

# Indian Ocean Regional Studies in Perspective of the Community of Shared Future for Mankind\*

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The research scope of Indian Ocean regional issues mainly includes the influence of the community of shared future for mankind on the foreign relations of Indian Ocean countries, a comparative study of Indian Ocean regional issues from the perspective of traditional Indian Ocean regional issues and think tanks, the influence of the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind on overseas Chinese community in the Indian Ocean island nation, and research paths in the Indian Ocean region from the perspective of think tanks, and so on. This article focuses on the politics, economy and culture of the Indian Ocean countries, analyzes and summarizes the theoretical and practical significance of the study of the Indian Ocean region from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind. Through in-depth discussions on the docking status and challenges of the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind in the Indian Ocean island regions, we will promote the exchanges and mutual learning of civilizations and people-to-people bonds between China and the Indian Ocean region, and provide intellectual support for the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and the construction of a community of shared future in the region.

*Keywords:* human destiny community, Indian ocean, regional studies, docking status, challenge

## Introduction

2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of international relations as an independent discipline. Over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, with the strengthening and promotion of comprehensive national strength and international influence, our country's research on international issues has made considerable progress. The knowledge system of international relations can be divided into three parts: international relations theory, history of international relations, and regional and country studies. So far, the work of translating, introducing and studying Western international relations theories, studying the history of international relations, and compiling modern international relations history textbooks can be said to have made

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great achievements. A group of ambitious people are working on constructing international relations theory with Chinese characteristics. In contrast, regional and country studies are particularly inadequate, and there is an urgent need to strengthen this research based on the advancement trend of the Belt and Road Initiative.

### **Theoretical and Practical Significance of Topics**

#### **Meet the Needs of the Belt and Road Construction**

With the rise of China, the world's largest developing country and a third world country, especially with the launch and construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (Yu, 2020, p. 60), the necessity, importance and urgency of developing national and regional studies is more prominent. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road involve more than 60 countries and regions, most of which are small and medium-sized countries, developing countries, and third world countries, and their politics, economy, history, culture, ethnicity and religion are different, their national character, historical tradition, foreign policy and international relations are intricate, and the lifestyle, value concept, and development path are rich and colorful.

During the Belt and Road construction process, some key countries have large areas, large populations, strong strengths, and large influences, occupying a pivotal position, and can play a pivotal role in assisting or resisting. In the past, most of our teaching and research were mainly based on Western countries and developed countries, and we seldom studied the emerging economies of the Indian Ocean like Mauritius, which are large countries in the Indian Ocean and are emerging forces in today's international politics. To build the Belt and Road, it will not work without comprehensive, in-depth and thorough research and risk prevention and crisis response plans for these countries. In terms of discipline construction, there are no countries or regions that can be ignored or "unimportant", and there are no "academic corners" that can or should be forgotten in the study of international relations. Without the research and teaching of emerging economies and BRICS countries, the study of international relations cannot reflect the full picture and progress of international issues, and it is unscientific and not profound. Therefore, we must work hard to make up for this shortcoming in order to serve the country's the Belt and Road construction.

Today, China's comprehensive national power and international influence have greatly increased. China is committed to "regional and global governance", provides international public products (Yu, 2020, p. 745), and promotes the construction of a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind. The study and grasp of international relations must stand at the height of the world, all mankind, and world history, stand on the comprehensive and complete breadth of the interests of all mankind, and stand on the thorough and fine depth of the development of all mankind. This requires us to vigorously strengthen the study of countries and regions, and establish regional and national disciplines, in which particular attention should be paid to regional country studies along the Belt and Road in the Indian Ocean islands.

#### **Create a Distinctive Academic Discourse System**

After entering the 21st century, as China's stakeholder area and resource gathering area, Indian Ocean island countries are of importance, particularity and strategic in China's major country diplomacy, neighboring diplomacy, diplomacy with Africa, and the construction of the Belt and Road. In the new era, the construction of a China-Indian Ocean community with a shared future and the Belt and Road cooperation have become current research hotspots, and the number of personnel and institutions studying Indian Oceanology has begun to

increase. More than 70 years since the founding of New China, the turbulent fate of “India Regional Studies” reflects, to some extent, the modern international pattern, the international status of the Indian Ocean island regions, and the tremendous changes in China’s diplomatic strategy. It also shows that there is an urgent need for national and regional research discipline construction and talent training.

From a regional perspective, our country’s research forces in the Indian Ocean region are mainly concentrated in the Southwest and North China. In terms of cities, they are mainly concentrated in places such as Beijing, Shanghai, Kunming and Chengdu. In terms of units, there are not only national ministries and commissions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Department Central Committee, the Ministry of Commerce, the Development Research Center of the State Council, etc., and there are also some national specialized research institute, such as National Institute of International Strategy Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China Institute of International Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, Xinhua News Agency, China Institute of Strategic Studies, etc. In addition, there are many universities setting up Indian Ocean research institutions of different levels, such as Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, South China University of Technology, Dalian University of Foreign Languages, etc.

Our country’s research on the Indian Ocean issues includes not only experienced experts, but also young and powerful backbones, as well as budding rookies. All kinds of research forces are committed to the construction of disciplines, and promote the “Indian Ocean Regional Research” to be disciplined and internationalized. A group of Chinese scholars have published high-level academic papers abroad, jointly researched with European and American scholars, and jointly published academic monographs, forming a unique regional and national research-“Indian Ocean Regional Research”, while using academic and discourse system, framework, and concepts with Chinese characteristics are engaged in “Indian Ocean Island Countries Studies” instead of the traditional “South Asia-India Studies”.

## **Ideas and Methods of Research on Indian Ocean Regional Studies**

### **Ideas**

The Indian Ocean regional country issues place our approach in the concept of interpretation of the Indian Ocean region, the connotation of human destiny community, influence of international relations and regional historical process, and overseas Chinese studies. But there are also some research difficulties: First, the selection time has a long span, leading to the difficulty of collecting more than 1000 years of regional historical materials; second, because of several disciplines such as geopolitical, historical, international relations, and geography, the research of the relationship between human destiny community and Indian Ocean region would integrate several disciplines theoretical knowledge, so it’s more difficult.

### **Methods**

The research of Indian Ocean international problem is mainly guided by historical materialism, drawing on the theory and methods of other disciplines. Firstly, the history theory method is used to conduct a historical review of the formation and development of the Indian Ocean. On this basis, with the application of international political and ethnology, we perform an integrity, multi-angle, all-round research of the relationship between a community with a shared future for mankind and Indian Ocean regional issues from both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. In the vertical direction, with the system network analysis method and comprehensive

analysis method, the research status and deficiencies in the Indian foreign regional issues were systematically reviewed; in the horizontal direction, we analyze the development process of the Indian Ocean region with historical comparative analysis method, historical language analysis method and other methodologies. Then, some important issues in the development process of the Indian Ocean region are discussed theoretically and summarized. Finally, it discusses the experience and lessons of Indian Ocean regional governance, and refines its enlightenment to China.

### **Research Path of “Indian Ocean Regional Studies”**

The current “Indian Ocean Regional Studies” in our country has the following three problems: firstly, it’s the segmentation and fragmentation of research; secondly, the dialogue between our country’s research and western research is not enough, or even missing; thirdly, it’s insufficient comparative research and lack of theoretical depth, in the final analysis, it’s the “dual insufficiency” of disciplinary and interdisciplinary. There are also problems in countermeasure research and consultation reports. The lack of a corresponding “revolving door” mechanism and other reward mechanisms which affects the enthusiasm and follow-up training of professional talents. Therefore, we should start to improve from the following aspects.

First, with the guidance of Xi Jinping’s Diplomatic Thought, establish a regional and national research discipline with Chinese characteristics and a first-class “Indian Ocean Regional Research”; second, upgrade “regional and national studies” to a first-level discipline the same as national security and world history; third, upgrade the country-specific research such as “Indian Ocean Regional Studies” to secondary disciplines; fourth, take the Belt and Road construction practice, the Belt and Road docking cooperation, etc. as the starting point for the construction of regional and national disciplines; fifth, conduct three-dimensional research, comprehensive research, system research and comparative research on relevant regions and countries with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary methods; sixth, it is necessary to allow different academic viewpoints, ensure sufficient funds for discipline construction, and establish revolving doors and encouragement mechanisms; seventh, gather national research strength, complement each other’s strengths, and jointly tackle key projects to serve the national development strategy; eighth, it is the only way to build regional and national disciplines that cultivate language talents of the research target country, conduct exchanges and cooperation and fieldwork in the research target country, and cultivate interdisciplinary international talents. The discipline construction of “Indian Ocean Regional Studies” is also like this. We must vigorously advocate conducting social surveys in the Indian Ocean island countries such as Mauritius and Reunion, travel all corners of the Indian Ocean, and cooperate with the target country’s institutions to achieve results.

### **Conclusion**

The Indian Ocean is very important as the lifeline of China’s overseas trade. China’s national style and responsibilities showed in the new crown epidemic, and the concept of a human community with a shared future is gradually deep into the hearts of the Indian Ocean. In the context of emerging economic globalization, global and regional governance, human fate community, China’s national acts have increasingly influenced the impact of these human beings, and by their own about (Yu & Zhu, 2020, p. 85). With more companies participating in the construction of think tank, the regional concept of a human community with a shared future will play an

important role in the modernization process of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, exploring the relevance between the economic and social development of the Indian Ocean country and the community of human destiny has realistic operability and broad prospects.

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