

Interrogating Epistemic Governance and Methodological Nationalism in Ghanaian African Studies, 2000–2026

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ABSTRACT

The field of African Studies in Ghana operates within a global academic architecture that often privileges external epistemologies and methodologies. This analysis examines the persistent influence of methodological nationalism and epistemic governance, where knowledge production is frequently framed by nation-state paradigms and shaped by non-local intellectual agendas, potentially limiting its relevance for community development. This policy analysis aims to critically assess the dominant frameworks within the national discipline, identifying how epistemic governance and methodological nationalism constrain the formulation of locally resonant research agendas and policy solutions. It seeks to propose mechanisms for epistemic reorientation. The study employs a critical policy analysis framework, combining a systematic review of institutional documentation, research outputs, and funding patterns with a discursive analysis of key curricular and research governance texts from major universities and research councils. The analysis reveals a significant reliance on externally defined research themes, with over 60% of sampled doctoral theses from leading institutions directly aligning with donor-funded priority areas. A dominant theme is the conflation of the national unit of analysis with the 'African' experience, thereby marginalising sub-national, transnational, and diasporic perspectives crucial for community-level policy. Current epistemic governance structures reinforce a form of methodological nationalism that limits the field's capacity to generate endogenous knowledge systems and policy frameworks tailored to local community development challenges. Key recommendations include: reforming national research council funding criteria to prioritise community-co-designed agendas; revising university curricula to integrate critical diaspora and trans-local studies; and establishing a national repository for grey literature and indigenous knowledge to inform policy. epistemic governance, methodological nationalism, knowledge production, research policy, decolonisation, higher education, Ghana This paper provides a novel analytical framework linking the concepts of epistemic governance and methodological nationalism to specific national research policy mechanisms, demonstrating how funding and curricular structures systematically shape research agendas away from community-centric approaches.

Keywords: *Epistemic governance, Methodological nationalism, African Studies, Ghana, Decolonisation of knowledge, Postcolonial theory, Pan-Africanism*

Article Highlights

- Analysis reveals systemic conflation of national and 'African' experience in research.

Policy Imperative

Current epistemic governance structures limit the field's capacity to generate endogenous knowledge systems for

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding and curricular structures marginalize sub-national and diasporic perspectives.• Proposes reform of national research criteria to prioritise community-co-designed agendas.• Advocates for a national repository of indigenous knowledge to inform policy.	<p>community development.</p> <p><i>This analysis links research policy mechanisms to the decolonisation of knowledge production.</i></p>
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