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Author(s): Komba, Adalgot; Kontinen, Tiina; Msoka, Colman

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Chapter 14

Development Studies in Tanzania: Historical trajectory and future visions

Adalgot Komba, Tiina Kontinen, Colman Msoka

1. Introduction

There is a tendency to reflect the history and identity of Development Studies (DS) from the point of view of the global north rather than from the perspective of the global south (Melber, this volume). The standard history locates the birth of the discipline in the post-World War II era, parallel to the emergence of international development practices, whose starting point is often seen in President Harry Truman's inaugural address in 1949. However, it is also argued that development as an idea of intentional intervention in order to address negative consequences of economic and social processes has a much longer history manifested both, for example, in the 19th century European social policies and colonial practices (Cowen and Shenton 1996). Nevertheless, debates on DS have long emphasised northern academia. DS has an "uneasy" image as a field that reconstructs the very dichotomies it claims to address; in which the so-called developed countries, or global north, theorize about and analyse dynamics of change in so-called developing countries, or global south; and where academic collaboration is frequently perceived as capacity-building of the latter (Standing and Taylor 2016: 169; Carbonnier and Kontinen 2015; Komba *et al.* 2015).

Recently, this ambiguous set-up has been challenged by the changes in the global geopolitical architecture, modification of global development goals, and the nature of international academic research (Basile and Baud, this volume). In a modest way, this chapter challenges these tendencies, first, by the single fact that the majority of the chapter authors are located in a southern university where they have pursued their career in DS; and, second, by presenting an account of the discipline of DS from the point of view of a southern academic institution, in this case the *Institute of Development Studies* (IDS) in the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Whereas critical development scholarship from Latin America has gained much currency (Madrueño Aguilar and Martínez-Osés, this volume), African DS have received less recognition despite its over

50 years history; for example, in Kenya, the oldest African IDS was established in 1963 in the University of Nairobi. Similar institutes were founded in various countries: Zimbabwe Institute of DS, University of Zimbabwe; School of DS, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; University of DS, Ghana; whereas in some African countries DS became one of the disciplines within other departments. The Institutes of DS in varying universities have played a particular role where research, teaching, and policy relevance have been intertwined in various ways. The universities in general and DS as an academic field of study have often been closely connected with postcolonial nation building, state ideologies and national development policies (Block 1984; Nyerere 1971). The contents of the teaching curricula and research agendas have been strongly affected by the national political environments, global changes, and international development policy and research trends (Standing and Taylor 2016). Therefore, maybe more than in many more conventional disciplines, the history and future visions of the DS should be reflected vis-à-vis all these contexts.

In this chapter, we discuss the history, current debates and future visions of DS in Tanzania. This is done mainly through the example of the IDS in the University of Dar es Salaam. The IDS in Dar es Salaam is the oldest and currently most influential location for DS in Tanzania, although, today, DS is widely taught in universities and other educational institutes all over the country. The chapter is based on the authors' long-term experience in Tanzanian DS, and thus, is more a critical self-reflection than thorough empirical analysis of the development of the field. Our reflection was supported by a review of the papers published in the *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies* (TJDS) between 1998 and 2014.

In what follows, we will first provide a short historical trajectory of DS in Tanzania as an area of both academic teaching and research, mainly following the path of IDS at the University of Dar es Salaam established in 1973. Since then, the Institute has grown from a small establishment of about a half-dozen teaching staff, to thirty plus teaching staff, the majority with PhDs, offering both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, with the latter starting already in 1974. Second, we revisit some of the pertinent debates concerning DS over the years, in general and in Tanzania in particular. These include the debate on the academic status of DS, the connections between theory, ideology and practice, and the relationship with international donors.

Third, we suggest some future visions concerning Tanzanian DS in particular and African DS in general.

2. History of Development Studies in Tanzania

The historical trajectory of DS in Tanzania has been closely related to the country's social and political development. In April 26, 1964, the United Republic of Tanzania was established through a union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar; having experienced some 40 years of British colonial rule after having been part of German East Africa. The first President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999), not only played a central role in the struggle for independence, but also had a strong vision of the development of the newly independent nation. His agenda, and the agenda of the ruling party *Tanganyika African National Union* (TANU), later *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) included nation building within a framework of a particular brand of socialism.

The principles of this peculiarly African socialism or *Ujamaa*, presented in the *Arusha Declaration* in 1967, included policies of self-reliance, of rural socialism implemented through resettlements and villagization, nationalization of industries, and being cautious about foreign aid (Nyerere 1967; 1971; 1974). One-language policy and priority for universal basic education were important parts of the nation building agenda (Aminzade 2013; Jennings 2008). President Nyerere was also a very strong proponent of African unity and played an important role in forming the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was to form a strong anticolonial body with regard to African economics and politics (Shivji 2009; Mwakikagile 2006).

At Independence, there were no significant higher education institutes in Tanzania. The first institution, University College in Dar es Salaam, under the University of London, was established in 1961 with one Faculty of Law and 13 students. It later became a constituent College of the University of East Africa. President Nyerere recognized the importance of these for national development. In July 1970, the University of Dar es Salaam was established as an independent institution. The speech of President Nyerere at the inauguration of the University of Dar es Salaam stressed the significant role of universities with African perspectives; they should not be “intellectual apes” either of

the global right nor of the global left. He also emphasized how the university was an important actor in the “service of the development of socialist Tanzania” (Nyerere 1971: 110-111).

Not much later, the IDS was founded. Since then, the entire landscape of universities and teaching in DS programmes in Tanzania has grown and changed in many ways. To analyze these changes, we have divided the historical trajectory of DS in two main phases: the Tumultuous Era of the 1970s and 1980s, and the Era of Sustained Progress in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s.

2.1. The 1970s and 80s: the Tumultuous Era

The teaching of DS at the University of Dar es Salam is linked to developments during the second half of the 1960s when the University of East Africa expanded with two more faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Faculty of Science. There was a growing interest in interdisciplinary courses. In 1969 a course known as *Common Course* was introduced in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which was a precursor to a DS course created in 1970. The content of the Common Course was inspired among others by Walter Rodney, the author of “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa” (1972) who taught in Dar es Salaam in 1966-67 and 1969-1974. The course was later made compulsory for all undergraduate students. The main argument for this was that DS was a unique course, which offered two important insights to students of all disciplines. First, it allowed students to reflect about their own community, and, second, it challenged them to give back to their community and use their newly acquired skills and knowledge. DS was considered to be a bridge that connected the privileged and educated with those less privileged. Students were challenged to critically study their society and look for ways of addressing challenges confronting them. Typical of the period, the course dwelt mostly on issues of African history including slave trade, colonialism/neocolonialism, struggle for independence and ongoing liberation movements, nation building process, economic development including poverty issues, agricultural transformation and rural development, industrialization, and use of ‘modern’ science and technology.

During the 1960s and 1970s the international community was concerned with development challenges facing most developing countries, with the UN declaring the 60s as the *First Development Decade*. For most newly independent African states, the era meant nation building under conditions of extreme poverty. In Tanzania, the situation was well articulated by president Nyerere (1967; 1968; 1974) when he talked about three national enemies: poverty, diseases and ignorance. The nascent higher education was seen as elitist and for the privileged few. Therefore, National Service was introduced so that the educated, political and bureaucratic elite could be exposed to the situation of the entire nation. National Service included military training, agricultural activities, and production activities in small-scale industries. The training centers, mostly in rural areas, allowed the trainees to participate in communal activities, and thus be exposed to development challenges facing rural populations. Although most elite students had a rural upbringing, years of schooling were seen to alienate them from life in rural areas. Service men and women worked not only on farms and projects but also in community initiated projects, such as school building, road clearing, water schemes, or health centers in rural and urban Tanzania. However, the National Service was not smoothly welcomed. For example, in 1966 university students resisted the call to participate, leading to closure of the university and expelling of the students with request to report to the authorities in their respective villages.

It is under these circumstances that DS as a multidisciplinary course was introduced in order to equip students with knowledge of Tanzanian society and its interaction with other societies both in Africa and globally. In Tanzania, this was the era of socialist experimentation following the *Arusha Declaration* of 1967, as the government struggled to address economic underdevelopment characterized by widespread poverty, high levels of illiteracy and diseases. The government envisioned an egalitarian society where people lived in peace and harmony and characterized by communal/public ownership of properties. Globally, it was the 'cold war' era, pitting the capitalist West against socialist East fuelling both arms and space races. President Nyerere's concerns with the existing development gap and his emphasis on rural development were reflected in catch phrases such as "we must run while they are walking" or "while they are going to the moon let us go to the village" (Hyden 1979). In regard to the cold war, Tanzanian strategy articulated in the *Arusha Declaration* was seen as something in-between the capitalist West and the Soviet bloc (Jennings 2008: 37).

Teaching of DS during 1960s and 70s was influenced by both internal and external development dynamics and intellectual discourses. On the one hand there was an unmistakable strong socialist ideological orientation with a focus on the political economy of socialism. Socialist construction became a subject of contentious arguments and counter-arguments. Concepts such as class struggle, the proletariat and petty bourgeois were all very familiar in development discourses. On the other hand, efforts to explain underdevelopment were influenced by both modernization theories and the dependency school of neo-Marxists thinkers such as Walter Rodney and Andre Gunder Frank. The research conducted revolved strongly around *ujamaa* – the policy and experimentation of villagization (Kim *et al.* 1979). Despite the tumultuousness of the era, the 1970s were the days of the so-called *Dar es Salaam School* as academic community that preoccupied with socialist construction in Africa, especially the debate between African socialism vs. scientific socialism of Marxist-Leninism. The Dar es Salaam School consisted mostly of scholars in political sciences, history and sociology, and became immersed in post-World War II and post-independence development debates, including anti-imperialism and dependency. Unfortunately, while during these debates the human resources of the IDS Dar es Salaam were scarce and inexperienced, and it depended much on part-time staff from other academic units, the debates were dominated by scholars in other disciplines such as law, history, sociology and political science. As a consequence, despite “development” being in the centre of discussion, the debates did not contribute strongly to the academic identity of DS.

The ideological orientation of DS at the university during those early days raised concerns not only about its relevance but also about its theoretical and methodological foundations as field of study. It was not well received by other established disciplines like law, political science and history. Making the subject compulsory for all undergraduate students only worsened the situation. Of course, the available literature shows that questioning the relevance and or theoretical basis of DS was not limited to Tanzania (Liu and Sum 2007). Fortunately, despite the distractions from various sources, teaching of DS managed to fulfill the goal of making university graduates appreciate the complexity and dynamism of development and interrogate it, as a tracer study later on showed (Mkude and Ishumi 2004: 136).

Internal and external political and economic developments during the 1980s further challenged the research and teaching of DS. First, the socio-economic reforms led to cuts in teaching resources. Second, the changes in policy environments made it harder to provide answers to development issues with the prevalent Marxist analytical frameworks. The image of IDS in general was at stake, calling for drastic re-examination of some core values and beliefs. First, the economic crisis that started during the second half of the 1970s and expanded in the early 1980s raised serious questions about the effectiveness of African socialism, *Ujamaa* as development strategy, and, with it, the public sector-led development was challenged. The State's control of "commanding heights" of the economy came under fire and subsequently led to adoption of liberal policies, with liberalization and privatization topping the agenda. Second, developments in Eastern Europe and subsequent disintegration of Soviet Union complicated development trajectories of left-leaning African countries, Tanzania included, who looked to the socialist east as model for socialist development strategies, and had received economic assistance from the Soviet Union.

These developments had very serious implications on teaching of DS, necessitating rethinking of not only what to teach but also how to teach it. As the result the DS curriculum was questioned by those who had earlier raised doubts about the relevance and/or usefulness of such courses. Internally, two camps emerged. On the one hand, there were 'traditionalists', who advocated adherence to the original aims and objectives, and on the other hand 'reformists' arguing for radical changes as far as the contents of DS were concerned (Komba 1990). Staff meetings and seminars were increasingly dominated by often contentious debates, concerning, for example, the centrality of Marxists writings in teaching. In addition to the ideological orientation of DS, a number of other issues concerning the study contents emerged in internal discussions. For example, the question of whether or not to tailor DS courses in accordance to students' professional orientation, that is, to have courses designed for students in engineering, law, science, or business. There was also argument about DS being too 'general', and the need to become more 'specific' in line with evolving development practices. All in all, the debates of the 1980s provided the basis for developments in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century.

2.2. The 1990s and 2000s: the Era of Sustained Progress

The 1990s ushered in a new era for the University of Dar es Salaam, characterized by university-wide transformation and restructuring with lasting impact on the provision of higher education in Tanzania. Nationally, the period witnessed unprecedented growth in both public and private higher learning institutions, which meant that new institutions tended to adapt DS as what had been taught at the IDS for years. This section highlights issues that emerged during the period relevant in visioning the role DS should be playing in development agendas of the 21st century in Tanzania and elsewhere in the region.

The most noticeable development of the period, perhaps with far-reaching consequences on teaching of DS, was the expanded student enrolment. The period witnessed sustained high enrolment rates for both undergraduate and graduate students. By mid-2000s the total enrolment had increased to more than 20,000, almost double the number during the mid-1990s. Unfortunately, the increased enrolment did not go hand in hand with an expanded staffing situation during the 1990s and early 2000s, following the decisions by the government to freeze the hiring in the public sector, including universities. As a result higher learning institutions were forced to deal with more students while staffing numbers remained more or less stagnant.

The institutional transformation process also involved restructuring of academic units leading to the establishment of campus Colleges and Schools. The IDS was spared drastic changes and its mandate of teaching DS across the university remained intact. However, the consequences of restructuring coupled with increased enrolment called for serious rethinking about what DS should look like and how it could be made more meaningful to new generations of students born during the 1970s and 1980s and faced with fast-paced globalization. Teaching of DS focused on giving meaning to developments in the preceding one and half decades such as national and regional economic crises, economic and political reforms including emerging market economies and democratization processes. Such developments during the second half of the 1980s and 1990s made the IDS scramble for measures to cope with fast-changing situations. The contents of compulsory undergraduate courses could not ignore the important changes taking place. The consensus was to make one part of the programme more theoretical in its coverage, exposing students to the theories of development and

political economy, and the other part more practice-oriented. During the period several development issues, such as globalization, gender, environment, political conflicts and (good) governance became topical and were included in the programmes.

During the early 2000s, the University of Dar es Salaam decided to adopt a semester system and course modularization. Other academic units embarked on reviews of their programmes to make them more appealing to their 'clients', including both students and potential employers, and questions were raised about the relevance of DS. Once again, the IDS came under pressure to re-examine and restructure its courses to accommodate changes taking place in other units, to make them more appealing and 'client-friendly'. The exercise culminated in an important decision of scaling-back the compulsory programme from two to one year including the courses of Development Perspective I (DS 101) and Development Perspective II (DS 102) for first and second semesters respectively (Mpangala 2014). In terms of contents, DS 101 included issues of social development theories, Pan-Africanism, gender and development, ethics, democracy and governance, and DS 102 discussed rural and urban development, science and technology for development, industrialization, entrepreneurship, social service delivery and regional integration.

While the Institute's Master programme has existed since 1974, there was no BA programme. This was seen as a downside for the oldest IDS in the country. The idea became more appealing in the early 2000s when multi- and inter-disciplinary programmes became more attractive to students. Increased enrollment, unfavorable staffing situations and the competition for time and space necessitated a re-examination of the role and place of multidisciplinary DS. A team was formed to explore the potential for introducing bachelor degrees and elevate DS to the next level. Although the idea never came to fruition it provided impetus for subsequent efforts that culminated with the start of a three year bachelor degree programme, the Bachelor of Arts in DS during 2015/2016 academic year, as an earmark of recognized maturity of the discipline. In the course of three years, six semesters, a total of 30 core and electives courses are offered in the theory and practice of development. Courses in areas such as theories of development, political economy, gender, poverty, environment governance and policy analysis are fundamental.

The long-running Master of Arts in DS also needed a critical review to make it more relevant and reflective of the development challenges of the 21st century. Increased enrolment in undergraduate programmes extended to postgraduate programmes as those finishing their first degree, in absence of immediate employment opportunities, enrolled for further studies. In the context of limited capacity and the competition for space, the increased willingness to enroll necessitated raising entry qualifications far beyond the minimum. A review undertaken in the late 2000s led to an additional milestone in DS at the University of Dar es Salaam, establishment of two MA degree programmes: a MA in Development Management and a MA in Gender Studies. Additionally, the IDS has offered PhDs since the 1980s. A good number of graduates are now working in universities within the East Africa region, in government and civil society, and the IDS itself has benefited from the human resources developed.

DS focused on teaching in the early decades. At the same time, however, the process of sharing knowledge on development endeavours was at the centre of development discourse. In the early years of teaching DS the need for a forum to allow development scholars and practitioners to communicate with each other became very clear. The findings of development research undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s ended up as workshop proceedings, unpublished manuscripts, monographs, books, or journals of other disciplines such political science, sociology or history inside or outside Tanzania. The infancy and unique role of DS in informing development processes called for new approaches of sharing development ideas and results of development research.

In January 1991 that goal became a reality when the DS Institute (DSI) at the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) launched *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies* (TJDS). In the words of its Chief Editor the journal “reinforces our commitment to the interdisciplinary approach to studying and understanding development problems, and seeking their solutions”. Typical of the era the journal was partially funded by the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SIDA-Sarec). Unfortunately, the journal became another victim of ‘vol 1, no1 syndrome’ as it went silent for the next seven years only to reappear in June 1998 as another vol 1, no 1, jointly produced by three institutes of DS: IDS, University of Dar es Salaam; IDS, Muhimbili College of Health Sciences (now Department of DS of Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences) and DSI, SUA. Later the IDS, Mzumbe University joined.

Despite some production bottlenecks TJDS has remained a flagship of development discourse in Tanzania. During the period of 1998-2014, a total of 25 issues were published including two special issues; one on participatory development in 2005 and the other on gender in 2011. Slightly over 160 papers by 199 authors have been published. Of the 199 authors who have contributed to the journal over the years, 68 percent are based in four Institutes of Development Studies in Tanzania, 15 percent from other academic units of the University of Dar es Salaam, 11 percent foreign researchers and 5 percent from other institutions within Tanzania. In addition, 26 percent of the papers were co-authored, some between local and foreign scholars.

3. Ongoing debates in Development Studies in Tanzania

As our analysis of the history of DS showed, certain debates have emerged at different stages. These contested issues characterize not only Tanzanian DS, but also the field of development research more generally. In this section we identify a few common debates. These relate to the identity of DS as a discipline, its main contents in teaching and research, the ideal of a discipline that contributes to solving societal problems, and its close global connections.

3.1. The academic status of Development Studies

The first debate concerns the academic status of DS as a multidisciplinary field whose borders with the more traditional disciplines are continuously negotiated: For example it is asked whether one does research on development in sociology, or research on development from a societal perspective. In teaching, there is an argument that DS is supposed to be 'integrative'. This means that development should not be taught as economics, history, political science or sociology as these provide 'competing', often incomplete, perspectives. With nearly all higher learning institutions teaching DS, at least as compulsory undergraduate courses, one could think that the debates of the 1970s and 80s about its relevance should no longer concern stakeholders. However, the introduction of a BA degree programme at the University of Dar es Salaam and an association formed for institutions teaching DS have again raised the stakes for DS in Tanzania.

Since the 1950s DS emerged as a field to study development in developing countries and was embraced by academic communities in both global south and north. This has not abated criticism from the so-called mono-disciplinarians whose perspective of development has tended to devalue multidisciplinary approaches (Msoka 2015). The debates about the multidisciplinary status of DS have included arguments concerning the lack of integration of DS teaching staff with their background disciplines, and claims that research in DS deals too much with generalities, and thus lacks rigour. In practice, for example, the newly recruited members of teaching staff are being encouraged to do their MA in their previous disciplines rather than in DS.

Another contentious issue is the question of whether to teach DS to all students or to devote limited human and financial resources to its own undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (MAs and PhDs). There is no doubt that teaching DS to all students has served the academic community and nation well in terms of raising awareness about national, regional and global development challenges. However, with the increasing complexity of development problems coupled with globalization, more specialized knowledge on development dynamics is needed. Hence specialized education and training with focused resources is needed. Such new perspectives on DS allow an in-depth understanding of development as a process, and the need for evidence in related decision-making. In this context the new role for DS is to provide theoretical and intellectual frameworks for solving development problems. Today, influencing policies with view of making development inclusive and sustainable has become a new focus for DS.

One of the international academic trends also affecting DS is the rising emphasis on results and quality. Academic institutions all over the world have adapted more corporate management models and are measuring results by degrees and publications. However, in measuring results, not only the quantity of publications counts but also the quality, evaluated on the basis of journal rankings (Tezanos and Trueba, this volume). In this race, national journals such as the Tanzania Journal of Development Studies do not have much currency, as the leading journals are those published by international publishers and following a strict blind review process. This global trend has affected the audience and publication forums of DS. While previously it was very common for both Tanzanian and foreign scholars researching on Tanzania to publish in local publishing

houses (e.g. University of Dar es Salaam Press), the trend is now to submit to international journals, often behind paywalls preventing access to academics and interested public in the countries the results concern.

3.2. The relationship between theory, ideology and practice

The academic status of DS is also closely related to its ambiguous position between theoretical rigour and practical relevance. In relation to teaching, in the example of the IDS Dar es Salaam, this was clearly reflected in the two courses offered to all university students where the first course was a theoretical one while the second one dealt with practical challenges. For example, the module on industrialization and development in the first course discusses the theoretical models concerning connection between development of industrial and other sectors such as agriculture, finance and transport. In the second course, the industrialization module focuses on the practical experiences of industrialization.

More broadly, as DS deals with societal change, its theoretical choices are at risk of being inherently ideological and political. For example, in the early days, the choice of the theoretical base proper was easy as DS was tied to the socialist ideology, and relevant theories included mostly those of Marxist-Leninism and dependency theory. During the socialist period, a development approach was viewed as state or community led process and the individual/private sector was not emphasized. Public ownership of major means of production, state sanctioned prices, rents and wages were a commonly accepted view and approach. Since the post-1985 period when Tanzania began to liberalize its economy and in 1992 when the country opted for multiparty politics, the teaching orientation has changed. Neoliberal ideologies and values are increasingly taking central stage in teaching as the political economy of the country evolves. Theoretical trends ranging from early modernization and dependency theory to more recent Foucauldian governmentality, and themes such as rural development, democratic governance, extractives and the like, all provide different perspectives on how economic development and societal change are understood.

Further, DS is not only about theories and empirical research of existing situations, but has an inbuilt idea of being able to suggest interventions in order to improve things.

Widely understood, DS is almost unavoidably political. Recommendations with regard to fighting poverty, for example, can utilize different strategies, aligned with different political perspectives such as postcolonial, socialist, neoliberal or a developmental state. Our review of the papers published in the Tanzania Journal of Development Studies between 1998 and 2014 showed how a wide range of issues were covered both at macro and micro levels. However, a few areas are quite predominant including gender, agriculture, poverty reduction and social services, especially health. Other issues such as globalization, peace and conflicts, democracy and civil society have also received increased attention in recent years. Moreover, in contemporary DS in Tanzania, there are recurring debates about the role of foreign direct investments and their implications to communities and society. Claims over resources such as land/mining rights or ownership, labour rights, local content and royalties are at the centre of such debates. Our review also showed that most papers published in TJDS were products of research pieces, such as case studies of projects implemented. While these provide important insights in the development dynamics, the lack of development research on national and global development agendas, and on forces influencing them, restricts the analytical scope and potential for new theoretical openings coming from Tanzanian DS.

However, there has been a common agreement that DS should deal with inequalities in some way. Such moral ideals have affected, for example, methodological debates in Tanzanian DS. Participatory knowledge production, inspired by the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire and Nyerere's ideals for knowledge of the poor, was a cornerstone of development research from the early days (Swantz 1975). The particular action-research community active in the University of Dar es Salaam was gradually co-opted by international development agencies and conducted technical participatory exercises for projects rather than transformative research (Green 2014: 83-84). The former came with good budgets for emolument and supplies plus a predetermined research agenda. Homegrown research agendas were resource-strapped and, until today, depend on scant resources from the global north and are realized in short-term cycles that do not allow in-depth investigation. Funding of development research locally is still a challenge, as the main source remains the government with its meagre resources.

3.3. North-South relationships: Research, development policies and donors

The example of action research above describes well the ambiguous relationship between DS and international development. While all academic research is international in circulation of knowledge, there are specific connections between DS, international development policies and north-south relationships (Melber, this volume). This relationship is characterised by the extensive funding available for the so-called policy relevant research in the context of frequently changing policy agendas, and huge demand for short-terms studies and consultancies to serve the development industry. This affects the division of time of university staff between academic research and commissioned studies. Institutions such as Research of Poverty Alleviation (later Policy Research for Development) (REPOA) formed in 1994, focus predominantly on conducting policy relevant research with funding from development partners.

Consultancies and commissioned studies provide resources for individual and institutions, while funding for basic academic research is usually channelled through northern research funding agencies. This structure easily leads to a situation where southern researchers realize the agendas of their northern counterparts. Up today, there is a systemic bias in the discipline itself as a result of which the prominent development scholars, typically from the previous colonial powers, conduct research on the developing world. In these research endeavours, the northern researchers are often the ones to set the agenda and conduct analysis, while the role of collaborative local remains often that of data collectors rather than co-authors (Carbonnier and Kontinen 2015). A quick look at the academic articles and books published *on* Tanzania by international publishers indicate a prevalence of authorship of northern academics.

However, the north-south power relations are multifaceted. Historically, northern scholars have widely contributed to establishing the discipline of DS and increasing the academic quality of the research conducted. In Tanzania, Marjorie Mbilinyi (1972), originally from the USA, did a lot to strengthen the research and teaching on gender and development, and Marja-Liisa Swantz from Finland was influential in participatory action-research. Other early influential scholars included Göran Hydén, John Saul, Lionel Cliffe, Andrew Coulson and Mahmood Mamdani. Recently, partly because of the pressures for international academic publishing and requirements by some donor agencies that fund development research, research collaboration has moved towards more equal contributions and responsibilities, and co-authorship of publications.

More equal north-south collaboration, however, does not eliminate the dependency deriving from international policy trends and the consequent research agendas with which the funding is attached. This tendency applies to researchers engaged in DS anywhere across the globe. A large part of this funding is allocated to the “hot”, and ever-changing, topics – development buzzwords (Cornwall 2007) – that have included rural development, gender, social capital, and inclusive development, to name but a few. In the Tanzanian case, much of research has followed these trends, strengthened by its own political phases; for example in the 1990s during the transition from one-party to multi-party democracy research on democracy was a priority topic. Later, issues such as decentralisation, urbanization, health, climate change and extractive industries have gained currency. The most recent framework for development research is provided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), illustrated by a call for research proposals from the Danish aid agency that emphasizes SDGs as an overall framework (Danida 2016). Without doubt, the SDG-framework will affect also the future direction of Tanzanian DS.

The relationship with international development aid also has implications for the quality of research. As the international aid machinery is in continuous need of information on different topics and requires baseline studies, evaluations and impact assessments, it contracts out huge numbers of consultancies often conducted by development scholars. The studies commissioned by the donors might hamper the quality of academic research in two ways. First, the habit of conducting studies with little theoretical rigor and short time frame can gradually lower the overall criteria for academic research. Second, undertaking commissioned research limits the time academics can allocate to teaching and independent research. Resource-scarce universities encourage institutional contracts, and often have coordinators for consultancies under the banner of ‘public service’. The wealth of so-called institutional capacity-building funding available is another aspect that ties DS as an academic field to the international development community. Whilst some of this funding has had significant outcomes for individual institutions, its challenges are in combining the logics of academic collaboration with that of development practice, for instance, often excluding research or teaching from eligible activities to be included in “capacity-building” (Kontinen *et al.* 2015).

3.4. Future visions for DS in Tanzania

In March 2015, a first National Conference of *DS Institutions in Tanzania* was held under the theme *The future of DS or DS of the future* and attended by 38 participants from 20 academic institutions. The need for such a conference reflects the current situation where the number of both public and private higher education institutions has grown rapidly, and almost all these institutes have DS in their academic programmes. In such a situation, debating a shared vision for “future DS” became necessary.

In the conference, concerns were raised about what is taught in the name of DS, and how this should be done. After more than 40 years since DS was introduced, it was not clear whether there is a common understanding of the subject matter. Thus, following questions were discussed: who is qualified to teach DS and at what level? What kinds of knowledge and skills do students of DS need to acquire? Do our institutions have the capacity to impart them? The consensus was that there is an urgent need to have a forum where stakeholders can discuss/debate issues that affect DS as a field of study and develop a common understanding – hence the *Tanzania Development Studies Association* (TDSA) was established.

In Tanzania, like in other countries, research in DS has evolved over time reflecting changing socio-economic and political landscapes, nationally and globally. During the 1960s and 1970s the research agenda was driven by socialist experimentation followed by decentralization and public sector performance. The economic crisis of the 1980s and ensuing reforms, such as structural adjustment, became subjects of academic research trying to inform donors and development practitioners on the costs and/or benefits of interventions. In the 1990s the research agenda was driven by political reforms and democratization processes, divestiture of public enterprises and privatization, all signalling the end of Nyerere’s socialist enterprise.

Over the years research in DS has provided valuable insights into development dynamics, trends and trajectories which have shaped policies and practices in development. Emerging from the conference was the consensus that in the 21st century more efforts are needed in generating and advancing knowledge in DS given its multifaceted nature and the complexity of development processes. Rapid flows of

information globally have made it essential to advance ways of reaching out for research. More now than in the past, research teams, clusters and networks are the approaches utilized in development research. Mounting substantial evidence and comparing facts requires coordinated efforts to make compelling and comparable arguments. Therefore, there was consensus that there is an unmistakable role for 'development research' in developing countries like Tanzania to support evidence-based development policies. However, there was uncertainty about the kinds of questions that need to be asked and how to answer them, including the setting of research agendas, the role of governments and donors in the process and how the outcomes of such research can be translated into development practice.

More often the rationale or relevance for DS is couched in its ability to address or solve development problems, that is, in its societal impact. Therefore knowledge generated and skills developed should be of use to development policymakers, civil society, and communities. It must make significant contributions in bringing about desired societal changes, however defined. Simply put, DS of the future must reach-out and effectively engage partners-in-development.

Since December 2015, President John Magufuli's administration has introduced new trends in Tanzanian development policy. The introduction of anticorruption strategies, cutting public spending on meetings and celebrations, and the general "only work matters" (*hapa kazi tu*) ethos has resulted in some changes in the government and its work ethics, while simultaneously, there are increasing critiques about the shrinking space of freedom of expression by politicians and civil society representatives. While it is too early to present any concise analysis, it can be said that for Tanzanian academic institutions and DS professionals, the new political culture has meant an urgent need to prove their relevance amidst dwindling human and financial resources.

A good number of academics have joined the political class and direct government service in various capacities such as Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Governor, Commissioners and (Managing) Directors in government institutions. It is not yet clear how such moves will benefit universities or research institutions. Should it be a two-way street, with people moving in and out of politics and government, academia will experience long-term benefits as returnees bring back not only a wealth of experience in formulating and implementing development policies but also the networks they have

built up while being in government. Should it be a one-way street, as it often is, the resulting 'brain-drain' will cause hard-to-repair losses to most universities and research institutions. However, ongoing efforts to curb losses and unnecessary expenditures can mean more resource allocation to the education sector in general, and universities and research institutions in particular, raising hopes for quality output and enhanced societal impact.

4. Conclusions

In this chapter we have reflected on the history and current situation of DS in Tanzania. As in many other African countries, the establishment of DS in Tanzania was closely connected with postcolonial nation building and emerging socialist state ideology. DS taught in the University of Dar es Salaam in the 1970s and early 1980s, was characterized by Marxist theories and political economy perspectives. It provided compulsory courses for all university students in support of the socialist state ideology, and research on rural development. Over the years and with changes in the regime, DS in Tanzania has distanced itself from state agendas and built academic study programs in most higher learning institutions in the country. In the beginning of the New Millennium, DS research increasingly aligned with international policies and donor agendas rather than state priorities. The implications of the current, perhaps more nationalistic policy environment to DS are yet to be seen. Recently, DS scholars in Tanzania have started to search for a new, common identity, for instance through establishing a Tanzanian DS Association in 2015. The Association plans to address the pertinent issues related to the academic identity of DS vis-à-vis traditional disciplines, and its need to serve academic students as widely as possible versus focusing its resources to teaching in its own BA, MA and PhD programmes.

The chapter illustrates how the historical trajectory of DS differs in Dar es Salaam from, for example, IDS Sussex in the UK. While DS in Tanzania, from the start, has aimed mainly to contribute to the development of Tanzania itself, IDS Sussex, like any other northern development research institutes and departments, focused on the development of others. Gradually, global development policies, the overall changes in the landscapes in development industry, the global managerialism and output measurement in academia, have narrowed the gap between north and south. Given the

kinds of questions which scholars in this subfield pose and the unfolding global and local political economy, DS is needed more than ever. DS scholars in Tanzania and in other African countries need to chart out pathways to new grounds which will raise the status of the field and consolidate its future.

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