activities are the most common types of work under the label of child labor, but western industrial stereotypes have limited the definition. Direct child labor practices include more than industrial factory work. By including all activities related to the production or sale of goods and services, the definition of direct child labor transcends industrial labor and more accurately reflects the full range of child labor activities. Direct activities can be factory work, agricultural work, household production activities including food sold at a market, hawking, and so on. Limiting child labor to factory work fails to capture the true cost of producing many goods. A broad definition of direct child labor also underscores the importance of a range of activities from exploitative to beneficial. A child hawker drops the price of the goods being sold because more expensive adult labor is not required to complete the sale. The majority of research on child labor relates to this first category of labor activity.

Indirect child labor includes those activities performed by a child not directly associated with the production or sale of goods and services. In agricultural and developing countries this form of labor activity usually includes taking care of younger siblings while parents, particularly the mother, tend to revenue earning activities. On a basic level, this should be considered child labor because by engaging in this activity the child frees up the time of an adult to earn money. From another perspective, older children who tend younger ones are a substitute for countries where child day cares are not readily available. It should also be noted that in poorer societies a day care would not be ideal because the cost of paying an adult to watch children may be too high compared to the money the parent can earn. Indirect child labor also includes household chores not directly related to economic activity for the same reasons as child care; it frees time for adults to engage in other money earning activities.

Copious amounts of research have shown that African societies during the pre-colonial era were organized hierarchically based on status and not class. What this means is the status of an individual or family in part determined the ability of the family to attain wealth. In terms of Nigerian history, indirect child labor includes periods when children participated in activities that permitted adults extra time to participate in community activities and meetings from which parents gained social status. Yet the basic premise is applicable to other societies as well. Farming communities and middle class societies also depended on cheaper adolescent wage earners to watch children during important professional meetings or parties that occurred in the evenings. The connection between social status and wealth also relates to the third category of alternative child labor activities.

Alternative child labor activities include decisions made by families and children that lead to future earning potential instead of immediate profits. The primary item in this category is education. At first mention it appears that viewing education as a form of child labor is radical; however, analyzing the circumstances and details of education historically leads to a position where there is no clear distinction between the two activities. From an economic approach, the purpose of education is to forgo current earnings to increase the value of human capital so that future profits realize an increase. Understanding the role of education as a form of labor relates to economic theories that explain economic production in terms of either individual or family contributions.

As with definitions of child labor, contemporary western ideology tends to dominate perceptions of education and its characteristics; however, even in the United States recent trends have supported trade skill education over traditional secondary education. The idea of children attending school all day for primary and secondary education, even in the West, is a relatively new trend that began in the early 1900s. The trend reflected a change in economic and social conditions rather than purely normative decisions although it was driven in part by a desire to eliminate child labor. A pre-industrial economy relies on the productive capacity of family units. This is clearly displayed in the colonial history of the United States. Child labor in these economies relied on a dual purpose of earning money and learning a trade for future economic benefits. Industrial economics historically relied on cheap child labor, but as mechanization became a greater component of these economies, skilled labor gained importance. By the post-World War II period increasingly large numbers of industrial work required a high school diploma.

The relationship between child labor and education was complex and they were not simply alternatives where children chose one or the other. Such ideas are representative of more current trends in thinking about childhood and labor. In pre-industrial societies education and labor went hand in hand. Children's work was an introduction to training for a future livelihood. As the needed skills for success changed, the strategies of families shifted from home education and skill training to a combination of skill training at home and formal education in schools. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, many children participated in factory work while attending school; these children are often labeled half-timers. The question then remains is whether current developments require a new definition of education or if it continues to conform to a historical pattern related to labor.

Education at the minimum is a means to attain employment. Yet even on the more basic level we use terms like school work and home work to define the activities of children who are in school. Teachers hand out specific tasks to children which they must complete by a deadline. The process seeks to educate children but also to acculturate them to the world of business with deadlines and task oriented projects. Peter Stearns labels education as a labor activity performed by children.[28] Therefore, the *long duree* of education history suggests a shift in practices depending on the labor requirements of a given economy and the local social conditions of the populace. To remove education from an economic labor category misses the connection between labor and education; a connection that is more than simply an either or relationship. In fact, contemporary research suggests child labor and education in the developing world are not alternatives of each other but schooling often reduces playtime not work time.[29]

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[28] Peter N. Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 1 no.1 (2008); 35-42.

[29] Ranjan Ray, "Child Labor, Child Schooling, and Their Interaction with Adult Labor: Empirical Evidence for Peru and Pakistan," *The World Bank Economic Review*, (May, 2000) Vol. 14, No. 2, 347-367.

The purpose for dividing child labor into three categories is to evaluate what should be included as a labor activity and why. The three divisions of child labor are not categories in which to place specific child laborers because most children participate in at least two if not all three categories at any given stage of their childhood. In fact, the overlap is the very reason why each of the activities already listed should be included under the broad umbrella term of child labor. The categories are intended to be descriptive and not a hierarchy where western nations are given a privileged position owing to a disproportionate number of children active in alternative child labor practices compared to developing countries. The definition intends to do just the opposite by extending an understanding of child labor beyond child wage labor associated with the Industrial Revolution.

The connection between economics and child labor are more clearly defined in terms of theory and practice. The role of families as productive units illuminates the position of child labor in total economic activity as well as the central position of education as an alternative child labor activity. Regarding Nigerian society, which is historically based on status rather than class, education provided a means to attain status and therefore economic profits through the benefits of increased status. Whereas the status attained in many ways was individual, it also reflected back on the family and benefited the family unit. The application of direct, indirect, and alternative child labor activities in Nigerian history accurately describes the connection between children and society. In Nigerian pre-colonial and colonial history children engaged is all three types of child labor; however, the colonial experience contributed new types of child labor activities and children and parents became critical consumers of new opportunities.

ECONOMICS AND CHILD LABOR

Child labor often plays a marginal role in economic and labor theories owing to it being viewed either as an alternative to adult labor or a marginal activity in which only the poor participate.[30] Child labor will be evaluated in terms of household economic theories, means of production, and market economics. Economic theorists generally credit either changes in means of production or social activism with the downturn of child labor in the developed world. Yet each of these arguments fails to explain the changes that took place regarding child labor during the Industrial Revolution. The reason for the problem in accounting for the rise and fall of industrial child wage labor lies in the faulty assumptions that child labor began and ended with the Industrial Revolution and that only harmful activities fall within the category of child labor. Economic theories show how evidence supports the proposed definition of child labor and also how child labor relates to poverty. Economic theory also explains the connections between the proposed three divisions of child labor.

There are two competing theories of household economics – the unitary and the collective theories of household productions. The unitary theory argues that each member of a household should be evaluated separately as an economic actor. This theory tends to gain support from developed countries where spouses earn their own income, maintain separate bank accounts, and file income taxes individually. In this model the individual economic decisions of family members take precedence over the collective. Collective theory of household production suggests that household production and economic activity should be evaluated as a single unit and not on an individual basis. The most common evidence for this theory includes developing and subsistence economies where the collective activities of all members of a household are required to maintain the family unit.

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[30] Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Landlords, the State, and Child Labor in Colonial Swaziland, 1914-1947," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1998): 571-593. Simelane argues how the historical record has generally ignored children as 'invisible' participants in the economy of southern Africa. Yet they played key roles in economic production. The argument needs to be extended to other regions of African history.

The proposed definition for child labor illustrates the interconnectedness between the labor activities of members in households. Therefore even in developed and post-industrial economies, members of a family still operate as a unit where direct labor activities by adults permit the alternative activities of children. Some economists refer to education as a luxury good families purchase for children in much the same manner adults purchase leisure time.[31] Collective household production allows for a means to understand family economic activity as a unit where each member's decision reflects choices guiding the direction of the entire family. This is not to suggest family members always act with singular purpose but that the decisions of family members are informed by one other.[32]

Collective household production explains colonial Nigerian economics provided some minor modifications. Family units in Nigeria did not include nuclear families but were based on kinship. Kinship homes included extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, or uncles. Kinships also included wives and children of a brother who passed away or in a polygamous household multiple wives and their children. Historical evidence supports the conclusion that kinship households operated as collective household producers.[33] Elderly members watched infants and young children while mothers attended markets and sold goods. Wives and other female relatives shared food production duties. In many cases, older children worked a trade with their father or mother in order to allow younger children to attend school.[34] In exchange, younger educated children were expected to support the family with their achievements in the future.[35] Individual adults still achieved wealth on an independent level especially in their ability to gain titles and admittance to secret societies; however, economic stability and wealth creation keenly depended on kinship cooperation.[36]

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[31] Kaushik Basu, and Pham Hoang Van, "The Economics of Child Labor," *The American Economic Review* Vol. 88 no. 3, (1988), 412-427.

[32] A simple economic example relates to the concept of choices at the margin. If a child can convince a parent to purchase an item then the child saves money for a different purpose.

The means of production in West Africa bear important weight on child labor and the organization of household economies. Antony Hopkins argued that productivity in

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[33] This is not to say individual members failed to embark on individual wealth accumulation or business activities but that choices at the margin and a need for economic stability meant choices were often mutually informed of one another. One example of this will be included in chapters one and two where pawnship provided an important method of credit acquisition, but child pawnship had to be approved by both parents and the child had to be willing to remain in service.

[34] The evidence supporting older children engaging in work to allow younger siblings to go to school is common in both memoirs across Africa and colonial documents. The British colonial government even attempted to mandate older children remain in agricultural work whereas the younger siblings pay fees and attend the local schools. W. G. 2140, "Scheme of Compulsory Primary Education, intakes," Oyo Prov 1/1 NAI; K. D. 1507, "Compulsory Education, Primary," Kukuruku Div 2 NAI; CSO 26 series 5, 54116, "Compulsory Education," NAI.

[35] The Yoruba proverb, "Without children you are naked" illustrates this dynamic. The lack of nursing homes in Nigeria meant adults needed children or relatives so that when they were elderly they were not reduced to poverty.

[36] Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, "The History of the Family in Africa: Introduction," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1983): 145-161. Marks and Rathbone call for a more detailed evaluation of African family history and theoretical concepts related to the family unit and kinship. The presentation of child labor here intends to offer a more complete picture of the kinship network and how it changed overtime during British colonial rule.

Europe was measured by maximizing land use whereas in West Africa productivity depended on maximizing individual labor.[37] The point being that land was abundant in West Africa and profit or subsistence, depending on the situation, relied on all members of the community being productive members of society. Hopkins' argument reinforces the need to focus on the family unit owing to the importance of maximizing the labor of all members of the kinship group. In fact, status was partly associated with the amount of land a kinship compound cultivated. Town and village elders possessed the ability to mark more land under a kinship household or remove land from a kinship household according to the household's ability to manage the land.[38] Children played an important role in the productive capacity of family units and heads of households actively sought to increase their number of dependents throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Market economics offer explanations for child labor's persistence in developing countries, the consequences of abolishing child labor, and how child labor relates to poverty, although the connection between child labor and poverty is often overstated. Market economic theory tends to depend upon a set of assumptions not always observed in the real world such as the response of price adjustments to changes in supply and demand and a general tendency for market equilibrium. Work by Amartya Sen and Kaushik Basu and Pham Hoang Van evaluates market forces and the basic level of earnings needed to survive which explains the role of child labor and its connection, or lack thereof, to poverty.[39] Basu and Hoang Van used a set of economic tools, including pareto efficiency, to determine the conditions under which child labor functioned as a supplement to or alternative of adult labor. They concluded that abolishing child labor would not necessarily improve the economic position of adults and children. Situations existed where abolishing child labor would fail to raise the adult wage and the loss of children's contributions to family income would lead to poverty. Basu and Hoang Van's main concern was to show how a universal policy of abolishing child labor would be imprudent. Their conclusion is related to Amartya Sen's argument that famine could occur without a shortage of food. In Sen's scenario, outside forces influence the availability of the supply of food leading to a rise in price making food unaffordable for poorer members of the populace. Both of these models evaluate market forces according to how they affect an income baseline needed for subsistence.

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[37] A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1973). It should be noted that the characterization of Europe's model of maximizing land opposed to labor was not a universal western characteristic. At different points in history, maximizing individual productivity may have been equally important. See also Jan S. Hogendorn and H. A. Gemery, "Assessing Productivity in Precolonial African Agriculture and Industry 1500-1800," *African Economic History*, No. 19, (1990 - 1991): 31-35.

[38] G. J. Afolabi Ojo, *Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis* (London: University of London Press, 1966), 56-67.

Basu and Hoang Van's research suggests two possibilities. One in which abolishing child labor leads to increased poverty and a second scenario where child labor exists for some other reasons besides poverty and abolishing it would not necessarily cause impoverishment. The research counters a popular assumption that child labor exists solely owing to the threat of poverty. Instead there is a combination of economic and social reasons for the existence of child labor where in some cases child labor manifests itself in exploitative situations but this is not always the case. Ranjan Ray's work suggests that child labor is not a direct substitute for education and vice versa but education tends to replace children's leisure time. Basu and Hoang Van conceptualized education as a luxury good that some parents were able to purchase whereas others could not. Or another way to put it, some families were able to invest in the human capital of their children by paying for them to attend school whereas other families could not meet a base level of subsistent income without their children's labor. Yet child labor in Nigeria can only be understood when we consider the value of specific activities, labor or education, to the socialization process and to what degree families and children believed those skills could empower them.

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[39] Sudharshan Canagarajah and Helena Skyt Nielsen, "Child Labor in Africa: A Comparative Study," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 575, (May, 2001): 71-91. The comparative study by Canagarajah and Nielsen confirm the economic data by Basu and Hoang Van. Other market factors appear to strongly influence decisions related to formal education and labor besides poverty.

Child labor historiography concerned with child wage labor and the Industrial Revolution most often argues that social activism was the primary determining force in the end of child labor. Hugh Hindman's *Child Labor and American History* represents the standard model for the activist argument in the United States and Europe.[40] Activist centered arguments focus on the efforts of social activist organizations and how they pressured the government to institute child labor reform. The downside to these narratives is that they fail to acknowledge some of the economic reasons for a decline in child labor. The majority of this historiography focuses on the idea that child labor and adult labor were alternatives. If child labor was reduced then the belief was the value of adult labor would rise and the number of jobs would increase. The most complete explanation of the decline in child wage labor must include both social and economic changes. Another aspect of the research on child labor is they only cover child labor during the industrial revolution and fail to evaluate the origin and development of child labor from agricultural pre-industrial labor throughout the industrial period of United States and European history.

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[40] Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

Clark Nardinelli's *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* is one of the few works that attempts to use economic factors to explain the end of child wage labor. Nardinelli argues that the Industrial Revolution increased wages which led to the elimination of child labor. The value in Nardinelli's thesis is that he transferred focus from solely civil rights activism to economics.[41] Yet Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries, two economists, proved that contrary to Nardinelli's argument, the Industrial Revolution did not eliminate child labor but caused it to increase at the same time wages increased.[42] Even though Nardinelli's somewhat apologetic thesis is faulty, Nardinelli was correct to look for economic factors that affected the demise of industrial child labor; his fault was that he chose a flawed economic variable. By comparing Horrell and Humphries's findings with Basu and Sen, we come to the conclusion that child labor operated as a labor market sensitive to a full range of economic variables including supply, demand, and alternative labor activities. When the wages gained from child wage labor rose children were more likely to participate. The conclusion suggests that poverty was not the only driving factor for child wage labor. Rising wages during the Industrial Revolution along with a decline in the value of agricultural goods made factory labor attractive to parents and children.

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[41] Clark Nardinelli, *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[42] Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries, "'The Exploitation of Little Children': Child Labor and the Family Economy in the Industrial Revolution," *Explorations In Economic History* 32 (1995), 485-516.

Modifications in the definition of child labor, as previously outlined, reflect the need to reevaluate child labor in terms of a *long duree* analysis that places the Industrial Revolution as a single event in a broader historical narrative. Errors in the understanding of the end of child wage labor and the role of children in economic production are underpinned by the elevated position given to child labor during the Industrial Revolution. Children moved from participation in household and agricultural economic activity into factory labor owing to both social and economic issues with the rise in the wages for factory work being one of the incentives. The movement of children in the west from wage labor to education marks not an end to child labor but a shift in strategy which foregoes current economic productivity for future earning capacity. In this scenario children limited their activity in the child labor market and became consumers of adult labor with the intention of acquiring education. In other words, children shifted their child labor contributions from direct labor to alternative labor. Yet this does not mean at any time children completely ended their wage earning pursuits but preferred jobs that allowed them to attend school and earn money during off hours. In most situations this meant a shift from production activities to farm labor and service jobs such as newspaper delivery boys. How children balanced their activities depended on the parents' goals, family earning capacity and the degree of children's agency.

NIGERIA AND CHILD LABOR: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSITIONS

The remaining question is what understanding we can gain from child labor in terms of Nigeria and to what extent does it differ or compare to broad global labor conditions and changes overtime. There is little question that western wealth along with government spending provided the main impetus for a large shift of children from labor activities into predominantly alternative activities. Yet the experience of the west, in terms of the entire world populace, is a marginal experience. Even at the height of child labor in the United States, the total number of children engaged in factory labor was a small number compared to the total number of children working worldwide. A second characteristic differing the West from the rest of the world was the high level of industrialization which was not a universal global experience. The proposed definition of child labor transcends the western experience and places the global context of child labor on center stage where the west is placed in a peripheral role regarding the child labor experience.

Child labor in Nigerian history relates to economic and social themes in the historiography. To be more specific, child labor is closely dependent on changes in economic strategy related to colonial conquest and the application of colonial rule via indirect rule and ‘civilizing mission’ ideology. The British government’s initial focus on the slave trade directly influenced the lives of children as workers and slaves; however, the change to ‘legitimate trade’ in order to supply the metropole with raw materials for industrialization led to a situation where child labor assisted in providing the empire with its desired raw materials, cash crops, and labor to build Nigeria’s transportation infrastructure. Throughout the dissertation, child labor’s role in Nigerian economics and society changes depending on different colonial economic strategies and the application of colonial rule and ‘civilizing mission’ ideology. In response to differing colonial goals, Nigerian children and adults responded to these changes with assent, indifference, and resistance but most importantly, more often than not, the actions of children and adults drove changes in colonial policy.

A history of child labor in Nigeria must include the full range of economic institutions in which children participated along with all of the industries that employed children. Slavery, pawnship, hawking, domestic production, agricultural labor, apprenticeships, and education comprise an abbreviated list of the various activities. The *long duree* of child labor in Nigeria includes a consistent participation by children in economic activity with shifts overtime that depended on the current economic and social conditions. Parents and children made informed decisions that reflected the needs of kinship production, the perceived benefits of different types of education, and current economic opportunities. Child labor was not driven by the need to combat poverty but part of a broad strategy to educate and empower their children to have the best possible opportunities. Chapters three and four illustrate how child labor was an important method for children to gain skills and employment and that poverty most often drove children to delinquency rather than employment.

Indirect rule and 'civilizing mission' ideology are persistent themes throughout the text. Most importantly it was shifting interpretations of these two often contradictory principles that led to the different roles of child labor in economic activity and society. From the early 1900s when Lord Lugard formalized indirect rule to Sir Donald Cameron's interpretation of the principle in the 1930s and his successors in the subsequent years, indirect rule and how to achieve it was never a consistently well defined or a uniformly applied idea.[43] Margery Perham noted in the late 1930s the difference in application between Lugard's initial idea and Cameron's application of modern social theory in terms of education and modern progress.[44] In part, the difference between the two applications of indirect rule related to an inability to achieve their goals. Nigerians remained resilient in defense of their culture and education, rather than accept British rule, and fueled resistance to colonial conquest. Indirect rule plays an important role in understanding child labor owing to how its application varied overtime and conflicted with 'civilizing mission' ideology, the driving force behind social welfare programs and education in general.

The initial goal of the 'civilizing mission' can be equated with missionary efforts to convert Nigerians; however, by the early 1930s, Christianity was relatively popular in the colony and ideas about how to achieve 'civilization' turned towards new social welfare concepts related to the environment. Social welfare ideology and 'modern' labor legislation called for radical changes in Nigerian society, changes that required increased funding, which the government opposed and social changes that conflicted with indirect rule ideology. Children were at the center of these debates in terms of child labor laws, health regulations, education, criminal codes, and community institutions. Indirect rule in many ways became a justification for providing limited funding for education and social welfare programs. Applying modern child labor laws, they argued, represented too radical a shift from ‘traditional’ society. They were right in that abolishing all child labor would have led to a gross amount of poverty but as they correctly concluded, they lacked the resources to even attempt to enforce such policies.

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[43] Lord Frederic Lugard, "Lord Lugard's Political Memoranda," in A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, ed. *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents 1900-1947*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Donald Cameron, "Cameron's Policy of Indirect Administration," in Ibid.; for a more complete analysis of Lugard's defense of the dual mandate see Lord Frederic Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th ed., (London: Archon Books, 1965).

[44] Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 282.

The general consensus of social welfare policy in Nigerian history was that the colonial government failed to invest the appropriate amount of funds to meet the needs of Nigerians. In essence, the lack of government support for social welfare directly led to the growth of nationalism and opposition to colonial rule. As early as 1937, Margery Perham noted a gradual decline in government spending in the colony between the 1920s and 1930s.[45] Between the affects of the Great Depression, World War II costs, and economic recovery efforts following World War II, colonial government spending on social welfare never completely recovered. In 1940 the British Government passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and it was updated again in 1945, which extended the budget to £120 million for the next ten years.[46] The increased funds were not enough to compensate for the growing population, post war economic problems, and an intensifying nationalist movement. Nigerians accused the colonial government for providing insufficient funds for comprehensive social welfare programs. One of the most significant issues was the lack of education. Despite the increase in funding, free comprehensive education was not a priority of the colonial government.

The allocation of expenditures alone fails to adequately describe the colonial government’s social welfare agenda. With limited funds, the colonial government sought to implement a new social welfare strategy beginning in the 1930s. The colonial government created new bureaus and committees composed of colonial officials already on the payroll to promote a new social welfare agenda. The After-School Care committee and the Juvenile Employment Office, which sought to find employment for children, were two such efforts. Colonial officials also modernized their treatment of juvenile delinquents by abolishing corporeal punishment and incarceration with adult criminals. The colonial administration had a long history of subsidizing church programs instead of establishing independent departments and programs. Education was a prime example of this model where the government subsidized mission schools rather than finance a comprehensive public education system.[47] The colonial administration continued the model with remand homes, which were often begun by churches with the colonial government subsidizing them for taking on juvenile criminals. Chapters four and five evaluate social welfare changes regarding juveniles, the ‘civilizing mission’ ideology, and Nigerian reactions.

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[45] Perham, 273-276.
[46] A.E Afigbo, et al., *The Making of Modern Africa: Volume 2 The Twentieth Century Second Edition* (New York: Longman, 1986), 19.

Agricultural labor in West Africa generally depended on maximizing the productivity of individual laborers instead of maximizing land use. Agricultural labor also depended on kinship networks to ensure all members of the compound received the appropriate level of care. As already noted, children played important roles in assisting with agriculture, household duties including the preparation of food, and caring for younger children. In most cases, the responsibilities and roles of children depended on the needs of the kinship group and the age of the child. As children increased in age, they took on greater productive responsibilities or transitioned to apprenticeships to learn trades. From the pre-colonial period to early colonial contact and throughout the colonial period, child labor existed in virtually all domestic economic activity and the economic ventures of the colonial government. Chapter one begins with an evaluation of the position of children within the kinship group and how it determined the labor duties of children. Furthermore, it explains child labor's important position in the Nigerian economy.

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[47] Perham, 280.

Prior to colonial conquest, children worked as slaves and pawns, two different but in some situations interdependent institutions. Lovejoy and Richardson narrated the case of boys who were held by slave traders until their parents could supply the required number of slaves to complete the transaction.[48] The value of child labor, from the perspective of Nigerians, meant child pawns possessed current and future economic value. From the perspective of the slave traders, the value of the child was far less than the value of several slaves, but the social incentive for the trader to retrieve the child was great. Pawnship activities were not synonymous with uncaring parents but part of a cultural strategy to promote business ventures. The example illustrates how child labor connected to labor in general and whereas pawnship was used as part of the slave trade economy, pawnship and slavery were separate labor institutions. All labor activity included the participation of children. Chapters one and two evaluate the role of children in slavery and pawnship beginning with the late 1800s and continuing into the early

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[48] Paul E. Lovejoy, and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic history: The institutional foundations of the Old Calabar slave trade," *American Historical Review,* Vol. 104 no.2 (Apr 1999), 333-355; Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c. 1600-1810," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2001), 67-89.

1930s. The research shows how children were fundamental participants in labor and the acquisition of credit for Nigerian business activity.

The shift in colonial economic strategy from the slave trade to 'legitimate' trade was part of a shift in the labor activities of children; however, the change in colonial policy did not have as significant an influence as one might guess. The slave trade in West Africa continued long after the end of the transatlantic slave trade. The slave trade also continued after colonial conquest.[49] Children continued to be caught and sold as slaves and women persistently complained to colonial officials about children being kidnapped and taken as slaves.[50] Yet British interest in trading goods rather than people did affect child labor activities. Increased demand for palm oil and other cash crops in part increased the value of child labor. The increase in the price of palm oil in the early 1900s meant women earned more money engaged in trading palm oil than by participating in other trading activities or agricultural work.[51] The new focus on 'legitimate' trade required Nigerians to change their economic activities from food production and slave dealing to cash crops, which required startup capital and new labor skills. Child labor became an important source of cheap labor or a means to acquire the necessary capital through pawnship. Chapter two draws the connection between cash crops, credit and child pawnship.

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[49] A. E. Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade in Southeastern Nigeria, 1885-1950* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006).

[50] A collection of petitions throughout the archival record show the consistent complaints by women. The importance of increasing the size of kinship groups by acquiring more dependents remained important to wealth creation. BP 425/1919, "Slave Dealing, Reports of," Benin Prof 2 NAI; 62 vol 1, "Slave Dealing," Kwale Dist 1 NAI; 1127, "Pawning of Children (Iwofa)," Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI.

[51] Susan M. Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

With British merchants and administrators switching the focus from slavery to 'legitimate' trade, the onset of formal British colonial rule meant the British administration needed to secure the safe transport of goods within Nigeria to promote merchant activity. An important step in the process was to build a transportation infrastructure to expedite the movement of troops to secure trade and to move goods to coastal cities more efficiently.[52] British administrators used forced labor to build roads and railways in Nigeria beginning in the late 1800s and continuing into the early 1920s. Children were part of that process. Child labor filled an important role in the transportation of loads of materials to constructions sites, which is evaluated in detail in chapter three; therefore, the work performed by children mirrored changes in colonial officials' goals and Nigerians' economic ventures.

The decline in the value of palm oil produce in the late 1920s and early 1930s presented women and children with a crisis. Palm oil production was only lucrative to the women if they were able to trade the produce for other items they needed. Pawnship occurred owing to an inability to procure the needed funds to maintain the kinship group. Pawnship allowed families to temporarily exchange children's labor for a certain amount of time in exchange for funds or goods to maintain the household. Pawnship was closely connected to changing economic conditions and the value of child labor. According to women's testimony, pawnship was a choice of last resort.[53] Yet children actively accepted or rejected pawnship conditions by fleeing pawning relationships or writing letters to colonial officials claiming a status commiserate to slavery. Chapter two concludes with an analysis of children's attempts to improve their pawnship relationships.

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[52] Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001). For a general overview of the role of intellectuals and the formation of the elite class.

[53] Petitions from women in Yoruba and Igbo provinces reflect the universal assessment that depression led to an undesirable increase in pawnship. See Martin A. Klein, and Richard Roberts, "The Resurgence of Pawning in French West Africa during the Depression of the1930s," *African Economic History* Vol. 16,

Nigerian cities experienced relatively quick growth after colonial contact, partly owing to coastal cities' connections to the export trade. Colonial administrative centers inland also experienced gradual population growth.[54] Urbanization in Nigeria led to significant changes in the types of labor activities children sought out. A host of new jobs and an increasing number of jobs became available to children in urban areas including messengers, porters, hawking, trade skills, and servants for military and police personnel. Some families believed their children, especially those who had some education, would find better opportunities in cities than in rural areas. Beginning in the 1930s, the number of migrants to the cities increased, a large number of them children. In fact the colonial government sought to implement a propaganda program to encourage children and adolescents to remain in the rural areas owing to the inability of the colonial government to maintain the infrastructure in cities such as Lagos.[55] Chapter three evaluates urban

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(Jan 1987), 23-37. Klein and Roberts give one of the few analyses of the relationship between the global depression of the 1930s and pawnship.

[54] Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, *Nigeria's Urban History: Past and Present* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2006).

[55] The issue of migration to cities surfaces in British administration records related to juvenile delinquency in large cities such as Lagos and Ibadan. Simon Heap, "'Their Days are Spent in Gambling and Loafing, Pimping for Prostitutes, and Picking Pockets': Male Juvenile Delinquents on Lagos Island, 1920s-1960s," *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 35 Issue 1, (Jan 2010), 48-70; ABP 392 vol 2, "Juvenile Offenders," Abeokuta prof 2 NAI; 2403, "Pickpockets and Hooligans," Comcol 1/1 NAI; 2471, "Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1/ NAI; 2872, "Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar," Comcol 1/1 NAI. The flight of children from the rural areas to cities partly related to a change in social welfare practices which will be evaluated in chapters four and five.

child labor and children's strategies to acquire education in the cities including formal school education and apprenticeships.

Child migration to cities outlines the agency and mobility of children during this period. Children proved themselves resourceful in their ability to earn money and in some cases sent money back to their parents. Children working in cities became part of an overall strategy to support the kinship group. Yet many children who migrated to cities for work did so owing to a breakdown in the kinship system. Children with few or no living relatives were most often among those who migrated to cities. The colonial government sought to limit the movement of these children with a system of regulations that intended to restrict the movement of children. According to British officials, the primary reason for the legislation was to prevent child slave labor and abuse; however, research suggests the majority of children migrated on their own accord. Chapters three and four address the migration of these children to urban areas and how their experiences varied in terms of the kinds of work they did along with some successes on one hand and troubles with poverty on the other.

Child delinquency increasingly received attention by the colonial administration in the 1930s. Prior to the 1930s, children caught stealing were flogged and imprisoned in the same manner as adults. Whereas poverty does not explain child labor, it does explain a large level of child delinquency. Most children who were arrested committed offences for stealing food or for illegally hawking goods. The colonial government made a point to arrest girl hawkers owing to an assumption that girl hawkers were actually prostitutes. Documents related to child delinquency reveal that most children who engaged in these activities were orphans or alienated from their families. Some children lived with extended families, but documents suggest the children were estranged and unhappy with their living conditions. They preferred to leave the extended family and try to earn an independent living. Large numbers of children worked in street trades and they were significant enough to economic activity in cities that businesses and parents protested new colonial legislation, which criminalized child labor in street trades. Chapter three evaluates the kinds of street trades children were employed in and Nigerian reactions to changes in colonial policy. Chapter four addresses the problem of urban poverty and how child labor or the lack thereof corresponded to child delinquency. Ironically, partly owing to limitations in government funds, the labor of child delinquents was used to help finance remand homes.

Education provided both opportunities and problems for Nigerian children and their families. Nigerian parents recognized the advantages of formal school education but also quickly realized the limited job opportunities provided for those children. Rosanah Ogwe, an Igbo woman, noted in 1930 that whereas they initially valued education the high fees for advanced schooling and limited job availability made European education disadvantageous because it turned their children into “useless persons” who were unable to gain employment in administrative posts and did not have the necessary skills to earn a living as a farmer or skilled craftsman.[56] Her comments reinforce the connection between labor and education. Labor in the family and community setting provided socializing skills in a learning environment, which enabled the child to become a productive adult.

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[56] CE/K5A, “Proceedings before the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Calabar and Owerri Provinces,” 1930, EPA, 732-741.

According to Rosanah Ogwe, a child who missed out on this experience became a useless person if they were unable to complete their schooling or find a job related to their education. Chapter three evaluates the strategies of Nigerian children and families to seek out apprenticeship positions in hope of overcoming limited job opportunities. In addition, social programs and school committees, with assistance from the colonial government, sought to find jobs for children between twelve and seventeen, although with limited success.

In the late 1930s, the colonial government hoped to force parents to send their children to school. The concern of the colonial administration was that low school attendance made the schools economically unviable.[57] Yet Nigerian families argued that they required the labor of their children to maintain the family and the cost of school fees was too much. The administration then amended their legislation to allow elderly children to work with the parents while younger children attended school. The strategy of sending younger children to school while the older children worked to help provide for the kinship group was a normal practice. Families believed the younger educated children increased the status and future earnings of the family. In addition to formal school education, it was popular for older children to learn to ply the father's or mother's trades whereas younger children apprenticed out to learn a new trade. The colonial administration's temporary preoccupation with mandatory universal education for school children reflected their 'civilizing mission' ideology. Replacing child labor with mandatory schooling represented an important advancement in their efforts of modernization. Yet at the same time colonial officials noted problems with cost and also the heavy handed reordering of the society that such a policy entailed which ultimately conflicted with indirect rule principles. Chapter five evaluates the connection between new social welfare practices and child labor along Nigerian protest and local efforts by community leaders, which sought to alleviate social problems associated with children.

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[57] AG 995, "Compulsory Primary Education," Agbor Div 1/1 NAI; 704, "Compulsory Education, General," Comcol 1/1 NAI; CSO 26 series 5, 54116, "Compulsory Education," NAI; 3141, "Plans for Universal Education," Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI; K. D. 1507, "Compulsory Education, Primary," Kukuruku Div 2 NAI; 1271, "Compulsory Education, Report by Sub Committee, General Communication in relation thereto," Oyo Prov 1/1 NAI.

Families and children made informed decisions about the activities children engaged in based on the value of different types of education compared with the value of the child's activities. During the economic recession, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, families often preferred to use their children's labor in the household economy or apprentice them out to learn a specific skill. During periods of economic booms, such as the early 1920s, families were more likely to take advantage of formal schooling for their younger children. Outside of the colonial administration, formal school education offered few prospects besides attending seminary training. Throughout the chapters that follow, a persistent connection exists between education and labor. These two seemingly alternative strategies in contemporary western societies were not clearly defined as separate strategies but were part and parcel of the same end goal of providing children with a meaningful source of income once they attained adulthood.

During the pre-colonial period, status was a key determinant in economic opportunities. The point to make here is that status remained an important aspect of economic opportunity throughout the colonial period but class perceptions gained increasing importance. Most often a divide between urban and rural communities became a new category of status. Children's flight to the cities must be understood as part of a desire to overcome the growing stigma associated with rural communities and to take advantage of urban opportunities. Strategies by children and parents partly related to the need to meet the social requirement of attaining status. The socialization process of child labor and education served child development to teach skills and to aid child development that led to more status and opportunity. Throughout the colonial period, economic and social changes led to a shift in the importance of status and a growing emphasis on class. Chapter five addresses the efforts of Nigerians to improve the opportunities of their children via self help programs either independent of the government or by participating in government committees. Throughout the period under evaluation, children remained active participants in seeking out employment regardless of the economic and social changes under which they lived.

CONCLUSION

In many ways the concept of the 'civilizing mission' corresponded to colonial welfare officials attempting to apply a universalist approach to Nigerian society whereby child labor would be modified to fit a European model with the majority of children attending school until adulthood. Yet on the other hand, indirect rule ideology most often interpreted the role of child labor in a relativist perspective by arguing that the colonial administration had no right to change "time honored" indigenous institutions. Children negotiated between these two competing perspectives and sought out education, apprenticeships, and labor opportunities to maximize their future prospects. Depending on circumstances, parents solicited the colonial government or ignored colonial law to achieve their goals on their children's behalf.

Child labor in Nigeria, while predominantly unindustrialized, experienced a connection to global economic changes. At the same time Europe industrialized, the demand for cash crops and raw materials influenced changes in child labor in Nigeria from a reduction in child slaves to increased child labor in extractive industries such as timber concessions, cocoa farms, and urban labor to support growing commercial centers. As the dissertation will show, child labor in Nigeria was never driven by a need to avoid poverty but by the necessity to prepare a younger generation for the new economic situation they would face as adults and to meet new demands European conquest placed on society. The kinship group plays a central role in this story as the primary method of social welfare and economic stability and as kinship groups broke down, particularly owing to urban migration, children faced a combination of new labor opportunities and new challenges. Urban child labor was as much about access to what people believed were better educational opportunities as to gain access to European currency.

Finally, child labor and education in Nigerian history never existed as alternative choices but they were part and parcel of the same strategy which sought to maximize children's skills and prepare them for adulthood in terms of knowledge and social skills. Including the three categories of child labor; direct labor, indirect labor, and alternative labor, underscore the interconnected relationship between the domestic economy, the colonial economy, and education. Furthermore the story is as much about the efforts of children for self advancement as it is about the struggle between the colonial government and parents to capture the labor resources of children and the authority to determine to what extent the colonial government enforced universalist ideas versus whether or not parents and children maintained enough autonomy to demand change or place limitations on the colonial government. Underlying all of these issues is the clear purpose to prove the intrinsic importance of child labor to the Nigerian economy. Children were not marginal objects in this history but central actors in the colonial experience.

Chapter one, “Child Household Labor, Slavery and Pawnship,” is primarily concerned with the cultural context of child labor in Nigeria and how it connected to kinship, status, wealth, and the importance of dependents. Evaluating child labor activities within the family unit and Nigerian education offers a starting point grounded in Nigerian culture. The purpose of chapter one is to show how child labor and education were not separate institutions but connected strategies for the acculturation and maturation process. In particular, it underscores the importance of children to the Nigerian economy in terms of dependents by evaluating the role of child slavery and pawnship. Pawnship illustrates the capacity for child labor institutions to include instances of exploitation as well as a beneficial practice that protected some children from poverty. The primary shift in child labor during this period resulted from a decline in child slavery and a steady increase in pawnship as a method for families to increase their number of dependents. The chapter argues that age and status defined the role of children in kinship groups and that a linear conceptualization of kinship rights regarding slavery and pawnship fails to account for the position of children.

Chapter two, “Slavery, Credit and Labor in an Era of Transition, 1893 to 1937,” primarily evaluates child stealing, child dealing and pawnship. Regardless of colonial policies, child stealing, child dealing and pawnship continued well into the 1930s. The chapter argues that the primary reasons for the persistence of these practices included Nigerian families’ need for credit, a desire to attain economic stability, and a means of social welfare to protect impoverished children. The chapter shows that children throughout this period were instrumental in the economic activities of poor and wealthy families in terms of their labor and how they generated access to credit for their families, which was often used to avoid economic hardship or enable entrepreneurial activity. As the colonial government gradually curbed these activities, the general result led to increased hardships for families and limitations placed on children’s labor activities contributed to a polarization between rich and poor. Whereas slavery explains the rise of coastal elites, the wealth of elites was related to the changing roles of children in the economy throughout the period. Whereas the position of children became dire in some instances during this period, children actively sought ways to improve their position.

Chapter three, “Child Workers and Colonial Labor Ideology,” evaluates the mass migration of children to cities as a strategy to avoid the threat of rural poverty and to seek out new avenues for social and economic mobility. The chapter is primarily concerned with hawking and a shift in the role of education and families’ strategies for educating their children. Chapter two begins with an evaluation of child agency and chapter three continues that trend with more profound examples. The colonial administration sought to constrict the activities of children in cities and the chapter evaluates how children disregarded colonial law to earn a living and in many cases sent money back to parents still residing in rural areas. At the same time urban living offered children new opportunities, it also presented dangers of exploitation and poverty.

Chapter four, “Child Offenders, Labor and Poverty, 1931 to 1953,” addresses how a reduction in child labor activities contributed to a rise in delinquent behaviors. The chapter underscores the argument that poverty was not the driving force in child labor but poverty did contribute to an increase in child delinquency for children who existed outside the protection of the kinship group. These children were often orphans or migrated to the city. Delinquency existed largely as a survival strategy in a changing society that offered few opportunities to children and adolescents. Furthermore the chapter evaluates the colonial reaction to child delinquency in terms of a new strategy for social welfare policy. In the early 1930s, colonial social welfare policy changed with a contemporary focus on child development and environment. As a result, the British colonial government embarked on a strategy that changed child punishments and instituted remand homes. Yet those changes offered little relief for the predicament of these children.

“Social Welfare and Child Agency,” chapter five, evaluates the responses of children and parents to persistent issues related to the acculturation and maturation of children. The chapter argues that concerns regarding children were an element in demands made to the colonial government and that social movements centered on children occupied an important role in the push for independence. Whereas colonial social welfare did little to alleviate problems facing children, Nigerian social organizations, such as the Nigerian Youth Movement, embarked on a broad campaign for the protection of children and more educational opportunities. Nigerian children and families also participated in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides organizations which fit into Nigerian concepts concerning age grade associations and the maturation process of children. In this sense, chapter five brings the dissertation full circle by showing how Nigerian strategies for social change reflected Nigerian cultural practices into the 1950s. These Nigerian strategies illustrate how they adapted foreign ideas and institutions to serve local purposes and by doing so developed an ideology for child welfare and labor practices.

The Epilogue addresses current child labor practices in Nigeria and they should be understood with current developments in context with historical evidence. By doing so, the epilogue offers future avenues of inquiry to connect the pre-1960s era to the modern nation state. Preliminary inquiries suggest oral research will support the conclusion that child labor persists partly owing to abusive practices and also as part of a cultural practice of using small scale child labor to acculturate and educate children. In addition, a process beginning with gradual change initiated by colonial policy along with shifts in Nigerians' conception of society and the role of children contributed to class as a more important social division than status. Finally, the epilogue considers c current issues facing children in West Africa including prostitution, child soldiers, and poverty. The preliminary analysis is that cultural systems of child welfare and protection broke down during British colonial rule which left children in a precarious position owing to a lack of a widespread government sponsored social welfare system to address these problems.

Chapter One

Child Household Labor, Slavery and Pawnship

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian children's experiences in labor and education occurred at the nexus of indigenous and colonial contact. Issues concerning children informed the decisions of Nigerian families and Europeans administrators throughout the colonial period. Men, women and children contested social problems whereas colonial officials sought to advance a British concept of social welfare and child development. Understanding changes in child labor practices in the first half of the twentieth century requires evaluating children's labor within household economics. Social and economic conditions prior to 1900 influenced the development of child labor in subsequent years. Understanding these conditions requires analyzing the nature of household production, the central role of the kinship group as a defining method of social organization, and how these two social features informed child labor institutions, slavery and pawnship, before the turn of the century.[1]

Household production in Nigeria, the primary means of economic activity, suggests that children's labor and labor potential were central to economic production and children were not peripheral participants. Effective development from childhood to adulthood depended upon the skills and education children gained while working alongside parents or apprenticed out to craftsmen. Children's importance to the viability of the household also relied on how children contributed to the expansion of the kinship group, an important aspect of economic stability. Household production also introduces a broad theme by illustrating the intersection between education and labor. The sharp division between child labor and education in Europe and the United States represents a modern phenomenon developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution and changes in social practice. The Nigerian household based economy offered a different childhood experience – albeit not a static one. In addition, child labor history in Nigeria generally fails to conform to the common western narrative which explains child labor as a new exploitative invention of the Industrial Revolution.[2]

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[1] The term pawnship is used to refer to the Yoruba practice of *iwofa* and the Igbo equivalent, *igba ibe*. The European practice of pawnship does not adequately describe these terms. The term pawnship is used because it is the closest English equivalent.

The kinship group influenced labor divisions within the household economy and directly informed the labor activities of children. The kinship group's status and economic stability relied on increasing its number of dependents.[3] The position of children within the kinship group and how they advanced the kinship group's wealth and status were key components of child labor and its importance to Nigerian economic activity. Status and wealth, or lack thereof, directly influenced the position of children in the kinship group and society in general. The Kopytoff-Miers continuum, which compares servile institutions with kinship rights, fails to adequately explain the position of children in the kinship group and labor market.[4] Child labor within the household economy and the institutions of slavery and pawnship reveal a varied set of conditions that affected children's labor and access to protection. Age as a historical category redefines the dynamics of kinship relationships and the institution of slavery. Age along with servile positions informed status and access to rights within the kinship group.

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[2] Child labor in the western sense tends to define child labor as wage labor activities; however, doing so devalues the role of children as economic producers in situations where their labor is important to household economic success. It also fails to make the connection between labor and education in institutions such as apprenticeship.

[3] Toyin Falola, "Slavery and Pawnship in the Yoruba Economy of the Nineteenth Century," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 130.

The institutions of child slavery and pawnship can only be understood within the context of household economic production and expansion. Slavery and pawnship were two key ways kinship groups increased their number of dependents. Whereas social rules governing slavery and pawnship differed, the labor activities performed by child slaves and pawns were comparable owing to the structure of the kinship group. In fact it was owing to this particular feature that colonial officials struggled to recognize the difference between slavery and pawnship. Child slavery and pawnship prior to 1900 sets a beginning position through which to understand labor and credit changes that affected the role of child laborers in Nigeria.

The prevailing narrative of economic and social change in Nigeria depends upon the influential role of colonial policies in transforming Nigerian society. Yet researchers in general have over emphasized the formative influence of colonialism and downplayed the ways Nigerians dictated economic and social change.[5] By beginning with an analysis of household production, child slavery, and pawnship, the argument emerges that

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[4] Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff. (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).

[5] African historians, particularly within nationalist historiographies, emphasized the impact of colonial conquest as a means to support the formation of national units via a narrative of shard exploitation. On the other hand, British Imperial historians often overemphasize the accomplishments of colonial administrators in developing African societies.

Nigerians sought to advance and develop their society and economy regardless of European efforts to direct those changes in ways beneficial to the colonial project. Without question the intersection of class and status, extractive and production economic activities, and child social welfare and education changed overtime as a result of both Nigerian agendas and colonial policy; however, the emphasis here will show how children and parents charted a course for economic and social advancement regardless of colonial policy and how colonial officials reacted and amended policies in order to attempt to accomplish their 'civilizing mission' goals.

Chapter one argues that child labor was a culturally embedded practice through which families trained children in skills necessary to be productive adults. The system was not perfect and at times some economic activities became abusive as the social system, owing to transitions partly related to colonial contact and partly to individual choices, no longer protected children in the same ways. The chapter begins with child labor and education in the kinship group from which it is argued that children were central participants in household production activities and a source of credit. Nigerians in general judged education and child labor practices on the returns those activities gave to their children and kinship groups. From this beginning, the chapter proceeds to evaluate transitions and continuities in the child labor practices of slavery and pawnship including how these changes led to varying experiences for children depending on whether they were male or female.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION AND THE KINSHIP GROUP

Throughout all periods of Nigerian history a close connection existed between child labor and household production strategies. The usage of labor in the household economy informed by the cultural context for child labor and the influence of gender ideology explains children's labor roles, the intersection between education and labor, and how kinship influenced status, wealth creation, and social welfare. Kinship groups, extended families living in a common compound, provided the economic and social framework in which child labor existed and contributed to economic security.[6] Children's roles in the household economy offer a context in which to evaluate specific forms of child labor including child slavery and pawnship. The household economy also outlines the extent to which children occupied a central position in the economy and that child labor was not consigned to families in poverty conditions. Furthermore household production and the kinship group underpin how childhood in Nigerian families was a process by which children learned to be adults.

Production in the household economy depended upon maximizing the productivity of individuals over maximizing land use.[7] The concept applied to economic activities including but not limited to agricultural production. Whether in rural or urban settings, survival and wealth accumulation required maximizing the labor of each individual in the extended family unit. Generating wealth depended on the amount of food produced, cash crops grown, or natural resources collected for sale. Therefore, even in urban areas, the total economic productivity of the kinship group at the minimum provided for the members in the kinship group and various social obligations. Children played an important role in maximizing individual productivity through education and freeing or aiding adults in their economic pursuits.

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[6] According to N. A. Fadipe, when kinship groups increased in size a male member of the group could seek to start a compound in a new location that had certain levels of autonomy but still answered to the overall kinship head. For the purposes here, the focus is on kinship compounds as economic and social units even though kinship groups were the primary political unit. See N. A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970).

[7] A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1973).

The need to maximize labor within the kinship group applied to gender and age. The chapter will show that children's labor activities were just as important to the kinship's success as the labor of men and women. In addition to a social and religious arrangement, marriage represented an economic contract where "… the desire for a helpmate in the household and family economy were responsible," for the trend that most men of marriageable age married.[8] Generally the value of child labor, especially in terms of slavery and pawnship, partly indicated the future productivity of a child once they became an adolescent or adult. Unlike slavery, a period of pawnship service for a child could begin and end before adolescence. Acquiring child slaves in Nigeria and accepting a child pawn or pawning out a child illustrates the economic strategy of maximizing the productive labor of the individual. Child slavery and pawnship underscored the roles of children in the advancement of the kinship group.

Marriage customs associated with betrothal underpinned the importance for maximizing the labor of individuals and the economic component of marriage. Fadipe suggests that individuals were responsible for their economic success even though they co-inhabited a single compound. The extent to which economics depended on individual pursuits or cooperation among the kinship group requires reconciliation. A woman of low status was said to have had “no work in her hand.”[9] During the betrothal process, families were careful to determine whether the other family had large amounts of debt or were known for laziness. The expectations of *noblesse oblige* could bankrupt a kinship group if they married into a family with large debt that they would have to assist in repaying.[10] Large debts likely caused fears that future children would be pawned to pay off the debts. Whereas status depended partly on individual economic success, the overall kinship group’s success depended on each member providing important labor activities and earning a profit from their endeavors.

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[8] Fadipe, 66, 97 – 118. The structured divisions between the labor activities of men and women, in addition to revealing concepts concerning gender, suggest a method of labor organization to ensure the productivity of the household. Social norms and taboos reinforced society's expectations of individual responsibility.

Household members pursued economic activities as a group and as individuals. Yet social expectations in terms of *noblesse oblige* underscore the cooperative element of the kinship group. Family members needed to achieve independent economic success to meet social obligations within the family unit. Social obligations included providing agricultural goods and meat to the family head, contributing revenue for funerals, covering the debts of family members, and contributing to the general success of other kinship members. If a kinship member were called away from their work, such as a skilled trade, other family members ensured the equipment or goods did not receive damage.[11] The characterization of children as ‘children of the compound’ and the expectations of *noblesse oblige* require understanding economic activity at the kinship compound level and not solely as individual activities. The need to maximize individual productivity led to social norms governing how children spent their time in labor activities.

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[9] Ibid., 71.

[10] Ibid., 76-77, 89.

[11] Ibid., 104. Fadipe gives an example where other kinship members with the appropriate knowledge left their activities to tend to another kinship member’s goods.

Household management and food processing were labor intensive activities. Labor activities performed by children are not easily separated from household production.[12] Child labor in the kinship group supplemented adult labor and adults permitted children to perform time consuming low skill tasks. Labor tasks important to households included carrying water from wells and processing food for meals. Child labor in the domestic environment provided adults, women in particular, with more time to engage in agricultural work, trading at local markets, or working as a skilled craftsman. Children's domestic labor in these situations warrants the designation of child labor because in addition to allowing women to participate in other ventures, carrying water or pounding cassava and yam were crucial to the family's needs and they were labor intensive activities. Child slaves and child pawns often performed domestic tasks as part of their service.

Labor intensive agricultural practices required a significant amount of human labor and in part explained the importance of polygamous marriages.[13] The labor of women in Nigeria, including agricultural production and trading, played a central role in the economic success of the kinship group. Marrying more than one wife illustrated wealth owing to the cost of bride price but also the added production multiple wives brought to the family unit and the potential for adding more children to the kinship group.[14] Family units also served basic social purposes by providing care for the elderly and supervising children. Depending on the responsibilities of specific women within the kinship group, women took turns watching the younger children up to ages five or six while other women focused on agricultural production, trade or household tasks. Often elderly women in the kinship unit cared for toddlers whereas infants remained with their mothers so they could be fed.[15] In a large kinship group, women nursing toddlers watched other women's children allowing the women to engage in market trade or agricultural labor.

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[12] The concept of household labor as being something other than work is a modern western phenomenon. In the colonial period of the United States the types of activities children performed were closely linked to the production of goods such as a boy or girl helping their mother churn butter which would later be sold or children responsible for feeding livestock or collecting chicken eggs. Agricultural economies historically place significant dependence on children's labor to be efficient. See Fadipe, 87-88 for an analysis of the time consuming labor involved in food production.

[13] Increasing the number of wives in a household meant a greater labor force and more children which led to more labor potential both in terms of male agricultural labor and female domestic labor and bride price revenue. As we will see, increasing the size of the kinship group through marriage and children was a key aspect of the household economy.

The type of work children engaged in depended on age and gender. Child labor and education composed part of a socializing process that enabled children to develop into productive members of society. Elderly members of the family cared for children between three and six years old during the day. Elders trained children in society's rules and gave them simple tasks to perform such as delivering messages. Giving children small tasks was part of their early socialization to teach them responsibility and respect for elders such as proper greetings and cultural rules.[16] The proper functioning of the kinship compound depended on each individual fulfilling their labor and social obligations and families began teaching children responsibility at a young age. Training children to properly deliver messages taught them how to follow instructions and reinforced the concept of contributing to the kinship group.

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[14] Fadipe, 77, 97-118.
[15] A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974).
[16] Ibid., 24-25.

Parents gave children more responsibilities in the household as they got older and showed efficiency in carrying out directions. When children reached the age of six or seven gender became a more important determinant in children's labor activities.[17] Girls tended to focus on domestic work including caring for younger siblings. Women in the kinship group taught girls to engage in local trade or crafts. Children learned highly specialized trades such as weaving and blacksmithing by apprenticeship.[18] Fathers and male elders in the family trained boys unless they were apprenticed out to learn a specific trade unknown in the kinship group. Boys learned vocational skills and how to cultivate crops. They learned agricultural skills by working between fathers and elder brothers who offered correction and punishment when necessary. The trades and professions children learned depended on parents' decisions, the status of the kinship, and the vocational knowledge available to the family.[19]

The connection between socialization and labor was a persistent feature of Yoruba and Igbo societies. Elders and parents often told children stories while they worked to acculturate them into society's expectations and rules. Stories taught important character traits and the social order dependent on age and status. The dual function of children's activities where education and labor occurred in tandem enabled the maximizing of labor. Education's primary purpose was to empower children to become productive members of society. Manual labor training represented an intrinsic aspect of children's education and a key to their success as adults. Parents and elders took care to ensure they equipped children with the required knowledge and physical skills. Children who failed to adhere to social rules could receive harsh punishment, especially for repeated offences.[20]

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[17] Ibid., 18-19.
[18] Fadipe, 87-88.
[19] Fafunwa, 31-35.

The kinship group's status and the status of individuals within the kinship group informed the socialization process of children's labor and education. For children to achieve the same status as their parents, a proper education in societies' norms was an intrinsic aspect of success. People who failed to adhere to social standards lost status and in some cases, depending on the severity of the transgression, were banned from the community. A wife who failed to meet social obligations received little assistance from other women in the compound, "people will even refrain from correcting her children of faults."[21] Status of parents within the kinship group affected the cooperative training of children to the degree that parents and their children risked becoming outsiders within the kinship compound. Whereas class fails to adequately describe Nigerian communities, status has some restrictions. The children of chiefs or village elders possessed better opportunities to fill prominent roles in the community.[22] Child slaves on the other hand could be accepted by the kinship group but they often experienced restrictions on the amount of status they achieved. Slaves gained status but they initially entered the lowest level of social status owing to their alien position to the kinship group.[23]

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[20] Fadipe, 101-103; 109.

[21] Ibid. The ability of a wife to correct any specific child depended on her age and the age of the child. Young wives did not possess enough status within the kinship group to correct children close to her age. Therefore, the education of children depended on senior members within the kinship group.

[22] Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elites in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Mann noted the importance of polygamy and large numbers of dependents in the kinship group in order to gain wealth. Yet Mann's research relates to a minority of elites in Lagos and not general conditions across Nigeria in rural areas.

The kinship unit provided economic stability. Nigerian economic conditions were dynamic. Local changes including environmental challenges, political conflicts, and the introduction of new crops required Nigerians to alter economic strategies. Men and women engaged in a variety of activities depending on the season and market conditions which offered security in the case of drought or changes in the demand for specific goods.[24] Varying local conditions affected the labor activities of children and in some instances increased their vulnerability. Kinship units permitted households to engage in economic diversification which in turn limited periodic hardships and prevented poverty. Custom required members of the kinship group to give free goods and services to fellow kinship members.[25] Economic diversification in the kinship group meant children gained an education in a variety of activities by assisting their parents and elders. Women, for example, practiced activities such as farming, petty trading, manufacturing jewelry, and food processing.

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[23] Ann O'Hear, "Elite Slaves in Ilorin in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (2006): 247-273.

[24] Fadipe, 88. Fadipe suggests the level of independent economic activity between wives and husbands partly depended on whether they lived in rural or urban areas. Fadipe believed families in rural areas were more closely connected in their economic endeavors. The argument laid out here will show that regardless of rural or urban locality from the nineteenth to twentieth century this dynamic changed overtime. For the pre-colonial period, men and women engaged in individual economic pursuits but crises and noblesse oblige were factors that connected their economic activities in common. As much as Fadipe repeatedly the importance of individual economic success, the plethora of examples he provides shows how the individual success overall directly relates to the total effectiveness of the kinship group.

[25] Ibid., 105.

The status of kinship groups depended on several issues and directly influenced the variety of labor activities in which children engaged. The number of dependents in the kinship group partly determined status. A large number of dependents permitted the family to engage in an increased range of activities, cultivate more land, provide more opportunities for credit, and increased the economic stability of the kinship group. The overall status of the kinship depended on individuals conforming to social standards. The saying, "This compound was not wrecked during the time of my predecessors, and I am determined it shall not be wrecked during my time" illustrates the connection between individual status and the status of the kinship group.[26] A family also possessed more status according to what kind and how many titles family members held or in which secret societies they gained entrance. Titles and secret societies provided avenues for the kinship group to play significant roles in the community. A kinship group that managed resources effectively increased their status by meeting external social obligations such as assisting struggling relatives or the community's poor. When kinship groups increased their status, the opportunities for children within the kinship group increased. If a kinship group assisted a struggling craftsman, later when the business improved, the craftsman might repay the kinship by taking a child on as an apprentice.

In addition to fulfilling important labor tasks for the household economy, children were intrinsic to the future development of the family and the expansion of economic wealth. Families who had several boys increased their labor base and families with many girls increased their access to credit. Whereas boys gave the family agricultural labor important for food crops and economic crops, girls, via bride price, gave the family access to credit through which the kinship added cultivatable land, economic trees, or a wife for another male in the family. Some men with several female children increased their wealth through bride price and the *noblesse oblige* expectations of son-in-laws to their spouse's father.[27] High mortality rates further underscored the value of children to family success. Child slavery and pawnship, to which the rest of this chapter is directed, illustrates household dependence on child labor.

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[26] Ibid., 110.

Child labor in Nigeria occupied an important position in the economic activities of kinship groups and the socialization of children as a means to prepare them for adulthood. Child labor composed part of a social system that included a variety of labor activities in which education occupied a prominent position. Yoruba and Igbo communities depended upon a complex social system to ensure economic success, a system designed to use education to maximize children's labor potential. Education and labor were not separate options for families but indistinguishable aspects of the maturation process. Household labor, slavery, and pawnship demonstrate the role of children in household economic activity and how those methods of labor organization were interrelated. Furthermore, these three aspects of child labor illustrate a history where the characteristics of child labor regarding exploitation and socialization were not static circumstances connected to a specific time period, but varied throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century according to specific working environments and the changing position of children within the kinship group.

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[27] Ibid., 77.

CHILD SLAVERY AND MIGRATION

Child slavery affected children and families well into the twentieth century for several reasons. Child slavery partly illustrates the value of child labor to the economy and how child slaves fit into the kinship and social system. Whereas child slavery and pawnship were governed by separate social rules, they were connected in important ways that revealed the central role of status in Nigerian society and how status related to children's labor experiences. On the other hand, British colonial leaders, except for passing laws, exercised little enforcement against child slavery before the 1920s. Nigerian women well into the 1930s feared their children would be stolen and sold into slavery. The apprehension of child stealing affected child labor by limiting the types of responsibilities mothers and adults gave to children. Child stealing and slavery finally subsided owing to protests by women and international pressure, which eventually led to increased enforcement against child stealing.

Data on the number of child slaves and the types of work children did as slaves is small. The lack of data partly relates to little interest on the part of colonial administrators to evaluate slavery based on age and the difficulties colonial officials faced in being able to distinguish the difference between slaves and pawns. Child slavery in Nigeria also lacks documentation because the British government showed little interest in the abolition of small scale internal slave networks. The colonial government effectively limited the Aro traders in eastern Nigeria but not until the early 1900s. In western Nigeria, missionaries depended upon child slaves and pawns well into the 1880s. The labor activities of slave children, child pawns, and non-bonded children were similar owing to the kinship system which defined the roles of community's members by age grade.

The status of slave children varied across geographical regions, overtime, and within specific cities. On some occasions, as in Ilorin, child slaves born from a concubine and a free father were incorporated into the community; however, they were labeled *omo eru* and regardless of their freedom carried their parent's heritage with them which restricted their status within the community.[28] The antiquity of a kinship group within the community contributed to the family's prestige. Yet in general the distinction of slavery did not prevent economic success. Slaves in Nigeria possessed means of social mobility; however, social mobility for slaves did have limitations. Children were aware of the difference in status and used labels to criticize children born from a slave mother or father. Yet by the early 1900s it appears the practice of selling child slaves abated and slave children were more likely to be incorporated within local communities.[29] The reasons for the change is unclear but it was possible British colonial officials' policy of targeting former trading houses to gain access to 'legitimate' trade hampered the internal slave markets even though British officials did not directly enforce a policy of abolition.

The number of child slaves within Nigeria during this period is uncertain; however, some data on the number of children sold as slaves in the Atlantic slave trade and information regarding the internal slave trade suggests some general trends for child slaves in Nigeria. A collection of data has shown that the internal slave market in Nigeria preferred women slaves and the transatlantic slave trade favored male slaves. The probable result of this trend led to a large number of slave children born in Nigeria. If O'hear's findings are correct for a larger region of Nigeria then it was likely children not wanted for local labor needs were sold back into the slave network and ended up in the transatlantic trade when old enough to bring a fair price on the market. The predisposition for women slaves in Nigeria may have included a secondary strategy of increasing child dependents as a means of resupplying the slave trade.

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[28] Ilorin is somewhat of an anomaly in the sense that it was predominately Yoruba but also the majority of the citizens were Muslims. Owing to specific doctrinal beliefs associated with slavery, it appears Islamic communities placed a greater importance on identifying the status of slaves.

[29] Ann O'hear, *Power Relations in Nigeria: Illorin Slaves and Their Successors* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 42-43, 79-80;Fadipe detailed how status was determined within the kinship group. Rise to the highest positions in the kinship group, such as the position of Baale, depended on the direct heritage of the person to a founding member of the kinship group.

The position of child slaves and the extent of their rights depended on their particular relationship to the kinship group. The assumption that all slaves possessed the same rights in the kinship group oversimplifies how families determined status. The social designation of being a child slave prevented children born of slave parents from attaining an elevated status within the kinship group but this did not necessarily result in poor physical treatment, fewer economic opportunities, or failure to be married into the community. The longer a slave lived in one kinship group the greater the chance for the slave to gain status owing to the precedence placed on cultural knowledge of the kinship group and the importance of abiding by social norms. Slave children born before their parents were purchased spent less time in the kinship group and most likely struggled to learn the proper social norms at the correct ages or they may have missed important circumcision ceremonies which would have linked them more closely with the community. The primary limitation on the rights of child slaves was the ability of owners to arbitrarily resell them without protection from the kinship.

Data on transatlantic slaves sold between 1701 and 1863 suggest the percentage of children sold as slaves from Nigeria dramatically increased between the periods of 1701 to 1809 and 1810 to 1863 even though the trans-Atlantic slave trade had been abolished. The Yoruba wars in the middle to late 1800s contributed to an increase in the number of child slaves because raiding and turning captured people into slaves served to increase the dependents and power base of Yoruba city states. Even after the end of the Yoruba wars, children continued to be a major aspect of the internal slave trade that continued in Nigeria following British conquest in 1893 (see appendix A). The prominence of children in the internal slave trade is supported by women's complaints of child stealing that continued well into the 1930s. The British policy to disarm Nigerians and the focus on transitioning to 'legitimate trade' made capturing adults much more difficult than capturing children.[30]

In addition to the number of children sold in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, child pawns were a key source of credit that permitted trade between coastal slavers and interior slave raiders. Potential slave traders on the coast used child pawns to finance their trading ventures by pawning children to slave ships in exchange for the necessary goods to acquire slaves from the interior. At an early period of the slave trade, European traders recognized the importance of pawns in order to engage in business transactions with African traders. Child pawns breached a currency gap; between British pounds and West Africans' use of cowrie shells. These early traders recognized the difference in value between a slave and a pawn with a child pawn equaling several slaves.[31] The role of children in the slave trade, both internal and external, should not be minimized. The slave trade required a high level of credit or resources and children functioned as a means to meet those needs. Child pawns as intermediaries for exchange re-emphasizes the role children played as enablers in the market activity of parents and guardians.

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[30] A. E. Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade in Southeastern Nigeria 1885-1950*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 66. Afigbo noted the shift in attention from general slave raiding to a focus on children in the first decade of the 20th century. British officials even noted the high number of children traded as slaves at that time. Afigbo connected the increase in the attention to child slave dealing with the British attacks on the Aro Chuckwu trading houses.

A boom in trading between coastal cities and interior rural areas in the middle of the 1800s onwards suggests the labor of children was a key component in the domestic economy. In fact, it was likely domestic consumption exceeded the export trade during the period.[32] Children in coastal cities such as Lagos or Port Harcourt were important consumers and food processors for goods imported to the cities for the growing urban population. On the other hand, children in the rural interior played an important role in agricultural labor that supported trade to the cities. Considering the large amount of goods transported to coastal cities for consumption and the export trade, the number of child agricultural laborers in the rural interior probably far exceeded the number of child laborers in cities. During this period, according to the role of dependents in kinship production, it was likely older children participated in portage service from the interior to the coast.[33] Yet cities along the coast, as early as the 1870s, experienced a large migration of children from the interior. The number of children moving into cities was large enough that the British colonial government began the Alien Children's Registration Ordinance in 1878.[34] The alien children's ordinance along with the Master and Servant Ordinance marked a new direction in how the British colonial government used legislation to define children's labor experiences.

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[31] Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c.1600-1810," in Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola (eds), *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 35-38. Lovejoy and Richardson show that European traders' slave trading strategy included using pawns as early as 1617 and was a component of instructions given to new traders by 1790.

[32] Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 65; David Eltis and Lawrence C. Jennings, "Trade between Western Africa and the Atlantic World in the Pre-colonial Era," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988). Mann suggests trade continued to boom in the 1840s and Eltis and Jennings make a similar argument for the pre-colonial period. Whereas Mann's focus is on domestic production and consumption in Lagos, it is important to note the labor that accumulated the goods to sell to middlemen and women who traded between the rural interior and coastal cities.

The British colonial government introduced the Master and Servant Ordinance in the late 1870s - a few years prior to the Alien Children's Registration Ordinance. The ordinance permitted slave masters and those who apprenticed children or adolescents to use corporal punishment to force compliance. The Master and Servant Ordinance reaffirmed part of a long trend in how children received punishment when they failed to comply to work requirements or violated social rules. Child delinquents received whippings or canings when caught stealing or breaking labor rules.[35] Punishment for bad behavior historically administered by parents and guardians shifted into the hand of colonial officers, and until the early 1940s, the punishment often included a prison term or fine. The introduction of corporal punishment to the apprenticeship and pawnship systems disrupted the socialization and educational benefits of apprenticeship and allowed those who had child pawns to overstep the normal social etiquette for the treatment of pawns without reprisals from the colonial administration.

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[33] Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City*, 150. Mann noted the large scale of portage needed between the interior and coast and that canoe transport did not meet all of the transportation needs. Oral Interview of Chief Mbabuike Ogujifo of Ihube in A. E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891-1929* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1972), 314. Afigbo gave one example of a warrant chief who possibly participated in portage as a boy. Patrick Manning, "Merchants, Porters, and Canoe men in the Bight of Benin: Links in the West African Trade Network," in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds), *Workers of African Trade*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985).

[34] Files from the Alien Children Registration Ordinance only offer a rough outline of the situation. As with most colonial ordinances dealing with any census calculations, the registration was sporadic and limited. The issue of children's migration from rural areas to cities re-emerges later; however, the documents suggest a long term trend and not a new issue in the 1920s and 1930s.

[35] The use of corporal punishment on children will be evaluated in detail in chapter five.

By the end of 1911 colonial officials believed the traffic in children to Lagos was reduced owing to the Alien Children's Registration Ordinance.[36] However, colonial officials failed to capture a change in tactics by traders to introduce child laborers, slaves, apprentices or pawns, into Lagos. A few glaring issues from statistics on alien children into Lagos suggest the limitations of the ordinance. Between 1878, when the ordinance went into effect, to 1879 the total number of alien children dropped from 787 to 154 (refer to appendix B). It is doubtful the ordinance had such a significant affect in just one year when the totals remained relatively consistent until 1903. The most probable conclusion was that those trading illegally in child slaves circumvented the ordinance after 1878 to avoid legal issues. The children captured by the ordinance were probably children who entered Lagos through legal means or under the guise of apprenticeship or marriage. For every year in the period from 1878 to 1910 except for three years the number of girls registered outnumbered boys. The disparity in numbers suggested a preference for girls and it was easier for traders to bring girls into Lagos under the pretense of marriage. Families were more likely to pawn out girls for credit in lieu of a future bride price which may account for the difference in female and male child migration to the city during this period. As we will see later, the trend changed in the 1920s and 1930s where boys from rural areas migrated to cities such as Lagos in larger numbers. Migration during the 1920s and 1930s shows the extent to which children continued to enter Lagos regardless of the Alien Children's Registration Ordinance.

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[36] CSO 19/5 O.P. 172/1917. A. 4054/1911. The ordinance sought to limit the migration of children from the rural areas into cities, particularly Lagos.

Details from children registered in Lagos for 1910 provide a few insights into the children who migrated to Lagos (see appendix C). Males were often between the ages of thirteen and fifteen whereas girls varied in age with several younger than ten. The most common reasons for children's entry included education or domestic service in which girls generally migrated as domestic servants. On occasion the parents of these children were listed but most parents remained anonymous, were reported as dead, or had at least one dead parent. A key difference between early migration to cities and later migration in the 1920s and 1930s was that before 1903 parents and children depended on the transport of their children via middlemen traders and travelers whereas after the colonial government built railroads, children began to use them to migrate to cities.[37] It is unclear why colonial officials failed to challenge the reason for children entering Lagos who had unknown parents. Normally if the children were given to a custodian through parental permission the custodian should have known the parents' name. Some of these children, especially the two year old Briman, may have been stolen. The older children, those over twelve years old, who did not have parents, may have been passed on to the custodian by relatives who felt they could not provide for the orphan.[38]

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[37] A.E Afigbo, et al., *The Making of Modern Africa : Volume 2 The Twentieth Century Second Edition* (New York: Longman, 1986), 16-17. A primary north to south rail line continued to Lagos. The completion of these railways nearly corresponds to the decrease in the number of children filed under the Alien children's Registration Ordinance which suggests children may have been able to use the railways to avoid detection.

[38] The practice of passing orphaned children to relatives for care in West Africa was part of a fosterage system, and it will be discussed in chapter five.

Child slave dealing continued along the coast of Opobo and Bonny well into the 1900s. The British colonial commissioner, Sir Ralph Moore, was complicit with the continued slave dealing by chiefs in the area and rationalized it by suggesting the slaves would be better off in coastal cities than the interior. Moore specifically refused to return all children and women taken as slaves.[39] In these early years of British administration, civilizing mission ideology reflected little interest in the position of children. The possession of slaves in southeastern Nigeria continued under the guise of apprenticeship. The Master and Servant Proclamation and the Native House Rule Proclamation provided children to be apprenticed out to middlemen traders for labor but did not permit the children to be permanently sold. The new apprentice rule allowed parents to receive income from their children's labor without selling the children. Parents who sold children often did so owing to a violation of serious community rules and not because parents needed the income.[40]

The primary method for parents to deal with persistently delinquent children who failed to respond to correction was to sell them or apprentice them out to traders.[41] Children who repeatedly violated social rules presented a risk to the family because the child's actions threatened the family's status within the community. It is unclear what ages these children were but they were most likely adolescents. Girls faced a particularly dire situation owing to how the social system of betrothal provided a loophole for slave dealers to exploit. Slave dealers paid the fee for a girl slave to the parents in the form of a bride price and claimed the girl was promised to them as a wife to avoid prosecution.[42] Coastal men also looked to marry wives from the interior owing to two different levels of bride price among the Ijo. Marrying young wives from ethnic groups in the interior allowed them to marry cheaper and still retain rights to the children resulting from the marriage.[43] A large number of children were stolen without the consent of the parents even though some children were willingly sold by parents for a variety of reasons. If parents fell on hard times, they were more likely to pawn their children than sell them and the number of child pawns appeared to far outnumber child slaves, especially after 1893.

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[39] Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 30-31; G. Ugo, Nwokeji, "The Slave Emancipation Problematic: Igbo Society and the Colonial Equation," *Comparative Studies in Society & History,* Vol. 40, Issue 2 (Apr 1998): 318-355, 322. Nwokeji argues that British dependence on local elites explains the administrations unwillingness to commit to emancipation within Nigeria.

[40] Fadipe, 91-99; Afigbo*, The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 56. Afigbo seems to dismiss the idea that some of these children could have been pawns.

[41] Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 71.

CHILD PAWNING AND THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Child pawning underscores the importance of child labor to domestic and international markets and how child labor changed overtime.[44] The origin of pawnship bears significant weight on the analysis owing to the perception of pawnship in relation to the degree European economic activities influenced West African society via the slave trade.

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[42] CSO 19/5 O.P. 172/1917. The Secretary Southern Provinces, Lagos to The Residents Office Onitsha Province June 23, 1917; CSO 28994, "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing, Southern Provinces," Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Enugu to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, June 14, 1934.

[43] Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 100; It was possible girls married to coastal men could have been girls who violated the social expectation of sexual purity. The male's kinship group would not be familiar with the degree of the girl's violation of social norms and therefore her status would not be as low as in her original area of residence. See Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*.

[44] The term pawnship is used owing to the lack of a better word in English. *Iwofa*, the Yoruba term, denotes lending ones labor in lieu of interest on a debt and is not the same thing as a person being held until the debt is repaid. See Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginnings of the British Protectorate* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1921), 126. Robin Law, "On Pawning and Enslavement," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 56-57. Law seems to conflate pawnship with other servile institutions such as slavery and he questioned Herskovits' conclusions regarding the difference between pawning and slavery. Yet Law failed to evaluate specific local rules governing pawnship. In the case of Nigeria, the relationship between pawnship contradicts the Miers-Kopytoff continuum which Law appears to support.

The experiences of child pawns challenge some assumptions regarding status, the rights of individuals, and dependency.[45] Furthermore pawnship explains connections between labor, credit, education, and kinship. Child labor represented a vital aspect of the economic system and it was not a peripheral economic activity. Owing to the volatility of child pawning, the institution is best understood in the context of specific periods including long-term economic shifts and social changes.

The assumption that pawnship came into existence after the introduction of currency supposes a direct relationship between currency, markets and labor in West Africa to European contact; however, it was possible these economic relationships developed in manner different from Europe. The need to maximize labor increased the value of labor over land. Raising loans in Europe generally meant using land or property as surety for the loan. People pawned property including land and economic trees in Nigeria, but the predisposition was to pawn labor. Creditors often required more labor to work the land they already possessed and persons giving themselves in pawn desired to keep access to land and economic trees so they had the means to repay the debt and hopefully increase their wealth in the future.

The origin of pawnship is uncertain but a few details are known that can approximate the latest possible date for the beginning of pawnship. In addition, it is worthwhile to take the analysis further by offering some hypothetical possibilities regarding the antiquity of pawnship in terms of how the institution related to social and economic systems prior to the transatlantic slave trade. Linguistic evidence supports the conclusion that pawnship was an institution of some antiquity.[46] In addition, evidence for pawning dates to at least the seventeenth century.[47] Researchers' initial assumption was that pawnship developed out of a need for liquid income related to the slave trade in which case pawnship relied on the existence of a monetized economy. However, scenarios can explain an origin for pawnship prior to the slave trade which are related to long distant trade or forced migrations, although the slave trade undoubtedly precipitated an increase in pawnship.

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[45] Miers and Kopytoff argued that societies in West Africa were best defined by a continuum of their rights as associated with kinship ties. In this continuum slavery represented a complete abrogation of kinship ties with pawnship representing a partial loss of kinship rights. While some of the flaws have been noted in this continuum, child pawning and labor offer further challenges. The flaws in the continuum are chiefly a result of a predisposition that slavery represented the primary defining characteristic of Nigerian society. Olatunji Ojo, “Emu (Amuya): The Yoruba Institution of Panyarring or Seizure for Debt,” *African Economic History*, Vol. 35, (Jan 2007): 31-58, 37. Ojo showed how slaves became incorporated in the kinship unit by being pawned out.

Pawning children or other adults for business reasons probably pre-dated the slave trade owing to linguistic and cultural evidence. The term used for pawning existed in several West African languages, "*awowa* in Akan, *awubame* in Ewe, *awoba* in Ga, *iwofa* in Yoruba, *iyoha* in Edo, and *abrofa* in Akwamu."[48] The similarity between the words suggests a common root word and supports the argument for pawnship's antiquity. Pawnship arrangements were formal business deals that required witnesses, support of the families involved, a pawn broker, and a formal celebration to seal the business transaction. The ceremony for completing a pawning transaction resembled other social ceremonies by using palm wine, kola nuts, and the following scripted lines at the conclusion of the ceremony:

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[46] Linguistic analysis of the similarities between the words for pawnship in several language groups in West Africa suggests an earlier origin from a root word that remains unidentified.

[47] Robin Law and Paul E. Lovejoy have found evidence of pawnship in European documents dating to the early 1600s. Ebiegberi J. Alagoa and Atei M. Okorobia, "Pawnship in Nembe, Niger Delta," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 100. Alagoa and Okorobia found evidence of pawning in the Niger Delta dating to the same period.

[48] Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c.1600-1810," in Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola (eds), *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 31.

> Borrower: The money will be refunded to you with our happiness and you in good health.
> Lender: What you raised for the loan will be a paying business.[49]

The quote underscores the business nature of pawnship and that transactions were expected to yield economic benefits to both parties. The ceremonial aspect supports the longevity of the institution although the ceremony probably changed overtime.[50] The linguistic evidence coupled with seventeenth century evidence of pawning in a variety of West African ethnic groups leads to a conclusion that pawning probably existed prior to the slave trade.

Pawnship may have been a feature of long distant trade and urbanization in kingdoms that predated European influence. Pawnship may have been connected to the trading economy prior to a monetized economy because petty traders lacking excess items with which to barter could have taken a loan from a wealthier neighbor in exchange for pawned labor in order to purchase goods from a long distance trader and then subsequently bartered the goods in local markets. It may have been possible, overtime, for petty traders to then redeem the pawned person with the profits from the exchange. A barter system does not necessarily by definition exclude an exchange of goods for labor. The analysis is speculative but it was possible for pawnship to have existed prior to the introduction of cowries although a monetized economy and an increase in foreign goods escalated the practice.[51] Pawnship may have resulted from an already existing need to facilitate trade.[52] If pawnship developed as a result of regional trade, its origin may be related to the production of iron or other metals. The high cost of iron production required raising funds to purchase iron or other metals. A Yoruba proverb says, "Okun Irina fi sin owo kija beni ki si ki. The debts [are] tied up an Iron's string never broken nor die away."[53] The quote suggests that perhaps pawnship began after the discovery of iron in West Africa. Perhaps the expansion of West African Empires (which used iron weapons) led to the spread of pawnship which also may account for the inability to find an adequate root word for pawnship.

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[49] No 1198/46/1933, "Iwofa Means Voluntarily entered into Six Days Service for a Certain Consideration, i.e. to Raise Loan," J. O. Aboderin, in 1127 *Pawning of Children (Iwofa)* Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI.

[50] Ibid. According to J. O. Aboderin by the early 1930s, pawnship transactions were concluded by the borrower responding to the lender's blessing with the response of 'amen' or 'ase'. If the ceremony predated European arrival the addition of 'amen' was a result of Christianity's influence.

The reasons why people pawned children highlights the antiquity of pawnship and the role of children in the overall labor economy. Reasons for pawnship included marriage costs, funerals, education, health crisis, natural disasters, or other hardships. Hardships in the mid nineteenth century, according to missionary accounts, increased the rate of pawnship among the Yoruba city states.[54] The correlation between displaced persons and pawnship suggests pawnship may have originated as a strategy for displaced people. People who lost their possessions and were forced to flee into neighboring areas may have pawned themselves as a means to join a community thereby acquiring what protections a kinship group or community might offer. The displacement of people could explain in part how the practice spread among different language groups over a wide area.

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[51] Scholars focused on the origins of the slave trade recognize European entry into an already existing market in people. In the same way, Europeans entered into an already large African market with enough complexity to suggest institutions of pawnship were already in place to facilitate trade in goods. Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism,* 27-54; Robin Law, "On Pawning and Enslavement for Debt in the Precolonial Slave Coast," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 55-69.

[52] A large amount of archeological work shows the antiquity of the trans-Saharan trade in West Africa the early introduction of cowrie shells from India. West Africa access to long distant trade was not a new feature of the European present especially along West African trans-shipment zones. Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

[53] No. 1198/46/1933, "Iwofa Means Voluntarily entered into Six Days Service for a Certain Consideration, i.e. to Raise Loan," J. O. Aboderin, in 1127 *Pawning of Children (Iwofa)* Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI.

[54] See Johnson.

Research suggests individuals were chosen for pawnship depending on their status within the kinship group and pawning decisions required the consent of more than one relative.[55] The process by which people were chosen to be pawned undermines the Kopytoff-Miers continuum of kinship rights where pawnship fell between slavery and full membership in the kinship group.[56] The continuum proposed by Kopytoff and Miers further falls apart when the status of children is considered. The proposed linear model of kinship rights and status fails to account for how age grades within the kinship group interacted with servile institutions. Child pawns spent their time with boys and girls of the same age within the family and they were protected by strict social rules that required the creditor to provide food and shelter for the child. Children had the ability to refuse to remain a pawn in which case the lender was forced to either repay the loan or offer a substitute pawn.[57]

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[55] No. 1198/46/1933, "Iwofa Means Voluntarily entered into Six Days Service for a Certain Consideration, i.e. to Raise Loan," J. O. Aboderin, in 1127 *Pawning of Children (Iwofa)* Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI. The description by Aboderin is corroborated by additional research. Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*.

[56] Suzanne Miers, and Igor Kopytoff. (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007). Mann was particularly critical in the continuum of kinship rights proposed by Miers and Kopytoff however Mann does not completely evaluate the role of age grades within kinship rights.

[57] Johnson, 129-130.

The concept of hereditary debt caused problems in the early 1900s owing to children who remained in pawnship because parents died before they were redeemed. Yet social mechanisms protected pawned individuals, especially children. At any time, a pawn could transfer his obligations to a new lender by making a new pawnship arrangement and paying off the old debt; a strategy unavailable to slaves. In the case of children, lenders were expected to care for the child by providing shelter and food and town leaders imposed harsh fines on lenders that abused children in any way.[58] Prior to colonial conquest, pawnship generally occurred in local settings with a short distance between the person pawned and their family, which made it easier to enforce pawnship rules.[59]

Status within the kinship group clearly played a deciding role in who was pawned. A description of Yoruba pawnship supports the conclusion:

> no, it is a disgrace to us and the rest of the family that its head be an *iwofa* on account of debt incurred on the common interest of the family when we the younger relations are there; one of us – either the younger brother or son – as is duty bound, must voluntarily offer to substitute his services for those of the Head of the family to his olowo.[60]

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[58] No. 1198/46/1933, "Iwofa Means Voluntarily entered into Six Days Service for a Certain Consideration, i.e. to Raise Loan," J. O. Aboderin, in 1127 *Pawning of Children (Iwofa)* Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI. Toyin Falola, "Slavery and Pawnship in the Yoruba Economy of the Nineteenth Century," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 127-128. Falola seems to support Kopytoff and Miers in that Yoruba folklore supports a difference in status between child pawns and children of the creditor. The quote "If the iwofa starts shivering" actually denotes the limitations in the creditors' responsibilities. Creditors were not required to provide pawns with clothing. Yet the protection child pawns received indeed must have varied based on creditor; however, the Miers and Kopytoff continuum does not account for a difference in kinship rights depending on age but only relationship to the kinship group.

[59] Ebiegberi J. Alagoa and Atei M. Okorobia, "Pawnship in Nembe, Niger Delta," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 99.

[60] Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 124. Iwofa is the Yoruba word for pawnship. The Olowo was the intermediary who brokered the pawnship arrangement.

The quote illustrates the connection between status, pawnship, and age in the kinship group. In this scenario the younger brother or son preserved the reputation of the household by preventing the senior family head from pawning himself. The connection between status, pawning and debt were important dynamics in the process of pawning people. There is evidence to suggest pawning denoted status; however, not necessarily in a purely derogatory manner. A family head being pawned to cover debts suggested that either the family lacked the resources to pawn a different member of the family or other family members, by refusing to be a pawn, were contradicting social etiquette. In either case, both situations suggested the kinship group no longer possessed the same resources and status.

The quote underscores the responsibility of individuals to the kinship group. The junior family members were bound by duty to contribute to the removal of the debt considering they benefited from the kinship group.[61] Whereas the quote suggests a degree of choice, in fact the junior members of the house had little choice but to pawn themselves as they "must voluntarily offer." Age grades, a determinant of social status within the kinship group, contributed to the process of selecting the person to be pawned. Yet when an individual within the kinship group was pawned, it did not necessarily indicate impoverishment. Whether pawnship carried a derogatory label depended on the reason for pawnship. Pawnship owing to debts related to unscrupulous deals or failed economic ventures led to a decline of status but pawnship used to increase a family's status including marriage, business ventures, titles or fulfilling social obligations did not necessarily carry negative connotations. Wealth and status were determined in part by the number of dependents in any given kinship group and the ability to pawn a junior member often indicated a process by which the kinship group expanded its resources.

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[61] Olatunji Ojo, "Emu (Amuya): The Yoruba Institution of Panyarring or Seizure for Debt," *African Economic History*, Vol. 35, (Jan 2007): 31-58; Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic history: The institutional foundations of the Old Calabar slave trade," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No.2 (Apr 1999): 333-355. Oji, Lovejoy and Richardson note the corporate nature to debt in that relatives were held responsible even after the death of the individual who owed money. Credit responsibility further supports the argument for evaluating labor within the kinship group as a single entity.

Social norms did not solely determine decisions regarding which member of the kinship group was pawned. The value of labor as related to economic activities appears to have varied based on gender and age grade.[62] The amount of goods or currency sought compared to the value of the labor of the pawned individual must be considered in evaluating when children were pawned and the gender of the pawned child. Debtors preferred to pawn female children whereas creditors often preferred male children. Debtors preferred to pawn female children because they could avoid repaying the loan. Once the girl reached marriageable age, it was common for the girl to marry a male within the creditor's household. Even if the girl chose to marry outside the creditor's household, the bride price covered the debt.[63] There was probably little incentive to redeem a pawned girl. Yoruba custom required girls to leave the kinship group when they married and become a member of the husband's household. Girls, therefore most often, sooner or later, married in exchange for a bride price.[64] Family heads who pawned daughters were taking an advance on the future bride price of the daughter to meet immediate financial needs or to expand their economic activity without waiting for the daughter to reach marriageable age. The connection between pawnship and marriage may have contributed to stabilizing bride price.

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[62] Johnson, 127.
[63] The groom would generally pay a bride price as well as the pawned debt.
[64] It was possible some girls did not marry but this was an uncommon situation.

Debtors wished to avoid pawning sons if possible owing to several issues. The agricultural labor of male children was important to the kinship group since male activities were often the most lucrative. Debtors avoided pawning young boys even though their labor contribution to the kinship was small. The reason related to how long it took to repay the loan. If the debtor was unable to repay the loan and the male child remained a pawn for several years the kinship group lost valuable manual labor. Creditors preferred pawned boys for this reason.[65] In addition to agricultural labor, Igbo creditors needed male labor to equip large trading canoes.[66] A girl, once she reached marriageable age, probably married thus releasing her from pawnship; however, boys lacked a similar opportunity for release. Creditors continued to reap the benefits of the pawned boy's labor into adulthood so long as the debt remained unpaid or the young man fled. If a boy fled a pawnship arrangement, the boys' family was required to repay the debt – another issue which encouraged kinship groups to pawn girls instead of boys.

The experience of boy pawns also differed from girls in that they generally did not join the creditor's kinship group. As pawned boys matured into adults, they faced the peculiar problem of being unable to start families. If the boy's parents' failed to redeem him, he had little hope of affording a bride price. These young men often sought deals with creditors to earn money so they could pay off the pawn debt and marry. Family heads who pawned male children lost the labor of the child, perhaps the labor of an adult male member of the kinship group, and often the opportunity to expand the kinship group when the young man married. Parents also faced long-term hardship if they pawned a male child. Without a social welfare system, as parents aged they depended on their children to support them. A family forced to pawn their male children increased their chances of being impoverished in old age.

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[65] Toyin Falola argues that creditors favored girl pawns over boys but the reason for this argument is unclear except that girl pawns provided additional household labor. In the early 1920s and 30s creditors may have rejected boy pawns owing to risks associated with being labeled a slave dealer. Creditors holding girls in pawn could avoid this by labeling the girl a wife acquired through bride price. However, colonial administrators through the 1930s rarely enforced the pawnship laws. It was most likely that debtors controlled which child was pawned and they most often placed girls in pawn over boys. Toyin Falola, "Slavery and Pawnship in the Yoruba Economy of the Nineteenth Century," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 125.

[66] Ebiegberi J. Alagoa and Atei M. Okorobia, "Pawnship in Nembe, Niger Delta," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 103.

Gender and the circumstances of debt greatly influenced the decision of a family to pawn a male or female child. Based on the downsides for pawning a son, families pawned boys when no other course was available. Boys were most likely pawned when the kinship group faced extreme conditions that threatened the survival of the kinship group or if the family had no female children to pawn. Girls on the other hand, because of credit acquired from bride price, were pawned more frequently and for a larger range of reasons.[67] Families tended to pawn girls regardless of whether the family experienced hardship or success. Poor kinship groups pawned boys and girls to cover debts or to escape poverty; however, successful kinship groups pawned more often pawned girls for economic expansion in trade or title taking.

Reasons for pawning individuals, including children, fell into two basic categories: hardships that required resources beyond the kinship group's immediate resources and strategies for the advancement of the kinship group. There is little doubt hardships including funerals, health problems, wars, famine, and other issues underpinned the use of pawnship. Funerals required special observances including spiritual rites and social obligations to the community. Funerals continued for several days and required the family to provide for community feasts and fees to priests or priestesses.[68] The cost of funerals rose during the nineteenth century and then fell as Christianity and Islam became more popular in the region. Prior to the transatlantic slave trade, funerals and marriages were the primary causes for pawnship.[69] Deaths in the family probably prolonged the term of pawnship for children owing to the need to raise funds for funeral costs and the labor lost from the departed family member.

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[67] Felix Ekechi, "Pawnship in Igbo Society," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 174.

Health problems placed a harsh burden on Yoruba and Igbo kinship groups. The cost of health care included fees paid to local herbalists and to priests or priestesses of a particular deity, who had the power to heal illnesses. People believed the surest way to recover from an illness required them to seek the assistance of both healing parties. It was likely that the price of these services gradually rose during the slave trade reaching a height during colonial conquest.[70] The cost of these services probably declined somewhat with conversion to Islam and Christianity; however, in dire situations, Muslims and Christians sought the assistance of local deities to cure illness. Illness probably hit poorer families (families with fewer dependents) hardest because sickness meant losing a member of the family's labor as well as pawning a child or other family member to acquire the funds for treatment.

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[68] E. Adeniyi Oroge, "Iwofa: An Historical Survey of the Yoruba Institution of Indenture," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 332-333.

[69] Johnson, 129; E. Adeniyi Oroge, "Iwofa: An Historical Survey of the Yoruba Institution of Indenture," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*.

[70] E. Adeniyi Oroge, "Iwofa: An Historical Survey of the Yoruba Institution of Indenture," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 331-332.

Famine and war affected child pawnship in a number of ways. They represented two key causes of migration in Nigeria.[71] A family forced to migrate sought ways to integrate into another community. Migration meant a loss of kinship status and land to cultivate. Marriage and pawnship were probably two of the most effective ways for a migrating family to integrate into a new community. Pawning children, in extreme cases, served as a strategy to avoid poverty. Families who faced the threat of starvation pawned children to gain food for the family and to protect children's health owing to the obligations of lenders to provide for child pawns. Creditors were obliged by custom to care for the child's maintenance including food and shelter. In some instances, debtors expected better care for their children under pawn than they could provide if the child remained at home.[72]

Strategies for kinship group advancement included education, purchasing titles, marriage, and business ventures. Pawnship as an advancement strategy may have existed before a monetized economy although there is little doubt that pawning for these reasons increased during and after the introduction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The origin of pawnship, partly owing to the antiquity of the term, probably began as a solution to economic hardship; however, the introduction of the slave trade and international commerce most likely increased the use of pawnship as an advancement strategy.

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[71] Judith Blyfield, "Pawns and Politics: The Pawnship Debate in Western Nigeria," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism,* 358. E. Adeniyi Oroge, "Iwofa: An Historical Survey of the Yoruba Institution of Indenture," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 326-327.

[72] Johnson, 129; E. Adeniyi Oroge, "Iwofa: An Historical Survey of the Yoruba Institution of Indenture," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 329-330.

Evidence until at least the 1940s suggests that credit remained an elusive commodity for many Yoruba families at a time when the cost of education and business increased along with new taxes and court fees, which required British currency.

The advantages of pawning a child extended beyond the immediate need for credit. The purpose of pawning a child for education began before European education was introduced through missionaries and colonial conquest. Pawning related closely to apprenticeship. Skilled craftsman guarded their trade and pawnship allowed children to learn a trade unknown within their kinship group. Families pawned children to craftsmen who in return benefited from the labor of the child while the child learned the trade. Families also pawned children to tradesmen and then instructed children to learn the trade by watching even if the craftsman did not explicitly plan to apprentice the child. The kinds of skills children learned depended on local conditions. Child pawns in the Niger Delta often learned lumbering and fishing trades.[73] Male children were probably most often pawned for this reason although some specialized trades were practiced by women. Girls who learned specialized trades such as midwifery or the use of herbs for healing may have increased their bride wealth, which benefited the kinship group once the girl married.

Titles and membership in secret societies offered Yoruba and Igbo people a way to increase their status within the community. Men and women sought to join secret societies and purchase titles, which gave them access to secret societies' resources and an increase in influence within the community. Men and women used pawnship to raise the necessary funds to buy titles.[74] Pawning a child required the consent of both parents according to social custom.[75] It was unlikely that self pawnship was a viable method for purchasing titles or gaining entrance to secret societies. Whereas pawnship in general did not carry a clear distinction of lower class status, secret societies and titles were exclusive clubs where the other members approved newer members. Self-pawning on some level indicated a lack of resources and current members of secret societies probably refused to accept new members with limited social standing. In fact, increasing the number of dependents in the kinship group took precedence over title taking. Title taking increased social prestige, but larger numbers of dependents brought with them economic stability.

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[73] Johnson, 129-130; Ebiegberi J. Alagoa and Atei M. Okorobia, "Pawnship in Nembe, Niger Delta," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 101.

Kinship groups used several strategies to increase their number of dependents including slavery, pawnship, and taking in impoverished relatives. Yet the most important means for increasing the size of the kinship group was through procreation. Marriage was a religious, social, and economic arrangement. The high cost of marriage placed economic strains on kinship groups but it also represented a key method to increase wealth. Pawning children to raise the necessary funds for bride price occurred regularly and increased throughout the early 1900s as the cost of bride wealth increased. Fathers and mothers pawned younger children, especially females, to afford the bride wealth for older male children. Families that had only male offspring faced a financial dilemma as to how to raise the funds for all of the male children to marry.

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[74] Felix Ekechi, "Pawnship in Igbo Society," in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 173.
[75] No 1198/46/1933, "Iwofa Means Voluntarily entered into Six Days Service for a Certain Consideration, i.e. to Raise Loan," J. O. Aboderin, in 1127 *Pawning of Children (Iwofa)* Ibadan Div 1/1 NAI.

Pawing children for business reasons occurred in both rural and urban areas. In the rural agricultural setting, parents used the credit acquired from pawned children to purchase access to more economic trees or to grow more produce for local trade. The largest amount of documentation related to pawnship and business included the role pawnship played in the trans-Atlantic slave trade; however, pawnship as a business venture probably predated the slave trade. Pawnship for business reasons in urban areas most often resulted from long distant or regional trading. Even though Britain outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808, pawned children continued to be important to trade relationships between Europeans and local communities.

Pawned children played an important role in the introduction of Christianity into Nigeria. Christian missionaries in the Yoruba region of Nigeria faced difficulty in winning converts. Missionary work was a business venture and missionaries struggled to establish a base in local communities. The value of pawns to missionary enterprise was intrinsic, "without slaves sag pawns no schools or churches could be erected in Yorubaland."[76] Missionary enterprise in western Nigeria depended upon the concept of purchasing destitute children from parents and then educating and converting them. In order to establish a support base, missionaries used donations from home offices to purchase slaves and engage in pawnship contracts to gain converts. Missionaries viewed these purchases as saving child slaves and pawns from the hardships of slavery and poverty. Missionaries especially targeted children pawns, the number of which steadily grew through the end of the nineteenth century.[77] Slaves and child pawns gave missionaries much needed labor to develop their land, grow crops, and assist in other church related labor activities. Missionaries openly complained about their inability to purchase labor through wages and felt no other course was available but to purchase slaves and child pawns. The church slaves and pawns were some of the first converts among the Yoruba people. Whereas missionary headquarters in London frowned upon buying slaves and pawns, missionaries viewed these activities as necessary to continue missionary efforts in the region.[78]

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[76] E. Adeniyi Oroge, in Lovejoy and Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism*, 341.

CONCLUSION

Child labor was a dominant feature that predated European conquest. It represented a need to maximize the labor of each kinship member and a socializing mechanism to educate children. Neither the Industrial Revolution, wage labor, nor European contact precipitated the practice of child labor in Nigeria; however, changes in labor and education overtime were profoundly influenced by interactions with colonial traders. The kinship group, the fundamental unit of economic production, informed the types of labor children performed, the kinds of education they received, and whether or not they served as pawns to assist the kinship group. Social rules to protect child pawns provide evidence that child labor before 1900 included a capacity for abuse. Whether child labor before 1900 can be characterized as instructive or exploitative depended on the specific context of individual cases. Children in this period experienced benefits as well as abuse related to servile institutions; however, pawnship was not a universally negative experience for children. It indicates the limits of child agency and that age partly determined rights within the kinship group.

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[77] Ibid., 339-341.

[78] Ibid.

The varied uses of pawnship and the possibilities for slaves to increase wealth contradict the linear continuum proposed by Kopytoff and Miers. Age grades along with a person's relationship to the kinship group determined social status and rights. A pawned slave was privy to the same protections as a pawned household member. The slave, as the property of kinship group, fell under pawning regulations which placed close stipulations on the treatment of pawned goods whether human or inanimate goods. The age grade system also governed how children interacted with adults. Even though a slave's social status was limited by their position, social custom forbid children from abusing their seniors. The dynamic between children and slaves within the kinship group differs from the experience of African American slaves where white children verbally abused adult slaves. Yet slavery reveals the limitations of the protection kinship groups gave to children in servile positions. Even though children possessed more rights than slaves within the kinship group, age played a key role in the ability of a pawn or slave to avoid abuse.

Child slaves and pawns occupied a central role in trade and labor prior to 1900. Children provided kinship groups with important labor and a means to acquire credit to meet emergency needs or to fund business ventures. Yet children played a more central role in their families and communities than just objects of economic strategy. Children were actors in social change and production. Children learned new skills and brought them back to the kinship group. They were exposed to new religions and ideas, which they also introduced to adults and parents. Children also rejected pawnship relationships and parents on occasion were forced to pawn a different member of the kinship group or repay a loan. Children also chose to run away; however, chapter two suggests this practice became more common after 1900.

Pawnship increased in the late 1800s owing to a decline in the slave trade even though the British colonial government did not abolish the internal slave trade. A desire for more dependents to work land for wealthier members of society coupled with wars and famines that endangered many agricultural communities underpinned a growth in the use of pawnship. Children composed a large number of pawned persons owing to both hardship and advancement strategies. Crises in the late 1800s provided the context for the beginning of a shift in society and economics which affected the labor experiences of children in the early 1900s. Colonial conquest presented new challenges for children after 1900 and this subject is the chief concern of chapter two.

Chapter Two

Slavery, Credit, and Labor in an Era of Transition, 1893 to 1937

INTRODUCTION

British conquest and the focus on 'legitimate' trade led to an emphasis on new markets in Nigeria. The Yoruba kingdoms relinquished political control in 1893 to British colonial officers whereas resistance continued in Eastern Nigeria until the defeat of the Ekumeku rebellion in about 1914 after a series of wars.[1] With the Royal Niger Company no longer able to maintain profits and fight Nigerian resistance, the British colonial government sought to secure trade routes for merchants and to end poll taxes levied by chiefs against long distance traders, which threatened to cut into the profits of British merchants. British demand for raw materials to fuel industrialization and the concomitant desire for overseas export markets drove British colonial policies in Nigeria. British conquest intended to solidify the relationship and secure British economic and strategic interests. The activities of British trading companies led to a trickle down affect that shifted the focus within Nigeria from domestic production to a cash crop economy. These economic shifts provide the background for changes in the role of child labor in the domestic economy.

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[1] The actual dates for the end of the Ekumeku resistance vary according to whether the capture of their leader is considered the end or if sporadic uprisings that followed are counted as a continuation of the war. Don C. Ohadike, *The Ekumeku Movement: Western Igbo Resistance to the British Conquest of Nigeria, 1883-1914* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991).

The relationship between kinship production and international trade was undergoing a process of change – change that influenced child slavery, pawnship, and education. As a part of establishing control, colonial officials initiated a series of regulations they believed benefited British trade and administration. Yet Nigerians continued to accept changes they found favorable to their culture and rejected other British policy agendas. Nigerians continued to place an emphasis on increasing the number of dependents in kinship groups in order to achieve economic stability and status. Even though labor relationships began to change between Nigerians and British traders, Nigerians continued to depend upon the kinship group as the primary means of production for the domestic economy. Interaction between British strategies for conquest and the Nigerian domestic economy led to a situation where the role of child labor in the economy continued, in some cases expanded, and resulted in dire consequences for some children. From the early 1900s until the 1930s, the story shows how Nigerians tended to ignore British laws related to children and tried to maintain the kinship production system. Children likewise either ignored British laws or used them to their advantage depending on individual situations.

In addition to an increased demand for Nigerian raw materials, British administrators required Nigerian labor to build an infrastructure to enable colonial conquest and a small cadre of workers to fill low level police and administrative posts. Forced labor from the early 1900s until the late 1920s allowed the building of roads and railroads. Labor conscription presented a problem for families owing to the dependence of the domestic economy on maximizing the labor of each individual. The practice of forced labor placed strain on communities and increased the importance of a large number of dependents to achieve economic stability. If anything, British conquest increased the importance of child labor to the family economy and contributed to impoverishment. A transition from food crops to cash crops, such as palm oil and cocoa, in the early 1900s placed greater emphasis on access to credit to acquire items for daily needs. Child pawnship shifted from an activity primarily associated with slavery and family crises to an integral part of the trading economy.

Changes in child pawnship and child hawking after 1920 suggest children took on a larger role in earning money for their families. In a letter to a district officer, Lawole wrote, "If there is no pawning or mortgaging children for money, the money lender will not give out money… please assist us, because all things that we are doing nowadays … most of us are getting money in such a way."[2] One administrator wrote of child pawning, "The custom is so prevalent in the Division that any drastic action might upset the Whole[sic] economic system of the area."[3] Chapter two illustrates how, regardless of changes in law and attempts by British officials to engage in a 'civilizing mission' that vilified child pawnship, children remained a crucial part of economic activity and entrepreneurialism well into the 1930s partly owing to the colonial economy, which promoted the very practices the 'civilizing mission' intended to curb.

British demand for secretaries, police, and other low level posts opened an avenue for Nigerians to make use of education offered by missionaries. Families viewed British education as a skill to be acquired that increased the status and resources available to the kinship group. It would be inappropriate to argue that Nigerians who sent their children to school intended to adopt British culture. Families approached British education in the same way they handled apprenticeships. Nigerian families were "absorptive and borrow[ed] from other cultures what [could] strengthen theirs."[4] Nigerians sought these new skills for their children and their use of British education varied according to the benefits they believed the skills offered them and their children.

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[2] Letter. Lawola Alarin to the District Officer at Oshogbo, June 19, 1933; No. 36/1927/17, Letter. Assistant District officer to the Akirun, Oshogbo, June 20, 1933, in 192 Pawning Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[3] No. O. D. 63/37, "Redemption from Slavery Cases," District Officer Oyo Division to The Resident, Oyo Province, Ibadan, Feb 6, 1936 in 1028 vol. 1, Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

Southern Nigeria experienced economic growth in the 1920s within the domestic economy and international trade regardless of the challenges British policies placed on Nigerian families' economic strategies. Yet by late 1929 and the early 1930s, Nigerians experienced a sharp decline in economic growth. The global depression reduced the price British traders were willing to pay for Nigerian goods.[5] At the same time, colonial taxes, pressure on access to land, and Nigerian demand for European goods increased their need for credit. Families pawned children at an increased rate while the value of British education offered few benefits to children. The effect of the economic crisis on children reached alarming proportions by the early 1930s when children migrated to cities in search of new opportunities and to avoid poverty.

The research in this chapter suggests child labor practices, specifically dealing in children and pawning, were not tied to poverty. Regarding child dealing, the desire of kinship groups to acquire more dependents, whether children or wives, related to an acquisition of wealth and not a strategy to avoid poverty. On occasion child pawning served a dual function as a method of social welfare to place a child in danger of poverty in a more secure home and as a method for attaining credit. Child pawning occurred as a means to access credit to expand business activities or to deal with unexpected catastrophes. The central position of children in economic activity prior to colonial conquest was directly related to the variety of childhood experiences during this period as Nigerians adapted cultural institutions to a new economic system.

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[4] Tanure Ojaide, "*Death and the King's Horseman in the Classroom*," in Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*, Simon Gikandi, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 118. Ojaide's comment specifically pertained to the Yoruba but the concept applies to the Igbo as equally well.

[5] Susan M. Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONS IN SLAVERY

The British Government outlawed slavery in all colonies in 1833 but the law had little direct affect within Nigeria until the government took over formal control in 1900 when the Royal Niger Company charter expired. Initially, the British colonial government considered all transfers of children to be illegal under anti-slavery laws. In one case, S. O. Roberts faced arrest by colonial authorities because he had two children in his possession who were not his biological children. Administrators arrived at the conclusion Roberts adopted the children because his wife did not have any children. Yet the colonial administration placed strict conditions on Roberts by mandating the children remained in Igbo territory; presumably to prevent the possibility of child dealing into other provinces.[6] According to returns on child mandates, the majority of children transferred to new guardians were orphans or whose parents were unknown, under the age of ten, and mostly girls.[7] The colonial administration set up a system to counter child stealing by paying churches to care for children they removed from the hands of presumed child dealers. In exchange the government paid compensation to churches or local families who cared for the children.[8]

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[6] No. B. P. 100/1914. Memorandum. Commissioner Benin Province to District Officer Ogwashi-Oku, June 19, 1914 in 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI.

In Eastern Nigeria, the Ekumeku resistance and British conquest mainly concerned Aro traders who managed long distant trade in the region. Aro traders specialized in the slave trade, which by 1900 was limited to an internal slave market. British colonial officials needed to supplant the Aro traders in order to eliminate trade tolls and capture the profits of Nigerian markets. British opposition to Aro slave trading houses suggests that in the early 1920s a small scale individual entrepreneur trade in slaves, especially slave children, supplied the internal market. Whereas British colonial officials did not institute a broad abolition program in Nigeria, British officials in the early decades of the 1900s filed reports on child stealing but with little results or thorough evaluation. The lack of documentation leaves questions about whether stolen children tried to return home or if they accepted their misfortune.[9] Yet the few details on child slavery suggest some important aspects of child labor during the period and the continued desire for kinship groups to increase dependents. Constraints on the formal slave trade caused families who sought an increase in kinship dependents to resort to child slave dealing.

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[7] No. B. P. 100/1914. Commission Benin Province to the Secretary Southern Provinces, Lagos, April 17, 1914 in 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI. British officials believed these children were being traded by Aro dealers out of Oguta.

[8] No. c. 1145/1913. Memorandum. Provincial Commission C. P. to the District Commissioner Asaba, Nov 29, 1913 in 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI.

[9] Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 113. Afigbo argued that kidnapping and child stealing occurred well into the 1940s even though colonial officials failed to acknowledge the problem. Yet the weakness in Afigbo's argument is that he does not seem to differentiate between possible cases of pawnship, child stealing, and child dealing. In addition, he fails to evaluate to what extent parents voluntary engaged in child dealing owning to the threat of poverty.

Children were stolen or adopted out under a number of false pretenses and subterfuge and these practices occurred from the early 1900s until well into the 1940s. In addition to girls being enslaved through dowry practices, children were stolen under the assumption that the trader would give the child an education, but once the child left with the trader the parents never heard from the child again.[10] Status and adult productivity depended on acquiring skills and parents were willing to seek access to new trades or trade networks as a means to acquire more status. The Resident of Owerri Province (a British colonial official) sought to petition the Secretary of the Southern Provinces in Lagos to extend child registration throughout the colony but the measure was rejected as unenforceable with their current resources. The request made by the Resident occurred in May 1917 when World War I was not yet resolved. The Colonial Secretary in Lagos made a recommendation that children should remain in the custody of the parents at all times.[11] Young children, classified as under ten years of age, were particularly in danger, because according to colonial officials, they were not able to testify in a court whereas older children could testify.[12]

The previous chapter explained how early mission efforts in Nigeria depended upon buying slaves and acquiring slave or pawned children to gain converts and provide the church with labor. The importance of children to church conversions continued into the early 1900s. Whereas buying children or engaging in child pawning contracts was no longer legal, churches used colonial mandate laws to take over the care of children who were either orphaned or believed to have been children sold into local slave markets.[13] Yet mandates did not offer children stable homes on most accounts. Churches generally took charge of children, but mandates required a specific individual to take responsibility. In the case of S. O. Roberts, the mandates carried a two year limit, after which the mandate was renewed or transferred. The young girl, Ogugua, in this case left Roberts' custody and entered the R. C. Mission owing partly to Roberts' need to leave the area and the mandate prevented him from taking Ogugua with him.[14]

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[10] Letter, the Secretary Southern Provinces, Lagos to the Residents Office Onitsha Province, June 23, 1917, CSO 19/5 O.P. 172/1917, NAI.

[11] Letter, the Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Lagos to the Residents Office, Owerri Province, May 1, 1917, CSO 19/5 No. I55/OW.I77/1917, NAI.

[12] Ibid.

Girls who remained under the care of a guardian for a long period of time faced problems when the guardian wanted to move and needed to leave the girls behind. In 1903, before two year limits were placed on guardianship, a guardian moved out of the region and left behind two girls one age fifteen and the other twenty. Colonial officials expressed concern about the situation because the girls did not have a family to rely on and one girl was twenty and they feared no one would agree to be the guardian of a girl who was at marriageable age.[15] The document underscores Victorian gender ideals where British officials were especially concerned with a need to protect girls from what they believed was an exploitative culture. British documents do not account for what happened to the girl; however, it was likely she married. Yet if she had been a member of a family under the normal social system of fosterage or even pawnship, the girl would probably have received more protection from a kinship group than she received as a ward of the state.

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[13] 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1. A large portion of the 100 page collection includes mandates to the R. C. Mission in Benin for children.

[14] Letter, The Commissioner, Benin City June 10, 1914 in "Slave Dealing in Nigeria," 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria Benin Prof 1/1, NAI.

[15] CSO 16/5 30/1903, Custody of Alien Children, NAI.

Child mandates on most occasions went to people who had associations with the colonial government. Directions for choosing guardians ordered that they, "must be trustworthy persons and very carefully chosen… the Roman Catholic Mission fathers may be able to suggest trustworthy guardians."[16] The government handed out mandates to Soni Eko who worked as a technical school carpenter instructor. He took guardianship over a four year old girl named Nkem-Fodu whose parents and original home location remained unknown.[17] David Kingston Gomes, a district clerk, took custody of a seven year old boy named Nwachuku whose parents and original home were also unknown.[18] Samuel Roberts, already mentioned, worked as the court clerk of the Ogwashi Oku native council. Each of these guardians may have taken custody of these children to perform a service of social welfare; however, it was likely these children performed chores to assist in household activities and gained some education from guardians. Each of these guardians worked in a capacity connected to the colonial administration and most of them were Igbo.[19]

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[16] P. 806/C. 1145/1913. Provincial Commissioner to the District Commissioner Asaba, Oct 10, 1913. "Slave Dealing in Nigeria," 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI.

[17] Mandate, April 29, 1914 in "Slave Dealing in Nigeria," 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI.

[18] Mandate, April 29, 1914 in "Slave Dealing in Nigeria," 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI. The two mandates are different contracts between the individuals and the colonial government; however, they were filed on the same day without distinguishing file numbers. CSO 16/5 30/1903, Custody of Alien Children, NAI. Mandates from as early as 1903 show that the colonial government placed children in the homes of residents closely associated with the administration prior to formal instructions to do so.

Colonial administrators sought to create space between the children of servants working for colonial administrators and British nationals even though the colonial government permitted employees to take in orphaned children or children recovered from child dealing activities. The sanitary commission ruled that “native children up to ten years of age are one of the chief factors in the spread of malaria.” The colonial government on the advice of the sanitary commission ordered, “All children under the age of ten years should be excluded from residing in government compounds.”[20] Colonial policy contradicted the social practice of young children remaining with their parents and learning from them by assisting in small tasks. Out of fear of disease, colonial officials sought to separate children from their parents’ place of work to limit Europeans’ contact with young children.

The colonial administration believed policies regarding slave dealing stamped out the practice by 1917, which was the last year Benin Province recorded a case.[21] Colonial administrators sought to double the prison term for slave dealing from seven to fourteen years on account of a decrease in slave dealing. Yet child dealing probably decreased less than colonial officials thought between the years of 1914 and 1931. A 1927 report suggests child dealing continued, but local inhabitants refused to cooperate with colonial officials.[22] Local people probably recognized the social function of pawnship and child dealing in terms of social welfare and rather than assist district officers local people found ways to circumvent the law. The increase in prison terms affected the practice of pawnship more than child dealing owing to the fact that child dealing was a onetime transaction whereas pawnship required the use of courts to recover debts. Yet people did not view all child dealing activities as acceptable. Many women expressed serious concerns about children being stolen from them and then sold.

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[19] Some of these guardians may have hoped to gain an eventual bride price from the girls owing to comments regarding the duration of the mandate and the extent of their rights, which may partly account for the high number of girls taken under custody of mandates.

[20] M. P. No. B. 562/1917. Secretary Southern Provinces to Resident Benin Province, April 24, 1917 in 218 Children of Native Servants, Residents in Government Compounds, Benin Prof 4/4, NAI.

[21] Memorandum. Resident Benin Province to the Secretary Southern Provinces Enugu, July 29, 1931 in B. P. 425/19 Slave Dealing, Reports of, Benin Prof 2/6, NAI.

In 1929 women in the Igbo provinces of Nigeria complained to government officials about child stealing. Women who engaged in the Women's War of 1929 used child stealing as a reason to question the efficacy of the colonial government and to petition changes. They connected bicycle use to child stealing by arguing that bicycles made it easier for thieves to grab children and then escape capture.[23] Colonial officials questioned the relevance of the woman's complaint; however, later evidence proved the women had valid concerns. In 1932 officials reported persistent cases of child stealing in Okigwi Division where they suspected organized gangs were engaged in "a steady trade in stolen children."[24] Colonial officials later concluded that the trade was largely conducted by individuals and not organized gangs.[25] A trade in stolen children existed between Obowo, Umuahia, and Umuokpara in Bende Division. According to some sources, the children were sold to childless parents in Obubra; however, some officials believed children were used in rituals.[26]

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[22] M. P. No. B. P. 425/1919. "Offences Connected with Slave Dealing," The Resident Benin Province to the District Officers Benin Province and the Assistant District Officer Agbor, Nov 18, 1927 in B. P. 425/19 Slave Dealing, Reports of, Benin Prof 2/6, NAI.

[23] CE/K5, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Disturbances in the Calabar and Owerri Provinces, December 1929*, (Lagos: Government Printer, 1930), 61.

[24] CSO 28994. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing, Southern Provinces," Owerri Province, Annual Report, 1932, NAI.

[25] CSO 28994. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Apr 20, 1936, NAI.

The mechanics of child stealing presented serious problems to families and especially to mothers. Some child stealing occurred when acquaintances of a family earned trust and then waited for an opportune moment to steal a child. Ebubu Dike and an accomplice who were friends of Mbeke's father attempted this when the mother left Mbeke in their charge while she traded at the market. When she returned, the child and the men were gone. Ebubu Dike was later captured and Mbeke returned to her family's care.[27] Mbeke's family had moved to Port Harcourt and her father worked on the railway as a laborer. Migration from their original community presented problems because they lacked the support of a kinship unit. In a kinship setting, Mbeke's mother would have left the child in the charge of another woman or an elderly member in the household while she traded at market. In rural areas, child stealing also interfered with the normal socialization process of children.[28] With the danger of child stealers, children who participated in chores such as collecting water or delivering messages for elders were at greater risk.

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[26] CSO 28994. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," letter Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Enugu to The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos. Nov. 23, 1933, NAI.

[27] Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade,* 76.

[28] Memorandum. Resident Benin Province to the District Officer Ishan Division, Sept 9, 1919 in B. P. 425/1919, Slave Dealing, Reports of, Benin Prof 2/6, NAI. A girl aged fifteen was stolen while on her way to the market. The man who allegedly stole her also had a boy aged eleven in his household. Another report from Kwale district also records girls being stolen while on their way to the market. 62 vol. 1. Slave Dealings, Papers Related to, Kwale Dist 1, NAI. Colonial officials also believed child stealers used canoes to kidnap girls on their way to markets. No. K. 92/1928/15. Memorandum. The District Office Kwale to the Resident Warri Province, July 24, 1928 in 62 vol. 1. Slave Dealings, Papers Related to, Kwale Dist 1, NAI.

Colonial officials traced many of the girls sold under the pretense of marriage but experienced so many problems finding stolen boys that they feared the boys were used in ritual sacrifices. Apparently the trade in children remained an important economic activity for men and in some cases it was possible that owning slaves was a prerequisite for membership in the Oboribori and Ekpoti clubs.[29] Yet colonial officials found no direct evidence that ritual sacrifices occurred and they were generally ineffective in enforcing protection for children who were stolen and sold. In March of 1934 alone, the colonial government received seventy-six complaints from parents whose children were stolen from districts near Owerri and Umuahia.[30] British officials attributed the majority of child stealing and slave dealing to the Aro despite many attempts by the British to stop all of their activities.[31] Generally, British fears about the activities of the Aro were unfounded and in many ways British preoccupations with the Aro misled them from finding actual slave dealers.

The efforts of constables under disguise and Nigerians in the employ of colonial officials discovered a complex network of child stealing and dealing in southeastern Nigeria.

> Stolen children are taken to Okuehe and he sends a boy named Obona Izala to Aro Chuku either by train as far as Aba or by bicycle to call Ngwu of Aro Chuku, Kalu of Aro Chuku and Lemedim of Aro Chuku. These three men are alleged to be well known buyers of children. They go to Amachara and buy any children in possession of Okeuhe

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[29] CSO 28994. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Enugu to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, June 14, 1934, NAI.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

> and return by bush path through Uzuakoli, Bende and on to
> Aro Chuku.[32]

On occasion the slave dealers employed women to pose as the child's mother in case the child was questioned by colonial officials while traveling on a train. This report from 1935 also affirms the complaints of Igbo and Ibibio women in 1929 who informed colonial officials that bicycles were an important element in child stealing.

Investigators employed by colonial officials discovered a trading network in children that responded to market forces. The interior provided a supply of children for which there was a demand by coastal ethnic groups. Traders acted as middlemen who brokered the transaction and delivery of the children. In the case of the Aro, the shift in a focus on the trade of children represented a response to British colonial tactics in how they dealt with Aro slave dealing. During the 'pacification' campaigns of the early 1900s, British officials confiscated a large number of firearms and engaged in combat with the Aro. The result forced slave traders to find new markets and methods for moving children.

British officials explained the trade and stealing of children by blaming the demand for children on the Ijaws. They categorized the people as "mostly degenerate and have a low birth-rate… it is due to persistent prostitution and the practice of abortion."[33] They further referred to the Igbo as the more vigorous group and the only way the Ijaw could maintain their community was to engage in a market for children. British perception of the Ijaws reflects the intersection between the 'civilizing mission' and racism, which continued to include a cultural element. British policy lamented the market in children but also expressed a sense of ambivalence. Rather than consider a need for new policies to end the trade, they placed blame on what they believed to be a degenerate group of people. British officials failed to examine the trade in children in terms of the social context and the shift in economic activity from slave trading to raw materials. British officials believed the proper way to address the problems were through the ideals of the 'civilizing mission' and increasing education; however, the colonial government took little notice beyond announcing bulletins in a propaganda campaign.

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[32] CSO 28994 No. S.P. 9994/194. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Jan 31, 1935, NAI.

[33] CSO 28994 No. S.P. 9994/194. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Jan 31, 1935, NAI.

British reports fail to offer context for child dealing and they do not explore any cultural reasons for the practice. Girls may have been sold when parents were unable to find husbands for them.[34] Many of the children traded through the Aro were young and these children were absorbed into coastal families and they did not carry the social designation of having been a slave.[35] Whereas stealing children was a troublesome problem for many families, there was an aspect to the trade in child dealing grounded in economic and cultural conditions – a process where children were actually protected from poverty and adopted out to new families.

The transaction aspect of the trade in children should not be completely vilified. Even in contemporary societies adopting children involves large sums of money. Families recognized the value of their children's labor to the kinship unit and expected the receiving family to compensate them if they traded the child. The trade network included cases of child stealing but also transactions approved by parents. Some families possibly feared poverty and preferred their child live with another family. The relatively low number of accounts of stolen children may suggest that when parents were unable to pawn a child they may have resorted to child dealing. Owing to the illegal nature of the trade, British documents do not offer an explanation for why these children were sold by parents; however, there are a few possibilities. Based on the explanations for alien children brought into Lagos in 1910, a large number of the children who were brought to coastal cities may have been orphans. Other children may have been sold owing to poverty, deformities, or other social reasons, such as illegitimate children.[36]

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[34] CSO 28994. No. S. F. 9994/270. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Aug 8, 1935, NAI.

[35] CSO 28994 No. S.P. 9994/194. "Slave Dealing and Child Stealing," Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Jan 31, 1935, NAI.

The economics of the kinship group partly explains transactions in children. The market operated according to the rules of supply and demand. In some cases the value of the child to a coastal family may have been greater than the value of an additional child's labor to the family's kinship unit. Families with a large number of children and limited land to work may have decided to adopt out their children. In this sense, the kinship group most likely responded to the rules of economies of scale where once the size of the kinship group exceeded agricultural resources; the labor of additional family member resulted in diminishing returns. On the other hand, receiving families along the coast engaged in some agricultural activities, but mostly depended on a trade economy and may have benefited from hawking child labor. Yet the trade in children should not be viewed solely as an issue where parents were unattached to children, but rather when children were voluntarily adopted out, it was probably done to protect the child.

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[36] Mandate, 1913 in 2270 Slave Traffic in Nigeria, Benin Prof 1/1, NAI. The mandate describes a young girl as being of "a yellowish complexion" and "knock kneed."

Child stealing on some occasions was a way for men without enough work to augment their income; however, the primary reason for child stealing appeared to relate to a larger demand for children than the supply rural families were willing to provide. Aro traders and other child traders stole children when they were unable to find families willing to part with children. Taxation may have also encouraged child stealing because selling children to traders provided rural residents disposable income to pay the fees.[37] Even for children who were stolen, it is difficult to classify them as slaves even though it appears the same slave trading networks were used to sell the children. There is no evidence to suggest that children stolen and sold along these trade networks were treated as slaves or later sold off or disadvantaged in any way. It was true few of these children were returned to their original homes but kidnapping and slavery were not synonymous institutions.

Child stealing continued into the 1930s. Women especially in the 1940s petitioned the colonial government on several occasions to assist them when their children had been stolen. Women who were most as risk to lose children appeared to be those who had a promiscuous reputation. The rights to a child were given to the father and not the mother. On several occasions men paid someone to take a child and then when caught the man claimed the child was his.[38] The colonial government was caught between attempting to prevent the transfer of the care of children from the mother to another person and the problem of whether to accept child marriages or counter cultural norms regarding marriage in order to prevent a loophole in the legal system. By 1942 the colonial government concluded that the majority of child dealing transactions involved girls under the guise of child marriages.[39]

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[37] CSO 28994. No. S. F. 9994/270. “Slave Dealing and Child Stealing,” Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Aug 8, 1935, NAI.

The ability of the colonial government to respond to petitions asking for stolen children to be recovered appeared to be limited. Yet in cases where children were recovered, ethnic markings played a role in finding the children.[40] The success of child stealers relied on quickly leaving a district or province before the incident was reported to the colonial authorities. Once in another province, no one knew the child and it was easier for child stealers to trade the child; however, ethnic markings assisted colonial officials to identify missing children. Even though colonial officials made a point to disseminate information regarding stolen children, the number of petitions sent by parents to colonial authorities was quite low. Either a large number of children associated with child dealing occurred with the approval of the parents or parents did not believe the colonial administration could recover their children.

The business of child stealing in Nigeria connected to larger networks into neighboring colonies in West Africa. By the late 1930s, the colonial government received petitions from the Nigerian Youth Movement to work with the Gold Coast to stop traffic in young girls who were being stolen and sold as prostitutes.[41] Evidence from the 1940s supports the conclusion that the practice of child stealing, although reduced, continued. Cooperation between local peoples, Native Courts, and colonial officials reduced the risk of child stealing.[42] Opposition to child stealing and dealing within Nigeria may not have ended the practice but contributed to the movement of girls outside the region in order to avoid capture and detection.

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[38] CSO 28994. No. 9994/40. “Child Stealing,” Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Jun 11, 1941, NAI.

[39] CSO 28994. No. 9994/459. Secretary of the Southern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos from, Sept 3, 1942, NAI.

[40] 62 vol. 1 Slave Dealings, Papers Related to, Kwale Dist. 1, NAI.

The persistence of child dealing underscores the importance of child labor and the value of children to the domestic kinship economy. Yet child dealing was only one aspect of the connection between child labor and economic activity. Pawnship was a far more common strategy used by parents than selling children and the selling of children often represented an extreme decision of last resort. Pawnship, a different institution from slavery, overlapped with slavery and child dealing in many ways. Child stealing reflected the continued importance of dependents to kinships groups and the creation of wealth. An end to the formal internal slave market caused elite coastal families accustomed to enlarging their number of dependents to seek out new strategies. For a short period of time and in a limited capacity, child stealing supplied coastal families with an influx of children, which replaced the formal slave market of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

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[41] CSO 36005 vol. 1. Traffic in Girls from Nigeria to the Gold Coast, NAI.

[42] 1291 Kidnapping of Children, Matters relating to, Sept 12, 1947, Ibadan Div 1/1, NAI.

CREDIT, CHILD PAWNING, AND RESISTANCE

The reasons for pawning and child pawning in particular changed little between the pre 1893 years and the first decade of the twentieth century. Families pawned children "for their parents' funeral … expenses" or "if the parents, father or mother incurred debt."[43] Parents or guardians also used pawnship to initiate business transactions or increase dependents by "pulling some sort of litigation for boundary of a house or landed property or properties" and "to increase their family or families by securing another wife."[44] Child pawnship continued to be used as an avenue to raise funds to provide for health services for ill members of the kinship group. The uncle and mother of a girl aged eight named Awobimpe pawned the child for three pounds to pay for the medical expenses for their mother who was ill.[45] The inability of the family to raise three pounds without pawning the child suggests the kinship group was relatively poor and underscored a general problem of credit access throughout the first several decades of the twentieth century.

The primary difference between child pawning before 1900 and after the imposition of colonial rule related to colonial officials' inconsistent or in some cases haphazard enforcement of pawning legislation. Initially, prior to 1923, colonial officials categorized pawning as slavery and only after continued explanation by Yoruba Bale's did officials acquiesce to a modified version of pawnship which criminalized the pawnship of children. The development of pawnship legislation after 1923 followed a course of ups and downs where colonial officials debated laws when issues arose but actually enforced few changes until the 1940s. The primary issue related to the inefficacy of British law when Native Courts refused to enforce laws and local families ignored the legislation. From the perspective of Nigerian families, whether child pawnship increased or declined, depended more on their needs for credit and less on British legislation.

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[43] 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[44] No. 1198/46/1933 "Pawning System," Bale's Office to the District Officer, Ibadan, Dec 11, 1934, 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[45] No. 129/369, "Case of Pawning," District Officer Ibadan Northern District to the Senior District Officer, Ibadan, Aug. 20, 1941 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

The colonial government sought ways to prohibit the practice of pawning in the early 1920s, especially the pawning of children. Administrators, through feedback from local chiefs, finally recognized the basic difference between pawnship and slavery but found particular aspects of the institution undesirable. Regarding children, colonial officials believed child pawnship was an equivalent to slavery, "there is no difference between receiving as pawn or pawning out small children and slave trade."[46] The correlation between child pawnship and slavery related to the concept that children lacked the power to choose whether or not they were pawns. The inability of a child to choose a pawnship labor relationship, for the British, meant child pawnship was slavery by another name. The issues of third party pawning led to an amendment to the legal code stating, "The pawning of persons usually children, by some other person is strictly prohibited."[47]

The colonial government had a somewhat haphazard approach to enforcing pawnship legislation characterized by inconsistency throughout the early 1900s even though a letter from Downing Street in 1922 emphasized to need "to stamp out this practice."[48] The inconsistency of legal enforcement is attributed to Nigerian resistance to limitations on their rights to engage in pawnship contracts. In 1927 the colonial administration issued a statement for circulation to administrators that demonstrated their ambiguity towards pawnship legislation.

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[46] Notice. "Pawning is Prohibited," 1937 in *1*127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[47] "Draft Instructions to Native Courts, Iwofa,"1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

> It is not the intention of Government that there should be any rigid enforcement of the Slavery Ordinance or that Political Officers, Chief, or Judges should take any action that is likely to precipitate any economic upheaval…. It is obvious that any sudden action on the part of the government with this time honoured custom of borrowing money will cause very great inconvenience and hardship to the people, and upset the ordinary life of Yoruba families.[49]

The colonial administration's stance on child pawnship diverged from their general ambiguity towards adult pawnship during the 1920s. Just a few years later, the administration stated, "that the government wishes to discourage the system of pawning especially cases wherein the persons pawned are children."[50] On the verge of economic downturn, the colonial administration shifted policy from pawnship toleration to active abolishment.[51]

As early as 1927, some colonial administrators took a hard line against pawnship stating, "the present system of Iwofa shall cease as not being in accordance with the principles of civilization particularly where children are concerned."[52] Colonial administrators, as did missionaries in the late 1800s and early 1900s, depended upon the relationship between administration and children to advance their concept of the 'civilizing mission.' From the colonial administrators' perspective, the persistence of child pawnship contracts, regardless of the social reasons or economic necessity for credit, represented the failures of the colonial project to affect social change. As we will see later, colonial officials often focused on children's social welfare and education as the primary method for influencing social practice. Even though the colonial administration tended to side with pawns when settling disputes, some creditors, with the assistance of Bale's, placed pawns back into servitude after district and assistant district officer's rotated out of the region.[53]

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[48] No. C. 8/1923, Confidential Letter, Governor Sir Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Dec 12, 1922 in Pawning of Children, Ijebu Prof 3/9, NAI.

[49] No. c. 4/23 Memorandum, "Pawning of Children," Senior Resident Oyo Province to The District Officers Oyo, Ibadan, Ife, and Oshogbo, Feb 14, 1927 in 1028 vol. 1 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

[50] No. 0060/34, J. G. Lawton, District Officer Ibadan to the Native Courts, Ibadan Division, July 11,1929 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[51] Frederick, Cooper, "From Free Labor to Family Allowances: Labor and African Society in Colonial Discourse," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Nov., 1989): 745-765. Cooper noted that the British believed the best course for economic development was to abolish servile institutions. These institutions by definition hindered free market trade and limited profits. The data on child pawnship contradicts the British assumption. Evidence related to Nigerian child labor suggests child pawnship was an important institution related to economic mobility and access to credit.

By 1937 the colonial government passed a new law abolishing all forms of pawnship; however, the agreement was that stamping out pawnship completely at that time was undesirable but they wished to give the impression pawnship was illegal without taking direct action, "But I do not consider that it would be proper publicly to announce that we do not intend to enforce the law."[54] The inconsistency in enforcement was attributed partly to the rotation of colonial administrators, lack of enforcement by chiefs, and a general concern of colonial officials as to exactly what consequences the law would have on the economy. The inconsistency in policy, as petitions show, created a level of instability in the financial arrangements between those needing credit and creditors.[55]

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[52] "Public Notice," W. A. Rose, Senior Resident, Oyo Province, Feb 1, 1927 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun Div 1/1, NAI.

[53] Letter, Ezekiel Adenirin to District Officer Ibadan Northern District Oshogbo, Oct 12, 1943 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[54] "Iwofa," G. D. Williams Acting Resident Oyo Province to the Honorable Secretary Southern Provinces, Enugu, Mar 11, 1938 in *1*028 vol. 2 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

The colonial government initiated a two pronged attack against pawnship which included changes in pawnship policies and a propaganda campaign. Administrators enlisted the assistance of chiefs to change a key aspect of pawnship contracts they perceived to be pernicious, namely unending servitude until the debtor repaid the money in full. Colonial administrators sought to amend pawnship labor to cover more than the interest on loans.[56] Colonial administrators calculated an interest rate and value for labor so that pawned labor reduced the principal of the debt by a set amount depending on whether the creditor provided a meal to the laborer on working days.[57] Whereas the colonial administration expected child pawnship to be illegal, it continued and the legislation calculated only the value of adult labor so that the labor of child pawns did not reduce the debt.[58] This led to two problems for child pawns. Many children continued to remain in servitude into adulthood because their labor failed to reduce the debt and creditors may have favored child pawns so long as they believed they were safe from prosecution in the courts.

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[55] Toyin Falola, "'My Friend the Shylock': Money-Lenders and Their Clients in South-Western Nigeria," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 403-423. During the 1930s, a process of change in credit institutions from indigenous cultural practices to a Western style system appeared to create a credit crisis where some people who needed credit were unable to attain it or did so at high rates and on occasion lenders faced difficulties in recovering their money.

[56] Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo to the Resident Oyo Province, Oct. 6, 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[57] "Draft Instructions to Native Courts, Iwofa," 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[58] No. S. P. 183/vol 11/90. Memorandum, "Pawning of Children," Feb 6, 1927, C.8/27, Ijebu Prof 3/11, NAI. Colonial officials determined the rate of decrease on the principle of the loan for labor services applied to pawns aged sixteen or older. The assistance district officer of Oshogbo suggested a debt be reduced for the services of a released girl pawn but no specific guidelines existed; No. 76/36/1927. Assistance District Officer Oshogbo to the Olotan of Otan, Jan 13, 1928, 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI; No. 36/1927, "Iwofa Matters Re.," Resident Oyo Province to Assistant District Officer, Northern District Oshogbo, Oct 6, 1934, NAI. 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI. One chief in particular opposed the new system of reducing the debt overtime of service by arguing pawns had several opportunities outside of pawn service to redeem themselves and that it was not agreeable for pawn brokers to spend the extra time inquiring into the about of labor performed and calculating the rates. No. 406/10, "Pawning," District

The dissemination of British policy regarding pawnship included a strategy, "by means of proclamations and propaganda."[59] Administrators agreed, "that a notice regarding pawning should be drawn up in Yoruba and produced at the next meeting with a view to its circulation in villages and markets. Bells will also be rung warning people against the practice."[60] However the aggressive proclamations appeared to do little to curb the practice of child pawning in 1937 even though creditors and debtors faced fines and prison sentences. Creditors' desire for dependents and labor along with debtors' needs for credit often outweighed the potential risks of prosecution. In fact, the documents suggest that cases of child pawnship only reached the colonial authorities in instances of abuse or when children reached adulthood and sought an escape from pawnship arrangements. The limitations of British policy to affect any immediate changes related to chiefs' unwillingness to enforce the legal code and also uncertainty among British officials as to which courts should deal with child pawnship cases.[61]

The reasons for child pawnship changed little, but the need for credit in a growing international economy placed increased strain on Nigerian households. British colonial

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Officer Oyo Division to the Resident Oyo Province, Nov 23, 1937, *10*28 vol. 2 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

[59] No. 1028/65, "Status of certain groups of people in the Southern Provinces of Nigeria," Resident Oyo Province to the District Officer Ibadan, Nov 2, 1937 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[60] Untitled and unnumbered memo, Nov 16, 1937 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[61] "Pawning," District Officer Ibadan Northern district, Oshogbo, Sept 24, 1943 in 192 Iwofa Oshun Div 1/1, NAI.

pressure on the practice of pawnship along with new economic arrangements presented Nigerians with a serious problem during the depression years from the 1930s to 1940s. Families were slow to abandon the practice of child pawning regardless of legislation passed by the British colonial government. Complaints from children or adults who related childhood experiences as pawns played a significant role in the colonial government's pressure on abolishing pawnship practices. The slow decline of child pawnship practices were attributable to the inability of the colonial government to actually enforce their legislative agenda; however, cooperation with chiefs led to a revision in the social and legal practices that governed pawnship.

Changes in child pawnship related to two important dynamics occurring at the time. Rising costs of bride price and the general need for more credit led families to seek out ways to acquire the funds they sought in a retracting economy. The increase in these costs led to an increase in the interest creditors wanted from pawnship arrangements. The change in the interest cost – labor requirement – for adults meant it became more favorable for parents to pawn children instead of themselves. In addition, child pawnship was a key component for Nigerian entrepreneurs to finance their businesses. The second important change that occurred was a gradual shift from status as a primary designation of social hierarchy to a more class based division of society. Status remained important but wealth began to significantly define access to political power. Child pawns were often caught in a cycle of hardship where their parents were unable to redeem them and they remained servants into adulthood. Elite members who possessed pawn contracts on occasion used their wealth to circumvent rulings in the local courts. Access to labor, such as child pawns, allowed wealthy elites to increase their dependents for cash crop cultivation without relying on wage labor – a practice Nigerians continued to detest.

By the early 1920s, creditors' expectations for the labor interest on loans increased by at least three times. The increase in the interest on these loans partly corresponded to a general increase in prices, such as bride price. As outlined in the previous chapter, the social expectation for adult pawns was one day of work per week on the creditor's property in which the work day ended by noon. However, by the mid-1920s, creditors received three days of labor per week to cover the interest on loans. Chiefs reported that "pawned persons were in the habit of working for their creditors for 3 days in 5 days and then only half a day work each day."[62] The early hours of the day – before noon – were considered the best working hours and the loss of three work days probably made self-pawning an undesirable practice. One account from the early 1920s states, "it is quite easy for him to mortgage the services of one more of his progeny for the purposes of affecting a loan."[63] An increase in child pawning during the early 1930s related to the increase in interest on adult pawnship and economic problems associated with the depression.[64]

The cost of court fees and taxes presented families with additional credit problems and precipitated a rise in child pawnship. Taxes in eastern Nigeria led to child pawning in the late 1920s and unfortunately for Nigerians, the practice of taxation was introduced in Western and Southern Nigeria only a few years before the region felt the effects of the global depression.[65] In addition to taxes, court fees for litigation placed pressure on families' credit resources. Court corruption and related bribes and court fees were major reasons for the Women's War of 1929 in eastern Nigeria.[66] High court fees and limited access to credit existed in Western Nigeria as well. Families continued to pawn children to pay court fees.[67] A rise in child pawnship led to more aggressive policies by colonial administrators to deal with the institution; however, rule changes happened slowly. Throughout the 1930s, the practice of child pawnship was modified by Nigerians owing to immediate needs and by pressure from colonial authorities. The increased need for credit along with new methods of transportation led families to borrow money from creditors further from their location of residence. Child pawns, according to earlier rules, were allowed to see their parents whenever they wished. Distance added new limitations on the freedom of pawns and colonial officials questioned the danger distance presented to child pawns, "especially in those cases where children are sent to serve debtors who live in places far from the child's home."[68] The general assertion that pawned children resided long distances from their families is supported by prosecutions of debtors and creditors who pawned children. One boy, Adebayo from Lokoja, was pawned to a man from Oshogbo (a distance of approximately 130 nautical miles).[69]

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[62] "Extract from Minutes of a meeting of the Ibadan Native Administration Executive Council held on Tuesday the 4th day of December 1934," in *1*127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[63] No. C. 8/1923, "Care and Training of Children," in Pawning of Children*,* Ijebu Prof 3/9, NAI.

[64] Martin Klein and Richard Roberts, "The Resurgence of Pawning in French West Africa During the Depression of the 1930s," in Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, eds. *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003). Klein and Roberts showed that the depression directly related to a broad increase in pawnship in French West Africa. The situation for people in Nigeria was similar. The conclusion is that the depression affected peoples across West Africa in similar ways.

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[65] 1028/2 "Pawning," The Assistant District Officer Oshogbo, June 1, 1933 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[66] Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs.*

[67] No. 1198/46/1933, "Pawning System," Bale's Office to the District Officer, Ibadan, Dec 11, 1934 in *1*127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI; 1028/2 "Pawning," The Assistant District Officer Oshogbo, June 1, 1933, 192 Iwofa**,** Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[68] S. 49/32, "Pawning," Resident Oyo Province, June 6, 1932 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

Child pawnship practices prior to colonial influence included a few other important characteristics, which began to erode by the early 1930s. If a child pawn was mistreated in some way or found their service undesirable, the parents transferred the child to another creditor and paid off the former. Yet British administrators viewed the transfer of pawn agreements as a form of selling the child and ruled that "The child so pawned must not be transferred or sold as slave, during the term of his or her service."[70] The intent of the previous ruling was to protect the welfare of a child from persistent movement or abuse; however, it by default gave creditors increased power over child pawns, which becomes evident in the petitions sent to colonial officials.

Owing to the prohibition on transferring a pawned child from one creditor to another, pawn related labor contracts were not supposed to continue after the debtor died "but at the death of his or her father or mother the child so pawned will return to the parent, when the whole families or the surviving brother or sister will be responsible for the debt."[71] The evidence suggests families circumvented British opinions on this matter whenever possible; however, if a creditor chose to sue in court, the family faced the dilemma of being forced to pay the balance of the debt. Whereas the old pawn contract was nullified by the death of the creditor, families often re-pawned children to a new creditor, if they found one, to pay the debt. Orphaned children were left with few options to challenge the pawnship arrangement. Yet the very pawnship relationships so vilified by the colonial government also functioned as a social welfare system whereby many orphaned children received a degree of protection from poverty or homelessness.

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[69] No. 513/1933/6, Letter. the Assistant Commissioner of Police to the District Officer of Oshogbo, Northern Provinces, Nigeria, July 15, 1933 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[70] Letter. Awawu Agoji to the Resident Ibadan, Mar, 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[71] 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, 1934, NAI.

When the kinship system broke down and children became orphans with few relatives, child pawnship offered a means of protection from poverty. One young boy lost his father and the mother suggested the boy's uncle, Ajayi, adopt the boy. He did so and soon after the ill mother died, Ajayi also became ill. The boy worked with Ajayi for three years on farms near Ibadan and Oshogbo. Ajayi writes, "I then became ill… Adebayo was still with me. He said let me go and get money to help you. He went to a man named Abiyola at Oshogbo… Adebayo agreed to go as security… I spent the money on food and medicine."[72] Ajayi remained sick up to the time he wrote the letter to defend himself against prosecution for pawning a child. From his perspective, pawning the child allowed him to get medicine and the pawnship contract protected the boy from poverty. One British administrator reported, "I am of the opinion that in very few instances do the 'pawns' suffer real hardship and in the majority of cases the pawns are better cared for by their pawn masters than in their own homes."[73]

The colonial government recognized the connection between the desire for credit and child pawnship, "the trouble seems to be that Yorubas always want credit and think they will pledge children… for credit if they get the chance but they always think they can redeem them"[74] Men used the credit gained from child pawns for more than business activities. Three men were convicted of using child pawns to raise money to pay bribes for a vacant political position. The men received fifty pounds total for pawning several boys in 1933.[75] A farmer in a similar case received six boys as surety for a thirty-six pound loan to Ibiloye who sought the stool of Timi.[76] Children also faced conditions of pawnship owing to a death in the family. The death of parents left some children without the necessary kinship protection from poverty especially if the dead parent owed a debt. The transfer of debt from a parent to his children or family members after death resulted in the pawnship of children. In fact, in one case, a creditor valued a girl pawn over a small cocoa farm owned by the deceased parent.[77]

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[72] "Statement of Ajayi," 192 Pawnship Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[73] No. O. D. 63/37, "Redemption from Slavery Cases," District Officer Oyo Division to the Resident, Oyo Province, Ibadan, Feb 6, 1936 in 1028 vol. 1, Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, creditors and debtors circumvented the legal restrictions on child pawning by drawing up contracts that avoided mentioning the involvement of children. If the creditor or debtor ended up in court over an issue of pawning, they avoided the heavy fines or prison sentences associated with child pawning. One case concludes, "… the agreement clearly states that the debtor promised to work on the creditor's farm and there is no mention of the debtor's son being pawned."[78] In this case, the lack of mentioning the debtor's son in the contract released him from working for the creditor but the debtor faced the unfavorable situation of either paying off the debt immediately or placing himself in pawn. The chiefs who presided over the courts often favored the rights of creditors to the labor of pawned persons or for the debtor to repay the full amount of the loaned money even if the pawned person was a child with deceased parents. Colonial administrators, if specific cases came to their attention, often intervened in the rulings in favor of defendants. [79]

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[74] "Pawning System (Iwofa)," District Officer Ibadan to the Bale and Council, Dec 20, 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[75] No. O. S. 134/102, "Pawning," Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo to the District Officer Ibadan, Mar 30, 1935 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[76] Ogunleye to the District Officer Oshogbo, Sep 22, 1936 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[77] "Sanni Boluwa – Petition for Release of His House," District Officer, Ibadan Division to the Resident Oyo Province, May 14, 1940 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[78] "Illegal Pawning," E. R. Ward District Office Ibadan Division to the Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police, Ibadan, Oct 30, 1937 in 1028 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI.

Legal intervention of the colonial administration also placed girl pawns at a particular risk along with the parents who hoped to eventually receive a bride price when their daughter married. Colonial officials, as early as 1923, believed all girls were pawned as part of a marriage agreement and that girls were never pawned into marriage against their will.[80] Yet by the middle of the 1920s evidence suggests that creditors seized pawned girls, when they reached marriageable age, as wives or gave them to others as wives without the girl's or the family's consent.[81] Some creditors, when faced with possible prosecution or looking for a better return on their money, married off girl pawns without parental consent and confiscated the entire bride price. One woman complained to authorities that, "he gave my young sister named Lalompe to a husband in unlawful manner and in a fraudulence way – that is, he gave her to a man (husband) and he received some money on her and he never deliver the money and anything he had received on my said sister, to my father."[82]

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[79] "Iwofa, Matters re.," Assistant District Officer Oshogbo to the Resident Oyo Province, Oct 6, 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[80] No. C. 8/1923, Resident Ijebu Province to the Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Lagos, Mar 12, 1923, Pawning of Children, Ijebu Prof 3/9, NAI.

[81] No. C. 8/1923, "Debt's and Their Recovery," Pawning of Children*,* Ijebu Prof 3/9, NAI.

The prohibition on child pawning presented a problem for families who sought redress against abuses. According to the law, if the father sought justice in the courts for the creditor stealing the bride price, the court could fine him and place him in prison for having pawned his daughter. Families were caught between a real need for credit and the illegality of child pawning under colonial administration, which upset a social system intended to protect children while still meeting the families' needs. Legal decisions by district officers and courts further affected the position of girl pawns by undermining social practices that protected girl pawns and marriage institutions. The ban on child pawning created issues with girls who had been pawned, married, and then divorced. The divorce of a formerly pawned girl had the potential to block the ability of the family to recover bride price or the creditor would still require the cost of the value of the pawn debt. In addition, the colonial administration encouraged men who wanted to marry a girl pawn to report the case of child pawnship to the authorities thereby forcing the child's family to face criminal charges or immediately find a way to pay the debt.[83]

The danger presented to child pawns owing to a gap in legislative protection and the possible consequences levied on parents precipitated a gradual decrease in child pawning.[84] Despite the illegality of child pawning, the courts generally upheld creditors' demands for a return of the money lent. On occasion families' sought to re-pawn a child to avoid prosecution but were unable to find a creditor willing to accept a child as a pawn.[85] The transition from the legality to illegality of child pawnship created a quagmire of litigation for the colonial administration in determining how to deal with child pawn contracts in place before the new laws and how to reconcile the debts. Debtors and their relatives relied upon local leaders who dealt closely with European traders to pawn children in order to cover debts. "I am informed … that to enable him to satisfy the judgment, he has sent his son Ayoola (about 15 years) as pawn to Laoya Solaja (of John Holts)."[86] Colonial administrators also noticed a correlation between rates of child pawning and cocoa farmers.[87]

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[82] "Alfa Sanni Boluwa: Petition from," District Officer Ibadan to the Resident Oyo Province, May 16, 1940 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[83] No. 0060/34, "Instruction no. 9," District Officer's Office Ibadan, July 11, 1929 in 192 Iwofa Oshun div 1/1, NAI; Elisha P. Renne, "Polyphony in the Courts: Child Custody Cases in Kabba District Court 1925-1979," *Ethnology*, Vol. 31, Issue 3 (Jul 1992): 219-232. Renne showed how in divorce cases Nigerians possessed more influence over the decisions and were able to alter the colonial administrations rulings.

The initial effect of child pawnship legislation appeared to be minimal; however, overtime the new laws probably limited the ability of poorer families to access credit and for farmers of mid-level size to acquire extra labor to work their land. Chiefs continued to use child pawns to work land owing to their influence within the courts and their ability to avoid prosecution. Chief Eshuja from Oshogbo grew unhappy with a child pawn and sought to switch the child with another. In the process, the assistant district officer discovered his use of child pawns and ordered him to release them.[88] Eshuja subsequently released the child as ordered and although the debtor pledged to find the money, it is unclear whether Eshuja received payment.[89] On another occasion chiefs petitioned the colonial administration to allow child pawning and count the labor time served toward the debt as was common with adults.[90] In 1935 the colonial administration required a list from the Native Courts of all pawning cases. The chiefs responded that they had heard no cases regarding pawnship and one chief continued, "We want the D.O.'s help if he can permit Iwofa…"[91] Considering few chiefs reported cases of pawnship, chiefs disregarded colonial instructions related to child pawnship whenever possible.[92]

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[84] Research supports the conclusion that colonial policies gradually led to a reduction in pawnship owning to the inability of creditors to retrieve their money in courts. Mary Douglas, "Matriliny and Pawnship in Central Africa," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Oct., 1964): 301-313, 302.

[85] Letter, Awawu Agoji to the Resident Ibadan, Mar, 1934 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[86] No. O. D. 15.1015, District Officer Oyo Division to the District Officer Ibadan, May 2, 1936 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[87] "Extracts from the minutes of the Executive Council held on the 16th of November 1937" in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

By the middle of the 1940s, either child pawnship finally reduced significantly or creditors and debtors found ways to protect themselves from prosecution in the courts.[93] The former was more likely owing to the failure of attempts in the 1930s to completely circumvent prosecution. Creditors and debtors in the 1930s and early 1940s entered into child pawnship arrangements by creating contracts with indirect language to prevent prosecution by the colonial administration. Yet if the debtor reported abuse to the colonial administration the language in the contract prevented the creditor from retrieving his funds. A more serious problem arose when a creditor or debtor went to the courts to solve a child pawnship dispute owing to the risk that both creditor and debtor faced fines or prison sentences if the court proved the dispute involved a child. Children, regardless of the power of wealthy pawn creditors, negotiated their status as pawns. When local courts failed to address their position, they petitioned, along with their parents, the colonial government to intervene on their behalf. However, petitions failed to affect immediate broad changes in law as local leaders debated with colonial officials what changes would be enforced in pawnship practices.

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[88] No, 2219/36/1927, Oshogbo Oct 26, 1927, "Pawn," in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[89] Letter, Oyekunle Olokuku, Native Court Okuku to Assistance District Officer Oshogbo, Nov 5, 1927 in *192* Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[90] No. 36/1927, "Iwofa Matters Re.," Resident Oyo Province to Assistant District Officer, Northern District Oshogbo, Oct 6, 1934 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[91] Letter to the District Officer Oshogbo, Feb 12, 1935 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI; 556 Annual Return of Cases of Pawning, Oshogbo, July 5, 1940, Oshun div 1/1, NAI. The chiefs wrote that they did not hear any cases of pawnship; however, the context of the request and suggest they specifically referred to child pawns and not pawnship in general. One chief sent a list of cases, which included cases of long duration exempt from the 1927 law.

[92] Letter to the District Officer Oshogbo, Oct 2, 1935 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI. One employee of the courts warned the D.O. that chiefs sent answers that no cases existed in order to avoid punishment for disregarding instructions. Presumably a court clerk, who sent the letter, swore he knew such cases to exist. Even though colonial administrators did not amend pawnship legislation, generally, when a person accused a chief of pawnship the claim was thrown out of court and labeled a malicious indictment intended to influence political power.

[93] "Pawning of Persons as Security for Debt," Assistant District Officer Ibadan, Oct 15, 1948 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun Div 1/1, NAI. The Assistant District Officer, despite reports from Bale's that pawning decreased with few cases brought to court, believed pawning continued on a large scale but the possible consequences of reporting cases prevented them from seeking restitution in the courts. Owing to child pawnship being labeled a criminal offense, it was likely child pawnship decreased during the period but self-pawning probably did not.

Parents and pawned children appealed to colonial authorities when situations arose where parents and children were unable to find redress for their concerns in the courts. One mother, Adebinpe, distraught over her husband having pawned her only daughter without her consent, appealed to the colonial authorities. She told the colonial administrator how she planned to have her ten year old daughter, Victoria Lalonpe, educated. She also expressed concerns about her daughter's health. [94]Victoria may have been aware of colonial health legislation and believed administrators pre-occupation with health concerns would entice them to take action against her husband. Some children who entered into pawnship contracts experienced a different level of social mobility from children who remained with their families. In previous decades child pawnship did not relate directly to poor education; however, Adebinpe expressed concerns about the opportunities available to her daughter. She also divorced her husband on account of the daughter being pawned.[95]

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[94] "Petitioner's only daughter Victoria Lalonpe (aged 10) pawned against the wish of her mother," District Officer Ibadan Division to The Resident Oyo Province, Oct 21, 1935 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

Children recognized the limitations pawnship contracts placed on their future including the difficulties of poor families being unable to find another source of credit to redeem them. In response to these issues, children actively sought ways to escape pawnship. Not only did children recognize that pawnship offered few routes of success but they also knew creditors had few methods to continue to force them to work once the colonial government placed a ban on child pawnship. One creditor "laid a great heavy labour on the two children pawned under him so much that one of them ran away about one year ago, and the other ran off there about a fortnight ago."[96] In 1938 one boy petitioned the government to gain release and when colonial officials delayed, "the boy grew tired of waiting and has vanished."[97] The number of examples of children, especially boys, running away from creditors is numerous. In addition to running away, some pawns refused to continue in service, a choice historically available to child pawns.[98]

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[95] District Officer Ibadan Division to the President Native Court, Lalupon, Nov 2, 1935 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[96] Petition to the District Officer Ibadan, July 6, 1938 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[97] "Salawu, Complaint by," Oct 8, 1938 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[98] "Petition on a loan transaction," Salau Akinade to the District Officer Ibadan, Aug 18, 1938 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

A boy from Ogbomosho ran away from a creditor in the hope of finding his father.[99] The increased distance between the location of creditors, often centered in towns and cities, and the child's original home limited children's means of protection from abuse but it did not stop children from seeking out their parents and leaving creditors. On occasion, boys who ran away from creditors placed pressure on other siblings. Often parents pawned another child to replace the one that ran away to avoid repaying the debt. In one case, a boy served for twenty years starting from the age of eight, ran away, and the father replaced in pawn a younger son who served another fifteen years before running away. The boy's father and the original creditor passed away and members of the creditor's family still sought the balance of the loan.[100]

Children, and relatives on their behalf, petitioned the colonial government in situations of abuse or when cultural rules were violated even if the colonial government failed to recognize Nigerians' expectations of pawnship contracts. Child pawns were at risk for being absorbed into an underground slave market according to one boy:

> our father Agunbiade by name and our mother is Abebi both of them died while we were very young. About ten years ago we were told that our father owed Sani the late Oluwo, a sum of 10 pounds, so we were taken to Oluwo palace like captives, and since that 10 years we are there up to date it was yesterday, I one of your petitioner manage to escape hence I able to stand before your worship this morning.[101]

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[99] "Salawu, Complaint by," Assistant District Officer Ibadan Northern District to the District Officer Ibadan, Sep 5, 1938 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[100] Petition, Ezekiel Adeniran to District Officer Ibadan Northern District, Oshogbo, Aug 13, 1943 in 192 Iwofa, Oshun div 1/1, NAI.

[101] Petition, Humuani and Tiyamiyu to the District Office Ibadan, June 10, 1940 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

Other petitions reached the colonial government claiming creditors either used pawned children as slaves or passed them off to other creditors as slaves. [102]Petitions such as these reinvigorated colonial policy against pawnship. Whereas colonial authorities' enforcement of pawning rules remained inconsistent, these petitions brought child pawnship back into the view of colonial officials and fueled new campaigns for reform.

Children in precarious situations also sent letters to their mothers and in turn mothers petitioned the government on the children's behalf. One boy alleged he was detained unlawfully as a pawn.[103] The boy may have found himself caught up in a case of child stealing. The colonial government sent a detachment to find the boy but he had already been moved by the time they arrived. Cases of child pawnship where children received harsh treatment or were caught up in child stealing convinced colonial authorities that rather than modify child pawnship laws, child pawnship needed to be abolished.

Adult men in particular petitioned the colonial government concerning pawnship contracts they continued to serve under since childhood. Marriage offered an escape from contracts for girls, but boys faced perpetual servitude especially if they no longer had living relatives. One man served as a pawn for twenty years and his condition prevented him from gaining farm land of his own to earn a living and repay the debt.[104] Another man was pawned as a boy in order to cover funeral expenses for his father's death and served as a pawn for twenty-one years.[105] Adults in these situations, with little recourse in Native Courts, sought escape through colonial intervention. Petitions such as these reinforced the colonial policy of reducing debt at a regular rate based on the number of days served in labor. What colonial officials failed to recognize, apart from the recorded abuses in the system, was that Nigerians generally disliked a wage labor system. Pawnship permitted adults to receive funds in exchange for labor and ensured creditors cheap labor for an extended period of time without paying additional cash. Colonial officials focused on the management of the interest/labor agreement and failed to evaluate creditors' desire for manual labor.[106]

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[102] Petition, Amuda Adisa to the District Officer Ibadan, April 24, 1942 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[103] No. 291/86, "Complaints," District Officer Kabba Division to District Officer Ibadan Division, Dec 31, 1935 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[104] Petition, Oseni Onigbinde to the District Officer Ibadan, Jan 30, 1940 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

Regardless of problems with child pawning, people understood the role of the colonial government in changing policy and some people challenged the government's right to do so. Mr. Adegbe sent a long letter to the colonial administration outlining the institution of pawnship. He expressed serious concern about his ability to access credit if pawning, including child pawning, became illegal. He expressed an understanding of the role of the British government in terms of indirect rule and challenged their authority based on involvement in a "time honored practice."[107] In addition Mr. Adegbe connected pawnship to his ability to maintain the use of land. Possibly, he referred to needed labor to work the land, which he found by loaning out money in exchange for labor. Considering the domestic economy's reliance on labor and kinship networks, the colonial government's attack on child pawnship in general not only limited access to labor but probably contributed to a decline in small localized rural farming.

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[105] Petition, Akinola Adisa to the District Officer Ibadan, April 27, 1942 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

[106] No. 11799/582, Confidential, "Pawning of Persons in Nigeria," T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, Chief Secretary to the Government to the Honorable Secretary Southern Provinces, Enugu, Mar 18, 1938 in 1028 vol. 2 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI. Most local officers disagreed with the government's desire to abolish pawning in general and believed legislation against third party pawning including children was enough. The government's desire to abolish all pawning was partly owing to international pressure related to stamping out slavery and high level government officials continued to categorize pawning as a form of slavery. "Pawning of Persons in Nigeria," to the Honorable Secretary Southern Provinces, G. B. Williams Acting Resident, Oyo Province, April 21, 1938 in 1028 vol. 2 Iwofa Slavery and Pawning in British West Africa, Questions as to, Oyo Prof 1, NAI. Williams noted that the fundamental issue with the Nigerian economy was not the labor system itself but the failure for people to access credit from another source other than self-pawning and third party pawning.

CONCLUSION

Economic depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s caused a retraction in the Nigerian economy, which affected children in several ways. A small group of Nigerians continued to seek a strategy of increasing their household dependents as a means to acquire economic stability and wealth; however, with growing British interests to maintain a positive international reputation, slavery no longer worked as a viable method for increasing dependents. The result was a small scale but persistent trade in children. Underpinning the supply of children was a combination of child stealing and child dealing. In the face of economic hardship, some families sold children in order to escape poverty – a method of social welfare for children. On the other hand, child dealers who were unable to acquire enough children through legitimate avenues stole children. A large number of stolen children were taken while performing tasks for their parents such as delivering messages or going to market.

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[107] Petition, Mr Adegbe to the District Officer Oshogbo, Oct 25, 1948 in 1127 Pawning of Children, Iwofa, Ibadan div 1/1, NAI.

The economic depression also led to an increase in child pawnship owing to a need for more access to credit. Falling prices for Nigerian produce sold on the international market meant the value of Nigerian labor decreased. Families compensated for the decline in credit by pawning more children to earn the funds for entrepreneurial business activities and to pay for colonial taxes and court fees. The effect on children resulted in high numbers of child pawnship with many of the pawns locked in servitude into adulthood. Poorer families felt the hardships the greatest. British policies, which curbed child pawnship, left families fewer opportunities to gain credit and children remained in impoverished situations rather than being pawned as a part of the *noblesse oblige* strategy. On the other hand, elites with growing access to wealth felt some constraints in economic activity as they were no longer able to loan money in exchange for indefinite labor services. Additional research might show that the reduction of child pawnship and pawnship in general was a key component in the rise of wealth as a determining social category over the importance of status.[108]

The institutions of child dealing and child pawnship were not purely negative experiences for children, but had the capacity to either assist poor children to escape poverty or on occasion were the cause of abuses. The British administration sought to abolish both institutions rather than reform them owing to international pressures and the

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[108] Anthony I. Nwabughuogu, “The "Isusu": An Institution for Capital Formation among the Ngwa Igbo: Its Origin and Development to 1951,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984): 46-58; Toyin Falola, “‘My Friend the Shylock': Money-Lenders and Their Clients in South-Western Nigeria,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 403-423. Certain titles in southern Nigeria used a system of dues where periodically a different member of the society received the dues to use as they wished. Elites with titles probably used these funds in place of pawnship to gain access to credit. However, lower classes without access to secret societies and titles were left with few alternatives to gain access to credit in times of hardship.

British concept of civilization did not include these practices. Yet the British administration offered few alternatives for children in difficult circumstances and rather than depend on appeals to the colonial government, children and families sought new strategies to overcome the threat of poverty. Children took their future into their own hands by escaping long term servitude or enlisting the assistance of the government to escape instances of child slavery.

Whereas farming in rural areas continued to present challenges in terms of access to credit, Nigerian began to look towards the growing urban environment as a means to overcome their economic limitations. Child pawnship and child dealing were on the decline in the later part of the 1930s; however, decline in these child labor activities did not precipitate a reduction in the importance of child labor to the economy. A shift began to occur in the 1920s where children became increasingly important in cities, especially in hawking activities and several service industries related to European demand. The data points to a conclusion where the decline of children as a means to credit access led to children's manual labor becoming more important to earning income. As we will see, children migrated to the city in large numbers looking for work and they sent money back to their parents at home. The city offered some children labor opportunities, but at the same time city life opened up new quandaries for many children.

Chapter Three

Child Workers and Colonial Labor Ideology

INTRODUCTION

Chapters one and two emphasized the central position of children in economic activity either through direct labor activities, the expectation of the future value of children's labor, and the fundamental role of children to credit access. Child labor also played an important role in the trading ventures of women and, early on, in colonial government forced labor projects. Building on the central themes of the first two chapters, chapter three evaluates the role of child labor in government projects and increased child hawking in large cities. The colonial government's position towards child labor and hawking changed overtime with policy adjustments that mirrored shifts in ideas about what children ought to do and the role of the government in local affairs via indirect rule ideology. Yet children and families continued to negotiate between the colonial government's expectations of what children ought to do and strategies they found intrinsically necessary for their welfare and economic advancement.

The transition from slavery to 'legitimate' trade marked a transition in child labor fit into the colonial project. The colonial government initially placed significant importance on children as laborers for the construction of public work projects including road building. The position of children in the British colonial government's force labor practices elucidates the relationship between government and children within colonial society. In fact in many regards, the colonial government, in its earlier years, followed similar policies regardless of age. The colonial government approached child labor and child punishment in the same ways they approached adult labor and adult punishment.

By the early 1930s, the colonial government's stance on the role of children in society drastically changed as a result of contemporary social theory and international pressure on labor laws and children's welfare. From the turn of the century to the 1930s, the government's changing opinions reflected interpretations of labor laws within the context of indirect rule ideology, which led to varied labor experiences for children depending on their proximity to European business ventures. Colonial officials interpreted indirect rule ideology in such a way that children's labor opportunities were circumscribed according to whether an industry was labeled as originally European or 'traditional'.

At no point did the colonial government seek to completely abolish child labor but attempted to closely control and monitor child labor in cities, especially in Lagos. The colonial government established a Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee and then later a Juvenile Employment Bureau, which sought to manage child labor in the city, prevent migrations of children from the rural areas to the city, and to employ children leaving school. Furthermore the government's approach to boys and girls differed greatly based on Victorian gender ideals and how colonial officials believed children should fit into society and contribute to the advancement of "civilizatizing mission" ideology. The gender ideology displayed by colonial officials mirrored an extension of girls' education whereby officials attempted to limit girls' economic activities in situations they viewed detrimental to girls' morals. In many ways, colonial officials' gender ideology conflicted with their general interpretation of child labor and indirect rule in the sense that officials sought to limit girls' hawking which clearly fell under the distinction of a 'traditional' labor practice.

The term hawking and the way it is used in the colonial documents reveal several issues in the definition of the term. Colonial officials almost unanimously interchanged the terms petty trading and hawking. Women who sold goods in market stalls or along roads were included in the definition of hawkers, whereas men who worked in similar situations were labeled shop workers. In addition to a gender bias in the division of terms, children who hawked goods in streets were not necessarily distinguished from women who 'hawked' goods in stalls along roadways and in markets.[1] For the purpose of child labor, there was a distinction between women who were petty traders or traders in markets and children who engaged in hawking activities, which included selling goods while mobile and not at fixed location.

The colonial government spent considerable effort in curbing child hawking partly owing to what they believed was an activity that contributed to child delinquency. In addition to selling goods, colonial officials also sought to limit boys who worked as messengers in the cities. In addition to gender issues associated with hawking, the government also focused on hawking laws in cities while tending to allow children to hawk in rural areas. Regardless of the colonial government's desire to limit child hawking in urban areas, children played a crucial role in the domestic economy by working as hawkers. Children presented the opportunity for petty traders to extend their customer base through their mobility, which permitted parents, women in particular, to have an opportunity to increase their sales. Education remains a key theme throughout this chapter owing to the requirement for children to learn the necessary skills to be productive workers. Whereas more children began to attend primary education by the early 1930s, parents and children continued to express concerns about the effectiveness of a European education when it came time for children to mature to adulthood and support a family. The interconnectedness between European education, trade skill education, and work further supports the argument that these activities were not either/or options, but a set of decisions sought out by children and parents to ensure future success.

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[1] "Hawkers Licence," 643D Ado Ekiti 1/1, 1957, NAI.

Parents and children reacted to colonial labor and education policies in the same ways that children and parents approached pawnship legislation. On occasion they abided by the regulations when it suited their interests, but more often than not, children in particular ignored colonial laws to pursue their goals. Children's disregard for colonial laws becomes readily apparent with their migration to cities, participation in hawking, and ignoring laws related to vagrancy and living in the streets. The details that follow, which lay out a general view of urban life for children and the role of their labor in colonial Nigeria, also creates a groundwork for understanding the material in chapter four, which deals with poverty and child delinquency.

CHILDREN, FORCED LABOR, AND COLONIAL POLICY

In Yoruba and Igbo regions of the Nigerian colony, British officials considered children to be important contributors to forced labor practices up to the late 1920s. In the early

1930s, with the majority of the infrastructure in place, colonial officials diverted from forced labor to taxation and at the same time new ideas about social welfare influenced how colonial officials believed children fit into the colonial project. The colonial government encouraged more education for children and sought to limit the kinds of work they did, in particular, manual labor associated with European businesses. The following section will trace the developments in the ideological shift and its influence on child labor policies.

Prior to 1920 the colonial government used children for carrying loads, especially to road construction sites. A.E. Afigbo noted that children participated in long distant marches to carry goods from rural locations to larger cities. Oral research revealed that warrant chiefs played an integral role in the selection of porters, which included elderly men along with children, especially if they were above average build.[2] The concept of indirect rule was not applied to the Nigerian colony until after Lord Lugard popularized the idea in Northern Nigeria.[3] Whereas Afigbo focused on long distant porters, the majority of children probably worked as carriers and cleared land relatively close to their villages of origin.

In 1918 a disagreement arose between the inspector of schools and colonial administrators regarding the role of school children in the forced labor system. Children sought exemption from forced labor based on the time requirements for their education. The discussion between colonial officials and educators clearly illustrates how the colonial government believed children fit into the colonial project.[4] Colonial officers viewed forced labor as an educational aspect for Africans that taught them civil service and responsibility to the larger community, traits officials believed were missing among African peoples. The 'civilizing mission' ideology called for Africans to learn community responsibility and it was through this position that colonial officials justified and insisted that children participate in road construction projects.

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[2] A.E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*. See the appendix documents from oral interviews.

[3] A. E. Afigbo, et al., *The Making of Modern Africa*, 10-11.

In February of 1918 school children aged between ten and twelve appealed to the Inspector of Schools at Asaba, for an exemption from community forced labor duties. Children aged twelve and thirteen were assigned for carrier work on Saturday February 2nd. The inspector succeeded in getting an exemption for the children and then sent a letter to the Resident requesting a uniform policy specifically regarding school children and forced labor. "I do not believe in pampering boys because they attend school, but school boys now must be of school age and I do not think young boys should be called upon to act as carriers, which is essentially men's work."[5] Despite the Inspector of Schools' petition on behalf of the boys, the Resident and district officer quickly discounted his argument and the Inspector agreed with the conclusions presented by the Resident.

The Inspector of Schools at Asaba responded to the petition by writing, "and quite agree with the rules formulated by the District Officer. I do not think it right that attendance at school should be put forward as an excuse for evading other work."[6] The district officer earlier in 1916 had laid out guidelines to govern the work requirements of school boys.[7] They were exempted from work on normal school days but were required to perform "ordinary work of the term including road work"[8] on Saturdays and holidays. On Saturdays the boys were not required to travel a longer distance than they could return from on the same day for school on Monday. Yet on holidays, "they must of course work in the ordinary way."[9] Furthermore the Resident believed that "it would be the worst service to the cause of education to exempt school boys from their share in the town work."[10]

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[4] "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

[5] Letter. Inspector of Schools, Asaba to the Resident Benin Province, Feb 4, 1918 in "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

When the district officer established rules for school boys in 1916, the rules were agreed upon by a missionary, Father Zappa, and the chiefs of Asaba. The district officer also stated the parents of many children agreed to the rules.[11] Yet there the documents lack concrete evidence that any parents agreed with the rules. The district officer and the Resident clearly viewed community work as part of the boys' education, specifically in terms of the 'civilizing mission,' which they believed worked to transform children from natives to civilized subjects. With the British pacification program fresh on the minds of many people, parents probably felt constrained in their ability to challenge the colonial administration. Furthermore, it is important to note that at the time neither Nigerian parents nor colonial officials drew a distinct dividing line between what constituted education and work. In the quote from the preceding paragraph, the Resident's opinion on the role of manual community labor in the education of children is quite clear.

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[6] Letter. Education Department Asaba to The Resident, Benin Province, April 24, 1918 in "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

[7] Letter. District Officer to the Resident Benin Province, Feb 26, 1918 in "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

[8] Memorandum. The Resident Benin Province to the Inspector of Schools, Asaba, March 23, 1918 in "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Letter. District Officer to the Resident Benin Province, Feb 26, 1918 in "School Boys, Employment of as Carriers," Benin Prof 2/5 142/1918, NAI.

As noted in previous chapters the shift in colonial policy from slave trading to 'legitimate trade' affected children's work and their role in the domestic economy; however, the colonial policy shift to indirect rule and the government's need to meet administrative needs further affected the education and work of children. The growth of missionary education and government schools in the first two decades of the twentieth century partly removed children from labor activities related to the household economy while at the same time potentially preparing the brightest students to seek employment in the indirect rule system. Additionally government officials continued to utilize children as a labor source for completing and maintaining the infrastructure of the colonial administration.

In the early 1920s and by 1930, colonial officials began to reevaluate the role of children in the labor economy. Colonial officials continued to believe in the civilizing mission but adjusted their interpretation of how to best achieve its goals in relation to children. With the general colonial infrastructure complete and the introduction of a tax system in the Southern Provinces, colonial officials encouraged school attendance and discouraged children from working. Colonial officials transitioned to finding ways to manage and limit child labor, especially in terms of work related to the colonial government. The causes for this transition are multiple and they explain changing colonial policies and their influence on child labor in southern Nigeria.

International pressure for the establishment of labor laws and the protection of workers led the home office to influence administrators in Nigeria to avoid any embarrassing accounts of labor abuse. Advancing the 'civilizing mission' meant educating Africans in civil service, but now also to protect the image of British colonialism as a humanitarian project. Colonial officials sought to revise labor laws so they would be consistent "with modern ideas of labour reform."[12] Apart from politics, new social theories concerning the role of environment in human development altered the methods by which colonial officials sought to achieve the civilizing mission. The re-organization of the social welfare system will be addressed in the next chapter; however, for now it is important to note that these new ideas influenced government policy regarding child labor. What ensued was a creation of new government offices to manage labor in general with sub offices directly concerned with how to control child labor. Yet the new concern for child labor was applied in a very limited scope with little concern for the rural population. In fact, the majority of child labor policies were directed specifically at Lagos.

Pressure from the home office on labor conditions in the Nigerian colony began in 1921 when the British government participated in international labor conventions. Colonial officials first enacted legislation on child labor in 1921 following an international convention on labor and a subsequent circular by Sir Winston Churchill.

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[12] Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Jan 29, 1931 in 1097, A Survey of the Conditions of Labour in the Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories, 1930, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Government law in general restricted labor based on the age of fourteen. The age set out by colonial officials lowered the age to twelve based on the assumption that "in certain tropical dependencies… children mature at an earlier age than children in more temperate climates."[13] Malcom McDonald's critique of the decisions made in 1921 led to differentiating between three categories of work including labor at sea, labor in European industries, and native businesses. Indirect rule informed these categories in the belief that the government administration should restrict child labor in work associated with European firms but in all other areas under native businesses those decisions should be determined by the local inhabitants.

Participation in conventions resulted in instructions to colonial officials to apply wherever possible the guidelines set out to manage industrial labor. Colonial officials in Nigeria, as a result of the instructions, issued a call to evaluate labor throughout the colony to determine how the new regulations could be enforced. The instructions set the goal to, "show a high standard in such matters to be able to stand the light of criticism in comparison to conditions existing in other countries… to aim at procuring the adoption of such a standard in future international conventions."[14] The instructions also called for an evaluation of the conditions of labor beyond rates of pay and to consider medical conditions and housing. Perhaps the most challenging application of labor law to the

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[13] Circular. Malcolm McDonald, Downing Street, Sept 29, 1938 in 1643 "Employment of Children" Benin Prof 1, 1938, NAI. McDonald draws attention to the previous decisions in 1921 and proceeds to call for a revision of those rules.

[14] "A Survey of the Conditions of Labour in the Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories, 1930," 1097 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Nigerian colonies included how to apply written labor contracts to a domestic system largely dependent on verbal contracts.[15]

The conclusion of the debate within government in Britain and dialogue between Britain and colonial officers affected child labor in two significant ways. The Committee of Experts on Native Labour drew attention to the need to eliminate penal sanctions placed on those who violated labor contracts. Penal sanctions included fines, the possibility of jail terms, and in the case of juveniles penalties included whippings. These penalties were extensions of the Master and Slave Ordinance, which influenced labor relations in Nigeria up to 1937. In addition, Lord Passfield drew attention to the colonial government's policy of discouraging unions, which he believed led to the formation of secret societies and fomented rebellion. To address these issues, the government recommended the creation of labor departments to regularly review labor conditions rather than initiate reviews only after complaints. W. Ormsby Gore, Secretary of State, emphasized in a circular to the colonial governments that women and child labor practices needed to conform to the standards set out by the international convention of labor.[16] On the social welfare side, these recommendations contributed to eliminating physical punishments on juvenile delinquents and they eventually led to the creation of labor departments in urban areas and in the case of Lagos, a Juvenile Employment Bureau.

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[15] Letter. Acting Administrator of the Colony to The Colonial Secretary of the Government, Lagos, Nov, 10, 1930 in Comcol 1097, "A Survey of the Conditions of Labour in the Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories, 1930," NAI.

[16] Circular, W. Ormsby Gore, Downing Street, Aug 24, 1937 In Comcol 1097, "A Survey of the Conditions of Labour in the Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories, 1930," NAI. International conventions on labor during the 1920s set in motion a long term trend throughout the colonial period that sought to use international pressure to improve the global conditions of women and child laborers. In many ways, the 1920s conventions were the forerunners of modern labor rights organizations that continue to define labor rights and pressure countries to abide by their recommendations.

McDonald recommended a minimum age of fourteen as laid down in the International Convention on Labor and that the labor of children in domestic and agricultural work be limited to the age of twelve. On the other hand, he agreed with legislation including an exemption to age limitations on work if the work was performed within the course of family work and under the supervision of parents.[17] McDonald's opinions on child labor reflected the shift from mandatory child labor to assist the colonial apparatus to a focus on education and limiting child labor as much as possible within the Nigerian colony. The District Officer of Kukuruku Division noted that colonial law only placed age limitations on European industrial labor with no restrictions on commercial or agricultural undertakings. He believed "any restriction on the employment of child labour… tending, as it would, to unfit the growing generation."[18] The difference of opinions between Downing Street and the district officer reflect the ideological goals of the 'civilizing mission' compared to the practicality of those policies on the ground. The District Officer of Kukuruku doubted the efficacy of child labor age legislation for native industries and the District Officer of Ishan Division agreed with his assessment; however, according to the District Officer of Ishan Division child labor abuses did occur. According to his statement, "youths of 14 or younger accept work under the timber concessions of their own free will."[19] He further assumed the timber companies would not employ any child unsuited for the work and that accurately determining the ages for these children was not feasible. Based on these assumptions, the district officer doubted the present need for any new legislation. Conditions in the timber industry revealed an interesting issue in terms of children's decisions to engage in these activities and the possible abuses, which continued without attention.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] District Officer Kukuruku Division to the Resident, Benin Province, Jan 4, 1939 in 1643 "Employment of Children" Benin Prof 1, 1938, NAI.

The extent to which children entered into timber work does not appear to have been investigated; however, the District Officer of Benin sought the advice of the Oba on this matter. The Oba believed children beginning at the age of ten could work in the timber concessions but recommended that the age limit for industries be established at twelve. In addition, the Oba believed children should be allowed to work in local businesses and family establishments beginning at the age of ten.[20] It is unclear whether the Oba supported these views or ceded to British requests out of necessity. In addition to timber concessions, colonial officials noted that in Benin every year a large number of child laborers migrated from the eastern provinces to work on African owned plantations.[21] Stolen children from the Igbo region of Nigeria may have ended up in rubber plantations in Benin Province. The Employment Exchange reported to the Commissioner of labor that, "the employer of cheap labor recruits children who are often brought into Benin at such a tender age that they do not remember the village they came from."[22] Whether some children worked in the timber industry and on plantations of their own free will or as part of an informal labor contract is unknown. Whereas child labor in the industry appeared to be an abuse, parents may have viewed child labor as a means of training to gain employment as an adult or a method to prevent poverty.

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[19] District Officer Ishan Division to the Resident, Benin Province, Jan 10, 1939 in 1643 "Employment of Children" Benin Prof 1, 1938, NAI.

[20] District Officer, Benin Division to the Resident, Benin Province, Jan 17, 1939 in 1643 "Employment of Children" Benin Prof 1, 1938, NAI.

[21] "Employment Exchange System," Resident Benin Province to The Secretary Western Provinces, Lagos, Jan 28, 1946 in "Adults and Juveniles at Benin, Registration of: Employment Exchange," B.P. 2380 Benin Prof 1, NAI.

Debate concerning the proper role of children in labor activities centered on what limitations if any should be placed on young children working with their parents in the rural environment. As far as industrial work, colonial officials arrived at the unanimous decision that children should not work in any industry. Yet rural labor, even hard labor, was viewed as appropriate for children as a part of the necessities of village life and the children's education. The Ijebu district officer offered the assessment that, "I can see no harm in the children of a village, male or female, of any age, carrying small loads of say earth for road making or mud for building houses."[23] The quote reflects an inherent contradiction in colonial ideology in terms of the 'civilizing mission' and how it should be achieved in urban and rural areas. Indirect rule required an effort to maintain "traditional cultural values" which clashed with progressive ideals concerning children. In the case of rural children's labor, the colonial administration accepted load carrying and other physical work as the normal duties of children long after the colonial government abandoned the use of child labor to build roads.

Whereas colonial officers agreed with parents' right to employ their children in domestic labor, colonial officials opposed parents hiring out their children to a third party even if the children were hired to do the same kinds of labor they performed for their parents. The policy restricting parents from hiring out children probably had little influence on children's labor. Parents were more likely to use child pawnship to gain revenue from children's labor than hire them out as laborers. It is unclear, but there was a possibility that restricting pawnship was exactly what colonial officials had in mind at the time. When it came to rural children's labor, colonial officials believed "employment by parents is probably education in itself."[24] The law permitted the employment of children as apprentices beginning at the age of fourteen.[25] Whereas apprenticeship required the child to work for someone outside the family, colonial officials accepted this labor relationship as appropriate while discouraging its agricultural equivalents even though they believed the kinds of labor children did with their parents was a form of education. Colonial officials' stance on apprenticeship and children's labor reveals an inherent bias in their idea of what constituted appropriate labor and training. Civilizing mission ideology meant promoting policies reflective of British practices at home.

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[22] "Registration of Labor – Benin Province," Employment Exchange, Benin City to Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, Aug 30, 1946 in "Adults and Juveniles at Benin, Registration of: Employment Exchange," B.P. 2380 Benin Prof 1, NAI.

[23] Continuation sheet no. 4, in J1868 "Employment of Children, Legislation Dealing With," Ijebu prov 1, 1938, NAI.

Economic changes and shifts in how the colonial government spent money after 1930 contributed to new practices to deal with economic issues in the colony. The onset of the Great Depression led to a decrease in trading activities in the southern Nigeria, especially in Lagos, where government spending on public works projects and a decrease in the import/export economy directly contributed to the unemployment of workers. Colonial officials proposed many solutions to the problem but ultimately the constraints of limited funds and an inability to curb migration to cities from rural areas led to persistent problems.[26] The colonial government put into place a low budget labor office titled the Adult Employment Exchange, which sought to loosely examine unemployed workers' residences and to attempt to find employment for those workers. Out of this office, an additional branch was added on February 20, 1947. The new branch titled the Juvenile Employment Exchange took over duties, which were partly filled by the Youth Movement between 1943 and 1946.[27]

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[24] Continuation sheet no. 4, hand written note, Dec., 28, in J1868 "Employment of Children, Legislation Dealing With," Ijebu prov 1, 1938, NAI.

[25] J1868 "Employment of Children, Legislation Dealing With," Ijebu prov 1, 1938, NAI.

The Juvenile Employment Exchange (J.E.E.) had been in the process of formation for several years partly owing to the efforts of the After-Care Committee, which sought to assist school boys and girls to gain employment upon the completion of their education; however, efforts met with limited success owing to the fact the committee was formed by social welfare officers and school officials who placed their primary efforts on the duties associated with their official positions.[28] Colonial officials hoped to find possible labor openings by designating a full time staff to connect with the education department and ascertain the number of graduating students. They could then reduce unemployment among school age juveniles between the ages of twelve and sixteen. The J.E.E. in many ways was a response to growing post-world war II Nigerian nationalist movements, which sought to assuage complaints without initiating expensive improvements and employment legislation.

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[26] "Unemployment in Lagos." 894 Comcol 1/1, vol. I and vol. II, NAI.
[27] "Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[28] No. L. 78/51, "Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Labour Department, Nigeria to the Colony Welfare Officer, July 16, 1943 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Colonial officials often rationalized the limitations of the J.E.E. and the After-care committee, a committee of school officials, to find employment the high number of unemployed school graduates as an inherent lack of initiative in the juveniles. Reports by the After-care committee suggested that if boys possessed initiative and worked hard, they could attain jobs easily without the assistance of the office. One report relayed the story of a juvenile who found work painting signs and another who found a position as an apprentice tin smith.[29] Whereas it was apparent children fared better with independent employment efforts, the After-care committee report reveals a racial assumption of African male laziness. Boys attended meetings at the J.E.E. and sought support, which indicated employment efforts by children and adolescents. The committee concluded that "a changed attitude of mind on the part of local inhabitants is necessary before real improvement can be effected."[30] The effectiveness of colonial officials to incorporate 'civilizing mission 'ideology was limited by racial assumptions, which led to scapegoating the short comings of government programs.

The Juvenile Employment Exchange sought to formalize the relationship between the colonial government, education, and juvenile labor. Colonial officials hoped the office would encourage children to complete their primary education, encourage the employment of those juveniles, and discourage migration from the rural areas. Based on evidence related to child hawking, delinquency, and other labor activities, the Juvenile Employment Exchange provided one avenue for children and juveniles to seek employment, but it had little success in achieving its goals. In fact, the committee keenly recognized that children sought out employment opportunities, but the office was unable to collect accurate statistics to determine how these children found employment.[31] The committee became aware that children found employment by following up on registered members.

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[29] "Report to the After Care Committee," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[30] Ibid.

The Juvenile Employment Exchange possessed few powers to actually limit the migration of children from rural areas into Lagos. The J.E.E. only assisted students who completed their primary education and who proved attendance at a Lagos school for a three year period.[32] The general idea followed that children migrating from rural areas could not prove attendance at school in Lagos and therefore would be discouraged from seeking employment in the city. Yet the legislation had multiple short-comings. The J.E.E. assisted a small number of children compared to the total number of child laborers. In the period between 1943 and 1944, before government control of the office, only 684 boys and 174 girls attempted to use the offices' services.[33] The J.E.E. serviced a small number of children who completed their education and hoped for higher paying jobs unobtainable through independent efforts. Furthermore, colonial officials knew children tended to migrate to cities in the belief cities offered higher quality education than local villages.[34]

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[31] "Minutes of the third meeting of the Lagos advisory committee for Juvenile Employment and After-Care; held in the council chamber on the 11th April, 1944 at 3p.m.," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[32] "Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[33] "Juvenile Employment Exchange Statistics December 1943 to May 1944," in "Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

While the J.E.E. targeted children leaving school aged between thirteen and sixteen years old, the J.E.E. looked to find employment for children under the age of thirteen but the children, "must prove that he or she did not just drift[ed] into Lagos."[35] It was likely the provisions may have limited the number of children who sought help from the exchange; however, it was also possible children enlisted the assistance of adults and other friends to help them claim a domicile in Lagos in order to circumvent the restrictions. Yet the number of children who circumvented the rules of the J.E.E. to receive employment assistance was probably few. The reason is owing to the fact that the J.E.E. had limited exposure among local people. The J.E.E. actively promoted its services by sending agents into Lagos schools to notify students of their services.[36] If students in Lagos knew little about the office, it was unlikely that a large number of child laborers migrating into Lagos knew about the J.E.E. Migrating children often had little support within the city and meeting the J.E.E. requirements on their own would have been a difficult task. Yet once children had been in Lagos for over two years, even if they had migrated, they could meet the J.E.E.'s requirements.

Based on employment reports by the J.E.E., the effectiveness of the office was marginal (see appendix D). The office claimed steady improvement but the numbers showed only recent success and whether the numbers were to continue remained uncertain. The J.E.E. noted that the number of juveniles they assisted increasingly came from regions outside Lagos. According to office statistics in 1946 approximately thirty percent of the workers employed through the agency originated outside of Lagos, but by 1950 the J.E.E. estimated that nearly half of the juveniles they serviced originated outside the city. In terms of total juveniles who registered with the office, there was a seventy-two percent increase between 1946 and 1950 with a twenty-three percent increase in the number of applicants originating from Lagos; therefore, the increase of juveniles employed by the office from outside Lagos corresponded to an increase of children registering who were born outside the city.[37] The increase in the services of the J.E.E. do not necessarily suggest an increase in child migration from the rural areas, but owing to the three year domicile within Lagos rule, children who migrated from rural areas by 1950 heard about the office's services and used the office as a means to gain employment once they reached eligibility.

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[34] No. 894/146 "Unemployment in Lagos," Commissioner of the Colony to the Colonial Secretary to the Government, Lagos, in Comcol 1/1 894 vol II, "Unemployment in Lagos," Aug 9, 1945, NAI.

[35] "Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[36] Ibid.

A summation of J.E.E. statistics compared with census material, the numbers of both must be treated with caution, suggests the majority of juveniles leaving school gained employment without the help of the J.E.E. In fact, the office assisted approximately ten percent of students leaving school between 1946 and 1950.[38] Whereas census information can be notoriously incomplete, the 1950 census for Lagos listed an estimated 1000 girls employed between the ages of five and nine. In addition, 1000 males and 3000 females between the ages of ten and fourteen were neither in school nor employed.[39] It was unlikely that such a large number of children remained idle in Lagos without pursuing one form of labor or another. The large number of unemployed children probably indicates children engaged in labor activities, which were not sanctioned by the government and the children and parents were afraid to report their children's labor activities. As we will see later, the colonial government's special attention to limiting child hawkers may account for the gap in the reported number of child laborers.

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[37] "Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care," Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[38] Ibid.

According to the J.E.E. committee, "we need hardly point out that the best cure for juvenile sweated labour is compulsory Primary Education."[40] Yet the assessment of the J.E.E. fails to match the data collected. If the J.E.E. only placed an average of approximately 40% of registered juveniles between 1946 and 1950, it makes sense why children left education to pursue employment opportunities even if the employment available to them paid low wages or involved illegal activity. Remaining in school for the majority of these students, especially students seeking a secondary education, offered few benefits compared to the costs of education.[41] Compulsory education fit well within the colonial government's concept of the 'civilizing mission,' but in the short term it did not appear to offer tangible benefits to children when the number of industrial and higher level jobs remained marginal and the colonial government refused to commit the funds to promote such a massive education campaign.

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] To adequately evaluate the costs of education for children and families, the value needs to include schools fees, the money children lost because of school attendance, and the perceived future benefits of education.

J.E.E. data and the census information also revealed a significant gender disparity in the employment opportunities available to girls. If the rate of unemployment of children in the census reflected the rate at which children sought out illegal labor activities, then the position of girls was particularly dire. In terms of the types of jobs the J.E.E. found to employ children, girls were generally ineligible for skilled trades. The large number of girl hawkers and prostitutes in Lagos in part was a direct result of girls lacking employment opportunities in the legitimate labor economy. In fact, education offered girls far fewer benefits in terms of employment than boys and it explains the large number of girls employed between the ages of five and nine in place of school attendance. Women occupied important economic roles in both Yoruba and Igbo communities; however, British 'civilizing mission' ideology sought to encourage women to adopt positions in society comparable to Victorian gender norms.

The agenda of the After-Care Committee and the J.E.E. particularly promoted 'civilizing mission' ideology. As already noted, the primary functions of the J.E.E. were to identify children leaving school and to assist them in finding employment; however, members of the After-Care Committee, which took on a minimal role after the J.E.E. was created, believed the solution to child vagrancy and unemployment depended upon training, "them to be good citizens living a healthy life with their leisure time fully occupied with interest."[42] The strategy to achieve this goal, according to Mrs. Cook, a member of the After-Care Committee, relied on setting up a network of clubs for juveniles to occupy their evenings with additional classes and recreations activities. The list of classes offered for boys and girls highlights the gendered divisions in the ‘civilizing mission’ and how it circumscribed the opportunities of girls. Classes for girls listed by the After-Care Committee included, “hairdressing; masseuring; manicuring; typing; shorthand; hygiene; housewifery.”[43] The primary avenue for women to make money, petty trading, was not presented in the list.

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[42] Proposal by Mrs. Anna Cook to the Commissioner of Labor in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Leisure activities, as conceptualized by the After-Care Committee, occupied a central position in the civilizing mission strategy. Work and education dominated the majority of the social programs and transformative agenda of colonial officers; however, leisure activities illustrated the degree to which colonial officials and social workers sought to control the movement and activities of children. The After-Care Committee recommended an aggressive recreational program for children from Monday to Friday in the evening from 6pm to 9pm and on Saturdays including, “sports, debating society, country dancing, keep-fit classes, and many other subjects.”[44] Social welfare workers believed the only way to curb juvenile unemployment and criminal activity was to prevent child idleness and completely occupy children’s time. The importance of leisure activity further indicated a shift in ideas about the role of children in society away from labor activities and towards European concepts of child development.

The central problem for the beginning of any new social welfare program in Nigeria was the ability to acquire funds to support the program. Mrs. Cook offered colonial officials a simple solution to fund the children’s clubs. She suggested, in the course of the children gaining proficiency in skills, the club would find small contracts for the children to fulfill and the funds would be turned over to the club to finance its programs.[45] Using child labor to support social welfare programs was a common practice in colonial Nigeria. It also had a long tradition. The first chapter noted how British missionaries acquired child pawns and slaves to initially spread Christianity in the colony owing to their inability to attract converts. Just as the labor of those children supplied early colonial churches with necessary labor, social welfare programs continued to follow the same model. The next chapter will show how remand homes for juvenile delinquents depended on the labor of children to help maintain the programs' costs.

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

Colonial officials, especially following World War II, were concerned about possible unrest related to labor organizations, which protested lack of employment.[46] In the process of evaluating labor conditions, colonial officials occasionally found employers who either bent or broke laws associated with child labor. The colonial government found the apprenticeship structure posed serious problems to the social welfare of children. Children leaving school often depended upon apprenticeship arrangements to find employment. The primary jobs the J.E.E. placed juveniles into were apprenticeships. Colonial officials explicitly made a connection between apprenticeships and migratory labor and the efforts of the After-care Committee in Lagos intended to place children educated in Lagos into apprenticeships ahead of children migrating to the city.[47]

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[45] Ibid.

[46] A. E. Afigbo, *The Making of Modern African*, 32-33. Newspapers and labor unions were key elements in advancing nationalist ideas from the educated elite to the majority of Nigerians who did not live coastal cities.

[47] "After-care Committee, Lagos,"Fola Ejiwunmi, Secretary, Apr 20, 1942 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Beginning in 1937, A. K. Beauchamp, Assistant Director of Education for the Southern Provinces, presented an apprenticeship scheme to the Superintendent of Education in Ijebu Ode. Beauchamp sought to organize future employment for juveniles by having them attend school for half of the day and apprentice out to a master craftsman for the remainder of the day. The plan called for evaluating potential craftsmen and placing juveniles into apprenticeships based on their interest.[48] The project required closer scrutiny of apprenticeship and juvenile employment practices than had previously existed. During the project's test phase, education officials gave boys three choices of training, which included tailoring, carpentry, and motor mechanics. All of the boys wanted to select tailoring.[49] The files do not explain why all of the boys selected tailoring, but it may have reflected a preference owing to the belief it offered the best employment prospect, because tailoring existed as a culturally recognized trade.

Increased scrutiny of apprenticeship relationships revealed that boys decided whether to stay with master craftsmen or leave depending on how well they liked the work and how the craftsmen treated them.[50] Out of fifteen boys apprenticed for tailoring, three left their appointments. As the program progressed, boys assigned to apprenticeships in carpentry and motor mechanics were far less successful, although one boy making boats was successful. A total of sixteen boys apprenticed in carpentry and motor mechanics and all but seven left their appointments.[51] Colonial officials failed to investigate why boys left their apprenticeship positions, but it is clear boys were critical consumers of their labor opportunities. Girls on the other hand were not given apprenticeship opportunities as colonial administrators sought to enforce British notions of gendered labor.

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[48] No. A.D.S. 3738/209, "Employment of Boys Leaving School – Apprenticeship Scheme," A.K. Beauchamp, Assistant Director of Education, Southern Provinces to the Superintendent of Education, Ijebu Ode, Aug. 27, 1937 in J. 1517 "Apprentice Scheme Employment for Boys," Ijebu prof 4, NAI.

[49] "Scheme of Industrial Apprenticeship in Lagos Schools," in J. 1517 "Apprentice Scheme Employment for Boys," Ijebu prof 4, NAI.

[50] Ibid.

Children had ideas about the kinds of work and pay they expected to gain from their education. When their expectations went unfulfilled, it was likely boys left positions to seek more advantageous work. One major expectation these boys probably had was payment for their services. According to the agreement organized by A. K. Beauchamp, part of the students' school fees went to pay the craftsmen for training the boys whereas the boys received no monetary compensation for their labor. Several boys, especially from mission schools, arrived at their apprenticeship appointments late because they preferred to attend all of their classes.[52] Wheras several boys were willing to learn trades, it appears boys attending schools preferred to focus on education and advance as far as possible with their learning. Apprenticeship practices suggest boys who attended school expected more from their education than a job in manual labor. Several issues with the apprenticeship system caught the attention of colonial officials. Colonial officials had difficulty determining legitimate apprenticeships from abusive labor owing to apprenticeship arrangements' organization based on verbal agreements without any guaranteed rights for children. The After-care Committee hoped the colonial government would mandate formal contracts between children and master craftsmen to prevent children from working without proper wages, upkeep assistance, or a clearly defined period of employment.[53] The proposal by the After-care Committee intended to resemble apprenticeship contracts in Great Britain.

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

The central problem with apprenticeships and the role of the After-care Committee in placing children in apprenticeships related to a lack of manpower. The After-care Committee created lists of registered children and placed them in known job openings, but the committee possessed insufficient employees and oversight power to identify abusive employers and take action against them. The colonial welfare office reported to the Commissioner of the Colony that, "it was composed of busy official who could only turn aside from their ordinary occupations for a short time."[54] Parents removed their children from several dangerous apprenticeships. Parents expressed special concern with electrical jobs and ended their children's apprenticeships. On another occasion, a parent removed a child from a job charging batteries in a motor shop.[55]

Finally, the apprenticeship system in Lagos, by the early 1940s, developed into a method of acquiring labor and not a system to train children to ply a craft. In one instance, a craftsman employed twenty-nine apprentices in his business.[56] The number of children seeking employment far exceeded the availability of permanent positions as adults. In fact, it was common for master craftsmen to release juveniles at the end of their services and then employ a new child instead of permanently employing the trained juvenile.[57] Therefore the colonial apprentice system in cities tended to result in dead end jobs for juveniles rather than a means to permanent employment. Master craftsmen employed children on a large scale and some of these craftsmen used child labor as an inexpensive method of expanding their business under the guise of an apprenticeship relationship.

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[53] "After-care Committee, Lagos,"Fola Ejiwunmi, Secretary, Apr 20, 1942 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[54] Report. Colony Welfare Officer to the Commissioner of the Colony, Dec. 15, 1942 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[55] "Report by the After-Care Committee," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[56] Report. Colony Welfare Officer to the Commissioner of the Colony, Dec. 15, 1942 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Child labor continued to remain important to the colonial economy regardless of attempts to promote education and limit the participation of children in industrial activities. Mr. Langley, employee of the United Africa Company, attended the After-Care Committee meeting on December 19, 1944 and expressed concerns about whether the committee only interviewed students who were leaving school. Mr. Langley stated that the United Africa Company sought to employ fifty elementary school boys. The After-care committee agreed to supply the United Africa Company with as many child laborers as they required.[58] The committee minutes do not include the kinds of work for which the company intended to engage the children; however, it is safe to assume the company preferred to hire younger children for the work owing to the wage they desired to pay. In this way, the evaluation of the topic of child labor as it related to the colonial administration has come full circle in the sense that European demand for child labor shifted overtime from forced labor government projects to the 'legitimate' trade of colonial businesses.

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[57] Report. Colony Welfare Officer to the Commissioner of the Colony, July 1945 in 894 vol II, "Unemployment in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[58] "Minutes of the seventh meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and After-care, held in the council chamber Dec. 19, 1944" in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

HAWKING AND STREET WORKERS

The intersection between colonial officials' practice of enforcing indirect rule, ideological interpretations of the civilizing mission regarding children's social welfare, and the practicality of child education and labor led to colonial legislation, which sought to control the activities and movements of children. By far the largest number of children working in the Southern Provinces engaged in family related labor and for urban areas such as Lagos and Port Harcourt, the majority of child labor included informal labor arrangements, hawking, street working, and illegal labor activities. Colonial officials desperately sought to limit hawking and informal labor arrangements out of a concern for the social well-being of children and the belief that these activities, especially hawking, directly correlated to juvenile delinquency.

Whereas labor legislation in the 1920s focused on preventing the abuse of children by unscrupulous employers, colonial officials' approach to street workers represented the morality aspect of the 'civilizing mission.' Colonial officials increasingly faced complaints from city residents that children increasingly participated in criminal acts. More often than not, colonial officials blamed crime on children migrating from the rural villages to cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, and Port Harcourt. Yet the other side of the issue was the reality that family economies and colonial run businesses continued to depend on the labor of children, which provided a demand for child labor in cities. Child hawking practices indicate a situation where the colonial government's 'civilizing mission' conflicted with the goals of businesses, which sought to use child labor as a cheap means to disseminate their goods.

Source material supports the assertion that education and labor were related options for children. Children most often balanced the necessity of working with the future opportunities they hoped education would provide. Apprenticeship and education clearly represented separate strategies with similar goals. Apprenticeship provided the practical skills for employment, which colonial education often failed to provide in the context of the economy. Street trades supplemented many children's education with needed funds and also practical street knowledge fundamental to their survival in the urban environment. Children in southern Nigeria, much like their counterparts among poor immigrants and African Americans in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s, employed a strategy of part time school attendance with street trades of various kinds.

Colonial officials' concerns for labor conditions and urban squalor associated with poor rural migrants led to extensive reports on living conditions in Lagos; however, the colonial administration underestimated conditions in rural areas. Semi-educated children and adolescents probably expected to find a better living in the city, but colonial reports fail to offer thorough data on these migrants. Yet there are several reports that show from the early 1930s through the 1940s children migrated to Lagos and other urban centers looking for work. Nor were these migrants only boys. For example, some boys migrated to Lagos to work as washer boys for the army barracks, whereas rural girls tended to hawk goods and these girls were often under the age of fourteen.[59] Boys and girls who migrated from rural villages employed themselves in whatever street trades they found employment while pursing either an education or long term employment.

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[59] "Report of the boys in the Soldiers Barracks in Lagos and Yaba," Colonial Welfare Officer, Lagos in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI; Letter. H. Millicent Douglas, Hon. Secretary, Women's Welfare Council to the Lagos Town Council Oct 12, 1942 in Oshogbo 667, NAI.

In one case, rural boys migrated to the Ikoyi Soldiers Barracks to gain employment washing clothes for the soldiers. Large barracks employed upwards of sixty boys. The ages of these boys ranged from ten to sixteen and they lived on pay according to how many uniforms they washed along with extra food soldiers left for them. These boys were not necessarily beggars. It was common cultural practice for adults to leave part of their food for children in the house and soldiers extended the practice to homeless boys who migrated to the city. The boy laborers included some Yoruba boys but most of them were Igbo boy migrants. When boys were fired by a soldier they either worked in another barrack or they went into Lagos to look for other street work. On occasion, as discussed chapter four, they resorted to criminal activity to survive.[60] The large number of Igbo boys working in the Ikoyi barracks suggests the likelihood that communication between migrants in cities to their home communities encouraged further migration.

The migration of Igbo boys to Lagos and the outlying areas requires more investigation to determine all the range of possible causes. Colonial officials, as already outlined, believed children migrated from rural areas looking for education and street employment. Children’s perception maintained that farming in the rural areas was not the ideal life. Yet reasons for children’s movement from the children and parent’s perspectives is absent from the colonial documents. One additional cause for children’s migration to cities may have been the combination of the colonial government’s enforcement of head tax and abolishment of pawnship. Yoruba and Igbo families increasingly needed cash to engage in business with colonial factories to purchase goods and colonial taxes required additional cash resources. For many children, close proximity to the city meant increased opportunities to land cash earning jobs. On the other hand, children moving to the city may have offset the census numbers for rural areas and decreased the taxes families paid to the colonial government.

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[60] “Report of the boys in the Soldiers Barracks in Lagos and Yaba,” Colonial Welfare Officer, Lagos in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Boys migrated from Offa, Oshogbo, Ede, Ilorin, and Ilesha looking for work as Alaru (carriers) and to attend Lagos schools. One eleven year old boy from Ilorin named Alade Jinadu lived with his destitute mother. His father had died. He heard about jobs in Lagos and left with an adult to pursue employment. He worked for several months at a time and either traveled home to give his savings to his mother or he sent the money back to her in the care of an acquaintance. It was common for colonial police to arrest boys of this type for wandering the town while trying to find employment or carrying out a job.[61] Kelani Alade, a fourteen year old carrier, was arrested for entering a train platform in Lagos without a ticket. He was sentenced to prison for being unable to pay a fine. According to the boy's story, he was brought to Lagos by his parents who handed him over to his uncle. The uncle was either unable or unwilling to pay for Kelani’s education so the boy sought employment as a carrier. Kelani claimed that he forgot to pay for the ticket and that he was working at the time of the offense. The social welfare officer believed the uncle was unaware of the boy's arrest and conviction.[62]

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[61] Alaru Question in Lagos, Sept 26, 1943 in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[62] Letter to the Commissioner of the Colony from the Colony Welfare Officer, May 11, 1943 in 2671 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

In order to reduce the number of children moving into cities and to limit child labor, the colonial government passed the Children and Young Persons Ordinance number 41 of 1946. The ordinance criminalized boys under the age of fourteen and girls under the age of seventeen from hawking goods in streets. Colonial officials allowed girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen to hawk if directly employed by a parent or guardian; however, officials believed, "cases of parents allowing their daughters to hawk are extremely rare in Lagos."[63] Colonial officials' preoccupation with children hawkers resided in the ideology that street activities led to "a great deal of juvenile delinquency and of child prostitution."[64] The children's ordinance reveals several items that require evaluation including; colonial officials' ideology as it related to the civilizing mission; the specific laws associated with hawking; the clear gender bias in the law; and reactions to the legislation by children, parents, and businesses.

As with previous colonial policies, dealing with the registration of alien children, colonial officials intended to control the movement of children. Colonial officials believed migrating children were the primary source of street hawking and that these children contributed to urban squalor and limiting the migration of these children would preserve the 'civilizing mission.' Migrating children and the concomitant criminal activity, according to colonial officials' thinking, threatened the 'modern' urban space their efforts created. Furthermore, as we will see in the next chapter, juvenile delinquency represented the inability of the colonial officials to protect its subjects, which fueled protests by Nigerians for colonial officials to live up to their promises of an organized and "civilized" society.

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[63] 2786/104 "Children and Young Persons Ordinance no. 41, 1943," Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos to The Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Nov 28, 1944 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[64] "Regulation Regarding Street Trading," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI. Based on the location of this report in the file, it appears it has been misplaced in the archive owing to who it was placed between the pages of another file.

Colonial officials targeted specific activities in order to accomplish their goal of checking children's hawking. According to the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1946, "no boy or girl may hawk newspapers, matches, flowers, food and goods or articles of any kind, nor may they play, sing or perform for money or engage in any trade in the streets."[65] The legislation clearly prohibited any street trading by children but by specifically listing activities the ordinance reveals the primary items that children hawked in the 1940s. Colonial officials noted that the ordinance might cause economic hardships for the affected families but they rationalized, "it is the welfare of the vast numbers of children in Lagos that is at stake."[66] In conjunction with 'civilizing mission' ideology, colonial officials associated the successfulness of the colonial project with what children were doing in terms of labor and education. Child street trading and juvenile delinquency directly undermined the moral justifications for the colonial system.

The Children and Young Persons Ordinance came with vast powers of enforcement by legislating that, "not only can the child who offends be punished, but … [if] parents were in any way responsible, they can also be fined or even imprisoned."[67] As in most manners related to children, colonial officials believed the best course of action was to threaten parents with punishment in order to control children. A newspaper article, published at the request of the colonial government, stated that, "the object of the ordinance is not so much as punishment but constructive treatment."[68] Yet it appears punishing children's parents for the criminal activities of boys and girls was seldom employed since colonial officials believed most parents did not encourage children, especially girls, to hawk. In fact, whereas juvenile offenders were processed in the courts, parents were not held responsible although colonial officials believed parents often failed in their obligations to their children; an issue that arises in the colonial welfare systems' treatment of juvenile offenders.

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[65] "Regulation Regarding Street Trading," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI. The colonial government placed initially established a Children and Young Persons Ordinance in 1933 and then revised it in 1938. The new incarnation of the bill sought to add 'teeth' to the bill owing to the pervious ordinances ineffectiveness.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid. An exact copy of this file was published in the *Nigerian Daily News* on July 3, 1946.

Gender biases in the law extended beyond the difference in age restrictions on hawking for boys and girls. The Children and Young Persons Ordinance placed heavy restrictions on the movement of girls under the age of seventeen. The law in the ordinance states, "only the lawful parent or guardian appointed by the court shall be allowed to remove any girl from an area which the ordinance is in force…"[69] In practice the law prohibited girls from migrating without a parent or guardian as escort. Colonial officials seriously sought to enforce this provision of the ordinance, which led to a harsh backlash from Nigerian parents. Owing to colonial officials' attempt to enforce the provision, the general result meant it was easier for boys to migrate into the cities than for girls. Boys were still able to use trains and boats as transport, particularly from Igbo villages to Lagos, whereas girls risked arrest by police inspections.

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[68] "New Ordinance for the Welfare of the Young," *Nigerian Daily News*, July 3, 1946.

[69] "Regulation Regarding Street Trading," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI. In addition to the restriction of the movement of girls, colonial law, in theory, prohibited child marriages and pawnship, which were used as pretenses for the movement of girls since the alien children registration act.

The enforcement of the ordinance's restriction on the movement of girls led to a sharply contested conflict between parents and the colonial government. In a petition to the government, the Women's Party and Women's Welfare Council challenged the legality of the new restrictions on the movement of girls and accused the government of violated the rights of these girls. According to the petition, women claimed the colonial government was removing girls from trains, subjecting them to unapproved medical examinations, and in some cases holding them in juvenile courts or remand homes.[70] The women believed the restrictions were "a direct interference with the economic home life of the average African home" and that it interfered with training girls in how to manage a home and prepare them for life as an adult.[71] Women were contesting the validity of the legislation by arguing that the law violated indirect rule, which in definition was supposed to preserve African cultural practices.

Yet the majority of the petition focused on allegations that the colonial government watched trains and removed girls whom they believed were under the age of seventeen and subjected them to medical exams. Whereas the women fail to explicitly describe the nature of the medical exams, the context suggests the colonial government used the exams to determine if the girls were virgins and if they were not, then the officials assumed the girls sought work as prostitutes. Women believed the failure of a court hearing to justify the exams was "unjust, indecent and a violation of the ordinary rights of a citizen."[72] The petition argued that using medical exams, unapproved by the parents, to determine if a girl was working for a brothel, criminalized girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen for having been sexually active regardless of the context of the activity.

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[70] "A Petition to the Government RE nos. 4 and 21 on pages 730 and 739 of Gazette nos. 36 vol. 33 of June 27, 1946," sgd. O.M. Abayomi Women's Party and Major A. Jones Women's Welfare Council in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1 , NAI.

[71] Ibid.

Colonial officials discussed whether or not to respond to the petition's accusations and in a hand written note the commissioner of the colony asserted, "that the things complained of by the Women's Party do not happen e.g. meeting of trains, medical examinations, etc."[73] Whereas the colonial documents do not explicitly state whether welfare officials inspected trains for girls, removed those girls under the age of seventeen, and administered examinations, just two months after the Women's Party submitted their petition, a probation officer from the Juvenile Court sent a request to the Manager of the Marina for information regarding incoming ship schedules. The probations officer specifically outlined the goals of the ordinance to restrict the movements of girls and stated that, "this department is checking up on lorries, canoes, launches, etc. likely to bring in girls."[74] In terms of medical examinations, per government policy, all juveniles were subjected to examinations after arrest in part to determine their state of health and to estimate their age. The specific allegations the women presented in the petition need more corroboration, which at the present is unavailable, but the probation officer's letter seems to suggest there was truth to the women's complaints.[75] The newspaper allegation provides evidence for an instance where issues related to child welfare became part of the anti-colonialist movement, which made use of newspapers to spread nationalist sentiments.

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Hand written note. October 23, 1946 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[74] Ref. No. 2786/T.1/1. Probation Officer, Juvenile Court Centre, 4 Military Street Lagos to The Manager, Elder Dempster Lines LTD., Marina, Lagos, Aug 2, 1946 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI. Based on the ref no. of 2786, the document may have been misplaced in this file.

In addition to complaints by women, the Nigerian News Vendors Union protested the ordinance's restriction of using boys under the age of fourteen to hawk newspapers. The union justified its argument for removing the restrictions based on the necessity to use boy hawkers to effectively distribute publications throughout Lagos and the outlying areas and that school age boys depended on the money they earned from hawking newspapers to pay for basic necessities and education. According to the petition, ninety percent of boys hawking newspapers attended school and they worked between the hours of five and six in the morning.[76] Restrictions on newspaper boys may suggest another motive by the colonial government, which may have been to limit nationalism by interfering with access to newspapers. The two petitions also reflect long running themes related to child labor and their relationship to economic activity. Children were important, both boys and girls, to domestic and business activities in urban and rural areas throughout the colonial period. In addition, children were active agents in seeking out employment, financing their education, and transitioning between different labor activities and education to secure the most advantageous opportunities available to them.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Petition. The Nigerian News Vendors Union to the Commissioner of the Colony, July 12, 1946 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

CONCLUSION

The participation of children in the economy and colonial building projects throughout the first half of the twentieth century remained consistent; however, the types of labor activities in which children participated changed overtime based on shifts in colonial policy and the desires of children to seek education and work. Colonial policy regarding child labor sought to balance government needs with changing world wide expectations of what childhood should be like. Early colonial officials viewed child labor as part of the 'civilizing mission'; however, when international pressure and new concepts regarding social welfare envisioned a new place for children in society, colonial officials applied the 'civilizing mission' ideology in new ways. In other words, when supporting child labor no longer advanced the colonial agenda, the colonial government passed legislation to manage child labor in a manner that reflected their concept of a modern society.

New applications of the 'civilizing mission' in terms of child labor did not continue unchallenged. Colonial officials faced the difficult task of implementing new social welfare theories with indirect rule, which included an inherent contradiction regarding children. When conflicts arose between 'civilizing mission' ideology and indirect rule applications, indirect rule almost unanimously won out except regarding girls' migration to cities to work as hawkers. Colonial officials' application of law in terms of gender reflected British gender norms in which girls' education and labor activities should remain within the home. The perception that girls' migration to the cities undermined the modern civilized urban space underscores a common ideology that maintaining morality required controlling the activities of girls rather than men.

Regardless of the multiple ordinances, programs, and departments dedicated to managing child labor activities, children continued to be active decision makers in their economic welfare. When it suited their purposes, children utilized colonial programs such as the J.E.E., paid for their education, sought apprenticeships, resisted colonial law, and migrated to new opportunities as they saw fit. On occasion, as we will see in the next chapter, colonial officials arrested delinquent children, vagrants, and street workers, but nothing in the documentation suggests any legal prosecutions by the colonial government significantly restricted children from seeking out the labor or education they so desperately sought.

The inability of colonial officials to enforce all aspects of the legal code was probably less important than the creation of the laws. In terms of international relations and approval of the home office, claiming the colonial government created laws that protected children and limited child labor were more important than actual conditions on the ground. Therefore, the colonial government operated between an imagined Nigerian colony where the civilizing mission encouraged progressive ideas related to social welfare and the reality of the intrinsic importance of child labor to the domestic economy, local businesses, and maintaining a balance of power between desired applications of colonial law and the demands of colonial subjects.

Finally, whereas child labor was an important element of the domestic and colonial economy, there is no indication that the majority of children worked in order to avoid poverty. School children and non-school children who worked for the colonial government on public work projects did so because the colonial government viewed those activities as necessary for the public good and as part of the civilizing mission. When colonial ideology retracted from the forced labor of children, children continued to work for a variety of reasons including to learn a trade, supplement family income, and pay for their education. The next chapter evaluates the consequences for children who fell outside these parameters. Poverty was the driving force behind child delinquency and children who were unable to find employment faced poverty and resorted to criminal activities. The goal is to determine to what extent colonial policy restricting child labor actually increased the very juvenile delinquency they sought to limit and how colonial law related to juvenile delinquents reflected the goals of the 'civilizing mission.'

Chapter Four

Child Offenders, Labor, and Poverty, 1931-1953

INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters showed that child labor in Nigeria was part of a social and educational system whereby children participated in every facet of the economy. Colonial contact and its varied affects on Nigerian labor included children's participation in slavery, forced labor and the desire to seek employment by Europeans to gain access to British currency. The overlap between labor and education illustrates how child labor served the dual function of assisting in the success of the kinship group and as a means of educating children so they would become productive adult members of the community. Changes in the child labor activities of Nigerians were a response to economic and social changes that affected the kinship group. Poverty influenced the daily lives of children, especially prior to the late 1920s, when families resorted to child pawnship in order to avoid impoverishment; however, the affects of poverty on children became a greater issue in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This chapter argues that as a result of colonial policies designed to limit all forms of child labor in urban areas children faced increasing threats of poverty and some resorted to criminal behavior when they were unable to find employment.

Changes spurred by an increasing population living in the urban landscape led to new problems and solutions for families and children as they dealt with conditions of poverty and economic instability. The strategies that some children pursued, including acts characterized as delinquent, led the colonial government to devise new ways of managing the changing social conditions. Nigerians accepted some of these strategies and continued to negotiate between their cultural heritage and colonial ideas about what children should do. Poverty in the rural areas influenced children to migrate to cities looking for work, but poor conditions led some children to steal and commit other crimes. The colonial government acknowledged the Nigerian extended family and attempted to find relatives to care for orphans and other displaced children but they also used extreme legal measures to deal with child offenders. Racial ideology and colonial paternalism shaped the ways by which colonial administrators dealt with child offenders.

Colonial legislation outlined in chapter three prohibited many child labor activities associated with street trades and provides the background for an increase in juvenile offenders in the 1930s and 1940s, which corresponded to a growing urban population. The combination of few opportunities for children to work while attending school, the cost of school fees, and limited opportunities for children upon completing their education led to urban impoverishment and increased children's illegal activity. In many ways, the very conditions the colonial government feared most became a persistent problem as colonial legislation disrupted indigenous social institutions and curbed child labor without offering alternatives. The British colonial government's agenda to become a paragon of the 'civilizing mission' in Africa actually led to an opposite affect for children where children became increasingly marginalized, unprepared for work as adults, and unprotected as colonial objectives indirectly undermined the kinship group as an economic unit. Colonial legislation criminalizing most child labor activities and prohibitions on child pawnship actually discouraged kinship groups from taking on more dependents. In many instances, children no longer presented kinship groups with the same benefits as in previous decades.[1]

The definition of delinquency and criminal activity requires a definition in order to contextualize the difference between what Nigerian children viewed as delinquent and what activities colonial administrators sought to criminalize. The concept of what illegal meant and the behaviors it included reveals a central issue related to resistance during colonial rule. Proponents of child agency might view all actions contrary to colonial rule as a form of resistance; however, for children it presented a conflict between behavior viewed as delinquent from the perspective of other Nigerians as well as the colonial administration. In other words, to what extent did children act out against parental authority and to what extent were they resisting colonialism. For criminal actions, like child prostitution, which were often viewed negatively by Nigerians and Colonial administrators, it is relatively safe to characterize them as delinquent even though some Nigerians may have supported the practice. On the other hand, based on widespread opposition to colonial child labor laws, children who violated labor laws were in many ways resisting colonialism by ignoring British legislation. What needs to be determined is the extent to which children resisted colonial laws for the sake of resistance or out of dire need to improve their living conditions and to avoid poverty.

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[1] Sara S. Berry, *Fathers Work for their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985). Berry examines cocoa farmers from the Oyo region of Nigeria to explain changes in the ways wealth was accumulated and used with an emphasis on the post-independence years. Berry suggests that a primary social change was a shift from children working for their fathers to fathers working for their children to give them access to education and other modern amenities.

The majority of research on children and adolescents in the Nigerian urban environment deal with extreme criminal activities associated with gangs such as *Jaguda Boys* and child prostitution[2]; however, this chapter will show that those criminal activities represented a minority compared to the number of children who engaged in petty crime and theft owing to poverty. This chapter argues a direct link existed between social changes that affected child labor and child offenders in colonial Nigeria. From the early 1930s to the late 1940s, children experienced a decrease in labor opportunities while European primary and secondary education remained a privilege for a minority of Nigerian children. Even children who received primary education struggled in an economy that offered few jobs. By the 1930s, children continued migrating to cities in hopes of a better education and better jobs; however, the lure of the city left many children displaced and at risk of poverty.

Impoverished children who resorted to minor crimes to survive represented a general change from the decades prior to 1930 when children tended to work as pawns. As noted in chapter two, the end of pawnship related largely to the outcries of mothers and former child pawns who decried the injustices practiced by unscrupulous lenders who abused the system. Child delinquents presented a different problem because most of these offenders lived alone and some migrated from rural villages where parents or guardians were unable or unwilling to support them. In the 1930s, partly as a result of the Children and Young Persons Bill, colonial policy regarding delinquent children shifted from corporal punishment and imprisonment to rehabilitation and skill training. Yet the intention on paper and actual application of new social welfare techniques varied with some children reaping rewards of the system but the majority entered adulthood facing the same issues of poverty and unemployment. The chapter will outline how the colonial administration criminalized child labor and shifted its social welfare policy regarding child delinquents and how race and progressive social welfare methods influenced those changes.

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[2] Simon Heap, "Their Days are Spent in Gambling and Loafing, Pimping for Prostitutes, and Picking Pockets:" Male Juvenile Delinquents on Lagos Island, 1920s-1960s," *Journal of Family History*, 35, (2009); Laurent Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920-1960," The Journal of African History Vol. 47 (2006) pp. 115-137; Benedict B. B. Naanen, "'Itinerant Gold Mines:' Prostitution in the Cross River Basin of Nigeria, 1930-1950," *African Studies Review* vol. 34 (1991), pp. 57-79.

THE 'CIVILIZING MISSION" AND CRIMINALIZING CHILD LABOR

'Civilizing mission' ideology informed the ways in which colonial administrators defined acceptable behavior and criminal activity in relation to children. Colonial opinions about children's behavior included a complex web of racism, notions of cultural inferiority, and general opinions of social and economic backwardness. These overarching ideas determined how colonial administrators applied criminal legislation, punished offenders, and instituted social welfare reforms. In order to deconstruct the layers to children's marginalization an evaluation is needed to contextualize definitions of delinquency between British and Nigerian perspectives, outline the role of race in the colonial administration, and determine how agency fits into the social changes initiated by the British colonial agenda of criminalizing child labor practices and the consequences of those policies.

Colonial administrators defined delinquency in the context of their objectives including how they applied the civilizing mission to colonial society. The British defined delinquency as children who violated British colonial law; therefore, child delinquents were those children who were non-compliant with British regulations and administrators placed special focus on cities that were considered the primary evidence for British initiated progress in Nigeria. As outlined in chapter three, international pressures and a desire to reform labor relationships led colonial officials and the British government to create new boundaries for child labor activity. From the British perspective, abolishing urban child labor represented a milestone in the modernization of the colony and improved the conditions of children and child delinquency was synonymous with ignorance and a lack of education.

On the other hand, Nigerians generally ignored many British laws as outlined in chapters two and three. Nigerians and British administrators agreed that stealing and child prostitution were important aspects of child delinquency that needed to be prevented. Yet most Nigerians did not view restrictions on hawking or street labor to be delinquent. A muddied line existed between delinquency as it was defined by British colonial administrators and resistance to colonial imposition by children and their families in terms of non-compliance with colonial law. Child delinquency in Nigerian societies more often included children who failed to take personal responsibility and contribute to their upkeep by working or learning a trade. In many ways, children who failed to find access to education or work might be considered delinquents by their families or local communities.

Colonial officials defined delinquency in contrast to their civilizing mission objectives and racist notions of Nigerian behaviors along with a paternalistic approach to their colonial ‘subjects’. Children were marginalized by a belief in inherent racial limitations and growing up in a disadvantaged environment. Colonial officials perceived their role as that of a parent who needed to accept the burden of correcting the lack of parental guidance given to Nigerian children by their families. The colonial government believed that "parental neglect continues to be the main cause of juvenile delinquency."[3] Colonial government official's assumption that parental neglect caused child delinquency partly reflected the persistent ideal that Nigerians needed to be educated and civilized. Officials believed that under the tutelage of colonial guidance, at some point in the future, Nigerians would be capable of properly training their children.

Comments by colonial officials elucidate the perceptions of Nigerian inferiority according to culture and race. The Colonial Welfare Office in 1947 stated that, "it is also the result of an a-morality that fails to recognize the tremendous hardship and mental upset there is to a child born into a family," faced with poverty and a dysfunctional structure.[4] The argument presupposes that those in the urban areas were more civilized than the rural and that modern structures of justice failed in the backward southern and rural provinces beset by polygamy, which social workers considered as one of the causes of child delinquency. It was quite possible, although not directly stated, that stereotypes of African sexuality as being promiscuous and uncontrolled informed colonial ideas about polygamy and how the supposed a-morality produced children without a proper moral compass.

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[3] Annual Reports 1952, 1177 vol. XXIV, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[4] Annual Report 1946, Colony Welfare Office, 667 Oshogbo, NAI.

The multiple ways in which children were stereotyped by race, culture, and gender led to overlapping degrees of marginalization dependent on the degree of interaction between children and the colonial system. For example, boys in the city risked arrest for hawking or appearing to be a vagrant. Girls faced additional marginalization as colonial preconceptions of what girls ought to do contradicted cultural trading practices. Many girls were arrested as prostitutes for hawking goods owing in part to colonial ideas of respectability frowned upon girls working in streets. Owing to the large number of girls who worked for their parents or other adults selling goods, girls were particularly disadvantaged by child labor laws and were at risk for arrest and punishment.

Chapter one argued that child labor in Nigerian societies often existed within a context that advanced a goal of socializing children and offering them routes to employment as adults. Colonial policy as applied according to ‘civilizing mission’ ideology sought to alter the cultural process of child training and acculturation. Education played a central role in an attempt to train children to accept gender specific tasks as outlined by British culture such as women fulfilling duties as homemakers and men as the wage earners with children as passive household members who enjoyed childhood. Colonial policy that criminalized child labor sought to force changes that the ‘civilizing mission’ was unable to accomplish by indirect means.

Colonial administrators subscribed to the concept that Nigerian children were incapable of self-determination owing partly to ideas of racism and cultural inferiority and the belief that children in general lacked the ability to properly care for themselves. Yet in Nigerian society children appeared to possess greater levels of autonomy than acknowledged by the colonial administration. A few examples include parents who supported children migrating to cities, children who refused pawnship contracts, and children who found employment or gained an education without the assistance of parents or the colonial government. Regardless of at least some measure of children's agency, colonial ideology continued to promote the administration as de-facto guardians for supposed defunct social practices. As this chapter will show, laws intended to curb child labor in many cases contributed to urban poverty and resulted in child delinquency.

DESTITUTE CHILDREN AND THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

In order to adequately understand the connection between juvenile offenders and poverty, the following section will offer an overview of economic and social conditions in Nigerian from the 1920s to the 1940s. Along with economic conditions, close attention will be given to social changes occurring during this period in relation to the kinship group and how urban spaces and poverty contributed to the dismantling of the social unit. In the context of urban poverty, the Children and Young Person's Bill of 1943 marked a turning point in juvenile delinquency owing to the criminalization of child labor activity and how the colonial government sought to either punish or reform offenders. Finally, the specific experiences of children varied according to how colonial administrators applied the law to gender. Civilizing mission ideology placed particular emphasis on the proper roles for girls and women, which was manifested in colonial legislation.

The colonial government demonstrated growing concern about the rising cost of living and its affect on Nigerians from the 1930s to the 1950s. Large scale slums developed in Lagos in the 1930s. The Great Depression contributed to high levels of unemployment and decreased the value of Nigerian goods. A plethora of factors led to increased poverty in Nigeria including the colonial economic structure that favored extracting natural resources instead of manufactured goods as well as growing cash crops in place of food crops. The impact of the shift in the Nigerian economy from food crops to cash crops led to a decrease in Nigerians access to European currency to buy needed items as well as a decrease in the amount of food available.[5] With the onset of the Great Depression, British businesses began to pay less for cash crops and other goods sold in Nigeria.[6] The falling value of goods combined with poverty and the rising costs of living in the cities led to dire circumstances for many Nigerians. Declining economic conditions were a contributing factor for child delinquency; however, economics was one aspect of a larger social problem.

The colonial government undermined the kinship group as a social and economic unit often indirectly and perhaps sometimes directly. Indirect rule ideology suggested maintaining indigenous social and political structures; however, in practice the colonial government dismantled secret societies, concepts of gender divisions, and indigenous social functions, which they deemed challenged colonial economic and political objectives or were contrary to 'civilizing mission' goals. One key component in Nigerian social change included the rising costs of bride price. From the British perspective, they desired to end bride price altogether if possible and passed laws in an attempt to prevent child marriage agreements.[7] Nigerian men may have fathered an increasing number of children outside the kinship structure owing to widespread adult male unemployment in cities, rising costs of bride price, and a lack of contraceptive practices in Nigeria during the first half of the twentieth century; however, more work needs to be done on this issue. Whereas currently enough data to support this position is unavailable, some of the aspects of the problem can be outlined.

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[5] A large amount of scholarship has noted the affects of cash crop production on the colonial economy. Berry, *Fathers Work for their Sons*; A. I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland under European Rule, 1889-1945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976); A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, (London: Longman, 1973).

[6] Susan M. Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800-1980*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Martin showed how the falling prices of palm oil contributed to protest by women in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

In 1938 the colonial government organized the Committee on Labour Conditions (CLC) to inquire into the living conditions of laborers in Lagos. The purpose of the committee was "to keep under continuous review the conditions under which labor is employed in the Municipal Area of Lagos and in particular to promote the proper observance of the provisions of the Labour Code and Regulations made thereunder."[8] The Chief Secretary became concerned about the possible exploitation of labor in 1937 and the committee to oversee the evaluation of laborers living conditions included a representative from the Nigerian Railway, the Commissioner of the Colony, the Medical Officer of Health, a representative of the Lagos Town Council, and a representative of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce.[9] The committee's main intentions were to provide for the home government a general report that could demonstrate to the public and the international community Britain's progressivism and also identify any possible labor related revolts. Yet the reports offer a small window into how adult male labor conditions contributed to urban poverty for children as well as a large number of single adult males unable to afford marriage and basic living expenses.

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[7] No. 24122/126. Confidential. "Child Prostitution," From Colonial Secretary Lagos to S.N.P, S.W.P. and S.E.P., Feb 8, 1944 in 619 "Protection of Young Girls," Agbor Div 1, NAI.

[8] Letter. J. J. Emberton to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos July 1, 1938 in 1097 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[9] Letter. The Commissioner of the Colony to The General Manager of the Nigerian Railway, Ebute Metta; Lagos, July 13, 1938 in 2159 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The CLC determined that examining the laborers' living conditions was the best way to assess the state of the labor force.[10] Mr. J.W. Duggan, representative of the Nigerian Railway, compiled a report of the committee's observations from the Ebute Metta area of Lagos. The conditions of laborers working for contractors faced particularly harsh living conditions with pay that barely supplied their monthly housing costs and food. These laborers sought to supplement their income with additional work, but it was available irregularly for little pay. The data also suggests that either a large number of these men remained unmarried or they were unable to provide for their wives and children as most of them lived in a small room alone.[11] G. Cotgreave, an employee of the John Holt Company, reported on wards A through D in the Lagos Municipal Area. He estimated that "at least 25% of the men interviewed appeared to have had no employment for years and were content to live on the relations and the earnings of their wives as petty traders."[12] The quote in part reveals the unemployment problem but officials explained the issue in context of a racist stereotype of African male laziness. In one brick building with a corrugated iron roof he counted thirteen rooms containing a total of twenty-six adults and approximately fifteen children. B ward contained a house of four rooms with ten adults and seven children and a small structure made of bamboo that housed five adults and two children. C ward housed thirty adults and twenty children in seventeen rooms. The men in this area claimed to have had no employment for up to six years and primarily lived on their wives earnings as traders. D ward was a house made out of old corrugated iron sheets divided into eight rooms in which fifteen adults and six children lived.[13]

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[10] Committee on Conditions of Labour in the Lagos Municipal Area, meeting minutes, Sept 27, 1938 in 2159 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[11] Committee to Enquire into the Employment of labor in the Colony of Lagos, Report on observations made by Mr. J.W. Duggan, Nov 3, 1938 in 2159 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[12] Committee on Conditions of Labour, Lagos Municipal Area. G. Cotgreave to The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, Feb 15, 1939 in 2159 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Employees who worked in jobs related to the railway lived in the best conditions. Garaba Jinkwa worked in a locomotive shop at an iron foundry and earned 26s per month. Mr. Sali, an employee for the Nigerian railway earned the same monthly wage. Both of these men lived in larger rooms, spent more money on food, paid for a washerman, were not in arrears on sanitation fees, and bought their clothes instead of buying on credit. According to the report, both men were single.[14] Jinkwa and Sail in many respects illustrate the possibilities of better living conditions when employed by European businesses in the city. Many adult males and children aspired to gain these kinds of positions; however, they were limited as illustrated in chapter three where apprenticeship programs at best offered marginal opportunities for children. The report on Jinkwa and Sali in part calmed British concerns over possible labor abuses by British businesses in the colonies but Jinkwa and Sali's more favorable living conditions were a minority.

Labor conditions outlined in the 1939 report relate to children in a couple of respects. Children living in these conditions with parents struggling to earn enough money to cover living expenses provided the context for children to resort to petty theft and crime to supplement their diet and pay for education, which often remained out of their reach owing to fees. Employment difficulties for men reinforced the problems their children faced as adults where those who gained an education failed to find long term employment. Child labor, even street labor, for many children provided immediate funds to alleviate their condition but it was likely child labor also presented them with future employment possibilities. Children working in timber concessions mentioned in chapter three should be evaluated with this issue in mind. For employers child labor offered inexpensive workers and for children it opened the door to employment possibilities in the future. Yet many children lived in these conditions without access to jobs, which resulted in some children engaging in criminal behavior to avoid poverty.

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

Even though the CLC established the low wages and poor living conditions of laborers and their families, the committee members needed to apply most of their time to other jobs and duties. Acting Commissioner of the Colony, E.G. Hawkesworth, decided that "the cost of living rendered from time to time in the Colony and Southern Provinces have little value since the officers concerned have scanty data available and have not the time to conduct detailed investigations."[15] He further argued that because housing alone is not a good determinant of the cost of living, "little value can be achieved until a central labour organization is available to collate and assist in the compilation of such figures."[16] Hawkesworth's comment underscores a repeated theme in how the colonial administration negotiated the balance between social welfare and governance. As noted in chapter three, the Juvenile Employment Board and other colonial social welfare programs included a hodgepodge of colonial officials, missionaries, and Nigerian leaders appointed by the colonial government who formed social welfare committees in addition to regular duties. In many ways, these short term committees were focused on alleviating the colonial administration's concerns rather than measuring the progress of the 'civilizing mission' or initiating long term reforms.

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[15] Letter. E.G. Hawkesworth to The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos; Nov 30, 1938 in 2198 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[16] Ibid.

According to colonial reports in the 1950s, living conditions experienced no improvement with rural inhabitants continuing to migrate to the cities. The annual report from 1952 stated that, "many problems … still remain unsolved... until the town can be planned, the slums removed and the streets widened, little improvement can be expected."[17] Colonial administrators believed that, "the lure of the glitter and glamour of urban life is irresistible to the partially educated youth in search of employment... with the result that every possible shack, nook, and cranny is converted into a dwelling."[18] They also noted that housing still represented a serious problem as "modest houses command annual rentals of £500 and the less fortunate employee in the lower income group is fortunate to find one room for himself and his family."[19] The report also notes a steady increase in the population without a decrease in the cost of living.

Whereas the colonial administration accurately described the problems associated with the cost of living and population increase, they underestimated the conditions in rural areas. Semi-educated young persons may have expected to find a better living in the city, but the colonial reports do not include data on this type of migrant; however, several reports and documents from the early 1930s through the 1940s show that children migrated to Lagos and other urban centers looking for work. As addressed in chapter three, these migrants included boys and girls. Such as the boys who migrated to Lagos to work as washer boys for the army barracks and girls tended to migrate to hawk and these girls were often under the age of fourteen.[20]

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[17] Annual Report 1952, vol. XXI, 1177 Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

High costs of living coupled with erratic employment opportunities meant child migrates to urban areas faced multiple hardships. The data from 1938 showed the difficulties adult males dealt with when trying to find work that paid enough for lodging and food. Children living in the cities sought to supplement the low family income by assisting their mothers, who played an important role as wage earners for the family. The documents show that high housing costs meant many child migrants lacked a place to live and police officers often found them sleeping on the street. Whereas children turned to criminal behavior for a variety of reasons, impoverishment provided the impetus for a large number of criminal acts, especially stealing.

An examination of child delinquency cases beginning in the 1930s suggests the main causes of delinquency included orphaned and displaced children, who were at risk of poverty. A boy whom colonial officers named "Dick" from Sierra Leone was found destitute in Lagos after being abandoned by a Lieutenant in the West African Frontier

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[20] Report of the boys in the Soldiers Barracks in Lagos and Yaba, Colonial Welfare Officer, Lagos in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI; Letter. H. Millicent Douglas, Hon. Secretary, Women's Welfare Council to the Lagos Town Council, Oct 12, 1942 in 667 Oshogbo, NAI.

Force, who employed him as a servant during World War I.[21] Reports in 1943 showed that soldiers brought boys from up country to Lagos and then left the children in the city after they were deployed overseas.[22] Soldiers who employed children offered them few if any long term means of sustainable income, skills or education. These children performed basic domestic tasks including washing and ironing uniforms, preparing food, and handling other daily tasks. On occasion the colonial government attempted to relocate children temporarily employed by military personal such as "Dick" but generally the children were left to fend for themselves in cities.

Children initially migrated to Lagos for employment and probably did not intend to resort to crime. In one case, boys from rural areas migrated to the Ikoyi Soldiers Barracks to gain employment washing clothes for the soldiers. When one of these boys was fired by a soldier he tried working in another barrack or went "into the Township of Lagos and become... one of the pick-pocketers in Town."[23] Children who engaged in pick-pocketing, housebreaking, and other thefts generally went unchallenged by the colonial police, who lacked the resources to seriously pursue those kinds of criminal activities.[24] In this instance petty crime supplemented income when other labor earning options remained unavailable.

A report sent to the Commissioner of the Colony in Lagos listed the offences of thirty four juvenile offenders in December of 1943. Twenty two children were charged with stealing, five for common assault, two with wandering without visible means of support, and five for traveling on the railway without tickets.[25] According to this report, sixty-five percent of child offenders were caught stealing. Nine years later, in the Social Welfare Report of 1951-1952, 610 male juveniles were brought before the court and 270 of them were convicted for stealing. The next largest number, sixty-two boys, were brought before the court owing to being unable to properly care for themselves and the third most common offence, thirty-five boys, were arrested for hawking. The majority of these boy offenders were either sentenced to a remand home or repatriated to their rural homes.[26] Numbers for the following year were similar with 159 convictions for stealing and 175 cases of lack of care and protection out of a total of 573 cases.[27]

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[21] Letter from the Colonial Secretary to Colonial Secretary's Office Sierra Leone, July 2, 1917. 1274 Oshogbo 19/5, NAI.

[22] Welfare Report submitted to H.G.S., 1943 in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[23] "Report of the boys in the Soldiers Barracks in Lagos and Yaba, Colonial Welfare Officer, Lagos" in 2600 Comcol 1/1. In another report, 2600/80 Comcol 1/1, NAI; colonial welfare officers noted that "The migration of children to Lagos has become a serious problem."

[24] Juvenile Delinquency, Colonial Welfare Officer, Oct. 9, 1943 in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Social Welfare reports as early as 1943 suggest that juvenile delinquents comprised of boys and girls who were brought to the city to work as hawkers or servants and ended up destitute without work or an opportunity to attend school.[28] Whereas the colonial government appeared most concerned about boys migrating from the rural areas to Lagos, boys also migrated out of Lagos to try and find better living conditions. Four Yoruba boys, Laiwola Iyanda, Yinusa Bankole, Kehinde Aremu, and Rashidi Amusa were arrested in Enugu, but Enugu officials believed vagrancy was not a serious enough crime to warrant imprisonment and wanted them returned to Lagos.[29] Yet colonial administrators in Lagos believed the boys needed to be submitted to a reform school and with the Lagos home in Yaba full to capacity, Lagos officials sought to block the return of the boys to Lagos. Officials in Lagos believed in the boys returned to the city they would not have proper accommodations and would resort to criminal behavior.[30]

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[25] Letter. The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, Jan 18, 1944 in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[26] Male Cases Juvenile Court, April 1, 1951 - March 31, 1952, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Welfare Report submitted to H.G.S., 1943 in 2600/80 Comcol 1/1, NAI. Report to The Governor of Nigeria, "Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate, 1943" in 4108 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[29] Telegram. Mabb Quod Enugu to Comcol Lagos, July 4, 1944 in 1890 vol. 1 "Boys Industrial Home Enugu," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The practice of officials blocking the return of children to Lagos was a common practice. On several occasions, children for a variety of reasons ended up in French colonies. These children were most often taken to the colonies with business men or colonial employees aboard steamers; however, some of these children were abandoned after they arrived in the French colony, particularly from Douala in Cameroon.[31] Eugene Mbende was born in French Cameroon but his father originated from Warri or Lagos. The French government sought to repatriate the boy who was a destitute since his father's death and prone to "bad habits".[32] The British colonial government refused to receive the boy unless family members were found in Nigeria. After several attempts to locate living family members, British officials refused to grant permission for the boy to return and believed relatives in Douala should take responsibility for Mbende. The British Social Welfare department argued that the boy at age sixteen was too old to be committed to the juvenile reform system.[33]

On a later occasion in August of 1956, French officials dropped two boys, Abayami Massurou and Enosa Adjosse, aged thirteen and ten respectively, off at the border of the Nigerian colony.[34] Perhaps the French colonial government was unhappy with the lack of cooperation from British officials in Lagos regarding their refusal to repatriate Eugene Mbende. The stories of these three boys illustrate the marginalization of children in colonial societies. Neither the British nor the French governments wanted to deal with displaced children and in the case of Abayami Massurou and Enosa Adjosse it appeared the families of the two boys sought to place the children in the care of a distant relative living in Cameroon and a goldsmith, respectively. Whereas the colonial governments did not provide more information on the reasons why the children were abandoned, it is clear some destitute children were forced to care for themselves without the assistance of family or colonial government.

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[30] Continuation Sheet 130, in 1890 vol. 1 "Boys Industrial Home Enugu," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[31] "Eugene Mebende: Juvenile Delinquent, Repatriation of From Douala," 51 s.41 Comcol; "Juvenile Delinquents from the French Cameroons," 51 s.46 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[32] Letter. Haut-Commissareat de la Republique Francais au Cameroon a Lagos, Yaounde, Nov 16, 1955, in "Eugene Mebende: Juvenile Delinquent, Repatriation of From Douala," 51 s.41 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[33] Letter. Chief Social Welfare Officer to Chief Administrative Officer, Lagos, May 18, 1956 in "Eugene Mebende: Juvenile Delinquent, Repatriation of From Douala," 51 s.41 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

A common problem for many children who were arrested by colonial police was the ability to secure their release. Colonial officials refused to release children unless they identified a living relative willing to accept the children. Raji, a Yoruba boy aged sixteen, was tried in the provincial court in Oshogbo district for "wandering in a public place in such a manner as to lead to the conclusion that he was there for a disorderly purpose."[35] This offence categorized him as a suspect person and was released to his father on a surety of £5, which could be recovered if Raji did not violate any laws for six months.[36] Raji was fortunate. The colonial government often experienced difficulty in locating the relatives of arrested children owing to death, movement of families, and an understaffed social welfare department.

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[34] No. 1159/132, "“Juvenile Delinquents from the French Cameroons,” from Kumba, Aug 13, 1956 in 51 s.46 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[35] Return of Juvenile Offenders, month ending Jan 31, 1932. Oshogbo District, Oyo Province, NAI.

[36] Ibid.

The colonial government experienced recurring problems finding relatives for many children who were arrested and committed to several years in a reform institute.[37] John Mbeke was convicted at the age of twelve and spent six years in a reform school. The juvenile law code prevented holding children in reform schools after their eighteenth birthday; however, even though Mbeke, according to British law was no longer a child, the authorities refused to release him until his family was found. The colonial government finally located an older brother, who was a farmer in the area, but they hesitated to release Mbeke who learned carpentry but had no agricultural skills.[38] Mbeke's brother agreed to take charge of him and he was released; however, one year later Mbeke sent a petition to the Assistant District Officer at Agbor asking for employment as a carpenter.[39] Colonial policies that remanded children to the custody of reform institutions contributed to the fracturing of the kinship group. In addition to the problem of reconnected children with their families, children rarely received the kind of training to permit them to live productively with their kinship group. They lacked socialization skills, connection to community, and practical skills. In many ways, it makes sense these children sought out a living in cities and refused to remain in rural areas.

JAGUDA AND BOMA BOYS

Throughout the colonial period children participated in a range of criminal activities; however, serious crimes escalated during the depression years and after the introduction of the Children and Young Person's Bill, which outlawed many forms of child labor. Children reacted to these laws in many ways. Some children ignored the laws, continued to work, and on occasion colonial police arrested them. Other children resorted to petty theft to supplement their meager earnings. A small minority of children found participating in organized criminal activities a lucrative occupation. Jaguda and Boma boys relied on employment in theft and black market activities designed to occur outside the purview of the colonial government and legitimate business activities. It was most likely boys engaged in these activities owing to a combination of reasons including poverty, the wages provided, status associated within the social groups, and affiliations with older boys active in the groups.

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[37] 1890 vol. 2 "Boys Industrial Home, Enugu," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[38] "Juvenile Offenders: Treatment of," Agbor 515, NAI.

[39] Letter. John Mbeke to the Assistant District Officer Agbor, Mar 4, 1957 in Agbor 515, NAI.

Jaguda and Boma Boys were two groups from Lagos that came under scrutiny by both the colonial government and local citizens. Jaguda boys were an organized band of thieves who pillaged markets and pickpocketed in the streets. They often stole goods in the open and on occasion resorted to violent robbery. Boma boys were an organized group that served as guides for locations of criminal activity especially for out of town visitors such as military personal. For a fee, they took visitors to liquor businesses or prostitution houses. According to colonial officials, older boys sought out younger boys to act as the guides and received a percentage of the profits.[40] Unlike many child labor occupations at the time, young Boma boys actually looked forward to a promotion when they replaced a head Boma boy and had young boys beneath them from whom they received commissions.

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[40] "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," 2471 Comcol 1/1, NAI. The exact title of this report is unavailable owing to the poor condition of the original copy.

Young men who migrated to Lagos for work often brought young boys with them to work as house servants. These child house servants compensated for the inability of many young men to be able to afford marriage. Colonial administrators feared these children were left for long periods of the day without supervision and were, “easy recruits for Jaguda Boys.”[41] One officer on patrol found a twelve year old boy from Calabar sleeping outside and “wandering about from one Palm Wine Bar to another.”[42] This boy regularly migrated between his home and Lagos apparently trying to find work to sustain himself.[43] Another boy between the age of fourteen and fifteen was known to make a living as a *Boma Boy*.[44] The colonial officers placed blame for child criminal activity on the migration of young men and children from rural areas to the city rather than the deplorable conditions and lack of employment opportunities that encouraged these age groups to seek a better life in the city.

Colonial officials approached the problems of juvenile delinquency with a sense of haughtiness that presumed the social problem resided in the racial inferiority of Nigerian peoples rather than destructive policies created by the colonial administration. A colonial report described Boma boys as a “cynical youth, up to all the tricks of the trade, lazy and immoral.”[45] Although social welfare thinking gradually shifted from innate causes to the role of environment as a reason for criminal activity, colonial officials continued to explain juvenile crime as a result of race and the general idea that these youths were part of a culturally inferior group. From the perspective of colonial administrators, the burden of finding employment resided with individual boys rather than account for the problems initiated by colonial economics and political policies. Colonial officials described Boma boys as a community disease that spreads and multiplies itself and "only in an institution can the bad habit-patterns … be broken down, and a reasonable moral attitude to Society developed."[46] In previous decades British ideology placed significant focus on the ability of European religion to 'civilize' Africans but in the 1930s European ideology reflected progressive ideas that sought to use education and environment to gain the acceptance and cooperation of colonial subjects. In this case, colonial officials believed a reform program offered a solution to African resistance to social change.

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[41] “Report on Juvenile Welfare in the Colonies,” D.E. Faulkner, Colonial Welfare Officer, July 15, 1943, NAI.

[42] “Children Welfare: General Questions,” in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] “Juvenile delinquency in Lagos,” 2471 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Poverty in part explained why some boys chose to work as Boma boys, estimated under the age of twelve, to maintain their livelihood. Boys new to the business often slept outside unable to afford any accommodations and apparently led "a rather meager existence."[47] Colonial officials, via an investigation, believed experienced Boma boys received around £2 per month.[48] Compared to earnings reported by the CLC these boys fared as well or better than some adults. Experienced Boma boys probably made arrangements with specific places of prostitution and received a service charge from both the man they escorted to the location and from prostitutes.[49] Whereas Boma boys just beginning in the trade faced deplorable conditions, it was likely they were aware of how experienced Boma boys fared and continued in the business with expectations of a better living in the future.

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[46] "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," 2471 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid. Colonial officials believed Boma boys had arrangements with specific prostitutes but there is no direct evidence to support this conclusion. It is however reasonable to assume Boma boys may have sought

Colonial investigations in 1940 revealed that many Boma boys were educated and "impressed us [colonial investigators] as being good material."[50] Children told colonial officials they received primary education, but the deplorable conditions of the apprenticeship system were so severe they resorted to work as a Boma boy to support themselves. Many of these boys were born in Lagos and had family members living in the city, which counters the typical stereotype of child offenders originating from outside the city. [51]Felix Bolaji, sixteen years old, was the son of a Lagos man who was currently unemployed. Felix attended St. Peter's Faji School to standard four or five but was forced to leave the school in 1938 for undisclosed reasons.[52] Apparently owing to his father's unemployment, he was no longer able to pay the school fees.

Another Boma boy, Jack Morris, made a less desirable impression on colonial administrators. Jack told colonial officials he was fourteen years old but they believed he was closer to twenty. Colonial officials often had difficulty arriving at an accurate age for children and it was possible the boy was correct or he may have lied about his age in order to avoid imprisonment for his illegal activities. According to Jack, he left his father's home because his mother had many children and she was unable to feed him.

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enumeration from both prostitution house and men they escorted in terms of a service charge, which is consistent with cultural practices.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] History Sheet. "Appendix E" Felix Bolaji, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Jack also attended school in Lagos and after a short time working on a ship as a washer man he left to gain employment as a Boma boy. At the time of the interview, he was living with a prostitute in Lagos.[53] Colonial officials viewed Jack as undependable and possibly a degenerate youth owing to his statement that, "he is satisfied with his Boma work and would not leave for hard work."[54] Jack's feeling probably described the opinions of several Boma boys. After having received an education, they looked for jobs with higher status and sought to avoid menial labor such as washer men and agricultural labor. Felix demonstrated an interest in leaving his Boma boy occupation but only for work as an engineer on a boat.[55]

A Muslim boy named Okoja, ten years old, was found presumably working as a Boma boy and living by begging and carrying loads. According to the colonial report, he was living on the marina. His father was dead and his mother remarried. Okoja said a man named Sadiku brought him to Lagos three years ago and since then he lived on the street.[56] Jason Obasike, fourteen years old at the time of interview, migrated from Benin to Lagos with his uncle who worked on a boat and served as his attendant. While in Benin, Jason reached standard III but his limited skill in English prevented him from continuing his education after he arrived in Lagos. At the time of the interview, he was living on Ebute Metta wharf without an established place of abode. His father was a court clerk and his mother had seven children.[57] Jason differs from the other cases owing to the higher position of his father. His father probably allowed the boy to leave with the uncle under the assumption Jason would get a better education in Lagos.

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[53] History Sheet. "Appendix F" Jack Morris, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[54] Ibid.
[55] History Sheet. "Appendix E" Felix Bolaji, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[56] History Sheet. "Appendix A" Okoja, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Yesufu Tijani was originally from Ibadan whose father died and his mother was ill. He attended school to standard I and then left school most likely owing to his parents' condition. Yesufu traveled to Lagos at the age of nine employed to carry loads and once in the city resorted to pickpocketing for an income. According to the report, the boy's brother helped him get training as a carpenter but the brother left for Kano to gain employment and Yesufu was unable to pay the train fare to follow. Colonial administrators considered Yesufu a vagrant without fixed abode.[58] Justin Phillip, the last boy interviewed by colonial officials, was originally from Abeokuta and migrated to Lagos to work as a Boma boy owing to a friend, who introduced him to the trade. His father and mother were still living at the time although his father was an old man and colonial officials believed his parents were unaware of his current occupation. Justin said he went to Lagos in the hope of learning the mechanics trade. He attended school to standard IV, but he gave colonial officials the impression that he hated school and they characterized him as a "dull boy."[59] Officials' assessment of the intelligence of Boma boys is suspect. The documents suggest colonial officials' denoted intelligence with the perceived inclination of the boys to agree with colonial officials. Justin was intelligent enough to arrive at the conclusion that his prospects for employment as a Boma boy offered him a better living than his education was able to give him.

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[57] History Sheet. "Appendix B" Jason Obasike, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[58] History Sheet. "Appendix C" Yesufu Tijani, in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[59] History Sheet. "Appendix D" Justin Phillip in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

These cases suggest the possibility that boys gained access to work as a Boma boy through connections to the shipping industry. Felix, Jack, Okoja, and Jason all spent time working on boats or lived near wharfs before they gained employment as Boma boys. The colonial report does not acknowledge this connection. Colonial officials also debated how to deal with Boma boys and the recommended solution was to remove all Boma boys from the city including boys who were born in Lagos and still had family in the city. Colonial officials rejected the idea of placing them all in reform schools owing to the cost of maintaining the institutions and felt if they could find suitable homes for them in rural areas the boys could no longer ply the trade.[60] Whether dealing with juvenile offenders in French colonies, offenders born in Lagos, or offenders migrated to Lagos, the consistent solution supported by the colonial government was to simply keep these children from living in the city. Colonial administrators viewed it as the cheapest and most effective means to control the behavior of child offenders.

Regardless of colonial administrators' intentions to relocate Boma boys, the policy lacked consistent and adequate enforcement. In 1943 the colonial police decided to address the "Boma boy menace" with more "vigilance."[61] In a single raid the police arrested seventy three Boma boys with twenty five juveniles between the ages of nine and fifteen. Twenty of the arrested boys were found guilty of working as unlicensed guides or

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[60] G.B. Williams, Commissioner of the Colony to The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, July 23, 1941 in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[61] Report. "Boma Boy Menace in Lagos," by Bankole Wright, July 12, 1943 in 2471 "Juvenile delinquency in Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

"with loitering in or about hotels, street corners, or places of amusement and other suspicious places."[62] The extent to which all of these boys may have been Boma boys is questionable. The colonial government often based guilt on association and any children near specific locations were considered guilty. The colonial government's concept of where children should be varied differently from what children actually believed was appropriate work. The concept of space dominated colonial ideology in relation to children in terms of assigning guilt and penalizing child offenders. The criminalization of child behavior; therefore, comprised two dimensions. On the one hand child legislation, such as the Children and Young Persons Bill, identified specific acts as criminal behavior, but on the other hand colonial officials followed an unwritten ideology of what spaces were acceptable for children and many children faced criminal prosecutions as a result of crossing into spaces deemed unwholesome for children. A newspaper article from January 1945 warned parents that children should be prohibited from visiting hotels for any reason and that children below the age of twelve should be prohibited from doing any business at hotels.[63]

Colonial officials indicated that destitute children who engaged in vagrancy and criminal activity were often displaced from the kinship group. In many cases at least one parent was dead and often the parent still living faced hardships supporting all of their children. Justin Phillip was the only exception who apparently fled home to avoid school and to seek out trade work. Colonial policy, particularly economic policy, contributed to the disintegration of the kinship group through the introduction of British currency, cash crop economics, and the criminalization of child labor activities. Children forced to support themselves outside the kinship group faced particularly severe poverty conditions and many of them used associations with criminal groups, such as Boma and Jaguda boys, to mediate their lack of connection with a kinship group. The structure of the Boma boys shared features with kinship groups. The groups were patriarchies where older boys – adolescents or men - employed younger boys to do the leg work. Leaders taught younger boys who hoped for promotions once they were older. The system also allowed adolescent and adult males to avoid criminal prosecution. The criminalization of pawnship mentioned in chapter two during the 1920s and 1930s further contributed to the increased growth of displaced children.

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[62] Ibid.
[63] "Juvenile Delinquents and Native Hotels," *The Nigerian Eastern Mail*, Jan 13, 1945.

GIRL OFFENDERS AND THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

Colonial administrators approached girl offenders with the same gender ideology used to outline other social and education policies. Colonial officials assumed girls were easily influenced, emotional, and unable to assert agency in many situations. Girls were viewed as passive objects rather than actors in their lived experiences. Administrators and social welfare workers demonstrated particular concern with girls' sexual activity. The Children and Young Person's Bill affected girls in drastic ways by criminalizing girl hawkers and by assuming hawking was a gateway to prostitution. Instead of policing the activities of military personnel and other visitors, the colonial government turned girls walking the streets into potential prostitutes. In the similar way colonial officials attempted to control migrating boys to the city, the colonial administration formed policies designed to control the spaces in which girls belonged.

Civilizing mission ideology greatly influenced colonial ideas about what girls should do and the spaces acceptable for them. Similar to education policy, administrators wanted girls to remain in homes to do domestic chores such as cooking and house cleaning or learn those skills from local schools. Market activity and street trading, a sphere of women's activity prominent in indigenous society, became an illegal space for girls under colonial law. Girls struggled between the needs of their families and their desires for independence compared to the restrictions the colonial state attempted to place on their movement. Some girls participated in illegal activities to avoid poverty in the same way as their male counterparts; however, restrictions on girls' movement and the spaces acceptable for them, led to a high rate of girls being labeled criminals.

The majority of girls prosecuted as juvenile offenders related to accusations of prostitution and it was common for colonial officials to suspect girl hawkers of prostitution. From 1951-1952, only eighteen girls were convicted of stealing whereas 203 entered the juvenile court owing to a lack of care or protection and 172 were convicted for hawking; the total number of female offenders was 426.[64] Whereas the crimes juveniles were convicted for varied between boys and girls, a consistent number of boys and girls brought before the court owed to poor living conditions and inability to either provide for themselves or live with someone who could provide for them underscores the pervasive problems of poverty and destitution. In addition, the number of children brought before the court was a minority of actual committed offenses considering the police force routinely complained of understaffing and a preoccupation of dealing with more serious crime.

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[64] "Female Cases Juvenile Court," April 1, 1951 - March 31, 1952, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Colonial reports note a number of girls found destitute in cities. An Efik girl named Adisha Akpan about the age of nine was found in Calabar without any family support. Investigations revealed her mother and father had died and the colonial administration sought a home in which to place the young girl.[65] Bassey Etim aged about ten years old was another girl found destitute by colonial officials. Her story is unknown but colonial officers assumed she was a kidnapped child who escaped her captors.[66] Colonial officials regularly denied girls agency by assuming they must have been kidnapped or moved by parents or guardians instead of considering the possibility that girls, like boys, migrated to cities on occasion to explore better opportunities for the future. On occasion girls also committed serious crimes even including murder.[67] Unfortunately, colonial officers had less interest in collecting information on destitute girls than boys and detailed files on the same level as the Boma boys do not exist for girls.

Whereas colonial officials showed less interest in the reasons why girls became destitute, they were concerned about the possibility that the rate of girl juvenile offenders was on the rise. In a report on criminal returns, the police magistrate's office reported the number of female juvenile offenders from October through December of 1937 to be more than the total number for 1936. According to the report the number of girl offenders nearly equaled the number of boy offenders, which the police magistrate, Mr. Fletcher Rogers viewed as an impending crisis.[68] The Chief Justice, Donald Kingdon, expressed concerns about the report and he forwarded the concerns to the Governor.[69] Colonial officials, however, documented girl offenders in a haphazard manner with few real statistics. Yet they were particularly concerned with how to handle girl criminals owing to few methods of punishment available to them.

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[65] Minutes of the Meeting of the Calabar Juvenile Welfare Committee, Feb 1, 1944 in 2872 "Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[66] No. 2600/14/51. Memorandum. Social Welfare Officer to the District Officer, Calabar, Aug 5, 1943 in 2796 "Remand Home Lagos," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[67] W.P. 17507/37. Secretary Southern Provinces to The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, April 20, 1939 in 2065 "Girls Industrial Home," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The most common crime girls were accused of was prostitution related to hawking; however, girls, like boys, engaged in stealing and other more severe criminal activities. Iyabo Ajoke, a girl of disputed age from Abeokuta, was convicted of three counts of theft in October of 1950. The colonial government struggled with the best way to either penalize or reform the young girl considering she had no known living parents.[70] Their initial strategy was to hand her over to a convent, which refused to take her, and then placed her in the custody of a female relative.[71] In 1952, Iyabo Ajoke was again arrested for stealing and on this occasion her age was estimated at 20 instead of twelve from just two years ago. The court concluded Iyabo was no longer a child and sentenced her to six months of hard labor.[72] Determining the age of juvenile offenders was a consistent problem for colonial officials even when they administered physical exams. They often depended on the estimates of the children, their relatives, or medical doctors. In the case of Iyabo, her aunt's estimate of twenty years old sealed Iyabo's sentence to a penal institution.[73] It was unclear whether Iyabo's aunt revealed the girl's true age or if the aunt decided to avoid all responsibility of the girl.

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[68] No. P.M.E. 0037/v.1/34. Police Magistrates Office to the Chief Justice, Lagos, Jan 7, 1938 in 707 vol. 3 "Female Juvenile Offenders," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[69] No. 1674/8. Chief Justice Lagos to Governor of the Colony, Lagos, Jan 10, 1938 in 2065 "Girls Industrial Home," Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[70] "Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance Cap 141 Laws of Nigeria, 1948," in 392 vol 2, "Juvenile Offenders," Abe Prof 2, NAI.

[71] No. AB.P. 392/182. Resident Abeokuta Province to The Secretary, Western Provinces, Ibadan, Jan 9, 1951 in 392 vol 2, "Juvenile Offenders," Abe Prof 2, NAI.

Whereas colonial officials struggled to accurately determine the ages of girl offenders, they went to great lengths to determine age according to menstrual cycles and sexual activity. In 1943 the colonial government passed an ordinance that prevented any girls from taking ceremony marks, who had not passed their second menstruation.[74] Section six of the criminal code legislated that a girl who had "unlawful carnal knowledge" defined as "carnal knowledge which takes place otherwise than between husband and wife" to be an illegal act.[75] Colonial officers wanted to enforce the provision of the criminal code as a means to advance the 'civilizing mission'; however, the legal code conflicted with indirect rule, which permitted child marriage when in accordance with indigenous law. Administrators hoped to force registration of all marriages in order to determine whether young girls married or if they were being transported as child prostitutes.[76]

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[72] No. S.W. 124/12. District Office Egba Division to the Resident Abeokuta Province, Oct 17, 1952 in 392 vol 2, "Juvenile Offenders," Abe Prof 2, NAI.

[73] Ibid.

[74] "Native Authority Ordinance 1943." In 619 "Protection of Young Girls," Agbor Div 1, NAI.

[75] No. 24122/126. Confidential. "Child Prostitution," From Colonial Secretary Lagos to S.N.P, S.W.P. and S.E.P., Feb 8, 1944 in 619 "Protection of Young Girls," Agbor Div 1, NAI.

[76] Ibid.

Owing to the colonial administration inability to enforce these laws, they sought to limit child prostitution by placing prohibitions on the movement of all girls. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1943 prevented any girls unaccompanied by a parent or guardian from leaving the Agbor district. The ordinance also prevented betrothed girls from visiting the homes of their fiancés for training or any other purpose without special consent from a parent or guardian. In addition, a betrothed husband was forbidden to have sexual contact with a girl if the girl was believed to be under age which colonial law defined as a girl who had not experienced her second menstrual cycle.[77] Colonial officials sought to use the legislation to advance the idea that they were protecting young girls from abuse; however, the colonial government spent little money on social welfare and owing to a small police force they failed to consistently enforce the legislation. The limitations of the colonial government's ability to protect girls from prostitution was evident as Nigerian women and the youth movement later petitioned the government to take stronger measures to protect young girls from trafficking from the colony.[78]

The colonial government placed significant blame for child prostitution on the presence of troops in Lagos during World War II. Colonial Welfare Officer, D. E. Faulkner, believed an influx of foreigners, including African and European soldiers, corresponded to a rise in child prostitution. Faulkner suggested that most child prostitutes were aged about twelve and were from adjacent rural areas including Igbo and Efik girls.[79] Faulkner, similar to colonial evaluations of boy criminals, blamed the situation in part on the movement of children from outside Lagos. Faulkner's report fails to include specific data and it was likely child prostitutes came from a variety of locations and included destitute girls born in Lagos. More useful in Faulkners' report was the assertion that the movement of soldiers to Lagos precipitated an increase in "the rapid development of facilities for drinking, dancing, and other less respectable social amenities."[80] The perceived increase in prostitution and Boma boys coincided with World War II. Although the war did not offer Nigeria with manufacturing opportunities, children still sought ways to benefit from the war economy in terms of the service industry – a sphere of the economy children historically participated in as outlined in chapter three.

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[77] "Native Authority Ordinance 1943" in 619 "Protection of Young Girls," Agbor Div 1.

[78] "Traffic in Girls from Nigeria to the Gold Coast," 36005 vol. 1 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

CONCLUSION

Civilizing mission ideology provided the primary means by which colonial officials determined the relationship between the colonial government and children. Whereas officials abandoned the previously heavy handed use of child labor to advance colonial objectives, their interpretation of what children ought to do gravely affected the living conditions of children. The Colonial Government's redefinition of the spaces in which children belonged upset the position of children in society and contributed to poverty, which in turn drove many children to steal and defy colonial law in order to survive. Yet the application of these new legal measures was unevenly applied. Colonial officials targeted children living in cities and often ignored rural areas.

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[79] "Child Prostitution in Lagos," D. E. Faulkner, July 1, 1943 in "Native Authority Ordinance 1943." in 619 "Protection of Young Girls," Agbor Div 1, NAI.
[80] Ibid.

The chapter has shown that children participated in criminal activities owing to poverty and decreased employment opportunities. Some of the practices labeled as criminal by the colonial government marked a shift in officials' application of the civilizing mission after passing the Children and Young Persons Bill of 1943, which criminalized activities previously considered acceptable ways for children to seek wages. In response to the criminalization of these spaces, children either continued in the same activities and risked arrest, resorted to stealing to supplement their income, or engaged in more serious organized criminal activity. The combination of criminalizing child labor and pawnship, poor employment opportunities, and an abusive apprenticeship system encouraged children to find other methods of supporting themselves.

In addition to legal changes, children who lacked the support of a kinship group faced the greatest risk. In some instances these children were orphans without living relatives willing to take responsibility for their care and in other cases children were entrusted to guardians, who abandoned the children in the city to fend for themselves. Based on the available documents, these children were the most likely to resort to illegal activities including Boma boys, Jaguda boys, theft, and prostitution. The position of these children was particularly dire owing to the lack of the colonial system to replace the breakdown of the kinship group with an effective social welfare system. Indigenous societies often provided methods for dealing with these children including pawnship, child labor, and fosterage, which assigned children value within the social system. As the colonial government criminalized many of these practices along with increased urbanization that fractured communities and kinship groups, greater numbers of children existed in a state of limbo.

Chapter five addresses the colonial administration's efforts to reform the social welfare system; however, new social welfare methods rarely led to meaningful change. The colonial government redefined juvenile justice but continued to depend on missionary activity and churches to fund reform programs, which did little to prepare children for adult. At the same time, colonial officials limited spending and refused to accept juveniles' repatriation to Nigeria and hoped to limit juvenile crime by removing offending children from cities, which continued to fail to address problems of unemployment and poverty. On the other hand, larger numbers of Nigerians created social organizations to combat the trend of destitute and displaced children. Children also played meaningful roles in these processes as they resisted colonial welfare policies and continued to pursue economic activities they believed offered the best opportunities for the future.

Chapter Five

Social Welfare and Child Agency

INTRODUCTION

In the 1930s the colonial government explored ways to improve the social welfare system; however, limited commitment to funding constrained colonial strategies. The plan included a combination of new laws, committees, and coordination with church organizations, particularly the Salvation Army. The shift in colonial tactics for dealing with children was closely related to new conceptualizations of the 'civilizing mission' and demands by Nigerians to reap benefits from taxation. For children social welfare policies marked a change in their relationship with the colonial government but at the same time some elements remained the same. This chapter will show how a revision of policies towards children led to a new justice system and reform strategies; however, child labor remained an important part of financing the programs. On the one hand the colonial administration criminalized many child labor activities (as noted in chapter three) but they depended on child labor to maintain government sponsored programs.

Ideas about how to punish juvenile delinquents varied between the colonial administration and Nigerians. The chapter will show that in the early stages of colonial rule administrators used the same prisons and corporeal punishment on children that they used on adults. As concepts about social welfare changed, so did the practices for dealing with child 'criminals'. Nigerians often protested the definition of child delinquency as noted in chapter three when businessmen and parents challenged new child labor laws that criminalized common labor practices such as newspaper hawking. Nigerians often used social pressure to control misbehaving children but the tactic seemed to lose currency in the larger urban cities where anonymity was easier to achieve. In small rural settings, parents and guardians controlled children's behavior by reinforcing ideas of family status within the community. Yet children who migrated to the cities lived outside the boundaries to which family status controlled children's activities. Punishment in the Nigerian sense was intended mainly as instruction whereas from the British perspective was designed as a penalty which included incarceration and removal from the community.

Research suggests a direct link between children's position in a kinship group, or lack thereof, and criminal behavior. Chapter four argued that the majority of juvenile offenders were either orphans or lived in cities independent of a family support network. From the colonial perspective, urban areas were the bastions of civilizing mission progress in the colony and child laborers and offenders in cities threatened to upset British self-perceptions of their positive influence in the southern provinces. In many ways, British administrators sought to apply 'civilizing mission' ideology in urban areas but desired to reinforce indirect rule in the rural areas, which absolved the government from spending additional revenue and resources on rural development. Children found themselves trapped between the necessities of an education for future success and the extractive colonial economy, which discouraged industrial development. Colonial social welfare policies offered only token assistance with the economic and structural issues. Whereas the colonial government from the 1930s onward spent few funds on social welfare, administrators shifted the application of the ‘civilizing mission’ from strong arm paternal punishments to environmental conditioning.

Up to the 1930s, the colonial government supported corporeal punishment and imprisonment for child offenders. Child delinquents most often engaged in stealing and pick pocketing; however, in Lagos some of them gained the title hooligans for actually holding down victims while others stole money from their pockets. Colonial administrators initially responded to these actions with prison sentences; however, in the late 1930s, social reformers attempted to rehabilitate these children with remand homes and boys clubs instead of prison detainment. Regardless of the sentences imposed, the underlying philosophy reflected a racist concept that a lack of civilization was the primary cause for delinquency. Children who engaged in hooliganism, from the colonial administrators’ perspective, directly challenged the social progress of the civilizing mission. Colonial officials and missionaries adopted a modern interpretation of the environment’s role in the socialization of children and determined that rehabilitation in homes offered a better method for controlling children than imprisonment.

Remand homes offered colonial administrators a two pronged response to children who refused to follow colonial law. In the first place remand homes removed children from the local environments in which they committed criminal offenses. The strategy was consistent with the initial policy outlined in chapter four whereby children were repatriated to rural areas or when repatriation to Lagos or Port Harcourt was denied to juvenile offenders living outside the colony. On the other hand, it offered a space where missionary societies and the colonial government worked together to advance the ‘civilizing mission.’ The colonial government sought to limit the amount of funds it committed to social welfare policies while missionaries and churches continued to look for ways to advance their mission in Nigerian communities. An evaluation of remand homes reveals the colonial government’s continued stance that child labor was a valid activity provided it advanced colonial goals.

In the context of these changes, children remained active recipients of colonial policies, but just as children resisted unfavorable pawnship arrangements, children circumvented colonial legislation, escaped remand homes, and sought out new organizations, clubs, and youth movements, which more closely resembled cultural self-help community programs. Children’s social welfare policies were significant enough of a concern for adults and children that they provided part of a larger movement to discredit the colonial administration and eventually make demands for independence. In many ways, local community organizations, which sought to improve the position of children, such as the Juvenile Employment Committee, were forerunners of grass roots movements supported by the educated elite to oppose colonialism. The same generation of children who worked to pay for an education and later struggled to find employment in the 1930s was part of the same generation that demanded independence in the 1950s. Arguments from the intellectual elite, which outlined the failures of the colonial administration, resonated with the majority of the population who found their childhood and adolescent hopes unfulfilled.

CHILDREN, CONTROL, AND COLONIAL JUSTICE

Nigerian children pursued criminal behavior, including stealing food, as a coping mechanism to deal with poverty. The Great Depression of the 1930s affected the developing world in various ways and amidst a growing urban population with high unemployment some parents struggled to provide for their children. Children, who were orphans or whose parents were unable to provide for them looked for employment but when none was to be found they resorting to stealing as a method of survival. Initially the colonial government treated children as adults and sent many to prison. This was consistent with their treatment of children in the early 1900s where children were used for forced labor development projects or as porters to transport goods. In the late 1930s to the early 1940s, colonial administrators accepted the ideas social of reformers as a new way to implement the 'civilizing mission' and supported the development of remand homes designed to rehabilitate delinquents. Yet the programs existed on a small scale as colonial administrators saw the necessity, but were unwilling to commit significant funds to the project, especially during World War II. As in many instances of 'civilizing mission' ideology, chapter five explains how colonial administrators enlisted the assistance of missions to manage many remand home efforts.

Colonial administrators' expressed concerns about children associating with adult criminals when child offenders remained in the custody of officers until trial. In terms of prison sentences, "he [a child] should be confined in a cell by himself and on no account should he be allowed to associate with adult persons in custody."[1] Colonial administrators believed the social welfare of children largely depended on association and the above rule was an extension of other colonial laws, especially in the urban areas, to limit children's exposure to what they deemed morally harmful associations. The transition from corporeal punishment and reform reflected a change in social philosophy that favored environmental over biological causes. The Colonial Welfare officer in 1947 expressed new social theories when he noted "that nearly all children, boys or girls, brought to the notice of the Welfare Officers on some charge, are themselves victims of Social circumstances far beyond their control."[2] Yet, this did not mean that colonial administrators dismissed the concept of Nigerian cultural inferiority. Rather the focus shifted from an emphasis on inherent racial ineptitude to a cultural inferiority that continued to create an environment, which supposedly hampered the colonial government’s civilizing attempts.

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[1] Memorandum. Treatment of Juvenile Offenders, W.E., Hunt Secretary Southern Provinces, Enugu, May, 21, 1932, NAI.

Regardless of concerns related to the incarceration of child offenders in prisons with adult criminals, the practice continued long after a boy’s industrial home was established in Enugu. The Secretary of the Southern Provinces noted that, "cases have occurred of juvenile offenders being committed to Prison by Native Courts, contrary to the provisions of my circular" dated August 11, 1932; nearly two years after instructions were given to find alternate punishments whenever possible.[3] How colonial justice systems handled juvenile offenders was characterized by inconsistency and haphazard policies. Technically, colonial law required courts to submit a list of juvenile offenders each year to the secretary of the province as well as request permission to sentence child offenders to prison sentences; however, children served prison sentences without approval from the secretary and seldom were reports regularly filed on juvenile offenders in the early 1930s.[4]

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[2] Annual Report 1946, Colony Welfare Office in Oshogbo 667, NAI.

[3] Memorandum, Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Enugu, May 26, 1934, NAI.

In the same way colonial welfare officers applied reformative ideas to child delinquents, they also advocated a concept of childhood far removed from the social experiences and necessities that Nigerian children dealt with during the first half of the twentieth century. D.E. Faulkner, a Colonial Welfare Officer, commented on strategies for curbing child delinquency, "One of our most useful preventative measures will be to get the public to understand the need the young human being has for play and provide facilities for it."[5] Faulkner apparently dismissed the extent of child poverty in Nigeria and the difficulties children faced in terms of survival. Faulkner's comments indicated the ways in which the 'civilizing mission' intended to alter the strategies for the development and socialization of children. Faulkner's ideas underscored the difference between civilizing mission ideology in terms of what children ought to do in contrast with the reality in which children lived.

During the early 1900s, colonial officials expressed little concern for differentiating children from adults or in considering how age difference fit within the colonial project. Chapter three illustrated this in relation to the forced labor of school children. The colonial government failed to acknowledge age as a meaningful determinant of colonial policy and included the application of penalties on children for failure to comply with colonial legislation. Prior to 1931, common practice included confining children offenders in prisons with adults and on occasion colonial justice officials used corporeal punishment on children. Even after the administration officially changed its strategies for punishing child offenders, some districts received admonishment for detaining children and using corporeal punishment.

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[4] Ibid. Because of these shortcomings in the records of juvenile offenders, the best source material for sentences, crimes, and ages comes from children who were discharged from remand homes.
[5] Report on Juvenile Welfare in the Colonies, D.E. Faulkner, Colonial Welfare Officer, July 15, 1943, in 2600 Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The age of juvenile offenders was of particular importance to colonial officials in 1931 as they discussed how to handle young criminals. Colonial officials decided to use two categories; 'children' to apply to those estimated under the age of twelve and 'young person' to categorize children between the ages of twelve and sixteen.[6] In addition, how colonial officials dealt with child offenders changed from imprisonment to reform and colonial welfare officials applied new ideas about the psychological development of children to the colonial project. The division of children and young person reflected new ideas about adolescence and the development of children that emerged in Europe during the early 1900s. Yet a gap existed between the intentions of social welfare officers, such as Mr. Faulkner, and the colonial justice system that enforced penalties. Colonial administrators found it difficult to divert from corporal punishment to reform owing to the high costs of reform compared to the cheaper practice of whipping child offenders.[7] The Director of Prisons noted the unreliability of determining age and a lack of medical officers to even handle age evaluation when handing out corporal punishment. As a result children continued to receive physical punishment. Administrators expressed concerns about beating elderly people and suggested that physical punishment for adults be limited to "offenses such as rape, the defilement of girls, all forms of violence against the person and possibly a few of the more serious offenses."[8] In the case of children, paternalistic thinking suggested whippings to be the preferred method of correction.

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[6] F.P. Lynch, Secretary Southern Provinces, Treatment of Juvenile Offenders, 1931; Oshogbo, div 1/1, NAI.

[7] "Returns of Corporal Punishments," Director of Prisons to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Sept. 12, 1938 in 34578 Corporal Punishment: Maximum Age Limits, CSO 26-4 series 3 set 1, NAI.

Prior to 1931, Provincial Annual Reports listed criminal offenders by sex without an indication of the age of the offender. The acting Secretary of the Southern Provinces, F.P. Lynch, required annual returns to be amended by including offenders' age.[9] Lynch's decision to require age categories revealed a shift in colonial policy from applying the same punishments to adults and children. It also explains the difficulty in quantifying the number of children, who received punishment prior to 1931 for activities labeled as criminal. In May of 1932 colonial officials agreed upon a new strategy for dealing with juvenile offenders. They believed protecting children from adult criminal influence was of paramount importance and they ruled that juvenile offenders were not permitted to associated with "adult persons in custody," which required police officers or constables to accompany children "to and from the court and for preventing their association with other accused or convicted persons."[10] When the juvenile could not be brought before the court in a timely manner, the child was supposed to be released on bail to a parent or guardian or had to remain in the care of a police officer until the court date.[11] Owing to the large number of juvenile's separation from the kinship group, evidence suggests many of the children remained in colonial government custody.

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[8] "Returns of Corporal Punishments," Director of Prisons to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Sept. 12, 1938 in 34578 C.S.O. 26-4 series 3 set 1, NAI. The Director of Prisons noted a significant number of adult criminal offenders who received physical beatings for quarrelling and scolding, making a loud and unnecessary noise, and entering a railway station platform without proper authority. Regardless of the case set out by the director of prisons, the Secretary of the Southern Provinces refused to change the policy of corporal punishment.

[9] Memorandum. "Treatment of Juvenile Offenders." F. P. Lynch to the Resident Ijebu Province, April 22, 1931 in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

[10] Memorandum. No. S.P. 7449/142 "Treatment of Juvenile Offenders," Secretary Southern Provinces, Enugu to the Resident Ijebu Province, May 21, 1932 in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

The application of separating juvenile offenders from imprisonment, which included hard labor, was unevenly enforced. Courts continued to confine juvenile offenders to prisons in May of 1934 for minor charges. The colonial secretary reminded district officers that courts must first administer whippings or request security and only use imprisonment for serious cases "where it is considered that neither whipping nor security to be of good behavior would be an adequate punishment."[12] The problem with the instructions from the colonial government was the imprecise directions. Local court officials and police determined what offenses fell under the category of 'more serious offences.' The application of the 'civilizing mission' regarding juveniles remained an elusive goal for colonial administrators as they were unable to consistently determine ages, apply uniform punishments, and finance an appropriate political structure to enforce legislation.

In 1931some colonial administrators lobbied for a separate judicial structure to deal with child offenders, but the Chief Secretary argued that, "the introduction of legislation at the present time to create special machinery for dealing with juvenile offenders in this country does not seem to be a matter of great urgency."[13] From 1928 to

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[11] Ibid. Colonial Administrators spent considerable time attempting to calculate how police officers and other guardians who hosted juvenile offenders would be reimbursed for the cost of daily maintenance.

[12] Memorandum. No. S.P. 7449/313 "Treatment of Juvenile Offenders," Secretary of the Southern Provinces, Enugu, May 26, 1934 in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

[13] Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Treatment of Juvenile Offenders, April 17, 1931, in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

1931, the secretary estimated a total of 151 juvenile offenders convicted and either sent to prison or whipped. The colonial administrator believed pressure from the government to institute new judicial proceedings were misplaced because, "the Secretary of State's dispatch appears to have been framed to meet conditions far more 'westernized' than they are in the southern provinces."[14] F.P. Lynch, the southern secretary, categorized the perceived difference between urban centers and rural areas. From his perspective, the native courts needed to handle instances of child offenders because the social structure was not as disintegrated as the cities. His solution was to increase reformatory schools for which they did not have the funds to expand.[15]

Lynch's comments failed to take into consideration the large number of rural migrants to the city or the ways in which native courts actually undermined local authority and indigenous forms of justice. The Women's War, which occurred just two years prior to Lynch's assessment, underscored the cultural conflict between native courts and local residents. Whereas conditions and punishments for juvenile offenders did not change immediately in the early 1930s, concerns about the treatment of juveniles existed owing to punishments of whipping, prison sentences, and in some cases spurious charges. As noted in chapter four, removing juvenile offenders from urban areas remained a preferred course of action owing to its cost effectiveness.

In 1943 the colonial government passed a new law to formalize children and young person policies. The criminalization of child labor mentioned in chapter three required a new judicial structure to manage offenders and colonial administrators needed a means to unify government policies. The Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943 was perhaps the most significant change in colonial policy dealing with children and adolescents. In theory, it created a juvenile court to separate juvenile offenders from adults and it officially mandated reform as the preferred option when dealing with children. This mandate set the ground rules for the establishment of reform homes and it set new guidelines that advanced the colonial concept of the 'civilizing mission.'[16] Whereas the colonial government sought to implement these changes with minimal costs, the bill marked an important structural and policy shift in how they intended to handle child welfare.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

The colonial government's consistent concern that juvenile offenders would become hardened criminals if they associated with adults in custody finally led to the formation of a judicial structure focused on child cases. Memorandum and orders by colonial officers proved to be ineffective in keeping arrested children from incarceration. The law provided for dedicated judges complete with a court system to hear juvenile cases, to inquire into living conditions, and to encourage reform instead of prison sentences.[17] The court system allowed parents and guardians to submit evidence on behalf of the child but the rules favored evidence presented by colonial officials. Stipulations required court officials to take into consideration any report from a colonial officer; however, regarding evidence produced by parents and guardians, the court had the power to determine, "if it thinks the evidence material."[18] The distinction of the value placed on types of evidence was important in the sense that it revealed the legal application of the 'civilizing mission,' which favored colonial administrators' interpretation of events over the mandate of indirect rule – the idea that the social and political structures of Nigerians should remain intact.

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[16] "The Children and Young Persons Ordinance, 1943 (No. 41 of 1943)" in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[17] Ibid.

The establishment of a juvenile court to enforce child labor legislation opened up an entire new sphere of responsibility for the colonial government. The merger of new social welfare theories with civilizing mission ideology required the government to create a strategy for punishment and reform consistent with common accepted notions of child welfare reform. The colonial administration sought to fulfill these responsibilities by organizing a system of remand homes with the cooperation of missions or any other social welfare oriented institution. Remand home rules required the principle to inform new inmates "that the period to be spent in the approved institution is not be regarded as a punishment but as a period of training and recreation designed to fit such inmate to take his place, socially and educationally in his community."[19] Clearly the colonial administration sought the acquiescence of children to participate in the program; however, the quote is a telling representation of the intentions of the 'civilizing mission' to redefine the socialization of children. Child labor in the indigenous context was no longer an accepted method for the socialization of children and the colonial government sought to offer an alternative.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] "Remand Home Rules, Part IV, Discipline," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The colonial government's interpretation of child labor laws and children's criminal behaviors continued to place responsibility on parents and guardians. The Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943 allowed colonial court officials to issues warrants to force parents or guardians to attend juvenile court proceedings.[20] Colonial officials believed if parents and guardians attended court proceedings they could convince parents of their lack of responsibility towards their children and take corrective action. The policy was most striking in the sense that rather than acknowledge the possible ramifications of criminalizing child labor, colonial officials continued to depend upon racist ideas of cultural inferiority to guide colonial policy. Early colonial ideology suggested that missionary activity would civilize Nigerians; however, with Christianity common in Nigeria by the early 1940s, colonial officials turned to progressive social welfare policies to achieve the "civilizing mission.' The stipulations for what offenses children could be convicted under the new ordinance illustrate this point.

According to the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, 1943, children could be admitted to remand homes for being charged with a crime or offense, being beyond parental control, children in need of care or protection, and truants. The social welfare officer of Calabar recommended that children who appeared more than once before a court should be sent to a remand home regardless of the infraction.[21] The varied reasons for admission to remand homes underscored the connection between civilizing mission ideology and juvenile justice. The legislation sought to control the activities and movements of children in a manner than advanced the colonial government's interest in preserving their concept of urban colonial civilization. Yet the limited capacity of remand homes presented colonial officials and remand home managers with difficulties in implementing the full scope of the legislation.

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[20] "The Children and Young Persons Ordinance, 1943 (No. 41 of 1943)" in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[21] "The Children and Young Persons Ordinance, 1942, Calabar Juvenile Court and Auxiliary Institutions," Social Welfare Officer Calabar to The District Officer, Aug 30, 1946 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Whereas the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943 attempted to shift the focus from punishment to reform, remand home rules set out uniform guidelines for controlling its child inmates. Colonial administrators reaffirmed corporal punishment as a viable method of control; however, they continued to forbid its use on girls. The general stipulation on control stated that "punishment must be reasonable and shall be effected by loss of privilege or reduction in quantity of food provided that not more than half the food for one day… and then not for more than one day at a time."[22] Considering legislation prohibited girls from receiving physical punishment, they were probably most likely to lose privileges or have food reduced. Remand home rules also stipulated that physical punishment was "restricted to a maximum of six strokes with a light cane."[23] Regardless of these restrictions, no evidence exists to suggest the colonial government exercised oversight to ensure children's protection from abuse.

Remand home rules and colonial social welfare policy were a direct reaction to the desire to control children's actions and enforce child labor laws. The truancy stipulation permitted colonial police to detain child migrants; a strategy which colonial administrators hoped would control the population of children in the cities. The remainder of this chapter outlines the relationship between child labor, the civilizing mission, and remand homes along with children's and parents' reactions to the new social welfare policies. Colonial Social Welfare Officers harbored high hopes that new programs would prove a more successful application of the civilizing mission; however, the actual benefits of remand homes proved to be limited owing to the inability of children to find employment once released from the homes.

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[22] "Remand Home Rules," in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[23] Ibid.

CHILD LABOR AND REMAND HOMES

Colonial officials wanted remand homes; however, financing remand homes and meeting the legislative requirements posed a problem owing to the colonial government's wish to avoid paying the full costs of social welfare programs. The following section focuses on several important aspects of new social welfare programs. In many ways, even though 'civilizing mission' ideology was undergoing revisions, colonial administrators used the same tactics to achieve policy goals. Missionaries and church societies bore a large part of the burden for new social programs, including remand homes. The colonial government also believed using child labor to finance remand homes was an agreeable strategy even though many children faced criminal proceedings owing to child labor activities. Finally, colonial administrators continued to include European style education as an important reformative strategy. Perhaps a well meaning policy, but the economic climate meant these strategies offered few long term solutions for children's employment.

Colonial administrators noted the conflict between what they believed was necessary to child correct vagrancy and constraints on colonial funds. The initial plan called for a staged process where the immediate need called for organized homes to house boys until they attended a court hearing or a guardian could be located by the police. At this early stage colonial administrators believed "boys could chop firewood or grow vegetables during their [sic] stay."[24] The report continues to argue reformatory schools should remain the last option owing to their high cost. The first method of finance included establishing a skill training camp school where participation by local artisans and employment by government departments covered the costs.[25] The scheme offered the government the dual bonus of cutting costs for reforming youths and providing cheap labor to government departments. The plan called for the work to be performed by a voluntary organization with the assistance of government.

The cost of reformatory efforts was too high to be completely a voluntary or government project. Mission societies and local organizations lacked the funds to support remand home projects and the government argued that with World War II in progress they could not commit enough funds to finance the project. Yet by 1943, with the passage of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, the colonial government had to implement a scheme to support the new requirements for juvenile courts and remand homes. The final plan called for extending mission efforts with government subsidies. The efforts included a combination of churches and participation by the Salvation Army, which promoted social programs for orphans.[26] The first government subsidized remand home in Lagos opened in 1943. A remand home, formed by the Roman Catholic Mission, existed previously in Enugu, partly under the supervision of Donald Faulkner, and his participation with the organization prompted a report to the government.[27]

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[24] Report by Donald Faulkner. Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos 1941, in 2471 Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos, Comcol 1/1, NAI. This report has suffered extensive damage with the heading and signature mostly lost.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Letter. Director of Prisons to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos July 21, 1941 in 2471 Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

As early as 1932, the colonial government sought to separate juvenile offenders from the adult criminal population; however, Kelani Alade's story underscored the limited effectiveness of those policies. The government issued a requirement to separate juveniles from adults in 1932 and the Enugu industrial school opened in 1933.[28] The Enugu Industrial School was the first organization in the Southern Provinces to implement a strategy of reform that included skill training of juveniles. The school began with a program that included "carpentry, blacksmith's work, mat making, physical training, gardening, games and adherence to a strict discipline."[29] The colonial philosophy resembled a modern concept of child development, which placed importance on boys' physical development, games, and skill acquisition. In order to limit the costs of maintenance, the labor of these boys was central to financial success. Gardening supplemented food costs and labor associated with apprenticeship training covered education costs.

The primary reasons for the increase in juvenile offenders were two changes in law. On the one hand, the colonial government criminalized many forms of child labor in 1935 and in 1943 the new juvenile court formalized the connection between colonial justice and remand homes, which offered a space for juveniles who refused to follow colonial law. Prior to 1943, colonial officials sought to deal with child offenders by repatriation to their families or guardians rather than use imprisonment, although some juvenile thieves served prison sentences with adults. By 1944 the colonial government had a system in place, which led more child offenders mandated to remand homes instead of prisons and more children passed through the legal system with formal mandates to reform homes.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] "Establishment of Reformatories in the Southern Provinces," Victor L. Mabb Actingn Director of Prisons, Southern Provinces to The Resident Oyo Province, May 4, 1934 in 2796 Remand Home Lagos, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[29] Memorandum. No. S. P. 5057/130, "Establishment of a Reformatory at Enugu," G.G. Shute Acting Secretary Southern Provinces, Dec 31, 1932 in 35 Juvenile Offenders, Treatment of, Oshun Div 1, NAI.

With the implementation of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, colonial administrators had more juveniles needing placement than available beds. By July of 1944 the remand home at Yaba, Lagos, which was run by the Salvation Army, was near capacity and a new home planned at Isheri was uncompleted. Conflict between Lagos authorities and Enugu debated the responsibility of the Enugu industrial home to the rest of the colony.[30] The Enugu industrial school faced its own problems of overcrowding owing partly to their acceptance of orphans, which the colonial officials strongly opposed even though the Child and Young Persons Ordinance included orphans in the list of children who could be sent to reform homes.[31] On the other hand, Enugu school administrators discouraged the movement of juvenile delinquents from Lagos to the Enugu school.[32] Yet in 1934, when the Enugu school increased its capacity to sixty, they welcomed the transfer of Yoruba boys to the school by issuing a notice to government officials throughout the Southern Provinces. At the time of the notice, the Enugu

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[30] Letter. The Commissioner of the Colony. Lagos to The Director of Prisons, Enugu, July 26 1944 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[31] No. P.H.Q. 1744/266. "Juvenile Delinquents," Director of Prisons to The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, July 5, 1944 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[32] Continuation Sheet no. 130, July 6, 1944 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Industrial School had a capacity for sixty children with only six current residents.[33] Between 1934 and 1944 the situation greatly changed.

Remand homes operated as a joint venture between local missions and the colonial government, but government officials continued to search for ways to limit costs. In 1944 the District Officer of Aboh Division asked the Resident of Warri Province if he could withhold payments due to the mission for mandated children. The dispute originated regarding payments between the mission and services rendered for a child named Titi.[34] Yet the amount of funds dedicated to child mandates remained low. The Catholic Convent at Asaba received a total of just over £25 for back payments due from 1944 and for the current financial year 1945.[35] Even with the end of the War in 1945, the amount of funds delegated to remand homes remained relatively consistent.[36] The colonial government finally added a girls' remand home after the war; however, they continued to search for ways to limit their financial and administrative commitment to reform strategies. Colonial officials were at conflict with their stated ideals of the 'civilizing mission' and commitment to implement social welfare policies.

Girl offenders presented the colonial government with a particularly difficult problem. The increase of girl offenders, noted in 1938 by Fletcher Rogers, caused problems because reform homes for girls did not exist and, "they [girls] cannot of course receive corporal punishment, and the only method of dealing with them is that of binding over. This course does not appear to be at all satisfactory."[37] The practicality of implemented the 'civilizing mission' in terms of curbing girls' street labor faced a crisis of enforcement because without a means of punishment the colonial government could not enforce child labor laws. Where parents supported girl hawkers, binding girl offenders over to parents and guardians did little to prevent continued hawking. Colonial gender ideology, which prevented physical reprimands for girls, left colonial officials with few inexpensive means of enforcement. They had no recourse but to work with missionary and church societies to establish remand homes for girls if colonial officials were to enforce child labor laws and limit expenditures on social welfare. Yet colonial administrators delayed the development of a girls' remand home until after World War II even though a proposed plan required limited funds.[38]

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[33] "Establishment of Reformatories in the Southern Provinces," Victor L. Mabb Actingn Director of Prisons, Southern Provinces to The Resident Oyo Province, May 4, 1934 in 2796 Remand Home Lagos, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[34] No. W.P. 162/50. Mandated Children, The Resident Warri Province to the District Officer, Aboh Division, Dec 22, 1944 in WP 515 The Industrial School Enugu, Warri Prof 1, NAI.

[35] No. W.P. 515/12. Mandated Children, The Resident Warri Province to the District Officer, Aboh Division, Sept 21, 1945 in WP 515 The Industrial School Enugu, Warri Prof 1, NAI.

[36] WP 515 The Industrial School Enugu, Warri Prof 1, NAI.

In 1952 the colonial government drafted a plan for the social welfare service which called for an immediate organization of remand homes and a plan to eventually increase the number of remand homes to eighteen; two in Lagos, five in the Western Region, six in the Eastern Region, four in the North and one in the Cameroons. The initial plan requested for the girls' remand home to be centrally located and to serve all regions of the colony.[39] The plan posed some problems for girls admitted to remand homes. The colonial government already proved ineffective in re-connecting children with family members and the possible distance only served to make those issues more pronounced. Girls mandated to the remand home for the full term and released at the age of seventeen or eighteen probably faced additional problems as they were disconnected from the kinship group, received only a domestic skills education, and probably faced fewer prospects for work or marriage. It is possible girls who left remand homes were more likely to look for immediate marriage or resort to prostitution or other illegal activities to support themselves. Records from the Catholic Convent of Our Lady of Apostles at Asaba suggest the majority of girls were mandated to convents rather than placed in regular remand homes.[40] It was likely many of these girls had few options other than permanently join the institution. Perhaps catholic missions wanted more nuns and if so, the colonial government provided them with prospects and subsidized the training.

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[37] No. P.M.E. 0037/V.1/34, "Monthly Criminal Returns," M.R. Fletcher Rogers, Police Magistrate to The Chief Registrar, Supreme Court Registry, Lagos, Jan 7, 1938 in 2065 Girls Industrial Home, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[38] Letter. C.C. 2065/23, Commissioner of the Colony to Colonel Ernest Bigwood, Territorial Commander, The Salvation Army, Lagos, Dec 7, 1939 in 2065 Girls Industrial Home, Comcol 1/1, NAI

[39] 3719 Plan for a Nigeria Social Welfare Service, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The colonial government set out clear guidelines for the treatment and punishment of children, but the measures were poorly implemented. In May, 1943, an inspection of prisons revealed that Kelani Alade, convicted for entering a railway station without a ticket, was confined in the Ikoyi prison. Aaccording to the inspector Kelani was, "alleged to be 14 years old but I doubt if he is as much… with physical evidence of neglect. He has sores on his legs which are now being cared for at Ikoyi Prison Yard."[41] Kelani failed to pay a penny fee in order to enter the Iddo Station platform. The Commissioner of the Colony requested Kelani be released and reunited with his father.[42] Kelani's case revealed a startling issue in the application of colonial law. Imprisonment of a child over the failure to pay a penny fine revealed the uneven application of British social welfare reform. In another case, three boys were picked up for wandering the streets at night without a place to sleep. The magistrate insisted they be tried for vagrancy and flogged before release.[43] The colonial government continued to use a combination of whipping, bonds, and prison sentences to punish child offenders even though colonial law mandated a new approach. In the simplest terms, colonial officials probably found it easier to informally handle child offenses than use the new juvenile justice system.

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[40] WP 515 The Industrial School Enugu, Warri Prof 1, NAI.

[41] Memoradum. No. 1128/87, "Juvenile Offenders," The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos to the Chief Registrar, Lagos, May 13, 1943 in 2761 Commitment of Juveniles to Prison, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[42] Ibid.

In order to deal with wartime demands for labor and to relieve pressure on remand home population, the colonial government offered adolescents close to release the opportunity of joining the colonial army. In September of 1944 five boys; Lamidi Akerele, Audu Bida, Titus Ayodele, Olufemi Ayeni, and Bolarin Jaiyesinmi, entered the colonial army and had their mandates cancelled.[44] Between 1941 and October 4, 1944 the prison department recorded a total of forty juveniles who joined the army.[45] The colonial government carefully monitored mandates and children's ages to make sure adolescents left remand homes by the age of seventeen or eighteen. Allowing adolescents near the term of release to join the army facilitated the removal of these children and opened space for younger children for which colonial administrators were particularly concerned. Yet colonial administrators merely delayed an inevitable problem. The majority of children arrested under the 1943 Child and Young Persons Ordinance committed crimes related to poverty and labor deemed illegal by the colonial government. These young persons, some of whom were now adults, faced the same problems as adolescents – few employment opportunities. In May of 1945 boys who joined the army were already being demobilized with few prospects of employment.[46]

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[43] 2600 Comcol 1/1, Children Welfare: General Questions, NAI.

[44] M.P. No. P. H. Q. 1323/29/33, "Juvenile Offenders: Release of to join the Army," Director of Prisons to the Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, Sept 27, 1944 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home, Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[45] 1323/29/43, "Juvenile Offenders: Release of to join the Army," Director of Prisons to the Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, Oct 4, 1944 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home, Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

The demobilization of former child offenders was part of a larger problem with the colonial government's application of the 'civilizing mission.' Ideally remand homes were supposed to reform children and provide them with skills for employment upon their release; however, discharge information for the children indicates remand home limitations. In cases where children committed minor offenses, colonial administrators committed children to remand homes for a short period of time and sought to reconnect the children with family members. Yet regardless of the amount of time children spent in remand homes, colonial officials always sought to find family members to whom to release them. In addition, colonial officials intended to find former remand home children gainful employment in skills they learned while in remand homes. Generally, the colonial administration repeatedly failed in all aspects. They often failed to find immediate relatives and children were released into the care of distant relatives, who did not wish to provide for additional family members. Most young people who completed their training failed to find sustainable employment.

Colonial officials recorded some discharge information for children formerly held in remand homes. From these documents an assessment can be made as to the limitations of the system's success. In 1941, Rasaki Adewole, a former juvenile offender sentenced for being in possession of house breaking implements, was scheduled for release. The superintendant of the Enugu Industrial School described the boy as "a continual disappointment. Just as he gives the impression of doing well, he commits some action which shows the deceit and cunning which have not been completely eradicated."[47] The superintendent's comment reflects the notion of cultural inferiority and the perceived role of the remand home in re-socializing children. A year later colonial officials initiated a follow up evaluation where they discovered that Rasaki was unable to secure a permanent job and worked only petty jobs from time to time.[48] Rasaki's experience proved to be the norm rather than the exception. The colonial government often sought to establish the progress of released juveniles; however, it was common for them to be unable to locate them.[49] The inability of colonial administrators to locate released juveniles supports the conclusion that they migrated in order to find employment opportunities which underscored the failures of the social welfare program.

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[46] No. 1890/170. D. E. Faulkner, Colony Welfare Officer to the Labour Officer, Employment Exchange, Lagos, May 2, 1945 in 1890 Boy's Industrial Home, Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

A boy named Kolawole Onimola was due for release from the Enugu Industrial School on March 21, 1954. At the age of seventeen, Kolawole spent two years in the school and learned the bricklaying trade but only finished standard one of his primary education. Colonial officials knew the boy's father was dead and they planned to return him to his mother.[50] Presumably the boy rejoined his mother owing to the colonial record' lack of further documentation; however, Ojo Isaiah was so fortunate to be reunited with his family. Ojo's family could not be traced and, once his release date approached, the colonial government placed him in the care of Mr. Emenike Abofor and his wife whom the administrator of the school personally knew.[51] Mr. Abofor met Ojo when he worked as Assistant Headmaster to the school and Ojo spent his Christmas Holiday with the Abafor family.[52] Ojo Isaiah had a privileged position that many children sent to remand homes did not experience.

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[47] "Juvenile Offender – Rasaki Adewole, alias Bakare Adisa Discharge of," Superintendent Enugu Industrial School to The Resident Oyo Province, Mar 12, 1941 in 35 Juvenile Offenders, Treatment of, Oshun Div 1, NAI.

[48] "Juvenile Offender Rasaki Adewole Alias Bakare Adisa Discharge of," Council's Office Oshogbo to District Officer Northern District, Oshogbo, Mar 26, 1942 in 35 Juvenile Offenders, Treatment of, Oshun Div 1, NAI.

[49] 1890/186 "Saliu Akande: Discharge of," Social Welfare Officer to The Principal H. M. Approved School, Enugu, Mar 26, 1954 in 1890 vol II Boys Industrial Home Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

CHILDREN'S PROTEST AND INDIGENOUS SOCIAL WELFARE

Colonial officials believed part of the juvenile delinquency problem resided in that children did not understand their crimes and specific instructions were given to court officials to "ensure that the minds of the juvenile offenders are directed to the nature of the charges against them in simple and direct language easily understandable."[53] The colonial government criminalized activities that were normal for children to participate in such as hawking and selling goods. Yet at the same time, social welfare officers underestimated the willingness of children to pursue activities deemed both legal and illegal. Children's engagement with remand homes was a mixed response of resistance and manipulation dependent on individual goals and desires.

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[50] No. H.M.A.S. 629/14, "Inmate Kolawle Onimole: Discharge of," Principal H. M. Approved School to the Social Welfare Officer, Juvenile Court Centre, Lagos, Sept. 16, 1953 in 1890 vol II. Industrial School Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[51] No. H.M.A.S. 711/19, "Inmate Ojo Isaiah," J.R. Lloyd Principal to The Director of Prisons, Lagos, Jan 6, 1954 in 1890 vol II. Industrial School Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[52] Letter. Emenike Abafor to The Administrator of the Colony, Lagos, Dec. 1953 in 1890 vol II. Industrial School Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[53] Memorandum, Treatment of Juvenile Offenders, from The Chief Registrar, Lagos to The Commissioner of the Supreme Court, Oshogbo, Dec 17, 1931, NAI.

Remand home documents also offer a unique opportunity to estimate the ages of children assigned by colonial administrators owing to how colonial officials sentenced children to remand homes. Most colonial officials mandated children to a full term, which expired when the child turned eighteen; therefore, planned release dates on mandates meant colonial officials believed the child to be eighteen at that date. On several occasions, such as when children escaped, subtracting the document date from the release date gives an estimate for the maximum age of the child. From this data, the conclusion suggests boys no older than fifteen often escaped from remand homes and many of these boys had already spent at least two years in the remand home.[54]

Children and parents responded to colonial legislation in various ways and generally they only complied with colonial guidelines when absolutely necessary and either individually or in conjunction with one another used the colonial system to circumvent unfavorable laws. The colonial government found it particularly difficult to determine the ages of offenders and children and parents used these laws to avoid more serious punishments. In 1951 colonial officials believed suspected juveniles were actually older than they stated.[55] The guidelines for remand homes prevented juveniles from staying past the age of eighteen and children and parents probably realized that by claiming a younger age they could avoid potential prison sentences. It was possible children and young people also heard about the possibility of receiving relatively free skill training in remand homes, which may have accounted for the large number of orphaned children in remand homes. Yet the colonial government vested interest in forcing children out of remand homes whether they were eighteen or not owing to limited capacity and a growing demand for reform institutions. J. R. Lloyd, Principal of the Enugu Approved School, stated that, "the vacancies occurring are in no way sufficient for the potential intake."[56] The colonial government consistently struggled to maintain a cycle of children through remand homes and children responded with mixed reactions, which in part sought to use remand homes as a means to avoid poverty but in other instances children escaped remand homes to maintain autonomy.

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[54] No. 141A/58, "Mandates for Juvenile Offenders," Secretary's office, Western Provinces, July 19, 1951, in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

[55] Ibid.

According to Mr. Emenike Abofor, Ojo Isaiah preferred to stay in the Abofor's home instead of returning to the Enugu Industrial School.[57] Apparently Ojo's dissatisfaction with living in a remand home was a common feeling among children. In September of 1942 a boy escaped from the Green Triangle Hostel with stolen cloth and within a few hours sold it to another girl at Bar Beach.[58] On April 7, 1946 Hassan Jos escaped from the Enugu Industrial School and he eluded capture up to his scheduled date of release in August, 1949.[59] Another boy, Olufemi Shodamola, was sent to the Enugu school on December 9, 1949 and he escaped in February, 1951. Olufemi also avoided recapture until his scheduled release date in 1954.[60] Hassan and Olufemi were not alone as both boys and girls sought to escape. Iyabo Ajoke, a girl, was sentenced in April of 1950 to serve three years in an approved school. She escaped police custody was recaptured and the District Officer Egbado Division described her as, "a constant nuisance."[61] For five months the District Officer waited for a place to transfer Iyabo and her resistance to arrest appeared to be persistent.

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[56] No. H.M.A.S. 759/415 "Admission to H.M. Approved School, Enugu," J. R. Lloyd, Principal to The Civil Secretary, Western Region, Ibadan, May 13, 1952 in 372 Juvenile Offenders (Treatment of), Ijebu Prov 1, NAI.

[57] Letter. Emenike Abafor to The Administrator of the Colony, Lagos, Dec. 1953 in 1890 vol II. Industrial School Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[58] Letter. Colony Welfare Officer to The Superintendant of Police, Lagos, Sept 22, 1942 in 2471 Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[59] No. P.H.Q. 3361/16, "Juvenile Offender Hassan Jos," Director of Prisons, Enugu to Secretary Western Provinces, Ibadan, Aug 24, 1949 in 392 vol II Juvenile Offenders, Abeokuta Prof 2, NAI.

Records of escaped children generally appear in colonial documents when the children were scheduled for release. The colonial government depended on the remand homes to report escaped children to the local police and apparently little effort was made to recapture children. Children apparently found it relatively easy, by migrating back to Lagos or other cities, to avoid recapture. Children's escape from remand homes leads to a few important conclusions regarding children's agency. Whereas they were provided with food and lodging in remand homes, children thought they could manage better independently or found the restrictions too invasive to offset the benefits. Furthermore, these children must have found the skill training to be unfavorable and they probably realized, from other education experiences, that the future prospects for such employment were grim. Escape from remand homes was also indicative of a long standing practice going back to pawnship where children felt they had the right to decline arrangements they determined were unfavorable.

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[60] No. P.H.Q. 6817/16, "Juvenile Offender, Olufemi Shodamola: Discharge of," Director of Prisons to the Administrator of the Colony, Lagos, Jan 22, 1954 in 1890 vol II. Industrial School Enugu, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[61] No. 304/26, "Iyabo Ajoke: Juvenile Offender (Female)," District Officer Egbado Division to the Resident Abeokuta Province, Oct 18, 1950 in 392 vol II Juvenile Offenders, Abeokuta Prof 2, NAI.

In 1943 a committee Calabar formed to deal with issues associated with children, poverty, and juvenile delinquency. The colonial government's policies, although intended to apply to the colony in general after the 1943 legislation, continued to focus on urban centers. The colonial policy of mandating children to institutions instead of individuals marked a stark difference from cultural practices. Indigenous fosterage practices were designed to place at risk children in other families;[62] however, owing to colonial policies that sought to limit slavery, pawnship, and to favor institutions, the practice of fosterage was undermined. Administrators stated, "it is always preferable, unless the circumstances are exceptional, that the child in question be placed in the care of some institution rather than in that of an individual."[63] Community based organizations and committees responded by seeking answers to social problems independently from the colonial administration.

The Calabar Juvenile Delinquency Committee notified the colonial government their intentions in August, 1943 and the Acting Chief Secretary of the Government responded that, "a local community which helps itself is this way should be encouraged."[64] The committee was composed of a variety of Nigerian and British persons including J. V. Clinton, the editor if the Nigerian Eastern Mail, Chief E. Ekpenyeng and Chief O. B. Otu who were local leaders of the Nigerian Youth Movement, members of local training institutes, several Roman Catholic Mission members including women and men, Major G. B. D. Ferguson, Salvation Army of Calabar Vice Chairman, Dr. H. C. Weir, Medical Officer, and police and prison administrators.[65] The committee, in notifying the government in Lagos, hoped to gain financial support for social welfare programs that offered children education to deter poverty and delinquency. The committee also hoped to represent children in the juvenile court and influence court decisions.[66] The committee noted that where Lagos had a dedicated welfare officer, a Salvation Army Reformatory at Yaba, and the Green Triangle Club, Calabar lacked any equivalent institutions in 1943. The committee's efforts and the colonial government's response reflected the practical problems for children's social welfare under a government system that lacked representation.

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[62] Uche C. Isiugo-Abanihe, "Child Fosterage in West Africa," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar 1985): 53-73.

[63] No. S.P. 142A/7, "Mandates for Destitute African Children," Secretary Southern Provinces to the Resident Oyo Province, Dec 7, 1933 in 35 Juvenile Offenders, Treatment of, Oshun Div 1, NAI.

[64] Savingram. No. 38660/130, "Juvenile delinquency, Calabar," Acting Secretary to the Government, Aug 25, 1943 in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Although the colonial government initially expressed interest and approval of the committee's actions, colonial administrators declined to offer any meaningful assistance. Colonial officials refused to give the committee influence in juvenile proceedings with the explanation that "unless, however, this Committee is a body recognized by Government, I am afraid it will have no status in Court."[67] The colonial government further declined to support the committee with funds. The committee depended on donations from churches, clubs, businesses, and unions. In order to raise funds, they organized community events including dancing and a boxing day.[68] The dance contributed over £28, which was more than the entire sum the colonial government gave to the Catholic Convent at Asaba for expenditures in 1945. In fact, the total funds collected by the committee exceeded £195 in 1944.[69]

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[65] Minutes. "Juvenile Delinquency Committee," Sept 2, 1943 in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[66] Ibid.

[67] No. c. 218/7 "Juvenile Delinquency Committee," Evelyn Brown, Magistrate to The District Officer, Calabar, Aug 20, 1943 in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[68] "Minutes of Calabar Juvenile Deliquency Committee held in the Pavilion of Thursday 30th September 1943 at 7.30 p.m." in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Whereas the colonial government denied the committee any specific powers or financing, they did request the committee handle the repatriation of Calabar children who served mandates in reform homes in other parts of the colony. The committee wanted these children returned and agreed to monitor them. The colonial government declined to finance the committee or give it voice in government decisions, but officials were willing to use the committee in an unofficial capacity to assist with a logistical issue that stretched the government's resources. In one instance the superintendent of police sent a nine year old destitute girl to the committee whose mother had died and her father was unknown.[70] The committee used its funds to pay for the girl to enter the care of "Mother Mary towards the maintenance, and schooling of the girl."[71] Owing to the lack of government welfare offices and remand homes in Calabar, the committee served the role without assistance from government. Placing the girl in the care of a woman mirrored the indigenous practice of fosterage, which the colonial government discouraged in the past. Presumably with the child outside Lagos and reduced concerns about pawning and child slavery in the 1940s, the government overlooked other legislation that prohibited the movement of children without a formal government mandate.

In addition to placing children in homes, the committee began plans for a broad program of establishing homes for children. They established connections with a variety of missions in Calabar including the Assemblies of God Mission and made plans to establish a home ran by committee members. The editor of the Nigerian Eastern Mail also supported the committee's efforts and they planned to employ Nigerians currently receiving an education in social sciences in the UK upon their return.[72] By 1944 the broad program initiatives corresponded to a change in the committee's name from the Calabar Juvenile Delinquency Committee to the Calabar Juvenile Welfare Committee. The organization recognized the stigma associated with delinquency and that the children they sought to help were not criminals, but faced impoverished conditions owing to a loss of kinship ties, limited education opportunities, and few if any employment opportunities. The committee desired to avoid criminalization and empower the children with better living conditions and access to education. In many ways the Calabar Juvenile Welfare Committee reflected Igbo practices of democratic community based strategies for dealing with social problems.

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[69] "Minutes of the meeting of the Calabar Juvenile Welfare Committee held at the Pavilion on 1st of February, 1944 at 7.30 p.m." in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

In 1945 the Lagos Women's Party led by Mrs O. M. Abayemi petitioned the colonial government to address the needs of girls in Lagos by establishing a training center. They proposed a location for the buildings and sought government approval to organize the center; however, the government deemed the location unsuitable and blocked the women's efforts.[73] The strategy of indigenous movements included a two pronged approach, which took decisive action to correct the short comings of the colonial government while at the same time protesting the colonial government's lack of implementing colonial social welfare policies already established through legislation. As noted in chapter three, international conferences in part dictated the development of colonial laws to maintain the credibility of colonialism, but the government found itself trapped between the laws it was encouraged to establish, lack of finance to implement the policies across the colony, and the demands of Nigerians for the government to live up to its social welfare responsibilities.

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[72] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Calabar Juvenile Welfare Committee held on Saturday 6th May at 11 a.m," in 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

[73] Letter. Commissioner of the Colony to Mrs O. M. Abayemi, Feb 28, 1945 in 3080 Lagos Women's Party: Girls Industrial Home, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Between the Nigerian Youth Movement's connection with newspapers and their demands for better social welfare programs, issues concerned with children's social welfare were central to the push for independence. The Nigerian Youth Movement also petitioned the government to do more to protect young girls who were being transported from Nigeria to other colonies.[74] Anti-colonial campaigns used the issue of child welfare to further undermine the colonial government by using its 'civilizing mission' language to illustrate the inefficacy of government policies. The West African Pilot wrote, "So far as we have been able to observe, it [Christmas holiday] is usually the season of excesses, hooliganism, squandermania... in the end, they tend to delay our social progress."[75] The article criticized the inability of colonial police to safeguard Nigerian businesses in Lagos. The Nigerian Youth Movement accused the government of doing little to curb unemployment and to encourage public education.[76] In many ways the colonial government's 'civilizing mission' ideology and plans for social welfare provided an impetus for Nigerian nationalist movements to discredit the colonial government. The lived experience of children during the 1930s and 1940s, including few education and employment opportunities, created a grass roots support base behind the emergent educated elite that organized Nigerian independence.

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[74] 36005 Vol 1 Traffic in Girls from Nigeria to the Gold Coast, CSO 26 series 3 set 4, NAI.
[75] "The Coming Festive Season," *The West African Pilot*, Nov 27, 1940.
[76] 1773 The Nigerian Youth Movement, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Conclusion

The definition and historical characterization of child labor has suffered from the hegemonic position of European and US academia to the detriment of accurately understanding how historical events shaped child labor practices in Nigeria. The Western notion that child labor developed as a product of the Industrial Revolution fails to account for the historical circumstances in Nigeria and how people negotiated labor, power, and self-determination. Furthermore, contemporary social practice obfuscates the differences in the role of children v in society. The universalist and relativist debates question the role children should have within any society; however, the debate operates from an industrial labor mindset without an accurate understanding of the origins and changes in child labor overtime in Nigeria.

Children in Nigeria, prior to colonialism, were not marginalized within the community in the same ways after British influence. Children and their labor were central features of every facet of society. Child labor extended to all aspects of economic activity and as such it is only in looking back that differentiating child labor from adult labor is possible. Children worked as slaves, pawns, and domestics. They increased the dependents within kinship groups, contributed to the stability of the family, and offered adults future economic security. As slaves, child laborers experienced all of the hardships and deprivations of their adult counterparts. As pawns, children brokered the transfer of credit and capital between the wealthy and the poor. Child pawns facilitated business transactions and presented families with a means to overcome temporary hardships. As domestics, child laborers contributed to the accumulation of wealth through freeing up the labor of adults and assisting in the day to day duties of the household.

In many ways children became subalterns among subalterns circumscribed by age and race. They were caught between two world views. On the one hand their culture and experience taught them the necessity to learn practical skills, whereas on the other hand colonial influence offered a minority of educated elite wealth and power, but economic hegemony created a situation where limited employment opportunities changed the nature of labor in Nigeria. Child labor practices shifted in the context of extractive economic practices, taxation, and new social welfare practices. For the early colonial years, child labor resembled adult labor in every way; however, as colonial welfare policies shifted, the role of child labor also changed. In pre-colonial Nigeria and during the early stages of colonial conquest, child labor occurred as part of kinship group activities, but as the economy shifted to a British driven export trade, an increasing number of children sought labor opportunities outside the kinship group, which led to problems of impoverishment and child crime.

In the early years of colonialism, children participated in all of the same ways as adults. Children were forced to work as porters and general laborers to support the colonial administration along with the creation of the road and railroad infrastructure. With British interests focused on a pacification campaign and solidifying the colonial administration, child slavery continued well into the 1920s. Child laborers were caught between a new ‘legitimate trade’ and the former slave trade economy. The growing hegemony of British merchant activity in the early 1900s contributed to an increase in the cash crop economy and other extractive industries. Children were present in these industries. Through pawnship and other labor relationships, children worked in timber concessions, cocoa plantations, and all other forms of business. The British civilizing mission ideology rationalized the participation of child labor as a means to teach the supposedly inferior Nigerian the responsibilities of a civilized society.

Growing urban spaces and new social welfare ideologies led to profound changes in child labor within Nigeria. Children remained important to economic activity and social life, but colonial administrators' ideas about what children should do clashed with Nigerian ideas. The growth of cities precipitated these changes as Nigerian children migrated to cities looking for labor opportunities and better education. Parents often supported the movement of children as early as 1903 and railways increased the ability of children to travel to cities in the following years. The migration of children to cities, increases in crime, and the development of slums contributed to the colonial government's search for new ways to insure the success of their 'civilizing mission.' In many ways the British government looked upon cities, like Lagos, as the hallmarks of their success, but modern urban problems challenged the justification for the 'civilizing mission.'

The British response to degradation in urban areas included blaming child labor and to seek out new social welfare policies to present to the world a modern approach to colonial development. The transition was relatively swift. In the 1920s the colonial government abolished pawnship and enforced legislation that prohibited the movement of children with the intention of stamping out child slavery and pawnship. The message from the colonial government was that children and child labor did not belong in cities. The British administration attempted to deny children what they viewed as their primary means of advancement. British policies appeared to have little effect. By the early 1930s, the British administration passed another series of laws and sought to enforce them. Child labor in its most common forms – hawking and portaging for European business – was outlawed. The most lucrative jobs for gaining access to British currency were found in connection with European business and one of the reasons why children sought those jobs.

British child labor laws had little initial effect as they lacked the judicial system to handle child criminals – a group largely invented by the British laws. The serious child offenders found their way into prisons, but the majority of these child laborers were repatriated to the rural areas or released into the hands of parents and guardians. British criminalization of child labor did little to prevent children from working. Yet in the early 1940s the situation changed. With the assistance of missionary societies, particularly the Salvation Army, the colonial government created a skeletal juvenile justice system complete with courts and remand homes. The general trend from the 1920s to the early 1940s was to remove child labor from cities. The affect on children was more pronounced but still limited. Capacity issues in remand homes circumscribed the colonial government's ability to enforce legislation.

The inability of the colonial government to enforce child labor laws did not mean child labor failed to change throughout the 1930s to 1940s. Shifts in child labor activity depended on economic demands and choices made by Nigerians. Children chose to migrate to cities to find jobs, which they often used to pay for education. Child laborers were critical consumers of education and labor where sometimes they accepted apprenticeship positions, but they also rejected those opportunities when they were exploitative. The end of child slavery and pawnship occurred partly owing to colonial interference, but intervention also came at the request of parents and children who sent petitions to the government. Child laborers also worked in the extractive industries, like the timber concessions, probably in hopes of securing higher paying jobs as an adult in the future rather than just owing to the current wages.

Child labor in Nigerian history offers a method to redefine the term in a way meaningful for Nigerians and people in the developing world. Child labor and education were historically interconnected ideas about how to socialize children to be productive adults. Regardless of European education, the majority of children in Nigeria needed some form of labor to present them with the ability to gain employment as adults. Pre-colonial child labor and colonial child labor are linked in that whereas the types of labor changed the strategy remained the same – to seek out the best way to train children so they could provide for themselves and a family in the future. Child labor in this sense was neither completely negative nor positive. Child labor in the context of slavery, pawnship, and forced labor had the capacity for exploitation and was harsh regardless of whether the child worked for a Nigerian or European. Yet child labor in terms of pawnship, hawking, and other activities had the capacity to educate and develop skills in child laborers.

Child labor and colonial legislation directed at children's labor offers a more complex analysis of the Nigerian relationship to colonialism. The British government gained political control of Nigeria in a short number of years through its pacification campaign, but if the ‘civilizing mission’ was an additional measure of colonial conquest – it failed miserably. The colonial administration’s lack of ability to enforce child labor legislation and children’s ability to work and migrate against colonial wishes is one topic that illustrates the limits of colonial conquest. In many ways, child laborers resisted the restrictions placed upon them by the colonial government but they also ignored colonial laws. Many of the changes in child labor practices resulted from the choices of parents and children rather than the dictates of the government administration. Whereas the British colonial government maintained political control, social control eluded their grasp.

The distinction between political control and social control is important. Resistance and collaboration can be meaningful categorizations of the colonial experience but they only capture the political sphere. Child labor outlines how Nigerians, regardless of colonial political conquest and hegemony, maintained control over social issues even though at times it created a clash with the colonial government. The resistance and collaboration narrative has a tendency to position Nigerians as reactors to colonial policy. Child labor suggests an alternative narrative where the colonial government reacted to choices made by Nigerians. The repeated series of child labor law changes indicates the limited ability of the colonial government to enforce its policies and that the government had to repeatedly revise legislation in an attempt to gain Nigerian compliance. The colonial government waged a war of conquest for social control and it lost.

The chief reason for the colonial government's inability to win its 'civilizing mission' campaign related to its unwillingness to commit large funds and armed forces. Yet this does not mean the colonial administration failed to influence changes in child labor. As Nigerians sought to take advantage of the colonial relationship, the result tended to place children in impoverished situations. The move to urban areas to earn money to pay taxes and buy European imported goods combined with the cash crop economy contributed to the breakdown of kinship groups. The indigenous social welfare system, which included pawnship and fosterage as strategies to deal with children in danger of poverty, was upturned by colonial policies. Colonial pre-occupation with limiting the movement of children after 1900, in part fearing the persistence of child slavery and pawnship, created some difficulties for parents to find suitable homes for children at risk. In turn the colonial government failed to offer alternative social welfare programs to protect children, while they criminalized child labor at the same time.

Many child laborers in cities lived and worked outside the protection of the kinship group and were susceptible to poverty, which resulted in child criminal activity as a survival strategy. In the urban environment child labor existed in the space between two cultural ideas about the role of children in society. Life necessities conflicted with colonial objectives and from this clash child delinquency during the colonial era owes many of its roots – partly created by colonial legislation and partly born out of necessity. Children working as Boma boys in the late 1930s made sense in this context. With child labor criminalized, some children turned to work in the black market and criminal element to earn a living. They sought labor in markets that by design operated outside the view of the colonial government. The shift from child labor in business to increased participation in criminal activities occurred when the colonial government increased efforts to limit child labor in cities.

Nigerians wanted more education for their children and children sought it out; however, limited jobs for educated adults meant European education alone offered too few prospects for too many students. Nigerians negotiated a balance of child labor activities to offer the best future possible for their children. Yet these limited prospects played a key role in political opposition to the colonial government. In many ways, Nigerian success in managing their social affairs translated into political opposition owing to the colonial government's inability to offer the self-proclaimed mission to bring modernity to the colony. Opposition to child labor legislation and social welfare policies related to children was part of the testing ground for anti-colonial opposition in the 1950s.

Historical accounts tend to depict children as marginalized observers of the events surrounding them; however, child labor in Nigeria was an integral part of pre-colonial and colonial social structure and economic activity. Although marginalized by age and race, Nigerian child laborers were historical actors. Child labor was crucial to the success of the kinship group; however, economic changes including the British money economy, its associated wage labor system, and the criminalization of child labor gradually decreased the importance of child labor to the kinship group. Child labor fit well within the kinship group economy, but the wage labor system devalued the labor of children as labor became a feature external to the kinship group. The desire for children to migrate to cities for labor changed the relationship of child labor to the kinship group whereby children became laborers for non-family members or independent workers looking for physical labor or service sector jobs. In the process of the economic changes that precipitated children to migrate for work, children combined education with labor to present themselves with the best opportunities for earning potential as adults. Finally, the limits for children to find employment and put their education to use contributed to the growing nationalist movement in the 1940s and 1950s as Nigerian elites used social welfare issues to garner support for independence.

Epilogue

Child Labor Past and Present

Child labor in Nigeria, past and present, bear some important connections; however, things have changed significantly since independence. Media coverage of child labor abuses in Africa, such as mining and child soldiers, depict a bleak picture of widespread abuse. These abuses occur, but they are neither new nor are they particularly widespread. Combat zones and refugee camps most often covered by western news media provide the source for the most startling atrocities – merely one side to a larger African experience. The majority of children who work in Nigeria do so under the media radar in the day to day economy. These children participate in agricultural and urban labor similar to their western counterparts. Children remain an important aspect of economic activity in Nigeria for a variety of reasons.

The common depictions of the Nigerian economy are backwardness, lack of industrialization, and corruption. These issues are part of the larger problem, but they also represent an incomplete picture. Western modernization theory suggests a linear development from pre-industrial to industrial to post-industrial economies. The linear development model lacks credence in the Nigerian experience. Unemployment remains a problem partly owing to limited industrialization; however, Nigeria has a growing service sector economy. In the cities, large numbers of children and adolescents work in family based food preparation services or in large chains like Mr. Bigs and Tantalizers. Children often work as servers and distributors of goods in family based restaurants.

In fact, children may be one of the most important labor sources for the Nigerian economy, but the lack of taxation laws make it more difficult to quantify the trends. Walking the streets of cities like Enugu, Ibadan, and Lagos illustrate the significant role of children to the domestic economy. Children are active in markets and street trading in staggeringly large numbers. Signs abound on streets requesting the service of child salespersons for hawking goods, especially phone charge cards. The cell phone industry represents one aspect of the growing service economy, which gives Nigerians phone and internet access without the costly infrastructure development. It would be inappropriate to label these child laborers as being exploited; however, there are limitations to these labor arrangements.

Children are still caught between the demands of two separate economic systems. Immediate necessity and long-term opportunity clash and families and children negotiate between the two options. Education for many Nigerians remains an important part of child development, but its advantages are tempered by employment opportunities, which is one of the many reasons for the term “brain drain” used by academics to explain the movement of professionals out of Africa to Europe and the US. Children with a sparse education working in the service sector, either hawking goods or selling items like phone charge cards, continue to dominate child labor activities. Similar to their counterparts a generation or two earlier, children continue to balance education and labor by using after school jobs to contribute to school fees.

Whereas changing economic conditions seem to mirror technological developments, there is still a strong case for a racist and neo-colonial structure underpinning how child labor is categorized, explained, and combated. In many ways, the United Nations engages in a new type of civilizing mission which often fails to evaluate local child labor conditions. In recent years the International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the UN, has attempted to divide child labor into two categories with child labor including abusive practices and child work representing local customs that are beneficial to the children.[1] The problem with the categorizations is that they leave open ended questions as to what is beneficial or abusive and it appears to be more concerned with straddling the political debate between universalists and relativists.

The role of the international community in child labor policies is a historical practice. As mentioned in chapter three, international labor conventions as early as 1921 played a role in colonial policy. Hegemonic economic and political decisions in the independence era continue to affect countries in Africa. The categorizations of backwards, developing, and third world – while they represent changes in political correctness – amount to some of the same issues. In terms of child labor, because Nigeria and other Africa countries have different labor policies, difference equates to inferiority; inferiority the international community must stamp out. Yet the actions of the UN are not without some credence. Abusive practices of international corporations find little opposition from home governments or corrupt governments in many of the countries where they operate. Children are often caught within the loophole and these children remain at risk.

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[1] The International Labour Organization posts definitions and policies online. International Labour Organization, “What is Child Labour,” http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm, accessed 5/15/12.

The most important continuity between child labor historically and in the present in Nigeria is the role of children in the economy. They are integral participants in the distribution of goods. More current research may reveal that child labor keeps the cost of goods, especially food products, at affordable levels. A contemporary project on child labor in Africa should evaluate the growing service sector economy in the continent and what it means to child labor. The long-term fear is that whereas these new service sector hawking jobs provide children with much needed income they also represent dead end employment. Labor and training in the colonial period focused on skill acquisition; however, in the present many child labor jobs lack skills and offer few long-term benefits to children. Here is the problem with UN policy, because its definitions of child labor and child work favor children working in these service sector positions, but discourage labor in avenues that require skill development. The challenge facing countries like Nigeria is how to provide skilled jobs for its citizens and an education system to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

Appendix A: Children Sold as Slaves 1701-1863

The charts are compiled from David Eltis and David Richardson (eds.), *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 31.

Children Sold as Slaves: Totals by Year and Location

Location	Years	Girls	Boys
Whydah	1701-1809	3366	5751
Whydah	1810-1863	1199	1850
Eastern Bight of Benin	1701-1809	172	396
Eastern Bight of Benin	1810-1863	1538	3169
Bonny	1701-1809	700	680
Bonny	1810-1863	2087	2111
Calabar	1701-1809	719	561
Calabar	1810-1863	1372	1599

Percentage of Children sold as Slaves

Location	Years	Girls	Boys
Whydah	1701-1809	7.9	13.5
Whydah	1810-1863	16.2	25.0
Eastern Bight of Benin	1701-1809	2.6	6.0
Eastern Bight of Benin	1810-1863	12.4	23.3
Bonny	1701-1809	3.5	3.4
Bonny	1810-1863	17.1	17.3
Calabar	1701-1809	5.9	4.6
Calabar	1810-1863	18.8	21.9

Appendix B: Alien Children Registry 1878 – 1916

The chart is reproduced from the Register of Alien Children, Lagos, CSO 19/5 O.P. 172/1917.

Year	Male	Female	Total
1878	333	454	787
1879	66	88	154
1880	56	79	135
1881	91	334	425
1882	47	85	132
1883	71	107	178
1884	73	119	192
1885	68	122	190
1886	79	139	218
1887	178	106	284
1888	101	104	205
1889	89	100	189
1890	144	111	255
1891	138	104	242
1892	97	101	198
1893	103	116	219
1894	99	113	212
1895	114	140	254
1896	86	113	199
1897	89	125	214
1898	91	130	221
1899	101	182	283
1900	75	115	190
1901	58	55	113
1902	33	68	101
1903	47	67	114
1904	35	28	63
1905	23	27	50
1906	33	40	73
1907	18	23	41
1908	16	23	39
1909	12	35	47
1910	9	16	25
1911	9	12	21
1912	1	3	4
1913	7	1	8
1914	8	3	11
1915	7	5	12
1916	17	34	51
TOTALS	**2722**	**3627**	**6349**

Appendix C: Children Brought into Lagos, 1910

The chart is reproduced from "Register of Alien Children," 1910, in CSO 19/5 O.P. 172/1917.

Name	Age	Sex	Ethnicity/Origin	Reason
Ajaratu	7	Female	Kanu	Domestic Servant
Jane (Koseyin)	9	Female	Hausa	Domestic Servant
Yelola	15	Female	Tapa	Domestic Servant
Fatumo	15	Female	Unknown	Domestic Servant
Barikisu	15	Female	Unknown	Domestic Servant
Awa	9	Female	Unknown	Domestic Servant
Kaletu	15	Female	Fernando Po	Domestic Servant
Kelani	15	Male	Ijo (Ikawo)	Education
Jubrilu	15	Male	Ijo (Ikawo)	Education
Rabiatu	7	Female	Duala	Domestic Servant
John	13	Male	Benin	Domestic Servant
Joseph Akoo	14	Male	Benin	Domestic Servant
Lucy George	7	Female	Ibo	Education
Tom Peji-kowo	13	Male	Warri	Domestic Servant
Awumi	8	Female	Yoruba	Domestic Servant
Adamu	15	Male	Hausa	Domestic Servant
Brimah	2	Male	Lokoja	Training/Adopted (parents dead)
Bockany	12	Male	Sierra Leone	Education
Safu	11	Female	Hausa	Domestic Servant
Georgiana Allison	12	Female	Bonny	Education
Elizabeth Huart	8	Female	Bonny	Domestic Servant
Christiana James	14	Female	Cameroon	Domestic Servant
Esthar Akanke	8	Female	Cameroon	Domestic Servant
Akanni Sangodare	12	Male	Ogbomosho	Domestic Servant
Maria	7	Female	Cameroon	Domestic Servant

Appendix D: Registered Juvenile Laborers in Lagos, 1946-1950

The chart is reproduced from the Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care, Jan, 25, 1951 in 2784 Juvenile Employment Advisory Committee, Comcol 1/1, NAI.

Date	Registered Juvenile Laborers	Employed Juvenile Laborers	Percentage of Employment
1946	160	39	24%
1947	257	95	37%
1948	145	56	38.5%
1949	349	98	24%
1950	447	263	58.5%

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