

Epistemological Decolonisation and the Reconfiguration of Tanzanian Africanist Discourse

A Theoretical Framework

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Received: 04 July 2024 | Accepted: 11 October 2024 | Published: 23 November 2024 | DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.18944331](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18944331)

ABSTRACT

Africanist discourse in Tanzania, while rich, remains constrained by enduring Eurocentric epistemological frameworks that shape the production of knowledge within the field of African Studies. This theoretical lacuna necessitates a critical re-examination of foundational concepts and methodologies. This article constructs a theoretical framework to analyse the process of epistemological decolonisation within Tanzanian Africanist discourse. Its objective is to delineate the mechanisms through which indigenous knowledge systems can be centred to reconfigure core analytical categories. The framework is developed through a critical theoretical synthesis, engaging with postcolonial theory, African philosophy, and discourse analysis. It employs conceptual analysis to deconstruct hegemonic paradigms and proposes alternative epistemic foundations. The analysis identifies that a predominant theme in existing scholarship is a reactive critique of colonialism, which inadvertently centres the very epistemic violence it seeks to overcome. The framework proposes a shift towards proactive epistemic reconstruction, arguing for the integration of concepts such as Ujamaa and Utu as central, rather than peripheral, analytical lenses. Epistemological decolonisation is not merely an additive process but requires a fundamental reconfiguration of the ontological and axiological premises of African Studies in the Tanzanian context, moving beyond critique to substantive intellectual autonomy. Scholars should apply this framework to specific sub-fields, such as historiography or political economy, to test its analytical utility. Funding bodies and academic institutions should prioritise research programmes that operationalise indigenous epistemic categories. epistemological decolonisation, Africanist discourse, Tanzania, theoretical framework, indigenous knowledge, Ujamaa This article provides a novel theoretical framework that moves beyond critique to outline a concrete mechanism for epistemic reconstruction, centring Tanzanian intellectual heritage as a foundational source for analytical categories in African Studies.

Keywords: *Epistemological decolonisation, Africanist discourse, Tanzania, Postcolonial theory, Knowledge production, Southern theory, African Studies*

Article Highlights

- Identifies the limitation of reactive critique in existing Tanzanian Africanist scholarship.
- Proposes a theoretical framework for substantive epistemic reconstruction.
- Centres indigenous concepts (Ujamaa, Utu) as core

Core Proposition

Epistemological decolonisation requires moving beyond additive inclusion to a fundamental reconfiguration of the ontological and axiological foundations of knowledge production.

This framework provides a concrete mechanism for advancing

<p>analytical categories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls for a fundamental reconfiguration of ontological premises in African Studies.	<p><i>epistemic autonomy in Tanzanian African Studies.</i></p>
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