Colonialism and the Invention of Modern Nigerian Childhood

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That the history of children is still yet to emerge into a viable sub-field of Nigerian history in the second decade of the twenty-first century attests to the limited scholarly attention given to this aspect of Africa's demography and past.[1] The study of the history of children is significant to the understanding of every aspect and era of African history. If historians have convincingly proved that Africa's past is incomplete without the history of women, so also is it lacking without children's history. In broader terms, the history of children is generally submerged in the larger history of state and empire formation, colonialism, modernity, and sociopolitical transformation. *Children and Childhood in Colonial Nigerian Histories* examines the central historical role of minors. It seeks to answer these interrelated questions, among others: What place did children occupy in colonial Nigeria's past, and how has their role changed over time? Who was a child in colonial Nigeria? What is the value of using age as a category of historical analysis? What is the intersection between childhood and modernity? We invite readers to join in reflecting on the idea of modern Nigerian childhood and how it emerged. The goal of this book is to place our received notions of an ideal or modern childhood—namely, school enrollment instead of work; child rights and legal protections; juvenile delinquency as a problem of nation building; and children as belonging to ethnic, national, and global spheres—into proper historical context. Although the focus of the book is on the colonial era, the importance of Nigeria's precolonial period is not neglected.

A core premise of the present study is that the notion of modern Nigerian childhood emerged from the mid-nineteenth century—along with modern politics, technology, family, economy, law, and other forms of modernities influenced by identity, place, and power relations. The core ethos of modern childhood did not simply replace the preexisting or precolonial/"traditional" one. Rather, they coexisted, creating often opposing and contradictory results. This book does not claim to provide answers to all the questions posed above. Neither does it pretend to present all the newest works on children and childhood in colonial Nigeria. Rather, it is aimed at sparking new historical investigation into the prevailing contemporary notions about childhood and at opening new sites for rethinking the often unacknowledged role that children played in shaping modern ideas about progress and nationhood. Indeed, the history of children's encounter with colonialism is a two-way street—children shaped and were shaped by modernity.

Childhood, like gender, is a sociohistorical construct. However, unlike gender, which is more fluid and flexible, childhood is defined by the rigid parameters of age. At every point in time in the history of societies, what makes for a "proper" or "good" childhood is framed by families, communities, and the machinery of the state in accordance with major social transformations. Even during the precolonial period, traditional institutions, cultural practices, and the prevailing ethos that defined the status of children and their obligations to constituted authorities were constantly in a state of flux. For instance, the incessant raiding for slaves definitely transformed the lives of children, limited their play time and choices, and placed fear of disappearance from parents at the center of their existence (chapter 4). From the nineteenth century, when Christian missionaries began to spread European culture, the core constituents of a good childhood reflected a negotiation between local and international interests as well as between Christianity and African indigenous faiths; urban and rural; literate and uneducated; black and European; lower and upper class—among the elements that defined social and group stratification. During the first half of the twentieth century, the framing of what constitutes an ideal childhood changed from one decade to the next, reflecting the complex outlooks of various groups within the colonial society and the difficulty of making perceptive recommendations for children—a very politically alienated demographic.

The most important issue concerning historical research on children, as with other subjects, is sources. The social history and

anthropology of marriage and families are replete with references to children.[2] Historical accounts of economic activities dating to precolonial times contain information about children's activities in diverse production domains. Primary archival sources are also legion. In the repositories of the three main National Archives in Nigeria exist massive stacks of documents on the modernization of child and maternal health care, education, and welfare remaining to be tapped. Fragmentary information on children is scattered in minutes of native authorities. Moreover, I recently found out that the record books of the criminal justice system document many cases of underage sexual violence, which shed significant light on the inter-section between sexual crime and youth sexuality. Newspapers are also another underutilized and valuable genre of sources for writing children's history, as this volume clearly reveals. Apparently, the dearth of research on colonial childhood and children owes less to the scarcity of archival materials than to the refusal of historians to mine them. It is only very recently that historians like Laurent Fourchard, Abosede George, Simon Heap, and myself began to use the trove of documents of the Colony Welfare Office, the government institution established in 1941 for policing juvenile delinquency. Memories of childhood and youthful self-narratives or autobiographies paint a picture of growing up under colonial rule. Used with care, they can reveal new insights into the wider history of childhood in Nigeria (chapter 7). The value of a well-coordinated oral history project of colonial childhood is limitless.

But the aforementioned documentary sources are not without their limitations. Some reveal more about adults' perceptions of children than childhood itself, or what is means to be a child. Children are rarely political actors. Their powerlessness makes them less politically visible than other sociopolitical groups. They cannot dictate what is written about them and how it is written. Even the memories of childhood documented in self-narratives occasionally lack objectivity, a core principle of historical research. The so-called ego-documents are characterized by embellishment that manifests in the author's well-guarded attempt at rendering an "authentic" representation of the self. The most profound sources about childhood would be information composed by children themselves; however, children rarely leave such sources. In a related study, I have made use of one of the very few records written by children to chart a new terrain in the history of emotions and childhood poverty in colonial Nigeria.[3]

What Is "Modern" about Modern Nigerian Childhood?

Before 1960 the history of children as an academic discipline in any part of the world did not exist. Historians generally agree that the publication of *Centuries of Childhood*, by Philippe Aries in 1962, originally in French titled *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960), raised the curtain for the field.[4] Although historians before Aries believed that children could be studied historically, no one before him placed childhood as a significant component of Western civilization and history. The importance of Aries's tome remains indisputable even though it was written by an amateur historian. One of the most profound of his revolutionary contentions is that childhood as a concept did not emerge in western Europe until the seventeenth century. He attributed the emergence of childhood to massive changes in European educational systems, decline in the child mortality rate, consolidation of class stratification, and increased individualization of the family. Although scholars across disciplines have faulted some of Aries's conclusions and sources, there is a general consensus that his work helped spur historical reflection about children and childhood across cultures, place, and time.[5]

Any serious historical work on Africa (especially Nigeria) would not subscribe to Aries's idea of the absence of childhood or the notion of its "invention" at any period in African history. Neither would it accept the notion that the persistent high mortality rate prevented parents from emotionally investing in their children. Childhood as a phase of life is well enshrined in oral traditions, the repository of African history and civilization. The agony of infant death, which is well represented not only in orality, but also in artistic and literary works (such as by the Yoruba), reveals that African parents did invest emotionally in their children right from birth.[6] However, what did not exist is the idea of childhood tied to a rigid chronological age. In Africa most people grew up not knowing their exact birthday (and hence age), until the emergence of formal schooling and public registration for colonial tax and other purposes. In precolonial and much of colonial Africa, the progression from infancy into various stages of adulthood was tied largely to satisfaction of core requirements for membership or initiation into religiocultural associations, like age groups. In addition, historians of Africa would agree with Aries that childhood, in addition to being biophysiologically constructed, is also culturally specific since each ethnic group set its own social expectations and conditions of progression to adulthood.

If the concept of childhood emerged in western Europe from the seventeenth century, according to Aries, in Africa it arose from the nineteenth century, when changes in the socioeconomic structures of African societies, the product of missionary activities and colonialism, led to the emergence or invention of a "modern African or ideal childhood." Advocates of modern African childhood (e.g., educated Africans, missionaries, and colonial masters) believed that childhood, like other aspects of Africa's encounter with colonialism, could be modernized.

Our discussion will proceed with a crude definition of modernity: cultures and institutions of Europe imported to Africa through Christian missionaries and colonial masters. I am aware of the argument that Africa was already going through an independent phase of modernity before colonialism abruptly imposed it.[7] I have decided not to delve into the complex definitions of modernity or the numerous debates over what does and does not constitute modernity in Africa, not because they are irrelevant, but because it would shift our focus from the emergence of the idea of a modern Nigerian childhood.

There is no better place from which to trace the emergence of modern Nigerian childhood than within the four walls of mission houses that began to spring up along the southern fringes of the West African coastline in the first half of the nineteenth century. History books have examined the introduction of Christianity to West Africa and the numerous anti–slave trade activities. But they have refused to acknowledge that mission education laid the foundation of the modern conception of childhood. In the mission houses, children were exposed to a new faith, a new language, new ideas of work and play, and a new representation of the self.[8] Initially, mission education was unpopular, even though it was free. Parents wanted their children to continue to help them on their farms and receive "moral and religious education, with clear precepts reinforced by taboos…[and] training in the etiquettes and conventions of society."[9] They wanted their children to continue to learn the evening games and moonlight stories, and to receive core competence training in conundrums and family stories. Hence, they saw mission education not as a substitute, but as a supplement—an apprenticeship that exposed children to extra-African skills in reading and writing, and to knowledge of measurement needed for handling commercial transactions.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that it was not the British colonial masters who spearheaded the introduction of Western education; however, they did a lot to expand and transform it into a staple of modernity through the firm institutionalization of imperialism and

its infrastructure of domination and social transformation. They did not even put education of colonial subjects at the center of domestic policy until the 1920s; rather, they placed a premium on Western literacy as the marker of a new sociocultural order. Colonialism institutionalized chronological age as a signpost by which the society measured progression in the course of life and as an aspect of power relations. Age as an organizational category under colonialism was rigid, compared to the very flexible precolonial emphasis on the satisfaction of social responsibility as the marker of maturity. Public policies, institutional restructuring, as well as legal and social practices all were tied to age. The laws preventing children from experiencing sex below a certain age, from working in specific jobs or places, from participating in political processes, and from facing prosecution for offenses were informed by rigid biological construction of age as an organizing social difference. If colonialism disregarded ethnic diversity in creating the artificial state called Nigeria, it also disrespected precolonial conceptions of childhood among numerous ethnicities by attempting to homogenize the experience of childhood.

But the institutionalization of age as a basic organizing category under colonialism could not have been possible without the standardization of the hitherto moribund elementary school curriculum, which increased school retention rates and facilitated the completion of studies, and the proliferation of secondary schools, which meant that more children would attain further education beyond the first five or six years of formal schooling. The statistic of 2.5 million children enrolled in over 13,000 primary and secondary schools in southern Nigeria alone in 1957, three years before the attainment of independence, contrasts starkly with enrollment of 11,892 students in 127 primary schools in the first decade of the twentieth century.[10] As children moved from one grade level to another, so also increased society's expectation of their intellectual development and emotional responsibilities. But more important, schooling would increase children's financial dependency on their parents, decrease their economic role within the family, and elongate the progression between childhood and adulthood.[11] Unlike in the nineteenth century when missionary education was largely free, in the twentieth century most mission schools charged fees, making education one of a family's most expensive investments.

What was modern about missionary education was not just that children received formal instruction or came under the authority of nonrelatives, subject to multiple agencies of imperialism, it was the imposition of a new culture of child socialization, all influenced by

both European and biblical teaching. Some children did not wear any cloth until they enrolled in a mission school. Western education gradually introduced children to global consumerist culture as European toys, gifts, and prizes meant to attract children into schools found their ways into Nigerian households. Children were exposed regularly to Christian music, which added a new experience to the African songs they learned at home.

There are several points of convergence between precolonial and missionary education. Indeed, both emphasized high levels of discipline and practiced corporal punishment as a means of correcting children's wrongs. However, missionary education more than Nigerian traditional culture extolled the idea of an innocent child and children as a blank slate waiting to be filled with instructions about respectable behavior. The first goal of missionary education was to undo the elements of traditional behavior children had learned at home, displacing them with Western culture's social and adult–child relations. Missionary education consistently looked for "barbarism" in the ways children ate, talked in public, dressed, and met adult expectations. By the 1880s or earlier, some Africans, especially the descendants of ex-slave returnees from Sierra Leone who experienced childhood under European Christian missionaries, began revolting against what they considered to be indoctrination, racism, and cultural implantation.[12] The new churches they established raised a new kind of child, one who experienced growing up with Christianity at the center of African life.

The missionaries and the British colonialists did not monopolize the notion of modern childhood. Rather, literate Nigerians who had experienced missionary education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their descendants, would occupy significant positions as agents of modern childhood. The newspapers that they controlled would become an important site through which the idea of an ideal childhood was performed and reproduced (chapter 1). From the late 1920s, advice manuals on child rearing began to proliferate as newspapers dedicated special columns to modern ways of raising children. How should parents respond to their children's emotions? What are the best meals and medicines for children? How should children be prepared for adulthood, and who should be responsible for this project? What should be the content of school curricula? Although publishers of Nigerian newspapers held divergent ideologies, they all believed that childhood, like other aspects of Nigerian life undergoing radical transformation, could also be modernized. Which aspects of modernity should be reflected in child rearing was a divisive

issue among learned public intellectuals of the period. The rhetoric of modernity found strong manifestation in the colonial system that pictured "civilization" as the pathway to the advancement of the African race. The newspaper took child care and welfare away from the nursery, creating a host of information that revealed the difficulty of defining modernity from one perspective. The performance of modern childhood in the print media mirrored the transformation in the demographic, racial, and class order of twentieth-century Nigeria. The more colonialism established itself as a driver of social change, the more the spaces in which childhood was experienced (classrooms, interschool competitions, neighborhoods, maternity wards, and playgrounds) were transformed.

Christian evangelical activities together with the rise of colonial urban centers (and the new opportunities it presented in terms of salaried employment) ruptured much of the precolonial pattern of family organization and reconfigured the social class system. Moreover, the decline in child mortality in the first half of the twentieth century and reduced reliance on farm labor lessened the desire of many men to have multiple wives and children. The urban family system tilted toward monogamy and smaller family size. Not only did colonial modernity decrease the size of households, it also intensified the amount of time and energy necessary to devote to child rearing. The new nuclear families of five or six all dressed in European attire, as seen in artworks and photos taken in modern studios, represented a stark contrast to the pre-twentieth-century image of an African male head of a household surrounded by numerous wives and mostly undressed children in front of a big family compound. The new colonial city had no place for the large extended family compounds; instead, new urban planning programs designed homes for single families. And as families became more individualized, so also did their children. Urban children withdrew more and more from public spaces and concentrated their leisure time and energies on the green turf in front of their homes and schools. New playing grounds and parks designed to conform to European standards reflected the colonialists' notion of an ideal childhood. Government-built parks, equipped with modern toys and play items, regimented children's activities and introduced new notions of socialization and safety. Rural children who visited the city discovered that their received idea of what constituted a perfect childhood would melt away as they encountered the new urban childhood. There, they would have to trade in their sociocultural

Figure 0.1   Abuja boys with their toy cars
Source: *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 34, 1950.

affiliations like age grade for membership in new clubs such as the
Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, where they would enjoy all the new
possibilities while enduring the restrictions.

Children's experiences under colonialism were in part shaped by
where they were raised and by their families' socioeconomic class.
The course of their lives was determined by whether they were raised
in big cities like Lagos, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt or small rural
municipalities in the hinterland. Urban children had regular access to
educational institutions, electricity, piped water, and tarred roads—
infrastructure that was largely out of the reach of their rural counter-
parts. Old cultural practices like betrothal and apprenticeship began
to fade as children immigrated to cities, leaving behind cultural obli-
gations. Yet, in the cities they were exposed to a host of new dangers
ranging from vagrancy to crime and even prostitution (chapter 2).[13] If
communal parenting helped protect children from social ills in small
rural communities, the facelessness and anonymity of the urban life-
style put them at the risk of being recruited into a subculture of vice
and vagrancy.

Another feature of modern Nigerian childhood is its high level of geographic mobility and multiculturalism. Unlike in precolonial times, when children lived mostly with their parents or extended families in large households, the colonial period saw new patterns of child rearing involving nonrelatives. Colonial children, more than their precolonial counterparts, stood the chance of living thousands of miles away from home in the city or mines. Like adult Nigerians, they also benefited from the Pax Britannica, being permitted to explore new territories in search of education, work, and other opportunities offered by British imperial culture. They were likely to be multilingual in several African languages as they socialized in the new places where they lived. By the age of ten, Nnamdi Azikiwe, a foremost nationalist, had lived in the north, east, and west of Nigeria, mastering the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo languages. The colonial child's identity—derived from her ethnic and religious background, and other circumstances dictated by place of birth—was never constant, but continued to change in accordance with where they found themselves. Hence an Igbo child at home was a colonial subject in school; a "pagan" child at home was a "Christian" in school. Being Hausa or Tiv, Christian, Muslim, or pagan transcended mere parameters of social indexing (chapter 7). It came with enormous responsibilities that children knowingly and unknowingly negotiated on a daily basis. Children under colonialism were more multicultural than their precolonial predecessors. They were both agents and products of cultural heterogeneity in the cities, where they borrowed from numerous cultures to create forms of expression and performance unique to their status.

In fact, the true color of colonial Nigerian childhood was not black, but a spectrum or gradation of colors, as European, American, Middle Eastern, and Asian children also experienced childhood in Nigeria. It was not unusual for Nigerian children to share classrooms, dormitories and playground with non-African children who were born in Nigeria or brought to the country by their parents. To underestimate the role that non-African children played in shaping the idea of modern Nigerian childhood is to miss a significant point about race and cultural diversity. The representation of modern childhood in the newspaper were informed, not only by the quest by educated Nigerian parents to give their children a modern upbringing, but also by the agenda of their European and American counterparts who raised their children in the country.[14]

The discourse of multilingualism in the context of childhood lends itself to other core issues—nationality, citizenship, and the empire.

Nigerian children not only grew up as members of their families, and of ethnic communities and religious networks, but they were colonial subjects within a much bigger geopolitical arrangement called the British Empire. Schools and popular culture alike directly as well as indirectly reinforced colonial citizenship through songs, a curriculum that emphasized loyalty to the British Empire, and celebration of such events as Empire Day, which fostered a sort of imagined global childhood. When Nigerian schoolchildren sang hatred songs about Adolf Hitler or wrote letters to their counterparts in England decrying the impact of incessant bombing on their education and lifestyle, they were engaging with the world at large in ways their counterparts in centuries before would never have imagined.

The changing perception of child work is another distinctive feature of modern Nigerian childhood. Today, we view most economic activities that engage children as "unethical," "dangerous," or "uncivilized" partly because it exposes them to physical, mental, and even sexual dangers. "Child labor" conjures up notions of child exploitation. We believe that the best place for a child to be in the mid-afternoon is in the classroom or on the playground. We tend to think that the more children assume roles as breadwinners or financial contributors to their household, the less they experience "real" childhood. But 150 years ago the concept of "child labor" as we now know it did not exist. The question here is not the meaning of the term, but the conditions attached to it. Children have always worked in every African society. But under colonial rule, the activities of children as "workers" began to take on new meaning in part because of new perceptions tied to the notion of ideal childhood, and the visibly negative impact that some forms of economic activity were having on children's health and their sexual "innocence." One of the distinctive features of children's work in colonial Nigeria was remuneration. The child worker in the tin mine in Jos or the Apapa Wharf in Lagos was not working for his family, nor was he receiving apprenticeship in a skill that was tied to a family tradition, which they might also hope to pass along to the next generation. Rather, they were employed by a usually faceless authority connected to big foreign company headquartered in Britain or elsewhere in Europe (chapter 6). Yet, the sight of children, especially girls hawking goods on the busy roads of Lagos in the 1930s and 1940s, attracted the concern of reformers because they thought it exposed them to sexual danger, among the other perils of urban crime (chapter 8).

Modern Nigerian childhood was also a gendered experience. The foundation of much of what we see as differing gender roles during

and after the demise of colonial rule was laid from the mid-nineteenth century. Christian missionaries, from the start, envisioned the future of boys and girls differently and thus prepared them for different prospects. Europeans imported ideas of women's domesticity, focused mainly on preparation of girls to become good wives and mothers through curriculum that emphasized home hygiene and courtyard culture. Boys, by contrast, were prepared for public roles. During the first half of the twentieth century, colonial authorities reinforced the idea of colonialism as a male-centered edifice by imposing rigid institutions and laws that designed separate experience for boys and girls. Not only were school competitions gendered in that boys were pushed toward activities such as sports that emphasized self-assertion, physical play, and prowess, but the notion of girls as weak and erotic creatures that require extra institutional surveillance formed an integral component of a colonial society that gave separate but unequal attention to girlhood and boyhood.

This book is more about the direction that the history of Nigerian children can take than the present state of knowledge about the field. We hope that historians of the country would take up the challenge of doing detailed works on some of the areas outlined above. We now turn to a brief overview of the contributions that follow.

The Chapters in Brief

The advent of the print media in Nigeria constituted a literary revolution, not only because it paved the way for Africans to express their perceptions of imperialism, but because it created a platform for debate over complex ideas associated with imperialism. In chapter 1, Saheed Aderinto argues that current studies of Nigerian print media tend to place an overwhelming emphasis on newspapers' role in the anticolonial movement. Even when scholars use newspapers to research nonpolitical or constitutional issues, the portrayal of children is largely left out. In order to correct this oversight, Aderinto examines the representation of children in three major daily newspapers: the *Lagos Daily News*, the *Nigerian Daily Times*, and the *West African Pilot*, between 1925 and 1950. He focuses on the following three areas: children and education, children and motherhood, and children as consumers, positing that these aspects of children's lives help us see them from perspectives other than that of delinquency and antisociality. He notes that debates in the editorial pages over the best curriculum for children and the most advantageous child-rearing practices were ingrained into the broader, complex deliberation around the best

pathways for Africans' development. Those who wrote about children in the print media did not mistake children's importance in society; in fact, they emphasized their primordial role as the future generation of Nigerians that would contribute to the decolonization of the society and help in the consolidation of an independent Nigeria free from the vagaries of domination. In addition, Aderinto's treatment of how newspapers helped emphasize the central role of mothers in modern child-rearing culture is important for a number of reasons centered on change and continuity in gender roles during the colonial era. For one thing, it demonstrates that the colonial state and its social and medical institutions did not monopolize the rhetoric of modernization of maternal health. Indeed, private citizens, including newspaper columnists and correspondents, contributed immensely to shaping modern motherhood by emphasizing new hygiene, child care, and feeding practices, among other aspects of child rearing.

Childhood delinquency predates the colonial era. But under colonial rule, delinquency took new forms that were both a product and a manifestation of the enormous social, political, and economic changes of the first half of the twentieth century. Urban childhood delinquency was partly a result of the institutionalization of poverty, the colonial government's lackadaisical attitude toward early childhood education, and the general lack of security in the city. But juvenile delinquency was not a threat to a child or to the family alone—the entire society suffered (directly and indirectly) when children committed crime, polluted the serenity of public spaces, or failed to engage in meaningful activities that added value to the society. Hence the attentions of the government and private bodies to childhood delinquency are traditionally informed by the need to save children from self-destruction, while also promoting a modern and civilized society committed to the ethos of a commonly shared "civilized" life. In chapter 2, Simon Heap takes us through the first institutionalized attempt to introduce the Western-style reformatory. In 1925 the Salvation Army collaborated with the government to establish the Boys' Industrial Home in Lagos. Heap examines the origin of this home from the perspective of the increasing involvement of children in crime and delinquent activities. He gives us detailed insights into the activities of the home, the identity of the boys admitted, and the challenges of establishing a modern reformatory in 1920s and 1930s Nigeria. The activities of the Industrial Home fed into the received notion among colonialists and African-educated elites that children were vessels to be filled with instruction designed and desired by adults. By examining attempts at reformation of boys categorized as "delinquent" from the 1920s to the

1940s, Heap's chapter complements and provides a useful background to the works of Laurent Fourchard, which address the activities of the Colony Welfare Office, an institution that put the government into the role of sole financier of the campaign against underage delinquency from the 1940s.

Children were an integral component of colonial Nigeria's performance arts and creative experience. They made crafts that mirrored their life experiences and composed music that reflected their changing encounter with their families, communities, and the colonial state in general. In chapter 3, Uyilawa Usuanlele takes us through the origins of children's masquerade culture, a significant aspect of African religious and sociocultural life in Benin City. Children carved a niche for themselves in this culture that was otherwise dominated by adults, and gave new expression to the art form. In explaining the ubiquity of children's masquerades in colonial Benin City, Usuanlele looks at the impact of colonial rule in the creation of an ethnically diverse society and the consequences of such diversity on the social landscape. Other aspects of colonial society, such as inadequate educational opportunities, the entrenchment of new religions (Islam and Christianity), and the new regimen of festivities tied to the colonial calendar, coupled with the shrinking of children's precolonial recreation habits, all led to the rise and consolidation of children's masquerade culture. Children's masquerades not only borrowed from other cultures in creating new forms, masks, and performance styles, they also realized the importance of physical and gendered space in mobilizing support for their acts, which aside from providing a source of income also paved the way for the expression of talents by several jobless children. What is more, masquerades gave children opportunity for leisure that shaped their experience of childhood in the urban space.

Chapter 4, by Saheed Aderinto and Paul Osifodunrin, covers child kidnapping, which was rampant in colonial Nigeria. Children lost their freedom to adults who used them for numerous purposes ranging from human sacrifice to labor. Aderinto and Osifodunrin argue that child kidnapping represents continuity and change in the history of violence against children. They counter the popular romanticization of the colonial and precolonial periods as eras when children enjoyed "limitless" freedom, and point out that at no time were Nigerian children totally immune to losing their freedom—although the nature and dynamics of child kidnapping varied from time to time and from one part of the country to another. They situate their chapter chronologically, looking first at how children often lost their freedom through slave raiding in precolonial times, then at how the

practice of child abduction in colonial Nigeria continued as a remnant of slavery and other forms of servitude such as pawnship. Anxiety over child abduction can best be understood within the framework of the socioeconomic importance of children. Not only were children expected to contribute their labor toward creating resources for the household, but the family relied on them to help transmit skills from generation to generation. Indeed, the stability of any family was based on the availability of children.

The Boy Scout movement in southern Nigeria is the subject of chapter 5 by Adam Paddock. He points out that the Boy Scout movement was not just another project of the "civilizing" mission that was disconnected from the reality of people's lives. Rather, its acceptance and popularity was enhanced by its domestication into indigenous cultures of the people of southern Nigeria, even as it also upheld the basic mission of its founder Lord Robert Baden-Powell. In addition, the movement shared some principles, philosophies, and practices—such as perseverance, discipline, focus, respect, and service—that were common to most indigenous southern Nigerian cultures of child rearing. The Boy Scouts, like the indigenous Nigerian cultures, focused on practical skill acquisition and socialization. Paddock situates the Boy Scout movement within the context of an uneasy cooperation between Western and African ideals of childhood socialization. He demonstrates that whereas the colonial government saw the Boy Scouts as a vehicle for mobilizing nationalist support for the British Empire, Africans used the movement as a means to gain access to colonial authority. But like several other institutions of social advancement, the Boy Scout movement encountered problems ranging from lack of representation in some parts of southern Nigeria, to financial limitations, to poor access to Western education, which served as the gateway to recruiting boys. Regardless, the Boy Scout movement expanded urban children's learning and recreation experience, providing opportunities for a new form of childhood different from those of the preceding centuries.

As previously mentioned, children were an integral but largely invisible arm of the colonial workforce. They were found in diverse sites of colonial economic activity such as the ports and military bases. At various times, the government attempted to modify labor laws to prevent children of certain ages from doing certain jobs during particular times of the day and in particular locations. Chapter 6, by Tokunbo Ayoola, examines the attempt by the Colonial Office to stop children from working in the tin mines in central Nigeria. The presence of children in the mines constituted a moral problem during

the last decade of the British imperial presence in Nigeria. However, neither the Colonial Office in London nor the local authorities in Nigeria prosecuted the owners of the mines who violated local and international labor laws. Hence exploited Nigerian children became pawns in a political and economic chess match involving powerful capitalist interests. Ayoola's chapter opens a critical inroad to understanding an uncharted aspect of colonial capitalism in Nigeria—the involvement of children in mining operations. According to him, while a great deal of scholarship has been carried out on the origins, capitalization, modernization, management, and impact of tin mining and exportation in Nigeria, none has thus far focused on the experience of children whose labor contributed to the entrenchment of mining capitalism.

One of the greatest challenges of writing the history of childhood under colonial rule is the paucity of written data compiled by children themselves. But historians do have access to memories of childhood scattered in autobiographies of Nigerians born and raised during the first half of the twentieth century. In chapter 7, Aderinto uses such autobiographies to reconstruct the everyday experience of children. The identities of the autobiographers cut across multiple ethnic as well as gender lines, and are drawn from both the southern and northern parts of the country. While some of the autobiographers, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Ahmadu Bello, were renowned politicians, others, such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, and Buchi Emechita, were literary icons. The memory of childhood in autobiographies reveals a lot about children's attitude toward colonial education, play and recreation, and adult–child relationships. Addressing the challenges of using memories of childhood as embedded in autobiographies to unlock children's experience under colonial rule, Aderinto demonstrates that they, like other sources of history, must be used with caution.

In 1946 the colonial government began to implement the street trading regulations of the Children and Young Person's Ordinance (CYPO) passed in 1943. The controversy that surrounded this legislation is the main theme of chapter 8, by Abosede George. Both the colonial government and some African elites worked to prohibit street hawking by girls because it exposed them to dangers including but not limited to sexual violence. In addition, street hawking contravened core principles of modern childhood, such as powerlessness, dependency, and innocence, that emerged in the Western world from the eighteenth century. The new prohibitionist regime, as George argues, dovetails with the colonialists' new modernization project of

the 1940s that placed the welfare of the colonial subject at the center of imperial politics. Using vivid court cases of girls' encounters with the juvenile court system, George argues that the significance of the CYPO "extends beyond the new questions it raised about child welfare policy and practice in Lagos. . . . [It] also sought to produce new social categories like the modern girl." Much of the public outcry against girl hawking laws centered on the indiscriminate arrest of defaulters, and the financial significance of the girls' trading activities to their families in an unstable colonial economy.

Notes

1. The following list of works on children and juvenile history in Africa is not exhaustive: Beverly Carolease Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labor and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006); Abosede George, "Within Salvation: Girl Hawkers and the Colonial State in Development Era Lagos," *Journal of Social History* 44, no.3 (2011): 837–59; Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa, 1885–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Laurent Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria," *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006): 115–37; Simon Heap, "'Jaguda boys': Pickpocketing in Ibadan, 1930–1960," *Urban History* 24, no.3 (1997): 324–43; Simon Heap, "'Their Days Are Spent in Gambling and Loafing, Pimping for Prostitutes, and Picking Pockets': Male Juvenile Delinquents on Lagos Island, 1920s–60s," *Journal of Family History* 35, no.1 (2010): 48–70; Saheed Aderinto, "'O! Sir I Do Not Know Either to Kill Myself or to Stay': Childhood Emotion, Poverty, and Literary Culture in Nigeria, 1900–1960," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8, no.2 (forthcoming, 2015); Abosede George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press 2014); Raphael Chijioke Njoku, *African Cultural Values: Igbo Political Leadership in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1966* (New York: Routledge, 2006); S.E. Duff, "'Capture the Children": Writing Children into the South African War, 1899–1902," *Journal of the History of Chilhood and Youth* 7, no.3 (2014): 355–76.
2. Nathaniel A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 100–105; Percy Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass, 1969 [1923]), 2: 388–415; Percy Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass, 1969 [1923]), 3: 538–61; and Percy Amaury Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria: The Magic, Belief, and Customs of the Ibibio Tribe* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967 [1923]), 26–9, 38–9,

126–27; G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1921), 57–67.

3. Aderinto, "O! Sir I Do Not Know."

4. Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, translated from the French by Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

5. For reviews of *Centuries of Childhood*, see, among others, Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 1–10; Paula S. Fass, "Is There a Story in the History of Childhood?" in Paula S. Fass, ed., *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, 1–14 (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995), 1–18.

6. J. Hawley, "Ben Okri's Spirit-Child: Abiku Migration and Post-Modernity," *Research in African Literatures*, no. 26 (1995): 30–9.

7. Olufemi Taiwo, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010).

8. A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers, 1974), 82.

9. J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891: The Making of a New Elite* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 133.

10. J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: A Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 134.

11. Sara Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extented Yoruba Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

12. J. B. Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1888–1922* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964); E. A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836–1917* (London: Frank Cass, 1970).

13. See the following stories in the *Daily Comet*: "Save the Future Mothers by Sogidi," September 21, 1935; "Save the Future Mothers by a Muslim," October 5, 1935; "Girl Hawkers' Morals by Kabiboy," October 19, 1935; and "Girl Hawkers' Morals by COO," October 26, 1935.

14. A Childhood in Nigeria. http://vimeo.com/74090670.