The European Neighbourhood Policy: Democracy Outside or Security Within the EU? Narrative and Practice in the European Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract:

The end of the Cold War brought a new dynamic for the EU: it had to balance its development strategies regarding Democracy and Good Governance – especially regarding the CEE countries seeking membership – with the new security risks that had arisen as a result of Globalization – such as terrorism, transnational organized crime and migrations. The European Neighbourhood Policy encapsulate these two different dimensions within one policy. Built on three pillars – Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance, Economic Policy and JHA policy – the ENP was presented by the EU as a Europeanization strategy. However, a tension – or asymmetry – exists between the Narrative promoted by the Commission – that the ENP fosters Democratization and Good Governance – and EU practice within the ENP – much more centred in JHA policy and regional stability. This paper is informed by – and seeks to contribute to – approaches anchored on Social Constructivism and Discourse and Narrative Analysis, which is considered central in the study of EU Foreign Policy. As such, I seek to answer the question "What are the reasons for the asymmetry between the Narrative and the Practice within the EU?". Building on the relevant bibliography and on the analysis of the Action Plans, we will construct two hypotheses for explaining the asymmetry: either the deficiencies of the ENP and of the EU Foreign Policy architecture skewers the ENP towards JHA and Economic questions – in detriment of the normative objectives present in the Narrative –; or the Narrative and Practice have differing objectives and work symbiotically in order to pursue them – which means the asymmetry is natural and expectable.
This paper seeks to contribute to both the debate regarding the ENP – and to the wider debate of the International Actorness of the EU – as well as the debate on Discourses and Narratives in International Relations in general, and in EU Foreign Policy studies in particular.

Keywords: European Neighbourhood Policy; European Union; Discourse and Narrative Analysis; Social Constructivism; Democratization; Security.

Resumo
A Política Europeia de Vizinhança: Democracia fora ou segurança dentro da UE? Narrativa e prática na Política Europeia de Vizinhança

O fim da Guerra Fria trouxe consigo uma nova dinâmica para a União Europeia: equilibrar as suas estratégias de desenvolvimento em relação à Democracia e Boa Governança – especialmente no que diz respeito aos países da Europa Central e de Leste que procuraram a adesão – e os riscos securitários que haviam surgido enquanto resultado da Globalização – tal como terrorismo, crime transnacional organizado e migrações. A Política Europeia de Vizinhança (PEV) encapsulou estas duas dimensões numa só política. Construída sobre três pilares – Democracia, Direitos Humanos e Boa Governança, Política Económica e Política de Justice and Home Affairs *(JHA) – a PEV foi apresentada pela UE como uma estratégia de europeização. No entanto, uma tensão – ou assimetria – existe entre a narrativa promovida pela Comissão – a de que a PEV fomenta a Democratização e a Boa Governança – com a prática da UE em relação à PEV – muito mais centrada na política de JHA e na estabilidade regional. Este artigo é influenciado pelas – e procura contribuir para – as abordagens centradas no Construtivismo Social e na Análise de Discurso e de Narrativa, que são aqui consideradas centrais para o estudo da Política Externa da UE.*

Assim, procura-se responder à questão "Quais as razões para uma assimetria entre a narrativa e a prática da PEV?" Construídas sobre a leitura da literatura relevante e análise dos Action Plans, *serão propostas duas hipóteses explicativas: ou as deficiências da arquitetura da PEV e da Política Externa da UE enviesa a PEV em direção às questões económicas e de JHA – em detrimentos dos objetivos normativos apresentados pela narrativa – ou a narrativa e a prática têm objetivos diferentes e funcionam simbioticamente para a persecução desses objetivos – o que significa que a assimetria é natural e expectável.*
Este artigo procura contribuir para o debate acerca da PEV – e, em sentido lato, para o debate acerca da actorness *da UE dentro das relações internacionais –, assim como para o debate sobre discursos e narrativas nas Relações Internacionais no geral, e no estudo da Política Externa UE em particular.*

Palavras-chave: *Política Europeia de Vizinhança; União Europeia; Análise de Discurso e de Narrativa; Construtivismo Social; Democratização; Segurança.*

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Introduction

Many scholarly works are eager to note how the EU's Foreign Policy is ineffective, that it lacks the necessary instruments or political cohesion and political will to work effectively. Some note how the EU's action inevitably falls short of the stated goals, how the EU isn't capable of meeting the expectations set by itself. This type of work – commendable as it may be – is pervasive in scholarly circles. Much rarer – though not at all unheard of – is the focus on the discourse or narrative nature of European Foreign Policy. Discourse Analysis – as understood in Social Constructivism – isn't new in International Relations, but it is seldom applied to conceptualizations of European international actorness or European Foreign Policy. Larsen (2004) argues for a greater discursive approach to EU Foreign Policy, and this is the line of inquiry of this paper. As such, this works functions as both a discursive approach to EU Foreign Policy, but also as a critique of EU Foreign Policy practice

This paper will focus on the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is understood as a central policy and instrument in European Foreign Policy. Authors commonly notice a tension between the normative dimensions of the ENP – Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance promotion – and its more *realpolitik* elements – mainly its Justice & Home Affairs dimension. This makes for fertile terrain in which to study the asymmetry between the Europeanization Narrative – focused on the EU as a central character in the democratization of the wider neighbourhood – and the EU's practice in regards to the ENP – apparently more attuned to JHA questions.

The objectives of this paper are triple-fold: to shine a light on the main question – that of the Asymmetry between Narrative and Practice; to argue for a greater focus on the concepts of discourse and narrative in EU Foreign Policy, and of discourse and narrative analysis as an approach to EU Foreign Policy; and finally to advocate for the continuation and betterment of the study of the European Neighbourhood Policy, as a pivotal policy and instrument in the affirmation of the EU in the international stage.

The paper is divided thus: the first overarching section focuses on the Discourse and Narrative components of the paper, and is composed of two parts. The first of these parts (1.1) is on the legacy of Social Constructivism in IR and European Studies, with a great focus on discourse and narrative analysis; this section is purely theoretical and its focus is to lay the groundwork for the following section. The second part (1.2) focuses on the idea of Europe as a Normative Actor and, more importantly, on the concept of Europeanization and of Narrative of Europeanization. This part conceptualizes and defines Narrative of Europeanization. The second overarching section of the paper is on EU Foreign Policy Practice, and is composed of four parts. The first (2.1), is on the EU Foreign Policy and its architecture; the second (2.2) is

on the Europeanization of the Central and Eastern European Countries before the 2004 and 2007 enlargement; the third (2.3) in on the ENP, its origins; the fourth (2.4) is on why the ENP is a failure when compared to CEE Europeanization. These two sections are functionally independent from which other, as they focus on the two different parts of the binary relation established by the main question – Narrative vs. Practice – independently from each other. The third part joins Narrative and Practice, in order to understand the asymmetry and build hypotheses for why there is one.

1. Narrative

1.1. Social Constructivism, Discourse and Narrative Analysis

Social Constructivism was born within the Social Sciences – namely Sociology, influenced by structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy – and was transported to International Relations by a group of young scholars in the 90s, opening new avenues of inquiry and approaches within IR (Brown & Ainley, 1997). One of the central arguments of Constructivism is that the social world is accessible only through our ways of categorizing it (Larsen, 2004). Human knowledge is "historically and culturally specific" (Larsen, 2004, p. 64) – it is the product of the historical process and individual experiences of each culture – and as such similar contexts can lead to different actions. In the study of Politics, it's of particular importance to know that each actor's interests are shaped by their understanding and perception of the World surrounding them.

Of the approaches proposed by the Constructivists – as well as by Critical Theorists – this paper is especially indebted to their focus on: discourse, through which we can understand how actors construct meaning of what surrounds them; identity, central in understanding actor's actions; and the power relations between actors, and the way in which they are constructed and performed – mainly through discursive acts. Indeed, the study of discourse – and the interrelated concept of identity – is not new. Philosophy – both Continental and Analytical – has been preoccupied with Discourse since the early 20th Century. The basis for this preoccupation is in wanting to understand how we, Humans, create meaning and perceive the social world around us. It is present not only in the Philosophy of Language – where it takes centre-stage –, but also in inquiries on the meaning of life – as Camus (1945: 49) said "What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms" – and the sociological investigations of Foucault, and other structuralist and post-structuralist philosophers. Foucault's concept of *"Discours"*

– focusing on the relation between discourse and power – has been particularly influential in the study of politics (Larsen, 2004; Lynggaard, 2019)

Milliken (1999), in her seminal article on discourse in International Relations, defines the three key theoretical claims of Discourse Analysis in IR. The first is that discourses are systems of representation, as understood by mainstream Constructivism – "a concept of discourse as structures of representation which construct social realities" (Milliken, 1999, p. 229). Second, in what Milliken calls "Discourse Productivity" (Milliken, 1999, p. 229), discourse produces objects and subjects, constructing ways of acting towards the world, while excluding other possible visions:

> "(…) discourses are understood to work to define and enable, and also to silence and exclude (…) some groups, but not others, endorsing a certain common sense, but making other modes of categorizing and judging meaningless, impractical, inadequate or otherwise disqualified" (Milliken, 1999, p. 229).

So, if discourse can construct "true" visions or ways of acting in the World, while excluding others, then Discourse Analysis should focus on "dominating or hegemonic discourses, and their structuring of meaning" (Milliken, 1999, p. 230). The third assumption is that discourses are "changeable and historically contingent" (Larsen, 2004, p. 67), requiring constant work and articulation in order not to lose their power.

From the idea of Discourse, emerges the idea of Narrative. Narratives are, as understood in International Relations, the overlap of different political discourses (Ni oiu, 2013), utilized to justify or sustain political decisions. Whereas discourse analysis is preoccupied with the way in which language constructs – and constrains – social reality (Milliken, 1999; Larsen 2004; Ni oiu, 2013; Willig, 2014), narrative analysis is mainly preoccupied with the structure, form, function and articulation of the stories individuals or communities tell themselves about the world around them (Willig, 2014). Narratives – more so than discourses – tend to have an imbued sense of History, meaning that their construction is based on the perception a community has of its History. Furthermore, narratives can only be constructed on the bases of hegemonic discourses – "Only those discourses that are institutionalized and enacted have the potential to create such widely shared narratives" (Ni oiu, 2013, p. 242).

Both discourse and narratives are – as alluded to before – of a fluid nature. As Laclau and Mouffe (in Ni oiu, 2013, p. 242) put it "neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible". Indeed, it is argued discourses can only be partially fixed: a crystallization of discourse is impossible, as discourse is a living thing, that has "spaces for change, discontinuity, and variation" (Jones & Clark, 2008, p. 549); but

complete discontinuity or change negates the existence of a hegemonic discourse or narrative. The power of a narrative or discourse is precisely in its capacity to adapt and change to the circumstances, without reneguing its core values or ideas – and in this way the core power structures that support and are supported by the discourse don't change. What this can create, though, is certain "rhetorical entrapments" (Ni oiu, 2013, p. 242), where actors see their action constrained by their previous acceptance of discourses or narratives – and their practical outcomes – when these neither reflect nor match the current social or political context – and when actors act in accordance to the current situations and not the narratives they have accepted, this can create a certain dissonance, or asymmetry, between what is said and what is put to practice.

Discourse analysis in European studies has asserted itself in recent times, though its focus is seldom placed on EU Foreign Policy – its more common for discursive approaches to look at the European integration process. Lynggaard (2019) outlines four[1] schools of thought regarding discourse analysis in relations to the EU. The first is the Copenhagen School, which has its point of departure in International Relations and Security Studies. Truly, its great focus is on the concept of securitization – the discursive process by which threats are created – and by extension, focuses also on politization and de-politization; but apart from that, this line of thought puts focus on how national perceptions of self – that is, of the concept of nation – relate to concepts of Europe, and how that relationship shapes policy regarding European Integration. Secondly, there is the governance school, which approaches the EU as a "a complex web of interaction by territorially as well as functionally different actors" (Diez, 2001, in Lynggaard, 2019, p. 7). This approach focuses on the structural side of discourse – influenced by Foucault – and/or on discursive agency – influenced by Habermas. The great interest of the governance school is in how the EU is legitimized. Thirdly, Critical Discourse Analysis is differentiated, mainly, by its critical part:

> "(…) in addition to uncovering the causes and consequences of discursive constructs, CDA evaluates these constructs against value scales of what is just and legitimate, thereby challenging the current state of affairs and aiming to develop strategies for progression" (Lynggaard, 2019, p. 7).

1 In the book, Lynggaard enunciates five schools of thought: the Copenhagen school, the governance school, critical discourse analysis, frame analysis and discursive institutionalism. This paper disregards discursive institutionalism as it is, in Lynggaard's words "more than anything a continuation of the governance school" (Lynggaard, 2019, p. 8).

They draw from the Frankfurt School and Gramsci, and focus on the power of hegemonic discourse. Finally, we have what Lynggaard (2019) calls "Frame analysis": these are the studies that are not formulated as discourse analysis, but are influenced by this approach – they focus, for example, on the ideational dimension of politics, public opinion or political communication.

While this paper doesn't subscribe to any one school, it is influenced by both the governance school and critical discourse analysis – and the conceptualizations put forth of Discourse/Narrative and Discourse/Narrative Analysis would attest to it. The double focus put on the power of discourse – that is, in its structure – and the impact of hegemonic discourses – in the case of this paper, the Narrative of Europeanization – will let us contrast the EU's discourse with the political reality, extracting from it the asymmetry between narrative and practice.

Schmidt (2008, in Ni oiu, 2013, p. 242) argues that there are two types of discourses that "intersect and give birth to narratives": the first is Coordinative Discourse, the second is Communicative Discourse; their great difference is the public addressed and their locus. Coordinative discourse is an "insider" discourse: it takes place within institutions and it's addressed to actors who have power and/or knowledge, in order to gain their support for whatever decision one is advocating for; shared-ideas and values are key in this discourse. Communicative discourse emanates from within the institutions, but it's addressed to the wider public, aimed at convincing the public of the necessity of certain policy or political decision. Both types of discourse have a top-down approach, and coordinative discourse has a more central role in the construction of foreign policy narratives – as would be expected from such an elite and State-drive policy area (Ni oiu, 2013)[2].

Summarizing, discourse is defined as "both the process and the background through which ideas and social practices become created, institutionalized and reified" (Ni oiu, 2013, p. 241), while narratives are the articulation of hegemonic discourses that are, simultaneously, the reflection of an actor's self-perception and the justification or sustenance of an actor's action; the analysis of both leads to the

2 Ni oiu (2013) argues that there is another type of discourse that influences the construction of EU Foreign Policy Narratives, and one this paper finds worthy of mentioning: the discourse produced by the academia on the EU Foreign Policy. Larsen (2020, p. 962) states: "There is an increasing interest in the social sciences in the ways in which the theoretical concepts actively employed in research and politics contribute to making the objects they are studying. This development has been dubbed the performative turn (Giesen, 2006). It is based on a view of theory as constitutive: theories are not simply neutral observations of a given reality but are involved in the construction of that reality". Although it is alluded to throughout the paper, and this line of inquiry is especially needed within EU Foreign Policy, it is neither the scope nor the objetive of this paper to investigate, though it enconrages this wide-ranging conversation on the study how theoretical and other academic work influences the objects of their studies..

uncovering of how an actor constructs its identity, how discourse and narratives shape – and maintain – power relations, and the way in which actors use discourse and narratives to justify their practices. Within the study of EU, one finds a wide-array of discursive approaches, though most that focus on Foreign Policy note the discourse is created – much like the policy – in a top-down, elite-driven approach.

1.2. Europe as a Normative Power and the Narrative of Europeanization

Although Constructivism had a great impact in IR in general – after all, it is the only other Theory that is capable of rivalling with the two mainstream theories, Liberalism and Realism –, its impact on the study of European Foreign Policy – or of Europe as an International Actor – has been more limited. In spite of that, Larsen (2004) points out that the discursive approach to EU Foreign Policy and Actorness is not new, although it wasn't done with total awareness of the fact. Larsen (2004, p. 68) argues that "to ask what kind of actor is constructed, including what kind of values are articulated as an inherent component of actorness" is to have a discursive approach, and this is something that has been done since the early 70s. This approach is indeed Constructivist in nature, and inherently discursive. If discourse is at the heart of identity construction, this is even more true when analysing the EU International Character – its reliance in diplomacy over hard power-adjacent instruments, and the normative bases with which it builds its identity means that discourse has a bigger role than concrete actions in analysing the International Character of the EU.

In this section we look to the way in which the European Union has been conceptualized as a global actor and then focus on Europeanization, always anchored on a discursive/narrative approach to the concepts.

So, the study of the European Union as an International Actor has fascinated scholars since the 70s, with the emergence of the first debates on the EU's actorness outside its borders, and its character as an international actor. From the beginning, the idea of the EU as a fundamentally different actor within the International System took centre stage, particularly if we situate the debate within the Cold War. When compared to the military and geopolitical competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, one could not look at the European Communities and think of it as just another conventional actor. Moreover, the European Communities were a new type of actor – neither a state nor just a regional organization – which needed conceptualizing.

François Duchêne was the first to argue, in 1972, that the European Communities were a Civil Power, anchored on its economic and diplomatic power, though lacking military might (Manners, 2002). Duchêne not only suggested this conceptualization

but also defended that the main goal for the European Communities should be to strengthen its claim to being a Civil Power in the International System – to construct an identity separate from those of other actors (Manners, 2002). Hedley Bull would take umbrage with this concept, arguing that if Europe wanted to be an effective actor in the international arena, economic and diplomatic power would not suffice (Manners, 2002). Bull took a more Realist approach – even if he wasn't a proponent of Realist Theory –, arguing of an increase in military power, as well as an internal reorientation – more power to Germany, more involvement from France and a change of attitude from the UK – were needed for the European Communities to achieve effective actorness in the international stage.

Although this was just the first big debate on the Europe's character as an international actor, it showed many of the tendencies that would mark the continuation of the debate: the contrast between economic and military power, the suggestion of Europe as a *sui generis* actor, the Liberal hegemony over this debate – paired with a general disinterest from Realists – and the normative insights and recommendations from the authors. The last tendency is particularly interesting, because even then – as is now – authors seemed less interested in explaining or problematizing what Europe was, but on what is should strive to become. Underpinning all of this is the centrality of identity – which is why such exercises are constructivist in nature. This isn't something one can find so much in Bull's proposition: his argument is for the European Communities to become another actor like the others, not a unique one. From Duchêne's perspective – as well as the many who took him as an inspiration to this day – identity is key; the lack of military means aren't a restrain for the exercise of actorness, but rather a constitutive part of the European Communities identity, which would be focused on its economic and diplomatic power and, therefore, on the values that underpin them: peace, cooperation and democracy. Ian Manners (2002) would take this a step further.

The most influential conceptualization of the EU as an International actor is Manner's (2002) contribution to the debate, with the concept of Normative Power Europe. Manners (2002) argues that the EU builds its external action not on strategic, political or economic interests, but in accordance to its values – such as respect for Democracy, Human Rights and International Law and norms. The main argument is that, due to its historical process[3] and the leadership of elites

3 First, the context in which it emerged: the European Communities were born after the deadliest war in History – one which saw unprecedent violence and atrocities ravaging Europe – making values such as peace, human rights and democracy central in the European identity. Secondly, the hybrid nature of the EU – both a supranational and an intergovernmental organization – leads it to lean on what unites all Member-States, which are the commonly held values and norms. Thirdly, the process of European Integration was consecrated through treaties and laws that upheld the European Constitutional values, such as democracy, protection of human rights, good governance, etc… making these values central in the European Integration Process. In Manners (2002).

with shared ideals, the EU is "normatively different from other polities" (Manners, 2002, p. 241), and is willing to act solely according to the values it upholds – while never instrumentalizing its values to further the political or economic interests of its Member-States. As such, the EU is willing to use its considerable economic and normative power – the legitimacy that other countries recognize in the EU's norms and values – to further an essentially normative agenda (Haukkala, 2008). At the centre of the Normative Agenda sits the concept of Europeanization.

Europeanization is a flexible concept. Olsen (2002) describes different meanings for this concept: it can mean the expansion of the European Union through the enlargement process; the development of European Institutions; the penetration of European governance in national political systems; the process of exportation of norms and values to non-EU spaces; or a project of European Unification. Simultaneously, we can differentiate Europeanization based on its geography: the Europeanization of Member-States, of Accession Countries and of the Neighbourhood (Börzel T., 2010). Since the focus of this investigation is on the European Neighbourhood Policy and on Europe as a Normative Actor, our working definition of Europeanization is the export – or dissemination – of European values, norms and forms of Governance to non-EU spaces. Going a step further, to Europeanize is to transform non-EU spaces into European spaces. This conceptualization has two very clear caveats, which constitute central parts of the Narrative of Europeanization.

First, to be transformed into a "European space" does not mean EU Membership. There is, as been said before, a differentiation between Accession/Candidate and Neighbourhood countries in regards to their Europeanization. The success of an Accession/Candidate country leads to Membership – the biggest reward possible; on the other hand, being a part of the Neighbourhood almost precludes any hope of becoming a member. To be a Neighbour is to be outside of one's home, it's to be an "Other" differentiated from the "We" – the EU recognizes the Neighbourhood as what lies outside of its possible future borders. Candidate countries – most notably the Western Balkans – aren't part of the "Neighbourhood" for the EU, and as such aren't part of the ENP. This preclusion of membership means that the final rewards for a successful Europeanization is rather limited, and as such Europeanizing the Neighbourhood is much harder.

The second caveat to our definition, is what constitutes "Europe". The geographical borders of Europe have always been hard to define – and the European Union has had problems defining them, as the Turkish membership question showed. Furthermore, Europe has always been more of an idea – a culture, a history, a set of values – than a geographical unit (Steiner, 2004). So, if Europeanizing means transforming something into Europe what does "Europe" mean? In this context, the answer is unassumingly easy: it's what the European Union says it is. The EU

has a singular discursive hegemony over the concept of Europe – the reason why this paper can alternate freely between "European Foreign Policy" and "EU Foreign Policy" is because there is a shared understanding, even if it is erroneous, that Europe and the EU are the same thing. The metonymic relation between the two terms is notorious because it gives the EU the opportunity – and power – to shape the definition of Europe to its own image. Accordingly, being a European state is intrinsically connected to a particular geography, but also to the values that the EU champions: Liberal democracy, protection of human rights, good governance, peace and cooperation. In this regard, being part of the Neighbourhood means not being a "real" European state. This is not problematic for the Southern flank of the Neighbourhood – no one would mistake the Maghreb for Europe –, but it is for the Eastern Partnership. Ukraine and Moldova – Belarus inhabits a wholly different dimension – aren't regarded in the same way as Switzerland and Norway – even if none are EU Member-States. This is because they don't fit in the concept of Europe as well: they are former Soviet Republics and they have weak democracies, rampant corruption and internal conflicts[4]. The Caucasus States are even more problematic because of their contested geographical connections to Europe as well as their worse normative standing[5].

This analysis draws directly from a Derridean approach in which discourses are constructed in terms of binary oppositions (Milliken, 1999). The binary relation in the narrative of Europeanization is the European Union on one side and the Neighbourhood countries on the other; going further, there are other constitutive binary relations within the narrative: Westerns/Non-Western, Developed/Underdeveloped, Democratic/Authoritarian and, in regards to discourse and the diffusion of values and norms, Legitimate/Illegitimate. This structuring is not neutral; the two parts of this binary relations are not equal in terms of discourse (Milliken, 1999). So, even if it is true that the European Union has more power than the Neighbourhood countries – something that is unquestionable –, the discursive practices within the Europeanization Narrative establishes a relation of power which privileges and legitimizes the EU's actions. Discursively, the EU doesn't only

4 This hasn't always been the case, of course. But as of today, both Ukraine and Moldova have ongoing conflicts: the Crimean and Donbass War in Ukraine, and the protracted frozen conflict of Transnistria in Moldova.

5 Not only are the Caucasus States less democratic – Azerbaijan is an Authoritarian State, while Georgia and Armenia are hybrid regimes (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020) –, they are also some of the States with the highest levels of state corruption (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011). Moreover, most post-Soviet conflicts are within this area: Artsakh – formerly known as Nagorno-Karabakh –, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

have more power than, but actually has power over the Neighbourhood countries. This is the basis for the Europeanization Narrative, which has two central elements: the first is the promotion of European values, as understood and constructed by the EU; the second is the EU as its protagonist, mainly through the Commission:

> "The European Commission's pivotal role in these discursive components, highlighting specifically the ways in which it carefully defines and delimits external situations for European intervention, produces systems of signification to render meaningful and appropriate this intervention, and deploys a suite of tactics to ensure the survival of Europeanisation discourses that it has brokered among EU Member States" (Jones & Clark, 2008, p. 568).

This is the great differentiator of this narrative from others: the crucial point is not only that the EU wants to Europeanize – the diffusion of its values by whatever political instruments that are available – other countries, but also that the EU is central in this practice – it is privileged in the binary terms of the narrative. The EU is, under the qualities it gives itself through the Europeanization Narrative, uniquely capable of transmitting its values and norms to others; all the while, within the same narrative, the Neighbourhood Countries, by themselves, are seen as uncapable and unwilling to make a change towards a certain – and, for them, unattainable – Europeanness, towards values the EU deems vital. This, as Jones and Clark (2008, p. 567) argue, "renders logical and legitimate European interventions" in the Neighbourhood.

This serves not only the purpose of building an international identity, differentiated from those of other Great Powers, as well as legitimacy of action in its external borders, but it also has the purpose of building internal legitimacy for external action – and this, beyond the structure, form and articulation of the narrative, is its function. It isn't for naught that the central actor in this Narrative is the European Commission, the *par excellence* supranational organism within the EU and one who has a relatively few powers over EU Foreign Policy. Outside its funding or its trade or financial instruments, Foreign and Defence Policy is still one of the least integrated policy areas in Europe, being an intergovernmental area. Indeed, the debate on the EU's actorness is over not because of the integration process, but in spite of it: as will be shown in the next section, Foreign Policy instruments and decision-making are still mostly in the hands of Member-States, even if the integration process has given increasing powers to the Commission. Looking only at the instruments, the EU can still be regarded as a non-actor, a vessel for Member-States' interests (Hyde-Price, 2008). The construction of an encompassing narrative central to its foreign policy-making, one that is maintained and furthered by the Commission, into which the Member-States opt-in and one that – at least

theoretically – constrains their actions within the framework of the narrative, helps the EU – as a supranational entity – to build an international identity that gives itself power and agency.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is a great example of how the EU – or the Commission – frames the Europeanization Narrative. First, it contextualizes the policy, building on past policy successes in order to legitimize new policy endeavours:

> "With its historic enlargement earlier this month, the European Union has taken a big step forward in promoting security and prosperity on the European continent" (European Commission, 2004, p. 1).

Then, the Commission goes on to define the common values that are the basis for the relationship between the EU and the Neighbourhood countries:

> "The method proposed is, together with partner countries, to define a set of priorities, whose fulfilment will bring them closer to the European Union. (…) The privileged relationship with neighbours will build on mutual commitment to common values principally within the fields of the rule of law, good governance, the respect for human rights, including minority rights, the promotion of good neighbourly relations, and the principles of market economy and sustainable development. Commitments will also be sought to certain essential aspects of the EU's external action, including, in particular, the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as abidance by international law and efforts to achieve conflict resolution" (European Commission, 2004, p. 3).

The framing of the relationship is of particular interest because it makes clear the way in which the EU puts itself front and centre in the narrative: First, the proposed method will bring "them" closer to the EU, not the EU and the neighbours closer "together"; secondly, there is no mention of Neighbourhood countries' interests, only the EU's. Indeed, to read the 2004 Communication on the ENP is to find only "common interest"/"shared interest"/"mutual interest" from both actors – mainly focused on European values or JHA issues –, the EU's interests and the Neighbourhood's interest in the EU, but no "interests" outside of the EU's realm of action or influence. This helps to prove not only that the EU as the protagonist is a very important feature of the Europeanization Narrative, but also that the main objective of the Narrative is not only to build an external identity, but internal legitimacy to act as an international actor. Then, finally, it lands its objective:

> "The European Neighbourhood Policy's vision involves a ring of countries, sharing the EU's fundamental values and objectives, drawn into an increasingly close

> relationship, going beyond co-operation to involve a significant measure of economic and political integration. This will bring enormous gains to all involved in terms of increased stability, security and well being" (European Commission, 2004, p. 5).

There is, of course, a certain performativity to the narrative; the Communication (2004, p. 8) goes on to say that "The EU does not seek to impose priorities or conditions on its partners", but this can't be true concurrent to the purported universality of the European values whose promotion sits at the centre of the document. It is true that the ENP – as will be analysed in the following section – takes a differentiated approach to each Neighbourhood country, but the final goal is the same all-round: to effectively Europeanize the Neighbourhood – the path taken might be different, but the destination is invariably the same.

2. Practice

2.1. EU Foreign Policy: Development and Architecture

In the 90s, a series of events led the European Communities to make strides towards a more effective and united Foreign Policy (Tonra & Christiansen, 2004). The end of the Cold War and the military competition between the USA and the USSR, in which Europe was one of the main theatres, freed the European Communities to pursue its interests without paying as much mind to Great Power competition and geopolitical calculations. The possibility of an eastern enlargement, after the complete collapse of the Iron Curtain, led to renewed hopes for the realization of the European Communities as a Pan-European Project. Also in the 90s, new conceptualizations of Security emerged – ones which were embraced by scholars, policy-makers and politicians alike. Gone were the traditionalist outlook on Security, anchored on its military aspect; In were new concepts that focused on political, economic, environmental and societal security on par with military security.
But more than anything, the main catalyst for this decision was the European debacle in Yugoslavia. During the Yugoslavian disintegration, the European Communities had the perfect opportunity to assert its power and influence in its own backyard, working as conflict-managers and peace-builders in a region ravaged by war unseen in Europe since the 40s. A successful intervention would allow the EU to build its power and influence in the global arena, as well as construct its international identity as a purveyor of peace and development. Therefore, the unmitigated failure in Yugoslavia casted a long shadow on Europe's role in the world – a shadow one can feel to this day. This debacle though, informed two very important aspects in European Foreign Policy, both of which are central to this

paper: the centrality of the neighbourhood in European Foreign Policy; and the centrality of Europe as a promoter of peace, democracy and human rights in the global stage – a Normative Power.

The transformation of the European Communities into the European Union led to the consolidation of the EU as an International Actor, first through the Maastricht Treaty and then finally through the Lisbon Treaty. This led to a loss of importance of the actorness debate in academia – though the EU's international identity continues to support lively debate –, and led to the emerge of new questions regarding the effectiveness of the EU as an International Actor.

According to Edwards (2013), there are certain pre-requisites to an effective Foreign Policy: coherence – that is, concentrating or carefully dividing powers and tasks between different actors so as to guarantee that the EU talks with a single voice; effective instruments; political will to act; and, finally, political internal and external legitimacy. The main crux of this paper is on political will and political legitimacy, so they will be illuminated on the next section of this paper. The instruments possessed by the EU Foreign Policy Actors will also be discussed further on: since the paper is on the ENP, we will focus our attention on ENP instruments. Let us then focus briefly on the very important idea of coherence in EU Foreign Policy.

The EU Foreign Policy architecture has two problems of coherence: that of Vertical Coherence and that of Horizontal Coherence (Edwards, 2013). The first is often the most talked about, as it pertains to the problems between the intergovernmental actor – Member-States and the Council of the European Union – and the supranational actors – mainly the Commission. It is well known – and it has been stated before in this paper – that EU Foreign Policy is essentially an intergovernmental arena, most of the times dependent on unanimity between the Member-States on the Council of the European Union. The lack of coherence comes from the fact that, albeit power mostly residing at the intergovernmental area, there are powers completely under the control of the Commission, which may be essential in Foreign Policy, such as trade policy or economic and financial instruments in the ENP.

Horizontal coherence, on the other hand, pertains to coherence problems within the supranational EU institutions. If one were to ask "Who represents the EU internationally?" the answer would vary: the President of the Commission, the President of the European Council, the High Representative all share representation roles – and roles in defining Foreign Policy. If one were to limit this to the Neighbourhood, there would be the inclusion of the Commissioner responsible for that portfolio. The Lisbon Treaty, which led to the strengthening of the High-Representative's role and the creation of the EEAS, was a step in the right direction, but incoherence still persists in haunting EU's international responsiveness. For example, the High Representative's actions are often hindered because it doesn't have control over trade, financial or economic instruments – those are with the

Commission, and even if the High Representative is, inherently, Vice-President of the Commission, it does not set its policies regarding those instruments. To summarize, Foreign Policy is a policy arena characterized by division – often overlap – of policy domains and responsibilities; to this it is added the fact that the High Representative, the Commission – including each Commissioner and each DG –, the Council of the EU, the European Council and the Member-States each have different instruments, powers and political interests; the result of these two factors is a Foreign Policy commonly derided as ineffective and unresponsive (Edwards, 2013; Noutcheva, 2015). Few policies are as derided as ineffective as the European Neighbourhood Policy.

2.2. Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe

The ENP is commonly contrasted to the accession process for Central and Eastern Europe, during the 90s and until the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. The EU's enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe was a largely successful story: in a decade, each CEE country transformed from an authoritarian State with a planned economy to Democratic States with market economies – as is required in order to become an EU Member-State. This clear success is mostly due to the power that the EU could exert in the CEE region, as well as the openness that the CEE countries had towards the European Union; the Europeanizing efforts in the CEE region were a success because all the favourable conditions were gathered. So successful that the EU soon constructed another Europeanization project.
To understand the perceived shortcomings of the ENP, it is essential one understands what led to the success of the Eastern Enlargement, focusing on its instruments. Europeanization – understood here as a process, and not a discourse – encompasses two main instruments/strategies: Conditionality and Socialization (Börzel T. , 2010). The strategy of conditionality is to make, for example, partnerships, financial aid and support conditional on the compliance with a set of established rules and norms. On the case of the EU accession process, it means making the financial, technical and political aid and support – as well as the next steps in the process – conditional on the fulfilment of the necessary reforms to become a Member-State; otherwise, non-compliance would mean a state wouldn't advance through the next steps of the process losing much needed support. The first type is Positive Conditionality – a reward conditional on the fulfilment of a contract – while the second type is Negative Conditionality – a sanction for non-compliance (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011). According to Börzel (2010, p. 9):

> "(…) accession conditionality gave the European Commission a powerful tool to pressure candidate countries towards down-loading the comprehensive *acquis communautaire* and introducing institutional reforms".

Socialization works differently from Conditionality. While Conditionality is a top-down approach, with the EU in control of the process, Socialization requires both top-down and bottom-approaches to Europeanization (Schimmelfennig, 2012). Kelley (2006, p. 39) defines socialization as "when actors generate behaviour changes by creating reputational pressure"; it is an approach based on dialogue and social learning, through which the EU build legitimacy for the compliance with its norms and values. And unlike Conditionality, which focuses on State-driven actions and reforms, Socialization involves the strengthening and democratization of Civil Society and its actors, independent from the State apparatus. Throughout the accession process for the Eastern Enlargement "EU officials travelled to candidate states to negotiate, but also to stimulate domestic debates on issues such as democracy, ethnic minority politics and human rights" (Kelley, 2006, p. 39). In this strategy, power is derived not from the EU's economic and financial strength – as it is in Conditionality –, but from the legitimacy of its norms and values as perceived by others. In this way, Socialization works in order not only to convince others to conform to its normative standard – "the EU can use political dialogue to win over the minds of governmental actors through persuasion and social learning" (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011, p. 7) – but also to build international legitimacy for this normative standard. This will be more focused on in the next section – which will focus on the tensions and asymmetry between the Europeanization Narrative and the ENP policy practice – but it is worthy of mention the fact that this instrument is crucial to the construction and strengthening of the Europeanization Narrative as an Hegemonic narrative, where "power, and the ideas, values and institutions are seen as both natural and legitimate" (Haukkala, 2008, p. 1608).

The success of the Eastern Enlargement cannot be concluded to have just been the result of the good management of instrument and political strategies for Europeanization. The political situation in the CEE countries was uniquely auspicious for the Europeanization effort. Börzel (2010) argues there are five conditioning factors: costs of adaptation – which is the misfit between EU requirements and domestic conditions –, external push –, which is the capacity and willingness the EU has to enforce its requirements –, capacity and willingness of the target country to respond to EU pressures, and the power of the target country to resist the pressures.

Looking at these conditioning factors, one is able to understand why the Europeanization of Eastern Europe was a success. The CEE countries had membership ambitions, so there was little resistance to EU pressures and a great

quantity of willingness to adapt to EU requirements; capacity-building through socialization also helped CEE countries to become able to adapt. The external push was high, as the EU wanted to expand; and although the costs of adaptation were high – given the historical processes of the CEE countries contrasted to those of the EC Member-States –, the reward was higher: Membership.

2.3. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The ENP was created in 2004, being the product of a two different, but complementing, dynamics. The first – related to the Eastern side of Neighbourhood – was the need to respond to the new opportunities and threats posed by the Enlargement. As Smith (2005, p. 757) posed the question "In May 2004 the European Union acquired not just ten new member states but also several new neighbours". The engagement with these new neighbours in the East had been reduced, due to the European focus on the CEE countries – although the Post-Soviet States were included in some forums and programs, such as the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (Smith, 2005; Tömmel, 2013). As such, the EU had to find a way to interact with still volutile new neighbours to the East, and so a new policy was needed. The UK in particular, pressuared for the creation of a Wider Europe Iniciative, that would include the Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Russia (Smith, 2005).

The second dynamic is a product of the first, as some Member-States – namely France, Spain and Italy – pressured the EU into including the Southern Mediterranean countries in this new policy. Indeed, the EU's political involvement in its southern flank was more historied than its involvement in the post-Soviet space. In 1995, the EU and its neighbours in Northern Africa and the Levant launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – commonly known as the Barcelona Process – which "encompassed an ambitious policy approach, aimed at transnational cooperation in a broad spectrum of policy domains" (Tömmel, 2013, p. 21), from the political-security dimension, to the economic or normative, through a multilateral approach. Tömmel (2013) argues that the multilateral approach was beneficial for social-learning and fomenting regional cooperation, but that its success was very limited, as there were little incentives for the acceptance of the EU's reforms and norms – something that would only become more difficult in the post-9/11 and its effects on the MENA region (Tömmel, 2013).

These dynamics resulted in the creation of the ENP: first, a Wider Europe Initiative, now including the Southern Mediterranean countries, was approved in 2002; in 2004, after successful lobbying, the former Soviet Republics of the Caucasus were included in the ENP; in that same year, the EU started to operationalize and put to

practice the policy (Smith, 2005). Its stated objective is simple to understand: as the Commission communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy of 2004 puts it:

> "The European Neighbourhood Policy's vision involves a ring of countries, sharing the EU's fundamental values and objectives, drawn into an increasingly close relationship (…)" (European Commission, 2004, p. 5).

The ENP isn't a monolithic entity, it presents different approaches, not only from country to country, but also – and quite fundamentally – from region to region. This divided Neighbourhood, alongside Eastern and Southern lines, is institutionalized through two geographically-defined partnerships: the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. The Eastern Partnership encapsulates both the Eastern European and the Caucasus Countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. On the other side of the ENP, the UfM includes all the ENP Mediterranean Countries – Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (although suspended currently), with Libya as an observer; the UfM also included Turkey, Mauritania and non-EU European Southern Countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Monaco.
The ENP's approach is mainly bilateral, through the constructed of mutually agreed upon Action Plans, that would recommend reforms to be implemented by the Neighbourhood countries, and whose progress would be monitored. The Action Plans would be drawn based on the same norms, principles and policy areas, but would be "differentiated, reflecting the existing state of relations with each country, its needs and capacities, as well as common interests" (European Commission, 2004, p. 3). The Actions Plans are not legally binding documents, and therefore their execution is promoted by the EU through conditionality strategies. For complying with the Action Plans and effectively implement its reforms, Neighbourhood Countries can be rewarded with "a stake in the EU's Internal Market and further integration and liberalization to promote the free movement of – persons, goods, services and capital" (Kelley, 2006, p. 35), as well as participation in Community projects in education, science and culture, and greater legislative support for transposing the European-style reforms into national legislation, among other incentives.

2.4. The Failure of the ENP and Neighbourhood Europeanization

As this paper has alluded to, contrasting CEE Europeanization to Neighbourhood Europeanization sheds great light on why the latter is so often regarded as a failure.

Unlike the Europeanization of the CEE countries, the ENP has much more limited instruments and strategies. The Socialization component within the ENP is considerably weaker than the Conditionality component. Although political dialogue is fomented, chiefly during negotiations (Kelley, 2006), the ENP's Socialization component has been criticized as insufficient, even non-existent. Firstly, the ENP lacks the multilateral forums of the Barcelona Process, substituting them for a bilateral approach. While a bilateral approach can be seen as inherently more effective – as it lets the Action Plan be shaped to a specific country –, it precludes the necessary forums for social learning, which are important when promoting norms and values. Aside from that – and relative to the Southern Mediterranean – Tömmel (2013, p. 23) asserts that the "abandoning the multilateral approach meant detaching the Mediterranean policy from the Middle East conflict", and that the bilateral approach led to increased competition between Neighbourhood States for EU financial aid and support. Secondly, the ENP's process – from the negotiation of the Action Plans, their implementation and progress assessment – doesn't involve the active participation of civil society in each Neighbourhood country. When conceptualizing Socialization as a Europeanization strategy, civil society holds a central role. No democracy exists without a strong, democratic civil society – indeed, the latter is a prerequisite for the former (Kelley, 2006). As such, authoritarian states don't have an active civil society and may even fight its emergence (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011); if the EU wants to promote the democratization of a Neighbourhood characterized by fragile democracies and, more commonly, full-fledged authoritarian regimes, supporting civil society organizations should be a focal point. And yet, it isn't; as Börzel (2010, p. 20) points out:

> "(…) the ENP does not provide for the involvement of civil society in political dialogue (…) EU has provided technical and financial assistance mainly to state actors seeking to strengthen effective rather than inclusive policy-making".

The weakness – or even absence – of the socialization component in the ENP, makes the strategy of Conditionality the central strategy of the ENP. That doesn't preclude it from severe, repeated and widely shared criticisms (Smith, 2005; Kelley, 2006; Gawrich, Melnykovska, & Schweickert, 2009; Börzel T., 2010; Börzel & Pamuk, 2011; Schimmelfennig, 2012), which revolve around two key issues. First, there is the lack of the Negative Conditionality instrument. As we have put it before, the symbioses between Positive and Negative Conditionality are needed to promote compliance with the Action Plans. Theoretically, a State would seek to comply with what was accorded not only because its compliance would mean a reward, but also, and very crucially, because non-compliance would mean a sanction. The application of sanctions for the non-compliance – mainly for the non-compliance of

its normative aspects – would be an effective way to signal that the EU is attentive to violations of human rights and of the democratic principles championed by the EU. Nonetheless, Negative Conditionality is never applied, mostly because "The imposition of sanctions in the case of political repression and gross human rights violations (…) is in the hands of the EU member states, which act by unanimity" (Noutcheva, 2015, pp. 29-30). Bridging the different political and economic interests of all the EU Member-States so as to guarantee unanimity in the Council is nigh-on impossible. Belarus has been under sanctions since before the ENP existed[6], and following the Arab Spring sanctions have been utilized against Syria (Noutcheva, 2015). Still, these are extreme actions by the EU – one involving a pro-Russian dictatorship to which the EU has no ties, the other involving a civil war instigated and violently perpetrated by an authoritarian regime. The lack of political will to use Negative Conditionality diminishes – or makes non-existent – the costs of non-compliance to the Action Plans.

Secondly, Positive Conditionality within the ENP is also frequently criticized, not so much for what it offers, but for what it can't offer: Membership. In terms of the Conditionality strategy, the larger the reward one can get, the larger the reforms one is willing to implement. The Europeanization of the CEE countries was successful because the reforms imposed by the EU were the path for Membership; the reforms were the way in which the *acquis communautaire* obligatory to be a Member-State was downloaded by the CEE countries, with EU support. There was a final goal in the Europeanization of the CEE countries, that isn't present in the ENP. Indeed, one can argue that Europeanising the Mediterranean partners would always have proven to be a difficult task and that membership would never be a possibility, but for the Eastern partners – as well as the pro-Europe Georgia in the Caucasus – having membership as a final goal would been a just reward for the implementation of reforms in acquiescence to European norms and values. Truth is, though, that the instruments at the disposal of the EU – within Positive Conditionality – are rather weak if one understands the costs of adaptation are higher than the possible rewards, making elites drag their feet or refuse to implement certain politically costly reforms.

The costs of reform implementation, leads us to systematize Börzel's (2010) five conditioning factors for Europeanization, this time in regards to the Neighbourhood.

6 The Commission recognizes this on its Communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy, stating "Belarus and the EU will be able to develop contractual links when Belarus has established a democratic form of government, following free and fair elections. It will then be possible to extend the full benefits of the European Neighbourhood Policy to Belarus. Meanwhile the EU will consider ways of strengthening support to civil society in ways described below" (p. 4).

First, the costs of adaptation are incredibly high for Neighbourhood countries, and much higher than they ever were for the CEE countries. For starters "the CEE countries were much closer to the EU member states with regard to both democracy and state capacity" (Börzel T. , 2010, p. 13), making the costs of adaptation much lower since the costs of adaptation are higher the farthest one gets from the European standard. Moreover, the authoritarian regimes of the Neighbourhood see EU requirements as threats to their power. Secondly, the external push by the EU is rather timid:

> "While the reform agendas agreed between the EU and the individual ENC constitute a comprehensive misfit on the domestic institutions, policies and political processes, the EU has not exerted sufficient external push to generate pressure for adaptation that could trigger domestic change" (Börzel, 2010, p. 11)

The rewards put forth by the Positive Conditionality approach while encouraging – "The size of the EU market (…) and the lack of alternative markets (…) promises important benefits [for ENP authoritarian regimes]" (2010, p. 17) – aren't powerful enough to offset the costs of adapting to EU standards and norms.
These two factors skewer the ENP policy practice towards a greater focus/success on Justice and Home Affairs and economic cooperation, in detriment of the promotion of norms – which can be easily seen in the Progress Reports[7]. Azerbaijan (EEAS, 2015a, p. 2), for example, is found to have made "good progress in its macro-economic development" and "good progress on the EU's Strategic Energy Partnership" and other JHA issues, while at the same time "conditions for civil society organisations in Azerbaijan (CSOs) deteriorated considerably (…) A number of prominent human rights defenders were detained (…) Only limited progress was

7 The Progress Reports utilized for this analysis are the 2015 progress reports. This has been done for two reasons: Firstly, it is a year in which all of the Neighbourhood Countries had their progress analysed and reported, which helps build a more homogeneous approach; secondly, the 2015 progress reports analyse the progress made until 2014, which marks the 10th anniversary of the implementation of the Action Plans – and as such, these progress reports allow for the analysis of what the successes or failures of the ENP in its first 10 years.
Not all ENP countries are present in this analysis, for different reasons. The progress reports for Tunisia and Algeria aren't available; Syria and Libya (as well as Belarus) are effectively frozen out of the ENP; Palestine has the issue of not being considered a State by the EU, which hampers action within the framework of the ENP; and Israel is already regarded as being "based on the values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, where fundamental rights are enshrined in 'basic laws' and it has a functioning market economy" (EEAS, 2015e, p. 2), which means there is no promotion of Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance needed.

reached in the fight against corruption (…) There was no progress regarding actual judicial independence" – Economic Cooperation and JHA reforms were largely implemented, while Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance reforms were ignored. This is a trend within the Neighbourhood: whatever progress – good or limited – is made in Economic Cooperation and JHA issues, the progress made in normative issues is invariably smaller. This is the case of Egypt (EEAS, 2015c, p. 3): "Egypt made limited progress in implementing the ENP Action Plan, especially on deep and sustainable democracy"; of Lebanon (EEAS, 2015g, p. 3): "there was limited progress in Lebanon on deep and sustainable democracy"; of Morocco (EEAS, 2015i, p. 2): *"Les efforts du Maroc sur le plan des principes démocratiques et des droits de l'Homme pour mettre en oeuvre la Constitution de 2011 devront s'accélérer";* and of Armenia (EEAS, 2015b, p. 2): "Armenia made limited progress on deep and sustainable democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms".

The other trend is that of good progress in all areas of the ENP, which is the case for Georgia (EEAS, 2015d, p. 3): "Overall, Georgia made some progress in implementing the ENP Action Plan and the Association Agenda, with achievements notably in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms and substantial progress in the visa liberalisation process"; Jordan (EEAS, 2015f, p. 2) "Jordan continued to make progress on deep and sustainable democracy"; Moldova (EEAS, 2015h, p. 2): "Moldova made less progress than in previous years on deep and sustainable democracy and on the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The overall level of political freedom in Moldova continued to be comparatively high"; and of the Ukraine (EEAS, 2015k, p. 3) "Ukraine made overall good progress on deep and sustainable democracy, on human rights and fundamental freedoms".

This overall and simplistic look at the ENP progress reports allows to conclude that while normative issues are of central importance in the ENP's mission, they are often relegated to the background, while JHA and Economic issues are brought to the foreground. The reasons for this to happen will be hypothesised in the next section, as we start to look into the asymmetry between Narrative and Practice.

3. Asymmetry

We arrive at the final section of this paper, and at the crux of the investigation: the Asymmetry between the Europeanization Narrative and the Policy Practice of the ENP. The first section established the Narrative, and the second established the Practice: their close reading and comparison let us identify the asymmetry between both. This comparison doesn't produce a canyon between Narrative and Practice; they aren't complete opposites. What can be found, though, is the sense that the discourse doesn't match the policy practice of the EU, that they are askew.

The Narrative is anchored on the idea of Europe as a Normative Actor, who uses its considerable economic and normative power to transform non-European spaces in the image of the EU; the Practice displays an ineffective EU, whose power is diminished in the Neighbourhood and incapable of transforming it into its own image. Indeed, the practice betrays the central tenet of the Narrative: Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance are at the centre of both the Europeanization Narrative and the rhetoric of the ENP, but is often relegated to the background; the reforms that are actually implemented by most of the Neighbourhood countries are economic or JHA related, with little transformation of their internal political system into an EU-adjacent model.

Given this, the paper arrives at its central question: "Why is there an asymmetry between the Narrative of Europeanization and the Practice within the ENP?". The analysis provided below seeks to shed light on the questions above, though further and complementary work might spring forth from this exercise, in the future.

The most effective way to justify the dissonance between Narrative and Practice, is to lay the blame at the Neighbourhood countries' feet. Indeed, this is another aspect of the asymmetry: the Europeanization Narrative has the EU as a central actor – the necessary actor for the guarantee that the Europeanization project will work; but as the progress reports for the Action Plan implementation within the ENP show, the language changes considerably when the project fails. The ownership of the failure is the Neighbourhood countries', while the successes are derived from effective EU action. This discursive subterfuge, though, does have its roots in policy practice and in the political reality of the implementation of the Action Plans. Therefore, the first tentative answer for the problem posed is that there is an asymmetry between Narrative and Practice because the Neighbourhood countries don't comply with the Action Plans.

If one looks closely at the overview of the progress reports in the conclusion of Section 2, one can systematize which countries work to adopt Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance reforms – and grow closer to the EU – and those that don't implement such reforms. Those which do, tend to be politically closer to the EU, have more established democracies relative to the authoritarian regimes of the Neighbourhood[8] and harbour membership hopes: this is the case of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. The lack of membership prospects in the near future hampers

8 In the 2006 The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy (Kekic, 2006) – the closest Economist index of democracy to the institution of the ENP – shows that Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia score constantly higher than countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Morocco or Azerbaijan. On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 meaning a full democracy and 1 a full authoritarian regime) Ukraine scored the highest, with a 6.94 democracy index, followed by Moldova, with 6.50. Both qualify as flawed democracies. Jordan scored 3.92, Egypt and Morocco scored 3.9 and Azerbaijan scored 3.31.

the speed of their Europeanization, but they accept the reforms in order to one day become what they aspire to be. Even if the ENP's instruments and strategies are lacking, the EU holds great influence over these countries; this influence comes not only from the positive conditionality applied to the implementation of the Action Plans, but also because these countries elite – which are closest to the EU – recognize the EU's legitimacy to act in order to transform the internal political systems of their countries. On the other hand, countries such as Egypt, Morocco or Azerbaijan, one will find the opposite. They have more authoritarian states, their civil society is either underdeveloped or actively repressed, and they are further away from the EU – be it geographically or values-wise. The lack of Negative Conditionality or of effective Positive Conditionality means that these countries have no reason to implement the EU's reform.

A good case-study for this is, as Börzel and Pamuk (2011) point out, the Caucasus. Each of the three Caucasus states has a different relation with the EU: "as Georgia capitalizes on its Western orientation and aspires nothing less than membership in NATO and EU, Azerbaijan stresses its genuine (oriental) values and commands control over substantial resources, and finally Armenia is geographically isolated and maintains close relations with Russia" (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011, p. 11), and because of their Europeanization has different results. Georgia is open to Europeanization, even if the ENP lacks membership prospects; Armenia reforms what it perceives as a political gain; Azerbaijan resists reforms and its elites co-opt the EU's influence to consolidate power (Börzel & Pamuk, 2011). Overall, Börzel (2010, p. 24) finds that the ENP "has strengthened state institutions and, hence, stabilized the power of semi-authoritarian regimes rather than fostered their transformation. The Ukraine is the only ENC that has made some progress towards democracy. (…) The other ENC have deteriorated in the democratic quality of their institutions".

Alas, to talk of Neighbourhood resistance to reform implementation, is to talk about the weakness of the ENP's strategies and instruments – which is the second hypothesis to explain the asymmetry. The asymmetry between Narrative and Practice cannot be sole responsibility of the Neighbourhood countries, as they have to duty to defend the symmetry between narrative and practice. Indeed, if we found that the EU utilized all of the resources, instruments and strategies at its disposal, we wouldn't be talking about an asymmetry between Narrative and Practice, but only of an ineffective Foreign Policy and of the great resistance of the Neighbourhood countries. However, as we have argued before, the EU doesn't utilize all of its instruments and strategies; it lacks the Socialization component that bolsters and gives power to civil society – which in turn helps transform political regimes from the inside, through reforms or revolution – and this lack of Socialization is not happenstance, but an institutional decision – given that the Barcelona Process had multilateral forums which could have been replicated in the

ENP; its Positive Conditionality is incredibly weak when compared to the great costs of adaptation of the Neighbourhood countries; finally, the unwillingness to use of Negative Conditionality means that there are no costs for grave violations of Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance norms.

A natural conclusion that this hypothesis brings about is that the normative power that the EU purports to have, is not as great as it is thought; the EU purports to have such a normative power that it can, coupled with its economic power, transform non-European spaces into ersatz EU images. This is plainly not true most of the times, showing that both its normative and its economic power has a limit in its ability to transform an internal political landscape. Those countries with elites already close to the EU's values and ideas – such as Ukraine, Moldova or Georgia – will adapt because they recognize this as legitimate, with the economic support from the EU to make the reforms happen successfully and diligently. Countries whose elites derive their power from a vast control over the institutions and instruments of the State, as well as control over the economy, – that is, Authoritarian States – don't recognize the EU's normative power as legitimate, but as a threat to their power. Nonetheless, they push to reform areas which are uncontroversial – such as JHA-adjacent reforms – and reap the benefits from their association with the EU, without incurring in any costs, because of the EU's unwillingness to use Negative Conditionality.

The lack of willingness to use instruments at the EU's disposal within the ENP leads us to the problems regarding the very architecture of EU Foreign Policy. As stated before, Foreign Policy is still an essentially intergovernmental area, with Member-States holding much of the power and most decisions requiring unanimity. This translates into the ENP's practice as such: The Commission, which holds the financial instruments, is capable to reward good behaviour and compliance; the Member-States, through the Council, are capable but unwilling to punish non-compliance. In order to impose sanctions, there must be unanimity in the Council of the European Union; as such, there is willingness to impose them only in the most egregious and grave situations, and only particularly if the Neighbourhood State is strategically unimportant. To impose sanctions on Belarus is relatively easy, as it is a state deeply within Russian influence and with little ties to the EU; to impose sanctions on Azerbaijan is hard because it benefits of a certain strategic independence from the EU due to its status as an oil and natural gas producer and exporter. Moreover, the power that the Member-States hold on European Foreign Policy, means that its interests are translated to it. Unlike the EU, no Member-State can be conceptualized as a Normative Actor, being beholden to their strategic, economic and political interests. These interests tend to translate more directly into JHA and Economic Cooperation issues than to the promotion of European Values.

The arguments laid above aren't new per se – they are habitual critiques of EU

Foreign Policy and the ENP –, but they help us build a new argument to explain the asymmetry we found between Narrative and Practice. The basis for this argument is that both elements of this binary relation are controlled by different actors. Narrative construction is an area in which the European Commission holds control, while Foreign Policy is the domain of the Member-States/Council of the European Union. And if we understand Narratives and Discourses as important elements that can shape actions and perceptions, then we should also focus on how the Narrative negatively impacts the Practice.

This fragmentation of powers weakens the power of the Narrative. As was said before, Narratives are built on Hegemonic discourses and have a constraining effect over the actors that have subscribed to them. But for a Narrative to truly wield power, the actors which control it need to have control over its policy instruments. This is not to say that the Narrative of Europeanization isn't incredibly powerful, because it is: it has constrained some actions within the ENP due to the norms it defends[9], it has effectively shaped the EU international identity and justified EU action outside its borders. But not having control over all the instruments that shape the Narrative leaves it weakened. A narrative – as any discourse – needs constant actualization, it needs to change and adapt in order to stay current; but it also needs affirmation. Any strong Narrative is rooted in the action of the actor that constructs it – after all, a narrative is a story told from a specific POV. If that actor's narrative is constantly upended by another actor's actions within the same framework, we can only conclude that it is a fragile narrative. As Jones and Clark (2008, p. 568) argue "Europeanisation is unstable and requires strenuous efforts to communicate, coordinate and stabilise its contested knowledges and identities"; it's the Commission's objective to communicate, coordinate and stabilize it, but also to adapt the Narrative to the ever-changing situation in the Neighbourhood and to realize the EU's limited impact within this framework. The fragility of the Narrative leads to little "rhetorical entrapments" – Member-States don't feel their actions constrained by the Narrative, and that is the main reason why there is an asymmetry.

9 Kaunert and Léonard (2011) argue, in a study on antiterrorism cooperation between the EU and the ENP countries, that in spite of antiterrorism measures being included in all of the ENP's Action Plans, very little is done in relation to fighting terrorism. The main reason for this, Kaunert and Léonard (2011) argue is because the EU's normative identity precludes effective cooperation with authoritarian states, as this type of cooperation involves, for example, the sharing of information the EU doesn't trust the ENP countries to have. In this way, the EU's norms overtake the EU's tendency to focus on JHA issues.

All of these hypothesis work in tandem, closely aligned and interconnected. They have an internal logic, with each building on the one which precedes it. They are built on the idea that the ENP and the Narrative of Europeanization are inherently connected, and if one deviates from the other, then an asymmetry springs forth into existence. This final hypothesis denies this apparent relation between Narrative and Practice. Yes, there should be no doubt that the Narrative and the ENP are connected to each other, but only in their emergence, not in their objectives. This last hypothesis – which warrants study and fruitful debate – posits that Narrative and Practice inhabit two different realms and, while they influence and constrain each other mutually, they have different goals, each associated to the actors that control them. As we have stated before, discourse constructs power, but it also constitutes power in and of itself. The power of discourse is at the base for the construction of the structures that govern societies, that establish identities and hegemonic narratives and shuts down alternative view-points. Discourse in the EU Foreign Policy is somewhat detached of the wielding of the instruments of power, but it serves other purposes, namely those of constructing the EU international identity and of legitimizing EU external action. In this perspective, there is a symbiotic relationship between Narrative and Practice, each feeding of each other but having different objectives. The Practice relies on the Narrative to legitimize its actions; it utilizes the normative framework and the International Identity to legitimize actions that benefit the Member-States in the pursuit of their interests. The Narrative relies on the Practice to legitimize its discourse; with no policy practice, the Narrative would be deemed as merely performative and would have a diminished power to establish the EU International Identity.

From this angle of analysis, the objective of the policy practice within the ENP – commanded by the Member-States through the Council of the European Union – is to pursue the realization of the Member-States strategic, political and economic interests, notwithstanding the poor mechanisms within the ENP or the inefficient EU Foreign Policy architecture. Of course, promoting Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance can be part of the Member-States strategic interest – as Manners (2006) argues, promoting norms can be pursuant to security –, but they are relegated to the background if they aren't central, or abandoned altogether if clashing with the strategic interest of any one Member-State. This does not preclude action from the Commission, it means only that its action is hampered by the institutional architecture of EU Foreign Policy and by Member-States interests. This is particularly true in the Neighbourhood, where a wide array of internal and external interests plays out.

On the other hand, for the affirmation and pursuit of Narrative's objective (see section 1.2), effective action symmetric to the discourse isn't totally obligatory. It would certainly bolster the Narrative as well as the Commission's power to shape

Foreign Policy, but it doesn't need to be perfectly reflected in the practice; the semblance of symmetry is enough to affirm the Narrative as a powerful tool to shape international perceptions of the EU as an International Actor. Moreover, its internal dimension necessitates very little policy practice in order to be effective, since it is already built on hegemonic discourses that have shaped internal perceptions of the EU's place in the world. The Europeanization Narrative is based on discourses that run deep within European societies, based on shared History and ideas – European Exceptionalism is central in the internal perception of the EU in the international stage. Therefore, little results are needed for the Narrative to take hold and construct the EU legitimacy to act in the Neighbourhood; anyway, as has been stated before, in cases of failure, the onus of the problem is firmly placed on the Neighbourhood countries' shoulders, and not on ineffective EU action.

Conclusions

This paper presents itself as a limited contribution of two important debates on the EU Foreign Policy. The first is the study of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This paper understands that the study of the European Neighbourhood Policy has never been as necessary as it is now. The effects of the Arab Spring are still being felt, but the EU hasn't done nearly enough to mitigate them; Russia grows bolder, with successive cyberattacks on critical cyber infrastructure all over the world; Belarus' authoritarian regime proved to be a threat to EU citizens; and 2020 proves to be a year marked by the backsliding of Democracy all over the world, with its effects particularly intense in the Neighbourhood (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020). Still, glimmers of hope appear on the horizon, and the profound study of the ENP is central in understanding how the EU might – or should – act going forward. The second contribution this paper wished to give is to the study of Discourses and Narratives in EU Foreign Policy. Discourses are central in constructing power and maintaining power relations over the years; discourse and power structures are indissociable from one another. Most papers on EU Foreign Policy touch, however briefly, on some conception of actorness or characterize the EU as some sort of Ideal Power; the critique of EU Foreign Policy often falls along the lines of "The EU didn't achieve its stated goals" or "The EU presents itself as an Ideal Power but can't follow through with the promotion of its values international"; the impact that discourses and narratives have in EU Foreign Policy aren't hidden, and yet they have often been left unproblematized.

Finally, this paper touched upon the issue of the asymmetry between the Europeanization Narrative and the policy Practice within the ENP framework. Mixing policy analysis and narrative analysis, this paper offers two distinct

hypothesis that can explain the asymmetry. The first sees the asymmetry as the undesirable and yet inevitable result of a fragmented Foreign Policy architecture within the EU; the second sees the asymmetry as the natural and foreseen result of the differing objectives of the Member-States/Council of the EU and the Commission, which work together to bolster their differing goal utilizing different instruments and approaches. While both hypotheses are preliminary, the second hypothesis is more experimental, rooted more in discourse and narrative analysis than in foreign policy analysis and warrants further development.

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