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Between Postcolonialism and Climate Justice – the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative in the age of geopolitical tensions and climate crisis

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Abbreviations

AEEP – Africa-EU Energy Partnership

AfSEM – African Single Electricity Market

AU – African Union

CMP – Continental Master Plan

EC – European Commission

ECDPM – European Centre for Development Policy Management

ETTG – European Think Tanks Group

EU – European Union

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CSO – civil society organization

GDP – gross domestic product

KAS – Konrad Adenauer Foundation

LTWP – Lake Turkana Wind Power Project

NGO – non-governmental organization

SAIIA – South African Institute of International Affairs

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This thesis investigates the discourse surrounding the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative with the framework of the Global Gateway strategy, analysing the initiative's framing from postcolonial and climate justice perspectives. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of documents from the European and African Union and civil society organizations (CSOs) this research aims at exploring the different perspectives on this policy. While political decision-makers highlight the possible benefits of this policy mainly in the fields of energy production and the enhancing of resilient and future-proof industries, members of the civil society mainly criticize the initiatives' financial structure, its focus on expanding extraction infrastructure. The findings reveal significant discrepancies in the framing of the initiative which reflects the different priorities and intentions among the stakeholders involved in the policy making process. With those results this study contributes to a sounder understanding of the geopolitical and socio-economic dimensions of EU-Africa relations and underscores the difficulties of advancing large-scale green energy projects in a multipolar world marked by power imbalances. The research offers insights for European and African policymakers as well as members of the civil society and researchers interested in the pursuit of a more equitable approach to the international fight against climate change.

1. Introduction

In the past couple of years, the importance of renewable energies in transforming the fossil fuel dependent economies has risen exponentially. Along with the geopolitical competition between the biggest economies it has led to a highly volatile situation in which climate protection efforts as well as the improvement of living conditions have seemingly had to take a Backseat.

At the sixth European Union – African Union summit in Brussels in February 2022 the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) agreed on a joint vision for a renewed partnership with a greater focus on solidarity and mutual economic development. This was communicated on the official website of the European Council (European Council, n.d.a.) as well as in multiple other sources.

This agreement can be seen as part of a wider strategy by the EU to enhance its international cooperation when it comes to the provision and production of clean renewable energy as well as sustainable economic development in general. Those programs are combined in the Global Gateway Initiative. From 2021 to 2027 the EU member states have pledged to mobilise 300 billion Euros of investments to support sustainable economic growth and create new opportunities for the EU member states' private sector to invest and remain competitive (European Commission, n.d.a.).

As a first step the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative has been agreed upon in which the EU looks to partner with Africa in its quest to accelerate a green and digital transition as well as strengthen health systems and improve education and training to enhance sustainable growth and create decent jobs. In this package 150 billion euros have been allocated to finance projects working towards these goals and have been widely discussed in the scientific community as well as political sphere (European Union, 2022).

When looking at the way this political engagement in general and those investments more in particular are perceived a huge discrepancy becomes apparent. On the one hand political leaders and decision-makers on both sides celebrate the agreements as a huge progress towards greater cooperation and a chance for mutual benefit (Lidigu, 2023). On the other hand, there have been accusations that the true motives of the EU are rather pragmatic (Bohne, 2023). This is indicated by several reports focusing on the geopolitical implications of Global Gateway and the initiative which leads to

separate problems. A major one being that the intentions of the EU become unclear since the contrast between their communicated objectives and their assumed goals is rather stark which might lead to resentment about perceived hidden motives especially in African societies which remember vividly their colonial oppression and are especially suspicious of foreign investments coming from Europe.

Analysing the discourse surrounding the initiative and the proposed new type of partnership between the EU and the African continent could help to understand the nature of the relations and how it affects the cooperation on an international level. This isn't sufficiently discussed by the current scientific discourse and leads to an insufficient view of the current state and outlook of the initiative.

2. Scientific & Societal Relevance

A lot of research so far has focused on the geopolitical implications of the Global Gateway Initiative in the context of a competition between the EU and China (Heldt 2023, Furness & Keijzer 2022, Duggan 2023) but barely any have investigated the effects this cooperation will have on EU-Africa relations as well as the effects of the initiative on the fight against climate change and the green. The thesis will provide a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) where takeaways might show blind spots in the current diplomatic and geostrategic relations as well as test the EU's strategy to promote green and sustainable growth.

This could be useful for further research on the external relations and role that the Union looks to take on in the future as a more active geopolitical power which concentrates the geopolitical weight of the individual member states. It also means that it could be useful for European policy makers on a national and continental level to determine how to adjust their approach or how confident they are in passing over competencies to the EU. African decision-makers could use this research to understand the motivation of the EU and the impacts of the initiative which could enrich their assessment on whether to engage in cooperation based on Global Gateway and what needs to be critically discussed.

In terms of societal relevance, Africa is going to be one of the most influential and important regions of the 21st century with its population estimated to nearly double by 2050 and countless natural resources which will play a key role in transforming the

world's economies and reduce emissions (Statista, 2024). This is particularly important as the EU's relationship with Africa will have a multitude of implications on everyday life in the Europe of the 21st century. Businessowners need to be assured that energy stays affordable and available, workers need to have resilient and future-proof industries as well as opportunities which can only be provided if the green transition is effective. It could also help civil society to understand how the EU operates internationally and which constraints might influence the Unions approach to international cooperation and climate diplomacy.

3. Research Question

This research will look to contextualize the problem that current EU-Africa relations face by studying the way the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative is framed and communicated by stakeholders and what can be abstracted from those findings for the way this policy and future partnership will be perceived. At the end this research aims to answer the questions:

How do political and civil society stakeholders frame the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative amidst discursive controversies about Climate Justice and Postcolonialism?

SQ1: What are the main features of the controversy over Climate Justice and Postcolonialism in EU-Africa relations?

SQ2: How do EU and African politicians frame the Green Energy Initiative?

SQ3: How do civil society actors frame the Green Energy Initiative?

The answers to those questions will contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and underlying forces determining African-European cooperation.

4. Theoretical Framework

When looking at the case and the angle this research takes it becomes apparent that there is an assumed tension over the question if this cooperation works towards is part of an agenda driven by the theory of Climate Justice or if this investment strategy is part of a Postcolonial agenda to ensure access to Africa's rich natural resources in

order to position the EU better in its geopolitical competition with other emerging powers namely China (Heldt, 2023). This research particularly focuses on the discourse surrounding this policy and how objectives, intentions and measures are framed by different stakeholders. A focus of this thesis lies on the just distribution of economic benefits and climate protection efforts which creates the need to build a framework which reflects this tension by incorporating theoretical aspects of Climate Justice. Those need to be compared to Postcolonialism as this might offer a perspective on the continued dependencies of the African nations on foreign powers. How those differing theoretical assumptions and ideas are reflected in the policy's design and communication as well as how it is perceived by the public is the reason why this framework needs to be based on the method and habit of Framing as well as Discursive controversy.

Keeping this in mind this section first introduces 'Framing' as a discursive mechanism after which the theory of Postcolonialism will be explained which offers a perspective on the continued dependencies of African countries followed by the theory of Climate Justice. This is communicated as the driver behind the Unions plan to reshape relations with African countries to advance a green and sustainable economic development. Also, the general relationship between the EU and Africa becomes important where this research is trying to offer new insights and show blind spots in the current debate.

4.1 Framing and Discursive controversy

As a first step in constructing this theoretical framework there needs to be an understanding about what framing means and how it is used to influence the perception of someone about something. This is important because this thesis aims to explore the differences in how this policy is framed versus what it does.

Framing was deemed as a narrative structure and perceived as a regulative technique of prioritizing some facts or developments over others while promoting one interpretation of events, according to Norris et al. (Norris et al., 2003, p. 11). Framing incorporates selecting aspects of a perceived reality in such a way as to promote a particular causal interpretation which means that the intention of the author or person communicating becomes important to the way the information is delivered. This can happen for various reasons but does so especially when a topic can be viewed very

differently, with one interpretation being perceived as significantly better than the other as it is the case when looking at the EU trying to position itself as a value driven and honest partner for African countries opposite to how Western nations have behaved towards African countries in the past which has led to resentment and distrust.

According to Dearden a topic is controversial 'if contrary views can be held on it without those views being contrary to reason (Dearden, 1981, 38). This implies that if different viewpoints all have their relevance and can be based on argument individual ideals and norms become deciding in how those arguments are weighed. According to Alharbi successful and good discourse on controversial topics is necessary to achieve strategic goals (Alharbi, 2021, 1).

As a result of the colonial history of the African continent, European and in general foreign investments in Africa are often critically questioned (Kaboub, 2024). In this study I expect to find a discrepancy between the way civil society actors namely non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and think tanks frame the initiative compared to how public decision-makers and entities involved in this decision communicate it. Differences between the way African decision-makers and European ones communicate the agreement are expected with the African officials focusing more on the economic opportunities whereas the EU will probably look to frame this initiative to build a new type of partnership and sustainably transform the respective economies. However, if this discourse is honest and goal oriented and not just about advancing your own agenda it may just lead to a more nuanced understanding of the way people from different backgrounds view certain behaviour which could help to adapt political communication as well as policy design to achieve more collective action.

4.2 Postcolonialism as a frame

When the general dynamics and methods of advancing your own agenda are established the framework will expand on this by introducing the main frames of the topic which are expected to be present in the current public discourse surrounding the initiative. A looming circumstance of European-African relations has been the colonial history between the two continents which has led to a lot of resentment especially on the African continent but also in the European public where the fear of Europe looking to maintain and increase its influence through new types of cooperation is rather big.

Underlying are extractivist ideas which see the planet and its natural resources as a mere mean to advance humankind and as endlessly exploitable instead .

Postcolonial theories emerged in the latter parts of the 20th century after the former colonies of Western countries gained independence (Sawant, 2012, 122). It seeks to understand the social, cultural, economic, and political dynamics that continue to shape the trajectory of the now independent former colonies as well as the colonizing nations. Their attempts in maintaining influence in the region have led to them aligning their foreign policies and developmental aid with the goal of maintaining influence (Said, 1979, 255). This is closely connected to the concept of resource extraction where big economic and military powers use other countries to extract valuable resources on their territory for their own gain.

Postcolonialism should offer insights into the role history and current power dynamics play when trying to institutionalize EU-African cooperation where the unequal distribution of power between the EU and African countries as well as the historical exploitation of Africa's natural resources raise question about the motives behind European investment strategies such as the one outlined by the Global Gateway program.

Historically, Africa has often occupied a peripheral position within the global economic landscape, characterized by asymmetrical power dynamics and marginalization within the international economy. This research aims at exploring possible dependencies or exploitation of African nations which find themselves as mere suppliers of raw materials used to produce green energy while at the same time lacking the control over technological processes or resulting profits.

When trying to analyse if and where those framing techniques are used to get to the underlying motives and to assess how well this policy might be equipped to fulfil its proposed objectives the following categories are to be checked.

An important pillar is the extraction of natural resources to improve the living conditions of a foreign society which is subject to scientific debate often criticized for its focus on short term gains over the sustainable development of economies where endless resources are extracted only to an amount which makes it possible for future generations to still profit. Scholars like Jason Hickel argue that the current climate mitigation efforts as outlined by the Paris Climate Agreement will only perpetuate

existing inequalities between nations, especially regarding the provision and availability of energy (Hickel & Slameršak, 2022).

A key role in the analysis will be power dynamics where the limited bargaining power of African governments could lead to one-sided gains for the EU. Additionally, documents will be analysed according to involvement of local and indigenous communities and how their rights are protected to understand how democratic the policy is.

This relates to the categories of social impacts on the targeted countries as well as the environmental impacts where the overall pollution due to the expansion of sustainable energy infrastructure and labour rights abuses will be analysed. An overly aggressive focus on the expansion of economic infrastructure which neglects the progress in other areas of infrastructural development should be of concern as well.

A major aspect of postcolonialism is the continued influence of the former colonizing nations in the region as it is rich in natural resources and located in the centre of maritime trade routes. This is exemplified by the quest of China and Russia to increase their influence by providing financial loans in the case of China and security assistance in the case of Russia. Geopolitical considerations could explain the great investments European powers are pledging to make through their Green energy initiative.

Hypothesis 1:

It is expected that those concepts and dynamics are reflected in the documents especially by more distant actors such as think tanks and NGOs who observe the policy and are advising the political decision-makers on adequate solutions. Their perspective is expected to be much more strategic and open on the true motives or consequences that this policy will have, whereas public decision-makers should look to not put geopolitical considerations at the forefront of the communication of their policy since this might cause backlash especially in the public debate of African countries which are more aware of the neocolonial power struggle they have encountered since their independence.

4.3 Climate Justice as a Frame

On the other end of the spectrum the theory of Climate Justice is expected to describe the framing of the policy by the EU. It states that the policy aims at creating a more just way of cooperation which includes the recognition that the effects of climate change will be felt most by the people who contributed the least to this problem (UNDP, 2023). Bridging this gap requires a distinct effort by economically wealthy countries to move away from focusing their economical and foreign policies on maintaining and increasing their own wealth towards a more balanced distribution of power and financial means.

The theory of Climate Justice gained popularity over the last ten years. It addresses the unequal distribution of the burdens and benefits of a changing climate and the resulting action, particularly focusing on marginalized communities (Harlan et al. 2015). Ensuring fairness, equity and accountability is at the core of the concept of Climate Justice and is used by the EU to legitimize and explain its objectives and design of policies.

This relates to the objective in various ways such as considering the historical contributions of industrialized nations to climate change and the disproportionate burden that countries of the Global South will have to carry because of it. Climate Justice calls for investments prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable communities and ensuring that benefits and costs are distributed fairly.

Participation, inclusion, and global solidarity are also important concepts when talking about Climate Justice and are as such expected to be highlighted in the communication of the EU's investment strategy. Those should therefore be analysed and checked on their validity since it moves away from realist views about absolute and relative gains whereas in an anarchical order all actors seek to maximize their own absolute and relative gains (Powell, 1991).

The initiative put forward by the European Commission (EC) and the AU is supposed to address this dilemma by paving the way for a new type of cooperation aimed at providing clean energy for the economies of Africa and Europe to ensure sustainable growth and that it follows the principles of fairness, equity, and accountability the theory of climate justice proposes. Therefore, documents on this policy will be analysed

according to these categories to explore the motives of political decision-makers and to determine whether those motives are adequately communicated.

Hypothesis 2:

A framing of the policy which aligns with the theory of Climate Justice is likely to be dominant in policy documents and communication by public decision-makers and other political actors while it is expected to play a lesser role in NGOs and think tanks publications as public decision-makers want to create support for their policy which requires positive connotated values like justice, honesty, and fairness to be at the forefront of public communication. NGOs and think tanks don't need to get support from the broader public as they often have a clear agenda and support group which expects them to provide an objective or critical analysis of the policy which would suggest that the benefits that are highlighted by political decision-makers are less dominant in the assessment of CSOs.

4.4 EU-Africa Relations

The relationship between Africa and Europe has been heavily influenced by the history of colonisation but in terms of how the EU and the African continent interact, scholars like Jetschke (2010) assume that the EU is a model for Africa's regional organisation, the AU. Authors like Manners (2002) or Barbé et al. (2009) argue that the EUs promotion of regionalism is motivated by its desire for self-replication which in turn increases its own legitimacy.

Much more important however are the current economic ties between the two continents where the enormous gap in economic output which is marked by the gross domestic product (GDP) of the EU being ten times higher than that of Sub-Saharan Africa indicates a great power disparity between the two continents. Although the EU is Africa's largest trade partner, the share of exports to the EU has been on the decline for several years, which was also accompanied by a greater involvement of China in Africa further separating the EU and Africa and creating a competition for its cooperation (Kappel, 2021).

The ambivalent relationship is a reason for the complicated and highly controversial discourse surrounding the Africa-EU Green Energy initiative which should be explored.

Keeping in mind those social, political, and economic developments is key when trying to analyse the way this policy is designed but also perceived and discussed.

5. Methodological Framework

5.1 Research design

To answer the question a CDA offers the most effective and reliable way. Since the question already assumes a difference in perspective, weighing and collecting arguments and working interdisciplinary is key in creating a broader picture of the implications and consequences of the policy. This is a question about the intent of a policy and how it is perceived. Analysing subjective topics and questions while being aware of unequal power distribution is a key element of CDA and in this case especially important.

Not only are existing realities to be described but also to be explained which is how Norman Fairclough described critical social analysis in his article on CDA from 2013. Furthermore, he describes CDA as an 'entry-gate' towards critical social analysis. When looking at the research question outlined above, it becomes clear that in this case it is important to consider the context as well as multiple different theories from different fields since this problem can be viewed from multiple angles, each offering a distinct perspective.

By conducting a CDA this policy and how it is perceived can be assessed thoroughly even though multiple projects are far from complete. Assessing the overall performance is therefore much more difficult and harder to empirically validate. The discourse around this cooperation however is in full swing and an analysis of this phenomenon is therefore feasible and most promising.

5.2 Method of data collection

To collect the data, various sources were used although due to time constraints and practicality the data collection has been focused on digital sources as those were the easiest to integrate into the coding programme. It also simplifies the workflow significantly since it is easier to compare and store the data without having to return hard copies or having to scan it.

Google Scholar as well as online libraries such as, Wiley, Elsevier, JSTOR and others were consulted to get scientific sources debating and exploring the case. Especially lesser-known publications such as theses could be found by using Google Scholar. When searching for documents different phrases were used such as 'Global Gateway Africa', 'EU-Africa Energy Partnership', 'African Position on Global Gateway' or 'Green Energy Cooperation in Africa'. The documents were then scanned regarding specific titles and the year in which they were published to ensure that they would relate to the case.

For the documents regarding political decision-makers the Google search engine was used since most documents from the European Union as well as other governmental organizations are freely accessible as they upload the decisions and communications directly to their specific websites. Finding policy documents from African governments or the African Union just by googling proved to be more difficult which is why official websites from the African Union and major African countries were scanned directly with hopes in finding specific documents communicating the initiative to its constituents and members.

Overall, 27 documents were coded with the goal being to code ten documents relating to the specific actor groups. In this case the goal would be to analyse ten or more official documents of the European Union and at least ten of the African Union or governments and official ministries by member states as it is much harder to find distinct sources directly from the African Union on this matter. A greater focus on EU communication is important since a great deal of the question focuses on extractivist practices of the European Union. In terms of civil stakeholders, reviews of the policy and studies by various European and African think tanks and NGOs will be incorporated in the analysis to ensure that the data follows some scientific principles and can be adequately assessed as representative of an informed civil society.

5.3 Method of data analysis

In this research a critical approach to a discourse analysis is chosen which means that when analysing the data, it is important to put a greater emphasis on the notion of power, in this case what is mentioned about the relationship of the two parties since this is exactly what this research question targets.

The documents will be coded according to a scheme which has been developed deductively and will only be marginally modified during the coding process in case major unexpected differences which aren't reflected in the scheme become apparent. To code the documents ATLAS.ti will be used since the documents are all in a digital format and can be incorporated into a project in the program. It allows for a great deal of adaptation and results can be extracted much easier compared to conventional analogue coding.

Codes need to be differentiated for the different layers of Global Gateway as a program but the EU-Africa Green Energy Initiative as well. For example, there need to be distinct codes for the economic development as well as social reforms or a green transition. Important are also codes about the type of cooperation the data is suggesting.

Coding scheme

The documents will be coded according to the main theoretical controversy outlined above which are Postcolonialism and Climate Justice. To that end the theories were categorized into its main components and codes were assigned.

Postcolonialism	PC1 - Resource Extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to resources - Expansion of extraction infrastructure - Export-oriented production of raw materials - Control of processes - Economic exploitation
	PC2 - Power Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliance on foreign investments - Pursuit of own interests - Gatekeeping - Unequal load management - Foreign political influence
	PC3 - Social Impacts & Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil society participation hindered - Human & labour rights affected - Resistance by local communities - Missing development of local infrastructure
	PC4 - Environmental Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habitat destruction & biodiversity loss - Pollution - Carbon emissions
	PC5 - Geopolitical Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliance building - Countering Russian & Chinese influence - Export of values & standards - Leadership

Climate Justice	CJ1 - Procedural Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance instead of Leadership - Participation of civil society - Focus on employing local companies - Sustainable growth benefitting future generations - Support for green transition
	CJ2 - Distributive Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue-sharing mechanisms - Knowledge sharing - Load sharing - Technology transfer
	CJ3 - Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of high-end value chains - Job creation - Investments in social infrastructure - Promotion of projects beneficial for African countries - Provision of sustainable energy for local markets - Integration of national markets
	CJ4 - Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to dialogue - Recognition of power differences - Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

6. Analysis

In the following the results of the analysis will be presented. To fit the theoretical lense of this research and hypotheses the different actor groups will be presented separately. All categories and how the different actor groups position themselves in this framework will be contextualized through citations. The distinct codes from the previous scheme will play a smaller role as the categories are most important to test the hypotheses.

6.1 The European Union’s framing

The EU is the main driver behind this initiative which becomes apparent when looking at the number of publications available on this topic, where multiple statements and communications have been published by the EU compared to only few publicly available documents solely by the AU. Of those available, ten different documents were coded ranging from the EU councils’ conclusions to the official communication of the EU on Global Gateway to different fora and discussions.

6.1.1 Climate Justice

Procedural Fairness

The European Unions tone in its publications is cooperative as they emphasized their commitment to working alongside Africa.

‘The Implementation of the investment package and all activities derived from it are both in line with African strategies, [...] and jointly identified through close dialogue with the African Union Commission, African partners’ countries, as well as regional economic organisations.’ (European Union, 2022, p. 1)

In the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) Forum, top officials of the EU like Brigitte Markussen, Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union highlighted possible ways in which the EU is committed to working alongside Africa, to achieve SDG7 and to contribute to the energy transition (AEEP, 2022b, p. 2). This shows the persistence with which the EU tries to establish a new tone in the development cooperation and its international appearance.

Distributive Fairness

The EU addresses the distributive fairness in various documents as well. For example, in the EU council’s conclusion on energy and climate diplomacy the ‘EU notes the challenging situation faced by many developing countries who will need to increase their resilience, while also struggling with debt’ (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 5). The financial aspect of the policy is a highly contested issue which will reappear in later parts of the analysis.

The technology and knowledge transfer are mentioned by the EU as they acknowledge that technological solutions are ‘abundant and ready to be deployed’ which is reflected in the official document on the EU-Africa Global Gateway Energy Initiative (European Union, 2022, pp. 1&4).

Equity

The EU placed a lot of emphasis on the equity of its program, where the provision of sustainable energy for local markets is at the heart of the policy. In its official publication on the initiative the EU states tha ‘there is still large untapped potential to increase the deployment of renewable energy in the continent.’ (European Union, 2022, p. 1)

In the final joint statement of African and European policymakers it is concluded that ‘the AU and its member states show that there is a clear political will and a clear plan to deliver universal access to sustainable energy by 2040’ (Africa Europe foundation, 2024, p. 2).

The initiative is also supposed to increase the efficiency and resilience of the raw material value chains of resource-rich countries (European Union, 2022, p. 4).

Investments in social infrastructure are mentioned multiple times across various documents ranging from vaccine deployment and production to providing quality education and training for all children and youth (European Union, 2022, p. 5).

Accountability

This is of great importance in the communication of the European Union as well where an emphasis is made on portraying itself as a trustworthy and reliable partner for the African continent. The Union is especially keen on showing, that there is an understanding for the power differences between European and African countries. The EU council acknowledged this in its conclusion on energy and climate diplomacy (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 5).

This recognition of an unequal distribution of the burden that climate change puts on especially developing countries is appearing consistently through various documents for example in its communication on Global Gateway, where it states that ‘the impact of climate change and degradation of biodiversity disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable in the world’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 7). High ranking European public officials are also acknowledging those differences, as during the AEEP Forum from 2022 Dr Jürgen Zattler, Director-General for International development policy at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) emphasised the importance of recognising the different paces of development in Africa and Europe.

‘Europe has access to more funds and technology, but they also have an increased responsibility to make sure other countries have access to the same technological advances. Africa has a different development pace, so aligning the two continents’ agendas will only work if the differences in capabilities are recognised.’ (AEEP, 2022b, p. 3)

Finally, it also sees Global Gateway as its best instrument to close those differences where in the official communication of the Initiative it reads that ‘with Global Gateway, Europe will play its full part in narrowing the global investment gap.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 4).

To summarize the EU’s position, it becomes apparent that an important part of the Initiative for the EU is to ensure that the perception of the Union as demanding and interested in its own gain changes and that it is viewed more as an altruistic partner with good morals.

6.1.2 Postcolonialism

Resource Extraction

According to the EU, this initiative is a possibility for Africa to increase the production of sustainable energy to enhance its transition to a green economy but also improve the living conditions for millions of people. But at the same time the EU-council called for ‘urgent, collective, and decisive global action [...] while ensuring the EU’s own resilience and competitiveness’ (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 2).

On the one hand it wants to ‘support transformational infrastructural projects like clean energy generation and transmission projects along with off-grid decentralized solutions’ which could be especially beneficial for rural communities which have been disproportionately affected by the lack of access to energy in general (European Union, 2022, p. 1).

On the other hand, is ‘the EU developing bilateral partnerships with resource-rich countries [...] to promote investment along the raw materials value chains, supporting partner countries to develop regional value chains, diversify their economies and create local added-value.’ (European Union, 2022, p. 4) This indicates a motive to ensure access to raw materials needed for a green transition which directly impacts the EUs own move away from fossil fuels.

This is reflected by statements highlighting the EUs ambition to incorporate African countries into global value chains such as:

‘Ambition by 2030: Enable African countries to integrate their raw materials and resources into sustainable global value chains’ (European Union, 2022, p. 4)

'We will also work with partner countries to invest in infrastructure for developing sustainable and resilient raw materials value chains.' (European Commission, 2021, p. 8)

Power Dynamics

In its communication of Global Gateway, the EU states that 'In assisting others, the EU will also be contributing to the promotion of its own interests, to strengthening the resilience of its supply chains, and to opening up more trade opportunities for the EU economy' (European Commission, 2021, p. 4). This shows another incentive for the EU to engage much more actively in the cooperation with the African continent and on the global stage in general.

It also makes clear that Global Gateway 'will provide an enabling environment to make sure projects deliver, by offering attractive and business-friendly trading conditions, regulatory convergence, standardization, supply chain integration and financial services' (European Commission, 2021, p. 4) which indicates that the EU plans on controlling the allocation of resources much closer than what the communication on a supposed new type of partnership indicates.

Social Impacts & Human Rights/ Environmental Impacts

The participation of the civil society isn't mentioned by European decision-makers. Neither in the official communication of the EU nor in the contributions of European panelists in the AEEP does a specific emphasis or desire to involve different civil society stakeholder appear.

Geopolitical Influence

The EU aims at taking on a leading role in the fight against climate change and sees international cooperation as highly important. In the communication of Global Gateway this perspective is mentioned as the EU states that 'given the global nature of this challenge, the EU needs to provide a positive offer for its partners' (European Commission, 2021, p. 3).

Unifying the different developmental efforts by the EU under a singular program is another motive as decision-makers hope that this could increase the overall effectiveness and visibility of the Unions foreign efforts.

'The Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative will ensure EU coordination, information exchange and overall visibility of the EU and its Member States efforts to support green investments in Africa under one brand.' (European Union, 2023, p. 2).

To increase cooperation, the EU wants to export standards and values to its partner countries which is alluded to in the communication of Global Gateway where it states that,

'Global Gateway will foster convergence with European or international technical, social, environmental and competition standards, reciprocity in market access and a level playing field in the area of transport infrastructure planning and development.' (European Commission, 2021, p. 6).

Next to combatting climate change the Union sees Global Gateway as an instrument to enhance its own international cooperation, to position itself better in the international geopolitical competition and to ensure the EU's resilience and competitiveness in 'a shifting security and geopolitical environment' (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 2).

In its council conclusion the EU also stated that it 'will work as a matter of priority, with non-EU G20 and other major economies on climate change mitigation efforts and is ready to join forces in high-ambition, high-level alliances and partnerships.' (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 3)

The increased efforts to establish deeper economic and political ties with the African continent and the AU is also a direct result of the increased influence of other major geopolitical actors namely Russia and China and even though these actors aren't mentioned by name in the EU's communication of Global Gateway, the EU says that through Global Gateway it will 'invest in infrastructure to plug vulnerabilities, provide trusted connectivity, and build capacity in the face of natural or man-made challenges, physical, cyber or hybrid threats, and economic coercion for geopolitical aims.' (European Commission, 2021, p. 3).

Summary of the EU's communication

The EU places a lot of emphasis on the geopolitical implications this policy could have on the Union's position in the international arena. Ensuring access to natural resources, which could power the European transition away from fossil fuels are almost always

mentioned along with the benefits that this production would have for the provision of electricity on the African continent as well.

6.2 The African Unions framing

Official independent African statements on this initiative were scarce which is why in total five documents by African officials or with the participation of African decision-makers were coded to analyse the perspective of African governments and the AU as the most advanced continental decision-making body. One of the most important documents is the summary of the AEEP Forum 2022 where different speakers from the two continents talked about how to advance the Global Gateway between Africa and Europe.

6.2.1 Climate Justice

Procedural Fairness

Regarding the procedural fairness as a big component of Global Gateway the African Union supports the proposition of the EU for a fair and just partnership instead of donor recipient relationship. This became especially evident during the AEEP EnergyTalks and AEEP Forum 2022 where various speakers emphasized the need for support and assistance. Those talks were organized by the EU and AU together which makes the summaries of those talks a valuable source.

'Mr Danglade pointed out the need for an Africa-Europe Energy Leaders' Group to coordinate the energy transition between Africa and the EU. He continued by explaining that the AU's energy plans needed to be strengthened [...]. African nations should be supported for establishing or updating the existing energy transition plants (ETPs). He further added that ETPs that are not yet ready for European funding should be challenged by the EU counterparts and revised to comply with requirements for technical assistance and support [...].' (AEEP, 2022a, p. 3)

Nardos Bekele-Thomas, as the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency a major representative of the African Union, participated in a dialogue on the connection of Global Gateway to the private sector where she stated

that she 'observes a shift in tone: Instead of projects for Africa, the international community now develops projects with Africa'. She emphasized the need to integrate African actors in the planning stages and support African priorities which were already identified by African Union member states. She calls on the EU to not only work with big European or multinational companies but also to incorporate the African private sector. (GIZ, n.d., p. 2)

Distributive Fairness

African decision-makers emphasize the need for a broader exchange of ideas and better distribution of the loads that each partner must carry. Especially the financing of those transformative projects is of great importance to African decision-makers and public officials. In the Forum on the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, Ikaba Koyi argued, that a lack of sustainable energy in the African energy mix doesn't stem from a lack of interest in using this energy but rather from a lack of opportunity due to limited financial means (AEEP, 2022b, p. 7).

Equity

It becomes apparent from the coding process that the common African position on economic development is to deploy all forms of its abundant energy resources including renewable and non-renewable energy to address energy demand (AU, 2022, p. 1). This is a major difference to the EUs position as it aims at facilitating a green transition to ensure that fossil fuels play a decreasing role in the African energy mix.

Integrating regional energy markets to increase resilience and the overall provision of electricity is of great importance for political decision-makers. As for example Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy in the African Union, emphasised the potential to further strengthen partnerships and collaborations between Africa and Europe in the AEEP Forum. She highlighted the tangible impact of the AEEP, and initiatives supported by the EU such as the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) and the Continental Master Plan (CMP) and advocated for a deepened cooperation on green energy. (AEEP, 2022b, p. 2)

Accountability

The question of accountability plays a minor role in the perception of the initiative as especially in the 2022 Forum on the AEEP a lot of African participants talked about the

need to engage in an open and honest dialogue about appropriate measures and the direction of the African-European partnership. Ikaba Koyi pointed out that ‘the recognition of power differences is especially important as not all countries have the same founding capabilities’ (AEEP, 2022b, p. 8). However, although a staple in the different discussions and fora, in official publications by the AU or national governments a focus on greater accountability as part of the new partnership couldn’t be observed.

Summary of Climate Justice

In the documents that were coded a greater emphasis was observed on the equity of the initiative which could see Africa diversifying its energy mix as well as increasing the overall provision of electricity which would benefit millions of previously underserved people. Accountability was especially prevalent during discussions and panels between European and African decision-makers not so much in official publications by the AU. Procedural and distributive fairness played a role but compared to the other categories only a minor one.

6.2.2 Postcolonialism

Resource Extraction

As mentioned before the AU plans on utilising all resources available to grow and create wealth. This includes fossil fuels but also emphasizes the willingness of African decision-makers to increase the production of sustainable energy. In the AEEP Forum panellist Kandeh Yumkella stated that, in a long-term partnership of equals Africa can play an active role in the provision of materials that Europe needs to fast track its own green transition countries (AEEP, 2022b, p. 6), which is important because here the focus shifts from the provision of sustainable energy for the population of Africa towards the production of green hydrogen which could be traded.

This is important as only a few documents mention the expansion of the extraction infrastructure especially to produce green hydrogen, which could be used to green Europe’s industries and access to those resources. Dr Rabia Ferroukhi mentioned that as well when she stated that it is important to ensure that Africa isn’t stripped of its natural resources but rather that those energy resources bring an added value to the local population and the continent (AEEP, 2022b, p. 9).

Power Dynamics

African decision-makers are aware of the power differences between Africa and Europe especially regarding the financial possibilities for each continent, which is why various politicians and public officials have called for greater investments by international financiers as they feel like the overall progress is too slow to meet the demand for infrastructural investments on the continent (AEEP, 2022a, p. 3).

‘Mamadou Diakhite, a high-ranking public official at the AU Development Agency, pointed out the importance of creating a business-friendly environment to encourage investments in renewable hydrogen as well as skills development and capacity building. He also called on international financiers and the private sector to increase their investments in the continent.’ (AEEP, 2022b, p. 9)

The unequal distribution of loads is a concern for African public officials as especially a deeper and more efficient technology and knowledge transfer needs to be initiated as well as the provision of financial means which aren't tied to rigorous repayment conditions (AEEP, 2022a, p. 3).

Social Impacts & Human Rights

Regarding the impact of the initiative and proposed cooperation on the living conditions and opportunities for African people the decision-makers take a differentiated stance.

A lot of emphasis is placed on the improvement of the living conditions of millions of Africans through the provision of electricity, where the African Union estimates that currently more than 600 million Africans live without electricity services while 900 million lack access to clean cooking facilities (AU, 2022, p. 1). Providing those people with the necessary infrastructure is the main objective for the African Union as it argues that through that alone many people will be provided the opportunity to better their lives. Critique on a lack of participation of the civil society or on labour or on human rights abuses wasn't found.

Environmental Aspects

Haven't been discussed neither by the AU nor the EU as the provision of sustainable energy was the focus of the initiative. The environmental impact of the different projects will have to be assessed on a smaller scale and will show up in a couple of years when the first projects will be completed.

Geopolitical Influence

The geopolitical implications of the Global Gateway were of minor importance in the communication by the AU as decision-makers didn't go into detail about their own geostrategic aspirations. The need to balance the influence of different economic blocs trying to do business with and on the continent is mentioned. In the status report from 2020 on the AEEP the authors mention the AEEP as a strategic dialogue 'driven by a desire to deliver positive, practical consequences' (AEEP, 2020, p. 4). Which shows that the decision-makers are aware that those initiatives do have a geopolitical component.

Summary of Postcolonialism

Overall postcolonial rhetoric played a small role in the communication by African decision-makers and public officials although some have warned about the possible risks of a lack of financing which could exacerbate existing inequalities.

The African Union mainly highlights the possibilities that Global Gateway could open for African economies and the living conditions of Africans across the continent. They see the investment strategy as a possibility to reduce the infrastructural gap and to fight energy poverty. In general, African decision-makers are rather positive in their communication although a lack of publications might indicate some scepticism regarding the actual implementation where African institutions appear to be waiting to see how the initiative unfolds.

6.3 The framing by NGOs

Assessing the position of NGOs comprehensively is rather difficult as there are various organizations and think tanks which all have a distinct agenda which determines the focus of their reports and publications. Nonetheless do trends become visible especially when considering the overall direction of publications and the topics that aren't mentioned in those reports.

6.3.1 Climate Justice

Although NGOs do mention aspects of Climate Justice the categories of Postcolonialism make up most of the codes and quotes in the dataset as shown in figure 1. Due to this major discrepancy only the most important quotes from NGOs regarding Climate Justice will be presented as analysing every category of Climate Justice independently would limit the space for a thorough analysis of the more contested and mentioned categories of Postcolonialism which is more important to the objectives of this research.

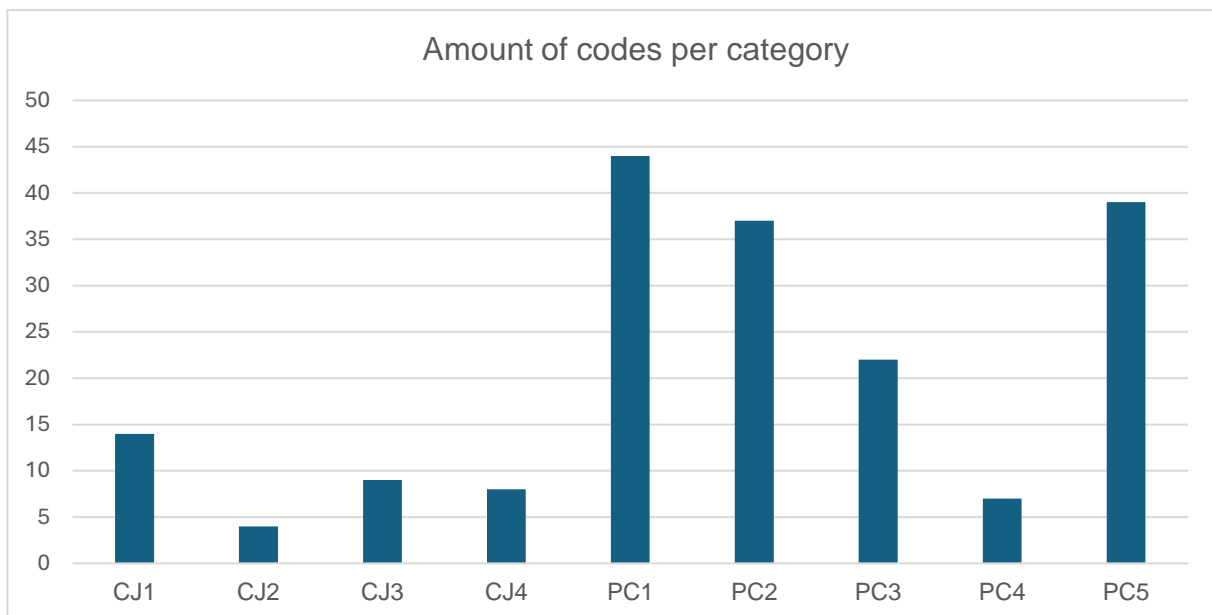


Fig.1 Distribution of Codes for Publications by NGOs

NGOs placed more emphasis on the procedural implications that Global Gateway could have on the relations between Africa and Europe. Different publications looked at the EUs envisioned support for the Green Transition of the continent as something that presents ‘significant opportunities for Africa as it seeks to implement the development ambitions outlined in Agenda 2063’ (Benkenstein & Chevallier, 2020, p. 3).

The European Think Tanks Group (ETTg) also called for the African energy transitions to remain African led and not dependent on or controlled by foreign donors (Bouacida et al. 2022, p. 5).

Regarding the distribution of funds, technology and knowledge NGOs aren’t as positive about the initiatives presumed impact than policy makers as almost none went into depth on the possibilities of technology or knowledge transfer nor did any of the analysed documents mention possible revenue or load sharing mechanisms.

Germanwatch is the only NGO which endorses the EUs efforts about increasing equity for African countries, where the organization mentions the potential of Africa as a carbon sink and generator of renewable energy which could be used to avoid emissions in Africa and could also be shared with the rest of the world (Wemanya et al. 2022, p. 7).

The commitment of the EU to engage in a more cooperative and equal partnership with the AU is picked up by a couple of reports from think tanks where the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) noted the Unions intention of increasing cooperation (Benkenstein & Chevallier, 2020, p. 6).

Regarding the security of the EUs pledged investments differing opinions can be observed on the implementation of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is questioning the feasibility of the financial target set out by the EU especially in a time of crisis and Elcano criticizes the 'lack of clarity about the plan to monitor and evaluate the strategy' (Olivie & Santillán, 2023, p. 17).

During the analysis it became clear that Climate Justice only played a minor role in the publications of NGOs as some acknowledged the positive role that Global Gateway could play in improving the livelihoods of people. But especially regarding the distributive fairness, NGOs weren't as positive about the effects of Global Gateway as the EU.

6.3.2 Postcolonialism

Resource Extraction

NGOs view the EUs Global Gateway Initiative more as a self-serving policy which is supposed 'to strengthen Europe's economic resilience' as Clingendael put it in its policy brief (Dekker & Okano-Heijmans, 2021, p. 2). The need for increased international activity to secure access to key resources is also picked up by the article of Michael B. Charles and others in the Journal of Energy Policy where they state that while right now '50% of the EU's total energy requirements are met by nations external to the EU, while, in the next 20–30 years, dependency levels are expected to rise to roughly 70%' (Charles et. al, 2009, p. 2).

Since hydrogen is supposed to be a driver for the green transition of the EUs economy it is a key area of concern for the European Commission and ‘to that end, Morocco, Mauritania, and Namibia are hosting industrial pilot projects with European companies aimed ultimately at exporting part of their production’ (Bouacida, 2022, p. 3). Counter BalanceEU along with Eurodad perceives those cooperations as the EUs attempt to ‘respond to the economic needs of recipient countries by supporting their incorporation in global value chains, mainly through the export of raw materials’ (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 11).

This perception is shared by other NGOs as the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation believes that Global Gateway is the EUs attempt to join in on the ‘ports race’ to position itself better in the geopolitical competition for Africa’s resources.

‘The initiation and implementation of local plans are currently in place for both sectors, without neglecting projects which are visibly orientated towards European interests — for example, the expansion and modernization of the port in Banjul, Gambia. These projects show the direction things are intended to go: the goal is the transport of raw materials through strategic corridors and a “ports race” that is already underway in many African countries.’ (Bohne, 2023, p. 3)

Germanwatch highlights that this move risks ‘Africa’s energy investments being skewed into producing fossil fuels for European consumption, rather than it being used for energy access or a green transition for Africans’ (Wemanya et al., 2022, p. 9). This critique grew even louder after the shortage in fossil fuels due to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine led some European countries to approach African countries in search of new sources of fossil fuels. This shift gave rise to allegations of hypocrisy and double standards as the ETTG points out, where the move to turn to Africa as an alternative source of natural gas has been viewed as hypocritical (Bouacida et al., 2022, p. 2).

The ETTG emphasizes that if this view perseveres African decision-makers and civil society might be deterred from cooperating with European companies and countries on the development of infrastructure which would only be a symptom of a greater loss of trust in the relationship between Europe and Africa (Bouacida et al., 2022, p. 6).

Power Dynamics

Regarding the implications of power dynamics, the publications of the NGOs overwhelmingly criticize the EUs persistence on controlling the direction of investments and conditionality of financing, which they see in stark contrast to the EUs communication of a new type of partnership built on cooperation rather than the outdated 'donor-recipient' principle that was leading the EUs development cooperation efforts so far (Bohne, 2023, p. 2).

In their study Counter BalanceEU criticizes the financial structure of the Global Gateway Initiative as they found that 'the financial pledges in the Gateway contain only €18 billion in grants, under the EU external assistance programme. The remaining investments would incur debt' (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 18). The sustainability of these credits is crucial as many developing countries are already struggling with a historic debt crisis.

The authors go further in their assessment as they highlight that 'renewable energy could become the new Trojan, which in fact displaces surplus from developing countries to developed countries' (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 19).

Counter BalanceEU also points out that the 'approach seems to be an attempt to rebrand existing plans, which raises concerns about diverting already scarce development resources' and is saying that the 'policies proposed under the Global Gateway primarily serve private sector interests and they lack a coherent focus on poverty alleviation' (Sial & Sol, 2022, p. 4).

The study goes on to provide an example of the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project (LTWP) which encountered several issues including financing problems and the unlawful occupation of land of indigenous communities. Most problematic is that 'the tendering process for the transmission line was biased in favour of Spanish companies. The Spanish government offered concessional tied financing to Kenya, forcing national authorities to award the transmission contract to a Spanish company' (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 14). This is a bad look on the EUs ambition to engage in a more equal partnership and calls into question that proposed new type of partnership.

This critique is picked up in the policy brief of the SAIIA as well where the authors state that 'the current discourse around the Green Deal resembles, at least partly, post-colonial rhetoric' (Högl & Iacobuta, 2020, p. 8). ECDPM sees those problems as well

as they think that Global Gateway ‘presents an alternative to the original Chinese alternative, while it doubles down on a European ‘democratic values’ discourse and a focus on regulatory alignment that may bring back echoes of stringent conditionalities’ (Teevan et al., 2022, p. 6).

Social Impacts & Human Rights

NGOs have been more critical on the EUs involvement of the civil society regarding policy design and implementation. In a letter from CSOs monitoring African renewable initiatives to the European Commission and member state representatives the signatories voice their concern ‘around the development of an initiative which seems to be EU-led, since our understanding is that there has been minimal interaction with African leadership, and none with African civil society on the initiative as such’ (Njamnshi et al., 2021, p. 1).

This perception can be observed in most publications by NGOs as Germanwatch is also concerned about the possibility that ‘an approach that focuses on visibility and branding will favour large scale and mega-scale infrastructure projects, similar to Chinese infrastructure investments. This could disadvantage or even exclude small locally led CSO initiatives in vulnerable communities.’ (Wemanya et al., 2022, p. 15).

The minimal consultation of, especially the African civil society, becomes apparent in the communication of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Kenya which the EU is declaring a success whereas civil society members in Kenya have been criticizing the agreement (Bohne, 2023, p. 5).

Counter BalanceEU also makes an argument about the proposed use of ‘Strategic Corridors’ which are supposed to link major production and resource extraction centres with major consumer centres. Those corridors and its corresponding free trade zones could erode workers’ rights and wages as in those zones ‘laws protecting workers and environment are often waived’ (Sia & Sol, 2023, p. 17).

Environmental Impacts

NGOs haven’t placed a major emphasis on the environmental impact of the initiative as a lot of the projects haven’t been realised yet which makes assessing possible environmental damages difficult. Regarding green hydrogen projects, Germanwatch fears the risk of ‘creating or aggravating resource conflicts around water, land and

energy' (Wemanya et al., 2022, p. 22). The NGO also criticizes the 'lack of a clear rejection of fossil fuels and the inclusion of fossil gas as a "transitional energy"' as they see this practice 'likely to drive up what are currently lower emission levels on the continent' (Wemanya et al., 2023, pp. 11& 18). The SAIIA expands on this argument by stating that 'the historical record of the EU's emissions does not legitimise it to demand stronger CO2 mitigation from African countries' (Högl & Iacobuta, 2020, p. 8) which is at the core of the issue as to meet global emission targets developing countries must reduce the number of future emissions which in turn hurts their short-term economic growth.

Geopolitical Influence

As the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) puts it, 'despite repeated denials from high-ranking European Commission officials [...], the speeches, participating countries, and flagship projects showcased at the Global Gateway Forum leave little doubt that it has a significant geostrategic dimension' (Wientzek et al., 2023, p. 4) which resonates with the assessment of other think tanks.

The export of values and standards as a major component of Global Gateway has been a dominant theme throughout the publications from NGOs as well as Clingendael sees Global Gateway as 'Europe's international agenda to promote individual freedom, political liberty and economic openness globally' (Dekker & Okano-Heijmans, 2021, p. 1). In an interview with Institut Montaigne Maaik Okano-Heijmans states that 'we have to recognize that the promotion of democratic values is the ultimate aim of the Global Gateway plan, but it is not necessary to make it explicit' (Institut Montaigne, 2022, p. 3). This questions the EU's motives behind the initiative. It needs to be assessed if the promotion of European values is beneficial for the success of the policy or if indeed brings back discussion about stringent conditionalities and eurocentrism (Teevan et al., 2022, p. 6).

European NGOs are divided on this matter as some CSO's make it clear that from their perspective 'EU and AU leaders must commit to a development-centered, rights-based approach, promoting and demanding success in good governance, [...]' (Bals et al., 2022, p. 1).

Counter BalanceEU for example supports this claim as the authors state that 'the Gateway's added value is said to rest on the delivery of projects that are rooted in

democratic values, operating through high standards and conforming to the principles of good governance and transparency' (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 5) although they question if this rhetoric is the true motivation behind the Initiative.

Counter BalanceEU perceives the systemic rivalry to China as the main driver behind the initiative 'Although the official documents on the Gateway do not explicitly mention competition with China's Belt and Road Initiative, the implications are clear. The Commission has framed the Gateway as a superior initiative, which is rooted in democratic values, an ethical approach to infrastructure financing based on sustainability and good governance' (Sia & Sol, 2022, p. 7). Elcano goes even further in their assessment as the state that 'fundamentally it is a geostrategic instrument motivated, as mentioned above, by the rise of Chinese influence in the world and especially in the world of development.' (Olivie & Santillán, 2023, p. 18).

Summary

NGOs view the EUs Global Gateway Initiative much more critical than the previously analysed institutions as especially the financing aspect of the initiative is subject to scepticism as the reports view the EUs approach as too reliant on credits and loans which increases the risk to exacerbate the debt crisis many developing nations are already facing. Further they see the initiative as a mean of the European Union to get in on the rush to Africa's resources where the access to rare resources and green hydrogen has been of high importance to the EUs foreign agenda. This race is only accelerated by the success of the Chinese and Russians in ensuring access to critical resources which is why the organizations also see the initiative as heavily influenced by geostrategic considerations as the success of the Chinese BRI is viewed as a major driver for the EUs increased activity.

7. Discussion

Hypothesis 1: It is expected that those concepts and dynamics are reflected in the documents especially by more distant actors such as think tanks and NGOs who observe the policy and or are advising the political decision-makers on the adequate solutions.

During the analysis it became apparent that European public decision-makers indeed tried to highlight the benefits of this new type of partnership for African countries to mask a significant part of the motivation like the EUs goal of gaining access to renewable energy resources or to counteract the growing Chinese influence. In the official communication by the EU in particular a lot of emphasis was placed on what the increased production of renewable energy would mean for the provision of electricity on the continent whereas TTs and NGOs highlighted the risks that come with an increased debt burden which would be inevitable with the current design of Global Gateway.

EU officials however when communicating the initiative to its own members, emphasized the benefits for the European economy and its geostrategic implications much more. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that generating support for a policy requires policymakers to adjust their communication to their respective audiences. Nonetheless, it became apparent that the geopolitical implications aren't at the forefront of the communication of the initiative.

CSOs place a much greater emphasis on the geopolitical implications of Global Gateway as even though the EU is not completely neglecting this dimension it does try to limit the space this dimension takes up in the discourse surrounding the initiative by highlighting other aspects which is why this hypothesis can be at least partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: A framing of the policy which aligns with the values of Climate Justice is likely to be dominant in policy documents and communication by public decision-makers and other political actors while it plays a lesser role in NGOs and think tanks publications

Climate Justice as a concept plays a major role in the EUs communication of Global Gateway as the EU outlined numerous times the positive impact an increased production of renewable energy either for local consumption or as a tradable good

would have on the local population and the economies of African countries. This was also communicated by African decision-makers who see the provision of electricity as a major step in their quest to improve the livelihood of millions of Africans.

Although NGOs and think tanks such as the SAIIA acknowledge the need for increased infrastructural investments, it became apparent that the NGOs and think tanks view this initiative more as a rebranding exercise by the EU aimed at increasing its visibility as a meaningful geopolitical actor on the international stage. Climate Justice plays only a marginal role in the publications by NGOs and TTs as they fear that this investment package will serve as a possibility for the European private sector and MNCs to generate greater revenues from the construction of big infrastructure projects and the export of energy and resources.

The analysis showed clearly that the second hypothesis can also be confirmed as aspects of Climate Justice play a much larger role in the communication by the EU compared to the assessment by CSOs.

8. Conclusion

The overarching question this research aimed to answer was the following:

How do political and civil society stakeholders frame the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative amidst discursive controversies about Climate Justice and Postcolonialism?

To answer this question several sub questions were formulated to get a comprehensive picture of the initiative. In the following, these sub questions will be answered first before returning to the initial research question.

The first sub question is: *What are the main features of the controversy over Climate Justice and Postcolonialism in EU-Africa relations?*

Here the first feature would be the divide on the perception of expanding the extraction infrastructure which will impact the socioeconomic development of African countries with the EU and AU pointing out that an increase in the production of clean energy for local markets as well as the export to third partner countries could strengthen the role of African economies and facilitate a knowledge and technology transfer.

CSOs however are critical of the proposed investments which target export related energy production as they view those investments as primarily supplementing Europe's efforts in gaining access to Africa's natural resources. This dynamic could further divide the European Union from African people and politicians which could have negative long-term implications for the relationship between the two continents.

Another controversially discussed aspect of the initiative is the financing of the policy with especially the NGOs and think tanks advocating for a greater share of grants to ensure the financial sustainability of the countries that are supposed to benefit from this initiative. The EU is arguing that by pursuing private investments a greater acceptance for this type of cooperation will be created and budgetary limitations restrict the Union from providing a greater share of investments as grants.

This is heavily criticized by NGOs who fear that this initiative could primarily serve private sector interests and divert already scarce developmental funds towards economic cooperation where it loses the focus on poverty alleviation.

The export of values and standards is also controversial. Particularly regarding the way those investments are linked to advancing green energy systems. Here African decision-makers make it very clear that they intend to use all forms of natural resources to advance their economies which includes fossil fuels. The EU however has made it very clear that with Global Gateway it will invest in sustainable green energy projects although this doesn't need to be a point of tension if the EU still assists African countries in advancing their electricity infrastructure and finances the expansion of renewable energy projects on the African continent because if those countries still want to extract their fossil fuels they would have to look elsewhere for funding.

Finally, the new form of cooperation is also controversial because in the publications by NGOs and TTs it became apparent that they view the EUs design and implementation of the policy as not coherent with its proposed change of tone towards African nations. Here critics have pointed to the one-sided design of the initiative where African countries were proposed a strategy that the EU constructed and where African countries had minimal opportunities to provide input.

The second sub question is: *How do EU and African politicians frame the Green Energy Initiative?*

The European Union emphasized the need for a cooperative approach to overcome the infrastructural challenges that hinder economical and societal growth. It portrays itself as a trustworthy and just partner who is aware of power differences between the two continents and the need to step up its efforts to ensure equity and fairness in the necessary transition away from fossil fuels and the creation of green and sustainable economies. The fight against climate change is a dominant theme in the EUs framing of the initiative which is why its stance is in line with the different aspects and layers of Climate Justice.

African decision-makers highlighted their desire to increase the level of energy infrastructure on the continent with the first objective being to provide electricity for its population while still highlighting the possibilities that exporting some of this produced energy which would generate revenue and attract foreign investors. The African Union also reiterated its stance on the deployment of fossil fuels to bridge the economic gap where multiple times the AUs desire to extract as much value from its fossil fuel reserves as possible which shows that the African Union perceives this initiative much more as an economic possibility to attract foreign investments to advance a specific sector of its energy economy more so than a tool to lower global emissions and to fight climate change.

The third sub question is: *How do civil society actors frame the Green Energy Initiative?*

Civil society actors put a lot of emphasis on the risks associated with infrastructure development mainly funded by loans as they see this development as a risk for African countries whose budget deficits and high debt burdens are already limiting growth and political wiggle room. Additionally, they frame this initiative as a tool for European decision-makers to combat the growing influence of especially China, which has positioned itself strongly on the African continent with its BRI initiative where a lot of African countries have improved their relationships with China to the detriment of European companies and countries.

Having answered the sub questions, it is time to return to the overarching question where it becomes clear that the actors frame the initiative very differently. The political stakeholders mainly highlight the positive aspects of the Africa-EU Green Energy

Initiative in terms of equity and procedural fairness while members of the civil society emphasized the risks associated with taking on loans for the expansion of extraction infrastructure. The geopolitical ambition of the EU is another major component in the publications and statements by the CSOs which shows that they aim to frame this initiative more critical.

The findings of this thesis can be of value to a multitude of groups where European decision-makers can use the findings of this research to understand how the policy is perceived and draw conclusion from this for the effectiveness of the initiative as well as recommendations which aspects should be reconsidered to ensure that the initiative fulfils its objectives. African decision-makers on the other hand can use those findings to better understand the geopolitical implications and underlying motives of the European Union and incorporate this into their decision-making process which projects should be pursued with funds from European investors. For members of the civil society and especially organizations promoting greater international cooperation and environmental protection this CDA provides important insights into the EU's external relations and the multiple facets of an initiative like this which could promote greater understanding for political decision-making processes and lead to more constructive debates on the direction of European foreign policy making and environmental diplomacy.

For the scientific community this thesis sheds light on the diverse perspectives and multitude of implications that this policy will have not only on the relationship between Africa and Europe but also about the general geopolitical trajectory of an emerging multipolar international order as well as the difficulties in finding common ground on how climate change might best be handled. This could be a starting point for further research into the impact of Postcolonialism on the relationship between Africa and Europe and could be connected to assessing which instruments of European climate diplomacy have been successful and should be relied upon to promote environmental protection efforts.

All in all, it can be concluded that the different framings reflect the differing intentions and roles that the analysed actors take on in this discourse and are prime example for a discursive controversy as the question is not so much about who is right but rather about the individual prioritization of different aspects of the initiative by different stakeholders.

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Appendix

Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that I completed the Bachelor thesis independently and used only these materials that are listed. All materials used, from published as well as unpublished sources, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, are duly reported. Furthermore, I declare that the Bachelor thesis, or any abridgment of it, was not used for any other degree seeking purpose.

Minsk, 03.07.2024

Place, Time



Signature

List of coded documents

1 EU council conclusion on energy and climate diplomacy

PDF-document, 7 quotes

2 EU-Africa Global Gateway Energy Initiative

PDF-document, 6 quotes

3 EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment package

PDF-document, 6 quotes

4 EU communication of Global Gateway

PDF-document, 11 quotes

5 ETTG perspectives on AU EU deal

PDF-document, 8 quotes

6 European Civil organizations on African renewable initiatives

PDF-document, 3 quotes

7 Germanwatch - Perspectives on Africa-EU Energy Cooperation

PDF-document, 28 quotes

8 Journal Energy Policy EU-Africa Energy Partnership

PDF-document, 12 quotes

9 SA-Policy-Briefing-Green-Transition-220-benkenstein-chevallier

PDF-document, 3 quotes

10 SA-Policy-Briefing-209-Hogl-Iacobuta

PDF-document, 5 quotes

11 AU-Pressrelease on AU position of just energy transition

PDF-document, 1 quote

13 Status report 2020 on Africa-EU Energy Partnership

PDF-document, 2 quotes

14 AEEP-Forum-2022_-Spotlight

PDF-document, 18 quotes

15 AEEP Energy Talks_Spotlight_COP27

PDF-document, 3 quotes

16 Final_Joint_Statement_Africa_Europe_Policymaker_Meeting_on_Energy

PDF-document, 1 quote

17 Global-gateway-flagship-projects-2023-2024-eu-africa_en

PDF-document, 0 quotes

18 CSO-Statement-EU-AU-Summit_14022022

PDF-document, 7 quotes

19 The “Global Gateway” Deception - Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

PDF-document, 15 quotes

20 GIZ report on partnership in private sector

PDF-document, 4 quotes

21 ECDPM-Global-Gateway-recipe-EU-geopolitical-relevance-Discussion-Paper-323-2022

PDF-document, 8 quotes

22 ClingendaelPolicyBrief_Global_Gateway_0

PDF-document, 5 quotes

23 Institut Montaigne_Global Gateway_ Positioning Europe for a Sustainable Future _

PDF-document, 5 quotes

24 KAS Global Gateway” is slowly gaining momentum

PDF-document, 5 quotes

25 Counter BalanceEU-global-gateway-report-FINAL

PDF-document, 22 quotes

26 Elcanopolicy-paper-development-aid-and-geopolitics-the-eus-global-gateway-initiative

PDF-document, 12 quotes

27 RLS The Global Gateway Isn't All It's Cracked Up to Be

PDF-document, 4 quotes

28 DIE Europe's Global Gateway_ a new geostrategic framework for development policy_

PDF-document, 0 quotes