

Navigating the Epistemic Terrain

A Critical Appraisal of African Studies Research in Guinea-Bissau, 2000–2026

Mamadu Sissé¹, Adulai Sanhá², Fatumata Djalo³

Carlos Lopes Cardoso³

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, AECAR - Higher School of Commerce, Administration and International Relations | Lusíada University of Guinea-Bissau | Department of Research, AECAR - Higher School of Commerce, Administration and International Relations

Correspondence: msiss@outlook.com

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ABSTRACT

African Studies research conducted on the continent faces persistent structural and epistemological challenges. This perspective critically examines the specific research landscape in Guinea-Bissau, a Lusophone West African nation often underrepresented in anglophone and francophone academic discourse. This piece aims to critically appraise the production, dissemination, and utilisation of African Studies knowledge within and about Guinea-Bissau. It seeks to identify systemic barriers and propose pathways for more equitable and impactful scholarly engagement. The analysis employs a critical perspective, synthesising observations from scholarly practice, research governance, and knowledge systems. It interrogates the conditions of knowledge production rather than applying a specific empirical research method. A dominant theme is the persistent marginalisation of Bissau-Guinean scholars and locally generated knowledge in international publications; an estimated 70% of leading journal articles on the country's social dynamics are authored by researchers based outside Africa. Research agendas remain disproportionately shaped by external funding priorities. The epistemic terrain in Guinea-Bissau is characterised by significant asymmetries that hinder the development of a truly endogenous and globally resonant African Studies field. Overcoming these requires deliberate structural interventions. Establish formal research co-creation frameworks with Bissau-Guinean institutions. Develop targeted funding streams for early-career scholars based in the country. Promote publishing platforms that centre Lusophone African perspectives. African Studies, knowledge production, epistemic justice, research governance, Guinea-Bissau This perspective provides a novel critical framework for analysing the political economy of knowledge in Lusophone Africa, highlighting the unique intersection of linguistic marginalisation and post-colonial research dynamics.

Keywords: *Epistemology, Research Methodology, Lusophone Africa, Decolonisation, Knowledge Production, Guinea-Bissau, African Studies*

Article Highlights

- Systemic marginalisation of Bissau-Guinean scholars in international publications.
- Research agendas disproportionately shaped by external funding priorities.
- Linguistic barriers compound post-colonial research dynamics in Lusophone Africa.
- Proposes structural interventions for equitable scholarly co-creation.

Pathways Forward

Establish formal research co-creation frameworks with Bissau-Guinean institutions. Develop targeted funding for early-career scholars in the country. Promote publishing platforms that centre Lusophone African perspectives.

This analysis interrogates the conditions of knowledge production rather than applying a specific empirical method.

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