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A Global Gateway for a Normative Power Europe? The role of civil society inclusion in international development aid partnerships

Padovani, Adrien

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A Global Gateway for a Normative Power Europe?

The role of civil society inclusion in international development aid
partnerships

By:

Adrien Padovani – s3543633

Under the supervision of:

Dr. Rik De Ruiter

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Abstract: This research provides an empirical analysis of the latest international development aid strategy of the European Commission, namely, the Global Gateway. This new approach to the European Union's (EU) development policy aims at developing equal partnerships through the correction of asymmetries of power as well as environmental and social inequalities. It notably puts a specific emphasis on the inclusion of the civil society in Global Gateway's partnerships. The underlying empowerment of partner countries and the civil society through '*local ownership*' and the objectives of the Global Gateway echo Manners' notion of Normative Power Europe (NPE). This research investigates the synergies between the strategy and an NPE by asking: How can the inclusion of the civil society in the Global Gateway strategy contribute to a Normative Power Europe? It identifies how the participation of the civil society to avoid neo-colonial relations in the EU-Togo partnership can fulfil the three prerequisites of an NPE: i.e. an '*action in concert*'; a '*simultaneous awareness*' and; a '*non-adversarial relation*'. Early studies suggest that the Global Gateway's discourses replicate neo-colonial and prescriptive diffusion of norms. But these findings rely on publicly available documents from the European Commission, adopts a Eurocentric view of the strategy and don't look at its practical application. This research takes these critics duly into account by analysing through an interpretative approach empirical material from both the EU and Togo, panel discussions of EU and partners' leaders and semi-structured interviews with EU policy makers. Findings stress the centrality of policy makers' intentions and visions vis-à-vis the Global Gateway. The instrumentalization of the strategy for economic and geopolitical purposes directly undermines the empowerment of EU partners despite effective civil society inclusion. If the EU were to be a normative power through the inclusion of civil society in the Global Gateway, it should make of development the principal objective of partnerships over trade and geopolitics.

Acronyms

African, Caribbean, Pacific countries (ACP countries)

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)

European Chamber of Commerce in Togo (Eurocham Togo)

European Consensus on Development (ECD)

European External Action Service (EEAS)

European Investment Bank (EIB)

European Partnership Agreement (EPA)

European Union (EU)

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Impact Assessment (IA)

International Relations (IR)

Joint Programming Assistance Programme (JPAP)

Normative Power Approach (NPA)

Normative Power Europe (NPE)

National Development Programme (NPD)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Strategy Togo 2025 (Togo 2025)

World Bank (WB)

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

In late 2021, the European Commission presented a new international development aid initiative aiming at supporting infrastructural development of third countries in line with high environmental and sustainability standards. Following early confusion as regards the novelty of the initiative and its practical features (Yumkella, 2022), the Global Gateway gradually appeared as a policy umbrella for development aid. It sets common guidelines and objectives for all development aid instruments from both the EU and national levels, and tries to reduce their fragmentation. The Global Gateway was initiated in an effort to harmonise development programmes from Member states and EU institutions, to reduce duplication of projects and increase their coherence and benefits on the ground (Tagliapietra, 2021). This strategic coordination heavily relies on a ‘Team Europe’ strategy that the Commission itself defines as a methodological approach “joining forces so that joint external action becomes more than the sum of its parts” (European Commission, n.d.b). In practice, the Team Europe joins forces of various European actors from the political to the financial spheres, being public or private actors (Shaw-Barragan, 2022). Hence, when adopting a Team Europe approach, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the industry as well Member states and their development agencies, such as France’s Agence Française de Développement (AFD) or Germany’s Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), coordinate and join their efforts to elaborate development programmes. This can considerably increase the scope of financial and resource assistance to third countries while guaranteeing that projects do not overlap and optimise their added value.

The Global Gateway’s benefits on the ground are expected to take two complementary forms. One refers to infrastructural development and upgrading in the sectors of: energy and climate, health, education and research, transport and the digital sector. A second set of benefits is related to European standards grounded in democratic values, good governance, equality and environmental sustainability (Join(2021)30). The Global Gateway starts from the idea that development objectives such as poverty alleviation or climate change mitigation can be best achieved through the integration of key democratic and environmental values. This is appearing in the very first page of the strategic document presenting the Global Gateway as the Commission stresses that “by offering a positive choice for global infrastructure development, Global Gateway will [...] demonstrate how democratic values offer certainty and fairness for investors, sustainability for partners and long-term benefits for people around the world” (Join(2021)30, 1). The benefits of development projects on the ground is paired with the effective establishment of governance practices and democratic instruments. In that perspective, the European Union ought to strengthen governments’ capabilities and development in a way that corresponds to EU values. With development aid partnership therefore comes a norm transfer, a convergence of systems and values.

The role of norms, principles, rules or values in interstate relations is at the centre of the emergence of constructivist studies in International Relations (IR) which emerged in the 1990s/2000s (Kratochwil, 1989). The interplay between the EU and the emergence, development and diffusion of norms started at that time to have a more important role in the literature. This interest relies on the very premise and observation that the EU as an international

actor doesn't weight in the international system in the same terms as states (Manners, 2000; Björkdahl, 2011; Zupancic & Pejic, 2018). With studying the external policies of the European Union comes an ontological repositioning, a redefinition of what the international system is made of. Contrary to other theories in IR, normative studies see the international stage as an entanglement of social relations and phenomena (Adler, 1997). In this social environment are evolving norms that encompass rules, values, principles or code of conducts. They are acknowledged as the 'normal' basis for their relations and organisation. Being able to shape a social environment and define what is to be considered as a "normal" mode of functioning and cooperation is appropriately defined as a Normative Power (Manners, 2002).

In 2002, Manners' Normative Power approach (NPA) provided new theoretical tools that went beyond classical understandings of international relations centred on the Westphalian state. By considering EU norms, their promotion and diffusion as central components to the EU external policy, one may argue that the EU is an impactful international actor. As presented initially, the NPA remained highly abstract despite efforts to translate it from concept to action (Manners, 2013). Manners continuously updated the NPA in light of the latest progresses made in the literature as well as the surrounding planetary environment (Manners, 2006; Manners, 2008; Manners, 2013; Manners, 2021). In his 2023 symposium article he argues that a normative power must respect three complementary prerequisites: an '*action in concert*', a '*simultaneous awareness*' and set '*non-adversarial relations*'. In short, combined together these criteria are to favour environmental and social equity/welfare for present and future generations through the empowerment of marginalised and silenced actors in IR (Manners, 2023b). At first glance, the Global Gateway well fits the conception that is made by Manners of a normative power. It tends to correct North-South inequality, to contribute to climate change mitigation and bring about sustainable gains for beneficiaries of development aid in various fields such as security, health, digital, education or infrastructural capabilities (Join(2021)30, 2021; Manners, 2023b; Ville, 2022).

However, before anything else, these objectives must avoid a dynamic which is often pointed out by academic researchers as well as the very countries receiving development assistance; i.e. the setting of neo-colonial hierarchies between the EU and development aid recipients (Appleby, 2010; Kapoor, 2011; Rutazibwa, 2014; Tupas & Tabiola, 2017; Yumkella, 2022). An NPA is for instance decoupled from a relation of "domination, subjugation and hierarchy" and must pursue equity (David et al., 2023, 9; Manners, 2023b). It should focus on the use of 'power' as a tool for 'empowerment' which gives the possibility to an EU partner to "build his own good life" (Rutazibwa, 2010, 222). To Manners, a normative power used in the field of international development is not translated as the ability to influence and determine the development of a country. But, rather by favouring first and foremost the autonomy of local populations in the management of their own land and development, what he describes as a '*local ownership*' through a "decolonial retreat" (Manners, 2008, 59; Manners, 2023b, 13). Following this definition of empowerment and the way it should apply to EU development policies, '*local ownership*' becomes unavoidable to the Global Gateway if it were to contribute to a Normative Power Europe. On the paper, the Global Gateway puts a specific emphasis on the inclusion of the civil society into the design, monitoring and implementation of the development partnerships by pursuing the "empower[ment of] local communities" (Join(2021)30, 2021). EU officials have stressed the value of the strategy as shifting from a

donor-beneficiary relationship towards equal partnerships adapting development programmes according to the needs identified by local populations while implementing the programmes/projects with them (Shaw-Barragan, 2022; Ville, 2022). If applied that way, the Global Gateway could be an adapted response to the several critics formulated against development aid programmes excluding the civil society from all stages of programmes' deployment (Madon, 1999; Hayes & Westrup, 2012; Kendall et al., 2015; Kendall, 2007; Kothari et al., 2001; Rahnema, 2010). It will realise a '*local ownership*' through/of the partnerships signed by the EU with third countries and guarantee that the developments taking place result from the active participation of local communities to define their "own good life" (Rutazibwa, 2010, 222). To sum-up, the Global Gateway seems to contribute to a Normative Power Europe because it first empowers EU partners through '*local ownership*'. This research will investigate this relation in depth and seek to answer the following research question:

How can the inclusion of the civil society in the Global Gateway strategy contribute to a Normative Power Europe?

To study the relation between the Global Gateway and an NPE provides new results to the literature in three regards. The first has to do with the NPA itself as the theory relies on a high degree of abstraction, despite strong theoretical internal coherence. In David et al. (2023) article, published together with Manners' symposium, the authors elaborate (abstract) concepts/values (the ethic of care, empathy, emancipation and equity) "for envisioning a nakedly feminist future for Europe" (David et al., 2023, 13). To reach more empirical ground, we focus on the operationalisation of '*local ownership*' through the inclusion of the civil society as a central feature of an NPE in the field of development aid.

Secondly, the academic relevance of our research lies in the originality of its case study. Manners' symposium was published together with another article by Pace, in which the author applies the concept to the Israel-Palestine conflict (Pace, 2023). This case study reaches specific fields of research having regard to humanitarian action, security and the specific Israel-Palestine wars. Our approach especially focuses on the field of international development aid which has, so far, not been investigated in the literature related to Manners' 2023 article. But it goes further by focussing on a policy strategy that has been little studied in the academic literature. One reason for this might be found in the date of introduction of the strategy as it was presented in late 2021. This recent nature has an impact on its study as it tends to restrain both opportunities and feasibility of researches. This short timeframe has impacted the studies of the Global Gateway as they exclusively focussed on the discursive construction of the strategy by EU officials (Karjalainen, 2023). Although results of projects which have not been fully implemented yet cannot be analysed, it is possible to investigate the impact that the Global Gateway has on the EU's general approach to international development. In other terms, we do not focus on the achievements of the Global Gateway but rather on the impact that it has on the general approach to development policy of the EU and whether it contributes to an NPE.

Thirdly, our empirical study has an important political meaning for EU policy-makers. The normative power as a concept has been employed by EU policy makers and leaders to identify the main domains on which the EU's external action should focus and the goals it should pursue (Manners, 2023a). A normative power is not limited to a theoretical lens, but it

is also defined as a goal to be achieved (Manners, 2002). It is also a normative study as it starts from the assumption according to which the EU must empower its partners to be a normative power. The results of this research will therefore serve both the academic community and EU development policy makers. It will identify the potential synergies of the Global Gateway and a normative power Europe, as well as their antagonisms. The relevance of this research lies in the three abovementioned features: 1) its attempt to operationalise a concept that remains highly abstract; 2) the originality of its case study with a new lens used to decipher the strategy's impact and; 3) the transposition of our results to the policy spheres.

To provide more insights on the strategy's impact, the research will take as a case study the EU-Togo Joint Programming Assistance Programme 2021-2027 (JPAP) which is labelled as a Global Gateway partnership (our unit of analysis). It will investigate whether the civil society was/is involved into the design and implementation of the partnership, and whether this inclusion fulfils the three prerequisites of an NPE. To unpack the internal dynamics of the Global Gateway, semi-structured interviews were conducted with an EU officer working on the policy-making of the Global Gateway in DG INTPA, an Evaluation Officer in DG INTPA and the Focal point for Civil Society inclusion at the EU Delegation to Togo. We also analysed seven panel discussions that took place during the two international forums dedicated to the Global Gateway in 2022 and 2023, and which gathered leaders from the EU and partner countries. Their results were analysed in light of official documents from EU institutions (European Council, European Commission) and Togo's government (Presidency, Ministry of Development Planification) as well as the relevant academic literature on development aid. The NPE being a constructivist theory, a (social) interpretative explanation approach was adopted to differentiate the stated participative features of the Global Gateway and the practical inclusion of the civil society in policy-making. As stated earlier, the contribution of the Global Gateway to an NPE relies mostly on its objectives and how they are exposed in the written strategy. But it also depends on its active implementation by decision- and policy-makers. The actors involved in the policy-making can have varying concerns, expectations or understandings of a strategy meaning and its features (i.e. 'local ownership') (Lukka, 2014, 559). Our interpretative explanation observes these social representations of development stakeholders and put them in contrast with those objectives of the Global Gateway on the paper. It juxtaposes the objective meaning of the Global Gateway (when considering the actual strategy as set in stone) and its subjective meaning in the mind of those who put it into practice. This approach is suitable to explain variations between the objectives of the strategy and its results. In practice, this approach examines how the EU, Togo or policy-makers and evaluation officers are affected by the Global Gateway in their development-related activities.

Chapter 2 will justify the relevance of normative approaches to the study of EU external action and the Global Gateway before to precise our meaning of 'normative', as a critical assessment of systems of norms/values/principles, and power', as a notion of empowerment and equal partnership. It discusses the risks faced by an NPE in the field of development aid in replicating asymmetric and coercive (neo-colonial) relations through Eurocentric relations. Finally, it sets our expectations vis-à-vis the synergies between the Global Gateway and the three prerequisites of an NPE. We determine that: 1) the inclusion of civil society in the design of Global Gateway partnerships can contribute to empower marginalised actors through an '*action in concert*'; 2) the inclusion of civil society in impact assessments of Global Gateway

partnerships can contribute to achieve environmental and social benefits for present and future generation through a '*simultaneous awareness*' and; 3) the inclusion of civil society in monitoring evaluations of Global Gateway partnerships can contribute to mutualise their gains and benefit the planet as whole through a '*non-adversarial relation*'.

Chapter 3 identifies the EU-Togo Joint Programming Assistance Programme as our case study. The data collection explanation that follows justifies the empirical materials that were collected from public sources from the EU and Togo's authorities as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with EU policy makers and panel discussions of EU and partner countries' leaders. The three sets of data that we introduce are then linked to the indicators that we identify to empirically observe the features of our expectations (i.e. causal mechanisms, independent and dependent variables). It finally sketches out our interpretative approach to the analysis of the research's empirical data and discuss the limitations of our empirical data, our analytical method and the validity of the findings. In Chapter 4 the features of the EU-Togo JPAP are presented, and it details what EU and Togo meant when they decided to focus on: 1) human development and socio-economic inclusion; 2) the agricultural industry and the management of natural resources and; 3) building up a resilient and peaceful society.

Chapter 5 will then proceed to the analysis of the collected data with regards to the expectations formulated in chapter 3. The results demonstrate that: 1) the civil society indirectly but efficiently participated to the design of the JPAP which translates its empowerment through an '*action in concert*' but; 2) despite the use of inclusive impact assessments the lack of long-term vision of EU policy-makers negatively influences the durability of the JPAP and is a direct impediment to an NPE and a '*simultaneous awareness*' and; 3) that the non-mutualisation of the JPAP's benefits despite the participation of the civil society in the monitoring of the partnership's implementation prevents a '*non-adversarial relation*' to operate the link between civil society inclusion and an NPE. Finally, chapter 6 will summarise our findings as regards our initial expectations and identify ways that the Global Gateway could follow to adequately fit the prerequisites of an NPE. It especially draws on the negative effects of the trade-oriented and geopolitical motives of the Global Gateway for a normative power Europe and argues that policy-makers intentions are determinant factors to an NPE.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

This chapter shapes the theoretical lens that we use to analyse the Global Gateway and its contribution to an NPE. The first part will justify the relevance of normative approaches to the study of EU external action and unpack what is meant by ‘normative’ and ‘power’, and the adverse effects of a ‘normative power’. The next step will demonstrate that, in order to be a normative power, the EU should avoid to replicate power asymmetries and unequal relations with its partners. The second part of the chapter explains the relevance of international development policy as a suitable field of study for the NPA and derive expectations from the existing literature. These expectations are all based on the supposed synergies between the Global Gateway and the (three) prerequisites of an NPE.

I. Norms in the European Union’s external actions: relevance and challenges

The study of norms in the European Union’s external action has adopted multiple approaches. The centrality of norms in these studies to explain the EU foreign policies varied depending on the theoretical frameworks that were mobilised. Some consider norms (institutional structures, values or principles) as a social phenomenon to be explained (Börzel and Risse, 2007; Börzel and Risse, 2012) or as a variable explaining governance practices (Bauer et al., 2007; Schimmelfennig, 2005; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004). Our understanding of ‘normative’ and ‘power’ merges these two approaches and defines a normative power as both an explanatory process and an objective. As we further elaborate on this position in this first part of the chapter, we analyse the general normative literature to stress the relevance of our approach. We then set the limits to the use of a normative power with regards to its potential adverse effects on EU partners. This first part sets the theoretical foundations to our approach with considering the importance for the EU to guarantee ‘local ownership’ in/through the Global Gateway in order to be a normative power. This will be pivotal to determine the specific expectations of this study when moving on to the analytical part of the research.

A. Studying norms in International Relations and European Studies

Before starting to discuss the features of a Normative Power Europe, it is necessary to decipher what is meant by a normative approach to the European Union. It embodies underlying questions having regard to the role given to norms in our study. Whether norms should be considered as explanatory or outcome variables? To what level of analysis norms best apply to? In other terms, is an NPE an explanatory factor? Or is it an object of study on its own right and, therefore, an objective for the European Union?

1) Norms as explanatory (sub)variables and indicators

In International Relations (IR) and European studies norms have been considered mainly as explanatory (independent) variables; a position that we depart from. Scientific knowledge encompasses norms as guiding principles and behaviours within international public

administrations. Norms are stressed as influential factors on international administrations' legitimacy, autonomy or expertise while having adverse effects nurturing their own malfunctioning (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999). Overall, norms offer a value- and principle-based rationale for members of a same community, such as epistemic groups or IOs' staff, in order to evolve in a social environment (Ban, 2013; Haas, 1992). They construct the administrative structure in formal and informal ways. Hence, norms are presented as structural determinants of institutional settings and social environments that condition behaviours and administrative organisation. The mentioned literature has mainly relied on case-studies covering international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and so on. But European studies also have inherited from this institutional approach as researches emphasise the role of norms in determining EU institutional and legal functioning.

When looking at the European Union (EU), the European Commission's is described as normatively distinguishing itself from national administrations while being influenced by nationals from its Member states. With the successive enlargement processes that took place in the 2000s, and especially the accession of Scandinavian countries, an organisational shift operated with privileging a more gender-balance and work-life balance approach (Ban, 2013). Similarly, an important part of the literature focusses on the emergence of values and principles that were progressively accepted as normal principles within the European Union. They give a specific attention to the modifications of the European legal framework and its institutions. Wesemann (2020) defends that the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union entails constitutional rights which normative nature is acknowledged through the extensive jurisprudence of the CJEU and the reasonings it adopted (Wesemann, 2020). In this work, he provides a peculiar analysis considering both the structure of the norm and the social administrative context in which it evolves. So far, the discussed literature reflects different degrees of attention given to 'norms' in scientific works. But they all have in common to treat them as explanatory variables. By focussing on the administrative and institutional dynamics within the EU, they miss the idea that a normative Europe can be an outcome on its own right.

2) Norms as an outcome variable and the meaning of 'power'

When moving from the internal-institutional towards the international-intergovernmental levels of analysis, norms become more common and appropriate outcome variables. Studies that consider normative problematics as outcome variables tend to be focussed on the international and intergovernmental level of EU policy-making and actions. Kleine (2013) argues that Member states can decide to adopt a common position on a consensual basis when future cooperation is endangered within the European Council. She explains how this organisational norm emerged and departed from the procedural framework to establish an informal code of conduct for Member states. Similarly, Saurugger provided an historical explanation to the emergence of a 'participatory norm' within the EU as resulting from power relations, strategies and asymmetries between Member states (2009). In contrast, Member states' negotiations were also studied in external contexts while adopting a more explicit norm-oriented focus. Lightfoot and Kim's (2017) work demonstrates that the leadership

position of the EU in the field of development aid provides it with an impactful role in shaping the global development norms in international forum. Intergovernmental and international dynamics are also seen as the two faces of a same coin. Elgstrom, for example, shows what impact the competing priorities of European Member states had on the normative design and negotiations of European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (Elgstrom, 2009; Elgstrom, 2011).

When the focal point of study moves from the internal (administrative and institutional) to the international and intergovernmental levels, norms seem to become an object of study on their own right. Hence, Manners' argument according to which the EU external actions is to be studied in normative terms seems to be corroborated (2000). In addition, the body of literature discussed in the previous paragraph shed lights on the competitive environment surrounding norms at the international and intergovernmental levels. For example, Member states are presented as competitors seeking to determine what should be the 'normal' principals of the Code of Conduct on aid effectiveness (Lightfoot & Kim, 2017). Would norms be a determinant of power? If yes, would this mean that a Normative Power Europe is instrumental to other purposes and cannot be an objective on its own? We argue that the definition that is given to power directly influences the nature of norms as a variable. This trend is well illustrated within the literature on the EU international political economy. The normative literature in the field of EU's political economy has focussed on both free trade agreements (FTA) and its international trade strategy. Under this umbrella, norms are studied in three different ways that all adopt a narrower definition to what normative power means than Manners'. While this definition seems adapted to the object of these studies to be presented, it replicates traditional hierarchisations that are incompatible with an NPE.

First, this economic lens tends to emphasise the instrumental use of European norms to maximise EU interests and benefits. Poletti and Sicurelli stressed the trade-off between normative convergence and market access during FTA negotiations (2019). For instance, the EU grants market access to third countries in exchange of their compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), technical norms as well as labour and environmental principles (Poletti & Sicurelli, 2019; Vincent, 2021). Discussed as a Market Power, the European Union becomes an actor whose intertwined market and normative features provides it with a genuine influence in international relations (Damro, 2021; Geeraert & Drieskens, 2017). Combined together, the size of the European market and its regulatory institutions and institutionalised rules are presented as means to 'externalise' European norms (Damro, 2021, 63). Market access and required regulatory compliance are therefore presented as leverages for economic normative convergence. It contributes to the harmonisation of free-trade and market competition rules between the EU and its partners. But it is also a maximiser of European interests. This literature's approach assumes that norms are instrumental in nature and that the EU can use the weight of its market in a powerful way. Power becomes an end on its own right, and the EU market a determinant to it.

Second, papers discuss the environmental, social and human rights norms of FTAs that are traded-off. They enlightened the lack of constraint, enforcement and the issues raised for the diffusion of European values (Giovanni, 2017; Pigeon, 2016; Van't Wout, 2021; Vincent, 2021). These works present this lack of 'bindingness' as an impediment to the diffusion of EU norms and the impact it has on the Union's ability to obtain the compliance of its counterparts

in these domains. They argue that the EU is a standard leader for the environment and human rights, and that its core values are part of its international identity and influence. Once again, norm diffusion is approached as an objective and a determinant of power. This overshadows the potential impact that this imposition of norms and required compliance can have on third countries.

A third approach takes this critic seriously and consists in appraisals of the FTAs adopting a sociological and constructivist lens. These researches evaluate how European norms, such as death penalty or ILO rules, might influence the political culture, structure or laws of partner countries (Obara, 2013; Sicurelli, 2014). In these latter studies, the socialising dynamics underlying normative diffusion is of interest. Social norms provide actors with a framework of understanding, which supposes a process of socialisation through which the norm attached to a specific community is accepted and adopted (Börzel & Risse, 2012, 5). Normative convergence is stressed as the result of ‘persuasion’ strategies of the EU. They acknowledge that repeated institutionalised interactions and dialogues progressively persuade EU partners to align with its normative view (Kang, 2021; Kavalski, 2013; Postnikov, 2018). Once again is discussed how the EU influences third countries and obtains the very integration of its norms in their system. Persuasion therefore appears as a tool for power. These three approaches primarily investigate the founding determinants of a European Union power. They do not question their actual understanding of what ‘power’ means. This lack of reflectiveness limits their analysis of EU external (normative) actions. To redefine the meaning of ‘power’ directly impacts the kind of variables and indicators that we should focus on to effectively grasp the EU role in the international system.

This body of literature over-focusses on the meaning of power as a tool for interest-maximisation, influence and coercion. Börzel & Risse argued that *manipulation of utility calculations, socialisation, persuasion, emulation* as well as *coercion* are underlying logics contributing to the spread, (non-)acceptance and adoption of norms (2009). Coercion, they argue, is a mean that falls out of the actual tools and competences of the European Union given the civilian nature of its power (Börzel & Risse, 2009). However, this conception of coercion relies on a traditional and Westphalian-centred understanding of power. To approach International Relations in normative terms supposes an ontological shift that redefines the previously accepted determinants of power.

To Manners, understanding the role and influence of the European Union internationally is a matter of reconfiguration. It redefines the European Union as a “power of ideas and norms rather than [a] power of empirical force” (Manners, 2002, 238). This approach to EU’s power analysis may be more appropriate than earlier attempts to analyse the Union as a civilian or military power (Manners, 2000). Hence, the peculiar role of the European Union on the international stage is to be grasped through a normative dimension according to which the EU diffuses its norms, values and principles in international organisations or third states (Hood, 2001; Patten, 2000). As it considers other components than military forces and resource capabilities, the Normative Power Approach (NPA) widens research perspectives. Coercion can therefore be analysed in economic as well as ideological/normative terms. Normative pressures and power are means to define the ‘normal’ basis and principles in international relations. Being economic, ideological or military, power has adverse effects that are to be avoided in international relations.

Manners' approach is by essence reflective and further deconstruct the definition of power. As he considers the social environment surrounding the exercise of an EU normative power, Manners gives a great importance to its subjugating effects. To him, the use of normative influence by the EU should avoid the setting of hierarchical relations. It should rather pursue a mutualised relation through which both parts are empowering each other when cooperating. It should further avoid the replication of neo-colonial relationships and seek to correct power asymmetries. Thus, power becomes a tool for mutual development but also a mean to correct unequal and unbalanced development levels (Manners, 2008; Manners, 2023b). By pursuing the empowerment of its weaker partners, the EU may and should contribute to their emancipation (David et al., 2023).

Hence, our normative position is two-fold. It is normative because it primarily focusses on the constitution of an EU power based on norms. But it is also normative in the assumptions that Manners sets at the basis of his theoretical framework. As the concept moves beyond the strictly academic world, Manners follows that path of other critical scholars for whom researchers' resources are mobilised in a normative way to identify social problems and formulate theoretical alternatives to such issues. What is to be questioned is not the fact that the EU "establishes normative principles and apply them to different realities" (Manners, 2008, 60) but rather: how it does so in third countries? what is the nature of the relation with those countries? and how this nature influences the way in which they are diffused and adopted? (Manners, 2008). In practice, theoretical reasoning and the NPA are to be reflective and critical (Manners, 2008). By putting on the cloak of the 'organic researcher' (Gramsci, 1978; Müller, 2006) Manners fully settles the NPA in the field of critical social theories. It goes beyond the production of knowledge for its own sake. Explanations of (global) political events have to draw conclusions for the empirical correction of international politics (Bohman, 1996, 190). The NPA, as a critical social theory articulates "local politics with global ethics to provide a normative basis for critic in planetary politics" (Manners, 2021, 69). Although this doesn't advocate for a political and activist role of the researcher, it supports a renewed objective of the NPA pursuing international social and environmental welfare. Hence, our definition of power as an 'empowerment of 'or 'power with' others (Manners, 2006; Manners, 2021) directly impact the object of our study. A normative power approach first pre-determines what and how the object of study (the EU) should be; it sets an ideal-type of normative actor. Then, it unpacks the empirical reality in a way that emphasises the differences between the EU in reality and its normative ideal-type. Finally, it identifies ways of reforms in a more compliant way with the pre-established ideal-type. More than an objective, a Normative Power Europe should avoid adverse effects of power and respect certain criteria having regard to social, environmental as well as relational equality (Manners, 2023b). These adverse effects of power have to be bared in mind to be limited. They will be unpacked in the following section before to move on to the central conditions to be respected if a Normative Power Europe were to be through the Global Gateway.

B. Challenges and adverse effects of a Normative Power

Norms are means of power. And because they can be tools of coercion, their use, being through persuasion or not, is subject to the same challenges as military power and empirical

force. In this section, these challenges are discussed in the light of the latest developments of the NPA in the literature.

1) Euro- and western-centric partnerships

When power asymmetries arise, the use of the subsequent advantage or ‘superiority’ by one party can be expected to result in uneven benefits between the two parties of a partnership. The EU used its economic and neoliberal superiority to set trade agreements’ provisions that largely benefited the EU more than ACP countries (Haastrup, 2013,793). This mirrors a long trend that approaches development objectives, as poverty reduction, through trade. It especially sought to spread market-related norms such as market opening, fair competition and public-private partnerships in third countries (Beringer, 2019; Elgstrom, 2011). Despite claims of equal partnerships, these relations reproduced standards of domination and unbalanced relations while replicating neo-colonial hierarchies (Rutazibwa, 2010). But they also tightly articulated trade objectives with development. For instance, the specific FTAs signed with ACP countries were all designed as means of development (Elgstrom, 2009). The 2007 joint EU-Africa Strategy translated a willingness to rebalance EU-Africa relationship and to go beyond the mere donor/recipient relation established in ACP partnerships (Lightfoot & Kim, 2017). But, assuming that the universal nature of these values can only improve other’s condition and prosperity, the EU blindly considered its partners’ interests as aligning with its norms. Scholars criticised this approach as a mere tool aiming at maximising material interests (Chandler, 2006; Kagan, 2003). Because the EU framed itself as “exceptional”, it necessarily captures its partners’ image as different from its position, presenting them as “non-ethical, inferior, or threatening” (Diez, 2005; Rutazibwa, 2010, 211).

2) Unequal and neo-colonial partnerships

By shaping what is normal, EU norms tend to correct differences in an arbitrary and prescriptive way. Norms are Janus-faced, they function as an inclusion-exclusion system, determining what behaviours are appropriate and those which are not (Merlingen, 2007). The challenges for an NPE doesn’t question the substance of the values promoted by the European Union. It rather discusses the type of relationship that takes place between the EU and its counterpart as well as the means through which these norms are diffused. Norm diffusion through development aid offer an appropriate illustration of this challenge. Conditionalities featuring development partnerships are supported by sanction mechanisms that allow the EU to suspend development aid in case of human rights, transparency or good governance violations (Bartels, 2005; Haastrup, 2013). Although applied to all parties of the agreements, these sanctions only target the counterpart of the EU in practice. They become tools to secure the respect and compliance with European norms against a transfer of technology and knowledge from the North to the South. To Rutazibwa (2010), conditionalities and sanctions are together ‘inequality mechanisms’ nurturing a fundamental view of the partner as unequal and inferior, establishing neo-colonial relations Development aid is for instance a channel for norm diffusion considering that conditionalities vehiculate a precise view of what institutional structures and societal values recipients must acquire and respect. Because an NPE is to

empower its partners first, the EU's ability to define its partners' normality must avoid asymmetrical and hierarchised relations.

Eurocentric and hierarchical partnerships are fundamentally opposed to the conception of a Normative Power as formulated and refined by Manners. His vision follows K. Liftin's approach to international relations through the concept of planetary politics. This theoretical lens of world politics gives a central role to "the complexity of local-global linkages", the north-south cooperation dilemmas, the establishment of intergenerational time horizons, the institutionalisation of the precautionary principle and holism (Liftin, 2003, 471). It frames all individuals' lives as bounded to each other and goes against the western sciences' emphasis on atomism and competition (Liftin, 2009). It rather upholds holism and symbiosis. Combined together, these criteria shape the NPA as a theoretical tool that seeks to identify ways in which '*simultaneous awareness*', '*non-adversarial relation*' and '*action in concert*' can be promoted and effectively established between normative powers and their partners (Manners, 2023b).

These three features are presented as unavoidable conditions to avoid the adverse effects of the use of normative power. Following the theoretical ground that we set in this part, the second part of this chapter will argue that the inclusion of the civil society into the design and implementation of the Global Gateway partnerships can fulfil each of these three conditions. Our expectations will be set in that regard.

II. The way forward a Normative Power Europe

As mentioned in the introduction of this research, multiple synergies between the Global Gateway and an NPE appear at first glance. By "empower[ing] local communities" it tries to correct North-South inequality, to contribute to climate change mitigation and bring about sustainable gains for present and future generations (Join(2021)30, 2021, 1; Manners, 2023b; Ville, 2022). Despite a genuine interest of think tanks or the private industry (CSR, 2023; Sauvignon & Benaglia, 2023; TIMOCOM, 2022; Teevan & Bilal, 2023; Olivé & Santillán O'Shean, 2023), the Global Gateway has been little, if not analysed in the academic literature. One early study of the Global Gateway finds, however, that the EU is replicating a donor-beneficiary relation set on a hierarchical and coercive basis which directly goes against the notion of empowerment which is central to an NPE. In an analysis of official documents and strategic communication of the European Commission, Karjalainen stresses that European norms such as regionalism and connectivity seem to be discursively diffused through the Global Gateway in a neo-colonial, prescriptive and hierarchised way (Karjalainen, 2023).

These findings face two generalisation shortcomings which neglect the role of the strategy and its impact on the overall EU development policy that we focus on. First, the case study especially focusses on the EU norms related to regionalism, standards of connections and the values attached to connectivity projects. By focussing on a narrow set of norms and values, the research doesn't provide a holistic understanding of the strategy and miss to capture complementary features such as civil society inclusion. Second, the empirical materials of Karjalainen's research are limited to officially published documents, strategies and declarations from the European Commission and its directorates. These are pivotal in discursive terms to shed light on the publicly expressed intentions of the European Union. They however hardly

translate the situation on the ground and the impact of the strategy on the approach of EU officials to the design and implementation of projects/partnerships.

When applying the NPE concept, the literature also misses to reach more empirical grounds due to a high level of abstraction. This makes more complex its operationalisation and application to concrete case studies. In the article of David et al. (2023) published together with Manners' symposium, the authors apply a critical feminist approach to the NPA. Similar to Manners' article, they elaborate (abstract) concepts/values (the ethic of care, empathy, emancipation and equity) to be adopted by societal and political actors "for envisioning a nakedly feminist future for Europe" (David et al., 2023, 13). Once again, the degree of abstraction is important as the article's purpose is to elaborate a new theoretical (feminist) approach to EU's external normative actions. To reach more empirical ground, we focus on the operationalisation of '*local ownership*' through the inclusion of the civil society as a central feature of an NPE in the field of development aid. This attempt will enrich the normative power literature as it will empirically apply a concept that remains studied in abstract terms.

Manners' symposium was published besides another article by Pace, in which the author argues that "water scarcity, rising temperatures and electricity interruptions" are co-constitutive issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Pace, 2023, 1). She further demonstrates that if the EU were to use its normative power, it should depart from the 'two-states solution' and encourage a new solution which joins Israelis and Palestinians in a "dialogical, democratic and inclusive action" (Pace, 2023, 12). This case study reaches specific fields of research having regard to humanitarian action, security and the specific Israel-Palestine conflict. Our approach especially focuses on the field of international development aid which has, so far, not been investigated in the literature related to Manners' 2023 article. But it goes further by focussing on a policy strategy that has been little studied in the academic literature.

To focus on mechanisms contributing to the design and implementation of development programmes as well as the impact of the strategy on EU policy makers' approach to development might contribute to fill these gaps. This will help to draw more accurate conclusions as regards the Global Gateway's empirical adequacy with the principle of '*local ownership*' and its contribution to an NPE. If corroborated, Karjalainen's findings can go further discursive generalisation and find empirical support. If not, her discursive analysis will show its limit and empirical testable case studies will acquire greater relevance to assess the Global Gateway in practice. The coming sections will argue that '*local ownership*' is favoured through civil society participation to development partnerships and can fulfil the three complementary prerequisites of an NPE: 1) an '*action in concert*', 2) a '*simultaneous awareness*' and 3) a '*non-adversarial relation*' (Manners, 2023b). These three prerequisites will structure our theoretical framework in three distinctive but complementary parts. They will be presented in these sections in light of the Global Gateway's features. Considering that Manners' latest symposium in which he presents these three prerequisites/determinants of an NPE was published really recently (August 2023), their study in the literature remains limited. More striking is the unexplored application of these criteria to development aid in light of participatory mechanisms. EU's development aid policy is a widely covered topic in the literature but the limited articulation of these studies with the NPE opens avenues of researches. It is in these interstices that this research sets itself.

A. *'Action in concert'*

The intertwined nature of individuals' lives requires a coordination of actions based on equity while seeking to empower one another, or what Manners calls an *'action in concert'* (Manners, 2023b). An *'action in concert'* calls for a theoretical reconfiguration of what is meant by "power". Although the concept was discussed as an ideational form of power (i.e. *pouvoir*) or as an ideal type of actor (i.e. *puissance*) (Forsberg, 2011), Manners defines it as the ability to "empower" others (Manners, 2006). It follows the idea that the EU should do "least harm" in world politics, through *'local ownership'*, and avoid the establishment of hierarchised relations (Manners, 2008, 59). An *'action in concert'* through *'local ownership'* directly mitigates the negative impacts of norms by supporting actors directly impacted by development aid (Manners, 2023b). This inclusion provides avenues to integrate short- and long-term impacts' consideration in the design of development partnerships. The strength of the EU should not only be found in its ability to shape what is normal in international politics. But, it relies on its capacities to shape others' reality by providing these 'others' with the resources necessary to voluntarily adopt these norms. This diffusion is to be adapted to the intrinsic cultural, social, economic and societal constraints of their system that local communities know best (Manners, 2008; Manners, 2023b). By empowering and de-silencing local actors and communities, the EU might favour the setting of common normative grounds with its partners. Normative power as an empowerment of others is an underlying feature of EU's development aid. Within the literature and to EU officials, development aid is a meaningful tool to strengthen local communities to tackle climate change and poverty (Kendall, 2015; Ville, 2022).

If the Global Gateway were to favour an *'action in concert'* this enterprise must correct the power asymmetries existing between the EU and its partners (David et al., 2023; Manners, 2023a; Manners, 2023b, 11). When entering the field, an *'action in concert'* comes to correct empirical inequalities and provides the means to local recipients of aid to improve their economic, social and environmental 'futures' through re-balanced power capacities (David et al., 2023). The emphasis put by Manners on non-western and silenced actors is important and must bear in mind that inclusion efforts from the EU may paradoxically reproduce exclusionary patterns (Manners, 2023, 4). As underlined by Bryson et al., the creation of new participatory mechanisms often leads to the participation of usual actors that are already vocal in the public policy arena (2013). This was partially acknowledged by the European Commission in 2017 as it stated that despite its efforts and commitments to set participatory mechanisms, some actors remain unable to engage in consultations (Com(2017)651, 2017).

This account echoes critics according to which participation mechanisms do not consider, or fail to consider power asymmetries amongst development programmes' stakeholders (Kendall et al., 2015). These asymmetries are fuelled by the variations and differences in the levels of wealth, education or social status between development projects' stakeholders (Kothari et al., 2001; Rahnema, 2010). Because of limited or inferior resources (material, financial or intelligence resources) compared to governmental or financial actors, local communities can be excluded from the design and implementation stage of development projects (Kendall et al., 2015, 66-67). As it undermines local communities' ownership of the projects it may lead to inappropriate and counterproductive implementation solutions on the ground (Kendall, 2007). The very exclusion pattern underlying development projects affects

local recipients of development projects and the benefits they get from its realisation (Kendall, 2015). In that regards, local communities and recipients of development projects are comparable to these marginalised and non-Western actors that Manners calls to de-silence (Manners, 2023b). Their inclusion is not to be only favoured through the existence/creation of participatory mechanisms. It also requires a degree of effectiveness ensuring that actors on the ground are reached and getting involved into development programmes. Overall, an ‘*action in concert*’ that empowers marginalised actors can be seen as a new way of ‘doing things together’ or ‘togetherness’ (Manners, 2023). The effective involvement of the civil society in the design of a Global Gateway partnership (i.e. independent variable) is expected to contribute to the empowerment of silenced actors, which is central to a Normative Power Europe (i.e. dependent variable), by setting an ‘*action in concert*’ (i.e. causal mechanism). We therefore come with the following necessary condition:

Expectation 1: The effective inclusion of the civil society in the design Global Gateway partnerships is likely to empower marginalised actors and contribute to a Normative Power Europe through an ‘*action in concert*’.

The following two prerequisites that will be discussed will start from this idea that if the Global Gateway were to contribute to a Normative Power Europe, it should set the necessary participation mechanisms to rebalance power asymmetries between the EU and its partners.

B. ‘Simultaneous mode of awareness’

A ‘*simultaneous mode of awareness*’ or ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ is well illustrated by international actions and policies that are thought in terms of causes and effects for current and future generations (i.e. holistic causality). It encompasses colonial and postcolonial experiences and capture the effects of the capitalist mode of consumption on the environment as well as social equality (Manners, 2023b). Development aid programs and policies set by the EU are primarily directed towards developing and least developed countries (LDCs) which tend to be more and more implicated into the local implementation of EU-supported aid programs (Saltnes, 2019). The EU is acknowledged as a global leader in the field of development aid in terms of aid volume and as a rule-setter (Lighfoot & Kim, 2017; Manea, 2022). Hence, the contribution of development aid to an NPE is hardly avoidable. In the EU’s meaning, development aid programs were elaborated and evolved in close relationship with climate change mitigation and poverty reduction efforts (Beringer, 2019; Manea, 2022). A specific feature of this approach is that the development aid provided by the EU is not only seeking to improve the condition of currently living populations. The objective is also to bring about sustainable benefits in time for successive generations (European Commission, n.d.a). Development is approached by the EU as a(n) (intergenerational) goal whose fulfilment will contribute to the social, economic and environmental welfare of both present and future generations (Manea, 2022). This trend can be found directly in the Global Gateway and its goal to contribute to “sustainability for partners and long-term benefits for people around the world” (Join(2021)30, 2021, 2).

A ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ in a development partnership unfolds as a transgenerational agreement that provides environmental, social, economic benefits for current and future

generations. This holistic causality adds several temporalities through a consequentialist mode of thinking. It means that actions are to be thought in terms of causes and effects to maximise the “translocal solidarity” (Manners, 2023b, 7) and benefits obtained from development aid. Anticipation is key. But how can we ensure anticipation through the Global Gateway? One way is to make use of *ex ante* impact assessments (IA). IAs are processes or methodologies that aim at determining the economic, social and environmental impacts of a development project (Kirkpatrick et al., 2001, 2). They are conducted prior to the deployment of development projects to anticipate but also to maximise the benefits of development programmes. They are used to guarantee that “policy decision making at the political centre can be made responsive to sustainability issues and problems as they are experienced” by local communities (Breton Morris et al., 2011, 17). The following part will argue that quantitative and qualitative IAs are to be articulated with one another and include local communities for a ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ to unfold.

1) Inclusive quantitative-qualitative impact assessments: the way forward simultaneous awareness

IAs can be conducted according to two methodologies. The first relies on quantitative means and makes quantifiable measurements using indicators, surveys and questionnaire data (Hayes & Westrup, 2012, 11). Quantitative IAs’ value lies in the possibilities to infer results from a wide population and at a larger level (Duncombe, 2009). However, they tend to generalise the benefits of a project without taking duly into account the synergies between a partnership and the local context (Hayes & Westrup, 2012; Kendall, 2007). Another problematic has to do with the deterministic nature of the data that are collected. For instance, surveys and questionnaires gather information that are in line with an evaluative framework. They assess the implementation of projects according to pre-determined and rigid indicators (Bell & Aggleton, 2016, 3) and do not give the possibility to raise qualitative issues impacting the project. Qualitative impact assessments fill that gap by providing ethnographic insights to prior quantitative measurements (Duncombe, 2009). Qualitative IAs are powerful means to determine the feasibility of projects on the ground but also to determine whether the objectives that were fixed can be achieved given local constraints. Quantitative IAs are not sufficient on their own to guarantee that the Global Gateway projects are designed with respect to what is needed by local communities. Completed by qualitative IAs, the Global Gateway can enter into the details of development projects and ensure that they are tailored to local contexts.

One important dimension to this complementarity between quantitative and qualitative IAs is their degree of inclusiveness of local communities. As underlined by Madon (1999), IAs tend to frame NGOs as the unique entry point to implement projects. One shortcoming to this is that NGOs, under the pressure of donors (i.e. the EU), are held accountable for the identification of targets and priorities (Madon, 1999) which de facto exclude local communities from the process. In a later work, Madon demonstrates that this upward accountability undermines the long-term implications of development projects and narrows the timeframe of projects, privileging short-termism (2004). This directly opposes the necessary ‘holistic causality’ of development which should think partnerships in terms of their potential effects on the environment and social equity. The ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ of development projects can

be significantly limited to their short-term effects and overshadow potential long-term backlashes. For instance, building classrooms can give an access to education to children as soon as the project is finalised but if they are tailored for welcoming less students (30) that a class is made of (100), learning objectives are hardly met (Kendall, 2007). To overcome this, Kendall et al. (2015) suggest that evaluation mechanisms are more prone to guarantee tailored as well as intergenerational benefits of development projects when targeted populations are involved into the process. This '*local ownership*' and involvement directly mitigates upward accountability that would undermine the results of the projects (Hayes & Westrup, 2012) and ensures that targets and objectives are determined by those who will benefit from the partnership's projects. The involvement of the civil society in the impact assessment of a Global Gateway partnership (i.e. independent variable) is expected to contribute to a holistic causality, which is central to a Normative Power Europe (i.e. dependent variable), by setting a '*simultaneous awareness*' (i.e. causal mechanism). We therefore come with the two following necessary but insufficient conditions:

The effective inclusion of the civil society in the design Global Gateway partnerships is likely to empower marginalised actors and contribute to a Normative Power Europe through an '*action in concert*'

Expectation 2.a: A quantitative-qualitative impact assessment of a Global Gateway partnership is likely to anticipate its environmental and social impact for present and future generation and contribute to a Normative Power Europe through a '*simultaneous awareness*'.

Expectation 2.b: The inclusion of civil society in quantitative-qualitative impact assessment of a Global Gateway partnership is likely to contribute to a Normative Power Europe through a '*simultaneous awareness*'.

C. '*Non-adversarial relationship*'

A '*non-adversarial relation*' is a situation in which a win for one actor cannot be a loss for another. It must be a win for both sides, in the present and the future. Because a loss for one translates as a loss for all and a win for one as a win for all, a '*non-adversarial relation*' creates a direct dependence of destinies, geographically and temporarily. This non-zero-sum game implies a non-contractual obligation defined by the belief of individuals to share relations with one another and their will to maintain it (Manners, 2023b, 8). Kavalski (2013) stresses that the deliberate practice of repeated interactions with a norm-promoter, based on respect, favours the recognition of promoted standards and values. More equal international partnerships and normative convergence therefore require repeated efforts to "establish and maintain a relationship of respect" and trust (Kavalski, 2013, 262). In practice, this goes against "postcolonial melancholia" and 'pathology of greatness' of former European colonial powers reproducing hierarchical relationships, between the EU and countries from the South (Manners, 2023b, 10; Rutazibwa, 2010). But it also interprets crises, being financial, environmental or sanitary as common and shared concerns. '*Non-adversarial relations*' de-silence non-western

voices, therefore compensating North-South asymmetries, through a subjective sharing of relations. This operates in practice by including so far excluded actors within decision-making.

The kind of relationship taking place in development aid programs and assistance is quite ambiguous vis-à-vis Manners' definition of a '*non-adversarial relation*'. On one hand, the close articulation between development aid and climate mitigation and poverty alleviation stems from the idea that both environmental and socio-economic crises have South-North transboundary effects (Beringer, 2019; Manea, 2022). On another hand, development aid has taken the form of formalised partnerships used as a mean to exert influence on the international stage (Petiteville, 2006). Equally, the dependency to such aid for some countries may be used as a leverage to push the beneficiaries to accept donors' conditions, hindering 'local ownership' of partnerships/projects and replicating hierarchical and neo-colonial relations (Gemechu, 2000). Because of this ambiguity, the study of development aid through the NPA lens provides relevant prospects of analysis and critical assessment of the EU's international development policy. If the Global Gateway were to contribute to a Normative Power Europe, '*non-adversarial relations*' should take place in a way that 1) mutualises the gain and losses of the EU and its partners while 2) relying on a non-hierarchical/coercive relation. These will be discussed in the two following parts.

1) Mutualising benefits and losses through participation

The *mutualisation of benefits* relies on the idea that a gain for one part is also a gain for the other part and cannot be a loss for the other. In addition to the mutualisation of a partnership outcomes a '*non-adversarial relation*' reconsiders relation of causality (Manners, 2023b, 8). It splits apart from the idea that the finalisation of a project and its effective implementation always contribute to the objective of both the aid donor and the welfare of aid recipients. As stressed by Kendall (2007), the construction of classrooms in Malawi in 2000 and 2001 successfully completed the objectives of the international development agency that funded the project. However, because these facilities followed western standards, classroom sized for 30 students hardly satisfied the needs of the average 100 students featuring each class (Kendall, 2007). In other terms, what is defined as a gain for a development agency can be an actual loss for local communities.

Discrepancies can exist as regards one's vision of a successful project and its benefits with another stakeholder of a development programme. A '*non-adversarial relation*' ensures that these two visions, from the donor and recipient, align and that their understanding of a project's achievement is shared. Star and Griesemer (1989) stress that this alignment of visions can, in practice, take the form of what they call 'boundary objects'. Boundary objects are abstract or concrete practices, representations, norms or objectives that are acknowledged and adopted by all social groups and actors involved into development aid (Green, 2010). They allow to bridge the various visions of social actors to set a functional cooperation with respect to these actors' diversity (Star & Griesemer, 1989, 393). Amongst the forms that boundary objects can take are participatory mechanisms but also targets and objectives (Green, 2010; Sapsed & Salter, 2004; Yakura, 2002). In such cases, they "create the possibilities for groups with divergent perspectives and interests to enter into temporary collaborations around shared objects of management" (Green, 2010, 1242).

The presence of participatory mechanisms, targets and objectives as boundary objects favours this alignment of views as regards what is a gain or loss in development programmes, and therefore favour an NPE through a ‘*non-adversarial relation*’. In practice, they can mutualise the impact of development partnerships when both parts of the partnership pursue the same goal and consider that a gain for one is a gain for all. The mutualisation of gains and losses, to Manners, go further the parties to a partnership. It is a consideration from the EU and its partner(s) that development aid can contribute to the development of the beneficiaries as well as the planet (Manners, 2023b). In addition to mutualised benefits and losses, ‘*non-adversarial relations*’ also depart from unbalanced, coercive and asymmetrical relations (Manners, 2023b). To that second end, monitoring systems of development programmes can contribute to build up a ‘*non-adversarial relation*’ if they were to give the opportunity to local communities to participate to them. They will be discussed in the following section.

2) *Favouring non-coercive relations through inclusive monitoring and evaluation*

‘*Non-adversarial relations*’, Manners argues, supposes the deconstruction of those factors that reproduce neo-colonial and hierarchical linkages between development aid partners (Manners, 2023b, 8). Any constraining mechanism that could be used by the EU against its partners to influence the course of development programmes would be a direct impediment to their ‘*non-adversarial relation*’. In the field of development aid, conditionalities have long been pointed out as coercive mechanisms contributing to the interference of aid donors in domestic politics of recipients (Rutazibwa, 2010). Would conditionality be a *de facto* impediment to a non-adversarial and non-hierarchical relation? The picture is more complex and requires to weight the pros and cons of conditionalities. By doing so and considering the necessary features of an NPE, we argue that a good balance can be reached through participatory mechanisms.

Key factors as institutional quality, good governance or the rule of law have a significant impact on the realisation of development projects. They secure the correct flow of resources and ensure that social, economic or political development is favoured (Moyo, 2009). However, the promotion of EU norms such as good governance or the rule of law may raise several questions. The Global Gateway partnerships involve a plurality of actors at multiple levels within both the EU and the beneficiary countries. Development partnerships suppose a complementary “sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources” besides “effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships” (Manea, 2022, 191). But considering that the EU has little room of manoeuvre to conduct the implementation of the programme on the ground (Manea, 2020), it may rely on conditionalities to guarantee the realisation of the project and the correct flow of resources (Bell & Aggleton, 2016). Smith defines conditionality as “the linking, by a state or organisation, of perceived benefits to another state [...] to the fulfilment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles” (1998, 256). We may split an overall development program into several temporalities at which different types of conditionalities intervene: *ex ante* and *throughout* conditionalities.

Prior to negotiations, *ex ante* conditions are set as pre-eligibility criteria featuring democratic, good governance or macroeconomic standards as requirements to be met by countries before to apply to development assistance (Hermes & Lensink, 2001). Overall, *ex*

ante conditions feature the principles and values of a partnership that must be fulfilled at any time by the recipients of development aid. Such conditionalities are translated within the Global Gateway and its objective to finance infrastructural projects strengthening “democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rule of law” (Join(2021)30, 2021). These conditions are inherent to the projects that the Global Gateway is financing and can be considered as unavoidable to development partnerships. Because these conditions are directly accepted by EU partners when agreeing on the projects of the partnerships, limiting their coercive nature, we will not investigate them. We will rather focus on pressures that can be exerted during the implementation of projects by the EU.

According to an official from the EEAS¹, the EU is also controlling the correct flow of funds and their use throughout the realisation of projects (Manea, 2022, 197). It conducts monitoring, evaluation and audit missions to address recommendations to implementers on the projects’ implementation (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010). These conditions focussing on the actual allocation of resources, and not on the principles and values of the partnership, will be labelled here as ‘*throughout conditionalities*’. The controls conducted throughout the implementation of projects are called monitoring. Despite an obvious requirement for assigning EU resources appropriately, monitoring can also be a driver for indirect coercion constraining the local implementation of a project and eventually impact its efficiency/effectiveness (Kendall, 2007; Kendall et al., 2015). Informal pressures could be used to influence the realisation of the project when the EU interprets one or several steps of the project as being contrary to the objectives or norms of the Global Gateway. This dependency transfers the responsibility for implementing the project from the beneficiary to the provider of development aid, while the alleged spirit of the Global Gateway is rather to preserve the beneficiary’s authority over the project (i.e. to empower it) (Coultais, 2020; Join(2021)30; Madon, 1999). This is reinforced by the general approach of aid donor and the EU to consider local populations as “participants” or “beneficiaries” rather than active implementers or “experts capable of ensuring that programmes are relevant and achieve the desired results” (Bell & Aggleton, 2016, 2).

The coercive use of monitoring can be traced back to the very consideration that aid donor have as regards their purpose. The use of monitoring as a tool to ensure accountability *de facto* reduces its importance as a “learning device” adapting implementation to the specificities of the field (Bell & Aggleton, 2016). Once again, participation of local/targeted populations is suitable to overcome this issue. As stressed by Aked, inclusive monitoring evaluation (IME) provide a “learning architecture” by linking project progresses to local experiences (Aked, 2016, 146; Burns, 2007). As implementers on the ground work closely with local populations, they can better adjust their approach throughout the project and create a downward accountability to the initial chain going upward (Coultais, 2020). The key lies in a renewed relation between implementers and targeted population as the former can develop insights, “understandings and perspectives” from “new relationships” in ways that are more tailored to social, economic or environmental contexts (Aked, 2016, 156). IMEs can take several forms and are not limited to a specific design. Inclusion can either take place through the methods of monitoring, such as the consultation of local authorities and the population from the village or city in which the project is implemented (Aked, 2016). It can also be more direct

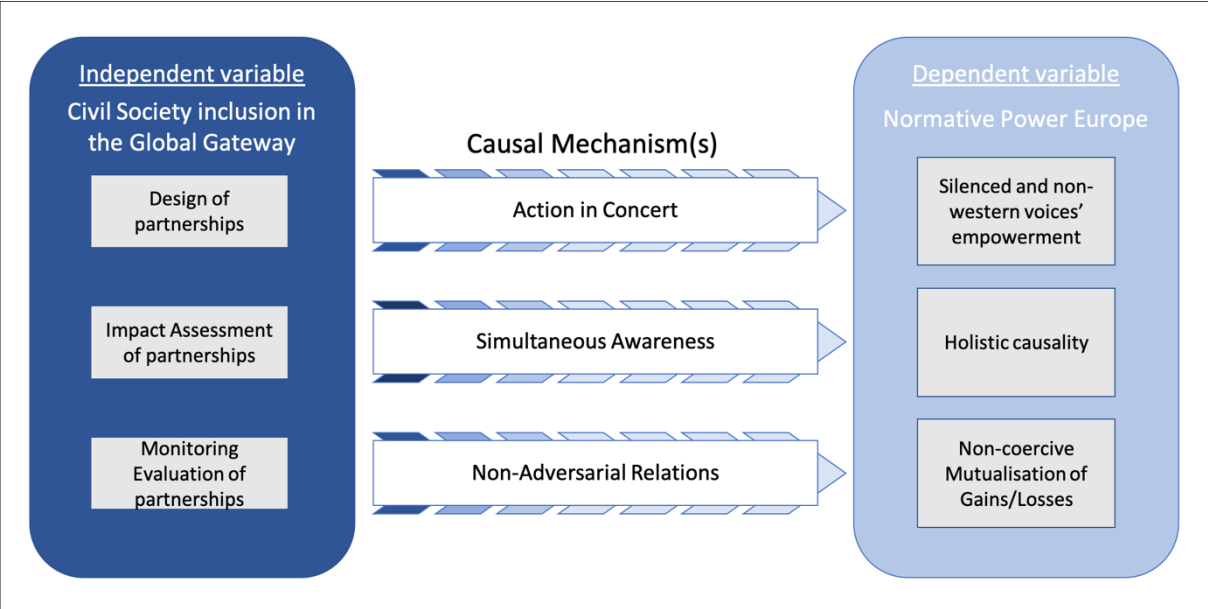
¹ Division of Development Cooperation Coordination. See: Manea, 2022, 197.

with communities taking part in the implementation management (deciding how to spend funds, making orders, building up the project), its continuous assessment and deciding how to put the project back on track or to adapt it if necessary (Kendall, 2015).

The involvement of the civil society in the monitoring evaluation of a Global Gateway partnership (i.e. independent variable) is expected to contribute to a non-coercive mutualisation of its gains/losses, which is central to a Normative Power Europe (i.e. dependent variable), by setting a ‘non-adversarial relation’ (i.e. causal mechanism). We therefore come with the following necessary condition:

Expectation 3: The inclusion of civil society in the monitoring evaluations of a Global Gateway partnership is likely to mutualise its gains/losses in a non-coercive way and contribute to a Normative Power Europe through a ‘non-adversarial relation’.

Figure 1: Expected causal relationships between civil society inclusion in the Global Gateway and a Normative Power Europe.



The components from our expectations on our causal mechanisms, dependent and independent variables are summarised in Figure 1. The next chapter will present the case study, methodology of analysis and data selected to explain how the inclusion of the civil society in the Global Gateway can contribute to a Normative Power Europe.

Chapter 3 – Case selection, methodology and data

To study the Global Gateway and determine whether it follows its participatory engagements in practice, it is necessary to observe how it operates in the development aid partnerships of the EU. To do so, we identify the earliest partnership with Togo as a suitable case study. We then outline what data was collected to provide an analysis that enriches the literature and responds to Manners' call to decentre our interpretation of EU external action, and how this data is suitable to detect empirical features related to our main indicators. The next step discusses the interpretative approach employed to analyse these empirical materials as a relevant analytical tool to determine the subjective consideration of EU policy makers to the inclusion of civil society. For instance, it is argued that studying the EU normatively (and with considering the three prerequisites of an NPE) requires to unpack the subjective meaning of social relations between the EU and its partners. The limitations to the data collection, the interpretative analysis and the validity of the research's findings will finally be discussed before to move on to the description of our case in the next chapter.

I. Case selection: what development programme to choose?

The Global Gateway strategy was presented by the European Commission on December 1, 2021, in a communication to the European Parliament and the European Council (Join(2021)30, 2021). The first partnership that was adopted after this publication was the Joint Programming Assistance Programme (JPAP) with Togo on December 15, 2021. Although it is clear that the negotiations of the EU-Togo JPAP started well before the official presentation of the Global Gateway, it matches all the features and principles of the strategy and is labelled as a Global Gateway programme by the European Commission (DG-INTPA, 2023). It focusses especially on human development and socio-economic development, notably through human right promotion, sustainable agricultural industries and natural resources as well as the reform of the state through decentralisation (JPAP, 2021). Democratic values, human rights, green partnership and good governance objectives of the Global Gateway are all reflected into the EU-Togo JPAP. After two years, the partnership already started to be implemented by Togo and the EU, and its effects on the country's development are hardly measurable (Join(2021)30, 2021). Our focus in time is however on the design of the partnership and what preceded its adoption as well as on those mechanisms which are already used to monitor it. We do not seek to provide an account or assessment of the partnership's achievements but we evaluate whether the approach and method of its design and evaluation are in line with and favour an NPE.

This focus can provide a good first account of how the Global Gateway is translated into the very daily life practices of EU officials, their approach to development partnerships and the participation (or not) of local communities. It tries to emphasise the expected contribution that the Global Gateway can have to a Normative Power Europe. Togo is also relevant given its geographical location. In its Joint Communication to the European Parliament and European Council, the European Commission identifies ACP countries and specifically Africa as a main target of the strategy. The main financial instrument on which the strategy is relying earmarks half of the funds to Sub-Saharan countries for the period 2021-2027 (€29.18

billion out of €60.39 billion) (European Commission, 2021a). This share of the funds is to be interpreted through a geopolitical lens. The position of China has considerably increased in Africa since the presentation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the country has secured a considerable access to raw materials and rare earth on the continent (Cabestan, 2022). While the EU was criticised for its lack of response to the increasing influence of China in developing countries, the Global Gateway appeared to policy analysts as the European response to the BRI (Sauvignon & Benaglia, 2023; Tagliapietra, 2022). In these regards, the EU-Togo JPAP is highly significant to the EU and its relations with Africa's countries and appears as a strategic partnership for the EU (DG INTPA, 2023).

II. Challenges of a study of the Global Gateway

The Global Gateway, as introduced by the European Commission, has raised expectations vis-à-vis a renewed approach to the EU's international development aid policy. As mentioned in the second chapter of this research, it seemed to align with these three determinants of an NPE as identified by Manners (2023). With keeping in mind that a Normative Power Europe is an objective on its own right, the Global Gateway can be a proxy to assess in what terms the current NPE empirically unfolds. By observing how '*local ownership*' can achieve the three conditions/determinants of a normative power, one may causally assess whether the European Union is departing from a replication of hierarchical relations and empowering its partners.

This approach is new in two regards. First it applies a comprehensive framework that has considerably developed in the last two decades, and which latest design was only recently presented to the scientific community (August 2023). Second, it applies this framework to a so far unexplored empirical case, i.e. the Global Gateway. For instance, the new development aid strategy of the EU is a recent initiative that has been little, if not studied in academia (Karjalainen, 2023). The main loophole that our design tries to overcome is the actual validity of the research. Karjalainen early study of the Global Gateway analyses primary data that is exclusively relying on publicly available documents of the European Commission (2023). Strategic communications, speeches or statements of EU officials are relevant when studying the (social) implications of discursive practices. But this approach suffers from the nature of the empirical materials that is used. Information and communications are often simplified to vehiculate the intended message and key elements can be overshadowed. The inclusion of civil society is often (briefly) mentioned on the materials related to the Global Gateway published by the European Commission. But questions having regard to how this operates are not answered by these documents (Join(2021)30, 2021). Another issue of Karjalainen work is to adopt a rather Eurocentric view that Manners' framework tries to avoid.

The design of our research and the collection of our data tries to avoid these two shortcomings. This research decentres our vision of the Global Gateway by surveying the actual participation of the Togolese civil society in the design and implementation of the EU-Togo JPAP. It also assumes that this participation is key in the success of the partnership's implementation and the efficiency of its related programmes/projects. The data collection also tries to overcome these issues by collecting information and documents from Togolese sources and conducting semi-structured interviews with EU policy-makers to unpack their actual

intentions as regards civil society inclusion. Overall, these data allow to study the actual impact that the Global Gateway has on the EU approach to international development and on the evaluation and monitoring of development partnerships by EU officers.

III. Data collection and concept operationalisation

A. The three sets of collected data

Our data collection was conducted in a way that attempted to, first, decentre the usual Eurocentric analyses of EU development aid and, second, unpack the practical application of the Global Gateway. We collected three types of data/information to do so. The first having regard to the Global Gateway and its institutionalised apparatus in general. It gathers documents on impact assessments, monitoring and evaluations mechanisms (e.g. the Global Europe Performance Monitoring System, the OECD guide on evaluation criteria, Regulation on Global Europe), official documents and communications from the European commission and its Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) and the European Council and Member states (e.g. Joint Communications of the European Commission on the Global Gateway and the role of impact assessments and evaluations in the work of the European Commission, Council conclusions on the impact of development policy) as well as relevant webpages from the European institutions on these topics.

To balance the Eurocentric nature of the first set of documents we mobilise second sources from EU development partner countries. We especially collected documents and information from official Togolese authorities such as the 2015-2020 and 2020-2025 presidencies and the Ministry for Development Planning. These documents were pivotal in elaborating the EU-Togo JPAP. Panel discussions that took place during the Global Gateway forums that were organised in 2022 and 2023², and that invited leaders from the EU and developing countries and partners, are also included (Panel 1 to Panel 7). These conferences were important to identify the consideration given by EU leaders and their partners to the inclusion of the civil society but more importantly to identify the main concerns of decision makers in the Global Gateway. Together, the two first types of data represent 14 documents, which length varies from 3 to 177 pages, for a total of 603 pages and 7 panel discussions ranging from 1 to 2 hours long for a total recording time of 10h 30m and 30s.

Information related to the Global Gateway and the JPAP are completed by a third set of data collected through semi-structured interviews with: An Evaluation Officer in DG INTPA (Interview 1, 36m 25s), an EU officer working on the policy-making of the Global Gateway in DG INTPA (Interview 2, 56m 15s) and the Officer in charge of Civil Society inclusion at the EU Delegation to Togo (Interview 3, 1h 03m 26s) for a total interview time of 2h 36m 06s. These three sets of data/information are completed by the text of the JPAP itself and the existing relevant literature. They will be instrumental when determining what elements from our expectations can be found empirically through our predefined indicators.

² To clarify the terminology that will be used, the events that took place in 2022 was named *European Development Days 2022* and the one organised in 2023 *Global Gateway Forum 2023*.

B. Operationalising expectations' variables

To contribute to a Normative Power Europe (i.e. independent variable) the Global Gateway should set an '*action in concert*' empowering its partners' civil society, while adopting a '*simultaneous awareness*' thinking the impact of the strategy in terms of environmental and social causes and effects together with the civil society, and establish a '*non-adversarial relation*' mutualising the gains of strategy/partnerships in a non-coercive way. Civil society inclusion in the design, impact assessments and monitoring evaluations (i.e. independent variable) is expected to contribute to an NPE (i.e. dependent variable) through these three prerequisites (i.e. causal mechanisms). To measure and detect these abstract concepts in reality we determine a set of indicators for each expectation. **Indicators 1** (a; b; c; d; e; f) will designate those indicators related to the independent variable to this research (i.e. civil society inclusion in the Global Gateway), and **Indicators 2** (a; b; c; d) will refer to those indicators related to the dependent variable of this research (i.e. Normative Power Europe). Information from this section are summarised in Table 1 and Table 2 at the end of this operationalisation part.

1) Expectation 1: the causal relation of inclusive partnership's design with civil society empowerment

An '*action in concert*' (i.e. causal mechanism) is expected to link the effective involvement of the civil society in a partnership's design (i.e. independent variable) to the empowerment of silenced and non-western voices contributing to an NPE (i.e. dependent variable).

In order to determine whether Togo's civil society was included in the design of the JPAP (i.e. independent variable), we look at the method(s) used to design the JPAP (**Indicator 1a**). This focus aims to distinguish the different ways through which the civil society can have been involved into the process (civil society participates to negotiations *vs.* civil society is consulted before/during negotiations) and by whom (the EU or its partner). The documents related to the preparation of the partnership, here the EU Togo development plans with which the JPAP was designed, will be important. The interview conducted with the focal point on civil society inclusion of the EU delegation to Togo and with an Evaluation Officer of DG INTPA will also emphasise the mechanisms that, in practice, allowed civil society inclusion.

Because an '*action in concert*' featuring an NPE is defined as a genuine empowerment of silenced and non-western actors (i.e. dependent variable), the alignment of the partnership priorities (**Indicator 2b**) on the Togolese civil society (**Indicator 2a**) can be expected to translate such empowerment. Civil society needs and priorities of the JPAP can be expressed in various terms and domains, from sanitation and literacy to government reforms, agriculture, fisheries, agro-forestry, SMEs' activities or business environment improvement. Although the Commission staff working documents on the preparation and negotiations of the JPAP would be instrumental to this purpose, these documents are confidential and not disclosed by EU institutions. To overcome this gap and determine whether a participation of the civil society allowed an alignment of needs and priorities in the design of the JPAP, the second and third sets of data will be relevant. To detect the civil society needs we especially rely on Togo's national development plans which feature the main orientations of the development policy of

the country (i.e. PND, 2018-2022; Togo 202). The JPAP priorities will directly be found in the joint programming document adopted by the EU and Togo, as well as additional documents from DG INTPA as regards the projects do be implemented in the country, and the Global Gateway strategy itself.

This focus will determine whether an ‘*action in concert*’ contributing to an NPE causally links the inclusion of the civil society (**1a**) (independent variable) with the empowerment of Togo’s civil society through the alignment between its needs (**2a**) and the EU-Togo JPAP priorities (**2b**) (dependent variable).

2) Expectations 2a and 2b: the causal relation of inclusive impact assessments with holistic causality

A ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ (i.e. causal mechanism) is expected to link the inclusion of the civil society in a partnership’s impact assessment (i.e. independent variable) to its anticipated environmental and social impact(s) on present and future generations (i.e. holistic causality), which contributes to an NPE (i.e. dependent variable).

To determine the effective involvement of civil society in IAs (i.e. independent variable), we look at the alignment of civil society needs (**Indicator 1b**) and JPAP priorities (**Indicator 1c**) as well as the method(s) of impact assessments (**Indicator 1d**). As expressed in the previous paragraph, to match civil society needs and partnership priorities contribute to empower EU partners but also to define sustainable positive development impact for present and future generations. The same documents as in the previous paragraph will be useful in this regard. Indicators **1b** and **1c** are to be analysed besides the method(s) used to conduct impact assessments (**1d**) defining the priorities of a partnership and how civil society inclusion is guaranteed through them. By looking at the methodological approach of these impact assessments, we can determine whether civil society inclusion took part through consultations or their active involvement. The added value of this indicator lies in its ability to distinguish how the civil society was included amongst several processes (be it qualitative or quantitative). The second set of data and official documents such as the National Development Plan Togo 2018-2022 and Togo 2025, and the interview with an EU evaluation officer and the focal point on Civil Society in the EU delegation to Togo will be relevant to observe the variations of these two indicators.

Because a ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ featuring an NPE considers the impact of partnerships for the present and future generations (i.e. dependent variable), the timeframe of the partnership (and the Global Gateway) (**Indicator 2c**) is expected to translate such consideration(s). When discussing the timeframe of a partnership and the Global Gateway, we refer to the timeframe that EU policy makers, leaders and evaluation officers have when they discuss the Global Gateway, its partnerships and their impacts. But it also translates their actual consideration as regards the pursued goal of impact assessments, whether they seek to maximise environmental and social benefits for present and future generations (i.e. a form of transgenerational timeframe). The 3 interviews that were conducted and the 7 panel discussions gathering EU leaders and partner countries will be useful to this purpose.

This focus will determine whether a ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ contributing to an NPE causally links the inclusion of the civil society in IAs (**1b; 1c; 1d**) (i.e. independent variable)

with the timeframe of the JPAP/Global Gateway as perceived by EU policy makers, leaders and partners (2c) (i.e. dependent variable).

3) Expectation 3: the causal relation of inclusive monitoring evaluations with mutualised gains/losses

A ‘*non-adversarial relation*’ (i.e. causal mechanism) is expected to link the inclusion of the civil society in a partnership’s monitoring evaluation (i.e. independent variable) to the mutualisation of gains/losses contributing to an NPE (i.e. dependent variable).

To detect the inclusive feature(s) of monitoring evaluations (i.e. independent variable) we focus on the criteria (**Indicator 1e**) and the method of monitoring evaluations (**Indicator 1f**). The focus of **Indicator 1e** and **Indicator 1f** aims to detect how the civil society is involved into monitoring evaluations, whether the participation of civil society is assessed by evaluators (criteria) and, whether and how it takes part into these monitoring evaluations (civil society conducts evaluations vs. civil society is consulted by evaluators). Official documents and webpages from the European Commission and the OECD on monitoring evaluation, evaluation criteria application and Global Europe performance monitoring, as well as the interview with the Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA will be useful to detect the features of **Indicator 1e** and **Indicator 1f**.

Because a ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ featuring an NPE mutualises the gains/losses of the Global Gateway and its partnerships (i.e. dependent variable), a focus on the nature of the gains/losses (**Indicator 2d**) as perceived by EU policy makers, leaders and partners allows to detect their mutualised nature. The purpose of **Indicator 2d** is to detect how the gains/losses of projects that the civil society/partners are defined, and to compare them with those of the EU. **Indicator 2d** can be identified depending on the nature of the gains/losses, whether they are expressed in economic, environmental, humanitarian, geopolitical or development terms. Gains and losses are therefore not operationalised quantitatively but rather through their qualitative nature. The 7 panel discussions gathering EU and partner leaders, the interview with the EU policy officer on Global Gateway and the official documents related to the Global Gateway from EU institutions and development plans of Togo will be a suitable basis to analyse whether the gains/losses as perceived by the EU and its partners are mutualised.

This focus will determine whether a ‘*non-adversarial relation*’ contributing to an NPE causally links the inclusion of the civil society in monitoring evaluations (**1e**; **1f**) (independent variable) with the non-coercive mutualisation of gains/losses of the JPAP/Global Gateway (**2d**) (dependent variable). The information related to the dependent variable and its indicators are summarised in the following Table 1. The information related to the independent variable and its indicators are summarised in Table 2.

Table 1: Dependent variable and main indicators

Expectations	Main Concept	Dependent Variable	Indicator(s)	Sources
1	Action in concert	Normative Power Europe (Empowerment)	Indicator 2a Civil Society needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan National de Développement (PND) 2018-2022, August 7, 2018 République Togolaise (2020). Feuille de route gouvernementale Togo 2025 European Commission (2021b). Document Conjoint de Programmation. Coopération européenne au Togo 2021-2027 Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission Interview 3, local focal point for Civil Society, EU Delegation to Togo
			Indicator 2b JPAP priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission (2021b). Document Conjoint de Programmation. Coopération européenne au Togo 2021-2027 Décision d'exécution de la Commission du 15/12/2021 relative à l'adoption du programme indicatif pluriannuel pour la République du Togo pour la période 2021-2027, C(2021), 2021 Directorate General for International Partnerships (2023). EU-Togo: Country projects. European Commission Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. The Global Gateway, Join(2021)30, December 1, 2021 Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission
2a	Simultaneous Awareness	Normative Power Europe (Holistic Causality)	Indicator 2c Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission Interview 2, Policy Officer at DG INTPA, Effective Development and Team Europe Unit, European Commission Panel 1 to Panel 7 (see Appendix II)
2b				
3	Non-Adversarial Relation	Normative Power Europe (Non-coercive Mutualisation of Gains/Losses)	Indicator 2d Gains/Losses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. The Global Gateway, Join(2021)30, December 1, 2021 Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères (2023). Séminaire sur la stratégie Global Gateway Eurochambres (2022). Annual Report. European Commission (2021a). Global Europe: Neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument Interview 2, Policy Officer at DG INTPA, Effective Development and Team Europe Unit, European Commission Panel 1 to Panel 7 (see Appendix II)

Table 2: Independent variable and main indicators

Expectations	Main Concept	Independent Variable	Indicator(s)	Sources
1	Action in concert	Effective involvement of the civil society in the design of Global Gateway's partnerships	Indicator 1a Method of design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> République Togolaise (2020). Feuille de route gouvernementale Togo 2025 Plan National de Développement (PND) 2018-2022, August 7, 2018 Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission Interview 3, local focal point for Civil Society, EU Delegation to Togo

2a	Simultaneous Awareness	Quantitative-qualitative impact assessments conducted prior to the implementation of Global Gateway's partnerships	Indicator 1d Method of impact assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> République Togolaise (2020). Feuille de route gouvernementale Togo 2025 Plan National de Développement (PND) 2018-2022, August 7, 2018 Council of the EU (2012). Council conclusions: Increasing the Impact of EU development policy: An agenda for change Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission
2b		Effective participation of Togo's civil society in quantitative-qualitative impact assessments of Global Gateway's partnerships	Indicator 1b Civil Society needs Indicator 1c JPAP priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan National de Développement (PND) 2018-2022, August 7, 2018 République Togolaise (2020). Feuille de route gouvernementale Togo 2025 European Commission (2021b). Document Conjoint de Programmation. Coopération européenne au Togo 2021-2027 Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. The Global Gateway, Join(2021)30, December 1, 2021 European Commission (2021b). Document Conjoint de Programmation. Coopération européenne au Togo 2021-2027 Décision d'exécution de la Commission du 15/12/2021 relative à l'adoption du programme indicatif pluriannuel pour la République du Togo pour la période 2021-2027, C(2021), 2021 Directorate General for International Partnerships (2023). EU-Togo: Country projects. European Commission Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission
3	Non-Adversarial Relation	Inclusive monitoring evaluations mutualising the gains/losses of a Global Gateway partnership	Indicator 1e Criteria of monitoring evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 9 20221 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, L209, 2021. Official Journal of the European Union European Commission (n.d.c). What is monitoring. URL: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/monitoring-and-evaluation/what-monitoring_en OECD (2021). Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully. Éditions OCDE Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions empty. Completing the Better Regulation Agenda: Better Solutions for better results, Com(2017)651, October 24, 2017 Commission staff working document – Launching the Global Europe Performance Monitoring System containing a revised Global Europe Results Framework, SWD(2022)22 Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission Interview 2, Policy Officer at DG INTPA, Effective Development and Team Europe Unit, European Commission Interview 3, local focal point for Civil Society, EU Delegation to Togo

IV. Data analysis: an outside-in and bottom-up analysis

Our method of analysis employs interpretative means of the social context in which the Global Gateway and the EU-Togo JPAP are evolving. Interpretative explanation unveils the “subjective meaning of social action” and tries to go beyond the empirical manifestation of

social behaviours (Manners, 2015, 239). In practice, this approach examines how the EU, Togo or policy-makers and evaluation officers develop their own meaning and understandings of the Global Gateway and the centrality (or not) of its inclusive features (Lukka, 2014, 559). The actors contributing to the JPAP all make their own choice as regards the importance of including the civil society in the design and implementation of the partnership. Thus, interviews and panel discussions are analysed in a way that sheds light, first, on the intention and subjective consideration of EU and partners' leaders and policy makers towards the Global Gateway. It discusses hidden dynamics such as cognitive biases that can create discrepancies between the initial design of the strategy and its practical application. This is suitable in two regards. First, it is relevant when analysing EU policies given the importance of the EU/Brussels bubble which create hermetic policy solutions from EU officials sharing the same background and vision of European integration (Dialer & Richter, 2019; Michel, 2013). Interpretative explanation allows to highlight differences in approaches to development strategies between different actors depending on their attributes (location, public/private interest, role in development aid implementation etc.) (Hines, 1988). This is also suitable given the worldwide nature of international development partnerships which can be expected to have different meaning in the mind of various stakeholders (EU officials, Member states, EU partners as well as local communities, NGOs, private companies, financial actors, etc.).

For instance, this research focus and expectations are based on three specific mechanisms: the design of the JPAP, the impact assessments contributing to its design and the monitoring evaluations contributing to its implementation. For each of these mechanisms, the actors that are involved have varying concerns, expectations or understandings of the Global Gateway and the inclusion of the civil society (or 'local ownership'). Our interpretative explanation observes these social representations of development stakeholders and put them in contrast with those objectives of the Global Gateway on the paper. It juxtaposes the objective meaning of the Global Gateway (when considering the actual strategy as set in stone) and its subjective meaning in the mind of those who put it into practice. This account respects this idea that the society and policies are an entanglement of objective and subjective considerations (Berge & Luckmann, 1971) which variations lead to varying outcomes. The variations in the inclusion of the civil society in the design, implementation and monitoring of the JPAP will causally determine whether the three prerequisites of a normative power are fulfilled and, ultimately, whether the Global Gateway contributes to an NPE through '*local ownership*'. To provide the most comprehensive social analysis as possible, we adopt what Manners calls an '*outside-in/bottom-up*' approach.

Collecting and analysing data 'outside-in' "means to begin outside the core of analysis, then to move in towards the analytical core" (Manners, 2023b). It is translated in practice by beginning with considering non-EU and Western actors, the civil society or NGOs; or all the actors not directly at the centre of the policy-making process (Manners, 2015, 229). This path was followed when designing the expectations of this research. It identified the conditions that the Global Gateway should respect in terms of inclusion and empowerment of partner countries and civil society to favour an NPE. But it also requires to collect the views of the actors impacted on the ground by the Global Gateway projects. Then, as we'll move to the policy spheres we analyse how inclusion of the civil society in the Global Gateway is conceived and

applied in the EU-Togo JPAP by policy-makers and implementers, and how this application strengthens or weakens the EU as a normative power. This will be the object of Chapter 5.

Collecting and analysing data ‘bottom-up’ means to begin at the more local level of encounters where actual relations between the EU and its partners is taking place before to move towards the higher level of political organisation (Manners, 2015, 229; Manners, 2023b, 9). Applied to our case, we first have a look at the EU officials’ activities that directly interact with partners countries and civil society. It encompasses the different institutionalised mechanisms that connects the EU and its partner on the ground, such as impact assessments and monitoring evaluations. This takes place in Chapter 5 with considering the insights derived from the semi-structured interviews and the role of the civil society in designing the EU-Togo JPAP. We then move towards the higher and more aggregated level of organisation which captures the Global Gateway holistically. It analyses the cooperation between the EU and Togo through their partnership by comparing the principles of the Global Gateway on the paper and how they are implemented in practice by EU policy-makers and EU actors in Togo. It also took place in the third section of Chapter 5 when we move from the JPAP dynamics to the considerations of EU leaders and partner countries as regards the Global Gateway’s gains/losses. This last step produces a more comprehensive appraisal of the strategy and determines to what extent the three prerequisites of an NPE are fulfilled by the Global Gateway.

V. Limitations

The international nature of the policy field that this research focusses on creates considerable challenges as regard data and information availability in three regards. First, because international development partnerships are part of international relations, the discourse of EU officials and their partners as regard one agreement can be overly diplomatic and optimistic. This tends to overemphasise certain aspects and benefits of a partnership over others. Second, the simplified presentation of policies/strategies sketch out the main ideas/guidelines of the Global Gateway but do not provide identifiable examples of projects or benefits. They rely on numbers telling what money will be disbursed to fund what project or state that civil society will be duly included but these do not tell us about the practicalities of the programmes. They tell about intentions but hardly translate the actual efforts and means through which these efforts are unfolding. The semi-structured interviews that are conducted for the purpose of this research mitigate these challenges by obtaining the necessary information directly from the stakeholders in charge of the mechanisms falling under this research’s scrutiny, which provides it with a good internal validity. Nonetheless, these interviews were conducted only with EU officials in Brussels and Lomé (Togo) due to the lack of replies from Togolese civil society organisations involved into the programme and the Togolese representatives in Belgium and Togo. This limits the internal coherence of the project that aims to integrate silenced voices and actors in IR into the study through both the data collection and analysis. However, we can estimate that the interpretation of the subjective intentions of EU policy makers combined with the official measures taken to include the civil society can provide a good first account of the participative dimension of the Global Gateway.

The external validity of the research is contingent on its single-case design and varies depending on the mechanisms that are discussed. When considering evaluation mechanisms,

external validity is high. This is explained by the positions of the interviewees, whose work is focussing directly on the Global Gateway, its operationalisation, and not on specific partnerships. In other terms, they are mechanisms that are applied across the board in a similar way from one partnership to another. It can be easily generalised to the whole population of cases and programmes signed under the Global Gateway in that regard. When looking at the inclusion of local communities on the ground in Togo (through impact assessments), results are more likely to be specific to the EU-Togo partnership. The context can vary from one country to another and lead to different results and even to different partnerships. For instance, our results will show that impact assessments are conducted exclusively by EU partners if they deem relevant to do so. In addition, elements such as political crises or conflicts can be impediments to local communities' participation and even to the whole implementation of development partnerships (Interview 1). With respect to such exogenous factors, the external validity of the research is low.

The replicability of the measurement is conditioned by the very nature of the research and theoretical framework. Because the NPA is a critical social theory it requires a subjective appraisal of what appears to the leader of this research as the empirical reality (Manners, 2021). "Observation is never completely divorced from theory" (Toshkov, 2016, 142) and our analysis is also influenced by the constructivist lens that we adopt. The interpretative method used to analyse our empirical data is positioned along that line. Manners' approach is fundamentally identified as a postcolonial and post-imperial theory which objective is to empower marginalised and subsumed actors in IR (Manners, 2023). This can have a direct effect on the analysis of the empirical material that was collected by seeing given dynamics as potentially harmful or unsuitable for local communities' participation while they do not experience it as such. This effect of postcolonial studies is criticised in a work by Haastrup who argues that studies adopting a postcolonial approach are prone to exclude local political dynamics and actors' view from their work (2013). The replicability of the findings may vary in this regard but to keep it as constant as possible and to limit the biased interpretation of the research, we tried to stick to the criteria of an NPE as outlined by Manners and do not overstretch the concepts.

Chapter 4 – Case description

The EU-Togo JPAP was adopted on December 15, 2021, by the European Commission jointly with France and Germany. Consistent with the Team Europe approach – which is an approach seeking to involve financial institutions, the industry as well as Member states – Germany’s GIZ and France’s AFD joined their forces to the Commission in order to design a partnership in multiple areas. By doing so, each actor is able to identify the fields and sectors it is best at and complete each other’s weaknesses or missing capabilities. Although Germany and France are not participating to all the projects featuring the programme, the European Commission is contributing, financially or materially, to all of them. This also means that the mechanisms identified in our expectations are to be used by the Commission in the implementation of all the projects of the programme³. This being said, the EU-Togo JPAP set three priority domains of interventions: 1) to act in favour of human development and inclusion; 2) to develop Togo’s agricultural industry and an environment-friendly economy and; 3) to consolidate a peaceful and resilient society. Each domain is more extensively presented in the following lines.

To the EU and Togo, human development is closely related and dependent on poverty alleviation and socio-economic inclusion. The multidimensional aspect of human development requires to target a wide set of services which access to will be generalised and reinforced with the assistance of the JPAP. The programme identifies the following sectors as a priority: 1) the access to water, sanitation, health, education and culture; 2) clean, sustainable et efficient energy services through clean energy infrastructures and electrification and; 3) efficient and affordable digital services including through developing connectivity, skills, entrepreneurship and e-services. The development of these capacities is designed as a pivotal requirement to realise Togo’s objectives to create an inclusive economy that creates decent jobs and is based on the respect of social and economic rights of individuals including gender equity.

The second priority domain is the agricultural industry and the management of natural resource. Efforts are concentrated on the improvement of the means of production and transformation of agricultural products as well as the reinforcement of fisheries and agro-forestry value chains. These priorities are identified to help Togo to face the consequences of climate change as the country is one the most vulnerable to its consequences. This vulnerability is eventually explained by its strong reliance on agricultural, fisheries, forestry and farming activities. They are central to the country’s economy as an estimated 70% of the population is dependent on them while representing 40% of the country’s GDP and being worth 15% of its country’s exports. To complete the improvement of infrastructures and practices in these sectors, the EU-Togo JPAP supports the removal of technical and legal impediments to business. It encourages the adoption and integration of international and European standards to facilitate Togo’s trade with its partners from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with the EU. The rationale is to create a favourable business environment and to liberalise the economy to facilitate but also to attract foreign investments in the country. Thus, besides the material and financial assistance provided by the EU, a technical assistance aims at steering Togo’s capacities towards its effective inclusion in the global economy and international trade.

³ This assumption was validated by the Interview 2 during the interview.

In that regard, the JPAP is also accompanying the modernisation of the legal and regulatory framework of the country, which can also be found in its third priority domain.

At the heart of the Global Gateway lies an intertwined relation between effective democratic governance and sustainable development for present and future generations. Following a period of socio-political crisis between 1991 and 2006, Togo initiated a series of political and institutional reforms to strengthen the country's democratic apparatus. The reform of the Constitution, the voting procedure or the Constitutional Court and the Court of Auditors were however not sufficient in a system weakened by corruption. As framed by the European Commission Togo's development is conditioned by the strengthening of the rule of law, democracy, social cohesion and security as well as the fight against corruption, which corresponds to the second priority domain of the JPAP. The assistance that is provided to modernise Togo and its institutional structures identifies three objectives: 1) to guarantee peace on Togo's territory, especially as regards the risks created by terrorism and organised crime; 2) to allow Togolese citizens, notably women and young people, to be involved in political and economic decision-making processes at the national and local level and; 3) to strengthen, modernise and professionalise the national public administration to guarantee macro-economic stability and support economic growth. These objectives are set notably to overcome and solve the current issues related to the management of international development funds. Despite significant improvements of its institutional apparatus, the country is still being impacted by embezzlement and nepotism practices (JPAP, 2022).

Overall, the EU-Togo JPAP features strong objectives to include the civil society and the improvement of local communities' conditions in different fields of development. The next chapter will analyse the JPAP in light of the expectations that were formulated in the third chapter. It will determine whether the civil society is involved and taken into account in the different mechanisms related to the design, implementation and review of the partnership. The findings suggest that the design process effectively and efficiently included the civil society, which translates an '*action in concert*'. However, the lack of long-term vision of policy-makers directly prevent the '*simultaneous awareness*' of the Global Gateway and the non-mutualisation of gains/losses of the partnership acts as an impediment to a '*non-adversarial relation*'.

Chapter 5 – Analysis and results

To contribute to a normative power Europe, the Global Gateway is to set mechanisms allowing the civil society to take part in the design, impact assessment and monitoring evaluation of development partnerships. The participation of the civil society doesn't only satisfy democratic standards, it also guarantees more suitable and realistic programmes corresponding to what people on the ground need and the challenges they face (Jensen & Winthereik, 2013; Madon, 1999; Hayes & Westrup, 2012; Kendall et al., 2015; Kendall, 2007; Kothari et al., 2001; Rahnema, 2010). The following three sections analyse the role of the civil society at the various stages of the partnerships, from its design to the monitoring of its implementation. It will also consider the vision of EU policy makers vis-à-vis the Global Gateway to determine the subjective meaning that they give to civil society inclusion and participation. The first section analyses the consultative features of the design process of the JPAP and how they favour an '*action in concert*'. The second section discusses the impact of a long-term timeframe and inclusive impact assessments through a '*simultaneous awareness*'. Finally, the third and final section discusses the impact of methodological inclusion of civil society in the monitoring of the Global Gateway's partnerships and the definition given by EU policy makers to the mutualisation of gain/losses on EU-Togo ('*non-adversarial*') relations.

I. The inclusive design process of the EU-Togo JPAP as a direct empowerment of silenced voices

The active involvement of the civil society into the design of Global Gateway partnerships directly empowers those silenced actors towards whom development aid is directed by setting an '*action in concert*' through '*local ownership*', which is a prerequisite to an NPE. To contribute to an NPE, the Global Gateway and the JPAP are to set necessary mechanisms allowing for the transposition of civil society needs (**Indicator 2a**) into the partnership's priorities (**Indicator 2b**). The EU-Togo Joint Programming Assistance Programme was adopted for a period of seven years starting in 2021 and terminating at the end of 2027. Covering three main priority domains, the JPAP is designed and labelled as a Global Gateway programme (DG INTPA, 2023) and explicitly values the participation of the civil society into its implementation. For instance, each of the three axes presented in the previous chapters include provisions on the empowerment of the civil society and its active involvement in the decentralisation of the state, the fight against corruption, the monitoring of public expenditures or the fight for peace and security (JPAP, 2021, 32). This inclusion is therefore defined as an objective of the programme. But development is also a matter of process and cannot be solely thought in terms of goals (Manea, 2020). The inclusive dimension of the programme should be investigated more holistically and should capture the processes of elaboration of the partnership. When looking farther in the past, the design of the JPAP went through successive steps of negotiations and design. Priorities were fixed independently from the EU's influence and remained strictly limited to these sectors that Togo identified as its own civil society's needs. For instance, Togo conducted on its own the consultative process that preceded the adoption of the JPAP and defined its priorities.

The consultative process that allowed to identify the needs of the civil society in terms of development, and to transpose them in the JPAP priorities was a nation-wide qualitative and quantitative impact assessment (IA) conducted by the Togolese presidency, which was not expected in our expectation's design. This IA took place under the exclusive supervision of Togo's authorities. As stressed by a policy officer of the European Commission in charge of strategic evaluation of development partnerships, *ex ante* impact assessments are conducted exclusively by partner countries (Interview 1). The unit in charge of these impact assessment is even identified as "not very active" and its role limited to the overview of the priorities "expressed by partner countries" (Interview 1). As he further explained, "it is not that usual [for the EU] to have development assessments before you start a development project" because the priorities of partnerships "are based on the needs expressed on the partners from the developing countries throughout negotiations [...] and those are the ones that we use to plan and design our projects" (Interview 1). By letting the partner country identifying what it needs and bringing the demands it wants on the table of the negotiations, the EU seems to favour a relationship that relies on trust, respect and equality. These factors are unavoidable components to a long-term cooperation (Kavalski, 2013). To act otherwise could bring about counterproductive effects on the durability of the partnership but also on the results and benefits of the programmes. As discussed by Kavalski, it favours the convergence of standards and norms between partners (2013, 262). This convergence took place as a voluntary dynamic from both the EU and Togo through the Togo 2025 strategy, and the inclusive qualitative and quantitative impact assessments that were led by Togo to elaborate it.

The Togo 2025 governmental roadmap sets the principal guidelines for the strategic development of its economy and the restructuration of its governance apparatus. The three priority sectors that it identifies were all decided following a nation-wide consultation of the economic and development stakeholders in the country identifying the needs of its population (PMCED, 2022). Togo 2025 was adopted in 2021 to replace the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2022 following the Covid-19 pandemic. Although it is a new strategy, the Togo 2025 roadmap is elaborated on the results of the consultative mechanism of the NDP and was adapted to the post-pandemic context (Togo, 2025). Togo 2025 is therefore based on the results of the NDP and identifies the priorities for the development of the country for the ongoing presidency. The roadmap followed a country-wide public consultation that invited multiple actors to discuss their views as regard the cap that the country should follow. It involved representatives from the private sector, ministries, financial partners as well as actors at the territorial level such as subnational public administrations and the civil society (NDP, 2018, XVI-XVII). The civil society composed of unions, federations and local volunteering associations had the chance to raise its voice and to discuss the main economic, social and political challenges that they face in their daily lives. The consultations took the form of public meetings during which the abovementioned stakeholders were invited to participate as well as quantitative surveys distributed to samples of the population (NDP, 2018). The local needs that they identified can be directly found in the JPAP in each of the three priority domains of intervention.

In the agricultural sector, a specific attention was given to representatives of traditional farming and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (NPD, 2018, 2). Their consultation allowed to identify the financial needs faced by SMEs and small farmers due to the drop of

their income caused by the pandemic and the bad weather, and the burden of loan interests (Togo 2025, 2020, 6). This was conducted through a quantitative survey with 350 respondents, identifying the main difficulties faced by these actors and estimating the financial constraints to which they are subject (Togo 2025, 2020, 6). In that respect, Togo 2025 made of the support to the agricultural sector a development priority based in the expressed needs of its population. It aims at modernising it in view of responding to the country's population needs and to develop its international trade activities (Togo 2025, 2020, 16). In line with this objective, the JPAP priority on agro-business allocates funds to increase the productivity and production of agriculture, farming and fisheries activities (JPAP, 2021, 27). It also incorporated a commitment to improve the business environment with developing certifications, industrial transformation of agricultural products, support competition hubs and to facilitate the access of SMEs to the European market and the AfCFTA.

To favour human development, digitalisation of the economy and public services, the development of energetics capabilities and the access to clean water were identified as central objectives to human development in the NPD and Togo 2025 as well. Human development is designed as one of the three top priorities of the JPAP which is, once again, aligned on the needs of the civil society identified during Togo 2025's IA. The JPAP supports Togo's objective to achieve the access of 95% of the population to internet and clean water by 2025 and the production of 200MW of electricity from clean energy sources. The aid notably targets the modernisation and deployment on the territory of the electricity grid including the development of risk-management instruments on the network and smart-grid systems (JPAP, 2021, 18). It also finances the government's installation of boreholes and the rehabilitation of water tanks, especially in the peri-urban and rural areas (JPAP, 2021, 17).

Finally, the alignment between the IA of Togo 2025 and the JPAP translates in the sectors related to the institutional reforms and governance efforts of Togo: the third priority of the JPAP and one of the three strategic axes of Togo 2025 (i.e. institutional structure reforms). For instance, Togo has undertaken reforms for the decentralisation and de-concentration of the state apparatus (Togo 2025, 70). This need seeks to promote and respect democratic values as well as to strengthen its military capacities to face security challenges related to terrorism and organised crime (NDP, 2018, 61). The third JPAP priority provides support to strengthen the security and defence forces of Togo to face threats such as maritime insecurity, smuggling, organised crime and cybercrime (JPAP, 2021, 31-32). More importantly, it participates to dialogue of these forces with the civil society and to foster the dialogue between local populations and national administrations, notably by operationalising the funds supporting territorial administrations and dividing the competences between local and central authorities (JPAP, 31-34).

The consultation and active involvement of the civil society at multiple levels enabled to align the priorities of the JPAP on Togo's identified needs. Although these alignments could be limited to a mere association, the multiple references to Togo 2025 in the JPAP allows us to reach more causal ground. For instance, the JPAP repeatedly states in the text that it was designed: in order to achieve these objectives, the European Union, Germany and France have adopted a strategy of cooperation strategy based on three axes aligned with the Togo 2025

roadmap⁴ (JPAP, 2021, 11). The complementarities between the JPAP and Togo 2025 emphasise an actual and effective inclusion of the civil society and local communities' needs (associations, NGOs, unions) in the design of the EU-Togo partnership's priorities. To do not intervene in the identification of Togo's development priorities sets a relation that is not guided by prescriptive guidelines determined by the EU but by the '*local ownership*' of the JPAP priorities. This social relation between the EU and Togo can be interpreted as an '*action in concert*' based on "trust" (Interview 1), respect and aiming at empowering Togo to face the environmental, economic, social or security challenges that it faces (JPAP, 2021; Manners, 2023a; Manners, 2023b). This approach to a development based on the needs identified by the receivers of development aid can be traced back to European Consensus on Development (ECD) adopted in 2017 and its renewed vision of development (Beringer, 2019; Interview 2). The Global Gateway follows a political will to shift from a strictly "donor-beneficiary" to a notion of partners where the EU and third countries "build together, define together what is needed" (Interview 2). By aligning the priorities of the JPAP on Togo 2025, the EU favours the '*local ownership*' of the partnership's priorities by the civil society and the voluntary adoption of norms such as democratic principles and human rights. As stressed in both the JPAP and the NDP, the measures to favour public transparency and civil society monitoring of public expenditures are conditions to the democratic and human development fulfilments of the country (JPAP, 2021, 35-36; NDP, 2018, 64-66). The design process of the JPAP through inclusive impact assessments conducted by Togo respects that line and led to a tailored approach to Togo's development which also aligns on the values of the EU. The empowerment of the civil society through the JPAP therefore appears as a direct consequence of the civil society inclusion in its design. Most of our results on the empowerment of the civil society and the alignment of needs and priorities ('*relation in concert*' through '*local ownership*') are derived from the analysis of the impact assessment set by Togo. These results will also be instrumental to discuss our second set of expectations on the role of qualitative-quantitative IAs on a '*simultaneous awareness*'.

II. A lack of long-term vision of EU policy-makers as an impediment to a Normative Power Europe's holistic causality

Quantitative and qualitative impact assessment ensuring the participation of local communities are expected to guarantee a way of thinking actions in terms of causes and effects for present and future generations (i.e. holistic causality) through a '*simultaneous awareness*', which is a prerequisite to an NPE (Manners, 2023b). As mentioned by Manners, to take into account the negative impact of the economy and industry on the environment and to take the measures necessary to alleviate/mitigate them is pivotal to a '*simultaneous awareness*' (Manners, 2023b, 6-7). The holistic causality between development aid/programme (causes) and expected benefits (effects) for present and future generations are well emphasised through the Togo 2025 strategy on which the JPAP is based. But also, through the consideration given to the development of green energy production, the management of natural resources or biodiversity protection and restoration (JPAP, 2021, 23-29). These objectives are pursuing a

⁴ Translated from French to English by the author.

wider purpose than the development of Togo as they are priorities identified to tackle climate change and protect the environment, and based on Togo's civil society needs. Similar to the results of the previous section, the priorities of the JPAP on the protection are all derived from the results of the Togo 2025's qualitative-quantitative IA and its results to strengthen the: regulation on the protection of natural resources and limit pollution⁵ (Togo 2025, 71). However, besides thinking in terms of causes and effects of development aid on the environment, it is necessary for a Global Gateway that works for a normative power Europe to widen the EU's awareness in time. To bring about environmental and social benefits for present and future generations is also a condition to this '*simultaneous awareness*' and requires a vision that goes beyond the official timeframe of a Global Gateway programme. However, the vision of EU policy makers to development impact is more contrasted in that regard and their timeframe overly limited.

On the paper, the Global Gateway is designed as a strategy that aims at creating "an impact that can last" (Interview 2) and as a way "to deliver on our climate ambitions" in the long-term (Shaw-Barragan, 2023; Panel 1). In the words of the Deputy Prime-Minister of Vietnam discussing the added value of hydrogen-related projects of the Global Gateway, the strategy is designed on the long-term to tackle climate change: "when we talk about climate change, green transition and also, green hydrogen, I believe that hydrogen is the vaccine to climate change [...] and to achieve the objective of net-zero emissions by 2050 or even earlier" (Panel 3). To the politicians intervening during the Global Gateway Forum 2023, the strategy is a "clear sign of investment in our forward shared future" (Šefčovič during Panel 3). However, despite this long-term political vision, the Global Gateway's timeframe appears more limited at the policy-making stage. As explained by a Policy Officer at DG INTPA working on the policy design of the Global Gateway, the timeframe of the Global Gateway programmes varies depending on the projects that feature it. For instance, "some of them are more, I would not say short or long term, but maybe the different types of sector define the timeframe" (Interview 2). Although this sounds like a logical statement that frames a partnership in time through its beginning and termination date, it can also mean that the Global Gateway's vision is limited to the realisation and implementation of its partnerships. It doesn't consider the effects that it will have upon the termination date of the partnership. Hence, the timeframe is expected to vary from "two to twenty years" depending on whether the partnership "builds classrooms or a bridge" (Interview 2). Although this statement can be interpreted differently, a look at the purpose and timeframe of *ex post* evaluations of partnerships tend to confirm our interpretation.

When a partnership ends, *ex post* evaluations can be conducted in order to assess the impact of the overall programme on the partner country's development. These *ex post* evaluations are the only mechanisms that operate after the termination of a programme and could extend its timeframe. They are conducted through quantitative tools measuring, for example, the economic impact on the partner country. Qualitative surveys are also used by conducting interviews of all different types of stakeholders involved into a programme, including local communities impacted by projects. As explained during Interview 1 "we also always contact the local organisations, civil society organisations, the NGOs that are involved or have been involved in the projects; usually the evaluator conducts interviews or surveys also

⁵ Translated from French to English by the author.

with beneficiaries, so the population, local population that is targeted by the action that receives the assistance” (Interview 1). The use of these two types of surveys is ideal to approximate the empirical results of the partnerships on the ground as it put quantitative measurements into perspective with local contexts and the experience lived by local communities (Duncombe, 2009; Hayes & Westrup, 2012; Interview 2).

Although *ex post* evaluations evaluate the sustainability of partnerships (i.e. whether the impact will last upon the termination date) (Interview 1), they are led for two main purposes which are not related to the durability and the longer-term impact the partnership. First, it is following a learning objective that aims “to learn from what we did to see what happened, how it happened, why, to judge the results that we produced, to look at the impact of the action” (Interview 1). Second, evaluation officers “want to look at impact it has, we want to see that we can justify the expenditure of the resources” for an accountability purpose (Interview 1). Although the learning objective could also serve the partner country by providing it with an *ex post* impact evaluation of its partnership, these evaluations are used internally by the Commission to adapt their approach to future partnerships. In practice, when the unit in charge of the *ex post* evaluation issues its report, it “conclude[s] with recommendations that we present to the services in my DG, so international partnerships, the relevant services that deal with the country, the topic, the [policy] area” (Interview 1). The benefits of these evaluations are primarily aiming at improving the different instruments and approaches used in the evaluated partnership in order to do not replicate mistakes and have better adaptive capacities. They do not aim to change an implemented project that would not have an efficient impact (Interview 1). In other terms, the long-term perspective and causality of the evaluation mechanisms is directed towards the evolution of the Global Gateway strategy and not towards the durability of the strategy’s partnerships and its impact on the environment and society. Despite the role played by Togo 2025 to align the civil society needs and the JPAP priorities, and the impact assessments’ inclusive method that served to its design, the limited vision adopted by policy-makers and evaluations hardly translate a holistic causality thinking the Global Gateway in terms of environmental and social causes and effects. The civil society inclusion in the impact assessment of Global Gateway’s partnerships is decoupled from its timeframe, and the EU’s ‘*simultaneous awareness*’ isn’t relating them to each other.

III. A non-mutualisation of benefits despite inclusive monitoring: the intentions of policy-makers as the principal impediment to a Normative Power Europe

Ex ante and *ex post* evaluations are not the only evaluation mechanisms that are operating in Global Gateway’s partnerships. Monitoring the progress of development programme and projects is also pivotal to ensure that the means deployed through the JPAP reaches the ends that it aims at (Jensen & Winthereik, 2013). According to our expectation, inclusive monitoring evaluations can mutualise the gains/losses of a Global Gateway partnership in a non-coercive way, and provide a suitable ground for a ‘*non-adversarial*’ relation to take place. To conduct these monitoring evaluations together with local communities impacted by the programmes and projects ensures that the constraints of local contexts are effectively considered. But it also allows to maximise the gains of a partnership for both sides

of the agreement, and therefore to mutualise their benefits. In addition, it can modify the implementation path of a programme if necessary but also limit the prescriptive nature of the modifications required to put the project back on track. The monitoring missions led by the EU in the frame of the Global Gateway's partnerships are following specific criteria to evaluate the progresses that are made. These criteria are all based on international standards and especially the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (European Commission, n.d.c; Global Europe, 2021, 46; SWD(2022)22, 2022).

Midterm assessments (i.e. monitoring evaluations) are conducted mainly by EU Delegations (in our case, in Togo) which outsource the management of the evaluation (Interview 2; Interview 3). In practice, "there is this huge consultancy which have experts available and they [...] try to find an expert that corresponds to the job" (Interview 3). Once the consultancy is selected, the midterm assessment uses four out of the six OECD criteria as its main evaluation framework, being: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability (European Commission, n.d.c). For instance, *ex post* evaluations and monitoring evaluations are based on these internationally recognised criteria to assess the implementation of development partnerships (Global Europe, 2021; Interview 1). They are "applied across the board by pretty much any donor that exists" and settle a common methodology that favours comparability of aid programmes/partnerships (Interview 1). Amongst these four criteria, none is directly related to the inclusion of civil society into the partnership, be it at the design, implementation or evaluation stage of the partnership. For instance, relevance is used "for assessing if the action is well suited for the problem at hand", efficiency analyses "how well are we using the resources to achieve these results", effectiveness refers to the "real benefits that we achieved, how the results are answering the objectives of the action" and sustainability looks at "if the result will continue or are likely to continue after we end the program and we stop providing the resources" (Interview 2; OECD, 2021, 18).

Inclusive monitoring evaluations can take several forms, including through consultative practices of local populations, civil society organisations and NGOs involved into the implementation of a partnership (Aked, 2016). As indicated in the Global Europe regulation (the financial instrument used by the Global Gateway and providing the funds of the EU-Togo JPAP), the data necessary to reflect on the progress of the programmes are collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods (2021, 47). For instance, all evaluation missions directed by DG INTPA, be it midterm assessments or *ex post* evaluations, "always contact the local organisations, civil society organisations, the NGOs that are involved or have been involved in the projects" (Interview 1). Qualitative collection of information goes through conducting surveys as well as interviews with the relevant stakeholders of the partnership at all levels, from the very local village in which a school was built to the European and Togolese institutional-governmental level. The participatory nature of the monitoring system of the EU Global Gateway partnerships is to be appreciated through its consultative methodology rather than through its criteria and more active role of local communities who would conduct the monitoring mission. It allows to identify the actual impediments to the projects depending on its impact on local population and according to them, ensuring their ability to define their "own good life" in a non-coercive but inclusive way (David et al., 2023, 9). However, this inclusive dimension hardly translates a mutualisation of benefits and losses between the EU and its

partners which seems to be decoupled from each other. The conception of gains and losses from the EU and its partners rather seems to be defined individually and as win-win situations.

The mutualisation of the Global Gateway's impact is a second unavoidable condition of a '*non-adversarial relation*' between the EU and its partners (Manners, 2023b). To question how are conceived the benefits/impacts of the Global Gateway's partnerships by the EU, it is relevant to question the motives of its aid attribution. An important aspect of the EU-Togo JPAP that was discussed in the previous and current chapters is the support provided to build up a business environment for Togo to thrive economically and through trade with the EU market and the African market. More accurately, the EU commits to assist Togo to improve the business environment to "encourage private investments in support of the agricultural sector and to support the emergence of an environment favourable to entrepreneurship, foreign investment and to the development of very small and medium-sized enterprises" (JPAP, 2021, 24). To accompany this improvement, the European Chamber of Commerce in Togo (Eurocham Togo) is strengthened and is in charge to represent the interests of European private and financial actors in the country (JPAP, 2021, 24; Eurochambers, 2022, 5). The reform of the economic governance of the country is part of the Togo 2025 strategy's objective to reinforce the country's attractiveness for investments (Togo 2025, 2020, 17). Although this might be interpreted as an alignment between the JPAP and Togo 2025 priorities, it also underlines the instrumental nature that the development assistance to Togo has.

For instance, at the policy-making stage, the Global Gateway was elaborated to reach specific benefits for the EU. They include the development of certain "value chains", the production of specific products as well as the access to critical raw materials (Okonjo-Iweala, 2023; Interview 2). Here, two dynamics are important to consider. First, the EU development aid policy, and especially the Global Gateway and its Team Europe approach, is significantly driven by trade and economic interests. The Team Europe approach aims to mobilise all Europe-based actors to participate in development partnerships including Member states, public financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank, but also the private sector and European companies and SMEs (Join(2021)30, 2021). Development partnerships become a tool to obtain market access, to produce market standard (or normative) convergence and require to create the incentives for European businesses to invest in the partner country (Commissioner Šefčovič during Panel 3⁶; Belgium's Minister for Development Cooperation during Panel 5; Interview 2; Beringer, 2019). The several panel discussions that took place in Brussels during the European Development Days 2022 and the Global Gateway Forum 2023 well emphasised the centrality of this economic/market feature. Out of the 7 panel discussions analysed in our study, the regulatory, standard or normative convergence of the EU's and partners' markets has been discussed in 5 panels. Be it related to patent recognitions in the field of pharmaceuticals (Panel 5), the alignment with the *acquis communautaire* and European standards for infrastructures (Panel 2; Panel 6), green energy production (Panel 3) and digital services and data protection (Panel 7).

While discussing development cooperation in education, health, transport and connectivity or green transitions, the invited leaders from the EU and partner countries mostly

⁶ Maroš Šefčovič is Executive Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.

discussed the opportunities in trade of these development priorities and for “boosting competitiveness” and private investments (Representative of Bangladesh, Panel 2; Minister of EU Affairs from Sweden, Panel 7). Development was described as a moral, and more or less formal, commitment from both the EU and its partners, with the former supporting the industrial basis development of the partner, and the latter reforming its system to welcome companies. This dimension was key to Zambia’s Minister of Finance and National Planning when he declared: “we ourselves have to create an environment that is conducive to the private sector, to bring in the capital, bring in the management expertise, to bring in the marketing channels” (Panel 4). Invited to a panel discussion on ‘Green Energy Transition and Green Hydrogen’, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič intervened according to this economic narrative as he said that “we have the kind of feeling that [the Global Gateway forum] is the new Davos in Brussels”. Following up on this aspect, the president of the EIB defined the Global Gateway as a strategy that “need[s] to bring innovation, AI technology, development and financing together” (Panel 2). These prevailing economic and trade-related motives of the Global Gateway and its stakeholders can be also be found at the structural core of a seminar/forum dedicated to the strategy that took place in France few months before the Global Gateway Forum. In addition to gathering exclusively private economic and industrial actors, the event framed the Global Gateway as being: first and foremost a strong economic programme, which aims at positioning the European Union as a major actor of the economic development of partner countries (Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, 2023, 4)⁷. As framed by EU policy-makers, “the cooperation is evolving a lot and we are also trying to link it with investment packages, with trade, with trade agreement or working on specific value chains like to use all the potential that the business can bring because with only public money we’re not going to achieve our goals” (Interview 2). Thus, the Global Gateway is mostly framed by EU policy-makers, leaders and partners through the economic opportunities that it provides to their companies and populations.

A second dynamic of the Global Gateway is related to its geopolitical motives as it was proposed as a (European) alternative to China’s Belt and Road Initiative and growing influence in Africa (Cabestan, 2022; Okonjo-Iweala, 2023; Tagliapietra, 2022) and was adapted to secure medium-term supplies to key resources following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia (Interview 2). When discussing the added value of the Indo-Pacific region for the Global Gateway and Europe, the Minister of Planning of Bangladesh especially stressed that given “geostrategic location, stability and certain economic growth, we can continue to enhance security, safety and resilience of the people of Europe and Asia” through development cooperation (Panel 2). The geopolitical and economic dimensions that seem to nurture the Global Gateway are not decoupled from each other, in certain cases they are interdependent as it was recalled during the Global Gateway Forum panel on freight corridors between EU and Asia: “since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there has been a significant drop of specifically trade, which was before going on the so-called Northern Corridor. Now this has, of course, very much now shifted more in the south which, of course, bring [Kazakhstan] in the middle of transport corridors [...] connecting central Asia with Europe” (Panel 6). The instrumental

⁷ Translated from French to English : “Global Gateway est avant tout un programme économique fort, qui vise à positionner l’Union européenne comme un acteur majeur du développement économique des pays partenaires”.

dynamic that the Global Gateway, and development aid in general, is following aims at creating economic security benefits for both the EU (Member states) and partner countries (Elgstrom, 2011). However, the share of gains that takes place intervenes in a more different way than the mutualisation of partnerships' benefits/impacts that a normative power Europe should pursue.

A Normative Power Europe having '*non-adversarial relations*' is to pursue a development policy that contributes not only to its own environmental, economic or social gains. But it should create benefits for the planet as a whole (Manners, 2023b). The gains of the Global Gateway partnerships' benefits are of course first benefiting the EU and Togo but they do not think their relation holistically as serving a planetary good. These gains are approached by EU policy-makers as strictly limited to the parties of each partnership (Interview 2) and do not bind each parties' destiny to each other. What Manners implied when he discussed the intertwined nature of individuals' life is that the intentions of the EU in its partnerships must be to contribute to the development of its partner(s) and to environmental and social equity for the planet as whole. The instrumental vision of the EU Global Gateway rather translates an individualist view that tries to create different benefits for the EU and its partners. The win-win partnership described by Jean-Louis Ville (director for Middle East, Asia and Pacific at DG INTPA) differentiates the gains of the EU from the one of its partners while it should rather mutualise them (Panel 2). This trend is found at the core of the Minister of Finance and National Planning of Zambia when he discusses development aid benefits as followed: "you do more additional value, you create jobs in Africa, you create incomes in Africa, our pockets are full and I'm sure this will also be a win-win solution for you because with the money in our pockets I'm sure there will be so many things that you make here in Europe and America that we can buy from you which we shall not be producing. So, this is a win-win solution" (Panel 4). To EU decision-makers and leaders, and partner countries, the very conception attached to the gains of the Global Gateway are: first, expressed in economic but not social and environmental terms and; second, differentiated depending on the actors of the partnership.

According to an EU policy-maker, this differentiation is due to the limited budget for development of the EU and the type of polity that the Union is (Interview 2). The EU has developed as a political actor through the adoption of its successive treaties and it was also established on economic and trade foundations through the creation of its single market (Gilbert, 2021). The force of the European single market outside the European borders lies in its power of attraction. Combined together with its (political) institutional structure, its market and the organisation of the various private interests provides the EU with a Market Power, an influence through the pressures it can exert with its market which is directly opposed to Manners' notion of power (Damro, 2021; Geeraert & Drieskens, 2017). Serving as a basis to its external relations, the power of the European market is at the core of the development policy of the EU. This is notably well emphasised by Elgstrom (2011) who shows that the progressive evolution of the EU development policy combined development concerns with trade-oriented views. This was echoed by the policy officer in charge of the Global Gateway during Interview 2 who stated "it's also a matter of also what you were saying on the longer view, if you want to create a system that works you need to build the business environment you need to enabling sectors that can allow this development". The intertwining of trade and development within the Global Gateway conditions social and environmental development on economic/trade benefits which directly affects the vision of the gains of partnerships. This is notably due to the limited

budgetary capacities of the EU (Interview 2). As stressed earlier, the Team Europe approach aims at involving multiple European actors to mobilise more funds and create an offer that can compete with the massive development investment plan of China (Interview 2; Tagliapietra, 2022). The political system of the EU directly influences its approach to development and, ultimately, the vision that it has with its partners of the gains and losses of partnerships. Despite the inclusive features (criteria and method) of the monitoring evaluations of the Global Gateway's partnerships, the instrumental and decoupled nature of their benefits hardly translate a non-coercive mutualisation of gains/losses. The civil society inclusion in the monitoring evaluation of Global Gateway's partnerships is decoupled from its gains/losses, and the EU's '*non-adversarial relation*' with its partners isn't taking place.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and discussion of findings

This research investigated the potential synergies between the latest EU development strategy, the Global Gateway and Manners' concept of Normative Power Europe (Manners, 2002). It especially considered the inclusion of civil society in the Global Gateway's partnerships as a potential catalyst for empowering EU partners and set the adequate equal basis for the EU to be a normative power. It ought to determine how the participation of civil society in the Global Gateway can contribute to a Normative Power Europe. To answer this question, we identified the different stages of Global Gateway's partnerships at which the civil society could be included and linked these mechanisms to the conditions to be fulfilled by a normative power actor. We therefore suggested four expectations according to which: 1) the involvement of civil society in the design of partnerships favours the empowerment of silenced actors through an '*action in concert*'; 2a and 2b) the use of inclusive and quantitative-qualitative impact assessments favours a holistic causality anticipating the environmental and social impact of partnerships for present and future generations through a '*simultaneous awareness*' and; 3) the inclusion of civil society in the monitoring evaluations of partnerships favours a non-coercive mutualisation of partnerships' benefits gains/losses through a '*non-adversarial relation*'. These expectations were tested in practice on the EU-Togo Joint Programming Assistance Programme signed for the period 2021-2027 which identifies three priority domains – covering human development and socio-economic inclusion, agricultural industry development and natural resources management, and building up a resilient and peaceful society. As we collected official publicly available documents from EU institutions and Togolese authorities, panel discussions with EU and partner countries' leaders, and interviewed EU policy-makers working on the Global Gateway, development evaluation and civil society inclusion, we interpreted our findings in light of our expectations. Overall, our results suggest that the inclusion of the civil society in impact assessments is an efficient tool only to create an '*action in concert*' empowering silenced actors. A '*simultaneous awareness*' and a '*non-adversarial relation*' are mostly contingent on the interpretation and conceptions of policy-makers and leaders of the Global Gateway's timeframe, impact and gains/losses rather than civil society inclusion. Because the results of our expectations 1, 2.a and 2.b are related to the impact assessment mechanism of the JPAP, we first discuss these two sets of expectations and their implications for the academic and policy arena together. We will then proceed to the discussion of the results and implications related to expectation 3.

When it comes to the design of development partnerships and especially the EU-Togo JPAP, the inclusion of the targeted/local communities and the civil society (i.e. independent variable) is a strong catalyst for empowering silenced actors (i.e. dependent variable) through an '*action in concert*' (i.e. causal mechanism). To detect the civil society inclusion, we focussed on the method used by the EU and Togo to design their partnership (**Indicator 1a**). To assess the empowerment aspect of the partnership, we focussed on the alignment between the civil society needs (**Indicator 2a**) and the JPAP priorities (**Indicator 2b**). The alignment between the JPAP priorities and the programme Togo 2025, elaborated by the current government through nation-wide consultations of the civil society's needs, is striking in that regard. The JPAP follows these objectives of the Global Gateway to make of the civil society a pivotal actor

for development partnerships that can bring about benefits to alleviate poverty and fight climate change (Kendall, 2015). It directly empowered local populations and allowed their voices to be listened and included into the design of the partnership. By using the IA's consultative process of Togo's NDP and Togo 2025, the EU-Togo JPAP acted as an empowering tool to correct power asymmetries (Manners, 2023b, 11). These results are notably supported by the fact that the civil society participation to public policy is limited by the centralisation of Togo's state apparatus, making of the civil society what Manners calls "non-western and marginalised voices" (Manners, 2023b, 8). In addition, the definition of these priorities heavily relied on the trust of the EU in its partners for defining what they deem important to their development, which is instrumental to a long-term relation (Kavalski, 2013). In that regard, we consider that our expectation 1 is validated. However, a non-expected element appeared. It is the role of quantitative-qualitative impact assessments for the empowerment of such communities. For instance, these mechanisms allowed to define the priorities of the JPAP in a way that respects as much as possible the needs of the Togolese people. The impact of these mechanisms, however, wasn't decisive for our following two hypotheses.

As determined in our expectations 2.a and 2.b, inclusive impact assessments are expected to translate a way of thinking from the EU and its partners that frames partnerships depending on their expected impact on environmental and social equity, and contribute to an NPE (Manners, 2023b). By doing so, impact assessments were expected to bring a long-term vision of the partnerships that goes beyond its termination and favours environmental and social planetary benefits (or holistic causality). To assess the link between civil society participation in impact assessments (i.e. independent variable) and holistic causality (i.e. dependent variable) through a '*simultaneous awareness*' (i.e. causal mechanism), we determined a set of dedicated indicators. To detect civil society inclusion in impact assessments, we looked at the link between Togo's population needs (**Indicator 1b**) and the JPAP priorities (**Indicator 1c**) as well as at the method of impact assessments (**Indicator 1d**). Timeframe of the Global Gateway and its partnerships (**Indicator 2c**) was determined to empirically grasp a holistic causality. Our analysis has proven that, despite an alignment of the JPAP priorities on Togo's civil society needs, inclusive quantitative-qualitative impact assessments are not necessarily conducive to a holistic causality through a '*simultaneous awareness*'. When discussing the timeframe of the Global Gateway's partnerships, EU policy-makers limit their visions to the termination and completion of the partnerships and their projects. Despite a will of EU and partner leaders to tackle climate change in the long run, which emphasises the close relationship between development and climate (Beringer, 2019; Manea, 2022), the actual implementation of the Global Gateway follows a more limited path in time. This lack of long-term projection is well emphasised by the use of *ex post* evaluations which primarily aims at improving the use of EU's financing instruments and the Global Gateway itself. A less important consideration from policy-makers is given to the actual impact of the partnership for the planetary good, on the environmental and social equity. In this regard, the development nature of the strategy is not linked to a previously assumed consideration of the EU according to which development is an intergenerational goal fulfilling environmental and social welfare (Manea, 2022). Although the '*local ownership*' of the partnership by the civil society was guaranteed when fixing its priorities, the two objectives of evaluation officers is directed towards the justification of expenditures and the evolution of the strategy itself (Interview 1). This focus on the (upward)

accountability between partnerships' implementers and headquarters is recognised as a direct impediment to the results of a partnership (Hayes & Westrup, 2012). In addition, these midterm assessments' accountability focus miss to bridge the various visions of all the partnerships' stakeholders and bound them together (Green, 2010; Sapsed & Salter, 2004; Star & Griesemer, 1989, 393; Yakura, 2002). In the case of the Global Gateway, upward accountability narrows the timeframe of the strategy which can directly impact the success of its partnerships, as emphasised by Madon (2004), and mitigate the potential benefits of their consultative method for civil society inclusion.

We can draw three conclusions from the findings on our two first sets of expectations. First, inclusive quantitative-qualitative impact assessments are more suitable to weight the empowerment of EU partners and evaluate an '*action in concert*'. Second, inclusive quantitative-qualitative impact assessments are not necessarily conducive to a way of thinking in terms of causes and effects for the planetary goods (i.e. holistic causality) through a '*simultaneous awareness*'. Thus, and third, inclusive quantitative-qualitative impact assessments are not sufficient on their own to create a '*simultaneous awareness*' contributing to an NPE. The intentions of policy makers are central. For the academic arena, the first and second implications call to identify new mechanisms that would contribute to set a '*simultaneous awareness*' between the EU and its partners, and to focus over policy-makers and politicians' considerations. For the policy arena, it is necessary to reshape the consideration of EU policy makers, leaders and partners more holistically to create a development nexus that includes sustainable environmental and social equity/welfare as the first results at which partnerships should aim. We validate expectation 1 but invalidate both expectations 2.a and 2.b.

Although the vision of policy-makers is restricted and draws its limits to the termination of a Global Gateway's partnership, does it necessarily mean that the benefits/losses are not mutualised between the EU and its partner(s)? Expectation 3 argued that the inclusion of the civil society in the monitoring of development partnerships (i.e. independent variable) can be conducive to a non-coercive mutualisation of its gains/losses (i.e. dependent variable) through a '*non-adversarial relation*' (i.e. causal mechanism). The criteria (**Indicator 1e**) and method used by monitoring evaluations (**Indicator 1f**) were identified to detect the inclusive feature of impact assessments. The nature of gains/losses (**Indicator 2d**) was used here as our main indicator for non-coercive mutualised gains/losses. When it comes to the inclusive dimension and openness of monitoring mechanisms to the participation of the civil society, the EU privileges methodological means of inclusion. Civil society and targeted/impacted communities are neither directly conducting the monitoring of projects/programmes nor their participation is evaluated through the international (OECD) criteria of evaluation. They are rather considered through qualitative interviews conducted by EU evaluation officers from DG INTPA and EU civil society officers in delegations. Thus, the monitoring evaluation mechanisms employed by the European Commission are inclusive through their methods of evaluation rather than their criteria. By consulting the impacted communities through qualitative interviews, the EU ensures that the final midterm assessment report that is issued is actually linked to local social, environmental and economic contexts (Aked, 2016, 156). By doing so, monitoring evaluations should mutualise the gains of partnerships/projects and ensure that their success is similar to both parties (the EU and aid receivers). However, this expected mutualisation of gains and

losses through inclusive monitoring couldn't be observed in practice. They are rather decoupled from each other.

Non-coercive mutualised gain/losses depart from the idea that one benefit for the aid donor and another benefit for the aid receiver is a win-win situation (Manners, 2023b, 8). It is rather a matter of intention of the EU and its partners, when they decide to adopt a partnership, to contribute and pursue goals that have a planetary impact, for the environment and the society (Manners, 2023b, 8-9). Although inclusive monitoring evaluations take place, the instrumentalization of the Global Gateway for pursuing economic and geopolitical/geostrategic purposes in the mind of EU policy-makers and leaders goes against this vision. Following a longstanding trend of EU development policy, the Global Gateway is mostly approached through its economic and trade gains, and is used to bring normative convergence, through standard and regulatory reforms, and market accesses (Elgstrom, 2011; Poletti & Sicurelli, 2019; Vincent, 2021; Damro, 2021, 63). This importance given to regulatory and (normative) standard convergence reproduces hierarchisation patterns discussed by Karjalainen in her early study of the Global Gateway (2023). It makes of the strategy a tool for the diffusion of European standards in third countries in view of generating economic and trade benefits for the Union. Investment and trade gains are therefore found at the very centre of EU development policy. This feature of the EU development policy is in stark opposition with the meaning given by Manners to mutualised gains and a '*non-adversarial relation*' which is a condition to an NPE. First because it decouples '*local ownership*' and the benefits of a partnership. And, second, because it puts at the heart of the Global Gateway the interest of the parties to a partnership rather than the planet as a whole. It prioritises stakeholders' interests over more global environmental and social gains. We can draw similar conclusions to those we drew for the two previous expectations. First, monitoring missions including the voices from the civil society are not sufficient on their own to mutualise the benefits of the Global Gateway's partnerships in a non-coercive way between the EU and its partners. Second, the mutualisation of benefits is strongly relying on the intentions of policy makers and leaders, and the considerations that they give to the gains/losses obtained from a partnership. These invalidate expectation 3.

In addition to the trade dimension of development (Elgstrom, 2009; Elgstrom, 2011), geopolitical concerns also have a negative impact on the non-adversarial nature of the EU relations with its development partners. Although the Global Gateway is presented has a renewed stance establishing equal partnerships, it is used for acquiring greater capacities by the EU. This dynamic directly makes of the Global Gateway an instrument of (market) power as a mean of influence, which is directly opposed to the very notion of empowerment on which an '*action in concert*' is based (Manners, 2008; Manners, 2023b). Although it was not formulated in our expectations as such, the intentions of policy-makers and leaders are central in the assessment of the EU as a normative power. Through our analysis, we observed that limited timeframe and instrumental intentions can have a counter-productive effect on the pursued empowerment of partners (Beringer, 2019; Elgstrom, 2011). In our case, the very geopolitical and economic motives of the EU expressed through the gains of the Global Gateway directly undermine the '*action in concert*' that it tries to establish. The instrumental use of the Global Gateway therefore appears as the 'normal' approach to development and is notably justified by the trade-oriented nature of development aid (Elgstrom, 2011; Interview 2). The Global Gateway claims to shift totally towards equal partnership and greater planetary benefits, and by

doing so is positioning itself in a movement to rebalance EU-ACP relations (Lightfoot & Kim, 2017). But the very conception of its gains to EU policy-makers, leaders and partner countries makes of it a tool to maximise material and economic interests of their companies (Chandler, 2006; Kagan, 2003).

On one hand, the case of the EU-Togo partnership, civil society inclusion (i.e. '*local ownership*') was a relevant feature of the Global Gateway to empower Togo's civil society through an '*action in concert*'. On another hand, the impact of effective inclusion of the civil society in partnerships' impact assessments and monitoring evaluations through a '*simultaneous awareness*' and '*non-adversarial relation*' is conditioned by the timeframe and considerations of policy-makers, leaders and partners of their (mutual) gains. Because norms are Janus-faced, they function as an inclusion-exclusion system (Merlingen, 2007). By reproducing former trade preferences and patterns in its international development policy, the EU indirectly sets a hierarchy between the various objectives of its partnerships and de facto sets trade-oriented norms' adoption as the normal basis and condition to its partners' development.

Overall, civil society inclusion in the Global Gateway is not sufficient on its own to fulfil the three prerequisites of a normative power, and to contribute to a Normative Power Europe. The participation of the civil society through the Global Gateway can contribute to set an '*action in concert*', a '*simultaneous awareness*' and a '*non-adversarial relation*' only if EU policy makers, leaders and their partners reshape their approach to development. Because the NPA is a constructivist theory, our results are called to be further deconstructed (Manners, 2021). It requires to go deeper into the factors contributing to these intentions and considerations of policy makers and leaders, and to investigate the foundations of these instrumental and trade-oriented gains. If the Global Gateway were to contribute to a Normative Power Europe through the inclusion of the civil society into the design, impact assessment and evaluation of its partnerships, a redefinition of the strategy's gains and intentions are unavoidable. It should make of development the principal objective of the strategy over trade and geopolitics.

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APPENDIX I - Guiding protocol interview

Interview 1, Strategic Evaluation Officer at DG INTPA, Quality and results, Evaluation, Knowledge Management Unit, European Commission, Interview held on December 12, 2023, online [36m 25s].

Interview 2, Policy Officer at DG INTPA, Effective Development and Team Europe Unit, European Commission, Interview held on December 19, 2023, online [56m 15s].

Interview 3, Local focal point for Civil Society inclusion, EU Delegation to Togo, Interview to be held on January 9, 2024, online [1h 03m 26s].

APPENDIX II – Guide of the panel discussions

Panel 1 (2022). Achieving coherent investment in interconnected cities. European Development Days 2022, Brussels, Belgium [51m 44s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhEd0reIm5Q&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 2 (2022). The Global Gateway in Indopacific. European Development Days 2022, Brussels, Belgium [1h 05m 41s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtOc7uA7aEg&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 3 (2023). Green Energy Transition and Green Hydrogen. Global Gateway Forum 2023, Brussels, Belgium [1h 30m 05s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knxO4CEaBXo&list=PL0NKSY4-2Dbk9Jegw9nOpzS3iyV18Jku&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 4 (2023). Critical Raw Materials. Global Gateway Forum 2023, Brussels, Belgium [1h 37m 22s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eK-ZC4_bjuM&list=PL0NKSY4-2Dbk9Jegw9nOpzS3iyV18Jku&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 5 (2023). Health Products Manufacturing. Global Gateway Forum 2023, Brussels, Belgium [1h 19m 08s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M77KtToUop4&list=PL0NKSY4-2Dbk9Jegw9nOpzS3iyV18Jku&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 6 (2023). Transport Corridors. Global Gateway Forum 2023, Brussels, Belgium [1h 24m 40s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp4mOZWgKyY&list=PL0NKSY4-2Dbk9Jegw9nOpzS3iyV18Jku&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships

Panel 7 (2023). Digital Infrastructure. Global Gateway Forum 2023, Brussels, Belgium [1h 30m 41s]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnLLdAtSAYA&list=PL0NKSY4-2Dbk9Jegw9nOpzS3iyV18Jku&ab_channel=EUInternationalPartnerships