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Dossier

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## Hybrid Identities of Development Studies in Tanzania

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### **Abstract**

This article addresses identities, hierarchies of knowledge and power relations in academia in postcolonial settings, in the context of development studies in Tanzania. Based on literatures on organizational identity and postcolonial hybridity, it establishes a conceptual lens of hybrid identity, scrutinizing how the identity of the discipline of development studies is constructed. Based on analysis of interviews with staff in development studies, we identify four relationships where differences and asymmetries were articulated: with other disciplines, with past development studies, with global theorizing on development, and with partners in the global North. We conclude in discussing how acknowledging multiple relationships and ambivalent knowledge hierarchies can make room for hybrid identities that can produce new ways of producing knowledge in development studies.

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### **Index terms**

**Index by keyword:** development studies, organizational identity, hybridity, Tanzania, North-South relationships

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### **Full text**



## I. Introduction

- 1 This article addresses identities, hierarchies of knowledge and power relations in academia in postcolonial settings in the context of development studies in Tanzania, which may be categorized as postcolonial in three aspects. First, Tanzania is a postcolonial country, and development studies played an important role in nation-building in its early years, after gaining independence from the British in 1961. Second, internationally, the academic field of development studies is an endeavour with a strong colonial legacy, fundamentally based on distinctions such as between developing and developed countries, between the First and Third World, between the West and the rest and, most recently, between the global North and South. The overall preoccupation of development studies has been to capture the economic and social changes in the latter “region” to “develop” towards the stage of the former, in facilitating interventions aimed at promoting such change, mostly designed in the global North. Third, development studies are in close relationships with the so-called international aid or development co-operation industry, policy, and practice. It is an international field emerging after World War II and further strengthened after the independence of former colonies. Much research in development studies is funded by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs as well as diverse international donor agencies and are implemented in collaboration with research institutions from the global North and South.
- 2 Development studies have subsequently come in for critical scrutiny when seen through postcolonial (McEwan, 2009; Kothari, 2006; Ziai, 2016) and decolonial (Rutazibwa, 2018) lenses. Scholarship on alternatives to development and post-development models (Escobar, 1995; Esteva/Escobar, 2017; Ziai, 2007) have challenged the imaginary of modernization as an aspired direction for “development”. Generally, the epistemological asymmetries between the global North and South in the areas of conceptualizing development and social change have been pointed out, and general social science debates on the need for Southern theorising (Connell, 2007, 2014; Comaroff/Comaroff, 2012), have become increasingly relevant for development studies as well. The global division of roles and power has been shown in the evolvments of the discipline of development studies. A case in point: while one of the most renowned institutes of development studies, in Sussex, UK, was established in 1966 primarily to conduct research on development in the global South, the Institute of Development Studies established in 1974 at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, mainly served research and teaching on development in Tanzania itself. Related to this contrast in areas of concentration, postcolonial notions like “Othering” are relevant in understanding the discipline and its theorization in contexts where most international research and theorizing within the discipline has been done on the development of “the Others”.
- 3 Development Studies is a field characterized by continual collaboration between research institutes from the global North and South. Pertinent asymmetries in academic collaboration have received increasing attention in recent development research literature (Axelby *et al.*, 2022; Perry *et al.*, 2022; White, 2020). While there are some analyses of partnerships from Southern perspectives (eg. Ishengoma, 2016), less is known about the dynamics of North-South partnerships in relation to the wider identities of academic disciplines in the global South who enter into the partnerships. To address this gap, and building on the authors’ previous work on the history (Komba *et al.*, 2019) and current issues (Kilonzo/Kontinen, 2015) of Tanzanian development studies, building capacity of development studies in North-South academic partnerships (Kontinen *et al.*, 2015), and counteracting systemic power relations in North-South research partnerships (Carbonnier/Kontinen, 2015; Kontinen/Nguyahambi, 2020a, 2020b), in this article, instead of scrutinizing North-South research relationships, we analyse hierarchies of knowledge as they emerge in current Tanzanian development studies.
- 4 To analyse diverse knowledge hierarchies, we establish a lens of hybrid identity, building on the notions of organizational identity as constructed in marking differences vis-à-vis others (Gioia/Hamilton, 2018) and postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), and scrutinize how staff working in development studies in three Tanzanian universities construct differences and power hierarchies when discussing diverse aspects of their discipline. In this approach, power hierarchies are not understood as static and pregiven, but as constructed in encounters – in the very articulation of differences and power

positioning between those differences. In the encounters, also potentialities for hybridity, something new, may occur. Therefore, in our analysis of 29 qualitative interviews with the various staff, we focus on how differences are expressed, power hierarchies constructed, and potentialities for hybridity brought out. As a result of our analysis, we strive to determine how identity is constructed in Tanzanian development studies in relationship with other disciplines, with development studies in the past, with global theorizing on development, and in North-South research collaborations.

- 5 The article proceeds as follows. First, we describe the research methodology and research material used in this article. Second, we establish a notion of hybrid identity to be used as an analytical lens. We will then present the findings, where the identity of current Tanzanian development studies is constructed vis-à-vis other disciplines, the past of Tanzanian development studies, global development theories, and their collaborations with the global North. In conclusion we suggest three contributions to the literature on North-South relationships.

## II. Notes on methodology

- 6 This article scrutinizes how Tanzanian development studies scholars construct the identity of development studies in relation to their “Others”. The research material used in this article is drawn from 29 qualitative interviews conducted by the authors with staff working in development studies programmes in three renowned universities in Tanzania. The participants had PhD degrees, but not necessarily in the discipline of development studies, and worked as permanent staff in the respective universities. Four of the interviewees represented the scholarly generation who had participated in the establishment of development studies in Tanzania in the 1970s, while most were of a generation who had received their PhDs in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The language of instruction in Tanzanian universities is English, but Kiswahili is mainly used in other communication. Thus, the interviews were conducted either in English or in Kiswahili, depending on the participants’ preference. In most of the interviews, a mixture of the two languages was used. The quotes used in the findings section of this article were translated into English by the authors. The open-ended interview questions concerned the disciplinary status of development studies, the historical trajectory of development studies in Tanzania, and its institutional status within Tanzanian universities. Additionally, the relationships of development studies with students, society, communities and academic demands, as well as state and government sectors, were discussed. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

- 7 Reflections relevant to the three postcolonial elements were selected for further analysis in this article. The analysis focused on how the identity of Tanzanian development studies was forged in relations with its various “Others” in the interviews. Following the usual steps in thematic analysis (Braun/Clarke, 2021), the transcribed material was first read thoroughly to identify interesting and relevant issues. Then, we conducted coding, facilitated by Atlas.ti software, to identify the various kinds of “Othering” articulated. This resulted in the following categories: definition of development studies; history of Tanzanian development studies; theorizing in development; and North-South collaboration, which were further analysed and interpreted through a lens “spelling out” differences, knowledge asymmetries in encounters, and the emerging potentialities for hybrid identities. As how articulations were made is central to our interpretations, we provide ample direct quotes in discussing our findings. However, to protect the anonymity of individual participants, we do not identify the quotes by university, gender, or the background discipline of the participant quoted. Nevertheless, several quotes from each participating university were categorized under each theme.

## III. Conceptualizing hybrid identities

8 In this section, we describe our conceptualization of the hybrid identity of development studies. Our notion of hybrid identity is built on two main literatures. First, we draw on the idea of organizational identity as constructed through collective meaning-making in distinguishing one organization from the others (Gioia/Hamilton, 2018). Second, we build on the notion of postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), suggesting that in the process of Othering, power asymmetries are constructed in encounters where differences are articulated. We define the notion of identity as a collective meaning making by development studies staff as they distinguish current development studies from their Others, articulate differences and knowledge hierarchies inherent in those relationships from others, and further, bring up possibilities for hybrid identities where something new may emerge from these differences.

9 The notion of organizational identity has been extensively discussed in the field of organization studies (Cornelissen, 2002; He/Brown, 2013). Broadly, the notion of organizational identity considers the question of how a collective defines itself. As such, it is a relational construct, as identity is defined as a connection or relation between ideas or vis-à-vis the “past”, the “different”, or “them” (Pratt *et al.*, 2018:3-4). The notion of organizational identity has also been used to analyse universities (Stensaker, 2013). However, in this article we do not focus on universities or departments as organizations but found the construct useful in analysing the identity of the academic discipline of development studies. We argue that disciplines, in a vein similar to organizations, define themselves in diverse relations in distinguishing themselves from others.

10 Epistemologically, Gioia & Hamilton (2018) distinguish between three broad approaches to organizational identity: social actor, social constructionist, and institutional. In this article, we draw on the second perspective, understanding organisational identity as a social construct, as meanings associated by the members of the discipline of development studies, continually renegotiated in interaction between the members, and between members and outsiders (Gioia/Hamilton, 2018:24). Hence from the social constructionist perspective, organizational identities are not stable properties, as the collective understanding of what distinguishes organizations from others is frequently redefined (Gioia *et al.*, 2000:64). Moreover, as Pratt (2018) argues, there may exist a plurality of organizational identities. In that context, he discusses the notion of hybrid identity in reference to two, opposing identities. His construct differs slightly from the one used in this article, as we contend that hybrid identities can be constructed not only between two, but several identities, and for us, hybrid identities have a postcolonial element of articulation differences and power.

11 In the literature on organizational identity, the notion of power has also been explored. In their review, Kenny *et al.* (2018) discuss power and politics in regard to the concept of organizational identity. They argue that exploration of power has mainly revolved around conflicts and interests, and little emphasis has been placed on the less visible and constitutive forms of power. Such forms of power, they argue (*ibid.*:145), are central in processes of constructing organizational identity, as they constitute “the very way people come to think about and talk about” an organization’s identity. In accessing this, they suggest the Foucauldian idea of power of discourse, and empirically investigating how subjects internalize and mobilize power/knowledge discourses. To enrich the notion of organizational identity to better capture postcolonial settings and their power dynamics, we draw on Homi Bhabha’s (1994) notion of postcolonial hybridity. Even if originating in postcolonial literature studies, Bhabha’s theoretical ideas have been widely applied in organization and management studies (Claeyé, 2014; Frenkel, 2008:926; Frenkel/Shenhav, 2003; Islam, 2012; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008; Seremani/Clegg, 2016). For our purposes, the notion of postcolonial hybridity provides a particular lens in understanding power, difference, and knowledge hierarchies when the goal is construction of identity in development studies.

12 Bhabha’s conceptualization of power draws on and is simultaneously critical of Foucauldian analysis of postcolonial discursive power – as exemplified in the seminal book *Orientalism* by Edward Said (1978). Bhabha argues that discourses are not internally homogenous; they are rather ambivalent and unstable. Consequently, power positions between discourses are not pre-given and stable, but continually constructed in

encounters (Kapoor, 2003:568). Bhabha posits that discourses, including colonial discourses, are ambivalent. The power relations between them are constructed through processes of “Othering” within the encounters, where one discourse can be constructed as authoritarian, through its attempts to translate the identity of “the Others”, the non-authoritarian ones, into a singular category. In our development studies cases, such simplified categorization can be seen, for instance, in labelling several countries as “developing countries” despite their differences. Additionally, “Others” can be constructed as something to whom the authoritarian knowledge should be transferred, to be able to gradually resemble those positioned in power positions (Frenkel/Shenhav, 2003; Papastergiadis, 2015). According to the Bhabhaian view, resistance shows up in encounters where discourses of authority attempt to translate the identity of “the Others”, the non-authoritarian ones, into a singular category, and to construct the others as ones to whom authoritarian knowledge should be transferred (Papastergiadis, 2015:279). For instance, in multinational corporations, Western management knowledge is often a taken-for-granted “best practice” that should be transferred to other parts of the world (Frenkel/Shenhav, 2003:1541-1542). In a similar vein, development studies and development practice has long exercised “capacity-building” in an attempt to transfer “best practices” from the Northern research institutions to the Southern. These dynamics resonate well with the broader pertinent idea of “development”, as following similar universal paths everywhere in order to reach the state of the “Others”, the already “developed countries”. Additionally, this process is often promoted by technology transfer to and capacity building of the Others, the “developing world”.

13 As authoritarian and non-authoritarian discourses only exist in relation to each other (Islam, 2012:161); power relationships emerge in continual processes of distinguishing one from another. Discourses constructing themselves as authoritarian, simultaneously, need “Others” to recognize their authoritarian position (Bhabha, 1994). Again, in the sphere of development we are arguing for, it is not only about the West exercising power over and dominating the rest, but also constructed in taken-for-granted ways as authoritarian – developed, and desirable by those in non-authoritarian positions. Therefore, in this approach, power positions are understood as articulations of differences between the one and the “Other” in encounters that are characterized by ambivalence (Kapoor, 2003) and incompleteness of authority (Jeffers, 2008:31, 38). Such understandings of power positions as articulations of differences also entail possibilities of resistance. Resistance, in this view, does not necessarily refer to an explicit contestation of a discourse perceived as authoritarian, but is often manifested as an unconscious antagonism, embedded in the renegotiation of identities in encounters (Moore-Gilbert, 1997:130). Everyday resistance might not show up in explicitly contestative acts but take place in more mundane ways in daily practice and interactions, for instance through racist stereotypes, statements, jokes, and myths (Bhabha, 1994:86). One of the main strategies of resistance is mimicry (Bhabha, 1994:85-92; Kapoor, 2003:563; Frenkel, 2008:927). Mimicry, on the one hand, is an attempt to force the colonized to transform their culture, to act like, or copy, the colonizer (Moore-Gilbert, 1997:120; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008:969); on the other hand, it highlights the difference between them (Frenkel, 2008:926). Bhabha (1994:86) defines colonial mimicry as “the desire for (a) reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite”. Therefore, mimicry is an ironic compromise between both demands to change and to remain “other” (Bhabha, *Ibid.*). In the context of development studies, at least when it comes to theory, this might consist in attempts to copy theories from the global North once they are regarded as authoritarian, while yet at the same time, emphasizing differences in context.

14 When power relations are constantly negotiated, there are also potentialities for hybridization where something new can emerge in a new combination of the discourses. In hybridization, the discourses constructed as authoritarian and subaltern can enter a kind of liminal stage (Bhabha, 1990), a third space. The creative possibilities of the third space (Kapoor, 2003:572), are not however characterized by harmonious dialogue between different knowledges, as suggested by Seremani & Clegg (2016). Rather, hybridity is a strategy fostering an antagonist resistance that makes creative use of

vulnerabilities of power (Kapoor, 2003:572-574). In order to identify ways in which something new can emerge, it is important to scrutinize how the knowledge hierarchies are resisted, and what kinds of potentialities for their renegotiation exist, with new, hybrid identities emerging.

- 15 In conclusion, our analytical lens started with the notion of organizational identity, re-interpreted as identity of a discipline of development studies, as socially constructed, and constantly renegotiated in diverse relationships where certain development studies are distinguished from others. We then added the notion of postcolonial hybridity, which guides us in examining how differences, knowledge hierarchies, and potential hybridity are articulated in the process of constructing identity in encounters. Therefore, the notion of hybrid identity captures the processes of distinguishing from Others with the power relations constructed in articulating those very differences.

## IV. Findings: the hybrid identities of tanzanian development studies

- 16 In this section, we present our finding on how the hybrid identities of Tanzanian development studies were constructed vis-à-vis the four relationships characterised by Othering identified as significant in the analysis. In each category of relationships, we discuss the differences articulated in the interviews, the knowledge hierarchies emerging in these articulations, and the potentialities for developing hybrid identities as spaces for something new to emerge. The categories identified are embedded within the country's historical development, the area of which, Tanganyika, first came to be under German and then British colonial rule until the independence in 1961 and formation of the State of the Republic of Tanzania in 1963. The political party of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) played an important role in the struggle for independence. It was led by Julius Nyerere, who then became the first President of the country until the year 1985. He possessed a strong vision of implementing African socialism, or familyhood, (Ujamaa) based on self-reliance. This meant nationalization of industries as well as one-party rule until the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1992, in parallel with adopting a market economy. It was also in the early 1960s that the first university was established in Tanzania, and, moreover, in the early years of the new nation, the discipline of development studies was an important means of teaching the prevailing state ideology to all university graduates. While the content of those development studies has changed since their early years, most universities in Tanzania continue to offer some compulsory courses for all students.

### A. The hybrid identity of development studies as a discipline

- 17 Reflecting on the question of whether development studies is an academic discipline in its own right, some differences vis-à-vis other disciplines were articulated, and knowledge asymmetries constructed. Participants hold divergent views on whether development studies have a disciplinary identity. At one extreme, some argued that it is not an independent discipline, but a mixture of others. For example, an experienced scholar argued:

In my view there is no core for [the] development studies, no. It is hotchpotch of other disciplines. It is a field of study called development studies, theoretical base unknown.

- 18 While the lack of a strong theoretical and methodological core was acknowledged by all, some have argued for the discipline's strong identity, attributed to its multidisciplinary nature. One participant reflected that development studies is «an integration of several disciplines», and another that:

We do not have real theories of development studies as a discipline, no. We normally use theories from different areas and combine them together, [...] putting them in the context of development studies.

- 19 Consequently, as reflected by one participant, the content of development studies was seen to depend a lot on the background disciplines individuals have entered development studies from:

So, it is more vulnerable to personalities; a professor in development studies will be different from another professor, depending on their perspective and orientation.

- 20 Many however argued for understanding development studies as a discipline. Several different perspectives have been outlined supporting that argument. For example: development studies are different from other disciplines – that are “narrow”, while development studies have a wider scope and looks at things holistically. Additionally, some participants argued that as for development studies, its societal goals and methodologies count more than any theoretical bases. Therefore, the methodology stresses the holistic identification of development issues and ways of addressing them. Participatory methods – especially – were mentioned as at the core of development studies. Additionally, unlike what goes on in other disciplines, a close relationship was attributed to practice and specific “development lenses”, meaning that

When we are faced with a situation or scenario, we don't like to conclude; we want to look for the causes, effects and consequences, – and even the impact and fall-out, in a continuum.

- 21 Lastly, ideas were put forward that the discipline of development studies is on its way to becoming a discipline, but for instance, its theoretical bases should be developed. As one participant put it:

We are working towards that and becoming a discipline rather than part of the social sciences discipline, and of course it's difficult [...] I don't know whether it's the limitations of resources or maybe that we have not been in a position to develop a more theoretical basis for development studies that would be, I am saying the right kind of thing – but to differentiate ourselves from others.

- 22 Being an interdisciplinary field of research, which is constantly debating its core theories and methodologies, development studies need to struggle for their recognition within the academic community. Especially in universities with a strong natural science focus, development studies, with its social science angle, and especially its acceptance of qualitative research methods, has been downplayed. The situation has been improved, but as one participant described happening in the not too distant past:

If you went to a meeting, and introduced yourself as somebody coming from development studies, then you would see how people looked at you, the way they took your comments. They were taken very lightly, and it's as if it's not a real science, you see.

- 23 Finally, hybrid identity held many potentialities, where development studies would assume their connection with practice and people's development, as well as seeing its interdisciplinary nature as a starting point and strength rather than a weakness. As argued by one of the participants:

Actually, given its required place as a discipline because it's serving a specific segment of development that not just any person can go in and perform. We have to understand people's perspectives as they relate to development from different walks of life. So, development studies stand as central and a connection point to all disciplines.

- 24 Therefore, the identity of development studies in relationships with other academic disciplines was constructed in an ambivalent way, which also allowed knowledge hierarchies to emerge. On the one hand, development studies were considered as inferior to other disciplines in lacking a strong theoretical and methodological core, on the other



hand it was thought to be superior with its ability to have specific development lenses and to engage with holistic, multidisciplinary research, teaching, and further, in finding solutions to development issues in the society, out of reach of other, narrower disciplines.

## B. Hybrid identity in relationship to past, post-independence development studies

25 One of the most prevalent constructions of Otherness set out in the interviews was that between today's development studies and Tanzanian development studies from the past. The participants constantly contrasted the flourishing days of development studies in the 1970s to the situation today. For example, one of the participants stated how Tanzanian development studies are «retarded now» and another remembered with nostalgia how «development studies did big things in the past». While such nostalgia was invoked by senior scholars having themselves been part of the establishment of Tanzanian development studies, the younger generation too frequently mentioned the influential role of development studies of the past.

26 The asymmetries between current development studies and those of the past were brought to light through several descriptions of differences. In the past, development studies played a central role in post-independence state-building, and thus, worked in close collaboration with the state leaderships and disseminated the main ideology of the first President Julius Nyerere, who is still highly esteemed as a Father of the Nation, and as Mwalimu, a teacher. Development studies had an exceptional status, as one of the participants put it: the «government issued that development studies should be a basic, a core study in all universities» (see also Nyerere, 1971). Indeed, Development Studies were made a mandatory subject for all university students, and its core courses were designated. It was considered essential to everyone to learn about the fundamentals of development as understood in the nascent nation's state ideology. A core curriculum was introduced in 1970, and the Department of Development Studies in the University of Dar es Salaam established, in 1971, was to become the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in 1973.

27 Consequently, the interviews pointed to a difference between past development studies as being “political”, and as having shifted towards more “analytical” tendencies in recent decades. In a similar vein, the teaching of development studies in the past was described as “indoctrination”. This referred to teaching the official development ideology of the State, Ujamaa, which revolved around ideas of self-reliance, participation of all in the nation's development, and African socialism (Jennings, 2017). According to one of the participants, teaching mostly included:

[...] rural development from the point of view of socialism, following the political agenda of President Nyerere of tackling the three enemies of the young nation, poverty, diseases, and ignorance.

28 Even if the early years of development studies in Tanzania were highly political, they were also praised for their theoretical rigour and evident scholarship. The 1970s and early 1980s were described as «the time of all the big ones» in Tanzanian development studies. Reference was made to scholars such as Issa Shivji from Law and Seithy Loth Chachage from Sociology, both of whom contributed to debates on Tanzanian postcolonial development from the late 1970s on. However, the earlier nascent development studies in Dar es Salaam were heavily influenced by critical scholars such as Walter Rodney, author of the seminal book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), or British historian Terence Ranger, both of whom were teaching in the University of Dar es Salaam in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Overall, Marxist theories were widely used, and a political economy approach was prevalent.

29 Regarding the relationship between the global North and South, early development studies in Tanzania had a clear agenda. As one of the participants described: «in the beginning, the emphasis was on anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, as the process of nation building went together with anti-imperialism and anti-

neocolonialism struggles». Here, a clear difference as compared to today's development studies was outlined. Many participants described how the nature of development studies changed in the 1980s and 1990s from a critique of imperialism to facilitating the «coordination of nations in the process of development, given the changing perspectives and new emerging issues». That change reflected the transition of Tanzania's political and economic status from a one-party socialism to a multi-party market economy in the 1990s. In interaction with international development actors, diverse new themes such as environment, gender, technology, and industry were introduced, which were also seen in the changes in the contents of teaching programmes as well as the foci of research.

- 30 While the contributors described what they consider as definitive constructions of certain knowledge asymmetries between the renowned and remembered past and the silent and dormant situation in current Tanzanian development studies, some potentialities for hybrid identities have emerged. Even if the role of development studies as distributors of State development ideology has long since faded and the relationship with decision-makers distant, in most of the universities development studies core courses are still offered to all students, notwithstanding their main subject. In one of the universities, this practice was terminated a few years ago. While offering development studies to all is considered important, it was also judged demanding in teaching resources. Additionally, it was also argued that the central role of development studies should prevail, even if the contents of development have changed and become more internationally oriented. As one of the participants stated:

We are the custodians of the Sustainable Development Goals in assuring that at least we do something to make those goals achievable; or ideally, we are supposed to do that but maybe we are not doing enough.

- 31 Moreover, Nyerere's legacy as a "philosopher" of development is still important, and constant efforts are made to insert his legacy into teaching and research on development in Tanzania. The importance of Nyerere and his thought was mentioned by most research participants, notwithstanding their age or extent of academic experience. In contrast, not many efforts are made to contribute to new and original theorizations in development, as will be discussed in the next section.

## C. Hybrid identities in theorizing development

- 32 One of the most discussed knowledge hierarchies in postcolonial literature concerns how the concepts and theories established based on experiences in the global North are considered universal, while ignoring the experience of the majority of humankind. This applies especially to concepts related to society, politics, or culture. Consequently, suggestions of Southern theorizing (Connell, 2007) have been formulated, in parallel with emphasizing indigenous knowledge and pluriversal (Mignolo, 2021) rather than Eurocentric theorizations of what is considered development as a desired good life in different contexts.
- 33 However, based on the interviews, traditional Eurocentric development theories occupy the development studies curricula and research. In discussing resistance, Bhabha (1994) identifies the use of irony and jokes as one way of constructing power differences. Such manifestations of difference took place in many interviews. When we asked whether Tanzanian theories of development were predominant, often the first response was laughter. While some reminded us that Nyerere's ideas on African socialism are development theories, there was quite wide-spread hesitation when it came to more recent theories, as illustrated by the response of one participant «no, I doubt it [...] I don't know if we really have Tanzanian development theories apart from the books written by Mwalimu Nyerere on development issues».
- 34 In regard to theorizing, a clear difference was established between the "mature" theorizing in Europe and the US, and Tanzanian scholarship – as being not "yet there". This articulation resonates well with Bhabha's (1994:86) notion of the postcolonial difference as being expressed as «being almost the same but not quite». Several

participants mentioned, for instance, difficulties in theorizing as Tanzania is a «developing country», that might have its own theories but not yet, or it is difficult to have Tanzanian theories as «we are still dependent». Therefore, it was quite taken for granted that «most of the theories come from outside» and «we normally use those from outside, as ours are not yet ready – from here». The most prevalent theories mentioned as being used in teaching were Rostow's (1960) theory of stages of economic growth, modernization theory, and Marxist-based theories of development. One of the participants argued that

In most of developing countries, it's not that we don't understand or see changes, but we don't theorize why things are changing and put it in writing, a theoretical kind of thing.

35 The lack of theorizing was attributed to a lack of academic reading, resources, and incentives to do theoretical research. One interviewee reflected the somewhat ambivalent position of Tanzanian scholars towards global development theories as something that «we have either critically rejected or adopted as such».

36 Along with being hesitant on the possibilities of Tanzanian theorizing, most of the interviews, however, mentioned the challenge of Eurocentrism in the current theories. A clear difference was expressed between the contexts the development theories were established in and contemporary Tanzania. As one of the participants explained:

The context really is different. Some of the theories are hard to read, as they are very well suited to the European context. The way society in Europe has evolved over time, over centuries, so to speak. If you look at our context in Africa for example, we can see that our background has influenced us. The slave trade and colonialism, they left us in a kind of limbo. Our thinking about social issues and so on, the area of development whatever: it's only from the post-independence period on that we've been trying to make an identity for ourselves as scholars, African scholars of course, that's who we are, why we are here and what purpose we do serve and – what are we contributing to the society, how do we understand our societies, our communities and so on? Sometimes it can be very tough, as of course Europe is still very much Eurocentric.

37 Nevertheless, even if the relevance of the Eurocentric theories was questioned, there was a shared understanding that local theorization, if it had occurred in some instances, is not valued and thus, is immediately forgotten. One of the participants remembered how someone in the institution established a relevant model and a theory:

But then what did we do with that theory? He wrote an email circulating it university wide, some people congratulatory for good work and saying how it will be worth further testing. But it ended there. So, we have our own biases, when a theory comes from our own context, we're hesitant. But it's immediately ok if it comes from anyone from Oxford or the US.

38 One difference described was that between scientific and useful theories. While one of the participants straightforwardly said that they «do not like theories at all», several others pondered that for them addressing communities' needs and understanding their development issues is much more important than contributing to any theory. One of the participants stated:

It is not a must to have scientific significance every day; I don't know any "Nobel prizes" and as such, we need to have models that work or theories that have relevance in our contexts, that we can use to build policies and even development interventions.

39 In a similar vein, many emphasized that theories should be able to contribute to the development of Tanzania, but simultaneously, some stressed the importance of theorizing in order to be able to promote relevant policies. One participant argued:

I think theorizing is still relevant, because the danger for development in our developing nations is to have sporadic aspects without having theoretical perspectives that can guide us. So, development studies should provide the right,

correct theoretical perspectives, the right strategies for the practical aspects of development.

- 40 In conclusion, the overall tune was that most of the development theories come from outside, and even if they suffer from Eurocentrism, they are relevant for development studies as a discipline and for development as a practice. There are, however, challenges in applicability, and a desire was felt to establish localized theories, which are not yet there. The potentialities of hybrid identities as producers of theory were, on the one hand, drawn from Nyerere's legacy, and on the other hand, from potential collaborations with scholars from the global North seeking to establish theories in dialogue.

## D. Hybrid identities in partnerships with the Others in the global North

- 41 The last identified relationship between current development studies in Tanzania and its Others concerned research partnerships with the global North. Building partnerships with Northern development institutions and universities was generally considered desirable. Most of the scholars interviewed had some experience in such partnerships and were motivated to establish new ones. In a few interviews, the condition of funding flowing only one way, from North to South was critically reflected upon, while in most cases it was considered a taken-for-granted fact. The partnerships were praised for providing opportunities to conduct research – which, in a Tanzanian context, are otherwise limited, to publish internationally, and to learn in conducting research together. Some grants for research visits to Northern universities were described as “empowering”. Similarly, research partnerships were often described as important capacity builders – provided from North to South.

- 42 The desirability of North-South partnerships related to several differences between North and South was dwelt on, and hierarchies in knowledge production identified. One of the academics interviewed pointed out how so much of academic knowledge is continually produced by scholars from Europe and the US, and not by the Tanzanians themselves, and reflected: «Some people know us better than we know ourselves. That is really a shame, very shameful», and continued how, to have balance, there should also be more research on Europe conducted by Africans.

- 43 The difference between the Others who have funds and “us”, who need to apply for project funding from them, came up repeatedly. Research partnerships were mainly described as continual processes of proposal writing to respond to various calls issued by Northern academic or development institutions. Their experience was that most proposals were not successful. One participant enthusiastically described a large international proposal the preparation of which they had participated in, and then ended: «of course, we received the decision some weeks ago, and it didn't go through». Another added «we have been struggling to get one; every year we see opportunities for research collaboration, but when we try, we miss the opportunity». Overall, the successful partnerships were seen as resulting from networks and linkages the researchers and departments have managed to build with actors in the North, who then, «recognizing our input, can invite us to partner in a proposal». For those institutions and researchers lacking prior contacts, applying for project funding was hard, as one participant said:

I remember there were some international partners, Danish DANIDA; they called for proposals so people could write, but the issue there is that they had to have a partner in their sponsoring country, and finding a partner in Denmark is somewhat challenging.

- 44 The most prevalent difference related to knowledge asymmetries in North-South relationships was how research priorities always ended up as determined in the North. This was mentioned by most of the participants, as exemplified by a quote from one:

They always produce themes, and you write according to their themes; they have specific things they want. As long as the donors have the money, they have specific

things to do. It's not as if you were asking for money to do what you want.

- 45 The suitability of the research priorities was questioned from several perspectives. Reflections on the mismatch between the donor research priorities and the communities' needs were made in several interviews. The fact that when the research is funded by donors, the results too tend to end up with donors in the global South, rather than with communities or local decision-makers – to be used for policy design. Additionally, the rapid changes in the agendas, and a lot of funds being allocated to various “buzzwords”, while others are simultaneously forgotten. As one participant explained:

We depend on donors who have their priorities. For example, some five years ago, we saw a lot of support on climate change. Then, here in the university, there were some four PhD students doing climate change, and then you ask yourself whether or not they were really interested in climate change. They acted that way because that's what the donors wanted. And this has caused problems.

- 46 One of the current agendas, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were frequently mentioned as an example of one of the priorities that determine North-South research relationships. Most of the funding opportunities revolve around implementation of the SDGs. One of the participants reflected that SDGs can be seen as a kind of new colonization process designed to impose various regulations, but then added that some people think that «these European countries, they came with these things, I don't know, sustainable development goals and the like, but they're there to assist developing countries catch up with them».

- 47 Another participant, moreover, reflected particularly on the global indicators to be used:

If we use the same indicator in the North and the South, then somewhere there may be a problem. Because we're a bit different in terms of change. So, if you use the global indicators at the higher level and the same indicators in Tanzania, obviously we will be underdeveloped till the end of this world.

- 48 Overall, there were differences erected between research partners from the global North and South, but also between the prevalent research agendas and the communities' issues and needs. When it came to the Northern partners, differences between them were also acknowledged. The academic partners, in general, were seen as more open and flexible than development institutions, who had more rigid agenda, often realized through consultancies rather than academic research. One of the participants reflected on the orientations of the Northern partners:

There are two different orientations. From a development perspective, they are trying to scan around in the environment to identify the issues. But sometimes you have international partners with a certain package they would like to push. If you have an international partner that has an academic basis, the room for discussion is usually wide and some areas of modification are always there. But there are rigid international development partners, who would just like to push their agendas.

- 49 Finally, certain potentialities for hybrid identities in North-South partnerships were felt to exist. Nobody suggested abandoning the North-South partnerships, and many had good experiences on collaborations as enablers of research work. Moreover, the international collaboration was considered an essential element of development studies, as one participant reflected: «These days, you cannot develop by yourself. Again, there's a concept we could use, co-innovation». Another reflected on how research collaboration can advance the understanding of Tanzanian development processes:

There must be a way of looking at things together; those studying in Europe and here in Tanzania, know exactly what's happening here. Sometimes you're surprised by the way we do things, and you theorize from your end. So, I'm talking about partnering with our European colleagues to try to understand why things are organized as they are here.

- 50 To counteract this running after changing themes and topics, and submitting to any call available, some of the participants suggested that each department focus on building

a certain expertise, and from there, gaining a «reputation that you're an expert in that particular area, and when you do so you have to also be prepared to support those priorities if some donors honour your priorities». The main obstacle for building such research priorities, as well as one's own theoretical foundations for development studies in Tanzania, has been the lack of Tanzanian research funds. As one of the participants pointed out: «we still have deficits in budgeting. The budgetary procedure requires us to earmark at least 10 % of the budget for research in development. But that hasn't been done for years». Consequently, some have proposed that more funding for research should be provided by Tanzanian universities so that not all research is dependent on partnerships with the global North.

51 In concluding: when it came to defining themes and agendas in North South research partnerships, power asymmetries were described. On the one hand, the Northern institutions, especially the academic ones, were constructed as having more in-depth knowledge, and therefore, more partnership potentialities for enhancing research capacities. On the other hand, the rigid agendas were considered as jeopardizing Tanzanian knowledge and skills in relevant research topics and needs.

## V. Conclusions

52 In this article we examined power and knowledge hierarchies in postcolonial settings in the context of development studies in Tanzania. We established and used the lens of hybrid identity, which combined a social constructionist approach to organizational identities as continual, as distinguished from others with postcolonial hybridity where power relationships between diverse discourses are constructed in encounters where differences and asymmetries are articulated, and potential spaces for hybrid forms open up. We identified four relevant relationships vis-à-vis which differences were articulated: with other disciplines, with past development studies, with a global theorizing of development, and with partners from the global North.

53 In all these relationships, current development studies in Tanzania were not only constructed as different, but also revealed certain, often ambivalent, constructions of power hierarchies. In relationships with other disciplines there was an ambivalence between development studies being superior due to its holistic, overarching, and multidisciplinary characteristics, but at the same time, being inferior as lacking as strong a theoretical or methodological core as other disciplines. In a less ambivalent way, past Tanzanian development studies were constructed as wider in scope and influence than today's. In discourses concerning theorization development, Tanzanian development studies were predominantly constructed to have a less authoritarian and inferior position as compared to theoretical knowledge production conducted in the global North. Finally, more ambivalence was built into their relationships with collaborators from the global North, and whereas, on the one hand they were constructed as more capable and resourceful in providing research opportunities, on the other hand they were less knowledgeable on context and in clinging rigidly to irrelevant agendas. Such ambivalences in the power positions consequently created potentialities for hybrid identities that might lead to changes in the identities and consequent practices in future Tanzanian development studies.

54 This article has contributed to research on knowledge hierarchies in academia in postcolonial settings in three main ways. First, rather than scrutinizing North-South partnerships, it offered a novel angle for investigating the identity of a discipline that frequently enters into these partnerships. The analysis showed the relevance of considering multiple differentiations made. Potentially, our findings open ideas for establishing partnerships. Moving away from the current situation, it proposes establishing contextual knowledge needs in any discipline in the global South rather than predominantly from Northern agendas, as frequently shown in previous research on North-South partnerships (White, 2020; Carbonnier/Kontinen, 2015). In such collaborations, the identities of Southern academics should be constructed as being



knowledgeable and capable rather than in need of capacity building in order to reach the knowledge levels of their Northern partners.

55 Second, in resonance with Perry *et al.* (2022), our analysis has shown how knowledge hierarchies are not only epistemological, but also material. Funding system and resource shortcomings contribute to the lack of theoretical research as well as the need to continually shift focuses according to changes in agendas, with that having epistemological consequences. However, currently, the funding for theoretical academic research is scarce not only in the global South but also in the global North. Development studies, especially, in both spheres are quite oriented to practice and funded by development agencies. That, for its part, reflects the more fundamental postcolonial condition of the development industry and research where, despite claims of participation and ownership, the agendas on how countries and societies should develop are drafted by influential global institutions who often outsource research to academics for their purposes.

56 Third, we showed that knowledge hierarchies are continually re-negotiated, but also closely entangled with the historical colonial experiences that continue to shape the overall epistemological, political, and economic relationships. Tanzanian development studies, which played an important role in the post-independence nation-building and were outspoken on anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, have since frequently adopted “overall” global development agendas and themes. However, contestations to colonialisms also prevail, as manifested in the critique of Eurocentricism. Therefore, there may well be spaces for new hybrid identities and novel, pluriversal (Mignolo, 2021) research agendas. While, for instance, decolonial contributions from Tanzanian scholars are still scarce (Sungusia *et al.*, 2020), new initiatives now exist: such as scholars familiarizing themselves with decolonial ideas – like the departments that participated in this study – enabled in constructing new hybrid identities in the near future.

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## Appendix

# Structured Summary

**Presentation:** This article addresses identities, hierarchies of knowledge and power relations in the academia in postcolonial settings in the context of development studies in Tanzania. Tanzania is a postcolonial country, and development studies played an important role in the nation-building in its early years after gaining independence from British administration in 1961. Additionally, the international academic field of development studies is an endeavor with a strong colonial legacy, fundamentally based on distinctions such as between developing and developed countries, between the First and Third World, between the West and the rest, and most recently, between the global North and South. The paper is motivated by critical literature concerning the Eurocentrism of theorizing development (McEwan, 2009; Kothari, 2006; Ziai, 2016; Rutazibwa, 2018; Escobar, 1995; Esteva/Escobar, 2017; Ziai, 2007) on the one hand, and the asymmetries in relationships in

research collaborations between global North and South on the other hand (Axelby *et al.*, 2022; Perry *et al.*, 2022; White, 2020; Ishengoma, 2016; Carbonnier/Kontinen, 2015; Kontinen/Nguyahambi, 2020a, 2020b). The paper examines the ways in which the disciplinary identity of Tanzanian development studies is constructed vis-à-vis different relationships, what kinds of knowledge hierarchies are attached to those relationships, and what potentialities for hybrid identities emerge.

**Theory:** The article draws on and combines two literatures to establish a concept of hybrid identity. First, drawing on literature on organizational identity, it conceptualizes hybrid identity as constructed through collective meaning-making in distinguishing one organization from the others (Gioia/Hamilton, 2018). The conceptualization used sees organizational identity as something always defined in relation between one and the other (Pratt *et al.*, 2018:3-4). Second, it draws on the notion of postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), which emphasizes processes of “Othering” and power asymmetries in identities constructed in encounters. For the purposes of the paper, postcolonial hybridity provides a particular lens to understand power, difference, and knowledge hierarchies when it comes to construction of identity, as organization studies scholarship has argued (Frenkel/Shenhav, 2003; Islam, 2012; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008; Seremani/Clegg, 2016). Thus, theoretically the article builds on the notion of socially constructed organizational identity, which is re-interpreted as identity of a discipline of development studies, combined with a notion of postcolonial hybridity emphasizing differences, knowledge hierarchies, and potential hybridities in the process of constructing identity in encounters.

**Method:** The empirical material analyzed in the article consists of 29 qualitative interviews with members of staff in development studies in three Tanzanian universities. The interview participants hold PhDs, and present two main generations of development studies in Tanzania: those who had experienced the emergence of the discipline the 1960s and 1970s, and those who had joined the academia in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The interviews were conducted mainly in Kiswahili, but in most of the interviews English and Kiswahili were mixed by the participants. All the interviews were transcribed and analyzed with facilitation of Atlas.ti software. The thematic analysis was guided by the theoretical approach, and paid attention to the ways in which the current development studies was distinguished from its “Others” in the interviews. Based on the inter we identify three main relationships where difference and asymmetries were articulated: with other disciplines, with past development studies, with global theorizing on development, and with partners in the global North.

**Results:** Drawing on the concepts of organizational identity and postcolonial hybridity the results show three main relationships where difference and asymmetries were articulated: a) with other disciplines, b) with past development studies, c) with global theorizing on development, and d) with partners in the global North. There were different views concerning whether development studies is an independent discipline or mixture of others. The former arguments was backed with claims of lack of methodological and theoretical core, whereas the latter view was based on the idea that development studies has a particular holistic approach revolved around the concept of development. A very prevalent distinction was that between Tanzanian development studies in the past and today. Development studies in the 1970s were seen as influential discipline, which was closely related to postcolonial state-building in Tanzania, when today its role was seen more marginal. Difference between the traditional Eurocentric and potential Tanzanian theories was clear, as the existence of any Tanzanian development theory other than President Nyerere’s ideology was questioned, and the theories from the global North were located higher in the knowledge hierarchies. Differences related to partners from global North were seen mostly in relation to the research resources, possibilities to publish in international fora, and learning in conducting research together, where the partnerships offered both important possibilities but also restricted the research agendas.

**Discussion:** The article contributed to research on knowledge hierarchies in academia in postcolonial settings in three main ways. First, rather than scrutinizing on North-South partnerships, it offered a novel angle to investigate identity of a discipline that frequently enters in these partnerships. The analysis showed the relevance of considering multiple differentiations made. Potentially, our findings open ideas for establishing partnership from the current situation and contextual knowledge needs in any discipline in the global South rather than predominantly from Northern agendas, as frequently showed in the previous research on North-South partnerships (White, 2020; Carbonnier/Kontinen, 2015). In such collaborations, the identities of Southern academics should be constructed as those being knowledgeable and capable rather than in need of capacity building in order to reach the knowledge levels of their Northern partners. Second, in resonance with Perry *et al.* (2022), our analysis showed how knowledge hierarchies are not only epistemological, but also material. Funding systems and resources contribute to the lack of theoretical research as well as need to continuously shift focuses according to the changes in agendas, and thus, have epistemological consequences. However, currently, the funding for academic, theoretical research is scarce not only in the global South but also in the global North. Especially, development studies in both are quite oriented to practice and funded by development agencies. This, on its part reflects the more fundamental postcolonial condition of development industry and research, where despite claims for participation and ownership, the agendas on how countries and societies should develop are drafted by the influential global institutions who outsource research for their purposes. Third, we showed that knowledge hierarchies are continuously re-negotiated, but also closely entangled with the historical colonial experiences that continue to shape the overall epistemological, political, and economic relationships. The case of Tanzanian development studies that played an important role in the post-independence nation-

building being articulate on anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, has frequently adopted the overall global development agendas and themes. However, the contestations to colonialisms prevail in the current critique of Eurocentrism. Therefore, the article concludes that there are spaces for new hybrid identities for development studies in Tanzania and elsewhere.

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