

Is there a common institutional discourse on the ENP: rhetoric during debates and during Question Time at the European Parliament on the Eastern neighbours

Beatrix Futák-Campbell
PhD Candidate (ESRC) University of St Andrews

Paper presented at the EUSA conference Montreal, May 17-20, 2007
(this is a working paper please do not cite)

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the different institutional discursive formulations on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) vis-à-vis the Eastern neighbours of the EU. The data was collected from AFET Committee debates and Question Times Debates at the European Parliament on the ENP when representatives from the Council and the Commission were also present. The identified discursive strategies were constructions of the ENP as a vocation for Europe (i); as defining the borders of Europe (ii); and as classifying 'Europeaness'; there was however another competing discursive strategy which is in opposition to these above mentioned by focusing on the energy resources and supplies available through those states participating in the ENP. These findings demonstrate the 'practices' of EU practitioners on the ENP and how these constructions implicate the wider notions of a fragmented and inconstant identity of the EU as a whole.

Despite the Common Security and Foreign Policy's (CSFP) and the European Security and Defence Policy's (ESDP) 'late' arrival into the Treaty¹, the possibility of European Political Cooperation (EPC) in the area of foreign policy has been explored since the 1950's. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) however is a relatively new policy that was launched in March 2003 which invites states that are situated adjacent to the new EU borders to cooperate in a strategic partnership with the EU. The principal of engaging with neighbouring countries is not new, as the setting up of the Barcelona Process and the Northern Dimension in 1995 and 1997 respectively have demonstrated. The necessity for such policy vis-à-vis the Eastern neighbours however became more evident in the aftermath of the Cold War resulting in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs).

Furthermore, as a result of the 2004 and 2007 Enlargement, Russia's economic and political recover after President Putin's election to power in 1999, the colour or flower revolutions in Georgia in 2003, in Ukraine in 2004 and respectively in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, as well as other soft security threats for instance: nuclear safety, increasing energy prices, insecurity of energy supplies, organised crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and the spread of disease i.e. HIV/AIDS all reasons as to why the EU's Eastern borders ought to be seriously considered when discussing EU security policy, external border policy and the EU's role in the region. Dannreuther (2004) further suggests that there is something more 'fundamental and existential' within this policy area reverting to the 'vocation' of Europe to ensure peace between battling European nation states. This acts as the ethical dimension to EU policy vis-à-vis neighbouring states.

Before the recent enlargements Christiansen et al (2001) argued that owing to the pre-accession strategy of the Union with regard to Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC), despite its clear definition on membership, the region became a "the targets of significant 'policy-export'" (*ibid*:389). This effectively lead to the lack of bindery division of inside/outside which is traditionally expected of borders; thus creating 'fuzzy' borders. Furthermore they claimed that the EU lacked coherent policy concerning its 'near abroad' which they identified as the root of the confusion on the management of different territories under the same policy umbrella. The questions at hand here are whether since CEEC enlargement and since the establishment of the Neighbourhood policy have the EU borders become less 'fuzzy'; and whether there is a common institutional discourse on the ENP?

Method

Data collection

The below extracts were obtained from AFET debates and parliamentarians questions to the Council and the Commission regarding the European Neighbourhood Policy *vis-à-vis* Eastern neighbours and when appropriate the enlargement strategy in the Eastern European region. The collected data was from different parliamentary session between the period of January 2005 and December 2006 pursuant to Rule 109 of Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament. Committee debates and Question Time² at the Parliament are important political tools for the EP as it enables MEPs to obtain information and policy specific answers from the Commission and the Council in order to carry out and further political democracy at the EU level. These extracts are also important examples of the EP's powers to use scrutiny towards the Council and the Commission.³

¹ In 1992 Treaty of European Union.

² Copyright notice on text originating from the EP's web site: "Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged, save where otherwise stated. Where prior permission must be obtained for the reproduction or use of textual and multimedia information (sound, images, software, etc.), such permission shall cancel the above-mentioned general permission and shall clearly indicate any restrictions on use." (EP Legal Notice 2006). This legal statement was considered when making the ethical decision on using extracts from parliamentary debates.

³ There is also evidence for the EP's budgetary control over Neighbourhood policy initiatives.

I selected out of all the available parliamentary debates all pages of talk concerned with the category of the ENP; the enlargement when discussed in relation with the Neighbourhood policy; the Eastern European region and with the ways the ENP was (co)(de)constructed by parliamentarians, Commission and Council officials during Question Time at the EP.

The use of post-structuralist discourse analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) is widely used in research on foreign policy in order to validate certain constructivist approaches (Larsen 1997; 1999; 2004; Weldes, 1996, 1999; Doty, 1996; Fierke 1998 and more recently Hansen 2006; also Campbell 1998 whose focuses is foreign policy in general or US foreign policy). However, no DA study has yet been conducted on the ENP that applied a discourse analytical method that focuses not only on the social, historical and political influence on discourse but also on the features of language (Wetherell 1996; 1998).

The empirical part of this paper is broadly framed within a discourse analytical approach informed by the work of Margaret Wetherell (1996; 1998). She argues for a more integrated approach based on Schegloff's take on conversation analysis and also incorporates some deconstructivist perspectives. In short, Wetherell advocates combining bottom-up (conversation analytical) and top-down (discourse analytical) analytical frames. Wetherell (1998) also states that it is imperative to map the argumentative threads or strategies and to flesh out sense making in various depths⁴. As a consequence, she argues that the linguistic resources available to the participants are directly encountered and drawn from the past historical circumstances and are far from random. Furthermore she emphasises the highly occasioned and indexical qualities of the subject positions (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Potter, 1996) and the importance of accountability.

“We can ... conceive the social agent as constituted by an ensemble of ‘subject positions’ that can never be totally fixed in a closed system of differences, constructed by a diversity of discourses, among which there is no necessary relation, but a constant movement of over-determination and displacement. The ‘identity’ of such a multiple and contradictory subject is therefore always contingent and precarious, temporarily fixed at the intersection of those subject positions and dependent on specific forms of identification. It is therefore impossible to speak of the social agent as if we were dealing with a unified, homogeneous identity. We have rather to approach it as a plurality, dependent on the various subject positions through which it is constituted within various discursive formations.

(Mouffe, 1992:372)

In particular, Wetherell's (1996; 1998) stance of dual focus on discourse analysis is more appropriate for this paper, as I am not interested solely in the sequential features of language which conversation analysis advocates but also the social, historical and political influences in discourse. Therefore, by analysing linguistic devices used by European parliamentarians along with Council and Commission officials regarding the Neighbourhood policy and by demonstrating the function, action and variability of their descriptions this paper will offer a better understanding of how these EU practitioners practices construct the ENP; and ultimately how that effects European identity and the EU's purpose in its Eastern 'near abroad'.

Linguistic resources

The effects from various accounts of the European Neighbourhood Policy is analysed in the latter part of this paper, for the linguistic resources available to participants to negotiate probable ascriptions of identities and inferences and the ways in which these resources were deployed moment-

⁴ “Why this utterance here?” (Wetherell, 1998)

to-moment to accomplish interactions. The list below contains samples of linguistic resources that are commonly used during interaction. They are used as discursive products that are talked up and negotiated in the context of discussion for explicit interactional functions. In this context, factuality and authenticity are understood as discursive accomplishments following the poststructuralist practice.

Descriptions and texts are constructed and displayed as factual by an assortment of shared discursive resources, such as stake inoculation, category entitlements, category membership, ontological gerrymandering (Potter, 1996; Potter and Edwards, 1990), vivid description, narrative, extreme case formulations, active voicing, consensus and corroboration and three part lists which can be situated against actual or possible different versions and explanations (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Jefferson, 1990; Pomerantz, 1986). For example employing a list format (Jefferson 1990) is a frequently used tool to construct descriptions to be complete or representative. Generally lists have three parts and they are complete only at the provision of the third part. Often one can be found to add etcetera or a suitable third element to complete a list (Jefferson, 1990; Potter, 1996). Subsequently when Charles Tannock during the summary of his report to the EP on the Neighbourhood Policy refers to:

“The Commission has already presented a strategy paper and country reports on a series of ENP countries, followed by action plans. A regular reviewing process will monitor the implication of those, for which I seek more parliamentary involvement. Seven actions plans have been adopted with Israel, Jordan, Tunisia the Palestinian Authority, Ukraine and Moldova. Five more are in preparation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia and Lebanon.”

Effectively what MEP Tannock is doing in this extract through listing all the actions that has already been taken and will shortly be taken is building up credibility for the ENP and for the actions taken under the auspice of the ENP. He demonstrates the importance of such policy. At the same time he also mentions the Parliament’s gatekeeper role of the ENP through seeking further involvement for the EP.

The other devices will be explained within the following parts of this paper along with the analysis.

A further analytical point is the way that speakers orientate towards aspects of accountability during the making of the accounts. Edwards and Potter (1992) identify accountability as an effect of constructing discursive resources:

“When people describe events, they attend to accountability. That is to say, they attend to events in terms of what is normal, expectable, and proper; they attend to their own responsibility in events and in the reporting of events.”

(ibid.:7)

The analytical task of this paper is to explore the way accountability is a discursive accomplishment and how it is defended in specific contexts. Thus when participants construct versions of events, people, places and so forth, they attend to the responsibility and accountability for the content of their accounts. The focus is on the way different kinds of discursive activities pose different sorts of accountability issues concerning claims to factuality and authenticity. It is a feature of such accounting to construct an ‘out there’ world in contrast to a subjective reflection of their own desires and agendas. Therefore participants adopt a variety of linguistic resources, as outlined before, to constitute their accounts as objective and factual. If the account is motivated by self-interest then the veracity of the account will be undermined. This is very clear within the earlier extract from Charles Tannock’s statement to the Parliament. His main concern is to build up credibility for the Neighbourhood policy even before being concerned with the Parliament’s involvement or its powers in this policy area. Through working up the importance of the ENP and as a result of the policy’s legal basis within the Treaty (Art. 181a; 300 and 310) the Parliament could gain further influence in EU

external affair; ultimately fostering a more powerful role for the EP in foreign affairs. His assertion: “I seek more parliamentary involvement” explicitly reveals this intention.

The two main aims here are to reveal: (1) common sense notions or construction of the ENP and the practice or (2) process in which they were strategically employed as arguments - accountability. This identification of common sense notions or categories is other known by its discourse analytical term as ‘interpretative repertoires’ or discursive strategies. Interpretative repertoires are also known as taken-for-granted grammatical constructions of particular narrative forms, metaphors, tropes and common places which are contingently constructed when discussing specific actions and events (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Billig 1987; Potter and Wetherell 1987). This analytical approach is often criticised for being first and foremost syntax driven. I however will focus here on the social relationships and the individual usage of the discourse or repertoires as argued for and tested by Macnaghten (1993:53) and as advocated also by Wetherell (1998). This emphasis on the social function of discourse is deemed more appropriate for the present analysis as the main aim of this paper is to identify the selectively used repertoires or discursive strategies that EU practitioners use to construct the Neighbourhood policy.

It is nonetheless important to stress that despite identifying these interpretative repertoires or common discursive strategies of the ENP, they are by no means intend to be a complete representation of my conclusions for this part of the data set. It is also in the intention of this paper to illustrate the use and the value of this particular DA method for foreign policy analysis in general.

The analytical phases were carried out periodically and revisited time and time again, contrasting and comparing the data by considering strategies of similarity and variance and the functions that they served. The accounts and versions of the European Neighbourhood Policy revealed three main and one competing discursive strategies in the ‘making’, the production and sustainability of multiple descriptions and argumentative strategies attributed to this policy, which I will explore further in the subsequently section.

Institutional rhetoric

In terms of argumentative strategies over the Neighbourhood policy, the broad options open to parliamentarians, Commission and Council representatives were interpreted as follows. For the parliamentarians, there are two main strategies made available: they could either argue that for a successful Neighbourhood policy, thus for the promotion of the European project to countries on the EU’s Eastern borders which would make further enlargement inevitable. This is very much the case for Ukraine who expressed great interest in being considered for candidacy. Or in contrast MEPs could argue that there are limits to where Europe’s borders lie and what could be classified as a European country in order to gain accession to the EU. This discursive construction, however, does not refer to Eastern European countries as it will be come apparent thorough my analysis; rather it most frequently applies to Turkey.

For the Council and for the Commission representatives the options were limited to one clear strategy. That is, the ENP is presented as an alternative to EU membership.

I. Constructing the ENP as a vocation for Europe

The first discursive strategy I identified in the text is and named ‘the ENP as the vocation for Europe’. This vocational inclination of the EU has already been identified in the introduction. Here it was located through a variety of discursive constructions including labels such as: promoting peace,

stability, security, community of values, laws, democracy, human rights, prosperity; and the contrasts between ENP vs enlargement and the ENP vs absorption capacity or ‘assimilation capacity’.

In terms of the strategy, most arguments focused on whether the ENP was to promote European values and make it possible for bordering countries, here mainly Ukraine⁵ to join the EU; or whether the ENP has a much more limited task which focuses on stability and peace in Europe.

The extract below demonstrates how parliamentarians use the former construct to argue that it is vocational for the EU to encourage further enlargement in Europe:

Extract I:1 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Józef Pinior (PSE) – (PL) (...) ⁶ I would like to highlight the particular responsibility the European Union has for creating a community of countries, nations and citizens on the European continent that is based on peace, liberal democracy, human rights, market economy and the rule of law.

(...) Absorption capacity is currently complicated by the impasse in the ratification process of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and by the obstacles on the path to the deeper political and strategic integration of the 25 Member States of the European Union. At the same time, over the next few years, the institutions of the European Union have to implement enlargement strategies that are based on strictly defined terms that take into account the European Union’s obligations towards Turkey, Croatia and all the Western Balkan states. The European Union should also elaborate a long-term European perspective through the European Neighbourhood Policy in relation to Eastern European countries, and Ukraine in particular.

The above extract is understood as using a discursive category ‘ENP as a vocation for Europe’ since it draws on the idea that it is the “responsibility of the EU” to create a “European continent that is based on peace, liberal democracy, human rights, market economy and the rule of law”. The MEP refers to the concept of the absorption capacity in connection with recent political difficulties experienced by the EU; however at the same time, he also implies continuity and normality of the enlargement process. What is more MEP Pinior brings “Eastern European countries, and Ukraine in particular” under the same umbrella as Turkey and Croatia which are candidate countries and the Western Balkan region where states have a different relation to the EU than those in the Eastern Europe region. By creating this analogue he almost takes it for granted, although within the long-term European prospective, that Eastern European countries, especially Ukraine will be part of the EU.

In order to make his reasoning more credible the MEP uses a list format (Jefferson 1990) a device that is frequently used to construct descriptions to be complete or representative. Generally lists have three parts and they are complete only at the provision of the third part (Jefferson, 1990; Potter, 1996). On this occasion the speaker employs this list device more than once, and with lists containing far more than three parts which further adds rhetorical strength to the his account.

To reinforce the above point during the same debate another MEP expressed the following:

⁵ They also mentioned Balkan states and Turkey, countries which are not the focus of this dissertation but reveal in itself an interesting comparison which will be addressed later in the analysis.

⁶ The sign (...) means that I have omitted parts of the text in order to focus on the sections of most interest to the debate.

Extract I:2 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Inese Vaidere (UEN). – (LV) (...) the enlargement of the European Union to date has without a doubt been a successful formula, since it has fostered reforms in many states by extending the area of peace, stability and the rule of law in Europe.

Further enlargement of the European Union is necessary, but we will have to find new mechanisms and ways which will lead the European Union out of the impasse of its current capacity to absorb new states. Certainly, by defining precise criteria the European Commission must develop this concept of absorption capacity. In addition to the possibility of full membership we also need to offer various forms of multilateral cooperation and partnership with countries which, at least in the short term, will not be able to join the European Union. Here I would like to express my full agreement with what Mr Brok said. This could be a way to draw in Turkey, Ukraine and the Balkans for example, and later on, other countries to the path of reform and European values.

This piece of text is interpreted as using the ‘vocational’ discourse by orienting towards the same constructs as the previous speaker; this was identified as a common pattern during the debate. Furthermore MEP Vaidere also brings Ukraine in to same group as Turkey and the Balkan states and refers to them as well as other unidentified states collectively as potential candidates for EU membership. She makes her claim more compelling by stating that she is in “full agreement with what Mr Brok said”. With this statement she displays the idea of consensus and corroboration (Edwards and Potter 1992), as Mr Brok is a distinguished MEP (elected since 1980) who is also the chairman of the EP’s Foreign Affairs Committee and delivered a report at the beginning of the debate. The notion of using consensus and corroboration is effectively to warrant authority, here to Ms Vaidere’s account of the way full membership could be achieved. Furthermore invoking personally Mr Brok’s would give confidence that her account is along the common line of thinking in the Parliament as Mr Brok in his capacity as chairman would be obliged take up.

The Council and Commission representatives alternatively use this way of account to argue that stability and security is very important for Europe and that the political and economic development of the neighbouring countries are vital to ensure Europe’s security. They however refer to maintaining a “closeness to Europe” as opposed to membership to the EU. This is ultimately the official position on the Neighbourhood policy:

Extract I:3 1 February 2006 Debate on: Common foreign policy perspectives for 2006 – Common foreign and security policy

Javier Solana, High Representative for the common foreign and security policy (ES) – The Committee on Foreign Affairs has seen (...) the extremely difficult situation being faced by Ukraine, a country that is a friend of ours and that is fundamental to the stability and security of Europe. (...) Today, a year later, many of the problems that existed at that time are not as serious, but they are unfortunately still sufficiently serious for us to have to continue working, essentially in order to ensure that that country does not lose its way, that this great country continues to move along the path of economic and political development, security and increasing closeness to Europe that we all want to see.

Even though this account aligns the “closeness to Europe” with security, economic and political development which were previously identified as vocational characteristics of the EU, Mr Solana, while evoking Ukraine in that very context, falls short of associating the country with EU

accession. Closeness is hardly an assurance for any substantial relationship. He accomplishes this by using the discursive device called footing. Footing was identified and developed by Goffman (1981: 128), who highlighted the different participant roles that people/agents have in the way they manage the production or reception of an utterance. Over the course of naturally occurring talk and even in institutional setting a speaker will invariably and consistently change his/her footing. Here Mr Solana first reporting on behalf of the 'Foreign Affairs Committee', than later on he shifts to employ the pronoun 'we' in order to now talk on behalf of all the MEPs in Plenary and the Committee as a collective. By doing this, his neutrality and objectivity is compromised.

Furthermore, he buries this idea amongst other things in relations to Ukraine giving equal relevance to all things he mentioned. This statement is further complicated by Mr Solana referring to Europe rather than the EU. This will become more apparent in the following section, within the discussion on borders, that many parliamentarians argue that Ukraine in particular is European.

The Commissioner for External Relations achieves the same effect by focusing on linking the Neighbourhood policy with the security strategy rather than what we saw earlier from Parliamentarians to the enlargement strategy:

Extract I:4 1 February 2006 Debate on: Common foreign policy perspectives for 2006 – Common foreign and security policy – 2004

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, *Member of the Commission* (...) The neighbourhood policy is an important part of the security strategy, because we really try to export stability by working together with Ukraine, the Southern Caucuses and the Mediterranean countries. Therefore we have high aspirations to make Europe safer; we know we have many challenges ahead, but I do not see another way forward other than trying to enhance all our instruments and work for a common Europe built on common values together with the world.

For accomplishing this upshot the Commissioner uses relentless vagueness as to what she would identify as "many challenges ahead"; or which exact instruments she is referring to when she states: "to enhance all our instruments and work for a common Europe built on common values together with the world"; or other indirect references to a common Europe and common values. In analytical terms this is called hedging or systematic vagueness (Edwards and Potter 1992; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998); since in this instance there is no voiced definition for the challenges, instruments, common Europe or common values that the Commissioner is only making a reference to as the "high aspirations to make Europe safer".

II. Constructing the ENP as defining the borders of Europe

The second discourse located in the texts is titled 'the ENP as defining the borders of Europe'. Building on the former discourse, examples of this construction of the Neighbourhood policy makes references to Article 49 of the Treaty which claimed to define EU borders; on the contrary it also uses metaphors such as: 'the term 'European' country has never been clearly defined', 'no simple formula' and '*L'Europe sans frontières n'existera pas*'.

In terms of strategy, arguments deploying these paradoxical constructions are the following: whether the question of Europe's Eastern border should lie beyond the Eastern border countries cover by the Neighbourhood Policy, or whether these countries are perceived not to be part of Europe. Council representatives' construct Europe's borders to be problematic and they cannot offer a clear official line on this matter. Parliamentarians and the Commission, however, mainly advocate that Europe goes beyond the current borders of the Union. In other words, as in the pervious construct of

the ENP, the MEPs strategy is to support and encourage further Eastern enlargement and for this one occasion they are supported in their quest by the Commission.

With regards to the references made on the current and prospective borders the two extracts below illustrate how the problematisation took place and also an admission from the Council, thus the representative of the member states on the lack of clarity regarding borders:

Extract II:1 25 February 2005 Question no 19 (H-0095/05) Subject: Strategic enlargement of the EU

Council Presidency (...) The term ‘European’ country has never been clearly defined by the EU and would certainly have to take into account geographic but also cultural and historic elements. There is no simple formula and each application for accession would have to be considered on its merits for the European Union as well as for the country concerned. Although the final borders of the EU have not been determined yet, the EU is currently developing other forms of partnership and cooperation than full membership with neighbouring countries such as the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Extract II:2 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Ollie Rehn, Member of the Commission. (...) Concerning the borders of Europe, the Commission works on the basis of Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, which states that any European country that respects and applies the European values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms may apply for membership of the Union. That does not mean that every European country must apply or that the EU must accept every country, but at the same time it means that it is not sensible to close the door forever by drawing a line across the map to define Europe once and for all, which would seriously damage our possibilities of having a beneficial influence and strategic leverage in our immediate neighbourhood.

Distinctions are being made in the above extracts (II:1;II:2) between applicants and potential candidates for full members and those countries participating in the Neighbourhood policy, who have little prospect to aspire for membership. Despite the member of the Council in the first extract spontaneously invokes that there has been no clear definition at the EU level as to what makes a country European. She/he implies three decisive attributes such as geography, culture and history through which a decision on what is European could be reached. There is, however, still no offer of a definition or a further clarification in the extract as to what would count as the borders of Europe over and above the invoked attributes.

In the second extract Commissioner Rehn by referring to Article 49 attempt to rely on the official a definition concerning the borders of Europe. At the same time he implies that it is not desirable to make Europe’s borders definite citing “beneficial influence” and “strategic leverage” as reasons. In short, it is not in the EU’s interest to shut the doors on its ‘immediate’ neighbours.

This indirectness or hedging (in analytical terms) apparent in both extract is a commonly used device when the speaker displays the problematic nature of the question at hand by avoiding to provide a direct answer (Edwards and Potter 1992; Antaki & Widdicombe 1998). In this instance: the lack of a precise definition infers that “each application for accession would have to be considered on its merits” which makes having a definition virtually irrelevant. Furthermore, the Council representative admits that EU borders have not been fully drawn up as yet, consequently the speaker is offering sufficient information regarding the subject matter but simultaneously making it difficult to challenge the answer itself. Further to this point, the speaker here is constructing the ENP as an alternative form of

partnership and cooperation to a full membership. This clearly advocates that for countries participating in the ENP membership is not an option as yet.

The following four extracts illustrate how this discursive formulation was further maintained by the institutions. What is more, is the way in which the Council representative distanced herself from the decision making process on what makes a country European and eligible to join the Union:

Extract II:3 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Ursula Plassnik, *President-in-Office of the Council. (DE)* (...) There will be no Europe without frontiers; *L'Europe sans frontières n'existera pas* – yet Europe was always a political project. That is why neither geographers nor historians nor rulers will be any use to us in the political decisions that we have to take; what will decide the issues will be the common will of those who share in this community of values and laws, namely us and – as is the norm in democracies – the people themselves.

The focus here is on the difficulty in finding a common agreement on where Europe's borders lie. While Ms Plassnik, on behalf of the Council, states that there is no such thing as Europe without frontiers, she also admits that "Europe was always a political project" consequently drawing up the borders will be a "political decision". She constructs Europe's borders as a notion that is up to the people of Europe to decide on, which implies as if it is beyond the EU institution, or outside of the institutions remit. To achieve this effect the speaker utilises what is called in analytical term stake inoculation. This tool is used in order to construct talk as coming from someone whose stake in the talk is counter to what one would expect when making the claim (Potter 1996).

Extract II:4 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Jacek Emil Saryusz-Wolski (PPE-DE). – I welcome this generally positive report by Mr Brok. I welcome its boldness in recognising the fact that the western Balkans should be an integral part of the European Union in the future. I am convinced that we have to respect our commitments; we cannot close the doors to those countries that were offered a membership perspective or to those countries that deserve such a perspective in future in the light of the EU Treaty provisions.

I welcome the report's innovativeness and courage. We could discuss the idea of intermediate steps towards reaching accession provided they were not permanent – intermediate steps, yes through the European Neighbourhood Policy, but not as a substitute for membership. Various considerations should not be used as an alibi for inaction or for closing the doors to countries that will one day merit membership, such as Ukraine. The Union's borders are already defined by the EU Treaty, which provides that 'any European state which respects the principles ...', etc.

Extract II:5 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Ollie Rehn, *Member of the Commission.* (...) Enlargement policy and neighbourhood policy complement each other. Furthermore, the Commission is ready to deepen further and upgrade cooperation with our neighbourhood partners once the main priorities in the current action plans have been properly addressed.

At the same time, we should avoid the pitfalls of an overly theoretical debate on the final borders of Europe. As we now have a consolidated enlargement agenda, a theoretical discussion, for example about whether Ukraine should even join the European Union, would

benefit neither us nor the Ukrainians, now that Ukraine's future path and democratic development is at stake.

Mr Saryusz-Wolski aligns the western Balkans and Treaty provisions regarding the EU borders with Ukraine, one of the states participating in the ENP. By making a reference to the Treaty, he claims that "(t)he Union's borders are already defined" and by quoting Article 49 according to which: "any European state which respects the principles ...", etc." straight after making a reference to Ukraine suggests that there is no doubt in his mind that a country like Ukraine fits this criteria. Using quotations especially from legal text to present the views and impressions of others as corroboration is called active voicing in discourse analysis (Potter 1996). Furthermore the alignment with the western Balkan states is particularly interesting as these countries are not part of the ENP but have SAA with EU just like the CEEC countries before enlargement.

Extract II:5 further demonstrates this alignment between the EU and Ukraine by spontaneously evoking Ukraine as an example for the theoretical debate on the borders of the Europe rather than any other country participating in the ENP. By making Ukraine relevant in his argument further strengthens the importance of Ukraine while debating where the EU border lies.

Finally, the last extract illustrates that some MEPs are equally worried about Europe's borders being stretched too far. Iraq is used as an example here which is in effect an extreme case formulation in analytical terms. It is deployed in order to build up the persuasive value and effectiveness of the speaker's account by focusing on the extreme elements of judgement (Pomerantz, 1986). Here the rhetorical construction of mentioning Iraq and the Indian Ocean are posited to maximise the impact of the question on EU's borders.

Extract II:6 15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

Georgios Karatzaferis (IND/DEM). – *(EL)* the first question we need to debate is, where does Europe end? We no longer know where Europe is: we have reached Diabakir and, if tomorrow the Americans tell us that Iraq needs to join Europe for reasons of equilibrium, shall we reach the Indian Ocean? That is the question. Who decides who will join Europe? (...)

III. Accounting for the ENP as classifying factor for 'Europeanness'

The third and final discourse of the ENP is located in the text titled 'the ENP as classifying 'Europeanness''. It was identified through discursive formulations such as European country, 'more of a European country than', Europeans, Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Central Europeans, common values, eligibility and non-eligibility.

Very little use was made of this construction by the Council or the Commission in relation to the Neighbourhood policy which is important in itself from an analytical point of view. Often it is more important what the speakers leave out from their deliberation than what they include (Wetherell 1998:402) especially if the issues left out are contentious in a policy debate. Indeed neither mentioned nor provided justification as to why one country for instance Turkey, a candidate country is more European than another, with the reoccurring example here being Ukraine. Deployment of this construction was made, nevertheless, by several parliamentarians in their arguments for clarifying what counts a European country:

Extract III:1 18 January 2006 Charles Tannock, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the European neighbourhood policy (2004/2166(INI) (A6-0399/2005)

Bernd Posselt, MEP: (...) Nevertheless, I cannot and shall never accept certain concepts. What do the ancestors of many western Ukrainians have in common with the ancestors of the Commissioner or myself, of Mrs Hybášková or Mr Rouček, of Mr Peterle or of many others in this room? They were citizens of a Central European state called Austria-Hungary. No one has yet been able to give me a rational explanation as to why some of these citizens should suddenly be Western Europeans and others Eastern Europeans, or why, indeed, some of them – as some people thoughtlessly say – should suddenly be Europeans and others Europe's neighbours.

MEP Posselt spontaneously invokes a number of categories such as 'Western Europeans', 'Central Europeans', 'Eastern Europeans', 'Europeans' and 'Europe's neighbours' with each of them having its own cultural, political and historical significance. These categories are presented as contrasting rather than being analogous with each other. He also makes use of a specific linguistic device called footing shift when he states: 'as some people thoughtlessly say'. Footing shifts tend to appear when more contentious factual claims are being made (Potter, 1996). In this instance he speaks on behalf of those 'thoughtless' people who would advocate such categories; but clearly those people would not include him.

Posselt's statement further adds to the controversy that no one has been able to provide a 'rational explanation' as to why some countries adjacent to the EU 'should suddenly be European and others Europe's neighbours' which draws perfect parallel with the same concern identified almost a year earlier by the representative of the Council within Extract II:1.

Lastly, the below extract evokes a comparison between Turkey and Ukraine and the question as to which country is more European thus eligible for EU accession. The social action here displayed by MEP Seppänen is blame. He explicitly holds the report (or indirectly the authors of the report) responsible for ambiguity over EU accession. Furthermore, he implicitly implies that 'Ukraine is a much more European country than Turkey'. Unfortunately the MEP does not engage in further explanation what he means by 'much more European'.

Extract III:2 18 January 2006 Charles Tannock, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the European neighbourhood policy (2004/2166(INI) (A6-0399/2005)

Esko Seppänen (GUE/NGL). – (FI) (...) The report reflects the trend where hope of help and support has to be given to countries not in the Union. That way there is a desire to bind the countries included in the neighbourhood policy, many of which are not neighbours of the EU, to the Union politically. The report's position on which countries may accede to the European Union is not clear. One does not want to tell Ukraine, for example, that it is not eligible or that is eligible, even though Ukraine is a much more European country than Turkey.

IV. Arguments using different constructions of the European Neighbourhood Policy

The previous section looked at three different but commonly occurring constructions of the Neighbourhood policy and some of the arguments which arose within each of these constructions to those previously identified. There were, however, texts which made use of different discourses. These texts offered competing and contradicting constructions to the ones before. The two following extracts will demonstrate that it is not only vocational for Europe to have a closer link with its neighbouring

countries but also in its interest, especially in the light of new energy security and energy supply concerns:

Extract IV:1 18 January 2006 Charles Tannock, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the European neighbourhood policy (2004/2166(INI) (A6-0399/2005)

Charles Tannock , MEP: Several ENP partner countries, such as Azerbaijan and Algeria, are rich in energy resources, as are the producers or transporters of oil and gas. Therefore, energy policy and EU energy security will be a key pillar of the ENP. The recent Russia/Ukraine gas crisis illustrates how energy policy and foreign policy now interface. (...)

The MEP constructs ‘energy policy and EU energy security’ as a ‘a key pillar of the ENP’. He explicitly attributes the Russia/Ukraine crisis to ‘energy policy and foreign policy now interface’ as a perfect example for claiming energy to be ‘a key pillar’. The social action here is performing concern and/or warning of the importance of the energy policy. Mr Tannock achieves this by evoking the term ‘several’ when refereeing to ENP partner countries who have energy resources. ‘Several’ in this case act as an extreme case to display the investment in the argument his building (Pomerantz, 1986). He also further lists (Jefferson 1990) those ENP countries which have interest in the EU member states energy supplies which is used to construct something as normal or standard.

The subsequent extract from Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner further confirms the ‘highest priority’ for energy policy within the ENP.

Extract IV:2 18 January 2006 Charles Tannock, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the European neighbourhood policy (2004/2166(INI) (A6-0399/2005)

Ferrero-Waldner, Commission: (...) Let me also say that we must urgently draw the consequences of this gas dispute and the energy question for our external policy. I intend to give the highest priority to developing an effective foreign energy policy which will aim at the most effective guarantee possible of the security of the EU energy supply. We are not starting from scratch, as many instruments already exist, but they need further exploitation and an energy dialogue with Russia that has already covered much ground and provided us with a good basis to address bilateral aspects is there, but we have to make it really profound and we have to go on. We recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Ukraine on energy and, in addition, we will provide expertise to Ukraine and Moldova. Therefore, there is a multidimensional aspect and we shall address that through institutions such as G8, the International Energy Agency, the OSCE and others. We have the Energy Charter Treaty, which Russia has not yet joined, but we also have the South-East Europe Energy Community Treaty as instruments on which we will build. That means the neighbourhood policy will certainly also have to tackle these questions in the right format. But, again, as I said today in another context, we will also need coherence from the Member States.

By deploying footing with the use of ‘we’ Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner constructs the idea of consensus and potential corroboration with the EP (Hewitt and Stokes 1975). This idea of consensus and corroboration is further invoked by naming other international institutions such as the G8, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the OSCE and ‘others’ to give more credibility and authority to the policy as well to the Commissioner’s account.

Both of the above extracts contesting the previous constructions of the Neighbourhood policy according to which the policies main interest is taking responsibility in the region and to promote peace, stability, security, community of values, laws, democracy, human rights, prosperity etc. It is also

clear that especially for Europe's future energy supplies Eastern Europe (as well as the Southern Caucasus region) is vital.

So what are the implications of the institutional rhetoric on the Neighbourhood policy?

The aim of this paper was to locate common discursive constructions from EU practitioners from the available discourse on the ENP. Here I focused more specifically on countries bordering the EU from the East. The findings suggest that three different constructions have commonly occurred during the examined parliamentary debates. They portrayed the Neighbourhood policy as a vocation of Europe (1) as defining the borders of Europe (2) and finally as classifying 'Europeaness' (3). There were, however, differences between MEPs and other Council and Commission representatives in the way they perceived these constructions. The parliamentarians either argued that it is Europe's vocation to achieve a successful Neighbourhood policy in Eastern Europe which will inevitably lead to the accession of these states to the EU, particularly Ukraine; or in contrast they argued that there are limits to Europe's borders and what could be classified as European by comparing Turkey (which they argue is less European) to Ukraine. For the Council and the Commission, the ENP was merely an alternative to membership. There were also competing constructions of the ENP which demonstrated the EU's interest in neighbouring countries sometimes goes beyond vocational especially in the light of new energy security and energy supply concerns.

These above findings demonstrate that there is some commonality amongst EU practitioners when describing the ENP which I demonstrated throughout the four strategies; however, there are some key points regarding the borders of the EU where MEPs are far more open to challenge the commonly accepted assumptions. It could be argued that the institutional competencies of the EP allow the MEPs to challenge such assumptions and even put forward more controversial views. I would argue however that it makes answering the other question I set out to explore concerning 'fuzzy borders' more difficult. The systematic vagueness and indecision often displayed by Council and Commission representatives especially on the borders of the EU reaffirms Christiansen et al (2001) claim that the lack of bindery division of inside/outside which is traditionally expected of borders creates 'fuzzy' borders. This wavering regarding EU borders ultimately effects European identity and the EU's role in the Eastern region. The apparent uncertainty on who could accede and who could not only consents to further questions on the commonality of EU foreign policy as well as on the fragmented and inconstant identity of the EU as a whole.

References

- Antaki, C and Widdicombe, S (1998) *Identities in Talk*, Sage Publications, London
- Billig, M (1987) *Arguing and thinking: a rethorical approach to social psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Campbell, D (1998) *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press
- Christiansen, T; Jørgensen, K E and Wiener, A (2001) *The Social Construction of Europe*, London, Sage Publication
- Dannreuther, R (2004) *European Union foreign and security policy : towards a neighbourhood strategy*, London, Routledge
- Doty, R L (1996) *Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines* in *International Studies Quarterly* Vol.37 p367-389
- Fierke, K M (1998) *Changing games, changing strategies: critical investigations of security*, Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Gilbert, G N and Mulkay, M J (1984) *Opening Pandora's box: a sociological analysis of scientists' discourse*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Goffman, E (1981) *Forms of Talk*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press
- Hansen, L (2006) *Security as practise: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*, London, Routledge
- Hewitt, J P and Stokes, R (1975) *Disclaimers* in *American Sociological Review* Vol.40 p 1-11
- Jefferson, G (1990) *List Construction as a task and interactional resource* in G. Psathas (ed.) *Interactional Competence* p 122-143 Washington, University Press of America
- Edwards, D and Potter, J (1992) *Discursive psychology*, London, Sage Publications
- Laclau, E and Mouffe, C (1985) *Hegemony and the Socialist Strategy*, London, Verso
- Larsen, H (1997) *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis: France, Britain and Europe*, London, Routledge
- Larsen, H (2000) 'Danish CFSP Policy in the Post-Cold War Period. Continuity or Change?' *Cooperation and Conflict* Vol.35(1) p 37-63
- Larsen, H (2004) *Discourse analysis in the study of European foreign policy* in Tonra, B and Christiansen, T (eds.) *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Macnaghten, P (1993) *Discourses of nature: argumentation and power* in Burman, E and Parker, I (eds) *Discourse analytical research: repertoires and readings of texts in action* p53-72, London, Routledge
- Mouffe, C (1992) *Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics* in Butler, J and Scott, JW (eds) *Feminists Theorize the Political* p 369-385, New York, Routledge
- Pomerantz, A (1986) 'Extreme case formulations: a new way of legitimising claims' in *Human Studies* Vol.9 (1) p 219-230
- Potter, J (1996) *Representing reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*, London, Sage Publications

Potter, J and Edwards, D (1990) 'Nigel Lawson's tent: discourse analysis, attribution theory and the social psychology of fact in European Journal of Social Psychology Vol20 (3) p24-40

Potter, J and Wetherell, M (1987) Discourse and social psychology: beyond attitudes and behaviour, London, Sage Publications

Weldes, J (1999) Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis in Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson, and Duvall (eds.) Cultures of Insecurity, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota p 35-62

Weldes, J (1996) Constructing national interests,' European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 2 (3) 1996 p 275-318

Wetherell, M (1996) Life histories/social histories in Wetherell, M (eds) Identities, groups and social issues p 299-342, London, Sage Publications

Wetherell, M (1998) 'Positioning and interpretative repertoires: conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue in Discourse & Society Vol9 (3) p 387-412

Wooffitt, R C (1991) 'I was just doing X ... when Y': some inferential properties of a device in accounts of paranormal experiences in Text Vol.11 p 267-88

European Parliament's web pages for the extracts:

15 March 2006 Debate on: 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20060315+ITEM-009+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y&LSTDOC=N>

1 February 2006 Debate on: Common foreign policy perspectives for 2006 – Common foreign and security policy – 2004

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20060201+ITEM-011+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=1&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y&LSTDOC=N>

18 January 2006 Charles Tannock, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the European Neighbourhood policy (2004/2166(INI) (A6-0399/2005) G:\CRE Wednesday 18 January 2006 - ITEM-012.htm

25 February 2005 Question No 19 by Nikolaos Vakalis (H-0095/05) Strategic enlargement of the EU

http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?SAME_LEVEL=1&LEVEL=2&NAV=S&DETAIL=&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20050224+ANN-01+DOC+XML+V0//EN#section_1

11 December 2004 Question No 37 (H-0559/04) Subject: New Neighbourhood Policy and Belarus

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20050111+ITEM-012+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=1&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y&LSTDOC=N>