

Abstract:

Africans in China: Key Questions and Answers about Africa's Newest Diaspora

In this talk I briefly review contemporary, 21st Century, Africa - China relations, showing that closer official interactions between Africa and China have led to an increasing number of Africans visiting and settling in China and forming communities there. This is a phenomenon that has never happened before the turn of the Century and has thus led to what is often termed Africa's newest diaspora. The key question addressed in the talk is: what is it like to be an African in China? Towards answering this question my research team and I interacted with more than 700 Africans across six main Chinese cities including Guangzhou, Yiwu, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Macau, administering questionnaires and doing semi-structured interviews of Africans from across the entire African continent. From these surveys sociolinguistic and socio-cultural profiles are constructed to depict the everyday life of Africans in China, addressing issues such as why Africans go to China, what they do there, how they communicate with their Chinese hosts in markets and on campuses, what opportunities and problems they encounter in their China sojourn and how they are received by the Chinese state. On the basis of this study I propose a cross-cultural bridge theory of migrant-indigene relations, arguing that Africans in China act as socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural bridges linking Africa to China. This approach to the analysis of diasporan communities has implications for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies in an era of globalization.

Speaker bio: Professor Adams Bodomo is African Studies Programme Director at the School of Humanities, University of Hong Kong. He obtained his PhD from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology after obtaining Bachelors and Masters Degrees at the University of Ghana. Dr Bodomo has given invited lectures on the topic of Africans in China and on general Africa - China relations studies at several leading universities, including Yale University, SOAS, Vienna, and Peking University. His latest book, on which this talk is based, is entitled: *Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and its Implications for Africa - China Relations* (March 2012, Cambria Press, NY).

Prof. Dr. Adams Bodomo
Visiting Professor (May and June)
Institute of African Studies
Bayreuth University
Germany