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**THE DYNAMIC OF THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF
EUROPEANNESS AND EASTNESS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S
DISCOURSE ON UKRAINE, 2004-2016**

MA thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Master's thesis is a single case study that focuses on the EU officials' discursive construction of Europe in the case of Ukraine as a significant Other playing an essential role in the construction of the European Self. In particular, the European Commissioners' discourses concerning the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations as well as the conceptions of 'Europeanness' and 'Eastness' will be analysed to define different categories of 'European countries' which are not limited to the dichotomous classification of European countries which are part of the EU and those which are not.

This thesis argues that European borders are paradoxical; Europe's permanent borders can only be established if all dimensions of European borders are coherent with one another. As there have been numerous debates among European elites regarding the boundaries of Europe, questions have been raised when it comes to what defines a 'European country' and what 'Europe' means in relation to its constitutive 'East'. These concepts have been constantly contested and the EU's boundary-drawing practices are legitimized by these concepts as reflected by the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. On one hand, the concept 'Europeanness' is understood as 'the geographical imagination of a progressive and secure Europe' (Kuus, 2007, p. 150), which does not draw a clear spatial boundary with European countries without a membership in the EU; on the other hand, Kuus also states that there is no fixed place of where 'Eastness' is located exactly, which makes it problematic to differentiate Europe's Self from its Other.

Considering the ambiguity of these concepts, a constructivist approach will be taken to conceptualise how Europe is understood with the starting point that Europe is not just a given by human senses, but it is rather the product of people's conceptualisations (Kratochwil, 2008). To this end, this thesis aims at describing the paradox of European borders through the changes of discursive construction of Europe; how 'Europeanness' and 'Eastness' are understood within the EU Commissioners' discourses on Ukraine as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Ukraine is the most relevant case of study to illustrate the paradoxical nature of the construction of European borders within the EU official discourse. The EU simultaneously includes Ukraine in certain policy areas but excludes Ukraine from being part of the EU institutions to allow full participation of policy areas.

While Georgia and Moldova also share similar situations with Ukraine that they all have conflicts with Russia to different extents, the EU's sanctions against Russian annexation of Ukraine's Crimea make it a unique phenomenon; the above cases cannot be comparable with that of Ukraine because there were two colour revolutions in Ukraine as long as an on-going open conflict with Russia that includes sanctions by the EU, therefore this case illustrates the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership.

The research puzzle lies in the contradictions within different EU's boundary-drawing practices. Throughout the period of 2014-2015 in Ukraine, the EU institutions were active to take different measures against Russia, such as imposing sanctions, travel bans and freezing assets. During the EU-Ukraine Summit in 2017, the EU's logic of inclusion applied to Ukraine as 'the European Union acknowledges the European aspirations of Ukraine and welcomes its European choice' (Tusk, Remarks by President Donald Tusk following the EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv, 2017, p. 1); on the other hand, an official EU factsheet explicitly excluded Ukraine as an Eastern Partnership country from being part of the EU accession process (EEAS, 2017).

Hence, Ukraine is not a complete outsider from Europe despite of the fact that none of the Eastern Partnership countries including Ukraine has joined the EU Enlargement process (Munter, 2019). The case of Ukraine is worth studying to exemplify the complexity of the connections between borders, identity and othering in order to make sense of how these physical outer borders are legitimised.

Analysing the EU official discourse on Ukraine regarding the ENP highlights different dimensions of boundary-drawing practices of the EU which discursive dispersion and different articulations of European identity will be concerned. Ukraine's 'in-betweenness' will be taken into consideration as the identification of Ukraine's place in Europe is linked with how Ukraine is constructed within the EU official discourses on the EU Neighbourhood Policy including Eastern Partnership and the Association Agreement. The European external borders are shaped not just by the normative and material structures of the EU, but also the discursive practices of the EU officials on how 'European' Ukraine is.

The main focus of this thesis is to examine the changes of collective meanings of ‘Europeanness’ and ‘Eastness’ throughout different periods of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), including its implementation before launching Eastern Partnership, the establishment of the Eastern Partnership as well as the launch of the Association Agreement within the Eastern Partnership countries. Hence, the research questions which stem from the main focus are as follows:

- 1) How is Europe discursively constructed through the EU Commissioners’ discourses on Ukraine as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy?
- 2) How are the discursive constructions of Europe changed in terms of the concepts of Europeanness, Eastness and border during 2004-2016?

To reach the goals of identifying Europe’s discursive constructions and their changes, official texts from the EU Commissioners are collected to identify the discourses and the changes of discourses. 168 statements and speeches between 2004 and 2016 are collected from the EU Commission Press Release Database online. Only texts mentioning ‘Ukraine’ are selected from the official category of policy area ‘European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR)’ in the EU Commission’s official search engine. A Foucauldian approach of discourse analysis will be applied to locate discursive constructions of Europe, identify different political discourses on European external borders, examine the ENP as the action orientation, and explore the relationship between the EU official discourse and the ENP.

Committed with an assertion of anti-essentialist ontology and anti-foundationalist epistemology, the research design follows several post-structuralist presuppositions of discourse theory which connects with the research problem on the collective understanding of ‘Europe’. The first presupposition is that ‘identity is shaped in and through its relation to other meanings’ (Torfing, 2005); in other words, there are always certain discursive contexts that condition how singular meanings or identities should be analysed. It is especially applicable to this particular research on the discursive construction of Europe in terms of bordering and othering. Secondly, according to Torfing’s interpretation on discourse theory, discourse is presupposed to be ‘constructed in and through hegemonic struggles that aim to establish a political and moral-intellectual leadership through the articulation of meaning and identity’(ibidem, p. 15) , which presupposes ‘Europeanness’ is dominant over ‘Eastness’ due to the former concept’s hegemonic struggles over the latter. The last presupposition is that ‘the

hegemonic articulation of meaning and identity' (ibidem, p. 15) is related to how social antagonism is constructed; such antagonism implies that the Other is threatening and the logic of exclusion is needed in order to make the discursive system stabilized while preventing the closure of this system.

The theoretical section of this thesis offers five discourse theoretical positions regarding what discourse theory stands and how it legitimizes the understanding and explanations of the concepts of 'border', 'Europeanness' and 'Eastness'. Holding an anti-essentialist position of understanding this subject of matter, Torfing (2005) insists that no value exists outside discourses, which make discourse analysis directly relevant to the discursive construction of Europe and its European external borders. The link between 'understanding' and 'explanation' also adds value this thesis to focus on what Europe means rather than why the European Neighbourhood Policy was implemented in the beginning.

Within this context, multiple interpretations of the construction of European outer borders are elaborated in terms of the nature of hard and soft borders and how these borders are mutually constitutive with one another. While the hard borders are not the focus of this thesis, they are clearly defined in order to show what legitimizes the European external borders and normalizes the discursive practices done by the EU Commissioners. To further discuss the soft side of European external borders, Othering and the formation of European collective identity will be introduced to connect the concepts of boundary-drawing practices and identifications of 'Europe' and the 'East'. The case of Ukraine will be discussed as it is the manifestation of the boundary-drawing practices by the EU officials and Ukraine's liminality adds value to this thesis to make sense of the discursive changes of Europe's soft borders through different stages of the development of European Neighbourhood Policy.

2. CONCEPTUALISING EUROPEAN EXTERNAL BORDERS

This section aims at synthesizing different dimensions of understanding European external borders through exploring the relationship between their dynamics of openness and closure, Othering as boundary-drawing practices and collective identity formation. 'Border', in simple terms, refers to the product of human agency instead of the natural product of geography; the act of bordering provides exclusion and inclusion through different social realms (Diez, Stetter , & Albert, 2004). In this vein, the concept of borders is ontologically prior to identity; identity is a product of bordering and othering, therefore this chapter begins with the section on dynamics of openness and closure, followed by Othering and the formation of identity.

2.1. DYNAMICS OF OPENNESS AND CLOSURE

The dynamics of openness and closure of European borders can be understood as the combination of hard versus soft borders and open versus closed borders. Hard borders refer to different political institutions that separate states; soft borders are defined by cultural characteristics which can be either open or close to outsiders.

The openness of borders can be understood as a malleable structure being responsive to changes (Delanty, 2006). This open structure is the inclusion of horizontal communication and coordination, interconnections between regional boundaries and overlapping networks, as well as sustaining external and internal ties by trust and shared norms among EU countries (Dimitrovova B. , 2010).

This way of understanding the European external borders is supported by Rumford, who conceptualised the idea of network Europe into 'a network polity linked by new forms of connectivity prompted by global flows of capital, goods and services and the mobility enjoyed by persons, enterprises and forms of governance' (Rumford, 2006). In addition to Europe's borders in the global context, Rumford(ibidem) maintains that Europe and its cultural meanings have been intertwined with each other, therefore the meaning of European external borders are related to culture.

A soft border means that it is subject to changes in terms of cultural factors. These European external cultural borders are soft in nature. They are drawn by the extent of EU values including democracy, diversity, human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law being shared between the Union and its neighbours (Dimitrovova B. , 2010). However, Dimitrovova also claims that the discourses on

common European values between the EU and the ENP countries as highly contested, showing that the construction of European external borders is paradoxical as the discourses of inclusion and exclusion coincide with each other within the European context.

The European hard borders are related to the membership of EU institutions concerning the policymaking process of the EU. They are clearly defined and these borders are not as malleable as the soft external borders. This is the dynamic of closure which can be arguably framed as a 'monotopia', a unified space where there is limited restriction on the movement of goods, peoples, capitals and labours (Jensen & Richardson, 2004). However, such definition of the European hard external borders tends to overlook the dynamics of European space with its neighbouring countries in terms of extensive educational, economic and civil society networks which undermine the closure of European external borders through full EU membership. In this way, the definition of soft borders is more holistic and meaningful to be the focus of this thesis as it takes all of the above into account.

As argued by Gerard Delanty (2003), the 'logic of closure' implies that there are unambiguous territorial and civilisation borders. Apart from cultural transformation envisaged by different waves of EU enlargements, there are different forms of transitions, including the transitions from political authoritarianism to democracy, state socialism to market economies, industrial culture to postmodern culture, and national to transnational order (Delanty, 2003). In spite of the interaction of various 'civilizational constellations', it remains challenging to apply the logic of closure of European external borders (Delanty, 2003). In terms of civilisation, Delanty defines it as an analytical concept which is heterogeneous by nature and changes continuously, comprising many diverse units.

The degree of openness of European external borders corresponds to boundary-setting of different EU policies. Its openness remains fuzzy as some non-EU members are part of the Schengen Area and European Customs Union, while some EU members are part of the Euro area which becomes subset of the EU. Considering the logic of ENP and EaP, the inside-outside distinction is blurred, different degrees of Europeanness dictate the political, social and economic positions of EU neighbours and a 'European identity' is linked with the bilateral agreements between the EU and certain third countries. Such political practices constitute the European external borders as being both exclusive and inclusive at the same time (Grzymiski, 2018). Therefore, the complexity of European external borders go beyond the oversimplification of EU insiders and outsiders, centre and periphery (Tonra, 2009).

2.2. OTHERING AS BOUNDARY-DRAWING PRACTICE

Having defined the European external borders as a combination of open, close, hard and soft borders, boundaries are needed to materialize the meanings of Europe through exploring Self-Other relations. Othering is the process of creating an in-group and an out-group of which the characteristic of Other is differentiated from the Self (Staszak, 2008). Setting boundaries is equivalent to the practice of othering—boundaries draw lines of separation or contact in multiple contexts. These ‘lines’ can be drawn upon between territories, groups and individuals (Newman & Paasi, 1998). They are constituted by social action and create identities and are, at the same time, created through identity (Newman & Paasi, 1998). Boundaries help to understand political life by examining how they are justified through different themes such as citizenship, identity, exclusion and inclusion (Paasi, 2005).

Concerning boundary-drawing practices, Prokkola (2011) points out that social institutions and power relations are symbolised by state borders. He further claims that people’s identity narratives and mindscape will then become the extension of social norms and values which are embedded into state borders as institutions. The boundary-drawing practices are manifested by the European Neighbourhood Policy and its subcategory Eastern Partnership, which constitute Europe’s image of other in terms of Europe’s representation of advancement, modernity, and embodiments of progress and liberty (Grzymiski, 2018). The ENP is a case in point of the EU’s boundary-drawing practice manifesting the boundary between ‘chaos’ and ‘cosmos’, of which its neighbours are defined as a zone of chaos representing the Other of “proper Europe” (Joenniemi, 2008). As Joenniemi points out, the EU’s boundary-drawing practices also demonstrate a certain degree of pragmatism which is implied within the ENP; a line was drawn between offering membership prospects as well as offering economic, administrative and transactional benefits to the neighbours.

The notions of othering can be categorised into spatial and temporal. Spatial and temporal othering are interdependent, depicting the transcendence of condition of every historical move (Prozorov, 2010). The very essence of temporal othering means the Self is constructed through identifying its own past as the constitutive Other which prevents the Self to repeat its own past to become the future. Within the context of Europe, there are other strategies of constructing Europe’s collective Self and its constitutive East as the Other. According to Thomas Diez (2006), the representation of the Other can be seen as inferior, different, and violating universal principles. He claims that the European Self

is often constructed with superiority over its Eastern European Other, though the Self can also be constructed as the universal standard of values or merely different than the Other.

2.3. FORMATION OF IDENTITY AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

The complexity of construction of Europe's hard, soft, open and closed external borders implies that the EU's boundary-drawing practices construct multiple dimensions of identity beyond a simple Self-Other dichotomy. To conceptualise the term 'identity', this section briefly discusses how identity is understood by scholars, followed by three clusters of alternatives including 'identification', 'self-understanding' and 'commonality, connectedness and groupness' to lay a foundation for further discussions on the formation of European collective identity in the next section.

The definition of identity has been contested from an individual level to a national level among different fields of study. Some core claims on identity are that it is relational, malleable and socially constructed; identity is constructed based on what it is and what it is not (Tonra, 2009). Tonra also maintains that discursive acts constantly contest any hegemonic or dominate definition of identity. These claims are supported by symbolic interactionism in sense of the formation of an individual identity through socialisation (Rumelili, 2004). To put it differently, instead of conceptualising identity as a static entity, it is conceptualised as a process which is in the making progressively (Mälksoo, 2010).

In terms of identity, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) suggest that there are 'strong' and 'weak' versions of interpreting identity; the former stresses on the essentialist understanding that identity exists across persons with group boundedness and homogeneity, while the latter insists that the term 'identity' is so elastic. These versions are considered to be problematic as the 'strong' conception of identity assumes that it is an everyday experience which is embedded into common sense, yet the 'weak' conception of identity is too ambiguous to carry out analytical work.

To substantiate the discussion on the understanding of identity, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) introduced three clusters of terms to better explain the use of identity—identification, self-understanding, as well as commonality, connectedness and groupness.

The first cluster is identification. 'Identify' is an active and processual verb which contains no reifying connotations of 'identity' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). While this process is naturally adhered to social life, the strong version of "identity" is not. Brubaker and Cooper argue that the term 'identification' does not assume the act of identifying by powerful agents such as the state will necessarily end up with bounded groupness, yet the process of identifying can be situational and contextual. They point out that there are relational and categorical modes of identification; a relational mode of identification concerns how one identifies any person by status in a relational web of kinship, while the categorical one concerns how a person identifies someone by membership "in a class of persons sharing some categorical attribute" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 15).

Brubaker and Cooper also introduced the term 'self-understanding' as 'one's sense of who one is, of one's social location, and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act' (Beyond "identity", p. 17). While this term suggests certain understandings of self and social location govern individual and collective action, this 'self' of the term 'self-understanding' does not refer to the modern understanding of 'self as a homogeneous entity. Instead, the term 'self-understanding' does not connect with the ideas of being the same or different in terms of semantic meanings.

The last cluster of terms offer alternatives for 'identity' are 'commonality', 'connectedness' and 'groupness'. According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000), 'commonality refers to certain attributes which are shared by individuals, 'connectedness' is the linkage among people, and 'groupness' is 'the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidarity group' (Beyond "identity", p. 20). These terms are productive to extend the discussion on the understanding of identity through developing analytical idioms with regards to different forms and degrees of commonality and connectedness.

The above alternatives of understanding identity avoid defining identity as malleable, relational and socially constructed (Tonra, 2009), thereby substantiating the discussion on the understanding of identity through other alternatives including 'identification', 'self-understanding' as well as 'commonality', 'connectedness' and 'groupness'. Therefore, identifying 'Europeanness' and 'Eastness' of a state can also be situational and contextual as suggested above; the EU's self-understanding on Europe is a factor of governing its collective actions, in which EU member states share certain attributes with a sense of belonging to constitute European collective identity.

2.4. FORMATION OF EUROPEAN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The formation of European collective identity mostly concerns with identification instead of the ontological understanding of identity itself. As explained in the previous section, focusing on identification of European collective identity is a more effective means to understand how European collective identity is imposed by the EU institutions than studying European collective identity itself through conflictual self-identifications from the officials of different hierarchies of institutions (Lebow, 2016). This way of conceptualising the formation of European collective identity offers a more comprehensive view of how the EU officials discursively construct Europeanness and Eastness by drawing the boundaries between ‘proper Europe’ and Eastern Europe, thus identifying the EU as proper Europe and Ukraine as Eastern Europe.

In terms of external and internal identifications, there are three different tensions as illustrated below (Lebow, 2016). The first tension is arisen from identification imposed by different sub-state and state actors; the second comes from the similarities and differences derived from self-identification of states’ roles, affiliations and relationship to political bodies; the last tension ties with multi-dimensional identifications imposed to policymakers by different commitments and behavioural expectations. These tensions show that there are different dimensions of identifying Europe and Ukraine by the EU officials within different contexts. In other words, to stabilise the discourses of Europeanness and Eastness within the contexts of border construction, it would be the most productive to study these discourses within a particular period of policy implementation to avoid some of the tensions mentioned above.

Another perspective of viewing the formation of European collective identity is that the European Union takes the concept of ‘Europe’ as its own, essentialising itself as the representation of the concept of ‘Europe’ (József & Kovács, 2001). In this regard, Europe’s identity is differentiated from what Europe is not. There is a blurred line between Europe and non-Europe due to different extents of associations between the EU and other non-EU countries. Currently, the EU consists of 28 countries in association with non-EU countries within the Schengen Area and the European Economic Area. It means there are nuances regarding what defines EU membership as there are other non-EU countries association with the EU countries through opening internal borders and access to the European Single Market.

When the EU claims to represent 'Europe', it also implies that non-EU European countries from the Eastern Partnership programme (Van der Loo, 2017) are being represented conceptually without participating the institutions. This way of European collective identity formation is linked to the openness of European external borders as there are interconnections between regional boundaries of EU and non-EU countries which differentiate Europe's Self from the non-Europe Other as a continuum from negative to positive. Given that Europe is a 'network polity' (Rumford, 2006), its formation of collective identity is tied by shared norms among EU countries as well as other non-EU countries which are located at the opposite end of the continuum of Europe's Self.

In this section, three dimensions of tension of self-identification were introduced to show the discrepancies of how the EU policymakers identify Europe in conflictual ways under different circumstances. Europe is identified and represented in different ways, so that the boundary-drawing practices of Europe and non-Europe result in different versions of 'Europe'. To better understand how the construction of European external borders result in differentiating Europe's Self and its constitutive 'East' as the Other, the concepts of Europeanness and Eastness will be used to explain this phenomenon in the case of Ukraine.

3. EUROPEANNESS, EASTNESS AND UKRAINE'S 'IN-BETWEENNESS'

3.1 DEFINITION OF EUROPEANNESS

To further extend the discussion on the conceptualisation of European external borders, Europe's Self and its constitutive Other are located at the opposite ends of the same continuum, which means that there are multiple versions of Others that help constitute European collective identity. While Europeanness is one of the defining characteristics of European collective identity, it can exist within and outside of the European external borders due to the cultural dimension of borders which is soft in nature and subject to changes.

Investigating 'Europeanness' is a continuous concern within the dominant conceptions of Europe. These conceptions are economically, culturally and politically defined by the EU's (then European Economic Community) founding members, which means that 'Europe' is a prosperous capitalist contemporary space being capable of establishing universal moral standards through its normative power (Manners, 2002).

Europeanness can be defined as the progressive character of Europe's Self constituted by its backward past through temporal and spatial Othering. Given the spatial definition of Europe, Prozorov (2010) states that the logics of spatial and temporal othering in contemporary European politics are intertwined empirically, or in other words, temporal and spatial othering are mutually dependent. He builds upon Kojévian's definition of self-transcendence by indicating the indissociability of spatial and temporal othering, saying that Europe negated its present-being into the past after World War II and embarked a future-oriented project to integrate other European nation-states. The self-identification of Europe was based on the 'interstice between the Othered past and the not-as-yet attained present' (Prozorov, 2010, p. 1281).

Considering 'European' as collective identity with a continuum from negative to positive, the degree of 'Europeanness' is, then, reflected upon the amount of EU laws and regulations implemented by a state to become European. Europe's identity is constructed within and outside of the European continent by spatial terms, existing at global, pan-European, national, (sub) regional and local levels through discursive practices (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012). It implies that 'Europeanness' does not necessarily refer to the feature of EU countries, but also non-EU countries surrounding the EU.

The mutual dependence of spatial and temporal Othering gives ground to the gradual change of Europeanness as the EU institutions anticipate changes. Given that there is no denial of the existence of core-periphery dichotomy of Europe, the process of European integration leads to an increasingly post-western shaped Europe (Delanty, 2007). Delanty argues that the EU enlargement has shifted the geopolitical influence eastwards with 'a polynational and polyethnic policy complicated by a more multicentric and transnational political order' (2007, p. 14). In this sense, the change of EU external hard borders also constitutes the change of its soft border, thereby incorporating Europeanness with cultural characteristics endowed by Central and Eastern European countries.

The differentiation of Europeanness within Europe has also been confirmed by numerous scholars. For Kuus (2007), Europe can be seen as a combination of different zones of political actions with different degrees of Europeanness. It means that the political power of EU member states within the EU institutions can affect the extent of Europeanness these EU countries possess. Within this context, the understanding of Europe can be flexible as the very being of Europe varies (Joenniemi, 2008); however, the defining characteristic of European identity construction remains a generalised East (Neumann, 1999).

Being the constitutive Other of Europe, the generalised East includes Eastern European countries which gradually move closer to the core of Europe through the inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries due to the EU enlargement in 2004. Arat-Koç (2010) argues that Eastern European countries started to be attracted by the notion of 'being European' after the end of socialist period; such obsession is related to different types of erasure and exclusion such as how these countries attempted to re-define themselves to align with the rest of EU member countries.

The mutual constitutiveness of ENP creates outsiders who are managed by the insiders within the EU institutions, yet these outsiders have to adopt EU internal standards (Kuus, 2011). The EU outsiders look at the EU, an idealised version of Europe at its very core (Grzymiski, 2018) ; on the other hand, the new post-communist Central European countries are closer to the idealised Europe than Eastern Partnership(EaP) countries as the former joined the EU in 2004. This idealised version of Europe indicates different gradients of being European.

Europeanness is, therefore, the product of the dynamics of European external borders which exists within and outside the idealised version of Europe (the EU), thereby defining the characteristic of European collective identity through differentiating a range of gradients of progressiveness from the core Western European countries to Central and Eastern European countries, then from these countries to the non-EU Eastern European countries.

The above definition of Europeanness helps understand where the paradoxical nature of European borders lie; different gradients of Europeanness were illustrated to show that the discursive constructions of Europe include the core of Europe as well as Central and Eastern European countries as part of the generalised East which was absorbed by the EU due to the enlargement process. Since the degree of Europeanness is subject to the changes of different forms of European external borders, conceptualising Europeanness narrows down the categories of analytical units in order to locate the changes of discursive subject during a specific timeframe.

3.2 EASTNESS AND EASTERN EUROPE

Being the opposite end of the continuum of Europeanness, Eastness can be understood as the negative characteristic of Eastern Europe against everything about Europeanness. As defined in the previous section, given that Europeanness exists within and outside the idealized version of Europe (the EU), Eastness can also be embedded within the EU institutions due to the incorporation of Central and Eastern European countries which are not fully transformed into 'proper Europe' as suggested in the previous section. As the result of the paradoxical nature of European external borders, the differentiation of Europe and Eastern Europe (in non-geographical terms) endow different degrees of Eastness in both Europe and Eastern Europe, which is contradict to the universal moral standards that define Europe and exclude 'the East' from becoming European.

Within the geographical space of Europe and the existence of EU institutions as hard borders, Eastness, as defined ambiguously, is a reference of an insecure periphery of Europe which is needed to construct European collective identity (Neumann, 1999; Kuus, 2007). Europe needs the imaginary existence of the 'East' in order to inscribe European collective identity, of which Europeanness and Eastness complement with each other in different gradients.

In the same vein, Eastern Europe and the Orient are not essentially identical, even though both of them are the Others of Europe's prosperous capitalist contemporary space (Manners, 2002). Eastern Europe is framed within geographical Europe without being fully European; it is located between the East and the West; this in-betweenness is 'the repository of Eastness within' (Kuus, 2004). On the other hand, the Orient is constructed from an 'uncritically essentialist standpoint' (Said, 1979) which confirms the West by observing the Orient from afar and talking about it from above, producing a sense of superiority and hegemony over the East. Whilst the images of Eastern Europe and 'the Orient' are overlapping, the conception of 'Nesting Orientalisms' (Bakić-Hayden, 1995) explains the gradation of Orientalism regarding the pattern of how the Orients are reproduced: Eastern Europe is less 'East' than Asia, whereas the Balkans are orientalised as the most "eastern" region within the reproduction of Eastern Europe's gradation by itself.

The notion of 'Nesting Orientalisms' (Bakić-Hayden, 1995) corresponds multiple versions of Eastern Europe with different gradients of Eastness due to the emergence of an increasingly post-western shaped Europe (Delanty, 2007). While the spread of Europeanness towards the East does not dissolve Eastern Europe, the re-inscription of Otherness of the East attributes different dimensions for Europeanness versus Eastness, delineating the opposition of Europe and the East.

Considering Europe's Self as the product of both spatial and temporal Othering, its constitutive East can be understood as the remnant of Europe's past as the result of EU's boundary-drawing practices. Following this logic of Othering, Eastern Europe is invented as a product of 18th century according to the categories and principles of the Enlightenment, namely rationalism and secularisation, commercialisation and industrialisation, as well as the emergence of bourgeoisie and the dominance of bureaucratic nation-state (Wolff, 1994; Todorova, 1997). Hence, the understanding of Eastern Europe as the backward version of Europe originates from the imaginary existence of this insecure periphery space in temporal terms.

The endowment of Eastness from Eastern Europe to Europe (in non-geographical terms) denotes a quasi-civilisation as Eastern Europe represents an intermediate position between proper Europe and Asia, making Eastern Europe 'quasi-European' (Wolff, 1994). On the other hand, Russia can be understood as the 'second other' of Europe which appears to be 'the East', offering an opposition to show what Europe is different from the construction of this version of the East (Eder, 2006).

In this section, Eastness was introduced as the juxtaposition of Europeanness, denoting the degree of geographical Europe's insecure periphery inscribed by multiple versions of Eastern Europe. The differentiation between Eastern Europe and the Orient also coincided with the conception of Europeanness as a continuum; Central and Eastern European countries within the EU endowed less Eastness compared to that of non-EU Eastern European countries, thereby Othering Russia 'the East' in spatial terms. The logic of temporal Othering also applied when Eastern Europe was claimed to be the invention of 18th century according to Wolf (1994). The notion of Eastern Europe to be 'quasi-European' (ibidem) depicts non-EU Eastern European countries endowed lower degree of Europeanness and higher degree of Eastness compared to those of Central and Eastern European countries within the EU.

3.3 UKRAINE'S EURO-EASTERN 'IN-BETWEENNESS'

Ukraine endows both Europeanness and Eastness as an Eastern European country abiding EU norms and regulations while facing more than two decades of challenges of post-Soviet legacies including corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism. This is an illustration of the paradox of European borders as Ukraine has been excluded from the European hard borders through the ratification of Association Agreement without mentioning any possibility for accession talks, while including Ukraine within the European cultural and civilisation borders through recognising Ukraine as a 'European country' (EEAS, 2015, p. 2). In this section, Ukraine's 'in-betweenness' will be explained in terms of Europeanness, Eastness, borders, Othering and identity to make sense of how this unique case adds values for studying the construction of European external borders and formation of European collective identity.

Ukraine is a case in point showing the openness of European external borders as the way of horizontal communication and coordination have been materialised through different institutional set-ups in order to implement the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement: the EU-Ukraine Summit, the Association Council and the Parliamentary Association Committee. The Summit is at the highest level of meetings on political agenda between the Ukrainian president and the President of the European Council; the Association Council refers to the ministerial meetings between the Ukrainian Prime Minister and the EU's High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission to take binding decisions; the Parliamentary Association Committee is a platform for the EU and

Ukrainian parliamentarians to exchange views (EEAS, 2015). The institutional set-ups show that Ukraine has been included in the European open borders through cross-border cooperation.

The cultural borders between the EU and Ukraine are constructed based on values including democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Dimitrovova B. , 2010). Ukraine is a case which shows the malleable nature of the European culture borders; the hard borders between the EU and Ukraine are constructed through different policy instruments including the European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership and Association Agreement, manifesting the value-based cultural border construction. The dynamics between the European hard and soft borders constitute the degree of Europeanness and Eastness Ukraine possesses as both borders become more inclusive when Ukraine is more Europeanised due to the diffusion of EU values and adoption of EU laws and regulations.

The Euro-Eastern ‘in-betweenness’ of Ukraine can be understood as the result of EU’s boundary-drawing practices through Othering and how the EU identifies Ukraine as a country between ‘proper Europe’ and the East. Through the initiation of the European Neighbourhood Policy, proper Europe and the East were characterised as ‘cosmos’ and ‘chaos’ respectively, implying that European neighbourhood countries such as Ukraine are within the zone of chaos (Joenniemi, 2008). As defined previously, Ukraine, then, possesses ‘Eastness’ which symbolises backwardness and denotes what it means to be ‘quasi-European’ (Wolff, 1994). In this sense, Ukraine’s in-betweenness can be understood as the product of Europe’s spatial-temporal Othering through constructing Ukraine as Europe’s backward past and Europe’s non-EU neighbouring country.

To conceptualise Ukraine’s ‘in-betweenness’, the term ‘identification’ instead of ‘identity’ has been used to understand how the EU identifies Ukraine as part of Eastern Europe. As previously defined, identification can be situational and contextual, showing that there are two modes of identification—relational and categorical (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In the case of Ukraine, the EU identifies Ukraine being relational with Russia and other Eastern European countries, whereas it categorically identifies Ukraine as a ‘neighbour’ as Ukraine shares attributes with other countries from the European Neighbourhood Policy. Other clusters of terms including ‘commonality’ and ‘connectedness’ can also help understand how Ukraine shares common attributes with Europe while sharing the Communist past with other countries endowed with Eastness. Hence, Ukraine’s Eastness

can be understood through how the EU identifies Ukraine instead of analysing what Ukrainian identity is.

In terms of Ukraine's Europeanness and Eastness, it can be understood that Ukraine is the EU's spatial Other as a neighbouring country, whereas Europe has been transformed by the inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries into a post-western shaped Europe (Delanty, 2007). Considering such inclusion shifted the generalised East to be closer to 'proper Europe', Ukraine would be more Europeanised with a lesser degree of Eastness due to the attraction of 'being European' which motivated Ukraine to be more aligned with the rest of EU member states (Arat-Koç, 2010) .

Considering Ukraine's endowment of Europeanness and Eastness as an Eastern European country which is closely tied with the Central and Eastern European countries within the generalised East, Ukraine is the best case in point to show the trajectory of Eastern European countries straddling between proper Europe and the generalised East at the expense of delineating themselves from being either fully European or fully Orientalised by the boundary-drawing practices of the EU officials. To produce meanings of Ukraine's 'in-betweenness' for being European and Eastern simultaneously, the EU official discourses on Europe and Ukraine are needed in order to identify their discursive constructions as the result of different bordering practices within the European Neighbourhood Policy.

4. DISCOURSE, ITS THEORY, ANALYSIS AND DATA COLLECTION

This section discusses the ontological understanding of discourse, five theoretical positions and the application of discourse analysis are used to materialize the above concepts.

4.1. DISCOURSE

A discourse is ‘a system producing a set of statements and practices that, by entering into institutions and appearing like normal, constructs the reality of its subjects and maintains a certain degree of regularity in a set of social relations’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 4).

Discourse produces meanings through representational practices, fixing certain forms of representations to disclose meanings and identities. A discourse theory adheres to the concept that the material world has no meaning itself; meanings are socially constructed through sign systems. Discourses define the authorities as subjects to speak and act (Milliken, 1999). It helps actors to make sense of the material world temporarily and act within the embedded meanings.

Operated on several premises in terms of the relationship between language, agency and identity, this approach provides a ‘theoretically parsimonious and empirically grounded way’ (Epstein, 2010) to analyse identity formation with a clear illustration of main pitfalls of the concept of identity. However, Epstein (2010) says that it does not make an assumption that states are the only actors to have a decisive role in shaping international politics. In particular, Epstein pointed out that language is assumed to be effective and making equivalence between speaking and acting; social actors are the same as speaking actors whose modality of agency and the way they position themselves are based on speaking; pre-existing discourses regulate actor behaviour in the context that discourses are the pre-conditions to act.

In this vein, the meanings of border’, ‘Europeanness’ and ‘Eastness’ are produced and reproduced both by the EU Commissioners’ statements and in the course of the implementation of European Neighbourhood Policy. These meanings are normalised through repetition of EU official statements and silencing the alternative articulations by ignoring them, thus constructing European external borders through Othering Ukraine as an Eastern European country. Studying the EU official discourse on Ukraine gives a more comprehensive understanding of the paradoxical nature of European borders. To be specific, the EU official discourse on Ukraine limits how the EU Commissioners define the

degree of Europeanness and Eastness of Ukraine with respective policy implications including the extent of Ukraine's participation of different fields of EU policies. It also gives an effective way of analysing the formation of European collective identity as a result of boundary-drawing practices, as well as how the East-West liminality of Ukraine was constructed by the EU Commissioners.

4.2. DISCOURSE THEORY

To theorize how the European borders' dynamics of openness and closure constitute the paradoxical nature of borders through differentiating Europeanness and Eastness by implementing European Neighbourhood Policy in three periods, five theoretical positions are offered by Torfing (2005) to substantiate different discursive constructions of Europe as subject and Ukraine as object within the EU official discourses.

Generally speaking, discourse theory offers 'an analytical perspective which focuses on the rules and conditions that condition the construction of social, political and cultural identity' (Torfing, 2005, p. 1); it is an attempt to 'describe, understand, and explain how and why particular discursive formations were constructed, stabilised, and transformed' (ibidem, P.19). Such analytical perspective gives five discourse theoretical positions regarding the starting points of a post-structuralist discourse analysis.

The first starting point is that a post-structuralist discourse theory asserts that there is such independent existence of reality from people's consciousness, thoughts and language (ibidem). In other words, this theory does not necessarily lead to idealism, though it presupposes the discursive character of all social meanings and identities. Torfing (2005) implies that there is a tendency for the discursive construction of certain matters to be strengthened through certain forms of subjectivities throughout the process of discursive signification. In this way, discursive forms actively construct the objects which they signify, even though the meaningful object constructed by the discourses is affected by dislocation and social antagonism at a regular basis. Therefore, this discourse theory subscribes the materialist stance that between form and matter lies an irreducible distance (ibidem).

Another discourse theoretical position asserts that any extra-discursive truth, morality, or ethics does not exist (Rorty, 1989). There are always a set of determinate values embedded into a particular discourse which gives everyone certain criteria to make value judgements. Given that all discourses are always contested and contaminated due to their continuous change of boundaries (Torfing, 2005),

it is possible to condition truth claims within a particular discursive framework within which “we define and negotiate our criteria for accepting something as true, right, or good (ibidem, P.19)”.

This version of discourse theory also asserts that it does not just understand social phenomena, but also explains them through contextualising certain historical conditions as discourses emerge. Whilst opposing the causal explanations of social phenomena of which universal laws are claimed to be created (Torfing, 2005), the notions of ‘understanding’ and ‘explanation’ are not completely opposed with one another; initial understanding is always needed as a prerequisite of an explanation and an explanation aims at completing our understanding of certain matters (ibidem).

The fourth discourse theoretical position holds that one can give critiques to the discourse one is analysing (Torfing (2005). While all ethical and normative claims can be deconstructed, it is still possible to give critiques through taking the form of ‘an attempt to deconstruct the closure invoked by ethical, normative, political, cultural, economic and other discourses’ (ibidem, P.20). An internal critique can be given by pointing out that the binary hierarchies of the text are problematic in terms of the non-totalizable openness.

The last position concerns the anti-essentialist claim of discourse theory. When discourse theorists assert that there is no essence, it means ‘the metaphysical idea of a positively defined essence that is given in and by itself’ (Torfing, 2005, p. 21). In other words, there is no such performative contradiction in discourse theory since this anti-essentialist claim does not imply determinate effects produced by social identities.

The above positions give a firm ground to the theoretical framework of how Europe and Ukraine are discursively constructed by the EU Commissioners within their official statements and speeches. As all values are embedded into a particular discourse (Torfing, 2005), value-based concepts including ‘border’, ‘Europeanness’ and ‘Eastness’ can be deconstructed as the social meanings of these concepts and identities are discursive in character. The anti-essentialist stand of discourse theory also gives room to identify different constructions of Europe and Ukraine so that discourses on Europe and Ukraine help us to understand and explain how European borders are discursively constructed in a paradoxical way through differentiating different gradients of Europeanness and Eastness.

4.3. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

To connect the above theoretical framework and concepts of border, Europeaness and Eastness, discourse analysis has been applied as the main method to examine how European external borders are constructed through Europe and its constitutive East in the case of Ukraine. This section gives a brief overview of discourse analysis, followed by a two-step approach of one version of Foucauldian discourse analysis in the following sub-section to make it feasible to analyse the relationship between borders, identities and Self-Other interactions in the case of Ukraine.

Analysing a discourse requires an examination of how the material world appears the way it does and how particular actions become possible. Multiple sources are needed to analyse a discourse because one single source alone is not enough for empirical arguments (Milliken, 1999).

A post-structuralist discourse analysis based on a constructivist understanding of the reality in social science will be applied to access social life through discourses. This approach holds an ontological point of view that discourse gives meanings to the material world, and it also means that it is possible to create, reproduce and change the structure using a language (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

4.3.1. FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Foucault's approach to discourse emphasises on 'the use of concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation' (Foucault, 1972, p. 31) in order to illustrate how statements are related with one another. However, considering that Foucault's work rather focused on exploring how language and subjectivity are related within the context of psychological research, therefore an adopted version of Foucauldian discourse analysis was applied in this thesis to offer clearer methodological applications of his theory.

This adopted version of Foucauldian discourse analysis concerns the relationship between discourse, practices and the material world; the social processes of legitimation and power are also its focuses (Willig, 2001). From this perspective, the epistemological understanding of discourses is that they allow and disable the matters being said by whom, where and when (Parker, 1992). According to Willig, this variation of discourse analysis to explore how the discourse's objects and subjects are constructed involves two stages which help illustrate some of the implications of practice from the concerned discourse.

The first stage is to identify how the discursive object is constructed in the text. Willig (2001) suggests that this stage of analysis focuses on identification of how the object is discursively constructed in different ways. Instead of looking for keywords, it is recommended that all forms of reference to the object must be highlighted. An analysis on these different constructions is then carried out to compare different discourses within the same discursive object.

The next stage is about the examination of functions and the relevance of different constructions to understand the discursive contexts shown by various constructions of the discursive object. These issues are linked to action orientation, the key to understand the achievements of the discursive object's different constructions. Within particular discourses, some forms of behaviours are legitimised as the practices of given discourse, thereby explaining the conditions of such behaviours based on the production of knowledge through discourse analysis.

To contextualise the stages of analysis, segments of EU official statements related to the concepts of Europeanness, Eastness as well as border will be highlighted in different ways according to the discursive objects the EU Commissioner addressed; in this sense, the meanings of these concepts will be constructed according to the highlighted segments within the selected timeframes during the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004-2008), Eastern Partnership (2009-2011) as well as the Association Agreement (2012-2016). After identifying different constructions of Europeanness, Eastness and border, they will be compared and contrasted within each selected timeframe. To link the EU's action orientation and the discursive constructions of the concepts above, different dimensions of the ENP, EaP and AA/DCFTA will be analysed to identify which particular discursive construction legitimises the action orientations. To reach the conclusion on discursive changes of different constructions of the above concepts, each concept is divided into the following categories to ensure the discursive changes are comparable in different timeframes: for Europeanness, the relations between EU values and policies will be the only category for analysis; for Eastness, Europe's spatial and temporal Otherings will be analysed; for border, the dynamics between the European hard, soft, open and close borders will be analysed as a whole.

The above stages give sufficient foundations for delimiting the boundaries of discourses on European borders, so that it is possible to explore the relationship between different discursive constructions of

Europe in the case of Ukraine and the European Neighbourhood Policy systematically through identifying the changes of discourses on Europe and Ukraine during 2004-2016.

4.3.2 DATA COLLECTION

This section explains the process of data collection to give empirical findings for this Master's thesis. Referring to the two-stage approach of Foucauldian discourse analysis explained above, all forms of reference to 'Europeanness', 'Eastness', and 'border' are highlighted in the collected statements and speeches from the EU Commission Press Release Database, so that the discursive meanings of Europe and Ukraine are to be discussed to understand and explain the paradox of European borders.

Due to linguistic limitations, while there are official speeches and statements in French and German, only texts written in English will be analysed to ensure meanings are not lost in translation. To ensure sufficient materials are collected to analyse how Ukraine is constructed as a discursive object, understand the discursive construction of Europe and changes of European external borders throughout out different periods of the implementations and advancements of the European Neighbourhood Policy, 168 official texts are searched by the policy area 'European Neighbourhood policy and Enlargement Negotiation' categorised by the EU Commission in order to identify different discourses within the this area. To better differentiate the changes of EU official discourses, these texts are further divided into three periods to illustrate the discursive boundaries through different policy instruments implemented by the EU Commission, namely the European Neighbourhood Policy (70 speeches and statements), Eastern Partnership (36 speeches and statements) and the Association Agreement (62 speeches and statements) periods.

The selected timeframe of the official texts is limited between 2004 and 2016, since the year of 2004 was the beginning of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The timeframe of data collection ends in 2016. Throughout the EU-Ukraine Summits from 2016 to 2019, these high-level political dialogues produced repeated discourses on Russian annexation of Crimea, Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as the European Council's President Donald Tusk made similar remarks (Tusk, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), which were semantically the same and hence it would be counter-productive to study these identical statements within this period. Within this context, the EU Commission's official search engine was used, and only statements and speeches mentioned 'Ukraine' filtered by the official category of policy area 'European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR)' were used as data.

The speakers who made these statements and speeches were the leaders of the EU Commission and other Commissioners who were responsible for the EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy during the time frame of data collection, namely Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Olli Rehn, Peter Mandelson, José Manuel Durão Barroso, Margot Wallström, Štefan Füle, Catherine Ashton, Johannes Hahn and Jean-Claude Juncker.

The EU Commission has been selected as the source for official discourse analysis due to the roles and functions of this institution that represents the EU's interests. The Commission proposes and enforces legislation in order to promote the interest of the EU; it also enacts the decisions endorsed by the European Parliament which represents the European citizens and the Council of the EU which represents the interest of the EU member state's government. Officially, the Commission represents the EU at the international arena and it is the legitimate institution that speaks on behalf of the EU member countries in international organisations as well as negotiate international agreements for the EU in order to protect the interests of the EU itself. Taking into consideration that the Commission consists of 28 Commissioners who represent all EU countries equally, when a Commissioner talks about Ukraine within the policy area of the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, his/her speech represents the official EU position instead of the position of a particular EU country. While whether the EU's actorness is still questionable in certain policy areas, this is not the focus of the thesis and what matters the most here is that the relation between the EU official discourses on Ukraine and the execution of EU external policy can be observed through analysing how the European external borders are constructed. Only by focusing on one particular institution of the EU, one can then isolate other external factors such as how the debates in the European Parliament is determined by party politics and national interests often take over during the political dialogues at the Council level.

The above data collection process implies that this is a qualitative analysis which focuses on the production of meanings to understand and explain how different discursive constructions of Europe and Ukraine are manifested through different periods of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

5. DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF EUROPE

In this section of discourse analysis, any statement from a part of a sentence to a longer text related to the concepts of ‘Europeanness’, ‘Eastness’ and ‘border’ will be used as an analytical unit to identify different discursive constructions of Europe and Ukraine during the following periods: ‘European Neighbourhood Policy and “The Big Bang” (2004-08)’, ‘Eastern Partnership (2009-11)’ and ‘Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (2012-16)’.

The periodisation of the above policies is based on the official launches of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 (EU Neighbourhood Info Center, 2015) and the Eastern Partnership in 2009 (EEAS, 2017), as well as the initiation of the official text of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in 2012 (European Commission, 2013).

While the dynamics of openness and closure of European borders differentiate Europeanness and Eastness, these categories have to be precisely defined for better analysis: ‘Europeanness’ refers to the degree of capacity to establish universal moral standards within a prosperous capitalist contemporary space (Manners, 2002); ‘Eastness’ is the reference to the insecure periphery of Europe which is the opposite end of the continuum against Europeanness (Kuus, 2007); for ‘border’, it refers to the product of human agency with hard, soft, open and closed lines of separation or contact in terms of political institutions, culture, interconnections between regional boundaries as well as transitions of political regime (Delanty 2003, 2006; Dimitrovova, 2010).

Taking into account that the EU official discourses construct the meanings of ‘Europe’ and ‘Ukraine’ by producing statements and speeches in order to enter into EU institutions, the references of ‘Europeanness’, ‘Eastness’ and ‘border’ within the texts can be understood and explained by analysing segments of statements related to these concepts during the aforementioned periods in order to identify the changes of discursive constructions of Europe and Ukraine.

5.1. EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND ‘THE BIG BANG’ ENLARGEMENT (2004-08)

5.1.1. EUROPEANNESS

Within the EU’s discursive constructions on Europe and Ukraine, political stability and democratic legitimacy were the main references of Europeanness from 2004 to 2008. ‘Political stability’ referred

to the regime change in Ukraine due to the presidential election scandal in 2004. The EU Commissioners' discourses on the political situation in Ukraine in 2004 legitimized the EU to make speeches and statements to call for a reform-friendly political regime in Ukraine, which was relevant to the construction of European external borders as the borders were shifted eastwards after the EU enlargement in 2004. The second discursive construction 'democratic legitimacy' referred to the EU's democratic mandate for EU citizens when new rounds of enlargement were involved; categorising Ukraine as the neighbour instead of candidate country did not involve democratic legitimacy to change the EU institutions, thereby differentiating non-EU countries with different statuses as boundary-drawing practice.

The discursive constructions of Europeanness as political stability and democratic legitimacy condition the EU-Ukraine Action Plan as action orientation. The Action Plan included 'partial integration of our partners into the EU Internal Market, a gradual participation in the so-called 'four freedoms' of the EU...the question of Ukrainian entry into the EU is not on the agenda. But it is clear that we are not closing any doors' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , Situation in Ukraine, 2004). Europeanness, in this sense, emphasised more on restoring political stability in the ENP countries such as Ukraine instead of diffusing democracy, human rights and the rule of law through absorbing these countries into the EU.

Another dimension of political stability referred to the need of peace for Ukraine as one of the EU's immediate neighbourhoods. Within this discourse, being European meant that one would be capable to 'handle the challenges of security and stability in our immediate neighbourhood' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2005), which implied security and stability were the values the EU wanted to diffuse through its neighbourhood. In this sense, peace was also necessary for the EU to guarantee such pursue of these goals towards its bordering countries 'should not be a tug of war between East and West' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2004). As the Ukrainian presidential crisis loomed in 2004, the 'recognition of the new political reality in Ukraine'(Ferrero-Waldner B. , Remarks to Foreign Affairs Committee, 2004) referred to the regime change in Ukraine as Viktor Yushchenko became the president of Ukraine and the EU's action orientation of engaging in the Ukrainian crisis was constructed as 'a very positive role on assisting the country(Ukraine) to overcome the crisis last year'(ibidem) , implying that the EU was capable of helping its immediate neighbours to uphold EU values by putting them into practice such as holding free and fair elections.

Europeanness was constructed as democratic legitimacy which constituted external actions on its immediate neighbourhood in order to be the moral leader which can export EU values and include its neighbours to be part of the European civilisation borders. Given that both enlargement and neighbourhood policies were effective in projecting European values and interests in different ways, enlargement was the core of the EU's soft power to ensure there would be not visible definition of the 'borders of Europe' (Rehn, 2006). In this vein, Europe needed to be open while keeping its consolidated enlargement agenda in place. Such democratic legitimacy could also be found in the construction of the ENP as a policy 'all about practical progress, not about theoretical institutional questions' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2006). Such practical progress manifested the open structure of European external borders as the inclusion of horizontal communication and coordination (Dimitrovova B. , 2010).

On the other hand, Europeanness as democratic legitimacy conditioned further cross-border cooperation between the EU and its neighbours through interconnections between regional boundaries and overlapping networks (Dimitrovova B. , 2010); this performance-driven ENP policy asserted the EU as a 'great transformational power' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2007) which would intensify the results with more economic components. The then EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn (2008) echoed the notion of EU as a transformation power with the case of Ukraine which moved on with a Eastern dimension to negotiate a 'New Enhanced Agreement including on a deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area' (ibidem); Ukraine was an illustration to show how an ENP country could be guided to the European track of reforms. Hence, this discursive construction of Europeanness projected EU values to its neighbours at the expense of Eastness, changing the equilibrium of Europeanness and Eastness in non-EU Eastern European countries.

In summary, during the first period of timeframe, 'Europeanness' was discursively constructed as 'political stability' and 'democratic legitimacy' in order to legitimise the EU to call for a EU-friendly Ukrainian government as well as the construction of new borders between the Central and Eastern European countries as well as Eastern European countries after the enlargement.

5.1.2. EASTNESS

Europe's temporal and spatial Others as well as juxtapositions of EU values were the main discursive constructions of Ukraine in sense of Eastness. Non-EU countries were constructed as Europe's spatial Other in a bid to draw the lines of separation between the EU countries and their non-EU partners along the European hard borders; post-Soviet countries were not fully endowing Europeanness as the EU claimed that they had a choice to align themselves between the EU and Russia (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2005). Regarding Europe's temporal Other, post-war Europe was mentioned to legitimize the necessity for the neighbouring countries to integrate with proper Europe through political and economic reforms. As for the last discursive construction, corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism were the juxtapositions of EU values in terms of Eastness.

Adopting the previous conceptualisation of Eastness, Russia was constructed as the backward version of 'Europe' which is often referred to the 'East' (Eder, 2006). In the beginning years of the establishment of the ENP, Eastness and Europeanness stood for different degrees of reforms needed but they were not necessarily mutually exclusive and they could co-exist. 'We agreed with the Russian authorities that...we can work together to help promote stability and prosperity in countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, without forcing them to choose one camp or the other' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2005). But the coverage of countries with Eastness was not limited to post-Soviet and post-Communist countries—the EU Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner framed the ENP as a 'Pan-European' policy that ranged 'from Eastern Europe through the Caucasus and the Middle East to the Maghreb' (ibidem). Taking the logic of Eastness as a continuum, the closer an ENP country related with the EU, the lower the degree of Eastness it possessed, then the case of Ukraine showed that its Europeanness was higher than its Eastness than other ENP countries as 'Ukraine clearly has an "avant-garde status" within the ENP' (Ferrero-Waldner B. , Quo vadis Europa, 2005).

Europe's temporal other was manifested by mentioning the Cold War and Velvet Revolution as well as the fall of Berlin Wall (Rehn, Enlargement in the evolution of the European Union, 2006). Not only did the historical references depict the source of Eastness, but they also constructed how Eastness was characterised by European integration. "Then the Berlin Wall came down. The EU started the 21st century as a very different community from the one of the Cold War era...the era that began in 1989 as the second great transformation of post-war Europe, following the first transformation after the Second World War, when European integration was established" (ibidem). This logic of temporal

Othering depicted how Europe's Self was constructed through identifying its own past as the constitutive Other (Prozorov, 2010), preventing the Self to repeat these historical events to become concurrent events in contemporary Europe.

In the same vein, the backwardness of Eastness was also discursively constructed as corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism, juxtaposing the EU values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Ferrero-Waldner (2006) stated that the post-communist region co-inhabit with the European continent and Ukraine should be assured that the EU will be with Ukraine every step of the way (ibidem). Russia was also mentioned as a significant post-Communist country as a parameter of Eastness as the Commissioner stated that 'of course in speaking about the post-Communist countries we must talk about Russia' (ibidem, p. 5). Generally speaking, Eastness was constructed as the legacy of communism (ibidem) which was still 'constrained by Soviet-era practices, extensive, corrupt bureaucracies, and top-down patronage networks' (ibidem, p. 6). The EU used enlargement to absorb shock for Europe (Rehn, 2006) as a response of the collapse of communism, attempting to extend the area which entails peace, liberty and democracy (ibidem).

Eastness was, then, discursively constructed as Europe's temporal Other in terms of the Cold War, Velvet Revolution as well as the fall of Berlin Wall, whereas Europe's spatial Other was another discursive construction of Eastness as the partnership with Russia. Both constructions legitimised the EU's discourse on corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism as post-Soviet legacy which needed to be transformed into EU values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law through implementing the Action Plan of each ENP country.

5.1.3 BORDER

The discursive constructions of border can be broken down into three dimensions as conceptualised previously regarding the dynamics of openness and closure of European external borders (Delanty, 2006): the first dimension concerns the hard borders constituted by the EU political institutions; the second is about the territorial borders which were functioned to protect EU citizens; the last dimension emphasises how the dynamics between widening and deepening of the EU constitute cultural borders.

The European hard borders were discursively constructed as political institutions beyond a EU membership. While the conditions for joining the EU were unambiguous and clear-cut, this dimension of Othering appeared to follow the logic that the layers of European hard border are threefold: the non-EU neighbours first had to participate in political cooperation as long as the EU desired, then these neighbours had to fulfil all the reform requirements envisaged by the EU, followed by further negotiations on EU accession if it was within the EU's interests.

In this case, the ENP aimed at inviting non-EU neighbours to the East and to the South to share peace, stability and prosperity defined by the EU (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2004). From a broader perspective, while the Commissioner defined what the ENP was and what it was not, it was ambiguous regarding whether the EU would accept the ENP countries if they applied for the EU membership. She claimed that the EU would not reject the ENP countries to accede the EU, but the ENP would not provide an accession prospect either (*ibidem*). The differentiation between 'being European' and 'becoming European' was seen as the participation in all these activities (TEMPUS programme, Erasmus Mundus programme, the European Training Foundation), which were financed by the EU, drew the region closer to the EU.

The above case of ENP countries' policy participation offered a clear and tangible European perspective (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2005) to keep them away from the EU but at the same time brought them closer to the EU. The Commissioner also explicitly stated that the possibility of applying for EU membership was a distraction from the real issue in the neighbourhood (Ferrero-Waldner B. , *The EU and Ukraine-what lies beyond the horizon?*, 2005), and Ukraine had the duty to 'consolidate its democratic and economic transitions, both of which are necessary before EU membership becomes an option' (*ibidem*). It indicated that the hard political border of EU was not completely closed throughout this period of the ENP. Ferrero-Waldner (2005) stated during the signature of EU-Moldova-Ukraine Memorandum of Understanding, the ENP gave "real benefits to Europeans both inside and outside the EU", or in other words, the ENP as an action orientation was an inclusive policy which did not exclude the ENP countries from joining the EU. Therefore, the boundary between Europe and its neighbours was created based on what the policy offered but not the exact statuses of the ENP countries as compared to those Central and Eastern European countries which joined the EU in 2004.

While the discursive constructions of border differentiated into three dimensions, it did not annihilate the meaning of border itself, “because borders matter—not as a way of defining ourselves, but because they are key to many of our citizens’ urgent concerns—security, migration, and economic growth...borders are not only about protecting our citizens, but also breaking down barriers between peoples and cultures (Ferrero-Waldner B. , *The European Neighbourhood Policy: helping ourselves through helping our neighbours*, 2005)”. The emphasis of European hard borders was illustrated through a remark on the fact that there was no discussion of EU membership with the ENP countries as a response on their desire for deepening relations with the EU (ibidem). In spite of the hardness of European borders, these borders were still porous and malleable due to the uncertain paths the EU had set the ENP countries in; Ferrero-Waldner claimed that borders mattered less and there was a need of ‘opening ourselves up’ (*Quo vadis Europa*, 2005), but every political Union had borders and the geographical change was not possible for the EU (ibidem).

The soft and close natures of cultural and territorial borders were discursively constructed as widening and deepening European political integration. While widening and deepening political integration within and around Europe were widely seen as dichotomous, this notion was rejected by the EU official (Rehn, *Enlargement in the evolution of the European Union*, 2006).

The construction of EU borders were based on the differentiation between how the political borders had been changed before and after the enlargement whereas the values shaped Europe remained the same before and after the change of its borders. “The rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy and good governance, is as valid today as 60 years ago. But physically the EU looks very different even compared to 18 months ago”, Ferrero-Waldner (2005) stated at the Conference of Foreign Affairs Committee Chairmen of EU member and candidate states. While the enlargement process was considered to unify the European continent within historical context (ibidem), the intertwining feature of Europe’s hard political border and soft cultural border was shown to be mutually constitutive since the change of EU political institutions is affected by the discursive practices on shared values between the EU and its neighbours, whereas these values have to be legitimised by the EU political institutions through action orientations.

This section highlighted the European hard, soft and close borders as three dimensions of the discursive constructions; the hard borders were constructed as the political cooperation between EU

and non-EU countries as the prerequisite for further European integration, while both soft and close borders were constructed as the dynamics between widening and deepening European integration. The discourse on hard borders legitimised the EU to delineate non-EU neighbouring countries from being part of ‘proper Europe’, while the discourse of soft and close borders legitimise the separation between Central and Eastern European countries and Eastern European countries.

5.2. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP (2009-11)

5.2.1 EUROPEANNESS

The discursive constructions of Europeaness were changed from political stability and democratic legitimacy to pragmatism and economic freedom as the European Neighbourhood Policy differentiated to Eastern Partnership which focused on six post-Soviet countries with a regional agenda. During this period, Europeaness was understood as the adoption of a range of EU laws, regulations and reforms through institution building; the discourse on pragmatism was about showing the results of the reforms agreed between the EU and an Eastern Partnership country rather than making statements and speeches about the reforms. The second discursive construction on economic freedom concerns the financial incentives which would be delivered to the EaP countries once their reforms plans were fully implemented.

The introduction of Eastern Partnership was a change of discursive practice from encouraging reforms in the EU’s immediate neighbouring countries to build new institutions through an ambitious programme (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2009). The notion of projecting European values into the European neighbourhood was no longer implemented by encouraging the political decision-makers but manifested by institutionalization through Eastern Partnership. The repeated statements of demanding Ukraine that reform needed to be done decisively (Füle, 2010). It implied that being European also meant the EU had to ensure Ukraine implement all the necessary reforms, including ‘getting Ukraine back on track with IMF’, ‘reforming the gas sector with a view to inclusion in the Energy Community’, ‘addressing gaps in the migration control system’, as well as ‘approximating trade related legislation to conclude the Association Agreement, including DCFTA’ (ibidem, p. 3). This discourse on pragmatism corresponds with the concept of the openness of borders which is understood as a malleable structure being responsive to changes (Delanty, 2006); only technical details such as trading and visa were emphasized.

Another discursive construction of Europeanness concerns with economic freedoms. Füle (2010) highlighted that many of the ENP countries were ‘obvious trading partners’ due to geographic proximity as he addressed what Eastern Partnership meant for EU businesses. Technicalities of the progress of Ukraine as Eastern partner were explicitly re-stated such as trade liberalisation and the visa dialogue (Füle, Address to AFET Committee, 2010). The proposal of the DCFTA and the enhanced co-operation in different sectors from public health to the environment (ibidem), as well as the illustration of reforms’ technical details and cooperation substantiated the characteristics of Europeanness throughout the period of Eastern Partnership. With the establishment of the European External Action Service enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, more interested-oriented approaches were mentioned in the EaP including the importance of taking a small leap in order to gain immediate and tangible benefits, as well as the financial contribution from other European financial institutions. The implications of ‘going further’ were that there would be more financial support for further Europeanisation if more reforms were envisaged by the Ukrainian government. Hence, the EU’s action orientation of giving financial incentives to the EaP countries to implement reforms was conditioned by the pre-existing discourse on democratic legitimacy during the ENP period.

The discursive constructions of Europe and Ukraine in terms of Europeanness changed from democratic values and political interests to technicalities of reforms and economic interests whereas the EU changed its action orientation from the ENP to EaP. These discursive constructions showed that the European hard and open borders predominated its soft (cultural) and close (territorial or civilizational) borders. The open structure of European external borders defined the meanings of Europeanness through technical talks between the EU and a non-EU third country.

During this period, pragmatism and economic freedom were the main discursive constructions of Europeanness; the former referred to the adoption of EU laws and regulations, while the latter referred to partial access of European Single Market for the EU neighbours. Both of the discursive constructions legitimised the EU’s emphasis on technical requirements of EU neighbours to envisage reforms in order to gain economic benefits as incentives.

5.2.2. EASTNESS

Considering the Eastern Partnership was about technicalities and economic freedom as mentioned above, there were similar patterns observed regarding Europe’s temporal and spatial Others, and the

juxtapositions of EU values as the discursive constructions of Ukraine's Eastness. After the political and economic reforms envisaged during 2004-08, Ukraine's values were no longer referred to the post-Soviet legacy of political practices including corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism; Eastness was addressed as the deficiency of Europeanness which conditioned the EU to institutionalize this deficiency and tailor-make reform agenda with each Eastern Partnership country. The spatial and temporal Otherings were discursively constructed as Russia's East and the fall of Berlin Wall; the former envisaged policies on the sphere of interest rejected by the EU while the latter depicted the opposite of construction of European external borders as there was no need for new political walls in Europe to replace the Berlin Wall (Rehn, 2009).

The institutionalisation of the deficiency of Europeanness meant that the EaP was set up in order to address the political and economic shortcomings of all EaP countries with a specific focus; the new instruments dedicated to EaP countries only existed due to the lack of Europeanness in different aspects. For instance, Štefan Füle, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, stated that 'we should capitalise on the attractiveness of our regulatory environment and expand the area where EU rules are applied' (2010, p. 2). While the EaP programme was presented as an option, this instrument defined the relations between the EU and these EaP countries. "The further partners can go with their political and economic reform the further the EU will respond through enhanced political association and further economic integration' (ibidem). In this sense, Eastness was not a mere recessive characteristic which was defined by Europe as the moral leader on human rights, democracy and the rule of law; quite the contrary, as the case of Ukraine suggested, the progress of Europeanness and the decline of Eastness were up to Ukraine's commitment to adhere these values to "ultimately define how close the EU and Ukraine come together (Füle, 2010)".

The discursive constructions of Eastness as spatial and temporal Otherings of Europe changed partially. On one hand, the European external borders were constructed as what was opposite against the Berlin Wall; on the other hand, Russia's policy on the sphere of interest was constructed as the juxtaposition of what European integration meant. "We don't need new political walls in Europe to replace the walls of concrete that fell 20 years ago. This would go against everything the EU stands for. That is why our new Eastern Partnerships, e.g. with Ukraine, are so important in bringing these countries closer to the EU and refusing any spheres of interest" (Rehn, 2009). The remark on 'Russia's return to a policy of sphere of interest in Eastern Europe'(ibidem) confronted the EU's

previous discourse on Eastness during the initial ENP period(2004-08) when the EaP was not yet instrumentalised. In other words, instead of categorising all Eastern Partnership countries as the full possession of the Eastness, the EU's reckoning of "Eastness" was, therefore, Russia.

During the Eastern Partnership period, Eastness was discursively constructed as the deficiency of Europeanness which bordered Russia as the spatial and temporal Other. This construction legitimised the EU to implement the Eastern Partnership programme to the post-Soviet countries surrounding the EU, thereby making these post-Soviet countries more Europeanised at the expense of Eastness.

5.2.3. BORDER

The European hard, soft and closed borders were the main dimensions of discursive constructions during 2009-11. While the hard borders and the logic of closure (Delanty, 2003) excluded Eastern Partnership countries to be part of 'proper Europe', the discourse on soft borders categorised post-Communist and post-Soviet countries to be part of the same 'civilizational constellation' (ibidem, p.14) as they both shared the history of the fall of Berlin Wall while they were under the rule of totalitarian regimes. The hard border was constructed within the same civilizational constellation as the EU post-Communist countries bordered with non-EU post-Soviet countries.

The construction of European external border emphasized more on the existing institutional borders between the EU and Ukraine as a non-EU country, albeit its categorization as 'European country' in cultural terms. "We seek to offer Ukraine and other countries close to our eastern borders new kinds of support, including in the field of energy...Ukraine will be a major player in the multilateral track of the partnership" (Ferrero-Waldner B. , 2009). In this vein, Europe's external borders with Ukraine was explicit in terms of the hard institutional border. Štefan Füle (2010) highlighted that the EU and Ukraine share four common borders physically, and this geographical condition gave ground to why 'the EU and Ukraine are enormously important to each other' (ibidem) and the mutual interest that drove the 'natural and inevitable dynamic' in EU-Ukraine relations. But the emphasis of the existing institutional borders was not equivalent to the permanent external borders of Europe.

While the permanent borders have yet been set, the discursive construction of European soft borders was manifested by the historical parallel drawn between the Central and Eastern European countries and Ukraine, including Eastern Partnership countries into part of the European cultural borders

through shared history. “Coming out from the Curtain, this was the magnetic pull that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe responded to when they chose to join the EU...many of our Eastern neighbours—from Ukraine to the Southern Caucasus—have the same ambition to join one day” (Rehn, 2009). This recognition of historical similarities between Central and Eastern European countries as well as the EaP countries gives room to facilitate the openness of European external borders through identifying the sameness between part of the EU and all EaP countries. “The European Union has undergone extraordinary changes in the past 20 years. Its membership has enlarged beyond recognition to include countries from South, Central and Eastern Europe” (Füle, 2010). On the other hand, Füle again referred to the historical moment ‘as the Iron Curtain opened, a whole new set of difficult questions were revealed, to be faced by governments, civil society and citizens in both the East and the West...reforms were needed first and how they could be implemented legitimately and effectively’ (The European Union and Eastern Europe: Post-Crisis Rapprochement?, 2010).

As the European cultural borders included the Eastern Partnership countries through similarities of historical narratives, the closure of European external border, however, drew upon different ‘civilizational constellations’ (Delanty, 2003, p. 14); the differentiation of Europeanness and Eastness was constructed as the boundary between former-Soviet countries which were ruled under totalitarianism and the EU countries under democracies. The close European border with the East was constructed when Finland joined the EU in 1995. The EU downplayed the geographical location of Eastern Europe even though Europe’s past was constructed as a divisive Other which the Iron Curtain existed while the Europe at present does not distinguish where Eastern Europe starts and where it ends. Instead, Eastness was defined as the cultural, economic and political differences between the EU countries and its neighbours which struggled to reform. Following the logic of closure, this definition implies an unambiguous border between ‘proper Europe’ and ‘Eastern Europe’.

This section also highlighted the European hard, soft and closed borders as three dimensions of the discursive constructions during the Eastern Partnership period; the hard borders were constructed as non-permanent existing institutional borders, the soft borders were constructed as the shared history between Central and Eastern European countries and Eastern European countries, and the closed borders were constructed as different sides of the Iron Curtain. In this sense, the construction of hard borders gave room for changes of institutional borders, the soft borders legitimised the EU

enlargement process , and the close borders conditioned the reforms in EaP countries to narrow down the differences between the EU and its EaP neighbours in cultural, economic and political terms.

5.3. ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT/ DEEP AND COMPREHENSIVE FREE TRADE AREA (2012-16)

5.3.1. EUROPEANNESS

Moral leadership and economic development were the main discursive constructions of Europeaness during 2012-16. The former concerns Ukraine's progress as the most Europeanized Eastern Partnership country which set an example for the rest of them, legitimizing the Association Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova; the latter emphasizes one of the main distinctive features to be 'European' is to enjoy economic prosperity as the case of Poland showed the merits of implementing necessary EU laws and regulations.

The discourse on moral leadership was seen from how Europe positioned itself as the role model of modernity in the face of the ENP countries. "Ukraine will have our support in order not to deviate from its choice for long-term modernity and highest political and legal standards" (Füle, 2012). Europe's role as a moral leader could be seen from the case of Ukraine as it also became another example for other Eastern European countries to follow its progress. "Ukraine has been a pilot case for solutions adopted later by other Eastern European Partners. For example, it was the first country to begin negotiations of the Association Agreement and to start implementing the Visa Liberalization Action Plan" (Füle, 2014), thereby showing the trait of being the moral leader of other non-EU neighbours which were put into the same category by the EU.

Europeaness also assumed the superiority of Europe over its periphery. As EU positioned itself as the point of reference of solidarity and human rights, its engagement with the neighbourhood countries was not merely a choice but out of necessity. The degree of Europeaness referred to the extent which Europe helped fulfil the potential for holistic development of citizens in Eastern Europe, but not the US as a global power. "Europe must take its responsibilities in its own neighbourhood even more proactively. We should not count on others, from other continents, to solve our problems. If we want to demonstrate that the EU matters in the world, surely it is in our own backyard that we must begin" (Hahn, European Neighbourhood Policy Review, 2015). The discourse on moral leadership also coincided with Europeaness as a quality to be superior over Eastness.

The discourse on economic prosperity referred to how Europeanness could be converted into measurable material interests to attract Eastern European countries to be more Europeanized. Ukraine's past was temporally constructed as a version of Poland before accession in economic terms. It implied that even though Ukraine was categorized as part of 'Eastern Europe' and Poland was categorized as part of 'Central and Eastern Europe', the starting points for both countries were the same. Europe was discursively constructed as the transformative power which could project its values into its neighbouring countries. "Poland itself is a good example of transformational power that Association Agreements between the European Union and Central and Eastern European countries had, back in the 90ies, well before these countries' accession to the European Union...we believe the European past of Ukraine would bring progress of the kind that Europe has been able to support in countries like Poland" (Barroso, 2014). Europeanness as economic prosperity could also be seen from the EU's reference on the economic performances of Poland and Ukraine in the 90s. "The GDP of Poland and Ukraine at the beginning of the 90s was more or less the same. Then Poland concluded similar kind of agreement we are offering to our partners now, and in a couple of years the difference in GDP has changed four times on the side of Poland" (Füle, Priorities for EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries , 2014).

During the Association Agreement period, Europeanness was discursively constructed as moral leadership and economic development; the former referred to Ukraine as the most progressive Eastern European country which had the highest political and legal standards, while the latter referred to the economic prosperity of Central and Eastern European countries before they joined the EU. The construction of moral leadership legitimise the implementation of Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, whereas the construction of economic prosperity conditioned the EU to envisage closer economic ties with Ukraine, namely the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

5.3.2. EASTNESS

Russia as 'the East' and Europe's spatial Other were the discursive constructions of Eastness during 2012-16. The former concerns the mutual dependence between Russia and Ukraine in terms of Soviet legacy, while the latter emphasizes the EU enlargement process as a 'reunion' between the East and the West, in which the East did not refer to Russia but Eastern and Central Europe.

After two periods of Europeanisation (ENP during 2004-2008 and EaP during 2009-2011), Ukraine was still associated with the degree of Eastness it endowed during the Soviet period. Füle stated that ‘we are talking about the transformation of Eastern Europe and we are talking about a country, a region, where, not a long time ago— and we all here remember this- a totalitarian regime reigned, the Soviet totalitarian regime to be more precise’ (2012). Within this context, the Soviet legacy of Ukraine was not entirely replaced by the fact that it has been part of the ENP since 2004. While the instruments have been changed from the EaP to the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), Ukraine did not fully adhere to the European norms; the problems of selective justice, business climate and constitutional reforms which fell below the expectations of the EU. As the Ukrainian crisis broke out in 2014, there was a connotation between Ukraine’s Eastness as a EaP country and Russia’s Eastness as ‘the East’ due to its Soviet past like Ukraine, which showed the source of Eastness came from the Soviet past of Russia. “Ukraine needs Russia, and Russia needs Ukraine. Russia has a chance to become part of the efforts to bring stability and prosperity back to Ukraine, including being part of the coordinated international efforts to help Ukraine address its economic challenges” (Füle, 2014, p. 3).

The logic of spatial Othering applied when the discursive construction of Eastness referred to the imaginary space which were ruled by totalitarian regimes under the Iron Curtain. The EU enlargement process was justified as a ‘reunion’ between the East and West after being split for decades, as ‘the accession of countries in Central and Eastern Europe in 2004 united East and West after decades of artificial separation, contributing to overall stability and security’ (Füle, Copenhagen accession criteria: 20 years that changed Europe, 2013), whereas the EU stated that one should not ‘underestimate the difference between being part of the socialist camp and being part of the post-Soviet Union: you have a different starting point’ (Füle, 2013). The difference between EaP countries and Central and Eastern European countries was highlighted as ascending gradient of Eastness from the Eastness of the former Socialist Republics to the post-Soviet Republics.

Europe’s spatial Other as well as the mutual dependence between Russia and Ukraine were the discursive constructions of Eastness during the Association Agreement period; the former referred to a different version of ‘East’ which did not reunited with the EU’s ‘West’ during the enlargement process, while the latter referred to the common Soviet past between Russia and Ukraine. The construction of Europe’s spatial Other functioned to legitimise the fact that the Association

Agreement would not be the final destination in EU-Ukraine relations, whereas the mutual dependence conditioned the imposition of EU values towards Ukraine in terms of Ukrainian reforms.

5.3.3. BORDER

The predominant discursive construction of border concerns how the unambiguous European political borders would be permeable by the Eastern Partnership countries included in the European cultural borders with open structures. Considering these countries have been included in different dimensions of European external borders, the aforementioned discourses on Europeanness and Eastness during 2012-16 showed that the boundary-drawing practices of Othering Russia as “the East” brought the Eastern Partnership countries closer to the EU. The paradoxical element of European external borders was, then, how these political borders were legitimized if they contradicted all other dimensions of border constructions.

The hard political borders of Europe were not finalized but they were not softened to accommodate the advanced EaP countries either. “Ukraine’s European aspirations were ambitious and firm; that European integration will contribute to Ukraine’s reform and that its ultimate goal would be to belong to our family...I firmly believe that by strengthening its democracy, Ukraine can reach the ‘point of no return’ on its European Union path” (Füle, 2012). While the EU claimed that EU-Ukraine relations were the most advanced compared to the rest of the EaP countries, it expected that the “destination” of Ukraine would be the ‘European Union path’, paving the way for closer integration and association with the EU. The border existed, but it existed in the form of a hard political border which was only permeable for EU neighbour countries. In other words, the AA/DCFTA itself would not change the decision-making bodies of the EU, but this instrument would not exclude any possibility for the EaP countries with AA/DCFTA to apply for EU membership in the future.

The European soft and close borders were found to be mutually constitutive as shown by the discursive construction of Europe. The EU’s boundary-drawing practice against Russia was constructed between the EU’s AA/DCFTA and Russia’s Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Area as Štefan Füle stated that ‘joining any structure which would imply transferring your own ability to set tariffs and define your own trade policy to a supranational body—would mean that Ukraine would no longer be able to implement the tariff dismantling agreed with the European Union in the context of the DCFTA’ (Füle, 2013). It meant that EaP countries including Ukraine were free

to join other supranational structures as long as it did not contradict the Association Agreement, but Russia's Free Trade Area would be incompatible with the EU's DCFTA. The concept of the Russia's Free Trade Area, then, was mutually exclusive with that of the EU's AA/DCFTA. Therefore, Ukraine was constructed as a European country which was located within the European soft border as the EU expected it not to join Russia's Free Trade Area which was not considered to be 'European'.

The physical boundaries between Russia and the EU's EaP countries were constructed as the civilizational borders between Europe and non-Europe, thereby including the EaP countries into the same civilizational constellation with the post-Communist part of the EU. "Our Eastern Partnership policy and consensus on it ends on the borders of our Eastern neighbours with Russia" (Füle, 2014). The boundary-drawing practice did differentiate Russia and the rest of EU's Eastern Partners, yet it did not differentiate its policies towards these countries as it stated 'our policy vis-à-vis neighbours should be also a policy vis-à-vis neighbours of our neighbours' (Füle, 2014). Therefore, Russia's Customs Union was also seen by the EU as the boundary of Europe. "The Customs Union is a different project, from a different world" (Füle, 2014).

The construction of European open borders conditioned how the European hard borders should be placed as the AA/DCFTA was constructed to be the closest instrument to the enlargement process. "Some partners in the east are embarking on ambitious association and deep trade agreements – and, although the scope of these has by far not been exhausted, already aspire to more, even to the perspective of EU membership in the very long term" (Hahn, European Neighbourhood Policy: the way forward, 2015). The function of constructing the open borders similarly to that of the hard borders was to maintain the connectedness and groupness between 'proper Europe', post-Communist part of Europe and the post-Soviet EaP countries to constitute European collective identity through 'the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidarity group' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 20).

The European hard borders were discursively constructed to be more inclusive as shown by the reference of the enlargement policy as the 'most powerful transformative tool' (Füle, 2014, p. 2). "If we want to be serious about the European aspirations of a number of our partners, then we have to use the most powerful transformative tool the European Union has at its disposal" (Füle, Presentation to AFET committee, 2014). This discursive construction conditioned further integration through imposing Europeanness on the EaP countries, thereby affirming that the AA/DCFTA is not a final

goal in the EU-Ukraine cooperation (Füle, New Europe and enlargement in a new political context , 2014).

During the Association Agreement period, the open, closed, soft and hard natures of border were the discursive constructions of border. The open and hard borders referred to European political borders which became more inclusive towards the EaP countries through loosening the boundaries between widening and deepening aspects of European integration; the soft and closed borders referred to the differentiation between Russia and EaP countries as different civilizational constellations. The construction of open and hard borders conditioned further European integration of Ukraine which could go beyond the instruments of the Association Agreement, whereas the construction of soft and closed borders legitimise the EU to draw a permanent border between Russia and the EaP countries.

6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, three periods of the EU Commissioners' discourses on Europe—the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership and the Association Agreement (with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area)—were analysed in the case of Ukraine. Only the statements and speeches within 'European Neighbourhood policy and Enlargement negotiation' were analysed. The aim for such selection was to understand and explain the complexity of European external borders through on how the discursive construction of Europe was changed in terms of how 'Europeanness', 'Eastness' and 'border' were understood by the EU Commissioners throughout different periods of EU neighbourhood policy. The findings show that the European external borders are paradoxical due to their dynamics among openness, closure, hard and soft affect the completion of construction of European permanent borders; the formation of European collective identity contradicts the very idea of the construction of European hard borders due to the constant changes of gradients of Europeanness and Eastness amongst EU and non-EU countries which are located in Europe in geographical terms.

The discursive constructions of Europeanness were changed from political practices based on values including the rule of law, human rights and democracy throughout the European Neighbourhood Policy to European integration based on effective political reforms and economic development during the implementation of Association Agreement. During the first selected timeframe (2004-08), the case of Ukrainian presidential election scandal (Ferrero-Waldner B. , Situation in Ukraine, 2004) was constructed as the need for political stability in order to stabilize Europe's political borders within the

discourse on political stability in Europe; another discursive construction of Europeanness was about democratic legitimacy following the trajectory of post-enlargement EU which conditioned the construction of different gradients of being European at the expense of Eastness. These discursive constructions changed as the ENP was transformed into a regional-oriented instrument with an Eastern perspective to envisage political and economic reforms during the second selected period of analysis; technocracy was much emphasized for institution building and adoption of EU laws and regulations, while economic freedom was stressed for EaP countries to partially integrate with the European single market as the European open border. These pre-existing discourses then conditioned the Association Agreement to focus on mostly about moral leadership and economic development during the period of 2012 to 2016. The discursive construction of Europeanness as moral leadership was evidently shown by the case of Ukraine that it was the most advanced country which set an example for all Eastern Partnership countries (Füle, 2014); on the other hand, the Association Agreement was constructed as the prerequisite of economic prosperity which would bring financial benefits to the EaP countries once the necessary reforms had been implemented.

As conceptually defined in the section of 'Eastness and Eastern Europe', Eastness is the opposite end of the continuum of Europeanness (Kuus, 2007), therefore the discursive constructions of Eastness also corresponded to those of Europeanness during the selected periods for analysis (2004-16). During the first period of ENP, Europe's spatial Other was constructed as the non-EU countries surrounding the EU which did not fully endow Europeanness to delineate themselves from Russia; on the other hand, Europe's temporal Other was constructed as post-war Europe which European integration was much in need so as to give necessary conditions for the action orientation of EU's neighbouring countries to integrate with proper Europe through political and economic reforms. As the reforms progressed, the discursive constructions of Europe's temporal and spatial Others as well as the juxtapositions of EU values were manifested by addressing the deficiency of Europeanness, rejection of 'sphere of interest' (Rehn, 2009, p. 2), as well as the fall of Berlin Wall. These constructions no longer concerned the political practices in sense of the Soviet legacy, but were rather about the institutionalisation of the deficiency of Europeanness for implementing a tailor-made reform agenda for each EaP country. In the same vein, the discursive constructions of Eastness were, subsequently, Russia as the East' and Europe's spatial Other in terms of the 'reunion' between proper Europe and Eastern and Central Europe. Russia was explicitly referred to 'the East' which conditioned Ukraine's Eastness as both countries were mutually dependent (Füle, 2014).

Influenced by the differentiation of different gradients of Europeanness and Eastness, the discursive constructions of border mostly concern the dynamics of openness and closure versus those of hard and soft borders in all three periods analysed above. The first period (2004-08) mainly focused on the natures of widening and deepening European integration based on the EU political institutions as hard borders and territorial borders which served to protect EU citizens. As the discursive constructions of Europeanness and Eastness emphasized more on technical details and institutionalization, they conditioned the 'logic of closure' (Delanty, 2003) of European external borders to exclude Eastern Partnership countries from being part of 'proper Europe', while post-Communist EU countries and post-Soviet neighbourhood countries were discursively constructed to be within the same 'civilizational constellation' (ibidem, p. 14). The last period (2012-16) showed some significant changes of discursive constructions of border as conditioned by those of Europeanness and Eastness; the hard borders were softened as they intertwined with the cultural and civilizational borders along with the open structure which included Ukraine to be the post-Communist part of Europe. It was shown explicitly as the Association Agreement was not the final destination of EU-Ukraine relations (Füle, 2014); the differentiation of different degrees of Eastness between the former Socialist republics and the former Soviet republics did not essentialise the European external borders either (Füle, 2013).

To this end, it is concluded that the major difference between the European open borders and hard borders has been blurred since the introduction of the Association Agreement; while the EU decision-making bodies may not anticipate further changes regardless of the progress of political and economic reforms implemented by the EaP countries which signed the AA/DCFTA, the tangible outcomes of the Agreement are not less attractive than the financial benefits of joining the EU and this minor difference would not change the EU-Ukraine relations fundamentally. The issue of the paradox of European external borders remains after the ratification of AA/DCFTA, as Ukraine has been categorized as the same civilizational constellation' as the post-Communist EU countries, but this mode of inclusion only makes Ukraine 'partially European' but not 'fully European', thereby contradicting the self-identification of EU as the representative of Europe and hence the current state of play of EU Enlargement Process. However, the discursive construction of the EU's soft border did not seem to condition the production of meaning of 'Europe' significantly as the AA/DCFTA countries including Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have been recognized as European countries (Van der Loo, 2017).

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