**Performing Graduates, Dropouts, and Pushouts:**

**The Gendered Scripts and Aspirations of Secondary School Students in Zanzibar**

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BY

Emily Morris

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Frances Vavrus and Dr. Joan DeJaeghere

August, 2018

# Acknowledgements

One of the things I have learned through the course of this dissertation is that it not only takes a village to raise a child, but also to cultivate a dissertation. While I have attempted to name everyone in my dissertation village, my sincere apologies to those I have omitted.

First, I would like to thank my advisors for their tireless guidance, patience, and scholarship. I am indebted to Dr. Joan DeJaeghere for mentoring me as a teaching and research assistant, and for advising me carefully through all steps of this dissertation. She taught me to work fluidly between quantitative and qualitative data and helped me wade purposefully through theory and longitudinal data throughout these four years. I am also honored and humbled to have learned through Dr. Fran Vavrus' work and from the examples she has set as a conscientious researcher and *mgeni/mwenyeji wa Tanzania*. Her tireless support, feedback, and mentorship throughout this doctoral process helped me become a better scholar. I am also grateful to Dr. Vavrus for opening her home and her many hours of advice that were among my favorite moments of this graduate experience. *Ahsanteni sana*.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to Dr. David Chapman, who has held multiple roles as an advisor, lead evaluator and mentor, and committee member. Dr. Chapman models how to gracefully straddle the worlds of academia and international development and has kept me focused on the larger purpose and intent of my research (and graciously smuggled me into the VIP airport lounges). I would also like to thank Dr. Ron Aminzade for his intellectual support, for sharing his books, and for connecting me to local activism efforts. His impressive knowledge inside and outside of the classroom was one of the highlights of my student experience and has helped me expand my thinking. *Shukran*.

In addition to my committee, I would like to thank the other professors and colleagues at the University of Minnesota who have contributed to my experience and dissertation. Thank you to Dr. Christopher Johnstone and Dr. Roozbeh Shirazi for helping me with my foundational thinking, and for being not just impressive researchers and professors, but generous individuals. Reading and experiencing Dr. Richa Nagar's collaborative work in storytelling and academia has been a critical part of this process. The ethics and conscience she brings to everything she does has helped me question my analyses frontstage and backstage throughout the writing stage and has helped me find a home in academia.

I also want to express my gratitude to Hugh and Elizabeth Thompson Travel Thesis Grant, Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle, Mary Corcoran Endowed Fellowship in Evaluation and Policy Studies, and the Mixed Methods Interdisciplinary Graduate Group (MMIGG) for their financial support of this research. A special thanks to Dr. Joseph E. Gaugler for his advice on the mixed-methods design. The Dissertation Retreat at the UMN Center for Writing under Dr. Katie Levin was also instrumental in creating the time, space, and community to move each chapter forward. Likewise, the members of the Youth as Subjects, Objects, and Agents group, especially Dr. MJ Maynes and Dr. Deborah Levison, have been critical in helping me scrutinize my research with youth. I also appreciate Dr. Fida Adely taking time to discuss her pivotal work on gendered paradoxes with me, and Dr. Supriya Baily for her helpful advice on analyzing gender and narratives.

And last, but with *toda mi alma y amor*, to Rafael Flores for his unconditional companionship, guidance, love, and sustenance on this journey. Thank you for caring so tenderly for me and Lucía Sabah, whose birth in this final writing stage has brought light and joy (albeit sleep deprivation) to every word I have written. You, *mis amores*, are my *maisha mazuri*.

Ahsante. Gracias. Obrigada. اركش . Merci. Ngiyabonga.

**Note to Readers:** To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, personal names of all but some of the research team members and prominent public figures have been changed. The names of schools and areas outside of Stone Town have also been changed. All translations of the original Kiswahili data are my own. Any and all errors within this dissertation are entirely the author's responsibility.

**For *vijana wangu***

H.A.V. O.H.M, C.C., & A.H.K.

For aspiring and believing even when the future seemed impossible,
and for becoming my family in the process of becoming *wahitimu*.
.
*Undugu ni kufaana, si kufanana.*
"Kinship is about belonging together, not resembling each other in appearance."

**Abstract**

This dissertation examines how girls and boys become labeled as secondary school graduates (*wahitimu)* or dropouts (*watoro*) in Zanzibar's education system, and how these categories influence youths' visions of their futures, or the good life (*maisha mazuri*). The term *watoro* suggests that youth are deficient in a fair system. However, this study argues that youth rarely just drop out on their own volition, but instead leave school because they are pushed and pulled out by a number of family, school, and community forces.

Through a review of historical documents, intergenerational interviews, and longitudinal analyses, this research traces how becoming a graduate (*mhtimu*) has shifted from the 1800s to present (2018), but also how deep geographical, economic, and social inequities still persist. These contemporary inequities are explored even further through theater scripts and narratives written and performed by youth using a popular theater methodology. Youth dramatize gendered reasons for being pushed and pulled out of school, but they also perform collective agency in navigating obstacles and in resisting the pathologizing girlhood and boyhood narratives written about them. By creating a stage for the youth to perform their experiences in schooling, and the climactic moment of the high-stakes exams, the youth revealed not just who, why, and how boys and girls leave secondary school, but the emotional toll this state of tension and limbo has on their confidence in themselves and their futures.

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## List of Abbreviations

DFID…………………...................    Department for International Development

EDC……………….……………    Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)

EFA…………………...................    Education for All

FAWE…………………………….    Forum for African Women Educationalists

GAD………………………………    Gender and Development

GER………………………………    Gross Enrollment Ratio

GETheatre..………………………    Global Empowerment Theater

GPI……………………………….    Gender Parity Index

HLM……………………………..    Hierarchical Linear Modeling

ILO……………………………….    International Labor Organization

iNGO…………………...................    International non-governmental organization

MDGs…………………………….    Millennium Development Goals

MoE………………………………    Ministry of Education

MoEVT…………………………..    Ministry of Education and Vocational Training,

Zanzibar

MoHCDGEC…………...................    Ministry of Health, Community Development,

Gender, Elderly and Children (mainland Tanzania)

MoLEYD…………….....................    Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Youth

Development, Zanzibar

NBS………………………………    National Bureau of Statistics

NECTA……………………………    National Exam Council of Tanzania

NGOs……………………………..    Non-governmental organizations

| | |
|---|---|
| OCGS………………………………. | Office of the Chief Government Statistician (mainland Tanzania) |
| OSC………………………………… | Orientation Secondary Class |
| PTA………………………………… | Popular Theater Approach |
| RGZ.………………………………… | Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar |
| RTE………………………………… | Right to Education |
| SAW…………………………….. | Sallallahu alayhi wa Salam (Peace be upon the Prophet) |
| SDGs………………................. | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SSA………………………………… | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| STEM……………………………. | Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics |
| TVET………………................. | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UCLES……………………………… | University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate |
| UN……………………................. | United Nations |
| UNDP……………………………. | United Nations Development Program |
| UNESCO………...................... | United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA………………………….. | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF…………………………. | United Nations Children's Fund |
| URT………………………………… | United Republic of Tanzania |

| | |
|---|---|
| USAID………………………………. | United States Agency for International Development |
| USDS……………………………….. | United States Department of State |
| USOIG……………………………… | United States Office of Inspector General |
| VTC…………………………………. | Vocational Training Center |
| WB………………………………….. | The World Bank |
| WID………………………………… | Women in Development |
| ZEC………………………………… | Zanzibar Examinations Council |
| ZEDP……………………………….. | Zanzibar Education Development Programme |
| ZNA………………………………… | Zanzibar National Archives |

# List of Kiswahili Terms and Phrases

Adadbu……………………………….. Manners or personal conduct

Ajira…………………………………… Employment

Akili…………………………………… Judgement or brains

Ameacha………………………………….. She/he has left something (code for leaving school)

Amefaili (plural wamefaili)………. She/he has failed (plural they have failed)

Amekamatiwa…………………….. She/he has been caught (code for becoming

pregnant)

Amekufa (plural wamekufa)……… She/he has died (plural they have died)

Ameoa/ameolewa…………………. He has married/she has married

Amepasi (plural wamepasi)…………. She/he has passed (plural they have passed)

Baraza………………………..….….. Bench outside a building, also means council or

assembly

Chuo (plural vyuo)………………..…. Qur'annic school (less formal and for younger

children)

Dada…………………………..…….. Sister, used colloquially for a domestic worker

Darsa……………………....….…….. Literally means "lesson/class" in Arabic, but often

refers to women's religious study groups

Elimu…………………………..…. Education

Hajafahamu…………….…..…….. He/she did not understand

Hasara…………………..…..…….. Loss, damage, costs

Heshima…………………….…….. Respect or Respectability

Kijana (plural vijana)…………..….. Youth

Kuharibikwa……………………….. To be spoiled (used as code for losing one's

virginity)

Kupasi……………………………… To pass (an examination)

Kufaili……………………………… To fail (an examination)

Madrasa (plural madaris)………….. Qur'annic school(s) (more formalized and older

children)

Maisha Badaaye…………………… Life Comes Later (title of Baobab students' play)

Maisha mazuri……………............. The "Good Life"

Mambo ya Swahili………………… Code for occult practices and beliefs

Maskani…………………………… Hangout or meeting space for men

Michepuo………………………….. "Biased school" or specialized school

Mhitimu (plural wahitimu)............... Graduate

Mtihani (plural mitihani)…..…........ Examination (literal translation)

<u>Mitihani</u>…………………………. Used colloquially in Zanzibar for

obstacles/hurdles/trials (underline indicates

colloquial usage)

Mshamba………………………... A person from a rural area or village

Mtoro (plural watoro)……………… Truant (literal), but used as dropout

Mwalimu (plural walimu)................ Teacher

Mwanafunzi (plural wanafunzi)....... Student (plural wanafunzi)

Mwari……………………………… Period of initiation and puberty; "a nubile girl,

maiden, virgin" (Baba Malaika, 1999, p. 122)

Mzungu (plural wazungu)………… Foreigner, sometimes refers to European/American or white person

Ng'ambo…………………………... Area of town outside Stone Town (formerly slave area currently working class neighborhood)

Papasi………………….............. Beach boys (men that hang out on the beach)

Rafiki wabaya……………………… Bad friends

Rafiki wazuri………………………. Good friends

Sadaka……………………………Charity

Shetani……………………………Spirits (often negative)

Shule/Skuli…………………………School in Kiswahili (shule commonly used in mainland, skuli in Zanzibar)

Uchawi……………………..……….. One form of occult belief

Ujana……………………………….. Youthhood

Ujuzi……………………..………..Knowledge

Uwezo……………………..………. Ability, capacity, also used as agency

Wangu…………………..………. My

Watoto wadogo……………………. Small children

Watu wazima……………………… Adults

Zakat (Arabic)……………………….. Giving alms (one of five pillars of Islam)

**Chapter One: Becoming a *Mhitimu* or *Mtoro* in Zanzibar**

"*Mtoto mzuri we, nitakupeleka skule eh.*" Having finished sewing the hems on her son's and daughter's uniforms, my host mother Bi Aida sang to her baby as we sat by candle light outside her rural home in Zanzibar.[1] This was the first time I heard this Kiswahili children's lullaby, which literally means, "If you are a good child, I am going to send you to school." In 1998, I stayed with Bi Aida and her family while I did research on rural women's participation in mangrove tree conservation. Like all the other families I knew in Bi Aida's village, she and her husband ensured their children finished their basic education—which from 1991 to 2006 covered seven years of primary and two of six years of secondary—even though they themselves had never completed primary school. Their children, like most of Zanzibar's young people, also attended daily lessons at the *madrasa*, or Qur'annic school, as the population is 98 percent Muslim (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Hamsa and Othman, the eldest sons of Bi Aida's nine children at the time, were in Standard 1 and 2—the first two grades of primary school. They were my unofficial Kiswahili teachers, and I was their English tutor. Although they studied English as a school subject, "Good morning teacher," was the only phrase they could confidently speak as their teachers themselves spoke limited English. I accompanied Hamsa and Othman on their three-kilometer walk to their government school during a number of

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[1] Zanzibar is an archipelago in the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) with approximately 1.3 million residents across Unguja and Pemba, the two main islands, and the smaller surrounding islands. Unguja, and the smaller islands surrounding Unguja, are divided into six districts with approximately 890,000 residents. Stone Town is Zanzibar's largest urban area with 593,000 inhabitants and is situated on Unguja's western coast. Pemba and neighboring islands are divided into four districts. Pemba has over 400,000 residents and has a number of small towns, but is more rural than Unguja (URT, 2013).

occasions and had the opportunity to observe their classes. I was fascinated by how gender divisions were clearly upheld in their classrooms and home. Girls sat one side of their classroom and boys on the other; boys played football (soccer) while girls played netball. When not in school, my seven and eight-year old hosts worked more than ten hours a week making charcoal for pocket money, catching and selling crabs, and fishing with their stepfather. Their sisters helped their mother wash dishes and cook.

At night, however, the boys scrubbed the carbon from their faces and the girls wiped chapatti dough from their hands, and they sat down together to study. While girls and boys moved and socialized in different spaces, Bi Aida and her husband, like many of the neighboring families, equally encouraged their boy and girl children to try hard in school. This encouragement was reinforced by their religious leaders, neighbors, extended family, and other members of their community who deeply believed that schooling was crucial to living well as adults and Muslims. In this study I refer to these different beliefs on the importance of schooling as social scripts, to be defined below. These social scripts not only inform the significance of schooling in young people's lives, but also their visions of their future "good life," or *maisha mazuri*. As will be discussed throughout this dissertation, *maisha mazuri* encompasses aspirations for schooling, careers and work, and families of their own, but also how youth live and interact with their families and communities.

At the Stone Town home of Bi Maha, my host mother in Zanzibar's largest city, I also observed the quest for *maisha mazuri* and the corresponding social scripts on schooling. For Bi Maha's children and grandchildren, becoming a secondary school "graduate," or *mhitimu* (plural *wahitimu*), was central to achieving a *maisha mazuri*. Bi

Maha's school age children and grandchildren attended government schools and spoke to me in articulate English until I mastered Kiswahili. As in Bi Aida's home, all the youth in Bi Maha's household had chores, but they did not work outside the home like Hamsa and Othman.

Another difference between households was that Bi Maha's children were given money for snacks and school supplies each day, and her children and grandchildren spent long hours after school in private tutoring sessions, referred to as "tuition,"[2] from trained teachers. Bi Aida could not afford tuition for her children; instead they attended an ad hoc tuition administered by other students or volunteer teachers. Bi Maha's older daughters helped their younger brothers with homework and vice versa, a concept I refer to as collective agency. As will be defined further below, collective agency is the "capacity for action" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 203) enacted by youth in collaboration with others in their families, schools, and communities. On occasion, Bi Maha herself did the tutoring as she had been a long-time teacher and social worker in the schools and spoke impeccable, or what she referred to as "the Queen's," English.

Unlike Bi Aida, Bi Maha was a secondary school *mhitimu*. She had also attended a teacher training college prior to the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, when the Omani Sultanate was overthrown and subsequently the archipelago's new government formed a union with the mainland Tanganyika to become the new nation of Tanzania (Sheriff &

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[2] Tuition in Zanzibar, and across many Anglophone countries worldwide, refers to the learning that takes place outside of the home and classroom. It can encompass tutoring, as well as a more systematic form of shadow education. Stevenson and Baker (1992) popularized the term of shadow education in the 1990s when describing the system of learning administered outside of the school day with the objective of enhancing student achievement on high-stakes exams and advancement in schooling. The structure and characteristic of shadow education varies by region and country, but is commonplace in Zanzibar. A survey conducted in 1995 found that 44 percent of 2,286 Standard 6 students in Zanzibar received paid or unpaid tuition (Bray, 2007).

Ferguson, 1991). While most of Bi Maha's peers never went to school, or had only completed their primary education, her family sent her from her rural home in the northern island of Pemba to live with an aunt in Unguja, Zanzibar's main administrative island. Her aunt made sure she completed secondary schooling at a time when less than three hundred male and female youth finished lower secondary (Form 4) each year (MoE, 1983). Bi Aida, on the other hand, did not have secondary school *wahitimu* in her immediate or extended family.

Contrasting and comparing schooling as experienced by Bi Maha, Bi Aida, and their children enables me to personify three key aspects of this research. First, Zanzibar has a long history of girls' education, and at present, girls are encouraged alongside boys to succeed in rural households as well as urban ones. Second, access to education and becoming a secondary school or university graduate is easier for youth from families that have past generations of *mhitimu*, who have deep social and familial networks, and who have economic resources and/or family members living in urban areas. As one of the aims of this dissertation is to explore boys' and girls' performances of schooling from three distinct geographical settings (urban, rural, and *ng'ambo* [3]), Bi Maha and Bi Aida's families exemplify how schooling can vary between families, schools, and locations. Third, Bi Aida and Bi Maha's children exemplify the ways in which the youth in this study performed collective agency and worked together with their siblings and peers to overcome obstacles and identify opportunities in their pursuit of becoming *wahitimu*.

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[3] *Ng'ambo* is the area surrounding town that is historically known as being slave quarters. Today the *ng'ambo* still exists, and is still associated with working class residents (Fair, 2001; Myers, 1993).

## Research Questions and Design

Bi Maha and Bi Aida's stories help me anchor the multiple youth narratives that appear in this study into a larger storyline and to frame the intent of this research. The purpose of this dissertation is to show how girls and boys become *mhitimu*, "a graduate," or *mtoro*, "a dropout"—including the family, school, and community forces that influence this process—and the implications that being labeled a *mhitimu* or *mtoro* ultimately has on youths' vision for their *maisha mazuri*. Another goal is to problematize the practice of dividing youth into a binary—*wahitimu* and *watoro*. Grouping youth into one ambiguous group of *watoro* assumes the youth are deficient in a fair system and negates the major obstacles they have surmounted and the collective agency they have performed in the process of schooling and pursuing their *maisha mazuri*.

This dissertation responds to three research questions. The overarching research question is:

> **Q1.** How does passing or failing the secondary school exams, and ultimately becoming a graduate (*mhitimu*) or a dropout (*mtoro*), influence Zanzibari girls' and boys' visions for their good life (*maisha mazuri*)?

Additionally, I look at the following sub-questions:

> **Q2.** How has accessibility to secondary school changed over time and between the past two generations of girls and boys?

> **Q3.** How do girls and boys perform multiple scripts and collective agency in the process of navigating obstacles in their schooling pathways and pursuing their good life (*maisha mazuri*)?

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I used mixed-methods research to answer all three research questions. To answer question two, specifically, I conducted a historical analysis from pre-colonial Zanzibar to today (2017-18). I traced the evolution of the compulsory basic education system in Zanzibar and scrutinized how the process of becoming a *mhitimu* has changed over time and among the past two generations. In addition, I used longitudinal cohort data collected with over a thousand youth from four districts. These data were collected together with Abrahman—my colleague from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) who will be introduced further in Chapter Three—between 2008 and 2017 when the youth were starting primary school (Standard 1) and at the beginning of their secondary schooling (ordinary secondary level).

While the quantitative data provided context on when the current generation of Zanzibari students leave secondary school and highlighted gendered differences in their participation in schooling, this dissertation focuses primarily on the qualitative narrative data written and performed by youth. I used these narrative data to answer the third research question and to explore different dimensions of youths' experiences in school and their desired futures, or *maisha mazuri*. These narratives were generated using the popular theater approach (PTA). The PTA is widely used in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to engage communities in development issues from education to health and the environment (Mlama, 1991). In this research, the PTA created a stage for youth to both individually and collectively construct stories, which were then turned into a final theater script performed for, and debriefed by, the youths' classmates. Before I define the concept of scripts and collective agency, I first describe the education system in Zanzibar and the process of becoming a *mtoro* or *mhitimu*.

<center>**Becoming a *Mhitimu* or *Mtoro* in Zanzibar**</center>

**Becoming a *Mhitimu*: Zanzibar's Education System**

At present, the pathway[4] to becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* in Zanzibar is defined as completing compulsory basic education and passing the Form 4 exam.[5] Between 1991 and 2006, compulsory basic education in Zanzibar consisted of ten years of schooling, starting with Standard 1 and stopping at Form 2 (MoE, 1991; MoEVT, 2006; see Appendix A for a map of the Zanzibar education system). Compulsory education was extended to twelve years of schooling under the 2006 Zanzibar Education Policy (also referred to as the 2006 Policy in this research). It now follows the pattern of 2-6-4, or two years of preschool, six years of primary school, four years of ordinary secondary level (O-level). The language of instruction in primary school is Kiswahili, but starting in Standards 5 and 6 mathematics and science subjects are taught in English. All subjects, except Kiswahili and Arabic, are taught in English throughout secondary school and university. After Form 4 there are two possible pathways. The pathway established during the colonial era is two years of advanced secondary level (A-Level) and four years of a university degree program. However, Form 4 graduates can also pursue a three-year college diploma and then be admitted for a university degree program.

There are four high-stakes exams that coincide with the different schooling levels: Standard 6 (end of primary), Form 2 (end of the former compulsory education), Form 4 (end of O-level), and Form 6 (end of A-level). Even though compulsory education was

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[4] I use schooling pathways to denote the different grades and academic or vocational tracks that individual students complete as they progress in their education toward the end of compulsory basic education. These different schooling tracks are prescribed by the MoEVT.

[5] On the Form 4 exam, students need to have at least three Cs on various subjects to go onto Form 5. If students do not get enough credits (D or higher), they get a 0 on the exam and do not earn a Form 4 certificate.

extended as of 2016, the Form 2 exam is still the critical moment when youth tend to either become a *mtoro* or qualify to go on to become a *mhitimu*.[6] Students who pass (*kupasi*) the Form 2 exam have the opportunity to become *wahitimu*. Those who fail (*kufaili*) are either pushed out of the system, have to find a way to pay for private secondary schooling, or can enroll in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Youth who are pushed out join the group of *watoro* who dropped out of school before reaching the Form 2 exam. In the next section, I problematize the use of *watoro* to encompass all youth who leave school, and the way youth are ultimately categorized into a binary of *mtoro* and *mhitimu*.

**Becoming a *Mtoro*: Distinctions and Intersectionalities between Pushout, Drop out, and Pullout**

Zanzibar has made great strides in increasing access to basic compulsory education. Despite these advances, 25 percent of Form 2 aged youth were out-of-school in 2016, a larger proportion being boys (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Another sizeable proportion (between 30 and 45 percent) left after failing the Form 2 exam. In conventional national and international datasets these out-of-school youth are often lumped together, even though the reasons they left school may vary widely. When analyzing the longitudinal cohort data on youth from four districts, I found that the term *watoro* was used as an all-encompassing term. It described youth who dropped out on their own volition, were truant or absent for long periods, got pregnant and had to leave, or disappeared and were unknown. When youth failed the Form 2 examination, they

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[6] It is important to note that the Standard 6 exam (formerly the Standard 7 exam) does not prevent youth from going onto Form 1 in Zanzibar. This was the case in the mainland until 2014, when the mainland Ministry passed a new education policy that extends compulsory education through secondary school.

became part of this larger category of dropouts. Not only does the term *watoro* lack accuracy important for analytical purposes, but it also assumes that youth voluntarily initiate the act of dropping out of school.

Based on this discrepancy, I argue that we need to resist using a dichotomy of *mhitimu/mtoro* in conventional education data statistics in Zanzibar as well as internationally. Instead of aggregating youth who drop out, are pushed, and are pulled out into a single percentage of out-of-school youth, we need to rethink the term *watoro* and understand the varied reasons why youth are leaving school. I contend that policymakers and education implementers need to refine the concept of *mtoro* by expanding the categories into pushout, pullout, and drop out and providing reasons youth leave school in national data. In addition to challenging the use of a single dropout category, I show how these labels can intersect through the examples of youth in this study. This not only provides a more nuanced and complex way of understanding why youth leave, but as detailed in Chapter Five, allows me to simultaneously challenge the assumption that youth drop out largely because of sociocultural reasons and family pressures as implied by the 2006 Zanzibar Education Policy (MoEVT, 2006).

***Terminology of pushout/pullout/dropout.*** Throughout this dissertation I use the term "pushout" to describe involuntarily leaving school as a result of failing the exam and/or experiencing dire economic hardship. The students in this research who were pushed out could not overturn predetermined regulations and guidelines set by MoEVT and were not given the option of continuing on with school. "Dropout," in the simplest sense of the term, is the voluntarily decision made by students to leave school, a decision made either in conjunction with or against their families' wishes. Finally, I use the term

"pullout," to describe when family members initiated the decision for a student to withdraw from school regardless of whether or not this was what the youth wanted.

In reality youth very rarely fell into one discrete category, rather the categories intersected. For example, the young man who instigated dropping out of school in this study described how being prodded by male peers in his neighborhood to "be a man and to start earning money" made him feel like it was not manly to continue on with school. While he made the ultimate decision to withdraw, I argue that these strong gendered expectations and doubts over time helped push him in the direction of leaving. Although he was classified as a dropout in 2016 school data, in 2017 he had reenrolled in school, showing that their statuses can change. Therefore, while these labels are messy and overlapping, identifying extremes helps demonstrate how youths' circumstances are fluid and allows me to examine the different root forces that are pushing and pulling youth into these different categories.

There are a number of different family, school, and community-level forces that influence youth to become *watoro*. As discussed in relation to Bi Aida and Bi Maha's stories, inequalities between students are influenced not only by where they live and go to school (rural, urban, *ng'ambo*), but also their families' economic resources, whether their immediate or extended family members are *mhitimu,* their access to academic supports like tuition, and other family, school, and community-related factors. These disparities affect who drops out before completing compulsory basic education, but also who passes the high-stakes Form 2 exams and can follow the pathway of becoming a secondary school *mhitimu*. Uncovering these forces at work helps bring to light recommendations on how to support youth in navigating schooling pathways and achieving their vision of a

*maisha mazuri*. In the next section, I introduce the concept of scripts both literally and

figuratively to illustrate how youths' visions of their *maisha mazuri* are entrenched in

different discourses [7] on schooling and shaped by a range of influential social actors in

their lives.

## Scripts and Collective Agency

In this research, I employ the concepts of scripts, specifically theater and social

scripts, from the fields of theater and sociology. I use theater scripts in a literal sense to

refer to the texts that youth wrote in the PTA workshops. I use social scripts to indicate

the phrases, expressions, and underlying ideas and discourses that youth drew upon and

that informed their written and oral accounts of how schooling related to their *maisha*

*mazuri*.

### Theater Scripts

The theater scripts the youth in this study produced are composed of a series of

vignettes, or stories, with multiple scenes around a common plot or storyline (Pavis,

1998). In each vignette there is a tension (conflict) and climax, which is the highest point

of tension. There are also multiple characters, including the protagonists, who are the

main characters, and the antagonists who struggle with the protagonists. In Chapter

Three, I introduce both the process of developing the *Maisha Badaaye* ("Life Comes

Later") and *Real Life in Zanzibar* theater scripts with youth from three schools, and the

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[7] I use the term "discourse" in this research in part to refer to policy language or rhetoric, but also as culturally and historically embedded systems of representation, beliefs, and values of girls' education commonly held by MoEVT, international development agencies, etc. This draws on Foucault's (1972) and Mohanty's (1988) notions of discourse.

actual vignettes written in collective PTA sessions and individually in the youths'

journals.

I used both journal writing and the performance of the theater scripts and youths'

stories about their lived experiences gathered through their interviews to scrutinize how

being labeled a secondary school *mhitimu* or *mtoro* influenced youths' aspirations and

visions of their *maisha mazuri*. I also analyzed the community, school, and/or family

characters in their stories responsible for pushing or pulling youth out of school. Finally,

alongside the obstacles youth mentioned in their theater scripts, I looked at the collective

and individual agency youth performed as they confronted these obstacles.

**Social Scripts**

Social scripts inform and are informed by different discourses from a variety of

domains, such as education and/or economics. The phrase "education is the key to life" is

an example of a common social script youth vocalized when asked why they aspired to

become secondary school graduates. While there is almost always a broader social

discourse informing social scripts, they are more fluid than discourse. According to Sayer

(2005) discourses go beyond "internalized and memorized bits of social scripts" (p. 7):

> Discourses derive from and relate to a wider range of situations than those
>
> directly experienced by the individuals who use them...While they [discourses]
>
> constrain thought in certain ways, they are also open to different interpretations
>
> and uses, and endless innovation and deformation, and they tend to contain
>
> inconsistences and contradictions, making them open to challenge from within.
>
> (p. 7)

Therefore while discourses and social scripts both embody rationales, discourses inform and structure perceptions while social scripts are the perfunctory articulations of these perceptions. Social scripts are often voiced colloquially as common sayings or expressions and used nonchalantly in conversation to summarize beliefs and perspectives on matters such as the importance of schooling. However, unlike discourse, the rationales behind these social scripts are only cursorily acknowledged if at all.

The scripts that surfaced in youths' interviews, journals, and theater performances ranged from being deeply internalized and well-rehearsed to fleeting improvised thoughts. A well-rehearsed social script is articulated over and over again in different contexts and with different audiences, as in the script "education is key to life." The majority of youth in this study expressed well-rehearsed aspirations for work, namely "I want to be a doctor or a teacher." Other times youths' social scripts were only drafted and were contingent on life circumstances, such as "If I pass the exam, *inshallah*, I want to be a doctor." Youth also improvised social scripts without deep thought or attention to discourses, such as one young woman who wrote about wanting to be a soldier like her uncle, but reverted back to her original aspiration of being a teacher the next day. While these social scripts on work aspirations were informed by social, cultural, and economic discourses, which can be traced to the colonial era in Zanzibar (Decker, 2014b), their ability to shift and disappear from youths' consciousness at any moment distinguishes them from more enduring discourses. Youths' social scripts were continually formed with, and revised through, the gendered expectations of their families, schools, and communities who collectively contributed to these scripts in a number of ways.

By using social scripts for my analyses, I was able to trace various influences and discourses youth were drawing from as they scripted their aspirations for schooling and for their *maisha mazuri.* I have categorized these social scripts into three main groups: inter/national scripts, religious and cultural scripts, and collectively-embedded youth scripts. These social scripts express the values of education for girls and boys, how education related to youths' vision for their *maisha mazuri*, and the challenges they faced in schooling.

   ***Inter/national scripts.*** Using the concept of the inter/national developed by Vavrus (2005), these social scripts describe a convergence between global education agendas and domestic educational policies in ideas, language, and approach. I use the concept of inter/national scripts to refer to the representations and discourses used in reports written by international institutions, which Zanzibari policy actors have internalized and draw upon largely unconsciously in their work (Samoff, 2010; Vavrus & Seghers, 2010). The inter/national script is evident in contemporary discursive projects in international development, and permeates into national and local spaces (Adely, 2012). For example, USAID (2012a) published a report that an alarming proportion of girls in the Global South leave school to marry early, and thereafter committed resources to combat early marriage in Tanzania. Although there is insufficient contemporary evidence and comprehensive data to show how widespread early marriage is in Zanzibar, early marriage was nonetheless listed as a key factor in why girls leave secondary school in the 2006 Policy alongside pregnancy. [8]

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[8] Pregnancy of schoolgirls is not reported regularly in MoEVT data, but in their 2006 Education Policy they noted that there were 56 recorded teenage pregnancies among schoolgirls and 74 marriages in 2003. Data

These ideas have flowed across local, national, and international actors and the issue of early marriage is now considered a major obstacle in schooling in Tanzania (Terway, Dooley, & Smiley, 2013; Ziddy, 2007). Furthermore an international non-governmental organization (iNGO) commissioned a report that touched on early marriage and collected additional data on a small sample of Zanzibaris, but did not clearly discern how this practice has changed over time and between age groups (Smee, 2012). Several Zanzibari academics then used these ambiguous and non-representative data in their reports (Omar, Hajj, & Nassor, 2016), and a number of newspaper articles have taken up the issue of early marriage reproducing the inconsistencies in the data (Nassor, 2016; Yussuf, 2016).

Relying on these academic and news reports, Ministry representatives, school teachers, and head teachers, repeated the social script that students drop out to get married in their interviews even when the underlying cause may have been pregnancy, rape, and/or some other form of violence against women. When international donors heard these concerns from the schools and MoEVT representatives during meetings and field visits, they went on to confirm that early marriage is still a large problem in Zanzibar (as seen in the USAID 2012a report), but do not discuss the underlying issues behind these marriages and the demographics on the males who marry these girls using actual Zanzibar data. Subsequently, early marriage showed up in the youths' theater scripts, whether or not youth actually knew young people who have been forced out of

collected by MoEVT's Office of Registrar of Education (2015) between 2005 and 2014 reported a steady decrease in school pregnancies over the ten years to 21 pregnancies in 2014. However, these data only include reported female pregnancies and not male students who got female students pregnant. Furthermore, Zanzibar's Ministry of Labour, Youth, Women and Child Development estimated that one in five Zanzibari girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years (18.5 percent) are currently married (UNICEF, 2011). It is not clear what percent of these marriages are by choice, arrangement, or as a result of a pregnancy.

school to marry. This process demonstrates how scripts travel across multiple actors and levels, and will be elaborated upon in in Chapters Two and Four.

One of the main inter/national scripts articulated in the various narratives and interviews is education as a panacea, a phrase Vavrus (2003) uses in her research in mainland Tanzania. The education as a panacea script maintains the "enduring faith that schooling will effect profound social change" (p. 7), that education is the solution for all problems, and as I add, is the foundational remedy for international development issues from unemployment to child mortality. Stambach (2000) refers to this script as "schools-to-the-rescue" (p. 11) in her research in northern Tanzania. In my study, the education as panacea script is manifested in the catch phrases that youth used such as "*elimu ni unfunguo wa maisha*" ("education is the key to life") and *elimu ni mwanga"* ("education is light"). This education as panacea script does not overtly question the importance of education and does not scrutinize whether the kind of education youth are receiving is relevant and responsive to their aspirations for their futures and *maisha mazuri*.

Another example of an inter/national script that surfaced over and over again was the "I want to be…" script, which, when prompted about their futures, youth articulated their desired professions with little actual thought to whether they had the skills, interest, and/or schooling credentials to pursue this formal employment. This script generally links education to future work and economic development; investment in young people's education and aspirations is assumed to yield growth in both skills and future work, and subsequently contribute to overall economic development (The WB, 2014). There is little to no consideration that schooling may not follow this linear path and that girls, in particular, may stay in schooling for reasons beyond employment, such as increased

social mobility, self-respect, and to promote the well-being of their families. This non-linear pathway is described as a gendered paradox by Adely (2012) and is a key concept that emerges in this study as well. The gendered paradox script maintains that education has value beyond just employment and economic development.

      ***Inter/national scripts on gender.*** There are strong inter/national scripts on gender repeated by government officials, teachers, parents, and even youth themselves. I started this research believing one of these inter/national scripts on gender, namely, that Zanzibari boys will persevere longer in secondary schooling, do better on the exams, and will transition into advanced secondary level schooling and university at higher rates (MoEVT, 2014b). I assumed this script to be true even though two of Bi Maha's daughters, who hold doctorates in Nuclear Physics and Architecture, encouraged and inspired me to pursue my PhD. Furthermore I reproduced this script despite having seen firsthand that girls excelled in school across Zanzibar during two year-long fellowships in Zanzibar and my later collaboration with MoEVT on two education projects between 2007 and 2011. I never questioned this dominant gendered script until I began analyzing preliminary quantitative data and my results showed the opposite, that boys were actually dropping out of school before completing Form 1 at slightly higher rates than girls, and that boys and girls were performing at par on the high-stakes exams. This led me to interrogate the many scripts that wrongly propose that girls have lower pass rates and do not aspire to become *wahitimu* to the same extent as boys.

      Although the 2016 *Zanzibar Education Situation Analysis* report written by researchers from Oxfam Policy Management in conjunction with MoEVT confirm through data that girls are not dropping out and failing at higher rates than boys (Murphy,

Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016), these researchers do not overtly question the dominant inter/national script on gender in the 2006 Policy or provide any insight on how to reframe this discussion. However, there are a number of scholars, especially those writing about schooling in the Middle East, parts of Asia, Latin America, and among minority communities in the US, who have studied how girls are staying in school longer and whose work helps clarify why this gendered script perpetuates misconceptions about Muslim women and students of color (see Adely, 2012; Ridge, 2014). In addition to examining these inter/national scripts, I look at how views on schooling, and notions of the *mhitimu* and *mtoro*, are embedded in religious and cultural scripts.

    ***Religious and cultural scripts.*** The inter/national scripts from the Global North frequently perpetuate the notion that Muslim girls are denied equal access to, and participation in, education. By using images from Afghanistan or stories such as Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan, these scripts not only perpetuate generalizations about national education systems, but they also mask the incredible diversity of women's experiences across the Muslim world (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Adely, 2012; Khurshid & Pitts, 2017). Although the young women in this dissertation are Muslim by faith, they are also Zanzibari by culture and context. I attempt as an outsider to highlight the religious and cultural scripts underpinning their participation and views on schooling, and show how important Islamic principles, as well as cultural assumptions, are to their notions of *mhitimu* and the *maisha mazuri.*

    While Zanzibari education policy and international development discourse mandate that every child, boy or girl, should follow a formal school pathway (MoEVT, 2006; RGZ, 2011; RTE, 2015; UNICEF, 2011; URT, 2015), this value did not originate

with the Education for All (EFA) movement in the 1990s. Historical documents and records show that educating girls, albeit elite girls, has been part of Zanzibar's history dating back centuries and supported by Islamic scholars and leaders across the archipelago. While initially education was centered in religious learning and Arabic studies, formal secular schools were established under the British influence in the 1920 and 1930s (Decker, 2014b). With the advent of compulsory basic education in 1991, becoming a *mhitimu* has increasingly become an expected aspiration for girls and boys alike, and among families in urban, rural, and *ng'ambo* areas. This aspiration has been supported by religious and cultural scripts.

As described in interviews and discussions, education[9] is seen as an imperative for every Muslim, boy or girl, a belief that surfaces in multiple verses in the Qur'an and through examples in the Prophet Mohammed's (SAW) Hadith. These religious scripts have continued to guide families and youth to put their trust and faith in schooling and the education as panacea script, despite the often negative and troubling experiences youth have in the process of obtaining an education.

I reference these religious and cultural scripts when youth themselves inserted them into their vignettes, narratives, or discussions to show how important faith is to their desires to achieve the title of *mhitimu* and in defining their *maisha mazuri*. For example, youth expressed how if they were to become *wahitimu* and economically stable they would help give *sadaka* (charity) to needy family members and neighbors. As they

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[9] Education is often intertwined with becoming literate. Christoph (2013) found in her research on literacy beliefs in Zanzibar that "respondents espoused a nearly unanimous belief in the power of literacy-in language not unlike that expressed in the Education for All (EFA) literature" (p. 84) while at the same time respondents noted how become literate was important as Muslims. This shows how religious and cultural scripts and inter/national development scripts can overlap.

explained, the *sadaka* helps elevate them in faith, which was essential to living a *maisha mazuri*. In addition to inter/national scripts and religious and cultural scripts, the boys and girls in this research also drew on their own youth scripts to articulate their aspirations for schooling and *maisha mazuri*.

*Collectively-embedded youth scripts*. Missing from the international development reports and national policy and program discourse are the social scripts written by the youth themselves. These youth scripts are critical to this research as they expose the gendered reasons young people leave school as well as the forces that push boys and girls into becoming a *mtoro* or *mhitimu.* The performances of their scripts, both in a literal and figurative sense, are also demonstrative of the collective agency youth harnessed in navigating schooling. In group storytelling activities and in youths' individual journal entries, they wrote about their obstacles, opportunities, and aspirations in relation to the people in their family, school, and community. As is the case in many communally-oriented societies (Appadurai, 2004), youths' social scripts were not formulated individualistically, but rather as inspired, motivated, and influenced by members of their families, schools, and communities. Communities included peers, neighbors, *madrasa* school teachers and sheiks, political representatives, or business owners, while family included both immediate and extended relatives. Schools included other students, their teachers, head teachers, and sometimes the curriculum and practices at the school.

Throughout the PTA workshops the youth referenced these three spheres—communities, schools, and families—in multiple ways. They were physical settings in the vignettes, where tensions and obstacles were performed, such as the announcement of the Form 2 exam results at school. They were also used to demarcate the social actors who

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informed both their literal and figurative scripts and visions of their *maisha mazuri*. As the youth demonstrated through the characters in their theater scripts, family, school, and community members helped them shape the social scripts and decisions they performed in staying-in or leaving school. For example, one young woman chose to pursue the status of university *mhitimu* to make her family proud as much as to achieve her own goals. Likewise, how youth were labeled by schools and teachers, as *mhitimu* or *mtoro*, influenced the kinds of work, school, and home-life aspirations they scripted for themselves.

In Figure 1, I show how the youths' narratives, performances, and social scripts are embedded in the three overlapping spheres of family, school, and community. For example, youth wrote about how their classmates, as peers from their community as well as school environments, helped them overcome various challenges they faced. Also informing youths' social scripts were Islamic values and principles. For instance, youth described the importance of being a "Good Muslim" in their community, school, and home. Additionally, inter/national policies and agendas contributed to youths' social scripts as the students consciously and unconsciously repeated phrases, such as "education is key to life" in their journals and theater scripts.
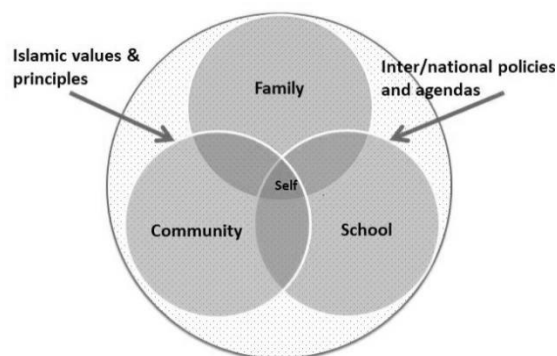


*Figure 1.* Collectively-embedded family, school, and community spheres

These three spheres also collectively informed youths' agency to overcome various obstacles in their schooling. For example, youth wrote about how older students (Forms 4 and 6) from their community helped provide free tuition to the students and to study for their exams. This collective agency is described in more detail below.

**Collective Agency**

In this dissertation I define collective agency as the "capacity for action" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 203) that is informed by youths' religion, culture, economic situation, geographical location, and in negotiation with the people in youths' family, school, and community (Alidou, 2005; Khurshid, 2015; Korteweg, 2008; Mahmood, 2001; Sewell, 1992). I use collective agency to show how youth actively performed their ideas, perspectives, and emotions in relation to the challenges and opportunities they encountered in schooling. While, at times, the youth unconsciously reproduced inter/national scripts in their own vignettes and narratives, they also embodied moments of resisting these scripts and engaging a "capacity for action" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 203) to find solutions to the various challenges they contended with in attempting to become a *mhitimu*. Their performances, I argue, are both individually and collectively agentic, as the characters they embody and the narratives they share speak both for their own experiences as well for those of other youth in their families, school, and community.

In the dozens of inter/national reports written about schooling and young people in Zanzibar that I analyzed, youth were commonly positioned as the objects of education interventions rather than agents actively involved in shaping these different strategies and scripts sources (see Maternowska et al., 2013; MoEVT, 2014a; UNFPA, n.d.; UNICEF, 2011; Ziddy, 2007). I maintain that positioning youth as agents who perform their own

scripts not only helps inter/national development agencies, policy makers, and researchers understand why they are leaving or staying, but why schooling matters for their *maisha mazuri*. As such, I not only add girls' and boys' scripts to the discussion of secondary schooling in Zanzibar, but I put them front and center. By sharing the narratives the youth performed, I am intentionally using their theater scripts to "speak back to the dehumanizing narratives" (Adely, 2012, p. 31) written about them as Muslim girls and boys. While at the same time the youth speak back to what has been written and assumed about them as youth, they are also speaking to how they will achieve their *maisha mazuri* going forward.

**Significance of the Research**

This research is important for theoretical and methodological reasons, but it also informs praxis. In regards to praxis, findings confirm that across Zanzibar girls do not at present drop out of secondary school or fail at higher rates than boys. Instead, this study urges policymakers and international development agencies to heed the notable percentage of boys dropping out of school before Form 1 and to move beyond analyzing gender parity and focus on issues like how sexual harassment affects girls' schooling. From a theoretical perspective, this dissertation troubles the binary of *mhitimu* and *mtoro*, and rethinks how the term "dropout" is used, and how it assumes youth are deficient in a fair system. I propose using "pushout," "pullout," and "dropout" to address the complex reasons that youth leave school and to interrogate the structural forces that push and pull youth from school.

Finally, methodologically, this study shows how historical analyses grouped with longitudinal cohort data, which follows youth across their entire schooling, provides a

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more complete picture of students' schooling pathways as opposed to just one moment in their educational lives. Another methodological contribution is the use of theater as a transformative methodology and viable analytical framework in educational research. The PTA methodology not only provided important data for the analysis, but also promoted a participatory and youth-centered process through which youth built enduring relationships with other youth, shared their own stories, and enacted collective agency in the process of performing. Below, I describe how this research is structured through the following seven chapters.

## Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in the following manner: this initial chapter introduced the primary aim of this research, key concepts employed, and introduced how becoming a *mtoro* or *mhitimu* ultimately affects youths' *maisha mazuri*. The second chapter provides a theoretical background to the different discourses shaping the inter/national and gendered scripts on schooling, including: conceptualizations of girlhoods and boyhoods; gender, equality, and equity in education; and notions of the good life. In Chapter Three I describe the research design and methodology, as well as the study sites.

I then begin my analysis chapters by examining how becoming a *mhitimu* has varied across different eras and generations using historical accounts, longitudinal cohort data, and youth perspectives (Chapter Four). Next, I look at who among the youth become a *mhitimu* or *mtoro*, and demarcate the term *mtoro* into pushout, pullout, and dropout (Chapter Five). I also look at how youth enact collective agency by performing the different obstacles in their schooling and show how these obstacles fall into the

family, school, and community-level spheres (Chapter Six). I then home in on the main reason youth are leaving school, the Form 2 examination, and the emotions surrounding this process of selection and exclusion (Chapter Seven). Finally, I explore how becoming a *mhitimu* or *mtoro* influences youths' aspirations and visions for their *maisha mazuri* (Chapter Eight). I close by providing policy recommendations for MoEVT and research implications for the field of comparative and international education.

**Conclusion**

In the seven total years I lived in Zanzibar, and the two additional years on the mainland of Tanzania, I observed that girls often outnumbered boys in primary and secondary schools. However, I also witnessed how schooling played out differently for girls and boys, as well as across class, social, and geographical backgrounds across the archipelago. While youth may have been exposed to many of the same inter/national and religious and cultural social scripts on schooling, such the education as panacea script, how girls and boys were able to perform these schooling scripts varied by where they went to school, what support they received in school and at home, and how they ultimately fared on the high-stakes exams.

As I became a part of Bi Maha's family, and eventually took on a guardian role for Bi Aida's sons Hamsa and Othman so they could attend secondary school and university in Stone Town, I lived vicariously through the vast range of emotions, trials, and tribulations their children experienced in schooling. I came to realize that even though all boys and girls were rocked to sleep with the same lullaby, *mtoto mzuri we, nitakupeleka skule eh*…, not all of them had the same opportunities and capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004), or imagine possibilities for their futures. Youth like Bi Aida's sons

Hamsa and Othman would have to continually rewrite their scripts for their *maisha mazuri* throughout their adolescent years and overcome a series of obstacles along the way. After failing his exam, Othman had to leave school for a period to work. Hamsa had a major injury that nearly prevented him from becoming a *mhitimu*. They relied on collective agency, or the support of extended family members, peers, teachers, and others in their family, school, and community spheres to help them overcome these obstacles.

Although becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* was an aspiration for Bi Aida's sons and daughters, for Bi Maha's children it was an assumed expectation and collectively-embedded script. Likewise, becoming university *wahitimu* and obtaining formal work was central to Bi Maha's visions of their *maisha mazuri*. On the other hand, no one in Bi Aida's village or her extended family had gone to the university and most youth in her community were *watoro* and worked in informal or self-employment, such as fishing, farming, or running micro-businesses. Thus, Bi Aida's notion of *maisha mazuri* for her children was centered on finishing compulsory basic education and meeting the economic needs of their family.

In summary, compulsory basic education is increasingly an expectation for both boys and girls across Zanzibar—as informed by inter/national, religious and cultural, and collectively-embedded youth scripts. However, youths' capacity to aspire and become secondary school *mhitimu* varies according to geographic location, family resources, and social networks. In the process of becoming a *mhitimu*, youth have to overcome numerous obstacles including family-level hardships, shortcomings in their schools, and pressures in their community. To surmount these challenges, youth enact collective agency, and in the process, trouble the practice of sorting youth into the *wahitimu* and

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*watoro* binary in their theater scripts. According to the youths' stories, labeling youth as dropouts not only wrongly assumes boys and girls are deficient in a fair system, but does not expose the family, school, and community-level forces that push and pull them out of school. The following chapter will explore the different notions of *mhitimu*, *mtoro*, and *maisha mazuri* in greater depth.

**Chapter Two:  *Mhitimu*, *Mtoro*, and *Maisha Mazuri***

**Youthhood and Education in Zanzibar**

In Chapter One, I discussed how youth become a *mhitimu* or *mtoro* in Zanzibar

and how these labels influence youths' visions of their *maisha mazuri*. In this chapter I

present different literature that engages with the concepts of becoming a *mtoro* and

*mhitimu* and visions of *maisha mazuri* to frame the inter/national socials scripts on

gender and schooling and to contextualize the youths' performances and narratives. I start

by exploring the link between youthhood and the *maisha mazuri* drawing on

anthropological concepts of how youth envision their futures. I then look at ways in

which inter/national scripts pathologize girlhood and boyhood in reports on youth, and in

particular make Muslim youth the subjects and objects of larger geopolitical development

conversations. I then look at different notions of collective agency from sociological and

postcolonial literature, and finally discuss how and why youth become *mhitimu* and

*mtoro* through a range of ethnographic youth research.

**Youthhood and the *Maisha Mazuri***

In this section I introduce the term youthhood and review literature that

contextualizes youths' visions of their *maisha mazuri*. The students in this study ranged

from 15 to 21 years of age and thus were situated in a wide and ambiguous category of

youthhood, or *ujana*. The majority of these youth could also be classified as adolescents,

which the U.N. defines as ages 10 to 19 (UNICEF, 2011; UNFPA, n.d.). While there is

no official Kiswahili term for adolescent, in Zanzibar this period is usually referred to

colloquially as *mwari*, or the ritual of puberty. However, most of the youth in this study

were beyond the age of *mwari*. Therefore, I intentionally use the term youth (*kijana*,

plural *vijana*) as opposed to adolescent throughout this dissertation to recognize the adult roles they already shouldered.

Stambach's (2000) research on secondary school students supported this ambiguity, arguing that secondary school students "are neither adults (*watu wazima*) nor little children (*watoto wadogo*), but something in between" (p. 142). Likewise, Lancy (2008) described, youth as living in a "state of limbo" (p. 295). The youth in this study exemplify this in-betweenness, having already begun to assume responsibilities associated with adulthood, such as caring for younger siblings and earning income for their families, even if they have not yet started their own families.

Therefore, I use youth not as a life stage category or age range—which the United Republic of Tanzania [10] defines as ages 15 to 35 (MoLEYD, 2007)—but rather as a period of "vital conjunctures" (Johnson-Hanks, 2002, p. 865). These vital conjunctures include aspirations (both individual and collective) for schooling, work, and life beyond school that are constantly in the making. This fluid and dynamic anthropological and sociological view of youthhood aligns well with the notion of *maisha mazuri* used in this study as neither *ujana* nor *maisha mazuri* are static and bounded by time or a developmental stage, but rather a series of conjunctures as will be demonstrated through youths' performances and narratives in the subsequent chapters.

Some researchers have interpreted the concept of *maisha mazuri* in Zanzibar as religious and cultural beliefs on the afterlife (O'Malley, 2000). However, it became clear during the theater workshops that *maisha mazuri* was firmly rooted in this lifetime.

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[10] While the Government of Zanzibar defines a "child" as being under 18 in The Children's Act No. 6 of 2011 (RGZ, 2011), they do not officially define adolescence or youth.

*Maisha mazuri* included ideal jobs, harmonious relationships with family and community members, hopes for future children, desires for compatible spouses, economic stability, good health, and being a "Good Muslim." In this sense, *maisha mazuri* reflects what Appadurai (2004) called the "capacity to aspire," or aspirations that are never just individual, but rather "always formed in interaction and in the thick of the social life" (p. 67) and in relation to larger cultural norms, beliefs, and ideas. Aspirations about health and happiness, or "the good life," exist in all societies and manifest in different ways. These aspirations can exist at a more philosophical level (e.g. beliefs about life or death) as well as in the more immediate realms of life, such as "densely local ideas about marriage, work, leisure, convenience, respectability, friendship, health, and virtue" (Appadurai, 2004, p. 68). While Appadurai clarified that these aspirations can be distilled even further into very specific material wants and choices, such as the desire for a particular piece of land or a mobile phone, the youths' visions of the *maisha mazuri* in this research were never detailed material goods. Their *maisha mazuri* embodied local ideas of how economic, social, and cultural wellbeing looked as compared to how others in their families and communities lived.

Appadurai's discussion on the "capacity to aspire" encompasses not just what youth envision in their *maisha mazuri*, but how these visions are formed in relation to their communities and families and relative to their economic resources and opportunities. What distinguishes this perspective from more developmental notions of aspirations and future orientations (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Gottfredson, 2002; Marjoribanks, 2005) is the culturally and socially-embedded nature of the *maisha mazuri* and the role of the youth and their families as collective agents in

navigating their futures and aspirations (Basit, 1997; Bok, 2010; DeJaeghere, 2016). This embedded nature of aspirations and notions of "the good life" informs not only youths' agency to aspire, but also their capacity to represent themselves beyond the pathologizing girlhood and boyhood stances described below.

## Pathologizing Girlhood and Boyhood

Youthhood, and particularly girlhood and boyhood, have been the subject of many inter/national reports and education and health strategies in Zanzibar and Tanzania (Maternowska et al., 2013; MoEVT, 2014a; UNFPA, n.d.; UNICEF, 2011; Ziddy, 2007). The way that Zanzibari youth are portrayed in these reports, however, is often by the challenges they encounter, such as "unintended pregnancies" and "lack of employment," rather than their capacity to aspire or serve as agents of change. Kirk, Mitchell, and Reid-Walsh (2010) labeled this approach as "pathologizing girlhood." A pathologizing girlhood stance depicts young women as victims of exploitation or stigma, rather than active agents that can and do contribute to discussions on schooling (Kirk, Mitchell, & Reid-Walsh, 2010). For boys, a pathologizing boyhood[11] stance often portrays young men as oppressors or delinquents (Ridge, 2014), idle (Mains, 2011), or, increasingly, as terrorists when they originate from parts of the Muslim and/or Arab world (Puar & Rai, 2002). Boys can also be portrayed as "marginalized" and "oppressed," especially when youth come from economically disadvantaged contexts (Shirazi, 2012). These pathologizing stances place women and men as if they were homogenous and universally oppressed or oppressive based on some policy or discourse that assumes so (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Adely, 2012; Alidou, 2005; Korteweg, 2008; Mohanty, 1988; Shirazi,

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[11] I adapted this term from pathologizing girlhood.

2011). Consequently, girls and boys become bullet points under sections marked "challenges" and "strategies," as is the case in the 2006 Policy. As Kirk, Mitchell, and Reid-Walsh (2010) described:

> Strategies to promote her educational opportunities, improve her health, and protect her from abuses, early marriage, and genital mutilation have been developed and implemented by a large number of well-intentioned individuals and organizations. Yet in most of these instances, the girl child remains voiceless. (p. 21)

Zanzibari boys and girls are not just pathologized for being youth, but also for being Muslim youth in inter/national representations. Given that the vast majority (95 to 98 percent) [12] of Zanzibaris follow Islam, they are commonly targeted by international development agendas trying to promote better equality and well-being for youth living in countries with large Muslim populations (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Adely, 2012). For example, USAID wove these assumptions into its strategy on *Basic Education in Muslim Communities*, of which Zanzibar and parts of mainland Tanzania received funds between 2005 and 2010. These basic education funds were earmarked in part for keeping Muslim girls in school and boys out of terrorism (USAID, 2004; USDS, 2009; USOIG, 2009) with the assumption that girls in Muslim-majority regions are more prone to early marriage and lower education access and attainment (Benoliel, 2003; Tembon & Fort, 2008). The *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* and the subsequent

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[12] While currently the Tanzanian census and Demographic Household Survey do not ask respondents their faith, estimates from previous survey (NBS & ORC MacroTBS, 2005), the USDS (2009, 2011), and Pew Research Center (2012) estimate the overall population of Zanzibar to be 95 to 98 percent Muslim and mainland Tanzania to be around 55 to 60 percent Christian and 30 to 36 percent Muslim.

*Ending Child Marriage & Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action* both featured young Muslim women wearing *hijabs* on the cover (USAID, 2012a; USAID, 2012b). Although these publications do not identify these girls as Muslim in words, they do so with images. As Mohanty (1988) described of this image of "*the veiled woman...*these images exist in universal, ahistorical splendor, setting into motion a discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintain existing first/third world connections" (p. 352, emphasis in original).

In the latest United States Government (USDS, 2011; USDS & USAID, 2016) and UN (2015) responses and strategy for countering "violent extremism," there are no pictures of the alleged perpetuators, but it is implied that these are young men from predominantly Muslim countries. They are portrayed on the one hand as victims of poverty, poor education, and weak social systems, and on the other hand as potential threats. As Shirazi (2016) wrote, all of these "media and policy depiction of youth as victims, empowered, threatened or threatening all serve political purposes, and may orient popular and policy understandings of youth" (p. 257). With the flagrant banning of Muslims by the US administration in 2016, and greater profiling across Europe, there was concern about how this pathologizing boyhood stance would be pushed to a new level under forthcoming international development strategies and agendas (MoEVT & NGO representatives, personal communications, August-September, 2016).

Such images and homogenization of girls and boys in the Global South by international development agencies not only pathologize and essentialize young people, but they create a false power binary between girls and boys that the youth performances in the subsequent chapters problematize. Throughout this dissertation I use the terms

pathologizing girlhood and boyhood to highlight when girls have been consciously or unconsciously positioned as powerless, or lacking agency, and boys as oppressors, or lacking motivation. I draw on the youths' performances and narratives to counter the pathologizing girlhood and boyhood social scripts, and to instead show how youth engaged collective agency.

<div align="center">**Performing Collective Agency**</div>

As introduced in Chapter One, I employ the concept of collective agency to show how youth engaged a "capacity for action" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 203) in their performances. I draw on Mahmood's (2001, 2005) attempt to decouple agency from acts of resistance to social norms and gender hierarchies to encompass a wider range of modalities towards actions, some actions that are subtle and others obvious. Alidou (2005) drew on Mahmood's discussion in her research on women's engagement in modernity in post-colonial Niger to show how agency overlaps with class, religion, ethnicity, schooling, citizenship, as well as gender. Alidou (2005) described agency as both individual and collective, but in response to "multiple legacies" (p. 4). These legacies in my research resemble the multiple social scripts, or beliefs and discourses that run through the various inter/national, religious and cultural, and youth social scripts. Mahmood and Alidou's conceptualizations of agency are particularly applicable in this research as they explore how agency is not only performed and embodied in radical and evident displays, but also in ways difficult to detect for observers not familiar with the context. These acts of agency, they argue, take place when "conditions permit" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 206).

While Mahmood and Alidou looked at individual performances of agency, they were careful to situate these expressions in the collective, either with other women or other Muslims and communities of faith. A number of other scholars have discussed agency as it relates to social actors and influences. Sewell (1992) referred to situated agencies as "collective agency" (p. 21). As Sewell described, agency is nearly always a "collective project" (p. 21), in negotiation with others and complex social, cultural and economic influences, supports, or obstacles. Korteweg (2008) and Khurshid (2015) described this collectively informed agency as "embedded agency," or the notion that Muslim women conceptualize their agency in intersection with their culture and religion. In the context of mainland Tanzania, DeJaeghere (2016) argued that youth agency is socially-situated and constantly changing dialectically with one's valued wellbeing and aspirations. Agency and aspirations are located in social, economic, and cultural domains that affect both the educational systems and the youth themselves (DeJaeghere, McLeary, & Josić, 2016).

Whether embedded, collective, or socially-situated, envisioning agency beyond the individual helps avoid using agency synonymously with resistance. This is important because there is a common tendency among international development agendas when discussing women or youth in the Global North to equate agency with giving voice, and associate resistance with empowerment (see The World Bank's 2014 report *Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*). As Korteweg (2008) asserted, "Conceptualizing Muslim women's agency as embedded enables an analysis that does not predicate women's capacity to act on liberal freedom, but rather carefully situates agency in the contexts that inform it" (p. 450). Therefore, I use the term

"collective agency" in my analyses as it reflects the embedded historical and contemporary contexts of Zanzibar and frames agency as beyond the individual in a dynamic and socially-embedded environment. While individualistic measures and concepts of agency are acknowledged in places, especially as they relate to academic achievement on exams and becoming a *mhitimu*, they are nearly always performed alongside youths' peers, family, and other social actors.

<center>**Gender, Schooling, and Becoming a *Mhitimu***</center>

In this section I discuss literature that engages with the concepts of becoming a *mhitimu* and *mtoro*. I start by exploring the underpinning theoretical ideas that guide Zanzibar's 2006 Policy and their current education program, the Zanzibar Education Development Program (ZEDP) II that extends between 2017/18 and 2021/22. I then look at why becoming a *mhitimu* is important to youths' visions of their *maisha mazuri* and the different ways this linkage is conceptualized.

**Gender Parity, Equality, and Equity in Schooling**

Inter/national social scripts on gender in education in Zanzibar are focused on equalizing the opportunities for males and females to become *wahitimu* (see ZEDP II indicators in MoEVT, 2017b). Where girls have not yet achieved parity with boys in a given grade or district, interventions are put into place to close the gender gap (MoEVT, 2017b). When parity swings in favor of girls, however, there are no interventions to support ensuring boys are not falling behind. This emphasis on achieving gender parity with a focus on empowerment of girls is rooted in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and prior to 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs/MDGs have been the guiding framework for the 2006 Policy and the

ZEDP (phases I and II). The ZEDPs are MoEVT's second plan for operationalizing the objectives and changes of the 2006 Policy as well as marshaling progress towards the SDGs and other goals set forth in Zanzibar's sector-wide Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty.

In addition to committing to the post-2015 SDGs, Zanzibar's government (as a part of The United Republic of Tanzania) has signed a number of international treaties and commitments to promoting gender parity, equality, and equity in education over the past six decades since independence in 1964. These include: Education for All (adopted by Zanzibar House of Representative in 1991); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1986—amended into Constitution of Zanzibar in 2002), and UNESCO Convention on Discrimination in Education (1979) (MoE, 1995b; UN, 2007; UN, 2008; URT, 2012). These conventions all focus on equalizing education access and participation for girls through female empowerment, as girls were underrepresented across the different schooling levels in Zanzibar until 1991. Empowerment of boys and men is not explicitly addressed in and through these agreements, nor are they intentional beneficiaries in the gender sections of these reports. Instead males are the group used to measure progress for girls against. As Ridge (2014) described in the Gulf States, "Not only are references to boys and men missing in international reports, national reports often drawn from these reports also then fail to mention males" (p. 159).

These international education conventions and agreements adopted in Tanzania and Zanzibar are largely focused on what Unterhalter (2007) called a distributive equality approach and are focused on promoting gender parity in enrollments, progression rates

between grades, and exam achievement. This distributive equality approach is also known as the women-in-development (WID) approach and was developed largely by economists and introduced by USAID in the1970s. The WID approach has been used widely by The World Bank and other large donor institutions to ensure women are equally represented in education, healthcare, employment, government offices, etc. (Mbilinyi, 1998; Stromquist, 1996; Thomas & Rugambwa, 2013).

Beyond distributive equality, there is a second approach—Gender and Development (GAD)—that looks at gendered practices in education in Zanzibar. Using largely socioeconomic and historical accounts, GAD situates gender in relation to power, and structures "social relations, language, and history between groups" (Unterhalter, 2007, p. 89). From the GAD approach, equality is analyzed within social conditions and arrangements, and promoting equality often includes empowering girls so that they have the agency to close conditional gaps with boys (DeJaeghere, 2015). One of the lead Zanzibari organizations working from this empowerment model is the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), [13] which facilitates secondary school scholarships as well as science and math camps for girls and boys.

The third movement in gender education and equality initiatives goes beyond parity and equalizing social relations and recognizes different communities and families "might do gender differently" (Unterhalter, 2007, p. 90). What one family living in the rural northern community of Baobab values for their girl child might differ from that of a family living in Stone Town. Therefore, equality from this vantage point is not about

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[13] While FAWE is often considered an iNGO as its founding/central office is located in Nairobi, Kenya, each FAWE office is independent in how they operate and how they solicit funds, therefore in practice it operates as a Zanzibari NGO.

ensuring girls and their families have equal values, or that one catches up to the other, but contextualizing education in relation to youths' *maisha mazuri*. The international development agendas and the inter/national social scripts have not yet moved towards this approach as they tend to globally aggregate country-level measures and the "do gender differently" approach does not fit cleanly into SDG performance indicator metrics. However, as the literature below intimates, this pluralizing approach allows for a more multi-layered analysis of youth scripts and avoids reproducing the pathologizing girlhood and boyhood narratives.

      **Becoming a *mhitimu*: A focus on girls.** The process of becoming a secondary school *mhitimu,* as demonstrated in Chapter One, is a messy process that is rarely, if ever, linear or without significant obstacles. While the education as panacea script implies that education is universally important for boys and girls alike, youths' experience in schooling and their visions for *maisha mazuri* in Zanzibar and Tanzania are highly gendered (Decker, 2014b; Posti-Ahokas, 2013; Posti-Ahokas & Lehtomäki, 2014; Posti-Ahokas & Okkolin, 2015; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014; Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2002; Vavrus, 2003). Although girls have increasingly become *wahitimu* over the past few decades in Zanzibar, how education links to their futures and notions of *maisha mazuri* have also changed. Women have increasingly engaged in employment outside the home since the end of the colonial area (1963) (Decker, 2014b). Consequently, all the girls in this study described their ideal jobs, for example a teacher, doctor, journalist, or accountant, in their narratives about their *maisha mazuri*. However, they also recognized that securing formal employment was very difficult in Zanzibar's economy. Women in urban Zanzibar are more likely to be unemployed than any other group, especially those

women with a secondary education or higher (ILO & DFID, 2010; Danish Trade Union Council for International Development Cooperation, 2016). Therefore, while future work is still an important motivation for becoming a *mhitimu*, it is not the only motivation the girls expressed.

As Vavrus (2003) and Stambach (2000) discussed in their ethnographic research among secondary school students in northern Tanzania, "becoming educated" has often been depicted as part of becoming modern, or "developed" (Stambach, 2000, p. 7). As Decker (2014b) discussed in relation to Zanzibar, part of becoming educated and modern as a woman was entering the world of employment and having more economic independence to make decisions. In addition to scripts on economic independence, international development agencies and national actors have associated women's education with becoming better mothers and wives. These inter/national scripts often draw on the link between higher education levels and lower fertility rates and better access to healthcare and child heath indicators as a justification as to why education of women is important (USAID, 2012b; UN, 2015; The WB, 2014).

However, the reasons girls seek education beyond health and economic outcomes—such as self-confidence, respect, and respectability—are often overlooked or underemphasized in these inter/national scripts (Adely, 2009; Decker, 2014b; Helgesson, 2007; Vavrus, 2003). As Adely (2012) discusses in her research with secondary school students in Jordan, the conventional theories and inter/national scripts on why education and becoming a *mhitimu* matters for young women are both limited and misdirected. As Adely explains, women have education rationales that fall outside economic and employment aspirations. While young female students may be striving to become

*wahitimu* in part so they have more mobility in who they marry, thus marrying into a family with greater economic resources or social networks, they also seek education as it provides a sense of morality, respectability, happiness, and the ability to live peacefully with their families and selves. Adely's ethnographic approach and analysis of girls' narratives helps highlight these gendered paradoxes as well as the academic and emotional struggles that intersect with race, ethnicity, class, and other social factors. While Adely's research takes place under a different social, cultural, and political context, her findings help not only frame the analysis of becoming a *mhitimu* and notions of the *maisha mazuri*, but her attempts to have youth narratives "speak back" (p. 31) to pathologizing girlhood representations is central to the overarching intent of this research as well. In the next section I engage with the literature that challenges the pathologizing boyhood stance.

**Becoming a *mhitimu*: A focus on boys.** Research on girls' participation in education in the Global South far exceeds studies on masculinities and schooling. However, there is a growing body of literature that looks at how education relates to males' futures (Jeffrey, Jeffrey, & Jeffrey, 2008; Mains, 2011; Ridge, 2014; Shirazi, 2012). Many of these studies problematize the postulation that more education results in better employment opportunities, which resonates with the findings among the boys in this study. Below I engage with scholars who have explored the intersection between education and masculinities in different contexts, including two ethnographic studies in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania.

Mains (2011) and Jeffrey et al. (2008) in their ethnographies on gender and schooling examined this disconnect between becoming a graduate (of secondary school

or university) and formal employment. In Main's (2011) study in Ethiopia, young men expressed an assumed connection between education and the "good life" in that education would provide knowledge and this knowledge would then be remunerated in material ways. Their aspirations for the "good life" were not to be rich, per se, but in "improving one's life, being free from thoughts, and helping others" (p. 69). Education, they posed, would help them achieve this "good life." Ironically, the largest segment of unemployed youth in Ethiopia is secondary school graduates, which is also true in Tanzania as a whole (NBS, 2015). As Mains (2011) explained:

> The gap between unemployment and youth aspirations has been exacerbated by the spread of formal education that generated expectations among youth and their parents that they will find high-paying, white collar positions after completing their education. When these jobs are unavailable, young people often choose to remain unemployed rather than take on low-status and low-paying positions. (p. 4)

Although it was particularly true in Zanzibar's urban areas that men and women *wahitimu* were often un/under-employed, in the rural areas the majority of youth were engaged in the informal economy through fishing, agricultural, and micro-businesses regardless of whether they completed some or no secondary schooling (see these demographics in Chapter Three and ILO & DFID, 2010; Danish Trade Union Council for International Development Cooperation, 2016).

Jeffrey et al. (2008) also described in their research in northern India among un/under-employed university graduates how education has failed to open up young men's employment aspirations and to help them escape from "dust and soil of the

village" (p. 2). As both Jeffrey et al. (2008) and Mains (2011) explained, in both northern India and Ethiopia there is an implicit expectation that young men work outside of the home, which is not the case for women. While these gendered norms may still be true among some families in Zanzibar, as discussed above, this has become less true over time. The dilemma that both Jeffrey et al. (2008) and Mains (2011) discussed in their research is that men's aspirations for employment largely went unachieved, which unraveled how they saw schooling: "Some educated un/under-employed young men had begun to question the value of education, and their practices were creating a new sense of irony, wariness and self-doubt among marginalized populations" (Jeffrey et al., 2008, p. 34). These young men were questioning what Jeffrey et al. (2008) referred to as "education as an unproblematic 'social good' within the development academia" (p. 34) and what I refer to as education as panacea (Vavrus, 2003).

In both Ethiopia, northern India, and in Adely's (2012) study in Jordan, being unemployed as a young man meant remaining at home with one's family and delaying one's full entry into adulthood:

> High unemployment and the economic situation of most young men decrease the likelihood that they will be taken seriously if they are young and not financially established. Since males are still considered the primary breadwinners in Jordan, they must demonstrate the ability to provide for a family before they marry.
>
> (p. 122)

As the role of the man as provider is "explicitly articulated in Islamic teachings" (Adely, 2012, p. 194), failing to take on this role is problematic in inter/national social scripts on education as well as in religious and cultural scripts. Going back to Johnson-Hank's

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(2002) nomenclature, obtaining employment is a "vital conjuncture" (p. 865) for these young men and becoming a secondary school or university *mhitimu* delays their capacity to perform this conjuncture.

Even though much of the literature written about youth, education, and agency tends to be focused on girls, there are a number of scholars taking up male agency in education. These perspectives help shift the pathologizing boyhood stance from empowering the marginalized to looking at how youth represent and self-author their own lives. In Stockfelt's (2011) study on the aspirations of secondary school males in Jamaica, agency was found to be relational, limited by social and economic structures, but potentially furthered through their home-school-community connections. In Shirazi's (2011) research in Jordanian secondary schools, he argued that structural constraints should not be seen as the absence of agency, but rather the focus should be placed on how male students subvert these constraints and exercise transformational agency. This transformational agency, which Bajaj (2009) described among secondary students in Zambia, was defined as how youth "respond to schooling in ways that express individual and collective action towards positive social change" (p. 552). This collective action and self-authorship was key to the performances of youth in this study, who–despite being portrayed by policymakers in a pathologizing sense–were able to perform other representations.

The two final scholars I draw on to contextualize the performance of masculinities in this research are DeFrancisco (2000) and Weiss (2009). They used poststructural and ethnographic perspectives to explore how young men in Zanzibar and Arusha, Tanzania performed agency by self-authoring and self-imagining their own aspirations and roles in

society. Weiss and DeFrancisco's research among men in the informal economy is important in that it helps contextualize the aspirations and imaginations of youth from working class and rural families who did not become *mhitimu*, and it helps highlight how they create work opportunities in lieu of secondary certificates and access to formal employment. While formal schooling and becoming a *mhitimu* is assumed to provide young men with better access to employment, enable them to take on provider roles in their families, and help them better achieve their imagined *maisha mazuri*, the male narratives in Weiss and DeFrancisco's studies problematized this panacea viewpoint. The harsh reality for most of these male youth in this dissertation is that they will likely end up in the informal economy, like the stories of the young men from Zanzibar to Arusha to Ethiopia to northern India.

   **Becoming a *mtoro*.** As discussed in Chapter One, this dissertation challenges the label *mtoro*, or dropout, as an all-encompassing category for youth who leave school and instead proposes three separate but overlapping groups—dropout, pushout, and pullout. There are a few comprehensive studies on dropouts in Tanzania, but predominantly those focused on mainland Tanzania (see Misigaro, 1993; Sabates, Akyeampong, Westbrook, & Hunt, 2010). Hunt (2008), in a literature review on dropouts across Tanzania, identified a few dozen publications that link dropping out to multiple factors including poverty, pregnancy, health and wellness, school infrastructure, curriculum, and instruction, among others. Similarly, a qualitative study of eight female dropouts in northern Zanzibar (North A district) found that there was not one underlying reason for youth leaving school, but usually many (Elofsson & Jartsjö, 2012). These included family-related factors including health of student of family member, poverty (inability to

pay school costs, hunger, and need for students to work), and pregnancy (and subsequently marriage). The school-related factors included poor quality of learning, low English proficiency among students, lack of role models at school, distance to school, repetition of grades, and harassment or bullying. Elofsson & Jartsjö (2012) did not identify any overt gendered preferences to boys over girls or any teacher-level indicators.

These studies looked at dropouts from a distributive equality, or women-in-development, approach, with some attention paid to power dynamics between genders (Unterhalter, 2007). What is missing from these studies, however, is a deep contestation of the term dropout, and its use as an absolute and static label for someone who is no longer in school. There have been a few studies in sub-Saharan Africa that use the language of pushout and pullout to demonstrate the structural factors that influence young people from dropping out (Ananga, 2011; Misigaro, 1993), but they have not problematized the term from a critical theory standpoint. According to Misigaro (1993), the term pushout originated as an economic term. Ridge (2014) also used this term from an economic standpoint in her research on the reverse gender divide in the Gulf States.

In lieu of literature that rethinks the term dropout in Zanzibar or Tanzania, I draw on Fine (1991) and M. Morris's (2016) sociological research among minority boys and girls in US schools. Although these scholars' research described schooling in contexts different from Zanzibar, their arguments are important theoretically because they question the underpinnings of the term dropout. While Fine (1991) delved into how and why dropouts is used, M. Morris (2016) rejected the term outright and instead provided stories and data on how African-American girls in US schools are criminalized and pushed out.

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What is important from Fine (1991)'s argument is that there are different semantic nuances to the terms dropout and pushout. When a youth *drops* out of school, the youth is responsible for the action. When a school policy *pushes* a youth out, the school is responsible for the action. Fine asked of the youth discharged from school, "Were these adolescents actually dropouts, pushouts, or withdrawals? Were they leaving 'voluntarily' given that they were offered neither alternatives nor accurate information about the alternatives they anticipated?" (p. 83). M. Morris (2016) showed us the process of how African-American girls come to be labeled as dropouts when they were actually pushed out, and how gender, class, and race intersect with being pushed out. Although M. Morris shared individual youth narratives, she made a larger argument that expectations and aspirations of these youth are heavily and collectively informed by outside structures (schools, families, media, etc.). Therefore, I draw on the factors that have been identified in research on dropouts in Zanzibar and Tanzania, and the notion that these factors are overlapping and school factors are under-scrutinized (Elofsson & Jartsjö, 2012; Hunt, 2008; Sabates et al. 2010). I also point out that youth who dropout can always "drop-in" (Ananga, 2011, p.1) and return to the system again. However, I use Fine (1992) and M. Morris's (2016) sociological use of these terms to hold schools and the education system more accountable for their role in pushing youth to become *mtoro* alongside the individual, family, and community-level forces.

### Conclusion

The discussion on youthhood and vital conjunctures (Johnson-Hanks, 2002; Lancy, 2008) and pathologizing girlhood and boyhood (Kirk, Mitchell, & Reid-Walsh, 2010) contextualize the way Zanzibari students are framed in inter/national scripts. The

notions of capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004), capacity to act (Mahmood, 2001), and capacity to self-author (DeFrancisco, 2000) help frame Zanzibari students' visions of their *maisha mazuri* in the larger scholarship on the good life. Meanwhile, notions of collective agency theoretically situate youth performances of their obstacles and challenges in schooling. The literature also helps scrutinize gendered differences in youth performances of schooling (Adely, 2012; Jeffrey et al., 2008; Mains, 2011; Shirazi, 2012; Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2003) and rethink the notion of dropout (Fine, 1991; M. Morris, 2016). While there are few studies in Zanzibar that look at schooling through youth's own narratives, the silence of these viewpoints shows the need to contribute the "voices of the youth themselves in how they understand their futures" (Shirazi, 2012, p. 72) and have youth "speak back" (Adely, 2012, p. 31) to the literature and social scripts written by them. The following chapters attempt to show how youth engaged in a process of writing and performing their own futures and how central youth narratives and performances were in the methodological and analytical processes.

**Chapter Three: A Methodology for Performing Graduates and Dropouts**

"I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person" (Adichie, 2009).

**Introduction**

The previous two chapters demonstrated how social scripts capture different perspectives on why education is important for girls and boys and how schooling relates to youths' *maisha mazuri* in Zanzibar. In this chapter, I explain the mixed-methods approach employed in this dissertation. I describe how I used longitudinal data in addition to youths' theater performances and narratives to capture the multiplicity of these collectively-embedded youth scripts. I start out by describing the research design, methodologies, and analyses, followed by the study sites, youth participants, and research team. I then present the key analytical concepts and end with a discussion on the study's limitations.

**Research Design, Methodologies, and Analysis**

I utilized a mixed-methods design in order to answer my key research question and sub-questions:

> **Q1.** How does passing or failing the secondary school exams, and ultimately becoming a graduate (*mhitimu*) or a dropout (*mtoro*), influence Zanzibari girls' and boys' vision for their good life (*maisha mazuri*)?
>
> **Q2.** How has accessibility to secondary school changed over time and between the past two generations of girls and boys?

**Q3.** How do girls and boys perform multiple scripts and collective agency in the process of navigating obstacles in their schooling pathways and pursuing their good life (maisha mazuri)?

Mixed-methods research is useful in investigating gender and social issues in that "quantitative data may assist in providing the big picture, but it is the personal story, accompanied by thoughts and feelings, that brings depth and texture to the research study" (Hodgkin, 2008, p. 296). A mixed-methods and longitudinal design allowed me to critically examine the inter/national social scripts, or "big picture" that girls currently drop out and fail secondary school (thus failing to become *wahitimu*) at higher rates than boys. This design also enabled me to use a transformational and youth-centered approach to understand how becoming a *mhitimu* or *mtoro* impacts youths' *maisha mazuri*. These theater scripts and narratives not only brought "depth" and "texture" to this study, but were central to investigating when and why youth became *watoro* or *wahitimu* and how these pathways impacted their futures.

My mixed-methods approach was facilitated using the underlying principles and processes of *examining* assumptions; *entering* into and engaging in collaborations; and *encouraging* use of findings (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009).[14] Longitudinal data allowed me to *examine* underlying assumptions in the story as well as trends and historical inequities over time. As explained in Chapter One, the Popular Theater Approach (PTA), in tandem with journal writing, interviews, and dialogues in rehearsals, provided a process for *entering* into collaborative work with youth and in building trust and establishing intentions and expectations. The performances along with discussions

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[14] I have adapted the terms *examining*, *entering*, and *encouraging* from Mertens (2009).

among the youth and facilitators then inspired recommendations and implications that

*encourage* policy and praxis changes. These research phases are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

*Methods, Purposes, and Data Collected*

| Methods | Purpose | Participants | Data (timeframe) | Analyses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Examining Assumptions (phase 1)* | | | | |
| **Zanzibar-wide data** | Observe when gender parity index (GPI) became near equal (1). | Zanzibar-wide | enrollment rates, exam scores (1975-2016) | GPI analyses |
| **Zanzibar-wide data** | Test whether girls are becoming *mtoro* or failing secondary exams at higher rates than boys. | Zanzibar-wide | enrollment rates, exam scores (2000-2016) | Chi-square tests, secondary data |
| **Longitudinal sample data** | Test how sex, school, location, and parent's literacy affect the likelihoods that youth will become a *mtoro*. | 1,145 youth | demographic, literacy/numeracy (2008, 2014, 2016/7) | Hierarchical linear modeling (regression) |
| *Entering and Engaging in Collaboration (phase 2)* | | | | |
| **Popular Theater Approach** | Create a common theater script where youth perform frontstage. | 41 youth | vignettes, rehearsals, conversations (August 2016; April 2017) | Narrative inquiry |
| **Journals** | Write about ongoing experiences and thoughts before and after the exams (frontstage/backstage). | 41 youth | journal entries (September 2016-January 2017) | Narrative inquiry |
| **Interviews** | Discuss backstage personal lives, stories, and visions of their *maisha mazuri*. | 39 youth, 18 Parents, 3 teachers, 9 MoEVT/experts | transcripts, field notes (August/September 2016; April 2017) | Narrative inquiry |
| *Encouraging use of Findings (phase 3)* | | | | |
| **Discussions/ Policy Brief** | Discuss the findings with all the study's participants. | Youth, parents, MoEVT/educators | | |

**Examining Assumptions through Longitudinal and Historical Analyses**

The process of examining assumptions took part in two steps. First, I looked at

Zanzibar-wide data from 1964 to 2016 to understand enrollment and exam rate trends of

boys and girls over time. I was not able to obtain gender-disaggregated data between

1964 and 1975, so I focused on the period after 1975. Second, I looked at my longitudinal

cohort sample of 1,145 youth from four of Zanzibar's ten districts. I used multilevel linear regression analyses to identify at what point youth were leaving school, the demographics of those leaving, and the reasons they left.

**Zanzibar-wide Data**

To analyze trends in distributive equality, I created gender parity indices for numbers of youth enrolled in Forms 2, 4 and 6 and exam pass rates for the corresponding grades. Indices helped me pinpoint when girls and boys began to enroll and pass exams at similar rates and to scrutinize gender parity across districts. I also conducted preliminary analyses of Zanzibar-wide enrollment and exam pass rates between 2000-2017 using chi-square tests to test whether boys and girls matriculated in secondary school (O-level) or passed Form 2 exams at significantly different rates.

**Longitudinal Sample**

After my initial Zanzibar-wide analyses I used a longitudinal cohort sample collected with my research partner, Abrahman. We had worked together from 2007 to 2011on an early childhood education partnership with MoEVT and an iNGO.[15] Abrahman was the project monitoring and evaluation officer and was still working for the same department at MoEVT in 2018 when this dissertation was completed.

Abrahman and I started collecting this longitudinal cohort data in 2008 as part of a quasi-experimental program evaluation we co-led with MoEVT staff. The longitudinal[16] sample of students came from 32 schools in four districts (Micheweni and

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[15] This iNGO was Education Development Center (EDC), Inc. EDC was gracious to allow us to use the data for this dissertation.

[16] This follows Epstein's (2002) long-term study format, one of three possible longitudinal designs, and entails "returning after a lengthy interval of time has elapsed since the original research" (p. 64)

Mkoani, Pemba, and North A and North B, Unguja), and were assessed and surveyed multiple times in 2008 and again in 2014 (see E. Morris, Othman, Mohammed, Mitchell, & Phillip, 2009; Vinagradova & E. Morris, 2014 for more details). The four districts were selected by MoEVT in 2006 to participate in the early childhood intervention because they had lower enrollment and pass rates than the national[17] average (see Appendix D for further details on these districts and the sampling strategy).

In 2016, Abrahman and I again worked with our MoEVT colleagues from the four districts to confirm whether the youth from the original 2008 sample were still in school. If they had left, we documented the reasons why and at what point in their schooling they had left. We also documented from the public on-line roster whether the students passed or failed the Form 2 exams, if they had reached this point. While all youth should have been in Form 2 by 2016, we found that in reality nearly a third had been held back and were anywhere between Standard 6 and Form 2. As Abrahman and I began to clean and link the 2016 data to the 2008 and 2014 data, we had to disentangle how different schools used the term *mtoro* for youth no longer in school. The names of students we had pored over for the past eight years, who were populated in orderly datasets, were systematically labeled into two broad categories: *wanafunzi* (students) for those still matriculated in school and *watoro* (truants, dropouts) for those who were not in school. *Mtoro*, literally means a runaway or truant, but it was used broadly for youth registered for Form 1 and 2 who had never actually attended school as well as those who had disappeared from the system.

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[17] Although Zanzibar is a part of the Republic of Tanzania, I use "national" in this context to refer to Zanzibar-wide as they have a separate education policy and system.

After requesting more information about *watoro* from schools, we received a list with clarifications written in the margins. Of the 389 youth (34.0 percent) labeled *watoro* in our sample of 1,145 youth, the majority (65 percent) were labeled as *ameacha* (he/she left) with no further details on the circumstances. More than 11 percent of youth—nearly all females—were classified as *ameoa*/*ameolewa*[18] (he/she is married) or *amekamatiwa* (he/she has been caught). As will be discussed in Chapter Four, this was code for premarital sexual relations that resulted in a pregnancy. There was also nearly a quarter (24 percent) of youth who had failed the Form 2 exam. By the time this data made it to the central MoEVT, however, all of these labels and nuances were collapsed into one single category of *watoro*, regardless of why they had left.
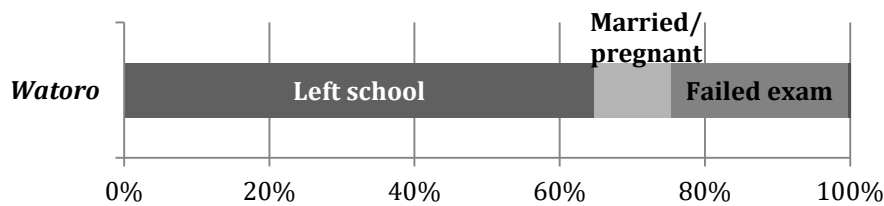


*Figure 2. Watoro* by reason for leaving school

**Longitudinal Analyses**

Once Abrahman and I had clarified why youth had become *watoro*, I used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), a multilevel ordinary least squares regression analysis, to examine the probability that a student would become a *mtoro* (girls or boys and from which districts) and at what point in their schooling this happened (before Form 1, or between Forms 1 and 2). The HLM[19] allowed me to examine *watoro* by school-

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[18] *Ameoa* literally means, "he has married," an active verb used for males, while *ameolewa* means "she has been married" and is a passive construction used for females.

[19] I used HLM to analyze variance at the various hierarchical levels, which in this case was students clustered in schools (Woltman, Feldstain, MacKay, & Rocchi, 2012). HLM is the most appropriate

level and to measure to what extent a school's geographic location related to probability that students would become *watoro* (between school variance). I was also able to scrutinize the likelihood that a *mtoro* would be a male or female (between student variance). These findings are discussed further in Chapter Four and in Appendix D, but they ultimately helped me identify that boys were becoming *watoro* at higher rates before Form 1 than girls. Certain factors also significantly affected whether youth became *watoro*: the primary school youth attended, their home district, whether youth started out in formal/non-formal (community) school, and if their parents were literate. After concluding that girls were not dropping out at higher rates before Form 2, and that girls were actually outperforming boys on the Form 2 exam, Abrahman and I began to collaborate with the youth in three school sites.

### Entering into and Engaging in Collaborations with Youth

In this second research phase, Abrahman and I *entered* into the three school communities and began *engaging in collaborations* with 41 female and male students between the ages of 15 and 21. Using the theater (PTA) methodology, and namely through collective storytelling activities and journal writing, youth generated theater scripts. These theater scripts encompassed their emotions and experiences in secondary schooling, specifically how becoming a *mhitimu* or *mtoro* related to their *maisha mazuri*. Youth then performed their theater scripts for their peers. In addition to the journal writing and production of theater scripts, we also conducted interviews with the youth,

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regression model for this sample given the clustered nature of the data (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), and allowed for group effects (participation in a specific school) to be observed. As such, I controlled any effects that emerged as a result of school-level factors, and measured gender relationships between groups of females and males more directly.

their parents, their teachers, and representatives from the MoEVT and local NGOs from Zanzibar. This approach and interview processes is outlined below, but first I describe the three government secondary schools where the collaboration took place.

**School Sites and Students**

**Baobab School.** One of the sites in the longitudinal cohort research, Baobab School is located in a rural community approximately 47 kilometers from Stone Town. The village immediately surrounding Baobab has about 3,500 residents with an average of five persons per household and is a part of North A district (URT, 2013). Baobab School, with over 1,030 students (700 females, 330 males) in 2018, is only a few meters from the paved road that extends from Stone Town all the way to the northern tip of the island. This road carries hundreds of tourists each day to one of the many resorts 10 to 15 kilometers away from the school. These resorts cater almost exclusively to foreigners.

A short distance from the school is a beach used for fishing and accessing other small islands in the vicinity. The majority of the households in Baobab earn their livings from fishing; farming cassava, bananas, and other fruits and vegetables; or micro-businesses, such as selling produce, snacks, or running small dry food kiosks. In Baobab, the majority of residents work in the informal economy and through family businesses, meaning they do not have formal employment.[20] There is a greater proportion of women in informal work (90 percent), compared to 85 percent of men (ILO & DFID, 2010).

Despite its close proximity to many luxury hotels and tourist businesses, not one of the over 150 family members with whom the 19 Baobab youth resided worked directly

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[20] Ninety-four (94) percent of rural Zanzibaris and 78 percent of urban Zanzibaris work in the informal economy. An estimated 50 percent of rural Zanzibari households are unpaid family agricultural workers (ILO & DFID, 2010).

in the tourism industry. In their interviews, only a few Baobab youth mentioned family members who were formally employed, the majority of whom were soldiers on a base nearby the school. While the reasons that Baobab residents were not employed by the hotels are a larger topic of discussion (see Larsen, 2000), the youth believed it was in large part because they did not have the credentials, meaning a college-level diploma, and English proficiency required for most of the positions (an assumption reiterated in the 2006 Policy). None of the 19 students had directly interacted with foreigners or native English speakers (excluding Ashley and me), and their exposure to tourists was limited to seeing the tour buses whiz past their school in route to the beach.

      **Mavinje School.** Whereas Baobab School is quietly nestled under banana and coconut trees, Mavinje is positioned in the busy heart of Stone Town, surrounded by dozens of hotels, bureaus de change, curio shops, and tour operators. Housed in a historic building with multiple floors, 570 students (285 boys, 285 girls) were enrolled at Mavinje in 2018. Many of the students resided nearby with their immediate or extended families. In 2017, as in other years, more Mavinje students passed the Form 4 exam than Baobab and Minazi Schools and as such was ranked higher in exam pass rates (NECTA, 2016). While many of the Mavinje students in this study came from families with significantly more economic resources than Baobab or Minazi students, there were also a number of Mavinje students who were from rural areas and Pemba who lived with aunts, uncles, or other adults in their networks so they could attend Mavinje. Mavinje had an active English Club (extracurricular language clubs that practice speaking English), where youth met with teachers on a regular basis to practice English and engage in English-speaking activities.

**Minazi School.** The largest of the three schools, Minazi is situated on the outskirts of Stone Town and the edge of *ng'ambo*--high-density, working-class areas formerly characterized as slave settlements. A towering, multi-storied school, Minazi had roughly 900 secondary school students (400 girls, 500 boys) in 2017. It serves a wide catchment area, including youth from the immediate affluent neighborhoods as well as students from *ng'ambo* neighborhoods. Hamsa, Bi Aida's son, as well as some of Bi Maha's grandchildren attended Minazi School, demonstrating how it serves youth diverse family backgrounds. The youth in this study from Mavinje and Minazi Schools had more exposure to formal employment and self-employment opportunities than Baobab students, as well as more direct exposure to foreigners and English-speaking populations. In fact, the student members in Minazi's English Club had been participating in annual PTA workshops since 2008. These workshops are described in detail below after a discussion on the use of urban, rural, and *ng'ambo* categories in this research.

**Urban/Rural/*Ng'ambo***

Although the narrative research in this study took place with youth living in distinct geographic spaces, two urban and one rural school setting, I have conscientiously avoided contrasting and comparing their narratives along an urban/rural binary. I have instead chosen to look at their stories in three spaces: urban Stone Town, rural Unguja, and *ng'ambo* outside of Stone Town. These distinctions reflect the historical planning of Zanzibar paved through colonial legacies (Myers, 2003) and are commonly used by researchers to show the intersection between geographical, social, and economic spaces (Decker, 2014b; Fair, 2001; O'Malley, 2000). I use these three geographies first to

contextualize the deep-rooted historical inequities between locations and schools, and second to highlight the similarities and differences between students at these sites.

While I use the school's geography to show how visions for a *maisha mazuri* can vary between sites, I also contrast the students' demographics within these three settings (see Table 5 in Appendix B). These contrasts expose some of the commonalities between Baobab's rural youth and those coming from *ng'ambo* neighborhoods attending Minazi School. For example, many youth from both sites described having to travel long distances to school (over 3 kilometers), having insufficient food in their households, and lacking access to quality tuition, or tutoring programs. The youth interrupted and challenged the rural/urban binary in their background narratives, and I attempt to do the same in my analyses by showing both the similarities and differences between rural, urban, and *ng'ambo* youths' experiences.

**Participatory Theater Approach (PTA) Curriculum and Workshops**

The PTA workshop content was adapted from the Global Empowerment Theatre's (GETheatre) ten-day curriculum. A US-registered non-profit and volunteer organization, GETheatre started working in Zanzibar in 2007 and has had an on-going partnership with Minazi and Mavinje Schools since 2008 (details on these sites will be discussed in depth below). The core GETheatre curriculum was developed by the founders (see Holmes, 2013 for details), but is based on Boal's (1985) *Theater of the Oppressed* and builds on principles from Freire's (1968) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Through PTA, sometimes referred to as Theater for Development or Peoples' Theater, scripts and performances are generated collaboratively through a process intended to empower, promote agency, and encourage participants to take action in their community

(Holmes, 2013). I use the term PTA as it has been used conventionally across Tanzania and sub-Saharan Africa since the 1970s. PTA has been employed by a wide variety of community and development organizations to engage with critical issues such as gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS transmission (Bagamoyo College of Arts, Tanzania Theatre Centre, Mabala, & Allen, 2002; Mlama, 1991). Epistemologically, PTA follows a participatory and transformative approach rooted in post-colonial theory, and when used in education it can create a space for youth to voice their perspectives on the asserted historical and contemporary inequalities in schooling with the goal of advocating for social change (Mlama, 1991).

After adapting GETheatre's ten-day curriculum[21] to align with our research questions, Abrahman and I recruited five other facilitators as part of our research team. Bello, a MoEVT colleague and former English teacher, was one of the other lead facilitators and interviewers throughout this research. Tabshir, who had worked with us during the initial longitudinal study in 2008, was also a facilitator, interviewer, and transcriber. Hafsa, a teacher trainer from MoEVT who had PTA experience, and Humaida, a medical student, were also facilitators. Ashley, a GETheatre expert teacher who had led the workshops in past years, was our PTA mentor. I refer to this seven-person team throughout the dissertation as "the facilitators." I had participated in PTA between 1999 and 2000 at the Bagamoyo College of Arts in mainland Tanzania and had co-led GETheatre workshops in the past, but Abrahman, Bello, Tabshir, and Humaida

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[21] I also integrated critical literacy activities from the Neighborhood Bridges program with the support of Maria Asp and Laura Mann Hill after I discovered during my preliminary field research that the youth in the rural school had very low literacy levels in Kiswahili. As youth from all three schools were not accustomed to writing original texts and narratives in Kiswahili or English, these critical literacy activities were essential for easing youth into writing their own narratives in their journals.

were new to the GETheatre curriculum and Ashley provided an orientation prior to beginning our workshop.

As a seven-person team, we facilitated two separate ten-day PTA workshops with 41 girls and boys during August 2016. The first workshop engaged 22 Form 3 students from Minazi and Mavinje Schools who voluntarily signed up to participate after an open call was made to all Form 3 students at their school. The Minazi students were from largely *ng'ambo* neighborhoods while the Mavinje students were predominantly living in Stone Town's city center. The Minazi and Mavinje students were not part of the longitudinal sample, which was conducted in rural districts only.

The second workshop was executed at Baobab School with 19 rural Form 2 students who were part of the larger longitudinal sample of 1,145 youth. This was the first time Baobab students had participated in a PTA workshop. At Baobab, we randomly selected nineteen youth from the longitudinal cohort sample to participate. While we intended to work with ten boys and ten girls, there were only six boys from the original 2008 sample still enrolled at Baobab School compared to over 80 girls. We invited all six boys to participate, as well as 13 girls. All 19 youth enthusiastically volunteered to participate in the workshops outside of school hours.

As described in Chapter One, the PTA curriculum included a combination of individual and collective writing activities. The narratives produced during these activities were then sequenced into a common theater script. This theater script was performed at the end of the workshop for the youths' classmates and teachers. Youth were given a series of daily prompts to help them write their stories in their individual journals and a series of games and activities to help them co-create stories orally. Youth

led the selection of key themes they wanted to perform, such as the most common

obstacles they encountered in navigating their *maisha mazuri*. They drew on their

collective agency in both creating and staging their theater scripts, and we facilitators

intervened only at the request of the youth. At Baobab School, the boys and girls elected

to work in two separate groups, while the Mavinje and Minazi students worked in mixed

gender groups. In the spirit of PTA, we debriefed with the student audiences directly

following the three performances (one at each school). We solicited the audiences'

feedback and perspectives to gauge which themes most resonated with them and what

parts of the theater script they would have changed and why. For example, the audience

members shared aspirations not covered in the play and gave feedback on the

performance; one young man even suggested that the teacher characters were too nice.

    **Journals.** As part of the GETheatre curriculum, individual journaling allowed

youth to create stories they could later turn into vignettes in the theater scripts.

Additionally, students documented their feelings and thoughts in journals before and after

their high-stakes exam. Journals (or diaries, as others have labeled them) are a method

used in research to measure youth's experiences and critical events, feelings and

emotions, and how they use their time (Hunt & McKay, 2015). Journals have more often

been used as a data collection method with university students and less so with secondary

school students (Andrews & Ridenour, 2006; Bailey, 1991; Bajaj 2009). Diaries/journals

are commonly paired with interview or observation methods and together provide a

participant-centered perspective and enable young people to reflect, ruminate, and record

what is happening in their daily lives (Bajaj, 2009).

**Interviews**

Directly after the ten-day workshop, we (the facilitators) held one-on-one interviews with each of the Baobab students to gather background information on their families, discuss their aspirations and visions for their *maisha mazuri*, and inquire about some of the themes and stories they had written about in their journals. I participated in all the youth interviews with one other facilitator. After this initial PTA workshop and interview, Abrahman, Bello, and Tabshir met monthly with the Baobab students between September 2016 and January 2017 to continue journaling and discussing the students' thoughts and feelings as they approached and completed their Form 2 exam.

After the Baobab students' exam results were released in February 2017, a subsequent two-day PTA workshop was held in April 2017. The five youth who had failed the Form 2 exam met separately on the first day of the workshop to discuss their thoughts and emotions. They also met with some of Bi Aida's children and Abrahman's family members who had failed the Form 2 exam in previous years. These outside youth had gone onto other education pathways, including TVET courses and non-formal tailoring and mechanics programs. The Baobab youth had a chance to ask questions about these pathways. During the second day of the PTA workshop, all 19 youth co-created collective stories and journaled about their experiences passing or failing the Form 2 exam. Follow-up interviews with parents of youth who failed, as well as Baobab School teachers, were also held in April 2017. This process is mapped out below in Figure 3.
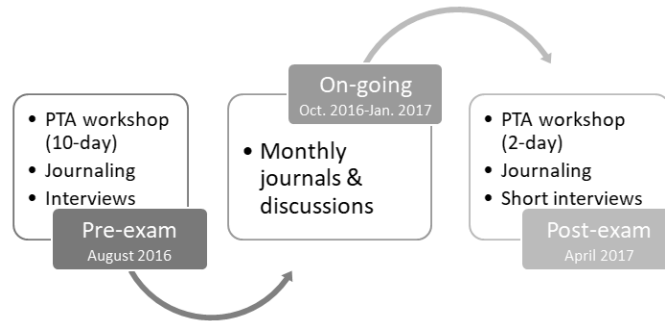
*Figure 3.* The Baobab School's Participatory Theater Approach Process

The youth from Mavinje and Minazi Schools were busy preparing for their Form 4 exams throughout 2017, as their final exam was in October 2017. Therefore, we did not hold a second PTA workshop with these urban and *ng'ambo* students, but we did meet for group interviews between March and April 2017. These interviews covered their experiences leading up to the Form 4 exam and other thoughts about their *maisha mazuri*. All of these narratives, generated through the theater scripts, journals, interviews, discussions, and rehearsals, were used during the narrative inquiry analyses discussed below.

**Narrative Inquiry Analyses**

The theater scripts and journal narratives were the primary texts analyzed, and the interviews and discussions held during rehearsals (per my field notes) were used to fill in the details of the individual's schooling experiences and to contextualize their narratives. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), narrative inquiry is a newer social science methodology that analyzes stories as a "portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience in the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (p. 477). Narrative inquiry often explores stories in three-dimensions– temporality, space, and the personal or social connection; stories can be collected using a

wide variety of qualitative and participatory methods, including interviews, journaling, and theater (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

There are two general types of narrative inquiry approaches: the paradigmatic approach and the narrative approach. The paradigmatic approach uses stories to produce categories and taxonomies from common themes, while the narrative approach uses accounts of storied events and happenings to produce explanatory stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). I used the paradigmatic approach to identify key obstacles and opportunities in youths' schooling (see Chapter Six). However, the majority of the chapters follow the narrative approach, through which I identified collective explanatory stories that youth developed for the final theater scripts (Olson & Craig, 2000). Giving youth the narrative authority to decide which of the stories to privilege in their final performance was central to *engaging in collaboration* and ensuring the youth were leading the process.

### Encouraging Use of Findings

Key to the transformative and participatory paradigm used in this mixed-methods research is *encouraging the findings to be used* (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009; Patton, 2012). I plan to do this in multiple ways. First, I am preparing a policy brief for MoEVT with the key findings and recommendations presented in Chapter Eight. Subsequently I plan to present these findings and recommendations during an open-dialogue to be held with MoEVT and key education partners (including those interviewed for this dissertation). I will also share these findings and youth scripts with two gender programs currently working in Zanzibar that are in the process of developing a gender equity and education strategy for working with Zanzibar's schools.

Second, I intend to share the findings with the Baobab School community through two separate meetings, one with youth and the other with parents and teachers. Finally, I hope to continue to present our collaborative research using PTA with wider audiences in the comparative and international education field. Abrahman and I presented our research to audiences in the US during 2017, and we expect to share our findings and process with others in our field. The key analytical concepts used are discussed below.

## Key Analytical Concepts

Having overviewed the research design and the process of examining assumptions, entering and engaging in collaborations, and encouraging use of findings, I now outline the key analytical concepts used in the analysis. Throughout the narrative inquiry process I drew on Nagar's (2014) work, which focuses on telling and writing stories across geographical borders as well as between disciplines and languages. Namely, I applied Shank and Nagar's (2013) notions of frontstaging and backstaging of narratives, which youth performed in the process of negotiating which aspects and elements of their narratives they wanted to share. These concepts allowed me to show the complexity of co-creating theater scripts, including the decisions made about what was performed and how youths' perspectives and social scripts were represented. I also utilized Nagar's (2014) discussions on co-authorship and collaboration for problematizing and challenging the ways knowledges are produced and performed, and for reflecting on the youth and facilitator collaborations throughout this research.

### Backstage and Frontstage

Backstage refers to the deep conversations amongst participants where vulnerabilities and experiences are exposed, but are not performed in front of an

audience. Frontstage illuminates the "staged performances or final scripts" (Shank & Nagar, 2013, p. 93), which are intentionally selected, told, and translated to an audience. The backstage conversations in this study, including all interviews and rehearsals, were predominantly carried out in Kiswahili, although the Minazi and Mavinje youth wrote in their journals in English to improve their skills as part of GETheatre's agreement with their schools. Baobab students performed frontstage in Kiswahili while the Mavinje and Minazi students performed in English.

What youth said out loud on stage and in their theater scripts and what they embodied and negotiated backstage in their narratives were equally important to this analysis of the social scripts. For example, youth performed taking the exam or dropping out frontstage, but backstage, through conversations, interviews, and rehearsals for their play, they described in detail the emotional experience of being pushed out or failing. While frontstage performances of youths' social scripts both reproduced and problematized inter/national scripts, backstage the youth contested and troubled these social scripts in more personal ways. For instance, one of the male youth, Khamis, performed how he was badgered to drop out of school by his neighbors and out-of-school peers and "to start earning money like a man." Backstage, however, this young man described how he did not have the "head for studying" and how he struggled to eat on most days (see Khamis's narrative in Chapter Six). What Khamis shared in his frontstage performance was what he and his classmates had collectively experienced, while his backstage story highlighted an emotional and deeply personal experience.

**Coauthorship**

I use coauthorship (Nagar, 2014) to describe the processes of developing

narratives and texts together with the youth, as well as the facilitators who also shared

their stories, experiences, and perspectives. While I am ultimately taking responsibility

and credit for the "frontstage" production of this dissertation, coauthorship acknowledges

that decisions for "deliberately constructing, framing, and performing any and every

story" (p. 93) were not made in academic solitude, but in collaboration with the youth

and research team. Without each of these coauthors this research would be incomplete.

Coauthorship took on many forms. During workshops, youth wrote their own

individual stories, guided by a simple question or statement, and together co-constructed

collective stories in large part without adult interference. During group stories, the

students often started out by listing ideas and then voting on which themes to write about.

For example, when asked about challenges to their schooling, they came up with a long

list of over 20 possible scenarios that they then narrowed into two to four stories. This

process of collective negotiation became part of the scripting and coauthoring process

that played out as youth made staging decisions, developed characters, and

choreographed movement.

To demonstrate co-authorship, I have attempted to include the ideas and

perspectives of the research team, and specifically Abrahman, Bello, and Tabshir,

throughout the chapters. They were actively involved in every step of the process. They

not only helped finalize the PTA curriculum and writing prompts, but were involved in

the transcribing, translating, and analysis process. For example, the facilitators provided

their perspectives on slang, including different terminologies youth used as a code for

taboo subjects, such as premarital sexual relations, and gave their opinions on the different themes that emerged in the scripts—such as masculinities and lack of teacher representation in the stories. As a research team, we also shared our own stories in the process of reflecting on what the youth had written and experienced. When the youth talked about the anxiety of the exam, we recounted our own experiences and academic successes and failures. When the boys wrote a scene about being pressured to take drugs, we sifted through our own heartache with drug addiction among our family members. In many ways, the research team was involved in a sense making and reflection similar to that which youth were asked to do in co-authoring their theater scripts.

There were nearly a dozen other backstage supporters of this research team who reflected with us on the different findings and experiences, examined assumptions, shared ideas and insights, and contributed to the final version of the PTA curriculum. These included Hamsa and Othman, the directors of the GETheatre, representatives of the Ministry, and friends and colleagues working with youth in education across the islands. While my name appears as the sole author on this dissertation, I acknowledge these research team members and co-authors who not only informed and guided this study, but graciously shared—both backstage and frontstage—their own narratives in the process.

**Theater Concepts**

In addition to the terms above, I used the theater concepts of plot, protagonist/antagonist, setting, tension, climax, and exposition in the analysis of the theater scripts (Pavis, 1998). Each theater script was made up of dozens of vignettes produced by the youth and generated through theater exercises, individual journal writing, and collective story composition sessions. These vignettes could either be a

single scene or up to ten scenes with a common plot, which is a sequence of events related to the storyline. Each vignette was performed by protagonists (main characters) and antagonists (characters who struggle with the protagonist) in one or more settings—or where the scenes took place. I also analyzed the tensions in the vignettes—or conflicts and moments of struggle that built throughout the scenes—and the climax, or highest point of tension. Finally, I refer to expositions in the analyses chapters, which is the backstage story that is on occasion shared frontstage in the theater scripts.

### Positionality

As I discussed in Chapter One, I began this research believing that girls were dropping out of and failing secondary school at higher rates than boys as purported in a Ministry report (MoEVT, 2014b). While I had helped reproduce this assertion in education reports written with and for the Ministry when I worked on joint iNGO and MoEVT projects during 2007 and 2011, my analysis of longitudinal data in 2016 for this dissertation failed to validate this claim. Consequently, I thought through my encounters living with Bi Aida and Bi Maha's families and the experiences of their children, and especially the challenges Hamsa and Othman encountered in becoming *wahitimu*.

At the same time as I was trying to help Hamsa and Othman navigate their many obstacles and hurdles, I was also supporting Malia, an orphan from the mainland who had grown up in Zanzibar. Malia had been pulled out of school in Standard 5 by an aunt. She re-enrolled when she was 18 but ultimately failed the Form 4 exam and believed "my life is over." It took her nearly two years to find other pathways that enabled her to pursue her dream of becoming a preschool teacher. After debriefing with her at the end of her first year of teaching, she described the feeling of finally being called a *mhitimu* and a

*mwalimu* (teacher) and shedding the names *mtoro* and *dada*, which literally means "sister" but can also be at title for domestic workers.

While Hamsa and Othman gave me the idea of looking at youth's aspirations and their visions of their *maisha mazuri* in different geographical settings, Malia gave me the idea of exploring labels and troubling the notion of *mtoro*. These three youth have been my constant advisors throughout this research and their perseverance has inspired me to keep going through setbacks. They ventured out to Baobab, Minazi, and Mavinje Schools with me and helped me understand viscerally the emotions and feelings youth described in their backstage journals and frontstage performances. I am forever indebted to them for allowing me to use their stories to enter into and frame this research.

I am also beholden to Bi Maha's family for welcoming me as another child. I came to Zanzibar as a righteous 20-year-old unsure of my own vision of my *maisha mazuri*. Bi Maha's children's guidance over the past two decades have helped me find my own pathway. They have taught me about faith and collective agency and inspired many of the notions I use in this research—such as collective scripts.

While I have tried my best not to pathologize girlhood or boyhood from my Global North upbringing, I am aware that I carry the biases and perspectives of an outsider even after living in Zanzibar for over seven years. Likewise, though I have been surrounded by Islam since I was ten (through two international students that lived with my mom and me for five years), and have diligently studied the Qur'an, my family is not Muslim by origin. I am aware that this affects my positionality as does my position as a white *mhitimu* from a middle-class background. Bi Maha's family has reminded me of this insider/outsider positionality throughout my time in Zanzibar. They refer to me as

*mzungu wa kipemba*, or "the foreigner/white person from Pemba." As they lovingly point out through this juxtaposed title, I have found a home in both Zanzibar and the US and my relationship with both of these places have undoubtedly influenced how I have approached this dissertation.

## Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this research. Two of the most prominent were lack of comprehensive gender-disaggregated historical data, and the positionality of the Ministry facilitators involved in this research. A third limitation was the absence of social scripts and perspectives told directly by youth who had been labeled as dropouts.

### Incomplete Zanzibar-wide Data

One of the major quantitative limitations of this research was the lack of available comprehensive and comparable gender-disaggregated[22] data. While Abrahman, Bello, and I attempted to gather yearly data between 1964 and 2017, we could not locate data reported separately by males and females before 1975. In addition to incomplete gender data, Abrahman, Bello, and I could not obtain gross enrollment ratios (GERs)—or the proportion of youth matriculated per the overall population of youth for the corresponding age group—for all years. Without comprehensive and comparable GERs, I was restricted to creating gender parity indices (GPI) from enrollment numbers, which does not take into consideration out-of-school youth populations. There are some gender-disaggregated GERs in Appendix C, but with notable gaps.

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[22] Gender in this research was limited to the biological male/female binary largely because Zanzibar only collects data using this binary.

**Positionality of Ministry Representatives**

One of the advantages of this research was that it was executed in close collaboration with MoEVT representatives. MoEVT supported my research permit and allowed their staff (Abrahman, Bello, and Hafsa) to co-facilitate the workshops and lead research activities. One of the limitations of having MoEVT representatives as facilitators and interviewers, however, was that Abrahman, Bello, and Hafsa were likely seen as government representatives with influence and power among the teachers, students, and parents. Although Abrahman, Bello, and Hafsa work in capacity building and community-oriented training positions at the Ministry, schools and communities were not aware of this distinction. For example, one of the school's head teachers allegedly warned students not to say anything negative about their school so as not to make their school look unfavorable. We did not want to put the students in a compromising situation, and thus did not probe into the school factors alluded to or discussed in the students' narratives.

Ashley and my positions as foreign *wazungu* may have influenced the youths' writing and performances. Although we tried to encourage youth to have open conversations about our roles and positionality, for the Baobab youth it was the first time they had ever had extensive contact with foreigners and it took time for them to get accustomed to our presence. However, my role as an outsider who spoke Kiswahili may have encouraged youth to be more open about their circumstances, especially youth from Mavinje and Minazi, as they shared many personal details about their experiences with me during their interviews and continued to update me on their lives post-research.

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**Dropouts**

As this study focused on youth who were in school, there was only one self-identified dropout at the beginning of the study. In consequence, the discussion of dropouts focuses on the few youth who moved in and out of the system during the 2016 and 2017 school years. It would have been a more thorough study with the viewpoints and perspectives of youth who had permanently dropped out of school before the Form 2 exam. While this research with dropouts was beyond the scope of this dissertation, this is an important area that deserves future exploration. To date, I do not know any other study of dropouts in Zanzibar that delves into how youth came to be labeled as *watoro*.

<div align="center">

**Conclusion**

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This chapter laid out my transformative, mixed-methods research design, the methodologies employed, and the key analytical concepts. I also provided background and context on the three schools, Baobab, Mavinje, and Minazi and their geographical positioning in rural, urban, and *ng'ambo* settings. To *examine* big picture assumptions, namely, when boys and girls tended to drop out (become *watoro*) and the factors that influenced their leaving, I used Zanzibar-wide data and longitudinal cohort analyses. In order to understand why youth were leaving and how this intersected with their *maisha mazuri*, I used the popular theater approach (PTA). PTA provided a way for both *entering and engaging collaboratively* with the youth in knowledge making and authorship. The youths' theater scripts and narratives not only helped to bring "depth" and "texture" to this research, but they moved youth perspectives front and center stage. In the following chapter I launch into analyses and discuss the notion of *mhitimu* from a historical and generational perspective.

**Chapter Four: Becoming a *Mhitimu* Across Time and Generation**

In this chapter I step back in time and look at how becoming a *mhitimu* was historically tied with class, ethnicity, gender, and geographical residence. I also look at the ways access to education changed as compulsory basic education was introduced in 1991. I start out by historicizing what being a *mhitimu* meant under religious schooling in the 1800s and how this shifted as the formal education system emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. I then look at how *mhitimu* came to be synonymous with whether one passed the secondary school *mtihani*, or examination, in the 1970s. Next I confirm with Zanzibar-wide data that for the past decade boys have not been becoming *wahitimu* at higher rates than girls across Zanzibar and use my longitudinal study of 1,145 youth to show that males leave school before completing Form 1 at higher rates in four districts. I end this chapter with youth accounts of how becoming a *mhitimu* has changed between this current generation and that of their parents.

**The Development of Formal Education: From *Mhitimu* to *Mtihani* (pre 1800s-1964)**

This section draws on historical, anthropological, and sociological research to contextualize the notion of the *mhitimu* in formal education in Zanzibar from the era of Omani Sultanate in the early 19th century to the decades under the British Protectorate between 1890 and 1963. I discuss how universal primary education was leveraged after the Zanzibar Revolution in January 1964 and the subsequent union with Tanganyika in April 1964. I then look at the establishment of the current national examination system in the 1970s as an institutionalized mechanism for reproducing *wahitimu*.

Given these different histories, Zanzibar's formal education system is in part an amalgam of religious education centered in Qur'annic and Arabic studies, and the formal

schooling system dominated by British curricula and pedagogies. While there were

substantial ruptures and contentions as these two systems of knowledge became

universally accessible to all Zanzibari children, they continue to coexist today and show

how schooling serves as a vital conjuncture in the lives of nearly every Zanzibari child.

Although the religious and formal education systems are separate and have their own

criteria for determining a *mhitimu*, they overlap in many ways and both inform the

religious and cultural scripts analyzed throughout this dissertation. Below is the history of

how these separate education systems came together and how they uniquely defined the

concept of *mhitimu*.

**Becoming a *Mhitimu*, or Religious Scholar, in the Pre-colonial Period (pre-1800s)**

Little has been written about education in Zanzibar before the arrival of foreigners

around 600 BC. The first known traders came from Persia and Arabia, followed by Indian

and other Asian merchants, and finally by settlers from Oman in the late seventeenth

century (Middleton, 1992). Zanzibar officially became an Omani sultanate in the 1830s,

and international trade subsequently increased. Zanzibar's economy at this time was

centered on clove production, and slaves from various mainland ethnic groups were

brought to work in the plantations (Sheriff, 1987). This interaction of traders, immigrants,

and slaves from across the Indian Ocean led to what ethnographers have described as the

Swahili society, the mixing of people and cultures from southeast Asia, Persia, Arabia,

and mainland Africa (for more on the Swahili society and people see Fair, 1991; Ingrams,

1931; Glassman, 2011; Middleton, 1992; Sheriff, 1987). For the next 250 years, until

1963, Zanzibar was under Omani leadership and an early education system began to

emerge (Glassman, 2011).

In the period before Zanzibar became a sultanate, learning took place privately and informally with religious scholars. Although males and females had access to religious learning, it was generally reserved for the elite, urban males of Arab descent (Glassman, 2011). In the late nineteenth century, education gradually became less exclusive, although it was still not accessible for slave families. Around this time Qur'annic schools were established. There were informal *vyuo* (learning without a set curriculum), which were slightly more structured than the initial learning with private scholars. Later more formalized schools, or *madrasa* (plural *madaris*), were established. *Madaris* had set curriculums, new types of knowledge (i.e. Islamic law), and were generally less exclusive (Loimeier, 2009). A few non-religious 'Indian schools' were opened, but they were only for students of Indian-descent (Loimeier, 2009). While girls and boys alike started *madrasa* at age six or before, by the time girls were ten years old they were often withdrawn by their families to help with household responsibilities until they married (Loimeier, 2009).

In the early part of the twentieth century, a number of East African Islamic scholars began to emphasize that learning the Qur'an was the obligation of every Muslim, male and female alike (Glassman, 2011; Loimeier, 2009). These scholars heavily influenced what I call the religious and cultural social scripts on schooling, and which I argue still inform many families' decisions to educate their children. Contrary to the dominant discourse that suggests Muslim girls from SSA countries are frequently deprived of schooling because of socio-cultural influences and expectations (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000), this long-term and open support of girls' education by Islamic leaders demonstrates a different history. Although there were indeed practices such as *purdah*, or

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gender seclusion of young women before marriage, this did not prevent girls from elite families from attending school (Decker, 2014b). Not only were women actively involved in religious learning, but they began to take over *madaris* from their deceased husbands and were responsible for educating generations of both male and female students (Loimeier, 2009). [23] For example, in the 1940s Bi Amina M. Janakheri, the wife of a religious leader, opened one of the first Qur'annic schools for boys and girls, and also established a *darsa* (religious study group) for women (Loimeier, 2009). The growing occurrence of these women's *darsa* groups was an indication of the rising importance of Islamic education for females (Purpura, 1997).

Islamic education in Zanzibar not only promoted rote learning of Arabic and the Qur'an, but it also led the development of religious knowledge (*ujuzi*) and judgement (*akili*). One that had acquired this knowledge and judgment—as determined by memorizing the first 30 chapters of the Qur'an—became a *mhitimu* (Decker, 2014b; Loimeier, 2009). Religious education also provided something less emphasized in the current secular curricula: honor, respect/respectability (*heshima*), and acceptable personal conduct (*adabu*) (Amory, 1994; Decker, 2014b; Loimeier, 2009; McMahon, 2005). *Heshima* and *adabu* were often associated with women and eligibility for marriage. Although *heshima* and *adabu* were embodied in an individual's conduct, they were values linked to the reputation of a family and community. Decker (2014b) argued that this notion of *heshima* as respectability was leveraged under the British colonial regime to restrict formal education for girls to the realms of homemaking and teaching as they believed that women's domestic labor would help drive the economy. However, *heshima*

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[23] This is especially true in the *ng'ambo* area surrounding town.

and *adabu* also surfaced in the contemporary narratives written and performed by the youth in this study and were used in part to describe why both formal and religious schooling were important for girls today. While *adabu*, *ujuzi*, and *akili* are also used to discuss the importance of education among boys, *heshima* is most commonly used for education of girls (Decker, 2014b; Loimeier, 2009).

As this section demonstrates, the label of *mhitimu* prior to the advent of the formal education system in the 1800s was largely used to describe accomplished religious scholars and was almost exclusively reserved for elite, men of Arab descent. Some elite women also had access to religious learning throughout the 1800s, which demonstrates that girls' education pre-dated colonial and postcolonial regimes. Religious education gradually became more open in the early 1900s during the same period that the formal education system was emerging.

**Becoming a *Mhitimu*, or Formal School Graduate, in the Colonial Era (1800s-1963)**

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Zanzibar in the sixteenth century and the first from the Global North to establish Catholic mission schools. However, they were expelled by Oman in the late 1600s, and their contributions to the formal education system were minimal (Lofchie, 1965). Other Europeans, such as the Germans, and Americans (US) arrived during the Omani rule, but they had little influence on the overall education system (Loimeier, 2009). While a number of British and French missionaries established mission schools in the 1860s, including two girls' schools, they served predominantly Christians of mainland descent (children of freed slaves brought to Zanzibar) and a few Goan Catholics and Parsees (Zoroastrians)

(Loimeier, 2009). Attendance began to wane in these mission schools as the secular formal education system introduced by the British gained momentum.

Starting in the 1800s, British education increasingly influenced learning across Tanzania and Zanzibar, especially through mission schools. While in some part these schools were concerned with facilitating values such as *heshima* and *adabu*, they focused on teaching secular subjects such as mathematics, literacy, and social sciences, and on producing *wahitimu*, or primary (as there were very few secondary schools at this time) and secondary school graduates. These colonial schools also exerted political power and authority by producing *wahitimu* who could fill colonial posts and help drive the economy (Aminzade, 2013; Decker, 2104b; McMahon, 2005; Vavrus, 2003). The link between education as a necessity for economic and social advancement became even more pronounced under the British system.

In 1890, Zanzibar was declared a British Protectorate, which lasted until Zanzibar's independence in 1963 (Lofchie, 1965). While the British officially held dual sovereignty with the Sultan of Oman, in reality the British gradually assumed administrative authority, and in 1913, Zanzibar became an official Colonial Office. The British's attempt to transform the education sector was met with substantial resistance across Zanzibar as the educational foundations in Zanzibar were deeply rooted in both Islam and the Arabic language among other reasons (Loimeier, 2009; McMahon, 2005). Influential Islamic scholars were reluctant to allow the British to secularize schools and change their definitions of *wahitimu*. This was not the case in mainland Tanganyika, where mission schools sustained their popularity and paved the way for the formal education system (Becker, 2008; Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2003).

As the formal British-influenced system of education began to emerge in Zanzibar, the colonial administration classified schools into four categories: government, mission, Indian, or Qur'annic. While some token girls' schools existed, especially those that taught domestic sciences, for the most part these four types of schools continued to serve largely urban and elite males (Puja & Kassimoto, 1994). These schools "virtually confined state-assisted education to the sons of the privileged classes" (Sheriff & Fergusson, 1991, p. 87). It was only after World War II that government schools gained wider acceptance across classes and ethnicities and colonial officials expanded participation to non-Arab boys and girls (Decker, 2014b).

Under the colonial system, exclusion was not solely gendered, but also deeply rooted in ethnic and class affiliations, often between young people living in Stone Town and other urban areas and youth from rural and *ng'ambo* areas. Initially non-Christian Zanzibaris avoided formal colonial schools because of the schools' previous association with British missionaries and the colonial administration's attempts to change the Kiswahili alphabet from Arabic to Latin script (Decker, 2014b; Loimeier, 2009). British mission schools tried to convert Muslims to Christianity in the mainland (Becker, 2008) and Zanzibaris were wary of these missionaries (Loimeier, 2009). Whereas *vyuo* taught *adabu* and *ujuzi* (knowledge), the British schools, or *skuli* or *shule*, focused on building British subjects (McMahon, 2005). Yet, Arab academies in Zanzibar eventually accepted an integrated religious and government education as proposed by the British in the 1940s (Loimeier, 2009; Puja & Kassimoto, 1994).

As the formal education system became more accepted by the Arab elite, colonial schools began to open up for girls, including the first girls' primary school in 1927 and a

secondary school in 1947 (Loimeier, 2009). According to a 1961 UNESCO report titled *Women in Public Life (1947-62)* written by the former head of the Women's Teacher Training College, Jane Bowen, because Zanzibar was a "Muslim State," "people [non-Muslims] expected a certain amount of prejudice against girls' education and the emancipation of women" (ZNA, 1961, as cited in Loimeier, 2008, p. 286). This account demonstrates how deeply rooted the inter/national scripts have been over time. However, as Bowen documents, in reality girls' education spread fairly quickly; by the time the report was published, matriculation for females had increased to nearly two boys for every girl. As described, the movement for girls' education was largely catalyzed by the Zanzibari women (of Arab descent) who were sent to Cairo for higher education, and returned as advocates for other girls. It is clear from these historical accounts that it was not solely British and inter/national efforts that began to promote the integration of women into schooling, but rather religious scholars and leaders as well. Table 2 below shows girls' participation in government education from the time of the first girls' school in 1927 until the years before Zanzibar's independence in 1964.

Table 2

*Government Girls' Education in Zanzibar, 1927-1962*

|  | **1927** | **1932** | **1937** | **1942** | **1947** | **1952** | **1957** | **1962** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of schools** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 13 | 14 |
| **Number of female students** | 38 | 183 | 278 | 518 | 895 | 1698 | 4053 | 6588 |
| **Percentage of female students out of total students** | 3.5 | 9.7 | 12.4 | 17.2 | 16.8 | 21.5 | 28.3 | 33.9 |

*Note.* Table replicated from *Mobilizing Zanzibari women: The struggle for respectability and self-reliance in colonial East Africa* (p. 82) by C.R. Decker, 2014, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Copyright 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan.

As part of the British-dominated curriculum and the expansion of education beyond the confines of gender, ethnicity, race, and class, the phenomenon of the high-stakes exam, or *mtihani*, emerged as a powerful instrument of determining who could become a *mhitimu*. During the 1940s, the practice of written examinations commenced under the Cambridge Overseas Examination (Galabawa, 1990). The exams determined completion and to some extent promotion. As universities were non-existent in Tanganyika or Zanzibar, *wahitimu* had to travel abroad for tertiary education (Galabawa, 1990). Whereas the notion of *mhitimu* celebrated Islamic scholars who excelled at memorizing the Qur'an, the *mtihani* eliminated students from the system based on examination scores. As Loimeier (2009) described, "The ocean of knowledge that characterized Islamic education was now turned into objectified school (and examination) knowledge that was no longer defined by charismatic religious scholars but by the 'Cambridge Overseas Examination' standards and rules" (pp. 337-338).

The colonial government in Zanzibar used examinations and age limits to address their issue of overcrowding and lack of secondary-school space. In 1957, one Standard 7 student recalled that only 11 of 40 girls in her class were allowed into Form 1 per the entrance exam scores, and in 1959, only half of the 60 female students in Form 2 were given the opportunity to finish (Decker, 2015). Furthermore, between 1955 and 1957 the Zanzibar Education Advisory Committee set age limits for secondary school students and pushed girls out from schools if they were over the limit age. Hence, at the same time the colonial government was encouraging families to keep their daughters in school longer, they were also removing girls if they were over the age limit in response to space constraints (Decker, 2015). According to a 1959 education report, there was no "fixed

pass mark" (Decker, 2015, p. 44), but in reality only students with the highest scores were admitted to secondary school based on available spaces. Even today, in the postcolonial era, exams are the major reason why young people leave secondary school (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016), which will be examined in detail in the section below and in the subsequent chapters. Although age limits are no longer enforced, the ministry set an age for entering school in its policy to curb the problem of overage students. This policy-age has not yet been realized across Zanzibar because of persistent space shortages (see Appendix D for analyses).

Beyond the exam, there were other historical reasons why students, particularly girls, left formal school and became *wahitimu* at lower rates than males. One of these reasons was early marriage, which commonly occurred around puberty and endured as a practice throughout the colonial era. However, as government schools expanded, an increasing number of girls began to stay in school through puberty and they even began to delay marriage to pursue teaching credentials, with a small number enrolling in nursing studies (Decker, 2014b). In a 1942 education report, Zanzibari officials boasted that there were "fewer girls leaving [school] on reaching puberty" and "fewer marriages of girls in top classes because of slight general tendency to raise the marriage age" (ZNA, 1942, as cited in Decker, 2014a, p. 232). As Decker (2014b) described, women were pursuing greater social freedom and "economic self-reliance" (p. 5). Decker further argued that by taking on more individual agency through the acquisition of formal education, women were simultaneously challenging the colonial administration's assumption that a woman's role was to provide domestic labor to fuel the economy.

In summary, the formal education system started to develop slowly in the late 1800s and met notable resistance from Islamic scholars at first, as the British imposed changes in language, curriculum, and definitions of *wahitimu* based on colonial ideas and motives. While some schools for girls from non-elite families began to emerge from the 1920s to1940s, education was still largely inaccessible to children and youth from rural families that were non-Arab or non-Indian in descent (Loimeier, 2009). This started to change gradually after the postcolonial period.

### Becoming a *Mhitimu* through the *Mtihani* (1964 Onwards)

As described above, until independence from the British in 1963, and the subsequent revolution in 1964 that ousted the Sultan, formal schooling was largely confined to the urban elite. Social class was not structured on economic resources alone but also on ethnicity; a survey in 1948 found that over four-fifths of students in secondary schools were "non-African minorities" (Lofchie, 1965, p. 92), namely, students of Indian or Arab descent. Around 1958, racial quotas were set in order to integrate more "Africans" into schools, and 80 percent of secondary school vacancies were allocated thereafter to "Africans" (p. 92). As was discussed earlier, elite, Arab young women participated in education, but the number enrolled in formal schools was much lower than elite, Arab young men. This started to change in 1964.

**Education for People of All "Colour, Creed or Gender"**

Immediately after Zanzibar's violent revolution, during which thousands of educated Arab and Indian citizens were killed or exiled, one of the leaders of the revolt—Abeid A. Karume—assumed presidential authority. Later that year he signed the Articles of Union with Tanganyika's first President, Julius K. Nyerere, changing the status of

Zanzibar from a country to a geographic area constituting five of Tanzania's 30 regions, and 10 of the country's 169 present administrative districts. At the time, Zanzibar had approximately 300,000 residents, 97 percent of whom were Muslims (Lofchie, 1965). The union changed yet again how young people became *wahitimu* in Zanzibar.

Both Nyerere and Karume tried to make becoming a *mhitimu* more accessible and promoted access beyond the colonial confines of race, ethnicity, gender, and geographic location (Askew, 2002; Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004; Samoff, 1990; Sheriff & Fergusson, 1991; Vavrus, 2003). After independence, education was declared free and non-racial, meaning schools no longer segregated students by ethnicity and race (Puja & Kassimoto, 1994). However, Nyerere and Karume's approaches to promoting inclusion differed. Nyerere was a foreign-educated *mhitimu* and an intellectual affectionately known as *Mwalimu*, the teacher. *Mwalimu* was a strong proponent of redressing inequalities, promoting education for self-reliance, and using schooling for nation building (Askew, 2002; Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004; Samoff, 1990; Vavrus, 2003). Karume, on the other hand, seized power in Zanzibar by force, and his education policies were focused on removing Arab and Indian *wahitimu* and elites in the name of making education free to all (Loimeier, 2009), regardless of "colour, creed or gender" (MoEVT, 2006, p. 1). He attempted to eliminate the elitism in the education system used to maintain social and economic power, and which reproduced inequities (Glassman, 2011). Although gender is mentioned as one of his equalizing agendas (MoEVT, 2006), it appears Karume was more interested in eradicating racial quotas than promoting women's rights. Shortly after he assumed power, he announced a policy of forcible marriages, of non-African women of predominantly Arab and Indian descent to African

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men, and in 1971 began to enact these marriages (Loimeier, 2009). There was no official procedure by which girls and their families could refuse or appeal these arrangements (Loimeier, 2009).

**The Establishment of Exam Councils**

While both Zanzibar and the mainland sought to desegregate who could become a *mhitimu*, their governments initially left in place the same system of selection and exclusion implemented under the colonial governments—the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). Prior to independence, the UCLES exam was only administered in elite European and Indian schools (Nyerere, 1985). In 1969, [24] Karume abolished the Cambridge system with the intention of establishing a Zanzibari system and a few years later the mainland followed suit. However, Karume never established a Zanzibari exam system, but rather supported the formation of National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) (URT, 1973). In 1977, NECTA began to oversee the national secondary public examinations in both Zanzibar and the mainland (URT, 1977). Although Karume and Nyerere may have severed official colonial ties with UCLES, the NECTA system that they put into place resembled the colonial examination system. For instance, NECTA's exams continued to be selective and exclusionary in large part because both regions had limited secondary school spaces for their youth.

While all education matters in the mainland and Zanzibar are administered separately under two ministries, including the Form 2 examination, as of 2017 NECTA still controls who officially becomes a secondary school *mhitimu* (Form 4 and Form 6) in

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[24] In 1968, the East African National Examination Council, in collaboration with UCLES, administered the examinations across East Africa, as well as mainland and Zanzibar (NECTA, n.d.). Karume abandoned the East African National Examination Council system in 1970.

both regions. This designation of *mhitimu* has been controversial, however, as the exams (especially the Form 4 exam) are believed to perpetuate the same underlying educational inequalities throughout the United Republic of Tanzania, including being biased towards urban students with economic resources and social networks (Galabawa, 2014; Omari & Mbilinyi, 2000; Twaweza, 2013). These exams are also believed to favor mainland Tanzanians over Zanzibaris because the exams are largely developed by mainland educators and officials and use examples and references specific to the mainland (Jamiiforums, 2012; Zanzibar Yetu, 2012). I observed an example of this while helping Bi Aida's son Othman study for his Form 4 exam. One of the questions on the practice exam was about "Jane" and asked for students to switch the order of the predicate and subject. After five failed attempts to answer the question, I realized Othman thought "Jane" was a verb as Jane is not a name used or heard in Zanzibar.

In order for the MoEVT to assume more authority over who becomes *wahitimu* within Zanzibar, it has been argued that the Ministry needs their own Form 4 and 6 exams (Jamiiforums, 2012; Zanzibar Yetu, 2012). The MoEVT has started to move in this direction. As of 2012, the Zanzibar Educational Measurement and Evaluation Council (also referred to as the Zanzibar Examinations Council or ZEC) was established to oversee all examinations from primary to secondary school to teachers colleges (Act Number 6 of 2012 in RGZ, 2012). ZEC replaced Zanzibar's MoEVT's Curriculum and Examinations Department, which between 1992 and 2012 managed the Form 2 exam. With ZEC's new mandate it is likely they will assume the administration of the Form 4 and 6 exams in the future (MoEVT representative, interview, August 24, 2016).

To recap, while the newly independent Zanzibar and Tanganyika sought to create their own examination system, ironically the one they put into place reproduced the same binary between those who passed (*wamepasi*) and were promoted onto higher levels, and those who failed (*wamefaili)*. The exam continued to perpetuate underlying geographical, class, and other inequities. Nyerere (1998) criticized this system of selection in a speech he gave 21 years after NECTA was established. He said of using the binary terms *wamepasi* and *wamefaili*:

> This kind of language is absolutely intolerable. We are still using it. It is adding insult to injury…We dangle before them [students] a Secondary School or even a University Education which we know they could not get even if they all scored 100 percent marks because the country could not afford it: And when inevitably they end their education at that level, and return to their villages we brand them failures. (as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004, p. 162)

Not only do the exams continue to divide students into *wamepasi* and *wamefaili*, but as compulsory basic education was extended into secondary schooling, the exams also determine who can start along the pathway of becoming a *mhitimu*.

**Compulsory Basic Education in Zanzibar and the *Mhitimu* (1991-2017)**

The policy that officially mandated that the Form 2 exam would be administered in Zanzibar was the 1991 Zanzibar Education Policy (*Sera ya Elimu Zanzibar*). This 1991 policy declared ten years of free compulsory basic education for all Zanzibaris, including two years of secondary school (MoE, 1991), which was extended to four years in 2006. Free meant tuition-free, but families contributed to other schooling costs, such as uniforms, learning materials, transport, and minor school repairs (MoEVT, 2006). While

in 1991 there were roughly 7,000 youth (52 percent girls, 48 percent boys) enrolled in secondary school (Form 1), this increased to nearly 15,000 (49 percent girls, 51 percent boys) by 2002 when Zanzibar rolled out the first Zanzibar Education Development Plan (ZEDP I) (MoE, 1995a; MoEVT, 2011). ZEDP I followed the 2000 Education for All meeting in Dakar, Senegal and the launching of the MDGs.

Although the initial 1991 Zanzibar Education Policy did not explicitly mention girls or gender, when it was amended in 1995 it promoted gender parity and girls' empowerment. The intention of this amendment was to accommodate different international conventions and declarations—including the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education, Access and Quality (MoEVT, 2006). After the 1995 amendment, government policies and reports begin to reflect the dominant inter/national scripts on girls' education (for example UN, 2001).

As mentioned in the first chapter, the 2006 Policy extended compulsory basic education to Form 4, and in 2019 the first cohort of students under the policy will reach Form 4. When this policy was passed in 2006, the Form 1 enrollment was between 20,000 and 30,000 (50.2 percent girls, and 49.8 percent boys), even though only a third of Form 1 boys and girls were making it through Form 4 (MoEVT, 2011; Ministry of State Planning and Investment Zanzibar, 1999; see Appendix C for detailed data). Promoting quality secondary education for families living in poverty, and especially rural areas, continued to be a major limitation and completion rates to this day are lower among these communities (MoEVT, 2006; Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Although extending

compulsory basic education to 12 years will in theory make becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* more accessible to all Zanzibaris, youth still have to pass the Form 2 exam to be eligible for Form 3. While the national examination system is mentioned as one of the key challenges influencing the high attrition of girls in secondary school, it is often cited as *a* constraint alongside early marriage, pregnancy, and poverty, but not interrogated as *the* main reason that boys and girls drop-out (MoEVT, 2011). This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

**Form 2 Exams**

Immediately after the 1991 Policy was put into place, Zanzibar's MoEVT began administering the Form 2 exam. The Form 2 exam determines who is eligible for Form 3 and the pathway of becoming a Form 4 *mhitimu*. In 1992 less than 10 percent of youth who took the Form 2 exam were promoted (MoE, 1995a), but as of 2016 this had increased to around 70 percent (MoEVT, 2017a). The Form 2 exam tests the curriculum's eleven subjects: English Language, Kiswahili Language, Arabic Language, Geography, Civics, History, Islamic Knowledge, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. All but Arabic and Kiswahili are tested in English. The questions are multiple choice, short answers, and essays (Salim, 2011). The exam score makes up 75 percent of the final Form 2 mark. The other 25 percent is based on students' continuous assessments for each subject as determined by their teachers (although the youth in this study spoke of the exam as sole determinant of their promotion onto Form 3).

While lack of sufficient space for Form 3 and 4 students is likely a reason the Form 2 exam is still administered, the main rationale given by the MoEVT is that the exam selects youth who are well-prepared for Form 3. The MoEVT asserts that the

exams are "valid and reliable" and "standardized," "to avoid any sort of bias between students coming from different schools" (Salim 2011, p. 35). However, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight, the exam in actuality is not a good predictor of Form 4 performance and therefore problematizes this rationale and the assumed validity and reliability (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016; Rea-Dickens et al., 2009; Salim, 2011).

Since instituting the 2006 Policy, MoEVT has been trying to do away with the Form 2 exam to increase the transition rate between Form 2 and 3. However, they are reluctant to do so because of their strong belief that the exam is a valid and summative measure of skills important for predicting success in Form 3 and beyond. The MoEVT asserted that:

> The proportion of students meeting the minimum requirements for Form 3 must be increased before the Form 2 examination can be abolished as there is little to be gained from pushing students into higher levels of education when they have not yet gained the basic competency levels required to perform at this level. (MoEVT, 2014b, p. 3)

Each January to February, the Form 2 results are published publicly on the internet. Public posting before 2016 only disclosed whether the students passed or failed, and not their final percentages. However, in 2017 the names of the students and all of their subject grades were disclosed online. This practice of publicly sharing exam results will be scrutinized further in Chapter Seven, but exacerbates the anxieties and emotions of youth.

Current criticisms of the exams mirror those made of the colonial education system by Nyerere and Karume after independence in the 1960s. The main criticism is

that the exams privilege urban youth from families with greater social networks and economic resources, especially those in historically affluent neighborhoods in Stone Town. Critics have also shown evidence that the exams are not true measures of students' knowledge (*ujuzi*), but rather reflect their mastery of English as the language of instruction and their socioeconomic status (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2013; Brock-Utne, 2010; Puja & Kassimoto, 1994; Qorro, 2010; Rea-Dickens et al. 2009). In one study of Form 2 learners in Zanzibar, Rea-Dickins and Yu (2013) point to a "vicious circle" where "little exposure to English in and outside of school leads to lower English proficiency which, in turn, leads to poorer exam results" (p. 201). Males only slightly outperformed females on the Form 2 exams between 1992 and 2007, but since 2008 girls have outperformed boys, although this varies greatly by district and school.

In summary, the MoEVT has made great strides in making the aspiration of becoming a *mhitimu* more accessible to youth from across the archipelago and ensuring primary and secondary education is a universal right. One continual challenge that has carried over from the colonial era, however, is limited access to and poor quality of schooling among communities that have been historically marginalized. The exam has historically been a way of selecting which youth are promoted into the limited secondary school spaces available, and it continues to be biased towards youth from urban schools and districts. As the longitudinal data shows below and in detail in Appendix D, reaching and passing the exams is more probable for youth from families with greater social and economic resources and with parents who have had schooling. Therefore, the challenge is to put the policies into action and to ensure that boys and girls from across Zanzibar have an equal opportunity to become *wahitimu* if that is indeed part of their vision of their

*maisha mazuri*. In the section below, I examine historical trends to show that girls are no longer dropping out or failing their exams at greater rates than boys. Instead, boys are leaving secondary school before completing Form 1 at higher rates than girls.

**Gender Parity and Performance across Time and Generations (1975-2017)**

It was difficult to analyze enrollment and exam data by gender over four decades because there is no complete database with all of these statistics. Therefore, Abrahman and Bello spent weeks going to multiple government offices to find this data in different archival documents, MoEVT budget speeches, and other dusty reports. I was able to piece together the following picture of gender parity in enrollments and pass rates over time (see Appendix C for the full data).

**Gender Parity in Enrollment Numbers (Zanzibar-wide Data)**

There were no gender-disaggregated data available between 1964 (post-revolution) and 1974, but the Form 2 enrollments in Zanzibar ranged between 235 to 2,005 students with the largest increase taking place between 1968 and 1969 when the number of youth more than doubled (486 to 1,005). Between 1975 and 1983, boys considerably outnumbered girls in Form 2. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of number of youth enrolled was 0.75 to 0.88 for these years, where GPI is calculated as the total number of girls over total number of boys with parity being 1.00. After 1984, however, the GPI for enrollments neared 0.95 and in 1989 Form 2 enrollments were at parity. By the time the 1991 Policy was introduced, girls outnumbered boys in Form 2 (GPI=1.08) as shown in Figure 4. The GPI for Form 2 enrollment in 2016 was at 1.13 (see Table 6 in Appendix C for yearly GPIs). The gender parity of the Gross Enrollment Ratio is a better

indicator of gender participation in schooling, but the total number of youth of that cohort age was not available across all the years and enrollment numbers were thus used.[25]
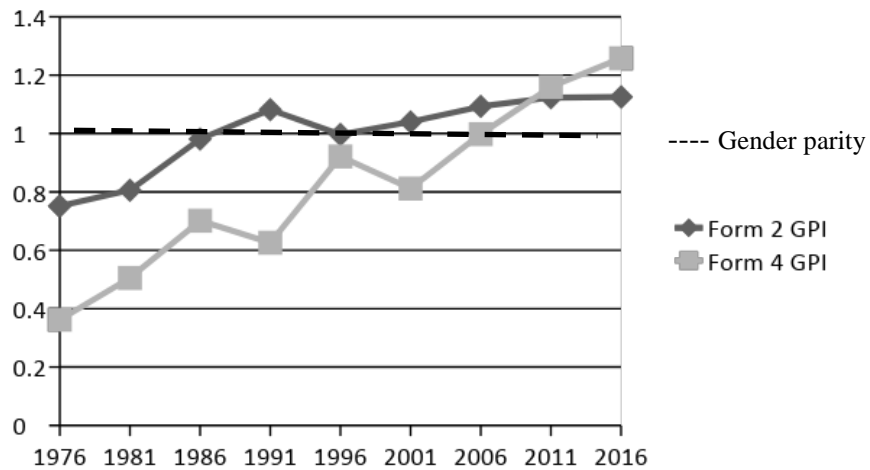


*Figure 4*. GPI in enrollments across time, by five-year increments (1976-2016)

       Enrollment of girls in secondary school has steadily increased over the years in Form 2 and in Form 4, to the point that girls now outnumber boys. As Figure 4 above shows, gender parity was also achieved in the Form 4 enrollments in 2006. Parity in Form 4 enrollments took longer to achieve than the Form 2 enrollments as a large proportion of female youth leave school between Form 2 and Form 4 (between 1975 and 2016 50 to 80 percent of Form 2 students left before Form 4). Meanwhile gender parity in Form 6 enrollments was not achieved until around 2011. However, whereas the GPI enrollments in Form 2 and Form 4 have steadily increased, the Form 6 GPI fluctuates notably over the years as there are only a small number of males and females left in the system by the advanced secondary level (Form 5). For example, in 2015 there were only

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[25] Note that I have provided in Appendix C all the GPIs for the available gross enrollment ratios by year. Between 2000 and 2010, the GPIs for enrollment were slightly higher than that the GPIs for gross enrollment ratios, but both were still at parity (i.e. 0.97 for GER verses 1.04 for enrollment).

2,147 Form 5 students who matriculated into Form 6 (52.5 percent of whom were girls), which was less than 10 percent of the total cohort that began Form 2 three years prior.

**Gender Parity in Exam Pass Rates (Zanzibar-wide Data)**

Gender parity on the Form 2 exam was largely achieved (at 0.95) by 2003. Starting in 2008, girls have consistently outperformed boys on the Form 2 exam across Zanzibar (see Figure 5 below and Table 7 in Appendix C for details). While district disparities exist, overall girls perform higher than boys on the Form 2 exams each year in all but two or three of the ten districts. However, a sizeable proportion of boys and girls never make it to Form 4. Of enrolled Form 2 students between 2009 and 2013, only 55 percent passed and were eligible for Form 3. The remaining 45 percent of the students left the formal education system (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). The proportion of youth who sat for and passed the Form 2 exam rose in 2014 and has steadily increased since then. In 2016, 70.1 percent (64.2 percent of boys, 75.2 percent of girls) passed. The reason for this increase starting in 2014 is likely because the passing criterion became easier, and private schools and "biased" schools (*michepuo*) were aggregated into this final data (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). These "biased" schools are specialized secondary schools in business, agriculture, or technical trades who admit the top performers on the end of primary school exam (Standard 6).
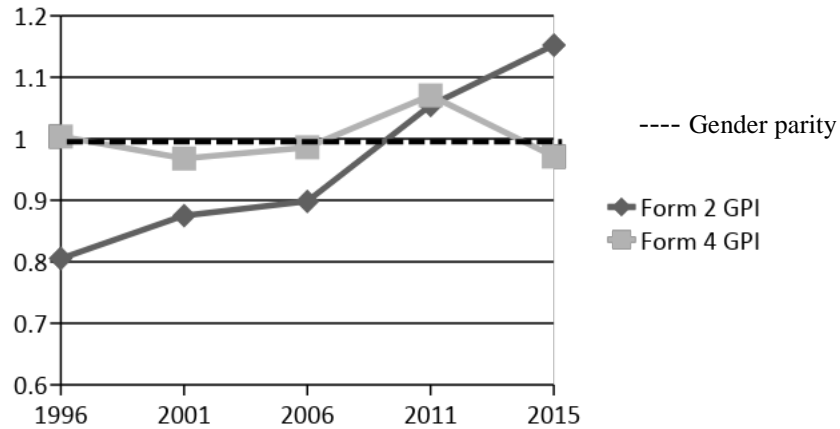
*Figure 5.* GPI in Form 2 and Form 4 exam pass rates across time

As shown above, the proportion of girls and boys who sat for and passed the Form 4 exam has also been at near-parity across Zanzibar since the mid-1990s. The Form 6 exams pass rates (not shown) are also at parity, albeit a smaller proportion of girls make it to this point than boys.

While there is national gender parity in pass rates, there are still disparities by district. These gender discrepancies by district are less pronounced in the Form 2 pass rates. However, as shown in Table 3 below, gross enrollment ratios (GERs) are much lower for the rural North B, Unguja and Micheweni, Pemba than in the other districts. According to the longitudinal analyses we conducted with 1,145 youth across the four rural districts between 2008 and 2016 outlined in Appendix D, these districts also had greater proportions of *watoro*. Girls outperformed boys on Form 4 exams in three Ungujan districts (including the one surrounding Stone Town), but in the remaining seven districts, boys passed and qualified for Form 5 at much higher rates (MoEVT, 2016; Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016).

Table 3

*Secondary school GERs and Form 2 pass rates, by GPI and district (2015)*

| District | Form 1-4 GER [a] (Per total youth) | Form 1-4 GPI [b] | Form 2 Pass rates [a] | Form 2 GPI [b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Zanzibar** | 62.9% | 1.16 | 69.6% | 1.15 |
| **Pemba, Micheweni** | 40.3% | 1.10 | 63.5% | 0.96 |
| **Pemba, Mkoani** | 58.9% | 1.27 | 65.9% | 1.02 |
| **Unguja, North A** | 62.5% | 1.37 | 63.1% | 0.95 |
| **Unguja, North B** | 40.1% | 1.33 | 63.9% | 1.33 |

[a] MoEVT (2016, p. 128-129)

While the number of students that stay in school through Form 2 is higher for girls than boys, school leaving between Form 1 and Form 3 is still a concern for both genders (MoEVT, 2016). This exodus of Form 2 students is slated to decrease under the 2006 Policy (which will only become evident as the first policy cohort reaches Form 4 in 2019). However, as the student narratives in Chapter Five suggest, reducing this large number of dropouts and pushouts between Form 2 and 3 will take time for a number of reasons. For one, there are currently insufficient TVET centers and spaces to serve youth who fail the exam. Another reason is that many families are unaware of the alternative learning options for their youth. A third reason is that some students are not interested in formal secondary education (MoEVT representative, interview, August 24, 2016).

**Gender Differences in When Youth Leave School (Longitudinal Cohort Data)**

While gender parity in secondary school enrollments and exam pass rates has largely been achieved to date, there is still a sizeable proportion of youth who do not complete compulsory basic education. As of 2016, only 75 percent of the total population of Zanzibari youth in the corresponding age group were actually enrolled in Form 2, a slight decline since 2010 (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). This means that nearly a

quarter of this age group either left school before the end of compulsory basic education or was never enrolled in school to begin with. As revealed in the longitudinal analyses, boys are leaving school (becoming *watoro*) before completing Form 1 at significantly higher rates than girls today. This is in large part because of pressures to start working and generating income. Girls and youth from families with greater social and economic resources and whose parents have some schooling were more likely to reach the exam. In summary, as of 2017 gender parity has been achieved across secondary school levels in enrollments. However, who is becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* has been shifting from being in favor of boys to girls.

Young women are now accessing Form 2 and passing their Form 2, 4, and 6 exams at rates similar to those of young men. While this may not be the case for all schools and districts, nor in every year from the time compulsory basic education was enforced in 1991, this is indeed the larger trend. This picture counters the inter/national scripts that pathologize girls and assume they fail and drop at higher rates than boys. As I discuss below, the aspiration of becoming a *mhitimu* has shifted between this generation of students and their parents' generation in large part because of compulsory basic education first put into place in 1991.

### Youths' Perspectives on Becoming a *Mhitimu* across Generations

In this section I examine how the experiences of becoming a *mhitimu* have varied between the youth in this study and their parents' generation, as perceived by the youth in their interviews. These youth were affected by compulsory basic education policy in contrast to their parents who came of age in large part before this policy went into effect. I also scrutinize the girls' beliefs that they have more agency in determining how far they

go in school and when they marry compared to when their mothers were the same age. Though family economic resources and social networks still influence decisions on schooling and marriage, the practice of early marriage has changed notably since the 1980s and 1990s, when the majority of youths' parents were at this vital conjuncture.

**"Now, everyone wants to study."**

Bello, Tabshir, and I asked youth during their interviews if and how participation in school changed from their parents' or grandparents' generations. While most of the urban youth had at least two generations of secondary school *wahitimu* in their families, the Baobab students were almost exclusively first generation secondary school students. The majority of Baobab students' mothers and fathers never went to school at all, or had attended a few years of primary school (see Table 5 in Appendix B). Among the Minazi students from urban and *ng'ambo* neighborhoods, half of their mothers and all of their fathers attended secondary school. In contrast, among Mavinje students schooled in Stone Town's city center, all but one of their mothers and fathers completed secondary school, college, or university. This shows that schooling was out of reach to Baobab students' parents who had fewer economic resources and social networks. Among youth from the *ng'ambo* areas, their fathers had slightly more access to education than their mothers, but among the urban Mavinje youth both parents had equal access to secondary schooling. The handful of youth—urban, rural, or *ng'ambo*—who lived with their grandparents reported that none of their grandparents had been to school.

Therefore, the Baobab students have seen an increase in access as a direct result of compulsory basic education more acutely in their families. Even though the rural youths' mothers and fathers had not been to school, they still hoped their children would

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become *mhitimu*. They were pleased their children had opportunities, which they did not have. One student described how compulsory education became less exclusionary:

| *Sahivi ndio imeongezeka kuliko* | Now it [the enrollment rate] has |
|---|---|
| *huko zamani, zamani kulikuwa* | increased as compared to the past, in |
| *hakuna skuli nyingi na halafu zile* | the past there weren't many schools |
| *skuli za matajiri matajiri tu, kama* | and those few schools were only for |
| *mtoto wa maskini tu, huwezi* | the very rich. For a poor child, you |
| *kupelekwa kama huna matajiri* | would never be enrolled if you didn't |
| *….wewe maskini utamsomesha* | have a rich sponsor…you as a poor |
| *hapa hapa lakini akifika kule juu* | person would educate your child right |
| *sasa pesa zitakushinda. Tena* | here [locally] but if you reached the |
| *atanini? Arudi nyumbani aolewe.* | top you wouldn't have money to |
| *Na mwanamume arudi nyumbani* | continue. Then what? She returns |
| *atafutiwe kama ndio hiyo kazi* | home and marries, and men went |
| *nyengine kwenda baharini huko,* | back and would be assisted in finding |
| *kujenga.* | work, like fishing or construction. |

The youth were also asked about the education levels of their older siblings in order to better understand how access to schooling has manifested within families. Baobab students' siblings left school anywhere between Standard 7 and Form 4, with fewer than half of their sisters and brothers becoming *wahitimu* and the majority being pushed out in Form 2 after failing the exams. Meanwhile among the Minazi and Mavinje youth, nearly all of their siblings were secondary school or university *wahitimu*. Therefore, compulsory basic education did not erase the historical economic and

geographic inequities between communities and families. Rather it has shifted inequities to advanced secondary level (Form 5 and 6) and university levels. Hamsa and Othman, Bi Aida's sons, personify this divide as well. They were not only the first young people in their family to become university *wahitimu*, but moreover the first in their entire village to do so. In contract, in Bi Maha's family nearly all of her children and grandchildren have at least one university degree. In summary, nearly all the youth and their parents discussed how access to schooling has changed over the years, and how becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* is no longer just an aspiration for families with economic resources and social networks. While there has been a major increase in access, however, there are still notable inequities in quality of schooling among communities, as will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters.

**"When the girl was mature…she had to marry."**

In addition to describing economic and geographical inequities, the youth across all three schools explained generational differences in school participation using social and cultural examples. They described how in the past among girls who had access to school, early marriage was a key reason they were pulled out prior to becoming a *mhitimu*. As described above, between the 1920s and 1960s, women often left school midstream to marry at the volition of their families (Decker, 2014b; O'Malley, 2000; Loimeier, 2009). O'Malley (2000) found in her interviews on marriage that before the 1964 revolution girls married between the ages of 12 and 14 and after 1964 between 16 and 22. The current generation of young Zanzibari women (under 24 years) are marrying on average at age 22.6 years of age, compared to their parent's generation that married on average between 18.2 and 19.2 years (MoHCDGEC, MoH, NBS, OCGS, & ICF, 2016).

The youth from the urban schools explained how in the past girls did not have the individual agency, or *uwezo*, to decide how far to go in school and who and when to marry, as compared to today. As discussed earlier, girls were often pressured to marry young to protect their *heshima*, or respectability. Their families were afraid that girls would (*ku*)*haribikwa,* be spoiled/ruined, (which was code for losing her virginity) and the parents would suffer *hasara,* loss or damages. Therefore parents married off the girls when they reached a certain age, whether or not they had completed schooling (Decker, 2014b; O'Malley, 2000). One Minazi young woman described this shift, but also qualified that early marriage still exists to some extent in Zanzibar:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Wazazi wa zamani…ilikuwa wasichana ukishakuwa mkubwa tu, ama ukishakuwa mwari tu unatakiwa uolewe. Ila na kwa sasa wapo wazazi ambao wanaendelea na mila hizo na wapo ambao hawaendelei tena na mila hizo. Wanataka mtoto wao afike kiwango ambacho cha kusoma. Awe na elimu ya juu kabisa ndio aolewe. Sasa ndio tofauti kubwa kati ya vizazi vya zamani na vya sasa.* | The parents from the past…when the girl was mature, meaning she reached puberty, she had to marry. Even today there are some parents who continue these traditions and there are those that do not continue anymore with these traditions. They want their child to reach a high level of education then marry. That is why current generations are very different from the past generations. |

In comparing across generations both males and females also drew on inter/national scripts, namely the argument that Zanzibar had modernized, to explain how girls have

become more agentic in the process of becoming *wahitimu*. A young woman from Minazi explained this modernization as the introduction of science and technology:

*Science na teknolojia yaani umeingia mtandawazi kwa hiyo kuna tofauti ya wasichana wa zamani ambao walokuwepo hawana uwezo wa kusoma na wanataka kusoma lakini wamejikita katika masuala ya kuolewa. Lakini sahivi wengi ambao wana fursa za kusoma...na elimu ambao ilokuwepo sahivi ni nzuri ambayo ya kujiendeleza wao kusoma.*

Science and technology has led to globalization. As such there is a difference between girls from the past, as they didn't have the opportunity to study even though they wanted to study, but they were married off. But now, many [girls] have the opportunity to study…and the quality of the current [state of] education is good for advancing their [girls'] studies.

The Minazi youth also described how "Africa" has changed and modernized, by contrasting their continent with "Arab" countries, ironically drawing on the same historical labels of ethnicity that once determined who had access to becoming a *mhitimu* before education was deracialized in the 1960s. These girls claimed that early marriage was still widely practiced in Arab countries (meaning Gulf States and the Middle East), and one young woman gave an example of distant relatives to prove her point. They were consciously or unconsciously drawing on the same discourse that leaders like Abeid Amani Karume drew on during the Zanzibar revolution to create divisions between ethnicities and to associate gender liberation with a modern Zanzibar (Decker, 2014b):

| | |
|---|---|
| *…Kwa upande wa Africa imebadilika kutokana na sahivi, kila mtu anataka awe msomi afahamu nini anafanya. Kila mtu anataka afahamu science na teknologia kwa hiyo imebadilika...* | ...For Africa, it has changed with time, everyone wants to study and understand what he/she is doing. Everyone wants to understand science and technology, so it has changed… |
| *Walikuwa wanaowa wakiwa wadogo lakini walikuwa ni wengi tofauti na sasa hivi. Sasa hivi ni wa wachache na utamaduni hizo kwa kwetu Africa. Hamna mpaka sahivi lakini kwa nchi za kiarabu zipo. Na ushahidi mdogo ni mume wa zamani wa dada yangu watoto wake walivyofika miaka 15 wote aliwapa wake na watoto wasichana baada ya kufika miaka 12 tu akawaozesha.* | In the past many married at a young age, but that is different now. Now, there are few who have this culture [of marrying young] here in Africa. There isn't any [practice of early marriage], but in Arab countries it [the practice] is there. Proof of this is my sister's past husband, when their children reached 15 years of age, they gave them wives. And he married off the children after the age of 12. |

While current data trends and research suggest that in many Gulf State countries girls are staying in school longer and marrying later (Ridge, 2014), these Zanzibari girls reproduced an inter/national pathologizing girlhood script that they may have heard through social networks, television, or possibly through historical and political discourses from within Zanzibar. This illustrates how the pathologizing girlhood script can be reproduced by the very girls who have been pathologized by inter/national scripts.

To summarize, according to the youth in this study, the practice of early marriage has changed from their mothers' and grandmothers' generations because girls have more agency to decide when and who to marry. Some of the young people from *ng'ambo* areas associated this change with modernization and becoming more "African" and less "Arab." In the next section I look at when the current generation of secondary school students marries and how this coincides with their aspirations for becoming *wahitimu*.

**"Most girls marry after they fail their exams."**

Youth were asked in their interviews to discuss the current intersection between schooling and marriage to gauge whether early marriage was indeed a notable policy issue in Zanzibar (MoEVT, 2006) and in response to recent news articles that suggest there is a crises (Nassor, 2016; Yussuf, 2016). The 41 youth were asked: "Do girls leave school to marry, or marry after leaving school?" The overwhelming majority concluded that girls tended to marry after they failed their Form 2 or Form 4 exams. As many of them described, when a girl was pushed out of school and was not studying or working, the parents encouraged them to get married to protect their *heshima*. This was the case with one of Bi Aida's daughters. When I asked her if her daughter was going to enroll in a TVET program after failing the Form 4 exam again, she told me, "*Hapana, aolewe tu!*" ("No, she'll get married, that's it!") This also aligns with O'Malley (2000) findings in her interviews on marriage in Zanzibar conducted with a cross-section of males and females:

> If they think their daughter is becoming interested in sex, or if she has failed her
> school exams and doesn't have any further educational goals, than they will ask
> her if there is someone in whom she is interested. If not, they will try to find
> someone to marry her. (p. 97)

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In this study, although most girls in the youths' peer circles were not leaving Form 2 to marry, a dozen youth gave examples of acquaintances who were exceptions. These acquaintances left school to marry for three main reasons: early pregnancy, their own desire to marry, or family pressure. Most of these young women had gotten pregnant, or "were caught," and their parents subsequently forced them to marry the boys/men responsible for the pregnancy. This is in large part because a child born to unwed parents does not have the same paternal inheritance rights as a child married to wed parents (RGZ, 2005; RGZ, 2011).

Up until 2011, the legal age of marriage was based solely on Islamic principles and not state law—a girl must reach puberty before she is eligible for marriage. To consummate the marriage, she had to be physically mature enough to engage in intercourse without bodily harm (Decker, 2014a). As girls mature at different rates, puberty has never been assigned an official age in Zanzibar. While the colonial administration attempted to estate a Penal Degree in 1934 to outlaw marriage before a girl reached 13, this never became widely enforced and practiced (Decker, 2014a). In recent years, the issue of child marriage has resurfaced. The Children's Act of 2011, which was largely drafted and funded by an iNGO, defines a child as under 18, and prohibits forced marriage but leaves the rest in the hands of the Islamic court as setting an age in the Act was contested among many religious leaders (RGZ, 2011; UNICEF, 2011).

Complicating matters, the Zanzibar Education Act of 1982 does not allow married females to be enrolled in school, but unwed mothers are allowed to rematriculate after their first child (MoEVT representative, interview, April 5, 2017; RGZ, 1982; RGZ, 2005). According to Zanzibar law, or *The Spinsters and Single Parent Protection Act of*

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*2005*, women are allowed to reenroll in school after giving birth if the girl has served the six-month community service determined by an education authority and it is their first child. The period of her school suspension is determined by the education authority, but is not to exceed two years (RGZ, 2005). If the young woman has "apparent unreformed behaviour" (Section 4.4), the education authority has the power to withhold her reinstatement. There are no definitions of what this "behaviour" is, but it implies further premarital sexual activity. The "education authority" is assumed to be the school administration, but often involves the Registrar's Office at MoEVT, which oversees all reported cases and may get involved in sentencing the man responsible for the pregnancy.

Men that are over 18 face a jail sentence, and schoolboys under 18, like pregnant schoolgirls, must serve a community service sentence. Schoolgirls who were raped or coerced are not subject to sentences and are allowed to re-enroll after three months. Although this 2005 act grants full decision-making authority to education officials and punishes both boys and girls by making them serve community service sentences, it could be argued that at least pregnant girls are still allowed back in school. This is not the case in the mainland, where girls by presidential order in July 2017 were barred from returning to formal schooling on account of their "immoral behavior" (Bongo Stars, 2017). In reality, however, many young Zanzibari women do not return to school after having a baby either because their family discourages them to do so, or because they themselves do not want that stigma at school (MoEVT representative, interview, August, 23, 2016; MoEVT representative, interview, April, 15, 2017). Only a few of the youth described friends and family members who continued with their schooling after marriage. Assumedly these youth did not report their status to the school authorities.

Beyond early pregnancy, a second reason youth said that girls married before finishing compulsory basic education was that the girls themselves aspired to be married. They gave several scenarios. According to one of the Baobab girls, a classmate refused to return to school after missing more than a month. Her father died right before the holy month of Ramadhan, and the girl's family decided she should stay home to mourn as well as to fast. By the time the family deemed here ready to return to school, she feared she was too far behind and she would be physically punished for being truant, or a *mtoro*. "*Akasema mie siku za utoro zishakuwa nyingi naogopa kupigwa*," ("She said, 'I was truant for so many days that I am afraid of being beaten.'") Instead of being supported emotionally and academically after the death of her parent, the girl was afraid she would be physically punished and therefore refused to go back to school. She then decided to get married as she was idle at home, and this was the "respectable," *cha heshima*, thing to do. Therefore, while the young woman made the decision to marry, she was pushed into this in large part by the circumstances of her family and lack of school supports.

According to the youth, some girls initiated their own marriages after falling in love. They ultimately chose marriage over schooling even though many of their parents disapproved of their early marriages. While only a few youth had specific examples to draw from, the Mavinje and Minazi youth performed this scenario in their theater script. In their vignette, the parent characters disapproved of their daughter's decision because they wanted her to pursue her studies first. Ironically, their scenes mirrored a few of our (the facilitators') experiences with our siblings—our parents trying to dissuade them from marrying young and to finish college first. As we discussed, many of these reasons for leaving school, including pregnancy, are not unique to Zanzibar or the Global South.

The third reason youth gave for why a girl may marry before completing Form 2 was familial pressure. While all the girls and boys explained that forced marriages were a practice of the past, they directly or indirectly knew of a few such marriages among their distant social networks. This corroborated with the longitudinal data. While there were a few communities and schools with a handful of youth who left school to marry, most schools had no, or only one, such case. With the exception of forcing pregnant schoolgirls and boys to marry, the youth generally agreed that this practice from their parent's generation had faded and that girls had more individual and collective agency to decide their visions of their *maisha mazuri.*[26]

In summary, according to the youth in this study, the main reasons that girls leave school to marry before reaching Form 2 are pregnancy, familial pressure, and a young woman's own desire to marry. However, most young women in the youths' families and communities married after they were pushed out of school and were at home without formal activities or work. In these circumstances their families pressed them to marry out of concern for protecting their *heshima.* While boys also tended to marry after being pushed out or becoming a *mhitimu*, the circumstances were different.

**"Boys don't have the same pressure to marry when they drop out of school."**

While Abrahman and I only saw a handful of boys labeled as married in the longitudinal data of 1,145 youth, we still asked the male youth about early marriage. Nearly all concluded that boys only leave school to marry when they have gotten a

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[26] However, the youth did explain that by Form 4 many girls decided not to continue onto Form 5 or retake the exams if they failed so they could get married. As by Form 5 girls are roughly 19 to 21 years of age, there is increasing pressure to marry. However, there is no prohibition of a married Form 4 certificate holder with the requisite economic resources from going onto higher education either immediately or with some delay. There were dozens of sisters among the Minazi and Mavinje youth and facilitators who had gotten married after Form 4 and continued on with their tertiary education.

classmate pregnant. When asked why, one young woman from Minazi summarized: "*Mzazi wa mwanamke hawezi akakwambia kama unasoma 'mie nitakuozesha mwanangu…'*" ("A girl's parent won't tell you if you are a [male] student that 'I will allow my child to marry you.'") In other words, girls' parents under ordinary circumstances do not want their child to marry someone who is still a student and cannot provide for their daughter.

According to the youth, when boys fail the Form 2 or Form 4 exams, they do not have the same pressure as young women to get married or to protect their *heshima*. As such, boys' aspirations (as the narratives in Chapter Five will reveal) largely focused on work after they left school. In contrast, girls' visions of their *maisha mazuri* tended to shift to successful marriages and having children after being pushed out. As one young woman from Baobab described it, if a boy fails the Form 2 exam he can continue on with work. When a girl fails, she is pressured to marry. In the unfortunate circumstance a pushout or dropout is left by her husband, she is stranded both without work and without a provider. As one of the young women from Baobab School explained:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Wanawake ndio wanakuwa wanapata hasara sana kuliko wanaume. Mwanamme mfano kashaacha skuli anaweza kujiendeleza kama ndio hiyo kuchimba mchanga, kuchimba mawe, kwenda kama bahari humo kufanya kazi, uvuvi…Wakishaacha skuli waolewe. Kuna pale mmoja jirani* | Women indeed are the ones that lose out more than men. A man for example if he has left school he can further himself like by digging sand, digging rocks, going to the ocean to fish…When they [women] leave school, they marry. There is one of my neighbors that left school in |

*yangu mie yeye aliacha skuli tangu darasa la tano sijui. Ndio naenda namwambia 'twende zetu skuli' hataki. Ndio juzi juzi nae akaolewa yuko kwake…Washaolewa wakisha kaa siku moja siku mbili anaachwa. Sasa mwanamme ana kazi yake ya uvuvi mwanamke huku hana kazi.*

Standard 5 or something like that. I went to tell her, 'let's go to school,' but she didn't want to. Just recently she got married and she is in her own house now…Once they get married, then after one or two days [a short time] she was left [divorced]. Now the man has his work of fishing, but the girl has no work.

This scenario articulated in this young woman's interview shows the linkage between school, work, marriage, and the *maisha mazuri*. Becoming a *mtoro* did not inhibit the man in Baobab from working nor in finding another wife (as the girl later explained). However, the female *mtoro* in the story lost out on the opportunity to become a *mhitimu* and the ability to be self-reliant. Therefore while access to becoming a *mhitimu* may be at parity for boys and girls, the repercussion of becoming a *mtoro* still varies between the two genders. As the youth described, a male *mtoro* can still achieve his vision of the *maisha mazuri* even if he leaves school, but for a female *mtoro* it largely depends on the circumstances of her family and/or the family she marries into. This will be discussed further in the following chapter through the narratives of five Baobab youth who were pushed out of school after failing the Form 2 exam.

## Conclusion

The ethos of education in Zanzibar is deeply rooted in religious and cultural scripts that date back before the eighteenth century under Omani rule. The importance of

education, although heavily restricted by race, ethnicity, class, and gender, was also evident in the colonial era with the dominant inter/national social script that education is a panacea and critical to the economic growth of Zanzibar. Prior to 1963, education was largely restricted to elite urban Zanzibaris of Arab descent under both the Sultanate and the British Protectorate. While there were more men participating in informal and formal learning, Zanzibar does have a long history of women's education. In 1991 compulsory basic education was introduced and schooling started to reach youth beyond the urban areas and elite circles. As the students' interviews revealed, there has been a remarkable shift in access to education between the current generation of youth in this study and their parents' generation, especially among the rural Baobab youth. Furthermore, social and cultural practices that once inhibited young women from becoming *wahitimu*, namely early marriage, have also shifted in the current generation of students. It is no longer common for girls to be pulled out of school to marry, as was the case among their mothers' generation. Early marriage, though it still takes place, largely occurs when students become pregnant.

While women's participation over time has surpassed men's in ordinary secondary level schooling, and exam performance has reached parity, inequities in who become a *mhitimu* and a *mtoro* persist. Although secondary schooling is free and compulsory through Form 4, students from families with economic resources and who study at urban schools continue to outperform students from rural and *ng'ambo* communities. Likewise the notable proportion of youth (anywhere from 30 to 45 percent in the past decade) that leave school before completing compulsory basic education and who become labeled as *watoro* in the education data, tend to come from rural schools and

families from challenging social and economic circumstances. These inequities in

becoming a *mhitimu* and *mtoro*, as identified through the longitudinal data and youth

theater scripts and narratives, will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters.

**Chapter Five:  Becoming a *Mtoro:* Narratives of Dropouts, Pushouts, and Pullouts**

In the previous chapter, I looked at how becoming a *mhitimu* has changed over time, primarily using longitudinal, quantitative data. In this chapter I look at the qualitative sample population of 41 youth to scrutinize who is leaving and why they are leaving. I also rethink the term *watoro* used to describe students who are not promoted onto Form 3 each year because they failed the exam, left school for employment, had a prolonged illness, got married, or whose status was unknown. I argue that the lack of detail in the national data about why youth leave school shrouds the obstacles that youth have encountered and obscures the inequities between schools and communities. In order to keep youth in school, it is crucial to understand why they are out-of-school.

The main intent of this chapter, then, is to demarcate the reasons why youth leave and to reframe their leaving as either being pushed, pulled, or dropping out of school. I also look at how being pushed out of school influences a young persons' aspirations for their futures and their *maisha mazuri*. I start by illustrating how eight youth fall into different groupings of dropout, pushout, and pullout based on the narratives they told in their journals and interviews and the details infused by their families and peers. I also draw on the *Maisha Badaaye* and *Real Life in Zanzibar* theater scripts and workshop discussions. After sharing their individual stories, I look at how notions of girlhood and boyhood inform the different vignettes and their experiences of becoming a *mtoro*.

**Distinctions and Intersectionalities between Dropout, Pushout, and Pullout**

Eight youth in this study left school at some point in their schooling. Most of the pushouts (Jokha, Halima, Pili, Khamis, and Habib) were from the rural Baobab School because the Minazi and Mavinje youth had already passed the hurdle of the Form 2

examination at the time of this research. The pullouts (Samir, Musa, and Layla) came from *ng'ambo* neighborhoods and attended Minazi School. Some of these youth were clearly labeled as *watoro* by their schools, and others joined the group of out-of-school youth because they failed their exams or never made it to the exam. In my categorization, however, none of the eight young men and women is solely labeled as a dropout.

Among the females, Jokha, Halima, and Pili are located solely in the pushout category because they failed the Form 2 exam in 2016 and were not allowed to continue at Baobab School (see Figure 6). Layla is labeled as a pullout as her guardians withdrew her from school after she got pregnant. Khamis is located in the categories of dropout and pushout, as he initially left school after Standard 7 in 2013 and then re-enrolled. He was later pushed out after he failed the Form 2 exam. Habib is listed between pushout, pullout, and dropout as he was pressured by his peers to get a job and stopped showing up for school a few months prior to the PTA workshops in August 2016. Despite missing months of classes, he sat for the exam in November 2016 and failed, thus becoming a pushout. Musa falls between the pushout and pullout fields because he was in part pushed out by his school for not paying fees, and in part pulled out by his family who did not try and find money for his needs. Samir was still enrolled in school at the time this dissertation was completed, but he had missed long bouts because of illness. He was in part being pushed out for too many absences and being pulled out by his inability to go to school.
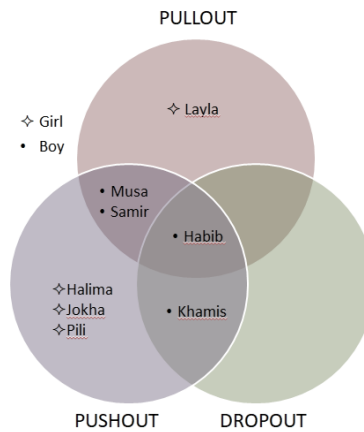
*Figure 6.* Dropout/Pushout/Pullout

These intersectionalities do not tell the whole story, however. In Table 4 below I
give the youths' reasons for leaving school and their education pathways as of March
2018, when this research was finalized. This is important because it shows the varied
reasons youth leave school and how they have tried to actively pursue other education
pathways after leaving formal school.

Table 4

*Reasons youth left school and current education pathways*

| Student | Reason for leaving | Education pathways (March 2018) |
|---|---|---|
| *Girls* | | |
| **Jokha-Baobab** | failed Form 2 exam | informally learning tailoring |
| **Halima-Baobab** | failed Form 2 exam | attending religious classes (out-of-school) |
| **Pili-Baobab** | failed Form 2 exam | enrolled in private secondary school (in-school) |
| **Layla-Minazi** | pregnancy/family pressure | unknown |
| *Boys* | | |
| **Khamis-Baobab** | 1$^{st}$ learning difficulties 2$^{nd}$ failed Form 2 exam | informally learning mechanics |
| **Musa-Minazi** | lack of funds | finished Form 4, not promoted to Form 5 |
| **Samir-Minazi** | pending, prolonged illness | unknown |
| **Habib-Baobab** | 1$^{st}$ lack of interest 2$^{nd}$ failed Form 2 exam | idle for nearly 6 months, later enrolled in formal TVET program |

Only Habib and Pili's families had resources to enroll them in a TVET program or

private school after being pushed out of Form 2. Khamis and Jokha moved into informal

learning opportunities. Khamis started learning mechanics through an informal apprenticeship, and Jokha joined a community training program for sewing. While they are not on a pathway to becoming *wahitimu*, and their experiences will never be captured in school or MoEVT data, they are learning trades that will help them earn income. Halima remained out-of-school as she was not able to join a formal or informal learning opportunity for lack of funds and family resources. Musa managed to re-matriculate into secondary school after a hiatus in 2013, but his score on the Form 4 exam did not allow him to continue on with Form 5. Samir never made it back into school by the end of this study. Layla's trajectory is unknown. After she was pulled out of school in 2016, she lost contact with her peers and the research team. Their stories of being pushed, pulled, or dropping out are told below.

**Pushed Out: Jokha, Khamis, Halima, and Pili's Narratives**

       **Jokha (Baobab School, age 17).** When Jokha was still in school, she used to rush home each day to cook for her infant niece. Jokha's mother died before she could remember, and she and her father took turns caring for the little girl. In her notebook she started out by telling "dear mama" stories about the need to become a *mhitimu* so she could be a teacher, and the challenges she was having with paying her school expenses.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mama, mimi ni mwanao ninahitaji* | Mama, I am your child and I need to be |
| *kuwa mwalimu ninaomba ushauri* | a teacher, I beg for any advice that you |
| *wako utaonitolea kwamba nikifaulu* | will give me so that if I pass this exam |
| *mtihani huu nitakuwa ni mwalimu.* | [Form 2] I will become a teacher. |

It is unclear who Jokha's mama character referred to—whether a deceased parent, one of us facilitators, or some hypothetical character she modeled from other students' stories.

Jokha was one of three young women who did not speak the first week of the PTA workshop. Her silence was to the dismay of her bolder classmates, who tried to prod her into sharing her perspectives. On the rare moments in the workshop when she spoke up, she placed her hand in front of her mouth as if it would protect her from people hearing her whispers. However, in her notebook, Jokha boldly articulated her thoughts about the various expectations and negotiations she encountered in her community and family, as well as being judged by her parents' lack of education. Although her mother was dead, it was known among her neighbors that her mother had not gone to school. Her father also never attended formal school and was largely illiterate, which Jokha said her peers reminded her of regularly:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Watu wa kijiji wananidharau* | People in my village disrespect me |
| *kutokana na hali yangu kwa sababu* | because I am so quiet, they say you |
| *mkimya wananiambia kuwa wewe* | won't pass, but if you do we promise to |
| *hutopasi, ukipasi tunakuahidi* | buy you a uniform, bag, notebooks, etc. |
| *tunakununulia fomu, begi, makuti,* | Others tell me that if I fail they will |
| *mabuku, n.k. Watu wengine* | marry me off, and if I pass they will |
| *wananiambia kuwa nikifeli* | take care of everything I need for |
| *wataniozesha kama nikipasi* | school, and they'll pay for all school- |
| *watanitunza vitu vyote vinavyo* | related costs. Others say, 'your mother |
| *hitajika shuleni na pia watanitolea* | never went to school and even if you |
| *pesa za masomo yangu.Wengine* | pass, you will never continue on, you |
| *wananiambia kuwa wewe mama yako* | will marry whether you like it or not. |
| *hakusoma wewe hata ukipasi* | We have already told you, that it [your |

| *huendelei na masomo yako utaolewa* | marriage] is an order and not a request. |
| *utake usitake tushakuambia amri sio* | If he [a husband] appears, he will be |
| *ombi akitokea tunampokea mwenye* | received as a good fortune. And you, |
| *kheri na wewe kama mama yako* | like your mother, who didn't choose a |
| *hakuchagua mzuri au mbaya kaja* | good or bad [husband], he came on his |
| *mwenye kheri na yeye.* | own good fortune.' |

Jokha's aspirations before the exam were to become a *mhitimu* and teacher, marry, have children, and live peacefully with her neighbors. Two months after finding out she failed the exam (April 2017) and had to leave school, she wrote in her journal, "*Matumaini yangu yamebadilika kwa sababu sivyo nilivokuwa nataka...Sasa matumaini yangu ninayotaka ni kuwa muhasibu ili nikifika huko mbele,*" ("My aspirations have changed in ways that I did not want...now my aspirations are to be an accountant so that I can go further.") As her own aspirations for schooling became ambiguous, she ended her last journal entry by transferring her desire to become a *mhitimu* onto her future children.

| *...Na baadae nitahitaji kuwa mama* | ...And later, I need to be a homemaker, |
| *wa nyumba(ni) niishi vizuri na* | living peacefully with my children and |
| *watoto wangu na jirani zangu* | my neighbors and also I will need to |
| *baadae na vile vile nitajitahidi* | educate my children so they can reach |
| *kuwasomesha watoto wangu ili* | the level [of education] they desire and |
| *wafike kiwango wanachotaka ili* | so that they can help their siblings later. |
| *wawasaidie wenzao baadae.* | |

A number of the other young women, when writing about the uncertainty of their futures, also transferred their schooling aspirations onto their children and their generation as Jokha's own mother likely had done with her.

After being pushed out of school, Jokha still hoped she could enroll in a private school, but there was doubt in her voice each time she said, "*inshallah baba atapata pesa kunipeleke skuli*," ("God willing, my father will get the money to enroll me in school [meaning private school].") As of November 2017, Jokha was taking non-formal sewing classes with a community project. She had only managed to pay for 2 months of training (5,000 TZS a month or equivalent to $2.30 USD) and was using a neighbor's machine to practice on. Her new aspiration, she explained, was to be a tailor. She had let go of her aspiration of going back to secondary school.

It is important to note that Jokha did not choose the path of dropping out: she studied four hours a day while in school and tried her best to attend free tuition classes each day. Although she first saw being pushed out as a temporary situation, a year after failing the exam Jokha was still out of school and unlikely to return to the formal track. She had, however, with the support of her father, found another educational pathway exhibiting collective agency in lieu of being able to follow her initial aspiration. Gottfredson (2002) and other developmental psychologists call this process compromise and circumscription of aspirations. However, Gottfredson assumed this process is largely based on student preference, confidence, and other non-cognitive factors, whereas in Zanzibar this process is largely dictated by the examination and schooling system as Jokha's narrative demonstrates.

**Khamis (Baobab School, age 17).** While Khamis was undecided about his ideal profession at the beginning of the PTA workshop in August 2016, he listed "journalist, doctor, pilot, fisherman, and carpenter" as potential work aspirations. Khamis wrote about his many setbacks in his schooling, namely long bouts of illnesses where he missed months of school. On the first day of the workshop, when all youth were sitting down for individual journal writing we watched Khamis fidgeting in his seat. Biting on his pen, kicking his feet against the side of the desk, Abrahman went to see how Khamis's writing was coming along. Quickly ushering Bello and me outside, Abrahman explained, "he has a lot of letters on the page, but there isn't even a legible sentence…There are some words he has written that shouldn't be there," Abrahman blushed as he recounted what Khamis had tried to write. We speculated that Khamis, as well as another student who ended up passing the exam, had undiagnosed learning disabilities that prevented them from being able to write even a sentence in Kiswahili. There was no learning specialist in the district for us to consult, so we were unable to name why these two young men could not read or write. Consequently, Abrahman or Bello notated their stories in a private space so they could contribute their ideas and stories to the collective script.

In a few heartbreaking accounts, Khamis described having dropped out in Standard 7 for two months because "*akili yangu siyo nzuri*" ("my brain doesn't work well"). His family members encouraged him to matriculate into secondary school, even though he failed the Standard 7 exam. As Murphy, Rawle, and Ruddle (2106) found in their Zanzibar-wide analyses, students with learning disabilities face higher rates of school exclusion and dropout. Likewise, as Abraham and I found in trying to track the students in our longitudinal study, these students are hard to confirm in the statistics as

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they are often labeled *watoro* before being identified as a student with a disability. Although Khamis never received academic support for his learning difficulties, he nonetheless persevered through Form 2. On several occasions we caught Khamis's male classmates whispering sentences from the *Maisha Badaaye* script into his ear. They knew he and his friend had trouble reading and they were helping them memorize their lines. At the same time Khamis had support from his male classmates, he wrote about and performed being bullied by out-of-school youth. In a scene presented below, his neighbor and other males in the *maskani* questioned his masculinity and academic abilities. *Maskani* literally means "abode or dwelling," but in slang it also refers to "a hangout for hoodlums" (Baba Malaika, 1999, p. 97). Khamis's family, on the other hand, supported his conviction to stay in school and become a *mhitimu*.

While Khamis's mother had never been to school, his father attended a few years of secondary school. One of his sisters had finished Form 4 but the others were pushed out of school after failing the Form 2 exam. Despite Khamis's father having completed some secondary schooling, he worked as a fisherman like the other youths' fathers who had not attended school. This brings into question whether education actually helps promote better employment options in largely informal economies like the ones surrounding Baobab School. Khamis described his family's poverty in nearly every journal entry. He recounted, "*Siku ambazo wazee wangu hawana pesa naenda shamba kuchuma nazi na kwenda kuziuza ili tupate chakula*," ("On the days that my parents don't have money I go to the bush to pick/forage coconuts and then I sell them to get food.") After visiting their house, Bello declared, "they are just surviving, struggling to put food on the table."

In the months after it was announced he had failed the Form 2 exam, Khamis's aspirations began to change. Instead of being a doctor, carpenter, fisherperson, or teacher, he now hoped to be a businessman, selling an assortment of goods like fruit and cars. He narrated:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Kutokana na matokeo niliyoyapata* | Based on my exam results, I feel it |
| *nimehisi itakuwa vizuri ikiwa nitafanya* | would be a good idea for me to do |
| *biashara kwa sababu biashara haitaki* | business, because business doesn't |
| *elimu kubwa kama elimu inayohitajika* | require much education like that needed |
| *kwa daktari na mwalimu* | to be a doctor or teacher. |

In December 2017, the last time we had contact with Khamis before this dissertation was completed, he was learning mechanics through an informal apprenticeship at a local garage. He planned to stay at the garage for two years. While he was not being remunerated for helping repair cars or motorbikes, he was learning the trade for free. He was still foraging fruits, helping his mother farm, and fishing to provide sustenance and some money for his family. His latest aspiration was to open his own garage, and given all the obstacles he had surmounted along the way, Abrahman, Bello, and I were hopeful that Khamis would be a business owner next time we met. Khamis's aspirations had changed, but he seemed to have settled into his new pathway.

**Halima (Baobab School, age 17).** Halima was even quieter than Jokha. When we (the facilitators) asked her questions, she refused to reply. Her silence was so absolute we wondered at first if she was non-verbal or had a speech impairment. However, her peers assured us that she could speak when she chose to. It was hard to picture Halima raising her hand in class or volunteering to share her opinion. The first time we heard her speak

to her peers a few days into the PTA workshop she looked around first to see if anyone was watching. We (the facilitators) had to strategize after each session how to get her to tell her story. Over the two weeks we started to get little glimpses of Halima's life through her journal and the vignettes she performed on stage. Like Jokha and Khamis, Halima's mother had not gone to school, but her father finished primary school and she had a sister who had finished Form 4. Halima's father made money fishing and carrying goods for others. Her mother was a homemaker. She had a number of siblings that contributed money to the household through activities like sewing hats. Several of her siblings had been pushed out of school after failing the Form 2 exam, and one had died when she was in primary school. Losing a sibling was fairly common among the Baobab youth, and Khamis, among others, mentioned these deaths in passing comments in their interviews, but never wrote about their deceased siblings in their journals.

On our drive home from Baobab School each evening, we (the facilitators) debated how girls like Halima and Jokha made it through Form 2 when they were reluctant to speak in front of their peers. "How do they master English if they never practice speaking?" I asked. "This is part of the problem," Bello who had been a former English teacher suggested, "it will be hard for them to master enough English to pass their exams." While their teachers may have let them sit quietly in class without uttering a word, we expected them to get up on stage to perform their parts of *Maisha Badaaye* alongside their peers. As such, we spent considerable time coaching them to speak. On the day of the final performance, Halima and Jokha got up on stage and performed their scenes in front of their classmates. Not only did they master their lines, but they embodied their characters as they fought with their siblings over chores and declared

their aspirations and challenges in front of their classmates. Halima's last line in the play was, "*Mimi nataka wengine wajue tunasoma Kiarabu, Kingereza na Kiswahili*," ("I want others to know that we study Arabic, English and Kiswahili.") She held her head high as she walked of the stage and I could not help but watch her beam as the audience sprang to their feet during the final ovation. Three months later, however, Halima failed the exam.

In November 2017, when Abrahman, Bello, and Tabshir met with Halima her aspiration of being a teacher lingered. She was studying religion every day with a local women's *darsa*, or Qur'annic study group. She held onto the hope that her father would find money to enroll her in some form of schooling, either private or non-formal, even though it seemed increasingly likely she would remain in the pushout profile. Despite being hopeful, she had become withdrawn again. "*Amerudi vile vile*," ("She returned to as she was,") Tabshir recounted after her last visit. The glimmer of individual agency Halima had performed was again hidden in her long bouts of silence as she met up with her peers who were back in school. Her aspiration was fading into the resignation that she would soon have to think about marriage if she did not return to school.

**Pili (Baobab School, age 16).** Confident and articulate, Pili played a variety of characters in the performance of *Maisha Badaaye*. She wrote cohesive narratives in her journal and led her classmates onto stage for the last scene of the play. Therefore, I was shocked that her name was missing from the list of students who passed the Form 2 exams on the MoEVT website. After viewing their results in Minnesota, I immediately called Abrahman. He had the same reaction, "I can't believe Pili didn't pass." Her journal entry captured her disappointment a few months later, "*Sijasahau machungu yangu,*" ("I

haven't forgotten the bitterness I felt,") she recalled of that period of limbo after the exam results were released and when her aspirations came to an abrupt halt.

Pili's family background was similar to that of Jokha and Halima's. Her mother never went to school, her father only completed up to Standard 6, and she had siblings who had failed the Form 2 exam. However, Pili was visibly different from Jokha and Halima in the classroom. She raised her hand, presented her ideas, and contributed to the collective theater script. Although she too described barely having enough food at home on most days and had lost a sibling during her schooling, she also wrote that school was important to her because of these struggles and that her family worked together to overcome their obstacles. She wanted to pass the exams as much for herself as for her family. "*Najitahidi zaidi…mtihani wangu wa Form 2 ili niwe na kufanikiwa huu …na nitakuwa kuwafurahisha wazazi,*" ("I am trying hard so that I can succeed on my Form 2 exam…so I can make my parents happy.") Like many of the girls, Pili linked becoming a *mhitimu* to having the capacity to help her younger siblings improve their lives.

Failing the exam was not only devastating to Pili, but it was also difficult for her to tell her parents as they were invested in her schooling. "*Yalipo toka matokeo nilijisikia mnyofu sana na wa kwanza kumuhadithia [ilikuwa] mama,*" ("When the results came out I felt so devastated, but the first person I told was my mother.") Her father described how emotional the experience was for him as well. "*Mimi nlikua baharini lakini baada mwanangu mkubwa kunipigia simu alininyongonyesha kweli, nilisimama tu kama dakika 5 nzima mpaka mwenzangu akaniuliza kwanini upo hivo nikamjibu tu sijisikii vizuri,*" ("I was at the sea [when the results came out] but my oldest child called me and was really

upset. I stopped for five minutes until my child asked me why I was like that and I answered my child that I did not feel well.")

Pili's story of being pushed out, however, has a happy ending. With the help of her parents and her teacher she enrolled in a private secondary school and was just about to enter Form 4 when Abrahman, Bello and Tabshir last visited her in November 2017. While she had to change her aspiration from being a doctor because she did not qualify to study the sciences, and she still struggled to pay the roughly $16.50 USD in fees per year (36,000 TZS) plus the transport and other educational costs, Pili has declared a new aspiration of becoming a journalist. She was hopeful she would pass her Form 4 exam. Her mother, she reiterated, was helping her pursue her dreams even though her mother had never been to school and could neither read nor write.

In conclusion, although Jokha, Halima, Pili, and Khamis were labeled *watoro*, they were pushed out of school by the Form 2 exam. While lack of familial resources prohibited Jokha, Halima, and Khamis from paying for private school or vocational training, Pili's family was able to find ways to cover their educational costs. More than just lack of financial resources, however, it was clear that Jokha, Halima, and Khamis also lacked sufficient academic and social supports at school. Khamis never received help for his learning disability and consequently blamed himself: "My brain doesn't work well." Jokha and Halima lacked the confidence and what cognitive psychologists may label as non-cognitive skills—or attitudes, behaviors, and strategies, critical to their academic success (Roberts, Martin, & Olaru, 2015). Instead of encouraging them to speak, however, teachers allowed Jokha and Halima to sit silently in their classes. And instead of confronting the insults and stigmas thrown at them from other young people in

their community, as performed in their vignettes, Jokha and Halima wrote about the embarrassment that their parents never went to school in their private journal spaces. These narratives point to deficiencies in the educational system, where lack of social, emotional, and academic supports contributed to students being pushed out. This is one of the reasons I argue that the term dropout should be questioned; it assumes the youth themselves were "deficient in a fair system" (Fine, 1991, p. 5). I therefore refer to such youth as pushouts through the rest of the dissertation.

**Pulled Out: Musa, Layla, and Samir's Narratives**

While I use the term pushout to describe youth who were forced to leave school after failing the exam results, I use pullout to describe girls who were withdrawn by their families because they got pregnant, or boys and girls who were not able to matriculate for the subsequent schooling year for lack of funds or illness. This distinction between pullout and pushout is also made by Fine (1991) in her research in US American schools. Although I separate the two, there is notable overlap between being pushed and pulled out. For example, Musa was pushed out of school for inability to pay school fees, but his family also let him down by not exhausting their financial sources to keep him in school. Layla, on the other hand was pulled out of school by her siblings—who served as her guardians—after she got pregnant even though, as cited in Chapter Four, Zanzibari law allows for pregnant and unwed girls to return to school after giving birth. Samir was enrolled the whole school year, but had missed months of classes as he was "sick" as discussed below. He never took the exam and was essentially pushed and pulled out for his absences. Though Musa returned to school, Layla and Samir's fate is unknown. Their narratives follow below.

**Musa (Minazi School, age 21).** Contrary to the stories of the four pushouts above, Musa and Layla did not fail their Form 2 exams. Rather they were in Form 3 when they participated in the PTA workshops. When Musa was first pulled out of school by his parents to fish and "to get food and other basic needs," he was 16 and in Standard 7. He stayed out of school for nearly three years, and eventually left home. As he wrote in his journal, "I decided to abandon home and find another place and live alone." [27] Musa lived in the outskirts of Stone Town, in what is considered *ng'ambo*. Already overage when he was pulled/pushed out (according to the 2006 policy Standard 7 students should be 13 to 14 years old), Musa was encouraged to return to school by a close friend who intensively tutored him to help him catch up in his studies. He was able to enroll in Minazi after a neighbor agreed to help him out with fees. As he described his neighbor:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ananisaidia mawazo, ananisaidia* | She helps me with ideas, she helps me |
| *pesa na matatizo ya skuli* | with money and problems at school. She |
| *anawajibika kwa njia moja ama* | is responsible [for my school] in one |
| *nyingine, hata vile vile mpaka nafika* | way or the other. She is the one who |
| *hapa ni yeye amenisaidia.* | helped me where I am today. |

While pulled out of school by his parents, whom Musa blamed, in part, for his predicament, he explained that the deeper reason for his departure was rooted in his family's poverty. "My parents [are] very poor, it was difficult for me to pay money for school." This begs the question: How much blame can be placed solely on parents when they have to make the choice between paying school fees and food? Rather than

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[27] Note that these quotes are only in English as the Minazi and Mavinje youth wrote their scripts and journal entries in English per the arrangements with their schools.

addressing this structural issue, the MoEVT blames parents, like Musa's father and mother, for their "lack of awareness on the importance of education" (MoEVT, 2006, p. 25). Although the Ministry acknowledges that poverty is a contributor to youth dropping out of school to work, there is little financial support, such as fee waivers or loans, to prevent very poor families from having to prioritize basic household needs over education. For this reason, I situate Musa between pullout and pushout. While his parents officially initiated the withdrawal, lack of financial safety nets in the education system simultaneously pushed him out.

When asked to write about someone in his family that had achieved a *maisha mazuri*, Musa chose his older sister. She was also pulled out of school in Form 3 but because she got pregnant and had to stay at home for seven months after the birth of her child. As explained in Chapter Four, when a girl becomes pregnant, or "gets caught," she can return to school but only with the family's approval. Even though Musa's sister "was chased from home" and had to live on her own, she still managed to finish her secondary schooling, graduate from college, and get a job at a hospital.

Musa did not explain how his sister managed to become a *mhitimu*, or why he could not live with her when he ran into his predicament, but he wrote about his sister with pride. Now "she owns a big house…a big car…a big family with children," he explained, and "she didn't give up." Musa stressed "big" not to exaggerate her material accomplishments, but rather to demonstrate how she inspired him to go back to school regardless of the challenges, stigma, lack of family support, and institutional hurdles she had to overcome. Both she and Musa demonstrated that it is possible to be pulled out of school and to return with the right combination of adult and peer support, collective

agency, and circumstance—which not all students, like Layla below, had access to. Nearly four years older than the expected age-level for his grade, Musa described "being treated like a king" by his family when he passed his Form 2 exams. He aspired to go to college some day and "own his own transport business, *inshallah*"—that is after he passes his Form 4 exam in December of 2017, he said with confidence. Musa did indeed pass his exam. Although he did not qualify to go onto Form 5, he can still fulfill his three-year diploma and start pursuing his *maisha mazuri*.

**Layla (Minazi School, age 19).** Also a Form 3 student from Minazi School, Layla was from a densely populated *ng'ambo* neighborhood situated outside of Stone Town. When she participated in the PTA workshop she was already facing pressure to marry as she recounted in the story she performed in the *Real Life in Zanzibar* script. Although Layla participated actively in the workshop, she struggled to keep up with her peers in English. The stories in her notebook lay largely unfinished each day. She wrote:

I have a dream of being a soldier.

But I have faced so many hard things in my life….

My brother and sister don't understand why I want to be soldier.

This makes me so sad.

After I got my Form 2 exam results they wanted me to marry some man,

but I refused because I am still a young girl. So they told me I am on my own.

That makes me so sad. I still have a dream of being a soldier… [28]

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[28] This final scene in *Real Life in Zanzibar* was revised in collaboration with Layla for the performance. While it originated from one of her journal articles, she worked on revising the grammar with facilitators before presenting to her peers, at her request and per the workshop process.

When we tried to find Layla in March 2017 for a follow-up interview and discussion, we were told by her classmates: "*Amekamatiwa*," ("she was caught,") and that she was somewhere in the mainland. The rumor, they said, was that she was taken advantage of by some older man who promised to buy her things and provide a comfortable life for her. In the end, however, he refused to leave his wife and children when she told him she was pregnant.

As her classmates told me her story, I was reminded of the scene "Temptations" that the Minazi and Mavinje students performed about a young girl who is lured by a sugar daddy's money and promises (see Chapter Six). A stereotypical and cliché story by many accounts, and a storyline reproduced over and over again in school curricula and in NGO interventions on girls' empowerment, I did not initially plan to mention this scene or Layla's story in my analysis for two reasons. The first is that given Zanzibar has a fairly low rate of reported teen/student pregnancies, I wanted to avoid contributing to inter/national scripts that consistently, and frustratingly, overemphasize teen pregnancy as the top reason Zanzibari girls drop out even though the data for Zanzibar today do not support this conclusion as was discussed in Chapter Four. The second reason being that I was not able to capture Layla's own narrative, as she was not in Zanzibar during our second round of interviews and workshops. Instead, I had to rely on her classmates to relay her story. However, leaving Layla's story out of this dissertation, and not retelling the powerful scene she wrote back in August 2016, felt like hiding a gender issue that still affects some young women. While I cannot confirm whether Layla was able to fulfill her aspiration of finishing secondary school and becoming a soldier, what is clear is that the reasons she was pulled out of school were rooted in the same institutional and

sociocultural layers I found with many students in the study—poverty, lack of emotional support from her family, poor foundational support and proficiency in English and Kiswahili, low self-awareness and confidence, and little to no guidance and counseling at school to support emotional and sexual health needs.

From my first encounters with Layla it was apparent that this young woman needed more educational support than just memorizing her lines. Each rehearsal she sat next to me on the school steps and grabbed my arm while she watched a scene. She also looked to us facilitators to reassure her that she would be able to perform in English. While Layla was the one eventually labeled as a dropout and failure, it was schooling and her family that had seemed to have failed Layla. She was pulled out of school by her guardians even when the official policy allowed her to stay, and as her peers described, "*Bado skuli hajarudi na wala hajajifungua*," ("She hasn't returned to school nor has she given birth yet.") This shows that while policies can be put into place to protect pregnant youth and keep them in school, it is ultimately up to families to determine their pathways.

Stories like Musa and Layla's remind us that schooling often fails to live up to the transformational and empowering promises perpetuated in the well-rehearsed education as a panacea script of education. But it is not only girls who are failed by schooling, although this is the emphasis in the inter/national scripts and the assumption of most educational empowerment programs, boys have also been neglected in the inter/national scripts. Below is a story about Samir, a young man from Minazi School.

**Samir (Minazi School, age 17).** There is little for me to recount about Samir. An articulate writer who was active in the PTA workshops in August 2016, we never saw Samir again after our final performance. His close friends shared that he was "sick" (as

will be discussed later in this chapter) and that he had not been to school for months. He was unavailable for an interview in March 2017, and when we tried to follow up with Minazi School's administration to find out if he took the Form 4 exam, they could find no record of Samir. One teacher believed he had transferred. The mobile phone number he had used during the workshop was no longer in service. Therefore, I have positioned Samir between being pushed out and pulled out as his illness pulled him away from his studies and school policies pushed him out for missing too much school. However, Samir represents the *watoro* in our longitudinal dataset that were unknown, who disappeared from school without any firm data or follow-up. In the final narrative we meet Habib, the only young person in the study whom I refer to as a *mtoro*.

**Dropped Out**

The main reasons boys described dropping out in this study was to earn money (what MoEVT calls opportunity costs), and for girls it was a mixture of not seeing schooling as relevant to their lives and deciding on other pathways with their families, one of which may have been marriage. The MoEVT stated in the 2006 Policy a number of school-level factors as well as family and cultural reasons that youth become *watoro*, acknowledging the ambiguity of dropouts:

> A significant number of school age children do not attend school or drop-out of basic education due to various reasons including shortage of places, distance from home to school, poor quality of education, irrelevant curriculum, lack of parents' awareness on the importance of education, early marriages and pregnancy and opportunity costs. (p. 24)

Some of these reasons found in this research overlap with the MoEVT's assertions in their policies, including curriculum and quality of education, but parental awareness and distance from home never came up. This is likely because the youth in this study would not have made it to Form 2 without parental support, and several youth lived with extended family so they did not have to travel long distances. Below is the story of Habib, who dropped out because of peer pressure and the allure of earning money. While his situation was unique among the participants, his story resembled that of the male dropouts in the youths' families and peer circles who they described in their interviews.

**Habib (Baobab School, age 16).** Even though Habib left school a few months before the PTA workshop commenced, he arrived each day in his freshly-pressed school uniform. In his journal he wrote about still being in school, why he wanted to study, and how passing the exam would help him succeed in life. Despite having been already labeled as a dropout in Baobab's school data, Habib wrote each journal entry as if he was still living a schooling experience, drawing mostly on well-rehearsed inter/national scripts about education being a key to his future aspirations. While during the first PTA workshop he was not registered for the Form 2 exam, he wrote:

> *Kuhusu mtihani wangu wa Form 2*          About my Form 2 exam, I am very
> *ninafurahia sana kwa kupasi matokeo*    happy that I passed. My results will help
> *yangu yatanisaidia sana katika*              me a lot in my life/my future. My exam
> *maisha yangu ya baadae matokeo*          results are important.
> *yangu ya mtihani yanaumuhimu.*

None of the facilitators could quite understand why Habib wrote about being in school and passing the exam. We didn't know whether he was writing what he thought

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we wanted him to answer as educators, whether he was copying the ideas from someone else's journal or an example given in the instructions, or whether he was responding the best he could as the only dropout in the workshop. While Habib never wrote the story of his dropping out, or performed it on stage, he told his story one-on-one to Bello.

We (the facilitators) had been under the impression throughout the whole workshop that the reason Habib had left school was because he had gotten married, as "*ameoa*" was the reason given to us by Baobab School. It was hard to believe that this young man, who arrived on a child's bicycle in flip flops each day, had a wife at home. Over the course of the workshop, we became doubtful that Habib was married, and Bello approached the subject during a one-on-one interview. There was an awkward silence as Bello tried to slip in, "*Wewe je huna mke*?" ("You don't have a wife do you?") after a superfluous discussion about all of Habib's siblings as an attempt to warm him up for this question about marriage. Habib responded with a firm, "*Sina*," ("I have none") to the next series of questions as Bello probed why he was recorded as married at his former school. We never got a conclusive reason why he had been labeled "married."

In addition to probing about his fictitious wife, Bello tried respectfully to ask Habib multiple times why he had left school. Each time he responded, "*Sina sababu yoyote*," ("I don't have any reason at all.") He described not showing up for school for months, and eventually being labeled as a *mtoro*. Finally, though, when asked if there was anyone in his life that influenced his decision, he briefly mentioned other youth in the *maskani* and *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) who had pressured him to drop out of school to hang out with them and start earning money. While this narrative of peer pressure in part suggests he was pushed or pulled out, Habib described deciding on his own volition

to leave. It was ironic that the only youth in the group who had a parent as a teacher, and who impressed upon him a strong education as a panacea social script, *nuru ya elimu* ("education is light"), was also the student that had dropped out. As Bello described after weeks of working closely with Habib, "He is an easy impressionable young man, and I am starting to get a picture of how the guys that hang out by his house convinced him to leave." As his father described, Habib missed two months of school and was expelled for too many absences to the family's dismay.

After participating in the PTA workshop, Habib expressed regret at having left school as his former classmates raced from our sessions to classes. He ended up registering for the exam, but ultimately failed. As such, in Figure 6 above, I place him between dropout, pushout, and pullout. Surprisingly, Habib wrote in his journal in the post-exam workshop about feeling good about his results and wanting to be a doctor—an aspiration that is not attainable for a Form 2 pushout. Meanwhile his family had already enrolled him in a three-year vocational training program for electricians. While Habib initially chose to drop out—which his parents reiterated was because of negative peer pressure—he had the opportunity to later enroll in a different education pathway in large part because of his family's access to social networks and economic resources and their ability to negotiate the pathway prescribed to Form 2 leavers in the policy. Unlike Habib, Layla, who also succumbed to what her peers described as negative peer pressure, did not have an outcome that was as clear and hopeful. This difference shows that being pulled and pushed out of school can be highly gendered, as is explored in the section below.

**Analyzing Boyhood**

Among the larger sample of youth (1,145) in four rural districts who were tracked from 2008 to 2017, a greater proportion of males (26.8 percent) left before entering secondary school than females (19.9 percent) (see Appendix D for a full analysis). In addition to gender, the other factors that influenced the likelihood that youth would leave school before reaching Form 2 were the district they came from (geographic locale) and parents' literacy levels. Those who were most likely to drop out were male youth from economically marginalized districts in Zanzibar (specifically those in Pemba) and youth whose parents had low literacy levels. Of the 283 youth who dropped out before Form 1, the vast majority of males were classified as *mtoro* (99.3 percent), with no reason for their departure, compared to three-quarters (73.8 percent) of girls. The remaining 26.2 percent of girls left without giving a reason. As described in Chapter Four, by the time youth reached Form 2 and 3, the enrollment gap between males to females widened even further (see Figure 4).

Although schools do not systematically document the official reasons why youth leave school, the MoEVT's 2006 Policy suggests that "an increased number of boys dropout at basic education level due to lack of motivation to learn and peer pressure" (p. 54). According to the male theater scripts and discussions with the young men, pressure to leave school to make money for their families and failing the exam were the primary reasons they left school before completing compulsory basic education. It is hard to discern what comes first, youths' assumed lack of motivation (youth variable) or a curriculum that is irrelevant to youths' anticipated or current work (school variable). The boys' theater scripts and narratives imply the latter. When school is irrelevant to the work

they plan to do, such as be a fisherman or open a small fruit business, they lose motivation and leave school to engage fully in the world of work. While peer pressure plays into leaving school early to work, the underlying reason is still economic.

When asked to tell a story about a time they were treated differently as a male or female student, Khamis described pressure to earn money, which was intertwined in a larger masculinities narrative about the importance of males providing for their families economically:

*Mtaani kwetu kuna jirani yangu mmoja wa kike hanipendi, mara nyingi ananishawishi kuwa sina haja ya kwenda skuli, nisiende skuli, nisikae nyumbani mara kwa mara kwa kuwa mimi ni mwanamme anaekaa nyumbani ni mwanamke, ananicheka muda ambao nafagia au naosha vyombo, ananambia ni kazi za dada zangu na ndugu zangu wa kike. Mimi mwanamme sifai kufanya kazi hizo, ananishawishi nikavue, niende pwani ntapata pesa. Pia kuna rafiki zangu wananiambia niwafuate wao katika mambo ya uhuni eti mimi mwanamme nisikae nyumbani.*

In my neighborhood there is this female neighbor that doesn't like me. She often tells me that there is no reason for me to be to go to school, that I shouldn't go to school, and I shouldn't stay at home [studying] all the time because I am a man and only a woman stays at home. She laughs at me whenever I am sweeping, or when I am washing dishes, and she tells me this work is for my sisters and my female relatives. I am a man and I am not suited for this kind of work. She urges me to go fish, to go to the beach and earn money. I also have friends that tell me I should join them in their hooligan activities, that I am a man

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*Wanavuta bangi na kuiba nazi za*                    and shouldn't stay at home. They smoke

*watu.*                                              marijuana and steal other people's

                                                     coconuts.

Upon sharing this story with the other Baobab boys in the workshop, each had a similar story of females and males in their families and communities who reinforced the idea that secondary schooling was not masculine. They were told in different ways, by men and women alike, that male youth their age (16 to 17) should be out making money instead of delaying their full entry into the workforce and spending time at home studying and taking on household chores reserved for girls. The boys decided to turn Khamis's story into a collective vignette called, *Elimu na Uvuvi*, ("Education and Fishing"). In this vignette they showed the intense pressure their community and family members placed on them to make money and how difficult it was to stay focused on their aspiration of schooling. As they performed this vignette for their classmates, the audience giggled as the neighbor character chastised Khamis's character for going to school and helping wash dishes instead of going to the beach to fish. The audience had seen this scene enacted before in real life. These same gendered social scripts that boys should be out making money starting at the age of puberty; that boys should not be helping with household chores; and that male spaces, specifically *maskani* (see extended description in Chapter Six), lure men away from school were reiterated in different vignettes. These social scripts are discussed below.

**"Boys should go out and make money."**

The pressure for male students to make money, documented in the recent *Zanzibar Education Situation Analysis* (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016), is one of the

main reasons boys drop out of school. The majority of boys from across the three school sites explained in their journals and interviews that as soon as boys reach the ages of 10 to 12, they no longer receive pocket money from their caregivers for buying food and school needs. Instead, they are expected to get informal jobs, such as selling coconuts or fruit, crushing stones, or assisting with family businesses. In contrast, girls continue to receive money from their families throughout their schooling and often until they have their own work or get married. This was visible in their demographic data as all but one of the Baobab boys were already engaged in their own income generating activities compared to only a third of the girls. A number of the Ministry and other education experts reiterated this sociocultural practice in their interviews, and they described how these small jobs habituate boys to working at a young age. They noted that as boys increasingly shift their time from studying to earning, they become less interested in schooling and more absorbed into their income-generating activities.

While none of the participating students directly questioned the relevance of their education in their journals or performances—which may have been out of respect or fear of their teachers or the facilitators—their antagonistic *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) characters did this for them in their theater scripts. These out-of-school peer characters helped lay out frontstage the unresolved tension of whether higher education actually leads to higher income and economic remuneration, a principal motivation for these boys. As seen throughout the male's vignettes, their peers sneered when the students were trying to study: "*Hupati kazi*," "*Hupati ajira, hutapata lolote*," and "*hapa, hapana ajira*," ("You won't get work," "You won't get employment, you won't get anything," and "Here, there is no employment.") The *rafiki wabaya* used the term "*ajira*," which

typically refers to formal employment, suggesting that the students' hopes for later formal employment were farfetched aspirations. As Adely (2012) noted in her study of Jordanian secondary school students, "In some sense, what males face most prominently is a disconnect between the image of what a man should be and the realities that limit what is possible" (p. 139). This is further complicated by boys who come from families living in poverty, with limited economic resources and social networks, and who are struggling academically (DeFrancisco, 2000; Jeffrey et al. 2008; Mains, 2011; Weiss, 2009).

It is assumed in the inter/national scripts that education is a means to formal employment. However, nearly all the students' guardians worked in the informal economy, and the reality is that most of these youth will eventually be absorbed into the informal sector and self-employment.[29] The *rafiki wabaya* were inadvertently challenging the education as panacea script that education is a universally important aspiration and pathway when most male youth continue to fish, farm, and manage income generating activities upon completion of school. After all, most of their fathers were fisherman and farmers regardless of whether they went to secondary school or not.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the assumption that one goes to school for later employment is highly gendered. The reasons boys and girls stayed in school were different, as were many of the reasons their peers had left. Girls expressed in their scripts that the main motivation for schooling was not solely the promise of a professional job and higher income but, as elucidated in further depth below, it was to

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[29] According to the National Bureau of Statistics for Tanzania (2015), self-employment includes working on personal or family farms and other income generating activity for oneself or household.

avoid being idle at home, to delay marriage, and to build their confidence and other non-cognitive skills. The extent to which male youth drop out, or are pushed out, because of the pressure to make money could not be determined conclusively in the scope of this study. However, the male participants in this research unanimously described this pressure as the primary reason their peers left school. Habib summed this up as, "*Wengine kashapata kazi yake kwa hiyo kaona bora aache kusoma*," ("Many have gotten a job and therefore they feel it is better to quit school").

**"Nephew, why are you washing dishes? That is a woman's job."**

According to the youth in their interviews, male students spend more time at home studying than their peers who are out fishing, farming, or hanging out in *maskani*. Narratives on masculinities purported that men should be the economic providers for their families, and boys described being bullied for staying too close to home and helping out with chores, such as sweeping and cooking, which were considered women's work. They performed this bullying frontstage and showed how helping with chores was another way of reinforcing the idea that school was not a place for mature men.

As Khamis described in his journal, his female neighbor used to make fun of him for participating in such chores. The urban youth also performed a script titled, "Gender Roles," where the protagonist's aunt and father repeatedly scolded him for washing dishes because it is women's work. Every time he tried to help out his sister with her chores so she could study, he was reprimanded. The protagonist also expressed his aspiration of becoming a nurse to which his antagonistic friends responded, "But isn't that a job for a woman? You need a job for a man." The boy faced the audience and projected loudly, "Pffffhhh, I don't care what they say. I am going to be a nurse." Before

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the actor could walk off stage, the audience started laughing, cheering, and screaming, and the next scene was delayed until the student viewers calmed down. While there were moments of enthusiastic eruptions by the audience throughout the play, this moment scored the most applause, matched only when the same actor did Michael Jackson's moonwalk across the stage in another scene. The boys' theater scripts and narratives showed the intense pressure exerted on them to become the breadwinners in their families and to perform the gendered roles prescribed in the social scripts on masculinities. These pressures often led the male characters to drop out of schools to pursue work and to take on the responsibilities expected at this vital conjuncture in their lives.

## Analyzing Girlhood

It was clear from the longitudinal data and the youth interviews that the primary reason that young women did not make it to Form 3 and eventually become *mhitimu* was because they failed the Form 2 exam and were forced out of school. However, there is a lack of official data on why young women drop out of school in Zanzibar before finishing their compulsory basic education cycle. The assumption in the 2006 Policy is that early marriages are the predominant reason:

> Cases of early marriages and pregnancies are a cause of an increase in drop-outs among girls especially at basic education level. Low awareness of some parents on the importance of education and extreme poverty are some of the reasons for early marriages. (MoEVT, 2006, p. 54)

As contextualized in Chapter Four, the assertion that girls leave school to marry has been asserted since the 1920s, when formal schooling for girls was first established. However, the longitudinal data suggests that there are a number of unknown reasons

behind why girls leave school before completing their compulsory basic education.

Among the 1,145 students in the longitudinal cohort with data on school leaving, 145 girls (67.5 percent) left school before completing Form 1. Of these 145 girls, 73.8 percent of them were reported by their schools as simply *watoro* with no further reasons provided. The remaining 26.2 percent were labeled as married/pregnant. Over 50 percent of these married/pregnant girls were from three schools in Micheweni, Pemba and North A, Unguja. This corroborates the MoEVT's claim that early marriage is more common in certain communities. Therefore, while marriage and pregnancy still appear to be reasons why girls drop out, there are other unknown reasons that led these young women to becoming *watoro*.

Without a comprehensive survey of these out-of-school youth, there is no confirmatory evidence as to why girls left before Form 1 or 2. [30] I therefore draw on the youths' perceptions of why women from their school, families, and neighborhoods became *watoro*. In the interviews, the young women identified poverty coupled with having to take on caregiver roles in their families, problems at school, as well as harassment and being taken advantage of by men as key reasons, which will be described in Chapter Six. The young women also discussed pregnancy, marriage, and illnesses as discussed below.

**"Many bad things can happen if you marry too young."**

When youth were given the task to perform some of the reasons that young people leave school, boys and girls came up with separate lists. Pregnancy and early marriage

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[30] There was a 2017 survey conducted by Oxford Policy Management, Limited on out-of-school youth, but the results were not yet released by the time I finished this dissertation.

were among both the Baobab students' and the Mavinje and Minazi youths' reasons. The youth voted which ones to perform and the girls in both the rural and urban workshops refused to perform pregnancy. When I asked them why, they explained that they would be laughed at if they came on stage with a big belly, and quite possibly teased for the rest of the school year. They also disclosed discretely that they wanted to avoid performing frontstage anything that involved premarital sex and loss of *heshima*. Their reluctance to perform pregnancy frontstage was in itself indicative of the taboo nature of the subject and the lack of conversations youth are having on these topics with adults. It is also a demonstration of their collective agency to decide which roles they performed and embodied as young women, and their fervor to reject the pathologizing girlhood social script.

The girls were more comfortable performing early marriage than pregnancy, and the Mavinje and Minazi youth included a vignette on the topic in their play. Instead of the cliché story about forced marriage, they scripted how the young woman insisted on getting married against her mother's will:

**Daughter:** Mom, I have something to tell you.

**Mom:** What happened? Tell me.

**Daughter:** I want to get married because I have a boyfriend.

**Mom:** What??? Are you a weak-minded child?

**Daughter:** No mom, I am not weak-minded. I am just trying to tell you that I already have a boyfriend so I want to get married.

**Mom:** Nooooo!! You must think of your education and your health. Many bad things can happen if you marry too young.

> **Daughter:** But Mom, I know what I want!
>
> **Mom:** I say No! If you do that I will chase you away. So please show your
>
> support and listen to me because I am your mother.

In this script, the girl has agency to decide who and when she marries, and to change her mind, as compared to the historical practices of forced marriage. The scene ends with the daughter being convinced by her mother and uncles to stay in school and to become a *mhitimu*.

**"She is…sick."**

As introduced in Chapter Three, the phrase *anaumwa* (he/she is sick) was used to describe classmates who dropped out or missed school for various reasons, from malaria to food poisoning to mental health issues. While males also missed school for prolonged illness, the issue of mental health came up in the vast majority of interviews with girls, especially those from Baobab School. They described classmates who had dropped out of school after being affected by *mambo ya Swahili*, or the Swahili phenomena, which was code for occult beliefs and practices endogenous to the Swahili coast, an area that extends along the Indian Ocean coast from Zanzibar to Somalia (Amory; 1994; Arnold, 2003; Middleton, 1992). I hesitated to delve into these beliefs for fear that readers would judge these girls' experiences from a Global North perspective and label their beliefs as witchcraft and shams. However, I could not leave these accounts out as nearly all of the girls across the three schools spoke of such issues in their interviews. The education experts from the Ministry and NGOs that mentioned *mambo ya Swahili* explained it in psychological terms, as responses to the emotional and hormonal stresses girls experience in school around the time of adolescence. As one described, *"[shetani] hataki mtu kizee*

*anataka mtu akiwa strong hasa akiwa yuko in that stage,*" ("[the spirits] do not want someone old, they want some that is strong and in that stage [puberty]") (NGO representative, interview, Sept. 1, 2016).

*Mambo ya Swahili* among school girls was also explained by the youth in sociological terms, as being curses created by people who were jealous and unleashed bad spirits on the girls. These envious spirits, or *uchawi*, as explained by Arnold (2003) in her research in Pemba using a socio-historical and cultural perspective, are a genuine fear among people of all ages and across the entire archipelago. Regardless of how a young person obtains the spirits, and what perspective is applied to understand this phenomenon, once these *uchawi* have "domesticated" (Arnold, 2003, p. 103) the girls, the results were disastrous. The girls described their friends as experiencing seizures or fainting spells and uttering language that was inappropriate and insulting. As one young woman described, "*Wanakuharibu kisaikologia,*" ("They ruin you psychologically.") As they recounted in their interviews, this disruptive behavior was problematic for the classroom and as a result the young women were often kept at home, sometimes for months on end if they ever returned.

One of the young women in this study from Mavinje was not available to be interviewed for six weeks while she recovered from one of these episodes with *uchawi*. While she did not speak openly about her possession, her classmates discussed it in their interviews as motivated out of jealously. The youngest of many siblings, her older sisters had also experienced possession. Likewise a few of the young women from Baobab had missed long periods of school prior to Form 2 for the same reason.

As the boys described in their interviews, young men could also experience *uchawi*, but it was much less common. Samir, the young man from Minazi who I classified as being pushed/pulled out for being ill, was never interviewed as he had been absent for months for *mambo ya Swahili*. When I asked Samir's friend how he was doing and if he would return to school he replied, "*Namshauri twende twende na bado alikua anataka akate*," ("I keep advising him let's go, but he still wants to drop out.") He described it as, youth start to feel their agency depleted and want to give up on school when they were experiencing *uchawi* or a prolonged physical illness. As discussed earlier, Samir's fate is still unknown. Illness, whether mental, spiritual, physical or other, continues to be a reason that youth across all three schools eventually left school. However, it is often underreported because it is a lot easier to defer to the blanket category of marriage, where girls are victims of poverty and uneducated parents, than to try and understand the complexities of mental and spiritual health issues among students.

In summary, there were many gendered forces that pushed or pulled youth out of school before finishing compulsory basic education. While some were openly performed frontstage, like the masculinities social scripts, others were only discussed backstage, such as pregnancy. Though the use of code language and backstage explanations made it difficult to unravel the reasons girls leave school, the act of protecting the integrity and *heshima* of their peers is in itself a form of resistance. While youth may be involuntarily labeled as *watoro*, they ultimately have the agency to decide which reasons they choose to perform as dropouts.

**Conclusion**

This chapter recounted the narratives of eight youth who were pushed or pulled out of school, or who dropped out. Their stories show how the label of *mtoro* is neither absolute nor concise, yet one that carries considerable stigma. Being labeled a *mtoro* places youth into a binary, where they are seen as falling short. Interrogating why youth left, therefore, not only helps provide educators and policymakers with better data for helping keep youth in school, but it gives youth the agency to perform their own stories.

As their performances and narratives reveal, youth leave school for a combination of reasons, some of which are common across boys and girls and others that are gendered. Girls and boys alike are pushed out of school because they fail the exam or their families cannot afford schooling costs. They are pushed or pulled out for missing too much school to grieve the loss of a parent or to attend to a personal illness. Boys dropout because they are pressured to earn money and to take on the tasks associated with being men, or because they find school irrelevant. Girls are pulled out after they become pregnant, or they dropout to get married. Interrogating these reasons helps rethink the term *watoro* and to see dropping out not solely as a decision made by youth, but a process influenced by family, school, and community forces. It also helps humanize the process of leaving school, and the emotional havoc that often accompanies being labeled a *mtoro*.

Becoming a *mtoro* is not just an enduring stigma, it also forces youth to alter their aspirations and their visions of their *maisha mazuri*. For example, Jokha aspired to be a teacher but she readjusted to the idea of being a tailor after she was pushed out. While Khamis initially aspired to be a doctor and a pilot, after failing the form 2 exam, he

declared the new hope of starting his own garage. Leaving school affected not only the kind of work youth had access to in the future, but also how they thought of themselves. As Halima described, she was tired of being stigmatized for her mother's lack of education and she wanted to become a *mhitimu* so she could have her own identity. After becoming a *mtoro*, however, she transferred her hopes onto her future children. In conclusion, the process of becoming a *mtoro* is both messy and complex, painful and stigmatizing, and one that changes the course of a young person's life forever. While this chapter looked at who leaves, the next chapter focuses on who stays, the obstacles youth encounter in the process of becoming a *mhitimu*, and the agency they perform to surmount these hurdles.

**Chapter Six: Performing _Mitihani_: Enacting Obstacles and Agency**

In Chapter Five I looked at how and when youth became _watoro_. In Chapter Six, I focus on the challenges students encounter in the process of schooling, and the collective agency they engage in trying to become a _mhitimu_. I discuss the different obstacles youth from Baobab, Minazi, and Mavinje Schools performed in their theater scripts and detailed in their journals and interviews. I situate these challenges in their community, school, and/or family spheres and look at how challenges differ between boy and girl youth and across the different school sites. One of the goals of this chapter is to show how youth dramatize the immense hurdles they surmount in their schooling. Their vignettes and journal entries chronicle how before reaching the final critical moment of the exam, many of them have already started the process of being pushed, pulled, or dropping out of school. Another goal is to exhibit the remarkable collective agency that youth performed in the process of finding ways to mitigate and persevere through these challenges.

I use the term _mitihani_ to refer to these challenges and obstacles. While _mtihani_ literally means examination, it is also used colloquially in Zanzibar to describe the obstacles and trials one encounters in life, including theft, illness, death, and other crises. I use the first meaning, _mtihani_ (singular and not underlined), to describe the actual examination, and the process of selection and exclusion, and the second, _mitihani_ (plural and underlined) to describe the challenges youth wrote about and performed in the three months leading up to the high-stakes Form 2 exam. The act of performing these obstacles and scripting protagonists and antagonists that resist and resolve these _mitihani_, I argue, demonstrates how youth engage both individual and collective agency in the process of becoming a _mhitimu_.

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I first return to Bi Aida's son Othman's story in order to show how these *mitihani* are influenced by inter-related family, school, and community-level forces, and how these challenges led to Othman eventually failing his exam and dropping out of school. Next I analyze *mitihani* performed frontstage in the youths' vignettes and discussed backstage in the youths' journals and interviews. Additionally, I utilize parents' interviews to contextualize these writings and to fill in backstage and frontstage details. I end the chapter by looking at how in the pursuit of their *maisha mazuri*, youth performed both encountering and mitigating the *mitihani* and how these performances show their capacity to act (Mahmood, 2001) in both subtle and obvious ways.

### Revisiting Othman's Narrative

Throughout Form 3 and 4, Bi Aida's oldest son Othman traveled an hour a day to a school in the *ng'ambo* because his village school did not have Form 3 and 4 classes. Othman had initially hoped to go onto university even though he did not know anyone in his immediate family or village who had progressed this far. After he failed the Form 4 exam, [31] Othman was devastated. He received a zero on his exam, which meant he did not earn a secondary school certificate and was not formally recognized as a *mhitimu*.

Shortly after receiving his results, Othman conceded his aspiration of becoming a *mhitimu* and a friend helped him get a job washing dishes at an Italian-beach resort 30 kilometers away. He made the equivalent of $90 USD a month working more than 45 hours a week. He was the first in his extended family to work in the formal sector and had not considered that without a Form 4 certificate he could not be promoted to working

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[31] On the Form 4 exam, students need to have at least three Cs on various subjects to go onto Form 5. Othman had D's in a number of subjects and had to increase his grades in at least three subjects the next time he took the exam. If students do not get enough credits, they get a 0 on the exam.

in hotel reception or being a waiter. I tried to probe Othman about how washing dishes connected to his *maisha mazuri*, and how the approximately $0.40 USD an hour he was making would allow him to achieve his goals of supporting a family and eventually getting a college diploma. He assured me, "*Nitajua badaaye*," ("I will figure that out later.") A few weeks later, Othman showed me the burns on his arms from the chemicals and scalding water and questioned if he had made the right decision to give up on school. He did not want dishwashing to be his career. [32]

Othman and I discussed the *mitihani* that had contributed to his failing the exam and strategized how to help him overcome these obstacles and pass the exam the second time. First, he had not mastered the content on the exam. There were a number of community and school-level *mitihani* he attributed this to, one being that no one in his community had gone onto higher education and he lacked peers and role models to encourage him to set up a study routine for the exams: "My [rural] peers and I didn't take the exams as seriously as my urban classmates did," he recounted to me. "We were pressured to make charcoal, help fish, and to start making money as soon as possible," he added, "which took up a lot of our time." He and his peers also lacked a quiet, well-lit place to study together.

At Othman's rural school, the quality of instruction was poor and there were few teachers proficient in English. Also, the school did not have a science laboratory or library to aid his studies. Additionally, as he described, the ad hoc tuition he attended did not sufficiently cover all the exam material. Within his family, Othman's mother and

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[32] In Zanzibar, unlike in parts of the Global North, there is no practice of obtaining part-time work that youth can maintain while they are in school. Therefore this work of dishwashing was full-time and potentially a long-term career.

stepfather struggled to provide Othman and his brother, Hamsa, money for schooling and transport as there were a number of younger children to support. They often confronted crises such as the illness or death of a family member and relied on their older sons for money. Additionally, their parents had not been to secondary school and worked in the informal economy and could not advise their sons how to navigate secondary schooling or the world of formal work. The family also lacked social networks to help Othman and Hamsa enroll in better schools, tuition classes.

To overcome these *mitihani*, Othman found a group of students who were also trying to retake the exam and they began to study together day and night. He also enrolled in an established and reputable tuition program. In addition, he received advice from Bi Maha's children on how to get into a private school and which subject areas he should retake on the exam. With this collective support from his peers and extended networks, he retook the exam ten months later and earned enough credits to go onto a private secondary school.

What I learned from watching Othman struggle to overcome his *mitihani* was that while these challenges can be located in family, school, and community-level spheres, they also overlap. In the case of Othman and the students from Baobab School, they come from rural communities where their parents and neighbors are less likely to have completed advanced secondary and pursued higher education than their urban counterparts (see Table 5 in Appendix B). Likewise, their rural schools may have fewer resources and less proficient and qualified teachers (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016; Salim, 2011). Their families often lacked economic resources for tuition and extra support and relied on their older children to provide financially for their families.

It is common for youth to begin to experience these *mitihani* by the time they start primary school. For example, in my longitudinal cohort sample of 1,145 students in four districts (see Chapters 3 and 4 and Appendix D), a notable proportion of youth started out in community schools or entered Standard 1 at eight years or older because their parents did not have the means to enroll them in a formal government school at the policy-age of six. Over time these challenges accumulated and created inequity gaps. The longitudinal cohort youth who started out behind both socioeconomically and age-wise in Standard 1 were more likely to have experienced interruptions or to have repeated school by the time they reached Form 2 (Vinagradova & E. Morris, 2014; see Appendix D). Therefore, before the rural Baobab youth reached secondary school, their *mitihani* had already paved the way for them to be pushed, pulled, or drop out of school. I explore these *mitihani* in the youths' performances below and discuss how these challenges differ for boys and girls and across different geographical sites.

**Performing the *Mitihani*: Encountering and Mitigating Obstacles as a Collective**

The notion of *mitihani* is grounded in religious and cultural scripts that humans are given certain trials and tests in life that they must overcome. [33] *Mitihani* are often external circumstances beyond an individuals' or communities' internal control. They can be difficulties influenced by structural factors, such as poverty or lack of medical facilities, or by natural external forces like hurricanes or cancer. Sometimes they are within the individual's control, such as how whether or not to steal food when hungry or cheat on an exam.

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[33] As can be seen in the Qur'an 29:2-3.

In psychology from the Global North, which Jaafar (2017) showed has been taken up in the Global South, *mitihani* might be explained as the locus of control, or:

> The extent to which people believe they have power over events in their lives. A person with an internal locus of control believes that he or she can influence events and their outcomes, while someone with an external locus of control blames outside forces. (Fournier, 2016, p. 2)

Looking at this concept sociologically and in the context of Zanzibar, the *mitihani* are often experienced collectively by youth from similar economic and school settings. For example, girls commonly faced sexual harassment and boys the pressure to obtain work. Although an individualistic locus of control approach has its limitations, it does help highlight the tensions between the ways inter/national development agendas and youth may approach the notion of *mitihani*. Pathologizing girlhood and boyhood scripts position youth as having little internal locus of control and agency, but youth showed in their performances that they had both. For instance, in a scene about sexual harassment, the girls demonstrated that they had the power to protect their respectability while at the same time speak back to their harassers.

Although there were some stark differences between the *mitihani* experienced by youth educated in the rural school (Baobab) versus the *mitihani* of youth in the urban schools (Mavinje and Minazi), there were a number of similarities as well. Therefore, I highlight some of these geographical differences but at the same time show how *mitihani* can overlap across urban, rural, and *ng'ambo* locations. In addition to exploring how youth endure obstacles across geographies, I look at gender differences in *mitihani* and

how youth engage individual and collective agency to confront these hurdles in open acts

of resistance, but also through subtle capacities to act (Mahmood, 2001).

**The Family, School, and Community Spheres**

I return to the three interconnected spheres that were used in the PTA workshops

to show the different settings where encounters with *mitihani* are performed (see Figure

7). The individuals in these different spheres appear in the youths' vignettes, with either

starring or supporting roles, as protagonists and antagonists. The critical roles these

characters play confirm Sewell's (1992) and Korteweg's (2008) notion of collective and

embedded agency, that agency is negotiated not just individually but in collaboration

with others in one's family, school, and community spheres.
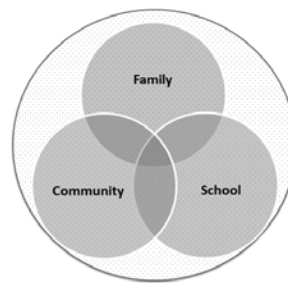


*Figure 7.* Family, school, and community spheres

While I explain these *mitihani* in terms of structural or social phenomena, I also

draw on theater analysis and the notions of settings, tensions, and characters (protagonists

and antagonists) involved in creating and resolving these *mitihani*. I present these

tensions as well as youths' attempts to alleviate these challenges using aspects of

collective agency. Although boys described this collective agency in their stories and

interviews at times, such as in the case of Musa in Chapter Five whose friend helped him

study so he could return to school, the girls performed collective agency in nearly all of

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their vignettes. I first start with the macro-level, community-level sphere and work inwards to the family level.

*Mitihani* **in community settings.** As discussed in Chapter Five, the youth from Baobab School set a number of their vignettes in community spaces, and these spaces were highly gendered. Conversations among girls in their community tended to take place on their way to home or school, or in a kitchen or classroom. Most male scenes set in their community took place in the *maskani* or on the football field with classmates and/or out-of-school peers. As described in Chapter Five, these male spaces became the location where the boys in this study were disheartened and emasculated by their out-of-school peers, who were called the *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) in their vignettes. For girls, their interactions with peers were more empowering and positive. I analyze these peer-to-peer relationships with other youth in their communities in the following excerpts from their theater scripts.

*"…you can pass the Form 2 exam, but further ahead you won't succeed."* In a half-dozen vignettes in both the *Maisha Badaaye* and *Real Life in Zanzibar* scripts, the boys collectively performed peer pressure from males who hang out in the *maskani*. *Maskani* are informal social spaces across Zanzibar frequented by men who are not in school or working. However, working men who are taking a break or discussing politics may also hang out in *maskani* (DeFrancisco, 2000). Students sometimes congregate in *maskani* after school. Elders and more "respectable" men and women also have such designated spaces, but they are usually referred to as *baraza* (DeFrancisco, 2000). In most of their narratives and interviews, the youth referred to *maskani* as places where youth are tempted to use drugs, drink, and steal agricultural goods like coconuts.

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In Zanzibar, *maskani* can be situated under a mango tree, near a political headquarters, in a village or town square, or outside a store or person's house. When these male spaces are occupied by predominantly unemployed and out-of-school youth, they are considered dangerous places where at night youth could be robbed or pressured to try drugs, like hashish, heroin, or different forms of cocaine. In one of the collective scenes written by the Baobab boys, a young man is trying to study too close to the *maskani* and the boys start to yell at him "*We, unafanya nini hapo we? Kusoma baadae, hapo si pakusoma. Twenzetu tukavute bangi hebu*!" ("You, what do you think you are doing? Studying is for later, here is not a place for studying. Come here and try some hashish!") The students in the script resisted and yelled back, "Go smoke your hashish!" In some real-life cases however, boys like Habib (whose narrative was told in the previous chapter) were lured into these conversations in the *maskani* and convinced to drop out of school.

In one PTA exercise, boys and girls were asked in separate groups to create a vignette on an obstacle they had confronted in their schooling, either personally or vicariously through a peer or family member. In response, the boys co-constructed a story about a fictitious character named Walid and his aspirations for a *maisha mazuri* as a Form 2 student. The story quickly evolved into a six-act script and took complicated twists and turns, or expositions as they are called in theater script analysis, before the scene ended. Throughout the vignette, Walid incurred the banter and bullying of peers and neighbors, including attacks on his masculinity, as he chose to continue on a more assumed feminine pathway of secondary schooling instead of dropping out to engage in economic activities. On his way home after finding out he passed his exams, Walid

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encountered two friends, *Rafiki Mzuri* (The Good Friend) and *Rafiki Mbaya* (The Bad Friend). They wrote:

*Walid: Rafiki zangu, nakuageni. Tutaonana Form 3!*

**Walid:** My friends, I am saying goodbye. See you in Form 3!

*Rafiki Mzuri: Nimefurahi kusikia hiyo. Hongera, na tutajitahidi kuendelea na masomo!*

**Good friend:** I am happy to hear that. Congratulations, and we will continue to try hard in our studies!

*Walid: Ahsante, nashukuru kwa msaada na kuniunga mkono*!

**Walid:** Thanks, I am very grateful for the support and for lending a hand!

*(Walid anasema kwa Rafiki Mbaya)*

*(Walid says to Bad Friend)*

*Walid: Mambo rafiki yangu? Nimefaulu mtihani vizuri, naendelea na Form 3 sasa.*

**Walid:** What's up my friend? I passed the exam and I will go on to Form 3 now.

*Rafiki Mbaya: Ata ujidai kusoma si unajiona ushapasi Form 2 yako, huko mbele hutofanikiwa utakwama tu! Urudi hapa hapa kuiba nazi.*

**Bad friend:** So you are bragging because you passed the Form 2 exam, but further ahead you won't succeed [meaning the Form 4 exam], you will fail! You will come right back here [to the *maskani*] to steal coconuts. *(Bad Friend leaves without giving Walid his hand [saying a friendly goodbye]).*

*(Rafiki Mbaya anaondoka bila kumpa mkono wake).*

Whereas Walid's male classmate (the Good Friend) encouraged him to stay in school, his *Rafiki Mbaya*, or Bad Friend, pressured him to give up. This shows the polarization of the

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peer characters in the male's vignettes—either as contributing to their agency or trying to deplete it. Othman, Bi Aida's son, also described this collective push and pull among his peers. He faced a large circle of out-of-school friends that pressured him to give up on schooling when he failed his exam, but also had a smaller group of confidants who encouraged him to keep trying. While the collective agency enacted by the Good Friend is less obvious and dramatic than the Bad Friend, male friendships were nonetheless critical for youth to overcome *mitihani*.

When I debriefed with the other facilitators after one PTA workshop, I asked whether *maskani* only affect youth who lacked cohesive families and sufficient economic resources. "*Maskani*, and the world of drugs and other vices touch families of different backgrounds," one of the facilitators replied. For the next hour she recounted how her own brother, who came from a middle-class family from the city with connections in the Middle East, slowly got hooked on drugs. A *mhitimu*, or secondary school graduate, he lost his job as he spiraled out of control and has been in and out of jail and on the streets for years. The discussion rang deep for each one of us. After the facilitator finished telling us about her brother's latest arrest, we each began to open up about someone in our family or community who has had a similar experience. For another facilitator it was a close neighbor friend and addict who was beat to death. In my case, I described family members whose addictions contributed to them leaving high school and living a vicious cycle of unstable employment, poor physical and mental health, and poverty. "Drugs are a real risk for both boys and girls in Zanzibar, they are not just a male problem, or an urban problem," the facilitator concluded. We all agreed that the rate of drug abuse was on a rise in Zanzibar, but little was being done to combat this epidemic. Although a few

girls discussed the threat of drugs in their interviews, they did not perform these threats in their vignettes. As described below, they instead enacted *maskani* as sites of unwanted attention and harassment from males.

   ***"Protect yourself before danger ensues."*** Harassment and succumbing to male pressure, or what female and male youth called *vishawishi* (temptations), was a theme performed frontstage in both theater scripts. While the tension in the vignette *Temptations* staged by Mavinje and Minazi students revolved around money, in the Baobab students' rendition of *Vishawishi*, the tension was confidence and respectability. Both, however, emphasized how common the challenge of sexual harassment is among female students in Zanzibar and the process of how many girls fall pregnant and are pulled out of school. This challenge of sexual harassment of girls was echoed by parents, teachers, education experts, and Ministry representatives in their interviews.

   In the Mavinje and Minazi students' vignette *Temptations*, youth performed a popular drama of a school girl getting corrupted by a sugar daddy antagonist. In the vignette the rich older man lured the girl with money and material goods and convinced her to leave school. This performance played into the pathologizing girlhood script discussed in Chapter Two, where girls are victims of exploitation or stigma, rather than young people with agency (Kirk, Mitchell, & Reid-Walsh, 2010). These youth had undoubtedly seen similar scenes enacted over and over again in local theater productions, television series, and movies. When I was a student at the Bagamoyo College of Arts from 1999 to 2000, many of my classmates were starting to perform in plays or Tanzanian television series and movies. "A good Tanzanian drama always has a sugar daddy," we joked. This was in part because this created an interesting gendered drama,

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and in part because sugar daddies are common antagonists in contemporary Tanzanian storytelling—which international development agencies and Tanzanian NGOs often incorporate in their radio series, publications, and other public awareness materials to spread their inter/national gendered scripts (see Fataki in Kaufman et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, very few of the Baobab girls could relate to the sugar daddy storyline told by their urban and *ng'ambo* residing peers. Their rendition, *Vishawishi,* took place at the *maskani* and centered on harassment by male peers. It was initially a <u>*mitihani*</u> written by Medina in a journal entry that she later staged. In the performance, Medina walked by a group of males in a *maskani* each morning and afternoon on her way to school. She repeated the scenario year-by-year to show how it affected her from the time she started school to her current grade (Form 2).

| | |
|---|---|
| *Matumaini yangu ilikuwa kusoma. Darasa la 6 nilipoanza kukumbana na wanaume ambapo ilikuwa ninaambiwa nina mchumba hadi darasa la 7 pia nilikuwa na matatizo hayo hayo.* | My aspiration was to study. In Standard 6 I encountered males [in the *maskani*] whom I told I had a fiancé. This [harassment] continued to be a problem, even until Standard 7. |
| *Kuna siku moja niligombwa na wazee wangu. Mama amesema, 'sasa hivi mwanangu ushakuwa mkubwa ujihadhari kuwa huko uendako utakutana vijana dume ambao havina adabu lakini mwanangu* | One day, I was scolded by my parents. My mother said, 'now, my child, you are a grown up. Beware of where you are going as you will encounter male youth who have no respect, but my child you need to protect yourself before danger |

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| | |
|---|---|
| *jihadhari kabla ya hatari* | ensues.' |
| *mwanangu.'* | |
| *Niliingia darasa la 9 ambapo* | I entered Form 1 and I was |
| *wanaume nilikuwa nawaonea haya* | embarrassed/bashful to even look at |
| *hata kuwatizama. Na sasa hivi* | males. And now in Form 2 the |
| *nilipofikia darasa la 10 bado* | temptations/threats are still there but I |
| *vishawishi vipo lakini mimi* | myself have confidence and my mom |
| *mwenyewe ninajiamini na hata* | believes in me. |
| *mama yangu pia ananiamini.* | |

At first Medina was scared and embarrassed by unwanted attention from males. Over the years, as she became more mature and confident in herself and her education, she was able to openly resist the men's harassment, which was one example of how girls performed their individual and collective agency through and within their schooling. As a few girls discussed when staging Medina's vignette, if girls are not disciplined and careful about protecting their *heshima* (respectability), they risk being lured into sexual relations that result in unwanted pregnancies. In their interviews, a number of young women from across the three schools described how this cycle of harassment and corruption of one's *heshima* was one of the biggest *mitihani* they faced in adolescence. Through schooling they developed non-cognitive skills like confidence, which gave them the agency to make good decisions about their lives. Consequently they were better able to protect themselves from harassment and pressure coming from the males in the *maskani*.

Medina took pride in enacting her character, especially when she performed agency and started to talk back to the males. She declared, "*Sitaki kufuatiliwa kwa mambo mabaya mwacheni kama ilivyo*," ("I don't want to be bothered with your bad things, leave it alone.") She ended the vignette with "*Hawaninenezi na wananiogopa*," ("They can't intimidate me, they are afraid of me.") While her female classmates laughed as she was being harassed in the first part of the vignette, they cheered as she performed her "capacity to act" at the end. She turned the pathologizing girlhood script on its head.

**"We don't have any rice for dinner, but you made a good decision to help your friends."** Girls portrayed their interactions with other young women in their community from a very different vantage point that the boys. All but one vignette featured their peers as positive influences who supported their agency to succeed and overcome obstacles. For the most part girls talked about out-of-school youth in their interviews as being girls who did not have a *maisha mazuri* because of poverty, family challenges, early marriage, and other reasons, but they did not chose to perform these characters. Instead, the girls enacted relationships that promoted their agency, as can be seen in the scene below.

In another vignette about the <u>*mitihani*</u> youth faced in schooling, the Mavinje and Minazi female students wrote about hunger (which will also be explored under the family-level challenges). Instead of presenting a drama that focused on the problem of hunger, however, the story exemplified the various ways in which students worked together to overcome a common problem. The plot was about two girls whose father had just passed away. Their mother did not sell any of her anchovies that day and so she sent her daughters out to find their uncle to borrow some money for food. On the way the daughters, Asha and Amina, encountered their neighbor and friend.

**Friend:** Hi Asha and Amina, where are you going?

**Asha:** We are very hungry, we haven't eaten, we are very hungry.

**Amina:** We are going to our uncle's house but we are very tired and it is very far away. I don't know if we will make it.

**Friend:** I only have 2,000 [TZS, or equivalent to 90 cents at the time] and I was supposed to go and buy some rice. Here take this and go and buy food.

Their friend acted without thinking twice, even though she knew she might get in trouble at home for spending her parents' money intended for rice. When the friend returned home she explained the situation to her parents:

**Father:** …What happened with the money we gave you to buy rice?

**Friend:** I saw my friends and they are very poor and so hungry, they are so hungry because their father died. So I gave them money.

**Mother:** What are we going to eat now?

**Father:** Don't worry my daughter. We don't have any rice for dinner, but you made a good decision to help your friends.

Instead of getting into trouble with her parents, the girl was congratulated for her charity. The authors of the vignette drew on collectively embedded religious and cultural scripts and symbolism to solve _mitihani_. Giving (alms) is one of the five pillars in Islam (_zakat_), and voluntary giving, or _sadaka_, is a form of _zakat_. Rice is a symbolic gift given to those in need during Ramadhan in Zanzibar. Charity surfaced as a collective solution to familial problems in the youths' narratives and interviews and was a frontstage enactment of both collective agency and being a good Muslim.

***Mitihani* in school settings.** While the youth performed some of the challenges they encountered with peers and individuals in their community frontstage, the *mitihani* they faced in the school setting were either indirectly implied in their vignettes or identified backstage through their interviews, journals, and discussions. This is likely because the youth were reluctant to perform critiques of their teachers or schools. As we (the facilitators) did not want to put the students in a compromising position, we did not probe them on school-related *mitihani*. We solely noted school-related challenges as they emerged backstage or as indirectly implied through their theater scripts. We also observed the subtle ways they enacted collective agency to address these *mitihani*. The first challenge surfaced in an interview with Musa, a male student from Minazi School.

***"Poor preparation leads us to fail."*** When Musa described how and why students like him became *watoro* at the end of primary school (see Chapter Five for his narrative), he first discussed his family's poverty as the main cause. As the interview concluded, however, Musa asked to elaborate a bit further on why he had become a *mtoro* after Standard 7. He described not just being pushed and pulled by his parents, but how youth like him who started off in rural or *ng'ambo* primary and secondary schools, with fewer economic resources, later failed the Form 2 and Form 4 exams at higher rates. As he explained, "*Mandalizi mabovu haya yanatupelekea kufeli*," ("Poor preparation leads us to fail.") While he only openly named lack of laboratory equipment for the science classes as an example of this "poor preparation," as did Othman when recounting his *mitihani*, we assumed Musa was also referring to poor teaching and instruction coupled with lack of mastery of English as a language of instruction.

As discussed earlier, my longitudinal cohort findings among 1,145 youth from four districts confirmed Musa's assertion (see Chapter Three and Appendix D). My data suggest that which primary school one attends is a notable factor in whether youth fail exams and leave school in or prior to Form 2 (primary school explained 10.5 percent of the variance between schools). Salim (2011) also pointed to school-level factors in his research among Form 4 students. He found that differences between secondary schools explained a significant amount of variance (7 to 39 percent) in students' tests scores. This means that test scores and whether or not youth leave school are not just linked to which secondary school youth attend, but are also related to the primary school where Zanzibar boys and girls received their initial education. Murphy, Rawle, and Ruddle (2016) and Salim (2011) found in their educational analyses that students from rural schools are more disadvantaged than urban ones, as well as youth from certain districts in Pemba and northern Unguja.

These geographic inequities were also revealed by analyzing the performances and narratives of youth across the three different schools that participated in the PTA workshops. Youth from Mavinje School (urban) faced different obstacles and challenges than those youth in the Minazi School (mostly students from *ng'ambo*), differences that were even starker when compared to the Baobab School (rural) (see Table 5 in Appendix B for some of these differences). There were not only substantial inequities between schools, but also between students within classrooms. Youth supported each other in overcoming these shortcomings in many ways. For example, they described studying together in groups, so that youth could share their different levels of subject mastery as Othman did when trying to retake the exam. Another approach was relying on older

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siblings and cousins for tutoring in the math and sciences, two areas where youth tend to fail at high rates on the end of secondary school exam (NECTA, 2016).

*"If you know how to speak English in grammatically or in a good way they try to hate you and ignore you."* One of the most obvious ways inequalities between schools were performed was mastery of the English language. Nearly all children in Zanzibar speak Kiswahili as their first language, but when they reach Standard 5, half of their classes are taught in English. By Form 1 all of their subjects except for Kiswahili and Arabic use English. The problem we (the facilitators) encountered, however, was that none of the Baobab students spoke enough English to be able to write or perform their theater scripts in the official language of instruction. While Mavinje students could write and perform in English, their writing was filled with errors. Minazi students' English proficiencies were somewhere between the Baobab and Mavinje students.

There were only a few sentences in the entire *Maisha Badaaye* script that were performed in English by the Baobab students. In one of these scenes, the teacher character recited: "Good morning students. How are you?" at the start of her class. "We are fine, thank you," the rural students responded robotically. In another scene of three friends studying together, one of the classmates asked her friends "What is democracy?" and they responded, "Democracy is people's power." The Baobab students not only lacked the proficiency and confidence to write and speak their scripts in English, but in the sparse dialogues they actually created, they drew on cliché lines used in school—a call-and-response teacher-student greeting and memorized questions and answers copied into their notebooks.

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Among the Mavinje and Minazi students, it became clear through the frontstage performances and backstage conversations that confidence and proficiency in English also varied by school setting. In two of the Mavinje students' journals, they spoke about jealously and resentment between students because of different English proficiencies. Those students who spoke confidently were chastised by their peers who had not mastered English. As one of the young woman, Abeida, explained, "If you know how to speak English in grammatically or in a good way they [the classmates] try to hate you and ignore you." As such, the youth described not wanting to speak English with their peers. The only students from the three schools in this study who spoke English to each other on occasion were from Mavinje School. They participated in English Clubs (extracurricular language clubs that practice speaking English), had an active English teacher, and were exposed to English speaking tourists regularly as their school was surrounded by dozens of hotels and tour agencies. This was a stark contrast to Baobab School youth who had poor English instruction, no English Club, and little contact with native English speakers (see Appendix D). Even Hamsa and Othman, Bi Aida's sons, who had known me for 20 years and stayed with me at various periods of time, would reply to my English questions in Kiswahili. I had to refuse to answer them in Kiswahili to get them to practice English as they were embarrassed by their poor comprehension and speaking skills. Bi Maha's children and grandchildren, on the other hand, were all fluent in English and used to laugh at my errors in Kiswahili.

As the workshops progressed, it became apparent to us (the facilitators) how confidence in English was intertwined with not only where a student went to school (urban, *ng'ambo*, or rural), but also their families' economic resources. Layla from

Minazi School, who was pulled out after she became pregnant, asked me for regular support in practicing her English scene in the *Real Life in Zanzibar*. She told me confidentially that it was hard for her to get to school most days for lack of transport money, and would whisper, "Do you think I can do it?" as she nestled herself close to us facilitators during rehearsals. Every day I took five minutes to allow Layla to privately rehearse her lines while I enthusiastically reassured her. When she made errors in English during rehearsals and her classmates would giggle, the other facilitators and I would quiet her peers while applauding Layla's performance and enunciation.

In contrast, Abeida, the Mavinje student, fearlessly improvised and would go off the script, adding new lines in English to the dismay of her scene mates trying to follow their cues set to her lines. She was one of a few students who spoke English to her friends outside of rehearsal, and even when she spoke Kiswahili, she slipped in English words such as, "issues," "you know," and "I'm telling you," into her speech, showing her ability to switch seamlessly between languages. Abeida's father worked in the Middle East and it was clear that she had economic resources by the clothes she wore and her possession of a smart phone.

I did not want to probe Abeida, Layla, and the other students further on their English instruction at school, so I asked two of my friend's 14-year old daughters who spoke English proficiently about their experiences in their elite, private Stone Town secondary schools. One of the girls told me that on a few occasions she corrected the English teacher when she made mistake. She was then humiliated and denigrated by the teacher in front of her classmates for being arrogant. "Now, when I hear the teacher make an error, I just ignore it as I will only be punished by my teacher or ridiculed by

classmates if I speak up," she recounted. The other young woman said that when she spoke English confidently she was called a *mzungu*, which is used interchangeably to describe a foreigner from the Global North, or sometimes a white person.

As Hamsa and Othman, and the young woman who was chastised for correcting her teacher, confirmed, even at their highly ranked urban schools, teachers were not always proficient in English. The situation was dire in the rural areas. On the few occasions that we (the facilitators) passed through the Baobab School, we could hear Kiswahili being spoken alongside English. Inadequate English proficiency among teachers is documented in the 2006 policy as well in research by Rea-Dickens et al. (2009), Rea-Dickens and Yu (2013), and Murphy, Rawle, and Ruddle (2016). This means that there are many students who are not proficient enough in English to pass the Form 2 exam. Therefore it is likely that the low English literacy levels of the Baobab students, as well as many of the Minazi youth, impeded their exam performance in other subject areas, such as math and the sciences. As the students from Mavinje and Minazi prepared to take the Form 4 exam (in English) in November 2017, it was already clear to us facilitators who among the students were better positioned to pass the exams and continue on to Form 5. Sadly, our predictions came true. Months before the exam took place, Layla was pulled out of school. Abeida and five of her Mavinje peers passed their exams, including the English subject content, and were admitted into Form 5. Meanwhile, none of the Minazi youth passed the English content nor were promtoed to Form 5.

Despite these acknowledged challenges, the MoEVT still defends English as a necessary language of instruction for Zanzibar: "The learning of different languages widens and enhances the interaction of cultures," and the "growing tourism industry,

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globalization and economic integration are all forcing people to learn more languages"
(MoEVT, 2006, p. 36). The MoEVT does not, however, in this policy statement directly
link the language of instruction to disparities in examination performances or as a major
contributor to inequities between students from different geographical and socioeconomic
backgrounds—which the youth performances and scripts revealed. The urban youth also
demonstrated by being willing to stand in front of their peers and perform in English as a
collective, even at the risk of being laughed at, that they were eager to master English
when the "conditions permit" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 206). As we (the facilitators) learned,
having youth support each other's English in rehearsals helped decreased the frictions
between students and increase everyone's collective agency to perform together.

    ***"That's not my concern."*** Another <u>*mitihani*</u> that emerged backstage during the
workshops was the lack of academic, financial, and emotional support at schools. Not
only were the rural students notably lacking in English proficiency, but they also had
difficulty writing in their native tongue of Kiswahili. As mentioned in Khamis's narrative
in Chapter Five, there were two young men who could not write a complete sentence in
Kiswahili. Khamis referred to his challenges in reading and writing as "*Sina kichwa
kusoma*," ("I don't have the head for studying,") and "*Akili yangu siyo nzuri*," ("My brain
doesn't work well.") Although Khamis lacked academic support at school, he was able to
cope through the collective support of his friends who recited to him from their
notebooks so he could memorize content. He also mentioned a few teachers who took the
time to review lessons with him over the years.

    A number of youth also described in their interviews how their siblings failed the
exams or dropped out of school because they did not understand the content in class.

They explained, "*Hajafahamu*," ("he/she didn't understand,") meaning their sibling either had not mastered English or could not understand the content regardless of the language it was taught in. While this was not indicative of a learning disability per say, it was an indication that youth tended to internalize their teachers' scripts and blamed themselves for not understanding material presented in class. More than once the students described themselves or a peer, as "*Hana kichwa kusoma,*" ("She/he does not have the head for studying,"), a deficit belief often reinforced by teachers and families. This phrase implied that there was something wrong with the student and ignored the socioeconomic conditions, teachers' language of instruction, pedagogical practices, or other family, school, and community-level factors that contributed to students' performance in school. This mirrors M. Morris's (2016) research which revealed that single measures of knowledge on standardized tests can lead youth to:

> …internalize that they are not worthy of completing school. They say things like 'Schools' not for me' or 'I was never good at school,' when their performance may actually be impaired by many other factors, including socioeconomic conditions, differential learning styles, the quality of instruction at their schools, the orientation and presentation of questions on the test, their own mental physical health, and disparities and access to early childhood education. (p. 33)

Backstage, youth from across the three schools also described how teachers humiliated them in front of their peers for not understanding subject content, for not being prepared, for being late, and for other circumstances out of the internal locus of control of the youth—like the death of a parent. One young woman wrote about her mother's death, which occurred right before the end of grade test (an internal assessment

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and not the national exam). "*Sikwenda [kufanya mitihani] na nikamwambia mwalimu*

*nilikuwa nimefiwa na mzazi wangu wa kike na nikaona kuwa mwalimu anirejeshe Form*

*One nitakuja kufanya mtihani mwaka mwengine*," ("I did not go [to the exam] and I told

my teacher that my mother died and the teacher made me repeat Form 1 so that I would

take the exam the following year.") The administration ultimately made her repeat the

grade instead of helping her take an alternative or make-up exam.

While the youths' scripts frequently featured their teachers and head teachers

publicly celebrating them for passing their exams, there were also instances of youth

being shamed when they failed. One young man from Mavinje described during a

rehearsal how his teachers often called him out for not understanding in class, telling me

dejectedly that he was not sure why his teachers hated him so much. Public shaming was

also occasionally employed by some of the facilitators—all of whom had been teachers—

during our daily feedback sessions. We had to work through some of the facilitators''

tendencies to publicly say "*Hajafahamu,*" ("She/he didn't understand,") to a student

reluctant to speak in the workshop before moving onto one of the more talkative and

articulate students. If this negative labeling was employed by Zanzibari facilitators eager

to work on youth-centered research in a collaborative environment, it likely occurred on a

regular basis in these youths' schools.

Finally, in addition to weak academic reinforcement, and deficit teaching

practices, the students enacted scenes in *Maisha Badaaye* and the *Real Life in Zanzibar*

theater scripts that demonstrated the lack of financial and emotional support at school. In

a few instances, the teacher was positioned as the ally while in other scenes she or he was

portrayed as the antagonist. For example, as the protagonist character the teacher brought

students work when they were out sick, helped them understand difficult material, encouraged them to persevere in their studies and not to give up, and congratulated them when they were doing well or passed their exams. In the urban schools, youth also described in interviews how teachers voluntarily offered tuition and administered English clubs to support their students' success on high stakes exams during interviews. In a few antagonistic scenes, in contrast, teachers and schools were shown to exacerbate students' *mitihani*. In the following scene the student tells the teacher her family cannot afford school fees, and she is shamed in front of her peers:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mwalimu: Asya, iko wapi ada ya skuli?* | **Teacher:** Asya, where is your school payment? |
| *Asya: Baba hajapata bado.* | **Asya:** My father doesn't have it yet. |
| *Mwalimu: Kila siku hujapata hajapata, naomba ukamwite mzazi wako.* | **Teacher:** Every day you repeat he doesn't have it. Go call your parent. |
| *Asya: Baba hayupo nyumbani, na jana alivorudi kuuza chicha hakupata pesa ila pesa ya chajio.* | **Asya:** Father isn't at home, and yesterday when he returned from selling spinach he didn't have enough money. |
| *Mwalimu: Mimi hiyo hainihusu, ningeomba ukamlete mzee wako.* | **Teacher:** That's not my concern, I request that you bring your parent in. |

In lieu of formal loans or leniency offered by schools or MoEVT to families that cannot meet the fees, the only option for Asya if her father did not pay was to withdraw from school—which I would argue is akin to being pushed out rather than dropping out. When we asked the youth how they resolved such financial situations they described

drawing on neighbors, friends, and extended family for support. Musa explained this community support in Chapter Five, when he described how his neighbor paid for his schooling. Likewise, one of the Mavinje students had a teacher supporting him with his fees demonstrating that many teachers are not only academic allies, but also financial ones. As will be discussed in Chapter Eight, youth identified both frontstage and backstage the need for more academic, financial, and emotional supports at school. Even though students did not overtly expose these *mitihani* in their performances, their subtle enactments of teachers as both antagonists and protagonists showed how important teachers are to the construction of agency among students.

"***What is the meaning of morpheme?*** Two other *mitihani* that the youth performed indirectly in their vignettes was the lack of alignment between the curriculum and their intended career and learning pathways, and the need for extracurricular tutoring. In one scene, the youth unintentionally integrated both of these challenges—two Baobab girls were studying for an exam during a tuition session after school, memorizing the functions of speech from their notes:

*Mwanafunzi 1: Kwanza, tuulizane masuali. Tuangalie kama tumefahamu au vipi? Ni nini maana ya "regista"?*

**Student 1:** First, let's start by asking each other questions. Let's see if we understood, or what? What is the meaning of "register"?

*Mwanafunzi 2: Maana ya "regista" ni kubadilisha nafasi, na kubadilisha nakati.*

**Student 2:** The meaning of "register" is to change place and to change time.

*Mwanafunzi 1: Maana za*

**Student 1:** What is the meaning of

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*"mofimu"?*

"morpheme?

*Mwanafunzi 2: Mofimu ni kipashio kidogo kabisa cha kisimu ambacho kina maana ya kisarufi na kileksia.*

**Student 2:** A morpheme is a unit of language that is used in grammar and lexicon.

*Mwanafunzi 1: Kuna aina ngapi zai mofimu?*

**Student 1:** How many types of morphemes are there?

*Mwanafunzi 2: Kuna aina mbili za mofimu. Mofimu huru na mofimu tegemezi.*

**Student 2:** There are two types of morphemes, free morphemes and bound morphemes.

As I watched the girls rehearse their vignette, I asked the other facilitators what a morpheme was. After much debate, Bello the English teacher explained to us the concept of morphemes in both Kiswahili and English. [34] I was amazed that these students who labored for 30 minutes each day to compose one original paragraph in Kiswahili were proficient on the difference between registers and morphemes. They had memorized their notes, but they could not apply these concepts in their own writing. While the youth did not overtly critique rote learning and the relevance of the curriculum they were learning, the *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) did this by questioning how going to school was going to help youth get jobs later or help youth achieve their *maisha mazuri*. The *rafiki wabaya* pointed to a disconnect that emerged through the PTA workshops: youth were memorizing for the exams but it was not clear how this information would help them achieve their aspirations for work or in their lives.

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[34] Morphemes are the smallest units of language that carry meaning. Free morphemes can stand alone, bound cannot. For example, in the word factual, "fact" is free and "ual" is bound. Register is the style of language used with different audiences (Anna Farrell, personal communication, April 27, 2018).

The above scene was also interesting because it modeled how tuition in the Baobab community is structured as study sessions between students rather than formal tutoring as explained by the Mavinje youth. While the Baobab youth did not perform any other scenes featuring tuition frontstage, they did discuss how access to tuition, or tutoring outside of school, was an important factor in whether or not youth were prepared for the exam in their interviews. They also provided details of how tuition can vary greatly across geographic locales and between families that have resources, like Bi Maha's, and those that do not, like Bi Aida's.

Unpaid tuition in Zanzibar is often led by volunteer teachers or by older students, which was the case for the Baobab students. Unpaid tuition is more common in rural and *ng'ambo* communities where families do not have the means to pay teachers, and in schools where most of the teachers commute back to the city after class (per discussions with the facilitators and the Baobab students). There were nine Baobab students who received tuition and ten that did not. These nine students were tutored by volunteer Form 4 students anywhere from two to seven days a week. They studied a range of subjects, including geography, biology, and chemistry, although three of the youth reported paying for English tutoring. Most of the students did not have anyone to tutor them in mathematics and physics and did not receive Arabic tuition, likely because they received this support through their *madrassa* or *vyuo*.[35]

On the other hand, nearly all the Mavinje and Minazi youth participated in paid tuition with qualified teachers (see Table 5 in Appendix B). Students across

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[35] As established in Chapter One, *madrassas* are more formal Qur'annic school programs, whereas *chuo* (plural *vyuo*) are more informal centers.

all of the schools alluded to how the quality of tuition depended heavily on the facilitator or tutor, and the more one could pay for a high-quality tutor or teacher, the better the youths' chances were of mastering the content. Regardless of the type of tuition they received, all schools heavily relied on their fellow classmates to help them understand exam content. As one youth from Minazi described:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Wanaotusaidia ni wale ambao wapo level ya Form 5 na Form 6, hata mimi nilipofika Form 3 nikiwa na matatizo walimu wangu wakuu ni hawa, hata tuition watu wanapoenda masomo ya ziada unakuta wao wanachukua sehemu kubwa kuliko walimu wa maskulini.* | The ones helping us are those in Form 5 and 6, even when I reached Form 3 and I had a problem my teachers were them [the Form 5 and 6 students], for those going to tuition you will find that they [the Form 5 and 6 students] were more essential than even their school teachers. |

Despite evidence that *mitihani* in the school settings contribute to Form 2 failure and are among the main reasons influencing youth to become *watoro*, which MoEVT acknowledged in their 2006 Policy, I argue that the policy and inter/national scripts overemphasize the shortcomings of parents and students. While *mitihani* in the family sphere did emerge in the youth scripts, they were less obvious contributors to exam performance than those in the school setting, such as language of instruction, tuition, poor teaching and instruction, and lack of attention to and support for students with learning, cognitive, and physical disabilities. I look at two key *mitihani* performed in the family sphere below.

**_Mitihani_ in the family setting.**

**_"Tomorrow maybe soap, or books. Inshallah."_** The most common _mitihani_ encountered in the family sphere, performed by male and female youth alike, were issues of poverty. Although school fees are supposedly "voluntary" at government secondary schools in Zanzibar, there are still a number of costs including uniforms, shoes, notebooks and supplies, various activity fees, and exam fees. The youth commonly described their own financial hardships backstage as not being able to pay for fees. However, in one vignette entitled "Poverty" the Minazi and Mavinje students performed the cyclical nature of poverty and having to prioritize basic needs frontstage:

**Daughter 1:** Father, I need some money, I want to go to school to buy books.

**Father:** Oh! Sorry, I don't have anything in my pocket today, you know I still cannot find a job. You need to go now, when you come back the cassava will be ready ok?

**Daughter 1:** *(Big sigh, disappointed)* Ok dad, I have nothing to say.

*(Daughter 1 leaves. Daughter 2 washing the clothes approaches the father.)*

**Daughter 2:** Father, we have a lot of dirty clothes and very little soap, it is hard to wash.

**Father:** I am sorry but I spent our only money on cassava so we can eat today. You will have to use what soap we have.

**Daughter 2:** Ok

*(Daughter 2 goes back to washing, the father goes to wake up his wife.)*

**Father:** Wake up my Shady.

**Shady (Wife):** Oooh! I am very sick.

The husband took his wife to the clinic, and the doctor concluded the obvious diagnosis—the wife was suffering from hunger. The husband used his last shillings for paying medical fees and could not give his daughter money for books. The scene ends with the father repining, "Times are hard, and until I find a job we have to choose what we buy each day. Tomorrow maybe soap, or books. *Inshallah*."

Poverty among the Baobab students, however, was not just the inability to pay school costs. As their backstage interviews, journal entries, and discussions in rehearsals exposed, it was also studying on an empty stomach, reading by candle light, enduring extra household responsibilities, and bouts of illness. When the girls at Baobab School were voting on which challenges they wanted to portray during one PTA session, they got into a discussion of how the majority of them went the full school day without eating. This was in part because Zanzibari's tend to drink tea, or the equivalent of breakfast around 10:00 am, and the girls did not eat before leaving home. However, a number of them said there was rarely food in the house at this time and they were not able to eat. While all the schools had vendors who sold snacks at the recesses, most girls did not have the pocket money to buy food. As such, the girls did not eat until late afternoon or evening after they had returned home and had cooked a meal for their families. Boys generally were responsible for their own pocket money, but they too went hungry on many days. Both girls and boys described how hard it was to concentrate on an empty stomach. It was interesting that the boys believed it was somehow easier for girls to go without food because they had "more stored fat on their bodies." This belief was tied to Ramadhan and the idea that women can fast more easily than men, but neither the girls nor boys could explain biologically how this worked.

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The girls chose the link between poverty-hunger-and the inability to study in a vignette entitled *Matatizo ya Wanafunzi* ("The Students' Problems"). This is the same vignette from above in which the student could not pay the fees and her teacher humiliated her. After the young woman was chastised for not paying her school fees, she went home to find no food and had to go to the *maskani* to get money from her uncle to buy rice. By the time the girl cooked for her uncle and her father, and she herself ate, it was nighttime. She missed the opportunity to study. She lamented before falling asleep:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Maisha haya sijui atakwisha lini. Sili* | I don't know when this life will change. |
| *asabuhi wala mchana. Nikirudi skuli* | I don't eat in the morning or the evening. |
| *nimechoka na nipike, na kufanya* | When I return from school I am tired and |
| *shughli nyingine. Sina hata muda wa* | I have to cook, and do other chores. I |
| *kurudia masomo yangu.* | don't even have time to review my |
| | lessons. |

While fewer Minazi and Mavinje youth reported food shortages in their homes than Baobab students, and often ate three meals a day as opposed to two, a few of the youth from Minazi explained that they often had to come to school hungry or walk many kilometers on days when they did not have bus fares. On those occasions they found it extremely hard to focus in classes. It is not surprising, then, that Salim (2011) found that family-level income is a significant variable in Form 4 exam performance. Those youth who have families with fewer economic resources scored lower on their exams if they even made it to that stage.

The 2006 Policy confirmed the link between nutrition and school performance. In a section entitled "Emerging Challenges—School Health and Safety," the policy stated

that "Many school children come from homes or areas which lack physical, emotional and environmental safety. They come to school without proper nutrition" (p. 64). MoEVT removed voluntary family contributions to primary schools in 2015 as an incentive to help families keep their youth in schools and to relieve educational cost burdens (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). As of 2017 this had not yet been extended to secondary school. During the period of schooling for youth in this study, as described in the vignettes, families were still pressured to pay monthly contributions to cover their children's schooling costs. In the case of nutrition, there were no direct strategy or policy statements that redressed nourishment related issues. While there have been some school feeding programs implemented by international development agencies or religious institutions, there are no Zanzibar-wide strategies for addressing hunger at school. There is also little discussion of how to support students and families so they do not have to make decisions between paying school fees, buying food, and paying for emergency medical costs.

Again, when asked how youth coped with lack of food, they described sharing food amongst themselves—as was demonstrated in the rice vignette presented above. There is a strong religious and cultural script about sharing food among friends, neighbors, and community members that youth modeled in rehearsals and on breaks. When one of the students purchased a snack at recess, they shared it amongst all their friends regardless of whether they ended up with only one small piece of mango or cassava. As the saying goes in Kiswahili, *Kula na wenzio* (Eat with your friends), meaning that eating is not something one does alone.

Another family-level *mitihani* discussed in a number of the journals and interviews was the death or prolonged illness of a parent. Nearly a third of the rural youth were orphans, either missing a father, mother, or both parents. As described above, a few of these students experienced their loss before end of term tests, which greatly affected their performance as they were only allowed to miss a few days of classes and had a hard time concentrating upon their return. One of the students from Mavinje went through the sudden death of her father during the course of this study and Tabshir, one of the faciliators who attended the funeral, described to me, "Dalila, the oldest, and her mother were left to care for all her little siblings, and *inshallah* they will be able to manage." I was happy to find out that Dalila passed her Form 4 exam with enough credits to continue onto Form 5. Her next *mitihani* would be finding a relative to pay for her schooling costs as her father was the one paying her fees. Finding collective ways to pay for educational costs was the topic of another series of vignettes, one example is shared below.

*"I don't have money, we will have to borrow from neighbors."* When youths' immediate families did not have the resources to pay for school costs, like in the real-life cases of Dalila, Musa, or Bi Aida's sons Othman and Hamsa, they often relied on extended family, neighbors, and people from their religious community for support. The importance of neighbors and community members in contributing financially to families in need is the religious and cultural script of *zakat* and *sadaka* described earlier. For girls and boys alike, this collective agency was critical in helping them overcome their financial and emotional *mitihani*.

Tatu, a student from Baobab School, shows collective decision making and *sadaka* in her vignette about the challenges of achieving her *maisha mazuri*. Her mother

was pivotal in both supporting her daughter's career ambitions and in helping her daughter find resources from neighbors:

*Tatu: Mama mimi mwanao nasoma karibu ya mtihani, mimi nataka kazi ya jeshi. Nimeona majeshi wakifanya mazoezi barabarani na ninataka kujiunga nao.*

**Tatu:** Mama…I am studying for the coming exam, I want to be a soldier. I have seen the soldiers marching on the road and I want to join them.

*Mama: Inshallah mwenangu*

**Mama:** God willing, my child.

*Tatu: Mama nishafanya mtihani wa Form 2 na nimefanikiwa. Nahitaji elfu kumi kulipia ada ya skuli.*

**Tatu:** Mama, I have taken the Form 2 exam and I passed! I need 10,000 schillings to pay the school fees.

*Mama: Mwanangu mimi sina pesa inabidi tukope kwa majirani ili nipate pesa ya kupelekea skuli.*

**Mama:** My child, I don't have money, we will have to borrow from neighbors so we can get the money to pay for school.

*Tatu: Mama mimi nishapata cheti cha polisi, mama nahitaji ushauri wako, nataka kwenda huko mafunzoni … Niendi au nisendi?*

**Tatu:** Mama, I have gotten my police certificate and I need your advice. I want to go for studies…Should I go or not?

*Mama: Haya nenda mwenangu ukafanye kazi vizuri nakutakia maisha mwema.*

**Mama:** Go, my child, go do the job well. I wish for you a good life.

This theme of making decisions with families was consistent throughout the girls' vignettes and journals. While males described in a number of cases consulting their parents on major decisions, they often relied on their siblings or peers for actual moral and financial support—suggesting that male youth are given more autonomy and responsibilities from an earlier age and are less dependent on their parents economically and emotionally. This is accordantt with boys' accounts that they were pressured to earn money earlier and had to rely on themselves, or siblings and friends, for pocket money. Regardless of whether youth performed collective agency through their relationships with peers, siblings, parents, teachers, neighbors, or other community members, and whether their capacities to act (Mahmood, 2001) were enacted as resistances or subtle tensions, it was clear that navigating *mitihani* and the process of becoming a *mtihani* is a collective endeavor.

**Conclusion**

The youth named and performed frontstage some of the *mitihani* they encountered in the process of trying to become a *mhitimu*, such as the family-level hardships of poverty and illness. In addition, a number of the backstage *mitihani*, including school-level challenges, were also revealed through the observations and informal discussions with youth. These school-level *mitihani* played a large role in whether a youth—either in the vignette or in real life—became a *mtoro* or *mhitimu*.[36] While these school-level challenges were discussed in the 2006 Policy, I argue that they lack sufficient emphasis.

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[36] As found in the longitudinal research, and as they related to the exam in Murphy, Rawle, and Ruddle (2016); Rea-Dickens and Yu (2013); and Salim (2011).

In terms of gender, the school-level *mitihani* tended to affect girls and boys in similar ways, especially poor English proficiency, insufficient access to quality tuition, and lack of emotional, academic, and social support, but their community-level challenges differed. At the community-level, boys faced more negative male pressure among their peers, pushing them to quit school to work. Girls tended to use their peer relationships to overcome *mitihani*. While both boys and girls drew on collective agency through their peer, family, and other adult relationships, girls performed it more overtly in their theater scripts. What became clear through the enactments of these *mitihani* was how the pathway to dropping out, or being pushed or pulled out, was being paved long before youth reached the critical moment of the exam. Looking back, it was not surprising that Othman had failed the Form 4 exam given all the *mitihani* he encountered from the time he enrolled in school in Standard 1. He fit the profile of a dropout or pushout, a rural male from parents who had limited resources and had not finished primary school. While the exam was the final thrust, he was already in the process of being pushed out. The next chapter focuses on the climax of the exam and how it radically changed or furthered youths' aspirations and visions for their *maisha mazuri*.

**Chapter Seven: Performing the *Mtihani:* Enacting the Exam**

"There is one attitude in particular that we must all fight-first, I suspect, within ourselves. It is the notion that a child who is not selected for Secondary School has 'failed.'….Not being selected does not imply that they failed anything; it is the result of very few…places that exist. So if there is any talk of failure, it is the country and the Tanzanian Government as a whole which has failed to provide secondary school for everyone" (Nyerere, 1984 as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004, p. 156).

**Introduction**

In Chapter Six, I presented the <u>mitihani</u> youth encountered in their family, school, and community lives in the process of trying to become a *mhitimu*, and how youth performed collective agency to surmount these obstacles. In this chapter, I look at how failing the examination pushes Zanzibari youth out of school. I also attempt to humanize students' experiences taking the exams, showing how they are emotionally taxing and how youths' hopes for their futures, or *maisha mazuri*, rest on their results.

I analyze the Baobab youths' theater scripts performed before they took the actual examination in November 2016 in relation to their journal narratives captured after they received their results in February 2017. I start this analysis by looking at the how youth performed the Form 2 exam in their vignettes; namely how girls and boys situated the exam as the climax in the schooling process and how the results allowed them to take the road of *mhitimu* or pushed them towards *mtoro*. I then look at how youth embodied the exam emotionally, being labeled either a success or failure. Finally, I end with a discussion of how failing or passing the exam directly influenced youths' *maisha mazuri* and aspirations for their futures future.

I place performances of the exam as the final analysis chapter for symbolic as well as chronological reasons. In the Baobab boys' theater scripts, the Form 2 exam was

commonly the final scene of their vignettes. It was the culminating moment that determined whether youth would go onto Form 3 and become *mhitimu* or join the statistic of *watoro*. For some youth the exam was their last experience in formal schooling. The previous chapters showed how five youth (Habib, Jokha, Halima, Khamis, and Pili) were already in the process of being pushed or pulled out of school long before this determinative event. With the exception of Habib, these youth were from families that lacked social networks and economic resources. Their parents: had either no schooling or only a primary education, struggled to provide enough food for their children, and did not have the money or connections to enroll their children in further education. Consequently, the examinations reproduced deeply rooted historical inequalities in who becomes a *mhitimu*.

As detailed in Chapters One and Four, the Form 2 exam is administered in English each year. Until 2017, the Form 2 results posted publicly only showed a "pass" or "fail" and not an actual score. In my attempts to secure 2016 raw scores on the Form 2 exams for my inferential analyses, I submitted a letter of request to the Zanzibar Examinations Council (ZEC) vowing to keep these scores confidential. My request was denied on the basis that the information was confidential and sensitive, which I saw as a reasonable and responsible response. When recounting ZEC's decision to a Zanzibari teacher friend, however, she wondered if the Ministry was more concerned about having an outside researcher see how low the minimum pass rate was as opposed to the confidentiality of scores. Skepticism on the pass rate criterion was discussed further among us facilitators when one of the students in our PTA, who like Khamis could barely write a complete a sentence in Kiswahili, passed the exam. While the Form 2 tests are

said by MoEVT to be "valid and reliable" (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016; Salim, 2011), the robustness of the process was questioned by parents and other education experts interviewed. Although I still question the practice of posting Form 2 exam scores publicly by name, it is reassuring to see in 2017 that the actual subject scores were released in the efforts to make the process more transparent.

While there have been documented issues with exam administration and cheating on Form 4 exams across Tanzania (NECTA, 2002), including a claim by Zanzibar's Parliament that the exam is biased against Zanzibari students (Jamiiforums, 2012; Zanzibar Yetu, 2012), usually the skepticism is that students were unjustly failed. In the circumstances of this research study, however, we were surprised that three quarters of the Baobab youth passed the Form 2 exam given their lack of English language proficiency. When discussing this as a research team, one of the facilitators mentioned sadly, "The real test for these students will be the Form 4 exam, do not be surprised if nearly all of these rural students fail." This realization, which echoed the doubt expressed by the *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) in the theater script, has troubled me throughout this research process. It was unsettling to read youths' stories of ambitious aspirations and hopes for their *maisha mazuri* written in their journals while at the same time acknowledging that, statistically, many of these young people, especially those from Baobab, would not become *wahitimu*. As the title of their script suggested, *Maisha Badaaye* ("Life Comes Later"), these adolescents were in a state of limbo, negotiating their hopes for passing the exam and their anxieties around failure. They were meandering through the various *mitihani* along the way and ultimately waiting for the

direction their lives would take after the results were announced. In the next section, I look at how boys and girls performed the climactic moment of the exam in their script.

## Performing the Exam: Vignettes on the *Mtihani*

Nowhere in the policies and reports on exam rates does it discuss how this moment of selection and exclusion is experienced or embodied by youth; they simply become a binary statistic of failed/passed in a system that places the bulk of the responsibility for failure directly on the young person and their families as exemplified in Nyerere's quote above.

The youth did not critique their schools or the education system frontstage. However, their performances showed how policies and practices affected them emotionally and academically as young people. For example, in a number of vignettes they enacted going to the school to see if their names were among those who passed the Form 2 exam (a practice more common among the Baobab youth as the majority do not have internet access). Although the students did not complain about the public posting of their results—a practice that is normalized across Zanzibar—the youth did write emotionally about this experience. They described and performed how the unveiling of their results increased their anxieties, which brought into question whether the benefits of this practice outweighed the negative impacts on a youth's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing in the days immediately following failing the exam. Below I look at these different accounts performed by male and female youth.

**Male Performances of the Exam**

When prompted to write a story about a common *mitihani* they experienced, [37] the Baobab males chose to focus on the exam, and the act of failing or passing. However, they also integrated masculinities scripts and indirectly pointed to a practice at their school that had a detrimental impact on their ability to prepare for the exams. I use this example because it portrayed the actual exam process as embodied by young men and the different protagonists and antagonists involved in this preparation process.

In the collectively-authored vignette in the *Maisha Badaaye* script, *Mafunzo, Mitihani, na Mpira* (Studies, Exams, and Football), the boys wrote about how male students were allowed to skip class to represent their schools in inter-school football matches. [38] They performed how this negatively affected their preparation for the exam. Although the male characters ultimately made the individual decision to miss class for practice, they acted out the pressure exerted by their schools. The vignette started out with the teacher character encouraging five students (who are named by their six-digit exam ID numbers) to attend the football match, and authoritatively questioning why one of the students was "truant" at practice. "*Kwa nini wewe mtoro wa mazoezeni?*" ("Why were you truant at practice?") the teacher asked, ironically using the term *mtoro*, which is also used for "dropout." When the student explained he injured his foot, the teacher

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[37] The majority of vignettes and details from the interviews and journals come from the Baobab youth as they took their exams immediately after the first PTA workshop. The Mavinje and Minazi, were already in Form 3 when they wrote their joint script *Real Life in Zanzibar* so I focus on their hopes for the Form 4 exam and some articulated experiences on the Form 2 exam from their interviews (March-April 2017). I also include some of the emotions and thoughts from Minazi youth in the text messages they sent me before and after they took their exam in November 2017.

[38] Unlike in the US and other parts of the world where students receive scholarships for being athletes, or in some countries where the aspiration of being a professional football player is planted early, in Zanzibar soccer is not seen as a viable profession as there is no professional archipelago team or pathway.

character made it clear that he still expected the student to attend the match the following day. In this telling scene, the teacher character played the antagonist:

*Mwalimu: Chezeni mpira mzuri ili tushinde. Mjikaze, ushindi lazima tuingie nusu finali.*

**Teacher:** Play football well so that we can win. Try your best, winning is a must to enter into the semi-finals.

*Mwanafunzi 343/104: Usijali Mwalimu, tutashinda. Tutarudi na ushindi skuli.*

**Student 343/104:** Don't worry Teacher, we will win. We will return to school as winners

*Mwanafunzi 453/103: Goaaaaaaal! Tumeshinda!*

**Student 453/103:** Goaaaaaaal! We won!

*Mwalimu: Gemu ya leo tumeshinda, nakupongezeni. Nani aliumia?*

**Teacher:** We won the game today, I congratulate you. Who got hurt?

*Mwanafunzi 453/103: Hakuna.*

**Student 453/103:** No one.

*Mwalimu: Ok, kapumzikeni, nendeni nyumbani. Nakupeni ofa.*

**Teacher:** Okay, go rest, go home. I am giving you an offer [meaning the rest of the school day off].

*Wanafuni wote: Sawa Mwalimu. (Mwalimu anaendea darasani.)*

**All Students:** Okay Teacher (The teacher goes back to class.)

By the third scene, however, the lead character—Student 340/110—began to question whether he should miss class the day before the big exam, a decision he discussed with his teammates:

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: Jamani, mimi naenda darasani, mtihani upo karibu.*

**Student 340/110:** Guys, I am going to class, the exam is too close.

*Mwanafunzi 453/103: Sawa, sisi tunaenda kupumzika. Tutaonana kesho, tutadurusu mabuku nyumbani.*

**Student 453/103:** Okay, we are going home to rest. We will see each other tomorrow, and we will study our notes at home.

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: Mimi narudi bwana, kama nyinyi mnaenda.*

**Student 340/110:** I am going back to class, man, if you are all going home.

Student 340/110 returned to class alone where other students had to fill him in on what he has missed. So as to show that he was a good teammate, Student 340/110 shared his class notes with the others. The climax, the exam day, finally arrived after three scenes of buildup.

*(Wanafunzi wanatoka nje ya darasani.)*

*(The students leave the classroom)*

*Mwanafunzi 343/104: Ule mtihani vipi mwanangu?*

**Student 343/104:** How was the exam my friend?

*Mwanafunzi 453/103: Nimejaza tu, hivyo hivyo. Weyeje?*

**Student 453/103:** I just filled in what I could, you?

*Mwanafunzi 343/104: Nimejaza ninayoyajua. Nisiyoyajua nimacha.*

**Student 343/104:** I filled in what I knew. What I didn't know I left.

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: Vipi mtihani?*

**Student 340/110:** How was the exam?

*Mwanafunzi 456/788: Mbona rahisi tu! Tusubiri matokeo inshallah.*

**Student 456/788:** It was really easy! Let's wait for the results, *inshallah*.

After conferring on whether the exam was too easy or difficult, the head teacher called each of the four students in by their student ID numbers to give them their results.

*Mwalimu Mkuu: Jina lako kamili nani*

**Head Teacher:** What is your full name

*na namba yako?* | and your number?

*Mwanafunzi #343/104: .... 343/104* | **Student #343/104:** … 343/104

*Mwalimu Mkuu: Umefeli, pole sana.* | **Head Teacher:** You have failed, I am

*(Mwanafunzi #343/104 anaondoka na* | so sorry**.** (*Student #343/104 leaves*

*huzuni na analia.)* | *sadly and crying.)*

The audience roared with laughter as number 343/103, one of the students who chose football over his studies, walked dejectedly off the stage. While laughing at the expense of a fellow classmate is indicative of this age group in Zanzibar, one cannot help but wonder if they were in part nervous laughing as this scene struck too close to their own fears. The next player also failed and again the audience exploded in giggles. Finally, the last two students were called in one after another, including Student #340/110 who overtly made a decision to return to class:

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: Asalamaleykum* | **Student 340/110:** Asalamaleykum

*Mwalimu Mkuu: Waalaykumsalam* | **Head Teacher:** Waalaykumsalam

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: Nimekuja* | **Mwanafunzi 340/110:** I came to

*kuchukua matokeo yangu* | take my results.

*Mwalimu Mkuu: Jina lako nani kamili* | **Head Teacher:** What is your full

*na numba yako?* | name and your number?

*Mwanafunzi 340/110: ...340/110* | **Student 340/110:** …340/110

*Mwalimu: Umepesi. Hongera!* | **Head Teacher:** You passed,

*(Mwanafunzi 340/110 anaondoka na* | congratulations! (*Student 340/110*

*furaha)!* | *leaves happy!)*

As the teacher declared, "Congratulations you passed," the audience erupted with cheers

and each boy who had passed took a short victory lap before they left the stage. The vignette ended with the exam.

This scene shows that teachers and head teachers contribute to the masculinities script by encouraging boys to miss class for attending soccer matches right before the exam. While it seemed like a harmless practice, one that not even the facilitators had thought much about, it sent the message to the boys that schooling was not as important for them as for girls who do not generally compete in inter-school sports activities. The boys were already experiencing pressure to make money and peer pressure to drop out; and this was just one more social script that contributed to their passing or failing the exam. Their dramatizing of the crying upon failing, and dancing upon passing, was intended to please their classmates in the audience. However, in their journals they revealed that the intensity of these emotions was actually part of their exam experience as will be detailed below. First, however, I look at the girls' dramatization of the exam.

**Female Performances**

The dramatic pressure of examinations was also performed by the girls in the vignette *Khadija*. Developed collaboratively by the Baobab girls, *Khadija* opens with the exam, as opposed to the boys who ended with the exam in both collective vignettes. In *Khadija*, four friends go and look for their exam results together:

> *Narrator: Baada ya matokeo ya mtihani wa Form 2 kutoka, Khadija na rafiki zake walikwenda kuangalia matokeo yao.*

> **Narrator:** After the Form 2 exam results came out, Khadija and her friends went to look at the results.

> *Friend 1: Mimi nimo.*

> **Friend 1:** I am there.

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*Khadija: Alhumdillah, nimefaulu na mimi.*

**Khadija:** Thanks be to God, I also passed.

*Friend 3: Ehhee. Nimefaulu alhumdillah.*

**Friend 3:** Yes, I also passed, Thanks be to God.

*Friend 2: Mie peke yangu nimefeli, wenzangu wote wamo. (analia)*

**Friend 2:** It is only me that failed, all my friends are there [listed]. *(she cries)*

*Khadija: Usijali rafiki yangu kutokana na hali inabidi ukarudie tena mtihani ili uweze kufaulu.*

**Khadija:** Don't worry my friend, based on these results you should take the exam again so you can pass.

Three of the friends passed, one failed. Instead of gloating and taking victory laps like the boys, the girls reassured their friend who was sobbing on stage. The rest of the scene revolved around the lead character, Khadija, going on to pass the next two secondary exams (Form 4 and 6). When she mastered Form 6 she had a discussion with her parents about how to finance a university education so she could pursue her aspiration of becoming a doctor. Together the parents decided they would start a small enterprise, a kiosk selling household goods, and sell all their chickens to pay for Khadija's education. She promised to study hard:

*Khadija: Baba na mama, nimefaulu! Bado nina matumaini ya kuwa daktari. Nataka kwenda cuho, sasa nitapata wapi hela?*

**Khadija:** Father and mother, I passed! I still hope to be a doctor. I want to go to the university, but now where will I get the money?

*Baba Khadija: Mama Khadija vipi tunaweza kupata pesa tukamsomesha*

**Khadija's Father:** Mother of Khadija, where can we get the money to send

*Khadija?*

*Mama Khadija: Tufikirie....labda tunaweza kungia katika biashara ndogo ndogo. Au tutauza kuku kwenye banda tupate kumsaidia Khadija? Pengine tunaweza kuuza vitu kutoka katika konde na Khadija asome aweza kufikia ndoto yake.*

*Baba Khadija: Kwani, bandani hakuna kuku? Tuuze wote ile tupate pesa za kusomesha watoto wetu.*

*Mama Khadija: Ehhe, mume wangu!*

*Khadija: Ahsante wazazi wangu! Mmenisaidia na mmenipa moyo. Nitajitahidi!*

Khadija to school?

**Khadija's mother:** Let's think about it, maybe we could start a small business? Or we could sell the chickens to help her? Or we could even sell some of our crops so Khadija can achieve her dream.

**Khadija's Father:** Aren't there any chickens in the coop? We should sell all of them so we can get to educate our child.

**Khadija's mother:** Yes, my husband!

**Khadija:** Thank you my parents! You have helped me and have given me hope. I will try my best!

The story ended with Khadija graduating from the university and her parents jumping out of their seats to applaud when their daughter's name is called. "Lelelelelele," they ululated as she walked across the stage. It is interesting that the boys did not perform going on beyond secondary school in any of the collective scenes, whereas the girls performed passing the exams and pursuing their aspired futures.

As in the collective vignettes discussed in the previous chapter, the girls chose to show how the main character, Khadija, had the individual agency and aspiration of

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becoming a doctor, making a clear link between education and her career path. They also

reiterated that a student's agency and pathways are largely negotiated and celebrated

together with one's family, whereas the boys celebrated their exam results with their

peers. Again, girls tended to position their agency and aspirations in relation to their

family members while boys tended to focus on the role of their classmates and friends in

influencing their decisions in both positive and negative ways. Both vignettes also

featured teachers as being front and central in the process of preparing for their exams.

In performing each of these three stories, the males and females framed

examinations as the climax, the critical moment when a young person would either

continue onto Form 3 or be forced to leave school. Whether they started or ended their

stories with this vital conjuncture, each of the scenes were fraught with tensions, and the

audience reacted with laughter and applause, leaving an ambience of nervous and elated

energy. The audience and the actors knew well the emotions of preparing for this critical

moment in their real lives. Their actual experiences with passing and failing the exam are

detailed below.

**Living the Results**

Three months after the Baobab youth performed the *Maisha Badaaye* theater

script and their hopes for their *mtihani*, they sat for the actual Form 2 exams. Another two

months went by before they received their results. The process of taking, passing, and

failing the exam is an immensely emotive experience for the youth. As a vital

conjuncture in schooling that only youth who make it as far as Form 2, 4, or 6 will

experience, the stress is often normalized and overlooked by Zanzibari educators,

researchers, and policy makers. In order to draw attention to the deep emotions of the

*mtihani*, I rely on youths' scripts and narratives in their journals written after they received their results. The sections are divided into youth who passed and were promoted onto the next grade, and those who failed and were pushed out of the system either permanently or temporarily. Their accounts are divided into these two distinct categories to reflect the harsh divide that was created by the exam, and to juxtapose the different aspirations and pathways youth have access to depending on whether they were labeled as a student that passed or failed. I start by describing the emotions of the Baobab youth who passed and were promoted onto Form 3.

**Passing the *Mtihani***

The intense range of feelings adolescents experienced in the months leading up to the exam became clear during the writing, performing, and viewing of the youths' performances. "*Nilihisi mwili wangu uko kwenye msiba wakati wa matokeo*," ("I felt like my whole body was at a funeral during the exam,") one student recalled in her journal. She drew on a metaphor for the physical state of being, which others also embodied in their stories. Nearly all youth described a hot, burning, and pounding heart; a stomachache and a general sick feeling; loss of appetite; confusion and disorientation; anxiety and fear; and sheer exhaustion in their writing. A number of youth also wrote about praying and bargaining with God, promising to pray more, to support their siblings, and to be devout Muslims if they passed. Having lived with Bi Aida's children Hamsa and Othman, as well as a number of Bi Maha's children before their Form 4 and 6 examinations, I witnessed the torturous patterns of anxiety and physical ailments that emerged in the prior months. There was also immense self-doubt and fear that life will end if one fails. Feelings of fear, anxiety, self-doubt, and physical pain were accompanied

by frequent and long visits to the Mosque or prayer mat, drawing on faith and prayer to remind oneself that the fate of passing and failing is bigger than their nexus of control. Knowing that youth undergo intense emotional and physical experiences in the months before the exams begs the question: how many students drop out before they reach the examination out of fear? The answer to this question was beyond the quantitative scope of this research, and was not possible to isolate from the other factors that influenced whether youth actually registered for the exams, including ability to pay for examination fees.

Given the emotional and climatic nature of the exam process, it is not surprising that the sentiments youth expressed in writing and performed were equally dramatic. *"Nimejihisi nimefaulu katika maisha,"* ("I felt like I had just passed [succeeded in] life,") one young man described. Not only did youth feel triumph, but they expressed relief, disbelief, happiness, audacity, love, strength, reinvigoration, and gratitude to God in their journals. Youth also recounted feeling compassion, and great disappointment, for their peers who did not pass the examination. One female described:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sikupata furaha yoyote wakati* | I wasn't happy at all when my classmate |
| *mwenzangu tulikuwa tukisoma* | who I studied with didn't pass...I went to |
| *pamoja hakupasi...nilikwenda kumpa* | give her my condolences before I let |
| *pole ndipo niliopapata furaha yangu.* | myself be happy for myself. |

While the males also expressed feeling compassion for their peers, girls tended to actively comfort and console their friends, as was demonstrated in the earlier vignette *Khadija*. Throughout the celebrations held in honor of the students who passed, those

being celebrated made sure their peers who had failed were invited and encouraged to find other pathways to keep studying. A young woman from Baobab wrote:

*Baada ya kutoka matokeo mimi na marafiki zangu tuliamua tupike pilau na pia tuliwaita waliofeli wakati wa kula chakula.*

After the exam results came out, my friends and I decided to make pilau [a rice dish for special occasions] and we called those who had failed to eat with us.

A number of youth, particularly boys, wrote that they were confident they would pass the exam in the months before the actual event; in their post-exam journals, however, many youth recalled that prior to the exam they felt a sinking sensation and doubted that they would pass. One young woman was so scared that she asked her friend to look up her name for her:

*Nilihisi kuwa katika matokeo simo na ndio maana sikuenda kuangalia matokeo.*

I had a feeling that my name was not on the results [list who passed] and that's why I didn't go see the results.

In a group story the boys constructed after the exam, they described the disbelief of their community members. The boys remarked that:

*…katika jamii nyengine watu wanatushangaa sana kwasababu sisi tulikuwa wacheza sana.*

…among some community members they were really surprised at us [for passing] because we played [fooled around] a lot.

Although the boys enjoyed the marvel of their neighbors and community members, a number of girls described the reaction of their families in a group story:

| *… katika jamii vile vile ilikuwa imara* | … among my community it [the |
|---|---|
| *na kuniona bora na kunipa kila aina ya* | reaction] was strong and they saw me |
| *ushauri na kunichangia baadhi ya* | in a more positive light and began to |
| *vitendea kazi kwa mfano mabuku, peni.* | give me all kinds of advice and |
| *mkoba, viatu na pia ada ya kulipia* | rewarded me with school equipment |
| *shule.…* | such as notebooks, pens, bags, shoes, |
| | and school fees…. |

While passing the exam can give youth the agency and motivation to further their schooling and pursue their *maisha mazuri*, the exams can have an equally adverse impact.

**Failing the *Mtihani***

As quoted in Chapter Four, Nyerere problematized using "failure" for youth who did not pass their secondary school exams in one of the last speeches on education before his death. He declared, "This kind of language [failure] is absolutely intolerable…It is adding insult to injury" (Nyerere, 1998 as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004, p. 162). The five Baobab youth who did not pass their Form 2 exams described their devastation after learning they failed the exams, but also how they had to seek new aspirations and imagine different futures. Failing the Form 2 exam not only made it difficult to continue on with schooling, but it also limited the kinds of work they could pursue, and the ability to claim the identity of *mhitimu*. The youth recounted how they had to process failure viscerally as well as emotionally in their journals.

A few weeks after the exam results were released, Pili, wrote:

*Yalipo toka matokeo nilijisikia mnyofu*     When the exams came out, I felt so

*sana na wa kwanza kumuhadithia*     down and out. The first person I told

*mama kwasababu nilijisikia mnyovu*     was my mother because I felt

*nilijitahidi kusoma mabuku yangu*     devastated. I had tried so hard to study.

*nilienda kulala…wenzangu niliosoma*     I went to sleep…all my classmates

*nao, wote wamepasi. Mie tu peke*     passed. It was only me that failed so I

*[y]angu nilifeli sasa ndo nimezidi*     felt even more depressed…

*kujisikia mnyonge…*

So confident in her early writing about how she would pass the exam, Pili described the feeling of being isolated from her classmates and curling up to sleep after seeing that her name was not on the list of those who passed the exam posted on the school wall. Not unlike the character who fails in the vignette *Khadija* told above, Pili described those overwhelming emotions that Khamis, Halima, and Jokha[39] also wrote about after receiving their results. They expressed feeling down and out, wretched, sad, melancholy, disappointed, embarrassed, angry, wanting badly to keep studying, discouraged, hopeless, devastated, bitter, afraid to go outside of the house, and unable to eat and sleep. Khamis narrated:

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[39] Habib, who also failed the exam as detailed in Chapter Five, wrote his post-exam story as if he had passed the exam and as such his narrative was not used here.

|  |  |
|---|---|
| *Mama ndio mtu wa mwanzo* | My mother was the first person whom I |
| *nilemwambia kuwa sijafaulu.* | told I had failed. I told her because I |
| *Nilimwambia yeye kwasababu* | felt bad [embarrassed] about telling my |
| *nilijisikia vibya kuwaambia rafiki* | friends that I failed. |
| *zangu kuwa nimefeli.* | |

Like Khamis, the other students who failed the exam told their mother or father first, seeking both solace and strategies for what they should do next. With time, however, these youth relayed that peers and classmates who passed encouraged them not to give up and to keep studying.

This theme of peer support and encouraging one another to continue with their studies, especially among female students, also resurfaced in the group stories written during the second PTA workshop that took place after their results were released (April 2017). Participants were tasked with writing a script about two cousins who lived together and who took the Form 2 exam at the same time. One of the cousins passed and the other failed. They were prompted to describe how each of the youth felt, what they did next, and how their lives changed (or not) after the exam. The resolution to failing in all four of the collective vignettes was to keep studying. Two of the groups sent the cousin who had not passed onto a vocational training program, while another sent the cousin onto a private school.

The characters in these vignettes resembled the pathways of two of the participants who had failed the exam; Habib who had been enrolled in a TVET program and Pili who had matriculated into a private school. While enrolling in a TVET program may be considered inferior to an advanced secondary level school or university pathway

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for youth from Minazi or Mavinje School, among the Baobab students attending a TVET program was well-respected. Someone with technical training could undoubtedly find employment in the Baobab community. In the case of Bi Aida's children, the only one of her sons that was viably employed in their rural community was the one that had finished a TVET electrician course. He was lauded for his work among his family and peers.

The only group that ended their story of the two cousins ambiguously, with no details on how or where the cousin would be able to continue her studies, was written collectively by Jokha and Halima who had failed the exam and had yet to be matriculated into any further education. They were waiting for their families to find money to enroll them in a private school or other pathway. As of January 2018, however, they had given up on a formal schooling pathway.

The two groups of girls were careful to show an allegiance and alliance between the two cousins in their stories. Likewise, both groups scripted that the cousin who had passed her exam reassured the cousin who had failed. "*Kufeli siyo mwisho wa maisha*," ("Failing isn't the end of life."), the cousin remarked. The girls also wrote about seeking the support and the advice of teachers and parents. Although these groups worked on separate sides of the room, it was interesting that they scripted nearly the same dialogue.

Meanwhile the group of boys described the strained relation between the two cousins. The student who failed felt like he was being snubbed by his cousin who passed and was resentful he could not further his aspirations: "*Kwa yule ambae hakufaulu matumaini yake yalianza kupotea*," ("The one who failed started to lose track of his aspirations.") The boys' script directly links one's agency to making decisions for the future, and the capacity to aspire professionally, with the exam results. Although this

connection between *maisha mazuri* and exam results is acknowledged by youth, MoEVT officials, parents, and others interviewed in this research, it is rarely acknowledged frontstage in policy discussions, which will be discussed further in the final chapter.

As was told during the youth theater scripts, journal narratives, and youth interviews, nearly all of the parents of the youth who had failed promised their children that they would have another opportunity to study. However, as was exemplified in Chapter Five through Khamis, Jokha's and Halima's narratives, not all families had the financial resources to pay for private school or TVET programs. In a joint story Jokha and Pili composed together, they wrote:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Hatukuwa na furaha kama wenzetu* | We were not happy like our classmates |
| *tulikuwa na hasira kwa sababu* | [who passed], we were angry because |
| *hatukufaulu. Tumeitwa skuli kwa* | we failed. We were called to school |
| *wanafunzi wote waliofeli kujiendeleza* | with all the other students who failed |
| *na masomo ya mafunzo ya amali.* | and were told to continue our studies in |
| | vocational training. |

As described earlier, the youth in this study were part of the last cohort of youth before the 2006 policy extended basic compulsory education to Form 4. MoEVT is encouraging this cohort to continue on with schooling up to Form 4 through either private schools or the vocational track. However, it is hard to make continued learning compulsory when it costs families money and there is no financial support, such as loans or grants, to help offset these costs (Habib was paying the equivalent of $155 US or 120,000 TZS per year).

Beyond private education, TVET institutions seem to be the only public one-stop policy solution for all youth who failed the exam, which presents some serious limitations. First, many of the youth cannot pay the costs of these two to three-year courses. Second, there are not enough spaces in the TVET institutions to accommodate all these students (MoEVT representative, interview, 24 August 2016). Third, TVET programs are more expensive for the MoEVT to operate than the secondary schooling and are beyond the current confines of the budget (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Fourth, if all youth who failed the exams were matriculated into TVET, there would likely be an oversaturation of carpenters, electricians, tailors, etc. Finally, eight of the 14 trades offered at these Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) open to Form 2 students are highly male-oriented (i.e. welding and carpentry) and reinforce gendered work. Of the youth enrolled at the three VTCs in 2015, only 28 percent were females (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Until VTC courses are more gender-responsive, they will reinforce historical inequities where advanced education served primarily males.

The challenge of continuing to study after failing the Form 2 exam was portrayed by five of the 19 Baobab youth in this study. In the months following the exam, only two of these five youth actually matriculated into further formal MoEVT pathways. Just like the cousins in the fictitious story, for some of the youth their futures were left ambiguous and in a state of limbo. While they would soon move onto other conjunctures in their lives, the memory of having failed would endure. "And so instead of leaving school with a sense of pride and achievement of their Seven Years Education [10 or 12 in Zanzibar], they live for the rest of their lives with a stigma of having been failures." (Nyerere, 1998, as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004, p.162).

**Conclusion**

As the Baobab youths' narratives, interviews, and theater scripts show frontstage, the high-stakes exams are a highly emotional and visceral experience and are one of the climaxes of the students' schooling conjuncture. This critical moment not only determines whether youth are labeled as successes or failures, but also influences how they see themselves and their futures and *maisha mazuri*. Exam scores can open up new careers of interest as youth are tracked into arts or sciences per their results. A number of youth who had previously aspired to be a doctor decided to go into a career aligned with an arts track, such as a teacher, because their science marks were not high enough. In other cases, the few youth who had aspired to be pilots or teachers decided to be doctors after being designated to the sciences—a more selective track. For those that already wanted to be a doctor, a high score may have given them confidence and agency to become a famous doctor as they expressed in their interviews. Those who passed described being celebrated by their school and families. The boys did victory laps and bragged to their peers while girls tended to share their success quietly and to empathize with friends who had failed. Both males and females, however, reinforced in their journals that they too could have easily been among those youth who failed the exam.

Meanwhile, the youth who failed the exam were forced to circumscribe their aspirations of becoming a *mhitimu* and give up on the formal career pathways they declared as an aspect of their *maisha mazuri* on the first day of the PTA workshops. While they had the empathy and support of their family and peers, this did not help make their futures any more certain. It took three of the five youth nearly a year to find a non-schooling pathway for themselves as they could not afford the private school or TVET

tracks. For the girl pushouts like Halima, their *maisha mazuri* was now focused on helping their future children become *wahitimu*. For Khamis it was on running his own business and economically providing for his family. As such, the *watoro* in this study were forced to create new aspirations and futures, which included working in the informal economy, or putting their aspirations on hold. Regardless of the new aspirations they declared in our final meeting, failing the exam had changed the course of their lives.

The Form 2 *mtihani* is regarded as a vital conjuncture that nearly all youth pass through in pursuit of their compulsory basic education. However, I cannot help but question if this exam is still necessary. Year after year youth continue to perform a part of the colonial legacy that is neither a good indicator of their later success in school, nor useful in helping them get the supports they need to become *mhitimu* or achieve their *maisha mazuri*. As the youth scripts, interviews, and journals revealed, the exam is just the final climax in being pushed out of school, but the pathway has already been laid by the inequalities between communities, schools, and families that exist. Instead of preparing these youth for the examination of life, they are being taught to believe that *Maisha Badaaye*, life comes after the high-stakes exams. In the final chapter I outline the findings of this research gleaned from my mixed-methods analyses in the previous chapters. I also present recommendations for policymakers and implications for international development agencies and researchers.

**Chapter Eight: *Mtoro*, *Mhitimu*, and Visions of a *Maisha Mazuri***

In this dissertation I scrutinized how passing or failing the secondary school exams, and ultimately becoming a *mhitimu* (graduate) or a *mtoro* (dropout), influenced Zanzibari girls' and boys' visions for their *maisha mazuri* (good lives). I used youth performances and narratives to not only complicate this graduate/dropout binary, but also to illustrate how youths' schooling pathways vary by gender, school and geographic location (rural, urban, *ng'ambo*), and families' economic resources and social networks. Through the notion of social scripts (inter/national, religious and cultural, and collectively embedded), I showed how different discourses influenced youths' visions of their schooling and their futures. I also utilized the concept of collective agency to frame how youth perform and react to the different challenges and opportunities presented. The ultimate goal of this research was to expose how becoming *wahitimu* and *watoro* affects youths' futures, and to challenge the idea that youth are deficient in a fair system. The *wahitimu/watoro* binary and the deficiency narrative negate the major obstacles youth have surmounted and the collective agency they have performed in the process of schooling.

In this chapter, I highlight some of my dissertation's key findings and present eight implications and recommendations for international development agencies, researchers, policymakers, and educators. I also suggest areas where further research is needed. First, though, I return to the narratives of Bi Maha and Bi Aida—my urban and rural families in Zanzibar—to synthesize the findings of the previous chapters and to illustrate the differences between students originating from Baobab, Mavinje, and Minazi Schools.

**Revisiting Bi Maha and Bi Aida's Narratives**

On a trip to Zanzibar when I was solidifying my dissertation topic, I was discussing my research ideas with one of Bi Maha's daughters, Shadida. Over our twenty years of sisterhood we spent many late evenings talking about politics, religion, and gender. On this evening, I was reciting to her the inter/national script that Zanzibari girls drop out of secondary school at higher rates than boys. I had read this script in MoEVT documents (MoEVT, 2014b) and heard it repeated time and again at various education stakeholder meetings hosted by international institutions. I explained to Shadida that I wanted to challenge this script through the analysis of youth narratives and the longitudinal data Abrahman and I had collected between 2008 and 2017. "You have seen how schooling has changed over time, but what is written about us as Zanzibari women is slower to change," she said in Kiswahili. We talked about her extended family and the dozens of women in her generation who were *wahitimu* and had become doctors, business executives, engineers, and scientists among other typically male-dominated professions. These were women who had social and economic networks that supported them along their schooling pathways. All of Shadida's sisters and brothers were secondary school *wahitimu*, and many of them had studied at Mavinje School. Nearly all of them had completed at least one university degree. Most of her sisters were formally employed, but not all of them. Two of her sisters were raising their children and supporting their husbands' careers or helping run informal activities for social organizations, such as charity events and school fundraisers.

Shadida had graduated from a government secondary school and had attended the top ranked schools [40] with dedicated teachers and English language clubs. Her family had the resources to provide quality tuition led by professional teachers, and they helped each other navigate university and scholarship applications. She had gone on to study at Tanzania's most-renowned university and had been awarded a scholarship to obtain her master's degree abroad.

The notable opportunities for women *wahitimu* in Shadida's urban family were very different from the challenges confronting Bi Aida's children and the students from the rural Baobab School as well as some of the youth from the *n'gambo*, the high-density areas outside of the main city center near Minazi School. These youth came from families with fewer economic resources and social networks than their Mavinje classmates and lived in largely informal economies. Bi Aida's children attended a rural secondary school much like Baobab, which gave them a poor foundation in literacy, numeracy, and the sciences, and where the teachers struggled with English. They attended an ad hoc tuition program facilitated by volunteer teachers. Their mother and stepfather had not completed primary school, and all of their five younger siblings were pushed out after failing the Form 2 or Form 4 exam. Only one brother had gone on to a TVET program; the rest were working in manual labor or had found an informal apprenticeship at a garage, like some of the Baobab pushouts. Hamsa and Othman's two sisters had gone further than their brothers and had passed the Form 2 exam. One was still in school. The other had failed

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[40] School rank is determined by overall student performance on the standardized national exams, namely Form 4.

the Form 4 exam, had learned informally how to sew, and had gotten married after she could not proceed onto Form 5.

Shadida had met Bi Aida and her family on a number of occasions when she accompanied me to their rural community. She also saw Hamsa and Othman regularly when they moved to the city and attended Minazi School. When I moved back to the US, Shadida even helped advise them on how to apply for internships. Hamsa and Othman were the first in their rural village to attend university; most of their young neighbors were pushouts, dropouts, or pullouts like the students from Baobab. Even though Bi Maha (with whom Shadida lived at the time) and Bi Aida's homes were only separated by 10 kilometers, their lives and notions of *maisha mazuri* seemed worlds apart.

Although Hamsa and Othman had finished their bachelor's degrees in June 2016 when I began my dissertation research, they still had not found jobs by the time I concluded this chapter in May 2018. They were competing with the 350 other *wahitimu* applicants for two open professional positions at the offices where they were interning. Even though they were *wahitimu*, which entailed passing half a dozen exams and surmounting numerous obstacles, their *maisha mazuri* was still in flux. It was not enough to be a *mhitimu* alone, they explained. There were too few positions open for the number of *wahitimu* in their graduating cohort, and they lacked connections and networks to help them find other career pathways. They were questioning if struggling through university was worth the effort. Much like the *rafiki wabaya* (bad friends) in the *Maisha Badaaye* vignettes, the prophecy that *hupati kazi* (you won't get work) had come true for Hamsa and Othman, at least thus far. Their five younger brothers and one sister were already earning money and contributing to the family either as manual laborers, agriculturalists,

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fishermen, electricians, or tailors. Therefore, while becoming a *mhitimu* opens doors to more formal career pathways, schooling is not a quick or steadfast guarantee for achieving one's vision of their *maisha mazuri*.

The stories of Bi Aida and Bi Maha's children contextualize my five main findings, which will be presented alongside recommendations and implications below. Before I discuss these findings, I return to the social scripts outlined in Chapter One to highlight the different underlying ideas and discourses that youth drew upon to in their performances of schooling. These social scripts expose how being labeled a *mtoro* or *mhitimu* influences youths' aspirations and their visions for their *maisha mazuri*. I also revisit how youth performed collective agency as they navigated schooling.

## Returning to the Social Scripts

The aspiration of becoming a *mhitimu* in order to achieve a *maisha mazuri* was informed by a number of different social scripts including inter/national scripts, religious and cultural scripts, and collectively-embedded youth scripts as detailed below.

### Inter/national Scripts

The education as panacea script (Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2003) appeared both frontstage and backstage in the youths' vignettes and narratives. For example, when asked about their futures, youth repeated the phrase "education is important to my future," in their journals, but they had a hard time articulating why. The education as panacea script was also evident in both the girls' and boys' performances as they made the association between more education and better employment on the one hand, and on the other performed the limitations of this assumed link. Interestingly, it was the *rafiki wabaya* who directly challenged this education as panacea script, reminding youth—

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especially males—that becoming a secondary school *mhitimu* does not guarantee that they will later become a doctor or obtain better economic prospects.

The girls in particular showed how their *maisha mazuri* extends beyond work goals and aspirations. Although girls habitually articulated their ideal careers, they seemed less concerned in their journals whether or not schooling would help them secure their desired employment. For girls, schooling allowed them to delay marriage, helped them stay actively engaged with their peers, contributed to confidence-building, furthered their social mobility, and set precedents for their siblings and future children. They also saw schooling as helping them be better future wives, mothers, family members, neighbors, and community members. Though on occasion the boys also articulated that schooling would help them better serve their families and siblings, the intense pressure to acquire work overshadowed these other socioemotional and non-cognitive aspects of male scripts. These gendered scripts overlapped with religious and cultural scripts.

**Religious and Cultural Scripts**

The presence of religious and cultural social scripts was difficult to isolate from the youths' collectively-embedded scripts. As Shadida reiterated to me, this is because, "Islam is not just a set of beliefs but a way of life." However, as described in Chapter One, the importance of being able to read and write was deeply instilled in the vignettes youth wrote and performed, which was described by the participants as an important Islamic value for both girls and boys alike. Likewise, nearly all the girls and some of the

boys expressed the aspiration of living peacefully with neighbors and family, as Islam teaches this value.[41] Many of them also wrote about their desires to be "good Muslims."

**Collectively-embedded Youth Scripts**

The youths' scripts on their aspirations for a *maisha mazuri* were informed by an array of people in their family, school, and community spheres. Within their schools, teachers were portrayed and described as playing both supportive and discouraging roles. However, while teachers were important characters, they took on minor roles compared to youths' family members and peers. Parents appeared in nearly all the girls' narratives on their hopes for the future, helping them negotiate financial and social challenges.

In their interviews, girls and boys alike described siblings and extended family as supporting youths' scripts and aspirations for their futures, whether helping them study, paying for school expenses, guiding them through the education system, or planting work aspirations. Boys also talked to some extent about parents and siblings in their narratives and interviews, but they chose to focus on the role of their friends. While some friends were *rafiki wabaya,* influencing them to drop out or engage in stealing or using marijuana, boys also wrote about *rafiki wazuri* (good friends) who helped them formulate their aspirations and negotiate the world of work. Through the characters in their theater scripts, youth elucidated how critical friends, teachers, neighbors, and family are in the process of navigating schooling scripts and highlighted another concept that emerged in their performances, the role of collective agency.

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[41] As can be seen in a number of places in the Qur'an and Hadith. For example, see Qur'an 4:36.

**The Role of Collective Agency**

Youth performed their agency in part by resisting the inter/national social scripts that pathologized them as girls and boys and instead showed their "capacity for action" (Mahmood, 2001, p. 203). However, their agency was rarely individualistic, but rather socially-situated and formulated through relationships with individuals in youths' family, school, and community environments. Youth performed their collective agency in different ways, such as working with other youth to overcome the various obstacles and challenges, or *mitihani*, and supporting each other after failing the examination. The youth also spoke about working together as students to pass the Form 2 examinations. While in their hour-long productions youth performed the dominant *pathologizing girlhood and boyhood* social scripts, they countered these with vignettes that touched on different aspects of their collective and individual agency as young men and women. They reiterated the need for educators, policymakers, and researchers to treat both girls and boys as assets and agents in their communities and not deficits. In summary, inter/national, religious and cultural, and culturally-embedded social scripts influenced youths' notions of their *maisha mazuri*. However, it was youths' collective agency that enabled them to both resist and act upon their visions and overcome the *mitihani*.

### Becoming a *Mtoro* or *Mhitimu*

While nearly all the youth who participated in this study held the aspiration of becoming a *mhitimu* at the start of this research, their exam results determined whether they achieved this aspiration or not. As expressed in their narratives, after receiving their results the youth who passed had more educational pathways, career possibilities, and other capacities to aspire (Appadurai, 2004) as *wahitimu* than the youth who failed and

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become *watoro*. Therefore, continuing to label youth who fail the exam as "dropouts" in national and global education data places an unfair amount of blame on both the youth and their families. It assumes they are "deficient in a fair system" (Fine, 1991, p. 5).

I argue, as President Nyerere did decades ago, that instead of treating youth as deficient, policymakers and education advocates need to do more to address inequities between schools and communities, including looking at English as the language of instruction; the relevance of the curriculum; access to quality instruction and tuition; and the availability of financial, academic, and social emotional supports in schools. The Form 2 examination also needs to be scrutinized because it is not an accurate predictor of later Form 4 success (Salim, 2011) and may be unfairly promoting or excluding youth from certain backgrounds from Form 3. I delve into the different findings that emerged through the multiple layers of data including the longitudinal analyses conducted with the larger sample of 1,145 youth, the frontstage and backstage narratives written and performed by the 41 youth from Minazi, Mavinje, and Baobab Schools, as well as the interviews conducted with parents, teachers, Ministry representatives, and other education experts. These findings are accompanied by implications and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers below.

## Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

There were five main findings in this research, each of which coincides with one of the analyses in Chapters Four to Seven, as well as a final overarching recommendation. There are also eight overall implications and recommendations that accompany each of the findings as outlined below. The term implication is used for suggestions aimed at broad international and research audiences. The term

recommendation is used when a suggestion is specific to policy or praxis within

Zanzibar.

**Finding One: Girls are not dropping out or failing secondary school at higher rates than boys.**

As presented in Chapter Four, in past generations more girls may have left the

school system before or during secondary school than boys, but this is no longer the case

in Zanzibar. According to the longitudinal cohort data collected in four districts, boys are

more likely to drop out before completing Form 1 than girls. It is therefore important to

acknowledge that girls are staying in school longer and that a concerning number of

youth—especially boys—are leaving school before they even reach the Form 2 exam.

**Implication One: Add boys to gender and equity strategies and initiatives.** As

discussed throughout this dissertation, boys are in large being left out of policies and

programs that address gender and schooling in Zanzibar. According to Ministry and NGO

representatives, this is likely because girls have been historically perceived as

underrepresented in education, and there are still a number of prominent gender equity

issues facing women. Another speculation was that international development agencies

have earmarked girls' education funding[42] that then sets the Ministry's agenda. One of

the Ministry representatives provided examples of such inter/national programs that focus

on girls and said, "…we haven't done much in terms of boys…there has been a lot of

emphasis on girls in the international agendas, but somehow it [emphasis on girls] has

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[42] For example, USAID's Ambassador Girls' Scholarship Program (2004-2011) was transformed into Let Girls Learn under the Obama administration, but with the same ultimate goal of removing barriers for girls. Likewise, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), while promoting gender equity, still focuses largely on the girl child.

also become a local agenda" (interview, September 26, 2017). Inter/national actors, school representatives, and even parents and youth have perpetuated the belief that girls are disadvantaged in education relative to boys, and consequently the increasing proportion of boys leaving before or during secondary school has been left off of the agenda.

The youth in this study suggest that boys also need to be included in the gender and education conversation or they will continue to leave schooling as dropouts, pushouts, and pullouts at higher rates than girls. There are potential economic consequences of boys increasingly becoming *mtoro* versus *mhitimu*, namely fewer skilled workers and more room for outside labor to enter as has been seen in the tourism industry with employees from the mainland moving to Zanzibar to work in hotels and other businesses (Ridge, 2014 noted a similar pattern in her research in the Gulf States). Therefore, I suggest to policy makers and international development efforts working in Zanzibar that boys be added to the gender and education discussion and that in subsequent policy and programming efforts there should be situational analyses of boys as well as girls. Inter/national girls' education organizations in Zanzibar like the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) support boys in addition to girls in their efforts to promote gender equity in schooling, but this has yet to become an official stance in their approach (NGO representative, interview, September 1, 2016). I also recommend that school leadership start to pay attention to dropout and pushout trends for both boys and girls in their communities.

**Implication Two: Support girls' education initiatives that are relevant to Zanzibar.** At present, gender parity has been reached in secondary schooling in

Zanzibar. However, this does not mean that gender equity in education has been achieved in all areas. This dissertation has shown that there are a number of prominent obstacles and challenges that impact Zanzibari girls' engagement in school in different ways than boys, including sexual harassment in their home, school, and community; lack of information on sexual and reproductive health; and under-representation in certain fields such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) (MoEVT representative, interview, April 5, 2017). These issues are important to continue to address through policy and programs. Such programming, however, should be careful not to perpetuate pathologizing girlhood and boyhood perspectives, but instead should be designed based on issues that are supported by evidence from Zanzibar.

According to the MoEVT unit where school pregnancy and marriages are reported, the majority of cases of early marriage in the past few years (2014-2015) were of schoolgirls who got pregnant by a classmate (MoEVT representatives, interviews, August 23, 2016 and April 5, 2017; MoEVT, 2015). There is no conclusive data on the age or demographics of those male classmates, however, because MoEVT does not accurately track boys who get girls pregnant. While strategies like *Ending Child Marriage and Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action* (2012) suggest that girls are getting married to older men, this may not be the case in Zanzibar, and before implementing programs, careful research needs to be conducted. For example, MoEVT could start tracking male students involved in unwanted pregnancies, and work to support legislative changes that allow married girls and boys to return to school (a recommendation made by a MoEVT representative in an interview on August 23, 2016). While by law unmarried pregnant girls can return to school after the first

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pregnancy, most families encourage their pregnant daughters to get married to the father of the unborn child for religious and cultural reasons. My suggestion to international and national agencies is, therefore, that programs intended to support equity and wellbeing of girls should take into careful consideration the reality and context of Zanzibar in the design stage.

**Finding Two: Youth are not merely dropping out of school, they are being pushed and pulled out of school by a number of family, school, and community forces.**

Youth become *watoro* for a myriad of reasons, from deciding to leave (dropout), to being required to leave by policy (pushout), to being withdrawn by their families (pullout). Therefore, I rethink the term *mtoro* and use a more nuanced analysis than just "drop-out rates" in MoEVT data.

**Implication/Recommendation Three: Use more nuanced vocabulary for "dropout."** When students leave school in Zanzibar there is no clear or systematic monitoring or tracking of the reasons they leave. At the national level, youth are grouped into one large category of "dropouts" regardless of whether they left because they had to make money for their families, were forced to get married, or they could not understand the classroom content. I therefore suggest creating more accurate tracking systems within schools and the central MoEVT to document the multiple reasons youth are leaving. While schools do track these reasons to some extent, there is no centralized way of reporting these data. With more nuanced and accurate data, analyses within and between schools could be conducted to better understand inequities related to geographic location, gender, family backgrounds, and other factors affecting youths' retention and completion of schooling. Although this recommendation is targeted at the MoEVT education

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monitoring information system, this suggestion could be applied at the global level as well. I acknowledge that it is costly and challenging to document reasons for drop-outs, but tracking clear cases of pushouts (youth who failed the exams) versus those who dropped out before the exams would be a start. Likewise, more systematic qualitative and quantitative studies of *watoro* and out-of-school youth would help provide better data for policymakers, educators, and researchers.

**Finding Three: While youth faced familial, school, and community-level challenges in achieving the status of *mhitimu*, many of the obstacles were located at the school level.**

The 2006 Policy alludes to a number of school-level challenges that contributed to drop-out rates in Zanzibar, including "poor quality of education," "irrelevant curriculum," and "physical [corporal] punishment" (p. 24; p. 63). However, the policy commingles these factors with family and individual-level reasons that contribute to dropout rates, such as lack of motivation to learn, low awareness of parents, and pressure to engage in income generation (MoEVT, 2006). The longitudinal findings in this research suggest that school-level factors play a large role in whether youth fail exams and leave school in or prior to Form 2 (Salim, 2011 also points to school-level factors in his research among Form 4 students). While the youth did not overtly blame their schools for failing their exams, backstage there were a number of school factors youth identified. These included a curriculum that was not relevant to youths' intended *maisha mazuri* as well as insufficient financial, academic, and social emotional supports at schools. There were also inequities between schools exacerbated by differential access to quality English instruction and availability of quality tuition. One of the backstage issues only briefly

discussed with a Ministry representative (interview, September 2, 2016) was that there are still not enough spaces for all the youth of the corresponding secondary age; as such, the examinations continue to filter students out by available spaces. While this is expected to change over time, lack of space is still an underlying challenge. The following recommendations respond to the shortcomings identified through the youth narratives and theater scripts and are intended for Zanzibari policy makers and school administrators. However, for international development agencies keen on increasing quality schooling for all, these implications are also relevant.

**Recommendation Four: Provide more financial, academic, and social guidance and counselling support for students.** While the youth narratives do not suggest that schools should serve as solutions for families' *mitihani*, or serve as charity institutions, their stories do indicate that teachers and school leaders could be more empathetic to students' hardships, especially in times of personal or family crises. More than being empathetic, however, youth performed how lack of school supports leads to pushout. As Salim (2011) suggests, Zanzibari students from schools where staff are more attuned to dealing with financial issues, make better academic progress than those in schools where these support structures are lacking. Therefore, defining a clearer national strategy to providing financial safety nets or scholarships for students and working with teachers to implement such programs is one approach to this issue.

In addition to financial support, many of the students demonstrated through their scripts that they needed additional academic and learning supports. While it was astonishing to watch how the two young male Baobab students who could not read and write (as described in Chapter Five and Six) coped, and the sheer collective agency and

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ingenuity they employed trying to keep up in the workshops, it is hard not to ignore their

academic and schooling potential had they gotten the academic support they needed.

Training educational staff to be able to make these diagnoses and support these students

would give them an opportunity to become *wahitimu*.

Beyond financial and academic support, the facilitators frequently discussed the

level of social and emotional supports many of the students needed given that many of

them had experienced hardships like the death of a parent or a sibling and been juggled

between grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other family members. Also, a number of

the youth were highly impressionable and described making bad choices under peer

pressure or struggled with severe lack of confidence. If these girls and boys had been

assessed using non-cognitive assessments, they would have likely scored very low in

confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness, grit, and other areas (Roberts, Martin, & Olaru,

2015). Social-emotional guidance could have given them support needed to succeed in

class.

School guidance and counseling efforts are often a low priority in Zanzibar when

schools have minimal educational resources and barely sufficient funds to pay teachers.

MoEVT established a Guidance and Counseling Unit in the Ministry in 2000 to help

students with obstacles in schooling, academic counselling, and career paths and vowed

to strengthen this unit in their 2006 policy (MoEVT, 2006; MoEVT, 2104a). Under this

policy, schools are mandated to have two trained teacher counsellors (one male and

female), but the capacity of these teachers to actually counsel is weak: "The training they

[the trained teachers] receive is limited to counselling children on acceptable behaviours

but not on academic, emotional or psychological issues or how to confront emerging

challenges" (MoEVT, 2006, p. 65). In addition to poor training, there are simply too few counselors for the population (MoEVT, 2006).

According to Bi Maha, who used to work in guidance and counseling under the MoEVT, these roles helped prevent youth from dropping out, but only when all the challenges in a young person's life are addressed, not only their behavior in school (personal communication, September 2, 2016). Although the MoEVT is committed to policy solutions around guidance and counseling (MoEVT, 2014a), the provision of better services was not apparent in the narratives and scripts of the students in this research. Therefore, investing in qualified school counselors is important for a number of reasons. First, these personnel can assume some of the burdens placed on teachers and head teachers in following, tracking, and supporting students (per recommendation number three). Second, school counselors trained in the social-emotional wellbeing and concerns of students would provide counseling services that students are not getting from their classroom teachers. Third, school counselors could help youth explore the different work options in their community and the education pathways (both formal and informal) needed to achieve these work aspirations and to help them decide whether schooling is indeed the best pathway. These programs should cater to both male and female students as well as those who will go into formal and informal work. In addition to better financial, academic, workforce, and social emotional support, another recommendation that emerged from the youths' performances was the quality of English language instruction as discussed below.

**Recommendation Five: Reduce inequalities in English language instruction between schools.** As high-stakes secondary examinations are all in English except for the

Kiswahili and Arabic sections, the great inequities between English language instruction in schools should be addressed. It is no surprise that schools like Baobab continue to have higher proportions of pushouts due to poor instruction and language mastery in English.

If English continues to be the language of instruction from Standard 5 onwards, then I concur with Salim's (2011) recommendation of establishing programs that support English learning across schools, especially under-resourced schools. Salim suggests that "class-readers and library readers, the use of oral speaking, debate and essay writing need to be re-introduced as it was done in the past" (p. 230). Prior to 2007, there was an Orientation Secondary Class (OSC), or bridge year, throughout Zanzibar for students who did not yet have the English language and other academic competencies for Form 1. This was abolished with the new policy when English instruction was shifted from Form 1 down to Standard 5 with the expectation that learning English at a younger age would help students be better prepared for the transition to secondary school. This policy shift, however, does not address the inequities between and within schools that continue to persist across Zanzibar. As this current cohort of youth, who were affected by the 2006 Policy change, sits for the Form 4 exams in 2019, it will be important to analyze boys' and girls' exam results compared to the past cohort who had access to OSC to better understand if inequities were reduced or exacerbated by the new English language policy.

In addition to improving opportunities for youth to speak and practice English in schools, and analyzing the new English language policy, it is also essential to provide opportunities for teachers to build their confidence and ability to instruct in English. The low level of spoken English was a common challenge identified by students, teachers, head teachers, parents, and Ministry officials alike in their interviews. Results from

student literacy assessments (the Early Grade Reading Assessment) also allude to the fact that mainland and Zanzibari teachers are rarely teaching English reading and writing, which directly affects students' mastery of English (RTI, 2016). While the report did not test teachers' English, one of the reasons teachers likely do not teach English reading and writing is they themselves have low comprehension and confidence (as reported to Abrahman and me during our 2008 longitudinal data collection). Improving teacher's confidence in English could be facilitated through in-service and pre-service training programs and would help ensure teachers have the minimal language qualifications needed to successfully teach the respective curricula in English. For example, Abrahman, Bello, and I worked on some low-cost interactive video and audio training in English for Zanzibari teachers back in 2010 to provide teachers with language tutorials. Such programs could be expanded to all teachers across Zanzibar.

**Recommendation Six: Enhance the relevance of the curriculum.** Another backstage issue that emerged was the relevancy of the school curriculum, and whether mastering this curriculum—or becoming a *mhitimu*—would actually help youth secure future work. In a number of the male youths' vignettes, the *rafiki wabaya* directly questioned the relevancy of the secondary school curriculum in preparing youth to obtain employment in their largely informal economy.

Zanzibar's MoEVT has the difficult task of developing a compulsory basic education curriculum up to Form 2 (and now Form 4) that serves youth who will eventually go into formal, informal, and self-employment, or no employment at all. The *rafiki wabaya* accused the curriculum of failing at the first by not preparing youth for an economic end. According to the interviews with Ministry officials and other education

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experts, this is in part because schools teach a curriculum that is heavily focused on preparing students for the exam (MoEVT, 2006; Salim, 2012) and the competencies that the Zanzibar Exam Council (ZEC) or the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) have determined are necessary to don the title of *mhitimu*. The consequence of this approach—one that is common in many parts of the world—is that youth who do not see becoming a *mhitimu* as important or viable for reaching their *maisha mazuri* are likely to become *mtoro*. A number of the narratives pointed out that the school curriculum is laden with content, such as the Kiswahili language curriculum where students are asked to define morphemes, which do not help prepare youth for securing future employment. Consequently, students are being asked to memorize knowledge but not to develop their own scripts for their *maisha mazuri*.

As we facilitators saw throughout the PTA workshops, it was much harder for the students to use their problem solving and creative skills to develop a narrative or vignette than it was for them to memorize the already produced script. My recommendation is to ensure schools are teaching a curriculum that is relevant for youth with different visions of their *maisha mazuri*, and not just those aspiring to become *wahitimu*. This means making the curriculum responsive to youth who are pressured to start earning a living early. This could include offering internship and apprenticeship opportunities through schools, as well as entrepreneurship curriculum as is the current approach in mainland Tanzania. Although there are specialized business secondary schools for youth in Zanzibar, these are typically only accessible to a small proportion of the population and are usually reserved for youth who pass high on the Standard 6 exams (and are matriculated into a "biased" stream or *michepuo* secondary school as mentioned in

Chapter Four). As Nyerere (1984 as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004) proposed

for the mainland over 34 years ago, these "biased" or specialty schools that focus on

business, agriculture, or technical trades should be more accessible to all youth,

especially youth in rural areas where there are few formal jobs. While the Ministry has

identified the TVET track as a viable formal option, broadening access to "biased"

schools and determining how entrepreneurial skills could be offered to all interested

secondary school students are other possible areas of exploration (see DeJaeghere, 2017

and Honeyman, 2016 for further discussions). Zanzibar has a long history of international

trade and a culture of small business dating back hundreds of years. An entrepreneurship

curriculum could be created that reflects the regional context of Zanzibar and would

prepare, youth for their life after school, or what Nyerere (1984 as cited in Lema,

Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004) called the "real examination" (p. 156).

**Finding Four: The exam is the major reason youth are leaving school between Form
2 and 3.**

Based on the performances and narratives of the youth in this study, the Form 2

exam is both a momentous and vital conjuncture in students' lives, one that either labels

them a *mtoro* or *mhitimu*. If students fail the exam, the emotional toll on students is

immense and for many students this marks the end of any formal learning opportunity, as

TVET cannot realistically serve all those that fail as the policy prescribes. If students

pass, they have jumped over one hurdle, but are constantly reminded by their peers,

neighbors, families, teachers and others that there are more *mtihani* and *mitihani* to come.

Furthermore, the Form 2 exam is not a reliable and valid predictor of success on the Form

4 examination, even though this is one of its objectives (Salim, 2011). This is likely

because of different English proficiency among the Form 2 takers and because the Form 2 exam is developed and administered by ZEC, while the Form 4 and 6 exams are administered by NECTA in the mainland. The ZEC and NECTA protocols and procedures differ as do as their overarching reliability and validity as assessments.

This raises the question as to why youth are being subjected to such stress for an assessment that is not a good predictor of whether or not they are prepared for the Form 4 exam. Likewise, if all youth now have access to Form 4 education, what is the purpose of labeling youth by who passes and or fails the Form 2 exam?

**Recommendation Seven: Use the Form 2 examination as an in-school assessment and not as a high-stakes exam.**

The recommendation is, therefore, to officially remove the Form 2 examination as a selective measure and to revise the test so it can be used as an assessment rather than a means of pushing youth out of school. As one of the MoEVT representatives discussed (Interview, September 2, 2017), this would mean major infrastructural improvements to ensure that there is sufficient space, teachers, materials, and capacity to educate all students presently in Form 2. If the Form 2 exam must stay as a high-stakes assessment, I concur with Salim's (2011) recommendation that at minimum its protocols of administration should be analyzed and improved. I would add that ZEC should seriously consider administering the Form 2 exam in Kiswahili and English, a recommendation made by Rea-Dickens and Yu (2013): "A system of bi- or multilingual assessment would also be considerably fairer and more inclusive for all students" (p. 202).

In addition to making the exam bilingual (Rea-Dickens et al. 2009; Rea-Dickens & Yu, 2013), improving the actual measurement metrics (Salim, 2011), and improving

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teachers use of on-going assessments in the classrooms to prepare students (Salim, 2011; Shuyler, 2008), I also recommend preparing youth for the emotional and mental stress of potentially failing the exams (Form 2 to Form 6). As one of their roles, school guidance and counselling teachers (per the above recommendation) could ensure there are supports in place for youth who fail, including how to navigate alternative education pathways that are options for them. As described in Chapter Three, during the March 2017 workshop, two of Bi Aida's sons and two of Abrahman's nieces who had failed the Form 2 exam met with the five Baobab youth who had failed the exam to share their stories of how they enrolled in TVET or non-formal programs, including electrician, mechanic, and tailoring training. Providing activities like these, as Abrahman, Bello, and Tabshir recounted, helped youth imagine other possibilities beyond formal schooling and gave them a chance to ask questions. The conversation focused not on failing, nor on becoming a *mtoro*, but on how to move forward. In summary, I recommend evaluating the necessity of this examination, the language in which it is administered, the administration procedures, and how schools support youth who fail the examination after the results are released.

**Finding Five: Being labeled a *mtoro* or *mhitimu* has a substantial impact on youths' aspirations and their visions for their *maisha mazuri*.**

As described throughout this study, being labeled a *mtoro* or *mhitimu* affects the kind of work youth are eligible to pursue, their social mobility, their confidence, their reputations and relationships, among other ends. While Zanzibari youth may not fulfill all the aspirations they script for themselves in secondary school, helping them with their capacity to aspire and becoming a *mhitimu* is a start. My final overarching

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recommendation emerges from the scripts, narratives, and interviews, but also the lived examples I witnessed through Bi Aida' and Bi Maha's children.

   **Implication Eight: Support youth-led solutions that engage their collective agency to navigate their futures.** According to the literature presented in Chapter Two, the dominant inter/national scripts on girls and boys in education reflect a pathologizing girlhood and boyhood narrative where girls are portrayed as oppressed and victims, and males are depicted as oppressors (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Adely, 2012; Kirk, Mitchell, & Reid-Walsh, 2010; Ridge, 2014). Schooling as a panacea is often rendered as the solution to victimization and oppression because it assumes formal education will result in the empowerment of women (see Tembon & Fort, 2008; UNICEF, 2011; UNESCO, 2015; USAID, 2012b; The WB, 2014). Schooling is also assumed to make males more employable and, in majority Muslim countries, less likely to participate in terrorism or to adopt extremist positions, an inter/national script that Shirazi (2012) critiques. The problem with these pathologizing views is that they position girls and boys as deficient in a fair system rather than as agentic youth in an unfair system (Fine, 1999; M. Morris, 2016; Nyerere, 1998 as cited in Lema, Mbilinyi, & Rajani, 2004).

   Although the youth in this study held some of these deficit views, repeating and reproducing these negative stereotypes in various dialogues with the *rafiki wabaya*, discerning neighbors, and even teachers and family members, the youth also challenged this deficit stance in a number of vignettes. They often wrote or performed examples of collective agency to offer counter-narratives to the deficit viewpoint and came up with youth-led solutions to mitigate tensions in their theater scripts and to address real life problems and scenarios. Sometimes this was sharing food or money, supporting each

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other through death and illness, talking back to individuals pressuring them for drugs or sex, and/or providing each other comfort when failing the exams. Even though their formal schooling encouraged individual competition—through class ranks, publically posting of examinations, selecting prefects, and streaming students into schools by exam performance—youth still emphasized and performed their collective power and agency.

My recommendation, therefore, is to support youth-led solutions where students harness their collective agency to mitigate obstacles in schooling as well as to navigate their futures. Many such examples already exist in the youths' communities. For example, in 2006 I received a fellowship to return to Zanzibar to study and work in a community-based organization started by Shadida and other Zanzibari alumni from the University of Dar es Salaam. Their main activity was to fund university students to return to Pemba during each school break to run intensive study camps, which served as a form of comprehensive tutoring (tuition) for both male and female students. These student volunteers taught subjects where there were no qualified teachers, such as the sciences, math, and English. For four to 12 weeks, they lived with students from the most marginalized schools and taught them the content they had missed out on during the school year. They helped prepare secondary school students for the exams and at the same time served as role models of how to overcome schooling obstacles and how to pursue aspirations for attending the university.

As *wahitimu* from the same towns and villages as the students, the impact on the youth was remarkable and many of the secondary school students went on to be volunteers when they reached university. These alumni also organized donations of computers, lab equipment, and textbooks, and raised money to build a school in a

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community where there was none. Their informal mission was to help other youth become *wahitimu* amidst schooling shortcomings and to live a *maisha mazuri*. They believed that helping these youth navigate their futures would also support the wellbeing of their larger communities. There are undoubtedly other examples of effective youth-led solutions that international development agencies, national policy makers, researchers, and school administrators could learn from if youth are given the opportunity to take front and center stage. My final suggestion is therefore to create these spaces and stages for youth to perform their collective agency and solutions.

**New Directions in Research**

One of the methodological contributions of this dissertation is using Popular Theater Approach (PTA) to create a stage for youth to perform their aspirations and disillusions with schooling, as well as solutions to the obstacles they have confronted, including the high-stakes exam. By privileging the scripts youth developed and enacted, I intentionally tried to challenge the inter/national scripts that pathologize girlhood and boyhood. Using theater as a transformative, youth-centered methodology and analytical framework has great potential in educational research as it allows for deep conversations and enactments of power dynamics among different characters, in different settings, and around diverse issues.

In addition to using more arts-based methodologies in education research, a number of different areas for future research also emerged. These included the need for a comprehensive study of *watoro*, or those students who have dropped out of school before or during Form 2. Identifying the reasons youth left would help isolate the family, school, and community factors that have influenced them to leave. Ideally, this research would

provide quantitative data to enhance the longitudinal analyses of dropouts, and to identify inequities between schools and between students in the same school. Such research would also ideally draw on qualitative methodologies, like PTA, to allow youth to voice the multiple and complex reasons for leaving. A special study on boys, and how pressure to earn money relates to their reasons for dropping out, would also be beneficial, as well as research on whether becoming a *mhitimu* indeed allows youth to access their work aspirations. As the 2006 Policy points out, there have been no comprehensive studies on this issue to date, although I was notified of a study conducted in 2017 that was in the process of being published.

Lastly, I propose new research on the extent to which early marriage still exists in Zanzibar, including accurate tracking of the reasons that precipitate a young woman or man to marry and how this overlaps with early pregnancy. Qualitative studies on areas in Zanzibar where early marriage still occurs would help identify ways to shift this practice, or potentially signal communities where there is a need for greater sexual and reproductive health education. Similarly, an ethnographic study in areas where this practice is no longer commonplace would help identify successful local efforts to curb this practice, which could be valuable to other parts of Zanzibar and beyond.

## Conclusion

As I finished writing this chapter, I received a number of texts and emails from Zanzibar. The first message from the Mavinje student in Zanzibar read, "I can't go to Form 5!," The exams were released on January 30th, 2018, and Samia had earned her Form 4 certificate but failed to qualify for A-level. "I want to fulfill my dream...of being a journalist," she lamented. Unlike the Baobab students pushed out in Form 2, this urban

student can still go onto the School of Journalism in Zanzibar as a Form 4 *mhitimu*. Nonetheless, she expressed feeling very disappointed after investing months of studying into the exam. She reminded me she had wanted to do well on the Form 4 *mtihani* to qualify for A-levels, to make her family proud, and to prove to herself that she could do it. Minutes later, I got a text from Hamsa, one of Bi Aida's sons, who had been waiting for months to hear back after a job interview. He wrote to tell me he is no closer to a job at this moment and does not have enough money for rent, food, or medicine to treat his malaria. He was seeking some consolation that his schooling had not been in vain after two years of unemployment. "They [the places he was applying] keep telling me that I need to know someone inside to land a position," he described.

As I tried to find the words to encourage Samia and Hamsa not to give up on their aspirations for a *maisha mazuri*, I was acutely aware that performing schooling is a messy and emotional process, full of examinations and long periods in limbo that can extend into adulthood. Their messages also reminded me that schooling is full of inequities and obstacles that will impact Zanzibari girls' and boys' pathways differently, as well as those from certain socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds without social networks. Many youth will be pushed out of school, some will drop out or be pulled out, and others will go on to become *wahitimu*. As the youth in this dissertation have shown through performances, whether they are labeled *watoro* or *wahitimu* matters for their futures.

In addition to challenging the inter/national scripts that portray young women and men from a pathologizing girlhood and boyhood stance, I have attempted to highlight the other scripts youth in Zanzibar draw from in their schooling. These include religious and

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cultural scripts and collectively-embedded youth scripts. I have tried to show the tensions and the obstacles youth encountered in their schooling pathways, as well as how youth have faced and/or resolved these challenges in their actual lives through collective agency. If we as researchers and policy makers have a common goal of trying to improve the quality of schooling and life outcomes for youth, then understanding who is leaving school, why they are leaving, and how leaving impacts their futures and aspirations for their *maisha mazuri*, for better or for worse, is critical. It is my hope that this dissertation sheds some light in these three areas, and how the linkages between *mtoro, mhitimu* and *maisha mazuri* differ for male and female youth.

I also hope that by allowing Zanzibari youths' scripts on secondary schooling to take frontstage in this dissertation and beyond, the inequities and obstacles they experienced will be made clearer to policy makers, researchers, and international development agencies who have the resources to invest in helping youth become *wahitimu* and/or furthering their capacity to aspire. As I learned from witnessing the youths' performances, the way forward is not solely about keeping young people in school or helping them perform better on the exams, it is in supporting them to achieve a *maisha mazuri* they have themselves scripted.

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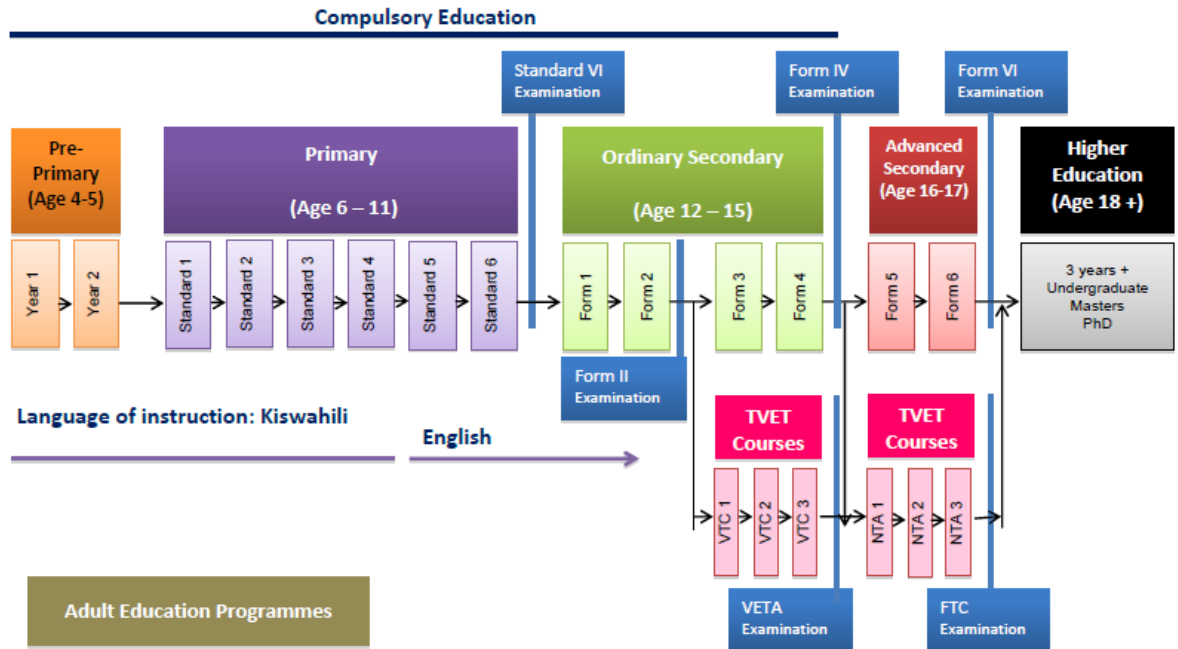


*Figure 8.* Zanzibar Education System

*Note*: Figure replicated from *Educational statistical abstract 2010 - 2013* (p. 2) by MoEVT, 2014, Zanzibar: author.

**Appendix B**

Table 5

*Demographics of youth who participated in PTA workshops, by school*

| | Baobab (n=19) | Minazi (n=12) | Mavinje (n=10) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Passed Form 2 Exam (2016)** | 14 (74.0%) | n/a | n/a |
| **Passed Form 4 Exam (2017)** | n/a | 6 (50%) | 10 (100%) |
| **Promoted to Form 5 (2017)** | n/a | 0 (0.0%) | 6 (60%) |
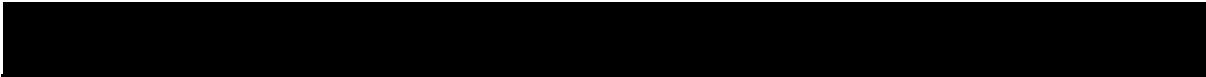
**Attends paid tuition**

1 (5.2%)

6 (75.0%)

10 (100%)

**Orphan (single or double)**

6 (31.6%)

4 (50.0%)

2 (20.0%)

**Access to mobile phone**

1 (5.3%)

4 (50.0%)

7 (70.0%)

**Watches TV weekly (home/neighbor)**

11 (57.95)

6 (75.0%)

9 (90.0%)

**Daily exposure to foreigners**

0 (0.0%)

7 (87.5%)

10 (100%)
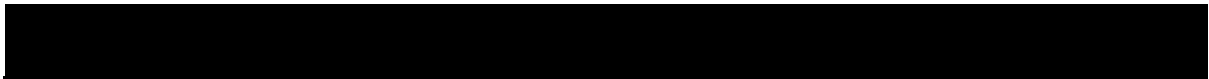
**Food at home is barely enough**

2 (10.5%)

2 (25.0%)

   **sometimes enough**

10 (52.6%)

1 (12.5%)

4 (40.0%)

   **always enough**

7 (36.8%)

5 (62.5%)

6 (60.0%)

**with no schooling**

9 (52.9%)

1 (10.0%)

**with primary**

6 (35.3%)

2 (28.6%)

**with secondary or higher**

2 (11.8%)

5 (71.4%)

9 (90.0%)

**with no schooling**

8 (47.0%)

1 (12.5%)

**with primary**

7 (41.2%)

**with secondary or higher**

2 (11.8%)

5 (100%)

7 (87.5%)

**Appendix C**

Table *6*

*Enrollments and GER for 0-level in Zanzibar, with GPI (1975-2015)*

| | Year | Number Enrolled by Grade | | | | | | GPI (Enrolments) | | | GER for O-Level | | | GPI (of GER) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | F5 | F6 | GPI F2 | GPI F4 | GPI F6 | GER St.1-F3 | GER F 1-3 | GER F 1-4 | GPI of GER S1-F3 | GPI of GER F 1-4 |
| Male | 1975 | 2584 | 2164 | 2045 | 162 | 32 | 36 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2025 | 1619 | 1198 | 79 | 14 | 13 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 4609 | 3783 | 3243 | 241 | 46 | 49 | 0.75 | 0.49 | 0.44 | | | | | |
| Male | 1976 | 2782 | 2446 | 2141 | 265 | 33 | 33 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2143 | 1838 | 2528 | 96 | 8 | 13 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 4925 | 4284 | 4669 | 361 | 41 | 46 | 0.75 | 0.36 | 0.24 | | | | | |
| Male | 1977 | 2708 | 2697 | 2376 | 392 | 34 | 31 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2036 | 2018 | 1779 | 156 | 12 | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 4744 | 4715 | 4155 | 548 | 46 | 39 | 0.75 | 0.40 | 0.35 | 64.8% | 52.8% | | | |
| Male | 1978 | 2796 | 2517 | 2,469 | 630 | 36 | 33 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2172 | 1903 | 1,848 | 249 | 19 | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 4968 | 4,420 | 4,317 | 879 | 55 | 45 | 0.76 | 0.40 | 0.53 | 77.7% | 50.0% | | | |
| Male | 1979 | 2757 | 2551 | 2,234 | 854 | 45 | 36 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 884 | 1989 | 1775 | 375 | 25 | 19 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 3641 | 4540 | 4009 | 1229 | 70 | 55 | 0.78 | 0.44 | 0.56 | 72.4% | 46.8% | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 1980 | 2928 | 2409 | 2175 | 849 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2398 | 1938 | 1663 | 413 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 5326 | 4347 | 3838 | 1262 | 71 | 62 | 0.80 | 0.49 | | 65.5% | 44.5% | | | |
| Male | 1981 | 3131 | 2637 | 2194 | 867 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2899 | 2125 | 1670 | 438 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 6030 | 4762 | 3864 | 1305 | 61 | 63 | 0.81 | 0.51 | | 61.7% | 41.4% | | | |
| Male | 1982 | 3266 | 2912 | 2481 | 926 | | | | | | | 54.6% | | | |
| Female | | 2847 | 2548 | 1937 | 502 | | | | | | | 45.7% | | | |
| **Total** | | 6113 | 5460 | 4418 | 1428 | 159 | 58 | 0.88 | 0.54 | | 62.3% | 50.1% | | F1-3 0.84 | |
| Male | 1983 | 3261 | 2867 | 2638 | 1028 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2940 | 2535 | 2288 | 634 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 6201 | 5402 | 4926 | 1662 | 179 | 63 | 0.88 | 0.62 | | 60.6% | | | | |
| Male | 1984 | 1643 | 2599 | 2463 | 934 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 1345 | 2466 | 2171 | 666 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 2988 | 5065 | 4634 | 1600 | 141 | 58 | 0.95 | 0.71 | | 57.5% | | | | |
| Male | 1985 | 3450 | 1375 | 2366 | 401 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 3627 | 1317 | 2149 | 236 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 7077 | 2692 | 4515 | 637 | 57 | 53 | 0.96 | 0.59 | | 54.5% | | | | |
| Male | 1986 | 2854 | 3001 | 1602 | 462 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2831 | 2945 | 1198 | 324 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 5685 | 5946 | 2800 | 786 | 44 | 55 | 0.98 | 0.70 | | 55.5% | | | | |
| Male | 1987 | 2569 | 2616 | 2308 | 444 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2599 | 2611 | 2355 | 218 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 5168 | 5227 | 4663 | 662 | 56 | 45 | 1.00 | 0.49 | | 57.7% | | | | |
| Male | 1988 | 2709 | 2667 | 2291 | 369 | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | | 2725 | 2648 | 2085 | 231 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 5434 | 5315 | 4376 | 600 | 127 | 52 | 0.99 | 0.63 | | 55.7% | | | |
| Male | 1989 | 2574 | 2333 | 2085 | 364 | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 2571 | 2364 | 2076 | 213 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 5145 | 4697 | 4161 | 577 | 195 | 115 | 1.01 | 0.59 | | 54.7% | | | |
| Male | 1990 | 3080 | 2290 | 1913 | 258 | | | | | | 60.9% | 35.8% | | |
| Female | | 3257 | 2386 | 1954 | 146 | | | | | | 58.3% | 37.2% | | |
| **Total** | | 6337 | 4676 | 3867 | 404 | 138 | 180 | 1.04 | 0.57 | | 59.6% | 36.5% | | 0.96 |
| Male | 1991 | 3410 | 2635 | 1986 | 286 | | | | | | 60.7% | | | |
| Female | | 3749 | 2851 | 2023 | 179 | | | | | | 58.2% | | | |
| **Total** | | 7159 | 5486 | 4009 | 458 | 175 | 128 | 1.08 | 0.63 | | 59.5% | | | 0.96 |
| Male | 1992 | 3146 | 2885 | 2248 | 197 | | | | | | 59.0% | | | |
| Female | | 3338 | 3212 | 2430 | 184 | | | | | | 56.8% | | | |
| **Total** | | 6484 | 6097 | 4678 | 381 | 117 | 164 | 1.11 | 0.93 | | 57.9% | | | 0.96 |
| Male | 1993 | 3993 | 2564 | 1204 | 195 | 93 | 73 | | | | 64.7% | | | |
| Female | | 4052 | 2847 | 1398 | 118 | 42 | 24 | | | | 61.7% | | | |
| **Total** | | 8045 | 5411 | 2602 | 313 | 135 | 97 | 1.11 | 0.61 | 0.45 | 63.2% | | | 0.95 |
| Male | 1994 | 4459 | 3168 | 872 | 1378 | 94 | 86 | | | | 69.7% | | | |
| Female | | 4602 | 3422 | 761 | 1420 | 36 | 41 | | | | 65.7% | | | |
| **Total** | | 9061 | 6590 | 1633 | 2798 | 130 | 127 | 1.08 | 1.03 | 0.38 | 67.7% | | | 0.94 |
| Male | 1995 | 4456 | 3769 | 984 | 871 | 99 | 94 | | | | 70.2% | | | |
| Female | | 4252 | 3858 | 823 | 751 | 35 | 45 | | | | 67.4% | | | |
| **Total** | | 8708 | 7627 | 1807 | 1485 | 134 | 139 | 1.02 | 0.86 | 0.35 | 68.8% | | | 0.96 |
| Male | 1996 | 4611 | 3410 | 1078 | 712 | 42 | 71 | | | | 70.2% | | | |
| Female | | 4310 | 3399 | 1063 | 656 | 52 | 27 | | | | 68.4% | | | |
| **Total** | | 8921 | 6809 | 2141 | 1368 | 94 | 98 | 1.00 | 0.92 | 1.24 | 69.3% | | | 0.97 |

| Sex | Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 1997 | 4502 | 3727 | 1132 | 1036 | 55 | 65 | | | | 72.3% | | | | |
| Female | | 4210 | 3832 | 892 | 1132 | 91 | 32 | | | | 70.6% | | | | |
| **Total** | | 8712 | 7559 | 2024 | 2168 | 146 | 97 | 1.03 | 1.09 | 1.65 | 71.4% | | | 0.98 | |
| Male | 1998 | 6090 | 3942 | 1438 | 1350 | 163 | 121 | | | | 74.8% | | | | |
| Female | | 5801 | 3579 | 1136 | 909 | 46 | 46 | | | | 71.6% | | | | |
| **Total** | | 11891 | 7521 | 2574 | 2259 | 209 | 167 | 0.91 | 0.67 | 0.28 | 73.2% | | | 0.96 | |
| Male | 1999 | 5757 | 4420 | 1297 | 1434 | 246 | 129 | | | | 77.3% | | | | |
| Female | | 5392 | 4125 | 1312 | 1182 | 217 | 78 | | | | 74.2% | | | | |
| **Total** | | 11149 | 8545 | 2906 | 2616 | 463 | 207 | 0.93 | 0.82 | 0.88 | 75.7% | | | 0.96 | |
| Male | 2000 | 5437 | 5235 | 1682 | 1600 | 288 | 268 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 5262 | 4957 | 1333 | 1183 | 267 | 116 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 10699 | 10192 | 3015 | 2783 | 555 | 384 | 0.95 | 0.74 | 0.93 | | | | | |
| Male | 2001 | 6453 | 4407 | 1547 | 1675 | 337 | 260 | | | | | | 0.86 | | |
| Female | | 6448 | 4582 | 1259 | 1359 | 138 | 104 | | | | | | 0.83 | | |
| **Total** | | 12901 | 8989 | 2806 | 3034 | 475 | 364 | 1.04 | 0.81 | 0.41 | | | 0.84 | | 0.97 |
| Male | 2002 | 7526 | 5298 | 1954 | 1904 | 261 | 284 | | | | | | 0.89 | | |
| Female | | 7253 | 5598 | 1721 | 1372 | 106 | 202 | | | | | | 0.87 | | |
| **Total** | | 14779 | 10896 | 3675 | 3276 | 367 | 486 | 1.06 | 0.72 | 0.41 | | | 0.88 | | 0.97 |
| Male | 2003 | 8000 | 5880 | 2296 | 2129 | 362 | 207 | | | | | | 0.93 | | |
| Female | | 7782 | 6091 | 2242 | 1844 | 148 | 98 | | | | | | 0.92 | | |
| **Total** | | 15782 | 11971 | 4538 | 3973 | 510 | 305 | 1.04 | 0.87 | 0.41 | | | 0.92 | | 0.99 |
| Male | 2004 | 8695 | 6834 | 2602 | 2269 | 555 | 388 | | | | | | 0.92 | | |
| Female | | 8480 | 6712 | 2552 | 2019 | 285 | 156 | | | | | | 0.91 | | |
| **Total** | | 17175 | 13546 | 5154 | 4288 | 840 | 544 | 0.98 | 0.89 | 0.51 | | | 0.92 | | 0.99 |
| Male | 2005 | 9402 | 7070 | 3192 | 2620 | 872 | 779 | | | | | | 0.92 | | |
| Female | | 9636 | 7489 | 3532 | 2497 | 824 | 496 | | | | | | 0.93 | | |

| Label | Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | | 19038 | 14559 | 6724 | 5117 | 1696 | 1275 | 1.06 | 0.95 | 0.94 | | | 0.93 | | 1.00 |
| Male | 2006 | 9033 | 7802 | 3445 | 3018 | 1085 | 821 | | | | | | 0.92 | | |
| Female | | 8834 | 8526 | 3625 | 3012 | 732 | 636 | | | | | | 0.93 | | |
| **Total** | | 17867 | 16328 | 7070 | 6030 | 1817 | 1457 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 0.67 | | | 0.93 | | 1.01 |
| Male | 2007 | 19939 | 7881 | 4262 | 3348 | 1002 | 923 | | | | | | 0.93 | | |
| Female | | 21019 | 8072 | 4182 | 3490 | 827 | 645 | | | | | | 0.96 | | |
| **Total** | | 40958 | 15953 | 8444 | 6838 | 1819 | 1568 | 1.02 | 1.04 | 0.83 | | | 0.95 | | 1.03 |
| Male | 2008 | 14224 | 14938 | 4162 | 4038 | 1307 | 968 | | | | | | 0.94 | | |
| Female | | 14339 | 17561 | 4055 | 3983 | 1173 | 833 | | | | | | 0.97 | | |
| **Total** | | 28563 | 32499 | 8217 | 8021 | 2479 | 1801 | 1.18 | 0.99 | 0.90 | | | 0.96 | | 1.03 |
| Male | 2009 | 12329 | 11234 | 7752 | 3927 | 1203 | 1419 | | | | | | 1.02 | | |
| Female | | 12986 | 12367 | 9120 | 3937 | 1183 | 1095 | | | | | | 1.05 | | |
| **Total** | | 25315 | 23601 | 16872 | 7864 | 2386 | 2514 | 1.10 | 1.00 | 0.98 | | | 1.03 | | 1.03 |
| Male | 2010 | 11923 | 10354 | 5968 | 7451 | 1121 | 1174 | | | | | | 1.04 | | |
| Female | | 12408 | 11962 | 6786 | 8795 | 943 | 1018 | | | | | | 1.08 | | |
| **Total** | | 24331 | 22316 | 12754 | 16246 | 2064 | 2192 | 1.16 | 1.18 | 0.84 | | | 1.06 | | 1.04 |
| Male | 2011 | 12090 | 10187 | 5532 | 5641 | 1156 | 974 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 13528 | 11442 | 7062 | 6543 | 1195 | 979 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 25618 | 21629 | 12594 | 12184 | 2351 | 1953 | 1.12 | 1.16 | 1.03 | | | | | |
| Male | 2012 | 12528 | 10146 | 5494 | 5322 | 871 | 1113 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 13288 | 12171 | 6417 | 6836 | 811 | 1068 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 25816 | 22317 | 11911 | 12158 | 1682 | 2181 | 1.20 | 1.28 | 0.93 | | | 0.68 | | 1.09 |
| Male | 2013 | 12131 | 9964 | 5148 | 5137 | 696 | 96 | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 12798 | 12021 | 7293 | 6185 | 672 | 51 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 24929 | 21985 | 12441 | 11322 | 1368 | 147 | 1.21 | 1.20 | 0.97 | | | | | 1.20 |
| Male | 2014 | 12733 | 10187 | 5450 | 4936 | 1116 | 610 | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | | 14113 | 11583 | 7227 | 7056 | 763 | 603 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 26846 | 21770 | 12677 | 11992 | 1879 | 1213 | 1.14 | 1.43 | 0.68 | | | | | |
| Male | 2015 | 13409 | 11037 | 5920 | 5345 | 1019 | 407 | | | | | | 0.64 | | |
| Female | | 14375 | 12901 | 7213 | 7033 | 1128 | 408 | | | | | | 0.62 | | |
| **Total** | | 27784 | 23938 | 13133 | 12378 | 2147 | 815 | 1.17 | 1.32 | 1.11 | | | 0.63 | | 1.20 |
| Male | 2016 | 25756 | 11515 | 6597 | 5659 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 28288 | 12958 | 8833 | 7118 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 54044 | 24473 | 15430 | 12777 | | | 1.13 | 1.26 | | | | | | |

*Note.* Data drawn from multiple sources including: Ministry of State Planning and Investment Zanzibar, (1981); Ministry of State Planning and Investment Zanzibar, (1999); MoE, (1983); MoE, (1990); MoE, (1995a); MoEVT, (2011); MoEVT, (2016); MoEVT, (2017a); UN, (2001)

Table 7

*Pass rates for Form 2, Form 4, and Form 6 Exams in Zanzibar (1992-2016)*

| | Year | Form 2 Exams | | | | Form 4 Exams | | | | Form 6 Exams | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F2-# Took exam | F2-# Passed | F2-% Passed | GPI F2 Pass rates | F4-# Took exam | F4-# Passed | F4-% Passed | GPI F4 pass rates | F6-# Took exam | F6-# Passed | F6-% Passed | GPI F6 Pass rates |
| Male | 1992 | 2236 | 265 | 11.9% | | | | | | 108 | 84 | 77.8% | |
| Female | | 2501 | 200 | 8.0% | | | | | | 52 | 46 | 88.5% | |
| **Total** | | 4737 | 465 | 9.8% | 0.67 | 450 | 331 | 73.6% | | 160 | 130 | 81.3% | 1.14 |
| Male | 1993 | 2426 | 794 | 32.7% | | | | | | 71 | 58 | 81.7% | |
| Female | | 2793 | 706 | 25.3% | | | | | | 24 | 20 | 83.3% | |
| **Total** | | 5219 | 1500 | 28.7% | 0.77 | 558 | 489 | 87.6% | | 95 | 78 | 82.1% | 1.02 |
| Male | 1994 | 4867 | 1614 | 33.2% | | | | | | 83 | 63 | 75.9% | |
| Female | | 4488 | 1346 | 30.0% | | | | | | 41 | 39 | 95.1% | |
| **Total** | | 9355 | 2960 | 31.6% | 0.90 | 719 | 637 | 88.6% | | 124 | 101 | 81.5% | 1.25 |
| Male | 1995 | 3291 | 1266 | 38.5% | | 848 | 576 | 67.9% | | 76 | 69 | 90.8% | |
| Female | | 3610 | 1213 | 33.6% | | 757 | 509 | 67.2% | | 26 | 24 | 92.3% | |
| **Total** | | 6901 | 2479 | 35.9% | 0.87 | 1605 | 1085 | 67.6% | 0.99 | 102 | 93 | 91.2% | 1.02 |
| Male | 1996 | 3030 | 1048 | 34.6% | | 768 | 565 | 73.6% | | 52 | 50 | 96.2% | |
| Female | | 3145 | 876 | 27.9% | | 665 | 491 | 73.8% | | 32 | 31 | 96.0% | |
| **Total** | | 6175 | 1924 | 31.2% | 0.81 | 1433 | 1056 | 73.7% | 1.00 | 84 | 81 | 96.4% | 1.00 |
| Male | 1997 | 3659 | 1255 | 34.3% | | 1087 | 792 | 72.9% | | 52 | 50 | 96.2% | |
| Female | | 3685 | 1043 | 28.3% | | 1058 | 711 | 67.2% | | 32 | 31 | 96.9% | |
| **Total** | | 7344 | 2298 | 31.3% | 0.83 | 2145 | 1503 | 70.1% | 0.92 | 84 | 81 | 96.4% | 1.01 |
| Male | 1998 | 3447 | 1313 | 38.1% | | 1232 | 972 | 78.9% | | 117 | 110 | 94.0% | |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | | 3303 | 1076 | 32.6% | | 992 | 754 | 76.0% | | 56 | 55 | 98.2% | |
| **Total** | | 6750 | 2389 | 35.4% | 0.86 | 2224 | 1726 | 77.6% | 0.96 | 173 | 165 | 95.3% | 1.04 |
| Male | 1999 | 4420 | 1280 | 29.0% | | 1369 | 1118 | 81.7% | | 230 | 215 | 93.5% | |
| Female | | 4125 | 1389 | 33.7% | | 1074 | 893 | 83.1% | | 101 | 99 | 98.0% | |
| **Total** | | 8545 | 2669 | 31.2% | 1.16 | 2443 | 2011 | 82.3% | 1.02 | 331 | 314 | 94.9% | 1.05 |
| Male | 2000 | 4867 | 1614 | 33.2% | | 1599 | 1231 | 77.0% | | 215 | 199 | 92.6% | |
| Female | | 4488 | 1346 | 30.0% | | 1207 | 938 | 77.7% | | 85 | 71 | 83.5% | |
| **Total** | | 9355 | 2960 | 31.6% | 0.90 | 2806 | 2169 | 77.3% | 1.01 | 300 | 270 | 90.0% | 0.90 |
| Male | 2001 | 3992 | 1610 | 40.3% | | 1701 | 1373 | 80.7% | | 215 | 199 | 92.6% | |
| Female | | 4293 | 1515 | 35.3% | | 1426 | 1114 | 78.1% | | 85 | 71 | 83.5% | |
| **Total** | | 8285 | 3125 | 37.7% | 0.88 | 3127 | 2487 | 79.5% | 0.97 | 300 | 270 | 90.0% | 0.90 |
| Male | 2002 | 5194 | 2020 | 38.9% | | 1834 | 1530 | 83.4% | | 241 | 231 | 95.9% | |
| Female | | 3091 | 1105 | 35.7% | | 1451 | 1269 | 87.5% | | 114 | 112 | 98.2% | |
| **Total** | | 8285 | 3125 | 37.7% | 0.92 | 3285 | 2799 | 85.2% | 1.05 | 355 | 343 | 96.6% | 1.02 |
| Male | 2003 | 5655 | 2319 | 41.0% | | 1829 | 1660 | 90.8% | | 173 | 170 | 98.3% | |
| Female | | 4314 | 1682 | 39.0% | | 1710 | 1607 | 94.0% | | 88 | 88 | 100.0% | |
| **Total** | | 9969 | 4001 | 40.1% | 0.95 | 3539 | 3267 | 92.3% | 1.04 | 261 | 258 | 98.9% | 1.02 |
| Male | 2004 | 6169 | 2738 | 44.4% | | 2200 | 2054 | 93.4% | | 283 | 276 | 97.5% | |
| Female | | 6179 | 2619 | 42.4% | | 2086 | 1992 | 95.5% | | 128 | 128 | 100.0% | |
| **Total** | | 12348 | 5357 | 43.4% | 0.95 | 4286 | 4046 | 94.4% | 1.02 | 411 | 404 | 98.3% | 1.03 |
| Male | 2005 | 6474 | 3044 | 47.0% | | 2707 | 2442 | 90.2% | | 324 | 304 | 93.8% | |
| Female | | 6881 | 3315 | 48.2% | | 2682 | 2455 | 91.5% | | 198 | 189 | 95.5% | |
| **Total** | | 13355 | 6359 | 47.6% | 1.02 | 5389 | 4897 | 90.9% | 1.01 | 522 | 493 | 94.4% | 1.02 |
| Male | 2006 | 6964 | 3722 | 53.4% | | 3184 | 2538 | 79.7% | | 579 | 558 | 96.4% | |
| Female | | 8039 | 3859 | 48.0% | | 3150 | 2476 | 78.6% | | 426 | 412 | 96.7% | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | | 15003 | 7581 | 50.5% | 0.90 | 6334 | 5014 | 79.2% | 0.99 | 1005 | 970 | 96.5% | 1.00 |
| Male | 2007 | 7185 | 3691 | 51.4% | | 3542 | 2950 | 83.3% | | 901 | 718 | 79.7% | |
| Female | | 7418 | 3748 | 50.5% | | 3708 | 3186 | 85.9% | | 665 | 531 | 79.8% | |
| **Total** | | 14603 | 7439 | 50.9% | 0.98 | 7250 | 6136 | 84.6% | 1.03 | 1566 | 1249 | 79.8% | 1.00 |
| Male | 2008 | 13258 | 7039 | 53.1% | | 4145 | 3244 | 78.3% | | 831 | 689 | 82.9% | |
| Female | | 16594 | 9043 | 54.5% | | 4301 | 3289 | 76.5% | | 601 | 496 | 82.5% | |
| **Total** | | 29852 | 16082 | 53.9% | 1.03 | 8446 | 6533 | 77.4% | 0.98 | 1432 | 1185 | 82.8% | 1.00 |
| Male | 2009 | 9931 | 5180 | 52.2% | | 4314 | 3482 | 80.7% | | 1085 | 916 | 84.4% | |
| Female | | 11324 | 6335 | 55.9% | | 4411 | 3584 | 81.3% | | 874 | 743 | 85.0% | |
| **Total** | | 21255 | 11515 | 54.2% | 1.07 | 8725 | 7066 | 81.0% | 1.01 | 1959 | 1659 | 84.7% | 1.01 |
| Male | 2010 | 8800 | 4889 | 55.6% | | 7658 | 5507 | 71.9% | | 1190 | 1009 | 84.8% | |
| Female | | 11055 | 6673 | 60.4% | | 9372 | 6695 | 71.4% | | 1118 | 931 | 83.3% | |
| **Total** | | 19855 | 11562 | 58.2% | 1.09 | 17030 | 12202 | 71.7% | 0.99 | 2308 | 1940 | 84.1% | 0.98 |
| Male | 2011 | 9119 | 4975 | 54.6% | | 5491 | 4018 | 73.2% | | 1041 | 791 | 76.0% | |
| Female | | 10547 | 6066 | 57.5% | | 6386 | 5002 | 78.3% | | 918 | 726 | 79.1% | |
| **Total** | | 19666 | 11041 | 56.1% | 1.05 | 11877 | 9020 | 75.9% | 1.07 | 1959 | 1517 | 77.4% | 1.04 |
| Male | 2012 | 8644 | 4427 | 51.2% | | 5651 | 3011 | 53.3% | | 898 | 661 | 73.6% | |
| Female | | 11035 | 6768 | 61.3% | | 7400 | 3924 | 53.0% | | 915 | 680 | 74.3% | |
| **Total** | | 19679 | 11195 | 56.9% | 1.20 | 13051 | 6935 | 53.1% | 1.00 | 1813 | 1341 | 74.0% | 1.01 |
| Male | 2013 | 8662 | 4805 | 55.5% | | 5542 | 3581 | 64.6% | | 1010 | 772 | 76.4% | |
| Female | | 10660 | 6678 | 62.6% | | 6662 | 4529 | 68.0% | | 1057 | 864 | 81.7% | |
| **Total** | | 19322 | 11483 | 59.4% | 1.13 | 12204 | 8110 | 66.5% | 1.05 | 2067 | 1636 | 79.1% | 1.07 |
| Male | 2014 | 10119 | 6373 | 63.0% | | 5267 | 3167 | 60.1% | | 586 | 548 | 93.5% | |
| Female | | 11825 | 8011 | 67.7% | | 7545 | 4546 | 60.3% | | 573 | 559 | 97.6% | |
| **Total** | | 21944 | 14384 | 65.5% | 1.08 | 12812 | 7713 | 60.2% | 1.00 | 1159 | 1107 | 95.5% | 1.04 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 2015 | 10820 | 6950 | 64.2% | | 5188 | 3842 | 74.1% | | 358 | 344 | 96.1% | |
| Female | | 13231 | 9794 | 74.0% | | 7020 | 5048 | 71.9% | | 315 | 312 | 99.0% | |
| **Total** | | 24051 | 16744 | 69.6% | 1.15 | 12208 | 8890 | 72.8% | 0.97 | 673 | 656 | 97.5% | 1.03 |
| Male | 2016 | 10820 | 6950 | 64.2% | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | 13231 | 9794 | 74.0% | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | 24051 | 16744 | 69.6% | 1.15 | | | | | | | | |

*Note.* Data drawn from multiple sources including: MoE, (1995a); MoEVT, (2005); MoEVT, (2011).

## Appendix D

## HLM Analyses of Longitudinal Cohort Data

### Background

One of the objectives of the longitudinal cohort analyses was to identify any differences between male and female students in the likelihood that they will leave school for reasons of *utoro*, failing the exam, marriage, among others. Additionally, among those who left school, one of the objectives was to understand who is more likely to leave school before completing one year of secondary (Form 1) verses in Form 2 and the reasons given. The third objective was to identify any gender, geographical, or other differences between those who pass and fail the Form 2 exam. It is important to note that this is a preliminary analysis and that these analyses will be repeated in late 2018 and 2019 when additional Form 2 exam data has been collected on the youth who took the exams in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Using the two-level Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) analyses, the variance between schools was identified and helps highlight geographical inequities among the sample of youth and schools in this sample. As school factors are known to influence student exam performance in Zanzibar (Salim, 2011), students were analyzed within their primary school cluster. It was assumed that the students were exposed to similar schooling conditions as their classmates, including common school infrastructure, administration, and teaching and instruction (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Therefore, the HLM analyses isolate any relationship between the primary school the youth attends and the three discrete outcome (binary) variables of: a) leaving school or not; b) leaving school before/during Form 1 verses in Form 2, and c) pass/failing the Form 2 exams. A number of predictor variables were used in the analyses to test which factors significantly affected the outcome variables and to control for these factors. These variables are described below.

### The Longitudinal Sample

As described in Chapter Three, 1,145 youth from four of Zanzibar's ten districts (North A, North B, Micheweni, and Mkoani) were followed in 2008, 2014, and 2016-7. This corresponds with when the youth were at the beginning of their primary cycle (Standard 1), end of their primary cycle (Standard 6 or 7), and their beginning of their secondary schooling (Form 1 or 2). The longitudinal sample was as follows:

Table 8

*Longitudinal cohort sample*

|  | 2008 | | | 2014 | | | 2016/17 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Females | Males | Total | Females | Males | Total | Females | Males | Total |
| **Sample** | 848 | 695 | 1,543 | 561 | 343 | 904 | 672 | 473 | 1,145 |

A semi-random two-stage sampling approach was used to select the original sample of students in this study. In the **first stage of sampling**, the rural districts of North A in Unguja and Micheweni in Pemba were selected by central MoEVT officials to participate in an early childhood intervention based on their low level of education performance and development indicators relative to other districts in Zanzibar. Two comparison districts, North B in Unguja and Mkoani in Pemba, were then selected. These comparison districts had education, health, and economic characteristics similar to North A and Micheweni (E. Morris et. al, 2009). In the **second stage,** random classrooms from across the comparison schools and intervention schools (which included non-formal and formal schools) were selected to participate. Approximately 20 students from each classroom were selected. There were a slightly higher number of girls as there were more girls than boys in the majority of classrooms. The 1,543 represents children in the 2009 sample were only those students who were present for both the baseline survey at the beginning of the 2008 school year as well as at the end of the 2008 school year.

These 1,543 students were then followed in 2014 and 2016/17 to collect additional information on whether or not they were in school. If they were still enrolled in school, their grade level and how many years they had to repeat; which school (primary or secondary) they currently attended; and whether or not they had passed the Form 2 exam if they had reached this milestone was documented. If they were no longer in school (were considered *watoro*) we collected when they had left school and the primary reason they gave for leaving. The longitudinal timeline is outlined below (2018/19 is proposed post-dissertation). Initial analyses for this sample can be found in E. Morris, Mohammed, Othman, Mitchell, and Phillip, 2009 and Vinagradova and E. Morris, 2014.
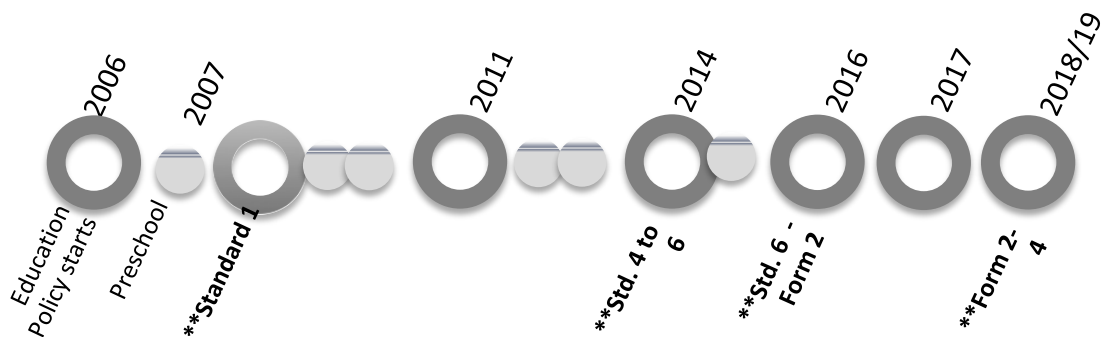


*Figure 9.* Longitudinal cohort timeline

While all students started out in Standard 1 together in 2009, including students from formal and non-formal (community) schools, by 2016 when the Form 2 exams should have been administered, only 35.0 percent of the 1,145 students had reached Form 2. Roughly 0.3 percent had died, 0.2 percent had moved districts and was unaccounted

for, and 19.3 percent had dropped out or left the system before reaching Form 2. The remaining 45.2 percent of youth had been held back at least one or two grades. It is important to note that the non-formal students were systematically held back by the head teachers, not because the students performed lower in major subject content area of Kiswahili, English or math, but because of an assumed bias that students who started Standard 1 in non-formal schools were not as prepared for school as those who started out in a formal school classroom. While the E. Morris et al. (2009) found that non-formal students caught up to formal students over the course of Standard 1, head teachers still made non-formal students repeat Standard 1. Therefore, by 2016 only 9.1 percent of the students who started out in non-formal schools took the Form 2 exam as compared to 42.7 percent of students who started Standard 1 in formal schools. For more information on the distinctions between non-formal and formal schools see E. Morris et. al (2009).

## The Variables

### Outcome (Dependent) Variables

**Analysis 1.** The first outcome was a bivariate (0=no, 1=yes) variable of whether youth had left school (been pushed out/pulled out or dropped out of school). There were 1,145 youth used for this analysis, 473 were boys (41.3 percent) and 672 (58.7 percent) were girls.

**Analysis 2.** The second outcome, when youth left school, was also a bivariate variable of whether or not youth left school before or during their first year of secondary (0=before or during Form 1), or in their second year of secondary (1=Form 2). There were 389 youth who dropped out and were used in this analysis, 215 (55.3 percent) were girls, 174 (44.7 percent) were boys.

**Analysis 3.** The third outcome captured whether or not youth passed (0=No, 1=Yes) their Form 2 exam. There were 377 youth who had taken the Form 2 exam in this analysis, 258 (37.0 percent) were females and 119 (24.0 percent) were males.

### Common Predictor (Independent or Control) Variables

**Student and family demographics.** There were a number of student and family-level (Level 1) variables used to test for and control differences between students. The first being sex (0=male, 1=female). The second being their composite literacy (Kiswahili and English) and numeracy score on an assessment at the end of Standard 1. This acted as a rough baseline of their language and math knowledge at the start of their schooling and is the total percent (0-100 percent) scored. In addition, a student age dummy variable was created to divide youth into those that were at policy age (6 or below) and overage (7 and above). While the 2006 Policy would not have affected any of these variables, the variables were created in relation to the policy changes.

There were a number of other variables used to test the significance of and control for family demographics. The first being whether students started out in formal or non-formal schools (0=formal, 1=non-formal), which was used as socioeconomic proxy. From the prior research (E. Morris et al., 2009), children who started out in non-formal schools were generally from families and communities that did not have a formal school

nearby and/or did not have the resources to enroll their children in formal schools in 2007/8 (E. Morris et al., 2009). Participation in preschool was also accounted for (0=no preschool, 1=preschool) as well as parents' literacy levels (0=no literate parents, 1=1 parent literate, 2=2 parents literate). These variables also controlled for socioeconomic differences, as in Zanzibar children with preschool access and literate parents, generally come from families with greater socioeconomic resources (Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Additionally, preschool controls for any differences in preparation for Standard 1.

**Geographical demographics.** In the second level of the HLM analyses, a geographic variable were used. As students lived in the same district where they went to school, a single geographical variable controlled for where the family lived and where the school was located and thus served as a community-level variable. This geographical variable (North A was the reference variable or 0, and the other three districts of North B, Unguja, Micheweni, Pemba, and Mkoani, Pemba were equal to 1) was used to control differences between schools' (Level 2).

## HLM Analyses

After determining possible predictors, the next step was to ensure that there was a need for a multiple-level analysis. For each analysis, the first model tested was the unconditional model where only the outcome variable and a random effect for intercept were included. This was to determine the intraclass correlation (ICC) or $\tau_{00}/(\tau_{00}+\sigma^2)$, where $\tau_{00}$ is the variation in outcome explained by between school differences and $\sigma2$ is the population within group error variance. The sum of $\tau_{00}+\sigma^2$ is the total variation in outcome. The ICC indicates the between school variance, and whether or not the outcome can be attributed to school-level factors. If between-school variance exists, this necessitates running the analysis by school cluster. The following unconditional model with no predictors was used.

$Y_{ij}=\beta_{0j}+r_{ij}$ (level 1 model - within/student-level model) (1)

$\beta_{0j}=\gamma_{00}+u_{0j}$ (level 2 model - between/school-level model)

$Y_{ij}=\gamma_{00}+u_{0j}+r_{ij}$ (multilevel model)

Where $Y_{ij}$ is the expected outcome value for student *i* in the school *j*,$\beta_{0j}$ is the average expected outcome value for all students in school *j*, and $r_{ij}$ is the error term for student *i* in school *j*. $\gamma_{00}$ is the fixed effect for intercept, which is the average of all school intercepts (i.e. the value of the outcome when all predictors are equal to 0), and $u_{0j}$ is the random effect, the difference between the intercept for school *j* and the average of all intercepts (i.e., $\gamma_{00}$).

## Running the Analyses with HLM

After it was determined that there was enough between school variance to proceed with the full HLM analysis, the three analyses were run with the same control variables or

predictors. The first analysis was also run with fixed and random effects (whether or not averages are allowed to vary across the different schools).

### Analysis 1: Who is leaving school (becoming a pushout/pullout/dropout)?

Overall, there were more girls (58.7 percent) in the sample than boys (41.3 percent). This is in large part because there are more girls enrolled in primary school in Zanzibar, and in part because there were a slightly higher proportion of girls retained in the sample over time (the 2008 sample of 1,543 students was 55 percent girls and 45 percent boys). Of the sample of 1,145 youth who were tracked longitudinally from 2008 to 2014, 34 percent (n=389) of youth were reported as having left school by 2017 either before completing Form 1 or in Form 2 (see analysis 2 below). A greater proportion of males left school (36.8 percent) than females (32.0 percent) although this difference was only marginally significant ($p \leq 0.01$) according to chi-square tests. Consequently, a larger proportion of girls were still in school (68 percent) compared to males (63.2 percent).

The ICC for the outcome of whether or not youth had left school was 0.1051, or 10.5 percent of the variation in the likelihood that youth had left school could be explained by which primary school one attended. This is a sizeable variation as compared to other like studies conducted in the US where variance in school dropout and absenteeism was 6.0 percent (Bryk & Thum, 1989). Primary school was used as a variable as opposed to secondary school as by 2017 not all students had completed a full year of secondary school. Primary school exposure was 6 to 7 years for all youth in the quantitative sample as compared to 0 to 2 years of secondary school.

The notable 10.5 percent between-school variance supports the argument that school level factors contribute to the likelihood that youth will leave school and that dropping out cannot solely be attributed to the choice of a youth as 89.5 percent in the variance is due to student level variables. Likewise, 6.5 percent of variation of the likelihood of being a school leaver can be explained by which district a student lived in. This reiterates the discussion in Chapter Three that there are noteworthy variances between districts.

Per the HLM analyses, the significant predictors of whether or not students became a pushout/pullout/dropout were: their Standard 1 literacy and numeracy score, if they started out at age or over policy age in Standard, if they had started out in a formal/non-formal school, and to some extent ($\leq 0.01$) their parents' literacy levels. Sex was not significant in this analysis when between-school variation was accounted for. It is important to note that in this first analysis, leaving school included *utoro* as well as failing the Form 2 examination. While there were significant gender differences in when girls and boys left school (before completing Form 1 or in Form 2) as will be shown in analysis 2, there were not significant gender differences between exam pass rates. In summary, we see gendered differences in leaving school only when we look within individual schools and when we scrutinize the category those who dropped out before Form 1 (dropout, pullouts, and pushouts). The variables for whether or not youth left school are presented below.

Table 9

*Analysis 1: Leaving school (becoming a pushout/pullout/dropout) (n=1,145)*

| Within-School Outcomes (Level 1) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| **Intercept** | -0.4443 | 0.3459 | 0.199 |
| **Female** | 0.0018 | 0.1775 | 0.992 |
| **Std 1. literacy/numeracy** | -2.1173 | 0.4504 | 0.000*** |
| **Over policy age** | 0.6740 | 0.2043 | 0.001*** |
| **Non-formal** | -1.0018 | 0.2863 | 0.005*** |
| **Preschool** | -0.1346 | 0.2052 | 0.512 |
| **Parents' literacy** | -0.2066 | 0.1142 | 0.070. |
| **Between-School Outcomes (Level 2)** | | | |
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| **North B, Unguja** | -0.3128 | 0.2758 | 0.257 |
| **Micheweni, Pemba** | 1.0181 | 0.2323 | 0.000*** |
| **Mkoani, Pemba** | -0.0426 | 0.2710 | 0.875 |
| **Random Effect** | | | |
| **Random Effect** | Variance | | |
| **Intercept** | 0.00 | | |

*Note.* P-value codes: ***=$\leq$0.001 **=$\leq$ 0.01 *=0.05 .=$\leq$ 0.1
Also note the estimates of random effects are variances rather than means.

The final model use to patterns in schooling leaving was:

$$\text{Leave school (by 2017)} = - 0.4443 + 0.0018 \text{ (female)} - 2.1173 \text{ (St. 1 score)}$$
$$+ 0.6740 \text{ (over policy age)} -1.0018 \text{ (non-formal schooling)} - 0.1346 \text{ (preschool)}$$
$$- 0.2066 \text{ (parents literacy)} -0.3128 \text{ (North B)} + 1.0181 \text{ (Micheweni)} - 0.0426 \text{ (Mkoani)}$$
$$+ u_{0j} + r_{ij} \text{ (error terms)} \tag{1}$$

As described above, 10.5 percent of variation in the likelihood that youth left school by 2017 can be explained by which primary school one attended. Thus, 89.5 percent of the variation in likelihood that youth left school can be attributed to differences among students within a school. The predictors used in this model—sex, Standard 1 literacy/math, age at Standard 1, participation in non-formal schooling, access to preschool, parent's literacy, and the school's locale—explained 40.7 percent of the total variance in students' likelihood of leaving.

In summary, whether or not youth left school by 2017 <u>did</u> depend to some extent on which primary school they attended. What school locale (district) also mattered, and youth who were at policy age at the start of their education (7 or older), and started Standard 1 in a formal school, had a greater propensity for leaving school. Youth who

had 1 or more parents who were not literate were only marginally ($p \leq 0.1$) more likely to leave school

While the positive correlation between parents' literacy levels and staying in school is consistent with other analyses (Murphy, Rawle, and Ruddle, 2016), the reason youth who started out in non-formal school stayed longer is in part because they were systematically held back by the formal school teachers when they transitioned into formal school in Standard 2. These youth who started out in non-formal school had not yet reached Form 1 or 2 by the time these data were finalized in 2017 and therefore a more complete analysis needs to be conducted in 2018 and 2019 when these youth have reached Form 2. Likewise younger students were often held back to make room for older students. Of the 1,145 youth in this sample, 53.5 percent experienced some kind of major interruption (both non-formal and formal students alike) or were held back. Therefore a more complete analysis will be conducted when all youth in the sample have completed their compulsory basic education cycle (Form 4 as they are the first 2006 Policy cohort to reach this level).

*Analysis 2: When and why are youth leaving school?* Of the 389 youth who had left school by 2017, 215 (55.3 percent) were females, 174 (45.7 percent) were males. However, as described above, among males in this sample a slightly higher proportion left school than females. Likewise a significantly higher ($p \leq 0.05$) proportion of boys (79.3 percent) left school before completing Form 1 than girls (67.5 percent). The reason youth left in Form 2 was in large part because they failed the exam (90.5 percent), as will be discussed further under Analysis 3.

Among those who had been labeled as dropouts in the school data, a significantly higher proportion of those who were labeled *watoro* were males than females ($p \leq 0.001$). Of boy school leavers, 80.5 percent were *watoro* compared to 52.6 percent of girls. Likewise a significantly higher ($p \leq 0.05$) proportion of girls left because they failed the exam (28.8 percent) than boys (19.0 percent). Additionally, a significantly ($p \leq 0.001$) higher proportion of girls (18.6 percent) left school to get married (including for reasons of pregnancy) than boys (0.6 percent). The majority of schoolgirls who got married or pregnant lived in Micheweni, Pemba (63.4 percent) and was enrolled in one of three schools. This echoes the discussion in Chapter Four, that leaving school to get married or because of a pregnancy does occur, but is more frequent in some schools and districts than others.
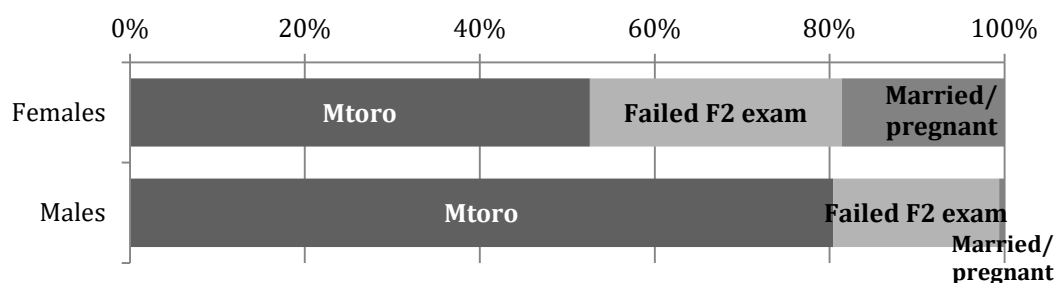
*Figure 10. Reasons for leaving school*

For youth who left school, this second HLM analysis investigates if the variables can tell us when the students left school (before/ during Form1 and during Form 2). Of the 389 youth who had left school by 2017, the significant predictors were sex, living in Micheweni district, starting Standard 1 in a formal school, and parents' literacy levels.

Table 10

*When students leave (n=389)*

| Within-School Outcomes (Level 1) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| **Intercept** | -0.8563 | 0.6662 | 0.199 |
| **Female** | 0.7960 | 0.3297 | 0.016* |
| **Std 1. literacy/numeracy** | 0.4683 | 0.8829 | 0.596 |
| **Over policy age** | -0.0309 | 0.3954 | 0.938 |
| **Non-formal** | -1.2500 | 0.6205 | 0.044* |
| **Preschool** | -0.1050 | 0.3730 | 0.778 |
| **Parents' literacy** | 0.4697 | 0.2153 | 0.029* |
| **Between-School Outcomes (Level 2)** | | | |
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| **North B, Unguja** | -0.0530 | 0.5183 | 0.919 |
| **Micheweni, Pemba** | -1.2199 | 0.4406 | 0.006** |
| **Mkoani, Pemba** | 0.3924 | 0.4888 | 0.422 |
| **Random Effect** | | | |
| **Random Effect** | Variance | | |
| **Intercept** | 0.00 | | |

*Note*. P-value codes: ***=$\leq$0.001 **=$\leq$ 0.01 *=0.05 .=$\leq$ 0.1
Also note the estimates of random effects are variances rather than means.

The final model use to analyze when students left school was:

Left before/during Form 1 or in Form 2 = - 0.8563   + 0.7960 (gender)
+0.4683 (St.1 score) -0.0309 (over policy age) -1.2500 (non-formal schooling)
-0.1050 (preschool) + 0.4697 (parents' literacy) -0.0530 (North B) -1.2199 (Micheweni)
+ 0.3924 (Mkoani) +  $u_{0j}$ + $r_{ij}$ (error terms)                (2)

Analyses showed that 24.0 percent of variation in the likelihood that youth leave school before completing Form 1 verses leaving school in Form 2 can be explained by which primary school one attends. Thus, 76.0 percent of the variation can be attributed to differences among students within a school. The predictors explained 43.4 percent of the total variance. Therefore, the reasons that youth were leaving school were not solely due to the volition of youth. When looking at variation between gender, boys are 1.15 times more likely to leave before completing Form 1 than girls.

In summary, when a youth leaves school is influenced by the youths' gender, their parent's literacy levels, which district they lived in, whether they started out in a formal or non-formal school, and which primary school attended. Boys from Micheweni district and who had less literate parents were more likely to leave school before entering or completing Form 1.

**Analysis 3: Who is passing/failing the Form 2 exam?** The final analysis is focused on the 377 youth who took the Form 2 exam in 2016. A significantly ($p \leq .001$) higher proportion of girls (37.0 percent) took the exam than boys (24.0 percent). The pass rate was 75.7 percent for those who took the exam. The pass rate was not significantly different for males (73.1 percent) and females (77.0 percent), which is consistent with the Zanzibar-wide data from 2015 and 2016 as discussed in Chapter Four.

The HLM analysis looked at the relationship between whether youth passed or failed and the control variables and predictors discussed under analyses 1 and 2. The only predictor that was significant was their baseline math and literacy score in Standard 1. Whether they started on in formal/non-formal school was marginally significant ($p \leq 0.1$). Sex, age, preschool attendance, and parents' literacy levels were not significant. There were also no significant district differences, which is likely because the four districts in this longitudinal sample (North A, North B, Micheweni, and Mkoani) have the lowest pass rates among the ten districts in Zanzibar. The variance between exam pass rates would have likely been higher if the urban districts had been included as a reference variable (see rates in Murphy, Rawle, & Ruddle, 2016). Despite these shortcomings, the results from the analysis are below and help confirm that at present girls are not failing exams at higher rates than boys.

Table 11

*Pass/Failing the Form 2 Exam (n=377)*

| Within-School Outcomes (Level 1) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| Intercept | -1.2617 | 0.7130 | 0.0768 |
| Female | 0.2371 | 0.3035 | 0.435 |
| Std 1. literacy/numeracy | 4.8000 | 0.8559 | 0.000*** |
| Over policy age | -0.4788 | 0.3348 | 0.153 |
| Non-formal | 1.2013 | 0.6475 | 0.064 . |
| Preschool | 0.1109 | 0.3479 | 0.153 |
| Parents' literacy | 0.2112 | 0.2092 | 0.313 |
| Between-School Outcomes (Level 2) | | | |
| **Fixed Effect** | *Estimate* | *SE* | *p-value* |
| North B, Unguja | 0.5325 | 0.440 | 0.226 |
| Micheweni, Pemba | -0.3754 | 0.4161 | 0.367 |
| Mkoani, Pemba | 0.4438 | 0.4303 | 0.303 |
| Random Effect | | | |
| **Random Effect** | Variance | | |
| Intercept | 0.00 | | |

*Note.* P-value codes: ***=$\leq$0.001 **=$\leq$ 0.01 *=0.05 .=$\leq$ 0.1
Also note the estimates of random effects are variances rather than means.

The final model used to analyze who was passing/failing the exams was:

$$\text{Pass/fail F2 exam} = -1.2617 + 0.2371 \text{ (sex)} + 4.8000 (\text{St. 1 score})$$
$$-0.4788 \text{ (over policy age)} + 1.2013 \text{ (in non-formal schooling)}$$
$$+ 0.1109 \text{ (preschool)} + 0.2112 \text{ (parents' literacy)} + 0.5325 \text{ (North B)}$$
$$- 0.3754 \text{ (Micheweni)} + 0.4438 \text{ (Mkoani)} + u_{0j} + r_{ij} \text{ (error terms)} \qquad (3)$$

In this final analysis, 2.2 percent of variation of the likelihood of passing and failing an exam can be explained by which primary school a youth attends. Therefore between 95.1 and 97.8 percent of the variation can be attributed to differences among students within each school. The predictors used in this analysis explained 13.4 percent of the total variance in passing or failing the exams among students. The between-school variation is likely quite low as the sample of youth who took the exams was distributed thinly among the schools. When this analysis is repeated in 2019 (when all youth in the sample have reached the Form 2 exam), this variance is expected to increase as was the case in Salim (2011) with a larger sample size.

In summary, there were no significant gendered or district-level differences in the Form 2 pass rates among the students in this longitudinal sample. However, even with the

small sample size and distribution, school-level factors were found to explain some of the variance in pass rates. A more comprehensive analysis will be conducted in 2018-2019 (post-dissertation) to follow all youth through their Form 2 and Form 4 cycles.

## Discussion

The longitudinal analyses helped confirm that girls are not dropping out of school or failing the Form 2 exams at higher rates than boys. Instead, a slightly larger proportion of boys from the youth sampled from four districts are officially withdrawing from school (either as pullouts, pushouts, or dropouts) before entering or completing Form 1 than girls. This disparity is likely to increase when all youth have reached the Form 2 level (per the 2018-2019 analyses). As it was revealed during this longitudinal data collection, a large number of youth are enrolled officially in Form 1 but not attending classes. However, by Form 2 youth who stopped attending classes in Form 1 and 2 officially become *watoro* in the central data as they do not register and sit for the Form 2 exam. Another major finding of this analysis is that personal and familial demographics only explain to some extent why youth are leaving school. School-level factors have a notable influence on who is likely to leave and at what point in their schooling.