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'Uncircumcised boys' and 'girl Spartans': Youth, Gender and Generation in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, c. 1954–59

Stacey Hynd

ABSTRACT

Both male and female youth were significant actors in anti-colonial insurgencies, but their involvement has been neglected in existing historiographies due to the marginalisation of youth voices in colonial archives. This article analyses the causes of youth insurgency and colonial counterinsurgency responses in two British colonies, Kenya and Cyprus, in 1954-59, providing a gendered and relational study of youth as cohort, as liberation generation, as life stage and as kinship position. It argues that a 'gen[d]erational' lens is necessary to properly understand how age and gender intersected to shape boys' and girls' experiences of youth insurgency, and how colonial states punished and tried to 'rehabilitate' such rebellious youths. This article argues that colonial responses to youth in insurgency were implicitly shaped by colonial understandings of gender and generation as well as by race and ethnicity, but that counterinsurgency policies failed to effectively integrate gendered and generational perspectives sufficiently into either their security, peno-legal or welfare and developmental responses. The only successful 'rehabilitation' programmes focused on male youth, and combined colonial and local understandings of age and gender to provided pathways towards the forms of adulthood desired by youth, rather than just treating them as unthinking, impressionable or irrecoverable children.

> I know of no other movement, organisation and army which has so actively employed boys and girls of school age in the front line. And yet there is every reason to do so: young people love danger; they must take risks to prove their worth.
>
> – General Grivas, National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA)

Grivas was wrong: his was not the only organisation to deploy boys and girls as part of anti-colonial insurgencies.[1] Children and youth played a significant role in many liberation struggles, in frontline, auxiliary and support roles, both through their own agency and in following insurgent groups' desire to mobilise their energy. Boys' and girls' involvement in anti-colonial insurgencies, however, has been relatively neglected in the existing historiography due to a lack of focus on gender and, particularly, on generation and age in conflict.[2] This article seeks to develop the literature by offering a more intersectional analysis of gender and generation, one focused on the experiences

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of male and female children and youth that highlights the differences and similarities between boys' and girls' experiences of insurgency and counterinsurgency.

I argue that applying a gen[d]erational lens to the study of insurgency and counterinsurgency helps to decentre adult male experiences and highlight those of often marginalised youth demographics, whilst remaining sensitive to varied identities and experiences of those within that demographic. Comparatively analysing how gender and generation intersect aids identification of which facets of identity most strongly influenced insurgent actions and colonial reactions, showing where girls' experiences were shaped more by their gender than their age, and how boys' age constrained or facilitated their masculine experiences. This approach also reveals how counterinsurgency strategies were broadly framed by notions of colonial paternalism, but how a lack of specific understanding of local gender and generational identities often weakened their implementation in practice.

To do this, the article will compare two liberation struggles against British colonial rule at the height of the decolonisation era: the Cyprus Emergency of 1955–59, and the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. These two conflicts merit comparison as they recorded the most visible and contentious youth participation in anti-colonial insurgencies, most significantly between late 1954 and 1959. Gender roles significantly shaped both insurgent and counterinsurgent forces in these conflicts, but only the Kenyan historiography has explored this in detail.[3] The National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA) and Mau Mau each had a complex relationship with gender, lauding particular militarised masculinities and restricting the roles of females in some ways, whilst giving them greater agency in others. Both conflicts comprised of one main insurgent force being opposed by a range of colonial security measures, including military and police operations, detention camps and emergency legislation, but also social-engineering-orientated developmental interventions and rehabilitation programmes for captured insurgents. Additionally, whilst urban and rural dynamics shaped both conflicts, Cyprus received far greater international attention and human rights concerns. Comparing these two anti-colonial conflicts allows historians to highlight differing responses from colonial authorities: differences that were shaped by local and imperial notions of race as well as gender and generation, and by broader frameworks of colonial counterinsurgency and development policy.

War has always been gendered, classed and racialised, not only in how it is fought, but in the ways in which conflict and militarism shape social relations and structures of power. In recent years, feminist scholars have applied a gendered lens to the study of contemporary counterinsurgency, and war more broadly. Their work not only highlights women's involvement in contemporary conflict, but argues that the nature of conflict and people's reasons for participating need to be read through intersecting lenses of gender, race, class and religion.[4] For Laleh Khalili, counterinsurgency doctrine and practice in countries like Afghanistan directly brings bodies and spaces coded as 'feminine' into the battlefield.[5] Population-centric counterinsurgency in particular, with its focus on winning 'hearts and minds', is argued to have made an undifferentiated category of 'womanandchild' a prime object of developmental intervention: a population viewed as intrinsically 'civilian' and domestic whose development is seen as instrumental for securing future control whilst military battles are waged against 'insurgents', a category heavily coded as adult and male but one that in practice often

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includes females and youth.[6] Yet despite David Kilcullen's observation of the need to 'engage the women, beware the children', the differing experiences of male and female children and youth from male and female adults – and from each other – remain under-analysed within contemporary counterinsurgency strategy.[7] This article develops Khalili and Kilcullen's insights and applies them to the study of colonial counterinsurgency, engaging also with recent historical writing that highlights the colonial roots of contemporary counterinsurgency.[8] Patricia Owens argues that colonial counterinsurgency fostered a 'form of household governance' that focused on (re-)creating households and families into acquiescent, 'modernised', colonial social units through tactics that were intrinsically – and sometimes explicitly – gendered, such as mass detention, forced resettlement, education and welfare interventions, and the 'rehabilitation' of recalcitrant subjects.[9] If, however, colonial counterinsurgency was a form of household governance, what it failed to properly recognise was that colonial households, and societies, were intrinsically ordered by age as well as by gender. Children and youth formed an important vector of colonial insurgency, but one to which colonial counterinsurgency was slow to respond. Both gender and age have been under-represented in historical analyses of anti-colonial insurgency and counterinsurgency, which have primarily focused on race and ethnicity.[10] This is a notable omission considering that firm linkages have been drawn between youth, gender and nationalism in the decolonisation era, and between youth and revolution in postcolonial spaces.[11]

This article argues for a gen[d]erational analysis of colonial archives in order to interrogate the 'generational gaze' in conjunction with the 'gendered gaze'. A gen[d]erational analysis aids historical understanding of how adult, predominantly male, colonial officials responded to boys' and girls' youthful insurgency during liberation struggles, drawing as they did from existing discourses and frameworks of colonial paternalism, occasionally maternalism and juvenile welfare.[12] As Rachel Leow argues, 'age too is a system of power relationships; like gender it is simultaneously natural and constructed', and gender cannot be effectively understood without reference to its temporality.[13] The understanding of youth applied here will be relational, highlighting the connection between generational structures, representations of and discourses about youth, and the lived experiences of being young.[14]

Like masculinity and femininity, neither childhood nor youth are universal categories: these identities are historical and cultural constructs and sites of contestation between, and within, colonial states and local communities.[15] In addition to gender norms, from the nineteenth century, middle-class, Westernised models of childhood circulated across European empires, generating imperial norms that constructed childhood as a time of innocence, education and protection from exposure to the adult world of sex, labour and politics.[16] Such norms however contrasted sharply with local conceptualisations and experiences of childhood, particularly in colonies like Kenya where Gikuyu children were productive members of household economies and where (gendered) categories of childhood were delineated physically or culturally, by birth order and by age grades, and where maturation was a status earned through navigating complex systems of obligation and privilege between elders and younger generations.[17] Colonial childhoods and youth overlapped, with youth being a 'shifter category' that was as much political as biological, but usually denoted someone beyond puberty but unmarried, sometimes in education, in their teens to early thirties,

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and of marginalised social status.[18] Youth as a colonial category was however implicitly coded as male: beyond puberty, girls were usually categorised by their gender as 'female' rather than by their age as 'children' or 'youth', despite the growing emergence of self-identifying female youth cultures and 'modern girlhoods'.[19] By the mid-twentieth century, changing notions of childhood, adolescence and youth were being shaped by local and global struggles over colonialism and decolonisation, and by the Cold War 'age of development' that emerged after 1945.[20] Juveniles – a socio-legal category denoting those under fifteen or eighteen years of age – became a major focus of welfarist concern. The late colonial-era was marked by 'a global phenomenon of youth insurgency' with children and youth becoming identified as integral to national building and the very project of becoming modern as states sought to co-opt them to secure future control in the face of mounting anti-colonial unrest.[21]

The article is based on qualitative pilot research in British, Kenyan and non-governmental organisation (NGO) archives, preliminary to a broader study on global histories of child soldiering in the late twentieth century. Researching male and female youth involvement in anti-colonial insurgency is hindered by the absence of their voices in official archives, and also by the mutable and inconsistent usage of categories of 'children', 'boys', 'girls', 'youth', 'juvenile' and 'students'.[22] The article therefore focuses primarily on adult representations of childhood and youth, boyhood and girlhood, as legal categories and social concepts, with youth's own experiences highlighted where possible. Due to the slippery nature of these categories in colonial archives, this article will therefore analyse 'child', 'juvenile' and 'youth' involvement in anti-colonial insurgencies, with a particular focus on what Manon Pignot terms 'ado-combattants', adolescent insurgents, who appear across these colonial categories.[23] Under current international humanitarian norms, 'any person under eighteen years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity' is defined as a 'child soldier'.[24] However, as many adolescent insurgents did not regard themselves as children and were not viewed as such by their communities, the terminology of 'youth soldier/insurgent' will instead be adopted to refer to those who were active in anti-colonial insurgencies between the approximate ages of twelve to twenty years of age, from armed fighters to activists who engaged in illegal activities in support of insurgencies, the upper age limit being extended to accommodate those who joined insurgencies as teenagers but aged out of that category during the conflict. The article will also, where appropriate, analyse the smaller cohort of children under the age of twelve who acted in support of insurgencies, although their involvement suggests different agential qualities and they were a lesser concern for colonial security forces. Category slippage and a lack of firm data on the ages or membership of most insurgent groups makes it difficult to quantify exact figures for youth soldiers/insurgents, but estimates will be drawn from detention and court data. Boys' involvement seems to have been more common, or at least more visible in the archives, than girls', particularly regarding detention and arrests for violent offences.

Gen[d]erationalising colonial discourses of youth insurgency

Child and youth insurgents played a particularly significant and visible role in Cyprus and Kenya due to both conflicts having significant urban dimensions, social and

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institutional networks through which youth could be mobilised, and due to the repercussions of late colonial efforts to co-opt and control youth.[25] Whilst colonial authorities depicted youth involvement in both conflicts as primarily due to adult exploitation and intimidation, many youths in these conflicts were active, voluntary participants. The Cyprus Emergency was fought by ethnic Greeks seeking independence from British rule and *enosis* (the unification of Cyprus and Greece), the main insurgent force being the EOKA.[26] Youth formed the 'seedbed of EOKA', with the most active members being between sixteen and twenty-five.[27] With staunchly religious communities and some 90 *per cent* of children receiving elementary education, schools and the Greek Orthodox Church provided an effective infrastructure through which thousands of boys and girls were recruited to support the struggle for *enosis*. Male and female schoolchildren participated in activities ranging from painting slogans and handing out leaflets to participating in riots or sabotage attacks, with older male teens involved in armed attacks on security forces and assassinations.[28] The Mau Mau uprising in Kenya was perhaps the bloodiest decolonisation-era British conflict and has become infamous for the severity of British counterinsurgency tactics, which included forced villagisation, mass detention, torture and execution.[29] Kenyan youths were targeted systematically in this racialised violence. Both an anti-colonial liberation struggle and a civil war within Gikuyu, Meru and Embu societies, Mau Mau revealed the tensions pervading Kenya's colonised communities. As Paul Ocobock argues, these included generational tensions that the colonial 'elder state' attempted to harness in order to secure youth support.[30] Youth constituted a substantive percentage of both urban Mau Mau supporters and forest fighters, particularly in the later stages of the conflict, being recruited most commonly through kinship relationships, peer networks and patronage structures, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes more coercively.[31] As John Lonsdale has shown, the Mau Mau rebellion was regarded by many Gikuyu elders and colonial officials as the epitome of 'youth gone bad'.[32] Loyalists saw Mau Mau fighters as ill-disciplined, 'uncircumcised boys' who had not gone through correct initiation rituals or attained masculine self-mastery due to their youthful composition and violent actions.[33] Neither EOKA nor Mau Mau were explicitly emancipatory for youth, but both insurgent groups proved willing and able to mobilise thousands of boys and girls to their cause through ethnic nationalism and anti-colonial socio-political grievances, and for many youths involvement in the liberation struggle was a core element of their social maturation process.

Notions of age commonly channelled youth insurgency in anti-colonial conflicts into three main forms of (often gendered) activity: first, as troop fortifiers, where teenagers served as able-bodied recruits to supply manpower for armed groups, their 'under-age' status being disregarded in the face of their physical capacity for action.[34] Teenager Petrakis Kyprianou was appointed leader of an EOKA group in Lacarna despite being the youngest member due to his 'bravery … and self-sacrificing attitude'.[35] Here normative gender roles and linkages between militarised masculinities and violence proliferated, with armed youth fighters being predominantly male, and girls mobilised in auxiliary roles. Second, youth were deployed in roles which exploited teenage liminality, where their covert or violent actions could be disguised behind presumptions of apolitical youthful obedience and mobility, such as spies, lookouts, couriers, or members of sabotage and assassination squads. Girls' double identities as

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female and youth made them particularly suited to covert activities as colonial forces did not view them as security threats, and hesitated to search them or publicly perpetrate violence against them.[36] EOKA leaders opposed female fighting units but ordered the formation of a schoolgirls section to take part in street demonstrations 'to embarrass the work of police and troops', because British security forces hesitated to openly attack young girls. EOKA subsequently proclaimed that '[t]he young girls of Cyprus … did not fall short in courage or self-sacrifice … [they] appeared to be real Spartans'.[37] Girls in Mau Mau were primarily involved in auxiliary capacities as part of the so-called 'passive wing' that provided critical support to the movement, taking oaths and supplying food, guns and information, their actions often hidden under the guise of normative domestic and agricultural duties.[38] Third, younger children could be involved in actions which symbolically mobilised notions of childhood innocence. This was the case in Cyprus where EOKA organised thousands of schoolchildren to publicly protest against British rule, knowing that images of government troops 'beating schoolboy rioters' would generate significant international outcry, thereby leveraging colonial constructions of childhood against the colonial state.[39] These protests frequently involved young children, often escorted by older students, highlighting age-delineated hierarchies of action and authority within youth insurgency. Such protests did not occur in Kenya however where schooling was less prevalent, and a less centralised leadership lacked an international media strategy.

Such child and youth mobilisation had not been anticipated by either colonial governments, who quickly scrabbled to explain youthful insurgency, focusing primarily on male juvenile violence. Whilst security officials tended to brand politicised, militant youth in a highly gendered fashion as 'truculent', 'thugs' and 'hooligans', the welfare and probation officials tasked with their rehabilitation instead viewed them as youth 'led-astray'.[40] The most common colonial explanation was that a breakdown of generational authority and failed parenting had fuelled a rise in juvenile delinquency, which in times of violence led to terrorism.[41] The post-1945 era saw global concerns about rising juvenile delinquency and established the figure of the delinquent as a major object of colonial welfarist concern and a metonymy for the fears of officials, local elites and community elders about the deleterious impact of urbanisation, detribalisation and modernity on colonised youth.[42] In Kenya, officials such as Thomas Askwith and Louis Leakey argued that Mau Mau was driven by a break down in tribal discipline and traditional socialisation, stating '[a] whole generation has disintegrated'.[43] Juvenile delinquents were thereby identified as 'strong recruiting grounds' for anti-colonial groups in both Kenya and Cyprus.[44] The Cyprus government openly blamed a lack of 'parental control' for children's participation in anti-colonial actions.[45] Parents were alternately castigated for being too indulgent, neglectful, or for actively encouraging their children's violence.[46] Youthful militancy was not seen as stemming from inherent criminality or 'anti-social behaviour', but from a 'complete lack of discipline at … a difficult age'.[47] A 1957 government report on the 'corruption of youth' lambasted the 'grooming' and 'seducing' of Cypriot youth by EOKA, noting that these children, who were not born criminals or agitators, were victims of impulse, inducement and intimidation, but nevertheless had become 'terrorists fully capable of murder and devoid of any sense of moral responsibility'.[48] Historically, as today, Western constructions of childhood served as a global disciplinary tool and moralising practice,

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blaming 'violent' or 'vulnerable' children on the failings of indigenous social structures and cultures.[49] Juvenile delinquency was however both a cause and a consequence of colonial counterinsurgency: in the aftermath of Operation Anvil, which cleared some 50,000 suspected Mau Mau supporters from Nairobi in 1954, newspapers described the city as being 'invaded by child gangsters … Thousands of African children, their lives disrupted by the terrorist struggle, are flooding into Nairobi to live as criminals', as they were separated from families and driven to crime to survive.[50] As Erica Burman argues, for children in conflict situations 'the cost of resourcefully dealing with conditions of distress and deprivation is to be pathologised'.[51]

Colonial notions of generation and gender intersected to shape a focus on boys' rebellious agency and violence whilst marginalising girls' involvement, both in policy and in the archives. The relative (in)visibility of girls in colonial counterinsurgency was a product of gendered conceptions of militarism and deviancy. Leakey bemoaned that Gikuyu boys no longer learned 'discipline and respect for their elders and their responsibility to society' or developed the 'manly qualities' and self-mastery that marked hegemonic Gikuyu masculinities.[52] Instead, all boys had was 'a desire for adventure. This has been looked for and found in the town, then in politics or crime, and finally in terrorism'.[53] Where boys were securitised as a potential threat because of their physical capacity for violence, girls were sexualised and moralised instead, their deviancy read as a social rather than political problem, in line with broader critiques of 'modern girlhoods'.[54] Colonial officials in 1950s Kenya, as elsewhere, became increasingly concerned about female mobility and the purported need to 'rescue' girls from the dangers of urban life, poor parenting, and from exposure to the destabilising effects of Western modernity and that archetypal form of female deviancy: prostitution.[55] During the Mau Mau Emergency, this concern transmogrified into fears that morally-disruptive urban teenage girls and young women – the 'unmarried girl class' – constituted a 'serious security risk' because they 'encouraged their menfolk in subversive activities', whilst younger girls were being pulled into prostitution by the social disruption caused by displacement or the loss of parents, with girls from ages twelve upwards reported being 'enticed into prostitution … the most successful procuresses being girls of the same age'.[56] Colonial concern however focused on girls' loose morals and resistance to welfarist intervention rather than on protecting them from sexual exploitation and statutory rape. Discourses about juvenile female sexuality also framed official responses to Cypriot girls' participation in the struggle for *enosis*, with official reports decrying their 'moral corruption', stating that 'during the winter of 1956–57 schoolgirls of aged sixteen and seventeen admitted they were in the habit of giving themselves promiscuously to members of killer and combat groups in town', with one girl stated to have 'had her first lover' aged twelve 'such is … the general decay of morals'.[57] Such language sought to discredit girls' anti-colonial actions, and thereby to discredit EOKA in the eyes of conservative Cypriot society for recruiting them.

Girls' political agency and rational involvement in anti-colonial struggles were denied or marginalised, their actions instead presented as a search for excitement and sexual gratification. Colonial officials viewed them as temptresses and deceivers, citing girls frequently hiding weapons for assassination gangs in their clothes, decoying security forces into ambushes, or transporting bombs for attacks.[58] In both Kenya and

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Cyprus, whilst boys' violence was seen as a natural, masculine trait, female involvement in violence was viewed as deeply transgressive.[59] Whilst adult Gikuyu women were often depicted as dangerous, fanatical 'hardcore' Mau Mau, Louis Leakey asserted that many teenage girls in Nairobi had become 'very active members of murder gangs' and engaged in violence 'out of sheer boredom' because they lacked domestic responsibilities and employment, rather than from any active, political intent.[60] Accounts written by a female welfare official charged with rehabilitating women conversely depicted girls as being 'terrorised into joining Mau Mau' and did not discuss active female participation.[61] With girls' own voices absent from the colonial archives, more research and oral history is required to properly illuminate girls' own rationales for their participation.

Relational identities and youth insurgency

What colonial officials failed to acknowledge was that youth insurgency and radicalism were driven by legitimate socio-economic grievances and political repression, and also by youth identities and relationships.[62] Different relational facets of generational identities were mobilised in the struggle against colonialism: of youth as a cohort; of youth as a liberation generation shaped by violent struggle; of youth as a life stage of personal growth and rebellion; and of youth's age position within kinship relations – with the latter two stages being most strongly gendered.[63] As Richard Waller has argued for Kenya, colonialism relied on co-opting youth for its future, but it also granted boys, and to a lesser extent girls, access to educational resources and social spaces which allowed them to challenge both colonial authority and the gendered hierarchies that underpinned colonised societies.[64] Youth then were 'inherently doubled as both peril and promise' for colonial states.[65] The youth who joined anti-colonial insurgencies were 'beings, becomings and having beens': their lives were shaped by, and need to be analysed in relation to, their experiences of growing up under colonial rule, their adolescent identities and social networks, and their desires for the future.[66]

Colonialism generated unprecedented levels of tension between the young and gerontocratic power structures; tensions that were driven by the contradictory ramifications of globalised modernity and the colonial project, and which inevitably shaped the anti-colonial movements that sought to politically mobilise youth. Particularly after 1945, many youths – both male and female – found themselves struggling with access to education, unemployment or underemployment, and consequently with being unable to marry and establish their own households. Ocobock argues coming of age stalled in 1950s Kenya, with many youths trapped between childhood and adulthood, entering a period of what Summers has termed 'waithood'.[67] This waithood created a moral economy of civil war that hinged on generational as well as ethnic and anti-colonial tensions. Kenyan elders were reluctant to accord youth agency and feared youth were attempting to usurp elders' power and responsibilities, subverting generational hierarchies. From the perspective of male youth forest fighters, joining Mau Mau marked the beginning of a new, alternative form of Gikuyu manhood, reinvigorating older 'warrior' hegemonic masculinities 'to regain stolen lands and become an adult'.[68]

Whilst many elders and colonial officials feared youth agency and their desires for personal advancement and independence, some insurgent leaders sought to capitalise

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on youth psychology, to co-opt and channel the energies of such disaffected young people, seeing in boys especially a natural rebelliousness and desire to prove themselves. EOKA undertook the most deliberate and strategic recruitment of youth seen in insurgencies against British rule, being led by General Grivas who asserted that 'it is among the young people that one finds audacity, the love of taking risks, and the first great difficult achievements'.[69] But whilst Grivas credited himself with the decision to deploy youth, and the colonial government saw EOKA as seducing youth into rebellion, it was youth themselves who chose to join the struggle, for reasons ranging from political consciousness to revenge, peer pressure or a desire to belong. Youth were agential actors, although levels and forms of agency vary by age as well as gender and are difficult to glean from colonial archives, whilst even youth's own accounts are inflected by post-conflict memory and experience, and multiple motivations.[70] With no children, households or careers, youth faced fewer obstacles to entry into armed groups than many adults. Girls' actions however were often constrained by patriarchal social structures, norms of femininity and respectability, and by bearing greater familial domestic duties and responsibilities than boys.[71] EOKA originally targeted 'single girls' for membership, viewing married women as domestic and maternal rather than political beings.[72] EOKA's conservative political ideology saw its leaders reject direct female violence, with Elenitsa Seraphim-Loizou – the only female area commander – noting that her girls were trained to use grenades and guns but 'never got the opportunity to put those skills to the test', praising them instead for being 'more positive and discrete than their male colleagues'.[73] Others girls however found in insurgencies spaces for challenging gender and/or generational roles. Jane Muthoni Mara recounted in a 2010 court case how she had been put in charge of organising the older women and girls in her village 'to provide the Mau Mau with food, water and wash their clothes'. She recalled 'I was a young girl at this time yet I was made a leader and put in charge of older women in my village' because she was 'very organised' and her older brother was 'a Mau Mau', which conferred trustworthiness by proxy.[74] Jane's testimony highlights the inversions of generational authority that could occur in insurgent movements, but also how gender and kinship relations remained significant vectors of mobilisation

Children and youth's decisions to join insurgencies were shaped by their experiences of colonialism and its impact on their lives and those of their families. But it was also often shaped by their kinship relations and generational tensions within their families. Some followed parents and older siblings into liberation struggles; others may have joined in part to contest their elders' acquiescence to, or collaboration with, colonial rule, rebelling against both state and parental authority.[75] Youth cohort identities were significant vectors of mobilisation, being crafted through gender-delineated age-sets in Gikuyu society in Kenya, and by school and youth organisations in Cyprus. Pamphlets from the Pancyprian National Youth Organization (PEON), and the Valiant Youth of EOKA (ANE), reveal a deeply patriotic rhetoric, full of the language of resistance, self-determination, anti-colonialism, and the glorification of sacrifice to overthrow repression, highlighting performative aspects of youthful insurgency: 'It is the duty of every school-boy and school-girl to pull together to oppose the plans of colonialists', 'Young boys and girls of Cyprus – Let all Cyprus become an inferno to obtain freedom' and 'glorious death for the sake of the Fatherland is the lot of the

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chosen'. These youth organisations drew on ethnically-Greek classical mythologies and heroic legends, as well as more recent memories of the Second World War to generate calls for resistance: 'You are the descendants of a generation of heroes and martyrs', 'In Cyprus where children are fighters, women become Amazons and young boys become jiants [sic]'.[76] Growing up during the struggle for *enosis* helped craft a sense of belonging to a liberation generation that was gaining its independence alongside Cyprus itself, although it should be noted that PEON and ANE also utilised intimidation tactics to encourage mass youth participation in school boycotts and to hold youth to their EOKA oaths.[77]

Colonial counterinsurgency responses to youth insurgency

Children and youth were key targets of so-called 'hearts and minds' population-centric counterinsurgency and 'repressive developmentalism', as states sought to re-capture the future of their subjects and of empire itself, particularly in Kenya where racial paternalism viewed Africans as both requirous of, and amenable to, social engineering.[78] Villagisation – the forcible resettlement of rural populations into government-designated new villages for surveillance – by necessity had a strong focus on women and children, who constituted the majority of the resettled.[79] After 1955, feeling the military battle was won, colonial officials reframed the Mau Mau Emergency as a social welfare problem, and, as Luise White asserts, officials 'sought to supplant Gikuyu parenting' with colonial expertise.[80] Community development staff and humanitarian organisations were mobilised to 'rehabilitate' the Gikuyu family, and young women became a particular target of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (Women's Progress) clubs training in home craft and child care to socially engineer Gikuyu domesticity.[81]

In terms of juvenile or youth-focused welfare programming, education was the prime site of intervention, but one which reflected the ambivalences of the colonial project, as schools became a vector of both insurgency and counterinsurgency. Schools that were supposed to train children to be productive and obedient colonised subjects became spaces of youth politicisation, resistance and recruitment into insurgency, most notably in Cyprus where schools proved to be 'a dangerous agency for the organised intimidation and the disruption of society' and were 'indispensable to the conduct of the anti-British armed struggle'.[82] During the 'Battle of the Flags' over student attempts to remove British and raise Greek flags in school grounds, the Cyprus government responded to student militancy by enforcing school closures, with up to eighteen of fifty-seven secondary schools and over half of elementary schools closed at any point in 1955–56 and the education system almost breaking down.[83] Boys' and girls' Greek Gymnasia schools, with their promotion of an ethnically Greek classical education, became a major recruiting ground for EOKA. To combat this, British officials promoted technical education to provide a self-consciously modern and vocational curriculum to 'de-Hellenise' education and counteract the cultural nationalism of the Greek schools, focusing implicitly on boys who were viewed as the main security threat.[84] Education was also a site of intense conflict during Mau Mau, with Gikuyu Independent Schooling Association schools being closed following alleged Mau Mau infiltration and teenagers suspected of swearing Mau Mau oaths not being allowed to leave villages for schooling, whilst school fees were sometimes lifted for

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Home Guards' children to reward loyalty.[85] It should be remembered, however, that 'coercion not conciliation was the mainstay' of British counterinsurgency, and developmental interventions in education, maternal health and child welfare were usually under-funded and under-resourced: welfare and development interventions ultimately lacked both the reach and the cultural and gen[d]erational sensitivity to capture either the hearts or the minds of child and youth populations.[86]

With welfarist interventions insufficient to prevent youth insurgency, more punitive mechanisms were deployed to discipline youth who were captured by security forces and brought before colonial courts. In Cyprus, children were among the first to be arrested on Emergency offences, with 1,073 juveniles under the age of sixteen being charged with such offences, 894 of whom were convicted for their involvement in illegal strikes, riots and assemblies or other offences 'against social order', and against firearms legislation: this data cannot be disaggregated by gender.[87] David French notes that overall 32 *per cent* of individuals brought to trial were high school students.[88] Meanwhile, in 1955 alone there were 2,571 convictions for juveniles under Mau Mau Emergency regulations.[89] The sanctioning of these juvenile insurgents was shaped not just by notions of age and gender, but also by the tensions of late colonial penality, where notions of judicial leniency and welfarist reform that suffused the rhetoric of colonial governance clashed with the reality of penal violence and the brutality of Emergency detention.[90] Fining or binding over youths was regarded as ineffective as it transferred responsibility from the individual to their families: the very families whom colonial officials held as unable to control their children.[91] Legal officials were generally reluctant to sentence juveniles to imprisonment, fearing that they would be corrupted by adult prisoners. Colonial courts faced added practical and moral difficulties in dealing with female juvenile offenders, due to their relatively small numbers and a lack of gender-segregated juvenile institutions. In Cyprus, officials struggled to place a fifteen-year-old girl sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, worried that she would be negatively influenced by the female criminals, terrorists and brothel keeper in the only women's jail block. Other girls were detained in a Famagusta house gazetted as a prison, with a police officer's wife acting as 'wardress', recalibrating detention as a domestic space for these European girls.[92]

Whilst officials were reticent to incarcerate youth insurgents, for those convicted of capital offences under extended Emergency regulations and sentenced to death for crimes such as murder, possession of firearms or consorting with terrorists, imprisonment was the only option given that penal codes forbade the execution of anyone under eighteen years old, whilst establish norms also opposed the execution of females. This restriction led to concerns that insurgent forces were deliberately using male juveniles for assassinations, knowing 'full well they would not be hanged by reason of their age'.[93] In Kenya, where capital punishment was most extensive with 1,499 Emergency-related capital sentences handed down, some 151 male juveniles and seventeen girls were sentenced to death for Mau Mau offences but had their sentences commuted, being 'detained at the Governor's pleasure' instead; girls were spared explicitly on grounds of their gender.[94] One hundred and thirty-six youths under eighteen years of age were prosecuted for capital offences between April 1955 and February 1957 in Cyprus, with a further 474 suspected of such offences.[95] By 1957 there was such concern about 'the increase of terrorist activity by youths' and their 'being up-

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graded to killers at a much earlier age … between fifteen and seventeen' that senior officials – unsuccessfully – opposed calls from London to raise the minimum age for the death penalty from sixteen to eighteen years, insisting that under eighteens convicted of murder 'should hang' to deter teenagers from participating in EOKA attacks.[96] It is significant that all nine Cypriots who were hanged by colonial authorities for terrorist offences were male youths aged nineteen to twenty-three years, their executions being intended as a didactic deterrent against youth violence.[97] Nevertheless, the youth of many condemned EOKA fighters caused significant international opprobrium, and some British politicians and public argued that 'these young men, many only boys, were acting as patriots', highlighting how notions of (white) youthful ingenuousness undercut anxieties about masculine, politically-motivated violence.[98]

Colonial courts ultimately determined that two forms of punishment were most salutary and apposite for juveniles: rehabilitation in detention and corporal punishment. Corporal punishment had long been regarded as an effective and culturally-appropriate sanction for punishing young colonised bodies, but only for male youth; females were legally exempt from such sentences due to metropolitan mores against the judicial infliction of physical violence on female bodies.[99] In Cyprus, Emergency regulations extended the category of 'juvenile' boy to allow the use of corporal punishment in Special Courts on males up to the age of eighteen on the grounds that 'whipping' was an 'appropriate' and 'humane' punishment, highlighting official belief in the necessity of physical violence to combat male youth rebellion.[100] Some 154 boys were caned by the end of 1956, sixty of whom were under sixteen years of age.[101] The use of corporal punishment, however, generated international outrage and infuriated Greek-Cypriot communities, for whom it was not a culturally appropriate sanction, and the resulting backlash forced an end to the policy in December 1956.[102] Outrage over the physical punishment of youthful insurgents, however, was distinctly contingent and racialised, with no concerns expressed about the simultaneous but more widespread use of corporal punishment against juvenile offenders in Kenya, where 3,197 boys were caned for Mau Mau-related offences in 1955 alone.[103]

Gendering youth rehabilitation

As with adults, many young insurgents ended up in detention after being captured by security forces. A mix of detention camps, approved schools, youth camps and reformatories developed to contain juvenile detainees, which were run by a combination of prison staff, former military personnel, probation officers, missionaries, welfare workers and humanitarians, ensuring that juvenile detention and reform were shaped by competing logics of violence and welfare. Recent studies have revealed the violence and brutality were inherent in colonial detention, and neither male nor female youths were exempt from such suffering.[104] In Cyprus, of the 1,118 males in detention in June 1957, 20 *per cent* were under the age of nineteen.[105] International Committee of the Red Cross files on Cyprus record concerns about the 'psychological effect on these youths', as well as physical abuse, with boys kicked and beaten with batons to the point of requiring hospitalisation, whilst memoirs also recount female juveniles being tortured during interrogation.[106] Meanwhile in Kenya, by mid-1955 over 2,000 boys and nearly 1,000 girls under the age of eighteen were detained or imprisoned for Mau Mau offences.[107] Initially juveniles were held alongside adults in dreadful

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conditions but medical, moral and ideological concerns quickly drove the establishment of segregated juvenile detention facilities, as evidence of overcrowding, radicalisation and the sexual exploitation of 'young uncircumcised boys' by adult detainees mounted.[108] Conditions remained harsh, however: 'they spent their entire day sitting with their feet in a drain, their bodies shrouded in blankets or sacks, and their minds and hearts revolving in wicked circles'.[109] Teenage girls frequently faced threats of sexual violence in securitised spaces, whilst younger girl detainees petitioned Kenya's government concerning their treatment, questioning whether 'a child of you aged 12 years carry a stone weights 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 10" taking little food like that. Besides that we are beaten by order of a chief warder [sic]'.[110]

To occupy the 'minds' and correct the 'hearts' of youth detainees, new reformative mechanisms had to be developed. 'Rehabilitation' programs for juvenile detainees blended colonial understandings of local age relations, imperial welfare policy and global technologies of juvenile reform in their attempt to produce productive colonial subjects. Cyprus had few juvenile reform institutions and establishing youth detention facilities was therefore deemed an 'urgent priority', but one that apparently went unmet due to insufficient resources.[111] Officials tasked with developing a rehabilitation program for the male youth detainees being held at Kokkinotrimithia camp argued that any regime 'must attach first importance to work', alongside games, hobbies and education 'designed to help individuals after their release'. Their reports, however, reveal a limited belief in the scope for rehabilitation, noting that no attempt should be made to force a 'change of heart' in the boys, as this could provoke a backlash, and that 'a real effort will have to be made to prevent deterioration and further embitterment'.[112] Overall, juvenile rehabilitation and developmental counterinsurgency efforts in Cyprus were less extensive than in Kenya, where racist and 'civilizational' framings of Gikuyu society and socialisation drove colonial responses.

Colonial archives are much more fulsome in their recording of juvenile rehabilitation in Kenya. There, officials were notably more positive and proactive about their ability to 'reclaim' and mould teenage Mau Mau adherents, reflecting paternalistic, racial views about the malleability of the supposedly inherently childlike 'African mind' and the power of white pseudo-parental authority.[113] Community development officials working at the main Manyani detention camp for boys dedicated themselves to reforming their charges and securing the necessary support and resources to enable a full rehabilitation program. Roger Owles, charged with the boys' reform, described his charges as 'a collection of Devils!' but stated firmly that they were 'reclaimable through school and discipline' and that with 'proper attention paid to their natural childish temperament they are material for a batch of young men-to-be of decent character'.[114] Owles's attitude reveals the paternalistic nature of the corrective regime that underpinned juvenile rehabilitation, unitising and infantilising Africans as a whole: 'hard discipline meted out with sound and flawless justice is the best medicine for these boys. I can give every assurance that, like any African, these boys re-act very favourably'.[115]

To create an effective space for the newly developed program of juvenile rehabilitation, Wamumu Approved School was established in June 1956 with capacity for 1,200 boys between sixteen and eighteen years of age. Wamumu became a showcase for rehabilitation, deliberately crafted to counter the 'gulag' image of the general

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detention system.[116] It was regarded by officials as the only 'successful' rehabilitation program of the Mau Mau Emergency, with Governor Baring granting a full pardon to any boy who graduated from the camp.[117] That success was attributed to its combination of global juvenile reform techniques, British boarding school ethos and the application of Gikuyu concepts of generational authority and gendered initiation, but was also a product of selecting the most seemingly acquiescent boys and leaving the 'hardcore' to rot in general detention.[118] 'Juvenile terrorists' were re-constructed as delinquent, disobedient, but reclaimable children: 'we treat them entirely as ordinary schoolboys, never as wrongdoers, and we get a perfect response'.[119] As Ocobock argues, 'emasculating and infantilising the detainees', desecuritising them, allowed the rehabilitation of boys of varying ages, backgrounds and degrees of Mau Mau affiliation as 'juveniles' rather than 'terrorists'.[120] Whereas Mau Mau insurgents had been pathologised by the state for their violence, rehabilitation reframed these male youths as corrupted innocents who could be restored to a pristine childhood; but in doing so it rendered them passive and denied their political agency.[121] Wamumu offered an 'alternative, state-sponsored rite of passage – a strange marriage of Gikuyu cultural life, colonial policy and carceral contingency'.[122] Its regime was disciplinary in the Foucauldian sense, with emphasis on developmental reform and training rather than punishing bodies and minds.[123] Confession was used to 'cleanse' the boys of their Mau Mau oaths and adherence, and a hybridised Gikuyu initiation ceremony, including circumcision, was used to mark 'reformed' boys' transition into manhood, with the state rather than community elders acting as the gatekeeper of masculine authority.[124] Wamumu youth masculinities, however, were 'co-productions' between adults and juvenile inmates and were the products of both horizontal and vertical socialisation.[125] Peer pressure was held as most effective in combating unwanted behaviours as 'reformed boys' sought to take best advantage of the opportunities offered to them, but doubtless some boys' rehabilitation was performative rather than genuine.[126] The emphasis on vocational training, basic education and physical training to reform youths in mind and body was geared towards the production of economically productive and socially acquiescent colonial youth masculinities, reasserting rather than significantly transforming pre-conflict hegemonies. Notably, Wamumu graduates were provided with secure jobs that granted them wages and respect, thereby removing the central grievance that had driven many into Mau Mau.[127] The success of Wamumu came ultimately not from its adherence to 'hearts and minds' but from its provision of an accessible pathway to successful manhood, supported by committed mentoring and peer socialisation. The boys responded to Wamumu's reformative program not because it turned them into good colonial citizens, but rather into respectable and successful proto-adults.

Juvenile rehabilitation programs were, however, distinctly gendered affairs: characters and employment prospects were the focus of boys' reform; for girls, it was their morals and maternal potential. Whilst considerable effort was invested in the rehabilitation of boys, the limited efforts towards girls' rehabilitation instead focused on turning them into well-behaved mothers and wives, adding domestic skills like sewing and childcare to basic education and citizenship classes.[128] Even today young female combatants' rehabilitation is seen primarily as a 'social rather than political process' that is mainly enacted in marriage and a (re)turn to the domestic sphere.[129] Due to their

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relatively small numbers, Cypriot girls were detained alongside adult women and no formal rehabilitation programme for them is mentioned in colonial archives, whilst in Kenya girls were commonly held at Kamiti Women's camp despite concerns that they would be 'contaminated' by the 'hardcore' Mau Mau adult women there.[130] To avoid this, colonial legal and welfare institutions often diverted girls 'outside the care of the state to private charitable or religious organizations', such as mission centres and Salvation Army welfare centres, which were gazetted as female-approved schools in Kenya, being viewed as cheaper and better equipped to recalibrate girls' morals.[131] Girls in Kamiti faced a violent and punitive regime, including hard labour, such as stone breaking and brickmaking, and solitary confinement, before they were deemed fit for rehabilitation.[132] In 1956 an international scandal erupted when Eileen Fletcher, the Quaker social worker in charge of female rehabilitation, published an account detailing abuses in the detention system, particularly those against women and girls. The British government attempted to deflect criticism by decrying Fletcher as emotionally unstable, and claiming the girls described in Fletcher's report had been 'mis-aged' in official documentation. They asserted that most were in fact over eighteen years of age: the punitive treatment of 'women' being held less problematic than that of 'girls'.[133] Fletcher's own proposed rehabilitation program for girls had drawn on English borstals, UNESCO's basic education scheme and the Quaker text *The Pilgrim's Progress* to combine metropolitan, international technocratic and religious ideas of female socialisation, but she quit after it was deemed unworkable by Kenyan officials.[134] In her stead, the task of rehabilitating females fell to Mrs Warren-Gash and African camp staff, who prioritised domestic skills. Successful rehabilitation was described as transforming girls from being 'sullen, sour, unpleasant and downright ugly' to 'really pretty'.[135] Even then, staff felt 'once released they are too young and inable [sic] to solve their own problems in a happy and honest way', suggesting a belief that girls were inherently immoral and required constant parental, and later spousal, control. Overall, officials seemed to find girls more resistant to rehabilitation compared to the Wamumu boys.[136]

Conclusion

Both male and female youth were a significant force in anti-colonial insurgency: seeing themselves as 'Spartans' fighting for their and their people's futures, but decried as 'uncircumscribed boys' and callow youths, led astray by insurgent movements, colonial authorities and loyalist elders. Youth insurgency, however, was driven by kinship, cohort identities, youth psychology and life experiences, and by their own political agency rather than just adult manipulation or failed parenting. They acted in varied capacities, often progressing from political protest to violent actions, their roles shaped by intersecting and competing notions of age and gender: although social networks and insurgent group dynamics saw youths more systematically mobilised by EOKA, across both Cyprus and Kenya, youths' physical and psychological capacities saw them serve in the same capacities as adults, as well as in covert and frontline roles which capitalised on teenage liminality. Younger Cypriot schoolchildren additionally undertook political actions which emphasised the propaganda value of symbolic childhoods. Gender norms strongly shaped youth insurgency, with boys routinely assigned directly violent roles whilst girls were deployed in more supportive or covert roles

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where feminine duties and taboos against the public violation of female bodies allowed them to operate effectively; however, some girls found in their social navigation of insurgencies the space to challenge gender restrictions, engaging in bombings or public protests. Some youths' individual talents and reputations saw them invert generational hierarchies of authority and take on local leadership roles. Both colonial states responded to this youthful insurgency in a distinctly gendered fashion, securitising boys whilst moralising and sexualising girls. Youth were not spared the violence of colonial counterinsurgency either in security operations or in detention, and indeed were targeted for gradated forms of that violence; often spared capital punishment due to their age but subjected, in the case of boys, to corporal punishment due to their gen[d]erational status. Counterinsurgency responses to youth were strongly influenced by colonial paternalism, generating common responses, but the greatest differences appeared in regard to rehabilitation. Gen[d]erational thinking intersected with colonial racism here, with African youths being perceived as more malleable and susceptible to paternalistic discipline and instruction than Cypriots. Gikuyu boys were to be turned into productive colonial citizens through discipline, skills training and promised employment, whilst girls were disciplined and domesticised, prepared for future roles as subordinated wives and mothers. However, it was not just colonial forces that sought to instrumentalise and control boys and girls. Like many insurgent groups, neither EOKA nor Mau Mau were explicitly emancipatory for youth, mobilising their energies in the insurgency but side-lining them in post-conflict politics, although youth have remained more prominent in public commemoration of the struggle in Cyprus. Further research into the experiences of children and youth in anti-colonial liberation struggles is required, with oral histories particularly needed to recover the voices of both male and female insurgents. It is hoped, however that this article has established the value of a gen[d]erational analysis of insurgency and counterinsurgency for revealing the underlying tensions and experiences which drove boys and girls, young men and young women, to fight against colonial rule, and that shaped colonial responses to their actions.

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