



Religion and the Formation of an Urban Educational Market: Transnational Reform Processes and Social Inequalities in Christian and Muslim Schooling in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract

Over the last decade in Tanzania parents' and students' quest for a good school has been shaped by the growing presence of religiously motivated schools, especially in urban settings. This paper argues that the diverse social positioning and educational appeal of new Christian and Muslim schools in Dar es Salaam are intimately intertwined with the continued weakening of state education that has been taking place since the mid-1990s to early 2000s as the result of privatization and World Bank educational policies. It also shows that the growing stratification and commodification of the education sector is tightly knitted with histories of inequality and religious difference in colonial and postcolonial Tanzania, as well as with the establishment and diversification of ties between actors and institutions on the East African coast on the one hand, and with those in North America, Europe, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia on the other. Finally, this paper demonstrates how macroeconomic and macrohistorical forces have become condensed in processes of subject formation and the widely varying production of religious spaces in an urban educational market. I argue that the resulting reinscription of religion in the public sphere must be understood not so much as an unintended side-effect of transnational reform processes, but more as part and parcel of multilayered histories of schooling and Christian-Muslim encounters in Tanzania that have also shaped the recent repositioning of the country's education sector in the global and transnational context.

Keywords

Christian-Muslim encounters, social inequality, history of education in Tanzania, educational market, transnational reforms, Dar es Salaam, urban anthropology

Introduction

When I first met Ramadan Hamidi* in October 2009 at an Islamic secondary school in Dar es Salaam, he was twenty-two years old. Ramadan was born on

Mafia, an island south of Dar es Salaam that, despite the fact that it has become a popular location for up-market scuba diving tourism, remains one of Tanzania's poorest districts. Because of the poor state of Mafia's educational system in the 1990s, his father, an employee of the national power company TANESCO, sent Ramadan to Zanzibar when he was five years old. There Ramadan lived with his maternal aunt and completed public primary school and the first two levels of a government secondary school. In 2006 Ramadan's father moved him to Dar es Salaam. As Ramadan recalls, his chances for completing higher education in Zanzibar were slim and the academic achievements of the other children living with his aunt were comparatively poor. In Dar es Salaam Ramadan was sent to the Al Farouq Islamic Seminary directed by the Africa Muslims Agency, and in 2009 he was about to complete Form III.

Since the death of his father in 2006, Ramadan had been living with the family of his father's younger brother on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam. Two of his 'little father's' children also attended an Islamic school and another went to the Aga Khan School, which is not explicitly religiously oriented though it follows Islamic ethical principles.¹ Ramadan sees clear advantages to attending a 'private Islamic school', a term he occasionally used to refer to the Al Farouq Seminary. Along with the allegedly better quality of private Islamic schools compared to public secondary schools, he referred to the teaching of moral values and religious knowledge: 'As Muslims we have to know the values and proper conduct of Islam (*maadili ya waislamu*). Even if we learn secular things (*mambo ya secular*) in this school, we must also receive guidance (*uongozi*) [for our lives]. Our friends, the Christians, are taught by other Christians, too'. However, while the conveying of religious and moral values was a constant theme of Ramadan's description of his life and schooling, and he dressed in dark blue pants and white *nusu kanzu*, a hip-length shirt resembling the Muslim *kanzu*, he was nevertheless flexible with regard to attending public or other private schools:

It is true that we [at Al Farouq] learn about Islam; however, later we have to look for public or [other] private schools, not Islamic schools. . . . Let's say the [quality of] education at Islamic schools was until recently rather limited. Only recently has progress been made in this area.

In this article I show how Ramadan Hamidi's biography and educational experiences are connected to the transformations in Tanzania's educational system since the mid-1990s, which have been marked, among other things, by the growing presence of private and nongovernmental schools. Part of the dynamics of liberalization has been the rising number of religiously inflected primary

and secondary schools that on the one hand, teach according to the public school curriculum and are subject to state standards for curriculum content, and on the other are dedicated to teaching religious moral values and content. At Islamic secondary schools, for example, religious knowledge is taught during obligatory classes in 'Islamic Knowledge' and Arabic, and there is an obligatory midday prayer in the mosque. In Christian schools religious knowledge is taught through classes in 'Bible Knowledge' or 'Divinity Studies', and there is often a requirement for collective church attendance. However, only the seminary schools are actively restrictive with regard to the admission of students with a specific denominational (Muslim, Catholic, Lutheran, and so on) background. Furthermore, many of these religiously inflected schools are connected to either a religious organization—which may be a charitable NGO as in the case of Al Farouq, a church, or mosque—or to private individuals and missionaries, often from neo-Pentecostal churches. Specifically with regard to the latter, the categorization of 'religiously oriented' is sometimes a matter of strategic self-positioning in order to attract students in an increasingly commodified urban educational landscape.

The growing market of Christian and Muslims schools in Tanzania is a particularly urban phenomenon and is closely linked to the transformation of urban space in the context of 'neoliberal urbanism,' as described by Beaumont (2008a, 2011). The socially and ethnically diverse spaces of cities in Africa and beyond have long been described as the spearheads of modern secularized life, which was opposed to the 'traditional,' tight-knit structures of rural communities with highly personalized norms and conventions (Wirth 1938; Redfield 1947). However, empirical research over the last decades has shown that the transnational entanglements of economic, political, and religious forces and migratory flows have been particularly strong in globalizing cities, offering a vantage point for 'understanding the changing postindustrial, advanced capitalist, postmodern moment in which we live' (Low 1996, 384). In particular, since the 1980s the growing number of faith-based organizations (FBOs) has reshaped urban life in various parts of the world. In response to social inequalities and injustice in cities, these new religious actors have contributed to the growing intertwining between religion, politics, and the 'postsecular society' in their effort to reach out into the public realm through their involvement in social service provision (Beaumont 2008a, 2013). These new FBOs differ from older Christian and Muslim organizations in that they are 'not exclusively of the charitable kind' and 'exert an increasing political and social impact' (Beaumont 2008b, 2023).

This article examines the coproduction of urban space and recent religious engagements in the field of education in urban Tanzania. It does so by

highlighting the connectedness between the individual biographies and experiences of students and teachers, the institutional embedding of Christian and Muslim schools in specific locations, and the entanglement of these processes with globalizing economic and political forces in Dar es Salaam. As Kim Knott (2005) has argued with reference to the work of Doreen Massey (1992), religious space is constituted on a range of scales—from global to local and from local to global; they are all interlocked and have to be considered in relation to one another. Furthermore, as space is constituted out of social relations, it is never static but highly dynamic and diverse and ‘by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation’ (Massey 1992: 81). In the resulting ‘power-geometry’ of spatial and temporal interconnections, relations between different elements—structures, people, actions, ideas—are partly coherent and explicable, sometimes also contingent, and with ‘unintended consequences’ (Massey, 81).

These unintended consequences have ‘effects on subsequent events’ and ‘can alter the future course of the very histories that have produced [them]’ (Massey, 84). In the case of the Christian and Muslim schools described in this paper, I argue that, among other things, it was the specific nature of privatization and the World Bank educational policies of the early 1990s and early 2000s that had two unintended consequences. First, there was the rapid weakening of the governmental education sector through the massive expansion of so-called ‘community-based schools’ from the mid-2000s onward. Second, there was the simultaneous rise of religiously motivated schools that—in connection with global events like September 11, 2001—led to a generally more favorable positioning of Christian schools in the increasingly competitive educational market. However, both of these unintended consequences—and the effects they may have on subsequent events—have to be understood in relation to the multilayered histories of schooling and Christian-Muslim relations in Tanzania that have shaped the recent repositioning of the country’s education sector in the global and transnational context.

Since the production of religiously diverse urban space is intertwined closely with power relations and historical processes, I first provide an overview of the history of religiously motivated education in Tanganyika/Tanzania from the late nineteenth century onward. It becomes clear that the field of religious education in national and missionary schools has been shaped by colonial and postcolonial politics, as well as by the corresponding processes and experiences of inequality, exclusion, and marginalization, especially among the Muslim population (Heilman and Kaiser 2002; Loimeier 2007). Two case studies—of a ‘new’ Christian and a ‘new’ Islamic school in Dar es Salaam—then show that

while the new generation of FBOs often follows 'an egalitarian idea' and may be committed ideologically to social justice (Beaumont 2008b, 2021), they have often become implicated in the logics of market forces and the competition for resources and wealthy clients. In particular, the new Christian schools have benefitted from the recent educational reform projects of the World Bank and the Tanzanian government and have become intrinsic to the reinforcement of social and religious difference in the educational market.

To conclude the paper I discuss how the production of urban space and religiously inflected publics in Dar es Salaam is shaped by the differential access to resources and capital that Christian and Muslim organizations and individuals have in a market-driven, transnationalized, and historically shaped educational landscape. Furthermore, I argue that the specific nature and dynamics of this landscape have become condensed in and are coproduced by the biographies, experiences, and actions of the teachers and students in the specific educational assemblages 'on the ground'. In particular, I argue that focusing on the biographies and subjectivities of individual students and teachers helps us understand how they perceive and experience the nature and effects of social and economic stratification in the context of transnationally driven educational reforms, and how their experiences and actions are further tied to the specific institutional setups (e.g., more charity based versus more profit oriented and market dependent) and ideological environments (e.g., Christian versus Muslim) of their respective schools.

Methodology

This article presents insights from fieldwork conducted in Christian and Muslim schools in Dar es Salaam throughout various extended research stays between 2008 and 2010. During previous fieldwork on HIV/AIDS and social relations in rural and urban Tanzania (see, e.g., Dilger 2007, 2008), I found that from the early 2000s onward families, parents, and children have become increasingly concerned with finding a 'good school'. This quest becomes particularly pertinent at the level of secondary education since the governmental education system shows significant weaknesses at this level and because attending a 'good' secondary school has decisive implications for the future life chances of young men and women.

The judgment of a school as 'good' or 'bad' is often based on the results of the national exams, which are published annually in Tanzania's major newspapers. Such judgments are also based on perceptions of an alleged general decline in the government-run schools with regard to buildings and infrastructure,

as well as with regard to the quality and reliability of teaching and the moral upbringing of young people. Finally, language is crucial for parents' and children's decisions when looking for a 'good school': while English is the official medium of instruction in Tanzania starting at the secondary level, only a few state-run schools and higher learning institutions are able to consistently employ English in their everyday teaching and learning. This has a decisive impact on students' futures since all national exams are conducted in English (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2004).

Given the centrality of secondary education in the public discourse on quality education in Tanzania, the case studies in my fieldwork include four secondary schools (two Muslim, two Christian) and two primary schools (both Christian standard seven, i.e., advanced level). These schools reflect the institutional diversity of the new generation of religiously motivated schools: one of the secondary Muslim schools is run by the Africa Muslims Agency, the other by a 'revivalist'² mosque in inner-city Dar es Salaam; two of the Christian schools (one primary, one secondary) were established privately by a neo-Pentecostal pastor. The other two Christian schools (one primary, one secondary) are Catholic and were originally missionary schools that were transferred back to the Catholic church following a phase of nationalization during the socialist *Ujamaa* period, which lasted from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. In all the schools I conducted extended participant observation in classrooms as well as semi-structured and partly biographical interviews with students, teachers, and school management. Complementing this research was the mapping of the schools' institutional histories and networks, including their entanglement with the production of urban space (e.g., through aerial photographs), a questionnaire on the sociodemographic profiles of students and their families as well as on students' hopes and expectations for the future, and interviews with the staff of religious organizations and government authorities.

The driving question of the initially mainly explorative fieldwork was to ask whether and how religious organizations and individuals' involvement in the field of education has led to a repositioning of faith and religion in urban Tanzania. The more specific aims of the study were then to understand how this repositioning correlates not only with the longer history of religious engagements in the field of education in the country, but also with the current global discourses and financial politics that have come to shape the field of faith-based development in Eastern Africa (cf. Dilger 2009). Furthermore, the research examined how these macrotransformations in the context of educational reforms are experienced and acted on by the staff and students of Christian and Muslim schools themselves, and what their motivations to work in or to give preference to a religious school are. In this regard, particular emphasis

was placed on the subjectivities articulated by my interview partners, and the ways in which they were shaped by the specific institutional setups (e.g., market driven versus mostly charity based) and ideological frameworks of their respective schools. The language used during the interviews reflects the different schools and educational standards. While students and teachers at Christian schools insisted on using English, the conversations at Muslim schools were conducted mainly in Kiswahili and only occasionally interrupted by English phrases or terms.

Fieldwork on the mutual interdependence between religious difference, history, and power relations raises questions about social and economic inequality and justice. The increased politicization of Christian-Muslim relations in the country influences schools' access to transnational resources and webs of power relations: the Muslim schools in my research mostly have affiliations with organizations in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the Christian schools with Christian and 'secular' organizations in 'the West'. Such politicization also has the potential for leading to social exclusion and conflict in urban Tanzania's highly diverse religious, educational, and political landscapes (Wijisen and Mfumbusa 2004). My access to and interactions within the different research sites were in turn shaped by such dynamics. For example, the teachers and students of Muslim schools were sometimes suspicious of my intentions when I asked about the funding structures of the institutions; though it was seldom explicitly addressed, these questions were immediately associated with the impact of the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998 on the structural position of revivalist Muslim organizations in the country. Issues of representation and power were, however, also pertinent for some of the Christian schools since they were concerned that the report I had to write for the Tanzanian government as part of the research clearance process might have negative consequences for the field of Christian education in the country, especially if I were to write that these schools had a missionary agenda.

The following section examines the multilayered histories of education and Christian-Muslim relations in Tanzania, which are important for understanding the social inequalities and religious differences in the colonial and postcolonial periods as well as their articulation with liberalization processes since the 1990s. It shows that encounters between internally differentiated religious groups have to be understood from a historical as well as contemporary perspective, with a focus on historically grown 'interreligious boundary zones' (Soares 2006, 16) that reveal the multiple potential tensions that have come to shape relations between various Christian and Muslim communities in Africa. Furthermore, the historical perspective sheds light on the different ways in which

Christian and Muslim organizations and individuals have been able to mobilize national as well as transnational resources and support for their respective educational and/or religious agendas since the early to mid-1990s, and how this has shaped their specific positions in the educational market in more recent years. In particular, it will help to understand the specific institutional arrangements established by various religious actors that have positioned such institutions in different ways in the competition over students, teachers, and resources. Christian schools are in a more favorable position overall than the new Muslim schools; however, within the field of Christian schools Catholic and Lutheran organizations, as opposed to neo-Pentecostal schools for example, have been able to capitalize on their long-standing collaboration with the colonial and postcolonial government that, despite the period of nationalization after 1969, has provided them with a privileged position since the shift to political and economic liberalization from the early 1990s onward.

Religion and Politics Intertwined: The History of Muslim-Christian Relations and Religiously Motivated Education on the East African Coast

At the beginning of German colonial rule during the 1880s Muslims of mainly Arab origin who had learned to read and write in the Quranic schools on the East African coast were the preferred employees for military service and tax collection, as well as for the supervision of cash crops and the implementation of new colonial decrees (Mushi 2009). There was a general feeling among the colonial authorities that Muslims were easier to control than Christians and that their position in the colonial order was overall neutral. Furthermore, there was the widespread perception, especially in military circles, that the newly converted Christians were 'too servile' (*kriecherisch* = bootlicking), but also that Christian missionaries, especially Catholics, were pushing their own agenda of establishing 'a state in the state' (Singleton 1977, 281ff.). Thus, even though there were several problematic (and partly violent) encounters between the colonial state and individual 'Muslim fanatics' (e.g., the Bushiri revolt in Tanga in 1888-89), overall there were strong pro-Islam tendencies among the colonial authorities and a symbolic alliance was established between the colonial state and the predominantly Muslim Swahili coast (Nimtze 1980).³

However, the relationship between the colonial state and the Muslim population became increasingly strained with the Maji Maji War of 1905-07, which, in the eyes of the authorities, was connected to the growing popularity of Islam among the local African population. This led to growing support for Christian missionaries and their activities, especially with regard to the role of mission

schools (Nimtz 1980). Thus, while there had been mission schools before the years 1905-06, with the German government's shift in policy their numbers—as well as the numbers of new Christian converts—grew exponentially in the years leading up to the outbreak of World War I (Sahlberg 1986). The missions, especially the Catholics, readily grasped the importance of education for proselytizing. In 1911 the German Benedictine Bishop Thomas Spreiter proclaimed that 'whoever wins the youth will win the future' (Sahlberg, 91).

With the outbreak of World War I the situation shifted again, and the war years can actually be described as the flourishing years of Islam. According to Nimtz (1980), the Muslim population grew from around 3 percent in 1916 to 25 percent in 1924. This development has been attributed to several factors: the newly established military alliance between the Germans and the Turks against the British; the overall weak presence of the colonial state during the war years; the interruption of missionary work due to the insecurity of the war and political restrictions; and finally the millenarian tendencies triggered by the influenza epidemic (Nimtz 1980; see also Singleton 1977).

After World War I control over Tanganyika was transferred from German rule to British rule by mandate of the League of Nations. In its first years the British government was concerned primarily with the consolidation of the new regime and focused particularly on restructuring the military and the police, as well on post-war reconstruction and public works (e.g., the building of railways). It was only after 1924 that the colonial state started to focus on the provision of education and health services. The need to integrate Christian missions into the provision of social services was promoted first and foremost by the Phelps Stokes Commission from the United States, which visited East Africa in 1924. The commission consisted of eight members from Great Britain and the United States, one 'Native African', and several representatives of Christian missions. The commission's main focus was to 'investigate the educational needs of the [East African] people in the light of the religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions' in the colonies (Jones 1924, xiii).

In the years 1923-24, while the colonial government allocated around 6.7 percent of its total budget to health services in Tanganyika, the allocation for education was less than 1 percent (Jones 1924). Against this background the Phelps Stokes Commission emphasized the need to involve Christian schools actively in order to achieve the ultimate goal of educating 800,000 boys and girls in the territory:

It is difficult to understand the failures of the Government to cooperate with the numerous missions, who, even if their work in Tanganyika itself be on simple lines, are famous for their really great achievements in education in different parts of Africa...

Most of these missions have been working in East Africa for many years. It is admitted that they are the pioneers of the land. (Jones 1924, 189)

Over the following decades the Christian missions became indispensable to the educational system of the colonial state. The number of government and local authority schools in Tanganyika rose from sixty-five in total in 1923 (Jones 1924) to 753 Primary Standard (I-IV), 149 Middle Standard (V-VIII), and twelve Secondary Standard schools (Std. IX-XII; Form V-VI) in 1960 (Tanganyika Report for the Year 1960). There were an additional 1,929 Primary Standard, 212 Middle Standard, and sixteen Secondary Standard schools (Jones 1924), which were mostly run by Christian missions; in addition to receiving financial and personnel assistance from their headquarters abroad, they were supported by the colonial government through subsidies. In 1960, for example, the British government paid a total of 1,703,055 GBP as grants-in-aid to voluntary agencies involved in educational work. Only 14,746 GBP (0.86 percent) of this was allocated to Muslim associations and agencies; the bulk of the money thus went to Christian missions, largely to Roman Catholic schools (which received 976,006 GBP; 57.3 percent of the total grants-in-aid) (Tanganyika Report for the Year 1960).

The British government's bias with regard to the involvement of religious actors in the provision of social services—and the building of the colonial state at large—was regarded critically by the Muslim population, which had been reluctant to attend Christian schools from the beginning. Not only was education in mission schools regarded as a medium for transmitting colonial ideologies and for molding employees for colonial service, but many students were also converted to Christianity and trained in trades and agricultural work, which further served the expansion of the missions (Mushi 2009). In view of these partially hostile reactions, the expansion of Christian schools was concentrated in predominantly non-Muslim regions, specifically in areas focusing on cash crop production in the profitable regions of Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, and Bukoba.

However, there were some institutionalized efforts to counteract the marginalization of Muslims in the colonial setting. For example, since Asian Muslims were excluded from the provision of social services by the German colonial government, the Ismaili communities began to build their own schools and clinics as early as 1905. Many of these facilities were exclusively for Ismailis, though they sometimes catered to the educational and health needs of other Asian groups (Kaiser 1996). From the mid-1940s onward the Ismailis were supported in their efforts by the East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS), established by the Aga Khan (the Imam of the Ismaili Muslims) in Mombasa in 1945

and dissolved again by Nyerere's socialist government in 1968. Furthermore, the Muslim community reacted to the growing alliance between the colonial government and Christian missions with their increased retreat into nationalist movements. This development also highlighted significant cleavages *within* the Muslim community, based on the dynamics of race and class. In 1934 African Muslims founded the Muslim Association of Tanganyika because they felt increasingly excluded from the East Africa Muslim Association that had been established previously to include all coastal Muslims irrespective of their ethnicity, especially when 'Indians' (i.e., Muslims of Asian origin) started to build their own schools (Nimtz 1980). The founders of the Muslim Association of Tanganyika were also key for the founding of the Tanganyika African Association, the predecessor of the Tanganyika National Union, which was guided by the later president Julius Nyerere.

However, while Muslim leaders played a central role in the struggle for independence in Tanganyika their contribution was not acknowledged in the independent state, where Muslims were marginalized in terms of the distribution of political power and high government positions (allegedly because they were not educated enough). Furthermore, despite the interventions of the EAMWS to improve the educational standards of Muslims, Tanganyika emerged as an independent state with considerable inequalities in the educational system with regard to religion, regional origin, and gender. At the beginning of the 1960s, for example, the ratio of Christian to Muslim students was 3:1 even though the ratio of Muslims to Christians in the total population was 3:2 (Mushi 2009).⁴ As Philemon Mushi concludes: 'At the time of independence, most of the educated people in the country were Christians who later became dominant in politics and government' (Mushi 2009, 84).

Educational and Religious Inequalities in Postcolonial Tanzania

While Muslims were marginalized in the assignment of leadership positions in the postindependence era, President Julius Nyerere did make active efforts to eliminate differences based on religion, class, and regional or ethnic origin in his socialist visions of the postcolonial society. Among other efforts, during the 1960s and 1970s Tanzania's socialist government developed numerous educational programs for the reduction of inequalities, which in the context of the 'politics of self-reliance' focused primarily on adult education and the training and educating of the peasantry (Stambach 2000, 41ff.). Furthermore, the government addressed inequalities in middle and higher education through the introduction of a quota system for all regions of the country and through the

nationalization of mission schools in 1969. Finally, the goal of national, social, and cultural unity became condensed in Tanzania's 1968 decision to make Kiswahili the national language of instruction (Stites and Semali 1991), a language that had been associated predominantly with the Arab influence of the urban Swahili coast.

Until the late 1970s Tanzania's educational reforms were regarded both in the country and internationally as largely successful, and were, for example, credited with the drop of the rate of illiteracy from 69 percent at the time of independence to 27 percent in 1977 (Stites and Semali 1991). At the same time, however, Tanzania's educational system suffered under the country's growing economic and political problems, which were partially due to the international oil crisis of the 1970s and the parallel decline in the price of cash crop products on the world market but also as a result of internationally raised concerns about the sustainability of the Tanzanian government's full financing of social services. Thus from 1982 onward the state-run education system was gradually released from the sole control by the government and was partially privatized, beginning in 1992.

Since the middle of the 1990s the number of private (including Christian and Muslim) schools has grown rapidly, and they have taken on an ambivalent role in an educational system geared toward universal access to primary and secondary education. Christian schools in particular play a crucial role in achieving the national goal of establishing broad access with regard to middle and higher education. In 2008, for instance, the percentage of Christian schools among all secondary schools in the country was between 10 and 20 percent, depending on counting method (Ministry of Education, Registration Unit 2008). However, with their annually increasing fees, religiously oriented schools are accessible only to the wealthier segments of the Tanzanian population and thus contribute to widening social gaps. In recent years a differentiated discourse has thus evolved among the population, religious leaders, and development experts about the limits and disadvantages of a stratified educational system, which increasingly takes account of religious difference in relation to educational inequalities. In the framework of this article it is interesting to see how the shifts in the educational sector are perceived and acted on by 'revivalist' Christian and Muslim organizations and how these responses have become intertwined with governmental and transnational politics in the field of education in urban Tanzania.

Within the religious field, the commodification of education and the resulting dynamics of social exclusion are articulated particularly strongly among Muslim revivalist organizations. First, Muslim activists link recent shifts in the educational field—and the continued disadvantages of Muslims with regard

to higher education—to the political and societal status quo in Tanzania. According to Muslim activists, Tanzania has been a ‘Christian state’ for many decades, with Christian churches expanding their dominant position in the context of the social and economic crisis in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Sivalon 1995). The role of Catholic and Protestant (but excluding, neo-Pentecostal) Churches in social service provision was cemented further in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1992 by the Christian Council of Tanzania with both the Tanzania Episcopal Conference and the United Republic of Tanzania. This MoU comprised the foundation of the Christian Social Service Commission, with a focus on education and health, in 1992; the commitment to not nationalize schools or hospitals in the future; close cooperation between international donors, the Tanzanian government, and the churches included in the MoU; and finally, the ‘willingness [of the government] to endeavour to include financial assistance to church-run social services in its bilateral negotiations, particularly with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany’ (Sivalon 1995, 189).

The close alliance between the Tanzanian government and international (Western) donors and churches in the field of social service provision has been discussed critically in the Muslim media and during public rallies, which focus on the marginalized state of Islam in the country, the introduction of Sharia law, and the need for Tanzania to join the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC, today Organization of Islamic Cooperation).⁵ Furthermore, Muslim activists’ claims are supported by recent studies conducted at the University of Dar es Salaam that have ‘proven’ the correlation between religious affiliation and access to social and political capital. Thus, while ‘religion’ and ‘ethnicity’ have been systematically excluded from demographic or sociological surveys in Tanzania since the 1970s, recent studies still show that Muslim citizens are indeed underrepresented in higher education and among government employees (Ishumi 2006; Musoke 2006).⁶

Second, the push for the political and social visibility of Islam in Tanzania—and its intertwining with social service provision—has been scrutinized by the Tanzanian government, as well as by revivalist Christians, in a way that has not been pursued with regard to Christian organizations,⁷ especially in terms of their potential proselytizing efforts and their links with transnational organizations. Many of the Muslim organizations that were established from the early 1990s onward have close financial and ideological links to charity organizations in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and have become involved in the promotion of Islam in the country (*da’wa*), as well as the establishment of health and education services (Ahmed 2009). The potential link between social welfare and *da’wa* activities has received heightened attention, especially after the

1998 U.S. embassy bomb attacks. In the case of the Africa Muslims Agency, this resulted in a search of their offices and the throttling of financial flows from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the early 2000s. Furthermore, such encounters with and experiences of the controlling state fed into the above-described feeling of Islamic marginalization in Tanzania (Loimeier 2007; Becker 2006). Such perceptions are coupled with widespread nostalgia about the loss of the East African Muslim Welfare Society in 1968 and its replacement by the Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), which, according to many revivalist Muslims, was established by the government in order to control and appease Muslims in the country.⁸

Third, and closely related to the second point, the educational work of Muslim revivalist has to be understood in the context of the growing competition between different religious actors for moral, spiritual, and political hegemony in Dar es Salaam and Tanzania at large.⁹ In particular, neo-Pentecostal churches have flourished over the last decades and have established an uncountable number of congregations and church buildings in the city, which are often connected to churches in North America, Europe, and other Sub-Saharan African countries (see Dilger 2007; Hasu 2009). These neo-Pentecostal churches are of varying size and attract people from different social and economic backgrounds, often with the help of their own television programs that provide strong public visibility in Dar es Salaam and beyond. The messages of neo-Pentecostal churches focus on a spiritually and morally pure life and the corresponding promises of physical and material well-being. Furthermore, most of them are actively engaged in proselytization and aim at 'saving' the Muslim and other Christian communities in Dar es Salaam from a sinful life of backwardness and poverty. Finally, and closely connected to this, many have recently become involved in the provision of social services; however, since neo-Pentecostal churches are not part of the larger Christian ecumenical organizations or the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC), these social services efforts are mostly still in an early stage of development (Dilger 2009, 2014a).

Finally, the discourse of Muslim activists concerning the historically embedded marginalization of Muslims in the educational system has been exacerbated by the educational policies and funding politics of the World Bank and other international actors over the last two decades. While private schools started to re-emerge in Tanzania as early as the mid-1980s, in 2001 a study by Lassibille and Tan (2001) still expressed concern about the rather low competitiveness of private schools. Not only were many said to be of poor quality with regard to educational standards, but they also had a rather small chance of becoming financially sustainable. As a consequence of their findings, the

authors called on the Tanzanian government to sustain the private educational sector with further deregulations (Lassibille and Tan 2001).

From the mid-2000s onward, private schools in Tanzania did receive a significant boost when the national government and the World Bank started a joint program to strengthen so-called 'community schools' in order to increase enrollment rates at the secondary level. The idea to rely on community initiatives for the establishment of new schools that were financed by the government seemed promising, especially with regard to the World Bank's seeming preference for locally rooted participatory development. However, government schools soon began to suffer due to the rapid extension of the public education sector.¹⁰ In the late 2000s a wide range of print and visual media in Tanzania discussed the general 'decay' of the public education system, which suffered from low rates of recruitment and retention of teaching staff for new positions, as well as from generally poor infrastructure.¹¹ A further result was that the predominantly quantitative focus on access to secondary education triggered a dramatic shift in the relationship between the private and public educational sectors, as the declining quality of the public sector led to private schools becoming increasingly attractive for students and their families.

On another level, the shifts in the government educational sector became intertwined with the strengthened performance of Christian schools in particular, which were able to capitalize on their longstanding contribution to the educational field as well as on a range of ties with international organizations, which had beneficial outcomes for their position in the competition over resources, clients, and teachers.¹² Over the last few years the attractiveness of private schools—especially the top-ranked Christian schools—in the increasingly stratified educational market has grown exponentially. The urban middle class in particular has become increasingly concerned with choosing a good school for their children,

'You cannot learn without remembering God first': Transnational Ties and the Practice of Religious Schooling in Urban Tanzania

The following section addresses how the various religious discourses and politics that have been sketched out in the preceding sections, as well as the dynamics of privatization and commodification in the educational sector from the mid-1990s onward, are reflected in the specific institutional structures of individual schools. I use case studies of two specific schools: one Christian and based more on market principles, and the other Muslim and rooted more in a charitable paradigm. I look at how these different institutional frameworks

and the wider historical context have come to shape the experiences and practices of students and teachers in these particular educational settings. I argue that these experiences and practices, and the subjectivities that are articulated within them, are intimately intertwined with and partly generated by the different histories and institutional arrangements in the two schools. Furthermore, it is through these experiences and narratives that the two schools under study emerge as religiously motivated educational institutions and mark their specific position in the larger educational market of Dar es Salaam.

Case 1: St. Mary's International Academy

St. Mary's International Academy was founded in 1996 by Dr. Gertrude Rwakatare, a pastor of the Assemblies of God,¹³ and is currently the head school of eight primary and secondary schools nationwide as well as a teachers' training college in Dar es Salaam. The school's Web site explains that the founding of the school network was closely connected to Tanzania's educational situation at the end of the 1980s:

The idea to set up an educational institution was mooted in 1987 by Hon, Pastor, Dr, Getrude [sic] Rwakatare. She wondered why Tanzanians were ready to send their children abroad (Kenya and Uganda) for studies instead of developing our local capacity to deliver good education. At that time (until now) there was a dire need of a good kindergarten, primary and secondary school in the country. Dr. Rwakatare shared the idea with her friends who agreed with her ideas and offered to support her spiritually, morally and intellectually.¹⁴

In founding the school, Dr. Rwakatare was able to rely not only on a local network of friends but also on the support of the U.S.-based Christian Working Woman, whose missions included 'Outreach for Africa'. While Dr. Rwakatare downplays her connections with influential personalities and organizations at home and abroad, in her numerous social engagements and projects she has become a prominent and well-established figure in the religious and political landscape of urban Tanzania. Dr. Rwakatare is the leading pastor of a church in Dar es Salaam with an estimated 10,000 members, which draws on a growing urban middle class. The church has its own radio and television programs through which Dr. Rwakatare has established herself as one of Tanzania's most influential neo-Pentecostal preachers.¹⁵ Finally, in 2007 Dr. Rwakatare was named 'Special Seat Member of Parliament', a position that she uses to discuss, among other things, the specific needs and challenges of Tanzania's private educational system at a political level.

For her first school project Dr. Rwakatare selected a sparsely populated neighborhood on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, which until the 1980s had

mainly been used by the local population for agricultural purposes. The choice of location was probably no coincidence since as with other Christian and Muslim individuals and organizations in the educational field, Dr. Rwakatare was confronted by governmental guidelines that require sufficient land for recreational facilities in the construction of a new school. Furthermore, as property on the city outskirts is more affordable, many less well-established organizations and private individuals build their boarding schools in outlying districts. This also correlates with the fact that teachers, students, and parents prefer to avoid passing through the regularly clogged inner city to access the school. The partial privatization of schools since the 1990s has thus become linked to an increasing restructuring of (up to this point) sparsely populated districts, which then become shaped by the establishment of religiously religiously inflected infrastructures (cf., Dilger 2014a).

In the case of St. Mary's and Dr. Rwakatare's subsequent development of a national school network, the processes of social differentiation were implicit from the beginning. This is similar to the ways in which processes of social differentiation have shaped the implementation of neoliberal reforms in urban Tanzania since the 1990s. The so-called 'international schools' of St. Mary's appeal predominantly to the Christian and Muslim urban middle and upper classes, who are capable of paying the annual school fees of 540 euros.¹⁶ In return, St. Mary's offers free transport for students to and from school, a daily snack, and lunch. The primary school with 1,700 students in which I conducted fieldwork is further distinguished by the fact that it guarantees a strictly regulated learning atmosphere with good chances for students to advance to the middle and higher educational systems. It is important to note that the school teaches in English at the primary school level and thus prepares its pupils for attendance at higher schools where English is the required language of instruction.

As indicated in the school's Web site statement above, the work at St. Mary's is closely tied to the recently reestablished East African Community and is shaped strongly by the presence of teachers and school officials from Kenya and Uganda. St. Mary's is directed by Mr. Karega from Kenya, who was hired by Dr. Rwakatare in 1997 and who has been central to the development of the international network at St. Mary's. 'I was young at the time', Mr. Karega related, 'I came to Tanzania with a vision. I wanted to realize my potential and was looking for greener pastures'. From the perspective of the school management and parents, the primary school has profited from Karega's leadership, in particular from his connections to neighboring Kenya that ensured a high number of English-speaking teachers from the country.

Karega also established a strict attendance and performance control system for students and teachers, which in the case of the teachers is tied to their

retention at the school. Several of the Tanzanian teachers expressed the fear that their monthly self-evaluations as well as their inadequacy in teaching 'excellently' in English could lead to their dismissal. Combined with the fact that the school does not offer work contracts, some teachers expressed criticism regarding the school's management, which was felt to operate exclusively according to free market principles and not—as the ideological framework of a Christian school might suggest—on principles of social welfare and/or Christian solidarity. 'We can say that we are doing cheap labor here', complained one of the teachers, 'This is no social service, this is a business. We have no security here'.

What, then, is the 'religious' character of a private school like St. Mary's? At first glance, Christian content and values play an unclear role in the school's day-to-day activities. The subject PPI (Pastoral Program Instruction) was, for example, reduced on the schedule to one hour per class per week, and took place in only one of the standard seven classes I observed over the course of several weeks. Furthermore, hardly any of the teachers knew what the abbreviation PPI stood for or the exact content of the course. One young male teacher explained to me that he personally draws on his experiences as an Anglican Bible schoolteacher for PPI class:

I don't know what [PPI] can mean. Every teacher has his or her topic with his or her pupils in the class. For us, we are just trying to teach how they can act as sisters and brothers—how they can be relatives and how they can share in school. We are doing this in order to improve their academic performance. . . . Sometimes we can say that this is a Christian school in policy, but not in practice.

However, this teacher's critique should not be taken to mean that Christian ideas and practices have no place in the school's daily life. Along with communal prayers taking place twice a week at the morning parades, sayings such as 'Jesus for Life' or 'The Lord is my Shepherd' are written in large letters on the walls of the dining hall. Moreover, Christian values are informally conveyed during Kiswahili lessons, the reading of short stories, or as an explanation of new concepts. Teachers, students, and parents also share an explicit consensus that learning and teaching at St. Mary's are closely linked to Christian values and morals and have a positive effect on the future lives of the children.

This perceived notion of the positive effect of Christianity on morality and values as expressed through prayer correlates to the establishment of prayer groups among the teachers in the staff quarters, as well as to the practice of using healing prayers for (mostly female) students with a predominantly Muslim background, among whom spirit possession has been identified due to unusual behavior. One twelve-year-old student named Happiness, who lived

in the boarding school section of St. Mary's, described the importance of prayer and the necessity of belief as a form of negotiation regarding religious and spiritual belonging for 'good performance in school': 'You cannot learn without remembering God first. In everything you must pray first to God. If you pray to God, he will make you perform better or your parents get money to pay for your school fees'.

For Happiness, a Roman Catholic, 'belief' and 'spiritual belonging' have not been uncontested issues in her young life. During the exams in 2008 she experienced troubling dreams of her late Muslim grandfather, which were subsequently identified as the requests of a malevolent *jini* (spirit) who wanted to eat her flesh and blood. After consultations with Happiness's grandmother and a 'witchdoctor' in her home village in Northern Tanzania, Happiness was taken to a healing church to be prayed for, and was also healed during prayers at her school:

Happiness: It was when I was doing exams, they were coming—they were just meeting me and wanted me to eat the blood and meat from someone. At night, I was talking to my [late] grandfather. [My mother] went to my grandmother in the village and my grandmother went to a witchdoctor. He said that I must eat the blood of someone. But my mother said: 'You must go to church and pray'. I went to a . . . Lutheran church, and they prayed for me. When they prayed, I fainted, and when I woke up I asked my mother what happened. . . . Since then I started to pray to God and for my family.

Hansjörg: Were you scared by the *majini*?

Happiness: Yes, I was scared. But then I started to pray.

However, it is not only students whose religious experiences and actions are shaped by the larger framework of St. Mary's in specific ways. Spiritually and morally troubling experiences were also part of Ms. Lucy's biographical narrative, a teacher from Uganda who had been recruited to St. Mary's in 2000 and who had been part of the teachers' fellowship group that was involved in Happiness' healing. For Ms. Lucy, the move to Dar es Salaam had been a spiritual challenge that she faced not only by fellowshipping regularly with other teachers but also by joining an evangelical church as a born-again Christian:

[When we moved here,] things were different. This is a coastal region, there are many foreigners, there are things like witchcraft, so I decided to give my life to Jesus. . . . In an Islamic school, my upbringing would be demolished. In a Christian school, I feel at home. I feel in my own place. I feel like I am at home spiritually.

Taken together, the narratives in this case study show that St. Mary's position in the educational market in Dar es Salaam is best understood with regard to recent political reform processes and the increasingly competitive educational

market in urban Tanzania, as well as the growing presence of neo-Pentecostal churches and leaders in the political and public arena from the 1990s onward. Furthermore, multiple conversations with teachers and students highlighted how educational experiences in St. Mary's are shaped by specific religious discourses and practices that are unlikely to occur either in a Muslim or government school, or in a Christian school unconnected to the neo-Pentecostal field. While I do not mean to imply here that witchcraft narratives or Charismatic healings are not popular *beyond* neo-Pentecostal groups and congregations, my data does suggest that experiences of possession and healing through prayers occurred primarily within schools attached to the neo-Pentecostal field, but never in the Muslim or Catholic schools under study.

Case 2: Al-Farouq Islamic Seminary

The Al-Farouq Islamic Seminary for Boys is located in the immediate neighborhood of St. Mary's. It was founded in 1997 by the Kuwait-based Africa Muslims Agency, a subcontinentally operating *da'wa* and development organization that aims for a 'strengthening of Islamic identity in Africa' through the construction of mosques and wells, and through education and health institutions (Ahmed 2009). Founded by a Kuwaiti doctor in 1981, the Africa Muslims Agency has now established a transnational network of aid activities and social institutions, including the International University in Khartoum and a teachers' university in Zanzibar. The Africa Muslims Agency Tanzania is part of this network, and some of the teachers at the six schools in the country were trained at these universities. Al Farouq is also closely tied to other Islamic schools in Dar es Salaam, which were founded by various individuals, organizations, and in some cases mosques, which are oriented toward improving the educational situation of Muslims.

Al Farouq differs from St. Mary's in its institutional and financial connections. The school is financed not only through private school fees but also through donations from the wider Muslim and Arab world. In recent years these transnational, charity-driven connections have affected the school on two levels. First, following the terror attacks on the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in 1998 and those of September 11, 2001, Islamic organizations in Tanzania (and subsequently the schools attached to them) have come under scrutiny by government authorities. Second, the school has earned a charitable reputation through the relatively large number of stipends it offers to students, which are based on students' socioeconomic situation rather than on school performance. This means that many poorly performing students are included in the school's graduation statistics, which tends to put Al Farouq

at a disadvantage in the national rankings in comparison to the often highly performance-driven Christian schools (Possi and Maselle 2006).

Similar to the government-run schools in Tanzania, Al Farouq's weak competitive position is worsened by its poor infrastructure with regard to teaching materials and low retention rates among teaching staff. Despite recent efforts to raise teachers' salaries and improve the teaching environment (e.g., by buying more books for the library), Al Farouq faces difficulties in retaining qualified teachers. Furthermore, many of the teachers are university students themselves, whose studies are partially funded by the Africa Muslims Agency and are rarely related to their teaching responsibilities. Others have additional sources of income, such as working as private tutors or running side businesses such as a computer training centre. Most of the teachers aim to pursue a career beyond teaching at a Muslim school. 'This is not the end of my journey', a twenty-seven-year-old teacher stated, 'I have still my dreams that I want to achieve'. Contrary to what has been suggested elsewhere (for instance, by Possi and Maselle 2006), my interviews did not indicate that Muslim teachers placed less value on material gains in their life plans than their Christian counterparts: '[This job] is a starting point for me', said one of the teachers, 'I will look at the income [I can get]. I am here out of interest (*kimaslahi*)¹⁷—not for religion'.

While the above statement indicates that Al Farouq's orientation as an Islamic school is not seen as central by some of the teachers for remaining in their current employment situation and was even described as a hindrance by others with regard to their future career chances, the situation for students and their families was often more complicated. Al Farouq is a seminary; religious subject material and values thus play a more central role in daily school life than in other schools that do not fall into this category. In addition to attending midday prayers at the mosque on the school campus (or, in the case of boarding students, the four other prayers throughout the day), attending classes in Islamic Knowledge and Arabic are required. The content of these classes is determined by Tanzania's Islamic Education Panel, the national Muslim organization BAKWATA, and by textbooks adopted by the Tanzanian Education Ministry; performance is tested through comprehensive national graduation examinations. For many students this is crucial preparation for later life. 'It is important for me [to attend an Islamic school]', stated an eighteen-year-old student, 'It helps me to learn about life'. When I asked if he would consider attending a Christian school, he said, 'No, because Islamic Knowledge is required at an Islamic school. At a Christian school they teach Bible Knowledge... It would damage my beliefs and confuse me'.

In other students' perspectives, however, Islamic teachings were not that central. This indicates that the attachment to a specific denomination and/or

religious framework was not necessarily decisive for all students and their families when opting for a certain school. Most students, as well as the teachers, at Al-Farouq come from socioeconomically underprivileged families; they are often the first to achieve a relatively high level of education. These students and teachers have thus developed a strong awareness of where they stand in an increasingly stratified society, and in relation to the ranking of Islamic schools in comparison to Christian or the smaller number of better government-run educational institutions. Students directly experience many of these differences on a daily basis, for instance with regard to their immediate living environments and use of public transport. The issue of public transport has been the subject of ongoing debate in Dar es Salaam for decades. The *daladalas* (minibus taxis), for example, have been required to take students at a reduced price since the turn of the century, but Al Farouq students report long waits and travel times as part of their daily trip to school. According to Ramadan, who was cited in the introduction:

In private schools the students are brought home after school, but we ride the *daladala*. They are often too crowded or the ticket sellers see that they get less money from students. . . . I leave school at 2:30 p.m. and often have to wait half an hour for transportation. . . . In some *daladalas* if the ticket seller has a bad heart you have to stand up the whole way home. By the time you get home your whole body hurts. . . . The Christian schools take care of their students.

Regarding their classes and learning, Al Farouq students largely agreed that attending an Islamic school was a disadvantage to them in the long term. In addition to the low rate of teacher retention, one of their main criticisms was that lessons at Al Farouq are largely taught in Kiswahili; students are thus not properly prepared for the national graduation examinations conducted in English. Abdullah, an eighteen-year-old who has been supported as an orphan since his first year of school by the Africa Muslims Agency, said:

I [would go to a Christian school] because I would go there only to study, I would not change my heart. In Christian schools we see many pass, more than in Muslim schools. And also the teachers. We didn't study math for four months—in Form IV they didn't have a mathematics teacher for the last seven months. . . . There is one school [I heard of] that has many Christian and few Muslim students, but they built a small mosque in the school compound. I don't remember the school's name.

My fieldwork at the Al Farouq Seminary indicates that the experience of teaching and studying in one of the new Muslim schools in Dar es Salaam is closely intertwined with perceptions of being disadvantaged in comparison to the

majority of Christian schools and also some government schools in Tanzania. The structural nature of this marginality is particularly articulated with regard to the weak competitive position of the school in the context of the annual rankings, but also in relation to the weak infrastructure and everyday exposure to the hardness of life on the streets of Dar es Salaam.

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that the growing presence of religiously inflected schools in urban Tanzania has become intrinsic to an increasingly segregated educational system. The educational system itself has been constituted at the intersection of transnationally embedded and internally contested histories, deeply rooted dynamics of social-religious inequality, and the reconfigurations of urban space and moral landscapes along the East African coast in the context of educational and economic reform processes. Christian and Muslim schools are part and parcel of specific (spatial-temporal) urban configurations that are experienced, acted on, and constituted in the process by students and teachers. In order to understand the nature of these evolving urban configurations and the ways in which Christian and Muslim schools are implicated in their formation, four issues should be highlighted.

First, it would be simplistic to ascribe the reinforcement of social differences in the context of neoliberal restructurings or the further marginalization of 'revivalist' Muslim schools *exclusively* to the policies of the World Bank or to the 1998 U.S. embassy bomb attacks and the events of September 11, 2001, respectively. However, it has also become clear that these events have become part of a specific, historically embedded period in which religiously motivated private schools have been established as a significant, internally differentiated social category. As I have argued with regard to the history of religiously inflected education in Tanganyika/Tanzania, the presence of religious actors in the public realm or their relative absence has never been a coincidence (or collateral) in the country's history. For example, with regard to evangelical schools, Amy Stambach has shown that over the last decades there has been explicit pressure on East African governments from the World Bank and the United States to register U.S. missions as development agencies (Stambach 2010). Under these circumstances, evangelical missionaries have become one of the main exports of the United States to Sub-Saharan Africa, which employed 59 percent of the globally operating Protestant missionaries in 1990 to 1992 (Hearn 2002). Through their mobilization of resources and involvement in the building of infrastructure in African countries, these missionaries have

become deeply involved in the penetration of religious structures and content into the public sphere in many rural as well as urban areas of Sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Englund 2011).

Second, while religiously motivated educational institutions in Tanzania—established by Muslim revivalist organizations or neo-Pentecostal pastors—have become part and parcel of an increasingly stratified educational system, the category of religious schooling cannot be taken for granted but has to be differentiated with regard to the specific institutional frameworks, the schools' transnational attachments and aspirations, as well as the founders' biographies and the practices, experiences, and perceptions of individual teachers, students, and their families. The two case studies provided above demonstrate that the emerging institutional heterogeneity and the way it is implicated in the reconfiguration of urban space and experience, cannot be described by simple dichotomies such as Christian versus Muslim, private versus institutionally linked or governmental/state-run, or formal versus informal. Some new Christian schools such as St. Mary's were established by private individuals and are run in a way similar to a private business. Nonetheless, the public perception of St. Mary's is still strongly associated with the school's founder—a religious leader in the pluralized religious landscape of urban Tanzania—and is preferred by students and parents *due to* its belonging to a Christian value complex, even if formal religious teaching plays a minor role in the school's daily life. It is furthermore not a coincidence that St. Mary's school was founded from within the spectrum of neo-Pentecostal churches, which have only begun to establish institutionally embedded welfare activities and have been characterized for many years by internal disputes. A restriction in this article to schools run by churches or Christian NGOs would thus run the risk of limiting the analysis to Tanzania's 'mainline' religious organizations that, due to their historical power positions, have already been the focus of critique from various perspectives.

Third, as I have shown, focusing too closely on the missionary aspect of religiously oriented educational institutions is not useful. At most Christian schools, even those not categorized as seminaries, students of all denominations are required to participate in prayers of the respective main church. Likewise, those interviewed made it clear that religiously inflected schools, both Islamic and Christian, represent a place for the negotiation of religious subject positions, a place that gives priority to the demarcation from other forms of religious belonging and practice and can determine the future life path of a student. However, it would be a simplification to conclude that an *automatic* relationship exists between attending a Christian or Islamic school

and a conversion to a different or a deepening of existing faith. Religious orientation depends primarily on the individual teachers and fellow students that a student encounters, and on their family and personal background. In this respect, attending a government-run school can also be the catalyst for a lasting strengthening of belief, as Ahmed, a twenty-four-year-old teacher at an Islamic school, suggests:

My family did not emphasize the role of religion. I didn't go to *madrasa*¹⁸ because my father wasn't interested in this. In A-Level [at a government school], there was a teacher teaching the religious period in school—so it was my peer group at school and the teacher who made me what I am today, what I am living today. Not the effort of my family—their effort is in education.

This last statement makes clear the fourth point, how important access to higher education has become for many families in Tanzania today, and what economic strains they are willing to endure in order to ensure better chances for their children in a stratified educational market. For those who have this choice, an important role is played by religiously inflected schools whose growing presence in urban Tanzania has become intertwined with broader geopolitical shifts and transnationalized reform agendas. In particular, the public perceives Christian schools as central to the present educational system because they provide services that are lacking in government schools. Christian schools are associated with a learning atmosphere in which students' education is said to be holistic, especially with regard to moral values. The teaching situation in Christian schools is also regarded as generally better and more reliable because the retention of teachers is higher and, most importantly, lessons are taught in English.

Despite these admittedly positive aspects, it is nevertheless up for question to what extent Christian schools actually reinforce the unequal dynamics of 'neoliberal urbanism' (Beaumont 2008a, 2011) that some newly emerging Christian congregations claim to want to stop or 'heal' (Dilger 2007). In particular, the Christian schools that are established by individuals from the neo-Pentecostal field and that often function like private businesses—but also other 'mainline' church- or FBO-based schools that increasingly operate according to free market principles—accentuate the growing social gaps in urban Tanzania, which become ingrained in the daily experiences and practices of students and teachers in Dar es Salaam. The opportunities of this market-driven social order, but also its internal boundaries that are intimately linked to historically produced religious difference, become embodied in the biographies of students such as

Ramadan Hamidi who, while accepted into one of the new Muslim schools, would not have had access to either the government schools or to most of the Christian schools presently operating in Dar es Salaam.

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Notes

- * The names of quoted students and teachers have been changed.
1. <http://www.akdn.org/faq.asp>; retrieved 3 September 2012.
 2. Many of the new Islamic organizations and mosques differentiate themselves in their social, religious, and political status from the national Muslim organization BAKWATA, which was established in 1968 and is perceived by many Muslims as a governmental organization. For lack of a better term, I refer to these mosques and organizations as well as to the new generation of Christian (especially neo-Pentecostal) churches as 'revivalist' (or, alternatively, 'activist'), though they would not necessarily use these terms themselves (Dilger 2014b).
 3. As indicated at the beginning of this paragraph, this positive attitude toward Muslims was not unanimous. A distinction was made between newly converted 'local' ('African') Muslims and 'Arab' Muslims, the latter of whom were preferred for colonial employment.
 4. Today the affiliation to Islam and Christianity is said to be 30-40 percent for each of the two religions, with the 'remainder consisting of practitioners of other faiths and indigenous religions, and atheists' (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report 2007*, online source <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90124.htm>, retrieved 14 September 2012). In the absence of a national census on the category of religious affiliation, however, these figures are hotly contested by religious activists from all denominations.
 5. This later debate has gained new momentum following an avowal by the *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM = Party of the Revolution) government to join the OIC as part of campaign promises in 2005. On the precursors of this debate with regard to Zanzibar, see Lodhi 1994, 92ff.
 6. These studies identified the percentage of Christians and Muslims in schools and governmental institutions on the basis of first and last names. For a critique of this method see Yahya-Othman 2006, 480, note 1.

7. While my field data suggest that the activities of neo-Pentecostal churches have also been scrutinized by government authorities (especially through the Ministry of Home Affairs), this has occurred to a lesser extent than in the case of Muslim revivalist organizations.

8. Like the East African Muslim Welfare Society, BAKWATA also established a number of educational and medical services in the 1970s. However, the remaining schools (two in Dar es Salaam) are now in poor condition, and most of the health services have been discontinued.

9. The encounters between Christians and Muslims in Dar es Salaam have also resulted in violent outbreaks on both sides; this subject cannot be included here, but see Heilman and Kaiser (2002) and Wijzen and Mfumbusa (2004).

10. The number of government secondary schools in Tanzania (including community schools) rose from 527 in 2001 to 2,893 in 2008; 2,802 of these were newly established community schools. The number of nongovernmental private schools increased from over 400 in 2001 to 755 in 2008.

11. I do not intend to claim that the infrastructure of public schools was de facto better in the mid-1990s than in the late 2000s. However, the discourse on 'bad' and 'good' schools has taken on new shape with regard to the choices and options people have (or at least wish to have) in the context of an increasingly diverse educational market.

12. This is not to say that Muslim schools did or do not profit from transnational ties, or that they were explicitly marginalized by the Tanzanian government or World Bank policies. However, as will be shown below, the mixture of global events combined with the (only partially market-driven) structural setups of the Muslim schools places them in a weaker position overall when compared to their Christian counterparts. The exception are the Ismaili schools, though because they are not explicitly religiously oriented (see footnote 1) they are consequently frequented by students of mixed denominational backgrounds.

13. One of the world's largest Pentecostal denominations that has existed in Tanzania since the 1940s (Ludwig 1999).

14. http://www.stmarys.co.tz/pages/about_us.html; retrieved 10 December 2009.

15. Though formally linked to the Assemblies of God, Rwakatare's congregation operates de facto largely independently from the mother church.

16. Government primary schools are free other than the cost of school uniforms and school materials.

17. *Maslahi* means interest, profit, remuneration.

18. Quranic school.