



PROJECT MUSE®

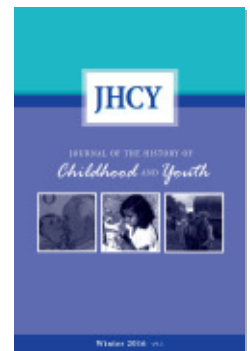
“Child! Now you are”: Identity Registration, Labor, and
the Definition of Childhood in Colonial Tanganyika,
1910–1950

Sarah Walters

The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth, Volume 9, Number
1, Winter 2016, pp. 66-86 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2016.0001>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/611007>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[18.221.146.223] Project MUSE (2024-04-19 22:58 GMT)

SARAH WALTERS

“CHILD! NOW YOU ARE”: IDENTITY REGISTRATION, LABOR, AND THE DEFINITION OF CHILDHOOD IN COLONIAL TANGANYIKA, 1910–1950

Child! Now you are; you have been in the body of your mother,
where nobody has seen you . . . become a child, who quickly knows
to work.¹

Child labor is under-researched in Africa. A principal reason for the subject's neglect is the difficulty of defining a “child” and what constitutes “child labor.” The contemporary invisibility of child labor is compounded by its invisibility in the historical record, and there has been a call for more context-specific and historical research. The focus of this study is colonial Tanganyika, where the labor of children represented an important but hidden sector of the economy. The conditions in which children worked were often dangerous and exploitative, and working often compromised education. As pressure mounted in the interwar period to exert more control over children's work in Tanganyika, the authorities increasingly turned to the argument that regulation was impossible, because “childhood” was so difficult to define.²

The basis of this argument (which was repeated across Africa) was that in the absence of birth registration and identity documentation it was impossible to tell a child's age with accuracy. Given that so few Tanganyikan children had any form of identity documentation showing their age, colonial officials and employers contended that age-based labor laws could not be implemented. Compounding this argument were theories about the relative definition of “childhood”: stages of psychological and physical development in African children were compared with those in the metropole to show that such legislation was not only impossible to enforce, but also inappropriate. The centrality of child labor to the household economy was an additional justification by employers for their exploitation in colonial concerns, and was a prime

reason why parents and children themselves were not universally supportive of regulation.³

In this paper, the lack of identity registration in colonial Tanganyika, the various attempts to institute such a system, and the resistance encountered from parents and children are first described. The extent and experience of child labor in the protectorate is then outlined based on evidence from inspection reports, legislative debates, newspapers, and anthropological investigations. It is shown how employers and administrators used the lack of registration and identity documentation to resist increasing pressure in the interwar period to implement international child labor law. Finally, it is argued that employers and legislators were not alone in taking advantage of the malleability of childhood in Tanganyika. Parents often sent their children to work, and children became increasingly important economic actors for their families in the transition to a cash economy. Children themselves were able to earn money through their work and saw labor as a means to their own advancement and security.⁴

This paper therefore explores how employers, legislators, educators, parents, and children themselves used the indefinable nature of childhood to their own perceived advantage. The absence of registration led to a lack of protection, but also proved enabling, allowing children to construct fluid identities adapted to serve changing needs and ends. This discussion is situated against a wider contemporary debate about empowerment, agency, and development through identity registration.

THE REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN

There was no comprehensive system of civil registration during the colonial period in Tanganyika. Population knowledge relied on censuses, and even these were inaccurate. Pre–Second World War national censuses were rough calculations based on multiplying the number of taxpaying men by an estimated number of dependants, and up until the 1960s, only very summary statistics were available for births and infant deaths. No individual-level registration existed before the advent of localized demographic surveillance systems later established to monitor the HIV/AIDS pandemic.⁵

Colonial officials wanted to measure births and deaths because they associated fertility and child survival with the economic vitality of the colony. Beginning in 1914, the German administration in Tanganyika sought to increase the birth rate and to monitor infant mortality, with the explicit aim of maintaining or increasing the labor supply. The Hamburg Colonial Institute launched a competition for ideas about how “the birth rate may be increased in our colonies and to achieve the reduction of mortality among children of the coloured native

population, which is the most valuable asset in the political economy of our colonies." (As in other quotations in this essay, the term "Native" appears in the original source.) During the interwar period, this preoccupation with increasing the birth rate and infant survival in order to expand the labor force continued under the British protectorate. A memo on infant mortality in 1923 noted that "the solution of many of the more important economic problems are to be found in its reduction," while in 1934 it was considered that "what is required in the future of Tanganyika, is an increase of its only economic asset—Native—not a decrease. An increase in other words of potential tax payers. It is encouraging to think that each year the number of maternity cases etc., has risen."⁶

Despite this preoccupation with the number of births and infant survival, the administration struggled to identify and keep track of individual women and children. The registration of births through surveys largely foundered, and even women who gave birth in clinics could not be observed because they did not return voluntarily for postnatal checkups. The difficulty the state had in defining the age of its subjects, the practice of name changing, and the increasing levels of mobility and migration conspired to keep African children hidden from the official eye. The Lake Province Medical Department recorded this frustration and uncertainty in 1949, noting that "once the mother and baby leave [the clinic], in most cases they are lost to medical advice." Colonial officials were so suspicious and frustrated that they went so far as to accuse women of deliberately falsifying their obstetric histories where these were being collected for epidemiological study. Parents were willing to attend clinics for immediate treatment but were very reluctant to seek admission as inpatients or to return for follow up appointments to treat chronic conditions in their children. One health officer complained in 1932, "She [a Tanganyikan woman] prefers in these towns as elsewhere, to be confined in her own house, and will attend for treatment for an ailment affecting her or her child. She will not seek admission, however, unless seriously ill or when delivery is abnormal, and their own methods have failed."⁷

Various efforts were made to create clinical records and identity tags for children in order to follow up medical interventions and establish mortality rates. Such efforts largely failed. The medical officer in Lake Province described in 1945 how "Dr Graham in Tabora had tin disks made to hang round the necks of his Mwanza infant patients in order to identify them," and similar systems were introduced in nearby areas during the 1940s. They did not go far towards solving the problem, however, and as late as 1947, the medical officer in Tabora was complaining that "few African mothers will come along to hospital and give full particulars of the infant and produce its Clinic identity disc. These particulars have literally to be dragged out of the average mother."⁸

In trying to understand why it was so hard to keep track of Tanganyikan children, officials pointed to the conflation in people's minds of the registration of birth and the collection of taxes. In 1930, Dr. Lester (who was in charge of a large epidemiological survey) complained that the census taking had been badly conducted because of a misconception on the part of the chiefs that it had something to do with taxation. Attempts had been made to encourage the chiefs in Kahama district to collect data about the local population through tying bits of colored string: one color for each sex, and for adults and children, one knot per individual. However, suspicion that registration was linked to taxation was such that by 1931 it was decided that it was a waste of money to continue data collection.⁹

In the absence of registration and identity documents, "childhood" in colonial Tanganyika was an ill-defined entity. The lack of definition and measurability of children was used by various actors to avoid legislating against the use of child labor. Before exploring this further, let us first consider the extent and character of child labor in colonial Tanganyika.

CHILD LABOR

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the coffee and sisal estates in Kilimanjaro and Tanga were some of the biggest employers of children in the country. Other sectors in the economy, such as the tea estates in the southern highlands, domestic service in Dar es Salaam, and the ginneries in the northwest, also relied heavily on child labor. The most detailed records for child labor are found in regions such as Kilimanjaro, where a strong missionary presence ensured a vocal education lobby that drew attention to the problem. Hence, while child labor was a known issue in Kilimanjaro and the northeast during the 1920s, it was not until a decade later that similar concerns arose elsewhere in the protectorate.¹⁰

In 1927, the question of child labor on the coffee estates surfaced "as usual" on Kilimanjaro. The provincial commissioner (PC) noted that there was "no doubt" local opposition to the employment of juveniles was increasing and that he believed parental opinion was hardening against it. A number of Chagga chiefs wanted to forbid the practice but were overruled by the PC, who was skeptical of their "high moral grounds" and suspected the "utility of the children at home" as their true motivation. In 1929, the Education Department complained about a decrease in the number attending village schools in Central Province because of the "growing inclination of children to go to work on the big estates." By 1930, missions in Tanga were finding it difficult to maintain the fifty percent attendance rate they needed to justify the government grant to mission schools because of child labor in the area, principally on the sisal and coffee

estates. In fact, the Tanga Education Committee went so far as to suggest taxing the work of children as a disincentive for hiring child laborers.¹¹

The problem of child labor on coffee estates was seen as particularly hard to combat, partly because of direct pressure from the planters who exploited child labor because it was cheap, but also because plantation labor was popularly seen as "child's work." During the picking season a large increase in the workforce was required on the plantations, and the employers demanded child and female labor because "the delicacy of the task renders small fingers and bodies very advantageous." School holidays were arranged to coincide with the coffee harvest to minimize the impact of employment on education. But the fact that children could only be employed on the government regulation thirty-day contract meant that they were often forced to miss substantial periods of school at the beginning of term. Compulsory education seemed unfeasible, and teachers had little power to retain children in schools if there was an estate nearby requiring seasonal work. Indeed, schools may have provided employers with convenient recruiting grounds. A schools supervisor of the Universities Mission to Central Africa noted in 1939, "In some cases the *Mzungu* [European] goes to the school and more or less compels the children to go work for him." He took the example of one Mr. Tate of the Ngambo *shamba* (farm) near Amani, who proposed, when the coffee was ripe, to "take all the school children in the area" for a period of two months, describing him as "generally unsympathetic" and as seeming "to think that education was a ridiculous fad of the mission and that the people only exist to do his work." He summed up that "the net result of all this is that in a school anywhere near a *shamba* the children, after the age of 9 or 10 when they can read 'Esopo' [Aesop's fables] only come to school on odd days when they are too tired to work in the fields or for periods when there is little work to be done."¹²

It was estimated in 1943 that during the coffee harvest up to 75 percent of labor on estates was probably conducted by children, with up to half being children under the age of twelve years. Any one estate might employ up to 150 juveniles, and it was difficult to ensure that all those under twelve years were working with adult supervision. Children from the age of eight or nine were accepted for work, and not only on the lighter tasks like picking coffee beans, tea leaves, and pyrethrum flowers and sweeping the floors of sisal factories; there were incidents of children as young as eight being forced to cart heavy loads of gravel on coffee plantations in the 1930s. The labor commissioner claimed in 1942 that although eight- to nine-year-old children were employed, the average minimum age on coffee, tea, and pyrethrum estates in Tanga, Arusha, and Mbeya was ten to twelve, as the very little children were unable

to reach the berries on the upper parts of trees and had a tendency to break the branches. Conversely, the UMCA school inspector suggested that the very youngest were favored as wages were paid according to size, with 3.50 to 4 shillings for the eight- to nine-year-old children in the late 1930s.¹³

Labor commissioners and employers justified using juvenile labor on plantations by arguing that it was suitable work for children. It was emphasized that this "healthy, outdoor" work was no different to the labor children performed "for free" on their parents' fields and that it had the benefit of keeping the ones not enrolled in school out of mischief. *Shamba* (farm) work was compared to hop-picking and blackberry-harvesting holidays in England, and it was emphasized that hours were reasonable—between six and six and a half hours per day—and employment seasonal. In 1940 it was noted that "all the while such work is light and means little more than healthy exercise in the open air." The continued employment of children in diamond mines (sorting diamonds) and in tea-sorting in factories in the Southern Highlands even after the passing of Ordinance Five of 1940 (which forbade the industrial work of children under fourteen years of age) was argued for on the grounds of it being "fairly harmless" and because it had been proven in Kenya that children were more adept at it than adult laborers. The labor commissioner wrote of diamond sorting that "the work is neither unpleasant nor arduous. . . . The children are inclined to look upon it more in the nature of a game than a labor; the stimulant to interest being the hunt for, and expectation of finding a diamond. Sorting is done in the open air under the shade of a grass roof and if the hours of work and periods of rest laid down in GN270 are observed it should be as innocuous to the health of the children as their traditional occupation (in the Shinyanga area) of herding the family's cattle and goats." Similarly, the chief inspector of mines wrote of the children sorting diamonds in 1941 that

at first glance it might have been thought that the youngsters were enjoying a meal in European fashion, but the similarity to the picnic table failed on closer inspection. Instead of forks or spoons, the youngsters held metal strips in their right hands. The table was laden, not with food, but carried down the centre an elongated heap of dark, damp, coarse sands. The children scooped out portions of this sand and spread it on the "cloth" before them. . . . The children seemed happy and in good spirit and might easily have been mistaken for scholars at an open air handicrafts school.¹⁴

It may well have been true that the circumstances of child labor were, at times, as idyllic as the inspectors portrayed them. The problem is that they were not adequate all of the time, that the regulatory apparatus and system of inspection was far from comprehensive, and that by permitting the principle of

employment, the way was laid clear for exploitation. Proponents of child labor argued that the education system was incomplete and that employment was a way of keeping children out of trouble, but as we have seen above, many children were in schools, especially in the coffee-picking areas where child labor was most utilized, and employment did indeed interfere with their education. Observers who suggested the employment of children on plantations was no worse than work on their parents' *shambas* forgot the fact that plantation laborers were often forced to work far from home and were not able to return to their villages at the end of the day. They belittled the concern expressed by groups such as the Chagga chiefs about the moral impact of being away from home for extended periods. Furthermore, these sanitized images of child labor belied the fact that once they were employed on a mine or on a plantation, children formed a ready reserve that could be tapped into when necessary to undertake more dangerous tasks. The isolation of many mines meant that once some "ostensible" reason had been established for having children on the mine at all, it was difficult to detect the times when they were employed on additional "unsuitable" work. Children who were allowed onto mines (such as the gold mines in the Lupa area) as cooks and water carriers for their miner fathers and older brothers were forced to live in remote and arduous conditions where children's needs were not catered for and where they were "almost bound to suffer from undernourishment."¹⁵

It was in the cotton ginneries that some of the harshest employment conditions were found. Ginneries relied on juveniles because of the perceived scarcity of adult labor in the cotton region (northwest Tanganyika) and because they were small. Young boys were employed in feeding the cotton into the gins. The work was not overly difficult, but it involved sitting in extremely cramped and dusty conditions for the usual twelve-hour shift every day. The ginnery inspector of the Northwestern Circle reported in 1936 that "working in a ginnery can never be looked upon as a pleasant form of occupation, but when there is no outlet for the dust and fluff, inseparable from the ginning of cotton, then it can only be considered as a mild form of purgatory." In 1936, no ginnery owner in the area had so far been progressive enough to install roof lights, even though children were employed through the night. The ginnery inspector for the rest of Tanganyika reported in the same year that the factories were in a "disreputable state" and that this was "directly due to the ignorance and neglect of the gin fitters" who were "generally lazy and neglectful . . . having one purpose only in their minds, i.e. to receive their pay at the end of the month." Wages were low, not more than a few shillings a month (and as low as ten cents a day) in the 1930s. Some employers provided a "meager" ration of food, but the quality was poor and variety minimal.¹⁶

A medical officer of the government hospital in Mwanza spent a night investigating the conditions in a ginnery near his home in 1939. His account of the conditions under which these children were working is so vivid it bears extensive quoting:

At ten o'clock I went down to the ginnery again. Outside the building was the night watchman superintending the carrying of sacks, and a few children were scattered around picking up bits of cotton seed from the ground. He said I might look inside. There they were in a long, well-lit room—thirty children each at a machine squatting on the vibrating boards. Many wore handkerchiefs over their mouths and noses, and the noise was such that when I spoke to them I could only just hear their childish voices raised in reply. Two men with sticks walked up and down. . . . The children's ages varied from about 9 to 14 . . . [one] . . . was obviously an old hand. He was beginning to get sleepy, but every now and then he would go out and dip his head in cold water. He was the only one during the night whom I saw taking any food. He had a mango, cut it in two, and tossed a bit to his neighbour. . . . [Another] looked 8 years old, but he must have been more. Rattling his cleaner across the gin, he always had an eye on the men with the sticks. It was difficult to snatch forty winks, for while one was walking away up one side, the other was walking down towards him. At 12:20, after about six hours work he lay back on the pile of cotton; but he was getting drowsy and had not noticed that one of the men had just turned the corner and seen him. He was gently pulled up again. . . . [Another] was very small and red-eyed. He was the only one who looked sullen; the others, if they had an expression at all, were just bored. He didn't dose [*sic*] like the others. Perhaps his cough kept him awake.

The overseer was standing by me. "Tell me," he said, after discovering who I was. "Surely there is nothing here that can harm the health of these children?" . . . "Come out into the fresh air; I can't speak in this noise and make you hear. Now, if you want my views, I know that bad health may be caused by bad housing or bad food due to poverty or ignorance or both; but never in my life have I witnessed such a deliberate and direct assault on the health of children as I am seeing here."

We returned, and I studied the "Wanyampara," the stick men, again. They were the employees of real importance. . . . The sole job of these men was to keep the children awake. They never touched them. The threat of force was enough, and scarcely enough for the older boys, who half opened their eyes with a grin, pushed the cotton along, and shut them again. . . . At one time the overseer went out for a while. Immediately these two men relaxed their vigilance; nineteen of the little heads nodded on to their chests, nineteen gins were empty, oil was being wasted, profits reduced. . . . [By two o'clock] the course of events was becoming absurd. The children would

not work. . . . But the "Wanyampara" had a new method of stimulation. By hitting the tin covers of the pulleys between each machine, and by introducing various catcalls directed at the offenders, there was still some hope of getting through the remaining work. The racket was appalling. . . . At 3 a.m. on Sunday morning the faces of the children were drawn with fatigue, the upper eyelids appeared swollen. Very little work was being done.¹⁷

The children were found not only to be working twelve-hour shifts in these conditions, without food, breaks or sleep, but also to have long journeys to and from the factory to their homes every day. Average earnings were eighteen to twenty cents a shift. Cotton ginneries were identified as being exceptionally poor conditions in which to work, but there is evidence that other environments where child labor was utilized were similarly dusty and unsuitable, in particular small flour mills; kapok ginneries; and jaggery, rice, and sugar mills. The use of child labor in these workplaces was the focus of even less publicity and inspection than in the cotton ginneries.¹⁸

In Kenya, the 1938 Report of the Employment of Juveniles Committee found that the main problem in the colony was "the large number of juveniles who drift or make their way into towns ostensibly to find employment. The employment which they do obtain in more cases is casual employment, often as domestic servants, at low rates of pay and other unsatisfactory conditions in the crowded bazaars." These children received "no apparent advantages from such employment and are open to the dangers of acquiring bad or vicious habits, or consorting with undesirables, and eventually in many cases becoming detribalised nonentities whose sole aim in life is to live as easily as possible by their wits. Much of such employment is by natives in the police lines, the medical depot, the railway service and in settlements such as Kibira." There was less official focus on the juvenile "drift" to towns in Tanganyika, although it was occurring in the same period. According to the *Tanganyika Standard*, when comments were raised in the Legislative Council about the "incredibly bad conditions" under which African children were working in Dar es Salaam, particularly in domestic service, where they were paid two shillings a month, worked twenty hours a day, and slept at times under shop counters, the concerns were immediately dismissed. One speaker claimed that African children were working for their own parents under equally bad conditions and that in all his experience in Dar es Salaam he had not heard any complaints, and he was satisfied that conditions were "not so bad." The denial of the paucity of child-labor conditions in towns in Tanganyika came in spite of the fact that African parents in Morogoro had expressed their objections to the labor commissioner as early as 1930. It took until 1946 for the issue to make the legislative agenda

and, even then, when it was tabled at the provincial commissioners' conference, it was addressed only in passing.¹⁹

LEGISLATION AND EXTERNAL INTERVENTION

Given the strength of the international labor lobby in the interwar period, it will come as no surprise that the impetus to regulate child labor at this time did not come from within Tanganyika. Practically every major intervention was made under order from London or to correspond with international standards, and even then only with considerable delay and prevarication. Despite the global groundswell against child labor, the colonial authorities sought to diffuse international pressure with the argument that it was impossible to define a Tanganyikan child because of the lack of registration data; they argued that they could not determine a child's true age in the absence of identity records, and therefore enforcing legislation would be impossible. Further, it was argued that the stages of development experienced by a Tanganyikan child may well be different to those of a European. "Considerations," it was noted in Tanganyika in 1940, "which apply in more civilised countries lose much of their force when we are dealing with native children."²⁰

The International Labor Conference of June 15 to July 10, 1920, founded two important international labor conventions, one dealing with the night work of young people, the other fixing the minimum age of employment at fourteen for children on industrial undertakings. In August 1921, Churchill forwarded these conventions to all colonial governments, who were expected to assess the possibility of bringing them into operation. Nothing was done in Tanganyika to move into line with these conventions; the governor noted in 1928 that "it is a difficult question—child labor among Africans—but I do not think that the time is yet ripe for Government to attempt to deal with it in any arbitrary manner." In reaction to further enquiries from the Colonial Office, in September 1931 the Tanganyika government informed the secretary of state that "local conditions present no insuperable obstacles to the application of the convention and the legislation required to give effect to its provisions is now under consideration," but nine years later still nothing had been done.²¹

In 1939, Malcolm Macdonald (as secretary of state for the colonies) increased the pressure on the Tanganyikan authorities, informing the governor, Mark Young, that Tanganyika was now virtually the only important colonial territory that had made no legislative provision for the two conventions in question. Neighboring Kenya and Uganda had already brought their legislation in line, with Kenya's minimum age in industrial employment raised to fourteen, and Uganda's set at sixteen. Ordinance Number 5 of 1940 (passed on March

21) finally made provision for these international conventions in Tanganyika, restricting industrial employment to those over fourteen years, forbidding the employment of women and children on night shifts and the employment of children under sixteen outside their home districts, and limiting the tasks that children and juveniles could undertake. As discussed above, even after the passing of this Ordinance, strong lobbies were made in favor of continuing child labor in certain industrial settings such as tea factories, and as sorters in diamond mines. Such arguments won favor with the colonial government who issued exemption orders almost immediately, which were only quashed through intervention—again—from the secretary of state (under whose direction the exemptions were revoked on May 1, 1942).²²

Even after Tanganyikan labor law had been brought in line with the International Labor Conventions, Macdonald did not let up the pressure. He had issued a dispatch in September 1938 suggesting that every colonial government should place legislation on its statute book making it illegal to employ children under the age of twelve in any kind of work, unless it was light, agricultural tasks with the child's own family. After the passing of the 1940 ordinance he pressured the Tanganyikan authorities to go further and to take up these 1938 suggestions. This provoked great protest against what was alleged to be "white-washing" legislation, detrimental to productivity and development. When the bill was finally drawn up, the secretary of state's wording was changed from "with the child's own family" to "in company with a parent," which implied the child could be employed "on estates or in domestic service, or anywhere as long as a parent was employed" as opposed to within the household or on the family *shamba* as Macdonald had intended. It was alleged by those who were against the legislation that it would be impossible to implement, as "when one thinks of the tribal extensions of the relation of 'fatherhood,' it is clear that estates will only need to employ a quota of adults to render legal the employment of an almost unlimited number of children." Furthermore, "One of the chief difficulties in implementing this legislation, if it is passed, will be to devise a means, in the absence of a system of registration in Tanganyika, of deciding whether a person in employment is or is not a juvenile."²³

With this line of argument employers and officials had hit procrastinator's gold. Whereas medical workers, missionaries, and educators drew on a universalizing discourse of childhood need to canvas support and money to bring Tanganyikan child health up to international standards, in the case of child labor, the alleged difference in the physical and mental maturation of Tanganyikan compared to European children was taken as an excuse not to protect them with regulation. It was a reason to avoid intervention and was the

local official's answer to external interference in labor law. The argument had two strands. First, it was alleged to be impossible to tell with any certainty the true age of an African child, and hence any legislation that specified minimum ages of employment was said to be problematic. Second, African children were said to mature much earlier than Europeans, thus justifying earlier utilization of their manpower.

DEFINING "CHILD"

The government anthropologist Hans Cory was one of the first to explicate, in print, the "comparison between the child of primitive and civilised society" in Tanganyika. He categorized stages of growth and contrasted Tanganyikan and European phases of development, arguing that there was "no doubt that a difference between his and our form exists." Although Cory argued that the Tanganyikan childhood was patterned similarly to the European, with a period of suckling and weaning followed by "infancy" up to the age of six, "childhood" up to the age of twelve, followed by puberty, he held that various stages of development were earlier in Tanganyika. He believed infants in the tropics were able to hold their heads up earlier because they were lighter than those of Europeans, and he noted children had an earlier observation of and reaction to their environment (though he argued that "this can hardly be called intelligence"). At the age of six, he suggested, Tanganyikan children were much more independent than Europeans, and, by the age of ten, the Tanganyikan child had acquired so much knowledge of life and so many experiences that it only needed physical strength to become an adult.²⁴

This idea of early maturity was an important weapon against the introduction of child labor legislation in Tanganyika. In 1941, the labor commissioner recommended that children be allowed to continue working as sorters in diamond mines in the Shinyanga region as "it is generally accepted that the development of the African child, up to 10 or 11 years of age, is considerably in advance of his European counterpart." Similar arguments were used in the debate about restricting the employment of people aged sixteen to eighteen years underground in mines in 1945. The director of public works argued at a meeting of the Labor Board that at the age of sixteen an African boy had reached the stage of development equivalent to that of a nineteen-year-old European, hence Article 21 of the International Labor Conference of 1944 (which advocated the restriction of employment underground in mines between the ages of sixteen and eighteen through making it conditional on the production of a medical certificate) should not be adopted in Tanganyika. During the 1942 debate about the use of children on tea, coffee, and pyrethrum plantations, the

labor commissioner argued that "it should not be overlooked that the African child of ten or so years old is more developed than the European child of a similar age. It is at this stage of life that they should be occupied rather than that they should roam about at will without restrictions."²⁵

Coupled with this idea of early maturity was the alleged impossibility of determining a Tanganyikan child's real age. The director of medical services confirmed in 1942 that there was no way of confirming a child's age by medical exam, an admission that was seized upon by the Labor Board, which concluded that "it was impossible to measure the age of the African child in years: they themselves did not know it," therefore concluding "white-washing" legislation which set minimum ages of employment could not be enforced. There was no attempt to follow the Belgian Territories where in the late 1930s labor in ginneries was limited to "adults," adulthood being defined on the basis of physical development rather than birth date.²⁶

In 1930, the governor proposed to prohibit the employment of children in factories and on plantations where it was difficult for them to return home at night and in some areas where it might interfere with schooling. The labor commissioner of Morogoro responded to these proposals by stating that regulating child labor in the matter of returning home each evening would be impossible. He argued that "it will be necessary for every employer to investigate the position of any boy or youth that might be considered a 'child.' It would seem absurd to hamper the employment of well-grown lads who come of their own accord to seek work with an employer, at some suitable task."²⁷

Similarly, in the 1937 campaign to legislate against the migration of children under twelve (with accompanying adults) from Nyasaland and Rhodesia to work on the Lupa goldfields, it was decided that no legislation was possible because there was no system of native registration, and thus no means of determining age, in either of these countries. In fact when Governor Mark Young wrote to Macdonald about the Lupa fields, he went so far as to deny that child laborers were being used, despite the controversy that had arisen in his own administration about how to deal with them. The difficulty of defining a child's age was therefore used as a tool for procrastination in child labor legislation, and there were also real fears that employers would exploit the haziness of age in hiring children. Regarding legislating for a minimum age in diamond sorting in 1941, the labor commissioner recorded that "it is often difficult to estimate within a year or two the correct age of an African child." He therefore saw it as necessary to fix the minimum age at eleven when meaning nine "to prevent the possibility of an employer engaging children of seven or eight on the excuse that he was of the opinion that they were fully nine."²⁸

The principal lobbyists against child labor in Tanganyika were the educators. They perceived a "battle" between the competing demands of labor and education. They employed a different but related rhetoric, arguing that the age of employment should in fact be higher than in the United Kingdom because a lower standard of education meant a lower standard of individual development and a greater immaturity in Tanganyika. Interestingly, the exact same argument was used by their adversaries, who argued that lower standards of education and lower levels of school enrollment should permit a lower minimum age of employment in Tanganyika in order to keep children occupied. In 1927, when it was proposed to prohibit the operating of machinery by children under sixteen years old, the labor commissioner thought the age of sixteen was "unduly high." He pointed out that "the English Factory and Workshop Act of 1901 . . . fixes the age at fourteen, and while more recent legislation has tended towards the higher age, to accord with educational requirements, the latter can scarcely apply to Tanganyika." It was argued in 1940 that "a child in Europe is in regular attendance in school until a certain age and is therefore kept usefully occupied. In many cases there is no school for the native child to attend and he or she has to fill in the day somehow—it may be partly in play, partly in looking after cattle or goats or working in the family gardens. By such children the opportunity of doing a little work for wages—of which, if they are lucky, they will be allowed to spend a part—is often welcomed." The governor wrote to the secretary of state in 1942 that it was important not to adhere to a definition of childhood formulated in European conditions, as the lower standard of education in Tanganyika meant children should work earlier.²⁹

It is clear, therefore, that the difficulty in defining a child's age in colonial Tanganyika, where there was no identity registration, was used by legislators and employers as an excuse to avoid the regulation of child labor. This lack of identity registration was also used by Tanganyikan parents and children themselves. Child labor was an important element of most household economies, and children were important agents in managing the transition to a cash economy. We have seen how Chagga chiefs in the late 1920s sought a legal order against child labor on plantations, partly because of fears about a collapse of morality but probably also because of the necessity of child labor at home and within the community. Parents on Kilimanjaro especially disliked the "emancipating influence of this employment on young girls who ought to be under absolute parental control." According to one official, "They object to children preferring to work for Europeans rather than for their parents in their own homes." At the same time, children, especially those with some education, were seen as suitably "modern" beings to act as family ambassadors into the

capitalist world, freeing adults to continue with work at home. New expenditures that pushed the margins of the household economy became the preserve of the child's contribution. One official in Kilimanjaro noted in 1928, "Too many parents look to their children to go out to earn money more particularly to pay taxes. A native told me once that he should be exempted from taxation because his child was still too small to work on the plantation: I learnt that many parents never think of providing clothing for their children because they can earn money for themselves." The Annual Education Report in 1929 noted, "There seems to be a growing tendency on the part of parents to shirk their responsibility . . . and to tell their children that if they want food and clothes they must go and work for them. It is no doubt a natural result of the rise in standards of living." Child labor became especially important in years of bad harvests, locusts, and famine, when there was a "necessity" for "children to become wage earners at as early an age as possible, so as to provide themselves with the food and clothing which their parents had not been able to give them."³⁰ Children themselves were often keen to work, despite the poor conditions and the impact on their schooling. Take the example of this young boy from Mwanza in 1939:

As I passed the ginnery at 6:30 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon the children swarmed out free again after twelve hours of work at the machine, their hair flecked with white, spitting the dust from their throats. Many went straight into the lake to bathe; others started on their way home. I spoke to one who was gathering something under a tree. His name was Kafunda bin Mayunga; his age about eleven years. He was picking up the little unripe dates and stuffing them into his mouth. "How long have you been working?" I asked. "Twelve days now"; and he showed me his "Kipande." It had 31 squares, of which the first twelve were marked with the employer's signature. "But why are there thirty one squares?" "One day is free; we only have to work for thirty days." "Aren't you tired of the work?" "Yes. But I want to get rich. When it is full I will get six shillings."³¹

In order to bypass legislation restricting young children working without the company of a parent, not only were their children's ages exaggerated, but parents also extended the conception of "parenthood," sending their children to work under the guardianship of older friends and acquaintances posing as parents to bypass legislative requirements. Employers reinforced the tendency of parents to view their children as particularly suitable for "modern" wage labor, encouraging educated and partially educated children more conversant in English than their parents to work on plantations. Parents' exploitation of the state's difficulty in defining a Tanganyikan child was therefore double-sided. Parents who wanted children to remain at home pointed to their immaturity

and vulnerability, while others, in sending their children out to work, took advantage of the lack of comprehensive registration to render versatile both the age of children and their biological parentage.³²

CONCLUSION

The lack of birth registration and identity documentation in colonial Tanganyika paved the way for the exploitation of children and their labor in the protectorate. Their immeasurability enabled individual children to slip past inspectors and into the factories and plantations when they could have been in school, and the lack of knowledge about children's ages gave the administration an excuse not to introduce regulatory legislation to protect children and reduce juvenile labor. Malleability in the definition of "childhood" was used by employers, administrators, parents and indeed children themselves, to justify continued employment in conditions that were often dangerous, frequently frightening, and certainly exploitative. Tanganyikan parents actively resisted registration systems in order to create their own definitions of childhood and to retain control over the labor of children, which was often an important contributor to the household economy. Where children's voices can be found in the archival record, they often emphasize their desire to work, and it is clear that they used their "invisibility" to official eyes to seek employment and to accumulate capital and skills. However, there is "a real danger in using children's expressed need and desire to work" as evidence of their agency, given the documented instances of their exploitation and abuse.³³

The example of child labor in colonial Tanganyika shows how civil registration could have facilitated child protection and the ratification of international law. Parallel arguments have been made in contemporary contexts, for example in relation to child soldiers in West Africa, where the inability to define children's ages has impeded the enforcement of international war crimes conventions. These findings give weight to a wider body of evidence showing that improving identity documentation and registration in Africa would be enabling—and possibly a necessary precursor—of social welfare, human rights, and economic development. That evidence is currently facilitating global pressure for the expansion of civil registration. Although the right to registration is codified in Article 7 of the United Nations Rights of the Child, less than half of all births are registered globally, and fewer than one in twenty are registered in Africa. Historians have already contributed to the growing advocacy for registration, describing its importance in European economic history. Historians of child labor in Africa can add to this debate, showing how the absence of registration delayed legislative protection and led to exploitation.³⁴

FUNDING

This study was funded by the Robert Owen Bishop Research Scholarship in History, Christ's College, Cambridge University, and a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Medical Humanities [award: WT095724MA].

NOTES

1. Words of the Masala (traditional healer) of the Wayangu clan (northwest Tanzania) on the first outing of a newborn child (Hans Koritschoner, Notes on the Ituga, 1934–36, Tanzania National Archives, Dar es Salaam [TNA] V11/23498).
2. Tanzania was called Tanganyika prior to the union with Zanzibar in 1964; B. Grier, "Child Labor and Africanist Scholarship: A Critical Overview," *African Studies Review* 47, no. 2 (2004): 1–25; B. Grier, "Child Labor in Sub-Saharan Africa by Loretta E. Bass: Review," *African Studies Review* 48, no. 3 (2005): 161–62; A. Bhukuth, "Defining Child Labour: A Controversial Debate," *Development in Practice* 18, no. 3 (2008): 385–94; B. Grier, "Invisible Hands: The Political Economy of Child Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1930," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1994): 27–52.
3. W. Beinart, "Transkeian Migrant Workers and Youth Labour on the Natal Sugar Estates 1918–1948," *Journal of African History* 32, no. 1 (1991): 41–63; W. Chijere Chirwa, "Child and Youth Labour on the Nyasaland Plantations, 1890–1953," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 4 (1993): 662–80; K. O. Akurang-Parry, "'The Loads are Heavier than Usual': Forced Labor by Women and Children in the Central Province, Gold Coast (Colonial Ghana), ca. 1900–1940," *African Economic History* 30 (2002): 31–51.
4. J. Lord, "Child Labor in the Gold Coast: The Economics of Work, Education and the Family in Late Colonial Africa, c. 1940–57," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 4, no. 1 (2011): 88–115. Lord describes children's own accumulation as a key motivator for child labor in the Gold Coast.
5. R. R. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949): 124; C. J. Martin, "Some Estimates of the General Age Distribution, Fertility and Rate of Natural Increase of the African Population of British East Africa," *Population Studies* 7, no. 2 (1953): 181–99; S. Walters, "Fertility, Mortality and Marriage in Northwest Tanzania, 1920–1970: A Demographic Study Using Parish Registers" (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008).
6. Tanganyika was part of German East Africa until 1919, when the League of Nations made it a British mandate; on the German period see: H. Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika 1850–1950* (London: James Currey, 1996); J. Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884–1914* (Helsinki: Finnish Historical Society, 1995); on the Hamburg Institute competition: Infaril Hygiene and Infantile Mortality 1920–26, August 9, 1913, TNA 450/178/1093; Steibel (senior commissioner, Tabora) to chief secretary (CS), January 19, 1923, Infaril Hygiene and Infantile Mortality 1920–26, TNA 450/178; Nzega District Annual Report 1934, p. 17, TNA.
7. Medical Department (Lake Province) Annual Report 1949, p. 10, Mwanza Regional Office, Medical Reports and Surveys, vol. 2, 1942–47, TNA 215/850; on the falsification of obstetric

- histories: A. G. Keevill to P. A. T. Sneath (director of medical services [DMS]), February 6, 1947, Tabora Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic, TNA 450/108/1/284; senior health officer to director of medical and sanitary services (DMSS), June 16, 1932, Maternity and Child Welfare, vol. 1, 1928–36, TNA 450/108/9/38.
8. A. Young (provincial medical officer [PMO], Lake Province), December 12, 1945, Maternity and Child Welfare General, vol. 2, 1945–47, TNA 450/108/9/128; Sleeping Sickness Office (Tabora) to DMS, March 18, 1938, Tabora Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic 1938–1947, TNA 450/108/1/238; A. G. Keevill (medical officer [MO], Tabora) to P. A. T. Sneath (DMS), February 6, 1947, Tabora Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic 1938–47, TNA 450/108/1/284.
 9. DMSS to A. E. Kitching (CS), July 28, 1930, Kahama Epidemiological Survey 1928–34, TNA V10/12639/95; minutes, July 31, 1931, Kahama Epidemiological Survey 1928–34, TNA V10/12639/165.
 10. Extract from minutes by CS, May 2, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/14.
 11. Extract from the Annual Report, Northern Province 1927, January 31, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/2; on the use of child labor in the home see also Lord, “Child Labor in the Gold Coast”; extract from the Annual Report, Education Department 1929, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/13; extract from minutes of the fourth meeting of the Tanga Provincial Education Committee, May 6, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/24.
 12. Minutes by director of education, July 15, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850; minutes by S. N. A., February 17, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/3; labour commissioner (LC) Morogoro to CS, May 27, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/16; supervisor UMCA schools to government inspector of schools (Old Moshi), Employment of Child Labour vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/4a; John Iliffe writes, “As the central railway crossed the country, schools stood empty in Uzaramo” (J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 161).
 13. LC to CS, July 2, 1943, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850/52; extract from minutes of the fourth meeting of the Tanga Provincial Education Committee, May 6, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/24; LC to CS, June 29, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850; supervisor UMCA schools to government inspector of schools (Old Moshi), Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/4a.
 14. “Labour Law to Avoid Misunderstanding,” *Tanganyika Standard*, September 18, 1943, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850/50; LC to CS, June 29, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850; minutes, June 25, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850; on diamond sorting: LC to CS, March 21, 1941, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850; Diamond Sorting by Juveniles memo by chief inspector of mines, April 2, 1941, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/26; for a similar idyllic version of child labor at the Mukekera tea factory in Tukuyu see: District MO Dar es Salaam to CS, September 23, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850.
 15. On the principle of employment leading to exploitation see P. Kea, “Girl Farm Labour and Double-Shift Schooling in the Gambia: The Paradox of Development Intervention,”

Canadian Journal of African Studies 41, no. 2 (2007): 258–88; on working far from home: director of education to CS, March 27, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/7; on the concerns of the Chagga chiefs: extract from the Annual Report, Northern Province 1927, January 31, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/2; on the isolation of mines: minutes, June 18, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850; on the presence of children on mines as assistants to their relatives: CS to secretary LGRRW Association, Lupa, March 19, 1937, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/82; on undernourishment: PC Mbeya to CS, February 20, 1937, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/79.

16. Report of the Ginnery Inspector North Western Circle, 1936, Labour Conditions in Ginneries, vol. 1, 1937, TNA V14/25233/4; Annual Report for the Year 1936 by the Ginnery Inspector for Eastern, Southern, Northern, and Tanga Province, Labour Conditions in Ginneries, vol. 1, 1937, TNA V14/25233/10.
17. Visit to a Ginnery, report by MO Government Hospital Mwanza, July 23, 1939, Labour Conditions in Ginneries, vol. 2, 1939–43, TNA V14/25233/2a.
18. Visit to a Ginnery, report by MO Government Hospital Mwanza, July 23, 1939, Labour Conditions in Ginneries, vol. 2, 1939–43, TNA V14/25233/2a; assistant DO labour Morogoro to chief inspector of labour, February 12, 1940, Labour Conditions in Ginneries, vol. 2, 1939–43, TNA V14/25233/9.
19. Report of the Employment of Juveniles Committee, Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1938, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/3c; “Labour Law to Avoid Misunderstanding,” *Tanganyika Standard*, September 18, 1943, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–7, TNA V14/11850/50; the argument that children were working under worse conditions for their own parents was widespread in colonial Africa: Lord, “Child Labor in the Gold Coast”; LC Morogoro to CS, May 27, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/16; extract from proceedings of PCs Conference, June 3, 1946, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850/124.
20. Minutes, June 25, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850.
21. On the International Labour Conference: Malcolm Macdonald to Mark Young (governor), December 2, 1939, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/12; minutes by governor, February 21, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850; A. Pennington (CS) memo for the executive council (ExecCo) on the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance, February 15, 1940, Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance 1940 TNA V14/25964.
22. On pressure from Macdonald: A. Pennington (CS) memo for the ExecCo on the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance, February 15, 1940, Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance 1940, TNA V14 25964; an ordinance to make provision for the control and regulation of the employment of women and of young persons under the age of eighteen years, March 20, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/16a; on the exemption orders: LC to CS, June 29, 1942, and secretary of state to governor, January 5, 1942 and February 18, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850/33 and 34.
23. On “white-washing” legislation: LC to CS, June 29, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850; on the definition of fatherhood: minutes to the agricultural secretary, March 8, 1943, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850;

- on the difficulty of defining a juvenile: minutes, November 27, 1939, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850.
24. H. Cory, "Comparison Between the Child of Primitive and Civilised Society," unpublished typescript, University of Dar es Salaam, Cory Papers: EAF Cory 70.
 25. LC to CS, April 3, 1941, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850; extract from minutes of the fourth meeting of the Labour Board, July 2, 1945, Employment of Women and Young People Underground in Mines 1945, TNA V14/32857/18; on the 1942 debate about children on plantations: LC to CS, June 29, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850.
 26. Extract from minutes of the second meeting of the Labour Board, October 29, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850/43; on the Belgian territories: memo on the Employment of Children in Gineries, 1937, Labour Conditions in Gineries, vol. 1, TNA V14/25233/73a.
 27. CS to director of education, July 25, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850/29; LC Morogoro to CS, September 6, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850/37.
 28. On migrant children from Nyasaland and Rhodesia: CS to H. Brown, May 11, 1937, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850/90; Mark Young to Malcolm Macdonald, December 8, 1938, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850/106; on the minimum age in diamond sorting: LC to CS, April 3, 1941, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850.
 29. On the battle between labor and education: minutes by director of education, July 15, 1930, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850; on educationalists see also Lord, "Child Labor in the Gold Coast"; on the prohibition of children on machinery: LC Morogoro to CS, January 21, 1931, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–38, TNA V14/11850/50; minutes, June 25, 1940, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850; W. E. Jackson (governor) to Cranbourne (secretary of state), September 22, 1942, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850.
 30. On the Chagga chiefs: extract from the Annual Report, Northern Province 1927, January 31, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/2; on parents in Kilimanjaro: minutes by S. N. A., February 17, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/3; on children as "modern beings," suitable for work: supervisor UMCA schools to government inspector of schools (Old Moshi), Employment of Child Labour, vol. 2, 1939–41, TNA V14/11850/4a; on new expenditures and the use of children's earnings for tax payment: minutes by S. N. A., February 17, 1928, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/3; extract from the Annual Report Education Department, 1929, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 1, 1927–1938, TNA V14/11850/13.
 31. Report by MO Government Hospital Mwanza, July 23, 1939, Labour Conditions in Gineries, vol. 2, 1939–43, TNA V14/25233/2a.
 32. On extensions to parenthood: minutes to the agricultural secretary, March 8, 1943, Employment of Child Labour, vol. 3, 1941–47, TNA V14/11850. The conflation between pater and genitor in Africa has been widely described, e.g., J. Goody, *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

33. Children's accumulation has been described elsewhere in colonial Africa: Lord, "Child Labor in the Gold Coast"; the question of exploitation and agency is discussed in Kea, "Girl Farm Labour and Double-Shift Schooling in the Gambia"; see also: Grier, "Child Labor in Sub-Saharan Africa."
34. D. J. Francis, "'Paper Protection' Mechanisms: Child Soldiers and the International Protection of Children in Africa's Conflict Zones," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 2 (2007): 207–31; Francis writes: "the simple question is, 'how do you enforce a law when the very people the law is designed to protect do not see themselves as belonging to such a category?' Furthermore, the support functions and tasks performed by child soldiers in these war-torn societies are generally perceived as an extension of traditional child labour practices in much of Africa" (p. 228); the lack of registration in the developing world has been defined as the "single most critical failure of development over the past 30 years" (C. AbouZahr et al., "The Way Forward," *Lancet* 370, no. 9601 [2007]: 1791–99); see also: UNICEF, "Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and Trends in Birth Registration" (New York: UNICEF, December 2013); P. W. Setel et al., "A Scandal of Invisibility: Making Everyone Count by Counting Everyone," *Lancet* 370, no. 9598 (2007): 1569–77; P. Mahapatra et al., "Civil Registration Systems and Vital Statistics: Successes and Missed Opportunities," *Lancet* 370, no. 9599 (2007): 1653–63; for an example of how historians are contributing to this debate see S. Szreter, "The Right of Registration: Development, Identity Registration, and Social Security—a Historical Perspective," *World Development* 35, no. 1 (2007): 67–86. The distinction is made between vital registration, wherein data are collected on vital events, and civil registration, wherein certification is issued at the time of the event enabling proof of age and identity (K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter, *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 22).