

# Brazilian Centre for African Studies

The Brazilian Centre for African Studies (<https://www.ufrgs.br/cebrafrica/en/>) traces its origins from the Centre for South Africa-Brazil Studies, a program established in 2005 through a partnership between the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation from Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations.

Its research activities are developed together with the Brazilian Centre of Strategy and International Relations, both being located at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul economics faculty, the Centre's main goals are the development of academic research, the supporting of works, thesis and dissertations, the congregation of research groups in African themes, the organization of meetings and seminars, the promotion of student and professor exchange experiences with other institutions, the establishment of research networks and joint projects with African and Africanist institutions as well as the publishing of works produced in Brazil and other countries, helping increasing the size of the specialized library provided by the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation.

The research efforts of the Brazilian Centre for African Studies are geared towards the understanding of Africa and its relations with Brazil, encompassing the fields of International Relations, Integration, Security & Defense, Political Systems, History, Geography, Economic Development, Social Structure & its Transformation and Schools of Thought. It is important to stress that the Brazilian Centre for African Studies is a purely academic and independent institution, housed in a Brazilian public university, without any bonds with the government or foreign institutions/foundations, hence it congregates researchers from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and many other Brazilian, African and international institutions, as well as post-graduate and undergraduate students that develop research in the centre's themes. The center also publishes the *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*.

## African Studies in Brazil

The African studies has been knowing notable development in Brazil, encouraged by the pioneering effort of a group of scholars, by the public politics of Afro-Brazilians inclusion and by the growing Brazilian presence in Africa. Yet, the unknowing is still wide, as well the generalizations and the mimicry in relation to other historic experiences. The Brazilian society and academia cannot relate themselves to Africa and study it in a limited perspective anymore. It is extremely important to study the continent's specifications and to directly dialogue with the scholars, the governors and the African society.

In this perspective, the researchers developed by the Brazilian Centre for African Studies have as a goal to study the inter-African relations' system, as well as the structures that compose it and, from this, try to comprehend its perspective of the international relations and of the continent's integration to the world.

Combined to this perspective, it becomes fundamental to analyze the Brazilian projection and its cooperation efforts (including the ones on defense) with African countries in the South Atlantic perimeter, as we see a scenario in which this Ocean assumes new geopolitics importance. It is important to emphasize that Brazil uses the cooperation as a way of promoting the construction of a regional identity in South Atlantic, which starts to alter the power relations in this space. The research effort is therefore based on regular contacts that have been kept with African, Latin-American, European and Asian academic institutions, specialized in Africa.

## **Research**

The research areas of the Brazilian Centre for African Studies deal with the diplomatic, economic and security relations between Africa and the South-South axis of the modern world system. Hence, the center looks at the historical revision of the relations between the African states, the great colonial powers and the superpowers, emphasizing the role of the first in obtaining resources and building a basic collective consensus, as well as the influence of superpowers upon the development of African state's national projects via a comparative and interpretative analysis of the relations between African states and new players of the South-South cooperation and the possibilities of international insertion in the post-Cold War era. Second, it provides an analysis of the geopolitical and economical transformations in the post-Cold War era, the emergence of regional African powers and integration processes with its political logic and the possibility of the formation of a Pan-African zone. Analysis of Africa's role as a new area in the global strategic dispute due to the energetic crisis and the natural resources and the new relevance acquired by the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean zones with a study of the Atlantic zone as a strategic axis for the relations between Brazil and Africa and as a development hotspot. And last, it provides an analysis of the process of how African states are built and the formulation and implementation of their foreign policy to consider an analytical description of the inter-African relations, its common goals and internal rivalries, successes and failures in the construction of a continental system in unity with an analysis of the relations between African states and the western powers together with new players in South-South relations.