

The history relationship between Africa and the European Union (EU) can be considered as asymmetrical. The Cotonou Agreement turned out to be a one-sided strategy, that strongly favored the EU. If effective cooperation is to be embarked, Africa and Europe will have to show a mutual understanding of their interests and expectations.

The primary purpose behind the project is to create a linguistified lexicometric model for between-cultural communication between Africa and the European Union (EU). By exploring four areas of cooperation: trade, development, security, and migration, such a model aims at acquiring a deeper understanding of how both parties perceive one another. The project, therefore, adopts a constructivist-reflectivity methodology which presents a novel approach for the study of IR in general and EU-African relations in particular.

A review of existing literature points to two major problems in regards to scholarly work on African-EU relations. The first problem involves the status of social constructivism in IR: that it is treated as an ontology, rather than a method of social science that is supposed to guide empirical research. The second involves the conceptualization of violence in mainstream IR, as classical approaches fail to conceive the dynamic nature contemporary African-EU relations. This project addresses both these issues as it (a) treats social constructivism as a middle-ranged theory, and (b) adopts the concept of epistemic violence, which presents a viable alternative to the dominating realist, marxist or liberal approaches.