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Introduction

A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what country, class or creed, the other may belong.

—The Fourth Scout Law

ON 25 FEBRUARY 2001 approximately ten thousand Scouts from around the world met in Nyeri, Kenya, at the tomb of Lord Robert Baden-Powell to honor him as the founder of the international Scout movement. From 1939 until his death in 1941, Baden-Powell lived out his waning years in a small cottage he named Paxtu at the base of Mount Kenya. Although Britain reserved a spot for him in Westminster Abbey, his will insisted that he be buried in Kenya. The government of Kenya intended its Founder's Day celebrations to be a national showcase to demonstrate its efficiency and stature in the international Scout movement, but the then State Minister Julius Sunkuli had to contend with a proposal by the South African Scout Association to exhume the founder and rebury him at Mafeking in South Africa, the site of his greatest military victory. The South Africans argued that the Kenyan authorities had allowed the tombstones of Baden-Powell and his wife, Olave, to collapse and become overgrown with grass and weeds. Equally troubling, a five-acre plot on the site that the Kenyan government had set aside for an international Scouting conference and camping center had been "grabbed" by anonymous, but politically connected, individuals.

Baden-Powell's grave in Nyeri is one of the three most important centers of the international Scout movement, along with Mafeking and Gilwell Park in Great Britain. Expecting tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of the roughly thirty million registered Scouts from around the world to make a pilgrimage to the site during the movement's centennial

in 2007, the Kenyan authorities moved quickly to fend off the South African challenge. Baden-Powell's gravesite and cottage at Paxtu have been restored with funds provided by a local Coca-Cola bottler. The local Nyeri Scout association has undertaken responsibility for improving the town's visitor accommodations, and the new National Rainbow Coalition government that came to power in December 2002 will most certainly move to retrieve the land set aside for the international Scouting center.¹

At first glance it seems odd that an institution like Scouting, which has its origins in the colonial past, would enjoy so much prestige in modern Kenya. Although Baden-Powell created the movement for British, rather than African, boys, colonial officials, missionaries, and educators introduced Scouting to Africa to discipline younger generations of Africans. African boys became Scouts for a variety of reasons during the colonial era. Jeremiah Nyagah and J. G. Kiano, both cabinet ministers in independent Kenya, credit Scouting with teaching them self-reliance, integrity, and political skills. The late Kiraithe Nyaga, director of the Africa Regional Office of the World Scout Bureau until his death in a plane crash in 2000, enjoyed the prestige associated with the movement.² None of them paid much attention to the reality that the colonial regime sponsored Scouting to promote social stability and loyalty to the British Empire. In 1955, Governor Sir Evelyn Baring singled out the movement as a solution to the Mau Mau Emergency in particular and anticolonial nationalism in general: "In Kenya today scouting has a most important role to play. In one part of the country many young Africans had come under the influence of what was really a totalitarian movement. . . . an attempt must be made to encourage them to grow up each with a personality which will resist a second movement that might attempt to overwhelm their powers of individual judgment. For this reason scouting will play an enormous part in training the African school boy not only in basic education, but also in the art of citizenship. It is designed to provide just that training which is not necessarily learnt in the . . . school-room."³

Baring's faith in Scouting's ability to shape the "character" of its members is not borne out in the recollections of individual African Scouts from that period. Although Kiraithe Nyaga was an enthusiastic and committed Scout, he also willingly and secretly supported the Mau Mau fighters who caused the Kenyan governor so much worry. British officials hoped the Scout Law's affirmation that a Scout was loyal would convince African boys to support the colonial regime. Yet African Scouts had little difficulty separating their commitment to the movement with their distaste for the discriminatory realities of colonialism. Matthew Kipoin

hated serving in the King's African Rifles but as a boy appreciated Scouting's prestige and discipline.⁴ Even more problematic from the standpoint of the colonial authorities were the members of Scout troops sponsored by independent African schools and churches and the outright impostors who wore illegally acquired Scout uniforms to trade upon the respectability of the movement.

Yet it was Scouting's vulnerability to appropriation by local actors that has allowed it to thrive in postcolonial Africa. The European Scout authorities were bitter enemies of African nationalism, but the Africans who took control of the colonial Scout associations after the transfer of power easily transformed Scouting into an explicitly nationalist institution. Teachers, parents, and boys throughout the continent value Scouting because it still teaches the same values of integrity, discipline, and self-reliance that made the movement so popular under the British. Now, however, Scouting promotes loyalty to independent nation-states rather than a foreign colonial regime. This explains why the modern Kenyan government values the movement and viewed the South African attempts to exhume and rebury Baden-Powell as a serious threat.

SCOUTING AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL

The contradictions between official Scouting and the experiences of individual African Scouts expose the fractures in the paternalistic institutions of authority and legitimacy that sustained the colonial enterprise. To British eyes Scouting appeared ideally suited to the task of disciplining educated Africans like Nyaga and Kipoin. Conceived by Gen. Sir Robert Baden-Powell (later Baron Baden-Powell of Gilwell) to reduce Edwardian class tensions and improve the quality of potential military recruits, Scouting evolved into a international youth movement that offered a romantic program of outdoor life as a cure for social disruption caused by industrialization and urbanization. Baden-Powell promised Scouting would remedy declining physical and moral fitness and juvenile delinquency by providing a healthy outlet for youthful rebellion. The Scout movement won governmental support by echoing dominant social values and teaching patriotism and service. Although Scouting captured the imagination of boys around the world, its global spread was due primarily to its success in attaching itself to the institutions of political and social authority.

British administrators, educators, missionaries, and social welfare experts transplanted Scouting to Africa as part of the process of socialization

and social control that introduced Africans to Western values and material culture. In essence, they sought to create reliable African functionaries who would assist in the colonial enterprise. The movement held that a Scout was trustworthy, loyal, obedient, and self-reliant. These are relatively universal values, but British authorities interpreted this core Scout canon to mean that African Scouts must be loyal to the colonial regime and its African allies. They worried that Western education fostered social instability by teaching African students to expect political and social equality and question the values and authority of their elders. Colonial youth experts saw the movement as an instrument of “retribalization” that encouraged young Africans to accept their place in colonial society. Working with Scout officials, they sought to reduce generational tensions and promote politically safe conceptions of adolescence and docile masculinity. Scouting never became a mass movement in anglophone Africa, but it targeted the secondary school graduates, juvenile delinquents, and young urban migrants that constituted the greatest threat to the security of the colonial regime.

Yet colonial Scouting proved to be an ineffective instrument of social control. African Scouts embraced the movement because they considered it entertaining, progressive, and useful, but they had their own ideas of what it meant to be loyal and disciplined. It seems that very few of them gave their unqualified allegiance to the British Crown. Membership conferred sophistication, social status, and legitimacy, and demonstrated a mastery of Western cultural norms. Neighbors in Kiraithe Nyaga’s Meru community believed that Scouts were mysterious people whose woodcraft skills allowed them to read secret signs. However, the Scouts’ “special knowledge” also included a greater understanding of the inner workings of the colonial regime. Uniformed Meru Scouts traveled on specially discounted rail tickets, mixed easily with the police, and appeared to cross institutional racial barriers with relative ease.⁵

Most important, African Scouts and their communities embraced the movement to claim the rights of full citizenship in colonial society. They used the Fourth Scout Law, which declared that a Scout was a brother to every other Scout, to challenge racial discrimination under what was known as the color bar. African independent churches and schools created unauthorized scout troops to appropriate colonial symbols of authority and legitimacy. Rather than papering over the contradictions of colonialism, Scouting offered Africans another means of contesting their subordinate social status. In anglophone Africa, therefore, Scouting was thus both an instrument of colonial authority and a subversive challenge to the legitimacy of the empire.

Scouting became a nearly universal global institution because its core conservative values are sufficiently adaptable to support the established political order in nations around the world. The movement is thus a useful analytical tool for exploring the tensions and fissures in a given society. The strength of official Scouting, as represented by national Scout associations, depends on an alliance with established institutions of legitimacy and authority. Scout officials invariably interpret the Scout canon to reflect prevailing norms and values and rarely, if ever, push the boundaries of social conformity. Conversely, unofficial local interpretations of Scouting have the capacity to express opposition to the dominant social order.

National Scout associations usually prevail in the struggle to define Scout orthodoxy for as long as their alliance with political authority remains in tact. They face problems when the political and social terrain shifts before official Scouting, which tends to be highly conservative, has time to react. In such cases Scout authorities have found themselves embroiled in controversies ranging from the civil rights struggle in the segregated American South, nationalist resistance movements in India and late-colonial Africa, and the debate over gay rights in the contemporary United States. Thus, an analysis of the struggle between colonial authority and African independency to define the “true” nature of Scouting has broad comparative applications. The colonial African Scouting case study provides a guide to map the divisions in any given society that supports a Scout movement.

No society is monolithic and inherently stable, and the tensions surrounding Scouting expose common points of friction generated by unequal relationships of class, gender, and often race and ethnicity. Colonial society in anglophone Africa, however, was particularly fragile and fragmentary. Originating from the autocratic, and often violent, suppression and co-option of local political and social institutions, the colonial regime attempted to transform the African majority into a permanent underclass on the basis of their supposed cultural inferiority. Scouting in this context exposes the efforts of Africans to imagine alternatives to established institutions of political authority, schooling, masculinity, and generational authority that threatened to shatter the brittle colonial social order.

The primary actors in this story are European colonial officials, teachers, and Scoutmasters, and individual African Scouts and Scoutmasters and their local communities. The African group was divided into official and unofficial Scouts. Scouting could be an elite movement based at secondary schools, part of educational experiments in reconciling Western schooling with “native tradition,” a social welfare tool for community development,

or a grassroots African expression of autonomy and anticolonial resistance. Although formal African Scouts usually belonged to troops sponsored by mission schools, they often used the egalitarianism of the movement to contest Britain's imperial agenda by imagining a more open and inclusive colonial order. Unofficial scouts were largely outside direct colonial control and embraced the movement for a variety of reasons. Some treated Scouting as a business or confidence scheme to enrich themselves, while others reinterpreted the movement to mount a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the colonial regime. This struggle between formal and informal Scouting for control of the movement throws light on the tenuous shape and character of colonial society by exposing larger conflicts over social reproduction and political legitimacy.

GOVERNING THE AFRICAN MAJORITY

Scouting both facilitated and complicated colonial rule. The men who governed Britain's African empire believed Scouting was a useful tool of "native" administration. They had ambitious plans to develop it into a mass movement that would give African youth a greater stake in the colonial enterprise. The short-lived technological and military advantages that allowed Europeans to carve out African empires in the late nineteenth century obscure the relative weakness of the resulting colonial states. British officials worked tirelessly to win at least the tacit support of the subject majority, but ultimately the viability of colonial rule depended on the threat of coercive violence. This "dominance without hegemony," as Ranajit Guha puts it, meant that the colonial authorities could not govern through "universal practices and norms," as they did in metropolitan Britain.⁶ Scouting was part of a broader strategy—which included education and Christian evangelism—to win local allies and introduce these Western values into local African communities.

Great Britain became an African power in the late nineteenth century in response to specific economic, strategic, and domestic social needs. The relative ease and rapidity with which it acquired sovereignty over large expanses of territory under the "new imperialism" meant that British politicians, missionaries, businessmen, and adventurers gave little thought as to how they would govern millions of new African subjects. With most colonies and protectorates acquired on the basis of speculation rather than tangible and immediate value, the British treasury insisted that the new territories strive for economic self-sufficiency lest

they become a burden on the metropolitan taxpayer. As a result, British colonial policy was largely pragmatic and adaptive.

Territorial governments lacked the financial resources and manpower to govern their African subjects directly. They had to weigh the potential returns of remaking African economies to serve Western commercial interests against the danger of provoking widespread unrest if their intervention was too rapid or unduly invasive. Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale have shown how the colonial state had to balance the demands of metropolitan and settler capitalist interests to mobilize labor and restructure local production with the necessity of maintaining rural stability. Mahmood Mamdani argues that these realities produced a “bifurcated state” where the civil power governed urban areas directly but relied on “tribal authorities” to extend its influence into rural areas. Labeling this system of “native” administration “decentralized despotism,” Mamdani rightly makes a distinction between the handful of urban “civilized” Africans who enjoyed the privileges of citizenship and the African majority who became “tribal” subjects.⁷

To be sure, colonialism was authoritarian, exploitive, and often brutal, but it also had its limits. The “thin white line” of the colonial administrative service, to use Anthony Kirk-Greene’s term, relied on African intermediaries to govern the countryside. In theory, under the philosophy of “indirect rule” Britain’s local administrative partners were “native rulers” who commanded obedience on the basis of their “traditional” status and prerogatives in precolonial times. In practice, these chiefs and headmen derived their authority largely from their participation in the colonial system. In addition to being inexpensive, indirect rule also allowed colonial authorities to claim a measure of legitimacy by posing as African rulers. In the countryside, the colonial regime governed by codifying local traditions and fixing the authority of male elders over women and younger men. The legitimizing ideology of indirect rule therefore had an additional consequence of making the British the self-styled guardians of “native custom,” but their interpretation of what constituted African tradition proved highly pragmatic and flexible.⁸

The colonial regime was never powerful enough to simply impose invented customs on unwilling local communities. Indirect rule therefore created opportunities for individuals who depicted themselves successfully as the arbiters of tradition. British colonial doctrine held that every African belonged to a “tribe” and that customary “native law” governed every aspect of a person’s political and social life. In other words, British colonial experts believed African identity was corporate rather than individual. In

theory, these “tribal” identities were primordial and encapsulated the customary laws that empowered the colonial regime’s rural allies. Colonial chiefs and headmen combined judicial, legislative, executive, and administrative power in their narrow parishes, and British officials cited “native tradition” to excuse their despotic behavior. Under the realities of indirect rule, “tribes” rather than people had rights.

Yet the legitimizing ideologies that reconciled Britain’s despotic seizure of an African empire with its commitment to humanitarianism and liberal democracy at home placed limits on the authority of the colonial state and its local African allies. Britain needed to depict Africans as primitive to alleviate the guilt of colonial rule. As the chief architect of indirect rule, Frederick Lugard, later Baron Lugard, argued that Britain had a “dual mandate” to foster the material and moral benefit of “backward” peoples while simultaneously exploiting the economic potential of the colonies.⁹ In practice, this meant that the colonial governments had to at least appear to show concern for African social welfare and development to demonstrate that they were a paternalistic rather than an opportunistic foreign power. To lend credence to Lugard’s highly unrealistic blending of altruism with self-interest, they tried to silence African and metropolitan critics of colonialism by claiming to govern in the best interests of the subject majority. Ideally, this meant allowing “tribal” societies to develop at their own pace.

In reality, the necessity of catering to metropolitan commercial interests, coupled with the fiscal priorities of the territorial governments, significantly undermined the ability of colonial officials to pose as paternalistic custodians of “primitive” peoples. The presence of small but politically influential communities of Europeans in eastern, central, and southern Africa made it impossible to treat Africans as anything more than subjects and “protected persons.” Colonial governments in these regions encouraged Western settlement on the assumption that local Europeans would provide a more solid base for agricultural and commercial development than the African farmers and pastoralists, who resisted integration into the colonial economy on subordinate terms. Colonial officials also hoped that these “islands of white” would bring permanence and stability to British rule in Africa.¹⁰

The settlers invariably forced their needs ahead of African interests. They refused to consider any form of African political participation and protected their dominant social position through rigid racial segregation. In dismissing the qualifications of educated Africans an administrator in Tanganyika sneered, “Does anyone who sees the Europeanised

African believe him to be genuine? Too often he seems only a caricature of a European and an insult to his own race.”¹¹ This racial discrimination exposed the inconsistency of colonial social policy. Although British officials invoked enlightened paternalism to legitimize the colonial regime, there were solid, if not always clear, barriers that prevented Africans from becoming equal partners within the empire.

Britain’s reliance on skilled and semiskilled Africans to reduce the cost of developing its African possessions further complicated the dual mandate. Lacking the financial resources to employ large amounts of European manpower, territorial governments, European businessmen, and even racially minded settlers relied on a small class of educated but poorly paid Africans for administrative, coercive, technical, and commercial assistance. As “native labor” expert W. Ormsby-Gore explained, “The economic development of tropical Africa calls increasingly for Africans to man the railways, the motor lorries, to build, to carpenter, and to do a thousand things which are familiar to us and quite new and strange to the African.”¹² “Native tradition” was of little use in training African clerks, interpreters, catechists, soldiers, policemen, prison wardens, agricultural demonstrators, medical assistants, artisans, and the like. The forced economy of colonialism led British officials to delegate the responsibility for training these essential African auxiliaries to the Christian missions. Mission schooling followed a “moral” Western curriculum, thereby providing proof that Britain was fulfilling its humanitarian obligations in Africa.

Yet the Western liberal arts curriculum almost always proved incompatible with “native tradition.” Mission educators, particularly in the early days of British rule, believed in an ideal of “liberal individualism and universal citizenship” that complicated the colonial regime’s intention to accord Africans only communal, rather than individual, rights. Although they were partners in the colonial enterprise, missionaries had their own evangelical agenda that placed a heavy emphasis on literacy and the diffusion of Western religious and secular values. As what Julian Huxley termed the “de facto Third Estate” in most territories, the missions often brushed aside official concerns about the destabilizing consequences of their educational policies. British officials therefore worried that the mission schools were instruments of “detrribalization” that inspired educated Africans to reject the authority of their chiefs and headmen. The educated intermediaries produced by these schools were both essential to the economic vitality of the colonial regime and a threat to its very survival. Occupying the uncertain ground between “tribal”

subjects and full citizens, they considered themselves outside the bounds of customary law and demanded full access to civil society.¹³

Colonial officials desperately sought to reintegrate mission school graduates into rural society and seized upon Scouting as an instrument of “retribalization.” The movement would teach African students to be “tribal” by preserving what colonial authority deemed useful and wholesome in local age grade systems. European Scout leaders sought to incorporate “tribal lore and custom” into their programs to compensate for the detribalizing impact of Western education, wage labor, and urbanization.

Much of the work on indirect rule’s inherent contradictions either has tended to overestimate the power of the colonial regime and its rural African allies to stifle dissent or has valorized the educated Africans’ oppositional strategies within the larger framework of subaltern resistance. Frederick Cooper is convincing when he notes that this approach has difficulty reconciling colonial subjects’ agency and consciousness with their subordinate status. The conflicting official and unauthorized interpretations of African Scouting demonstrate that Africans had the ability to turn the mechanisms of colonialism to their own ends. Colonial institutions like Scouting were authoritarian and occasionally despotic, but they were also vulnerable to subversion and reinterpretation. To categorize the movement solely as a “retribalizing” tool of social control is to miss the larger picture. Scouting shows how middle figures navigated the difficult terrain between cooperation and resistance to achieve mobility within the confines of colonial society. African Scouts used the Fourth Scout Law to contest the color bar and traded upon the colonial regime’s assumption that their membership in the movement meant that they could be trusted.¹⁴

Adaptive resistance often took the form of autonomous Western-style institutions that mirrored, but were independent of, the colonial bases of power and legitimacy. With political participation and social advancement blocked by racial discrimination under the color bar, Africans created their own businesses, churches, schools, and Scout troops to acquire the benefits of Western culture without having to submit to colonial authority. Through this independency they laid claim to the symbols of progress, civics, and faith that legitimized the colonial regime and adapted them to suit local African circumstances. Independency meant creating autonomous Western-style institutions that were free from the taint and influence of colonial authority. Derek Peterson describes these processes as “contracting colonialism.” In explaining why the leaders of Kikuyu independent churches and schools went to such great lengths to adopt Western bureaucratic institutions and practices, he argues that “playing

by the state's rules of recognition was for Kikuyu organizers a way of claiming entitlement from colonial administrators." By mastering the "grammar and practice of citizenship" the Kikuyu independents demanded full access to civil society.¹⁵ Scouting was unquestionably part of the grammar of citizenship and proved a tempting target for the independents.

Much to the consternation of European Scout officials, independent African scout troops freely modified the Scout canon to reflect their own political and social values. Independent Kikuyu troops substituted "Jomo [Kenya]ta]" for "Jesus" in Scout songs and hymns. On an individual level, African boys and men styled themselves Scouts and Scoutmasters by donning variations of the Scout uniform. In some cases, they were simply seeking the status that the colonial regime accorded uniformed African Scouts. In other instances, they were outright impostors who traded on the prestige of the movement to pose as government representatives and engage in illegal fundraising. The behavior of the second group was unquestionably larcenous, but their tactics also represented a challenge to the controlling power of the mundane in colonial culture. John and Jean Comaroff have shown how the authority of the colonial regime depended on its ability to capture the banalities of everyday life. Unauthorized African scouting was part of the larger African contestation of colonial culture that produced "half-caste currencies, playful synthetic styles, and mixed modes of production."¹⁶

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE COLONIAL SCHOOL

Sanctioned official African Scouting was largely an informal extension of the colonial school system. The movement had a much stronger link with formal educational institutions in Africa than it did in virtually any other part of the world. Baden-Powell was deeply interested in correcting the perceived failures of metropolitan British schools and conceived of Scouting as a supplemental educational tool for teaching the character development and morality that he believed was missing from the conventional curriculum. He called Scouting "a venture for a jolly outdoor recreation which has been found to form also a practical aid to education. . . . It is, in a word, a school of citizenship through woodcraft."¹⁷ It would have been virtually impossible for Scouting to exist in colonial Africa without the support of the education establishment. Mission and government schools sponsored the vast majority of official Scout troops

because they had the manpower, financial resources, and official connections needed to reach African boys. Colonial educators imported the movement to Africa to resolve the inherent contradictions in indirect rule by teaching students to give their loyalty to their “tribal rulers” and, by extension, the British Empire. There was no African “citizenship” under British rule, and “character training” in the colonial context meant rejecting the lure of personal enrichment and political activism and subordinating individual interests to the collective needs of the “tribe.” Formal Scouting’s important auxiliary role in African schools means that the movement must be considered in scholarly debates over the nature and legacy of colonial education.

Generally speaking, historians have not been kind to the colonial schools. Many experts on African education have charged that British colonial education amounted to cultural imperialism that imposed alien values on subject African communities. To some degree, this argument is based on an idealized view of precolonial African society. Critics of colonial schooling have argued that prepartition African communities developed systems of education that were in harmony with their material and social life and made no distinction between physical and intellectual labor. They charge British educators with destroying this educational harmony by teaching individualism rather than the values of a collective society.¹⁸ Yet this was exactly the agenda of the colonial teachers, who tried to modify Western educational practices to create a new curriculum that was specifically “adapted” to the needs of “primitive” pluralistic African communities. This adapted colonial curriculum assumed that “tribal” Africans were incapable of mastering Western cultural norms. Colonial officials worried that Western schooling led to materialism and individualism and turned to Scouting to strengthen the “traditional” communal values that buttressed indirect rule.

Many scholars attribute political and social problems in contemporary Africa to the colonial regime’s imposition of an alien Western value system that destroyed the sense of cooperation and community that bound Africans together in precolonial times. They stress that colonial education prepared Africans to be nothing more than “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” and indict it for “brainwashing” students into rejecting their heritage and embracing the allegedly superior Western culture. To be sure, colonial schools denigrated local learning practices by projecting an image of backwardness and incompetence on people who remained outside the Western education system. Colonial school certificates and diplomas were of limited value because many employers con-

sidered them inferior, and African workers usually learned lucrative vocational skills on the job.¹⁹

These attacks on colonial education are part of a broader leftist critique of education in Western societies positing the existence of a “hidden curriculum” in state school systems that strengthens and perpetuates divisions of race and class. In this sense British colonial schools were part of the larger Western educational system that sustained capitalist power relationships. They followed an “adapted” curriculum taken from the segregated American South that stressed vocational skills and manual labor over a scholastic liberal arts education. The colonial regime transplanted this adapted education system to Africa in the 1920s to limit the political impact of Western schooling and strengthen the rural social order threatened by colonial demands for labor and commodity production. Under this system only a handful of privileged African students had access to a classic literary education at the secondary level.

This narrow education pyramid that characterized “native education” in anglophone Africa was not unique to the colonial periphery. The metropolitan British education system also made a sharp distinction between vocational training for the masses and higher education for administrative and technical elites. Whether in Africa or in the West, formal schooling reproduced subordinate future generations and acted as an instrument of imperialism by linking subject populations to world markets and teaching capitalist concepts of work. Far from being a universally egalitarian force, it provided real social mobility only for the fortunate few who served the capitalist state as compradors and overseers.²⁰

These critiques of colonial African schooling make some telling and damning points, but they run into the subalternist problem of reconciling the subordinate status of subject peoples with their capacity to resist, alter, and adapt colonial policy. Although many Africans were understandably suspicious of the avowed civilizing agenda of the colonial schools, they eagerly sought access to Western education as a means of economic accumulation and social advancement. Even a basic primary education qualified graduates for lucrative clerical and administrative positions, thus allowing an escape from subsistence agriculture and unpleasant manual labor on public works projects, corporate plantations, and settler farms. As products of an elitist and restrictive school system African students had high expectations for social mobility and became embittered upon realizing that the color bar would forever block their progress. Secondary school graduates in particular believed that their mastery of Western culture entitled them to full rights as citizens and rejected the authority of

their “tribal rulers.” Western schooling produced a class of educated elites with the ambition, political expertise, and social sophistication to challenge the legitimacy of the colonial regime on its own terms. To be sure, they had few ties to the less educated general population, but they were hardly willing tools of the colonial regime.

In the eyes of British officials, education was the cause of, and the solution to, these dangerous contradictions in colonial administration and society. Educators and administrators believed that it was possible to develop new styles of schooling that would be civilizing and humanitarian, provide economically useful technical training, and teach young Africans to seek their fortunes within the safe confines of “tribal” society. They tried to fulfill their educational obligations under the dual mandate but not to the point where their students had the ability or inclination to challenge British rule. Believing that they could remake African society through the schools, colonial educators developed an adapted curriculum to reflect the political and social goals of the colonial regime. As C. T. Loram, a South African authority on “native education,” explained, “Reduced to its lowest terms, education is the process by which a human being is changed from what he is to something that those in authority wish him to be.”²¹ More simply, this meant fitting Africans into the new economic and social realities of colonialism.

The adapted curriculum favored by “native education” experts in the 1920s was weighted heavily toward “practical” vocational skills at the expense of advanced literacy, mathematics, science, and history. On the surface, it appeared relatively uncontroversial in stressing mundane subjects like agricultural science, handicrafts, literacy in African vernaculars, and “native lore and tradition.” The conventional literary curriculum was available only at one or two elite secondary schools in each territory. Advocates of adapted education promised to promote rural development, reduce political discontent, and reinforce the sanctioned conceptions of tradition that underpinned indirect rule.

The ability of African students and local communities to reinterpret and subvert these educational efforts demonstrates the limits of colonial authority. They demanded full access to the Western literary curriculum and viewed adapted education as an attempt to institutionalize their inferior status. The colonial educators’ efforts to create a class of economically useful but politically compliant graduates failed miserably. Educated Africans, even the products of adapted schools, were some of the most vocal and effective opponents of the colonial regime. Moreover, African communities created their own independent schools to

wrest control of the Western literary curriculum from the colonial state. It is significant that most independents did not try to re-create the romanticized precolonial education systems celebrated by leftist critics of the colonial schools.

Nevertheless, Scouting was indeed part of the “hidden curriculum” of colonialism. It promised to counter the politicizing tendencies of Western schooling through “character training.” European Scouters and teachers interpreted the Scout canon as an obligation for African Scouts to give their loyalty to the colonial regime. Scouting was to be a form of supplemental education that corrected the flaws of the adapted curriculum. Yet the movement proved as open to reinterpretation as colonial schooling. In reworking the Scout canon within the context of independency, African Scouts challenged their subordinate social status. Far from being the deculturized victims of an alien value system, they demonstrated a strong sense of agency in appropriating the methods and legitimacy of the international Scout movement and local colonial schools.

MAKING THE AFRICAN BOY

Scouting also exposes the uncertain nature of masculinity in colonial society. As was the case with governance and schooling, gender became a key site of contestation between colonial authority and African independency. The security of British rule in the countryside, law and order in the cities, and the reliability and productivity of migrant labor all depended on the capacity of the colonial regime to reorder African family life by promoting specific conceptions of masculinity and femininity. In theory, colonial rule imposed a gendered division of labor where women were responsible for domestic rural agricultural work while men became labor migrants in service of settler and foreign capitalist interests. Properly regulated gender relations were also a key to the viability of indirect rule. Much of the authority of the colonial regime’s rural allies depended on their control of the productive and reproductive capacity of young women. The ability to define customary practices regulating adolescence, bride price, and inheritance also gave the chiefs and headmen control over younger generations of men who had to defer to their authority in order to marry. The ability of young men and women to slip the bonds of rural authority by finding alternative means of support and forming new conjugal relationships was a veiled, but direct, challenge to the security of

the colonial regime. Scouting was an important tool in addressing this “gender chaos” by promoting sanctioned conceptions of masculinity.²²

Although patriarchal institutions of authority generally privilege men over women, not all men share this power equally. In other words, there are multiple and often contradictory masculinities. The most accepted conception of masculinity in a given society usually reflects hierarchies of class and racial privilege and enjoys the distinction of being perceived by the general public as natural. Alternate masculinities are often, but not always, challenges to the established political and social order. Although they would have objected strenuously to the suggestion that gender was socially variable, Baden-Powell and the founders of Scouting were consciously aware that they were promoting a specific form of masculinity over a range of less desirable masculine identities. In their eyes, manliness meant physical courage, patriotism, stoicism, chivalry, and sexual continence. They viewed the early feminists’ demands for greater social and economic autonomy as a serious threat and sought to confine women to the private domestic sphere.²³ Scouting became a tool for staking out the public arena for middle- and upper-class men. Poor and working-class British boys had little use for Scouting’s emphasis on discipline and social conformity. They certainly also aspired to be men, but embraced a decidedly different concept of masculinity that preserved their autonomy. Similarly, African boys frequently rejected the movement’s attempt to make them into obedient men who accepted their place in colonial society and sought sexual release solely within the bonds of marriage.

The linkage of homosexual desire and expression with alternate masculinities was a particular concern of Scout authorities in Britain. The ossification of masculine and feminine identities linked to domesticity, patriarchal authority, and aggressive imperialism in late Victorian Britain led to the classification of a preference for emotional and physical same-sex relations as an abnormal psychological state. Homosexually oriented masculinity called key elements of the Scout canon into question by suggesting that there were alternate conceptions of manliness that were not linked to chastity, conformity, and patriarchal privilege. Yet Scouting’s all-male environment often attracted men who were sexually drawn to males. Tim Jeal, Baden-Powell’s biographer, suggests that the chief Scout himself found men physically attractive and approved of young Scouts swimming and sun bathing in the nude at Gilwell Camp, the British Scout Association’s primary training center. Nevertheless, Baden-Powell was appalled when he had to remove two of the first Gilwell Camp chiefs for molesting boys in their charge. He stressed sexual self-control and continence

above all else, and wrote privately that the offenders should be flogged for their crimes.²⁴ The Scout establishment was thus concerned with promoting respectable conceptions of heterosexual masculinity and ensuring that the movement was not tainted by charges of pederasty.

Homosexuality was far less a concern in African Scouting. There is virtually no mention of either specific scandals or official fears about same-sex relations in the archives of the territorial Scout associations. Colonial officials and educators generally believed that homosexuality was an imported Western “perversion” and not part of “traditional” African culture. They considered the sexualized relationships that developed between older and younger men in southern African mines to be aberrations caused by the breakdown of “tribal law.” Yet this is not to say that homosexuality was never present in African Scouting; instead, it may be absent from official Scout records because the Scouting authorities never looked for it. They had full control over the movement only at the elite secondary schools and were dimly aware, at best, of what went on in rural African troops. Certainly sexual contacts between African boys and adult European men in positions of authority were not unheard of. Chenjerai Shire recalls that some mission school students who could not pay their tuition shared a house and, by implication, a bed with priests.²⁵ Colonial officials denied the existence of African homosexualities because they complicated the patriarchal heterosexual conceptions of masculinity that underpinned indirect rule and gendered divisions of African labor.

Scout authorities were much more concerned with making Africans into the right kind of boys and men than they were with the perceived threat of homosexuality. To most European officials and settlers, African men were perpetual boys who lacked the self-control to be accorded adult status. The resident commissioner of Basutoland put it this way: “With the young native the attainment of the years of manhood appears to be accompanied by an arrest of intellectual development, an increased dominance of the appetites.” Similarly, a Southern Rhodesian official denied the adulthood of Shona men because they “never learned the value of hard work; indeed, they hardly know what it means.” In reality, the colonial regime itself bore primary responsibility for hindering the ability of African males to reach the markers of adulthood by making it difficult for young men to acquire enough cattle or land to marry and support a family. Taxation, land shortages, stock culling and grazing controls, and the destruction of rural economies drove young men to become labor migrants. Denied the opportunity to establish stable families, many formed temporary conjugal relationships with urban women. The

fleeting and often overtly commercial nature of these sexual contacts threatened government attempts to create stable family units and seemed to validate colonial stereotypes regarding the unquenchable sexual appetites of African men.²⁶

Interestingly, the colonial Scout establishment did not fully subscribe to the stereotype of Africans as permanent children. As in Britain, European Scout leaders genuinely believed they were making African boys into men. In the colonial context this meant reinforcing “tribal” discipline on graduates of government and mission schools. As allies of the missions and the colonial state, the Scout authorities taught that true men were obedient, disciplined, and sexually continent. More specifically, they sought to control the youthful sexuality that led to bride price disputes, illegitimate childbirth, and the spread of venereal disease. These outbreaks of “immorality” threatened colonial authority by undermining African families, the patriarchal authority of the chiefs and headmen, and the coherency of “tribal” life.

From the Scouts’ standpoint, a true man controlled his sexual desires. Julian Huxley, once a lecturer in experimental zoology at King’s College London and who conducted an educational survey of East Africa for the Colonial Office in 1929, believed that Africans could achieve full adulthood if they mastered the sexual urges that blocked their intellectual maturation. “In the existing state of native culture, sex looms large, and at puberty comes to occupy the focus of life. If you can provide native boys with a different background of thought and practice, their intellectual development can continue through puberty with no more break and disturbance than overtakes the white child, and [they] can continue and mature with us.” Scouting was just the vehicle to provide these new “thoughts and practices.” African Scouting in South Africa, commonly known as Pathfinding, taught boys to respect girls while avoiding their company until marriage. The Pathfinders could associate with Wayfarers (Girl Guides) only if their leaders gave them “special permission.”²⁷ African Scouting “made men,” but these men were to be responsible clerks and teachers. Similarly, the few nonscholastic official troops sought to produce chaste labor migrants and tribally conscious peasant farmers.

The colonial regime was attempting the impossible in trying to fix African gender identities. African opposition to its despotic social and economic policies inevitably produced conflicting conceptions of masculinity. In urban areas migrants could acquire entirely new gender roles. Women adopted male roles by becoming financially independent, and, according to Marc Epprecht, men experimented with alternate masculini-

ties, including homosexuality. The cities also bred more dangerous forms of manliness as the colonial regime's limits on education, employment, and legal residence made poor rootless young men more aggressive. In South Africa, the highly masculine gang culture that developed rejected generational authority and forced women into subordinate roles through violence and intimidation.²⁸

Independent African scouts also contested and manipulated colonial gender identities. Their claim to respectability and legitimacy made them rivals of the urban gangs, but their conceptions of manliness were equally, albeit more subtly, subversive. In Kenya, independent Kikuyu scouts agreed that true men were tough, self-reliant, and "loyal," but in the early 1950s they gave their allegiance to the Mau Mau forest fighters. The independents also rejected the colonial regime's insistence on strict gender segregation. Much to the horror of the Scout and Girl Guide leadership, the Kikuyu schools often enrolled females in their scout troops instead of creating separate guide companies.²⁹ Although the independent school leaders shared the Kenyan government's concerns about sexual immorality, they created a coed scout movement to conserve financial resources. They did not believe that scouting had to be an all-male institution. This was not the norm in most independent troops, but those African scoutmasters who added girls to their troops most likely sought to contest the colonial authorities' attempts to define the proper relationships between pubescent African boys and girls.

YOUTH AND THE CRISIS OF GENERATIONAL AUTHORITY

The colonial regime's attempt to shore up the patriarchal authority of its local African allies was the last of the four main social fault lines that Scouting exposed in anglophone Africa. Each generation worries that the young people who follow will not uphold its values or recognize established patterns of authority and divisions of wealth. In the West these concerns have become more pronounced in the last two centuries with the classification of postpubescent youth as adolescents who were socially and morally undeveloped. Social reformers and youth experts conceived of juvenile delinquency as rebellion stemming from an immature attempt by young people to acquire the autonomy of adulthood before they were ready. In the late nineteenth century, Western social reformers began to worry that formal education could not provide the necessary supervision to guide adolescents to adulthood. Technical advances in

transportation and communication gave young people a greater sense of a common identity and a powerful capacity to shape culture. More seriously, youthful demands for autonomy also had the capacity to grow into political activism and open rebellion because young people were less invested in established social norms.³⁰

Scouting was the most popular of the organized youth movements that established institutions of authority created to provide structured diversions for the energy and ambitions of younger generations. The success of these movements depended on their ability to make their programs relevant to the lived experience of adolescence. Scouting was particularly popular because adults believed it extended their control over youth while convincing boys that the movement actually increased their autonomy. The Scout canon thus became an effective means of transmitting established norms and values to succeeding generations.³¹

To a large degree, adolescence was an elite category in colonial Africa. Only a fraction of children attended school in each territory, and most of those completed only a few years of schooling before being forced to drop out by high fees, competitive examinations, or the pressure to earn a living. In most cases, only advanced students and young people with semipermanent urban residency could be classified as adolescents in the Western sense. Yet as such they represented one of the most serious threats to the stability of the colonial regime. Intermediate and secondary school graduates demanded social mobility and the rights of full citizenship. Young nonstudents migrated to the cities for work and excitement when rural economies began to collapse. In both cases, they rejected the authority of their elders, who could no longer provide the means for succeeding generations to establish themselves as respectable adults. In southern Africa young men in particular blamed their older relatives for failing to prevent the imposition of colonial rule and saw little reason to defer to seniors who could not give them land and cattle.³² This rejection of generational authority eroded the foundations of indirect rule and threatened to spark widespread social instability.

Scouting promised to correct this imbalance by teaching “detribalized” students and city boys to respect their elders. The movement implicitly reinforced the Western concept of adolescence by subjecting African teenagers and young men to extended supervision while they theoretically acquired the discipline and deference to authority required for full adulthood in colonial society. Thus, in embracing Scouting, the colonial regime sought to extend its reach into local African communities by exercising power over the smallest units of society, namely fami-

lies, households, and children. Colonial African Scouting was also part of larger state-sponsored social welfare initiatives that aimed to improve labor discipline and stifle political dissent by structuring African leisure time.³³ Just as metropolitan social reformers worried that unchecked urbanization and class antagonism led to the physical and moral degeneration of Britain's lower classes, colonial officials worried that African resistance to state and generational authority was due to a similar decline in communal "tribal" values brought on by the deleterious introduction of Western materialism. Scouting would "retribalize" individualistic Africans by teaching them to be selflessly "loyal" to their elders and "native rulers."

The Scout uniform played a central role in these processes of social control. Baden-Powell modeled it on the uniform of the South African Constabulary, a paramilitary police force that he raised and commanded after the Anglo-South African War. In adapting an adult military uniform for use by boys he sought to create a potent socializing device that would become an enticing recruiting tool, establish Scouting's elite credentials, and reinforce the Fourth Scout Law by blurring class distinctions within the movement. Although the Scout uniform's martial origins left Baden-Powell open to charges that he was secretly preparing boys for military service, his primary goal was to defuse the potential for intergenerational conflict by creating a structured outlet for youthful rebellion.³⁴ The uniform marked its wearers as members of an exclusive, tough, but also chivalric youth gang. It tempered boys' energy and aggression with elitist conformity. The Scouts were not the only youth group in Edwardian Britain to wear military-style uniforms, but their successful blending of martial style with woodlore and social egalitarianism made them the most popular.

The Scout uniform had even greater potency in colonial Africa, where Western styles of clothing conveyed gentility, sophistication, and respectability. European employers usually insisted that Africans dress in simple utilitarian work clothes to reinforce their subordinate status, and laborers had to carefully husband their earnings to purchase Western clothing. Most students went barefoot, and colonial armies generally did not issue their African soldiers boots until the Second World War. As a result, even the simplest items of apparel acquired considerable prestige and status. Workers, military men, and young people coveted high-class European-style clothes to wear in their free time. Western clothing became a means of contesting colonial social restrictions by acquiring more sophisticated identities that could be put on and off as the situation allowed.³⁵

Most African boys coveted the Scout uniform for many of the same reasons as their British peers, but the uniform had additional meaning in colonial society. The Scout authorities hoped the uniform would inspire African boys to be proud, but also disciplined and obedient, members of the movement. They never expected that it would become a tool for circumventing colonial authority. Uniformed Scouts had more autonomy than the average African boy because the colonial authorities assumed they could be trusted. African Scouts were less likely to be questioned by the security forces and enjoyed greater freedom to travel as well as free admission to public events. Scouts also had considerable prestige in rural communities, where the local people generally assumed that anyone wearing a khaki uniform was some sort of government official. The trust accorded uniformed Scouts by district officers and policemen reinforced this belief. It was therefore not surprising that some Scouts traded on this deference to circumvent colonial authority and exact privileges and tribute from local communities. In other cases, enterprising individuals simply posed as Scouts by wearing illegally acquired parts of the uniform. Their manipulation of the material culture of Scouting is illustrative of the ways in which colonial peoples adapted Western institutions to fashion hybrid colonial cultures that brought greater freedom and autonomy.

Wearing a uniform did not mean that African boys accepted the general principles of British colonialism. Instead they appropriated the Scout uniform to imagine an alternative version of colonial society where Africans had access to positions of authority and legitimacy. Uniforms exposed one of the most fundamental and potentially disruptive contradictions of African Scouting: “To make things uniform means to make them equal. Making individuals equal means abolishing distinctions of class and demographics.”³⁶ Most of the settler colonies in eastern, central, and southern Africa also supported European Scout troops. In theory, their common Scout uniforms conveyed the message that African and European Scouts were equals. Combined with the Fourth Scout Law, which affirmed that all Scouts were brothers, the Scout uniform was a serious challenge to the color bar. Following Baden-Powell’s lead in Britain, the territorial Scout associations were committed to maintaining their ties to the institutions of political and social legitimacy. They were therefore unwilling to jeopardize their alliance with the colonial regime by adhering to the spirit of the Scout canon. The Scout authorities’ attempts to fashion a distinctly African uniform and, by extension, an adapted form of Scouting that respected the realities of the color bar left the Scout movement open to reinterpretation by African independents

who used the Scout canon to challenge colonialisms' inherent racism and social inequality. Scouting was thus both an instrument of social control and an equally potent expression of social protest.

THE SHAPE OF THE STUDY

Scouting comprised a package of values, norms, and rituals that varied considerably in each local culture. In one sense, Scouting can be compared to a secular religion with Baden-Powell as its prophetlike founder whose writings constituted the core of the Scout canon and whose personal example became the guide for model behavior. The territorial Scout associations around the world correspond to national churches with the authority to make alterations to the movement within the limits of Scouting orthodoxy. At the local level, troops are the congregations who put core Scout values into practice. Local applications of Scouting usually result from a syncretic blending of Scouting orthodoxy and community values. In some cases these adaptations have the full blessing of the Scout authorities. Scouting allows religious institutions to create "closed" troops solely for the members of their congregations, and national Scout associations are free to choose their own emblems to symbolize patriotism and loyalty. Some local communities, however, also make alterations to the Scout canon that official Scouting considers unacceptably heretical. This was the case in colonial Africa, where nationalists, independent schools, churches, and outright impostors appropriated the movement for their own purposes.

Understanding the full social implications of colonial African Scouting therefore requires a vertical study of the interplay between manifestations of the movement at the metropolitan, territorial, and local levels. This study traces connections between the orthodoxy of Baden-Powell and the British Scout Association (BSA), the adapted "native" Scouting developed by territorial governments and Scout associations to support colonial policy, and the conflicting attempts by missionaries, teachers, Scoutmasters, and African Scouts to make the movement relevant to local circumstances. In some cases African Scouts and Scoutmasters worked within the confines of orthodox Scouting to claim imperial citizenship by establishing their respectability and mastery of Western values and material culture. In other instances unauthorized scouts reinterpreted the Scout canon and transformed the movement into an expression of social and political dissent.

Historians of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain have paid close attention to the development of uniformed youth movements, and the question of whether early Scouting was militaristic has generated considerable scholarly debate. Education specialists have also explored the movement's pedagogical applications. Finally, in addition to Tim Jeal's comprehensive biography of Baden-Powell, we have the founder's own voluminous publications on virtually every aspect of Scouting. The Scout canon consists of these writings, the Scout Oath and Law (originally referred to in Britain as the Scout Promise), and the national Scout associations' bylaws and Scout handbooks. These core tracts, institutional histories, and official and semiofficial sources outline the development and goals of imperial Scouting, but they show only how the Scout authorities thought troops should be run rather than how the movement played out at the local level.³⁷

In colonial Africa, the territorial Scout associations, colonial administrators, and mission educators constituted another layer between official Scouting and its grass roots. In explicitly trying to adapt the movement to African circumstances they created versions of Scouting that were distinctly different from the metropolitan model. Although a few historians of India have addressed Scouting and Guiding under the British Raj, there are no comparable studies of the colonial uses of Scouting in Africa. Girl Guiding in South Africa offers important comparative insights into Scouting, but the two movements developed in markedly different ways in the African context. Histories of colonial African education also pay little attention to the movement on the grounds that it was a relatively narrow extracurricular activity. Social historians have examined Scouting as part of the colonial regime's social welfare programs, but their studies deal with the movement only tangentially. As a result, Scouting's ties to colonial authority have remained largely unexplored.³⁸

Colonial Scouting has been largely forgotten in contemporary Africa because membership levels were relatively low. Despite the best efforts of British administrators and educators, Scouting never became a mass movement in the colonial period (see table 1.1). Overall, there were probably about one hundred thousand registered African Boy Scouts in all of anglophone Africa by the 1950s. Admittedly these figures do not account for the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of boys who belonged to informal troops that the territorial Scout associations did not recognize. The colonial governments and territorial Scout associations were deeply concerned with adapting the movement for Africans, but they often had little clue as to what was actually going on in individual African troops. In

Table 1.1. African Scouts as a Percentage of the Student Body

Territory	Students Registered	African Scouts	Percentage
South Africa, ca. 1950	747,026	14,885	1.99
Nyasaland, 1950	219,667	750	0.34
Kenya, ca. 1948	262,300	759	0.29

Source: Muriel Horrell, *Bantu Education to 1968*, 51; Union of South Africa, *Report of the Commission on Native Education, 1949-1951*, 94; Lord Arthur Hailey, *An African Survey*, rev. ed., 1165; Extract from CO Report on Nyasaland, 1950, MNA, 17/BSA/1/210; Kenya Colony and Protectorate, *African Education in Kenya*, 14; Kenya Colony and Protectorate, *Annual Report of the Welfare Organization, Kenya Colony, 1949* (Nairobi: Government Printer, n.d.).

essence there were two types of African Scouts. The first belonged to troops sponsored by missions, government schools, or social welfare organizations. These sanctioned groups usually had either a European leader or a supervised, “reliable” African Scoutmaster. Government and Scout archives deal with these Scouts in some detail. They mention the second kind of scouts—independents and impostors—only in disapproving terms. Thus, official sources offer only tangential insights into the experiences of individual African boys in the movement.

Ideally, comprehensive interviews with formal and informal ex-Scouts would provide this information. It is relatively easy to locate members of the sanctioned troops. Most attended elite secondary schools and often occupy positions of prestige and authority in postcolonial society. Not surprisingly, they tend to have warm memories of their Scout experiences. These men have tended to stay in touch with each other and can often be contacted through alumni organizations and old-boy associations. Finding members of the informal unauthorized troops is much harder. Many are poorly educated and are much harder to identify as scouts. Moreover, in both cases there are significant methodological problems in asking old men to recall details from their youth.³⁹ Interviews with former Scouts from both official and unofficial troops made it clear that older informants often recalled even the most difficult childhoods with a certain degree of nostalgia. Colonial authoritarianism, poverty, and a racist education system were problems they overcame in the remote past, and many men dwelt on warm recollections of friends, parents, and youthful accomplishments. They often scathingly recalled their mistreatment by the colonial authorities but had little negative to say about their Scout experiences. Those who disliked the movement

might provide a more balanced picture, but they are much harder to locate because they have little reason to identify themselves as ex-Scouts. As a result, the oral histories of African Scouting are usually romanticized and often frustratingly vague.

The records of the metropolitan and territorial Scout authorities are more detailed but also problematic. The archives of the BSA are well maintained and easily accessible to researchers, but they only provide insights into the official thinking and high policies of Baden-Powell and his successors. For the most part, there are no formal archives of the national African Scout associations. The Kenya Scout Association stored the once voluminous records of its colonial predecessor in a disused latrine building on the grounds of its Rowallan Camp, where they fell victim to rot, mold, and insects. The Kenyan Girl Guide Association kept its colonial archives in the rafters of a building that had lost part of its roof. The semiofficial status of most colonial Scout associations meant that much of their correspondence survives in state archives. Although incomplete, these surviving records provide a fairly comprehensive picture of colonial Scout policy. Unfortunately, the only insights they offer into local and informal African Scouting is through worried and often scathing denunciations by European Scout officials.

This study allows for these problems by taking a vertical approach that integrates metropolitan sources on official Scouting and government and territorial Scout archives with the testimony of former African Scouts. Imperial ideology and colonial policy can be understood only through their application to specific historical circumstances. Official Scouting provides a baseline standard for comparing local adaptations of the movement. Tracing the linkages and tensions between imperial rhetoric and ideals, territorial colonial policy, and local adaptation and resistance provides insights into how the idealistic legitimizing ideologies of colonialism played out in practice at the local level. Local variation makes it impossible to construct a picture of African Scouting that depicts faithfully every African boy's experiences in the movement, but hopefully this book will provide the inspiration and context for future research on the local applications of colonial education and youth movements.

This project focuses on the tensions between formal and informal Scouting through specific regional case studies. Kenya and South Africa had entrenched settler communities that protected their social and political privileges through strict racial segregation. The Fourth Scout Law's insistence on egalitarianism and brotherhood complicated this color bar and brought the inherent contradictions of colonialism into

sharp focus. Kenya provides a central point of reference for comparing local Scouting variations in Uganda and Tanganyika, while South Africa serves the same function for Britain's colonies and protectorates in southern Africa. The study also touches on Scouting in anglophone West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, British India, and the segregated American South for additional comparative perspectives. It also pays attention to the Girl Guides and rival male youth groups to shed greater light on how uniformed youth movements developed in segregated and divided societies.