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Prostitution and Urban Social Relations

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Introduction

Discourses on prostitution either in Africa or in any other part of the world must commence from some conceptual clarifications. The need for conceptual clarification stems from the fact that prostitution has been viewed from different perspectives. The conceptualizations of prostitution also vary from culture to culture and time to time. This is presumably why it has been regarded as the “oldest profession” amongst mankind. The major limitation of this universal assertion is that it does not differentiate between the definition of prostitution as a professional identity or role, or rather, of a female that earn her livelihood through the sale of sexual relations on one hand, and different forms of extra marital or multiple sexual practices prevalent amongst all mankind and dated back into antiquity on the other hand.¹ For instance, multiple sexual practices such ritual sex, exchange of wives, concubines, courtesans, etc., were prevalent amongst groups that would later become Nigeria in pre-colonial times, have been misconceived as prostitution. It is inappropriate to identify the above-mentioned cultural practices as prostitution because they neither involved a professional identity nor were carried out solely for material gratification. The historical moments that gave birth to the new forms of stigmatization were from the period of colonial urban transformation, and they were the product of social, economic, and political changes during the first half of the twentieth century.² There was a “cultural uncertainty” as a result of mix ethnicity and gender relations in urban areas during the period. Suffice it to say that the ambiguity of this situation-enabled people to borrow selectively from both indigenous culture and foreign norms of behavior associated with modernity in order to produce cultural hybridity.³

Prostitution in the context of this study is defined as a professional identity or role of female who earned her livelihood through the sale of sexual favor in urban colonial centers.⁴ How can a literature like this establish the difference between sexual relations carried out solely for material gratification and those carried out not chiefly for material gratification? Kenneth Little has provided comprehensive detail of the difficulty which one could face in trying to discuss prostitution as a

professional identity that involves exchange of sexual favor for material gratification and extra marital/multiple sexual practices in urban Africa.⁵ While it might be difficult to identify prostitution as a professional identity, which involved sale of sexual services in some parts of Africa during colonial period, the Nigeria situation provides a different picture. This is because the *modus operandi* of prostitution which includes the method and places where prostitutes solicited, demand and supply of prostitutes, procurement, laws, reformist arguments, etc. which are well documented. Colonial documents, in spite of their fragmented nature, include much information about prostitution as a “deviant career”. Meanwhile, newspaper reports and oral history remain the most veritable genre of data for the reconstruction of the history of prostitution in colonial Nigeria. The vast materials related to prostitution in newspapers and magazines spanned from the late 1920s to the late 1960s. With a substantial number of newspaper reports coupled with archival and oral history, it is not difficult to say in concrete terms that the category of females under consideration were those who professionally provided sexual services for material gratification. What is known about prostitution in colonial Nigeria is the information supplied chiefly by those who felt that it was a social problem.

Colonial documents and newspapers generally labeled prostitutes as “undesirables.”⁶ The condemnation which prostitution received in the world of public opinions was akin to the one related to nationalism, a phenomenon that took a dynamic dimension after the Second World War (1939-1945). The intensity and manner in which the print media reported prostitution between the late 1930s and the closing years of the 1950 show how very alien it was to the people as it was cynically described by one observer as “a shock”.⁷ This chapter will thematically discuss prostitution as one of the social legacies of urban transformation during the colonial period. The emergence of prostitution is discussed as the aftermath of some socio cultural and economic changes ushered in by the incorporation of the various groups in the Nigerian geographical area into the vortex of colonialism. Prostitution in Nigeria, just as it is in most parts of Africa, is basically an urban phenomenon and a relationship between rural/urban socio-cultural, political, and economic relations.⁸ The origin of prostitution is therefore located within a lot of extremities. None of the factors, vis-à-vis economic, social, cultural, etc., which allowed prostitution to emerge, can be understood in isolation. The best way of appropriately locating the impact of colonial rule in the emergence of prostitution is by treating all the factors as working and complimenting one another. The impact of colonialism on the ways of lives of the colonized can only be judiciously examined through a survey of pre-colonial social formation. It is in the light of this that this study is going to take a look at some sexual practices that were misinterpreted as “prostitution” and the transformation they took during the colonial era. The work also takes a cursory look at some machinery put in place to “regulate sexual behavior” and limit the incidence of “deviant sexual behavior” amongst selected groups in the Nigerian geographical area before the advent of colonialism. This will lead us to a general survey of some socio cultural and economic changes that allowed prostitution to emerge in colonial Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Modern academic research on prostitution started in the 19th century with the influential work of Alexander Parent-Duchatelet, a Parisian Public Health Officer.⁹ In his study of prostitution in Great Britain, he had access to police records which enabled him to categorize prostitution based on weight, eye color, place of origin, years of schooling, etc. After a judicious appraisal of data, he concluded that prostitutes are not biologically different from other women, and that they were driven into prostitution for economic reasons.¹⁰ Parent-Duchatelet's work did not only become influential but also motivated academic research on prostitution in Europe and America. By the first half of the 19th century academic research on prostitution had occupied the attention of scholars from diverse intellectual persuasions. Prostitution also attracted the attention of criminological research of Lombroso and Ferrero,¹¹ W.I Thomas,¹² Otto Pollak,¹³ etc. As diverse as prostitution related theories are, they can be broadly divided into biological, pathological, economic, social, and psychological categories.¹⁴

Significant factors, which make the adoption of theories of prostitution difficult, are that social and sexual characters of human beings vary from one part of the world to another. Also, time, socio-cultural, economic, political, etc. circumstances have to be considered. While social scientists have the opportunity of carrying out research on prostitution and adopting theories "freely", a historian's task of reconstructing the past would constitute problems. How does a historian determine the socio-cultural, economic, psychological, biological, etc. factors which made some female to take up prostitution as a career in the past? For instance, the access, which Parent-Duchatelet had to document sources about biological and life history of prostitutes in 19th century, Great Britain allowed him to propound theories related to biological and economic status of prostitutes. This type of opportunity is absent in Nigeria. Colonial documents related to prostitution are fragmented. Prostitution and human trafficking in Nigeria were politicized. The politicization of prostitution is exemplified in the refusal of the colonial government to provide credible data on the nature of Traffic in Women and Children to the League of Nations and later United Nations. Questions related to the origin or causes of prostitution were not contained in the questionnaires of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on Traffic in Women and Children. The questionnaires, as great as they were, were targeted towards knowing the efforts made by individual countries of the world in prohibiting the trafficking of women and children for prostitution along international and national borders¹⁵. Such information, if available, would have paved the way for critical insight into the origin or causes of prostitution and human trafficking in Nigeria.

Also, the use of police records is made impossible because prostitution was not an illegal offence in colonial Nigeria. Even when prostitutes were arrested for breaking anti-prostitution laws such as loitering, brothel keeping, procuring, living on immoral earnings, etc., information related to their place of origin, family background/life history, age, etc were not collected.¹⁶ The Venereal Diseases Ordinance was passed in 1943 to combat the unprecedented upsurge in the incidence of venereal diseases in the country.¹⁷ However, reports stated that

unattached women who had venereal diseases did not patronize government hospitals so that they would not be branded as “prostitutes.”¹⁸ Medical reports from the Federal Ministry of Health throughout the colonial period did not provide the number of cases related to venereal diseases and the contributions of prostitutes in its spread.¹⁹ Therefore, the assertion that prostitutes were responsible for the spread of venereal diseases through their “repatriation” from one part of the country to another remained an assumption during the period under consideration. Materials are not available to justify the presumed biological/pathological mutation inherent in the career of prostitutes. So what is known about prostitution is the information about their work i.e. provision of sexual services, places where they solicited, and their relationship with the government and the people who collectively branded them as “undesirables”. There is no access to credible sources such as the family background of prostitutes, ethnic origin, life history, and other models that include biological/pathological and psychological motivations. The unavailability of the above mentioned models constitute a serious problem in the reconstruction of the history of prostitution in Nigeria. However, the socio-cultural and economic theories remain the only formidable theories in the analysis of the origin of prostitution in colonial Nigeria. Meanwhile, the fact that prostitution is more rampant amongst some tribes in colonial Nigeria makes its discussion as a product of colonial rule to be probable.²⁰ Nevertheless, this limitation does not nullify or undermine the historical fact that prostitution is a social legacy of colonialism in Nigeria. It only calls for research on the factors responsible for the preponderance of prostitution amongst some ethnic groups and to look at cases from individual prostitutes’ perspective.

Conceptualizing and Clarifying the Pre-colonial Situation

As pointed out earlier, there are a lot of cultural practices, which have been wrongly interpreted as “prostitution” in the Euro-American sense. One such cultural institution is *Karuwanci*. Dated back into the pre-Islamic Hausa socio-cultural history and with its own organizational hierarchy and paraphernalia of authority, *Karuwanci* thrived in the society that witnessed a high rate of divorce, early widowhood, post-partum taboo, etc. Also, it gave women a substantial degree of social and economic independence while serving as a link between the period of divorce and re-integration into the household.²¹ Scholars over the years have tried to discuss *Karuwanci* either as “prostitution” in the sense of sexual relations for material gratification or as “courtesanship”. Jerome Barkow²² and Barbara Cooper²³ demonstrate the complexity behind a discussion of *Karuwanci* as prostitution by looking at the similarities and differences between it and courtesanship. Therefore, they resolve to identify *Karuwanci* as “courtesanship” by exploring its social and sexual features, which are similar to courtesanship. M G Smith²⁴, Renee Pittin,²⁵ and Abner Cohen²⁶ discuss *Karuwanci* as “prostitution” and a “*Karuwa*” (a female who practice *Karuwanci*, plural *Karuwai*) as a prostitute without exploring the differences and similarities between it and courtesanship. They analyze all the social and sexual attributes of *Karuwanci* which are similar to the western understanding of prostitution i.e. provision of sexual services for material

returns. Of equal importance is Renee Pittin's²⁷, and John Iliffe's²⁸ categorization of some divorcees as "independent women" because they were not economically dependent on men and did not have to live on earnings from prostitution. This categorization therefore limited *Karuwanci* to a practice of mainly poor divorced Hausa women who had to sleep with men for survival. The data, which earlier authors used in writing about *Karuwanci*, was either collected towards the end of the colonial period or a few years after the demise of colonial rule in Nigeria.²⁹ Time is a very important factor in the discussion of social behavior amongst all mankind. A major limitation of all the attempts that have been made over the years to discuss *Karuwanci* either as "prostitution" or as "courtesanship" is the inability of earlier authors to identify the differences in the social and/or sexual character of the *Karuwa* during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post independent periods. The argument here is that the institution of *Karuwanci* was basically a form of courtesanship in pre-Islamic and pre-colonial Hausaland.³⁰ The circumstances that led to its transition from a form to courtesanship to "prostitution" can best be appreciated within the framework of the socio-cultural and economic dislocations brought about by colonialism. There is much evidence that suggests that during the colonial period, there were *Karuwa* who retained the identity of *Karuwanci* and therefore could be categorized as courtesans; this is similar to what was practiced in pre-colonial period when there were a lot who carried out the task of providing sexual services solely for material gratification and could be called prostitutes.³¹ My fieldwork in Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Zaria demonstrate that in colonial Hausaland, there was no demarcation between these two categories of free or unattached women. Divorcees who lived in *gidajen mata* (houses or compounds where *Karuwai* lives) and required a specific period of relationship with men, who in most cases end up marrying them, and the peripatetic one who moves from one place or *gidan mata* to another soliciting/seducing and providing sexual services mainly for material purposes were generally called *Karuwai*.³² A major flaw in Jerome's work is, therefore, a generalization that all *Karuwai* were courtesans in spite of the fact she discussed some aspects of the features of a *Karuwa* that are completely similar to provision of sexual services for material gains alone. M.G Smith's classification of *Karuwai* on the basis of access to resources is a strong indication of how greater economic opportunities provided in colonial urban centers allowed *Karuwanci* to undergo corruption. *Karuwanci* is therefore one of the socio cultural ways of life of the Hausa that underwent continuity and change during colonial period of Nigerian history.

Before the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, there existed a form of concubinage, which involved sexual relations between slaves and their masters. Their masters for sexual attractiveness chose female slaves, and they had rights which were denied other slaves.³³ Islamic law makes a rigid distinction between slave wives and free ones. Slave wives can only be free at the death of their masters while their children enjoy freedom upon birth.³⁴ In spite of the deprivation which concubines had, they belong to a category of privileged female slaves because they are important members of the household at least by bearing children for their masters. Several cultural exigencies were responsible for the entrench-

ment of this form of concubinage in Sokoto Caliphate. Prominent amongst these were the need to increase the size of the aristocratic class and consolidate the Caliphate's dominant culture.³⁵ One of the major concerns of Lugard after the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate was the social problem which were capable of following the emancipation of slaves most especially female slaves. The reason for this was that the British were interested in avoiding insurgency by making a final pronouncement against slavery, which was a very prominent culture of the Caliphate. In the first instance, the British feared that escaped female slaves would become prostitutes and thereby contribute to the criminal class.³⁶ To avoid such an eventuality, Lugard wanted all unattached slave girls and freed women to be placed under guardianship "as it minimizes the chances of prostitution."³⁷ Girouard also believed that women slaves who had ran away tended to "drift into prostitution," and this was tendency that had to be checked.³⁸ In another report, he confessed that: "continual reports are reaching me as to constant desertions of domestic slaves, who often become banded together as robbers and malefactors when men, or drifted into prostitution when women".³⁹ What was the outcome of the fear of British Administrators about the custody of female slaves? Oral history in Kano recalled the story of one Mai Kano Agogo who built houses where fugitive female slaves resided and lived on the proceeds of prostitution. Mai Agogo's was reported to have introduced broth keeping and prostitution into Kano.⁴⁰ By the early 1920s, fugitive female slaves had formed a very important class of *Karuwai*.⁴¹ Redemption of female slaves was difficult since it was relatively hard to identify a freeborn *Karuwa* who was hitherto married and the ones who ran away from their masters. As previously identified, all "free or unattached women", irrespective on their economic, legal, or political status in colonial Hausaland, are called *Karuwai*. Tasks that remain difficult are the ones which involved the identification of the percentage or number of *Karuwa* who were prostitutes and the ones who did not live on proceeds from prostitution⁴²

Similarly, amongst the *Igbo* of Southeastern Nigeria, a form of concubinage known locally as *Iko mbara*, *uga*, or *enyi* took the dimension of the exchange of wives and husbands. A man who is interested in contracting *Iko mbara* required the knowledge and approval of the wife and vice versa. In this manner, the husband and wife have the right to contract *Iko mbara*. Traditionally, the husband got the wife's paramour to promise under oath that the woman should be given no injurious medicine which might turn her attention and devotion from her husband. This cultural practice provided sexual adjustment required in an andocentric *Igbo* culture in which the marriage of a woman and a child, long post-partum taboo, early widowhood, relative equality between the sex, etc. were the characteristic traits.⁴³

Points that have to be understood about the above-mentioned sexual practices are that they were rooted in people's cultures and carried no stigma at all in the pre-colonial period. Similarly, they present an antithesis of the stigma, which a female carried because of her job of providing sexual services under the condition of which she must be compulsorily remunerated.

Household and "Deviant Sexual Behavior" – Pre-colonial Phase

It can be argued that the emergence of prostitution in Nigeria is a product of disintegration of the household and weakened socio-cultural and traditional ties set in motion by colonial rule. Females who were prostitutes and men who patronized prostitutes were products of social dislocations. Prostitution as a “deviant career” had no place in pre-colonial societies where customs and tradition of individual communities were built around the stability of the household. Marriage was a normal rite of passage that was conducted at the traditionally accepted period.⁴⁴ Conditions, which were capable of preventing someone from not undergoing the rite of passage at the traditionally accepted time, is considered abnormal and therefore uncommon. Polygamy and woman-to-woman marriage are practices that must have contributed in reducing ‘free or unattached women’ in pre-colonial societies⁴⁵. Divorcees and new brides were readily absorbed into large households that formed a basis of production units. Except amongst some tribes such as the Hausa of Northern Nigeria divorce, this was rare amongst the groups that later became Nigeria. Women throughout their lifetime were either daughters in their father’s houses or wives in their husbands’ homes.⁴⁶ To a very reasonable extent, this made the availability of ‘free women’ or women who refused to marry to be uncommon in pre-colonial period. Below is the observation of Basden about the disposition of women to divorce in pre-colonial Igboland:

Then no Ibo woman dares to charge her husband with bigamy is the case ever so scandalous. For one thing she does not seriously resent the introduction of another wife, but a more potent reason by far is that she is not prepared to risk losing home and in practice, though not legally, her children. She is fully aware that she would deprive herself of any further chance of marrying again.⁴⁷

Amongst the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, divorce, to use the word of Samuel Johnson, was “so rare to be practically considered as non-existing.”⁴⁸ When married, women, were forever attached to the house and family of their husbands. The fear of divorce is rooted in the possibility that a divorced woman might not be taken up legally by another man.⁴⁹ “Free women”, or better put, women who decided not to marry after divorce or widowhood, were very uncommon. As it will be seen later, a major factor that led to migration of female who went to urban centers to work as prostitutes was the commercialization of marriage and the introduction of British laws that provided ‘unlimited access’ to divorce.

P.A. Talbot provides a detailed appraisal of all taboos related to extra-marital sexual practices.⁵⁰ What this suggests is that there were some forms of extra-marital or multiple sexual practices that the society treated as “deviant behavior.” Some of these multiple sexual practices included adultery that is committed if a man sleeps with a woman other than his wife and vice versa. *Ale yiyin* is a form of adultery, which was prevalent amongst the Yoruba in pre-colonial times. *Ale yiyin* is, therefore, a “deviant sexual practice” which was curtailed through a lot of religious and customary sanctions. In Appiapum and Ediba, for instance, oral tradition recalled the presence of a traditional council of elders called the *Ogua* society.⁵¹ This society was used to prevent women from living and having sexual relationships with men who did not pay their dowry. A fine of six bar imposed on

such women was said to have gone a long way to prevent promiscuity.⁵² In other parts of Cross-River it was a heinous crime for a woman to sleep with somebody who was not her husband. Such women otherwise called *Akunakuna* were sold away as slaves, exchanged for canoes, or killed.⁵³ The preponderance of prostitution amongst the people of rivers and cross rivers during the colonial period was attributed to the refusal of the colonial government to allow the people to make use of customary laws which were believed to have gone a long way in ameliorating marital problems before the imposition of colonial rule and the introduction of several British Laws related to marriage.⁵⁴

Betrothal was a common practice in pre-colonial Nigerian societies. In fact, it was an important preliminary stage of marriage that occurred before the final marriage rites were completed. Amongst virtually all groups in the Nigerian geographical area, undue contact between a betrothed girl and her husband to be was prevented. The social and economic changes brought about by colonial rule and the emergence of urban centers provided situations whereby the betrothal of children became used as a popular means of procuring girls for prostitution in urban centers.

Some feminist augments about the transformation of pre-colonial Nigerian societies from the type which entailed equal rights of males and females in the realm of social, political, economic, etc. responsibility to a masculine one under colonial rule are significant.⁵⁵ The male-dominated nature of the society under colonial rule, a product of the imported socially constructed sexual dichotomy, allowed females to be alienated in the colonial capitalist space, and, as shall be demonstrated later, provided a condition for the emergence of prostitution.

Colonial Urban Development and Emergent Prostitution

Prostitution in Nigeria is a product of two major and closely connected phenomena; these included urbanization as exemplified in the unprecedented growth of cities, a reflection of the new capitalist edifice put in place by alien rule, and new pattern of social outlook or behavior that emerged. The imposition of colonial rule enhanced tranquility and facilitated the movement of people from one part of the country to another. The Pax Britannica imposed by the British was further promoted by the commencement of rail lines which opened up communities and the development of port facilities in Lagos, Warri and Port Harcourt.⁵⁸ Succinctly, all these led to the rise of urban centers such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Kano etc. While some of these urban centers, as seen in the case of Kano, developed partly as a result of ancient economic activities, the British deliberately established others like Port Harcourt and Kaduna as administrative centers in 1912⁵⁹ and 1914⁶⁰ respectively. Whether in the first, second, or third category of township, urban centers generally attracted a lot of people due to the availability of infrastructural facilities which included electricity, pipe born water, tarred roads, and greater economic opportunities.⁶¹ The second phase of urbanization that can be described as social is the aftermath of the first type was namely the new pattern of social behavior and a product of the cultural heterogeneity of cities.⁶² As a melting pot of cultures, the cosmopolitan/heterogeneous

nature of urban centers that emerged during the colonial period paved the way for the emergence of social vices prominent amongst which were prostitution, child labor and new forms of criminal behavior, etc. Numerous beer parlors, cinema houses and several places that were stigmatized as “red light district”⁶³ all over the country are known for “urbanized behavior” and “deviant characters.” “As a container and transmitter of culture,”⁶⁴ Nigerian cities are characterized by dual role as solvent; i.e. “weakening traditional social ties and loosening the hold of traditional beliefs and values.”⁶⁵

A distinctive aspect of urbanization is, therefore, rural-urban migration. Migration of male and female into urban centers is multifaceted in nature. There is no gainsaying the fact that the principal reason for migration of men; categorically the first to migrate into urban centers was the need to partake in the new economic opportunity put in place by colonial rule. Female migration into urban centers continued in spite of several attempts by traditional authorities to restrict female mobility for economic and social reasons. Patterns of female migration had a more multifarious outlook. In the first category of women that migrated into urban centers were those who went to join their husbands to live permanently in the city but went home occasionally. Also were those whose interests were akin to those of men, namely to seek greener pastures. Some women were induced to migrate to look for husbands while a sizeable number left the countryside after a marital breakdown. This last category belonged to women who migrated to the city for the purpose of being “urbanized,” socially.⁶⁶ In all, female migration into urban centers enhanced greater degree of economic and social independence, both of which were, absent in most rural areas. Out of the aforementioned categories of female migrants into urban centers, the first category appeared to be more economically empowered and secured. This is because they enjoyed a relatively stable social and economic status, which can readily be provided for by their husbands. Frequent visits to the countryside could also generate resources that might be used to augment the fluctuating economy of the colonial state of Nigeria. The economic and social prosperity of the other categories were closely tied to the deplorable and unpredictable economic condition of the urban centers. This is because the colonial capitalist structure was male-centered. Nigeria’s urban centers, like those of her other African counterparts, were designed (sometimes years after their foundation) to contain and maintain pools of competitively cheap male laborers, who in theory would return to their rural families. Wage labor was introduced for men in urban centers of Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, etc. Colonial capitalist structures such as the mines of Jos and Enugu and the railway were male dominated. While wage labor was introduced for men, female migrants in cities were restricted largely to the off-the-book economy. Urban economy did not provide women with the social and economic security traditionally obtainable in the countryside. The alienation of female migrant within the urban capitalist space placed some of them in the very precarious situation of providing sexual services for their male counterparts, majority of who migrated into the city as bachelors or as husbands with wives and children remaining in the

villages. The effect of colonialism on the socio-economic lives of the people of Kano is best illustrated from the following extract:

The breakdown of the household also led to the release of women some of whom migrated to the *Birnin* Kano to stay as independent women, as *Mata Masu Zaman Kan su* (free women) practicing prostitution, making themselves available to the increasing number of urban laborers who had left their wives in their localities. Prostitution as an institution was said to be unknown in the pre-colonial Kano, but with the consolidation of colonial economy and the resultant penetration of capitalist values into the society, the phenomenon of sex as a commodity began to appear.⁶⁷

By the early 1930s, strains of unemployment were apparent in some Nigerian cities, the most important of these cities being Lagos.⁶⁸ The situation uncontrollable during the Second World War when more people migrated from the provinces as a result of pauperization caused by wartime exigencies and emergencies. The integration of female migrants into the vortex of a male dominated colonial capitalist economy was hindered by the nature of colonial cities that could not provide employment for the teeming male migrants, and their female counterparts.

The question of employing women into government services was first broached in the early 1920s. It was decided that women who were to be recruited to the services should have passed the Clerical Service Examination as their male counterparts. None was forthcoming. Subsequently, women were appointed to such posts as teaching, nursing and such other fitting posts, but none were appointed to the clerical grade. However, in 1945, due to the growing drive for female education and influx of women into the service, the government appointed a Committee to inquire whether women possessing the prescribed educational qualification should be admitted to the standard scale with particular reference to the Clerical grade. The recommendations of the Committee was that the clerical grade should not be thrown open to women but that in special cases “women of marked ability” may be admitted. In 1949, just one woman was able to satisfy the provision of the “women of marked ability”.⁶⁹ A significant factor that jeopardized the employment of females in government jobs was the poor attitude of the colonial government to female education. Had adequate attention been given towards the education of females, it would not have been difficult for them to be employed into the clerical grade, which absorbed most females in colonial Africa. As little emphasis was placed on female employment, the few lucky ones who were able to work with the government faced a lot of discriminations in terms of remuneration and emolument. This was because the government felt that most men have dependants and most women have none. It was not until 1956 when females who were recruited to government departments with the West African School Certificate got the same salary as their male counterparts.⁷⁰ The table below shows the statistics of female employees in all the government departments from some urban centers by 1950:

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City	Number
Lagos	920
Kaduna	158
Ibadan	252
Enugu	56
Port Harcourt	3
Kano	3

Source: Computed from NAI, CS0 26/035171 Vol II *Employment of African Women in Government Services*

Some economically underpowered female migrants were not lax in adjusting to the economic realities obtainable within the colonial capitalist space. There is an ample amount of evidence of how women migrated to the cities to become prostitutes due to economic hardships caused by the large-scale recruitment of men for wage labor.⁷¹ The compromised nature of female employment in colonial Nigeria must have informed the thinking of the editorial comments of the *Southern Nigeria Defender* of 5 April, 1944. After a careful observation of the ostracized nature of female employment and the role it played in the emergence of prostitution, the editor made these recommendations:

As men in lower classes are generally seen in mean walks of life, prostitutes should also be employed by both government and mercantile houses to work as laborers, trade callers, shop girls, messengers, gate women and if possible be recruited for services elsewhere, where they could be in position to earn a more decent livelihood.

Of unimaginable importance is Alexander Paterson's observation about the technological backwardness of colonial Nigeria and the absence of industries. He located the preponderance of prostitution as a product of the lack of industrialization in the country. In his monumental 1944 report of the Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, he opined:

In many countries, two major occupations absorb the labour of the unmarried girl. One is factory work and the other is domestic service. Both of these are denied to the Nigerian girl, and if she wants to escape from close grip of the family, prostitution is almost the only alternative open to her.⁷²

Another imperative colonial structure that allowed prostitution to flourish was mines. Mines all over Africa were known to attract 'free or unattached women' who provided casual sexual service for miners. Despite the absence of official recognition, the presence of women who provided casual sexual services for miners was a popular scene in the mines. Burkar has this to say about the conduct of prostitutes at Jos mines:

The harlots were associated more intimately with the immigrants' mines laborers, who as a rule, left their families behind when coming to the mines. In this connection, some of these harlots cooked for the

immigrant mine laborers, giving them a semblance of the comforts of a home.⁷³

Burkar's observation in Jos is similar to the account recorded Bill about the presence and conduct of prostitutes in Nigerian mining camps:

Independent women came to the camps along with the rest of the floaters; they included prostitutes as well as traders and farmers. It was characteristics of capital's need for a semi-stable but still migrant labour force that prostitutes were encouraged by the management to settle in the camps. They cooked for the men, fulfilling some of the necessary functions of a household at a very cheap cost⁷⁴

Also, the sexual and domestic importance of prostitutes in the mines attracted the concern of delegates from Zaria at the Conference of Chiefs and Emirs of the Northern Provinces in 1942. The delegates suggested that prostitutes should be sent to Jos 'where they could cook for mines laborers.'⁷⁵ Mine laborers, in spite of the severity of their job, had money to patronize prostitutes who were always at their beck and call. Prostitution, gambling and drunkenness provided good opportunities for the proletariat to ease the stress of their deplorable working condition.

A significant indicator in the connection between prostitution and the rise of urban centers in the colonial period is the origin and geographical distribution of the brothels in major cities of the country. Brothels and/or places where prostitutes were seen in large numbers are culturally heterogeneous parts of the cities. In Ibadan, for instance, 90-95 percent of brothels that emerged after the colonial rule could be found in culturally heterogeneous parts of the city like Ekotedo, Ojoo, Mokola, Sabo, etc.⁷⁶ These areas, most importantly Ekotedo and Dugbe, developed due to colonial economic activities such as the extension of railway to Ibadan in 1901 and the concentration of colonial economic structures such as banks, mercantile houses, etc. The British first introduced stranger quarters to separate strangers from the natives in Kano in 1913.⁷⁷ Between 1913 and 1960 virtually all the major urban centers in the country had their own stranger's quarters otherwise called *Sabon gari*.⁷⁸ (Hausa word that can be translated as new town). *Sabon gari* encouraged a large influx of strangers, a majority of which were men and women looking for greener pastures in urban centers all over the country. While non-Hausa densely populated *Sabo garis* in the north, their counterparts in the south were predominantly Hausa in ethnic composition.⁷⁹ Prostitution flourished within the conditions of weakened social ties and cultural heterogeneity characterized by stranger quarters of *Sabon garis* most importantly the southern ones. In a study of Hausa migrant's settlement of Ibadan, Abner Cohen has demonstrated that out of 1753 females in *Sabo gari* in Ibadan in 1963, 250 were prostitutes. Only 2 out of the 250 were born in *Sabo gari* while the remaining migrated from the northern part of the country.⁸⁰ Renee Pittin's survey shows that of 123 *gidajen mata* (compounds occupied wholly or in part by Hausa women living away from kin, and available for sexual liaisons) in Katsina, seventy three are located in *Sabon Layi*. In a short, detailed description of these strangers' quarters, she wrote:

Sabon Layi within which are also found the majority of inexpensive hotels, beer parlours and restaurants. Katsina's two cinemas are sited on one side of Sabon Layi, and such night- life as there is, is centred in this section of town. Newcomers to the city, transients, newly arrived women on their own and men looking for women tend to gravitate to Sabon Layi⁸¹

The situation in Ibadan and Katsina are similar to what was obtainable in Kano about two major culturally heterogeneous part of the city; Fagge and *Sabon gari*:

In fact as early as 1920, one of Kano's famous attajirai, Maikano Agogo, had built some lodgings at Fagge rented mostly by these "free women". From the 1940s, the Fagge quarters became a well-known abode of prostitutes. It is true that it was not everywhere in the settlement that was occupied by these prostitutes. The point being made is that some parts and streets of the settlement became the "red light district" of urban Kano. Certain locations such as Tudun Lawarudu, lay in Jalannawa, lugun ruwa etc were known areas of prostitutes business. Most of these prostitutes that were residing at Fagge were either Hausa or Northern Nigerian origin. The ones that mostly from Southern Nigeria and some West Africa countries lived at Sabon gari which from 1950 when the impact of import-substitution-industrialization began to be felt in the society of Kano came to surpass Fagge in the prostitution business. In fact, even in the old city where the Native Authority was very strict in eradicating this deviant behavior, prostitution houses began to mushroom during the period⁸²

Socio-Cultural Dislocations

One of the most potent aspects of colonial rule was its effect on several aspects of the socio-cultural ways of life of the people. The widened differentials between the income of rural dwellers and their urban counterparts led to many changes in aspects of customary marriage, most importantly of bride price. Parents became more interested in giving out their daughters to wealthy urban migrant workers. This type of outlook developed out of the countryside's gradual absorption into the urban system, which made the possession of money increasingly essential for local needs. The result was a circular process because there was a demand for consumption goods that, in turn, could only be met by earning money abroad. Thus, this withdrawal of male labor disturbed the rural subsistence economy making the village more and more dependent upon the remittances as well as the goods and cash brought back by returning migrants.⁸³ The monetization of the economy, to a very reasonable extent, led to the "commercialization" of marriage phenomenon, which undoubtedly affected the whole country with little or no variance. One of the major problems that occupied the attention of the Conference of Yoruba Chiefs in 1937 was the need to fix a certain amount to be paid as bride price due to the notoriety that occasioned the unprecedented increase in bride price.⁸⁴ In Hausaland, the new economic structure made cash and marital gift to become

important in all aspects of marriage. Thus, the *Mirmushin Chiromas Maikano Agogos*⁸⁵ and the *Kaima tsaya ka samu naka*⁸⁶ were introduced as *Kayan zance*.⁸⁷

The Igbo were certainly the most badly hit by the high bride price demanded by families of brides in the villages. P.C. Lloyd pointed out that sixty percent of the Igbo in Lagos with age ranging from 15 to 34 were young men in search of the high bride price demanded in their various communities.⁸⁸ Men from the Mbaise clan, Owerri district, resided in Lagos in 1953 and had to save for eight years before they could raise two hundred-pounds demanded by their clan as bride price.⁸⁹ *The Nigerian Spokesman* reported in 1948 that the Youth of Awo-Omama (Lagos Branch) threatened not to marry from their community if the bride price was not reduced. The youth advocated for the reduction of bride price to twenty five-pounds for illiterate and fifteen-pounds for literate brides.⁹⁰ Arguably, the role which unprecedented increase in bride price played in promoting prostitution is that men who could not raise the required amount needed as bride price remained in the city and lusted after prostitutes who they could always pay for providing the needed sexual labor. There is much evidence that suggested the influx of women who after years of living in the villages without husbands migrated to become prostitutes in the cities.⁹¹ The following extract from 12 December 1951 issue of *Nigerian Spokesman* comprehensively describes the connection between high bride price and prostitution:

Much has been said and written about the sky-rocketing bride price which seems to have been prevailing in Iboland since the past two decades and barring two or three towns, all other places in the East are still encouraging the seeming “slave traffic” in marriage. Many writers have aired their views on the situation but yesterday an Okija indigene went all out x-raying the Okija’s plight. A girl is to be priced from €90 to €300 in part of this rural district. Today, when we look around, we notice prostitutes in great multitude swarming into cities from various villages. This is one result of the high bride price permeating the Iboland. Many young girls have found marriage in their towns unaccomplished, because they are unable to meet the high demand of bride-price from parents who want “money at all costs” by demanding much, they have demoralized Nigeria boys and girls

A contributor to the 20 January 1948 issue of the *Eastern Nigeria Newspaper* on the problems and causes of prostitution also wrote:

The exorbitant bride price is therefore one of the greatest if not the greatest cause of prostitution in our clan today. A clan that regarded marriage as a holy institution has lost the dignity of this institution in pursuance of unholy wealth.

The *Daily Comet*, a newspaper published in Kano, has this to say about the deleterious effect of high bride price and the trafficking of girls for the purpose of prostitution:

Everyone is surprised nowadays at the astonishing development and spread of prostitution and the emulation of foreign and indecent ways of living quite unafrika. In some districts of this country, parents

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traffic in their daughters by as much as 80 to 100 pounds from young men⁹².

The extract below is part of the communiqué issued by the Committee on Prostitution in Northern Nigeria about the causes of prostitution:

Parents should be made to realize that it is not the amount of money paid for their daughters that leads to a successful marriage. Highly-paid-for wives are ill treated and become unhappy and therefore do not stay long with their husbands.⁹³

The fragile nature of customary marriage in colonial Nigeria, partly a product of monetized economy, is the root of the contemporary problems of the trafficking of girls for the purpose of prostitution. Betrothal, a very significant aspect of customary marriage that in pre-colonial and colonial periods sometimes took place even before the bride or the bridegroom or both were born, came under heavy abuse. By the late the 1930s, child betrothal had become a very important means by which young girls below the age of 15 were trafficked for the purpose of prostitution in urban centers, most importantly Lagos and Ibadan. The *modus operandi* was for a trafficker to secure or lure girls from parents under the pretense of training them and getting husbands for them in the city. The parents did not release such girls until the traffickers, who in most cases were retired or adult prostitutes, had paid a dowry ranging from 8 to 10 pounds to marry an anonymous man in Lagos. In a letter to the Welfare Officer, a child prostitute narrated her ordeal in the hand of her procurer:

In the year 1945, she asked me to follow her to Ikeja where I shall be better trained. We arrived in Ikeja early in 1945 when I was given to a certain army who took my virgin and he paid 3 pounds to this woman, from there I was forced by her to become a harlot. Sir, all the money that I have been gathering from this harlot trade from 1945 is with this woman.⁹⁴

The above information is similar to a letter written by a petitioner to the District Officer about child prostitution in Ibadan:

I beg to report to your necessary information about the following Urhobo women in this town who keep their houses and premises for brothels. The following are the experienced leaders of harlots in Ibadan. Madam Isobo: a well-known woman in the town as the leader of all Urhobo harlots. She occupies large premises in a compound very close to high class Hotel of Urhobo Union. She has some set of young Isobo girls of about 12 years old upwards about 12 in number, and some old women with her. If one goes to her compound to look for harlot, verbal application will be made to Madam Isobo who will decide the charge and supply any one that will serve the purpose. All harlots usually hold meetings in her house to decide about their prostitution charges for a trip or for sleeping with a man till day break.⁹⁵

One of the most important factors that increased the demand for child prostitutes was that men preferred them to adults who were conventionally difficult to deal

with. Similarly, there was an assumption common amongst male migrants from the Eastern Region that sexual intercourse with virgin could cure certain ailments. Traffickers, therefore, earned better pay when they produced girls who were still virgins.⁹⁶ Closely connected to the problem of high bride price were divorce. As earlier mentioned, before the imposition of colonial rule, divorce amongst many groups that later became Nigeria was rare. Therefore, this made the presence of “free or unattached women” in pre-colonial times rare. Amongst the Hausa where the incidence of divorce was highest, the institution of *Karuwanci*, as previously pointed out provided an opportunity for a divorcee to be reintegrated back into household. The imposition of colonial rule and the introduction of British Law eroded some of the virtue of customary marriage that made women a very important member of an indissoluble household. While the introduction of colonial courts empowered women by allowing them to be “liberated” from unhappy marriages through divorce, it nevertheless contributed immensely in the production of large number of “free or unattached women.” Discourses on divorce and other processes that produced free or unattached females can best be appreciated against the background of the fact that prostitution as a professional career, both on long or short basis, thrived amongst the unmarried and divorced in colonial Nigeria.

By 1929, cases of divorce and legal separation instituted by women had become common according to the records of the Supreme Court at Lagos. The rate of divorce in Lagos alone was estimated to about 20% in 1958-59.⁹⁷ Records have been found containing stories about women who after having divorced their husbands by merely putting up an appearance in the court and paying necessary charges to the court and the divorced husband migrated to the city to become prostitutes.⁹⁸ P.A. Talbot has this to say about marital breakdown during the colonial period:

It would appear that the standard of morality has been lowered since the arrival of European and the establishment of a government, which does not encourage the treatment of adultery as a criminal offence, while it forbids the cruelties, which were amongst some peoples practiced on an erring wife, and the exacting of personal vengeance on an offender. Matrimonial “palavers” form by far the greatest proportion of civil cases heard in the courts to day, and it will be found that the vast majority of these is due to the desire of the women for new husbands; a man will usually submit to almost anything in order to keep his wife⁹⁹

In the colonial society, which had little economic opportunity for economically un-empowered women in the cities, divorce did nothing but increase the number of women who fled to the cities and lived on earnings from prostitution. A major problem encountered by the police during the period of arrest and repatriation of prostitutes was how to differentiate between a divorced woman who left on her own “legitimate/moral earning” and the ones who went outside in the night to solicit and bring men into her room. The *Southern Nigeria Defender* reported in 1946, “If demobilization must be carried out, all divorced and unmarried must be demobilized for they are all birds of the same feathers.”¹⁰⁰ While it is inappropriate to identify all unmarried women as prostitutes, the fact that “free women” were

highly susceptible to prostitution must have influenced some of the comments made in the print media about “free women”.

Conclusion

The origin of prostitution in Nigeria has been discussed against the backdrop of socio cultural and economic changes brought about by colonial rule. The major indices for the measurement of the role that colonialism played in the emergence of prostitution are the rise of colonial urban centers, colonial capitalist structure, and attendant social milieu.

Prostitution attracted the concern of many people majority of who were urban dwellers. It was regarded as a “deviant career” because the society was not in support of it. The history of the public condemnation of prostitution can be dated back in the 1930s and 1950s when newspaper reports carried stories related to what can summarily be called “public pollution” caused by prostitutes. “Public pollution” signified the preposition that prostitution lead to an increase in crime rate, venereal diseases, reduction of access which people who engaged in “legitimate work” had decent accommodations and a generally high rate of immorality. Pages of the *Southern Nigeria Defender*, *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Nigerian Observer*, *Nigerian Guide*, *West African Pilot*, *Nigeria Spokesman*, etc. in the late 1930s, 1940s, and the 1950s are replete with a lot of stories which signify that prostitution was not only a societal problem but a product of colonial urbanization. The point being made here is that a very good percentage of what we know about prostitution in Nigeria during the colonial era is information supplied by the print media about the societal implications of commercial sex labor. It was also in the late 1940s that prostitution became known as commercial sex working.¹⁰¹ This is contrary to the general conception that the word “commercial sex working” is a new way of euphemistically describing prostitution in contemporary Nigeria. The major factor that molded the public stigmatization of prostitution was that people recounted the state of things before colonial rule and were able to trace the origin of the problem to “westernization.” So, what we consistently read in colonial newspapers in the 1930 and 1940s are ‘during our father days’, ‘in the olden days’, ‘in those days’, ‘in our days’ etc. All these were words used to describe the situation of things before colonial rule and to demonstrate that the deplorable situation was a development occasioned by colonialism.

Amazingly, right from the opening years of the 1960s down to 2005, the level at which we read stories about prostitution reduced. Whereas, stories on prostitution were reported at least four times in a week during the late 30s, 40s and early 50s, post independence reports in the print media reduced to a very unimaginable degree. This development is explicable partly in what can be called the “institutionalization of prostitution.” The “institutionalization of prostitution” signifies the extent or degree at which the society began to see prostitution as an inevitable aspect of life.

The response of the colonial government to the problems of prostitution took the dimension of the enactment of ordinances to regulate or prohibit activities such as loitering, soliciting, procuring, brothel keeping, etc., which are connected

to prostitution. Throughout the colonial period, the arrest and prosecution of prostitutes continued without a major breakthrough in the reduction of their numbers. This called for a consideration of the lopsidedness in the government's disposition towards the administration of justice between the two sexes. Categorically, between 1944, when the prosecution and repatriation of prostitutes started, to 1960, there is no record that showed the prosecution of male solicitors.¹⁰² The relevant section of the criminal code which made it illegal for men to publicly solicit and traffic women and girls are 225A (b) 224(1).¹⁰³ The fact that prostitution in colonial Nigeria is a female offence made the exclusion of men who broke anti-prostitution laws easy.¹⁰⁴ The practice of excluding one sex from legal sanctions or applying different legal categories according to sex is highly suspect to charge of sexual discrimination.¹⁰⁵ Men, who throughout the colonial period patronized prostitution, were not brought to book. A major flaw in the government and people's perception of prostitution is its treatment as the degradation of females without recognition that prostitution thrives because of the patronage received from men.

Notes and References

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2. See Nakanyike B Musisi, "Gender and the Cultural Construction of "Bad Women" in the Development of Kampala-Kibuga, 1900-1962" in Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A McCurdy (eds.) *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2001) pp.171-187
3. Nakanyike, "Gender and the cultural Construction," pp 172
4. In this conceptualization of prostitution, two things are cardinal. The first is that the female is providing sexual services, for which she must be compulsorily paid or remunerated. The female is providing sexual services for men who paid for it.
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6. National Archives Ibadan (NAI), COMCOL, 1 1016 Vol III, "Undesirables in the Lagos Township and Suburbs, Repatriation of", Eastern Nigeria Guardian, (ENG), "Undesirable Women", 7 September 1947, p 3, *West African Pilot* (WAP), "Undesirable Women to Get Uneasy Time," 21 January 1955, p 1, *Southern Nigeria Defender* (SND), "Ekotedo Undesirables", 21 September 1946 p3.
7. *The Comet* (Nigeria) "Smoke Out the Prostitutes," 24 June 1944 p2
8. Luise White's work is one of the excellent works on prostitution in Africa. See Luise White, *The Comfort of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, The (Illinois, University of Chicago Press Ltd, 1990).
9. Charles Bernheimer "Of Whores and Sewers: Parent-Duchatelet, Engineer of Abjection" *Raritan* 6,3 (Winter 1987), pp 84
10. Charles Bernheimer, p84
11. C Lombroso and W Ferrero, *The Female Offender*, (London, Fisher Unwin 1895)
12. W.I Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1967)

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13. O Pollak, *The Criminality of Women* (New York, A.S Barnes, 1961)
14. For a general survey of history of prostitution see, S Williams *The History of Prostitution: Its Effect, Causes and Throughout the World.* (New York, Eugenics Publishing Co 1937)
15. Saheed Aderinto, "Journey to Work: Nigerian Prostitutes in the Gold Coast," 1935-1955, unpublished manuscript, 2005. See also, National NAI CSO 26/03338 Vol II *International Convention for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic and Traffic in Women and Children_1913-1925, 1936-1956*, NAI, CSO, 27837 Vol I and II *Annual Report on the Traffic in Women and Children and Obscene Language Publication*, NAI, Oyo Prof 1, 1373 *Traffic in Women and Children, Obscene Language etc, Report for the League of Nations*, NAI, CSO 36005 Vol II *Traffic in Girls From Nigeria to the Gold Coast etc*
16. NAI, A Special List of Records on the Police Force, *Annual Report of Police* 11814 vol I-XII, 1905-1960
17. Saheed Aderinto, *Urban Threat: Prostitutes and Venereal Diseases in Colonial Nigeria*, Paper presented at the African Health and Illness Conference, University of Texas at Austin March 25-27 2005.
18. Saheed Aderinto, *Urban Threat*, See also all the annual reports of the Medical Services between 1930 and 1960 in NAI, CSO *Simple List of Federal Ministry of Health*, Venereal Diseases Ordinance 1943 in NAI, *Annual Volume of the Laws of Nigeria, Legislation enacted during 1943*
19. Saheed Aderinto, "*Urban Threat*"
20. One of the most indisputable facts about prostitution in colonial Nigeria is that apart from Northern Nigeria, chiefly female who migrated into urban center carried out prostitution. The phenomenon was not well pronounced amongst the indigenes apart from in the Northern Region. The names given to prostitutes by the host community sometimes signify their place of origin. For instance, prostitutes from Idoma were called *Akwato* by Easterners see, Jerome Barkow, "The Institution of Courtesanship in the Northern States of Nigeria," *Geneva Afrique* X, 1 (1971), pp 59-73. In Ibadan most of the migrant's women who practices prostitution were from Warri, see NAI, Oyo Prof 1,3562 *Measures Against Prostitutes 1942-1944*. In Lagos women from Calabar were chiefly accused of prostitution. See NAI, COMCOL 1 248, *Calabar Improvement League, Minutes of Meetings*. While the Traffic in women to the Gold Coast was rampant amongst women from Obubra Division of Ogoja Province, see Public Record and Archives Administration Department, (PRAAD) National Archives, Accra, CSO 15/2/2222 *Traffic in Women and Children, 1940-1948*, see also Saheed Aderinto, "*Journey to Work*".
21. Jerome pp 59-73
22. Ibid
23. Barbara Cooper, "The Politics of Difference and Women's Association in Niger: of "Prostitutes" the Public and Politics" in Dorothy and Sheryl (eds.) "*Wicked, Women*, p 257-260.
24. M.G Smith, "The Hausa System of Social Status" *Africa*, 29 (1959) pp 239-253
25. Renee Pittin, "Houses of Women: a Focus on Alternative Life-Styles in Katsina City" in Christine Oppong (ed) *Female and Male in West Africa* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1983) pp 291-301
26. Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Town* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1969) pp 51-71

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27. Renee, "Houses of women," p 294
28. John Iliffe, *The African Poor, A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p34,
29. Cohen carried out his survey in 1963, Pittin, 1971-72, Smith, 1957-58, Jerome, 1968-70. All these authors are either sociologist or anthropologist.
30. I call it "a form of Courtesanship" because *Karuwanci* is one of the numerous African cultural institutions that cannot be rendered directly in English. *Karuwanci* is therefore discussed here as a practice similar to Courtesanship.
31. Oral evidences, Mallam Yaro Ahmed, N0 14, Emir Yahya Road, Sokoto age 90+, 10/10/2004, Alhaji Barau Haroun, Gausau Road, Sokoto, age 80+ 21/10/2004. Mahdi Adamu who carried out very extensive fieldwork on pre-colonial ways of life of the Hausa asserted that there is no evidence of the presence of prostitution in Hausaland before the imposition of colonial rule. Mahdi Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West African History* (Zaria/Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University Press and Oxford University Press, 1978), pp 171-172. For a categorical expression about the absence of prostitution in Hausaland before colonial urbanization see, Tahir, *Scholars Sufis, Saints and Capitalist in Kano, 1904-1974, The Pattern of Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society* unpublished PhD Dissertation Cambridge University, 1975
32. Oral interview with Hajia Awau Kashim, Zamaru, Zaria, age 90+, 21/10/2004; and Hajia Fatima Fatiu, Kawo, Kaduna, age 80+, 07/11/2004. All my informants made it clear that the major problems which the Emirs and local authorities faced during the enforcement of anti-prostitution laws in the 1940s and 50s was that it was difficult to identify the *Karuwa* who went out to seduce men for sexual intercourse in their rented homes and those living on "legitimate earning".
33. Paul Lovejoy, "Concubinage and the Status of Slaves in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria" *Journal of African History*, 29 (1988) p 246
34. Paul E Lovejoy and Jan S Hogendorn "Slow Death for Slavery: The Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993) p 112
35. Paul, "Concubinage," pp 245-248
36. Paul and Hogendorn, *Slow Death*, p 117
37. Ibid. p 117
38. Paul, "Concubinage," p 249
39. Paul and Hogendorn "Slow Death," p 63
40. Oral evidence, Mallam Sherif, Agwarimi, Kano, 22/10/2004 age 90+. For some documented accounts related to this man, see National Archives Kaduna (NAK) Secretary of Northern Provinces (SNP) 7, "Kano City Assessment," 1921-1922
41. Oral evidence, Mallam Sherif
42. Catherine and Mack asserted that *Karuwanci* is an occupation amongst Hausa women, which is yet to be systematically studied. Catherine Coles and Beverly Mack "Introduction" in Catherine Coles and Beverly Mack (eds) *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century* (Madison Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991) p18
43. Victor Uchendu "Concubinage Amongst Ngwa Igbo of Southern Nigeria", *Africa*, 35 (1965) pp187-197
44. Published works on traditional custom related to marriage are numerous. For a general survey see P.A Talbot *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol II* (London Longman 1926).

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45. This practice does not have any resemblance with North American and Western understanding of lesbian marriage or homosexuality. For a very interesting account of this type of marriage, see, Ifi Amdiume *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an Africa Society* (London, Zed Books Ltd, 1987)
46. La Ray Denzer, "Yoruba Women, A Historiographical Study", a paper presented as a lead paper at the Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Calabar 18-23 May 1992 pp4-5
47. G T Basden, *Amongst the Ibo of Nigeria*, (Ibadan, University Press Publishers 1921) p 102
48. Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba* (Lagos CSS 1921) p116. Amongst the Esan, what was obtainable was what Igbafe called theoretical divorce because it never took place. For further readings see, P.A Igbafe, "Tradition and Change in Benin Marriage System," *Journal of Economic and Social Studies* 1970 p 76
49. Samuel *The History* p 116
50. P.A Talbot, *The People of Southern* pp 425-467
51. National Archives, Enugu (NAE) Obubdist 4.1.71, *Prostitution in Obubra Division*, 1939-1944
52. NAE Obubdist
53. The Nigerian Observer, *Is Prostitution a Trade*, 19 July, 1930 p3. This word must have been corrupted over time. This is because, there is a town in Obubra called Akunakuna.
54. NAE, Obubdist
55. For instance, Ifi *Male Daughters*, Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making An African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 1997), Oniagwu Ogbomo, *When Men and Women Mattered: A History of Gender Relations amongst the Owan of Nigeria* (Rochester NY University of Rochester Press 1997), Gloria Chuku "Women and the Complexity of Gender Relations" in Toyin Falola (ed) *Nigeria in the 20th Century* (Durham Carolina Academic Press 2002) etc
56. E.G Ravenstein "The Laws of Migration", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 48, 2 1885
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59. C.N Anyanwu, *Port Harcourt, 1912-1955; The Development of A Nigerian Municipality*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ibadan (1971)
60. Oyewole Enoch *Colonial Urbanization in Northern Nigeria: Kaduna, 1913 1960*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Northern Historical Research Scheme, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1987
61. Akin Mabogunje, *Urbanization in p112*
62. Kenneth Little, *Urbanization as a Social Process: An African Case Study* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973)
63. Most "red light districts" are found in culturally heterogeneous parts of the cities. In Kano such places include the *Fagge* quarters and *Sabongari*. Such places in Ibadan can be found in Dugbe, Ekotedo, Mokola etc.

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66. Kenneth, *African Women*, chapter one. See also S. O Osoba, "The Phenomenon of Labour Migration in the Era of British Colonial Rule: A Neglected Aspect of Nigeria's Social History", *JHSN* 4, 4 (1969)
67. Ado Muhammed Yahuza, *Pattern of Urbanization in Colonial Kano, 1903-1960* Unpublished M.A thesis, University of Ibadan p148
68. NAI, CSO 26/38322/S.193, *Unemployment Movement, Petition by*
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79. Olawale, *Urban* chapter three
80. Abner, *Custom and Politics*, p 54
81. Renee, *Alternative* p292. *Sabon gari* might be given other appellation, such as *Sabon Layi*, meaning (new lane),
82. Ado *Pattern*, chapter 2
83. Kenneth Little, *African Women*, p18... See also Saheed Aderinto, I Need to Work Hard for Marriage: Masculinity and "Bride Price Hysteria" in Colonial Nigeria, a working paper
84. N.A Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba* (Ibadan, University of Ibadan Press, 1970) pp 91-93
85. The name of a popular trading agent given to a brand of imported cloth
86. A statement which means you should get your own

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87. Meaning, courtship. In all, these three Hausa statements were popularly and summarily used to jokingly describe the magnetization of marriage or how great emphasis was placed on expensive gift as a prerequisite for marriage. For further readings, see Mansur Ibrahim Mukhtar, *The Impact of British Colonial Domination on the Social and Economic Structures of the Society of Kano, 1903-1950* unpublished M.A thesis, NHRS, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1983
88. P.C Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change: Changing Traditional Societies in the Modern* (USA, Penguin Books 1967), p 123
89. WAP *Bride Price in Mbaise* September 1 1953, p 2
90. Nigerian Spokesman, *Youth of Awo-Omama Will Boycott Their Girls, Want Bride Price be Reduced* 8 January, 1948, p 1
91. Nigerian Tribune, *Prostitutes in Ibadan* 21 July, 1952, p 3
92. Daily Comet, *Bride Price in Iboland* 7 July, 1949, p 3
93. NAK, Ministry of Local Government (MLG/S/RGA) *Committee on Problems of Prostitution in Northern Nigeria, 1950-1965*
94. NAI, COMCOL 1, 2844 *Child Prostitution ..*
95. NAI, Oyo Prof 1, File No 3562 *Measures*, the letter is dated 16 March, 1944.
96. NAI, COMCOL 1, 2844 *Child Prostitution ..*
97. John, *The African Poor ...*p183. For a detail discussion of other causes of high rate of divorce, see Damachi Ukandi Gowin, *The Nigerian Modernization: The Colonial Legacy* (New York The Press 1977) p110
98. NAE, Obubdist, 4.1.71...
99. Talbot, *Peoples* p430
100. SND *Demobilization of Prostitutes*, 3 October, 1946 p3
101. See SND Ekotedo, September 26, 1946. See also WAP in the late 1940s.
102. NAI, CSO 26/27837 *Annual Report on*
103. NAI, *Annual Volume of the Laws of Nigeria, Legislation enacted during 1944*
104. NAI, COMCOL1, 2600 *Social Welfare, General Questions, Establishment of Welfare Department, 1942-1945 Vol II*
105. Carol Smart, *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique*, London Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, pp 77-93.