

Epistemic Sovereignty and Methodological Pluralism

A Theoretical Framework for African Studies Research in Morocco

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ABSTRACT

{ "background": "Research within African Studies, particularly when conducted on the continent, often grapples with enduring epistemological hierarchies and methodological constraints inherited from colonial academic traditions. This is especially pertinent in contexts like Morocco, where its geographic, historical, and cultural position presents unique challenges and opportunities for redefining scholarly inquiry.", "purpose and objectives": "This article constructs a theoretical framework to reconceptualise research praxis in African Studies, using the Moroccan context as a focal point. It aims to articulate the principles of epistemic sovereignty and methodological pluralism as foundational for generating more authentic and transformative knowledge.", "methodology": "The framework is developed through a critical synthesis of theoretical literature from postcolonial studies, decolonial theory, and indigenous methodologies. It employs conceptual analysis to deconstruct dominant paradigms and propose an integrated model for research design.", "key insights": "The analysis demonstrates that centring epistemic sovereignty necessitates a fundamental shift in research design, where approximately 70% of a study's conceptual architecture should originate from endogenous African and local intellectual resources. A key theme is the strategic integration of Amazigh (Berber) oral historiographies and Maghrebi Islamic epistemologies as core, rather than peripheral, analytical lenses.", "conclusion": "The proposed framework provides a coherent and actionable theoretical foundation for conducting African Studies research that is both academically rigorous and epistemically liberatory. It moves beyond critique to offer a structured approach for knowledge production.", "recommendations": "Academic institutions in Morocco and across the continent should institutionalise this framework in postgraduate research training. Funding bodies must prioritise proposals that explicitly demonstrate methodological pluralism and a commitment to epistemic sovereignty in their protocols.", "key words": "epistemic sovereignty, methodological pluralism, decolonial theory, research praxis, knowledge production, Maghreb", "contribution statement": "This paper provides a novel theoretical synthesis that explicitly links the concept of epistemic sovereignty to practical methodological choices, offering a new model for research design in African Studies that is contextually grounded and systematically pluralistic." }

Keywords: *Epistemic sovereignty, methodological pluralism, African Studies, Maghreb, postcolonial critique, knowledge production, research methodologies*

Article Highlights

- Proposes a shift where 70% of conceptual architecture stems from endogenous African resources.
- Integrates Amazigh oral historiographies and Maghrebi Islamic epistemologies as core analytical lenses.
- Moves beyond critique to offer a structured, actionable

Core Conceptual Shift

The framework argues for methodological pluralism as the operational expression of epistemic sovereignty, fundamentally reorienting research design away from inherited colonial academic traditions.

This article constructs a new theoretical model for contextually

<p>model for knowledge production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls for institutionalizing the framework in postgraduate research training and funding priorities.	<p><i>grounded research in African Studies.</i></p>
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