# Challenging Global Geographies of Power: Sending Children back to Nigeria from the United Kingdom for Education

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> The Temne chief Naimbanna [Sierre Leone], recognizing the value of a European train-
> ing, had sent two of his sons to Britain for schooling in the late eighteenth century. This
> example was followed by other African rulers, often at the instigation of missionaries
> and colonial officials who hoped that African princes would serve as agents to plant
> European 'civilization' and Christianity in the Black continent
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> ———Killingray 1993: 7

As early as the sixteenth century, European traders sent a small number of Afri-
cans to Britain for schooling in order to secure their support in West African
coastal trade relations. Throughout the seventeenth century, growing
numbers of Africans attended schools throughout Britain.[1] From the eighteenth
century onward, West African elites used wealth accrued from trade to send
their children to Britain for secondary and university educations to support
their work in trade and assume official duties integral to the maintenance of
empire (Jenkins 1985; Killingray 1993). At the same time, Britain made use

[1] Africans have migrated to Britain for hundreds of years, many residing in port cities as slaves,
merchants, servants, musicians, entertainers, students, artist models, and in the case of children,
playthings of the aristocracy (Costello 2001). But there remain huge gaps in our knowledge of
African migrants to Britain (Adi 2012: 266).

of "good," educated colonial subjects to sustain the slave trade, spread the gospel, and fulfill the goals of empire (Adi 1998: 7). The 1801 establishment in Britain of a society for the education of Africans indicates the increasing numbers migrating there for education (Killingray 1993: 7).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Church of England mission organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent missionaries to convert local populations throughout the Atlantic World. In the later eighteenth century, the Society paid for English educations for young men in hopes that they would return to their homelands to spread Christianity and "civilization." One was Philip Quaque, from a comfortable Cape Coast family on the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and the first African ordained in the Church of England after the Reformation (Herbstein n.d.). He returned with an English wife to live in Cape Coast. Positioned at the junction of distinct religious and social realms, Quaque faced numerous difficulties in his attempts to bridge these realms by converting the locals to Christianity. Nonetheless, he became an influential and prominent figure in Christian missions and the local schooling system.[2] Quaque's case highlights the role educational migration played in the (re)production of status (Valentin 2014: 1) and moral worlds, as well as in the making of particular types of subjects within changing cultural, political, and economic conditions.

From the late Victorian period, Britain instituted a policy of allowing its imperial subjects to enter the country with relative ease, awarding them the same rights of property, abode, and association as white British citizens, and this resulted in a growing African presence (Killingray 2012: 393). Many Africans traveling to Britain for education came to improve their lives and further their prospects since they faced enslavement and/or colonial domination in their home countries. They benefited from British education and the economic and political power of the metropole. For those who came to study, Britain offered opportunities and respite from colonialism and slavery, but at the same time subjected Africans to other forms of racism and oppression (Adi 2012: 265). As a result, many established networks and formed and joined associations, which served as systems of support and refuge. Further, throughout the colonial period these networks were key in supporting and giving voice to an anti-colonial and anti-racist politics, and the Pan-Africanist movement, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century (ibid.: 266). Paradoxically, Britain provided the space from which Africans and those of African descent could critique the forces responsible for both their presence in Britain and the racism many suffered. Ultimately, the dissemination of these ideas, in part through the development from the early twentieth century of vibrant print cultures, helped to bring about the end of colonization (Bressey and

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[2] See Philip Quaque 2017.

Adi 2010: 108). In the postcolonial period, partly in recognition of the importance of education to nation-building and modernization, significant numbers of Africans migrated to Britain. Nigerians and Ghanaians made up the largest group of overseas students following independence (Bailkin 2009: 88).

The migration of Nigerians to Britain for education, work, or family reunification, among other reasons, is central to postcolonial migratory historical narratives (Harris 2006; Olwig and Valentin 2014: 6). West Africans, particularly the upper and middle classes, have a long history of investing in their children's education by sending them to the metropole. Yet, going against this long historical grain, some young Britons of West African descent, born in the UK, are now being sent to West Africa for secondary education (see Bledsoe and Sow 2011). What does this tell us about the types of subjects that their families, members of the British West African diaspora, seek to produce within a changing global political economy?

This article addresses this question through an ethnographic study of British Nigerian families. We offer new insights into the relationship between education, migration, space, emotion, and the production of particular types of subjects and subjectivities within neoliberal globalization. We draw from 2012 fieldwork carried out for four months in London and one month in Lagos, Nigeria.[3] In both places we conducted one-on-one interviews and also group discussions. Our interviewees were eight Nigerian-socialized parents, all of them first-generation migrants and either British citizens or legally resident in the UK; eight children and young adults who had gone to school in Nigeria while their parents were in the UK, but were now back in the UK; and fifteen children who were still attending school in Nigeria while at least one parent was in the UK or the United States. Finally, we also interviewed nine close relatives of these children (grandparents, uncles, aunts, and siblings) and several other relevant people such as teachers. In a few exceptional cases, people we interviewed in London were related to people we later interviewed in Nigeria. Here we will focus on three cases in order to provide depth and a stronger sense of the experiences and emotions of those involved, highlighting parents, their children, and in one case, grandparents.

Our interviewees in both the UK and Nigeria can be broadly described as aspiring middle class. We follow Spronk's (2014: 94–95; see Behrends and Lentz 2012) definition, which sees class not as simply a matter of household

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income (African Development Bank 2011), but as "cultural practice" and an "aspirational category" marked by possession of various forms of capital (Bourdieu 1984; see Coe and Shani 2015). Education, as a form of cultural capital, has historically served as a key component of middle-class British and Nigerian subjectivities. All the parents, relatives, and unrelated "carers" in our study valued education enormously. Several of the parents had attended boarding school or lived away from their parents in their own childhoods and valued this positively as a formative experience. Sending children to Nigeria is costly (fees, travel, board, etc.), and not surprisingly all the parents had jobs and tended to live in middle-class residential areas of London.

The movement of children from the UK to Nigeria is, from the perspectives of children, their families, and "carers," all about the making of good subjects (see Fechter 2014) who possess particular dispositions and behave in such a manner as to ensure educational success, as well as the (re)production of middle-class subjectivities and networks, in a situation of increasing economic precarity (Sassen 2014). We argue that this movement highlights the way in which global geographies of power, rooted in a colony-metropole divide, are being challenged and reconfigured—the UK is being "provincialized" through the educational choices that Nigerian parents are making for their children. Inspired by Dipesh Chakrabarty, the term provincialize as used here "means … relocating western narratives of progress in their wider colonial histories and rethinking the 'centre' by resituating it in its complex web of colonial interconnections" (Nash 2002: 222; see Arndt 2009). As Nigeria becomes the preferred destination for educational migration for some British Nigerians, it is repositioned as the center. Such small acts disrupt imagined geographies (Said 1978) rooted in colonial histories, and also particular spatial and temporal configurations of progress and modernity, in which former colonial subjects have traveled to the metropole for education (see Olwig and Valentin 2014: 3).[4]

These choices to send children to Nigeria must be understood in relation to the historical relations that informed the colonial encounter and the emergence of new relations of domination that are central to neoliberal globalization (Coronil 2000: 352). The latter is characterized by the drive for new forms of "profit-driven extraction" and the emergence of outsourcing sites and global cities that house financial institutions and corporations that run extractive industries (Sassen 2014: 9). Constituting a "new geography of centrality," the matrix of global cities transcends "North-South and East-West divides" (ibid.). This neoliberal logic asserts that "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights,

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[4]  Similarly, we are cognizant of the continued presence of "non-colonial forms of imperial domination" in which financial capital in the form of loans and foreign aid reproduces imperial geographies of power (Glick Schiller 2005: 443).

free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2005: 2). It has transformed institutions, forms of governance, and "ideas about the self and society" in what has been termed neoliberal restructuring (Glick Schiller 2011: 214). In the neoliberal world, workers are expected to continuously reinvent themselves, engaging in a project of the self (Giddens 1991; Foucault 2008: 252–53), developing the appropriate skills, cultural practices, and dispositions for the new economy (Walkerdine 2003: 240). In a context in which profit is based more on resource extraction than labor, we see decreasing investment in the reproduction of the labor force. Consequently, following a neoliberal agenda, governments serve the interests of corporations while cutting back the welfare state and the costs of social reproduction (Sassen 2014), including state education. Cuts to education, and the welfare state more broadly, are, in turn, part of the neoliberalization of education, which typically includes increased "parental choice" and a reframing and promotion of the role of private schooling (Ball 2012: 11).

As the international educational market has expanded, Nigerian boarding schools have become a more popular choice among some British Nigerians, and we argue that their appeal is growing as power becomes more rooted in cities and regions seen to be growing. Although not a global city, Lagos, a mega-city of almost twenty million inhabitants, is the economic powerhouse of the region (Howden 2010). Despite huge income inequalities, a range of indicators—a growing middle class, the ascent of billionaires, increasing investment and trade, and a rising GDP—make Lagos, along with other African cities such as Nairobi, Accra, and Johannesburg, central players in the Africa rising narrative. That narrative attributes economic growth to the implementation of a range of policy measures and good governance reforms (McKenzie 2016).

Yet, this growth, which is generating rising inequalities, is unsustainable and based on profit-driven resource extraction that enriches transnational corporations. In the "new scramble for Africa," this growth is driven by the logic of primitive accumulation that drives neoliberal globalization (ibid.: 3–4). Nevertheless, the continued salience of the "Africa rising" narrative has encouraged descendants of Nigerian migrants to the West to return to Nigeria to live in Lagos as "repatriates."[5] It is within this situation that many first- and second-generation Nigerian migrants to Britain are sending their children to be educated in Nigeria. We argue, too, that the decision to send children to Nigeria is an act of social positioning (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992), within changing global geographies of power. It is a key feature of the aspirational strategies of a British Nigerian middle class, at a time when the middle classes are shrinking in Britain (Sassen 2014) but

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[5]  Gilmore 2016.

are perceived to be growing in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa (African Development Bank 2011). Within the setting of neoliberal globalization, British Nigerians now benefit from an elite Nigerian education, the networks this experience gives access to, and potentially, the economic power of the Nigerian state, formerly conceived within the Western imaginary as a "disenchanted space" (Chakrabarty 2000).

While the mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry 2006) highlights how subjectivities are configured through relations with people and places (Conradson and McKay 2007: 168; see Berg 2014: 2), anthropological approaches to subjectivity privilege the "internal life of the subject" (McKay 2008: 382). We suggest that children who are sent to boarding school in Nigeria, and then back to the UK for school holidays, experience a continual process of mobility, and subsequently develop transnational lives. Here, mobility creates the conditions for the development of new subjectivities and networks, and a transformation of subjectivities. Parents who send their children to boarding school in Nigeria believe that the experience creates the conditions that are most conducive to this transformation. We argue that the qualities that are central to the good subject embody an idealized conception of a disciplined, well-behaved, polite child, informed by a nostalgic view of Nigerian socialization practices and a firm belief in corporal punishment.

However, because the transnational migrant experience "is inextricably linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism" (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 5), the good subject also embodies characteristics that are fundamental to contemporary middle-class and neoliberal subjectivities, such as self-discipline, flexibility, time-consciousness, self-inventiveness, self-governance, and so forth.[6] Continuous mobility and processes of transformation give rise to a range of thoughts and emotions and the configuration of translocal subjectivities (Conradson and McKay 2007: 169)—the "multiply located senses of self among those who inhabit transnational social fields." In documenting the nature of children's mobility and changing subjectivities, we highlight the significance of emotion in transforming subjectivities, including feelings of privilege, power, and prestige, but also those of abandonment, fear, apprehension, and loneliness.

We first situate our argument within the literature on children, transnationalism, and educational migration. We then contextualize our account by providing an overview of the changing nature of both education in Nigeria and Nigerian migration to the UK. We draw on ethnographic case studies and discussions of parental motivations for sending children to Nigeria for schooling to argue that such choices must be situated within the context of neoliberal globalization and cuts to British state education. The former involves the

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[6] "The neo-liberal subject is the autonomous liberal subject made in the image of the middle class" (Walkerdine 2003: 239).

growth of the Nigerian economy and rising levels of prosperity for a small minority of the population, and this must be juxtaposed with the levels of poverty found in the parts of London where many West African migrants reside or once resided. Finally, we sketch out the types of subjects Nigerian parents seek to produce and the range of emotions and subjectivities that their children experience due to their continuous mobility.

## CHILDREN, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION

The rich and growing literature on transnational childhoods and children and migration increasingly privileges children's experiences. Topics range from transnational care chains, intimacy and connection between parents and children they leave behind; children who migrate independently; and children of migrants who are sent back to the "home" country for education, care, immersion in home cultures, and other reasons (e.g., Gardner and Mand 2012; Zeitlyn 2014; Qureshi 2014; Orellana et al. 2001; Bledsoe and Sow 2011; Carling, Menjivar, and Schmalzbauer 2012; Coe 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parrenas 2005a, 2005b; and Olwig 2012). Research on education and geographic mobility highlights the role education plays in acquiring cultural capital and social mobility (e.g., Berg 2014; Olwig and Valentin 2014; Waters 2006).

Much of this literature focuses on the devastating effects of vagabond capitalism and the intensifying mobility of capital, as parents and children seeking work are separated from each other and from other loved ones (Katz 2001). Most of those in search of work or education are from the South and travel to wealthier parts of the world (Waters 2006; Olwig and Valentin 2014). Such common trajectories are, as we have seen, rooted in colonial histories and the allure of particular types of cultural, economic, and symbolic capital.[7] With respect to African migrants seeking education in the West, this movement re-inscribes a familiar first world/third world, developed/developing dichotomy in which Africans are framed solely as migrants and diasporans. When people from the North or wealthier parts of the globe travel for work they are privileged migrants, transnational elites, or mobile professionals, making informed choices about where they choose to work, study, and live. Both types of mobility are situated within the competing opportunities and constraints of the global political economy. Yet, despite the similarity, analytical distinctions and unquestioned assumptions persist about differences between mobile professionals and transnational elites, and migrants and diasporans. These cast a "Eurocentric and class bias" on the literature (Werbner 1999: 17).

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[7]  With reference to East Asian educational migration, Waters maintains, "A Western education is an essential component of what Mitchell (1997) has described as a 'self- fashioning' process, undertaken by East Asia's transnational middle-class seeking inculcation in the 'language of the global economic subject'" (2006: 181).

In fact, such analytical distinctions re-inscribe the global geographies of power, rooted in the colony-metropole divide that we critique. In a new geography of centrality that cuts across North-South, East-West divides, Nigerian parents in the UK make choices, in an educational marketplace, about where to educate their children (Castles 2010: 1567). Consequently, as transnational elites, migrants, and members of a Nigerian diaspora, they question assumptions and break down received distinctions. Nigerian parents who send their children to Nigeria for education must, to be sure, negotiate challenging circumstances by drawing on kinship and familial networks, education, transnational orientations, and varying degrees of wealth (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 4). Yet, as trans-migrants, they are also positioned to engage in a form of prestige migration (Bredeloup 2013: 172).[8] This form of prestige migration is about, not the acquisition of material objects, but rather the cultivation of particular characteristics and dispositions. British Nigerians see acquisition of the latter as a way to improve the status of the individual and the family "in response to the changing social, economic and political conditions of a globalizing world" (Huang and Yeoh 2005: 380; see Carling, Menjivar, and Schmalzbauer 2012).

EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Formal Western education in Nigeria today is rooted in British missionary education, which spread in Southern Nigeria during the colonial period.[9] Nyamnjoh (2012: 132) details the powerful sets of relations that emerged once missionaries became involved in education, creating an "unprecedented alliance between State, Capital and Church" that served to subject and dominate the bodies and minds of Africans. As part of this, once Christian missionary schooling was introduced in Nigeria in the mid-nineteenth century, corporal punishment came to be used in both mission and state schools (Last 2000: 362).

The 1960s into the mid-1980s saw an expansion of state education—secular, Christian, and Muslim—and, in the 1970s, the establishment of federal colleges as a way to extend education to the masses (Peil 1982: 159). Also after independence, entrepreneurs began to establish for-profit schools (Rose and Adelabu 2007: 71). The implementation of structural adjustment policies in 1986 resulted in a rapid contraction in educational resourcing and provision, which generated decreased standards and brought about a crisis in the educational system (Nwagwu 1997). Disenchanted with state education, many parents of students at both primary and secondary levels turned to the

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[8]  Historically, those involved in prestige migration within West Africa were seen as adventurers in pursuit of material wealth (Bredeloup 2013).
[9]  Lord Lugard, British governor of Nigeria from 1914 to 1919, greatly admired the Hausa-Fulani hierarchical social structure in Northern Nigeria and described them as more developed than "tribes" of Southern Nigeria. Consequently, as part of attempts to "develop" the latter, missionary educational activity was greater in the south (Chukunta 1978: 69–70).

burgeoning private school sector (Ogunsanya and Thomas 2004: 80). Significantly, the latter's clientele now include local Nigerians as well as the children of expatriate Nigerians (Harma 2013). Tapping into the heritage and cultural legacy market, a wide variety of private schools began competing to woo the best students by targeting expatriate Nigerians through websites, open days, and marketing campaigns. Prospective students take their entrance exams in the UK.[10]

Such educational choice must be understood within a Nigerian political economy with huge inequalities between the rich and poor (Give Yourself 2014).[11] Nigeria has Africa's largest economy and is the world's seventh-largest oil producer.[12] Inequality can be traced largely to years of rule by the military, which effectively pillaged the economy (Smith 2001: 804). Yet, private schools in Nigeria do not simply cater to the wealthy. In a calculated bid for social mobility and the status and networks that education offers, some poorer families with few resources sacrifice to send their children to cheaper private schools (Ogunsanya and Thomas 2004; see Binaisa 2013: 890; Last 2000: 362). Most private schools are entirely self-financing, and though they must be registered and the government recognizes their status, they operate independently from the government (Harma 2013: 548). Prices for private schools range widely, with cheaper schools attracting poorer Nigerians, particularly in Lagos state, where "12,098 private schools cater to 57% of the state's enrolled children."[13] A child may be fostered to relatives who are better educated than the parents in the belief that the child's prospects will be improved by the adopters' education and professional status (e.g., as a banker, teacher, or government official).[14] In this sense, geographic mobility for education, whether local or transnational, is seen as key to ensuring social mobility and fulfilling an array of other aspirations (Brooks and Everett 2008).

NIGERIAN MIGRATION TO THE UK AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

An estimated ninety-eight thousand UK residents were born in Nigeria, making them the second-largest group from Africa and the tenth largest out of all

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[10] The literature on the burgeoning international education market concentrates mostly on higher education in Western countries (e.g., Waters 2006: 180; King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003; Olwig and Valentin 2014). Less has been written about private schools and higher education in countries in the south.

[11] See, for instance, websites such as Burleigh 2014.

[12] Oil "accounts for about 40% of the Gross Domestic Product and 70% of government revenues" (Ikelegbe 2005: 208).

[13] Costs for elite private boarding schools vary from US$4,000 to $20,000 for fees alone (Expat Arrivals n.d.).

[14] Fosterage, in which children are entrusted to relatives or friends in order to affirm relations, as an additional source of labor, and to enable children to attend school and acquire additional skills, is a common practice throughout West Africa (Goody 1982).

immigrant nationalities (Matheson 2010: 17). Most of them live in Greater London, and the majority is of Yoruba descent and/or grew up in Lagos, which is dominated largely by Yoruba. Nigerians in the UK are Muslims or Christians, and there is a vibrant landscape of Nigerian-dominated Pentecostal churches there.

Most of the many Nigerians who have migrated to the UK since the 1950s have come for education. Those who migrated in the 1950s expected to return to an independent Nigeria (Nigeria gained independence in 1960) (Harris 2006: 23). Wives of such students often supported their husbands by working low-paying jobs (ibid.: 30); due to financial pressures on parents, children were sometimes left behind in Nigeria, or sent home, but some were fostered out to white British families so that their parents could study and/or work (Goody and Groothius 2007). The importance placed on education has not diminished among the many educated middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs who have come to the UK since Nigeria's mid-1980s economic crisis.

As Nigerians have become structurally and financially stronger in the UK, they have become more transnationally mobile. In this sense, they have formed "multi-layered, multi-sited *transnational social fields*, encompassing those who move and those who stay behind" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1003, our emphasis; see also Glick Schiller 2005). Within the current period of neoliberal globalization, many people are subjected to precarious working conditions and various forms of social protection are becoming the preserve of "highly skilled workers, corporate capital, or those with inherited wealth" (Gill 1995: 401). Consequently, in the transnational social field that Maier and Coleman (2011: 453) call "London-Lagos," children move in order to obtain an adequate education, networks, and cultural dispositions that will help give them the best start in life (see MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

Decisions to send children to Nigeria have been strongly influenced by educational cuts and increasing privatization, which have brought about seismic changes in the nature and quality of state education in the UK (Ball 2012: 2). The growth of neoliberal policy has brought enhanced competition, in which schools' achievements are measured by a range of performance indicators. Such policies have (re)produced existing racial- and class-based inequalities as schools seek to attract the strongest students within a performance-led environment (Apple 2001: 413; Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz 1994). As performance indicators are published in public league tables, those schools that perform well are rewarded. They, in turn, try to attract students who can contribute to their school's strong performance in the league tables or are seen to have the potential to do so. This results in "the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility both within and outside the school" (Apple 2001: 410).

It is widely recognized that the middle classes are better positioned to manipulate this system to their advantage (ibid.: 414). Although British Nigerian parents in this study are middle class, their class-based experiences are mediated by race (Gilborn 2008), gender, and in the case of first-generation migrants, their migratory status. Many criticize the British state educational system for their children's poor educational experiences, the low expectations that teachers had of their students, and the way in which racism within schools led to different educational outcomes for different groups of students (Stevens 2007: 171). They felt that the system did not instill the requisite levels of ambition in their children (see Bledsoe and Sow 2011: 8). Such dissatisfactions encourage some parents to either send their children to a boarding school in West Africa or, as a first measure for those who can afford it, to a private school in the UK. By drawing on transnational opportunities, they make both themselves and their children less vulnerable to potential racism and to the inadequacies of the British educational system (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 9).

## DISCIPLINE AND THE MAKING OF GOOD SUBJECTS

High-end boarding schools in Nigeria can be a means to deal with a financially and morally challenging UK environment, and can also result in ongoing intergenerational tensions within families, as the following case illustrates. Patience previously went to a private school in Croydon, South London before attending boarding school in Nigeria from the age of fourteen. She underperformed at her school in Croydon, forgetting books at home and showing general disorganization in her daily routine. Prior to this the family had negative experiences of state education of their children. Yet Patience was the only one of her siblings to be sent to Nigeria, because of her lack of self-discipline. Her parents and teachers felt she needed the structured and regulated routine that a boarding school environment would offer because both parents were working and felt unable to "micromanage" Patience's life. Inspired by other African parents who had sent their children to boarding schools in Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Nigeria, Patience's parents looked at a range of schools in Nigeria and opted for a high-end, internationally oriented, single-sex secondary boarding school in Lagos.[15]

Sending children to Nigeria for schooling is part of a transnational, collective endeavor—involving parents, extended family, teachers, and peers within boarding schools—to produce particular types of subjects and networks that facilitate success (Cohen 1981). In this sense, these moral and aspirational projects involve not only immediate family members but also key actors within the

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[15]   Even with the high costs of regular travel between London and Lagos, fees, general expenses, and paying chauffeurs, the boarding school in Nigeria proved to be cheaper than the private day school Patience attended in her south London suburb.

Nigerian educational and social world (see Carling, Menjívar, and Schmalzbauer 2012).[16] For instance, parents may consult grandparents or other relatives at home, explaining the needs of the child and of the parents, and the nature of intergenerational tensions between them. Grandparents and relatives involved in the care and emotional support of children who have been sent back often benefit from parental financial contributions as well as the affirmation of transnational kinship relations.

Alternatively, pressure to send a child to Nigeria may come from relatives there. In one case, a girl's Lagos-based maternal grandparents had repeatedly asked for her to be sent to school in Nigeria. They thought that when they visited London she had displayed a severe lack of "respect for her elders" (parents, grandparents, and other adults). They were concerned that British education and society were not teaching her the "Yoruba culture" of respect and obedience and that this would get her into trouble. The girl was sent to a Nigerian boarding school and has been under the guardianship of her grandparents for the past four years. Similarly, Patience is supported and cared for by relatives in Benin and Lagos who she visits during school breaks. In most cases, trusted family relations have facilitated logistics and worked to meet the emotional needs of children who have been sent to Nigeria.

That said, Patience's move to Nigeria was not without emotional cost to her mother Mary and the rest of the family. "Oh, it was hard. I cried that day. You know? Even I broke down crying because.… And you could always think, 'What have I done?'… And, er, to have been put in that position, you know,' where we have had to put her into a school abroad, I think it was quite hard."[17] The family felt they had to put on hold certain events and occasions because Patience was not there. "We are not complete. My husband would say 'no' if we were planning anything, 'not until she comes back.'" This sense of waiting for Patience's return highlights the feelings of loss and deep emotional cost entailed in sending a child to Nigeria. Yet, these mixed emotions help to promote and guide conduct: Mary was adamant that only in a boarding school environment could Patience acquire the skills and cultural dispositions that she needed, learning to be polite, organized, independent, educated, time-conscious, and well-mannered. Mary used terms such as "organization," "respect," and "regimental," and adamantly claimed that Patience needed to learn "that things have to be done at a certain time, in a certain way, and in a certain manner."

These dispositions and qualities speak to Nigerian conceptions of the good child, which are partly informed by culturally specific notions of what it means

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[16] Often enquiries are made with schools, relatives, and friends within transnational social networks. Sometimes the plans are dismissed; families may determine that the schools are inadequate, or sometimes there are no relatives or friends available to act as the child's guardian in Nigeria.

[17] All quotations from Mary are from a May 2012 interview at her London home.

to be educated (Levinson and Holland 1996). The latter are rooted in nostalgic accounts of the ethos of Nigerian education, prior to the introduction of colonial education, which emphasized the group, "respect for elders and those in positions of authority," an appreciation of "cultural heritage," and the development of the intellect and "character" (Obiakor 1998: 59). In addition to exposing their children to Nigerian society, parents who send their children to boarding school there seek to inculcate desirable behavior by immersing them in a particular moral world and its disciplinary regime. In so doing, they create a moral mirror against which they judge and provincialize British society and its deficiencies, as Mary explained:

Nigeria has a way of molding them.… Discipline in Nigeria is much more spot-on than what we have here.… But you see, in schools, even though they call them *ajebota* (rich, spoiled kids who eat butter[18]) … they still flog them. They discipline them very well if they misbehave. The way they brought them up here is that the child can walk past you and they won't even look at you. But at [the school Patience attends in Nigeria] you'd have to say good morning, good afternoon, good evening.… They expect them to respect them … all those traditional things that probably did exist in the UK in the past, but no longer exist at schools today.

Mary emphasizes the importance of corporal punishment in childrearing and the making of good children in Nigeria, a practice meted out to unruly children regardless of class affiliation. This view was echoed by one of our interlocutors in Nigeria, an elderly Baptist Reverend who, with his wife, had cared for their granddaughter while she went to school there. He claimed that the only way to ease intergenerational frictions between parents and children is to send the latter back to Nigeria for training, without which it is difficult to instill in children a respect for elders: "In England if you beat your child, for this reason or another, they call it child abuse. In this country [Nigeria] it is 'training!'"[19] His beliefs, like those of Mary and other parents, reveal the Nigerian diaspora's ambivalent, hesitant, and fraught relationship with the British state, in which the latter is seen to dictate appropriate childrearing practices through child protection measures, and thereby undermine Nigerian parenting strategies (Maier and Coleman 2011; McGregor 2008; DeLoach and Gottlieb 2000; Carling, Menjivar, and Schmalzbauer 2012).[20] Indeed, many parents feel that the problems and protracted crises they face in their relationships with their children stem partly from state education and flaws in British society (a lack of discipline,

[18]  The ability to "eat butter" symbolizes a particular level of wealth and privilege.
[19]  Corporal punishment in British schools has been illegal since 1987, but striking children is still permitted in homes. Booklets such as *Manual on Child Protection for African Parents in the UK* (2012), directed at the African diasporic community, attempt to prevent abuse toward children while offering childrearing support and guidance.
[20]  At an evening parenting class in a big Nigerian-led Pentecostal church in London, Nigerian parents expressed their sense that they are disempowered by the state and by legislation that restricts their ability to discipline their children as they would like to.

moral values, and respect for elders), rather than from their own parenting methods.

Mary harks back to a period in Britain's past when, it is alleged, corporal punishment in schools and homes was common practice and children showed respect for adults. Ironically, the methods used to instill respect, new habits, and a work ethic in the Nigerian educational setting are informed by the British educational colonial legacy of discipline through corporal punishment. Once Christian missionary schooling was introduced in Nigeria in the mid-nineteenth century, corporal punishment was used in both mission and state schools. The limited literature on the topic maintains that beatings and corporal punishment were less common in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa prior to the colonial period (Emy 1972: 128–35; see Sulaiman 2012). Although beatings did take place, they were often inflicted by other family members or as part of initiation practices (La Fontaine 1986: 98).

Within both mission and state schools, physical punishment was central to the civilizing mission of British colonial educational policy and colonial modernity, in which physical punishment became associated with being civilized and modern. Consequently, those who beat children came to be seen as civilized while those who did not were "backward" (Last 2000: 359–86).[21] "Legitimacy accrued to beating primarily by virtue of it being a particularly European practice" (ibid.: 362; see Pierce 2001). By sending Patience back to Nigeria, Mary actively bypassed British legislation and assumed a position of moral superiority vis-à-vis the UK, yet she also affirmed disciplinary practices rooted in a colonial modernity, which she felt were central to the making of a good child. She associated these practices with greater legitimacy since she drew on nostalgic representations of Victorian childrearing strategies and reworked historically sedimented practices to suit her current, immediate needs.

Despite Mary's strong and clear ideas about appropriate childrearing practices and the use of physical punishment to teach desired behavior, she readily admitted that she did not have the time to socialize Patience accordingly: "The school in effect is doing what I should have been doing.… They are doing it. Allowing me to have the easy part of it." As part of its relationship with fee-paying clients, the elite school Patience attends in Nigeria takes the lead in working to change Patience into a disciplined, well-mannered child through a time-tabled rigor of daily routines, a regime of punctuality, academic achievement, and an abiding appreciation for education. As the school takes on a full-time role in this project of transformation, Patience feels compelled to become a

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[21] The non-Muslim Hausa generally do not beat their children, who are likened to visitors and are part of a spirit world. In a situation of high infant mortality, parents need to encourage their children to stay: a departure is equated with death and return to that spirit world (Last 2000: 368; Gottlieb 1998; 2004; Okri 1991).

good subject and manage the range of emotions that schooling in Nigeria evokes.

Through processes of subjectification and self-formation (Foucault 1977) people actively turn themselves into subjects. Following Foucault's three modes of objectification of the subject, the third and most significant, subjectification, highlights the practices and techniques that are central to the process of self-formation. As children self-govern and self-regulate, they become particular types of subjects. In Patience's case this process involves a range of disciplinary measures enforced by teachers, relatives, parents, peers, and the children themselves. Patience is actively engaged in self-making, and is also being made through culturally specific regimes of family- and school-based discipline, punishment, and training (see Mahmood 2005). She describes in detail the regimented routine and the importance of obedience in the boarding school's culture. "You are in Nigeria. We have a certain time to do certain things.... I had to be ready to just be that orderly person. It was very hard."[22] Patience had to perform the role of an obedient and well-mannered young woman, negating feelings of distress and anxiety. She described the feelings of loss and emotional breakdown she experienced when her mother placed her in the school and left her for the first time.

Sitting in her living room in a South London suburb, having undergone a "successful" transformation, Patience claims to be much happier now, preferring "the person I am now to the person I was before." Yet, even now, at home on holiday, her feelings of loss and incompleteness return when she ponders the prospect of going back to school in Lagos. Subjected to the "disciplinary power of uncertainty" (Roberts-Holmes and Bradbury 2016: 604) that distinguishes neoliberal subjectivities, Patience is engaged in a continual process of self-improvement and self-formation: "I just don't want to leave my family. I feel like this all the time, every time I go back. Every time I go, pieces of me will just … any time I am walking through the gate at the airport, pieces are just dropped, they are just left behind.... I have nothing. I don't have anybody around me anymore. I hate going back. But when I get there, it will all change."

As Patience leaves her family to return to school she loses pieces of herself, pieces that she must, through a labored performance, work to replace and transform in her boarding school environment. As she moves from one place to the other—from home, to the airport lounge, the airplane, the chauffeured car in Lagos, and finally to the confines of the school—she struggles to locate and (re)place herself in these diverse settings. Over time Patience draws on and generates diverse translocal subjectivities informed by a range of emotional states, as well as a range of geographic spaces. "Nigeria has

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[22] All quotations from Patience are from a May 2012, interview at her London home.

changed me, it really has.… Even though I don't want to admit it sometimes, but it has helped me. I am a better person." When Patience moves from London to Lagos, the "calm" atmosphere of the school and its surroundings makes her feel as if she is back in the UK. Her movement from London to the enclosed, bubble-like world of the elite school, with its green courtyard and strutting peacocks, locked in by firmly guarded iron gates, as well as the relations in both places, are central features of her transformation. Here, geographic and temporal mobility is central to the emergence of Patience's varied translocal subjectivities.

### SOCIAL POSITIONING AND THE PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED SUBJECTS

The transformative power of mobility in fashioning privileged subjects is captured in the following accounts of the Olaju family.[23] They live in one of the commuter towns to the northwest of London. Rose and Ola, the parents, sent their elder daughters, Bola, Tolu, and Ayo, back to Nigeria for a number of years and plan to send their youngest daughter Kemi in a few years. Twenty-one years ago they lived in Peckham, a part of South London notorious for high crime levels, and they decided at the time that they would send their children to school in Nigeria before secondary school. Their case differs from that of Patience's family in the sense that education in Nigeria is a part of this family's normal practice. All their girls knew from a young age that they would be sent to Nigeria, and unlike Patience, they had little choice in the matter. Ola was keen to convey that if things did not work out for the girls they could always return: "It's not do or die. We can always bring them back." In the interview it seemed that this was as much a comfort to the parents as to the girls. However, Rose and Ola felt strongly that because they both worked they were in no position to instill the necessary respect, morals, and cultural dispositions in their daughters or protect them from "the thieves [and] bad habits" in the area.

Much of the literature on parents' motivations for sending children to their home countries for education, in addition to highlighting the import of affirming cultural heritage, stresses the perceived need to discipline children and protect them from urban cultures of danger and immorality (Bledsoe and Sow 2011; Mazzucato and Schans 2011; Qureshi 2014). Nigerian parents refer to the crime and troubles that plague children living and attending school in deprived parts of inner city London, such as Peckham, and they highlight the "relationships between ethnicity, poverty and space" (Hall 2015: 26) that exist in the urban landscape.

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[23]  All quotations from the Olaju family are from May and June 2012 interviews at their London home.

Rose describes Peckham—known as "Little Lagos" because of the many Nigerians who live there (Barber 2013: 168)—as one of the worst places to bring up children. Drawing on the familiar trope of urban decay and moral collapse, Ola recounts how some friends who chose not to send their children to Nigeria once returned home from work to find the police at their house, and guns under their children's beds, features of the violent landscape that, from his perspective, exemplify poorer parts of London. Moving to the more prosperous surrounds of suburban London was a first step in protecting their children from the dark underbelly of urban life, and getting them a good education was the second. Both Ola and Rose emphasize the importance of education as a sign of social status: "In Nigeria, it is something you have to do if you don't want to be looked down upon. You need to go to school; you need to go to university. If not, you get looked down upon by everybody, because you are more or less like a downtrodden person, somebody not to be reckoned with."

Rose and Ola work hard to position their daughters in an environment in which they will develop the cultural dispositions, skills, transnational orientations, and networks necessary to succeed in a changing, global political economy. Such cultural dispositions and transnational orientations, ideally, encourage those who have been educated in Nigeria to adopt a global outlook. For instance, Bola maintains, "I would go to Nigeria again. Anywhere.… I mean there was a point when I was thinking of going to China for a bit. To work. Yeah. I would go where the money is. And I definitely think that [being in Nigeria] did help." Given rising levels of economic precarity and enhanced competition for social mobility, "network building" (Portes and Walton 1981: 60) with elite Nigerians both in Nigeria and in the UK is ever more necessary to the (re)production of middle-class, neoliberal subjectivities. The girls and other informants talked about new friendships they had formed with Nigerian girls and other British Nigerian girls who had been sent to Nigeria for education and were now back in the UK.

Similarly, Rose and Ola held strong ideas, rooted in a diasporic imaginary (Berg 2009: 267), about the need for their daughters to learn about struggle while at school in Nigeria. They were keen to ensure that the girls were never complacent about their privileged lives and the material comforts they enjoyed in the UK. A return to Nigeria would, it was hoped, expose them to having to struggle but also serve as an act of social positioning. Yet, there is a clear discrepancy between what they felt their daughters would achieve in Nigeria and what their daughters thought they had learned. The following interview extract illustrates this:

Katrin: And then, maybe you two [the two older daughters, twenty-one and nineteen] can respond to that … when you are in Lagos and you get into the gates of the boarding school, there is a very big sense that it's a very good school. It's very clean, it's very tidy. In Nigeria, being part of [that school] you actually get a sense that you are privileged.

Daughter 1: I would say absolutely!

Daughter 2: I agree!

Daughter 1: And I know where they [their parents] are coming from in terms of, "Ok, you see these kids, you know, hawking…," but it's actually not. The school they sent us to, it did make us feel bigger. It's a school full of snobs if I can be frank! And if you go to a school where your friend is the daughter of a senator and you are going to their house and they have swimming pool-s—you know, plural!—and huge houses and we are in these air conditioned cars and we are driven by drivers … half of the time this whole thing of seeing those kids [poor children hawking in the streets of Lagos]: you are not looking outside the window! You are sleeping because you are in this really cushiony air conditioned car…. The idea of "don't be complacent because, you know, it costs money to pay for electricity and water" … but we were at a school where as soon as the power cuts, the generator is on…. And there are no times when there is no water. I can count on my hand how many times something happened that went wrong and there was no water.[24]

In trying to make sense of their Nigerian schooling experience, the girls rely on oft-repeated narratives to guide them, finding comfort in their familiarity. Confirming Patience's account of life in a boarding school in Lagos as distinct and separate from the experience of ordinary Nigerians, Bola likens the school to Eton, describing the wealth of the Nigerian girls who attended: many had several swimming pools and air conditioned, chauffeured cars and took annual holidays to Europe. In the fashioning of new translocal subjectivities, Bola and her sisters are immersed in a space occupied largely by the Nigerian privileged elite, which is considerably more affluent than the one they inhabit in suburban London. Within this space, Bola and her sisters participate, albeit temporarily, in a world of wealth and privilege. Their social position as elites is generated and affirmed within the space of their Nigerian boarding school.

Bola was initially blind to the poverty of Nigeria, and in a direct challenge to her parents' views, she maintains, "I think it's here [in the UK] that we have learned … about struggle. It wasn't until I got back here that I started to see things." This statement speaks to the relatively moderate living conditions of many Nigerian migrants in London and some of those involved in this research, as well as to the disparities in wealth and extremes of poverty and hardship that many face. It took Bola four years, when she had returned to Nigeria for a holiday, to realize that poverty was a central feature of the Nigerian landscape as well. "But because of the situation I was in [at boarding school] I was never gonna see it!" Her parents had expected that life in Nigeria would make their children value the material comforts they had in the UK. However, Bola associates struggle and poverty with life in London, and opulence and comfort with her life in Nigeria. This highlights the changing nature of global geographies of power, in which British-Nigerians, in a form of prestige migration, are immersed in a world of wealth and material comfort in their elite Nigerian

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[24] Family interview, London, 21 Aug. 2012.

boarding school. As they embrace their translocal subjectivities, their sense of national belonging becomes more fluid. Tolu described her own situation: "I don't really have ties anywhere. I don't really feel I am fully Nigerian, I don't feel I am British, I just … you know? I don't think nationality is really my … it's not a big deal to me because I have had it both ways and either place I fit in properly."

Nonetheless, the girls still affirm their Britishness in Nigeria. Surrounded by wealth and privilege in the hidden confines of boarding school life, they are accorded status because of their Britishness, a key attribute in the development of elite networks. The girls also "keep their options open" by drawing on the symbolic and cultural capital of their Britishness in Nigeria and converting it into social capital in the form of extensive networks, and economic capital in terms of university prospects and future jobs once they are back in the UK (see Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 12).[25] And yet, some children return from Nigeria bitter and angry about the experience, as in Joseph's case, to which we now turn.

### RESISTANCE AND THE MAKING OF VULNERABLE SUBJECTS

Although many children are given a choice as to whether to go to school in Nigeria, some, positioned as pawns, are forced to go. In fact, they are highly mobile precisely because they adhere to adults' authority and reluctantly follow their dictates (see Olwig 2012: 936). Joseph was born and brought up in South London in a small Victorian house. Although his mother was not so well off as the families of Patience and the Olaju daughters, she was comfortable enough to be able to send him to Nigeria for secondary schooling from his thirteenth to eighteenth years. Unlike the girls, Joseph did not return for visits to Britain during school holidays because his mother could not afford regular return trips, nor did she visit him in Nigeria. This no doubt contributed to his feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and negativity.

He is now in London, living on his own, although one of his brothers occasionally stays at the house with him. He studies art and fashion at a local college and works at a clothing shop. Unlike the other interlocutors, Joseph's account about this time in Nigeria is particularly bitter, because his mother died just before his return to London. Consequently, despite having four siblings in London, all of whom are married, he feels very much on his own and conveys a sense of disappointment in people generally. During the interview, as well as having a headache and feeling under the weather, Joseph gave the impression he was irritated by the questions, no doubt because they evoked

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[25] One young woman who had been sent back commented that the more elite schools in Nigeria often have a non-Nigerian principal. "The parents see that the schools here are actually better, so if someone from here goes there, he's gonna bring that mentality that is in the UK to Nigeria" (see Nyamnjoh 2012: 139).

painful and unpleasant memories. At times he paused and hung his head, exposing a profound vulnerability.

Joseph claimed to have trusted his mother's decision to send him to Nigeria, and confirmed that he was "misbehaving.… I wasn't doing well in school," yet his sense of abandonment was silently conveyed through his body language and frequent pauses in his accounts of life in Nigeria. Yet, to make sense of his mother's decision, Joseph claimed that he had been difficult and that his mother had no choice but to send him to Lagos against his will. "I wasn't acting up to my mum's standards. I was getting in a lot of trouble." In this sense, he was very different from his siblings. As well as misbehaving at home, which caused ongoing conflict between himself and his mother, Joseph was excluded from school. The friends and sisters of boys who had been sent to Nigeria for education maintained that boys had more unpleasant and traumatizing experiences in Nigeria than did their female counterparts. They were treated more harshly than the girls, partly because they had often been "in trouble" in London before being sent to Nigeria, and had often been sent against their will. His mother, a single parent, clearly could not cope with his behavior, and so she decided to take him to Nigeria.

When Joseph's mother told him that he was going to go to school in Nigeria, he was shocked, as he conveyed in a state of disbelief: "I didn't believe her until I proper got put into the school, the boarding school. So, I didn't proper believe it. I thought it was just a joke to try to scare me.… She just left me there." It is common for parents to threaten to send children back to their home countries without ever actually doing so, instilling fear as a way to address disciplinary issues (Orellana et al. 2001: 583; see Ellis 1978: 49). Yet, his mother clearly was unsure of her decision, underscoring the sense of uncertainty that many parents feel in making such decisions: "My mum called me every week … sometimes twice a week … she was very worried about me all the time. You can imagine leaving your own last-born child in another country. It's hard."

Despite understanding his mother's motivations, Joseph was reluctant to think about his time in Nigeria: "I don't really want to think about it because when I start to think about it, I will start getting upset. Don't want to think about it at all.… I just keep it to myself." Similarly to the other interviewees, though, his time in Nigeria instilled in him a strong sense of discipline, hard work, and respect for his elders: "If you don't learn them you get forced to learn them. You get hit or you get punished.… You just have to obey, you don't have the choice.… If you don't work, if you're lazy, if you're rude, whatever you do that's bad, if you do it over there, they will beat you with a stick called a cane. Or some big cord.… You have to respect your elders. That is the first rule."

Likening his punishment to a form of abuse, Joseph sighed, conveying a sense of fatigue and resignation. As he was subjected to the school's authority

as well as that of his mother, he felt there was no space for resistance (see Gardner 2012: 898). Yet, by negating his experiences of life in Nigeria, expressed through his reluctance to think and talk about his time spent there, he gave the impression of resisting through his strategic use of memory (Foucault 1977).

In this sense, Joseph's experiences clearly highlight the way in which these projects of transformation, in which children are sent back for schooling in order to experience Nigerian socialization practices and to develop good, neoliberal subjectivities, are rarely seamless and, in some cases, are extremely difficult. Apprehensive about the potential negative side effects of sending their children to Nigeria, some parents choose to keep them at home, thinking they will fare better in the UK. Alternatively, they compromise and visit Nigeria on a regular basis with their children. Joseph maintained that he would never send his own children there: "I don't wanna keep in touch with nobody from Nigeria! I want to move on because I don't want to think about it.… I don't want to talk to anyone from Nigeria. I am done with that. I have suffered enough." Joseph's negation of his time spent in Nigeria as well as all things Nigerian, compared to Patience's active involvement in the decision to send her to Nigeria and her experience of positive transformation, demonstrates the importance of choice and negotiation in decisions to send children back to the home country. Joseph associated mobility and Nigeria with trauma and loss. His feelings of abandonment and loneliness were compounded because his mother passed away: "My life is hard. My life is not easy.… So, I am just surviving, just on my own."

Some of the children who are sent back to their parents' home countries are seen by their parents or relatives to be unruly, ill mannered, and lacking in discipline (see Orellana et al. 2001) and valued cultural dispositions. Others are presented as fragile subjects who are vulnerable to the culture of danger that defines the neighborhoods and wider urban settings in which they live, with their drugs, racism, gang culture, violence, sexual license, truancy, educational failure, and so forth. Yet, though Joseph's unruly behavior was beaten out of him, he returned to the UK haunted by a vulnerability born of his Nigerian experience and the loss of his mother. His experience not only confirmed his fear and apprehension regarding life in Nigeria, impressions that were initially generated by the media, but it also left him with a tangible hatred of and deep anxiety toward the country and the region, and indeed a mistrust of people generally. Still, his plans to continue studying and to combine business with art highlight the sense of focus and ambition that he now possesses.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In highlighting the transnational nature of British Nigerians' lives, we must be attentive to the relationship between "historical experience, structural conditions,"

and the cultural and social milieu that these people move between, in this case between Nigeria and the UK (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 8). African elites have a long history of sending their children to the UK for education. Similarly, some first- and second-generation British Nigerians' parents were sent to boarding school in Nigeria while they lived there in their youth. The decision to send children back to Nigeria for education must be understood within the larger structural context of global capitalism, as well as in relation to the cultural and ideological circumstances of the UK and Nigeria, respectively.

We have argued that the choice to send the children and the practices and performances this choice entails on the part of the children do a number of different things. They serve to disturb and contest taken-for-granted notions about education in Nigeria that are rooted in global geographies of power, while also generating counter-narratives about Nigerian education, society, and economy. In addition, analysis of this movement problematizes assumptions, and extends our thinking, about spatial and temporal configurations of progress and modernity in relation to educational migration. It does this in two key respects: First, it provincializes the UK and forces us to rethink "the center" and resituate it "in its complex web of colonial interconnections" (Nash 2002: 222) and in the new geography of centrality of global cities that underpins neoliberal globalization. Second, it compels us to question analytical distinctions between mobile professionals and transnational elites, and migrants and diasporans. British Nigerians are members of both of these categories and make their choices about where to educate their children within an international education marketplace.

Moreover, Nigeria takes on a transformative capacity: circular mobility between London and Lagos generates new and translocal subjectivities. The process involves engaging in a project of the self by dismantling parts of the self—a central aspect of the process of self-making—and also by being remade as one develops particular cultural dispositions and skills. Some British Nigerian parents endeavor to turn their children into good subjects: they seek to rescue them from an educational, social, and moral quagmire and to equip them with the training, discipline, independence, and cultural dispositions and knowledge they feel they can more readily attain in Nigeria. This is not just a moral and cultural project. It is also an act of social positioning, an incremental process through which children are fashioned into neoliberal subjects—independent, autonomous, competitive, ambitious, self-regulating, self-inventive, and so forth—in the (re)production of middle-class subjectivities and the pursuit of successful futures in the UK, Nigeria, and elsewhere. The children are socialized to possess values and skills that will allow them to move and operate at ease within a number of different settings (see Coe and Shani 2015: 563).

We have seen that this process is, above all, a collective endeavor that demands compliance and a degree of willingness on the part of the child (Joseph being a striking exception). Children are used as a symbolic space

where concerns and unease about British society and the educational system can be addressed: the relationship of Nigerian migrants with Britain is a contradictory one that highlights their "ambivalent situatedness" (Arndt 2009: 107–8). They make choices within an international, educational market place, travelling back and forth between London and Lagos, affirming and cultivating networks, and pursuing social and material objectives in both countries. At the same time, they draw on disciplinary practices rooted in the civilizing mission of British colonial modernity. Just as the Olu girls are accorded status in Nigeria because of their Britishness, in a similar vein education in Nigeria remains rooted in an epistemological hierarchy in which European knowledge, values, and educational practices and systems are privileged over indigenous ones (Nyamnjoh 2012: 129). Consequently, the choice to send one's children to school in Nigeria, while it challenges global geographies of power, also illuminates the continued relevance of the colonial educational legacy. That legacy, with its disciplinary strategies and epistemological hierarchies, remains, in turn, part of the project of modernity itself.

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Abstract:  West Africans have a long history of investing in their children's education by sending them to Britain. Yet, some young British-Nigerians are being sent to Nigeria for secondary education, going against a long historical grain. The movement of children from London to Nigeria is about the making of good subjects who possess particular cultural dispositions and behave in such a manner as to ensure educational success and the reproduction of middle-class subjectivities within neoliberal globalization. We maintain that this movement highlights the way in which global geographies of power—rooted in a colony-metropole divide—are being challenged and reconfigured, serving to provincialize the UK, through the educational choices that Nigerian parents make for their children. Such small acts disrupt imagined geographies and particular spatial and temporal configurations of progress and modernity, in which former colonial subjects have traveled to the metropole for education, while generating counter-narratives about Nigerian education, society, and economy. Yet, the methods used to instill new dispositions and habits in the contemporary Nigerian educational context are informed by the British educational colonial legacy of discipline through corporal punishment—physical punishment was central to the civilizing mission of British colonial educational policy. Consequently, the choice to send children to school in Nigeria and other African countries both challenges global geographies of power and illuminates the continued relevance of the colonial educational legacy and its disciplinary strategies, which are, in turn, part of the broader project of modernity itself.

Key words: West Africa, Nigeria, migration, transnationalism, global geographies, children, education, United Kingdom, middle-class subjectivities, neoliberalism