Re-bordering of Europe:
The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy[1]

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Abstract:
Drawing on an extensive data set and a large number of interviews with the EU's officials, diplomats, Members of European Parliament, civil society organizations and other practitioners, this paper will discuss the implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy on the development of European political community in terms of contested projects of re-bordering. This involves one the one hand, the transnationalisation of Neighbourhood space through promoting cross-border networks and exporting the EU's values and norms. On the other hand, with its Neighbourhood Policy the EU creates new limits and dividing lines among the neighbours who compete for the EU's attention and rewarding packages. As argued here, the ENP is an important re-bordering strategy because it provides the basic foundations for the EU's external relations in ideological, institutional and strategic terms and at same time it evokes a sense of European community.

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1. Introduction

The creation of the ENP appears to be an ambitious foreign policy initiative of the EU which seeks to reconcile two potentially contradictory and competing rebordering processes. The point of departure of this paper is that the Neighbourhood is a contested space where bordering and re-bordering is the subject of a tension between different discourses and practices. Two issues, in particular, are being constructed and contested. One is the construction of the Neighbourhood as a space of connectivity and integration where borders are transcended. The primary function of borders here is to connect and to establish a platform of cross-border cooperation and integration across a comprehensive range of economic, cultural, political and security issues (**border transcendence**). The other sets the limits of such approximation, accentuates differences and constructs a notion of the Neighbourhood as a closed space of potential conflict and contamination (**border confirmation**). Here borders are represented as dividing lines or, to borrow imperial terms, as buffer zones (Holm, 2005; King, 1998) or marches (Walters, 2004b) separating neighbours from the EU.

This paper engages with debates on borders and bordering in order to study contemporary transformations of the European community through the ENP. Two main issues are highlighted:

The first is the relevance of state borders as essential attributes of modern states and of their function in homogenising, controlling and regulating within a delimitated territory. Building on a state-centric paradigm of borders (Westphalian), it is suggested that some imperial features (Colas, 2007) of re-bordering, such as domination, expansion, hierarchies and ordering, which span beyond the territorial borders of the EU can still be relevant to the process of 'neighbouring'.

The second theme of neo-medieval (Zielonka, 2006) and networked borders associated with multiple identities, overlapping sovereignties (Anderson, 2007) and relocated border controls which downgrade ideas of state sovereignty, is used to explore transnational and

integration aspects of the ENP. Instead of territoriality as a static concept, cross-border governance perspectives emphasise the spatial dimension of re-bordering and re-territorialised state power (Kramsch and Maladouch, 2003).

The empirical analysis of the ENP[3] demonstrate several points of tension that lie behind the straightforward dichotomies of opening/closing and hardening/softening borders or lines of inclusion/exclusion. The ENP is not about making clear distinctions in terms of these dichotomies. Rather it is more about where the emphasis is placed in different spheres of the ENP such a security, mobility of people and goods and values. The ENP manages these aspects of borders in different ways, through different re-bordering practices and discourses– each of which entails a different form of territoriality and each of which implies different forms of political community.

This paper discusses the contestations and ambiguities that have appeared in my empirical research under two headings: the repertoire of integration and the repertoire of differences. The main focus is to examine the ways and strategies in which the EU is constructing 'differences' and similarities through a set of discourses and practises. It should be noted that these repertoires are not separate but constitutive of each other. Nevertheless, because of the complexity of the ENP discourses, and for analytical purposes, it is useful to discuss them separately.

This paper refers to the aspirations, objectives and ambitions articulated in both spoken and written ENP discourses. It is too early to evaluate in detail what has been implemented or what has worked in ENP countries and, in any event, this is not the purpose of this paper. In light of all of the above, what did this research find out, and what conclusions can we draw from it?

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[3] This paper draws upon a series of interviews conducted with European Commission (EC) officials, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and representatives from European civil society organisations in Brussels. It also utilises official documentary sources connected with the ENP, in particular ENP policy documents and the speeches of Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the former European commissioner for external relations and the ENP (retrieved from http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/document_en.htm).

2. The Repertoire of Integration: Towards an Integrated Borderland

The repertoire of integration represents the original goals of the ENP and aims to avoid the further development of 'otherness' and prevent the emergence of new dividing lines. It attempts to transcend the EU's borders by building networks of cross-border cooperation and interactions across them and by pushing forward the idea of Neighbourhood as an open, inclusive and integrated space while pointing at the limits of sovereignty and territoriality.

This repertoire draws chiefly on the concepts of conditionality, trust and networks where neighbours are considered as 'partners' and 'friends' rather than as 'strangers' or 'outsiders'. In other words, integration meant different things to different people. A distinction can be made between security paradigms, the mobility of people and goods, and common values discourses which all presume an increasing connectivity and a certain degree of integration albeit through different re-bordering strategies and rationales. The repertoire of integration has been mainly employed by officials from the European Commission[4] while building positive images of the ENP or more broadly portraying the EU as a post-national, transnational community (Diez, 2004, 2006; Habermas, 2001). These positive images are problematised by representatives of civil society organisations, but also to some degree, by ENP countries[5]. Their discourses reveal tensions and hidden rationales behind the repertoire of integration and these theoretical approaches to borders as open structures. These re-bordering processes of integration and connectivity are manifested in different ways and are summarised albeit in simplified way in the table bellow (*table 1.):*

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[4] Author's interviews with EC officials from DG RELEX.
[5] Author's interviews with Moldovan, Ukrainian and Moroccan diplomats and CSOs in Brussels.

Table 1. Six Types of the EU Discourses under the Repertoire of Integration

The Discourse of Connectivity and Trust	The Discourse of Selectivity	The Discourse of Conditionality	The Discourse of Homogeneity	The Discourse of Commonalities	The Discourse of Transnational Threats
Cross-border cooperation (CBC)	Visa facilitation	Access to internal market	Export of EU rules and norms	Common values	Illegal migration
Twinning programmes	Free trade agreements (FTAs)	Opening of the EU programmes and agencies		Common threats and challenges	Readmission agreements

2.1. The Discourse of Connectivity and Trust

The principal objective of the ENP is to tie the neighbours closer to the European space of governance in terms of trade and deeper economic integration, establishing networks of cooperation among governmental and non-governmental actors, allowing access to the EU's agencies and programmes, and promoting a dialogue of common values.[6] This border-related demand for the gradual opening of European borders is driven by the imperative of eliminating the barriers dividing Europe and the neighbours and to diminish the existing differences. The ENP is structured around Western experiences of integration that builds on a methodology of functional spill-over. In this sense, the ENP can be interpreted as an extension of the European model of integration, enhancing cross-border cooperation and supporting the gradual harmonisation of different policies. Yet cross-border cooperation remains a weak part of the ENP which raises the question of whether the European model of integration can be replicated in other parts of the world. We have seen that the ENP has adopted all kinds of new normative vocabulary (e.g. partners,

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[6] COM (2006) 726: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening European Neighbourhood Policy, Brussels, 4/12/2006.

friends, privileged partnerships) to engage with the neighbours, to promote confidence-building and to export political and cultural values.[7] Here borders can be described as networks and mobile units which encompass new forms of fluid territoriality rather than being spatially fixed, and where the outside is incorporated into the inside. From the EU point of view, the ENP - despite its shortcomings and limitations – signifies the high level of trust and political will that is necessary, if the EU is to remain an 'unbound' (Zielonka, 2002) and 'networked' entity (Axford, 2006). Here borders become an area of exchange, interaction and integration where various social actors meet, cooperate or interact. The promise of deeper integration across a large range of sectors represents, in the eyes of EU actors, a significant step towards an integrated borderland. This type of borderland involves no barrier or impediment to the flow of goods and people which can also involve informal or irregular cross-border interactions. On this reading, the ENP can be seen as an attempt to create a new borderland of connectivity, security, human contacts and economic exchanges in the Neighbourhood. The notion of a borderland has been employed to point at increasing connectivity and blurring between the inside and outside (Balibar, 2004; Hassner, 2002; Rumford, 2008).

In the opinion of a majority of respondents from the EU institutions, the dynamics and nature of cross-border cooperation practices and border transcendence is undermined by the notions of trust and distrust. At the same time, this discourse reinforces the idea of the Neighbourhood as an area divided by hierarchies of trustful and distrustful, or privileged and less privileged, partners who compete for the attention of the core (the EU). In this sense the notions of transcending borders and building networks of cooperation across them are viewed by some as a response to increasing interdependency or dependency, economic pressures, geographic proximity and the impossible task of the EU insulating itself from unstable and impoverished neighbours. Scepticism, suspicion and lack of trust are widespread among the EU actors and can be seen as countering effective networking and dialogue with the neighbours. These views also seriously challenge the EU's self-perception as the exporter and promoter of values in the Neighbourhood, and as a result

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[7] This normative vocabulary has been mainly employed by a former ENP Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in her speeches adressed to ENP countries.

have negative consequences for how the EU is perceived by its neighbours.[8] Overall, if the EU wants to become a qualitatively different polity, as it claims, it needs to change its self-defensive attitudes and to re-formulate its rhetoric.

2.2. **The Discourse of Selectivity**

These re-bordering processes can be described as an 'unbundling of the territory of the EU' (Ruggie, 1993) where the relationship between territory and authority is increasingly blurred and functions traditionally attributed to states no longer conform to the Westphalian model of the state. The repertoire of integration implies that certain regulatory functions traditionally performed within territorial states are no longer the sole responsibility of the states. According to EU principles, a loss of state autonomy over policy in economic spheres is to be compensated for by the economic gains resulting from access to the internal market. It is the magnetism or attraction of the EU that should stimulate the transformation of societies across the Neighbourhood and motivate the ENP countries to integrate and to adopt its rules and norms. The ENP can be read as an attempt by the EU to exercise its self-proclaimed 'soft' or transformative power while minimising the neo-colonial connotations of the ENP exercise (Wallace, 2003). But while there is a high degree of rhetorical commitment to opening the EU's internal market, the EU (or its member states) continues to apply restrictions on the import of sensitive commodities, on the opening of its labour markets and on facilitating the movement of people. The analysis also demonstrated that cross-border networks are limited to political elites, experts, bureaucrats and technocrats in ENP countries. Under such conditions, most people are bounded within their states and only the elites experience the effects of border transcendence and deeper integration. This suggests that integration will remain an inter-governmental business with little effect on the wider society in ENP countries unless state elites engage with non-state actors. In other words, if the EU wants to be serious about integration and creating prosperity in the Neighbourhood, it would have to open its labour markets and economic borders to all people and goods. As pointed out by representatives of civil society organisations in Brussels[9], unless the EU (or its member

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[8]This has been to a great extent confirmed during my post-doctoral research entitled '
[9] Author's interviews with representatives of CSOs' in Brussels.

states) removes the obstacles to the movement of people and goods, the integration dimension of the ENP will have limited effects on selected categories of people included in visa facilitation agreements and goods covered under deep free trade agreements (DFTAs) and will not achieve any substantial changes in creating a common sense of belonging.

This reluctance to fulfil the ENP promises of greater border transcendence leads to frustration, particularly among 'new' member states[10] who not long ago experienced being 'on the other side of border'. In their view, this gap between rhetoric and practice undermines the credibility of the EU in the eyes of the neighbours and reduces the capacity of the EU to act as a transformative power. Furthermore, the current low level of attractiveness of the ENP may endanger the sustainability of these newly emerging networks unless the EU becomes a more open and more outward looking polity. The multifaceted character of the ENP suggests that some sectors are more integrated or 'Europeanised' in ways that can be described as a selective unbundling of sovereignty. In broad terms, bordering and re-bordering are selective processes where the EU advances mechanisms to exert its control over some areas and policies; but not in others.

2.3. **The Discourse of Conditionality**

The image of the organisation of a political and economic Neighbourhood space which is increasingly inter-connected with the EU through different degrees and forms of integration can be described as one of concentric circles (Weaver, 1997). Those who adopt the European values and norms will not only receive rewards but will also gain respect in the form of privileged relationships (among them Ukraine and Morocco)[11]. It can be argued that the ENP pushes the EU closer to its peripheries through its integration rationale based on progress and a willingness to accept the rules and norms prescribed by the EU. Border transcendence is regulated, supervised and guarded by EU who let well-behaved, reliable and responsible neighbours visit and participate in the prestigious and respectable European club without however giving them a say in decision-making

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[10] Author's interviews with the MEP's from new member states.
[11] IP/08/1488, 'The European Union and Morocco strengthen their partnership', Brussels, 13/10/2008

procedures. The gradual opening of institutional boundaries[12] and the inclusion of ENP countries in the regulatory mechanisms of the EU is a highly technical, bureaucratic and selective process. In other words, re-ordering of the Union's institutional and economy boundary is strictly conditioned and limited only to those who adopt the EC legislation.

The ENP rhetoric of rewards and punishment, with a transparent and horizontal logic of interactions, is more typical of some types of empires than it is of networks. The discourse of conditionality positions 'neighbouring relations' in an asymmetric relationship which goes against the spirit of partnership and solidarity. The conditionality is used for the purely strategic interests of the EU and it tends to be strictly applied in those areas where the ENP partners find themselves in a dependency relationship and hence in a less favourable position to bargain. For instance, the use of conditionality varies when democracy and human rights are at stake. It is an asymmetric dialogue or the strategic use of norms that re-shapes cultural borders[13] rather than set of tools applied to all neighbours. As such, it is an obstacle to providing the environment of mutual trust and confidence-building that is imperative if borders are to take on the forms of networks or overlapping sovereignties. In this context, the quality of networks is undermined by the principles of conditionality and reward mechanisms. In a setting of asymmetric relationships in which the EU assumes the right to define what is appropriate, it is, however, hard to imagine that borders acquire many of the features of networks.

2.4. **The Discourse of Homogeneity**

The ambitious project of the ENP can only work in a relatively homogenous environment far removed from the diversity of the existing Neighbourhood. The repertoire of integration, therefore, implies an increasing sameness of ENP countries to the extent that they share values and develop common understanding in order to maintain stability and order in the Neighbourhood. To overcome the existing differences and gaps in the interpretation of values between the neighbours and the EU, the ENP proposes a variety of activities such as student exchange packages and joint education programmes under a

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[12] COM (2006) 724: Communication from the Commission on the general approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes, Brussels, 4/12/2006
[13] For a detail discussion on the cultural and political dimensions of the ENP see Dimitrovova (2010)

cross-border cooperation framework. In this sense, the ENP can be understood as an attempt to achieve the political and economic homogenisation of the essential features of the systems in place in order to assert control over both the domestic and foreign affairs of ENP countries via conditionality. This powerful logic of domination can be depicted as underlying the rationale of the ENP.

The EU pursues a kind of imperialism (Hettne and Soderbaum, 2005) that seeks to modify, regulate and control the Neighbourhood through a variety of 'soft' tools such as convergence with the Union's values and norms across different fields. In the light of these calls for homogenisation, standardisation and the transformation of the Neighbourhood into manageable and predictable units that mirror the EU systems of values and norms, the repertoire of integration is problematic when it hides the desire to control, modify and regulate. It lacks mutual recognition and acknowledgment of 'others' and it goes against the declared values of partnership and principles of differentiation. Instead of the networked borders discussed above, the EU's re-bordering strategy has parallels with an imperial model or a 'civilising mission' (Böröcz and Sarkar, 2005) where borders are about control, domination and homogenisation. The repertoire of integration needs, therefore, to be disentangled from the insecurity, suspicion and mistrust which to a large extent currently inform the discourse of border transcendence.

2.5. **The Discourse of Commonalities**
In the rhetoric, at least, neighbours are part of networked or re-bordering processes - negotiated and mutually defined by the EU and the ENP countries through Action Plans. The ENP, therefore, seeks to overcome this methodology of 'one model fits all' and to consult with a wider spectrum of actors. The official line adopted by the EU stresses the point of common values to give an impression that Neighbourhood is indeed constructed through the voluntary participations of neighbours under the guidelines of the EU. In this sense, a commitment to common values underpins the repertoire of integration. These debates around common values assume that integration is 'good thing' without looking for more critical evidence of the adequacy of the EU's model in its diverse Neighbourhood. The EU's preoccupation with values can be regarded as the result of the

EU's self-reflection rather than as the result of the EU's concerns with the situation in the Neighbourhood. The ENP emphasises its voluntary character so as to avoid any sense of imposition that would risk generating reluctance or revolt from ENP countries who have already expressed reservations.

Civil society representatives and, to some degree, ENP countries expressed deep reservations about the voluntary character and inclusive aspects of the ENP. In their view, the EU downplays the enormous structural differences in economic, cultural and political systems, which may require more inclusive policies and different instruments. The logic derives from the Union's own experiences and the expansionist nature of the European community. In this sense, the ENP can be understood as the Union's attempt to spread its values around the world. This strong emphasis on the common values that the EU shares with its neighbours at times serves to legitimatise the Union's interventions abroad and suggest a form of the Neighbourhood where geographical and cultural differences are fading away. The ENP rationalises a series of security measures designed to protect the European home and to create a sense of belonging, togetherness, trust and unity among the members of the European community. At the same time, the EU seeks to extend this sense of belonging to the Neighbourhood through an integration rationale. Some voices, among them those of civil society representatives and some officials, doubt the existence of common values, or even the need for there to be common values. Others prefer to stick to 'status quo' where borders are clearly confirmed and defined. The ways in which the EU deals with integration, particularly in the field of democracy and human rights, is neither coherent nor consistent and reinforces a hierarchy of friends in the Neighbourhood.

2.6. **The Discourse of Transnational Threats**

Another key theme to emerge from the analysis of the ENP is the perceived need to jointly address new soft security concerns which transcend European borders and can therefore threaten the EU's stability. This discourse of non-territorial threats, reinforcing the idea of Europe being fragile and open to influences from outside (Bigo, 2005) is accompanied by the production of fears and threats that also serve to legitimate new

security-related measures. In this sense, the external environment has a major influence on the transformation of European borders. Borders are moving towards structures which are beyond modern territoriality and where it is difficult to separate the interior from the exterior. This tendency to look beyond the territorial borders of the EU to its Neighbourhood goes against the modernist conceptual backdrop of absolute control over borders. From the EU perspective, re (de)territorialisation of security threats requires a serious re-defining of the principles of sovereignty, such as non-interference in domestic affairs, and the neighbours are expected to take an active part in newly designed 'global' approaches. In other words neighbours are no longer seen as passive objects on the other side of the border. In the name of the struggle against a post-national enemy (Walters, 2004), different state agencies across the EU borders are urged to cooperate under the ENP framework.

The border paradigm that is associated with trans-border and de-territorialised threats (O' Tuathail, 1999) calls into question the role of border controls which are the exclusive responsibility of a single state. Instead of reinforcing territorial border controls, the ENP proposes new solutions based on joint responsibility and on the harmonisation and integration of neighbours into the European space of security. The issue of 'common threats' is the only theme where all EU actors are in agreement. Likewise, ENP countries also engage in a security discourse although their perspective differed somewhat from that of the EU. In their view, the EU's intentions of sharing security, stability and joint responsibility are the ways in which the EU addresses its own interests and priorities without considering the destabilising effects in the Neighbourhood. Once again, the repertoire of integration seems to neglect the unequal distribution of power, structural differences and the effects of geopolitics in the Neighbourhood. Another point of tension highlighted is that the EU's preoccupation with security undermines the original goals of the ENP, i.e. to democratise and integrate neighbours. Nevertheless, despite increasing transnational and cross-border networking, the ultimate frame of reference for current politics in the Neighbourhood is the state which, however, becomes willingly or unwillingly interconnected increasingly with other states and with non-state actors. Another problem related to the re- (de)territorialised approaches to borders discussed

above is their lack of attention to the geopolitics of inter-state relations, unresolved territorial disputes and the actual threats to territorial integrity that many ENP countries are facing.[14] The discourse of transnational threats is introducing the common understanding of threats or security concerns which needs to be questioned.

All above suggests there are grounds to look at the integration rationale of the ENP with pessimism. We saw that distrust, the EU's self-interests (or those of its member states), geopolitics and a perception of power asymmetries undermine the networking function of borders and can be seen as damaging to effective cross-border governance and border transcendence. The repertoire of integration downplays state borders in some ways that undermine their privileged status. It is too early yet to evaluate the results of the shifting and re-configuring of regulatory power in different functional fields. For the time being, integration and cross-border practices are still heavily directed towards state-centric territorial frameworks and emerging cross-border networks are mainly of an inter-governmental character bounded within their territorial units. In terms of politics, the economy, the mobility of people and goods and the promotion of values, the agenda for the ENP integration project remains challenging. Taken together, the huge structural differences, the different understandings of cultural and political norms, the different degrees of European aspiration and the varying capacities of ENP countries all serve to undermine the extent of integration. If the network thesis accurately captures the transformation of borders in the European Neighbourhood, we should find such borders to be more about integration and inclusiveness than separation and neglect. The repertoire of integration requires serious re-thinking among the EU actors across a wide range of fields. Despite these difficulties, it can be argued that the ENP has to a certain extent transformed the modernist understanding of a singular state sovereignty and rigidly defined territorial units in which each state controls and regulates its affairs within its own territory. In this respect, the ENP seeks to move beyond the traditional outside-inside dichotomy and the frontiers between the internal and external are becoming increasingly interwoven—notwithstanding the above mentioned difficulties. Despite all

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[14] Action Plans provide a list of 'threats' which need to be jointly addressed.

the attempts of the ENP to promote a more open and integrative approach in the Neighbourhood, integration remains a contested concept.

3. The Repertoire of Differences

Modest and regulated interactions take place in the Neighbourhood where differences are acknowledged and respected, enabling both sides to interact within a framework of clearly defined and confirmed borders, without any claims to changing these existing dividing lines. The repertoire of differences is more about confirming borders and less about changing 'neighbours' perceptions and their value systems. The idea of differences has both positive and negative connotations depending on whose discourse it is or in what context it is addressed. There is no systematic approach or consensus among the EU actors on how to differentiate between the neighbours.

The point of departure here is that differentiation is a key principle of the ENP, aiming to match local needs, aspirations and the progress of individual ENP countries while also recognising historical, cultural and socio-economic differences. Borders require symbolic, socio-cultural and physical dividing lines with the 'Other' (neighbours) (Newman, 2006). Despite the efforts of the EU to overcome differences and to speak with one voice to the neighbours, the ENP points to the limitations of this state-like paradigm of borders. In this respect, it might be more appropriate to understand the differentiated approach of the ENP as a mosaic of differences, with multiple overlapping and connecting diversities. On the whole, the repertoire of differences draws attention to the necessity to differentiate among the neighbours, and to the need to maintain the boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' which brings about many challenges:

Table 2. Six Types of the EU Discourses under the Repertoire of Differentiation

Discourse of Defining Borders of the EU	Discourse of European/Non-European Neighbours	Discourse of Foreign/Alien	Discourse of Differentiation	Discourse of Buffering and Border Controls	Discourse of Geopolitics
The EU Membership Geography	Cultural and religious difference Poor governance Poverty	Uncontrolled mobility of people Spread of 'insecurities' Religious difference	Action Plans; privileged partners; inter-cultural dialogue	FRONTEX; Readmission agreements; Visa regimes EUBAM	Energy security; Frozen conflicts

3.1. Discourse of Defining Borders of the EU

Although the ENP documents avoid directly addressing the issue of defining the Union's borders, it appeared strongly as an issue among the EU actors. This gap reflects the sensitivity of this topic which tends to be suppressed in the official documents and is more likely to be revealed in 'spoken' discourses. From the point of view of those who are 'temporarily' excluded from the EU, the ENP is seen as a way to set the final outer borders of the Union, a topic which remains highly disputed and controversial among European actors. The ENP is therefore seen by Moldovan and Ukrainian actors[15] from both governmental and non-governmental sectors as a means of exclusion and denial of accession to the EU, as an 'artificial' policy imposed by the EU in order to postpone the question of the final borders of the EU.

The perception of a territorially fixed political community with clear boundaries of 'us' and 'them' is still embodied in defining European borders but it has, however, become more difficult to sustain. The image of a clearly demarcated European community is in contrast to a vision of the Neighbourhood as an overlapping space of multiple identities

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[15] Author's interviews with the Moldova and Ukrainian diplomats and CSOs.

where borders are not only geographically defined but also acquire political, economic and cultural criteria. There is a widespread view that defining Europe or the European continent is no longer merely a geographical exercise. Furthermore, bordering becomes intertwined with the cultural heritage of Europe, the Enlightenment and with the economic and political notions of well-governed countries. Sometimes differences are associated with a specific territory, as it is the case with Russia, while at other times, the universal application of values beyond the Union's borders is stressed out. All of this suggests that the criteria are not settled or defined; the neighbours are therefore left with uncertainties about their future position vis-à-vis the EU. At first sight, this uncertainty of European borders and the hesitancy over the fixing of the EU borders could be linked to notions of an open, limitless or unbounded Europe that is characteristic of the first repertoire of integration. In this sense, the ENP demonstrates the ongoing struggle over the territorial limits of Europe/EU and the modern ordering of space of clearly demarcated territories.

3.2. Discourse of European/Non-European Neighbours

The visions of bordering outlined above lead to another point in the repertoire of difference, one that is based on the notion of Europeanness. This criterion of differentiation between European and non-European neighbours has been less visible and more difficult to grasp in the official discourse but it undoubtedly brings an important ingredient to the analysis of the Neighbourhood space and to the theorisation of borders. Depending on the context and on the audience, different forms of distinction between European and non-European are re-produced and re-confirmed. The very definition of what is European and non-European, however, remains contested. Cultural concepts of Europe as a site of Christendom based on civilisation, cultural and religious differences have been emphasised, for instance, in relation to Turkey[16]; whereas the Commission mainly refers to the political and economic character of ENP countries in measuring the degree of Europeanness and in distinguishing between the neighbours. Consequently some neighbours are classified as more pro-European minded (e.g. Morocco) regardless

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[16] This point has been mainly made by MEPs' from the Group of the European People's Party in the European Parliament.

of their geographic location outside Europe or differences in religion; others have a less European identity (e.g. Russia) because of their reluctance to adopt European norms and values and because of ideological differences and conflicting geopolitical interests. The general trend of the EU discourse is to rationalise differences in terms of political and economic governance rather than through cultural norms associated with cultural heritage or religion. The EU has developed all kinds of tools such as inter-cultural exchanges, education programmes or people-to-people activities to address exclusion in more humane ways, to eliminate their negative consequences and to manage the existing differences beyond its boundaries but also within the EU. The ENP provides a platform of cooperation but within clearly defined borders. In other words, the borders are confirmed and preserved via inter-governmental agreements under the close supervision and guidelines of the EU. In that context, the ENP seeks to manage the tensions between cultural differences and the universality of values by introducing a new normative vocabulary such as inter-cultural dialogue, cultural tolerance or, more broadly, the recognition of specificities.

The problem is once again the unequal distribution of power and the lack of trust and understanding of the other side of the border which seriously undermines the efforts of some actors (e.g. CSOs) to establish inter-cultural dialogue based on mutual recognition of values and norms. In other words, it is Western ownership of universal values that goes against the intentions to recognise cultural, socio-economic and political particularities elsewhere or, as Paasi (2001) notes, the dominating hegemonic identity tends to suppress other voices. In effect, the neighbours are evaluated, differentiated and measured from the point of view of Western civilisation that this is in contradiction to the proclaimed values of tolerance and respect for diversity.

3.3. Discourse of Foreign and Alien

This leads me to another point of the repertoire of difference, one that concerns negative discourses of threats, fear, and the unknown – the foreign or alien. This negative conception resonates with a state centric understanding of borders - what lies beyond the borders is considered as dangerous and as an existential threat to the European

community. Neighbours are presented as potential threats and the term neighbour itself connotes inferiority. In other words, in contrast to EU rationality, order and cosmos, the Neighbourhood is presented as a potential site of disorder, chaos and contamination. Differences associated with these negative connotations and consequently put forward the idea of the core-periphery which relies on the distancing of the core from its periphery.

In the light of this, the ENP distinguishes between the core, which signifies stability, prosperity, modernity and development, and the peripheries associated with 'barbarians,' 'chaos' and instability in the Neighbourhood which needs to be sealed off from the EU. Likewise, the core-periphery framework is defined by structural asymmetries of economy and culture but also by a more subtle civilisation discourse. In other words, cultural or political factors continue to shape and re-define the (re) location of peripheries. In this sense, peripheries are not just static units and passive objects of the Union's policies but they also influence the agenda and priorities of the core. Peripheries are more influential in some areas, such as in the field of security where the core (the EU) is seen to be more vulnerable to the spill-over of risks associated with the mobility of undesirable people and goods or other unwanted differences. The mobility of people illustrates how the re-bordering of Europe is still characterised by exclusion and separation between the 'desirable' and those perceived as threats or simply not welcomed. For instance, in its 'fight' against illegal migration the EU moves closer to the peripheries in order to address the risks and threats associated with mobility and at the same time to benefit from cheap labour and economic markets. At other times, the centre (EU) pulls away from the periphery as is the case with frozen conflicts. Moreover, a gradual incorporation of ENP countries into the EU is changing the proximity of peripheries to the core. The EU is interested in maintaining differences in order to distinguish itself from its peripheries. In other words, differences are accepted when they don't present a threat to the European system of values and when they are contained in the Neighbourhood.

3.4. Discourse of Differentiation

This analysis also suggests that the ENP introduces a system of classification or differentiation among the neighbours which leads to new hierarchies rather than to the

fluidity and fuzziness of borders suggested by some scholars (e.g. Christiansen at al, 2000). This logic of differentiation can be found in the ENP and its attempt to differentiate among neighbours on the basis of their strategic importance, their degree of European aspirations, their reluctance or willingness to cooperate, or the perception of them as being either trustful or distrustful. While some neighbours (e.g. Moldova and Ukraine) are under close scrutiny by the EU in terms of their performance, others (e.g. Russia) are allowed to maintain their cultural differences, or more precisely their political differences, unless they threaten European order and stability.

The recognition of different cultural, economic and political systems that are incompatible with Europe/the EU is mainly driven by the strategic interests of the EU (and its member states) and the security rationale of the ENP rather than by the declared values of mutual respect, tolerance and diversity. This preferential treatment of some neighbours may lead to more competition rather than to a friendly and cooperative Neighbourhood. Not all neighbours are obliged to comply with the Union's norms except when it suits the EU interests and when it matches its capacities to pursue its democratisation agenda in the Neighbourhood. In rhetoric, the ENP offers the same opportunities to all neighbours but in practice a differentiated approach is strictly applied, particularly in the fields of mobility of people and free trade agreements when only a few of them can profit from these arrangements. Universal values are used as tools to achieve the self interests of the EU rather than to deliver on the fundamental principles of solidarity and tolerance beyond the territorial boundaries of a political community. We can observe tensions between the 'common cultural inheritance' and an inter-cultural dialogue approach where the differences are recognised and reconfirmed.

3.5. Discourse of Buffering and Border Controls

Despite the recent efforts to frame difference in positive terms, 'neighbouring' is increasingly understood as a security imperative. The ENP is introducing new ways to map and to control societies beyond its territorial boundaries in order to capture and manage differences. At times, despite their re (de) territorialised character, borders still

have an importance as physical barriers. They represent the power of the state; they are a key apparatus of the state.

In the field of mobility in particular, the EU's desire for total control of its territory reflects an attempt to behave like a state-entity where borders take on the state function of controlling and regulating the movement of people and goods from outside. In other words, mapping or regulating mobility has traditionally been an important element of state power and continues to be so. The efficiency of border controls is therefore an expression and a measure of the power of the state which points to another empirical and theoretical ambiguity. First, building strong and effective state institutions under EU supervision, regardless of the weak performance in the field of democracy of ENP countries, goes against the normative dimension of the ENP of promoting democracy and human rights. Second, the neighbours are measured and evaluated by their capacity to control state borders which at the same time should establish mutual confidence and trust. Unlike the case of border integration, the erosion of territoriality and national sovereignty is defined as a weakness or failure of the state's capacity to manage flows of people and goods into its territory especially when security is at stake. Borders still display the characteristics of control, exclusion, surveillance and increasing regulation. In this respect, the ENP is oriented towards the physical boundary of the EU. This is not to say, however, that border controls are static and fixed units.

Efforts have been made to secure and fortify not only the immediate external borders but also to create secure border zones in the Neighbourhood. The fears of instabilities, insecurities and the intrusion of migrants into the Union's space of stability result in a concept of buffer zones and a hardening of external borders but without necessarily replicating national border systems. In this sense, the paradigm of security does not reinforce Fortress Europe, but rather buffer zones that allow the EU to reconcile its interests and at the same time to shift the risks further from the European continent. The EU is mainly engaged in dialogue on security issues with state elites without any intention of having direct control of vast territories outside its borders. This border paradigm suggests another conceptualisation of border controls which resembles an

empire-like bordering exercise where control is achieved through the compliance of elites with the prescribed norms. In this context, the ENP is not about territorial defence of the EU territory but rather about establishing new forms of de-territorialised border controls that can be managed and regulated from different locations (Walters, 2006). For instance, the EU encourages stopping unwanted migration and other security risks before they enter the EU by way of readmission agreements and the work of FRONTEX. But it is also a question of power relations around the issues of migration, democracy and human rights, and socio-economic deprivation that allows the EU to exert its power in the Neighbourhood albeit in limited ways. In this situation an asymmetrical relation remains a permanent source of tensions. Borders can be interpreted as a means of bringing stability by separating the EU of order and prosperity from the conflict and insecurity driven Neighbourhood.

3.6. Discourse of Geopolitics

The ENP clearly reminds us of the importance of geopolitical relations when we are analysing the transformation of European borders. For instance, the discourse of frozen conflicts and the geopolitics of energy demonstrate that territoriality, state borders and sovereignty still shape the re-bordering processes in the Neighbourhood despite the EU's efforts to suppress this state-centric paradigm of borders and to widen the definition of 'security'. The security repertoire reinforces internationalising or inter-state processes where states are the main protagonists of the arrangements. For instance, migration and energy – despite their transnational character - are amongst the key issues regulated within bilateral or inter-governmental frameworks. While promoting its own integration agenda, the EU is forced to take into consideration the national interests and bordering practices of two other major actors; Russia in the East Neighbourhood and the US in North Africa. Both play decisive roles in defining the nature of borders in Wider Neighbourhood although Russia is perceived by the EU as an 'obstructive' force.

A major factor affecting the ENP policy towards Eastern neighbours is the relationship with Russia which considers this area to fall within its sphere of influence. If Russia continues to obstruct the EU's efforts to include the neighbouring countries in its orbit of

control, it is likely that the Neighbourhood will become a site of conflict, tensions and disorder instead of an integrated borderland of trust and unity. In this context, the intense geopolitics that is characteristic of the Neighbourhood emphasises the maintenance of the status quo. In other words, the state-centric discourse of geopolitics are dominated by themes such as national sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs or the strategic interests of member states when energy security and unresolved conflicts are involved. The most obvious example is the clash of the EU with Russia over the latter's interpretation of values (e.g. democracy). In this case, however, the different interpretation of European values by Russia are often recognised, albeit not by all actors in Brussels. The civil society sector, the Parliament and new member states do not share these pragmatic views of maintaining 'status quo' scenario in the Neighbourhood.

The repertoire of differences suggests another clear-cut divide between outsiders and insiders, members or semi-members, good or reluctant neighbours. We can observe a process of re-thinking in new directions in the search for new ways of confirming borders (e.g. inter-cultural dialogue) and for a new vocabulary of difference rather than one of diminishing borders. The criterion of difference serves different purposes. It is perhaps the uneven effect of globalisation that reinforces a need to resist and to protect the EU's wealth. While the ENP was originally designed to connect rather than divide, a close scrutiny reveals however that some aspects of 'Fortress Europe' still exist. For instance, the economic boundary remains closed to sensitive goods while only selected categories of people (e.g. visa facilitation agreements) can access the EU. It is the preservation of European markets and the well-being of Europeans that dominate EU concerns rather than the opposite trend of disappearing borders. The EU is being differentiated from the neighbours by the discourses and practices referred to above which, at the same time, are strengthening its image as a guarantor of internal security. As with the repertoire of integration, differences are at times confirmed or played down mainly for strategic purposes (e.g. Russia). There is no coherent approach among EU actors on how and when to address economic, political or cultural differences. The bordering of Europe is characterised by moments of closure when the difference is perceived as a threat or risk to the Union's stability.

4. Conclusions

This paper has illustrated the interplay of highly contradictory and ambiguous bordering scenarios that are emerged in the discourses in Brussels. With the ENP, the EU seeks to reconcile the tendencies of homogenisation (border transcending) and of differentiation (border confirming) but, in doing so, it risks creating political destabilisation rather than stability, as well as the deepening of social and economic inequalities and the further escalation of conflicts in the Neighbourhood. There is an incoherence and tension between the opening (softening) versus the closing (hardening) of borders, exclusion/inclusion and acceptance/neglect.

What is emerging in the ENP is a highly pre-defined dialogue where any consensus is made possible by the power asymmetries inherent in the relations between the EU and its neighbours. These asymmetries are not only structural in nature but reflect the extent to which identity politics influence the debates on the EU's neighbours. In many ways, the ENP is one-sided attempt on the part of the EU to exert its power and to control the Neighbourhood. While lacking the incentives and a political will, facing the legacy of European colonialism, the internal fragmentation and geopolitics of 'big power', the EU risks destabilisation as the recent events in Eastern part of Neighbourhood shows. Russia's self-exclusion from the ENP and its 'big power' strategic influence underlines the difficulty of developing a uniform borders policy.

The re-bordering of Europe is dominated by conflict and the dominance of the interests of some actors over others rather than by consensus. At the same time, borders are continuously being transcended by those who are invited in or by those who manage to find ways to cross European boundaries. The balance of cross-border mobility and security becomes pressing within the framework of the ENP. This clearly suggests that Beck's notion of 'the paradox of frontier mobile Europe' (Beck 2005:131)—that the more frontiers inside the EU are dismantled, the more forcefully they are invoked and

strengthened in relation to its 'others'—is also taking place in the European Neighbourhood.

Given these conflicts, the question remains as to whether the ENP can bring substantive changes in bordering practices. The ENP appears to a great deal more opportunistic, inward-looking and protectionist. It comprises a mishmash of frequently incongruent goals, simultaneously seeking closer cooperation with non-EU states while emphasising greater security for the Union. Economic and security agendas are primarily focused on a European defined notion of free trade and on controlling illegal migration while marginalising its original objectives of socio-economic development, human rights and democracy. The EU policies should be more sensitive to the specific practical problems of border regions. If the EU is indeed true to its humanistic values and ideals, the future of the ENP will depend on a capacity to tolerate cultural difference and to promote a model based social opportunities, opening its labour market, freedom of cultural expression and ability to participate more directly in policies that affect the Neighbourhood.

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