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Which 'Mediterranean'?

A comparison of discursive practices from the EU and the case studies

Chapter 4 presented an analysis of the struggle of the EU to define the Mediterranean through its policies addressed at this area. The aim here was to critically evaluate EU Mediterranean policy as a discursive practice and in so doing to reveal the vague EU representations of this area that is here understood as an area continuously in the making. As a contribution to the explanation and critique of such international practices, Chapter 5 attempted to draw out some of the subjugated knowledges and alternative discourses on the Mediterranean that have been excluded or silenced by the EU's hegemonic discourse. This was carried out through an examination of the discourses about the Mediterranean and Europe emanating from Greece, Malta and Morocco. It was observed that these alternative discourses on the Mediterranean often work in resistance to the dominant EU knowledge/power nexus (created through its discourse on the area). While the EU struggles to fix meaning to the Mediterranean area, the cases revealed practices of questioning this flexible concept. Moreover, the discourse emerging from the EU about the Mediterranean has been noted to be complicit with its structures of domination in certain sectors as shown in Chapter 3. The EU clearly possesses a degree of control in the economic field. (In contrast to this, the EU lacks military clout that leaves it dependent on the USA, as in the case, for example, of the Middle East.) In this manner, EU discourses have served as systems and structures of signification that construct Mediter-ranean social realities.

In order to tie up these research results with the theoretical framework adopted in this book, this chapter seeks to summarise and compare the predications/'truth statements' of the Mediterranean in EU discourses and practices (statements and texts) and discourses/practices of the Mediterranean in Greece, Morocco and Malta.

The first section of this chapter will present and discuss a schematic outline of some of the various types of *Mediterraneans* that emerged from the discursive practices investigated through EU texts/practices and through the textual analysis and interviews carried out in Brussels, Greece, Morocco and Malta.

The following section will investigate how these different discourses/ practices of the Mediterranean reflect upon the deficiencies of the EMP. This will include an analysis of the implications of these diverse discourses on the Mediterranean for policy-making,

which are here termed the *effects* of discourses on the Mediterranean. This section will present some ways in which the European Mediterranean policy can be re-analysed from a discursive-constructivist angle and in light of the findings of this research on discourses of the Mediterranean. The concluding section will rethink the reality and re-presentation of the Mediterranean in light of this research.

The various types of Mediterraneans – mapping out the various discourses uncovered through this inquiry

This book has been inspired by critical constructivist, discourse analysis and foreign policy writings in its investigation of the resulting essences and meanings of the Mediterranean from discursive practices of this area. In particular, the EU's construction of the Mediterranean rests on a struggle to classify, organise and structure this area on the basis of some characteristics or contents that make the Mediterranean,[1] as a community, meaningful and manageable for the EU. This representation of the Mediterranean echoes Foucault's work that looks at how a domain can be organised and socially constructed through discursive practices and how such discourses contain a plurality of meanings.[2] The outline presented below sketches out some of the contents or characters of the Mediterranean (not in any order of importance) that emerged from the discursive practices investigated here.

Content/'substance' of the Mediterranean (set 1)

- Economic market.
- Securising object.
- Myth of Med: common/cradle of civilisation.
- Contact/networks/communications: cultural, people-to-people Med.
- Political sphere/arena of influence.
- A multi-religious area.
- Historical trade route.
- Countries on the periphery that have an impact on each other.
- A unified area in terms of its immigration 'problem'.
- Identities.

Through the above contents of the Mediterranean, EU action is expressed as a need to code its experience with its Mediterranean partners and to see this area as a representation. In other words, the EU needs to simplify the Mediterranean 'reality' – and in the process distorts the area – in order to act towards this object/field of knowledge of the Mediterranean. EU practices of the Mediterranean include discourses of this area as an economic market, a securitising object, a political area of influence, a multi-religious sphere, a historical trading route, a communications arena and a unified area in terms of immigration problems. EU discourses also include references to the myth[3] of the Mediterranean as the cradle of civilisation, Mediterranean identity/ies and the impact that the countries around the Mediterranean Sea have on each other.

As a reflection of what the Mediterranean is all about, one interviewee claimed that: 'the term requires the immediate interdependence between states for such an area to

exist'. Moreover, the diverse references to the Mediterranean concept reflect the constructed nature of such an area. For instance, when the Mediterranean partners of the EMP are referred to as 'third countries' this certainly reflects part of the ordained Euro speak of the EU (which is not only applied to the Mediterranean). When contrasting EU discourses of the Mediterranean with those of Greece, Malta and Morocco, a perennial struggle emerges between these different discourses about the definition (and meaning) of the Mediterranean phenomenon. A deeper reading of EU documents and case study materials which have been analysed show that apart from this recorded material, the Mediterranean is also continuously undergoing a process, an unbroken process of semantic choices, a movement through a network of potential meaning, where each set of choices creates an environment for action on the Mediterranean.[4] These issues all deal with questions of EU positioning, self-understanding, signification and identification – in other words, issues of identity.[5] In its discourses on the Mediterranean, the EU depicts this area as having 'different' problems and 'different' regimes and any references to the Mediterranean are rather vague and confusing. Underlying this confusion is a power notion of who these 'other' are when compared to the European 'self'. The challenges marked out by the EU with regards to the Mediterranean and which differentiate the EU from the Mediterranean include: a cultural divide (Christian/ Islam mainly); an economic divide (rich EU/poor Mediterranean); social divide (demographic trends, nutrition, housing, health care, literacy, etc.); political divide (democracy versus authoritarian or quasi-authoritarian regimes); irregular and not intense patterns of interaction as well as the absence of regional identity and 'we' feeling in the Mediterranean.

Consequently, the context in which the EU recognises this 'Mediterranean' entity is fear or risk stemming from 'insecurity' and 'instability' emanating from this area (that is through processes of securitisation). In fact, the EU discourse on the Mediterranean as a securitising object emerged as a very powerful discourse, even more so before the events of 9/11 and 11 March 2004.[6] It has been noted that the EU's securitisation of the Mediterranean is prominent (the EU seems to be almost obsessed with Mediterranean security issues). Linked to this discourse is another powerful discourse on the risk of immigration/terrorists from the area entering into the borders of Europe (securitisation of issues such as migration, drugs and crime also brings in the inter-regional level).[7] Through these discursive practices the EU extends the boundaries of the Mediterranean into its own borders. There has been a discussion on an EU common migration policy but not all member states accept the communitisation of migration policy.[8] An analysis of these discourses reveals, on the one hand, economies of hope and aspirations of migrants and would-be migrants and, on the other hand, economic relations of exploitation through which the EU member states plan to grant permission of stay to migrants who can fill the gap in areas of employment in demand in EU states, like education, health and information technology. In this manner, EU discourses on the Mediterranean show that there are no concrete geographies of the Mediterranean, but power relations that are constructed through the discursive practices of the EU. In this fluidity of its discourses on the Mediterranean, the EU has created policies and programmes of development and co-operation, aid programmes for the economic restructuring of countries in this basin and plans to facilitate trade with these countries/partners in an effort to build confidence and security measures, to promote 'development' and to 'stabilise' southern economies – a Stability Pact for the Mediterranean. The EMP has been specifically analysed in this book

as one of the EU's most recent discursive practices of the Mediterranean. What clearly emerged is that the Mediterranean *is* important for European identification. The process of identification needs others, plenty of others – security-wise, in terms of economic requirements, political reasons, etc. The Mediterranean is thus one external space in the political practice of forging a European Self.[9]

Hence, the Mediterranean is an important factor in the 'otherness' of Europe – but not necessary since there are many 'others' (of Europe). The Mediterranean is one of Europe's 'others' but not the only 'other'. In short, Europe has many 'others' and 'otherness' is a factor in the EU's identification processes – the Mediterranean being one of these others. Therefore, as concluded in Chapter 4, the EU's making of the Mediterranean is a need – a must for the EU's political action and a construction of what the EU's 'foreign' or one of its 'other' entails. Moreover, the ensuing division between what is 'Europe' and what is 'Mediterranean' is contingent. The EU's Mediterranean (or any other Mediterranean for that matter) is an unstable counter concept often in opposition to what should be familiar – as in 'Europe' that is often taken for granted. Thus, Mediterranean 'otherness' is necessary for the EU but remains almost entirely impossible to point at – the EU's Mediterranean in effect is a process of interdependent yet unsettling units. The regular markers across EU discourses of the Mediterranean are reflected in its policies (practices) addressing this area.

Moreover, it has been observed that some aspects of identification may not be necessarily purposeful but rather *resourceful*. As noted above, the EU, for example, seeks to understand the Mediterranean in order to manage it. Accordingly, it creates a framework of understanding and acting towards its object/field of knowledge, that is, the Mediterranean. Thus, not every discourse from the EU on the Mediterranean has a purpose to do something to the Mediterranean partners but could be a recourse to manage the complexity of the Mediterranean. Discourses may have a purpose – for example, as shown in Chapter 4, the text for 'stability', 'peace', 'prosperity', etc. – but it is rather the dynamics of constructing and defining a specific Mediterranean that are present within these discourses. This EU framework of constructing and conceptualising the Mediterranean has the Mediterranean as a tool not as a purpose: a tool to construct the subaltern Mediterranean that works as a dynamic with an *effect* but not a purpose (otherwise the discourse would be an instrumentalist – serving as a means to – one which defines its object).

It is worth recalling that discourses have unintended effects. It is thereby important to reiterate the affectivity and effect of discourses on the Mediterranean and not just the purpose of such a discourse. Social constructs have effects and this is why it is important to observe and examine the availability of such an EU framework for the Mediterranean through which European self-understanding/identity can be asserted. This emerges as an unfocused process and, at the same time, as an unintentional process but it has an effect – the formation of a stronger European identity (especially in security matters). One can thus speak of the reflexes of discourse. Libya can be said to have been invited as an observer for the Stuttgart conference for a purpose – the EU has had the will and wanted to normalise its relations with Libya (which seem to be bearing fruit recently) but this also has an effect in the definition of who 'we' (European) are and who the Mediterranean are. (The recent discourse of Mauritania's inclusion in the EMP may be read as having a similar effect).[10] Therefore, it is crucial to stress that what is important is

not what parts of the Mediterranean the EU addresses but what *types*, what kinds of Mediterranean the EU deals with (in terms of issues, contents and characteristics of the Mediterranean). The EU looks through 'eyes'/'lenses' that try to eliminate factors of complexity.[11] The EU overlooks the concerns of countries for underdevelopment and it presents them as equals but they are not. As one interviewee in Morocco stated:

> Partnership (referring to the EMP) means you are equal somehow and obviously we are not. The strength (especially economic) of the EU is felt within the EMP. Even within the Mediterranean (itself), some countries are weaker than others. It is therefore difficult to talk of a partnership.[12]

Discursive constructivism as a community of theory/research programme has therefore been useful in showing the way in which discourses contain multiple meanings.[13] In the case of the discourses on the Mediterranean, it has revealed underlying interviewees' feelings of frustration, anger and feelings of being let down or feelings of hope of interviewees in the Mediterranean countries investigated that are part of the EMP.

Furthermore, the EU can be said to be emphasising its European self-understanding forcefully in a way through its discourses of the Mediterranean. The same can be observed in discourses emanating from NATO. It has been stated that all European countries will be part of NATO – implying that NATO is in part European.[14] Some institutions thus try to privilege Europeanness as a quintessential element of being a part of this club. The EU in fact identifies itself as European par excellence.[15] The EU has been trying to construct and give meaning to Europe through cultural values, religious values, etc. which are distinguished from those values of 'others',[16] even though some member states have taken multiculturalism on board (officially at least).

Thus, these characteristics of the Mediterranean that make up this socially constructed area for the EU can be said to persist for a long time through processes of inertia and institutionalisation of discourses. This illustrates why some discourses are more powerful than other discourses and why some discourses become embedded in structures.

Chapter 4 examined the meaning of the Mediterranean emanating from EU sources; that is, meaning where it arises, namely in EU language itself. Language is here understood as a social system that also follows its own logic and this is the logic that produces the Mediterranean 'reality' for the EU. Thus, EU language on the Mediterranean is said to be relational and a system of relations. Chapter 4 also mapped out the EU–Mediterranean relational system that is latent and examined how the actual patterns of social interaction between the two parties look. This relation was found to be an asymmetrical one. As Bakhtin states, language only lives through the dialogical intercourse between those who use it[17] (or what Shapiro and Der Derian call intersubjectivity and intertextuality).[18] This may clarify why EU officials adopt instrumental views in their discourses on the Mediterranean. The EU's language on/references to the Mediterranean create an impression that the EU–Mediterranean relation is an active and developed one. The EU's Mediterranean is clearly shifting through time and space too.

What is important to observe is the context in which this discourse has been developed and the power lying behind such discourses – in other words, what Foucault terms the signification (or characteristics) of discourse. Foucault is concerned with showing 'that

the analysis of discursive formations really is centred on a description of the statement in its specificity … that they really are the proper dimensions of the statement that are at work in the mapping of discursive formations'.[19] It is thus crucial to question this discourse and to analyse the systems that make possible new discourses on the Mediterranean. The EU's current reiteration 'for Mauritania to be able to participate as a full member in the political dialogue of the Barcelona Process'[20] may be examined in light of Foucault's work. Firstly, this discursive practice reveals a widening of the EU's discourse on the Mediterranean to include Mauritania, which had so far been excluded from the Partnership (as well as the more recent EU initiative on the Greater Middle East that includes the Gulf states).[21] This statement thus shows how the EU's Mediterranean is a fluid concept, continuously in the making and it also shows how the EU persistently struggles to define the Mediterranean and to fix meaning and delineate borders around this area. Beneath this statement, however, lies the question of whether France has somehow been involved in this recent inclusion of Mauritania. At times when Britain and Germany work at enhancing their dual nexus and when France seems to loose its own nexus with Germany, France's leadership role within the EU appears in flux.[22] One may therefore speculate that France has attempted to influence the EU's discourse on the Mediterranean by going back to its historical links with Mauritania and the role it has had in North Africa in order to reiterate its role within the EU.[23] In light of this analysis the current EU discourse on the Mediterranean can be said to be a power discourse emanating from France.

This observation leads to the next set of Mediterraneans that emerged from the nation-state imaginings investigated through the documentation analysis and empirical work carried out for this book. The outline presented below must be analysed as an extension of the first set of Mediterraneans presented above and not as separate types of Mediterraneans. This separation in terms of analytic presentation is here made in order to show that distinctions of the Mediterranean can be made through various discourses: on the one hand, through the 'contents' of the Mediterranean as described above (for example, security or economic issues) and, on the other hand, in terms of national imaginings which may contain specific contents of the Mediterranean. Therefore, as Foucault claims, discourses may overlap which means we can trace the regularity of markers across discourses. This second set or *types* of Mediterranean are mainly geographically determined and are presented below.

Nation-state imaginings of the Mediterranean (set 2)

- French Mediterranean.
- Spanish Mediterranean.
- Italian Mediterranean.
- Maltese Mediterranean.
- Moroccan Mediterranean.
- Greek Mediterranean.

France, Spain and Italy's Mediterranean

It may be argued that, because of its established (even taken-for-granted) leading role within the EU, France's discourse may appear to fix a specific meaning to its Mediterranean. However, upon further analysis it seems that its discursive practices show that they are subject to change whenever its political influence is put to question. Spanish and Italian constructions of the Mediterranean appear to be more flexible, in accordance with external events and these countries' particular interests at certain periods. One may speculate that these discourses reflect the challenge Spain and Italy still have to establish themselves as important and influential EU members. Having analysed these discourses, however, it appears that French, Spanish and Italian discursive practices on the Mediterranean reiterate and reflect the more important discourses on Europe for these countries.[24] Therefore, it follows that the argument that southern European EU member states such as France, Italy and Spain act as a 'bloc' in their discursive practices on the Mediterranean is currently not a powerful discourse. Northern European countries, especially Sweden and Germany,[25] have been emerging with their own discourses on the Mediterranean that they deem as a very important area of influence and which therefore construct the Mediterranean in terms of its content. As one interviewee put it:

> The EMP cannot be influenced by Spain and France only. This is merely propaganda. Spain is now much less active in the Mediterranean than it used to be. New countries are showing interest in the Mediterranean now, Sweden being one of these. The balance of interests in the Mediter-ranean area shifts according to different criteria at specific time periods. This reflects the vitality of the Barcelona process.[26]

This discourse reflects how the EMP as a discursive practice on the Mediterranean constructs this area through different discourses stemming from diverse EU member states. It thereby emerges that the EU's Mediter-ranean is shifting not only in time but also in accordance with varied EU member states' national discourses (through their foreign policies as discursive practices).

It is interesting to note that there currently seems to be less of a discourse on the Mediterranean in the South European members of the EU – Italy, Spain and Portugal (and Greece too). These countries have been the most 'backward' European countries prior to their integration into the EU process. When they joined the EU, it seems that their national discourses on the Mediterranean faded and they only participated in discursive practices on the Mediterranean through official EU discourses. Yet, as the EU becomes more integrated with the entry of new members, southern European countries may develop more active discourses on the Mediterranean that in turn may influence EU practices on the area.[27] However, such more recent discourses on the Mediterranean reflect a different Spain, a different Italy and a different Portugal: these countries' discourses on the Mediterranean now reflect a certain distance in the positions and practices of these EU member states as compared to their earlier discourses on the Mediterranean as non-EU member states.[28]

This analysis confirms the work of critical political geographers[29] who state that geography supports increasingly uncertain socio-cultural and political spheres. In such dubious environments (post-9/11, 11 March),[30] geographical imaginings are constructed as an attempt to denote territory as well as identity concretely. Modern geography grew

out of a support discipline for military campaigns. EU geographic imaginings (especially some specific nation-state imaginings like those of France) of the Mediterranean still reflect this origin. Furthermore, as noted by Neumann, 'the geographer's concept of "region" stems from the Latin term *regere*, to rule. The original region was thus what one today would call a theatre of war'.[31] The term Mediter-ranean is also essentially Latin and means 'in the middle of the lands'.[32] Thus the prevalent meaning of the Mediterranean region may be read as the middle of the lands as the theatre of war. Although it is not clear whether all Europeans would make this connection, the Mediterranean is often imagined as a conflict zone. It is no surprise then that the most regular marker across EU discourses on the Mediterranean is the securitisation of the area. Such geographical views fail to be conscious of the historicity of an area.[33]

Malta, Greece and Morocco's Mediterranean

Malta, Greece and Morocco can be said to be geopolitically and geoculturally engaged in the Mediterranean. Morocco is more involved with the Maghreb (but also with the EU, especially France and Spain, as well as with the USA); Malta is more involved with Italy and Libya and the EU; and Greece more with the eastern Mediterranean (Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus, etc.), 'Near East' and the Balkans. Maltese and Moroccan interviewees related to the Mediterranean feeling but Greeks did not relate to this as much. Moreover, the discourses on the Mediterranean in Greece, Malta and Morocco seem to reflect some common practices of the fluidity of this concept. In fact, in all three cases the Mediterranean emerged as a fragmented area through the use of the bridge notion. It is also interesting to observe that the Mediterranean which emerged in the nation-state imaginings of France, Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece and Morocco underlines a particular reference to the Arab countries, these being referred to as either the Maghreb (in French and Moroccan discourses) or the Western Mediterranean (in Spanish discourses) or North Africa (in Maltese and Moroccan discourses) or the Middle East (in Greek discourses). These discourses can throw some light on the EMP as it is constructed in the partners' discourses. One may speculate whether it may be the case that all partners to the EMP unofficially treat this policy as an EU discursive practice of its relations with its Arab partners (rather than all the Mediterranean countries). After all, Malta and Cyprus joined the EU in May 2004, Turkey awaits its final verdict in October 2005 and Israel has special relations with the EU. The speaking 'subjects' of these discourses – that is those who can utter and make meaningful utterances about the Mediterranean – are the elites interviewed for this research. The thematics of these discourses, that is, their object/field of knowledge is the Mediterranean as a socially constructed area. Moreover, even within countries delineated as Mediterranean, it is important to distinguish between old concepts and meanings of the Mediterranean and more contemporary ones. The latter refer to more flexible notions of the content of the Mediterranean based on exchanges and relations between countries that make the area an emergent entity; that is, an entity in the making. Old concepts of the Mediterranean in these case studies refer to trade and co-operation initiatives and movements – in other words, the old notion of the Mediterranean as a trading post that 'makes' the 'area'. More contemporary discourses of the Mediterranean in Greece, Malta and Morocco still refer to specific but different characteristics of the area, namely to identity issues (broadly defined), cultural exchanges, educational and

economic/business networks, contacts and national interests. This contrasts sharply with the resulting fixed meaning of the Mediterranean within EU discourses – which construct the area as a holistic group of similar countries that the EU must 'deal' with and 'manage'.[34]

Before investigating how these different discourses on the Mediterranean reflect upon the deficiencies of the EMP (as these have been presented in Chapter 3), it is worth mentioning a third set of *Mediterraneans* underlying discourses on this area. These are outlined below as common discourses of the Mediterranean:

Common discourses of the Mediterranean (set 3)

- Sea.
- Sun.
- Cuisine.
- Ambiance.
- Feeling.
- Olive-tree zone.

The meaning of an area like the Mediterranean has been strongly influenced by the writings of travellers and traders who have imposed specific meanings on this space over time. Among the common discourses on the Mediterranean are references to the sea, the sun, the Mediterranean cuisine, the Mediter-ranean ambiance, the Mediterranean feeling and the area as the olive-tree zone. These common discourses were frequently noted when nation-state imaginings of the Mediterranean were observed and also when the Mediterranean is socially constructed through specific contents or characteristics. Thus, for example, when the Mediterranean was constructed in terms of people-to-people relations and exchanges (set 1 – content of Med), statements about the Mediterranean also mentioned that such interpersonal relations are usually experienced in a Mediterranean environment. Interviewees cited conferences they attended on the Mediterranean in Greece, Spain, Italy or southern France for example. The context of these conferences thus reflects the agenda of the discussions on the Mediterranean. For instance, the Halki international seminars on themes related to the Mediterranean are conducted on a yearly basis on the island of Halki in Greece. As a participant during these conferences I observe many other participants referring to the 'appropriate' ambiance offered by Halki for such a conference. Therefore, although these types of Mediterraneans have been presented as three different sets, these are often overlapping discourses that contain elements of all three broad outlines. Hence, geography and politics contribute to each other's construction.[35] Certain groups of metaphors about the Mediterranean – especially the spatial ones – are built into the way people think of the Mediterranean and are impossible to escape. Certain embedded metaphors and ways of thinking about the Mediterranean are therefore difficult to remove but may be reflected upon. In sum, language is metaphorical and each text on the Mediterranean is influenced by its preceding text (if known) – be this a common discourse, or specific characteristics of the Mediterranean or geographical determinants. The following section will look at some of the deficiencies in the EMP as the most recent EU discursive practice of the Mediterranean – which attempts to address the Mediterranean through a policy.

Some deficiencies in the EMP as a discursive practice

As a reflection of EU discourses/representations of the Mediterranean, Chapter Four analysed the EMP as a discursive strategy. Although this policy suggests relations between European and Mediterranean partners, the Mediterranean that emerged in the nation-state imaginings of France, Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece and Morocco underlines a particular reference to Arab partners. These discourses suggest that the EMP is in effect about European–Arab relations, at least in the manner in which the EMP is constructed in some of the partners' discourses. This observation is in line with Foucault's analysis of statements in which he claims that:

> The enunciative level is neutralized each time: either it is defined only as a representative sample that enables one to free endlessly applicable structures; or it disappears into a pure appearance behind which the truth of words is revealed; or it acts as a neutral substance that serves as a support for formal relations … In considering statements in themselves … We shall try to render visible, and analysable, that immediate transparency that constitutes the element of their possibility.[36]

The analysis of the discursive formations of the Mediterranean in EU policy that has been carried out throughout this book has attempted to analyse EU statements on the Mediterranean. In so doing, it has exposed the constraints and resources of such statements and the regularity across markers in EU discourses. It has also revealed that what made these discursive practices possible included the colonial legacy of European countries (along the thinking developed in new development theories) and their economic power (as a form of hegemony) for effective action. This section will now endeavour to present some of the lessons that can be learned from adopting a discursive constructivist approach to the study of European-Mediterranean policies. This analysis is not meant as a direct prescription of how the EMP can emerge as a successful policy. Rather, it seeks to scrutinise the implications of how the EU defines the Mediterranean and the manner in which its discourses on this area govern its relations with Mediterranean partners. By uncovering the discursive formations of the Mediterranean in the EMP, this book hopes to offer some tools for understanding the way in which EU discourses on the Mediterranean have become institutionalised and how this area has been constructed as an element of EU strategy.

In its first pillar of the EMP, EU discourses on the Mediterranean offer ideas and directions for 'political dialogue' between the two partners to cover the rule of law, human rights and democracy. It may be argued that the effect of this discourse leaves much to be desired since the EMP pays 'little more than lip-service to democracy and the rule of law, and it still contains only few concrete steps towards a political implementation of the goals set'. Moreover, its 'success … can hardly be assessed in any serious way as yet'.[37] During President Prodi's visit to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in 2001, the implementation of these ideas was attempted through a public address by Prodi at Damascus University.[38] The EU is seeking ways to look into these issues through such public practices or through the use of institutional means to promote human rights.[39] The discursive practices analysed in this research, however, point to the vagueness in EU

discourses on such issues that seem to remain at the level of rhetoric. EU definitions of the Mediterranean in terms of the 'common' problem of immigration is an example of such an EU practice at the level of rhetoric. The EU does not show enough political will to go beyond its strategy of controlling immigration. Perhaps it attempts to do so through the Schengen agreement and the support it offers for border guards, but it has not seriously dealt with this issue so far.[40] Thus, this is an example of a regular marker across EU discourses on the Mediterranean, if one sticks to the level of rhetoric. Even elites from its member states, Italy and France, note that not much has been done regarding this issue area. In short, the EU is not dealing with the issue of immigration. Therefore, one may observe that although the EU identifies the Mediterranean as an area where immigration is a unifying factor – an 'identity' aspect (broadly defined), this is another instance of a gap between EU rhetoric on the Mediterranean and its action towards the implemented goals in EU Mediterranean policies.[41]

This is also the case in the second pillar of the EMP that 'is less (about) poverty eradication as an objective in its own right, (and) rather the cushioning of adverse social effects which liberal reforms invariably bring about …'. The third pillar also 'presents a somewhat ambiguous picture'.[42] This latter pillar reflects a lack of EU understanding of the Mediterranean countries it deals with within the context of the EMP.[43]

Moreover, it seems that the EU has its own priority list in its (EMP) Mediterranean policy. The struggle for 'stability' – which reflects the EU's securitisation discourse on the Mediterranean – has priority over 'democracy' (for the EU in its Mediterranean policy). This EU priority list is also reflected in the unbalanced distribution of funds between the different baskets. It seems quite obvious that the EU prioritises economic reform processes in its Mediterranean partner states. This is a sector that allows for an impression that EU–Mediterranean relations are active and developed. Economics is the sector that authorises the EU to govern its relations with the Mediterranean partners since it has more clout in this field. In fact, the EU tends to marginalise the political component of its stated policy objectives since this is the field where Mediterranean reality and complexity lies. EU involvement or attempts at involvement in this area would therefore not reflect well on EU credentials: because of the EU's lack of political (especially military) clout within the political pillar, this pillar does not reflect well on the success of the EMP and thereby on EU–Mediterranean relations. It cannot be denied that the EU is in the process of establishing itself as an international actor still.[44] If the EU allowed issues/voices (that is a space for utterances from within the Mediter-ranean) to emerge from the Mediterranean, it might be incompetent to address them. Therefore, it sets the agenda and responses for questions it can give on the Mediterranean – questions it can solve and issues that give credence to the reasons for its very existence.

There is no doubt that the Mediterranean gives Europe and specifically the EU some *materiality*.[45] The EU deals with many countries as one group in order to reduce its variables, thus increasing the manageability of a regional system. This is an important insight derived from discourse analysis that differs from many other social scientific approaches that tend to define parts of the world as unproblematic. By freezing reality in this manner (of controlling these variables), the EU can say something about the Mediterranean other than about those issues which it cannot deal with or which would reflect negatively on it as an international actor, albeit in the making. The EU, for example, is unprepared to deal with so many complex issues such as the Middle East

crisis[46] – it has too much of a straightjacket in dealing with its regional groupings: even though the EMP and the MEPP are interrelated.[47] These are the variables that are relevant when dealing with the Mediterranean – an effort from the EU's side to manage, make more easily controllable the international reality that is surrounding it (a strategy of bringing/selecting common denominators). In defence of the EU as an international actor, the EU therefore shuts out parts of the Mediterranean and reduces the rest to clearly ordered categories. Thus, the EU only senses part of the Mediterranean and adapts the countries selected as its Mediterranean to pre-stored regional models.

> Cognitive consistence theory makes this insight the starting point for the study of the social, by studying (a) 'the framing problem': what frame one chooses to interpret something within, and (b) how expectations about what can be found inside the frame determine what one observes.[48]

The EU sees what its members want to see of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean has to therefore be put forward in EU discourses time and again. Yet, there is no 'true' or 'correct' discourse of the Mediterranean. From the EU's side, one can agree with Schlumberger that:

> (t)he EU is … no homogenous actor. In many policy areas, the southern member states' interests differ significantly from the northern members, and overlapping institutional responsibilities and competencies further complicate the formulation of coherent policies.[49]

Practical implications for EU Mediterranean Policy

This observation fits with the results of the documentation analysis and fieldwork of this research in terms of the ambiguous EU discourses of the Mediterranean that challenge the EU's international actorness. As a Maltese interviewee stated, unless EU Mediterranean policy attempts to be attractive to all parties in terms of responding to their individual interests and needs,[50] it is unlikely that any EU Mediterranean policy will succeed. EU practices of the Mediterranean cannot be grounded in a holistic view of all its Mediterranean partners as one group: they are different, with their own specific needs, requirements and priorities. The adoption of such a flexible EU Mediterranean practice can bring about improvements in EU–Mediterranean relations in terms of better communications and understanding between partners.[51] Whenever possible, EU partners can act through a sensitive approach to the specificity of each Mediterranean partner. The Mediterranean is a plural area in terms of (broadly defined) identities, cultures, development stages, economic performance, etc.[52] The discursive constructivist framework adopted in this book sheds light on the nature of dialogue which is a fundamental building block in EU–Mediterranean relations. When one enters into a dialogic relationship, one cannot assume that one partner is superior and the other inferior:[53] such a relationship assumes that other partners are equal and the relationship is based on premises of exchange between the two partners. In such a dialogue, it follows that the EU does not only enter into a relationship with its Mediterranean partners

through regular meetings and a furtherance of understanding but also the determination to deconstruct the EU's sense of 'holiness'.[54] As Prodi said recently:

> The only way to express ourselves in the new world is by being together. I don't like to be a colony. If we do not get together, we will disappear from world history.[55]

If the EU's Mediterranean policy is to be revisited, almost ten years since its inception, these reflections point to the need of the EU to strengthen the social component within the EMP. The EU has to do without its neo- or post-colonial discourses/practices in order to avoid the impression that its institutions and elites are all about political interference in the Mediterranean partner countries. Instead, the EU could aim to fulfil the objectives set for the social and human 'basket' of its Mediterranean policies. In practice, this means addressing the fears of Mediterranean partners about the EU's neo-colonial project, that is the suspicion of Western attempts to impose a European agenda. This will require a building process of shared norms and institutions that create mutual understanding. The envisaged Foundation for the Dialogue of Cultures could be seen as a positive step in this direction and could be the 'catalyst for all initiatives aimed at increasing dialogue and common understanding'.[56] This effort could balance the pressure and strong concentration on the purely technical-economic aspects of Euro– Mediterranean relations. It is commonly recognised that strong social safety nets are essential to ensure the success of transitional processes in developing societies. It will also be useful if the EU tries to involve its Mediterranean partners in a truly dialogic relationship before any strategy is 'commonly' agreed upon.[57] This could ensure that any strategy respects the fears, anxieties, interests of both the Mediterranean partner governments and those of the EU partners. In this manner, the EU could be presented as a context, an 'action system',[58] rather than as *the* centre of action.

Discourse analysis and foreign policy

Discourse theory can thus inform EU–Mediterranean relations through its focus on the intersubjectivity of communication processes.[59] In the case of EU–Mediterranean relations these can flow through both the parliamentary bodies and the informal networks of the public sphere.[60] The recent mention of Mauritania's potential inclusion in the EMP (within a parliamentarians' environment) shows that the European Parliament and parliamentarians in Mediterranean countries can have an important and effective role in enhancing EU–Mediterranean relations and understandings. It may be argued that the discourse of parliamentarians on the Mediterranean is more flexible than that of Commission officials as a result of the nature of their tasks: the latter deal with Mediterranean issues in a more direct manner while parliamentarians operate more at the strategic level. However, the Commission delegations in Mediterranean partner countries can play a crucial role in reinforcing and implementing the EMP's partnership building instruments. This can be further facilitated through the recently established Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary body. This author supports the continuation of the dialogue environment created in Barcelona between the partners in the EMP as a means of clearing up misunderstandings and to foster the approximation of discursive practices and

perceptions and to make it possible to strengthen confidence and trust amongst all the EMP partners.[61] Rather than attempting the symbolic ordering of Mediterranean social relations, European partners have to understand their Mediterranean partners better. Likewise, Mediterranean partners have to enhance their understanding of their European colleagues.[62]

Therefore, when applied to this work, discursive constructivism points to the importance of the third pillar of the EMP and the meaning of the Mediterraneans that emerge from informal networks of communications and exchanges.[63] The Mediterranean is a set of complex societies rather than one holistic and homogenous society: the EU *cannot* therefore be effective in the area through its presuppositions and rhetoric of these societies as one holistic group. When dealing with this area, the EU has to accept its Mediterranean politics as continuous, ceaseless and endless, a process that the EU needs to work on too and not expect things to happen from the Mediterranean partners' side alone. The EU has been conceived in this book as the marker of a Mediterranean certainty that characterises the specific form of social symbolic power that is at the core of EU 'democracy'. It has to do away with the specific kind of politics which the development of the modern state in Western industrial societies created – that is, it has to do away with the politics of domestication, containment and boundary-drawing. The alternative for the EU lies in a non-state centred vision of the political.[64]