

## ABSTRACT

### HOW GOOD INTENTIONS DON'T SEAL THE DEAL: THE PROBLEMATICS OF THE EU'S ETHICAL INVOLVEMENT IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

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Ever since the heightened Western attention, two decades ago, to democracy and statebuilding in Africa, few studies have exclusively focused on the feasibility of less international involvement as a viable strategy to reach these goals. The proposed paper deconstructs the European Union's well-intended Africa policies in this regard, into the mechanisms that are potentially detrimental to the achievement of these ethical goals, by presenting the EU as an "Ethical Intervener" (good intentions next to invasive and self-centered measures). The mechanisms consist of the fact that a) the receiving partner is seen as fundamentally different from the 'Self' (i.c. the EU) (*Inequality Mechanism*) and b) the content and the occurrence of the ethically perceived policies are in the first place centered around the sending 'Self' (agenda setting, isomorphic and assimilatory solutions), and not so much inspired by the realities of the receiving 'Other' (*Intervener Centric Mechanism*). The paper focuses concretely on two strands of empirical expression of EU efforts to transform African societies for the better. Firstly, to account for the occurrence, a statistical analysis of EU-Africa actions (declarations, sanctions, funding,...) on statebuilding issues (democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance,...) is presented by comparing the period of 1999-2004 with preliminary data of 2005-2009. Secondly, a text analysis of two defining EU-Africa policy documents, the 2000 Cotonou Agreement and the 2007 Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES), studies the evolution of the perceptions on the 'Self' and the 'Other'. As today the principles of equality, partnership and ownership are put forward as the essential guidelines to meaningfully help Africa, it seems that the identified mechanisms are being challenged. The aim of this paper is to investigate whether they still apply or how they have evolved, thus ultimately contributing to research on the feasibility of less international involvement in Africa.