

African Studies in China

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In China, African studies is understood as comprehensive research on regional issues, with multiple disciplines included. This paper looks at the following aspects: Development of African studies in China; Major institutes involved in African studies in China; Important research results in African studies; Major journals focusing on African studies; Problems confronting China's African studies; and Projects undertaken by the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) of China's Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

African studies in China basically began from political economics, and were closely linked with the development and changes in the international environment, African situation, Chinese development and diplomacy, and Sino-African relations.

African studies in China started in the late 1950s to early 1960s. In the following 20 years, researches were characterized as the investigation and collection of information on the African political situation. After 1980s, African studies began to diversify, and researchers began to look at more fundamental and comprehensive issues. With the strengthening of China's diplomatic and economic relations with African countries, many institutes began to contribute to African studies. Beginning in the 1990s, Chinese Africanists directed their research into current African political and economic development, international relationships, and Sino-African strategies, while giving consideration to the issues of African history and social culture.

Thus, during its half-century history, African studies have made great progress in China. Multiple research disciplines have been improved and the research field is widening. Research institutes have diversified their projects and have published many books and articles. Through growing exchanges with foreign counterparts, they are learning about each other's perspectives and research methods.

Currently, African studies can be characterized as follows: First, they focus on strategic issues and on forecasting issues in Africa; Second, studies on fundamental issues have been strengthened through multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary perspectives; Third, projects have been commissioned by organizations other than government think tanks, and institutes have

gradually come to participate in specialized research projects based on their own strengths; Fifth, African studies have come to place a greater research emphasis on major issues with their foreign counterparts.