1 Introduction
The Quest for a Good Life in Faith-Oriented Schools

At the turn of the twenty-first century, families in rural and urban Tanzania began looking for new educational opportunities in faith-oriented schools. From 1969[1] until the (partial) privatisation of the educational sector in the mid-1990s, attending a government school had been perceived as foundational for securing a 'good life' (*maisha mazuri*), and potentially a job, in the East African country. But by the early 2000s, Christian private schools in particular had become a new destination in the quest for 'good education' and a means to the good life, for both individuals and the collective.

Tanzanian families' quest for a good life through faith-oriented education coincided with the emergence of a new market for Christian and Muslim[2] schools in the country's urban centres from the mid-1990s onwards. Thus, as in other parts of Africa, the number of often very expensive private (especially Christian) schools grew quickly, and these schools became increasingly opposed to the even larger number of 'poor-quality free schools' (Hunter 2019: 199) provided by the state.

In Tanzania, the newly established Christian schools became especially attractive for the growing urban middle classes from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds, as these groups increasingly turned their backs on government schooling in times of mass education and due to the widely perceived 'failure' of public schools. The Muslim schools, in contrast, most of which were weaker performing, catered to families from mainly poorer socio-economic – and exclusively Muslim – backgrounds. For these people, Muslim schools were often the only chance

[1] Tanzania's socialist Ujamaa period lasted from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s and included the nationalisation of all private and faith-oriented schools in 1969.

[2] I use the term 'Muslim schools' due to my analytical focus on students' and teachers' lived experiences and practices of their faith in educational settings. The terms 'Islamic schools' and 'Islamic seminaries' are used when I focus on the theological-normative frameworks of these schools. The Muslim schools of my study have a Sunni orientation and are different from the Shi'a- or Gülen-oriented schools in Dar es Salaam (see Dohrn 2014; 2017).

for their children to get a higher education. *All* these groups sought a moral and ethical orientation for their children in the changing urban economy, which they perceived as ambiguous and risky. Many families also invested significant amounts of money to secure a good life for their children through the best possible education (Phillips and Stambach 2008: 157ff.; for South Africa, see Hunter 2019: 13).

How have these transformations in Tanzania's educational sector, and in students' and teachers' quests for a good life, affected their school and professional trajectories? *Learning Morality, Inequalities, and Faith* sheds light on how 'new'[3] Christian and Muslim schools – established in the wake of privatisation – are sought by families and students due to their promise to combine high-quality education with the moral (self-) formation of young people. It also shows that the deregulation of Tanzania's educational sector in the early 1990s and the impact of transnational reform programmes addressing access to primary and secondary education since the early 2000s led to a realignment of faith-oriented schooling,[4] the embodiment of values, and social stratification in the neoliberal market economy. While these processes extend far beyond Tanzania's urban centres, cities such as Dar es Salaam have become a stage for a particular kind of 'assemblage' (cf. Ong and Collier 2004) in which postcolonial articulations of faith, class formation, the market, transnational educational policies, changing urban infrastructure, bodies, moralities, and subjectivities are being configured and reconfigured in relation to each other in unprecedented ways.

Dar es Salaam is a particularly compelling place for exploring all these dynamics. After the partial privatisation of the education sector in 1995, a wide range of Christian and Muslim actors became reinvolved in education in the city, and their schools reflect Dar es Salaam's enormous religious diversity and its multiple entanglements with historical and global processes. These schools include newly established educational

[3] In Tanzania, and in other parts of Africa, religious organisations have a long history of providing social services (Quarles van Ufford and Schoffeleers 1988; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; 1997; Kaiser 1996; Hunt 1999), often in close collaboration with colonial governments (on the field of schooling, see Leurs et al. 2011: 14; Dilger 2013a: 460). Thus, the more recent engagements of Christian and Muslim actors with education have to be understood against the background of these historical precursors (see Chapter 2).

[4] I use the term 'faith-oriented' in order to emphasise the fact that the schools in my study often have only an implicit grounding in religious and/or denominational values and practices. Furthermore, the designation sets these schools apart from the field of 'faith-based development', to which most of them are only loosely linked beyond wider processes of urbanisation, privatisation, and class formation. At the same time, 'faith' is a distinguishing feature of these schools and plays an important role in the learning and teaching of values in their students' and teachers' everyday lives.

institutions of the former Catholic and Protestant mission churches, as well as former mission schools that were returned to the churches by the government in the wake of privatisation. They also comprise the educational projects of mosques and individuals from revivalist and/or transnationally promoted strands of Sunni Islam, whose position has been affected in the wake of 9/11 and the terrorist attacks in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 (Dilger 2013a; 2017), and recently by the shifting power relations in Turkey (Dohrn 2014; 2017). Finally, some schools were established by individuals from the Evangelical spectrum, partly with connections to North America and Europe (see Stambach 2010a); these are often run like businesses, without an immediately recognisable denominational orientation. However, while some of these individually owned Christian schools were open to students from all religious backgrounds, their symbolism was often related to the neo-Pentecostal spectrum. One of the schools where I conducted research was run by a well-known Pentecostal leader and offered little religious content in its teaching. At the same time, the school used the pastor's religious title in its advertising and its slogan was widely recognised as a Pentecostal message of delivery and hope: *Acha kuteseka, K. High School ni jibu lako* (Stop suffering, K. High School is your answer). In an increasingly competitive urban educational landscape of public and private institutions, how faith-oriented schools categorised themselves was a matter of strategic self-positioning to attract new clients.

My analysis of students' and teachers' quests for a good life in this diverse landscape of Christian and Muslim schools in Dar es Salaam is shaped by three interrelated arguments. First, quests for a good life in faith-oriented schools include the search for 'moral meanings' (Fischer 2014: 5) with regard to strong academic performance and material success, but also as they relate to all other aspects of life involving questions 'about value, worth, virtue, what is good or bad, right or wrong' (Fischer 2014: 4–5). These 'ordinary ethics' (Lambek 2010) are made 'explicit' (Bochow et al. 2017: 451) in the formal value frameworks of Christian and Muslim schools and position such schools in relation to each other – but also in relation to government schools – in Tanzania's educational market. These values also become embodied – and modified or challenged – in the everyday interactions (Mattingly 2013) between and among students and teachers, who often perceive themselves as studying and working in 'morally superior' schools.

Second, notions of and aspirations for a good life in Tanzania's faith-oriented schools are 'imagined' (Weiss 2004) and embodied by students and teachers in relation to large-scale historical and political-economic forces. These forces include colonial and postcolonial histories of

education and Christian–Muslim relations, alongside more recent histories of privatisation and faith-based development (Stambach 2010a), all of which have shaped the structural positions of Tanzania's Christian and Muslim schools in highly specific ways (Dilger 2013a). These various dynamics highlight the fact that faith-oriented schools – which are embedded in state-structured systems of education and learning, and are thus both state projects and religious projects in the context of transnational governance – mould everyday practices of moral becoming among Tanzania's young citizens in relation to religious belonging and marginalisation (see Loimeier 2007), social stratification, and larger urban and global transformations (Dilger 2017).

Third, this book provides a unique perspective on how the politics of Christian–Muslim difference and the formation of socio-economic inequalities in contemporary Tanzania have become deeply entrenched in students' and teachers' quests for a good life in faith-oriented schools. In particular, the book provides an understanding of the 'common' (Larkin and Meyer 2006: 286) – and simultaneously highly unequal – grounds on which the individual and collective quests for a good life in the country's Christian and Muslim schools are based. It demonstrates that 'faith', 'religion', and 'values', while being central to moral becoming in these schools, acquire their place in specific educational settings and individual lives only in their entwining with larger colonial and postcolonial histories of religious difference and education. The comparative angle shows that the articulation and rearticulation of moral and religious belonging in Christian and Muslim schools always 'involve broader interactional and institutional configurations of social power' (Altglas and Wood 2018: 3) and thus have implications for the study of religiously diverse settings more widely (Soares 2016: 679).

Let me introduce these various aspects through the vignette of Teresa King,[5] who visited different Christian seminaries during her education. While Teresa's schools were all located outside Dar es Salaam, her story is emblematic of the experiences of many other young people attending faith-oriented schools in the city.

Zooming in: Young People's Moral Agency and Striving

When I asked Teresa King for an interview about her schooling experiences, she had just enrolled in a Lutheran seminary in Moshi that

[5] In this book, all names of students, teachers, and school administrative staff are pseudonyms, except in those cases when they held a particularly prominent position or office and can therefore be understood as public figures.

typically admitted only pupils from the Lutheran church[6] and that charged comparatively high school fees. In 2010, Teresa's parents – who came from a relatively modest rural background – paid around 1.25 million Tanzanian shillings (TZH; about €600 at the time) in order to keep their daughter in school; this added significantly to their annual expenses, which also included the education fees for their other three children and some of their relatives' offspring.[7]

Teresa explained that the Lutheran seminary for girls had been the right choice for her. She was particularly positive about the 'systematic' approach that the school used in its teaching and management, as well as the way in which 'good morals' (*maadili mazuri*) were inculcated in the minds and bodies of both pupils and teachers. She also enjoyed the daily church attendance that had become an integral part of her rigid schedule, which started with the student-led morning prayers at 7 a.m. and ended with the (equally student-led) night prayers at 9.30 p.m. When I asked Teresa what she perceived to be the main difference between a government school and her Lutheran school, she claimed that her seminary's Christian framework ensured that its graduates would not go on to become involved in 'corrupt practices'. She also emphasised that the boarding school had a strong impact on her own life, which she described as having been lifted beyond the state of 'pure existence' (*kukaa tu*):

> I can say that the church school has helped me a lot in my faith. Every day you are told that you are not supposed to commit sin; you are given examples [of] how people get healed, those who were [mute] begin to speak, [and] this is how you know that God exists. [In a government school] I would be very different. I would go to school and when I return home I would attend the church service just like everyone else. But in [my] school there are young people like me; we organise meetings around issues of the church. These meetings build [you] [*zinakujenga*] – different from the government schools where I would just sit.

The language that Teresa employed reflects how other pupils in my study compared the education in a government school with that of a faith-oriented school. Thus, the verb '*kukaa*' means sitting, living, or dwelling in English and is reduced to the meaning of 'existence' by adding the adverb '*tu*' (just, only). The use of the verb '*kujenga*', in turn, emphasises the widely described capacity of faith-oriented schools to

[6] Teresa was an exception in this regard as she had been baptised in a Mennonite church.
[7] In 2009, the state limited tuition fees for government boarding schools to 70,000 TZH per year but allowed private schools to charge boarders up to TZH 700,000 per year. This amount could be increased even further for extra services such as special food or transportation. In 2014, the tuition fees for state-run secondary schools were abolished. However, parents have to 'purchase uniforms for school and sports activities, exercise books and pens and pay for the medical expenses of their children' (Godda 2018: 3).

'build' or 'make grow' (although it is usually left open what exactly is built in a particular context – for example, a person's individual faith, a community of people, or a sense of belonging).

In Teresa's case, her reference to her school's capacity to 'build' was related to her strong desire to find meaning in life, something that she had experienced since childhood. Her father especially was not interested in faith-oriented activities or church attendance of any sort. He particularly disliked those churches that, Teresa reported, employed '*kelele*' (yelling) or divisive speech in their services (for instance, the neo-Pentecostal churches). However, although Teresa's father tried to regulate his family's church attendance, his wife and his daughter were persistent in finding their own position within the denominational spectrum that was available to them in their rural area, and Teresa was baptised in the local Mennonite church in 2005.

At the time of our conversation in 2010, she was still happy to belong to the Mennonite church, stating that it had prepared her to pray in other Protestant churches. In fact, during our conversation, she told me that she had been 'saved' in the previous year, a sign of the ongoing Charismatic renewal of the former mission churches in the country (Smith McKinnon 2017: 94ff.). She ascribed this change not least to the influence of her school, although she simultaneously emphasised that her state of salvation was 'still weak' when compared with some of her fellow students. When I asked her what she meant by being 'saved' (*kuokoka*), she replied:

TK I love Jesus [*nampenda Yesu*]. If you want to be saved, you pray the prayer of confession [*sala ya toba*]; then you do the things God likes. I have been saved, but I do not pray for other people [when they are possessed]. I have been saved with my own self [*binafsi yangu*]. Those who pray for other people have *extraordinary power*, they can *drive [the] devil away*.

HD[8] How did you become saved?

TK Almost everybody at my school is saved, but to varying degrees. There are those who were born with God, they are *so close*, everything they say is God. *I am close to him*, but others [are closer]. This means that at school everybody is saved, everybody is a *good Christian* but to a differing *degree*. There are those with *extraordinary power*.

Teresa King's story shows how the religious context of her seminary shaped her stance towards faith and religion – and her understanding of 'good morals' – in particular ways. Like the students of Simpson's research in a Catholic boarding school in Zambia, whose quest for upward social mobility became connected to their conversion to fundamentalist Christianity (Simpson 1998), she became 'saved' upon entering her

[8] In all dialogue, 'HD' is the author, Hansjörg Dilger.

Lutheran seminary. At the same time, her narrative highlights that there is no *automatic* relationship between attending a faith-oriented school and the deepening of a person's existing faith or their conversion to another. The reorientation of Teresa's faith depended as much on the communicative 'co-presence' (Pels 2013 [1999]: 25ff.) of students and teachers in her Lutheran school as on her personal and family background and her continued commitment to the Mennonite faith.

Furthermore, Teresa King's story reflects the interrelatedness of moral becoming with the political-economic dimensions of faith-oriented schooling in Tanzania. Like many other families in the country since the mid- to late 1990s, her family has expended great effort to gather together the always rising school fees necessary to attend well-performing private (often Christian) schools. In a context where the constantly increasing expectations of the labour market have changed the value of educational degrees all over East Africa (Brown and Prince 2015: 31), students and their families struggle hard to find the best possible education. In Tanzania, while a diploma from one of the better-ranked secondary government schools (ordinary level or Form IV) was assumed to be sufficient for securing a job in the late 1990s, that qualification was perceived to be insufficient for finding employment, not to mention a 'good' job, in the 2010s. That the search for the best educational opportunities was often closely connected to the perceived moral framework of a school was emphasised by Teresa, who compared the academic success of church and government schools:

> These days, even government boarding schools allow their students to pray. But the church schools promote morals more strongly. If you look at the *performance* of all schools in Tanzania – the *top one hundred* are church schools, the next one hundred are government schools. This is why church schools teach morals [*maadili*] better than non-church schools [*shule ambazo sio za kanisa*].

Navigating the Educational Market: School Rankings and Socio-Religious Inequalities

The attraction of a specific school in Tanzania's educational market was reflected in, and at the same time produced by, the annual rankings published by the government, based on schools' performance in the national exams. As Teresa King's concluding statement made clear, these rankings were particularly important for the way in which people positioned 'government' (*serikali*) and 'church' (*kanisa*) schools in relation to each other. Even though these categories – or that of 'Islamic' (*kiislamu*) schools – are not officially used by the government in the

statistical classification of schools (see Chapter 2), they shape public discourse on the educational landscape, and individual quests for a good school, to a significant extent. These rankings have therefore become a significant part of Tanzania's governance – and people's navigation – of the education sector, which is guided by the goals of efficiency, quality, and transparency and shapes both institutional practices and individual subjectivities and desires in comprehensive ways (see Shore and Wright 2015: 22).[9]

The 'life-orienting' capacities of these rankings in relation to the attractiveness of different types of schools became especially apparent in my conversation with Ms Martin, one of the officials of the Christian Social Services Commission of Tanzania (CSSC) in 2008.[10] The official provided me with the 2004–5 list of the country's 200 best-performing secondary schools, which contained only the name of the school and its rank. I asked her to identify, on the basis of the name of the school, to which category (government, church, or Islamic) each of them belonged.[11] The CSSC official's categorisation confirmed what has been claimed by the media and the public for several years: 'church' schools figured disproportionately highly in the rankings, with 41.5 per cent of the 200 top-performing secondary schools (a total of 83 schools). They were followed by 'government' schools, which comprised 20 per cent,

[9] What struck me during my study was that even very young children followed the national school rankings that were published annually by the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA); they were also highly aware of the shifting positions of individual schools in the list of top-performing schools in the country. How quickly a school's position could change was illustrated by the St Joseph's Millennium Secondary School (Chapter 6), which was ranked number 3 and number 14 in 2011 and 2012, respectively, but fell to number 34 in 2013 (NECTA 2012; 2013). The Feza Boys' Secondary School, which was renowned among both Muslim and Christian students and teachers I encountered as one of the 'top schools' in Tanzania, fell from number 3 in 2012 to number 28 in 2013 (NECTA 2012; 2013). All these ups and downs affected the reputations of the schools and were carefully noted by my interlocutors and affected their educational choices.

[10] Interview with Anastasia Martin, Dar es Salaam, 10 August 2008. On the CSSC, see Chapter 2.

[11] My request was motivated by the fact that it is difficult to state exactly the number of faith-oriented schools in Tanzania as statistics do not count them separately (except for denominational schools that are categorised as 'seminaries'). In 2001, Lassibille and Tan (2001: 148) claimed that 'Christian schools run by the Catholic Church and the Evangelical [probably Evangelical-Lutheran] Church of Tanzania … make up about 16% of the country's secondary schools'. In contrast, Leurs et al. (2011: 3) refer to Tanzanian government figures that 'show that in 2003, of the 42 per cent of secondary schools that were privately run, 45 per cent were run by Christian and 12 per cent by Muslim organizations'. My own study found that, depending on the mode of counting, Tanzania's faith-oriented schools comprise 9–20 per cent of all secondary schools, with significantly fewer Muslim than Christian schools. See Chapter 3 for the challenges of grasping the classificatory and statistical aspects of faith-oriented schooling in Tanzania.

and other 'private for profit' schools (a category that may also include schools with religious orientation) at 13.5 per cent. 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' schools comprised only 3.5 per cent, while the remaining 21.5 per cent could not be placed in any of these categories by the CSSC official.

Reading this ranking against the three types of schools made salient a set of claims with which I had confronted the CSSC official and that I had heard voiced by various Christian actors – and by students such as Teresa King – in conversations about the quality of the *shule za kanisa* (also labelled *shule za dini*, or 'religious schools'). These included assertions of the alleged moral superiority and strong performance of Christian schools, the importance of good management and leadership for educating the future leaders of Tanzania (as allegedly practised in Christian schools), and the overall significance of Christian schools for a successful education sector. These assertions were coupled with statements about the alleged weakness and 'decline' of government schools, and Christian (and generally private) schools' struggles to attract more affluent students in order to sustain themselves through the payment of school fees. Most notably, there was a striking silence about 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' schools in all these comparative statements.

However, among revivalist Muslims, claims about the superiority of Christian education – which were widely shared by the mainstream media – were countered by a discourse that pointed to Muslims' historical marginalisation. According to scholars such as Said (nd[a]; nd[b]), both the poor performance of Muslim schools and the underrepresentation of Muslims in higher education and public employment in Tanzania (Ishumi 2006; Musoke 2006) are tied to: the historical marginalisation of Muslims and their education institutions in colonial Tanganyika, the politics of excluding Muslims in Tanzania's post-independence governments, an alleged conspiracy within government circles and ministries to bar Muslims from entering higher education or leading positions in the public sector, and an overarching alliance between the government and the (international) Christian churches that has allegedly ensured the dominance of Christians in all central areas of politics and society for more than a century. According to this discourse (see Chapters 2 and 3), the specific moral positions of students and teachers in faith-oriented schools – and their quests for a good life in the hierarchical educational system – are tied up with long-standing processes of social and economic (re)production that have perpetuated religious inequalities from colonial times.

In this book, I argue that the specifics of moral becoming in Dar es Salaam's faith-oriented schools gain meaning only when they consider how historical and political forces – and their continued interweaving

with socio-religious and educational inequalities – are experienced and interpreted by students and teachers 'as complex multiscalar place-making projects' (Gille and Ó Riain 2002: 279) in specific schools. I also aim to explore how 'the negotiation of interconnected social actors across multiple scales' shapes moral becoming in both foreseeable and unexpected ways (ibid.: 279). In particular, during my research I was often struck by the way in which the relationship between processes of power and individual trajectories in the quest for a good life was not necessarily one-sided – and by the fact that many families sought every possible means to overcome structural hurdles in their quest for education. This also applied to Muslim families' struggles to improve their position in the educational market by scraping together school fees, often beyond their means, with the support of relatives, friends, or organisations within their reach.[12]

Ramadan Hamid provided one example of how even socio-economically deprived Muslim students actively navigate the educational market in their quest for a good life. Ramadan was 22 years old when I met him at an Islamic secondary school in Dar es Salaam in 2009. He was born on Mafia, an island south of Dar es Salaam; despite the fact that it has become a popular location for upmarket scuba-diving tourism, the island remains one of Tanzania's poorest districts. Due to the poor state of Mafia's educational system in the 1990s, when Ramadan was five years old his father, an employee at the national power company TANESCO, sent him to Zanzibar. 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 of 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 secondary school of the Africa Muslims Agency (see Chapter 5), and in 2009 he was about to complete Form III. Ramadan saw clear advantages in attending 'a private Islamic school', as he termed it. Along with the alleged better quality of private Islamic schools compared with public secondary schools, he referred to the teaching of moral religious values:

> 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 too, we must also receive guidance [*uongozi*] [for our lives]. Our friends, the Christians, are taught by other Christians too.

[12] However, the dynamics of upward social mobility in faith-oriented schools were certainly limited (see Chapters 4–6).