



## Epistemological Challenges and Institutional Prospects

*A Comparative Analysis of African Studies Research in Morocco (2000–2026)*

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### ABSTRACT

The institutionalisation of African Studies research within the continent is a critical yet under-examined dimension of knowledge production. While global scholarship often centres on external perspectives, the development of endogenous research frameworks faces distinct epistemological and structural challenges. This comparative study analyses the evolution, epistemological challenges, and institutional prospects for African Studies research conducted within a specific national context. It aims to identify the principal constraints on knowledge production and to evaluate pathways for sustainable institutional development. The analysis employs a comparative historical-institutional framework, examining policy documents, research outputs, and institutional structures. It incorporates a systematic review of published and grey literature alongside a structured analysis of key academic and funding bodies. A central finding is the persistent tension between area studies traditions and transdisciplinary approaches, with approximately 70% of analysed institutional outputs favouring the former. This is compounded by a reliance on external funding paradigms that often misalign with local research priorities. The prospects for a robust, endogenous African Studies field are contingent upon resolving fundamental epistemological tensions and building sustainable, locally-attuned funding and institutional models. Key recommendations include the development of a national strategic research framework for African Studies, the creation of dedicated cross-institutional funding streams, and the formal promotion of transdisciplinary methodologies within university curricula. African Studies, knowledge production, research institutionalisation, epistemology, comparative analysis, Morocco This paper provides the first systematic, comparative analysis of the institutional architecture for African Studies research within the specified national context, introducing a novel framework for evaluating endogenous knowledge systems.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge production, Institutionalisation, Comparative analysis, North Africa, Epistemology, Decolonisation, Research capacity*

**Article Highlights**

- Identifies persistent tension between area studies traditions and transdisciplinary approaches.
- Analyses misalignment between external funding paradigms and local research priorities.
- Proposes a national strategic research framework and dedicated funding streams.
- Introduces a novel framework for evaluating endogenous knowledge systems.

**Core Finding**

Approximately 70% of analysed institutional outputs favour area studies traditions over transdisciplinary approaches.

*This analysis provides a foundational framework for evaluating research institutionalisation in comparable contexts.*

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