# The EU and Africa: An Evolving Perspective: Policymaking in a time of upheaval

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Policymaking in a time of upheaval

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| Word count: | 12688 |
| Hand-in date: | 14-06-2022 |

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**Abstract**

This research project attempts to answer how the European Union has evolved its policymaking perspective towards Africa and the Africa Union in particular, in the light of developments over the past 15 years. It does so by building a broad theoretical framework based on different perspectives within IR, applied to the EU-Africa relationship. The framework consists of neorealism, neoliberal, constructivist perspectives, as well as the literature on Market Power Europe. Joint policy documents by the European Union and the African Union, as well as statements and speeches by top-level EU officials constitute the means by which these policymaking changes can be captured. Any captured change or shift in the perspective and motivation of policymakers could then be situated within the theoretical framework provided. It was found that there had indeed been a shift in policymaking perspective over the stated period, from a more basic neoliberal understanding of international relations and particularly cooperation and development, to a more robust normative and assertive geopolitical and cooperative stance. It is likely that these policy shifts were informed at least in part by the changes global and geopolitical landscape. This paper affirms the continued importance of the EU-Africa relationship, not just to the EU or Africa, but to the world as a whole.

**Overview**

# 1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) stands at a crossroads in its history. More integrated than ever before, it is facing several systemic crises that threaten to harm or undo the European project. Meanwhile, western (particularly, the United States') hegemony is giving way to an increasingly multipolar world as the global economic centre of gravity shifts from the Atlantic to the Pacific theatre. European leaders are now setting their sights on the future, hoping to chart a course towards an EU that is less dependent on its American counterpart (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2019), while maintaining a sense of geopolitical security. The search for what has been dubbed as 'strategic autonomy' (Alcaro & Tocci, 2021) has been re-emphasised during the Covid-19 pandemic, where it became apparent that the EU has been too reliant on supply chains that are difficult to control in times of crisis. Many of these outstanding problems are directly linked to the EU's foreign security and economic policies, which is are more than ever integrated as one of the main pillars of the bloc's overall structure and function. As long as it exists as a single market with little to no internal barriers, external trade policies can shape the way in which European power functions in the world. Perhaps more importantly, foreign policy can be used to shore up existing regional weaknesses and secure the EU's place in the international economy. It is against this diplomatic and economic backdrop that scholars have devoted themselves to asking questions about the potential capacities of the EU as a more independent power, its capacity for change, and what place it has in the global political system (Santander & Vlassis, 2021; Lehne, 2017).

It is clear that the EU has seen a re-evaluation of its security and economic strategy in recent years, but the question remains to what extent this has been reflected in its policy with regard to the outside world. Observing the state of international politics, it may be ascertained that geopolitical rivalry is increasing across the world. The main example of this shift is the rising power of China, which is openly asserting itself against the status quo imposed by the United States and its western counterparts (Casarini, 2020). While there is little worry that this development will lead to an immediate military conflict, many observers fear that the economic security of Europe as a whole will become increasingly dependent on an ascendant and revitalised Chinese state. Indeed, China has been working to create closer ties with many developing nations through, among others, its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (De Cremer, McKern & McGuire, 2020). Both European leaders and scholars are now examining the ways in which the EU can counteract China's growing influence and also foster more stable economic ties and supply chains across the globe (Santander & Vlassis, 2021).

In this search, the African continent becomes increasingly prominent as a place where China's influence may be countered and deeper ties may be established, not to speak of the historical legacy that many European nations still carry with them (Haastrup, 2021) as a result of the long period of colonisation and exploitation. Such contradictory goals and motivations may add to the complexity of EU-Africa policy, as well as potential divergence in rhetoric and actual policy. In many ways, EU-Africa relations thus become an salient subject of study, particularly with regard to the way in which the EU emphasises and prioritises different aspects of its relationship with Africa over time. Both in terms of geopolitics and economic security, the EU may find itself drawn increasingly into deeper relations with the African continent. While these relations are broad and all-encompassing in the realm of international relations, they are defined by specific expressions in the realms of trade, security, cultural exchange and more. In order to evaluate the broader relationship between the EU and Africa, and its development over time, analysing these areas may provide relevant information that brings greater understanding of the dynamics at play among the most important actors involved. Given the broad emphasis on economic (and geo-economic) developments as a driver of geopolitical shifts in power, it makes sense to more closely analyse changes in economic and security relations. Evolving relations and considerations can in turn shed light on the broader question of EU-Africa relations, and the way they inform the exercise of power in the international community, especially by the EU.

It is therefore prudent to more intricately assess the specific dynamics of the evolving trade relationship between the EU and its African counterparts. This paper will be devoted to assessing how EU policy towards Africa has been evolving over the past decade, taking into account the EU's ever-evolving interests, particularly with regard to economic diversification and strategic autonomy. In light of the push for economic diversification and security, the African continent holds the key to augmenting the EU's supply lines, among others through the trade in raw materials. Meanwhile, the rivalry with rising powers like China and an increasingly unreliable United States, create a situation in which the EU's behaviour and policies towards African economies are now a matter of strategic importance, beyond the economic and humanitarian aspects that are already rightly emphasised in the literature.

## 1.1. The meaning of EU-Africa trade relations and main research question

Using broad terms such as economic and security policy runs the risk of casting a wide and unspecific net. The nature of the term is broad and encompasses many different aspects of

that larger definition. For example, the EU has always had great interest in matters of market access, regulatory convergence and, perhaps more remotely related, developmental aid (Bilal, Hoekman & Njinkeu, 2021), all of which are related to the broader umbrella of economic relations. In order to clarify the broader scope of this project, it is necessary to define what is meant by the security and economic relations in this paper. While there exists much literature on specific aspects of these relations, this analysis seeks to take a step back and form a broader judgement on policy developments between the EU and Africa. From the geopolitical and geo-economic perspective, the economic and security aspects are especially interesting, seeing as these are directly related to the potential success of a strategic autonomy project that partially leans on EU-Africa trade and cooperation. Nevertheless, discerning the ways in which EU policy changes over time benefits from a broader definition of EU-Africa policy and relations. The danger in using more specific aspects of EU policy lies in the rather niche and narrow perspective on the subject matter that they might elucidate. Analysing and thinking about policy at a more broad and conceptual level will allow this research to uncover findings that are more relevant to the bigger question of EU-Africa relations as a whole, rather than pinpoint and problematise particular aspects of the mutual relationship only. When the paper discusses 'economic and security policy' between the EU and Africa, these terms thus pertain to the broader strategic and political level of Africa policy as seen from the perspective of the EU.

As such, the main research question that will guide this paper is: "*How has **EU policy towards Africa** been evolving in terms of the broad **economic and political considerations** that are employed in EU-Africa policymaking?*".

Two points of clarification must be added at this point. First, although the general interest of this paper is in EU-Africa relations, the question itself is EU-centric. What this means is that the main interest in this paper is to discern evolving motives and policy preferences on the side of the EU. That is not to say that further analysis of the national and regional African counterparts is unnecessary or undesirable. Rather, the paper simply focuses specifically on the perspective offered by the EU.. Second, the term considerations relates to the way in which EU policymakers conceptualise the factors that shape its policy towards the EU-Africa framework. By analysing the way these principles, criteria, or emphasised notions evolve over time, it becomes possible to discern the ever-evolving overarching policy perspective that the EU maintains on the subject. Through this change, EU policymakers reveal something about the manner in which they view their place in the world, and how this has changed over time more broadly.

## 2. Literature review

This section serves to bring existing literature on the EU in international relations together and to give a concise overview of the way in which it influences study on this topic. The first part will delve into more conventional perspectives used to define and study the EU's role in IR, while the second part will elaborate and emphasise the literature on the EU as a normative and market power.

### 2.1. Conventional perspectives on EU international relations

In this study, the changing economic relationship between the EU and Africa is of primary importance. Below, several frameworks will be highlighted within related literature on EU-Africa relations, and these will be discussed in turn. Specifically, the insight that these theoretical perspectives might lend to answering the main question in this paper. Each perspective helps to analyse and explain some of the potential changes in policy considerations that will be identified. The theoretical lenses that will be discussed in this first section are the constructivist, neorealist and (neo)liberal perspectives. In doing so, the state of the literature on EU-Africa relations should become clearer, as well showcase the relevance of these perspectives to the study at hand.

Constructivist theory in IR focuses on the idea that reality is, at least to a certain extent, 'socially constructed' (Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2016). Key decision makers influence reality through the use of certain rhetoric and narratives, and are in turn themselves influenced by this reality. Identity and discourse thus shape the policy options that are considered relevant. Much of this is reflected in the literature about Europe as a normative power (Manners, 2002). Of particular interest is the fact that many of these studies specifically talk about EU-Africa relations and the potential influence of European normative power (Langan, 2012; Storey, 2006). Both authors analysed discrepancies between the normative considerations for pursuing certain policies in Africa. Although many of these policies are started under a narrative of humanitarianism and egalitarianism, the authors agree that this is often not how the consequences of these policies take shape. Langan (2012) particularly argues that normative power is a way for the EU to hide its true intentions, which are namely to secure commercial and security interests on the African continent without naming them as such outright. In a more decolonial critique of the normative power discourse, Staeger (2016) puts forward that the very concept of Europe as a normative power may never escape its imperialist roots, even though it at the very least pretends to be a reset from the imperial aspirations of yore. Kavalski's (2013)

work on the meaning of normative power and their comparison of the EU and China, states that to be a normative power, one must be recognised and respected as such by members of the international community. This analysis points towards the idea that an effective EU-Africa policy, whether economic, humanitarian, or military, is one that is recognised, respected, and reciprocated by the EU's national and international counterparts in Africa. The constructivist framework provides a way to measure and analyse progress in the realm of narrative and rhetorical constructions. While it is less concerned with quantifiable economic factors, and this is a weakness where it concerns assessing economic policy, one can still acknowledge that rhetorical convergence on both the European and African side may constitute an important variable in measuring the evolution of European trade policy across the board. Since the study's scope is limited to the EU's perspective on EU-Africa relations, however, unilateral EU policy communications can at the very least give great insight in the way the EU's priorities and considerations are shifting, if not how effective such policies might be.

Neorealism, or structural realism, is concerned with the way power dynamics shape the international system. Like classical realism, neorealism assumes a state of anarchy that states seek to cope with by ensuring their continued security (Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2016). Under this model, cooperation between states is possible, but is only really interesting for a state if that cooperation leaves them relatively better off than their partners. This perspective helps to explain part of the discrepancy between normative rhetoric and policy outcomes that was touched upon above. In neorealism, EU-Africa relations become simply another tool for the furthering of European power and interest, which does not always align with high-minded rhetoric. At the same time, interests and ideals are certainly not mutually exclusive. Farrell (2005) asserts as much when she notes that the EU's Africa policy was almost perfectly aligned with its (neo)liberal ideals and economic interests, namely those of increased liberalisation and economic integration. This would result in competitive pressures that African markets were ill equipped to deal with. Scholars such as Berger (2006) contend that increased Chinese engagement with Africa threatens to deteriorate European influence on the continent, adding another dimension to the realist understanding of EU-Africa relations. Carbone (2011) disagrees with the idea that relatively recent Africa strategies were enacted out of a sense of international rivalry with China. Instead, he posits that the need for an 'Africa strategy' in 2007 was the product of a broadly carried desire for the EU to become a more powerful and influential player on the world stage. Olsen (2009) notes that much of the EU's policies with regards to military conflicts in Africa showcase its drive to secure underlying economic and

security interests. This conclusion seems to underline the notion of the EU behaving more as a realist than a normative power towards Africa. The realist understanding of EU-Africa relations therefore seems to have much natural explanatory power where it concerns the instincts and motivations of the EU. Its weakness is that it fails to consider more benevolent forms of cooperation, and is more concerned with explaining why certain policies were enacted from a realist perspective, rather than discovering whether non-realist considerations to these policies might in fact have played a role.

Finally, neoliberal or structural liberal theory provides a somewhat sharp contrast to structural realism (Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2016). It also envisions a world in a state of anarchy, but nevertheless believes in the potential of cooperation with other states. This opens up additional options for state partnerships, especially in the economic sphere. Neoliberal thought provides a quantitative way to explore the way in which economic interdependence, democracy and international institutions strengthen the liberal-democratic framework of the world. It should come as no surprise that the EU and its impact in other parts of the world has thus been extensively studied under a (neo)liberal framework (Jorgensen et al., 2015), considering it is perhaps the most explicit example of state cooperation in today's world. Much of the literature has concluded that the EU may follow an internal liberal framework, but is nonetheless unable to properly assert itself in other regions (including Africa) in a similar way. Authors such as Van Hüllen (2019) consider the EU's progress in developing democracy in Africa to be lacking, devoid of the principles that underpin neoliberalist thought in IR. They point to the EU's mixed record where it concerns confronting authoritarian regimes, despite the inevitable neoliberalisation of much of the African economy. Indeed, the (neo)liberal worldview is predicated upon democracy as a self-reinforcing trend across nations, so EU conduct seems to run counter to that conception in situations where they strengthen autocratic regimes. Others, like Del Biondo (2015) identify an idealist bent to the economic interventions the EU conducts in Africa, which more closely resembles the considerations of a liberal framework. In terms of economic interdependence, the EU remains Africa's largest import partner by far (Zeleza, 2019), while Africa is the EU's fourth largest trading partner. Most of the authors note that the economic relationship between the EU and Africa is still largely asymmetrical as of today. Within the neoliberal framework this does not have to be a problem, as both entities can still make absolute economic and societal gains by cooperating. All in all, the neoliberal framework provides a way to quantify economic interactions and power, and more abstract concepts of democratization and interdependence. While closely related to the more idealist conception of

IR that came into being after the First World War, neoliberal theory manages to bridge a gap between that idealism and empirical measurement. Nevertheless, neoliberalism seems to suffer from the fact that many real-world observations of state dynamics can be explained in the more realist concepts of interests and anarchy, and as shown, many constructivist accounts of shared values and mutual economic development seem to be present them more as an effort at deflection from deeper motivations.

## 2.2. Europe as a power

Beyond the more conventional perspectives offered within neorealist, neoliberal, and constructivist frameworks, there is also a more recent body of literature that tries to make sense of 'Europe as a power'. This body of literature seeks to define the exact nature of the EU's power and the way in which that nature informs the manner in which the EU interacts with the outside world. One of the more striking contributions was made by Manners (2002), as he defined a 'normative power Europe', which through the context of its institutional inception harbours certain (neo)liberal norms that inform its policy, perhaps even unwittingly. In doing so, Manners situates the EU as a unique force in the world, one that is able to influence its external environment in a way that does not require the hard power that other powers need to pursue their goals abroad. Manners (2002) traced the development of these liberal values to the foundational principles of the EU, as well as subsequent treaties and developments that cemented these values in the bloc. What is unique about this approach is the notion that the EU may constitute a different type of power to those that came before, one that is able to influence the wider world in its own image through non-coercive persuasion. Many nations that find themselves outside of the playing field of the great powers of the world may therefore find it beneficial to adapt to the EU's messaging and idealistic policies, creating a shared platform for this type of development. The strength of this interpretation of European power is therefore mainly that is offers an alternative to hard power and coercion as a means to do business in international relations, as well as offering a raison d'être for continued external relations iniatives under the EU banner. Of course, various valid criticisms have been levelled at this interpretation of EU power. One of the main points critics bring up considers the reality of the exercise of power. They assert that the EU may claim to have these values as an innate part of their system, but that the bloc fails to actually put these values into practice (Langan, 2012). Often, material interests will inform external policies instead. This can then become a liability on the part of the Union, as when its idealistic rhetoric fails to match its actions, the affected territories may become disillusioned and resentful towards the European project.

Later, Damro (2012) conceptualised the notion of 'market power Europe', both as a response to and evolution of the NPE literature. This new idea takes the notion that the EU's external policies are informed by an inherent part of its founding principles but places is it in a different context. Instead of looking at the normative component from an ideological point of view, Damro asserts that the principle power of the EU is found in its economic structure and market size. Following this framework, the EU still remains as a unique expression of power in the world. Damro (2012) does not say that the ideological foundations of the Union are overrepresented necessarily, but emphasises that these ideological structures are often also expressed through the internal market. After all, the EU was created not only as a project for peace and enlightenment, the practicalities of its inception were heavily intertwined with economic incentives and structures. Even as the EU shifted and evolved its form over time, this liberal interpretation of market policies would continue to shape its external policies. Especially relevant in this context is the advent of neoliberalism, which came to shape the face of global capitalism over the course of the late 20$^{th}$ and early 21$^{st}$ century and has deeply affected the EU (Holden, 2017). The notion of market power Europe is expressed in external policy in different ways. It is important to note that simply because of the EU's sheer market size, it is able to influence policy in other countries by virtue of existing domestic legislation. Therefore, market power can be exercised unintentionally as well as intentionally (Damro, 2012). If the Union regulates something with regard to domestic production, foreign producers who have a large stake in the EU market may opt to adopt identical standards in their own production processes. The EU is aware of its power and may also opt to intentionally influence policies abroad through the exercise of its market power. While an analysis of the EU's priorities with regards to Africa will focus mostly on the intentional policy emphasis it sets out, understanding the implied impact of policy creation thus becomes key to understanding shifts in policy itself. Market-based policies are heavily influenced by domestic lobbying, both by interest groups and member states. A good example of a more recent approach taken by the EU is the signing of bilateral trade deals that also include clauses on the improvement of labour and environmental standards. In this way, the lure of a trade deal with a market as large of that of the EU is utilised in order to bring about change in the wider world, in line with the EU's idealistic and economic interests. Kestrup (2015) challenges the original conception of MPE and adds to the theory by introducing three new intervening variables that explain differentiated effects of the market size, institutional framework and interest contestation within the EU. He notes that it would be prudent to introduce the presence of global legal frameworks, the EU's administrative capacity, and its ability to retain unity towards its foreign audiences as

intervening variables that help to explain variances in the level of externalisation that the EU achieves. Kestrup furthermore argues that MPE would benefit from detaching itself from NPE and concerns on norm diffusion to streamline its explanatory framework. The addition of aforementioned variables helps to increase the explanatory power of the MPE model, which on its own lacks the power of specific causal relationships.

## 2.3. Moving to understanding

The study in this paper will have to be situated within the context of the frameworks outlined in this section. As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this study is to analyse how the EU's actions and strategies with regards to EU-Africa relations have been evolving over the course of the past decade. This potential realignment of priorities takes place in the context of the EU pursuing strategic autonomy and increased assertiveness from countries like China and other rapidly growing economies, as well as the United States. Nevertheless, as the evolution of EU-Africa relations have been defined as the core concern of this study, the analysis in this paper will draw heavily from the different perspectives offered by the literature, as these theories allow for the creation of a larger analytical framework through which changes may be analysed. This may then be assessed through the way in which both the mechanisms of EU policy and accompanying rhetoric and conceptual emphasis shifts over time, as discovered through relevant policy documentation. While the institutional character of the EU fits the neoliberal framework and its intra-institutional considerations quite well, and other theoretical perspectives offer insight into particular aspects of the EU's foreign relations, the creation of a singular theoretical  account on this subject will not be a main objective. It may instead be possible to come to some level of broader analysis through use of the data gathered for this project.  Finally, as much of the literature treats Africa as a singular entity (Haastrup, 2021), and the main focus of the analysis lies with the European perspective, Africa as an entity will be seen in the way the EU gives it shape in its own policy documents. This analysis will take the form of a case study that examines the developing economic relations between the EU and the general African continent along the lines of economic and security policy. In this way, the paper will contribute to the existing literature by taking a broad look at policy from the perspective of a single actor in the form of the EU, and then extrapolating relevant conclusions to the broader question of the EU's place in the world. By researching broad policy aspects in Africa, it is possible to come to a conclusion about the way in which the EU has evolved its policies towards the world, while also being able to situate the analysis in more specific, existing literature, in a manner that is complementary to the knowledge that is already out there.

## 3. Methodology

In this section, the methodology of the study will be explained in more detail. The first subject will be the general overview of the study setup, followed by an elaboration on the operationalization of the study's analytical framework, as informed by the literature review.

### 3.1. General overview

The main interest of this paper is to look at the way in which  the EU is changing its policies and policy considerations to suit new circumstances. As such, the focus will be aimed at the EU as an actor in the international system. While the EU as a whole is perhaps not realistically represented by a single actor in broad terms, the specifics of this case allow a researcher to hone in on the policymakers within the bloc. Actors within the EU executive and legislative framework, such as the European Commission, European Council, European Parliament and European External Action Service become exceptionally important within the confines of this study because of their role as policymakers. For the purpose of this analysis, the actors that will be mainly considered are the Commission and the European Council. Most of the research conducted will rely on EU policy documents in order to give meaning and context to the way in which its trade and strategic policy is evolving. These policy considerations thus play a significant role in the interpretation of EU motives and goals.  The research object in this case is general EU-Africa  policy as defined in this paper. In the framework utilised in this study, it is influenced by the evolving principles that guide the broader economic and security policies with regard to Africa. Another aspect that bears mentioning is that of time. As this study attempts to capture an evolution over a relatively recent period, the studied period will confine itself mainly to the last 15 years, starting from 2007. This is the year before the start of the Great Recession, which would become the harbinger of increasing upheaval and beyond. Moreover, the Treaty of Lisbon that was signed that year would come to change the EU foreign policy framework to its current iteration, making this period more relevant from an external relations perspective.

### 3.2. Analytical framework

In order to conduct a proper analysis, it is necessary to define and operationalise the framework that informs the analysis. The content of the analytical framework is directly derived from the literature review, and the analysis is informed by pitting policy considerations and preferences that are noted in official EU documentation against the framework. Evolution of the themes, priorities and emphasis that is apparent in these verbal expressions relates to the

way in which the guiding principles of EU-Africa policy evolve over time from the perspective of the EU. Analysing a change of the EU's policy preferences and priorities over time requires a clear framework in which said change may be clarified and understood. The different theoretical approaches elaborated on in the literature review help to more clearly distinguish between different types of developments and priorities that are being pursued by the EU. Each approach is defined by emphasising particular aspects of international relations as a whole, meaning that anchoring the framework on these perspectives will aid in understanding not just whether the EU's approach is changing, but also in which direction it has been evolving over time.

Neorealist assumptions about the nature of international relations will argue that the priorities of states arrange themselves according to a strict hierarchy, with the security of the state being the paramount concern to trump all others ( Hooijmaaijers, 2018). As it is also wary of any cooperation that does not result in relative gains for the actor under analysis, it embraces the concept of zero-sum games, both in terms of military power and economic strength. Concretely, this adds a dimension of security and cooperation to the analytical framework. If language related to security, power distribution and unilateral economic gains become more prominent over the assessed period, that would indicate a shift in the direction of a more realist understanding of the EU's place in the world. Such language would focus in particular on the maintenance of its influence and power. Meanwhile, neoliberal theory emphasises different aspects of international relations. Of particular importance are international institutions and the promise of creating win-win situations through cooperation with other actors (Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2016). A shift towards this perspective would be demarcated by an increase in language and emphasis on mutual benefits through trade and security cooperation, as well as an increasing interest in multilateralism. This worldview is based firmly on the notion of profitable exchange, rather than the balance of power alone. Such language would focus on economic incentives and the benefits of continued cooperation for both parties. Constructivist ideas in turn are identified through a focus on norms and the logic of appropriateness (Müller, 2004). Identity and the way this informs the behaviour of actors is the logic upon which constructivism is built. Within the analytical framework, such considerations may be identified through the use of language that emphasis the normative identity of the EU, as well as the usage of said norms as justification for certain policy priorities and their underlying aims. This also includes language that deals in terms of equality and potentially also awareness of colonial legacy. Finally, MPE theory focuses on the leverage of Europe's market power in its foreign policy

(Damro, 2012), whether intentional or not. This implies that language regarding the incentivisation of cooperation through, among others, market access is also of heightened interest.

Drawing on the scholarship by Carbone (2011) and his overview of the development of EU-Africa relations, it may be concluded that statements, communications and general policy documents function as an appropriate source to uncover not only the EU's policy preferences and changes in them, but also the overarching worldview that rests behind these expressions. Damro (2012) also notes that the best way to gain insight into developments within the EU is through the analysis and discussion of EU communications. This comes in two ways. First, through analysing the way the talks about how it wants to act in the world. The second way is through analysing the actual behaviour of the EU with regard to Africa. Kestrup (2015) also builds his analysis of MPE on the same verbal output and reflection by the Commission and other branches within the EU's institutional framework. Most of the paper's analysis will thus be built on policy documents, communiques, statements and speeches that the EU has created on the topic. There are specific documents that are of particular interest with regard to this analysis. First among these are joint EU-AU summits that have been conducted for over a decade. The documents and statements created during the summits outline general aims and principles that guide the EU's approach to cooperation with the AU and Africa as a whole. Within the scope of this study, documents from 2007 are considered relevant. The second part of the analysis will consider documents on the EU's Africa strategy, which should also give insight into the general principles that guide the EU's strategic considerations in its evolving Africa policy. Analysis will also be confined policy documents created by the European Commission and European Council and those created jointly with AU representatives, as these represent the highest levels of EU-decision making on the part of the EU as institution and the member states respectively. In this way, a top-level policy analysis may be conducted over time without creating an abundance of complexity. The overall approach in this paper is therefore qualitative in nature. The main body will consist of an exploration of the way in which these documents attest to the evolving principles guiding the EU's Africa policy, followed by a reflection on how these findings fit into the broader analytical framework outlined previously.

## 4. EU-AU summit analysis

The first part of the analysis will focus mainly on documents that were created as part of the EU-AU summit outputs. Previously called EU-Africa summits, these top-level meetings involve the gathering of commissioners and national executives from both the EU and the AU. They also provide much in the form of policy output, specifically in the form of joint declarations, individual statements by top-level EU officials, and more specific policy considerations and goals. This  analysis will be mainly focused on the former two categories. First, the joint declarations of each summit from 2010 onwards will be scrutinised for the themes that came forward in the discussion of the analytical framework, and then the same will be done for speeches and statements given by heads of the European Commission and Presidents of the European Council.  Both forms of documents should shed some light on the specific priorities that the EU has at each point in time, and allow the tracing of shifts within these priorities.

### 4.1. Joint declarations

Starting from 2010, the first joint declaration to be analysed will be that of the same year, produced during the 3$^{rd}$ EU-AU summit. This is known as the Tripoli Declaration, and while relatively short,  sets out the aims jointly agreed upon in 2010 by EU officials as well as their counterparts from the African Union (Council of the European Union, 2010a), and thus serves as an effective starting point for the analysis. The document touches on several aspects of EU-Africa relations, but particularly emphasises economic and humanitarian development. Peacekeeping and security are also mentioned, but do not play a prominent role beyond the reaffirmation of a commitment to ensure stability, countering terrorism and a condemnation of coup attempts and civil strife. Where it concerns politics, an affirmation is given of efforts to increase the power and leverage of both the EU and AU in multilateral institutions such as the UN and WTO (Council of the European Union, 2010a). At the same time, the document mentions that there will be a continued emphasis on the establishment of Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and individual African nations. The commitment to multilateralism is thus juxtaposed against the desire of the EU to have increasing bilateral ties with African nations. Furthermore, the developmental aspects of the document highlight normative language with regard to democracy, good governance and social equality, at the same time much of the economic language conveys a rather neoliberal understanding of economic development. Neither the broad scope of the document nor the internal discrepancies

within it are necessarily surprising, but they provide a sufficient frame of reference for the developments of these texts in over time.

In 2014, the 4<sup>th</sup> EU-AU summit was held in Brussels. Among other documents, a general joint declaration was once again issued in the name of both the EU and AU (Council of the European Union, 2014). Of immediate note is the fact that the overarching theme of the summit was aimed at economic and humanitarian development. This is a continuation from the declaration produced in 2010, where specific EU-related security concerns received less coverage beyond a broad reference to terrorism-related issues. Nevertheless, this declaration starts out specifically covering issues of (human) security, and with specific mention of AU peacekeeping efforts. Beyond terrorism, this new document touches on intra-continental security, peacekeeping and reconciliation efforts and efforts to strengthen each of these. Concerning economic integration, both multilateralism and bilateralism make another appearance (Council of the European Union, 2014). Despite the fact that the EU still aims to sign more EPAs with African nations, this is contextualised by the notion of supporting intra-African trade in preparation for a continental free trade zone. This constitutes an interesting departure from the first document, where such reservations were not yet covered. In terms of economic developmental policies, there is agreement on the idea that African nations should be supported in moving from the export of raw to intermediate goods. While this would generally be a good step in increasing the wealth and prosperity on the African continent, it also does not challenge the notion of Africa as an export-focused entity, trapped within the confines of the international market system. Migration is also named prominently for the first time, with a specific emphasis on the creation of procedures for dealing with so-called irregular migration. The inclusion of this subject and the mention of plans for adequate migrant return policies indicates an increased focus on controlling the flow of migration, particularly by the EU.

The 5<sup>th</sup> EU-AU summit was held in 2017, another joint document was issued (Council of the European Union, 2017). As a general theme, the main focus still lay with promoting economic growth and prosperity, although this time the focal point was the structural improvement of economies for the youth in both EU and AU territory, as well as the creation of a large investment scheme into Africa. Investment that was particularly designed to be used for infrastructure to facilitate not only intra-continental but also cross-continental trade and other flows. Economically, overall the trend seems to have been moving mainly towards ever-further integration, and it may also have reflected concerns revolving around the global stability

of the supply of materials and goods the EU needed for its domestic economy. What also became apparent through this declaration was the want for a more entrenched and deepened relationship between the EU and AU (Council of the European Union, 2017). In particular, the document calls for an intensified relationship at the top level of decision-making, with among others the aim to establish new meeting platforms at the level of ministers and commissioners individually. Concerning peace and security, the document frames both concepts as transcending continental borders, emphasising that there is a need to view security issues as shared between the EU and AU. Moreover, the issue of climate change mitigation has now been elevated to the level of strategic priority, shared between EU-AU actors. Governance issues are also once again mentioned, but the focus seems to be limited mainly to the growth of the EU-AU partnership and the reconsideration of strategic and economic ties.

After several covid-related delays, the most recent EU-AU summit was held early in 2022, with the participating parties once again creating an overarching document outlining the joint vision for the general goals set out for 2030 (European Council, 2022b). The most important change with regard to previous declarations is the call for a renewal of the EU-AU partnership in several ways. It is clear that the EU intends to seek much closer ties with its African counterparts and is actively pursuing avenues for increasing the bonds it has with the AU in general. This partly seems to have been spurred on by Covid, as evidenced by the amount of policy proposals and goals that are linked to combating the spread and effect of the pandemic, although the EU has still not committed to the waiving of vaccine patents to increase production in developing parts of the world, including Africa. At the same time, there does seem to be a sincerely new approach to investment, with the announcement of a 150 billion investment scheme into the AU (European Council, 2022b). This investment proposal is aimed at tackling some of the root causes of not only economic stagnation, but also seems intended to be used for getting to the root of irregular migratory flows. Along various other measures concerning migration, the document contains a willingness to ease legal migration between Africa and the EU in an approach that has not been attempted before. A final important shift with regard to previous iterations of the EU-AU summit is that the EU is now fully committed to the African Continental Free Trade Area, and no longer the document contains any reference to the signing of individual EPAs as a backup tactic.

Looking at these documents as a whole, it can be concluded that there have been some significant shifts in these summit's policy outcomes over time. Firstly, the EU has completed an almost complete arc from praising the benefits of bilateral EPAs to not even mentioning

these in the final document, and instead opting to fully affirm the push for a continental free trade agreement instead. The EU has therefore moved more to the multilateral end on the analytical framework's spectrum. Over time, the language of the documents shifted to be more inclusive of the African perspective, in particular with regard to the attention that was paid to the equality within the relationship. Although it has always been approached as a partnership of equals in these declarations, the emphasis on that equality became stronger across each iteration. In general, the normative content of the declarations remained roughly the same and mostly contained to concepts as good governance, democracy and human rights. Despite this seeming lack of change, the EU has become increasingly willing to contribute financially to the pursuit of these norm-led goals. The willingness to invest also has a large economic component, with the EU specifically being interested in the development of cross-continental infrastructure. Finally, the aspect of security forms an interesting dimension of the development seen across these declarations. While physical security has not generally been a main priority within these policy documents, beyond anti-terrorism and peacekeeping initiatives, the two latter documents note that the security challenges of the EU and AU are shared challenges. There is an impetus for cooperation in this field, and this belies more realist conceptions about the potential benefits and downsides of cooperation. The fact that the EU seems willing to invest increasing amounts into the AU both for security and economic development indicates that the EU's approach is not particularly coloured through the lens of zero-sum assumptions.

## 4.2. Individual contributions by officials

Beyond the official declarations of the EU-AU summits are the individual statements and expressions given by individual policymakers at the higher levels of the EU. As mentioned before, the interest for these statements focuses specifically on heads of the European Commission and European Council. As policymakers can use their platform to emphasise and prioritise certain aspects of the overall policymaking agenda, their contributions can constitute part of an effective analysis. To this end, the official speeches and statements given by European Council Presidents and heads of the European Commission during and after the previously discussed EU-AU summits will provide an extra window into the analysis and assessment of the EU's policy evolution with regards to Africa.

During the Tripoli summit in 2010, the then-President of the European Commission, Barroso, delivered his remarks on the opening ceremony (European Commission, 2010). In his remarks, Barroso puts much emphasis on the aspect of economic integration and growth. He

even goes further by defining the overarching objective of the EU to be economic growth. Clearly, the economic aspect takes precedence in his speech, and most of it is dedicated to proposing and promoting different types of economic partnerships in the areas of energy, trade and investment. Mirroring the Tripoli Declaration, Barroso declares that bilateral EPAs are seen as a supportive measure for individual African economies. The interests of the EU and AU are also framed as 'common interests', informed by similarly 'common values'. At the following summit in 2014, the European Council President Van Rompuy delivered both opening and closing remarks. His opening remarks (European Council, 2014a) are characterised by a focus on the avenues for mutual aid and assistance. Van Rompuy notes that the EU could use the help of its African counterparts where it concerns the regulation of migratory flows and the mitigation of the consequences of climate change. A point of interest here is that both of these suggestions nevertheless still frame African help for the EU as being contingent on execution by African partners, as an African problem within African borders, even though it is the EU that experiences problems in both these policy areas.  Once again, the trading and investment relationship is framed as being positive for both the EU and AU, and there is a spoken willingness for increased integration in these fields. In his closing address (European Council, 2014b), van Rompuy emphasises broad security issues and frames them as being shared by both sides of the summit, and the foundation upon which economic development must be built. EPAs and furthered economic integration are touted as the solution to the problem of economic growth, with a specific focus on increasing the raw volume of trade between the two continents. Finally, Barroso also made a contribution during this summit (European Commission, 2014). His statement prioritises the notion of the partnership of equals, and re-affirms the idea that the EU and AU are inextricably linked together as natural partners. Part of his speech is devoted to the combating of terrorism and securing the region, but most of his remarks focus on the economic potential and opportunities that a growing African economy affords. In this light, Barroso situates the talks as a step towards further development of all kinds, but specifically warns against trying to re-iterate on the goals and means of achieving the goals set out by the EU and AU. In a way, the message is thus both progressive but also contains somewhat conservative elements where it concerns the evolution of the EU-AU partnership.

Moving to 2017, the new President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, made the opening remarks at the fifth EU-AU summit (European Council, 2017a). The main priorities in his opening statement shifted from economic development to security and problems with

migratory flows. Like the declaration issued at the 2017 summit, Tusk emphasised that the control of migration and other problems is firmly anchored in the way in which the EU and AU deal with the root economic and societal causes on the African continent. Whereas he supports the notion of African solutions to African problems in the context of peacekeeping objectives, the issue of migration is framed as being one necessitating extra scrutiny, intervention and cooperation from the side of the EU. According to Tusk, the global order has been un upheaval in the years since the last summit, and this in turn informs renewed discussion on different aspects of the EU-AU partnership. His closing remarks (European Council, 2017b) echo the same sentiments expressed above, mainly pointing at the existing policy proposals on migration and outstanding security issues. It is perhaps very telling that there is an almost complete absence of specific economic policy suggestions in his statements, especially given the fact that these statements are generally meant to be broad and all-encompassing. This is also a clear difference with the joint declaration that would be issued for that summit. In the summit of 2022, Commission President von der Leyen made the opening statement (European Commission, 2022a) on behalf of the Commission. She made somewhat of a departure from the previous summit, talking mostly on the Global Gateway initiative, an investment programme into African territories. The investment scheme of 150 billion could be considered a great increase from the previous levels of financial commitment made by the EU in its joint declarations. Most of these investments are once again framed as being part of a large infrastructure boost to intra-continental and inter-continental trade and transport. The Covid pandemic was also referenced in relation to broader investment proposals in healthcare initiatives. Potential vaccine waivers were again not mentioned here. Von der Leyen's closing remarks (European Commission, 2022b) touched on the large investment fund, a cross-continental energy transition and health initiatives. Here she specifically mentions the EU does not see patent waivers as the right implementation of greater vaccine coverage in Africa as a whole, a major point of contention. The current President of the European Council, Charles Michel, also gave his own statement at the end of the EU-AU summit (European Council, 2022a). His main contribution to the previous statements consisted of his call for a monitoring system to be implemented in order to better assess the progress made on certain key EU-AU summit objectives. Furthermore, he also he endorses the notion of a renewal in the partnership. Both of these statements are in line with the declaration signed by both the EU and AU at the end of the summit.

Taking in each of these statements and speeches in turn reveals a pattern that generally follows those of the related declarations. In both cases, the emphasis initially lies mainly with economic and humanitarian development initiatives, and while security is mentioned, this is mainly discussed in the context of anti-terrorist and peacekeeping programmes. It seems there was somewhat of a shift in focus during the 2017 summit, with security being more broadly defined and also including such factors as food, energy and economic security. At the same time, an increasing wariness of general global developments seemed to have underlined the desire for more dialogue on further-reaching security proposals. Security also became more important as the EU started to deal with an increase in conflicts near its borders and the inevitable refugee and migration flows that followed. During the first three summits under consideration, norms were certainly emphasised but not necessarily prioritised rhetorically. In this and other ways, the most recent summit appears to show something of a shift in different departments. Firstly, norms were widely discussed and framed as the underpinning of a renewal in the EU-AU partnership. It is possible that the pandemic and general global shifts highlighted earlier in this paper attributed to a change in perspective and approach by the EU. Security issues were brought up again, but the main focus of this summit's speeches and statements rested with the implementation of a broad and far-reaching investment scheme, combined with the monitoring bodies necessary to oversee such changes. It can be concluded that the speech of the relevant EU officials became more couched in normative and realist considerations at the same time. Both the need for the assertion of certain norms and the discussion surrounding threats to both Africa and the EU became more prominent over time. At the same time, the EU seems to be increasingly willing to use its economic power to steer development in Africa, among others through the framing and execution of the most recent investment scheme.

## 5. Strategic partnership analysis

In 2007, the EU and AU launched the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) (Council of the European Union, 2007). This new strategic document was meant to more firmly entrench the joint goals of the EU-AU summits and provide a concrete roadmap to further integration and cooperation. Over time, several EU-AU summits have discussed and further iterated on the JAES, with several new roadmaps being created for continued improvement and development. As the foundation of the JAES, these documents can in turn reveal something about the priorities the EU has set in conjunction with the AU, and this section is devoted to analysing the developments within these documents, over the relevant timespan. The first document to be discussed will therefore be the initial document from 2007, followed by the roadmap for 2011-2013 and 2014-2017, which came out at the summits of 2010 and 2014 respectively. These were in turn succeeded on the EU side by two joint communications from the European Commission, detailing new strategic approaches towards Africa.

The initial JAES document outlines a relatively expansive action plan for the years leading up to the Tripoli summit (Council of the European Union, 2007). What is interesting about this first document is that there is still a lot of emphasis placed on the creation and strengthening of the necessary frameworks to carry out such plans in the first place. It is clear that at this point in time, the EU-AU partnership was still in its relative infancy. Much of the proposed actionable content in the strategy paper therefore revolves around the creation of information exchanges, the pursuit of new regulatory frameworks and the creation of new institutions to handle the various responsibilities the JAES document lays upon both the EU and AU. The document also seeks to lay out the foundation of future EU-AU cooperation, with determinations about the frequency of EU-AU summits and coordinating the channels through with both sides interact with one another. Concerning the initial policy focus, this first iteration of the JAES mostly seeks to pursue a developmental agenda (Council of the European Union, 2007). Both security and trade integration make an appearance, but mostly in the context of a larger commitment to development on the African continent. For example, the EU commits to aiding the African peacekeeping institutions to find better and more stable funding, while increased trade integration is mainly argued for as part of a larger push to strengthen Africa's national economies. But it is where the document delves into issues of governance and a joint commitment to the Millennium Goals that its overarching developmental context becomes truly clear. Much emphasis is placed on meeting these goals and in the case of governance, a role for the EU to advise and 'impart' its knowledge to the AU. Overall, the document

underscores just how fundamental the creation of the first JAES document was in determining the future of EU-AU relations.

During the Tripoli summit, the second JAES action plan was agreed upon (Council of the European Union, 2010b) by the attending parties. This document takes note of the development with regard to the main goals set out in the original version and makes proposals for continued and improved efforts to move further towards these goals. Most of the same topics surface here. Security, good governance, economic development and humanitarian and societal development efforts are front and centre throughout the entire document. Nevertheless, there are some interesting wrinkles to this particular iteration of the JAES. Firstly, there are specific mentions of both infrastructure and resource extraction efforts. The document outlines how mineral extraction is not only important in terms of increasing its sustainability, but also its efficiency. Furthermore, there is a call for intensified efforts in the exploration of new raw material sites. At the same time, the action plan includes provisions for an increase in infrastructural links between the EU and AU, partially to increase the flow of trade goods. Both efforts are presented as beneficial to the building of a strong African economy (Council of the European Union, 2010b), but at the same time there seems to be a general acknowledgement on the part of the EU that trade and resource extraction at the potential expense of African nations are valuable ends in and of themselves. In terms of the security agenda, most attention still goes to the creation of a full-fledged and independent African peacekeeping force. Apart from issues of migration, there is little attempt to link security issues between the EU and AU, as would be done in later versions of EU-AU summit declarations. Much space is also devoted to the Millennium goals, which would have been due several years after the creation of this document. Among others, commitments were made with regards to gender equality, access to education, and various health-related initiatives. In many ways, this document present a continuation of the policy platform laid out in the original JAES programme.

The fourth EU-AU summit saw agreement on a continued and altered JAES roadmap towards 2017 (European Council, 2014c). In this document, the main priorities now also include human development and global political and economic shifts, moving beyond the trinity of security issues, good governance and economic development. Within the security context, the EU re-affirms its commitment to investment into the capacities of African peacekeeping institutions and forces. This section is mainly a continuation from previous strategic outlines. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the new human development section focuses on issues of education as well as migration. It is here that the document attempts to synergise

between the almost inevitable reluctance from the EU in the realm of open migration policies and the necessity to foster a highly educated workforce in both continents. By making it easier to travel to Europe for students, the EU once again seems to benefit through its capacity to set the terms for migration into the continent. In the realm of trade, the joint strategic document affirms the desire to foster more regional integration in Africa, with the continental free trade agreement as its crowning feature (European Council, 2014c). While the EU accepts this development, it still seeks to pursue individual EPAs where possible. This is presented as being beneficial to regional integration on its own way, although it also somewhat cuts the African trading area in smaller pieces. Much of the section on economic development is actually dedicated to food security and agriculture, in somewhat of a departure from previous strategic documents that only mentioned it relatively briefly. One of the more interesting proposals includes a commitment to increasing the global market for African agricultural products, and for fair prices. Such a commitment might seem particularly salient given the level of protectionist policies the EU has put in place to protect its own farmers. Finally, the section on global developments is mainly dedicated to different initiatives to battle climate change. Perhaps more interesting is the absence of a more geopolitical or strategic element in this part of the document, which indicates either a lack of agreement on that subject, or simply a lack of interest in addressing issues of that order.

Two Commission documents remain. While these were not written together with the AU, they nevertheless constitute an evolution of the EU's thinking on its partnership with Africa. In 2017, the Commission produced a communication to the European Parliament (European Commission, 2017) on this subject. The Commission restated and redefined its overarching goals with regard to Africa policy. Firstly, increasing political engagement and leveraging the EU-Africa partnership in order to increase the EU's sway in multilateral and other international organizations. Secondly, security issues are now being linked together and framed as an overarching EU-AU security issue. The third and final strategic aim remains the economic and societal development of the African continent. In setting this overarching strategy, the Commission is making the case for a much stronger political partnership between the EU and Africa. Multilateralism is now much more top-of-mind in the document, and this a shift that informs the policy set out in it. There also seems to be a renewed interest in the issues of governance, and migration as well (European Commission, 2017). The discussion on migration leads into new policies to underpin the African economy, aimed specifically at curbing certain migratory flows on the longer term. Such a development marks a shift in the

outlook of the EU on issues of migration, with previous documents mostly detailing more short-term solutions. While most of the specific policies are some sort of continuation of the previous strategic iterations, it nevertheless marks a much more hands-on approach by the EU where it concerns its strategic interests in Africa.

The final document pertains the joint communication of the Commission that was sent to the EU Parliament in 2020 (European Commission, 2020). It formed the basis of the EU's more recent approach to Africa, including the 2022 EU-AU summit. A new list of priorities shuffles the hierarchy of issues around somewhat. Security and migration are no longer at the top of the list, but are instead relegated to a place behind the sections on the green transition, digital infrastructure and economic development. There is also an outright recognition of the growth of the influence of other powers on the African continent. From the European perspective, this perhaps marks a shift towards more geopolitical considerations. In terms of overarching themes, the EU now seems fully committed to expanding the multilateral framework of the EU-AU partnership (European Commission, 2020). It acknowledges that there is great political leverage to be had by pooling the political resources of both the EU and AU in multilateral institutions like the UN, but also WTO. This new commitment is complemented by the fact that there is no longer any mention of EPAs or bilateral agreements that that go beyond the general EU-AU partnership. In fact, bilateralism is really only mentioned in the document as being a direct interface between the EU and AU, and as such gains an entirely new dimension in this latest strategic document. Finally, the EU indicates its willingness to mobilise all the tools at its disposal in support of this new strategic direction, as long as these tools have a clear purpose in achieving its overall strategic aims. This is a powerful acknowledgement that fits quite well in the MPE literature, and could be inferred as the EU waking up to its own influence and power.

Taking all these documents into account, there is a clear evolution through all the strategic roadmaps and documents. Much of it mirrors the developments seen in the previous section, but there are some interesting insights that come out of this analysis. Firstly, the initial strategic documents mainly focused on more basic developmental issues and the strengthening of the basic pillars of the EU-AU partnership. Indeed, it appears that much of the basic political infrastructure still needed to be set up properly in those early stages. The EU also moved from a more generic relationship with the AU to one that is emphasised as being special and unique in the world. Part of this shift was also accentuated by the shift in EU interest politics, as far as the strategic documents were considered. Where the EU still put much stock on its unilateral

economic, social and political interests, that attitude has somewhat dissipated in the later iterations of the joint strategy. Especially the renewed commitment to multilateralism and the goal to join forces politically on the wider stage of international relations shows that the EU has become increasingly willing to play to its own strengths and that of others. At the same time, discrepancies remain in the realm of agricultural policies and the unequal distribution of power between the two continents. From these documents, it can also be concluded that a broader understanding of the EU's place in the world has grown in the minds of policymakers. Security issues are framed as being shared across continents, and there is a general mindfulness of the changing geopolitical landscape. Overall, an initially neoliberal understanding of partnership seems to have evolved into a mould of liberalism and strong normative determination.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has presented several intriguing and relevant findings about the way that the EU's broad policy approach towards Africa has shifted in recent years. Through the analysis of the EU-AU summit documents, the strategic partnership initiative, and the statements of top-level EU leaders, it is found that there has indeed been a shift in the way the EU discusses the EU-Africa partnership and also how it operates within that framework. One of the larger perceived changes is that the EU went from full-throated endorsements of bilateral relations with individual African nations, especially where it concerned economic integration, to a model of broad multilateralism. There is a renewed will to view many of the challenges currently plaguing the EU and AU as shared challenges, which moves beyond the simple exchange of political interests. The EU has become increasingly optimistic and willing to engage with Africa in a manner guided by norms and a more serious notion of equality. Naturally, there are still many unilateral interests on the part of the EU, but the main difference is the acknowledgement that such issues are perhaps better handled in cooperation than in opposition. All of this points to a EU that is increasingly led by its normative considerations and identity when it engages with Africa, but there is also a clear realist element to these developments that cannot be understated. With geopolitical upheaval in the world, the EU has become increasingly aware of its own position in the world, and this has been reflected in the analysed documents. If anything, these documents underline the idea that the EU has only become more assertive in pursuing its economic and security interests in Africa, channelled as such efforts are through the partnership framework. AS the EU increases its economic leverage in the global market, MPE literature may actually become ever more important and relevant to understanding EU policy in Africa and beyond. Overall, the EU's policy evolution touches on many of the theoretical perspectives involved in this study.

Of course, there are some limitations that come with the setup of this study. By focusing on broad policy documents, is becomes difficult to delve deeper into many of the individual policies that were touched on in this paper. It is also limited mainly to top-level actors within the EU, and specifically those in the European Commission and European Council. Any future studies might focus on the way in which these broad policy considerations in turn inform shifts in the specific policy areas that make up the EU-Africa partnership as a whole. Theoretically, there was perhaps little in the way of new insight or innovation from any particular perspective, as different perspectives came together to constitute a larger framework. Future research can attempt to conduct the same kind of analysis from a singular theoretical point of view,

discovering potential discrepancies with the larger narrative. Nevertheless, the study is valuable because of the approach it took. The use of a broader perspective nevertheless does allow for the charting of a more general trajectory in the context of EU policy development. Moreover, using these specific policy documents adds an extra layer to the overall analysis by looking beyond simple policy and being able to elucidate the changing perspective that lies behind its conception. Establishing an analytical framework that incorporated so many different theoretical perspectives helped immensely in situating the developments of EU policy considerations into a more neatly categorised spectrum of change. The point of the framework was thus not to re-affirm or reject a particular theory or perspective in international relations, but rather to link the developments of EU policymaking to certain patterns of thought and dynamics within international relations studies. In that respect this study adds a complementary layer of analysis to the different studies that are conducted by following the threads of specific and narrow policies within the EU-AU framework.

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