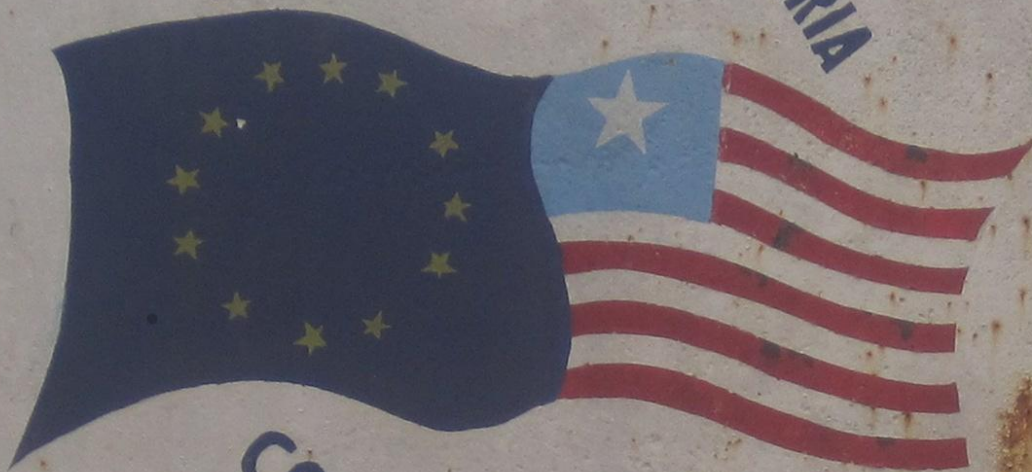


PERFORMING POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP

EUROPEAN UNION-LIBERIA



COOPERATION

A STUDY OF EU-LIBERIA RELATIONS.

MASTER'S THESIS BY SIGRID BJERRE ANDERSEN

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES,
ROSKILDE UNIVERSITY 2011

SUPERVISOR: STEFFEN JENSEN



“Performing political partnership – A study of EU-Liberia relations”

Master’s thesis by Sigrid Bjerre Andersen

International Development Studies, Roskilde University, April 2011

Supervisor: Steffen Jensen

A visualisation of the EU-Liberia partnership. Signpost in Zwedru, Liberia, pointing towards an income generation project financed by the EU as part of its 2005 “Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People”.



Abstract

This thesis investigates the concept of political partnership as a way of describing relations between the European Union and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries). The concept reflects two trends in current development discourse. On the one hand, the renaming of donor-recipient relations as ‘partnerships’, implying a more equal status between donors and recipients. On the other hand, the bringing in of political principles into donor-recipient relations, based on the philosophy that there are certain political preconditions to sustainable development. The thesis approaches political partnership through a case study of the EU’s relations to one specific ACP country, Liberia.

The thesis understands political partnership as being based upon principles of ownership, equality, and mutual responsibility, and at the same time as presenting specific political principles as crucial to development. Political partnership is linked to a donor-recipient relation, and hence holds the potential to be used as conditionality. The thesis looks at how these contradictions harboured by the concept of political partnership are negotiated in the specific context of EU-Liberia relations.

Within the thesis, partnership is understood as an ‘interpellation’: a specific mode of address, creating possibilities and constraints for the EU and Liberia. The thesis hence focuses on how the EU and Liberia, respectively, respond to the specific address of ‘political partner’. The interpellation perspective furthermore understands subjectivity as constituted in response to an address, and hereby allows for an illustration of how the EU is dependent upon Liberia in becoming a political partner. In this way, focus is directed towards how political partnership offers possibilities of discursive agency to donors and recipients alike.

The thesis presents political partnership between the EU and Liberia as characterised by a mismatch of expectations, as Liberia steers clear of the EU’s attempts at establishing a political partnership between them. While Liberia does not explicitly reject the idea, Liberia justifies political partnership as a question of complying with donor demands, and in this way creates a conundrum for partnership as it should ideally be recipient-driven.

The thesis concludes that the EU’s political identity project, resonating in its political partnership strategy, establishes a particularly fragile position for the EU, as Liberia is left with the power to define the relation, and hence with the possibility to refuse to address the EU as a political partner.

Contents

Abstract	3
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	6
Epistemic interest and basic assumptions	9
Approaches to partnership	11
Performing partnership in Liberia	15
Conceptualising partnership	
The EU and Liberia as legal entities	17
Partnership as interpellation	20
Performativity and negotiation	23
Methodology	
Research strategy: Accessing the discursive terrain of political partnership	27
Research techniques: A case study of EU-Liberia relations	29
Structure of the thesis	34
CHAPTER 2. Towards an understanding of political partnership	
Towards an understanding of political partnership	35
The potential contradictions of political partnership	43
Conclusion	49

CHAPTER 3. Two storylines about political partnership	50
The EU storyline	51
The Liberia storyline	59
Conclusion	67
CHAPTER 4. Three performances of political partnership	69
The Europe Day celebration	71
The debate about the Governance Audit Commission	78
Liberia's reintroduction of the death penalty	86
Conclusion	92
CHAPTER 5. Discussion	
Performing a tacit disagreement	95
CONCLUSION	102
Literature	105

Chapter 1.

Introduction

This thesis approaches political partnership as a way of describing current relations between the European Union and the ACP States, a group of 78 countries in the global South that are the recipients of its development aid. Within the past two decades, the idea of establishing political partnerships with developing countries, rather than maintaining relationships mainly characterised by giving and receiving aid, has become established as an aspiration of the EU and the ACP group. This aspiration reflects two trends in current development discourse: The renaming of donor-recipient relations as ‘partnerships’, implying a more equal status between donors and recipients, as well as ascribing a more active role to recipient countries, expected to take ownership and responsibility of their development strategies. And the bringing in of ‘political’ principles such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance into aid relations, based on the philosophy that aid is not enough and that there are certain political and institutional preconditions for a country’s economic development and integration into the global economy (Abrahamsen 2004; Baaz 2005; Fowler 2000; Maxwell and Riddell 1998).

The relationship between the European Union and the ACP has for the past three decades been based on development aid and trade agreements, within the framework of a partnership where ACP countries have, at least formally, had remarkably more influence on aid priorities than what is more often the case in relations between Western donors and recipient countries in the global South (European Commission 2010; Clapham 1996; Raffer 1997). Since the mid 1990’s, however, ‘partnership’ has

gained a new meaning in EU-ACP terms, with the introduction of political clauses into the EU-ACP partnership. Partnership had until then been associated with the prioritising, programming and implementation of aid, but was now to signify a relation between global political actors, dealing with political matters in forums isolated from the domain of development aid (Mackie 2003; Laakso 2007; Santiso 2002).

Consequently, in the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, which today sets the frame for EU-ACP relations, a 'political dimension' was formally added to the partnership. The political dimension takes its point of departure in a mutual recognition of political principles intended to guide the political developments of the involved countries: Human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance. Failing to fulfill one's obligations in relation to these so-called essential and fundamental elements of the Agreement, could be the basis for the suspension of aid or the suspension from co-operation on the whole. In order to prevent such situations, a 'political dialogue' instrument was also introduced, with the purpose of treating political issues in recurrent dialogue meetings in the individual ACP countries, between EU representatives and representatives of government, civil society and other relevant actors in the given country. Political dialogue has been described as unique, as it is perceived to give the EU an insight into internal political matters of these countries, to an extent that other donors do not have (Mackie 2003). Political dialogue is meant to run in parallel to 'policy dialogue' between the EU and the given country on policies directly relating to the EU's aid programmes. But apart from dealing with non-aid related, sensitive political issues or points of critique, political dialogue is also intended to be a forum for the discussion of current global events, for matching opinions or even building alliances on various global or regional issues, and sharing experiences and knowledge from both sides of the table.

Potential contradictions in political partnership

Ideally, then, political partnership implies the establishing of a political space which is independent of an unequal donor-recipient relation, and within which the EU and the individual ACP countries can be perceived of as principally equal political actors. However, as a strategy, political partnership seems to harbour certain conflicts and tensions, opening the possibility for negotiations of its meaning.

Partnership is described as being based upon principles of equality, ownership, and mutual responsibility. However, these principles seem contradictory to a situation where the one part is

potentially economically dependent on the other, and the recipient might be inclined to follow any implicitly or explicitly articulated donor demands. At the same time, political partnership is based upon predefined political principles, which, as they are predefined, might challenge the ACP countries' possibility of taking a position in "the driver's seat", and defining context-specific development strategies.

The political principles furthermore seek to strike a balance between universally agreed principles about which there is a consensus, and the sovereignty of the ACP countries, who should take responsibility of their own development strategies, as it is formulated in the Cotonou Agreement. However, the universal values are perceived as primary to ACP country sovereignty and local approaches to development. As the principles are at the same time broadly defined, they open for a broad range of interpretations. Consequently, they might be interpreted in ways that eventually compromise the sovereignty of ACP countries.

Furthermore, there is a potential contradiction between development partnership and political partnership, which are ideally expected to exist independently of each other, yet contribute to the same goals. It can be discussed, whether this separation of development from politics that the partnership discourse attempts to promote is in fact possible. 'Political' issues such as good governance and human rights also form part of development programmes, and the people who are to put political partnership and political dialogue into practice in the individual ACP countries might often be dealing with development cooperation and policy dialogue as well. This poses a risk of transcending the institutionally instituted line between development and politics.

The combination of principles of equality, ownership and mutual responsibility, and the specific political principles which political partnership also represents, thus suggest political partnership as potentially contradictory. Consequently, this study of political partnership directs its attention towards how it is performed in practice through negotiations of the conflicts and tensions outlined above.

A study of EU-Liberia relations

The thesis approaches political partnership through a case study of the EU's relations to one specific ACP country: Liberia, whose particular political context seems a relevant starting point for an inquiry into how political partnership is performed. Liberia's relation to the EU is unusual as compared to most other ACP countries, as Liberia is not a former European colony. Nevertheless, it is heavily

dependent upon aid from the EU, the EU being the second-largest donor in the country. Given Liberia's recent history of civil war, and its current political situation characterised by peacekeeping and state building efforts, issues relating to democratic principles, human rights, rule of law and good governance are at the forefront of Liberia's relations with the global donor community in general. These issues are especially pertinent seen through the lens of EU-ACP partnership discourse, as building blocks for a stable political environment and thereby the preconditions for economic development.

Based on these preliminary considerations, the thesis takes its departure in the following research question:

How do the European Union and Liberia perform political partnership, and how do they negotiate its potential contradictions?

Epistemic interest and basic assumptions

The epistemic interest of the thesis is to understand what happens when donor-recipient relations are rearticulated as political partnerships, and how the subjects of political partnership accordingly approach the potential contradictions of this articulation. Hereby, I make two assumptions. Firstly, I assume that articulations have consequences for the subjects that they address. Secondly, I assume that political partnership as a discursive category harbours various conflicts and tensions. In this way, the focus of the analysis becomes how the subjects of political partnership, as they are rearticulated as 'political partners', negotiate these potential contradictions. This focus is captured in the research question, consisting in two parts. In the first part, the research question presents three main elements: Firstly, a pair of subjects - *the European Union* and *Liberia*. Secondly, a mode of action - *performance* - through which the two subjects are assumed to engage with the third element, the object of *political partnership*. In its second part, the research question further introduces the assumption that political partnership contains *potential contradictions*, and that these contradictions are *negotiated* by the two subjects.

The epistemic interest and its basic assumptions are informed by the empirical observation that partnership has come to be a preferred description by development actors of aid relationships between donors in the North and recipients in the South, especially within the last decade. This includes the aid

relationship between the European Union and the ACP countries, where a specifically ‘political’ dimension has been added to partnership. In this way, donor-recipient relations have been *rearticulated* as partnerships. Partnership indicates a distribution of roles where donors to a lesser degree prescribe and condition the aid they give, and recipients, in turn, take more responsibility and ownership of their development strategies. As such, it signifies a shift from an unequal power relation where donors are in possession of both the funds and the initiative to distribute them, towards a more equal relation where recipients are to a larger degree “in the driver’s seat” of their own development (Baaz 2005, 3; Abrahamsen 2004, 1453). I argue that this shift suggests the importance of linguistic categories in politics, and, in this case specifically, in donor-recipient relations, as a shift in categories comes to signify a perceived or projected shift in the social conditions of development actors.

The assumption that linguistic categories have social consequences has its meta-theoretical roots in a social-constructivist and discursive approach arguing that articulations are expressions of discourse. Discourse, following Hall, is understood as “partial, temporary closures of meaning, closures which are never fully successful and which imply an exclusion of other possible meanings” (Hall in Baaz 2005, 3). As such, articulations provide identities and events with meaning, and therefore make various courses of action and specific social and political practices possible (Baaz 2005, 13; Hay 2002, 207). Conversely, in this view, actors behave the way they do because they have specific perceptions of their social environment and its identities and events, provided to them through their own or other actors’ articulations (Hay 2002, 207). Furthermore, the assumption that political partnership harbours contradictions, is informed by the view that “concepts are provided with different meanings in different discursive contexts,” and are, consequently, open-ended and often articulated in contradictory ways (Baaz 2005, 9, 15). In addition, it is informed by qualitative aspects of the political partnership strategy – as outlined in the introduction - which at first glance seem to point in different directions, and thus open the possibility for negotiating its meaning. By studying political partnership through its performance in practice and through the negotiation of its potential contradictions, I focus on how political partnership discourse makes various social practices possible.

Throughout the thesis, the object of study is political partnership. This entails a terminology of the adjacent concepts of ‘partnership’ as a specific mode of cooperation between aid donors and recipients, and ‘political partnership’ as a type of partnership with specific qualitative aspects. Both terms are used throughout the study of political partnership, with reference to their distinct meanings.

In order to proceed with this study, a conceptual framework conceptualising the elements of the research question needs to be established. The epistemological assumption that the various roles that are discursively attributed to subjects make various courses of action possible, is echoed in the concept of ‘interpellation’, originally formulated by Louis Althusser (1971), and later put forward by Judith Butler (1997) in her theory of what she calls ‘the performativity of political discourse’. Political partnership as the object of study, is conceptualised as an *interpellation*: a mode of address that creates certain possibilities for the social existence of the EU and Liberia. In its conceptualisation of the EU and Liberia, the framework takes its point of departure in the documents that announce political partnership and address the EU and Liberia as subjects hereof. As a consequence, it approaches them as *legal entities* within an international system. However, as a consequence of the interpellation perspective and Butler’s focus on *discourse* and *performativity*, the idea of the legal entities is conceptualised as a discourse performed by the human beings that represent these entities. Finally, *performance* and *negotiation* are conceptualised as activities assumed to follow from interpellation, and which can be observed through articulations and practices by ‘negotiators’ – the human beings that represent the EU and Liberia, respectively, within the performance of political partnership.

In the following, I present the meta-theoretical considerations that have informed the conceptualisation of the elements of the research question. This is followed by a presentation of the specific case of EU-Liberia relations, and a presentation of the conceptual framework of the thesis.

Approaches to partnership

The conceptual framework of the thesis has been developed on the basis of reflections concerning existing scholarly approaches to the study of partnership. Two ways of approaching partnership are predominant within contemporary literature, as partnership is perceived of either as a mode of international cooperation or as a discourse. The scholars contributing to these approaches are elaborated in the second chapter of the thesis, in the context of a mapping of the potential contradictions of partnership. In the following, I outline the two main approaches defined by their meta-theoretical positions. Subsequently, I discuss these approaches against considerations relevant to the development of a conceptual framework with which to approach *the performance of partnership* within a specific context.

Partnership as an international relation

Within the literature attempting to explain partnership in general and the EU-ACP partnership in particular, a common approach is to perceive of partnership as a relation between international actors. The actors are presented similarly to the way they are presented in partnership strategies, that is, as coherent and bounded legal entities, and focus is directed towards the balance of power between them. Consequently, the balance of power is the primary independent variable to these analyses. Some present partnership as aiming to even out unequal donor-recipient relations, and as such draw upon ideals formulated in literature on 'participation' as a strategy for development (Maxwell and Riddell 1998, 259). Within participatory approaches, power relations between donors and recipients are sought transformed through the application of local resources and knowledge to the formulation of development strategies, instead of donor-imposed ideas. Hereby it is asserted that the "poor, excluded, marginalised, subordinate and powerless" become empowered, to the benefit of both the donor and the recipient. In the same way, partnership can be seen as based upon the idea that power relations can be changed, and that this change does not necessitate a loss for any of the parties involved (Chambers 2009, 100-101).

In contrast to this approach, a dominant position within the study of partnership perceives of power as a zero sum game, and stresses the donor's role as the stronger part. This can be seen in Clapham's (1996) account of EU-ACP relations, focusing on the bargaining power between the ACP group and the EU over time. Mayall (2005) approaches the relationship as 'asymmetrical', and as a system in which the ACP countries have to "take what is on offer", regardless of whether it falls short of their demands (Mayall 2005, 307). As the balance of power in itself only explains the actors' capabilities, a second variable is included in these analyses, which regards the actors' strategic intentions, eventually decisive for partnership strategies are implemented. Accordingly, Mackie (2003) largely concludes that although the EU is holding "most of the major cards", political partnership basically aims to increase mutual understanding and enhance cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries (Mackie 2003, 30, 33). In contrast to this conclusion, Allan Fowler suggests that while the concept of partnership appears to be "benign, inclusive, open, all-embracing and harmonious," it serves "to co-opt and sideline potentially opposing ideas and forces that express and propagate alternative views" to the benefit of the donor (Fowler 2000, 7; Fowler in Crawford 2003, 142).

Partnership as discourse

The above approach is criticised by scholars from another strand within the study of partnership, whom instead approach partnership as a discourse. As Baaz (2005) contends, a focus on intentions presents partnership as a “political slogan to hide other motives” and thereby idealises partnership as “reflecting an un-ambiguous intention or wish to re-create power relations” (Baaz 2005, 7). Instead, Baaz suggests an approach to partnership as an open-ended discourse, focusing towards articulations and structures of meaning. In a similar vein, taking her point of departure in Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’, Abrahamsen (2004) argues that partnership discourse works as a form of productive, disciplinary power, shaping the behaviour and interests of states and state actors, and constituting developing countries as “capable agents, responsible for their own future” (Abrahamsen 2004, 1464). In Abrahamsen’s words, partnerships are at once voluntary and coercive, as developing countries are not forced into them, but face negative consequences if they do not join or comply (Abrahamsen 2004, 1464). In this way, developing countries become ‘partners’, but their room for manoeuvre is constrained, as the partnership discourse is invoked within a donor-recipient relation rather than outside of it.

Similarities and differences in existing approaches to partnership

The difference between the above described approaches, is their meta-theoretical perceptions of power relations. The international relations approach emphasises the donor’s dominant role within the relation, and sees partnership as a superstructure upon a donor-recipient relation, which, however, cannot be denied, and whose unequal power relation depending on the donor’s intentions, might interfere with the ideal of an equal partnership. The discourse approach emphasises the recipient’s role as a self-disciplining subject. Whereas the recipient enters the partnership as a consequence of the donor-recipient relation, the discourse approach questions the necessity of bad intentions, self-interest on the part of the donor, and an unequal economic relation in order for partnership to be effectual as a disciplinary mechanism (Harrison 2004, 76). While the actor-based approach and the discourse approach have fundamentally different points of departure, their considerations about the effects of partnership lead to somewhat similar conclusions. Common to these studies on partnership in general, and political partnership in particular, is that the partners are approached as abstract, coherent entities, or through theoretical frameworks with a priori assumptions about the power relations between international actors. Because these studies are largely based on the assumption that the donor is the stronger part in the relation, they tend to also conclude that partnership is highly influential, and that

this is to the detriment of the recipient, as partnership is perceived to have potential for conditionality and coercion, in overt or covert ways, by donor imposition or by recipient self-discipline.

Towards an elaboration of donor-recipient power relations

Based on the assumption of partnership as a re-articulation, this thesis takes a discourse approach to partnership. However, some qualifications should be made regarding the approach to partnership as discourse.

Many existing discourse approaches to the study of partnership, attribute a significant amount of power to liberal discourse about democracy, human rights, and good governance (Abrahamsen 2000; Harrison 2004). At the same time, in these analyses it is implied that liberal discourse stands in contrast to the realities of for instance African societies that are not perceived of by these scholars as developed liberal democracies, but rather as objects for improvement through development. Hence, while it might hold true that development discourse is powerful and has effects upon recipient countries, the effects would seem to be more intricate than what is assumed by most of these approaches. Olivier de Sardan (2005) argues, in his critique raised against discourse approaches to ‘development’, that these perceive of development as an a priori entity with negative effects for developing countries, and that they pay “little attention to incoherencies, uncertainty and contradiction” (Olivier de Sardan 2005, 5). Discourse authors, in his view,

“tend to choose only those aspects of the ‘discourse’ that support their theses. Conflation is a common practice, which is moreover facilitated by the fact that terms like ‘discourse’ and ‘narrative’ are vague and have hardly benefited from any empirical mapping. In fact, it suffices to select one public rhetoric or another, one type of cliché or another, and proceed to its deconstruction” (Olivier de Sardan 2005, 5).

Olivier de Sardan’s critique is relevant in relation to the study of the *performance* of partnership, insofar as it warns against a priori assumptions about how discourse affects practice. However, I would not attribute this to a necessity following from discourse approaches as such. As Baaz emphasises, a basic assumption of the discourse approach is that discourse is contradictory and open-ended, and thus contains a potential for change (Baaz 2005, 15). The fact that discourse analysis might lead to conclusions about hegemony, does not rule out the possibility of accounting for the contradictions and fragility of the discourse along the way. The thesis therefore applies a conceptual framework to the study of partnership that might contribute to a further elaboration of the effects of partnership discourse.

Approaching partnership empirically

Another critique that can be raised against most discourse approaches to partnership, is that while they adopt the assumption that discourses are potentially contradictory, they do not go all the way in explaining the effects of these contradictions, which might be the further production of contradictions, as discourse is articulated within specific contexts (Baaz 2005, 15). As Olivier de Sardan also stresses, a weakness of many discourse approaches, is that they do not base their analyses upon what he calls “an unbiased empirical enquiry” but rather upon a perception of ‘development’ – here, ‘partnership’ – as “a single gaze or voice which is all powerful and beyond influence” (Olivier de Sardan 2005, 5). Accordingly, it seems to be the case with most existing approaches to partnerships that partnership is generalised to include, in principle, any donor-recipient relation. Moreover, analyses of the specific EU-ACP partnership see it from a macro-perspective, whereby ACP countries are perceived as a group of countries, subjected to the same set of political demands and by and large the same political pressure from the EU (Mayall 2005; Clapham 1996; Santiso 2002). It is often implied that the pressure depends on the individual ACP country’s trade and aid dependence on the EU, and it is understood that ACP countries is a heterogeneous group with great variations on these indicators (Holland 2002; Raffer 1997; Laakso 2007). Nevertheless, existing analyses mostly contribute to an understanding of the intentions behind political partnership and the potential risks political partnership offers to ACP countries in general. They do not look at how these indicators actually come into play, or how political partnership is performed in practice.

This calls for an inquiry that takes into account how partnership is performed within a specific context. The thesis takes the EU-Liberia relation as a case of the performance of political partnership, with the purpose of giving an empirical account of how the potential contradictions of political partnership are negotiated. The EU-Liberia relation is studied through a field study, the details of which are presented in the methodology section of this chapter. In the following, prior to the conceptualisation of the elements of the research question, I introduce its subjects - the EU and Liberia – and its object, their partnership relation, with a focus on the historical and political context which affects a study hereof.

Performing partnership in Liberia

Liberia is a state in West Africa, spanning a territory of 111,369 km² and inhabited by a population of 3.47 million people. Liberia is, among a few other African countries, seen as an exception to the rule of having been subjected to a process of colonial state formation. The Liberian territory was in 1822

claimed on behalf of freed American slaves, establishing Liberia as an independent republic in 1847. The former slaves came to form a minority elite group on the territory, which was at the time inhabited by 16 different ethnic groups. These groups were to be ruled the descendants of the so-called ‘Americo-Liberians’ until a military coup in 1980 (Andersen 2010, 137). In 1989, a civil war broke out, lasting for 14 years and killing an estimate of 200.000 people, and destroying the country’s economy and infrastructure. Since 2003, a UN peacekeeping operation has secured Liberia’s peace (Andersen 2006, 3). As a consequence of this longstanding war, Liberia is today one of the least developed countries worldwide and depends heavily on support from international donors, among them, the European Union.

The EU as an institution encompasses the European Commission, the European Parliament, and 27 Member States represented in the European Council. The EU has in its mandate to represent its institutions and Member States in its external relations, and is constitutionally obliged to promote a set of democratic and human rights values as part of these relations. At the same time, its Member States have their own foreign policies and maintain their own relations to other countries. Against this backdrop, the EU is in an ongoing process of strengthening its ability to promote itself as a coherent actor globally, a fact that has a strong bearing in its relations to third countries such as Liberia (Keukeleire and MacNaghan 2008, 223).

The EU and Liberia have cooperated under the auspices of the EU-ACP partnership since 1973. Today, the EU is the second-largest donor to Liberia’s development, only surpassed by the United States, with whom Liberia still has close political relations. The European Commission contributes 8% of Liberia’s aid, and the EU is furthermore the largest donor of direct budget support to Liberia. Adding disbursements from 15 EU Member States, contributions amount to a total 36% of Liberia’s development assistance (ECO Consult 2010, 18; USAID 2011). While the EU and Liberia thus have an extensive and long-standing relation, their political partnership is relatively young. This can be explained by the fact that the political dimension of the EU-ACP partnership (as will be elaborated in Chapter 2) was formally introduced in the late 1990’s, but also as Liberia has first recently regained its status as a trustworthy partner in the eyes of the international community.

As for the EU, its political mandate is a balancing of Member State sovereignty and commonly defined goals, as described above. Moreover, this mandate has just recently been strengthened, as the ‘Lisbon Treaty’ in 2009 assigned the EU with ‘legal personality’ and thus enabled it to formally represent its institutions as one coherent actor. In Liberia, this meant an upgrading of the EU Delegation’s staff and

the insertion of an EU ambassador (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2011). The relatively new roles for both the EU and Liberia influence the study of their political partnership, as it means that the performance we gain access to can be seen as some of the first, tentative steps towards a more political relation.

In the following section, I present the conceptual framework through which we might capture how this political partnership relation is performed, and how its inherent contradictions are negotiated within a specific context.

Conceptualising partnership

The EU and Liberia as legal entities

The research question presents the ‘European Union’ and ‘Liberia’ as two legal entities, engaging in a partnership together. This perception is rooted in the documents that formally establish the partnership between them, and which reproduce an understanding of the European Union and Liberia as coherent, bounded legal entities within an international system. Because of this status, they are able to engage in partnership as a mode of international cooperation. The thesis approaches this understanding of the two subjects as a *discourse*. In this way, the conceptual framework of the thesis seeks to integrate an empirically informed terminology about partnership, presenting bounded and coherent legal entities within an international system, with a theoretical framework that resonates in the epistemological assumption that partnership is a discourse producing certain effects.

The legal entities discourse enables us to approach partnership as a mode of international cooperation, yet does not account for the ontological status of its subjects. On an ontological level, the thesis therefore approaches the two subjects as products of a discourse, practiced by the human beings that are perceived to represent them. In the following, I elaborate on the legal entities discourse, and further present an approach to the study of the EU and Liberia as images practiced by human beings.

Legal entities in an international system

The idea that cooperation and partnership is entered into by legal entities, resonates in the idea of an international system, within which a principle of sovereignty organises and delimits its entities, entitled to exclusive, unqualified, and supreme rule within their own territorial space (Anthony McGrew in Baylis and Smith 2005, 25, 35). The entities are traditionally conceived of as *states*, and the idea of sovereignty refers to, on the one hand, the recognition of a state by other states, and on the other hand to the effectively exercised dominion by a government over its peoples and territories, and the ability of the state to defend itself against external threats (Clapham 1998, 144). As argued by scholars within the study of International Relations, relations to an increasing degree not only take place between states, but also in multilateral cooperative and collaborative structures, on national, regional and global levels. (Anthony McGrew in Baylis and Smith 2005, 35). According to Sharma and Gupta (2006), sovereignty “can no longer be seen as the sole purview or “right” of the modern state but is, instead, partially disentangled from the nation-state and mapped onto supranational and nongovernmental organizations” (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 7). The system thus also encompasses a range of legal entities that are not states, but which are seen as similar to states insofar as they can enter into agreements with other legal entities in their capacity of ‘legal personality’.

Both the EU and Liberia are legal entities. While not recognised as a state but rather as an intergovernmental or supranational institution, the European Union resembles a state in many ways. It fulfills important functions for its member states, economies and people, it faces classic state issues such as how far powers should be centralised and how decisions should be made, and it has global political significance in certain political areas (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 17; Hix 2006, 141; Sharma and Gupta 2006, 6). Liberia on the other hand, is formally recognised as a sovereign state by other states and has full legal status. Its sovereignty, however, can be perceived as challenged as fragmented internal power structures impede its ability to effectively exercise dominion over its peoples and territories. Furthermore, its sovereignty can be perceived as infringed by its political and economic relations and obligations towards international donors (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 18; Williams 2000, 565, 573).

As the two subjects can be understood as legal entities, they can be perceived of as engaging in cooperation and more specifically partnership together. Within the study of International Relations, this form of cooperation, characterised by legal entities entering into agreements that bind them to certain obligations towards one another, is seen as a negotiation of the principle of sovereignty. The entities are

perceived as harboring intentions and interests, and these intentions and interests come into play as the entities seek to reach agreement (Barnett in Baylis and Smith 2005, 253). As a consequence, understanding what happens as the entities cooperate is the subject of a long-standing and ongoing debate. Some argue that the entities cooperate for want of better, others argue that actors, despite individual interests, can see the fulfillment of long-term interests as a consequence of their cooperation (Barnett in Baylis and Smith 2005, 253; Wæver 1992, 174). In any case, in aiming to explain *why* cooperation takes place, these perspectives perceive of cooperation as something that is *entered into* by legal entities. Partnership, in this perspective, is a negotiation of sovereign intentions and interests, and a modality preconditioned on the existence of at least two legal entities.

Within this thesis, the legal entities discourse is necessary in terms of understanding the frame of reference to which international actors and legal entities relate. Meanwhile, this frame of reference is not satisfactory to an empirical study of legal entities, as they are, as suggested by Sharma and Gupta (2006), ideas that are practiced by human beings. Consequently, human beings should be the object of study. In the following, I present a conceptualisation of the link between the legal entities and the human beings that practice them.

The disaggregated, translocal, legal entity

In their study of the state as an anthropological object, Sharma and Gupta (2006) contest the idea of a state¹ as a coherent and bounded “core”, which is the idea reproduced within the legal entities discourse. They argue that states only come to exist in and by practices, and furthermore, that a state is not coherent but is “always contested and fragile and is the result of hegemonic processes that should not be taken for granted” (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 8, 11). As a consequence, Sharma and Gupta suggest an understanding of the state as a “a multilayered, contradictory, translocal ensemble of institutions, practices and people”, and as an entity brought into being through various discursive or material state practices that succeed in “congealing its contradictions” and representing it as coherent and bounded. The state is *disaggregated* in its form, as it is constituted by various ‘institutions, practices and people’, and can therefore not be seen as coherent and bounded. The state has a *translocal* ontology, as it does not pre-exist spatially or temporally, but is instead located wherever it is practiced. Hence, a study of the state should, following Sharma and Gupta, focus on the conditions under which it, despite

¹ Sharma and Gupta have as their object of study the state – here their theory is applied as a conceptualisation of the more generic concept of legal entities.

its disaggregated and translocal nature, succeeds or fails in representing itself as coherent and bounded (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 8, 10).

These conditions are “the re-petitive re-enactments of everyday practices”, that seek to present a coherent image of the state (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 13). Sharma and Gupta explain that these practices, “rather than being an outward reflection of a coherent and bounded state “core” they actually constitute that very core. It is *through* these re-enactments that the coherence and continuity of state institutions is constituted and sometimes destabilized” (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 13).

In this sense, what we refer to as ‘the European Union’ or ‘Liberia’, are in fact two abstract images of institutions that only exist insofar as they are spoken into existence and performed by human beings. In this way, the image of the legal entity is physically manifested in bureaucrats, buildings, policy papers, institutional symbols and other ‘techniques of representation’, which, through practices, reiterate this image (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 16).

Thus having accounted for the ontological status of the two subjects of the research question, we can direct attention towards the object of the research question: partnership. In the thesis, partnership is understood as a relation between the two subjects, but rather than being a mode of cooperation that the two subjects enter into, I choose to understand partnership as yet another discourse *performed* by the subjects – a discourse about a relation. As such, I choose to understand partnership as an ‘interpellation’: a specific mode of address that makes various courses of action possible, based upon conferred but constantly negotiated subject positions. The concept of interpellation is elaborated in the following, followed by a conceptualisation of the concept of performativity.

Partnership as interpellation

The concept of interpellation describes a process through which a subject is constituted discursively as a consequence of its being recognised and named. Judith Butler asserts that not only do interpellations *affect* subjects; they *constitute* them by producing “a terrain of discursive power that operates without a subject, but that constitutes the subject in the course of its operation” (Butler 1997, 34). Following this view, subjects do not exist prior to interpellation but are called into being as its consequence. Furthermore, subjects never exist in isolation, but always in relation to other subjects that address them through interpellation. I choose to understand partnership as a form of interpellation: a mode of

address that creates certain possibilities for the social existence of the legal entities of the European Union and Liberia. More than that, it contributes to a further understanding of the ontological status of the two, as it explains the relation between them. The interpellation perspective emphasises that their subjectivity is mutually constitutive, which means that rather than *entering* into partnership unilaterally, they are *called* into it.

Partnership as a mode of address

Butler argues that the process of naming - or interpellating - is the process whereby a subject comes to exist. This means, that in order to exist, one needs to be recognised by another subject, and it is only by way of the address of this 'Other' that one is constituted as a subject. In this way, Butler attributes primacy to discourse above any other foundation for subjectivity, and makes it not only relevant to social relations, but one of the primary forms that a social relation takes (Butler 1997, 30). By arguing that naming constitutes a subject, naming becomes a 'speech act', meaning that it should be understood as more than just speech, but as speech that produces an effect. Butler borrows the concept of speech acts from J. L. Austin (1962), but in contrast to Austin, institutes a gap between speech and action to that no utterance can be seen as the action it attempts to announce. Instead, speech is a "ritual moment", exceeding the time and space of the utterance. The speaker, rather than conveying his own intentions and authority, conveys a "condensed historicity: (...) an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance" (Butler 1997, 3; Jagger 2008, 120). The subject that performs the speech act is thus analytically irrelevant to the speech act and its effect; what remains important is the discourse that is conveyed through speech, in response to an interpellation.

The citational effects of interpellation and the possibility of agency

Insofar as an interpellation constitutes a subject, it always has an effect. When arguing that interpellation 'introduces reality' rather than merely pointing to a pre-existing subject, it would therefore be reasonable to understand interpellation as imposing an essential identity upon the subject, and at the same time, conferring a certain authority upon the speaker. However, Butler stresses, that "to act linguistically is not necessarily to produce effects," meaning that an interpellation may also fail (Butler 1997, 5). To explain this, Butler asserts that the process in which identity is constituted consists of two steps: First, there is the interpellation where a subject is hailed into being, and next, there is the process in which the subject places itself in a specific subject position within the discursive terrain, thus

temporarily fixing its own identity. Consequently, there are two aspects of interpellation that determine its success: one is “the citational effect” of the discursive articulation; the other is the possibility of “discursive agency” of the subject that is constituted by it (Ibid.).

In pointing towards the condensed historicity of the utterance, Butler highlights the fact that interpellation depends on citation. A ‘successful’ interpellation is one that “echoes prior actions, and accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices”, meaning that in order to succeed, the act of interpellation has to be ‘coded’ - recognisable and accepted as a social practice (Butler 1997, 51). The interpellation may or may not be traced back to a speaking subject, but either way, it will have its effect in and by citing a backlog of prior interpellations, “imitating a ritual that is for some reason inscribed into a history of convention” (Butler 1997, 33). Furthermore, by removing speech from its moment of utterance and into a domain of citation, Butler takes away the control of the speaker, and speech is in this way always already distinct from the speaker and his expressed intent and authority (Jagger 2008, 116). This opens the possibility for the interpellation to be interpreted differently from what might have been expressly intended by the speaker, and confers discursive agency to the subject. Therefore, while the process of naming someone is a way of recognising them as part of reality, and the specificity of *what* one chooses to name them, has an effect, this effect can be the subject’s acceptance or refusal to be identified by that name at all. While interpellation is a matter of constituting the subject, in Butler’s view, it always “runs the risk of inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use the language to counter the [interpellation]” (Butler 1997, 2). As such, interpellation always works by its introducing reality in the form of subjectivity, but does not always succeed in fixing the identity or meaning of the specific subjectivity that it introduced. The subject’s discursive agency lies in its possibility of appropriating the discursive processes which constituted it in the first place, and working against them by not only *repeating* the discourse but also by *using* the discourse in various ways to place itself in a specific subject position (Gade 2010, 27). The subject is thus constituted, determined and ‘coded’ by the process of interpellation, but may consciously displace the meaning and use the codes in various new ways (Gade 2010, 28).

Butler uses ‘performativity’ to refer to both the citational effect of interpellation and the discursive agency of the subject, as both the speaker subject and the constituted subject in their performances draw upon discourses that exist prior to their performances, and in this way, all their actions are *reiterative* (Gade 2010, 28). Furthermore, as a consequence of the speaker’s loss of control and the

discursive agency of the subject of interpellation, the reiterations, at the same time as drawing upon existing discourse, also *resignify* it.

The mutually constitutive character of subjectivity

The relevance of interpellation processes to the research question of this thesis is, as mentioned, that it enables an analysis of how the partnership discourse constitutes the subjectivities of the EU and Liberia, by addressing them as ‘partners’, and of how they, in turn, resignify this address. What is more, interpellation entails an understanding of subjectivity as relational and mutually constitutive, meaning that the one subject is dependent on the other subject’s recognition in order to become. As such, interpellation directs our attention towards the power structures that are created *between* subjects, in this case the relation between Liberia and the EU, because possibilities of the one subject is determined by the way the other subject addresses it (Butler 1997, 30). Interpellation in this way produces a relation of power between two subjects: one constituted discursively by the speech of the Other (Butler 1997, 33-34). When interpellation is translated into partnership, the partnership discourse constitutes the EU and Liberia as ‘partners’. This means that any one of them can only meaningfully call themselves ‘partner’ if they are addressed as such by the Other, hence the mutually constitutive character of subjectivity. Approaching partnership as interpellation therefore means that the EU and Liberia, rather than *entering* into partnership, as it would be perceived within an international relations discourse, are *mutually constituted* in and by partnership.

In the last and following section of the conceptual framework, I present the concept of ‘performativity’ as the mode of action through which the legal entities relate to the partnership interpellation.

Performativity and negotiation

Following the interpellation perspective, a subject’s agency is *performative* in the sense that it, through its performance, positions itself within a discursive terrain produced by the interpellation that called it into being. Through performance, the subject draws upon discourses that exist prior to its performance, and in this way negotiates its subjectivity. If we wish to study the EU and Liberia in relation to the partnership interpellation, we therefore need to direct our attention towards these performances. As legal entities, the EU and Liberia manifest themselves through the performances of the human beings

that are discursively constituted as their representatives, and thus are the subjects of interpellation. As such, performativity within this conceptual framework, connects the discourse of the legal entities and the discourse of partnership, both to be understood as possible subjectivities offered to the human beings that perform them. In the following section, I conceptualise performativity as the mode of action through which the EU and Liberia engage in partnership.

Performing the legal entity and its various subjectivities

Butler's theory of the performative focuses on the process whereby the subject is constituted in and by an interpellation, and on how the subject further negotiates its subjectivity. This relation takes place in what she calls a 'terrain of discursive power', which the interpellation – in this case, partnership - produces. Butler's 'terrain' can be understood as framing the possibilities and preconditions for the performance of the hereby-constituted subjects. As a precondition of the social, Butler asserts, interpellation should be understood as an act that may take place numerous times upon any one subject. Any given number of names can hence be the source of one subject's identity, simply because the act of interpellation has taken place any given number of times. Not all or any of the names, however, are determined to be accepted by the subject – and even so, the subject, as a consequence of being continuously constituted and re-constituted by these names, finds itself navigating in the various discursive terrains that they create (Butler 1997, 38). This assertion is consistent with the perception of partnership as yet another form of subjectivity performed by the EU and Liberia. As legal entities, the two have been called into existence outside of the discursive terrain of partnership, and as an interpellation, the legal entities discourse is potentially and concurrently constitutive for their subjectivities as well. However, the partnership interpellation and the discursive terrain it produces, harbours specific codes and meanings, that may or may not challenge the 'legal entities' subjectivity, but in either case offers specific modes of action for the EU and Liberia, respectively.

The thesis directs attention towards the discursive terrain of *partnership*, and on the specific preconditions it sets for the subjects of partnership. At the same time, inevitably, it directs attention towards discursive terrains *beyond* partnership, as it is not granted that the EU and Liberia identify with their roles as 'partners', and as they, as a consequence of their discursive agency, may refuse them or resignify their meaning. While there is an outside to partnership, however, there is no outside to discourse. We can only perceive of the EU and Liberia through the articulations that speak them into existence as subjects, and thus condition and enable their response. Approaching partnership as

interpellation is therefore relevant insofar as it enables us to see whether the legal entities of EU and Liberia are successfully transformed into ‘partners’.

To understand these various and repetitive acts of interpellation and the hence derived discursive terrains ontologically, Butler introduces a distinction between ‘the body’ and ‘the subject’, the body signifying the *material entity* that is *discursively constituted* as a subject. While interpellation does not bring the body into being in any material sense, “it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible” (Butler 1997, 5). A similar distinction can be made when dealing with the ‘legal entities’ of the EU and Liberia as performers of partnership. Here, we can perceive of the legal entity as a subjectivity performed by the human beings that are perceived to represent it. As Sharma and Gupta explain, the state (here, the legal entity) is not the sum of individual performances, but is reproduced through each performance, which therefore also allows for the institution’s discursive agency as a derivative of the human being’s discursive agency.

In this perspective, the performances of individual representatives of the two respective institutions can be studied directly as performances of the institution, with the reservation that these performances, while aiming to perform the institution as a coherent whole, co-exist with different or possibly conflictual performances of the same institution (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 13).

The negotiators

So far, we have focused on the way in which the institutional entity comes to manifest itself performatively. As we are looking at the specific performance of partnership, and thus a relation *between* institutions, we further need a conceptualisation of how the interpellated entities engage with each other. Sally Engle Merry (2006) focuses on the social processes whereby ideas and institutions move from a global organisation into various local contexts, by the human beings that represent these organisations. Merry focuses on those who “work at various levels to negotiate between local, regional, national, and global systems of meaning” (Merry 2006, 41), and in this way enables an analytical move from what we could call the *meta-partnership* between the abstract legal entities of EU and Liberia, and towards the interaction between the human beings that physically perform partnership in the Liberian context: the officials that meet in the discursive terrain of partnership with mandates from either the EU or Liberia. In this way, the officials have one foot in their respective institutions, and one foot on the partnership terrain. Upon it, they translate and negotiate the meaning of partnership as a result of of

their performance. To emphasise the analytical focus upon how the subjectivities of the legal entities are *negotiated* within the possibly contradictory discursive terrain of partnership, these officials are conceptualised as ‘negotiators’.

In this way, we can conceptualise partnership as an interpellation, the discursive terrain of which is inhabited and performed by the bodily manifestations of the partner institutions: the negotiators. In this further conceptualisation of the performance, it is emphasised that while the partnership address is the same, authorless strategy in the case of both legal entities, it may be received and interpreted in different ways by the negotiators. Merry explains this in the same vein as Butler, by saying that the capacity of the producers of discourses to control their meanings are limited, and therefore they can be interpreted by the negotiators in a variety of ways different from what might have originally been intended (Merry 2006, 41). This means that as the negotiators meet, they may find themselves to be speaking different partnership languages. Hence, there is a need for negotiation and translation, understood as the constant resignification of the meaning of the mandates of partnership which negotiators have been assigned by their respective legal entities. As Merry explains, negotiation and translation is necessary as the intermediaries are working in “a field of conflict and contradiction”: on the one hand, they have to speak the language of partnership preferred by their institution. On the other hand, they have to present their initiatives in terms acceptable to the partner (Merry 2006, 42 (paraphrasing)). Therefore, the negotiators are not just subjects of interpellation, but are also creators of discourse.

By combining the view of the state as a multilayered, contradictory, translocal entity brought into being through various discursive or material state practices, and the concept of negotiators, we arrive at a conceptual framework in which we can perceive of how the EU and Liberia perform partnership. Within this framework, the ‘EU’ and ‘Liberia’ exist as discursive subjectivities that the negotiators adopt and translate through their everyday practices and articulations, which continuously reproduce and are understood to represent the images of the two respective legal entities. Within this conceptual framework I seek to understand partnership as a constant negotiation, more than as a dominant, monolithic discourse, as the interpellation perspective opens for the discursive agency of negotiators.

In the following section, I present the methodology of the thesis, consisting in the research strategy with which I approach the analysis, and, subsequently, the techniques applied in the collection, interpretation and structuring of the empirical material from the field study of EU-Liberia relations.

Methodology

When partnership is understood through the conceptual framework of interpellation, the performance of partnership is perceived to take place within the discursive terrain of partnership which interpellation produces. The analysis directs its attention towards this discursive terrain, and calls for a methodology that captures the discursive terrain of partnership through the performances of its negotiators. In the following section, I present my *strategy* for approaching the discursive terrain of partnership, as I explain the connections between the constituent elements of the analysis. Subsequently, I present the *techniques* with which I have collected and interpreted the empirical material of the analysis. Finally, I present the structure of the thesis.

Research strategy:

Accessing the discursive terrain of political partnership

The strategy for accessing the discursive terrain of partnership has three constituent elements: *the performance of political partnership* by the EU and Liberia, *the inherent contradictions of political partnership*, and a *conceptual framework*.

The performance of political partnership is approached through a field study carried out in Monrovia. As such, it has empirical status, and refers to the everyday performances by the negotiators, who perform the institution they represent within the discursive terrain of partnership. Consequently, by approaching the negotiators, we get access to the discursive terrain of partnership and the way in which its potential contradictions are negotiated.

The potential contradictions refer to a range of seemingly contradictory discourses that co-exist within the category of political partnership. These are presented in the second chapter of the thesis, based on a reading of the political partnership strategies, as well as scholarly analyses that approach partnership strategies from various theoretical positions.

The concept of ‘performance’ derives from the conceptual framework of the thesis. It resonates in the theory of interpellation, which sees articulations and practices as performances of discourses that transcend the time and space of the performance itself. Performance furthermore refers to the assumption that the entities of the EU and Liberia exist as a consequence of the institutional practices through which they are performed.

The three constituent elements of the analysis, then, are a body of empirical knowledge, a set of analytical categories, and a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework has an explanatory function throughout the analysis. It conceptualises the field of research by naming its analytical entities as ‘negotiators’, ‘discursive terrain’, and ‘performance’, and offers explanations to the relations between these entities. In this way, the conceptual framework does not just name already existing objects, but *constructs them discursively* as part of the analysis (Dyrberg, Hansen, and Torfing 2000, 334).

The ‘potential contradictions’ shape the field study of the performance of political partnership, and at the same time contribute with a terminology through which we can understand and put further words to the performance of partnership. This enables an analysis that deals with the relation between political partnership, as it is understood in isolation from performance, and political partnership as it is understood *through* the performance of partnership.

Inductive and deductive aspects of the research strategy

The research strategy is empirically driven, as it seeks to present the specific performance of the EU-Liberia partnership. As such, it attempts to illustrate and broaden the perspective of what contradictions are being negotiated within the discursive terrain of partnership, and how. This can be seen as the *inductive purpose* of the thesis.

The thesis furthermore has a *deductive purpose* of exploring the explanatory power of the interpellation framework to an analysis of the power relations between donors and recipients. In contrast to most existing approaches to partnership, which attribute a significant amount of power to the donor, the interpellation framework opens the possibility of telling a story about partnership which is not *only* a story about Western dominance. By seeing partnership as an interpellation, discursive agency is attributed to the subjects of the partnership discourse, and as such, the power of discourse is not only perceived of in terms of the power of the speaker, but also in terms of the power of its recipient to reiterate and thereby resignify its meaning.

The idea of using the interpellation framework, is not to reject the conclusion that partnerships, as many scholars assert, may come to work as a powerful tool for the donor. Meanwhile, the purpose of this framework is to elaborate upon this claim, by also pointing towards possibilities of agency. Furthermore, by approaching legal entities – here, the EU and Liberia - as fragmented and dislocated and as existing only in and by everyday institutional practices, they are attributed a more concrete ontological status than is the case in most existing studies of partnership. This enables a view of specific relations between human beings, and therefore may portray more fragile and context-dependent versions of, in this case, the EU and Liberia as entities.

Research techniques: A case study of EU-Liberia relations

Case generalisability and particularity

The analysis focuses on the particular case of political partnership between the EU and Liberia. It can be seen as basis for a general discussion of political partnership, as it points towards issues that, rather than being typical, may be instructive, as Kvale formulates it, to other contexts in which partnership is performed (Kvale 1997, 228)². As such, the thesis seeks to expand the spectrum of *possible performances* and to demonstrate the *particularity* of performances. Thus, the use of the case is similar to what Stake describes as an ‘instrumental case study’: a study in which the case plays a supportive role as it “facilitates our understanding of something else. The case is still looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest” (Stake 2005, 445)

Field study in Monrovia

The analysis takes its vantage point in a field study conducted in the Liberian capital of Monrovia in June 2010. The objective of the field study was to meet officials – ‘negotiators’ - from both sides in the partnership, as well as to get an impression of their working environment in the ‘donor landscape’ in Monrovia. The tangible output from the field study is recorded conversations with nine European officials, and eight Liberian government officials. Within the text, the two groups of officials are

² “(...) kan være vejledende for, hvad der kan ske i en anden situation.” (Kvale 1997, 228)

referred to as 'European officials' on the one hand, and 'Liberian officials' on the other. The officials appear anonymously in the text, and are referred to with an 'E' or an 'L' and a number.

The less tangible output from the field study consists in impressions from the hours spent waiting in reception areas and walking in and out of offices, as well as "the body language and gestural cues that lend meaning to the words of the person being interviewed" (Angrosino 2005, 728).

I was able to contact most of the European officials prior to my trip to Liberia, and a few days before departure, I had more or less exact appointments with all nine European officials. Finding Liberian officials engaging in issues relating to the EU was markedly different, as it seemed there was little knowledge about these within the various ministries I contacted. This limited knowledge became a case in point within the analysis.

The European officials are officials from the EU Delegation in Monrovia and from EU member state missions of Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, and the United Kingdom, partly or entirely dealing with political relations to Liberia. The latter do not have a direct mandate from the EU as an institution, but at the same time do constitute the group of officials that refer to the European Council in Brussels on political matters (the 'Head of Missions' group). Designating them as 'European officials' indicates that these are European representatives, but not necessarily representatives of the EU Delegation in Liberia.

The Liberian officials are officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the 'Governance Commission', the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. As a group, they are not direct counterparts to the European officials, and handle a diverse range of issues. Therefore, a general reservation must be made in relation to seeing these persons as 'performers of political partnership'. However, all represent a Liberian government institution, and therefore, I find it reasonable to group together their statements.

Putting into words the discursive terrain of partnership

Steinar Kvale (1997) describes the process of qualitative interviewing as a continuum between description and interpretation of the life world of the interviewees. The researcher takes on a gradually more active role in condensing the meaning of the interview statements, and finally recontextualises the statements into a chosen analytical framework (Kvale 1997, 186p). As such, Kvale emphasises,

interview material cannot be understood as something that is simply ‘gathered’, but is *constructed* through its usage (Kvale 1997, 194). In the following, I describe this process of construction.

Interviews

The interviews were carried out on the basis of an interview guide prepared prior to the field study. The guide was based on my prior understanding of political partnership as harbouring certain contradictions. The interview situations, while at some points taking the form of a conversation on the same subjects, were often characterised by the officials bringing up subjects related to political partnership which I had not been aware of, and were just as often characterised by me bringing up subjects that the officials had not reflected upon, or, sometimes, even heard about before. As such, the interview situation was, as Chase (2005) describes it, a ‘socially situated interactive performance’, in which the narrative is produced and adjusted to its audience. As narrators, the officials at times disrupted my assumptions about the political partnership narrative, and brought up unexpected themes (Chase 2005, 662). Likewise, I became a co-narrator, as I invited the officials to speak about subjects that would most likely otherwise not have come up (Chase 2005, 661). As these subjects were sometimes entirely new to the interviewees, their narrative at times took the form of ‘negative narratives’, as they articulated a lack of knowledge hereof.

Storylines

As a way of categorising and recontextualising the interview statements, I use the concept of ‘storylines’, as described by Dorthe Marie Søndergaard (2002). This technique allows access to the discursive terrain, as we observe the effects of a process of subjectification – the process that we here call interpellation – by looking at how subject positions are constituted (Søndergaard 2002, 191). The term storyline refers to “a course of events, a sequence of actions that, just as with categories, creates identities through inclusive and exclusive discursive movements” (Søndergaard 2002, 191). Within a storyline, “the positions of specific actors are revealed and made available to the subject as potential identifications” (Søndergaard 2002, 191). As Andersson (2008) elaborates, storylines “serve as interpretative frames that render our own and other people’s actions meaningful” (Andersson 2008, 145). Using storylines as a research technique hence directs attention towards the underlying assumptions necessary to the story’s progression, and allows us to look at what courses of actions are made available given the subject positions formed in the storylines (Søndergaard 2002, 194).

A storyline can be made up of several people's statements, and one person may draw upon not only one but also several storylines. Storylines are *collective* and created and changed in more or less fragmented ways as they are taken up by subjects (Søndergaard 2002, 191). They appear and disappear in everyday speech as fragments, which, when put together, come to constitute a more elaborated storyline. Storylines and their subject positions are in other words 'offered' to subjects, not as a priori phenomena, but as social constructs that subjects constantly cite from. Furthermore, one subject may cite from several storylines within just one utterance (Søndergaard 2002, 199).

The idea that statements are fragments of collective storylines corresponds with Judith Butler's notion of looking beyond the speaker and focusing on the utterance. This enables an approach in which the officials' individual statements are grouped together into two main categories of 'European officials' and 'Liberian officials', respectively. This technique is challenging, as officials within one group at times contradict each other. Contradictions might be relevant to emphasise, as a matter of reliability, but might on the other hand be irrelevant to the overall storyline. As such, the construction of storylines on the background of interview statements is a balance between presenting a coherent narrative and demonstrating honesty by presenting the fragmentation also inherent to the narrative.

Two types of material: Storylines and events

When investigating storylines, as formulated by Søndergaard (2002), what is especially useful is the kind of material that is "full of people's understanding of themselves and of each other, of interactions, of interpretations of what is going on in and around them, of the structures and the materiality of everyday life, as well as their ways of practicing these understandings" (Søndergaard 2002, 191). Two types of material from the field study underpin the analytical structure of the thesis. Firstly, articulations about the EU-Liberia relation, that come to reveal the positions attributed to the two entities, "made available to the subjects as potential identifications" (Søndergaard 2002, 191). This material is characterised by interpretive, analytical accounts of the EU-Liberia relation. Secondly, articulations about partnership performance: descriptions of sequences and events that illustrate how the officials perform their positions within the discursive terrain of partnership.

While the interviews were characterised by these two types of material, there was a bias towards the more general, analytical articulations about subject positions. This might be ascribed to the fact that the

interviews were to some extent characterised by what Chase calls “sociological questions”: questions that seek to “compare, to abstract, to generalize”, rather than specifying and inviting for particular descriptions about experiences (Chase 2005, 661) As Chase further argues, “[w]hen researchers ask sociological questions, they are likely to get sociological answers – generalities about the interviewee’s or others’ experiences” (Chase 2005, 661). The events ‘emerged’ from the material during the writing process, as I gradually discovered that they had been attributed with particular importance by several officials. First realising the opportunity to describe them as isolated sequences long after the field study was concluded, I only to a limited degree had the opportunity to follow up on the officials’ statements and have them described in as much detail as I desired. Therefore, the ‘event’ statements are supported with secondary material, consisting in newspaper articles, reports, as well as speech transcripts by the EU’s ambassador in Liberia, and the President of Liberia, respectively.

Acknowledging that a sharp and exclusive distinction between these two types of material is unattainable, I structure the analysis based upon firstly, two separate storylines, and subsequently, three events that were attributed with significance by the officials. The research strategic purpose of each chapter is elaborated in their introductions.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists in five chapters. The first chapter, which is now approaching its end, presents the research question, the theoretical framework conceptualising its main elements, and the methodology with which to approach the study of the performance of partnership between the EU and Liberia.

Chapter 2 consists in two sections that work towards the aim of understanding the object of study, political partnership, as a concept. The first section presents the concept of political partnership, in attempting to understand what it intends to do, how it intends to do it, and with what motivations. The second section seeks to map out the concept of political partnership, in the light of the main strands of the scholarly debate hereof. This produces an overview of what can be perceived as the potential contradictions of political partnership.

The analysis consists in two chapters, which use the conceptual framework of interpellation and the field study of EU-Liberia relations towards an explanation of how political partnership performed, and how its contradictions are negotiated. Chapter 3 presents two storylines about political partnership: the EU storyline and the Liberia storyline. Through the storylines we gain access to how the European and Liberian officials construct subject positions for the EU and Liberia, respectively, through their articulations. This chapter addresses the questions of what assumptions are reflected, and what courses of action are legitimised, on the basis of these subject positions.

Chapter 4 presents three events that have been attributed with importance by the officials, as performances of political partnership: the 'Europe Day' celebration, a public dispute over an audit, and Liberia's reintroduction of the death penalty. Through the three performances, we gain access to the courses of action made possible as a consequence of the political partnership interpellation.

The last chapter of the thesis takes on a discussion of the main conclusions from the analysis. The discussion is concluded with reflections about how the interpellation framework, on the basis of this analysis, has contributed to an understanding of power relations between donors and recipients. The discussion is followed by the main conclusions of the thesis.

Chapter 2.

Towards an understanding of political partnership

The epistemic interest of the thesis is based on the empirical observation of two current trends in the discourse on donor-recipient relations: The renaming of donor-recipient relations as ‘partnerships’, implying a more equal status between donors and recipients, as well as ascribing a more active role to recipient countries; and the bringing in of ‘political’ principles such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance to aid relations, based on the philosophy that aid is not enough and that there are certain political and institutional preconditions for a country’s economic development and integration into the global economy. These two trends are conflated in the framework of EU-ACP development cooperation, where a new approach to partnership has been launched within recent years, seeking to expand and strengthen the existing partnership with a more ‘political’ partnership dimension. As such, political partnership constitutes the object of the research question and the thesis’ field of research. What I seek to understand is how this renaming is handled by the donors and recipients involved. The following section consists in an empirical account of ‘political partnership’ based on a description of these two trends. The purpose is to understand what political partnership intends to do, how it intends to do it, and with what motivations.

The partnership paradigm

Especially within the last decade, partnership has come to be a preferred description by development actors of aid relationships between donors in the global North and recipients in the global South. The upsurge in partnership strategies came in the mid 1990's where trend-setting donor agencies described a transformation of donor and recipient roles as necessary to achieve aims of long-term development. In the words of the World Bank, partnerships enable developing countries to be "in the driver's seat" and assume greater responsibility for their own development, while donors are to merely assist developing countries in achieving their goals (World Bank in Mercer 2003, 744; OECD-DAC 1996, 13).

This idea was seen in contrast to development strategies based upon donor-formulated economic and political conditionalities, understood as measures that face aid recipients with rewards if they live up to certain policy guidelines and sanctions if they do not (Holland 2002, 119). Conditionality is criticised of being inconsistent with the *sovereignty* of developing countries to determine their own goals, and is perceived by some as "*paternalistic*" as it predefines what is best for developing countries (Baaz 2005, 3; Holland 2002, 121).

In contrast to this, the partnership approach suggests that a lesser degree of intervention and an increasingly supportive and collaborative role for donors will lead to more sustainable development. As such, it signifies a shift from an unequal power relation where donors are in possession of both the funds and the initiative to distribute them, towards a more equal relation where "development co-operation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them" (Baaz 2005, 3; Abrahamsen 2004, 1453).

With the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness' of 2005, partnership was established as a framework for cooperation amongst more than one hundred donor- and developing-country governments, multilateral donor agencies and regional development banks (Foresti, Booth, and O'Neil 2006, vi; Winckler Andersen and Therkildsen 2007, 3). The Declaration commits its signatories to enhance the ownership of developing country governments over foreign aid funds through a greater level of direct budget support, that is, aid disbursed directly to public administrations in developing countries. Previously, the tendency had been to channel aid through projects or programmes in parallel to existing local institutions, which meant that local institutions did not benefit from development efforts and thus, it was argued, were not able to take ownership hereof (Winckler Andersen and Therkildsen 2007, 3). As a consequence, ownership and partnership became a nexus instrumental to an overall aim of sustainable development and combating global poverty and inequality (Hyden 2008, 259; Mercer 2003, 745; Crawford 2003, 143; Foresti, Booth, and O'Neil 2006, vi).

What characterises partnership then, are objectives of equality, increased ownership of recipient countries, as well as the fulfillment of mutual obligations amongst the partners. Under the auspices of the EU-ACP partnership, partnership is based upon the same principles as described above, but furthermore combines the partnership philosophy with a ‘political dimension’. The specific characteristics of the EU-ACP partnership and its political dimension are elaborated in the following.

The EU-ACP partnership

The EU-ACP relation dates back to 1964 when 18 former European colonies in Africa entered into a convention with the European Community³. In 1975, the 18 were joined by countries in the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as a number of additional African states. Today, the ACP group includes 78 countries. The relationship is framed by the Cotonou Partnership Agreement of 2000, based upon three dimensions of ‘partnership’; an aid dimension, a trade dimension, and a political dimension, which are meant to work together towards the common objectives of “poverty eradication, sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy” (European Commission 2006, 3). From the beginning, the EU’s policies towards developing countries have been based on a founding principle of “equality between partners, respect for their sovereignty, mutual interest and interdependence” (Lomé I, Art. 2 - in Crawford 2003, 140). These principles were materialised in a unique contractual right to aid, a right to compensation for shortfalls in export earnings of specific commodities, and an institutional set-up with joint institutions to oversee that principles of equality and sovereignty are upheld (Raffer 2001, 1p; Mayall 2005, 306).

However, according to observers and according to the EU itself, the partnership aspects of the EU-ACP relationship became gradually less apparent. In 1996, the European Commission describes how the principle of partnership has gradually “lost its substance and been only partly put into practice”, and that the EU’s approach up until then had not encouraged ACP countries to “display the genuine political commitment expected of them”, and had instead deprived them of initiative (European Commission 1996, VII). Development cooperation had been characterised by aid dependency and the automatic granting of aid had in some cases undermined efforts to discuss how funds were used in ACP countries (European Commission 1996, VII, 6). Accordingly, as Clapham (1996) claims, since the

³ ‘The European Community’ here refers to the European Council, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. As of 2010, these three institutions are represented as ‘The European Union’. For the sake of simplicity, the term ‘EU’ is used from here on.

1980's, negotiations “essentially consisted in the EC telling ACP states how much aid they were going to get, and the ACP complaining that it was not enough” (Clapham 1996, 101; Raffer 2001, 3). As a response to this lack of “real” partnership, as well as an acknowledgement of a “changed global context”, new roles were formulated for both the EU and the ACP countries. The development dimension was reformulated as a framework based on principles of equality, ownership, and mutual responsibility. These principles were further mirrored in a new ‘political dimension’, based upon predefined principles and values. These two dimensions of the new EU-ACP partnership are elaborated in the following.

The re-launching of EU-ACP partnership

The development dimension

The perceived problem with the ‘old’ EU-ACP partnership was, as the European Commission describes it in 1996, that the EU took away the initiative from its weaker partners, not allowing them “to display the genuine political commitment expected of them” (European Commission 1996, VII). The EU had been too “eager”, and intervened in ACP countries’ policies instead of encouraging them to take their own initiatives (European Commission 1996, 7). In contrast to this, the EU’s new role is formulated as a reduction of the EU’s degree of interference in ACP affairs. At the same time, the new partnership foresees an increase in the ACP’s *ownership* and *responsibility* of development strategies and policy reform, very much in line with the main tenets of the partnership paradigm (European Commission 1996, 10). The responsibility aspect is for the most part described in relation to the ACP countries, which are expected to take the “ultimate responsibility for reforms and development policies”(European Commission 1996, VIII). For the EU’s part, responsibility means responsibility to the European taxpayer, which the EU should hold itself accountable to with regard to the way aid is disbursed in ACP countries (European Commission 1996, VIII). Lastly, the new partnership projects a less active role for the EU and a less passive role for the ACP states, in order to counterfeit the conditions of aid dependence, crisis management, and what is described in the Green Paper as “the needs of the moment” (European Commission 1996, 7)). Overall, this means a more *equal* relation. Described as ‘adult’, ‘responsible’ and ‘mature’, the new partnership succeeds an old partnership resembling that of a parent-child relation, characterised by dependency and passivity on the recipient part, and activity and dominance on the donor part (European Commission 1996, 24; Mackie 2003, 30)

Regarding the disbursement of aid, it was formulated as an aim to use direct budget support to ACP country government budgets, as far as “conditions allow” (Moreau 2006, 18). It was argued that removing the strains attached to certain aid disbursements would further enhance ACP country ownership and responsibility (Moreau 2006, 20). As such, in the Cotonou Agreement the EU and the ACP countries sign up to an acknowledgement of: “equality of the partners and ownership of the development strategies: for the purposes of implementing the objectives of the partnership, the ACP States shall determine the development strategies for their economies and societies in all sovereignty and with due regard for the essential elements described in Article 9” (European Commission 2006, Article 2).

The political dimension

While stressing the sovereignty of the ACP countries in relation to their development strategies, the Cotonou Agreement – as in the quote above – balances it against the Agreement’s “essential and fundamental elements” defined in its Article 9. These four “elements” of human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law, and good governance, make up the foundation of the partnership’s new and separate political dimension. They were introduced into the Agreement as guiding principles for the political development of the ACP countries, and became the basis for a suspension or redirection of aid, or the imposition of further conditions, should they be violated by any of the parties (Laakso 2007, 122; Mayall 2005, 300). The political dimension was introduced based on the philosophy that a political environment guaranteeing these principles is “part and parcel of long term development” (European Commission 2006, Preamble). Hence, it links the political principles with the Agreement’s overall objectives of “poverty eradication, sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy” (European Commission 2006, Preamble). Furthermore, it establishes that the responsibility for building this political environment “rests primarily with the countries concerned” (European Commission 2006, Preamble).

By introducing political principles into the partnership, the EU-ACP partnership reflects a general trend amongst international donor agencies that “sustainable development can only result where there are secure and effective institutions that promote democracy and civil society” (Holland 2002, 121). Political principles were introduced “because the EU could not accept that aid should be provided irrespective of human rights violations in some developing countries” (Maxwell and Riddell 1998, 261). The balance between these principles and the sovereignty of ACP countries is established as, for instance, ‘democratic principles’ are described as “universally recognised principles” on the basis of

which “each country develops its democratic culture” (European Commission 2006, Article 9.2). This balance can be seen as a result of negotiations through the years between the ACP and the EU, as ACP countries voiced scepticism towards the broad definitions of the principles (Holland 2002, 202).

The renewed form of partnership was launched together with an instrument of ‘political dialogue’, envisaged as the key tool of political partnership. The dialogue is to take place between each ACP country and the EU and Member State representatives within that country. It has as its purpose to “regularly engage [the parties] in a comprehensive, balanced and deep political dialogue leading to commitments on both sides” (European Commission 2006, Article 8, 1.), and to exchange information and create a common understanding in areas that might influence the goals defined in the development and trade aspects of the partnership. In practice, political dialogue allows for a “joint drawing-up of benchmarks and targets” in relation to the essential elements, which should at the same time “take account of the particular circumstances in each country (economic, political and social context)” (Moreau 2006, 14). Formally, political dialogue establishes a forum for the discussion of ‘political’ issues, which runs parallel to a ‘policy dialogue’ relating to the implementation of the development dimension of partnership.

The purpose of political partnership

Whereas the purpose of the political dimension is in this way linked to the overall objective of poverty eradication, the political dimension was also born out of a perceived “changed global context” in the aftermath of the Cold War. This context, it was perceived, offered the opportunity to establish a stronger political relationship between the EU and the ACP, based on mutual political commitments. As the Commission describes it in 1996, the EU saw it as its responsibility to become more of a political actor on the global scene than had been the case during the Cold War era, especially as it was perceived to stand out among other donors due to its role as an institution with a political mandate (European Commission 1996, 4). At the same time, the EU’s role as a global actor had become even more necessary, it was perceived, as the East-West conflict had disappeared, ideological differences between states had gradually minimised, and a new political openness and consensus on democracy and the market economy had emerged (European Commission 1996, V, 3). Also facing the end of “the colonial and post-colonial age”, this would make possible a closer cooperation between the ACP and the EU (European Commission 1996, VI). In sum, the European Union was envisaged to establish itself as a global actor striving to “forge its external identity” in a global landscape perceivably characterised by a consensus on common political values and principles which mirrored the values and

principles that the EU had been fighting for all along (European Commission 1996, III). This meant an explication of the EU's foreign policy goals in its relation to third countries such as the ACP (European Commission 1996, 2).

The introduction of political partnership was also rooted in the idea that having a stronger political relationship between the parties is beneficial to the success of development cooperation policy (European Commission 1996, 25). This is explained in relation to the formulated goals of a stronger sense of responsibility and ownership on the ACP side, and suggests the belief that closer cooperation, especially on issues of great political importance for both parties, garners trust and ensures mutual understanding, thus reducing the risk of political crisis (Moreau 2006, 11). As Jamaica's Head of Mission to the EU states in his introductory remarks to the Cotonou Agreement, the ACP acknowledge the fact that the EC is the dominant partner of the two (European Commission 2006, 7). However, strengthening the role of the ACP in political dialogue would forge "an authentic spirit of partnership with the EC", and this is therefore the ACP's key motivation for agreeing to the political dimension.

Being a 'political actor' is for the EU's part described as something highly attractive. But just as the EU is dependent on ACP countries and political dialogue in order to perform its political role, ACP countries, on their part, are promised political agency as a consequence of the EU's will to dialogue (Vanheukelom, Mackie, and Bossuyt 2006, 1). It is described as attributing the ACP countries with the characteristics of modern, mature international actors who are no longer invited to the table as former colonies, but are invited for reasons of possibilities for closer cooperation. In this way, ACP countries are not only addressed with this second role, but are also reimbursed for the increased responsibility following from development cooperation, through the promise of political partnership. Political partnership is thus mutually constitutive of the two political actors, as they are dependent on each other to play out their respective political roles.

A contradictory concept?

In sum, political partnership can be understood as a specific mode of cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries, based upon political principles, as well as general partnership principles of equality, mutual responsibility, and ownership. Accordingly, it offers a new set of roles for the ACP countries and the EU, based on a strengthened role for the EU as a global political actor, and a greater responsibility for the ACP countries to establish a political environment conducive to long-term development. ACP countries are guided by a political dialogue with the EU, aiming to set benchmarks

for the progress on the various political principles within the individual countries. In this way, it is perceived that both parties will benefit from a stronger, more equal partnership based on mutual responsibilities. Whereas political partnership is a means towards an aim of long-term development, it takes place within the confines of a secluded political space in which the partners are foreseen to interact independently of the donor-recipient relation that runs in parallel to it.

By combining principles of partnership where recipient countries are expected to take the lead on development strategies, and political principles agreed in advance, political partnership balances considerations for the sovereignty and ownership of ACP countries over their internal affairs. Furthermore, combining the idea of an equal political partnership with the crude reality of an economically unequal donor-recipient relation where funds continue to go only in one direction, political partnership – or partnerships in general – would seem to be balancing a knife's edge between good intentions and political conditionality. Hence, the idea of political partnership can be said to encompass certain contradictions. This assertion is supported by scholars in the debate on the workings of development partnerships in general, and the EU-ACP political partnership in particular. In the following section, I apply the arguments from these scholars to the political partnership strategy, with the purpose of mapping out its potential contradictions.

The potential contradictions of political partnership

The thesis takes its point of departure in a social-constructivist approach asserting that discourses are open-ended and encompass potential contradictions. As argued by Baaz (2005), the ambiguity of the partnership discourse is “an example of how concepts are provided with different meanings in different discursive contexts”, and suggests that partnership should be approached as “harbouring different conflicts and tensions” (Baaz 2005, 9). The research question is accordingly based on the presumption that political partnership harbours certain contradictions, opening the possibility for negotiations of its meaning. Furthermore, as illustrated in the previous section, the concept of political partnership draws upon various potentially contradictory principles. In sum, this is basically what makes political partnership an interesting object of study, as it is not given in advance how political partnership is played out, or what its consequences are for the relationship between donors and developing countries. Within the contemporary debate on the partnership paradigm and its consequences, many scholars problematise the concept of partnership with reference to such contradictions. A quick glance at existing literature on development partnerships reveals titles such as “Rhetoric or results?” (Brinkerhoff 2002), “Partnership or power?” (Crawford 2003), “Conditionality or contract?” (Maxwell and Riddell 1998), covering analyses that challenge the extent to which objectives of partnership – equality, mutual responsibility and ownership - are practically attainable. In the following, on the basis of existing scholarly work on development partnerships in general and political partnership in particular, I seek to map out the contradictions and range of interpretations that can be identified on the background of the political partnership discourse. In line with Baaz’ approach, the purpose of the following section is not to point towards these contradictions as conclusions, but to use them as themes to structure a further analysis of how they are negotiated in practice.

Partnership as power

As also outlined in the introductory chapter of the thesis, a recurrent theme in the debate on partnership is the relations of power between the donor and the recipient. This makes the conceptualisation of power pivotal to the partnership debate. While Robert Chambers’ ‘participation’ approach explained the possibility of positive-sum power, most scholars question or dissociate

themselves from this by emphasising how the fundamentally unequal relation between a donor and a recipient creates unequal preconditions for entering into partnership.

In the sense that partnership can be understood as a transformation of the roles of donors and recipients alike, as Maxwell & Riddell suggest, the notion of partnership draws upon the perception of power as a positive sum formulated in literature on ‘participation’ as a strategy for development (Maxwell and Riddell 1998, 259). To the contrary, Allan Fowler (2000) argues, partnerships are inescapably based upon unequal power relations. The partnership approach is vague in its definitions of “how relations are negotiated, and who wins and who loses,” and consequently, partnerships can be appropriated to the advantage of donors and allow for a “deeper, wider and more effective penetration into a country’s development choices and path” (Fowler 2000, 3). Fowler designates partnership as “a terminological Trojan Horse”, hence indicating that while the concept appears to be “benign, inclusive, open, all-embracing and harmonious,” it in fact serves “to co-opt and sideline potentially opposing ideas and forces that express and propagate alternative views” (Fowler 2000, 7; Fowler in Crawford 2003, 142).

Baaz, analysing partnership against the grain of the paternalism it explicitly seeks to keep at bay, argues that the partnership discourse may overlap with a discourse of paternalism, as its objective to empower its subjects is articulated from a superior position whether intended or not. Baaz explains that partnership, just as much as earlier, paternalist development strategies, thrives upon parent-child metaphors, but as opposed to these, the partnership discourse seeks to “counter the childlike attitude by teaching the object of the educative effort responsibility” (Baaz 2005, 168). According to Baaz, paternalism lies in the donor identifying the problems on behalf of the recipient, who is in turn expected to solve them, using its own resources. As such, Baaz and Fowler agree that partnership discourse holds a hegemonic power position, by determining in advance what knowledge is relevant to development processes, contrary to the idea of putting development countries in the drivers’ seat. However, instead of approaching this seeming paradox as a pretext for a conspiracy or tactic, Baaz approaches it as a discursive precondition, as explained above.

More explicitly than Baaz, Rita Abrahamsen (2004) highlights what can be said to be the contradictory character of partnership’s values of equality, ownership and responsibility. On the basis of her governmentality approach to the study of partnership, Abrahamsen asserts that partnership confers responsibility upon the developing countries and as such gives them *freedom*: equality instead of inequality, ownership instead of imposition. However, ‘responsibility’ in the case of partnership means

living up to the liberal democratic norms that are defined as part of partnership strategies (Abrahamsen 2004, 1454). While promising freedom to developing countries, partnership at the same time imposes and exercises constraints, as specific principles are expected to be met. Instead of being exercised by donors, these constraints are expected to be exercised by developing countries themselves, and partnership is therefore not ‘freedom’ understood as the absence or levelling of power, but is rather an exercise of power in the *form* of freedom (Abrahamsen 2004, 1459, 1464).

In the following, I introduce perspectives on specific aspects of partnership strategies that are by and large informed by these conceptualisations of power, and the potential contradictions they point towards as a consequence hereof.

Challenges to equality and mutuality

Some scholars assert that as partnerships are contractual agreements including mutual commitments, more often than not they become a new kind of conditionality. As Maxwell and Riddell (1998) argue, the donor is likely to be the one of the two partners who defines the commitments (Maxwell and Riddell 1998, 256). Specifically in relation to the Cotonou Agreement, Maxwell and Conway suggest partnership as “asymmetrical accountability” as “there are no conditions binding the European Union comparable to those binding the developing country partners” (Maxwell and Christiansen 2002, 480). While Maxwell and Conway primarily ascribe this to the development dimension of the Agreement, the assertion about asymmetrical accountability can also be applied in relation to the political dimension. As such, the essential elements largely mirror the EU’s own foreign policy objectives, and the political progress measured through political dialogue is that of ACP countries, and not that of the EU.

Furthermore, the EU remains with the exclusive right to judge when the essential and fundamental elements have been breached, further adding to an asymmetrical relation. The judgement is difficult to predict for ACP countries, as essential and fundamental elements are broadly formulated and difficult to assess from a legal point of view, leaving the contract of partnership somewhat non-transparent (Laakso 2007, 118; Holland 2002, 121). Compliance with the essential and fundamental elements of the Cotonou Agreement define the precondition for inclusion into partnership, and the political dialogue tool enables the EU to continually monitor progress in the individual countries. Following Abrahamsen’s take on partnership as a disciplinary mechanism, a perhaps even more important tool is the *tacit expectation* that ACP countries will comply with the established political principles and the absence of explicit standards and directions related to the latter. The fact that the essential and

fundamental elements are broadly and vaguely defined, would seem to leave the ACP countries in a seemingly open discursive terrain, able to navigate freely within the realm of democratic principles, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. However, the broad definitions risk constraining ACP countries in ignorance and unpredictability, as the interpretation of these principles is eventually up to the EU countries to decide (Holland 2002, 123; Laakso 2007, 118).

The separation of politics from development

Regardless of who formulates the benchmarks, the partnership as a broadly encompassing framework might come to work as what Fowler suggests as “transformed conditionality”, as the political and development dimensions of partnership intended or unintended are intermingled. Political partnership formally attempts to separate political issues from development issues, and thereby attempts to remove the risk of the *unequal economic relation* influencing the ideally *equal political relation*. However, taking into consideration that the officials handling political dialogue on the ground are often the same that play the roles as ‘donor’ and ‘recipient’ in development cooperation, the risk of intermingling the two dimensions seems difficult to retain in practice, as development issues intentionally or unintentionally may be dealt with, within the framework of political dialogue (Mackie 2003, 32). While seeking to level out differences and reaching an understanding on sensitive political issues, political dialogue is furthermore linked to a possibility of sanctions and is in fact meant to be *preventive* hereof (European Commission 2006, 62-63; ECDPM 2001, 1).

As ACP countries are aware that an unsuccessful dialogue could eventually lead to sanctions, they have a clear incentive to follow suit to the EU’s political demands rather than to voice their dissent. Even with sanctions off the table, political dialogue can be seen as a quite powerful tool in the hands of the EU as suggestions from the EU within the framework of the political dialogue might be interpreted by the ACP as conditions for an increase or cut in aid funds. As such, as James Mackie (2003) formulates it “the partnership is manifestly not one of equals (...) The EU holds most of the major cards. The ACP countries feel this means the EU can twist their arm if differences are not resolved” (Mackie 2003, 33). Laakso (2007) goes so far as to question the very idea of ‘partnership’ in an EU-ACP context, when aid is made dependent upon political developments in a context where the receiving partner is economically dependent upon its donor (Laakso 2007, 117).

The depoliticisation of development issues

As a final effect, ironically, the introduction of a political dimension comes to indicate a depoliticisation of the entire partnership, at least in terms of vocabulary. This happens in two moves. Firstly, as ‘development cooperation’ is formally separated from the ‘political dimension’ it is implied that development cooperation is not an area of politics, but rather an area of economic disbursements and technical implementation of programmes on the ground. This division is not a new one, and rather than a clever step towards finally depoliticising development this move should be seen as a reflection of the institutional structure of the European Union’s external relations. Here, ‘political’ refers to classic inter-state, foreign policy and security issues, and is dealt with by diplomats, while ‘development’ refers to projects and programmes, and is dealt with by ‘experts’ or ‘technicians’ (European Communities 2004). However, the introduction of the political dimension does contrast the two policy realms, and by underscoring that they are inherently different and mutually exclusive within the framework of this agreement, the political dimension symbolically deprives development cooperation of its possibly controversial nature. To paraphrase Baaz, this moves development problems from an international foreign policy context where other states, and global political economy, impacts local structures, into a secluded nation-state space, where each ACP country deals with its development problems in a bilateral relation focused on technical solutions (Baaz 2005, 172).

The depoliticisation of political issues

The second move of depoliticisation regards the political dimension itself, when it presents the above mentioned political principles as universal and as something to which both the EU and the ACP countries already subscribe, in saying that “human rights are universal, indivisible and inter related,”; that “[d]emocratic principles are universally recognised principles,”; that “[t]he structure of government and the prerogatives of the different powers shall be founded on rule of law,”; and that good governance is there for the purpose of equitable and sustainable development (European Commission 2006, 9 (Article 9, 2)). Secluding ‘politics’ into a separate dimension of the Agreement would seem to contribute to a more political relationship between the two parties, but as ‘politics’ enters its own dimension, it is reduced to a number of minimum principles that are labelled as political because they are associated with what Chantal Mouffe (2005a) calls ‘constitutional essentials’: “the fundamental principles that specify the general structure of government and the political process as well as basic rights and liberties of citizenship” (Mouffe 2005, 28). The ‘political’ dimension of partnership can in this way be understood to signify a range of specific constitutional issues, rather than signifying

something that should be debated, what Mouffe calls a “terrain of contestation” (Mouffe 2005, 7). The idea that there are minimum principles that are so fundamental and universal that they cannot or should not be disputed hence amounts to a depoliticisation. The political dimension of the Cotonou Agreement is presented as a consensus, but in actual sense, Mouffe claims such a consensus is only possible based on an authoritative exclusion of alternatives. Mouffe further claims that when in this way “drawing a frontier without recognising its political character”, “the very possibility of a legitimate form of expression for the resistances against the dominant power relations [disappears]” (Mouffe 2005, 5). As such, the political dimension is double-edged; on the one hand, it proclaims to be political and opens a space for dialogue on these political issues. On the other hand, it is based upon a number of minimal principles that are presented as agreed upon and universal.

Political dialogue as consensus or contestation?

This seeming paradox begs the question of what the political dialogue is meant to deal with, when it would appear there is a consensus about its political principles. As Harrison formulates it, the re-naming of politics as ‘consultation’ or ‘dialogue’ “[locates] political conflict or contradiction within specific and relatively limited boundaries” (Harrison 2004, 99, 101). Similarly, as it is understood within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement that so-called political issues should be dealt with in a specific manner in order to fulfill the Agreement’s objectives of “poverty eradication, sustainable development and the integration of ACP countries into the world economy”, it becomes legitimate to deal with them as common sense, uncontroversial and non-negotiable (European Commission 2006, 9 (Article 9, 1). The ACP group have previously expressed concern that political dialogue would become a prerogative for the EU to interfere in matters perceived as internal and sovereign to ACP states, directly against the stated intent of the Cotonou Agreement that “the ACP States shall determine the development strategies for their economies and societies in all sovereignty” (European Commission 2006, 6). This suggests a challenge to ACP country *sovereignty* and *ownership*, by allowing for the EU to intervene into issues that would, as some scholars assert, “previously have been regarded as [belonging to] the sphere of domestic politics” (Clapham 1996, 198; Holland 2002, 123).

Conclusion on Chapter 2

The conflicts and tensions of political partnership, firstly concern a contradiction between the key partnership tenets of equality, ownership, and mutual responsibility, and the predefined political principles of partnership. The predefined principles seek to strike a balance between universally accepted values on the one hand, and local circumstances on the other, but seek to install a hierarchy between the two where the universal is superior to and more elementary than the local. The unclear definition of these principles opens for a broad interpretation, leaving ACP countries in an uncertain terrain where it is eventually up to the EU to decide who remains included in the partnership and what political issues should be taken up in dialogues, with the risk of compromising the sovereignty of ACP countries. This stands in contrast to the principle of ownership, whereby developing countries to a larger extent define their own development strategies.

Secondly, there seems to be a tension between development partnership and political partnership, which are expected to exist separately of each other, yet contribute to the same goals. The possibility of this separation can be questioned, as the same two entities are to implement the two dimensions. It could be asserted, that regardless of the formal separation of the two, the entities would associate them and possibly link them strategically, asserting that for instance progress in political partnership would lead to continued funds from development partnership. In this way, political partnership has an inherent conditionality mechanism.

Finally, the 'political' in partnership seems to occupy a paradoxical position: at once a terrain for dialogue, if not contestation, and at once a domain of universally agreed values and consensus. The attempted separation of the policy areas of development and politics means a depoliticisation of development, but also of political issues as political principles are understood as commonly agreed, universal and non-negotiable.

Chapter 3.

Two storylines about political partnership

The political partnership strategy interpellates the EU and Liberia as political partners and at the same time presents them with a discursive terrain rife with contradiction, which allows for a negotiation of their subject positions as political partners. In the following chapter, I present this process of subjectification through the articulations by the European and Liberian officials, respectively. They form two storylines about the EU-Liberia relation, through which we gain access to how categories and subject positions are constituted through “inclusive and exclusive discursive movements”, as the officials articulate their perceptions of the EU and Liberia as entities. Based upon the storylines, we are able to identify what subject positions “are revealed and made available to the subject as potential identifications” (Søndergaard 2002, 191), and further ask, what are the underlying assumptions necessary to the story’s progression? What courses of action and specific practices are consequently made possible? And finally, what assumptions do they reflect about the general EU-Liberia relation in general and political partnership in particular?

The EU storyline

The European Union in the donor landscape

It was only a five-minute walk from my compound in Monrovia to the neighbouring compound where I was to meet one of the EU member state representatives in Liberia, on the first day of the field study. I thought I was meeting her in her home as I walked into the small courtyard with little two-story houses placed end to end and with a pool at the far end, facing the sea. But the first room I stepped into was the small reception room of the Spanish Consulate consisting of a reception desk with a small Spanish flag, and a seating area with a poster above it, depicting Spain. After the Spanish interview, I was offered a ride from the Consulate's driver, as the Consul did not perceive it to be safe for me to walk my way to the French Embassy, although it was only ten minutes away. On the way there, we had to take a detour around the block, as the part of the 16th Sinkor road which connected it to the main road, was so damaged that it was not possible to pass. When we finally arrived, the French ambassador explained - as he wandered back and forth in the limited space of the French consul's office, waving his arms around passionately to stress his points - that we had set foot in a "microscopic embassy", in fact "the smallest French embassy in the world", strategically badly placed in a part of the city far from the government institutions, on a small side-road to which one could not even drive directly. An official at the EU Delegation in Monrovia had described in an e-mail prior to my visit that the European diplomatic missions in Liberia were all "small and under-resourced". At this point, I came to understand what that actually meant, as both the Spanish and the French meeting bore witness to the relatively limited physical presence of the European Union and its Member States in Monrovia, and, if nothing else, substantiated the self-irony bordering resignation or frustration with which this role was presented through the words of the officials.

A weak citational effect?

The limited physical presence of the European Union and its Member States in Monrovia, substantiates a perception which was common among the European officials, that the EU's presence is not only limited in physical terms, but also in terms of the EU's political relation to Liberia, as the EU is perceived to play an overall weak role vis-à-vis Liberia. The EU-Liberia relation is described as impaired by what the European officials present as a paradox: that the EU as Liberia's second-largest donor neither receives due recognition for its economic contribution, nor is perceived by Liberia to be a specifically important partner. E4 accordingly describes the current relation as one in which the

Liberian government and specifically the president is “not taking [us] serious as a partner...or, maybe [the president] is taking us seriously as a partner, but she’s not giving the room for discussions. (...) It’s just, you don’t have any voice. You are not invited to discuss”(E4). As E4 elaborates, the position that the European officials expect from partnership, is a position in which “you have something to say and your opinion is valued” (E4). However, this is not the case in the current relation where, it is perceived, the EU is not seen nor heard by Liberia. E4 contrasts the situation in Liberia to the EU’s relation to Sierra Leone, where the European Union is respected, and seen as “something important” (E4). E4 explains that there are ongoing talks in the group of European officials about whether and how to carry out political dialogue, but when describing the current climate for political dialogue, E4 passes it off as impossible: as of now, Liberia would, in E4’s view, “feel they are being examined. I don’t think they see us as a partner to talk to and discuss openly” (E4).

The EU’s weak role in Liberia is explained by the officials through a chain of arguments suggesting that the EU and its large contribution are not being recognised by the Liberian government, due to the US overshadowing the EU’s role, the Liberian government’s lack in capacity, and the EU’s lack of ‘visibility’ – all factors which in turn have the consequence that the EU has little influence as a political partner to Liberia, as it is formulated by the officials. As a final link in the chain, a range of solutions and unexploited potentials are suggested, perceived to eventually strengthen the EU’s role. This chain of arguments points towards material, external factors that influence upon the citational effect of political partnership, to the effect that the EU is not perceived as “important” by Liberia. The EU might eventually be perceived as such, it is argued, given that these factors are changed. In this way, as will be elaborated in the following, the European officials have been successfully interpellated as political partners, insofar as political partnership is not questioned. Rather, what is identified as problematic in the following is certain aspects of the specifically Liberian context.

The Liberia-US relation

What is significant about most of the European officials’ way of putting into words the EU-Liberia relation, is that they from the outset tell a story, which at first deflects from the EU-Liberia track, in order to explain Liberia’s relations to a third actor: the United States. Unequivocally, the European officials describe the US as the strongest outside influence on Liberia’s development, and an influence that stands in the way of other influences such as the EU itself.

Liberia declared its independence from the United States in 1847, and as already mentioned Liberia's status as a US colony prior to independence is questionable. This historical fact does not, however, detract from the fact that the word 'colony' is used as basis for the description of US-Liberia relations - not so much as a description of the current relation, but more as a basis for understanding what this "special relationship" is, if not colonial. By some of the European officials it is said that Liberia has never been a colony, but that something remains 'strange' about the US-Liberia relation. As one official puts it: "It's so strange, they haven't been colonised, but then they have that close relationship with the Americans – so close, they think they are the small brothers. I don't know, I think that someone said once that 'if we had had a colonial power, maybe we had had something...someone to blame because of our failures. But we have no-one to blame.'" (E4). The "little brother" metaphor is also attributed to Liberia by another official, saying that Liberians refer to America as their "big brother", and see themselves as "an offshoot to America" (E3).

This description of the US-Liberia relation is presented by the European officials as a fact that is necessary to be aware of when moving into the domain of Liberia's political relations. The special political relation between Liberia and the US is explained with reference to their common history, and is seen as "understandable" (E2). Furthermore, it is used as an explanation for the seeming paradox of the EU's weak role.

Juxtaposing the EU and the US

As explained by the European officials, Liberia's special political relations to the US means that other donors, among these the EU, have "a relatively limited political influence in Liberia" (E2; E8). As E3 sees it, "Liberians tend to turn to the US and listen to the US more than anybody else, obviously for historic reasons, but also because of this perception that the US are doing the lion's share of the development"(E3). E3 further states that this perception is obviously "misguided", both because the EU is a large donor, and further asserts that there is a mismatch of expectations within the US-Liberia relation, as the US, while contributing a lot to Liberia, does not feel the same "colonial responsibility" that European countries feel towards their former colonies (E3). E3 uses the term "the unwanted US child" about Liberia while at the same time stressing that this is not a fitting description. Still, it is E3's impression that Liberia has higher expectations about the relationship than what the US actually fulfills. Within this narrative, the US is positioned as a not very reliable partner for Liberia, and this unreliability is further compared to the way the EU deals with *its* former colonies, by stressing that the European

countries do feel responsible towards these. The EU's own reliability is demonstrated through the narrative of how the EU was the only donor to maintain its representation in Liberia throughout the 14-year civil war (E1). In contrast, as E3 maintains, the US during the war evacuated their embassy and "didn't do anything to try to prevent the fighting" (E3). In this way, the EU's position is associated with reliability and an idea of 'the former colony' - Liberia - is reproduced, described as a country which requests help from the outside, but which has been let down. This image is remarkably different from the image of a matured partnership, where "the colonial and post-colonial age" has come to an end and the recipient country takes responsibility for its own development. At the same time, the positions articulated here for the EU and Liberia point towards the establishing of a closer relation. The EU storyline is saturated with this ambiguity, which on the one hand describes Liberia's inferior position as subversive to political partnership ideals, and on the other hand articulates political partnership as based upon a premise of inequality.

Liberia's little brother position

While the US may not in practice be a partner that Liberia can always rely on, this does not detract from the fact that the close relationship between Liberia and the US, in the perspective of some of the European officials, is detrimental to Liberia's partner role. It is accordingly claimed by some officials that Liberians have become passive and dependent in their expectations to receive help from the Americans, in line with the "little brother" position established for Liberia in the above. E4 furthermore argues that Liberians are inhibited by "that special relationship to the Americans, so protective that they are not able to grow" (E4).

Liberia's dependency and hence derived passivity, is further explained with reference to Liberia's dependence upon the international donor community in general. E9 argues that this dependence is an obstacle towards Liberia's development, as Liberia is disinclined to accept that it can no longer be seen as a post-conflict country, but rather a developing country expected to take ownership of its own development process (E9). E3 supports this contention by referring to the fact that it seems to be difficult for the Liberian government to discuss or even recognise that there will be an era after the UN mission has left, where Liberia will need to take over the responsibility for its own security (E3). In this perspective, Liberia is seen to actively position itself as dependent, by neglecting the fact that it has been moving since the end of the civil war, and by developing an attachment to the international donor

community. As such, Liberia, instead of being an active development partner taking ownership and responsibility for its own development, seems to actually want to remain a passive recipient.

The difficulties in establishing political partnership can further be attributed to a lack of capacity in the Liberian government structures, some argue. The EU's limited success in engaging the Liberian government in a political dialogue is partly explained with the lack of skilled staff and capacity in the Liberian ministries (E2). As it is formulated by E9, dialogue requires ownership, and ownership is difficult to achieve if capacity is limited on the recipient side. This can lead to the recipient not understanding that it is actually perceived as being a partner, which makes dialogue "silent", as "only the donor is speaking" (E9).

Liberia is as such described by European officials as performing the role of an aid dependent recipient, as a 'little brother' not only to the US but also in its donor relations in general. In other words, Liberia has internalised its inferior position as part of its national identity. This inferior position is attributed with characteristics opposite to the image of a partner actively taking ownership and responsibility for its own development. These characteristics, cementing Liberia's inferior position to its partners, are in this way understood as standing in the way of Liberia's ability to step into an equal, 'matured partnership'.

The EU's invisibility

The EU is also described as being responsible for its own weak role in Liberia, as it is perceived to be suffering from a "visibility gap". In spite of its large contributions to Liberia, the EU seems to be 'invisible' to both the government and the population. 'Visibility' is articulated as the visual representation of the EU towards the general population and in a more abstract sense, as the EU's "presence" and ability to create awareness about itself towards the government. This 'visibility gap' is furthermore perceived as a key impediment to the EU's building of a political partnership with Liberia. Visibility in its visual sense is described as the degree to which the EU is advertising what it contributes development-wise, and it is perceived that, as opposed to the US, this is not currently the EU's strong point. As E3 puts it: "I don't think the EU are actually particularly good at advertising what they're doing. USAID are fantastic...they'll make sure the press are there whenever they open any project, programme, or anything, it's covered in the press. Now, the EU do some of that, but they're not as...anything as aggressive in advertising what we've been doing" (E3).

In E6's view, the EU has not succeeded in promoting itself as a coherent actor, making it difficult for the government to understand "where the money comes from," and when it is cooperating with an individual member state, as opposed to the European Union as a whole. Accordingly, the government still prefers to talk to the Member States bilaterally, rather than with the EU as a group (E6). The fact that only five EU Member States are represented in Liberia, that they are "small and under-resourced," (E1) and that only two of them are represented at embassy level, is further offered as explanations for the limited 'visibility' of the European Union to Liberia (E2). According to E1, political dialogue is not regarded as something the European officials in Monrovia can necessarily go through with on their own, as the EU as an actor in Liberia is "extremely small" (E1).

This might however be changing, some of the European officials contend. E2 explains that the visibility gap will be filled as the Delegation is gradually upgraded, and as additional "visibility resources" are being committed (E2). E3 further points out that the group of European representatives might even be able to draw strategic advantage from having few and small representations, as this might enable them to act in a more coherent manner. Further, it is proposed that the complicated institutional structure of the EU will in time become less complicated, due to the ongoing process of developing the EU to become one coherent actor on the global stage (E1; E5).

Within this part of the storyline, a gap is constructed between an ideal image of the EU as a coherent actor, and the current situation characterised by a lack of visibility and coordination. By explaining that the EU is partly at fault for not being visible and present enough, the officials ascribe the lack of citational effect to factors external to political partnership rather than to the idea of political partnership itself. By increasing coordination and visibility, as it is foreseen above, the EU will successfully increase its presence, and this is seen as a precondition for political partnership. Hence, this assumption is based upon the logic that a donor's contribution, presence and visibility, is proportionate to its "importance" to the recipient, which is in turn qualifying for a political partnership. As a final turn in the storyline, the officials explain how they might use their visibility strategically and actively – as opposed to just passively, as is the case in the current situation - as a way of making Liberia aware of the EU's importance.

Using the donor position as leverage

Many of the European officials translate donor visibility into political cooperation, and describe it as a precondition hereof. This reveals the idea that visibility as an indicator of the EU's degree of economic contribution should in itself qualify the EU for political partnership. E2 explains that "for a long time the EU support to Liberia did not get the level of visibility responding to its volume" (E2) and E3 argues that the EU's relatively large contribution means that Liberia should ideally listen to the EU "as much as to anybody else". In E6's statement above, the government's attention towards the EU as a coherent and political actor is perceived as dependent upon an understanding of "where the money comes from", thereby suggesting that if the EU wishes to establish itself as a political partner to Liberia, it needs to be better at communicating its contribution. E4 also presents visibility and coordination as a matter of adding up the EU's contributions and thereby gaining not only recognition for contributions but also gaining recognition politically.

Furthermore, economic contribution and political partnership is strategically linked by some of the officials. Accordingly, E3 argues that the EU and its Member States in Liberia "don't use our collective leverage politically enough. We are actually major contributors in development terms to Liberia's recovery. And we should be using that more to actually take a political role, and to actually have some political leverage" (E3). Hence it is taken for granted that part of the EU's mandate is to gain political influence. The proposed strategic use of the donor role to exert political leverage wedges itself into the attempt by the political partnership discourse to separate the political domain from the development domain: political partnership is described as having an intrinsic value to the partners, and as a step away from a relation based upon the economic equalities inherent to the donor-recipient relation. In stark contrast, the donor-recipient relation is here formulated as *instrumental* to partnership.

Since political partnership is described as political leverage, it would seem that political partnership is partly motivated by the EU's isolated political ambitions as much as ambitions on behalf of the EU and Liberia, together. It does not speak into the discourse of political equality between the partners, practiced through a political dialogue separated from unequal economic relations between donor and recipient. Rather, the donor role is appropriated as an instrument to gain a position as political partner.

Conclusion on the EU storyline

The EU storyline explains how political partnership seems to have a lack of citational effect in Liberia. It is presented as a paradox that the EU is a large contributor to Liberia's development, but is not recognised as a political partner by the Liberian government. Following the mutually constitutive character of subjectivity, the EU's room for manoeuvre is determined by the way Liberia addresses it. The EU attempts to interpellate Liberia as a political partner, but as Liberia does not respond as a political partner, the EU cannot meaningfully perceive of itself as such.

This lack of visibility is explained by institutional challenges for the EU and Liberia, respectively, as well as by Liberia's internalisation of its position as an inferior and dependent "little brother". It is argued that the latter obstructs an equal, mature partnership. Moreover, the strong relation between the US and Liberia is perceived as an obstacle to the EU's political ambitions. The juxtaposition of the EU's and the US' respective relations to Liberia, reveals how the European officials resignify political partnership as *recognition* – being duly credited for one's contribution - and *political influence* – "being listened to".

Within this description of the EU's partnership loss a power relation is articulated where the EU is subjected to Liberia's will. In this way, the EU is implicitly characterised as the inferior "little brother" in the relation. The focus of the EU's political partnership ambitions seem to be the EU's role as a political actor, more than how political partnership might contribute to Liberia's development. Overall, the explanations refer to the Liberian context, and not to how political partnership is relevant within this particular context. In this way, political partnership and the EU's own political ambitions are implicitly legitimised throughout the storyline.

The solutions envisaged to make up for the weak citational effect of political partnership, reiterate the EU's position as a *donor*. Accordingly, it is proposed that the EU enhances its *visibility* or uses its contribution as *leverage*, and in this way 'earns' political partnership on the basis of Liberia's dependence. Liberia's dependence is as such perceived as a *precondition* for establishing political partnership, and political partnership is conflated with the donor-recipient relation, rather than seen as separate from it. This illustrates a contradiction, as partnership is otherwise perceived as dependent upon a principally equal relationship.

The Liberia storyline

In the following section, I present the storyline about the EU-Liberia partnership as it can be assembled from the articulations from Liberian officials in various government ministries. The Liberia storyline, on the one hand, largely reiterates and confirms assumptions laid out by the European officials in the previous section. It portrays Liberia as the aid dependent recipient rather than the mature partner, and it reproduces the idea that a donor's contribution to a given recipient country corresponds to its visibility or influence upon the country. Central to the storyline is not so much the partnership with the EU, as the officials admit to the fact that knowledge about the relation is scarce within the government institutions. As such, the assumption is confirmed that the EU is largely invisible to both the Liberian population and the Liberian public administration. Furthermore, it is argued that this is peculiar as the EU is an important economic contributor to Liberia.

What is more, the Liberian officials supplement their awareness of the EU's invisibility with spoken and practiced testimonies to even more invisibility: The Liberian officials are aware of the invisibility of EU as a donor, but are not aware of the EU's attempts at establishing itself as a political partner, and therefore do not refer to this particular role. As such, the Liberia storyline is explicitly about *partnership's* lack of citational effect, but implicitly comes to reveal the lack of citational effect of specifically *political partnership*. Finally, the storyline and the subject position it constructs for Liberia, suggests Liberia's possibility of using its discursive agency as a strategic positioning. Within the storyline, Liberia negotiates its partner subjectivity by emphasising the role of the donor as an initiator, thereby creating a conundrum for partnership insofar as this is understood as a mutual endeavour. In this way, the Liberia storyline illustrates what Butler describes as the risk of "inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use the language to counter the interpellation" (Butler 1997, 2).

The broken links

In the search for Liberian officials dealing with EU-Liberia relations, I was referred to the International Cooperation and Economic Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Here, I met an official – L2 - whose function was to cooperate and coordinate on diplomatic issues with international donors, including the EU. L2 told me as we arranged for the interview, that he would very much like to tell me about the EU's role in Liberia, but that what he could primarily tell me about was why he did not know very much about it. Hence, he would mostly be able to tell me about the "broken links" in EU-Liberia

cooperation. As an example of his role in cooperating with the EU, L2 told a story of how he had once been asked to draft a memoir for the president on an occasion where she was to speak about Liberia's cooperation with the EU. When I asked about the specific occasion for the memoir, he hesitated for a moment and then left his chair to go and look for the "EU file" in his cabinet in the opposite corner of his office. While browsing through the drawers, he explained laughingly that there were folders for all the development partners in the cabinet, but that the unit had an especially close partner and that "because of [the partner's] active involvement in our office, we have several folders, very huge folders," which took up most of the space (L2). The involvement between his office and this partner was very intense, L2 explained, and the partner country director would visit the office on a regular basis, to brief them on the activities that the partner is involved in with the other ministries and agencies. As L2 added, "I'm really looking forward to the European Union working together with us in that way as well," because, as he added, "the full potential of that relationship has not yet been tapped" (L2).

Subjecting the EU to a donor position

The above story illustrates two things central to the Liberia storyline. Firstly, while the citational effect of the EU's performance in Liberia might be weak, this weak citational effect is articulated and acknowledged by the Liberian officials. As such, the storyline draws upon a discourse about a lack of knowledge. However, while there is awareness of the lack of knowledge about the EU's role as a *development* partner, little or no awareness is expressed about the EU's role as a *political* partner. This is revealed in the storyline through its silences about the EU's political role, and in the conversations with the officials through their tentative or hesitant answers, shrugging shoulders, and shaking heads as response to questions regarding political partnership. Secondly, EU-Liberia cooperation is nevertheless attributed with importance within the storyline, as officials – as L2 above - express hope that cooperation will be closer in the future. While not specifically referring to a 'political partnership', the officials nevertheless articulate Liberia's cooperation with the EU, as something that should be strengthened. As political partnership is tentatively spoken into existence, it is attributed with significance, not so much because of what it means to Liberia qualitatively, but more as a matter of strengthening donor cooperation. Political partnership is signified as something positive, as it is a donor cooperation modality.

Within the Liberia storyline, the EU is described as a "key partner" to Liberia, and notably, as a key *development* partner. As such, it is explained that the EU has played and still plays an important role as a donor in various development sectors such as water and sanitation, electricity and infrastructure (L3;

L4; L5; L2). The EU is perceived as ‘unique’ as it is the largest contributor of direct budget support, meaning that aid funds are disbursed directly through government structures (L5; L1). In the view of L1, the EU’s presence in Liberia has a value beyond its specific contributions. As the EU has been present in the country throughout the civil war, as the only donor, the EU has sent “a signal that no matter what happens, they will always be there with us” (L1). Both L1 and the other Liberian officials nevertheless question whether the EU’s presence can be felt within the “government circles”. While they are aware of the EU’s contributions, they also express puzzlement concerning the fact that in spite of its contribution, for some reason the EU is neither very visible to the population, nor to officials within the Liberian public administration.

Explaining a lack of citational effect

Within the EU storyline, the weak citational effect of political partnership is explained with reference to factors external to political partnership itself. Similar explanations are offered in the Liberia storyline, linking the weak citational effect to Liberia’s lack of institutional capacity as well as the EU’s lack of visibility. As an example of the EU’s invisibility, one official describes how the EU is too subtle in its promotion of its own contributions, even when it comes to one of its most tangible contributions to post-war Liberia, the electricity grid in Monrovia:

“You can walk from one point to another point in Monrovia and you see all the electricity lights (...) But you do not know whether it is the EU or not. You only get to know if it is the EU when you get to, maybe, one of the power stations. You see the generator; there you have the EU flag on that. But what happens to some individuals who cannot get to the power stations (...) they still do not know that it is the EU.” (L1)

As in the EU storyline, the fact that other donors, especially the US, are less subtle is emphasised as a possible explanation for why the EU tends to fade into the background. Accordingly, L1 asserts that the US is better at making its projects “visible”, and asserts that “the colonial relationship” between Liberia and the US might explain the common misperception that the US is the one key partner to Liberia’s development (L1).

Notably, some explanations that are in the EU storyline articulated as deficiencies that can be made up for, are in the Liberia storyline portrayed as more fundamental issues. Accordingly, the EU is described as blending in with other donors due to its funding modalities, and due to the perceived fact that it does not have specific conditions attached to its budget support. These explanations are elaborated below.

The camouflaged donor

The EU's direct budget support to Liberia is in the EU storyline articulated as a step towards being recognised as a political partner, and in a more concrete sense as an instrument to exert leverage. In the Liberia storyline, to the contrary budget support plays a role as an explanation for the EU's invisibility, together with funding through 'pool funds', which is also described as a typical way for the EU to finance Liberia's aid programmes. These aid modalities are described as camouflaging the donor's contribution (L1; L3). L3 accordingly describes the EU's support as "hidden". As E3 proposes in the EU storyline, the symbolic value of budget support is the confidence it shows towards the recipient government that it can administer the aid funds on its own. The Liberian officials confirm this. Nevertheless, apparently, budget support plays a double role, as it does not necessarily allow the donor to cash in on heightened attention followed by increased leverage. On the contrary, budget support may even lead to less attention, as donor support is nested into government structures. In a perspective where the aim of partnership is for the recipient to be in the driver's seat, this situation seems to be ideal. However, in a perspective where heightened attention is the precondition for partnership, as indicated by E3, budget support might be an obstacle to a closer relation.

The EU as just another donor

Moreover, the storyline reveals the perception that the EU places the same conditions as most other donors do, or as some Liberian officials perceive it; no conditions at all. Accordingly, an official in the Ministry of Finance states that the EU, just as all other donors, have certain conditions, but that the EU's conditions are not remarkably different (L5). L1 argues that donor's are so well coordinated in Liberia, that "[t]hey are all saying the same thing" (L1). L1 continues:

"...politically, it's not just the EU standing as a unique group and saying 'we're doing this and we're doing that'. They're unique in a way, in their level of contribution. But it's done in a partnership, as a framework – everybody is included, and everybody performs a unique role in that framework" (L1)

The partnership referred to here is clearly the general framework of donor coordination between international donors and the Liberian government, and not the bilateral partnership between the EU and the government.

The EU's rather neutral position as a donor is further cemented by L2, suggesting that the EU improve its profile to cover more *political* areas. As such, L2 is under the impression that, as opposed to the EU, the US is in fact more active in areas such as the security sector, which are "crucial to Liberia's

recovery” (L2). L2 further argues that for the EU to be more influential, it could extend cooperation to for instance the security sector, beyond typical development sectors such as water and electricity. This statement is significant as it reproduces the picture of the EU as a donor in traditional development areas, as it is also outlined in the above section, rather than a donor contributing to ‘political’ sectors such as governance, the rule of law, and security, which is in fact the case (L2). Further, it witnesses the gap of knowledge not only within the general population, but also within government circles.

Interestingly, some of Liberia’s explanations for the weak citational effect actually point towards what is in the EU storyline articulated as unexploited potentials. Without questioning the legitimacy of political partnership as such, the Liberia storyline, then, further challenges the EU’s ambitions of making up for invisibility.

Internalising inferiority

A last explanation for the EU’s lack of visibility and lack of political cooperation with Liberia is a perceived lack of capacity and hence derived loss of institutional memory within government institutions. As an example, the coordination unit referred to above, has difficulties in keeping up with its relations to donors as only eight out of eleven positions are filled, and as there is a frequent turnover of staff. As L2 explains, it is difficult to keep staff: “Those who are here are people with very limited expertise. (...) And people with extensive expertise normally don’t stay long here” (L2). L2 explains how this loss of expertise affects the everyday work in the unit, as specific cooperation with for instance the European Union is difficult, and as contact with donors and knowledge of donor activities is random. Issues that should go through the office do not, and instead:

“I will hear that the European Union is cooperating with the Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy and is contributing maybe three million Euros to the energy sector. I will only hear that on the radio. And my office should be an active player in concluding that deal” (L2)

The story about the donor coordination office symbolises Liberia’s difficulties in keeping up its relations to multiple donor agencies, and thereby affirms the suggestion put forward in the EU storyline, that donor relations can be demanding to maintain for the recipient. Specifically relations such as political partnership, which require that the recipient actively contribute something to a dialogue, might be difficult to handle for a weak public administration such as Liberia’s (E9). What is more, the coordination office story also symbolises an aspect of capacity building that might be more

challenging than envisaged throughout the EU storyline. As illustrated in the above description of L2's search for the EU file, the donor coordination office does have strong relations to particular donors – albeit not the EU. The specific partner country taking up a lot of space in the office cabinet, in fact also took up space in the office itself, with various souvenirs from this particular partner decorating L2's desk and walls. This special connection between the cooperation office and this particular donor illustrates that the EU might not be the only donor interested in making an impact on Liberia and establishing a special relation. Liberia's lacking capacity is therefore not only a challenge in terms of building institutional capacity; it is also linked to visibility, as the EU is up against donors 'rivals', also attempting to get Liberia's attention and to build a stronger relation. As it can be read from the following statement, the responsibility of strengthening the relation is perceived to lie with the EU:

“I think that the European Union office in Liberia needs to find a way to strengthen dialogue with our government (...) so that the important [principles], that set the basis for our cooperation, can be brought to the fore” (L2)

As such, the Liberia storyline portrays Liberia not only as *dependent*, as in the EU storyline, but also as *desirable*.

The Liberia storyline largely challenges the EU's visibility strategy and its envisaged attempts towards strengthening political partnership with Liberia, by pointing to possibly more fundamental problems. Nevertheless, these problems remain external to political partnership, and therefore Liberia's storyline does not challenge it as such. While the Liberian officials do not seem to be familiar with the concept, they articulate it as something that could and should most definitely be established. However, this position is ambiguous. On the one hand, it succeeds in positioning Liberia as non-dismissive of political partnership. On the other hand, it succeeds in keeping political partnership at bay, with reference to various tangible deficiencies. In this way, maintaining Liberia's inferior position becomes legitimate.

Resignifying political partnership as a bargain

The specific political dimension of partnership with the EU however, is not attributed with specific expectations in the Liberia storyline. Some explain that for a country like Liberia, just having “returned from war”, as said by one official, political cooperation with for instance the EU is seen as important as a way of “[returning] to the community of nations, to have a rightful place in the community of nations” (L2). However, apart from this, the motivation for engaging in political partnership is the fact

that political partnership is a modality of cooperation suggested by an important donor. As such, political partnership – or, partnership altogether – is resignified as a matter of complying with donor demands. Accordingly, L5 describes the disbursement of aid funds as a bargain, in which the donor has to live up to its commitments and disburse immediately after the recipient has met its obligations (L5). For Liberia, L5 explains, meeting donor obligations can sometimes be challenging, but as the country is so “destroyed”, immediate disbursement from the donors is crucial. As L3 explains it, when donors pose demands to Liberia, it is rarely a question for Liberia *whether* to accommodate to these demands, but *how* to accommodate to them, as they are “a matter of compliance,” prompted by the fact that “[the donors] really, really want to help us...and we really, really need the help” (L3).

As such, Liberia’s storyline cements Liberia’s position as dependent upon the donor community, and internalises its identity as a post-conflict state in acute need of help. Furthermore, it reveals that Liberia positions itself in relation to ‘the speaker’ articulating the political partnership interpellation, more than the discursive field and the specific social existence which political partnership would make possible. This reproduces the conundrum established in the EU storyline, as political partnership is otherwise understood as a mutual endeavour and as its purpose is to even out the stakes between the donor and the recipient. When the EU’s function as the speaker of the interpellation is stipulated, a power relation is spoken into existence. In this way, Liberia negotiates the meaning of political partner subjectivity by emphasising the role of the donor as the initiator of political partnership, thereby possibly dismantling its legitimacy. In this way, Liberia uses its discursive agency by at once repeating the discourse, but also using it in alternative ways (Gade 2010, 27).

Conclusion on the Liberia storyline

As it can be read from the Liberia storyline, there seems to be a general awareness of the EU as an important and loyal donor to Liberia, but less if any awareness of the EU's intentions to engage in political partnership. As in the EU storyline, political partnership's lack of citational effect is articulated and explained with reference to factors that are external to the idea of political partnership.

In the Liberia storyline, these factors are explained as more problematic than in the EU storyline. Budget support, which in the EU storyline is articulated as a step towards being recognised as a political partner, is in the Liberia storyline articulated as an aid modality camouflaging the donor. Liberia's weak institutional capacity is put into perspective, as it is indicated that the EU is arguably not the only donor attempting to establish a 'special' relation to Liberia. This portrays Liberia as not only *dependent*, but also *desirable*. A superior subject position is here established for Liberia vis-à-vis its donors - not in spite of, but paradoxically as a consequence of the internalisation of its inferior position.

This description of the lack of citational effect further contributes to a justification of establishing a political partnership between the EU and Liberia. At the same time, however, a position *outside* of political partnership or as a passive partner *within* political partnership is justified. In this way, a consensus is constructed and sustained regarding the establishment of a 'special' relation to the EU, while at the same time a position is established that allows Liberia to escape it.

In spite of the fact that political partnership is not a familiar concept to the Liberian officials, it is attributed with importance and relevance, insofar as it might give Liberia international recognition - but notably, also as it is a mode of cooperation initiated by an important donor. As Liberia in this way points towards the speaker of the interpellation as being the EU, political partnership is resignified as a donor demand and as part of a bargain, and thus as being dependent upon the donor-recipient relation. By speaking into existence this power relation, the partnership conundrum also seen in the EU storyline is reproduced.

Finally, Liberia disavows the qualitative aspects of political partnership – the specific modes of social existence that it makes possible – as what is articulated as relevant about political partnership, is the fact that it has been suggested by a donor.

Conclusion on Chapter 3

The two storylines contribute to an image of a partnership characterised by a mismatch of expectations. The EU storyline positions the EU as an important donor, expecting to be recognised as a political partner, but experiences that Liberia hardly even recognises the EU. The Liberia storyline, in somewhat contrast to this, refers to the EU as an important partner, but does not signal awareness of the EU's political ambitions. As such, both the EU and Liberia storylines draw upon a discourse of *partnership*, but the citational effect of the more specific *political* partnership discourse seems to be weak.

When Liberia does not react to the EU's interpellation, political partnership cannot be established. This is not only because a partnership needs two subjects in order to exist, but also follows the mutually constitutive character of subjectivity, whereby Liberia's lacking response deprives the EU of its self-image as a political partner, amounting to a lost possibility of subjectivity. This loss is articulated by the European officials as they describe how expectations of political partnership remain unfulfilled, thus reflecting a hierarchy in which Liberia has the upper hand. The loss is confirmed in the Liberia storyline, as the idea of political partnership is not rejected, but as a subject position is established for Liberia that legitimises its passive disavowal of political partnership. Liberia shifts responsibility to the EU, as the EU is positioned as the speaker of the interpellation, or in other words, the initiator of political partnership. This can be seen in contrast to the Cotonou Agreement's conferral to ACP countries of primary responsibility for building a political environment conducive to sustainable development. The EU shifts responsibility towards Liberia as it is argued that Liberia is the one opting out of the political partnership. As such, both partners succeed in shifting responsibility for the lack of political partnership towards the other.

Although citing political partnership, the officials from both sides seem to be, as Butler formulates it, "imitating a ritual inscribed into a history of convention," which in this case is the donor-recipient relation. This relation is referred to throughout the storylines as the basis for engaging in political partnership to begin with. As a consequence, the institutionally and discursively instituted border between the political and the development dimensions of partnership is transcended.

The donor-recipient relation on the one hand indicates an unequal economic relation and a division of roles where the donor is dominant and the recipient is subjected to its will. However, as the relation is reiterated within a discourse of political partnership, the roles are resignified to the effect that the EU

becomes subjected to Liberia's will, insofar as it depends upon Liberia's recognition. The possible identity as a political partner is perceived as an asset for the EU and the EU's ambition to become a political partner is hence a powerful discursive tool in the hands of Liberia.

Finally, common to the two storylines is that they do not qualify the relevance of political partnership nor address the fundamental discrepancies in their expectations. The EU storyline justifies political partnership as a way of gaining recognition for its contribution. The Liberia storyline justifies political partnership as a question of complying with donor demands. As political partnership is in this way reiterated, its *raison d'être* is sustained, but its added value to Liberia's development is not further elaborated. For the EU, political partnership is hence reduced to a question of, following its own political mandate, and for Liberia, to maintain its relation to the EU as a donor.

Within this chapter, it has been discussed what courses of action seem to be legitimised by the subject positions articulated throughout the storylines. It has accordingly been concluded, that the idea of a political partnership between the EU and Liberia seems to be taken for granted as something that should be achieved.

That political partnership is articulated as such, however, does not preclude the possibility that its practical manifestations expose other and additional justifications. What we can still ask, is: How are the articulated subject positions performed in practice? What possibilities of social existence does political partnership establish within the specific Liberian context? How are the political partner subjectivities and their contradictions negotiated by the EU and Liberia officials, respectively? How are these positions justified?

These questions are addressed in the following chapter, which looks at three events that were attributed with specific importance by the officials, as examples of the performance of political partnership.

Chapter 4.

Three performances of political partnership

Chapter 3 presented the two storylines as expressions of two processes of subjectification as a response to the interpellation of the EU and Liberia as political partners. Through the storylines, we have gained access to articulations about the subject positions that the negotiators attempt to establish for the EU and Liberia, respectively. As such, the storylines were characterised by descriptions of the current state of affairs of the EU-Liberia relation.

The officials' statements further contain descriptions of more specific cases of performances of political partnership. Three *events* were recurrently attributed with importance by the European officials: The celebration of 'Europe Day' on May 9th 2010; a dispute between government officials over an audit from the EU-sponsored General Audit Commission in 2010; and the EU's response to Liberia's reintroduction of the death penalty in 2008. During conversations with the officials, the events were articulated as exemplifications of the more general, analytical assertions presented in the storylines. In the following section, the events are presented as three isolated cases. Notably, few other examples than these three were presented by the officials, testifying to the limited activity within the political partnership, also articulated in the storylines. The Liberian officials referred only to the latter case of the death penalty as an example of political partnership, which also testifies to the limited awareness from the officials of the EU's political ambitions. The events, indeed, reflect the *EU's* ambitions, as they are all examples of how the European officials *identify* and *construct* partnership issues within the

Liberian context. Hereby, they contribute to an understanding of how political partnership is translated into this specific context.

While the storylines illustrate what subject positions are made available to the negotiators as potential identifications, the three events show the ways in which the negotiators “further develop various subject positions in their everyday lives” (Søndergaard 2002, 194). In other words, we ask what the officials attempt to do on the basis of their articulated subject positions. If we see the storylines as articulations that seek to justify a certain social existence, through the events we gain access to this social existence, made possible as a consequence of the political partnership interpellation (Butler 1997, 5). Thus, we can perceive of the events as performances of partnership – while we are not direct spectators to the performance, we gain access to it through the officials’ articulations. The representativity of the events is limited by the relative novelty of this political partnership, only offering a limited scope of cases from which to choose. They can to some extent be seen as the first tentative steps towards the establishment of a political partnership. Conversely, the three events can be seen as illustrative of the preconditions for establishing this political partnership, and can in any case be read as negotiations of its potential contradictions. As performances, they are in this sense also *ritual*. While they to some degree are events with practical political consequences, within the analysis, they are read as reiterations and resignifications of the political partnership address, as they represent the officials’ translations of political partnership into the specific Liberian context.

The issues that this chapter seeks to address build upon the conclusions from the storylines. In this sense, as we already know that both of the partners take political partnership for granted as something that should be achieved, what the events might help to clarify, is how this perception is justified through partnership performance. What issues are defined as political, how, and what courses of action do they legitimise? Furthermore, as it has been established that political partnership to the European officials means political influence, what kind of influence is then envisaged? And finally, as it has been suggested that political partnership has a lack of citational effect in Liberia, how does Liberian representatives react as they are directly confronted with the EU’s political partnership interpellation, and how is their position justified? In the following three sections, the three events are presented and discussed, and the chapter closes with a conclusion addressing the above-described questions.

The Europe Day celebration

On May 9th 2010, the European Union had invited Liberia's President Sirleaf as a guest of honour to their celebration of 'Europe Day' at a resort in Monrovia. Europe Day is an annual celebration of the European Union, and the day is celebrated within Europe as well as in countries where the European Union is represented.

The European officials describe Europe Day 2010 as a significant event in the recent history of EU-Liberia relations. It was the first celebration in Liberia since the EU Delegation was upgraded in 2009, and was celebrated with greater volume than had previously been the case (E2). It was furthermore seen as significant in the context of the EU promoting its visibility and creating awareness about its contribution to Liberia, and the speech which the Liberian president held, was perceived as bearing witness to the EU's difficulties in establishing itself as a partner (E4; E3). In an interpellation perspective, the event is furthermore significant because of the symbolic importance with which it is attributed. As such, it can be seen as a diplomatic ritual, which may not in itself have substantial effects, but which displays how the negotiators reiterate and resignify political partnership as they address one another. Not having participated in the event myself, and only having limited and mediated access to what went on, the following analysis focuses on the meaning attributed to the event by the European officials, as well as the two speeches that were held by the president and the EU ambassador, respectively.

Performing the partner position

The Liberian president's presence at the celebration had signified something "very important" to the European officials, E4 explains. It constituted a turning point in Liberia-EU cooperation as it was the first time that the president "was showing some support to the European Union in front of everyone" (E4). Apart from being there in person, the president and the EU ambassador both gave speeches on behalf of their institutions. The two speeches can be seen as speech acts, speaking their partner roles into existence. While not necessarily citing the political partnership, both speeches at least reiterate the existence of a partnership between the EU and Liberia, and in and by this reiteration resignify it. One official explained that as part of this performance of partnership, it had been important to the EU Delegation to make use of the occasion to convey the EU's visibility towards Liberia, and to portray the EU as a coherent actor. To this end, an 'exhibition' was set up, displaying the EU's contributions in the sectors of human rights and gender (E2). Through this technique of representation, the EU's

important role in these two specific sectors was emphasised, but what is more, the exhibition testified to the EU's importance in general (E2). As such, the Europe Day reception was perceived as an actual chance for the EU to enhance its visibility (E4). As such, the event can be seen as significant not only as a *ritual*, but also as a rupture, as it is not only a reiteration of the relation, but also a social context subject to expectations of change.

Putting the figures together

The EU's 'visibility plan' here became a material technique of representation, but was also implemented through the *figures* that were presented in the EU speech, signifying the EU's financial contributions to Liberia in 2009 and 2010. E4 explains that adding up the EU's contributions is part of the strategy of making Liberia aware of the EU's contribution, and is important both in terms of internal coordination among the European officials in Monrovia, and in terms of interaction with the government:

"If we really put our figures together, that will be important towards them. (...) it's because, I think, the European Union has to play a role also as a real actor. And that will give us more power (...) but not only concerning the Liberian government, but also concerning the actors here." (E4)

In this way, the figures are perceived as representing the EU as a "real actor", and by being instrumental to an aim of giving the EU more "power", they become a symbolic token hereof. Presenting the figures thus speaks into the logic that donor influence should be proportional to donor contribution. By referring to contributions already made, the figures remind Liberia of how far the EU has already gone in helping Liberia, and constitute proof of the EU's economic importance to the country's development. In referring to future contributions, the EU's persistence and loyalty is demonstrated.

Insofar as the figures are part of a visibility strategy, the ambassador's speech was a success, some officials assert. E3 describes how some of the other donors at the reception expressed "astonishment" that the EU contributed this level of aid, as they allegedly "had no idea that the EU were putting so much money into Liberia" (E3). These assumptions are at least not contradicted by the president's reply, stating that Liberia is "grateful to our European partners for the strong partnership demonstrated so well and the notable success scored during the year 2009" (Government of Liberia 2010). Following the speech by the ambassador, the president more or less reiterated the EU's figures without significant variation, and commended the EU for its assistance in various specific sectors.

In and by themselves, the figures are direct representations of amounts of Euros that have been transferred from the EU to Liberia, but as part the speech, they demonstrate and legitimise the EU's position as a partner. The figures cement the EU's *donor* role, and can be understood as a means to gain recognition from Liberia as a partner. Furthermore, articulated as a means towards an aim of "power" (E4), they might also be a means towards an aim of influence, and thus recognition as a political partner.

Resignifying EU-Liberia history: A common destiny

Prior to reading aloud the EU's contributions, the ambassador gave an account of the history and relevance of the EU-Liberia relation. In this part of the speech, the EU is portrayed as not only an important economic partner, but also as an important *political* partner, in relation to its various partner countries around the world (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010). Specifically regarding the relation to Liberia, the speech stresses similarities in the EU's and Liberia's histories, and argues that the EU has specific importance as a partner to Liberia, as Liberia can profit from the EU's experience. In stark contrast to the image of the EU-Liberia relation offered through the Liberia storyline, the ambassador's Europe Day speech tells a story in which Liberia and the EU are closely linked and share common destinies:

"We both came out of devastating wars during which individuals committed atrocities; the diversity of our peoples was a problem and needed to become an asset; the competition over resources and the lack of democracy had been key triggers of the wars (...) For Europe integration was the only way forward to achieve peace, stability and economic prosperity. (...) The difficulties that post-war Europe and Liberia have gone through and the challenges are different in scale but similar in nature and equally daunting."
(Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010)

The EU, presented as having achieved peace, stability and economic prosperity, is here a partner that can advise Liberia based on its experience from a similar situation. This position is portrayed as given, as the EU possesses knowledge which Liberia needs, it is assumed, and it is in that sense legitimately paternalistic. It is further elaborated that the relation resonates in perceived shared values and principles, and by referring to political dialogue and essential and fundamental elements, the EU's position is established as 'political':

"There are values and principles that we share, there are concerns, objectives, ideas and suggestions that we need to discuss in the spirit of the political dialogue we agreed to hold under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (...)" (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010)

The political dimension of partnership is further highlighted in the speech, as the essential and fundamental elements are cited as “crucial”, “particularly in a critical moment for a country which has just taken the path leading to peace and prosperity” (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010). In this way, a distinction is made between what is on the one hand *shared* and what is on the other hand to be *discussed* within the framework of political dialogue. While discursively constructing a space for political discussion, this space is at the same time challenged by a space of “shared values and principles”, invoked as “crucial” to Liberia’s specific post-conflict situation. Although there is an inherent ambivalence in the speech, between the shared and the discussed, the speech seems to institute a hierarchy between the two, by articulating the shared as “crucial”.

At the same time as shared values and principles are reiterated, “[t]he spirit and the objectives” of partnership are also underlined. Accordingly, the ambassador emphasises that:

“decisions on how to use EU aid are made jointly through a dialogue during which the partners influence each other but never impose their views. The results are actions/projects that belong to the recipient. The EU is not the owner of a road or of an institution simply because it finances its reconstruction or its running” (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010)

This statement has two consequences for the role the EU has hitherto attempted to establish within the speech. Firstly, it balances the presentation of the EU as an important donor, and in a way retracts the earlier invocation of the EU’s importance as a donor, as well as the related assumption of a reciprocity between donor contribution and donor influence. Secondly, by emphasising that “the partners influence each other but never impose their views”, partnership is portrayed as a relation in which the partners influence one another only because of their cooperation, and where, it would seem, there is no room for the EU’s superior role.

Finally, the US is given a particular place in the story, as it is described as having been crucial to the EU’s development from devastating war to peace and prosperity: “The modern Europe is the result of the desire of all Europeans of long lasting peace and of the support provided by our American brothers” (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010). In contrast to the narrative of the common US and Liberia history standing in the way of the EU’s constitution as a political partner, in this perspective the US is integrated as a necessary part of both the EU’s and Liberia’s development. In this way, the speech seeks to establish a position for the EU that balances the EU’s political ambitions with the US’ inevitable yet acceptable influence. This position is characterised by on the one hand

acknowledging the US' crucial role to Liberia, and on the other hand integrating this acknowledgement into the story about the EU's and Liberia's common destinies.

In sum, by resignifying EU and Liberia's histories, the ambassador seeks to explain to Liberia specifically how it may benefit from a political partnership. Citing familiar events in Liberia's recent history as well as key tenets of political partnership such as political dialogue and democracy, the ambassador at once includes and invites Liberia into a community with the EU, based on a 'common destiny', and at once sets limits for Liberia's taking part in the political partnership hereby suggested, as it is emphasised that certain values and principles must be respected. The result is a balance between contradictory discourses of partnership, where the 'package' offered to Liberia consists in principles that are *assumed* to be shared, and can therefore be presented as unproblematic. Whereas the EU is hereby positioned as a political partner, its success is dependent upon Liberia's recognition of this specific account of the relation. Within the framework of this diplomatic ritual, Liberia's degree of recognition can be interpreted from the president's speech.

Reiterating donor-recipient relations

As it turns out, the ambassador's discursive strategy was not an undivided success after all. As described above, the president did indeed confirm and acknowledge the EU's important contribution to Liberia; however, she did not as much as mention the political dimension of partnership, and as such did not respond to the EU's partnership address. The president's speech reiterates the importance of partnership by reading out and commending the EU's financial contribution, but does not follow the logic of rewarding this contribution with a returned address of political partnership.

President Sirleaf's remarks are by one official interpreted as a confirmative indicator of ambivalence towards the EU as a partner. In elaboration of the statement that the president's presence in itself was an important step, E4 says:

“[I]n the way she talked, you see that she really thanks for the help and she appreciates the money, and everything, but she's still not taking [us] seriously as a partner. Or, maybe she's taking us seriously as a partner, but she's not giving the room for discussions.” (E4)

In the president's speech, this ambivalence – addressing the EU as a partner while not really taking the EU seriously as a partner – is well reflected, as the speech is to a certain extent partnership *coded*, and for example cites the EU-Liberia relation as a “strong partnership” and addresses the “European

partners” (Government of Liberia 2010, 2). However, it is clear to see that partnership is re-articulated as a donor-recipient relation, and that the ‘partner’ that is commended in the speech is in fact a donor. A notable point of divergence between the two speeches is their approach to Liberia’s post-conflict situation, which the EU speech, as illustrated, uses as a stepping-stone for political cooperation. In contrast, the Liberia speech links Liberia’s status as a ‘fragile state’, not to increased political cooperation with the politically more experienced EU, but to additional resources. The president states that the government welcomes the attention given to Liberia as a fragile state, as it was long overdue, and adds that Liberia also welcomes the additional resources that are made available as a consequence of the EU’s recognition hereof (Government of Liberia 2010, 4)

In this way, the president’s speech reproduces Liberia’s ‘internalisation of inferiority’ as Liberia’s position in the partnership is cemented as a recipient rather than a political partner. This internalisation could be read as a refusal of political partnership, but could also be understood as an attempt to emphasise the aspects of partnership that are of primary relevance to Liberia: development cooperation, more than the sharing of experience and dialoguing over political principles. Hereby, the *intrinsic* value of the donor-recipient relation is emphasised, more than the *instrumental* value anticipated in the EU storyline.

As part of a diplomatic ritual, the president’s remarks constitute a ‘reply’ to the ambassador’s speech. In actual sense, the speech is of course written in advance of the event, and as such cannot be expected to respond to specific aspects of the EU speech. That said, the president’s speech could be expected to touch upon the same themes, as the common overall theme for the event was the EU-Liberia partnership, and as part of it is formally political. What is left is therefore an impression of a fundamental mismatch of expectations and a lack of recognition by Liberia of the EU’s political ambitions, strategically motivated or not.

Conclusion

The speeches from the president and the EU ambassador at the Europe Day celebration can be seen as performances of Liberia’s and the EU’s respective subject positions. The event is attributed with strategic importance by the European officials who not only see the event as a diplomatic ritual, but also as an event with a potential to affect the relation. The event is presented as an attempt by the EU to portray itself as a “real” political partner towards Liberia, which is articulated as a success insofar as the EU manages to make itself more *visible* and to make an impression as a *donor*. However, the attempt is also articulated as a failure, as the EU speech interpellates Liberia as part of the *political* partnership,

but does not succeed. While expressing recognition of the EU's contribution, the Liberian president responds to the EU's political partner address as an aid recipient.

The EU articulates the EU's 'similar' post-war experience as relevant to Liberia, and thereby as a basis for a closer political relation. Rather than accepting the EU's proposal to guide Liberia in its post-conflict political struggles, the Liberian speech moves Liberia's status as a fragile state into the development domain, and articulates it as a basis for increased funding. By signalling that Liberia needs funding more than political guidance, Liberia reclaims its political mandate and its sovereign subjectivity. While on the one hand cementing its position as an aid recipient, Liberia on the other hand manages to take ownership and responsibility of its own development process.

The European officials perceive this as a strategic internalisation of Liberia's inferior position, and thereby as an obstacle to the EU's ambition of political partnership. This confers responsibility for the non-existing political partnership upon Liberia, and the legitimacy of establishing political partnership in the first place remains intact. At the same time, the EU's own performance of political partnership is, ironically, based upon its role as a donor, and, following the mutually constitutive character of subjectivity, can as such be seen as contributive to Liberia's formation as an aid dependent recipient. Following the EU's interpellation attempt, Liberia is left with a choice between subjecting itself to the interpellation, or to position itself as not being in need of political partnership.

The debate about the Governance Audit Commission

In the following section, I present an issue that is described by the European officials as an evident case for the EU to deal with as a political partner towards Liberia. The issue concerns a dispute between two government institutions, the General Audit Commission (GAC) and the Ministry of Finance. The European officials see the dispute as taking focus away from the audit that it is about. The EU did not react collectively to the case, but looking at articulations about it reveals specific expectations about the EU's political role, and the assumptions about Liberia and partnership, upon which these are based. Some define the issue as an issue 'internal' to Liberia, while others define the issue as 'political'. The categorisation of the GAC issue as 'political' or 'internal' reflects two different roles for the EU as a partner to Liberia, which are spoken into existence by the European officials. While some argue that the EU should be using its economic leverage to ensure its political influence, others argue that the EU should simply advise Liberia. Nevertheless, both approaches are based upon the assumption that the EU's opinion in the case is relevant to Liberia, and move context-specific aspects of Liberia's handling of the case away from the partnership terrain.

The construction of a partner issue

Liberia's General Audit Commission was created in 2005 as an independent commission with the mandate to audit all accounts of the government once a year, to "[increase] accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the management of public finances in Liberia" and to "move in line with international best practices" (EuropeAid 2011). The EU is financing the GAC's full budget of € 7.2 million, as part of an effort to support governance as an important part of Liberia's development process (GAC 2011).

In the spring of 2010, the GAC released an audit as part of a process to make Liberia eligible to receive debt relief from the World Bank and the IMF. The audit covered five ministries including the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and after its release in May 2010, set off a dispute between the GAC and the MOF, in which various officials in the MOF protested to elements in the GAC's report, and amongst other claimed that the GAC had 'erroneously' and 'calculatingly' placed certain names therein (The Analyst 2010). Later on, a former GAC employee had raised accusations of sexual harassment towards the GAC's Auditor General, which set off a court case (The Informer 2010). All of this received wide attention in the Liberian press, and the involved parties on various occasions voiced their accusations directly in the newspapers (The Informer 2010).

The chain of events is presented as an issue the EU should act upon as part of the EU-Liberia partnership. The GAC issue is described as EU-related with reference to the fact that the EU sponsors the GAC (E3; E5; E8). What makes the issue an ‘issue’ in the first place is explained in various ways by the European officials. E3 explains that the debate between the two institutions about the audit’s legitimacy meant that focus was directed away from the purpose of the audit, which was to “say where systems were wrong and needed fixing” (E3). The debate also lost sight of the recommendations that were put forward by the GAC to the government, which were “perfectly good, normal recommendations” (E3). In this way, the ‘issue’ at stake is about not respecting the function of the GAC, and it is therefore an issue “linked to good governance” (E3). As E3 further argues, in the bigger picture, the EU can only continue to give direct budget support if such audit requirements are respected.

The officials further present the debate as problematic with reference to the way it has been dealt with in the media, or the fact that it has been dealt with in the media at all. The “battle” between the GAC and the MOF is described as “personal” in the words of E3, indicating that the debate does not belong in newspaper columns but rather behind closed doors (E3). E8 describes it as “a heated debate” with a use of “emotional, rhetorical language”. E5 further presents a distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ ways of handling such inter-institutional quarrels:

“These are two institutions in the country that have to fight this out within the government, and not in the public. The public should know there is money missing in the Finance Department - wherever - and we are trying to find it. Yeah, but not telling each other ‘you do the wrong thing, you do the wrong thing’ (...) or whatever...and this was horrible.” (E5)

By constructing the GAC debate as a problematic issue, the officials establish a subject position for the EU as a partner in this case.

A ‘technical’ issue

Overall, the GAC issue is articulated as a conflict by the European officials: An unnecessary one at worst, and at best a conflict that might be solved with the assistance of the EU as a partner. The GAC issue is defined as a good governance issue as the GAC, obviously, works towards good governance aims of accountability and transparency in the management of public finances. By presenting the issue as a conflict to be ended, the officials at the same time succeed in presenting good governance as an unproblematic policy domain, and the government institutions as “systems” that can be right or wrong - and if they are wrong, can be fixed, as in E3’s quote above. E3’s subtle depoliticisation of this

governance issue the recommendations are presented as “perfectly good, normal recommendations”, seems necessary in order to approach the issue as a solvable conflict, and furthermore, to perceive of the EU as the partner to solve it.

In continuation hereof, the GAC issue is described by the officials as an issue that should not be handled in the public realm. Two explanations are given for this. Firstly, the debate in the press largely revolved around “personal” issues and was “emotional” and “rhetorical”, and secondly, the GAC and the Ministry of Finance, as implied by E5, are exactly two institutions that should not have open fights in the public, but should keep them private.

As opposed to the EU’s presentation of good governance as a technical, apolitical matter about which there can be disagreement but not outright conflict, Liberia’s handling of the case appears emotional and immature, as technical matters, it is perceived, are mixed up with private affairs. By depoliticising good governance, the EU is positioned as a partner that knows how to distinguish the personal from the public, and how to rationally handle what goes on within this domain. Hereby, the EU is placed in a legitimately paternalistic and superior position vis-à-vis Liberia, who is on its side positioned as inferior insofar as it yet has something to learn from the EU.

A ‘political’ issue

While the GAC issue is in this way construed as an issue to be dealt with within the framework of the EU-Liberia partnership, some officials further construed as specifically ‘political’. E3 explains that the GAC issue is an example of how “there is room for a more political role for the EU” (E3). In this way, the GAC issue is not only articulated as an issue in relation to which the EU is a stakeholder and therefore should act, but is also articulated as an *opportunity* for the EU to play a role as a political partner. This constitutive process is elaborated in E3’s explanation of how the European officials in Monrovia have negotiated the status of the GAC issue amongst them:

“Well one of the things we were thinking of was actually doing a statement to the government, saying, basically: Sort this out. (...) then we decided, actually, that we wanted it to be more of a political statement (...) Rather than a donor statement.” (E3)

In and by the utterance: “we wanted it to be more of a political statement”, it is clear to see how the political partner role is the result of a discursive constitution, as the officials obviously reflect upon not just whether to play a role vis-à-vis Liberia, but also what role to play. As ‘governance’ is in this way

made negotiable, the GAC case can be perceived of as either a development-related or political issue, and is in this case eventually defined as political.

As E3 further explains, obvious political issues are rare, which further justifies the GAC issue's being defined as political. The political domain is delimited by on the one hand a development domain, and on the other hand, a security domain, which can, it is argued, at times be difficult to separate from the political (E3). This means, as E3 describes it, that the EU risks becoming "too political", as EU Member States, particularly France and Britain who have seats in the UN's Security Council, are opposed to the EU dealing with issues on Liberia's security agenda. This balancing act is especially challenging in Liberia, E3 explains, as the UN is in charge of the country's security, and the EU's role security-wise is very limited.

The European officials in Liberia, then, navigate within a delimited political spectrum as they determine what kind of issues to construct as 'political'. As a result, governance-related issues become the EU's political safeplace, as these can be constructed as either 'political' or 'development' and are on all counts not security-related. The premise of this negotiation, furthermore, seems to be a mandate not only to *react* to overt political issues as they occur, but also to actually *construct* issues as belonging to the political domain in order to establish and legitimise a political role for the officials on behalf of the EU. In other words, the question is not so much, *whether* the EU should be political, but rather *how*, which reveals the process of identifying political issues as partly demand-driven: playing a role politically is desirable in and by itself.

Notably, in contrast to the above interpellation of Liberia as immature and inferior in relation to the GAC issue, as the GAC issue is resignified as specifically political, Liberia is not attributed with any specific role. Rather, Liberia is absent from the justifications for why the GAC issue should be approached as a political issue, which further contributes to an understanding of the EU's political role as deriving from a desired position rather than from a perception of the specific EU-Liberia relation and its potential.

Establishing the GAC issue as an evident issue for the EU to act upon further legitimises certain forms of intervention, related to the roles envisaged for the EU. Two roles in particular crystallise from the above articulations about the EU's relation to the GAC issue. As emphasis is put on the private/public axis of the issue, a role as an adviser to Liberia is established. As the issue is moved more explicitly into the political realm of partnership, a role as a political partner is established. Both are associated with specific propositions for action, and therefore reflect specific translations of political partnership.

The political partner: Exerting leverage

As it has previously been described, while the European officials in Liberia distinguish between the development and political dimensions of partnership, the role as political partner is not interpreted as strictly *independent* from the role as a donor. To the contrary, the donor role is perceived as instrumental to establishing the EU as a political partner, and as such, as something which can be used as conditionality. This happens as the EU's aid contribution to Liberia is proposed utilised as leverage to convince the Liberian government to act differently, as is the case with the GAC issue. E3 accordingly explains that the officials have been discussing how budget support could be used as leverage to “get back to focusing on the audit requirements, which is something that we need to see happen if we're going to continue to put direct budget support into the government” (E3). E4 further argues that establishing the EU as a “real partner” entails a strategic linkage of ‘policy dialogue’ and ‘political dialogue’, as “it's easier to go to the policy discussions first, and then move to political dialogue,” because making Liberia more aware of the EU's contributions gives the EU “something to say” and gives the EU “room” to be a political partner vis-à-vis Liberia (E4).

In this view, then, political partnership and development cooperation should be used to advance the EU's aims. E1 explains that the idea to use aid as leverage reflects an overall shift in the EU's development approach, since the political dimension was introduced, in which aid disbursement has become dependent on whether the Liberian government responds positively to political dialogue, and that “[t]hey will be offered more resources if they sing to the tune,” as E1 puts it.

In this way, political conditionality is justified as a means towards an aim of *influencing* Liberia in political issues, and of realising “what we need to see happening”. Furthermore, the EU's isolated ambition of acting politically seems to be a justification in itself, as it is described as necessary for the EU to have “something to say” and to find ways of using its leverage. This evidently echoes the assertion above that the European officials have in their mandate to find a way for the EU to play a political role vis-à-vis Liberia, more than to figure out whether this political role is relevant in the Liberian context or not. The consequence for political partnership is that its justification is unilaterally defined by the EU, rather than as part of cooperation between Liberia and the EU, or as Liberia explicitly requests the EU's opinion. Furthermore, the perception of political partnership as something that is established through economic leverage and conditionality bears more resemblance to a bargain than an equal dialogue, and insofar as the discursively established domains of development and politics can be separated in practice, this approach to partnership transcends them.

Advising Liberia

In contrast to this explicit approach towards influencing Liberia, E5 explains that the EU's role in the GAC issue is to only "advise" Liberia. This role as adviser is presented together with a distinction between "internal" and "high-political" issues. As the GAC issue is an "internal" issue, E5 argues, it should be dealt with in an informal manner where the EU does not "force" Liberia to follow its demands (E5). It is E5's perception that the government would listen to the EU's political guidelines, and that "they're waiting for this advice. They're thankful for this advice" (E5). However, as E5 further asserts, "you cannot just take our lines and bring them in here. It's a process they have to do, they have to make. You cannot expect from one day to the other, they do the same as we do" (E5). A similar description of the EU-Liberia relation is put forward by E4, explaining that when confronted with political issues, the Member States and the EU do not always feel inclined to act: "It's like an interference, and they are...they are adults. They know what they are doing" (E4). In this way, the officials touch upon the sovereignty dilemma of partnership, introducing the possibility that there are limits to how far into Liberia's internal affairs the EU or other donors/partners should interfere, and limits to how this interference may take place.

This approach to political partnership, in contrast to the leverage approach, more explicitly touches upon the dialogue aspect of partnership, as it is implied that Liberia actually requests and is grateful for the EU's advice in this particular situation. It aligns with partnership tenets of ownership and respect for the sovereignty of the recipient country. Furthermore, as the government is described as "adults", they are established as independent and mature, as opposed to their position as immature and inferior, as it was described in relation to Liberia's handling of the GAC issue.

However, it can be argued that there is an ambiguity to the position hereby established for Liberia. Whereas the government is described as adults, it is at the same time said that they "know what they are doing", implying that there is an already established wrong and right in this case, but that it is nevertheless not the EU's responsibility to correct the wrong, and that it might be better for the government to do it by themselves. As E5 confirms, this is actually how the dispute came to an end, as the president eventually stepped in and said that "this is not the way it should be handled" (E5). This resonates Abrahamsen's assertion that the responsibility conferred to developing countries in partnerships is ambivalent, as it is based upon predefined standards and expectations (Abrahamsen 2004, 1459, 1464). In the GAC issue, by labelling the government as "adults", they are set free from the EU's imposition, but only to the extent that they are expected to follow the EU's standards. As Baaz

also argues, there is a remnant of paternalism in the partnership discourse, as conflicts of interest are downplayed, and as it is assumed that the donor and the recipient share interests and goals (Baaz 2005, 74). This tendency resonates in the adviser role as well, as it is described as part of a harmonious partner-relation, where knowledge is transferred rather than imposed or disputed. The EU's advice is articulated as an expression of a common interest in teaching Liberia how to approach inter-institutional conflicts - rather than an attempt to understand the Liberian way of handling them.

Thus, while the intentions are clear – not to interfere too much in the internal affairs of other countries – the very intention of advising another government in such matters might as well be interpreted as a compromise on sovereignty and as a token of paternalism.

What regards both the envisaged positions for the EU in relation to the GAC issue, a specific division between a right and wrong handling of the case is assumed. Liberia's way of handling the case as a public issue is mistaken, it is assumed, as the audit's "good recommendations" are no legitimate cause for conflict, and in any case should not be dealt with publicly. Looking at the GAC case through the lens of the political dimension of the Cotonou Agreement Liberia's handling of the case prior to the president's interference could, however, also be interpreted as a specific way for Liberia as an ACP country to "[develop] its democratic culture" on the basis of "universally agreed [democratic] principles" (European Commission 2006, Article 9.2). As such, the public debate on the audit, while possibly drawing attention away from the audit itself, does not necessarily compromise basic political principles. It could be asserted that it might as well be understood as displaying a relatively transparent and publicly accountable manner of handling the dispute. Whereas the line between respect for 'universally recognised principles' and the 'democratic culture of each country' is indeed negotiable, this could be seen as a "democratic culture" formally based upon the rule of law and democratic principles, but more specifically based upon public opinion and popular sovereignty.

Conclusion

The European officials' proposed handling of the GAC issue is based upon a subjectification of Liberia into a position as inferior to the EU, as Liberia is perceived as inexperienced in its handling of inter-institutional disputes. The European officials pass off the dispute over the audit as irrelevant, which results in the subtle depoliticisation of governance. On this background, the EU can legitimately take a position as a paternalistic partner assisting Liberia in correcting its misstep. The product of this process of subjectification is an unequal relation between the EU and Liberia, seen as unproblematic insofar as

it is a starting point for developing and educating Liberia. The EU is perceived as being able to identify Liberia's problems, and Liberia, if accepting the EU's help, can expect them to be resolved.

All the above is based upon a process of locating the issue within the domain of the EU-Liberia relation, and thereby upon the assumption that the EU has relevance in this case to begin with. In addition, the status of the issue as a governance issue opens the possibility of further defining it as an actual 'political' issue. This categorisation of issues takes place among the European officials, as they in this case choose whether to position the EU as a 'donor' or as a 'political partner'. This underlines the perception also illustrated in the EU storyline, that the European officials have as part of their mandate to actively identify situations in which the EU can be manifested as a political actor. Consequently, the EU's political partner role not only emerges as a response to overt political cases, but also as a consequence of a negotiation process, constructing certain issues as 'political'. In other words, the question is not only *whether* the EU should be political, but also *how*, as playing a role politically is portrayed as desirable in and by itself. An issue such as the GAC issue thus becomes mutually constitutive of the EU's role as a political partner.

As mentioned, the Member States and the EU Delegation did not reach agreement on the GAC issue, and a common statement was thus never issued by the EU. Therefore, evidently, it is not possible to discuss how the EU's envisaged political performance would have affected Liberia in actual sense. However, it is possible to activate Liberia's voice in the discussion, by dwelling on how the issue was handled between the institutions, before the president interfered. This handling, it can be argued, could be interpreted as a specific way for Liberia as an ACP country to "[develop] its democratic culture".

Liberia's reintroduction of the death penalty

A third event that is articulated as significant in the recent history of EU-Liberia relations is Liberia's reintroduction of the death penalty in 2008. This event is categorised by European officials as a specifically 'political' issue, and is not only perceived to be important by the European officials in Monrovia, but also by the Council of the European Union in Brussels, articulating this action as "an extremely disturbing signal" and at that time urging Liberia to re-abolish it (The Council of the European Union 2008). Liberia, on its side, did not make a public response to the EU. The death penalty issue is characterised as political, but in a way that does not refer specifically to the political partnership domain, but rather refers to the public debate to which the issue has been subject. As such, Liberia succeeds in repoliticising the death penalty issue, and does this by remaining passive towards the EU's recommendations. In this way, the event illustrates various tools that the two partners have at their disposal, and how they use them in reiterating and resignifying their political partnership.

Depoliticising the death penalty issue

In 2005, the Liberian government signed the 'Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights', signalling agreement with the aim of globally abolishing the death penalty (The Analyst 2008). Three years later, in 2008, a set of 'New Penal Laws of Liberia' were signed by the current President Sirleaf, making rape and armed robbery punishable by death through hanging or life imprisonment (The Analyst 2008). These seemingly contradictory actions set off reactions from stakeholders of the international campaign against death penalty as well as some of Liberia's development partners. The European Union, its Member States all signatories to the Protocol, expressed its concern with this event through a so-called 'demarche' taking the form of a written declaration from the Council of the European Union in Brussels, and an oral statement delivered to Liberia's Minister of Justice by the French ambassador to Liberia on behalf of the EU (E4). In its declaration, the EU stated that Liberia's actions ran counter to the trend towards a global abolishment of the death penalty. The death penalty is formulated by the EU Council as "a cruel and inhuman punishment and a violation of the right to life", and abolishing it contributes to "the enhancement of human dignity and the development of human rights" (The Council of the European Union 2008). Through the demarche, the EU urges Liberia to withdraw its decision and abolish the death penalty once more, in the declaration stating that Liberia has committed itself to this in and by its ratification of the Second Protocol, as well as "international human rights standards" (The Council of the European

Union 2008). The issue is articulated by the European officials as ‘political’, and as significant in being the only recent example of a political case where the EU stood together and had stated its common position towards Liberia (E4). In E4’s words, “reintroducing the death penalty in 2008 was something that you had to react to (...) And I think if there was a killing, if they were about to execute, there will be another demarche. I think that’s the only thing...this is one of those issues we all agree on” (E4). E5 brings up the death penalty issue as an example of one of the ‘high-political’ issues that the EU has to react to in a more formal, official manner: “It was not only the EU... everybody can say 'we don't agree with this'” (E5).

The EU’s interpretation of the case seems to be, that since both the EU and Liberia have signed up to the Second Protocol, the issue can be referred to the “international obligations and commitments concerning respect for human rights” that the Cotonou Agreement seeks to keep its signatories responsible for (European Commission 2006, Article 9.2). As Liberia reintroduces the death penalty in 2008, the European officials explain, the EU is obliged as a partner to remind Liberia of its commitment, and to urge Liberia to “take death penalty out of its laws” (E5).

What is more, the issue is also presented as an issue beyond discussion, because the death penalty signals a violation of a ‘universal principle’. This is emphasised as E5 underscores that “everybody” would disagree with Liberia on this issue, and, as it is “an international thing” (E5). By referring to “the international community” and how they agree with the EU on this issue, E5 indicates a dividing line between Liberia and an international consensus including the EU. This places the EU in a position as a spokesperson for the international community, and in this way, political partnership is expanded to also include a broader audience of likeminded actors. In this way, the EU is placed in a superior position to Liberia, as it is implied that Liberia in this case needs to comply with an existing consensus.

By taking this position, the EU further reveals a particular partner identity related to such ‘high-political’ issues, where, it seems, political dialogue is not perceived as a relevant tool, as opposed to stating the EU’s position through a demarche. While this partner identity might only apply to such particularly high-political issues, it further reveals a limit to the intention of dialoguing on political issues, and reveals the ‘political’ domain as a spectrum, part of which apparently trumps dialogue and negotiation to the benefit of compliance. By referring to universal principles and by stating its opinion in advance of any actual dialogue, the EU signals that the death penalty issue is non-negotiable, and thus *delegitimises* articulations of opposition to this opinion. The manner in which the EU moves this issue into the political domain is therefore in practice a depoliticisation.

Liberia's repoliticisation of the death penalty issue

Looking at Liberia's approach to the issue of death penalty, in contrast, it has the character of a *repoliticisation*. The issue is repoliticised as Liberia reintroduces death penalty, and hereby rejects its character as a violation. The political character of the issue is further cemented as Liberia abstains from following the EU's instructions to re-abolish death penalty.

The government motivated its decision by referring to Liberia's post-conflict situation and a perceived public demand to address issues of impunity in a violent society. The Deputy Information Minister has been cited as defending the reintroduction on the basis that "armed crimes had dehumanized the Liberian people after the brutal civil war" and that there had been a "public outcry over the growing crime rate, suggesting that it is prudent to make law for the general good of the people" (The Analyst 2008). On this basis, it would seem that the government did not principally distance itself from the global movement against death penalty, but rather specified that the particular Liberian context could overrule universally agreed principles and in fact necessitate a reintroduction.

L1 elaborates this argument by explaining that in a post-conflict society such as Liberia's, the level of crime is out of sync with the capacity of the judicial system, leading to a status quo of violent disorder:

"We experienced *more* than the death penalty; there were armed robberies all over Monrovia – everywhere. (...) They killed [people], and little or nothing comes out of it. (...) with a porous judicial system, these guys were virtually going free. In a post-conflict nation in Africa you cannot totally abolish the death penalty after the conflict." (L1)

L1 further explains that it was unproblematic for Liberians to reintroduce death penalty, as they did not perceive of it as an extraordinary measure. Quite the contrary, L1 explains, as "[w]e have grown up as a nation in the past twenty to twenty-five years, experiencing, implementing that death penalty" (L1).

In L1's view, the issue is inherently "political", both with reference to its having to do with constitutional and legal matters, but also with reference to the fact that death penalty in a Liberian context is an issue that is in fact subject to debate and contestation. In L1's analysis of the death penalty debate, the dilemma of Liberian policy makers is between complying with previously made commitments to an international convention "that is guiding us in our preparation of policies," and a perceived state of emergency which explains the "will of the people" in Liberia's post-war society (L1). That "the will of the people" is to retain the death penalty is in L1's view a tangible fact, manifested in the reactions to the one specific case of death sentence that has taken place since the reintroduction. In this case, which is still waiting to be settled in the Supreme Court, a man and a woman are charged with

the killing of a young girl, and have been sentenced to death by hanging. L1 describes that “a multitude of Liberians” had waited outside the courtroom for the judgement to be read out, and that immediately after, “there was jubilation all over Monrovia. After we’d left the court scene, there were parades being held by different youth groups, women groups around Monrovia, jubiling, celebrating, because of the judgement that the judge gave” (L1).

In this manner, the Liberian approach to the issue suggests a contradiction between democratic principles of popular sovereignty, and the democratic principles of the Cotonou Agreement, as Liberia obviously does not perceive of the abolishment of the death penalty as a violation of a universal value. While the EU can be said to move the death penalty into a realm of ‘constitutional fundamentals’, Liberia perceives of it as an issue that can be subjected to the will of the people. While there is no formal proof (yet) of the assumption that a majority of Liberians support the death penalty, the emphasis on popular sovereignty reflected in L1’s and the Deputy Information Minister’s statements challenges the dichotomy of universal wrongs and rights that the EU’s statement seeks to institute. Instead, the statements propose an inherently *political* dilemma between, on the one hand, international legal commitments and law as static phenomena – and, on the other hand, the will of the people, and the dynamic and contingent nature of politics. In this way, Liberia negotiates the universality of the death penalty issue and reclassifies it, not as ‘political’ in a Cotonou sense of the word, but political as in contestable. Furthermore, Liberia comes to use repoliticisation strategically as a way of stepping out of the universalist political partnership terrain, and withdraw, together with the issue of death penalty, to its own sovereign, internal matters. This step out of the universalist terrain, however, is sought legitimised by Liberia, with reference to the declared state of emergency. In this way, Liberia avoids disclaiming the fundamental preconditions of the partnership, and yet succeeds in justifying that this specific policies issue is an internal affair.

Silence as resistance

Liberia did not make a public response to the EU’s demarche. In the words of E4, Liberia’s response, which was not made publicly, was not satisfactory to the EU: “I read the report and it was unsuccessful. They [the government] said ‘we don’t care’. Basically” (E4). From the Liberian side it is explained that the EU’s reaction to the issue was perceived as “normal. We expected for our partners to say ‘no, you can’t do this, no this is wrong, you can’t reintroduce this’, like the European Union did. That was normal, but one way or the other, we tried to walk around it – we *are* walking around it” (L1).

Therefore, while the European side seems to expect of Liberia to be affected by the EU's reaction, the Liberian explanation suggests that Liberia was aware and is still aware of the consequences of the reintroduction, but that the problem is one of tackling this disagreement rather than of changing one's mind. The contradiction between these two perceptions of the case illustrates a relation that is unresolved as regards the negotiation of sovereign, internal affairs, on the one hand, and universal principles on the other. Whereas the EU in this case draws the line to the advantage of the universal principles, and argues that death penalty belongs on this side of it, Liberia interprets the case as an internal matter. Furthermore, the two statements illustrate how Liberia in this case succeeds in resisting the EU's interpretation of the essential elements. Rather than a publicly articulated resistance, Liberia's resistance is non-dialogical, if not silent. While public explanations are given as to why death penalty is reintroduced, no official explanation is given directly to the EU, at least not an explanation that is perceived as satisfactory to the EU. As it can be read from E4's commentary, Liberia's response was perceived by the EU as less of a response than an offense. By explaining that "we're walking around it," L1 confirms that the issue, as part of a political partnership, is left unarticulated between the partners, and that Liberia is aware – or at least, L1 is aware – that the issue is perceived of as sensitive by the EU and other international partners, and therefore something that needs to be "walked around" rather than put into words.

As such, Liberia's silence can be interpreted as a mode of resistance towards the EU's attempt at establishing a political partnership where Liberia is by and large expected to change its mind on matters perceived by Liberia to be internal. That Liberia does not go into dialogue with the EU is, on the other hand, not that surprising, considering the fact that the EU in this case has not made use of political dialogue, but instead simply proclaims its unambiguous position on the death penalty, knowing that this position is in opposition to Liberia's position. If the case is understood as a fundamental disagreement on the meaning of death penalty, and if acknowledging that both parties are aware of the fact that this disagreement exists, the EU's reaction might as well be seen as an equivalent of silence, or at least not an invitation to discuss, but only an invitation to comply with the EU's demands.

Conclusion

The death penalty issue is unique as it is the only example of a post-war political issue upon which the EU has acted in concert towards Liberia. It displays various tools that the two parties have at their disposal in voicing their disagreements within the framework of political partnership. It illustrates a

process whereby the ‘political’ is negotiated, as both the EU and Liberia designate the issue as political, but with different consequences.

The EU sees the issue as mutually constitutive of its role as a political partner. The issue is designated by the EU as being beyond negotiation, reflecting a universally accepted division of right and wrong, and thereby as an obvious case for the EU as a political partner to remind Liberia of its international obligations. The EU’s role in this case is to correct this wrong. This role is established on the basis of a depoliticisation of the issue, as well as a hierarchy between the two partners, which legitimates the EU’s influence in this case. As the EU moves the death penalty issue into the realm of universal principles, Liberia is only left with one legitimate option: to comply with the EU’s demands to reabolish the death penalty. Hereby the EU in advance dismisses Liberia’s possibilities of legitimate resistance.

Liberia nonetheless succeeds in negotiating the status of the death penalty issue by moving it from the partnership terrain and into the realm of sovereignty. This is done by invoking the specific context of post-conflict state of emergency and the principle of the will of the people. Liberia resignifies the death penalty issue as ‘political’ in the sense that it is the subject of a public debate, and hereby succeeds in repoliticising it. At the same time, Liberia deconstructs the hierarchy instituted by the EU’s depoliticisation, by reclaiming Liberia’s power of definition, and depriving the EU of its position as an influential political partner. As Liberia in this way refuses to respond as a political partner, the EU’s interpellation is unsuccessful.

Looking at the partnership which the EU seeks to establish on the basis of its depoliticisation, it seems that it is on the one hand based upon an expectation of a form of dialogue, at least to the extent that disappointment is expressed that Liberia apparently did not care about the EU’s opinion on the matter. On the other hand, the official EU reaction does not suggest dialogue as a suitable modality, and is rather a statement of disagreement, reminding Liberia of its perceived obligations. This reveals a political partner role that in this case is not associated with dialogue, but primarily associated with voicing the EU’s opinion. As Liberia seems bent on not changing its mind, and has already, at the moment of repoliticisation, weighed international obligation against popular will, the result is two statements more than a ‘dialogue’.

Conclusion on Chapter 4

In Chapter 3, the two storylines justified the idea of establishing a political partnership between the EU and Liberia. There seemed to be agreement that the EU as a donor should receive recognition and political influence as a reward for its contribution, yet, this justification did not refer to aims beyond the fulfillment of the EU's self-image. In the Liberia storyline, political partnership was justified as a donor-initiated mode of cooperation and hence as a matter of compliance. However, the storyline did not articulate how it might contribute to Liberia specifically. The three events in Chapter 4, in contrast, illustrate how the EU envisages performing this general justification of political partnership, and how Liberia responds to its performance. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, these three events might not be exhaustive to an understanding of the performance of partnership, as they can be seen as the EU's attempts at *introducing* a political partnership. What is more, as regards the two first events, we only have access to Liberia's *performance*, and not to a Liberian interpretation of the events. This constitutes an analytical limitation, as the Liberian voice throughout the chapter is relatively silent, and focus is automatically directed towards the EU's interpretation of what took place. Nevertheless, what we can learn from them, is that there are indeed differences in the way Liberia and the EU negotiate the contradictions of political partnership. These differences are elaborated in the following.

The EU's political partner role is performed in different ways throughout the events. The performances link political partnership to the specifically Liberian context. The EU is portrayed as an *adviser* to Liberia, based on the assumption that Liberia can learn from the EU's experience in the domains of post-conflict and governance. These domains are depoliticised, and rearticulated as somewhat technical matters about which there is a consensus. The EU takes upon itself a gatekeeping function as it reminds Liberia of its international obligations in the campaign against death penalty. This role draws upon a discourse of urgency, necessity, and universality, which legitimise the EU's course of action. These performances speak into a discourse of developing Liberia, and construct a need for guidance on Liberia's behalf. In this way, they verge on a paternalistic subject position, which seems to stand in contrast to ideas of developing country ownership and responsibility.

Finally, the EU attempts to perform political partnership by drawing upon its role as a *donor*. Attempts are made to enhance the visibility of the EU's contribution, and it is, again, suggested that the EU's contribution be used as leverage. This performance is based upon the assumption that political partnership is earned through aid, and consequently transcends the discursively instituted separation of

the domains of politics and development. What is more, it reveals the assumption that the EU not only has a political *mandate*, but also has an *obligation* to use it. The European officials not only act upon political issues, but also *construct* political issues with the purpose of carving out a position from which the EU might perform its political role. The disappointment expressed when the EU fails to be recognised by Liberia, is not about Liberia not wanting to take responsibility or ownership, but rather seems to be about the failure of the EU's political identity project, as a response to the interpellation of the EU as a sovereign, legal entity. Accordingly, considerations of whether Liberia is in need of political partnership are not accommodated within this discourse.

Within the Liberia storyline, a position was established for Liberia *outside* of political partnership, while political partnership as a concept was not radically challenged. This happened as responsibility for political partnership's lack of citational effect was shifted to the EU and explained by various material factors. Throughout the three events, it is illustrated how this ambivalent position is performed as a *tacit mode of resistance* towards the EU's attempts at establishing political partnership.

Liberia challenges the EU's performance discursively, as an alternative negotiation is suggested, of the boundaries between internal issues and partner issues, political issues and development issues. Whereas the EU articulates Liberia's post-conflict situation as a basis for cooperation, Liberia re-signifies it as a basis for increased funding, and hence moves it from the partner domain to a domain of internal affairs. As the EU attempts to depoliticise and universalise the death penalty issue, Liberia insists on its repoliticisation, and silently ignores the EU's involvement. Counter to the points of view presented in the Liberia storyline, then, political partnership does not seem to be of great value to Liberia.

Without explicitly voicing its disagreement, Liberia succeeds in staying outside of political partnership, while at the same time not formally resigning, hence leaving the idea intact that a political partnership *should* exist between the EU and Liberia. By not handling the disagreement as an overt conflict, Liberia further sustains the *tacit disagreement* between the EU and Liberia, whereby both are released from the responsibility of defining what political partnership is. Instead, deficiencies are explained by a 'lack of citational effect', and solutions, therefore, amount to reiterations of the political partnership – speech acts attempting to speak the political partnership into existence in spite of its glaring deficiencies. In this way, Liberia is justified in remaining passive, and the EU is justified in remaining disappointed. By asking, as Søndergaard suggests, what is the 'binary other' of the subjectivities that are performed, we can more or less conclude that the EU and Liberia's binary other is non-cooperation.

By exerting its passive resistance, Liberia succeeds in maintaining sovereignty over its internal political affairs. The donor-recipient hierarchy is reversed, and Liberia is ‘in the driver’s seat’ performing a hybrid position of a dependent recipient and a capable agent, responsible for its own future (Abrahamsen 2004, 1464). Ironically then, although the political partnership interpellation seems to have failed measured by the EU’s ambitions, what Liberia performs does resonate in the key partnership tenets of ownership, responsibility, and equality. In that perspective, this is a successful performance of partnership.

The above conclusions address questions that have been posed throughout the analysis, concerning the negotiation of political partnership contradictions, and how certain courses of action are justified by the EU and Liberia, respectively. It has been described how there seems to exist a tacit disagreement between the two, regarding the terms of political partnership, and how it should be practiced. Furthermore, it seems that Liberia, through its discursive agency, has the upper hand in the political partnership. But why is it, that there is this *tacit* disagreement about political partnership, and at the same time an obvious mismatch of expectations? And what is it about political partnership that allows the recipient to take such a powerful position? These questions are addressed in the following chapter. The discussion is concluded with reflections about how discursive agency, on the basis of this analysis, might contribute to a more elaborated understanding of power relations between donors and recipients. The discussion is followed by the main conclusions of the thesis.

Chapter 5.

Performing a tacit disagreement

The analysis of the performance of political partnership concludes that political partnership as it is performed between the EU and Liberia is preconditioned upon a tacit disagreement. Throughout the analysis, we have seen how the partners negotiate their partner subjectivities and thereby attempt to justify certain courses of action. A mismatch of expectations seems to characterise the relation, as can be read from the two storylines in Chapter 3, and there seem to exist significantly different perceptions of what actions are justified within the discursive terrain of partnership, as can be read from the three performances in Chapter 4. However, this mismatch does not seem to have led to more fundamental discussions about the relevance of political partnership to Liberia specifically, and both partners contribute to maintaining the idea that political partnership should be established. Whereas Liberia shifts responsibility for this to the EU, it justifies taking a passive position, and whereas the EU continues to feel unrecognised by Liberia, it is justified in being disappointed. In the following discussion, I elaborate on this tacit disagreement characterising the political partnership between the EU and Liberia, in trying to understand why neither of the partners feel urged to openly declare their disagreement with the other partner's actions. In other words, what is it the partners attempt to protect with their silence?

A tacit compromise?

One way of understanding the non-articulation of the differences between the EU and Liberia, is to see it as a form of compromise, safeguarding specific positions for both of the partners. Looking again at the way the officials articulate their partner subjectivities, it can be seen how Liberia maintains a recipient identity rather than an identity as a political partner, by internalising its inferiority. By the European officials, it has been indicated that this internalisation is strategic and can be read as a silent mode of resistance. To the contrary, officials from both sides also suggest that the silence can be ascribed to a lack of citational effect, meaning that Liberia does not as of now acknowledge or understand the new possible identity offered to it by the political partnership discourse. In this perspective, Liberia's resistance can be read as coincidental and a result of a lack of capacity to respond.

However, it can be argued that the latter assertion does not sufficiently explain Liberia's silence: as we heard from L1 in the death penalty case, Liberia attempts to "walk around" the issue, in order to avoid confrontation with the EU. Moreover, as we saw it in relation to the Europe Day celebration, Liberia has an entirely different interpretation of how the EU might contribute to its post-conflict struggles. Liberia's discursive agency in these cases are indicative of an attempt to on the one hand avoid withdrawing from political partnership, and on the other hand protecting itself from the possible unintended consequences of political partnership, as it is presented by the EU. As the EU performs political partnership, it becomes clear that it is not simply the bargain envisaged by the Liberian officials, in which Liberia remains a passive member in exchange of continued funding. To the contrary, political partnership is suddenly introduced as an intimidation of Liberia's political sovereignty, as it presents the abolishment of death penalty as a condition. Political partnership moreover poses a threat to Liberia's recipient position, as it presents "shared" democratic principles as a precondition for Liberia's development, and constructs a political space removed and separate from the aid relation. If understood as *strategic*, Liberia's silent position might therefore be an attempt to at once maintain its membership and at once steer clear of political partnership's attempts at resignifying Liberia's favourable recipient position.

The EU's fragile process of subjectification

What regards the EU, its position throughout the analysis has been characterised by tentatively putting its foot down against Liberia, and instead articulating its frustrated disappointment that Liberia does not live up to its expectations. This might equally be explained as a way of safeguarding a specific subject position. If the EU explicated its ambitions, it might be exposed that they are indeed *ambitions*, that they are not fulfilled, and that they are therefore not just a matter of playing a powerful upper hand. This might put the EU in a fragile position, revealing that its self-image as a global political actor has cracked in the face of the challenges met upon Liberian territory. It is a way of admitting to the fact that the EU in this case depends upon Liberia, hence revealing that Liberia has the upper hand. The disappointment expressed by the European officials is a narrative *about* this fragility, revealing that the EU's identity as a political actor is the fragile result of an ongoing discursive struggle, rather than an effortlessly achieved position rooted in a global consensus about the EU's status as a political actor.

The relation as it is described here, illustrates the 'discursive trade-off' that seems to characterise the EU-Liberia political partnership, and which underpins its mutually constitutive character: that the EU's gain from political partnership seems to be its being recognised as a political partner. But why is this objective so important that it puts the EU in a decidedly *fragile* position in relation to Liberia? What is so desirable about *the partner label* that the EU prefers to subject itself to Liberia's silence, persistently attempting to gain its recognition - rather than to stake everything in one throw and risk a break-up?

The partnership paradigm: Camouflaging the donor

One way of explaining this fragility is to see the discursive trade-off as a general characteristic of a balance of power inherent to the partnership paradigm. The partnership paradigm commits donors to take a more camouflaged position within the give-and-take of aid relations, as budget support and pool funds, the coordination and harmonisation of donor efforts, and not least the presentation of development policies as results of political processes within developing countries, contributes to an automatic phasing out of the importance of the *individual* donor. Furthermore, as responsibility is shifted from the donor to the recipient, the donor is left with a paradoxical role: at once exempt from responsibility, at once still held accountable for the aid it disburses with money from Western taxpayers.

Hereby, it can be argued, the donor's self-image is challenged as the partnership paradigm denies donors the possibility of emphasising, accounting for and justifying their individual contribution. While overt donor visibility and conditionality can be seen as traditional ways of creating awareness or ensuring accountability, within the partnership paradigm, donors have to find alternatives. The partner label could be seen as a way of legitimately making up for these lost possibilities. Its discursive strength is as a 'seal of approval' signifying that funds are disbursed in an effective manner, which caters to a demand for accountability. Furthermore, it implies a non-paternalist donor-recipient relation, which speaks into a discourse of empowerment of the developing country, and further portrays the donor as matured and selfless.

If we acknowledge the partnership paradigm as a challenge for the donor, it serves to explain the importance of the partner label and why it is worth fighting for. As a consequence, not being recognised as a partner is an embarrassment to the donor, as it not only degrades the donor's self-image as a responsible, accountable, and important actor, but also reveals that the donor depends on the recognition of the recipient country to become a 'partner' in the first place. This makes the partner subjectivity immensely precarious, as the partnership equation in order to be solved needs the recipient's recognition of the donor as a 'partner'. As such, the partnership 'contract' can be understood as a discursive trade-off in which donors agree to promote their own role to a lesser degree, on the condition that recipient countries address them as partners. This means, however, that the partnership label becomes a strong tool in the hands of developing countries, left with the power to *define* the relation, and hence left with a possibility to *resignify* the meaning of partnerships or *refuse* to address the donors as partners. This leaves donors in a vulnerable position, and consequently partnership can be understood to hold a potential for discursive resistance.

Finally, as was seen in the EU storyline, the partner label and the EU's visibility is not only important as a bilateral positioning towards Liberia, but also as a *multilateral* positioning, as the EU attempts to maintain a respected position within the broader donor landscape, in this case not only to be seen as a terrain of bilateral relations, but also as a microcosm of the international system, manifested in the multitude of donor agencies and state representations that navigate upon it.

Negotiating visibility

The EU's struggle for recognition can in this view be seen as a general struggle for donors within the partnership paradigm. However, adding to the EU's fragility in this discursive partnership bargain is the specifically *political* mandate that the EU has to balance against the partnership paradigm's imperative of invisibility. In an era where donor visibility is challenged by new aid modalities, this mandate would seem to be far more challenged than otherwise. The EU juggles, on the one hand, a pronounced political mandate of safeguarding the political values and principles of the Cotonou Agreement, which moreover mirror the EU's own foreign policy values, and on the other hand, a development mandate committing the EU to disburse its money through pool funds and budget support. This essentially results in a juggling of visibility and invisibility. This paradox is fleshed out in the speech by the EU ambassador at the Europe Day celebration, where, on the one hand, the EU's role as a political partner was performed, while on the other hand, it was emphasised that projects "belong to the recipient" and that the EU is not "the owner of a road or of an institution simply because it finances its reconstruction or its running" (Delegation of the European Union to Liberia 2010). By and large, this balance in the speech reflects the EU's attempt of at once stepping forward as a unique and important political adviser, and at the same time reiterating its obligation to basically fade into the background after the funds have been disbursed.

Political partnership can in principle be understood as a way of offering a solution to the invisibility of development partnership. It shifts visibility from the development domain to the political domain, and in this way, political partnership promises the EU and its negotiators an important *political* position, as compensation for a lost important *donor* position. However, political partnership still hinges upon Liberia's recognition in order to constitute the EU as a political partner, since a political role within the partnership paradigm is not established by the donor, but can only be constituted at the initiative of the recipient. The EU's proposed visibility strategy can in this perspective be understood as an attempt to carve out a legitimate space of visibility in between a political mandate contradicting the partnership paradigm, and a development mandate precluding visibility because of its hidden modalities. It is a powerless strategy, insofar as it attempts to make visible the EU's contribution while being limited by hidden aid modalities - with the purpose of attaining a position that should ideally *not* be earned through contributions, but should instead follow from the automatic recognition from its partner, Liberia. As the EU attempts to make itself visible, it can thus be understood as a remnant of an

outdated aid paradigm, which legitimised other modes of action than the current paradigm. Within the current paradigm, the most legitimate thing to do seems to be to blend in, in exchange for a partner label which precisely allows for a maintenance of taxpayer accountability, and the possibility of positioning the donor as partner - and if the recipient allows, a political partner as well.

While hereby pointing towards a possibility for discursive agency given by the partnership paradigm, a qualification should be raised as to the context-specific nature of this possibility. Firstly, as is asserted by many of the aforementioned analyses of partnership, partnerships may as well be used as a strong discursive tool for the *donor*, covering up conditionality by signifying the relation as a ‘partnership’. As such, partnership principles of ownership and equality might not necessarily be practiced by donors, and all donors are, obviously, not as ‘invisible’ as the EU in Liberia. Moreover, the study of EU-Liberia relations illustrates an ambivalence from the EU’s side in its implementation of partnership principles: on the one hand, pool funds and budget support, on the other hand, a Europe Day celebration and political leverage. Secondly, resistance is not necessarily without consequences for the recipient. In the context of the relatively new EU-Liberia political partnership, it seems that Liberia’s resistance is sustained by the tacit compromise described above, preconditioned on the EU’s identity project, which puts the EU in an especially fragile position. Whether the conclusion about discursive agency as given by the partnership paradigm can be seen as general to EU-ACP relations or donor-recipient relations, lies beyond the framework of this thesis. Within the framework of the thesis, however, it can be concluded that the partnership paradigm, exactly because of its potential for discursive dominance, *also* offers a potential for discursive resistance.

A multilateral political partnership?

Finally, it can be ascertained that the tacitness and the profoundness of the disagreement between the EU and Liberia, reflects a deadlock produced by the ‘mother’ partnership between the EU and 78 ACP countries. What we have seen in the analysis is the concrete disagreement between what has been designated as the negotiators on either side of the partnership table. What the negotiators have in common as they perform the partnership, is that neither of them have partaken in the negotiation of a specific political partnership agreement between Liberia and the EU. The framework for cooperation

between the EU and Liberia is set out in a bilateral agreement⁴, but even here the bilateral political partnership is introduced automatically, as a consequence of the multilateral political partnership negotiated at a higher diplomatic level. The multilateral political partnership bundles a group of extremely diverse countries, on three different continents, most of them common in their colonial relations to Europe and nothing else, into a partnership that deals with issues of a highly sensitive political nature. Seeing political partnership as a framework covering so many country contexts puts into perspective its attempt at balancing *universal* against *local* values. Although it may be argued, that the Cotonou Agreement is a compromise between ACP and EU priorities, in any case, the political dimension of the partnership looks more like a one-size-fits-all development strategy than an attempt at accommodating to a local context. This becomes especially clear in the Liberian context, where no local framework has been set up for political dialogue⁵. Here, the negotiators on both sides can be seen struggling to implement an agreement that has been settled at a higher level, but which is not guaranteed to have any bearing or relevance in Liberia in specific. The Liberian government becomes a subject of “transformed conditionality”, as it is locked into a conglomerate of countries negotiating on its behalf, but with no guarantee that Liberia’s own priorities are reflected in a final agreement. At the same time, as illustrated in the analysis, a heavy mandate rests on the shoulders of the EU negotiators, as they are charged with the responsibility of *constructing* a justification for political partnership in a Liberian context, whether or not their political partner – Liberia – sees political partnership as legitimate in any sense.

Taking these considerations into account, it can be asked, whether it is at all meaningful to talk about ‘partnership’ and ‘ownership’ in the EU-ACP context, when it regards such context-dependent issues as democratic principles, the rule of law, and good governance. As a consequence, it may be argued that the political partnership performed between the EU and Liberia, may not be called a partnership after all.

⁴ The ‘Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme’ between the European Community and Liberia (Republic of Liberia and European Community 2007).

⁵ At least not at the time when this field study was carried out.

Conclusion: Performing political partnership

The thesis studies how the European Union and Liberia perform political partnership, and how they negotiate its potential contradictions. Throughout the thesis, partnership has been understood as an interpellation, a mode of address creating certain possibilities for the social existence of the EU and Liberia, perceived as legal entities within an international system. As the conceptual foundation for the thesis is a theory focusing on how subjects respond to the particular way in which they are addressed, the focus of the thesis is on the possibilities and constraints deriving from ‘political partner’ as a specific address. As the interpellation perspective understands subjectivity as constituted in response to an address – and not as something that can be constituted unilaterally - the thesis directs its attention towards the process whereby the EU and Liberia are mutually constituted as political partners.

Perceiving of political partnership as interpellation, has allowed for a nuanced perception of power in donor-recipient relations. Rather than telling a story mainly about Western dominance in the global South, the study of political partnership as interpellation has attempted to illustrate how the discursive terrain of political partnership offers discursive agency to donors and recipients alike.

The discursive terrain of political partnership is potentially contradictory. It balances, on the one hand, principles of equality, ownership, and mutual responsibility, and on the other hand, predefined political principles. In this way, it attempts to take into account both universally accepted values and local circumstances, but at the same time installs a hierarchy between the two, whereby the ‘universal’ becomes superior and elementary to the ‘local’. Within the framework of EU-ACP relations, political partnership exists separately from a development partnership, and is envisaged to contribute towards

the same goals. However, there exists a potential tension between these two dimensions of partnership, as they, if strategically linked, may come to work as a form of conditionality.

Political partnership between the EU and Liberia manifests itself through a performance that reverses the hierarchy of the donor-recipient relation, insofar as the political partner label, desirable in itself to the EU, leaves Liberia with the power to define the relation, and hence with the possibility to refuse to address the EU as a political partner. It can moreover be argued, that this balance of power is characteristic of the partnership paradigm and its aid modalities, camouflaging the donor to the benefit of the recipient. If the 'partner' label is seen as a way of reimbursing the donor of its lost visibility, partnership can be seen as a discursive bargain, leaving a strong discursive tool in the hands of the recipient.

The thesis has illustrated this through an analysis focusing on articulations about the subject positions offered by the political partnership interpellation to the officials representing the EU and Liberia, respectively. It has further been illustrated through their articulations about the performance of partnership.

The EU-Liberia partnership is characterised by a mismatch of expectations. The EU justifies political partnership as a way of gaining recognition for its contribution to Liberia's development. While the EU on this basis attempts at positioning itself as a political partner, Liberia's lacking response, however, deprives the EU of its political partner subjectivity. While Liberia does not explicitly reject the idea of political partnership, Liberia justifies political partnership as a question of complying with donor demands, and in this way establishes a subject position as an inferior, dependent recipient, in need of economic assistance from its donors. This position enables Liberia to passively disavow political partnership, and runs counter to the EU's ambitions of creating a political relation beyond the existing donor-recipient relation. Furthermore, Liberia shifts the responsibility of establishing a political partnership to the EU, thus revealing that political partnership is a donor initiative, and thus creating a conundrum for partnership, which should ideally be recipient-driven.

In this way, both partners succeed in shifting responsibility for the lack of political partnership, towards the other. However, because of its unaffected political ambitions, the EU continues to take the initiative in the performance of political partnership.

The EU's performance of political partnership reveals the assumption that the EU not only has a political mandate, but also has a perceived obligation to use it, leading European officials to construct political issues for the EU to deal with. The EU performs various roles that seek to advise Liberia on these issues, to exert its leverage to influence Liberia's actions in a specific direction, or to remind Liberia of its adherence to universal values and principles. These performances are based upon the assumption that Liberia needs guidance, and in this way construct a need on Liberia's behalf. They verge on a paternalistic position, which seems to stand in contrast to ideas of developing country ownership and responsibility. Furthermore, the performances are preconditioned on a depoliticisation of the issues that the EU attempts to move into the partnership terrain.

In its performance, Liberia, in contrast, exerts silent or passive resistance towards the EU's attempts at justifying its political role. Liberia further cements its position as a recipient, as it steers clear of the EU's attempts at cooperating on political issues, and thereby reclaims its political mandate. As Liberia in this way succeeds in staying outside of political partnership, Liberia, ironically, ends up performing partnership, as it takes responsibility of its own development. This performance resonates in the key partnership principles of ownership, responsibility, and equality. It further confirms a contradiction within the political partnership discourse between these principles, and the political principles on the basis of which the EU constructs 'political' issues.

While the political partnership between the EU and Liberia is characterised by a mismatch of expectations, neither Liberia nor the EU reject the political partnership idea. In this way, their political partnership can be described as being preconditioned upon a tacit disagreement, safeguarding Liberia's position as an eligible recipient, while safeguarding the EU's precarious subjectivity as a global political actor. Finally, we can understand the tacitness of the disagreement between the European and Liberian officials, as a necessary response to the way in which political partnership has been negotiated in the first place: on a multilateral level between the European Union and 78 ACP countries. If Liberia has never expressed a need for a stronger partnership, and if the EU continues to push for its establishment, key partnership principles seem to be challenged. This calls into question whether the political partnership performed between the EU and Liberia meaningfully can be called a partnership at all.

Literature

- Abrahamsen, Rita.** 2000. »Disciplining Democracy: development discourse and good governance in Africa«. Zed Books.
- . 2004. »The power of partnerships in global governance«. *Third World Quarterly* 25 (8)
- Andersen, Louise.** 2006. »Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform and the Challenge of Ownership - the Case of Liberia«. *DIIS Brief* 2006 (July).
- . 2010. »Outsiders Inside the State. Post-Conflict Liberia between Trusteeship and Partnership«. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4 (2).
- Andersson, Kjerstin.** 2008. »Constructing young masculinity: A case study of heroic discourse on violence«. *Discourse & Society* 19 (2).
- Angrosino, Michael V.** 2005. »Recontextualising Observation«. In In Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln: *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research - Third Edition*. SAGE.
- Baylis, John, and Steve Smith.** 2005. »The Globalization of World Politics - An introduction to international relations«. Oxford University Press.
- Bretherton, Charlotte, and John Vogler.** 1999. »The European Union as a Global Actor«. Routledge.
- Brinkerhoff, Jennifer M.** 2002. »Partnership for International Development: Rhetoric or Results? « Boulder.
- Butler, Judith.** 1997. »Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative«. Routledge.
- Baaz, Maria Eriksson.** 2005. »The paternalism of partnership: a postcolonial reading of identity in development aid«. Zed Books.
- Chambers, Robert.** 2009. »Transforming Power: From Zero-Sum to Win-Win?« *IDS Bulletin*.
- Chase, Susan E.** 2005. »Narrative Inquiry«. In Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln: *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research - Third Edition*. SAGE.
- Clapham, Christopher.** 1996. »Africa and the International System –The Politics of State Survival«. Cambridge Studies in International Relations.
- . 1998. »Degrees of Statehood« 24 (2). *Review of International Studies*.
- Crawford, Gordon.** 2003. »Partnership or power? Deconstructing the »Partnership for Governance Reform« in Indonesia« 24 (1). *Third World Quarterly*.
- Delegation of the European Union to Liberia.** 2010. »Remarks by His Excellency Attilio Pacifici

- Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to Liberia. Europe Day – 9th May 2010. URL: www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/liberia/index_en.htm.
- . 2011. »The Role of the EU Delegation«. URL: www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/liberia/about_us/delegation_role/index_en.htm.
- Dyrberg, Torben Bech, Allan Dreyer Hansen, and Jacob Torfing.** 2000. »Diskursteorien på arbejde«. Roskilde Universitetsforlag.
- ECDPM.** 2001. »Cotonou Infokit 20: Essential and Fundamental Elements«.
- ECO Consult.** 2010. »Country Level Evaluation - Liberia. Evaluation carried out on behalf of the European Commission«. European Commission.
- EuropeAid.** 2011. »Governance and institutional reform - Increasing transparency and efficiency in Liberian public finances«. www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/casestudies/liberia_governance_public_finances_en.pdf.
- European Commission.** 1996. »Green Paper on relations between the European Union and the ACP countries on the eve of the 21st century – challenges and options for a new partnership«. European Commission.
- . 2006. »Partnership Agreement ACP-EC (The Cotonou Agreement)«.
- . 2010. Background on EU-ACP cooperation: www.ec.europa.eu/development.
- European Communities.** 2004. »Taking Europe to the world - 50 years of the European Commission's External Service«. European Communities.
- Foresti, Marta, David Booth, and Tammie O'Neil.** 2006. »Aid effectiveness and human rights: Strengthening the implementation of the Paris Declaration«. Overseas Development Institute.
- Fowler, Alan.** 2000. »Introduction - Beyond Partnership«. *IDS Bulletin* 31 (3).
- GAC.** 2011. »Background - About the GAC«. URL: www.gacliberia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=91.
- Gade, Solveig.** 2010. »Intervention & Kunst - Socialt og politisk engagement i samtidskunsten«. Rævens Sorte Bibliotek.
- Government of Liberia.** 2010. »Special Remarks by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf At Europe Day Reception Hosted by the European Union«. URL: www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/May_10_2010_Remarks_at_EU_Reception_final.pdf.
- Harrison, Graham.** 2004. »The World Bank and Africa – The construction of governance states«. Routledge.

- Hay, Colin.** 2002. »Political Analysis - A Critical Introduction«. Palgrave.
- Hix, Simon.** 2006. »The European Union as a Polity (I)«. In Jorgensen, Knud Erik, Mark Pollack, and Ben Rosamond: *Handbook of European Union Politics*. SAGE.
- Holland, Martin.** 2002. »The European Union and the Third World«. Palgrave.
- Hyden, Göran.** 2008. »After the Paris Declaration: Taking on the issue of power«. *Development Policy Review* 26 (3).
- Jagger, Gill.** 2008. »Judith Butler: sexual politics, social change and the power of the performative«. Routledge.
- Keukeleire, Stephan, and Jennifer MacNaghan.** 2008. »The Foreign Policy of the European Union«. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kvale, Steinar.** 1997. »InterView«. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Laakso, Lisa.** 2007. »Politics and partnership in the Cotonou Agreement«. In Gould, Jeremy and Lauri Siitonen: *Anomalies of Aid*. Interkont Books.
- Mackie, James.** 2003. »Partnership and political dialogue«. *the Courier ACP-EU*.
- Maxwell, Simon, and Karin Christiansen.** 2002. »Negotiaton as simultaneous equation: building a new partnership with Africa«. In *International Affairs* 78 (3).
- Maxwell, Simon, and Roger Riddell.** 1998. »Conditionality or contract: Perspectives on partnership for development«. *Journal of International Development* (10).
- Mayall, James.** 2005. »The Shadow of Empire: The EU and the Former Colonial World«. In Hill, Christopher, and Michael Smith: *International Relations and the European Union*. Oxford.
- Mercer, Claire.** 2003. »Performing partnership: civil society and the illusions of good governance in Tanzania«. *Political Geography* 2003 (22).
- Merry, Sally Engle.** 2006. »Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle«. *American Anthropologist* 108 (1).
- Moreau, Françoise.** 2006. »The Cotonou Agreement: Building on the experience of 30 years of ACP-EC partnership«. In *Partnership Agreement ACP-EC (The Cotonou Agreement)*.
- Mouffe, Chantal.** 2005. »The Democratic Paradox«. Verso.
- OECD-DAC.** 1996. »Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation«. OECD.
- Olivier de Sardan, Jean-Pierre.** 2005. »Anthropology and Development - Understanding Contemporary Social Change«. Zed Books.
- Raffer, Kunibert.** 1997. »Rolling Back Partnership: An Analysis of the Commission's Green Paper on the Future of Lomé«. European Development Policy Study Group.

- . 2001. »Cotonou: Slowly Undoing Lomé’s Concept of Partnership«. European Development Policy Study Group - Discussion Papers, 21.
- Republic of Liberia, and European Community.** 2007. Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme for the period 2008-2013.
- Santiso, Carlos.** 2002. »Reforming European Union Development Cooperation: Good Governance, Political Conditionality and the Convention of Cotonou«. In *ACES Working Paper* 2002.4
- Sharma, Aradhana, and Akhil Gupta.** 2006. »Anthropology of the State«. Blackwell Publishing.
- Stake, Robert E.** 2005. »Qualitative case studies«. In Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln: *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research - Third Edition*. SAGE.
- Søndergaard, Dorte Marie.** 2002.
»Poststructuralist Approaches«. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 15 (2).
- The Analyst.** 2008. »Death Penalty under Fire«. *The Analyst*, August 7.
- . 2010. »Asst. Finance Minister Lashes at GAC«. *The Analyst*, May 18.
- The Council of the European Union.** 2008. »12344/08: Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding the reintroduction of the death penalty in Liberia. The Council of the European Union«.
- The Informer.** 2010. »Sexual Harassment - Auditor John Morlu Linked«. *The Informer*, May 7.
- USAID.** 2011. USAID Africa: Liberia.
URL: www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/liberia/index.html.
- Vanheukelom, Jan, James Mackie, and Jean Bossuyt.** 2006. »Political Dimensions: Introductory Note«. ECDPM discussion paper. European Centre for Development Policy Management.
- Williams, David.** 2000. »Aid and sovereignty: Quasi-states and the International Financial Institutions« 2000 (26). *Review of International Studies*.
- Winckler Andersen, Ole, and Ole Therkildsen.** 2007. »Harmonisation and Alignment: The double-edged swords of budget support and decentralised aid administration«. DIIS Working Paper (4).
- Wæver, Ole.** 1992. »Introduktion til Studiet af International Politik«. Institut for Statskundskab, København: Forlaget Politiske Studier.

