

African Studies in Poland: Limbo with (no) Way Out?

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African Studies in Poland are in limbo. Once thriving and fashionable, especially in the 60. and 70. when the political confrontation of the Cold War was rife and the African nationhood and state-building captured the world's attention, it has been significantly downgraded and marginalised in the 90. when Poland was undergoing political and economic transformation. Today African Studies in Poland are regrettably a niche explored by few. By consequence, also the access to African Studies by Polish students is extremely limited. In a formal sense African Studies (Afrykanistyka) as a study area is available solely at one state university in Poland (University of Warsaw) out of forty established state and private universities. The other original feature of Polish African Studies is its narrow focus on Philology/linguistic, Ethnology and Anthropology. In fact "African Studies" are often *implicitly* assumed linguistic studies. For example Political Science or Economy perspective is almost non-existent and represented only by individual scholars scattered around the Polish academic community. This all may be surprising given a rapidly growing fad for African Studies in other countries of the European Union. The article first outlines the history of the Polish African Studies. Then it discusses the current situation together with the origins of the current discipline crisis. It also presents examples of the bottom-up initiatives devoted to development of African Studies in Poland, such as Polish Centre for African Studies. The ambition of the Centre is to (re)establish a broad-based community of African researchers and conduct advanced studies centred around the African continent. Finally it presents a short-term forecast of a possible directions of African studies developments in Poland. The authors adopted four major research methods: discourse analyzes, on-line surveys, interviews with Polish academics, and extrapolation of the current trends.