

EUropean space making in the 'Wild East': An inquiry into the enactment of geostrategies in the Moldova-Ukraine borderland through EUBAM



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June 2011

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Cover photo: EUBAM

Abstract

Within current (geographical) academic debate, there coexists a wide range of visions on the question how the contemporary geopolitical development of the European Union (EU) at and beyond its external borders should be conceptualized. Most of these theoretical perspectives are inspired by and based on the activities the EU is enacting in and the relationships it is developing with countries in its 'near abroad', first and foremost in the light of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This particular policy framework has been developed with the objective to 'avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe', and to bring 'prosperity, security and stability' to both the EU as well as to its 'ring of friends'.

This thesis aims at making a further contribution to the discussion. By looking at a specific case, which is part of the ENP framework (in the form of EUBAM, see below), it is hoped that the contemporary 'stock of knowledge' on the geopolitical development of the EU at and beyond its external borders will get even richer and more diverse than it already is. After giving an overview of the current state of affairs when it comes to theorizing the role the EU has to play in 'the wider European space', summarizing some of the most prominent views (which can all more or less be placed under the heading of 'critical geopolitics'), a more concrete and specific theoretical perspective is selected and further elaborated on. This theoretical perspective consists of the framework as developed by Christopher S. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, who are, in turn, to a large degree inspired by the work of William Walters.

Browning and Joenniemi note that, when it comes to conceptualizing the geopolitical development of the EU, scholars often turn to (one of) three models, in the form of the 'Westphalian', the imperial and the neomedieval conceptualization of the EU. Despite the fact that these models represent and summarize quite a wide range of perspectives, it is argued that they lack a certain dynamism, and that their application can easily result in their reification and the simplification of obviously a very multi-faceted and complex process. For this reason, these scholars have attempted to overcome the limitations of the models by combining and integrating them with the work of William Walters. Walters has identified a number of 'border geostrategies', which can be considered as discourses on how the EU perceives the space at and beyond its own outside borders; they are to be viewed as certain 'spatial imaginations', normative visions on how the 'wider European territory' should be organized, controlled and thought of. More specifically, Walters makes a distinction between four border geostrategies, in the form of the 'limes', the 'colonial frontier', the 'march' and the 'networked (non)border'.

Up to this point, the combined framework has only been applied to draw some very general conclusions on the geopolitical development of the EU, without any specific cases being analyzed into detail using this particular perspective. It is, however, certainly possible to identify a number of highly interesting and special cases of the EU enacting certain border practices, with particular underlying and guiding discourses oriented towards, indeed, organizing and changing the space of its 'near abroad'. One of these interesting cases is formed by EUBAM, an EU border mission in Moldova and Ukraine, which started in 2005 at the joint request of the presidents of Moldova and Ukraine. In essence, the goal of the mission is to, in cooperation with a wide range of 'implementing partners', improve the border controls between these two countries. One of the aspects making this specific EUBAM mission quite a special case, is the fact that both Moldova and Ukraine are both non-EU countries. For this reason, for instance Luiza Bialasiewicz argues the EU now has a say over what she labels 'a remote control border', with the EU being able to organize the Moldova-Ukraine border space from a distance. Another aspect worth mentioning is formed by the 'Transnistrian situation', which also gives the EUBAM mission a unique dimension. These and other relevant aspects will be worked out and commented on in this thesis.

Through a discursive analysis of both textual data (the 2011 edition of the so-called 'Action Plan' and the 'Press Pack 2011' are selected) and some visual materials (maps, logos, pictures), both found on the website of the mission, it is attempted to gain an insight into the geostrategies that form the heart the EUBAM mission, i.e. the specific ways in which the EU, through EUBAM, presents the Moldova-Ukraine borderland and how it attempts to organize and change this particular space. On this basis, in turn, it is possible to draw further conclusions on the value of the three geopolitical models. In addition, attention is paid to the actual results of the mission, the 'on the ground' impact up to this point. With this, the specific goal of this thesis can be formulated as follows:

The goal of the research is to gain further insight into and make a contribution to the debate on the (new) geopolitical ways in which the EU is attempting to manage and influence the space in its direct 'neighbourhood' and the related changing nature of the EU's external borders

By

Performing an analysis of both the presentation and the impact of the geostrategies that are being used with the enactment of EUBAM, as a geopolitical policy instrument of the EU, applied in the border region between Ukraine and Moldova.

On the basis of a 'deconstructive' analysis, it is argued that there is actually quite a lot more to the EUBAM mission than 'just' improving the border controls between the involved countries. Actually, although some clearly play a more prominent role than others, it is possible to identify at least glimpses of each of the geostrategies when analyzing both the textual data as well as the visual materials. With this, it can be stated that EUBAM is a multi-geostrategy construction. Also, it is highlighted that the actual, on the ground activities of EUBAM not always fully coincide with the discursive tone with which the mission is presented to the outside world. Furthermore, it is concluded that the models remain important when it comes to fully capture and conceptualize the evolving nature of EU geopolitics (mainly when it comes to describing the organisation of the mission), although also this case shows the problems arising when dogmatically clinging to one specific, individual model.

Concerning the actual impact the mission has had up to now, it is argued that social benefits can clearly be identified, the main example of which is probably the progress that has made when it comes to cutting crime in the Transnistrian region, especially (the detection of) smuggling. There remain, however, some serious challenges for the future, which, in order to be able to tackle them, require the full effort and commitment of all actors involved.

Finally, it is recommended that further research needs to be conducted, not only when it comes to EUBAM and its progress over time, but also on other activities the EU is enacting in its 'near abroad'. By doing so, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the direct and indirect impact of such projects, as well as a better insight into the most appropriate ways to theorize the EU's geopolitical development. Only by subjecting a wide range of cases to critical scrutiny, a more well-informed scientific insight into such a complex, multidimensional and dynamic process can be developed.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Project framework

In July 2007, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission (EC), remarked that he likes to consider the European Union (EU) to be showing the characteristics of an empire: "We are a very special construction unique in the history of mankind [...]. Sometimes I like to compare the EU as a creation to the organisation of empire. We have the dimension of empire" (in Waterfield, 2007). With these statements, Barroso attempted to make clear how, in his view, "unlike old 'super state' empires the EU was based on a voluntary surrender of sovereignty, not military conquest", making the EU the first 'non-imperial empire' (in Waterfield, 2007). Furthermore, he added that all 27 EU members should be proud of what he called 'their unique union'. "At least we in the Commission are proud of it" (in Charter, 2007).

The expressions cited here came two years after the Dutch and French dismissal of the EU constitution, and in the midst of the British discussion on the necessity of holding a referendum on the EU treaty that would replace this failed EU constitution. In this context, it should not come as a surprise that the remarks of the president of the European Commission did not remain unnoticed in Great Britain. For instance, Waterfield (2007) (labelling Barroso as the would-be emperor) stated that "[t]he comments from the most senior EC official in Brussels will infuriate the Prime Minister as he tries to fight off growing demands for a referendum by denying a planned new EU treaty has constitutional implications." Also, Mark Francois, the Shadow Europe Minister, declared that "[t]he British public will be surprised to hear that we are now part of an EU empire. For the President of the Commission to say this is quite startling and anyone who thinks that we have been exaggerating in calling for a referendum on a revived constitution only has to look at what Mr Barroso has said to realise the scale of what is now being contemplated." Furthermore, Nigel Farage, the former leader of the UK Independence Party, stated: "I would like Mr Barroso to come to Britain and repeat those quotes and see what the reaction would be" (in Waterfield, 2007).

Just as predictable as the reaction of the Euro-sceptics, who were obviously not hesitant to make use of this sudden 'window of opportunity', was the reaction of the Barroso spokesmen afterwards (Waterfield (2007) describes how "[n]ervous aides to the former Portuguese Prime Minister inquired after his press conference whether this description might feature in British media reports"). Attempting to directly take away the newly gained ammunition from the hands of 'the sceptics', the Barroso camp expressed: "No one needs to have imperial nightmares." And: "EU member states came together peacefully, democratically and voluntarily - the president would not want it any other way." Also Barroso himself, referring to the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, was quick to declare that the EU is "anything but a superstate" (Waterfield, 2007).

It is possible to derive (at least) two important conclusions from the event described above. Firstly, designating the EU (whether it is as an empire, or a superstate) is more than merely a labelling exercise, and such categorizations are, as the both the Barroso camp and the British Prime Minister have experienced, not without their (political) consequences. By framing the EU as an empire, Barroso sparked heated reactions from EU-sceptic parties, and at the same time he handed them a new kind of ammunition in their political crusade against the (increasing power of the) EU.

Secondly, it is important to notice that the nature of the institution that is the EU is constantly changing, and is doing so in different ways. This evolving nature manifests itself both in the internal dimension of the EU (e.g. the EU treaty of Lisbon, which was, after skirmishes such as the one described above, signed in December 2007 and came into force in December 2009, (European Union, n.d.)), and in what can be seen as the external dimension of the EU (of which the

enlargement of the EU up to 27 member states at this point is the most prominent example, but which also includes the growing number of activities the EU is currently conducting in its direct neighbourhood and even beyond).

In essence, this thesis will be centred around both of these issues: it attempts to contribute to the debate on the question how the EU should nowadays be considered and conceptualized in the light of the growing number of activities taking place in its direct external neighbourhood. Should the EU, in an attempt to influence and change this 'near abroad' according to its own insights, be considered an empire (perhaps even a neo-imperial one), looking to increase its territory over which it reigns, or are such conceptualisations somewhat exaggerated? It is issues such as these that I will address in the coming chapters, with a detailed case-study forming the heart of the thesis.

Whereas, when it comes to the evolving nature of the EU in a more external sense, enlargement is the most important foreign relations-instrument the institution has at its disposal, it certainly doesn't stop there. In this light it is also important to, already in this introduction, pay attention to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which was founded in and has developed significantly since 2004, "with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all" (European Commission, 2010). Chapter two provides an extensive overview of the characteristics of the ENP as a policy framework, as well as an overview of the academic debate on the consequences that such policy initiatives have for the way the EU should be framed. For this moment, it is important to note that, as the ENP can be considered to be very broadly oriented (both in terms of participating partners and issues being addressed), an in this context feasible research focussing on the external geopolitical involvement of the EU should be addressing a more specific case. In this inquiry, this case will consist out of the EU activities taking place in (the borderland between) Moldova and Ukraine, under the umbrella of EUBAM (the European Union Border Assistant Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, which started in 2005 and can be placed in the (legal) context of the ENP). The fourth chapter consists of a more detailed overview of EUBAM and its goals and activities, but for now it suffices to state that EUBAM is a project of the EU in cooperation with Moldova and Ukraine, which, in essence, looks to improve the border controls between these two countries (EUBAM, 2011a). As I hope to show with my thesis, however, there is more to this 'EU mission' than 'just' improving border controls, and there are a number of more or less implicit geopolitical discourses underlying the activities of the mission and their justification. It is through an analysis of this EUBAM case that I will try to shed some light on these discourses, and, with that, add to the debate on the geopolitical nature characterizing the EU's external policy.

Furthermore, in this light it is worth mentioning that this EUBAM case shows a number of quite unique characteristics which make it a very interesting one for subjecting it to an-depth analysis. For instance, as also Luiza Bialasiewicz has stated, this specific case shows how the EU is now performing border management activities not only at its own external border, but also at the border between Moldova and Ukraine, which are both non-EU members. This border between Moldova and Ukraine can, as Bialasiewicz states, therefore be considered to be a 'remote control border', which the EU is now able to manage from a distance (personal communication, 29 November 2010). Another aspect worth incorporating into this study is formed by the so-called 'Transnistrian conflict' (see chapter four), which also adds a specific and special dimension to the EUBAM mission.

As mentioned, the second chapter of this thesis will (partly) consist of an overview of the academic debate on the geopolitical ways in which the EU is attempting to manage the space beyond its own

external border (the 'empire conceptualisation' of the EU, whether or not in a imperial sense, will also feature here). For this introduction chapter however, it is necessary to briefly present the work of Browning and Joenniemi (2008) in advance. These scholars have developed an analytical framework for understanding and conceptualizing the dynamics going on at and beyond the EU's external border, whereby they first and foremost focus on the ENP. Browning and Joenniemi state that the debate about the ENP is, in essence, often centred around several "rather fixed geopolitical vision[s] of what the EU is about and how it aims to run and to organise the broader European space" (p. 519), and that their framework should be seen as an aim to "retain space for viewing the ENP as a developmental and somewhat fluid process", and to "be able to tell a more dynamic story regarding the developing nature of the ENP and the EU's evolving nature more generally" (p. 529). The authors start off by summarizing three 'classic' models of (the development of) European geopolitics, i.e. the 'Westphalian', the 'imperial' and the 'neomedieval' model of the EU (see chapter two), which they use as benchmark for constructing their own framework.

Browning and Joenniemi argue that, although these models are widely applied to conceptualize the development of the EU and European governance, they have some limitations constraining their explanatory power. The authors argue that these models don't take into account the dynamics characterizing the development of the EU, "not least because one can be Westphalian, imperial or neomedieval in different ways, while one may be more than one of these at the same time in different locations" (p. 526). It is because of this reason that Browning and Joenniemi have tried to add explanatory power to the framework, by combining it with the work of Walters (2004). Walters (in Browning and Joenniemi, 2004) has formed a conceptualization for analyzing the various 'geostrategies' the EU applies along its borders. Walters explains that a geostrategy can be seen as a discourse, which "corresponds with a particular way of organising the space of the border" (p. 526). Walters has identified four geostrategies, i.e. the 'networked (non)border', the 'march', the 'colonial frontier' and the 'limes'. They will be explained in detail in chapter two.

Up to this point, Browning and Joenniemi (2008) have applied the combined framework to draw some very general conclusions on the geopolitical strategies used within the ENP as a whole. Furthermore, both in scholarly debate (see e.g. Kurowska and Tallis, 2009; Popescu, 2009) and in the media (e.g. Dura, 2004), some attention has been paid to the institutional context, the advantages and disadvantages and the achievements and challenges related to EUBAM. However, the combined conceptual framework of Browning & Joenniemi and Walters has not yet been applied on the specific (and special) case of the EU border practices currently being undertaken at the Moldova-Ukraine frontier. It is by identifying the geopolitical ways in which the EU (through EUBAM) discursively presents the current state of affairs in the Moldova- Ukraine borderland, and, on the basis of that, 'justifies' the EUBAM mission, that I will try to overcome this 'knowledge void'.

I do not, however, want to turn my thesis into only a 'labelling exercise', (e.g. coming to the conclusion that the current EU border work in Ukraine and Moldova is a manifestation of the imperial model of Europe; something Barosso's 'nervous aides' would probably be very eager to refute again). Nevertheless, I will use the framework consisting of the models to be a sort of 'benchmark theory', as I see them as a good, reasonably straightforward basis for analyzing this specific border, integrating the main elements of several of the most prominent views on how the EU is attempting to organize the 'broader European space'. I will, however, immediately admit that they remain models; abstractions and simplifications of obviously a more complex reality. Therefore, going beyond the idea of determining to what extent the current border management corresponds with which of the three models, it might also be interesting to see if the project of modelling such a complex development can be considered to be opportune, if there is altogether any (empirical) value in working with such categorical labels. Admittedly, Browning and Joenniemi have also stated that "[t]he problem is that discussion of geopolitical models easily results in their reification and a

simplification of the nature of the policies under analysis” (p. 526). However, although these scholars leave room for the possibility of combining the models, they do still assume that these three models, whether individually or combined, are fully able to capture the evolving nature of Europe’s geopolitical practices in its direct neighbourhood, and I don’t want to dismiss this beforehand. However, I consider it to be valuable to investigate whether EUBAM, and the specific ways in which one or different geostrategies are being applied in this special (‘remote control border’) case, ‘fits the models’ (whether a specific, individual one or a more hybrid version). Do the three geopolitical development models ‘resonate’ and ‘fit’ with the specific geostrategic ways in which the EU, through EUBAM, tries to conceptualize, territorialize, organize, control, prescribe and deal with (the issues and threats at) this specific borderland and the people in it? And what do these perceptions and ‘mental geographies’ say about the political rationality and identity of the EU?

Going a step further, it is interesting to reflect on the explanatory power of models in a more general sense, and the value of modelling (and with that also labelling and categorizing) such a complex and often highly differentiated development altogether. And if it is possible to (partly) dismiss the value of this modelling exercise, what are the alternatives? It is by translating the EU(BAM) border management activities and the accompanying and legitimizing discourses into terms of geostrategies that I will come to an answer to questions such as these.

Furthermore, it is also important to pay attention to the more practical side of the coin, in the form of the actual impact the EUBAM mission has had up to this point. The questions mentioned above address the very much theoretical goals of identifying geostrategies and determining the value of a number of geopolitical models. However, in order to also give the thesis a more practical dimension and move somewhat away from merely doing a theoretical inquiry, it is also highly interesting to also incorporate the question of the actual spatial and social outcomes of the geostrategies as they have been and are being enacted via EUBAM. On the basis of the outcomes of this specific part of the analysis, it might even be possible to derive some policy recommendations to improve the missions output (see below).

From the remarks above, it is possible to derive a research goal and a number of research questions, which will be presented in the following paragraphs.

1.2 Research goal

The goal of the research is to gain further insight into and make a contribution to the debate on the (new) geopolitical ways in which the EU is attempting to manage and influence the space in its direct ‘neighbourhood’ and the related changing nature of the EU’s external borders

By

Performing an analysis of both the presentation and the impact of the geostrategies that are being used with the enactment of EUBAM, as a geopolitical policy instrument of the EU, applied in the border region between Ukraine and Moldova.

On the basis of a ‘discursive deconstruction’ (to speak with Derrida), it turns, it should be possible to draw some further conclusions on the value of the current stock of knowledge regarding this theme, especially in the light of the (usage of) three theoretical models of the geopolitical evolution of the European Union and its external borders (as summarized by Walters, 2004), i.e. the ‘Westphalian’, the ‘imperial’ and the ‘neomedieval’ model of Europe.

1.3 Research questions

Main question:

Which of the four EU geostrategies, as identified by Browning and Joenniemi, are enacted by 'EUBAM' on what ways in the border region between the Ukraine and Moldova, and what are their social and spatial outcomes?

Sub questions:

- What is the current in state of affairs concerning the debate on conceptualizing the geopolitical development of the European Union at and beyond its external border?
- What are the core elements of the 'Westphalian model', the 'imperial model' and the 'neomedieval model' of Europe and its geopolitical dynamics at the external border?
- What are the core elements of the geostrategies 'limes', 'march', 'colonial frontier' and the 'networked (non)border'?
- What is EUBAM?
 - What is the place of EUBAM within the broader EU policy on the external European neighbourhood?
 - What are the goals of EUBAM?
 - What are the means with which these goals are to be achieved?
- Which geostrategy/geostrategies (as discourses) are being applied within the framework of EUBAM, and how does this happen?
- What has been the impact of the enactment of these geostrategies in the border region between Moldova and Ukraine up to this point?
- What is (or remains of) the explanatory power of the Westphalian, imperial and neomedieval model of Europe, in the light of the specific ways in which one or multiple geostrategies are being applied in the case of EUBAM?

1.4 Relevance

As can be noted from the first paragraphs of this thesis, the research is primarily oriented towards applying and with that also empirically testing an existing theoretical framework. By investigating EUBAM, as a relatively new type of policy instrument at the disposal of the EU, through the lens of the geostrategies, it is possible to draw further conclusions on the value of the three models of the geopolitical development of the EU as summarized by Browning and Joenniemi. On the basis of this, in turn, it is possible to comment on the (more general) validity of using such reasonably straightforward models for explaining a complex geopolitical development that is the growing influence of the EU beyond its external border. Obviously, a wider range of cases needs to be taken into account before it is possible to come to final conclusions regarding the issue at stake here. However, this inquiry of EUBAM might serve as one of these concrete case studies necessary for the further development of a conceptual framework regarding the external geopolitical nature of the EU.

Furthermore, besides this purely conceptual/theoretical goal (which remains at quite a high level of abstraction), the research also serves the more empirical and with that more concrete goal of simply getting a better understanding and coming to a better informed interpretation of EUBAM, as the current (scientific) study of this policy instrument/project can be considered as being fairly underdeveloped (for instance when it comes to the impact the mission has had up to this point), with only little academic attention paid to it (see e.g. Kurowska and Tallis, 2009; Popescu, 2009). It is in this sense that the research also fills a more 'empirical gap'.

Finally, it is possible to defend the claim that this research also serves a more practical goal, although it must be admitted that this plays a somewhat less prominent role than the other goal types. It might, for instance, be possible that EUBAM, looking at its impact up to now, turns out to be a good manifestation of the 'imperial model' of Europe, with e.g. the EU, through EUBAM, attempting to spread around what are considered 'European values' (see chapter two). The question then is, is this also really the (prime) policy objective of the EU? In other words: is the policy of EUBAM working out as intended, or are the main goals behind the policy more based on e.g. a 'neomedieval model' of Europe? This research, although it must be emphasized that this isn't the main focus, might generate some of the knowledge necessary for answering very much practical policy related questions such as these. On that basis, the taking into account of such issues could eventually even provide an insight serving as the basis for (incremental) policy changes when it comes to the enactment of (projects such as) EUBAM.

1.5 Thesis outline

Chapter two will address the first sub question and consists of a very general (and with that obviously incomplete) overview of the academic debate on the ways in which the EU is trying to manage the space at and beyond its external border, with a special focus on the ENP. This part forms the very basic theoretical structure from which the final part of the chapter is, in a way, derived. This section will provide a more extensive overview of the combined work of Walters & Browning and Joenniemi (the three geopolitical models and the four geostrategies), which will form the 'benchmark theory', the 'theoretical lens' used for conducting the actual research. In chapter three, I will explain the methodology (discourse analysis) chosen for conducting the empirical part of the inquiry. Chapter four provides the necessary background on both the Moldova-Ukraine borderland (including an overview of the Transnistrian situation) and EUBAM (its goals, means etc.) In chapter five, the results of the actual empirical research will be presented. Chapter six, being the final part of this thesis, comprises the concluding remarks, the most prominent part of which obviously will be the answer to the main research question. Furthermore, there is room for some recommendations (particularly when it comes to the possibilities for conducting further research), as well as for reflecting critically on the research as a whole.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework: a 'critical geopolitics' perspective

2.1 Introduction

On the basis of the vast amount of literature that can be found on the topic of the geopolitical development of the EU at and beyond its outer borders, it is fair to state that there exists a profound (scientific) need for understanding and interpreting the dynamic and multiple ways in which Europe is developing at and also increasing its geopolitical influence beyond its own frontiers. The existing literature concerning this topic is not only voluminous in a quantitative sense; it is also quite differentiated and rich when it comes to the views that are expressed and the cases that are used to support these different positions.

In the first part of this chapter, I will present a very brief introduction on the ENP, since the EUBAM case, which forms the heart of this thesis, is part of this policy framework. In the second part, I will try to provide a very general overview of (obviously only a very limited part of) the currently available stock of knowledge on the geopolitical development of the EU and the fundamentally related changing nature of Europe's external borders, serving as the basic theoretical structure of the research. On the basis of this very general framework, the specific lens with which the EUBAM case will be analyzed (as already introduced in chapter one) will be derived and further elaborated.

2.2 The ENP: key facts

As can be read on the ENP website, this policy framework provides the neighbours of the EU a privileged relationship, "building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP goes beyond existing relationships to offer political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts. The level of ambition of the relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared." Adding: "The ENP remains distinct from the process of enlargement although it does not prejudge, for European neighbours, how their relationship with the EU may develop in future, in accordance with Treaty provisions" (European Commission, 2010).

At this moment, sixteen 'neighbours' make up the 'ring of friends' (as Romano Prodi, at that time president of the EC, famously put it in 2002), in the form of Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine (figure 2.1).

The ENP addresses a broad



Figure 2.1: Overview of the EU member and candidate states and the eastern ENP partners. Source: European Union (2011).

spectrum of (interrelated) issues, ranging from e.g. political cooperation to social development and from economic reforms to tackling environmental issues: “[The ENP focusses on four central themes, namely] promoting sustainable economic and social development; addressing common challenges, such as the environment, health, the fight against organised crime, ensuring efficient and secure borders and promoting local, people-to-people actions. Together, the political, economic and regional cooperation objectives pursued by the EU are meant to counter the reasoning that contrasts the countries on the inside with those on the outside” (Sushko, 2006, p. 2).

A key role within the ENP is being played by the bilateral ‘Actions Plans’, which are agreed upon by the EU and the ENP partner in question. These plans set out the agenda for reform, consisting out of short and long-term priorities (3-5 years). Currently, twelve Action Plans have been signed (the sixteen partners with the exceptions of Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria (European Commission, 2010)). Serving as the policy framework for a broad range of projects and activities in almost all of its direct neighbours, the ENP has developed into one of the most prominent geopolitical instruments with which the EU is able to manage and influence the space beyond its own territory, a development that has inspired quite a number of scholars to form and express their visions on contemporary EU geopolitics. These visions from the core of the remainder of this chapter.

2.3 Borders and the EU's geopolitical development: an overview

2.3.1 Borders: not what they used to be

From a theoretical point of view it is, firstly, important to point to the fact that in academic debate there is a growing awareness of the changing nature and the growing complexity of the way borders work and should be conceptualized in a more general sense. It is often remarked that policy initiatives such as the ENP are not only an attempt to manage and change the ‘space beyond’, but also have a profound impact on the nature of the EU's external border. For instance, Comelli, Greco and Tocci (2007), who, by focusing on the outer frontiers of the EU, look at the European Neighbourhood Policy “as an attempt by the EU to transform its external borders from areas of demarcation and division to areas of exchange and interaction” (p. 1).

Also according to Etienne Balibar (2002), nowadays “borders are no longer [only] at the border, an institutionalized site that could be materialized on the ground and inscribed on the map, where one sovereignty ends and another begins.” Also, and related to this stance, the political geographer Luiza Bialasiewicz states that “borders are now everywhere”, claiming that the development of new types of borders can be partly considered to be a reaction to new ‘de-territorialised threats’, such as terrorism and other forms of crime. This leads to both what she calls ‘securing the internal’ (new borders and ‘lines of defence’ (‘internal policing’) within the traditional nation-state), and externalizing and off-shoring the border and the management and control of borders, which blurs the distinction between the ‘internal’ and the ‘external’ (personal communication, 1 December 2010). A similar position is taken up by Delanty (2006), who argues that a border is nowadays a “networked and fluid process”, instead of a steady, fixed line.

As mentioned, I will try to make an addition to this ‘border debate’ by looking specifically at the border between Moldova and Ukraine and the activities the EU has been conducting there through EUBAM (how does this border and the way it is managed fit into the ‘new border nature’ discussion?). Before doing so, however, I will give a more extensive literature overview on the geopolitical development of the European Union and its external border practices more specifically, serving as the background framework for interpreting the EUBAM mission.

2.3.2 Theorizing the geopolitical development of the EU

A good, quite general starting point for this literature over- and review is formed by highlighting the stream of 'critical geopolitics'. It can be claimed that several of the opinions and standpoints of the different scholars that will be presented in this first part of the chapter are, to a lesser or greater extent, related to or can be fully placed within this broadly oriented school of geographical thought. Because it would be possible to argue that critical geopolitics serves as the 'umbrella' of quite a vast part of the current ideas on political geography (obviously also including and prominently featuring the geography of EU politics), it is important to briefly present it here as a first step to coming to a well-informed conceptual understanding of the current geopolitical development of the EU. Sharp (2009) gives the following description of critical geopolitics:

Critical geopolitics refers to a range of approaches that arose through a revival of interest in political geography to challenge dominant geopolitical arguments in the 1980s. This involved a number of intellectual positions from European and Anglo-American geography which arose to challenge the state-centrism and factual accuracy of conventional geopolitical theories [...]. Founded initially by political geographers Simon Dalby and Gearoid O' Tuathail (writing together and separately) in the late 1980s, critical geopolitics influenced by poststructuralist concerns with the politics of representation considers the ways in which the use of *particular discourses* [emphasis added] shape political practices. Using the apparently oxymoronic term 'critical geopolitics', Dalby and O' Tuathail sought to create a critical approach to subvert the taken-for-granted meanings of geographical discourse in explanations of international politics. The rise of critical geopolitics in political geography can be seen in a wider context. Post-structural approaches in international relations theory deconstructed the foundational concepts upon which the discipline had been built, including realism and sovereignty, in a way mirroring the theoretical agenda of critical geopolitics. (p. 358)

Adding that:

Critical geopolitical approaches seek to examine how it is that *international politics is imagined spatially or geographically and in so doing to uncover the politics involved in writing the geography of global space. Rather than arguing over the true effects of geography on international relations critical geopolitics asks whose models of international geography are used, and whose interests these models serve* [emphasis added]. This approach owes much to Michel Foucault's insistence that power and knowledge are inseparable. For geopoliticians, there is great power available to those whose maps and explanations of world politics are accepted as accurate because of the influence that these have on the way the world and its workings are understood, and therefore the effects that this has on future political practice. (p. 358)

Furthermore, Sharp describes how the stream of critical geopolitics can be linked to mapping practices, and the role individuals and institutions have to play in this respect:

Dalby and O' Tuathail likened critical geopolitics to writing over the accepted political maps of the world to expose what these omitted and to highlight the power/knowledge relations upon which they depended. *Unlike conventional geopolitics, for critical geopolitics geography is not a collection of incontrovertible facts and relationships 'out there' in the world awaiting description but is a discourse. Geographical orders are created by key individuals and institutions and then imposed upon the world* [emphasis added]. O' Tuathail has called this process 'geo-graphing' – earth-writing –

to emphasize the creativity inherent in the process of using geographical reasoning in the practical service of power. *Geographical discourse used in representations of international politics then is the product of cultural context and political motivation* [emphasis added]. [T]he Foucauldian approach to discourse makes it clear that no geopolitician can be innocent of interest. (p. 359)

Also, Sharp states that: "In addition to recognizing the situatedness of geopolitics, critical geopolitical approaches have focused on ways in which geopolitical arguments have sought to create emotional response on the part of its subjects encouraging them not only to believe in certain representations of the world, but also, in some cases, to create active citizens remaking their world" (p. 359). Finally, it would be interesting to note that Sharp states that Orientalism is often seen the beginning of critical geopolitics; "the imaginative geography of the West versus the rest so eloquently elucidated by Edward Said. Drawing upon the Western philosophical tradition of ordering the world through conceptual binaries, Said argued that Europe's representation of the Orient as other, was used to reflect back a positive image of the self. The West is everything that the rest is not" (p. 359-360).

The citations presented here highlight several of the most important characteristics of what the stream of critical geopolitics entails. A key term within this school of thought is that of 'discourse', which, in this context, points at the power of imagination and representation and the essentially contested nature of any geopolitical logic. The issue of discourse will return regularly in both the rest of this chapter as in the later parts of this thesis.

These first remarks on the stream of critical geopolitics can very much be related to the ideas of James D. Sidaway (2006), summarized in an article called 'On the nature of the beast: 'Re-charting political geographies of the European Union' (I will be dealing with this article quite extensively, as I think it summarizes quite well the different visions on what Europe (in a general sense) is, how it should be understood, and it provides a conclusion that can serve as a first step towards presenting the multiplicity of conceptualisations of the EU's bordering practices more specifically).

As the title suggests, Sidaway, drawing on and integrating the work of a wide range of scholars, presents the EU as a complex 'beast', the nature of which is open to a variety of interpretations. As many other authors have stated (albeit from different perspectives) (see e.g. Paasi, 2001; Boedeltje & Van Houtum, 2008), Sidaway states that Europe should be seen as an ongoing social process, a construction, and therefore also a *discourse*, with no pre-given end-point or overarching end-goal. A quote of Chrysochoou (in Sidaway, 2006, p. 4) is very telling in this respect: "[...] after nearly five decades of uninterrupted theorizing about European integration, international scholarship is still puzzled as to what exactly the EU is or may come to resemble in the future." Both the absence of such an end-point and the relative novelty of the EU (which, according to Sidaway (2006, p. 1) "lies in part in the complex territorial configurations of authority in the EU") implies the possibility of a wide range of conceptualisations of what the EU is, how it functions, and, relevant in this respect, how geopolitical and territorial dynamics of the EU should be understood: "The EU lends itself to a wide diversity of interpretations about its *modus operandi*, structure and relationships to sovereignty and territory" (Sidaway, 2006, p. 1).

In his article, Sidaway explores "the shifting political geographies of the European Union" (p. 1) by focussing on the "challenges that the EU poses for conventional understandings of the ensemble of relations between *territory-government-power* that have traditionally lain at the heart of political geography" (p. 1). He underpins his statement of the multiplicity of possible EU-conceptualisations by providing us with an anthology of several ones, ranging from creative and sometimes even odd perspectives (e.g. those claiming that Europe is a fundamentalist Protestant

entity (based on biblical prophecy), or that Europe can be considered a conspiracy directed by the Vatican), to more mainstream views stating that Europe is a superstate, or an empire (these labels again). Sidaway (2006, p. 2) hereby instantly notices that “[m]ost analyses agree that the EU is not a state (even allowing for the variety among them). Yet nor can the EU be credibly designated merely as a traditional intergovernmental or international organization. Others point out that it can never be a state, since these are conventionally understood – despite some ‘state-like characteristics’ (e.g. flag and anthem, economic and monetary union, and moves to a common defence and citizenship provisions in recent European treaties)”, and that “the apparent novelty of the EU’s process and structures, and the open-ended Europe on the move (enlargement, fast-tracks, accessions and blockages to the east), renders it hard to characterize according to familiar taxonomies” (p. 2).

Sidaway (2006, p. 2) goes on to analyze the different conceptualizations and their implications of the EU from ‘different scales of reference’, from those readings that focus on the actions of individual member states, to the scale of regions and networks, and those focussing on the interactions of multiple levels.

Without going into further details, it is useful to highlight the main conclusion drawn by Sidaway, which can also be considered a very useful starting-point for further theoretical inquiry’s into Europeans ‘border management activities’: “[T]here is little consensus about what the EU represents. Therefore, amidst the diversity of positions and views [...], a way forward is to rephrase the question of what is the spatiality (or more narrowly, perhaps, the political geography) of EU governance towards critical scrutiny of how this is *discursively constructed* [emphasis added]. Therefore, there is no single, stable, hegemonic understanding of the EU. Instead, a variety of visions exist in circulation and contest, embodying (though rarely in a straightforward or direct way) different social interests” (p. 10). And: “[T]he European Union has no straightforward sum and substance. It is rendered meaningful and real through *complex systems of representation* [emphasis added]. Indeed, that it has no eternal essence is borne out in the open contest between different representations” (p. 10).

The more specific issue relevant in this context is, then, how the border dynamics, or the influence the beast that is the EU has beyond its own territory, is being understood and theorized. Was Barroso, looking at the EU’s activities taking place ‘abroad’, right to label the EU as a, albeit non-imperial, empire? Or, to speak with Sidaway, what are the different representations used to conceptualize the external border dynamics of the EU? And what discourses are being identified within these different theoretical points of view? The next section will try to highlight the variety of perspectives regarding the EU’s external bordering practices more specifically.

Interestingly, Delanty (2006) singles out Europe (the EU) as the prime illustration of the changing nature of borders. Borders, he argues, are now “constituted in new and changing relations between cores and peripheries and [are] the site where power and culture interact”. In Europe, Delanty states, “[the] internal borders are not merely modified by the growing significance of a European external frontier, but both internal and external borders are influenced by the wider global context.” He concludes that the “emerging networked border challenges existing notions of a European identity defined by the closed borders of culture or territory. The result is that Europe’s external border will be post-imperial.”

This thesis is, at least partly, aimed at scrutinizing labels such as the ‘post-imperial’ one coined by Delanty. Whether or not this conceptualisation of the EU and its outer border is a valid one, the idea of the ‘networked border’ features prominently in both academic debate (see e.g. Comelli et al. again), and in more EU policy related documents, e.g. and especially when it comes to the European Neighbourhood Policy. Being one of the most prominent European external relations

policy instruments, a large bulk of the scholarly attention on the EU's activities in its direct 'neighbourhood' has been dealing with this specific framework. It is with instruments like this one that, as Bialasiewicz (2009, p. 80) notes, the "EU presumably aims to transcend the conventional (nation-state) distinction between inside/outside."

Although it should be noted that the ENP is certainly not the only policy instrument the EU possesses when it comes to managing and dealing with its external relations (as mentioned earlier, enlargement remains the most prominent one, although it is sometimes argued that the ENP is, in the light of an increasing 'enlargement fatigue' (see below), gaining importance). Nevertheless, I do want to mention some interesting (critical) academic works dealing with the ENP, as I feel that the development of the ENP forms a very telling illustration of the way the position of Europe as a global actor (see beneath) is shifting, and, with that, how also the way Europe sees and manages its outer border is subject to some fundamental changes. Also, as will be shown in chapter four, the EUBAM case cannot be considered independent of the ENP.

Looking at the academic debate on the ENP specifically, I would like to mention, first of all, the work of Smith (2005). She, besides providing an analysis of the chronological, historical development, the goals ("deal with the outsiders", "foster a friendly neighbourhood and a 'ring of friends'" (p. 772)) and the institutional setting of the ENP, also states that although the ENP was developed to deal with challenges related to inclusion and exclusion (one of which was the so-called 'enlargement fatigue'), the ENP isn't (yet) fully capable of dealing with all of these challenges. Examples of these have, among others, to do with the question of how to deal with 'countries of concern' (e.g. Belarus), conflict in and between neighbours, and the ever present 'ghost of enlargement', which 'haunts' the relation between the EU and its neighbours. It is on the basis of this analysis that Smith comes with several policy recommendations, the most important of which is that "the EU should try to resolve the hardest dilemma of all: where its borders will stop moving outwards. Ambiguity is not working. Either the EU should say 'no' to further enlargement, so that the ENP (preferably revamped and improved) becomes the framework for relations with the neighbours for the foreseeable future; or it should say 'yes' to letting in (eventually) a specified number of neighbours, which then move out of the ENP, but no one else" (p. 773). A comparable line of thought has been provided by Dannreuther (2006), who also identifies several complex internal and external challenges that the ENP has to deal with, but with thereby also explicitly underlining the potential value of the policy framework, by stating that "it would be a mistake to dismiss the ENP purely as an exercise in empty rhetoric. There are potential analogies with other EU policies which initially faced considerable scepticism and even outward rejection, such as eastward enlargement, but which then developed an internal dynamic and momentum transforming the very nature and self-identity of the union in the process" (p. 201).

Smith and Webber (2008) similarly provide an interesting insight into the way the ENP operates, its added value and limits, and the challenges the ENP faces. Other scholars have investigated the way the ENP works in specific countries (for instance its impact in Ukraine (Bobitski, 2008; Gatev, 2008) Hillion, 2007; Wolczuk, 2009) and Libanon and Jordan (Seeberg, 2010)), while Aliboni (2005) has investigated a number of different geopolitical scenarios related to the (implementation of the) ENP, one of which is the entry of Turkey into the EU. Furthermore, and also of importance in this context, is the work of Delcour and Tulmets, who, on the basis of an analysis of the ENP as a case study, state that the EU should be seen as "a 'Pioneer Europe', looking for new ways of doing foreign policy, thus experimenting its policies abroad and constantly learning from the successes and failures of its own policies" (p. 1). The authors state that the ENP can be used to "conceptualize and to define further the characteristics of the European Union as an international actor in the making" (p. 1).

It can be argued that the EUBAM case, as analyzed in later on in this thesis, shows at least glimpses of a number of these general ENP characteristics and challenges.

Moving somewhat away from focusing solely on the Neighbourhood Policy again, the moral of the description Sidaway provided regarding the question how the EU, in a more general sense, should now be conceptualized, is also applicable when it comes to positioning the EU in a wider, global context. The *communis opinio* is that there is no such thing: although several scholars hold a quite similar vision, the variety of perspectives on the (new) geopolitical ways in which the EU is attempting to manage and influence the space in its direct 'neighbourhood', the related changing nature of the EU's external borders and the consequences this has for the global position of the EU remains quite broad.

For instance, Zielonka (2008), trying to capture the nature of the EU as an international actor, notes: "Jacques Delors used to call the EU an 'unidentified political object', and it is obviously difficult to comprehend the nature and behaviour of such an object" (p. 472). Also Bialasiewicz (2009), who sees developments such as the growing importance of the EU in its direct neighbourhood fundamentally as a question of power, claims that consensus on the answer to this question is not within reach, and will probably remain an Utopia: "The surge of popular and political attention reflects growing interest in this question among European academics as well, with a great deal of speculation devoted in recent years (by political scientists, IR theorists, political sociologists and, to some extent, political geographers) to the changing dynamics and nature of EU power. (EU)rope has been variously described as a 'soft power', a 'civilian' or 'civil' power, a 'normative power', a 'transformative power', or even an 'ordering power'" (p. 79). In this framework, Bialasiewicz notes that "although the EU may pronounce itself a 'soft' and 'civil' power, its leaders are increasingly explicit about the fact that the EU's various 'soft' initiatives – including the 'European Neighbourhood Policy' (ENP) – are aimed also (if not primarily) at protecting Europe from 'hard' threats" (p. 79). Bialasiewicz states that the EU, facing new, de-territorialized threats, engages in 'preventive security', developing new "regional security scenarios" and using new "security tools" (p. 80). This, in turn, could lead to conceptualize the EU to be what Charillon called a 'security regime': Charillon looks at the ways in which "the European Union sees its role in the evolving international security architecture and the contemporary concerns with security" (p. 1). Bialasiewicz further underpins her stance by showing how the European 'force of law' (an expression coming from Derrida), manifests itself in various ways: "The EU's engagement in state-making in the Balkans over the past couple of years is perhaps its most visible expression. In Montenegro in 2006, and in Kosovo in 2008, the EU has specified and enforced the legal conditions for state-making." Adding: "The Kosovo example is an important one, both for its pressing political/geopolitical relevance but also because it provides a mirror to the political geographies of EU influence in its 'Neighbourhood' and some of the modes of incorporation 'by law' through which countries are brought into Europe's 'orbit': through the creation of (semi)protectorates whose sovereignty is not denied but 'creatively constrained'" (Zielonka, in Bialasiewicz, 2009).

Related to this, it is also worth mentioning the work of Barbé and Kienzle (2007). These scholars use a theoretical framework which they explicitly contrast from early conceptualisations of the EU as a foreign policy actor, "in particular the civilian and normative power Europe concepts" (p. 1). They argue that the EU foreign policy can be characterized by two contrasting analytical concepts, as they consider the EU to be both an active 'security provider' in some, and a passive 'security consumer' in other instances (it is also within these security and protection discourses that the often used notions of Europe as a 'fortress' or Europe as a 'gated community' (e.g. Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & Pijpers, 2007) can be placed, although these conceptualizations focus more specifically on how the EU is trying to achieve security and protection within Europe

(the protection of the safety, comfort and the identity of the EU and its nation-states and citizens through e.g. militarized borders and a selective immigration policy, as a reaction to perceived threat of a mass influx of immigrants, the *deluge*), whereas e.g. the work of Bialasiewicz (2009) also looks at the ways in which Europe is trying to provide security and increase its influence on the issue of security beyond its own borders).

Very much connected to the issue of security (the EU as 'security regime'), is the idea of Europe as being a 'normative power', spreading its norms and values over areas beyond its own borders. Quoting former British prime minister Tony Blair, Elden, Bialasiewicz and Painter (2005), highlight the role of the promotion and legitimation of 'morals' and 'values' in the foreign policy of the US and the EU: "The best defence of our security lies in the spread of our values" (p. 163).

Cardwell (2011) as another example, has recently investigated the multiple and often implicit ways (Cardwell has identified four types/categories based on the question whether the policy is implicit/explicit and whether the policy is positive/taking away a perceived benefit) in which the EU tries to promote democracy across the globe, via multiple policy areas ("The EU's own treaty arrangements state that EU action on the international scene shall be guided by a set of principles which are central to its own existence – and the first of these is 'democracy'" (TEU, in Cardwell, 2011, p. 21). Cardwell states that "the EU's confidence in presenting itself on the international stage as a peaceful entity concerned with using its power for the benefit of humankind, whether expressed through humanitarian and development aid, environmental protection or otherwise is grounded in its Treaty provisions which expressly call for the EU to share its values" (p. 22). And: "It almost appears that the mission to establish and ensure democracy in the world is the *raison d'être* of the EU's foreign policy" (p. 22). It is necessary to note that Cardwell highlights the importance of "not to be starry-eyed about the EU only being about democracy promotion – country specific approaches mean that other interests may be at stake and the lack of democracy in a particular country may not be a complete barrier to cooperation in fields such as trade, migration or security" (p. 40), and that the EU also is also very much focussed on "rival concerns such as security, economic interest and strategic diplomacy" (p. 39).

The goal of spreading values beyond its own borders, among which democracy is the most prominent one, has, as mentioned before, lead academics to use various conceptualisations of what Europe is and what kind of power it possesses (e.g. normative, civilian, cosmopolitan). Hettne and Söderbaum (2005) have contributed to this debate by presenting an analytical framework for analyzing the foreign policy relations of the EU. Within the framework, they make a distinction between 'civilian power' and 'soft imperialism': "The former implies a foreign policy built on the norms promoted internally within the Union (such as social pluralism, the rule of law, democracy and market economy) and on voluntary dialogue and consensus building with the counterpart. The latter refers to an asymmetric relationship, and the imposition of norms in order to promote the EU's self-interest rather than a genuine (interregional) dialogue as a foundation for sustainable global governance" (p. 549). The authors conclude that "civilian power is more prominent in issue areas such as development and environment than in trade and security, where there is a stronger element of soft imperialism and even coercion by force" (p. 549). Concerning the ENP, they state that this "is primarily driven by the EU's aim to stabilize the region of its neighbourhood. There is a strategic use of norms (democracy promotion, human rights, market logic), and the rhetoric of symmetric partnership, but very little restructuring of the current pattern of interaction. This also suggests the relevance of soft imperialism [...]" (p. 550) (although it would obviously be worthwhile to ask the question when the 'softness' ends, and a label such as hard/imperial/colonial power would be more appropriate).

It is here for the first time that we come across the notion of imperialism/colonialism in relation to Europe's foreign policy, which is also very much related to the conceptualisation of

'Europe as an empire', obviously a somewhat more radical vision/framing of the EU compared to e.g. the notions of 'soft power' or 'normative power'. Important in this respect is the work of Zielonka (2008), who, after analyzing "the EU's efforts to spread its norms and extend its power in various parts of the world", comes to the conclusion that "this effort is truly imperial in the sense that the EU tries to impose domestic constraints on other actors through various forms of economic and political domination, or even formal annexations. This effort has proved most successful in the EU's immediate neighbourhood where the Union has enormous political and economic leverage and where there has been a strong and ever-growing convergence of norms and values." (p. 1). And: "[T]he Union looks and acts like an empire because it tries to assert political and economic control over various peripheral actors through formal annexations or various forms of economic and political domination. This kind of imperial politics is most pronounced in the periphery of Europe, but one can also trace similar policy patterns towards more distant parts of the world. Europe claims that its model of interstate cooperation has a universal character, and it tries to make other actors accept its norms and standards by applying economic incentives and punishments" (p. 475). Zielonka is not in denial about the differences between the current EU as an empire, and empires such as "contemporary America or nineteenth century Britain. The EU has a polycentric rather than centralized governance structure. The EU's 'imperial' instruments are chiefly economic and bureaucratic rather than military and political. Its territorial acquisitions take place by invitation rather than conquest. Legitimizing strategies of the Union do not follow the usual imperial motto of 'might is right'. The EU legitimizes its policies by claiming that its norms are right and that it promotes the most efficient model of economic and political integration. The periphery is often able, gradually, to gain access to the decision-making mechanisms of the European metropolis. Its sovereignty is not denied, but merely constrained by the policy of EU conditional help and accession" (p. 475).

However, Zielonka does add that, and here he moves away from the idea that Europe's foreign policy is based on merely the use of soft power, "it would be wrong to identify the Union with soft power alone. The concept of soft power, as spelled out by Joseph S. Nye, is based on diplomacy. Soft powers shape institutions by setting agendas. They also rely on their normative power of attraction to spread values. The Union not only applies soft power of this kind, but has also used economic power to further its objectives, including the instruments of sanctions, bribes and even coercion" (p. 475).

Zielonka does not see the idea of Europe as an empire to be something *a priori* negative, but he states that the exercise of power by the EU "should not be chiefly about indoctrination and subjugation. Instead it should be about promotion of policies, procedures and rules that lead to empowerment of other actors, however weak. Only then can Europe's exercise of power be seen as legitimate. Only then can the empire by example have a practical rather than merely rhetorical significance" (p. 484). Zielonka concludes "that although the Union has a global economic reach it is not in a position to impose on other actors its preferred model of economic and political cooperation. The challenge the EU faces, therefore, is not only how to enhance its global power, but also, indeed primarily, how to export rules and norms for which there is limited demand among the existing and emerging global players. In other words, Europe should try to become a 'model power' rather than a 'superpower'" (p. 471-472).

The imperial/colonial conceptualization of Europe and its foreign practices also features prominently in the work of Kramsch and Hooper (2007), who feel "struck by the absence of contemporary Europe in the now prolific literature on empire and *postcolonialism* [emphasis added]", stating that "postcolonial literature is dominated by Europe Past, its imperialisms and colonialisms understood as events that have come to an end: there are global aftershocks but the phenomena that sourced them are 'post'" (p. 526). According to these scholars, it is, attention for the United States

that is dominant within academic debate on contemporary imperial/colonial practices, whereas the role of Europe regarding this issue, is, for various reasons, not reflected upon, refrained from 'auto-critique' and even considered to belonging to the past. Kramsch and Hooper argue that, besides the Europe that is presented as the 'soft power' that "renounced armed warfare and violence and established social democracy and ethical governance in their place: blood for roses" (p. 527)

there is also another Europe, one no less real but existing outside Europe's geopolitical consciousness: namely, a Europe oddly unreflexive about its own imperialisms, past and present, as well as its contemporary less than enlightened attitude towards strangers'. Alongside Europe's self-positioning as the globe's guardian of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and the apparently innocuous language of 'the European social model', 'subsidiarity', 'commitology', intergovernmentalism', 'the four freedoms', and so forth, are the still-standing statues of King Leopold in Brussels [...], a continent radically absent of Jews, a developing literature on the benefits of empire [...], a widely tolerated everyday racism concerning 'the Turks' and 'the Moroccans', and a blatant continental orientalism operating in the EU's 'eastern' enlargement process: to say nothing of 'Europe's' flourishing neo-colonialist political economy. (p. 527)

This leads to "a geopolitical analysis which not only precludes recognition of the spatiotemporal complexities of empire, but masks Europe's current complicity in the production of exploitative and oppressive relations within as well as beyond its newly minted frontiers" (p. 527).

Coming to a conclusion of this first and more general part of the theoretical framework, I feel it would be fair to argue that the current stock of knowledge on the ways in which the EU is attempting to manage and influence the space in its direct 'neighbourhood' and the related changing nature of the EU's external borders is, as stated earlier, very rich and diversified. Put simply, these points of view range from the idea of the open 'networked border' to the notion of the impenetrable 'fortress Europe' (isolating its own territory from 'the wider European space', including outsourcing border management, mainly when it comes to security and migration issues). It is once again important to emphasize that, because of this richness, a lot more can be said about the various visions and standpoints of a lot more scholars when it comes to the conceptualisations of Europe's foreign policy (its impact beyond its own borders) and the influence this has on how the external border of Europe changes and should be theorized. For now, however, I feel the general framework presented above forms a sufficient theoretical introduction on the topic of the geopolitical development of the EU at and beyond its outer borders. This not in the least because the new points of view concerning this specific topic are not so much emerging from a fierce debate, with new visions and insights trying to criticize or even dismiss other, possibly outdated ones. Instead, from what I've presented up to now, these newer conceptualisations are more to be seen as adding up to the 'peacefully' co-existing and further widening variety of standpoints, mostly under the umbrella of critical geopolitics, focusing on the discursive representation of (e.g. EU) geopolitics.

With my thesis, I would like to undertake a (modest) effort to, by taking up a discursive, 'critical geopolitics' perspective, address this current state of affairs, so that the debate on the (ever evolving) geopolitical ways in which the EU is attempting to manage and influence the space in its direct 'neighbourhood', will get even richer than it already is. And, depending on the research results, the research might even add some (necessary) heat to the debate as well.

As noted in the introduction chapter, I will be taking the combined framework of Browning & Joenniemi and Walters as the theoretical lens with which the (for several reasons) special case of EUBAM will be analysed and 'deconstructed'. In my view, this framework forms a quite varied yet 'manageable' 'benchmark theoretical entry-point', including and integrating several of the most prominent theoretical visions/models on the development of the EU's external governance. Therefore, throughout the actual analysis, glimpses of the notions as put to the fore by a number of the mentioned authors can, more or less implicitly, be recognized. Also, with the attention it pays to the discursive aspect that is fundamentally tied to analyzing (and conducting) geopolitics (see the next part of this chapter), this quite accessible framework forms a useful way of interpreting and giving shape to the geopolitics stream, which is currently a very dominant one when it comes to conceptualizing geopolitical practices.

2.4 Models of the geopolitical development of the EU

As already mentioned, Browning and Joenniemi (2008) argue that the debate about the ENP is, in essence, a border and bordering discussion often centred around several "rather fixed geopolitical vision[s] of what the EU is about and how it aims to run and to organise the broader European [border] space" (p. 519). Their conceptual framework, in turn, should be seen as an aim to "retain space for viewing the ENP as a developmental and somewhat fluid process", and to "be able to tell a more dynamic story regarding the developing nature of the ENP and the EU's evolving nature more generally" (p. 529). The authors start off their project of reshaping and complementing the 'rather fixed geopolitical visions' by summarizing three 'classic' different models of (the development of) European geopolitics, i.e., the 'Westphalian', the 'imperial' and the 'neomedieval' model of the EU. These will be explained in the next paragraphs.

2.4.1 The Westphalian model of the EU

In essence, the Westphalian model (figure 2.2) "depicts the EU steadily coalescing and assuming all the characteristics of modern statehood as sovereignty is steadily moved away from the states to the Commission in Brussels. Power, in this model [...], is seen as held at the centre but as applied consistently over the territory up to the border, where one sovereign territoriality meets another" (p. 522). The scholars argue that "[e]vidence for such a modernist model is often drawn from the oft-stated desire that the EU should develop into a unitary actor, that it should have its own currency and border regime (Schengen), and not least its own foreign and security policy including a foreign service and a 'European army'" (p. 522).

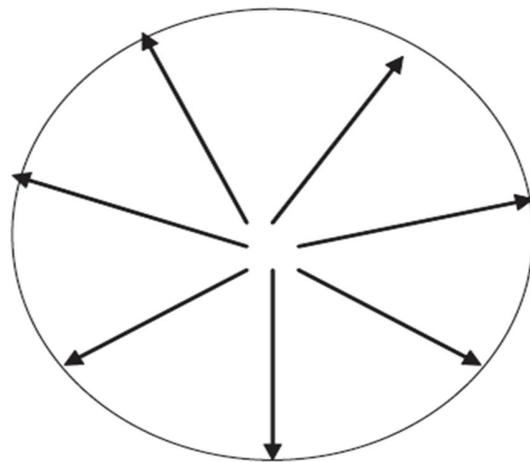


Figure 2.2: The Westphalian model of the EU. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.4.2 The Imperial model of the EU

Secondly, “[u]nlike the Westphalian metaphor that depicts the EU as having clearly defined statist borders across which governance is relatively uniform, the *imperial* model (figure 2.3) depicts EU governance in terms of a series of concentric circles. Power, here, is understood as located at the centre in Brussels and dispersed outwards in varying, multilayered and declining degrees” (p. 524). Browning and Joenniemi argue that this imperial logic can be found in EU policy in at least two respects:

“First, notions of the EU as possessing a ‘peace mission’ to bring stability throughout Europe have provided the EU with both moral and identity prerogatives to try and organize the space beyond its borders and to spread ‘European values’ to those on the outside.

Slogans of building a ‘Europe whole and free’

and a ‘Europe without dividing lines’ reflect such an endeavour. Second, this desire to foster stability and security through the spread of ‘European values’ and practices is also enhanced by ‘security discourses’ [...]. The point is that the EU has tended to see its outside as a source of instability and insecurity. This has resulted in two policy responses. First, there has been a desire to preserve the security of the inside by asserting the need for the Union to develop rather impermeable borders to keep the danger excluded at the gates of a fortress Europe, as evident, for example, in Westphalian readings of the Schengen visa regime. Second, however, to overcome the external threat and to live up to EU ideals of an open peace project, policies have also been developed to extend EU systems of governance to those beyond its borders in order to bring stability and security. This has been achieved through a variety of measures from the Association Agreements to the Balkans Stability Pact, to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, to the NDI. Central to the effectiveness of most of these policies has been the conditionality mechanism by which states that comply with EU reform goals are rewarded with a closer relationship with the EU. The ultimate carrot has been EU membership, at which point, however, the integration-security nexus begins all over again in relation to the EU’s new neighbours” (p. 525).

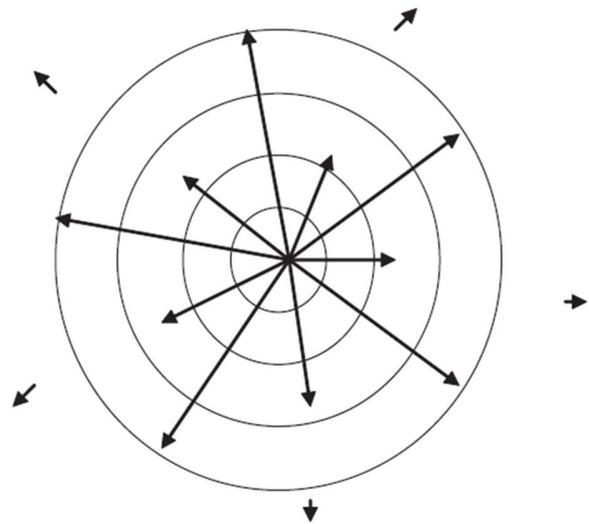


Figure 2.3: The imperial model of the EU. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

In the light of discussing the imperial model of the EU, Browning and Joenniemi (2008) make an important comment related to the issue of enlargement. They state that “whereas previously the EU has deferred the question of its final borders by pushing forward with another round of enlargement, it appears this is no longer possible” (p. 524). Because of what they call the ‘constitutional crisis’ and the widespread skepticism when it comes to further EU enlargement (which would include countries like Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and, even more controversial, countries in North Africa), “seems to have taken enlargement off the agenda for the time being and has meant the EU needs a new policy both to cope with and hopefully overcome this ‘integration-security dilemma’ – that is, how to promote stability and security without having to rely on the carrot of future enlargement. The ENP is designed to fill this gap” (p. 524).

2.4.3 The neomedieval model of the EU

This model (figure 2.4) is described as follows:

“The neomedieval metaphor depicts power in Europe as dispersed in a more radical fashion to that of the imperial or Westphalian models, with power no longer fixed on a single centre in Brussels, but as being far more regionalized and corresponding to logics of transnationalism and network governance, depending on the particular issues at play” (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 523). Or, as Scott (in Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 523) argues, this model is related to what he calls a ‘geopolitics of dimensionality’, “where geopolitical thought is informed by many ‘centres’ rather than by one dominant ‘core’.”

Furthermore, “[t]his model also resonates with the multilevel governance [...] where European governance is seen as focused more around issue networks than territorial spaces. Conceptualized slightly differently, it has also been visualized in terms of a ‘Europe of Olympic Rings’ in which regionality becomes the core constitutive organizing principle of European political space and where governance, authority and decision-making are dispersed and brought closer to the people” (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 523).

Browning and Joenniemi argue that, although the models are widely applied to conceptualize the development of the EU and European governance, these models have some problems which make their explanatory power limited. The authors argue that these models don’t take into account the dynamics that characterizes the development of the EU: “The problem is that discussion of geopolitical models easily results in their reification and a simplification of the nature of the policies under analysis, not least because one can be Westphalian, imperial or neomedieval in different ways, while one may be more than one of these at the same time in different locations” (p. 526).

It is because of this reason that Browning and Joenniemi have tried to add explanatory power to the framework, by combining it with the work of Walters (2004). Walters has formed a conceptualisation for analyzing the various ‘geostrategies’ the EU applies along its borders. He states that a geostrategy “corresponds with a particular way of organising the space of the border. It presupposes many things, including particular definitions of the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the polity, the types of threat or problem which the border is to address, and specific accounts of the time and the space of the border. Geostrategies entail certain territorialisations. Each implies a particular form of controlling space and population. But they also presuppose particular definitions as to the identity and political rationality of Europe” (p. 526). Browning and Joenniemi add that “[d]ifferent geostrategies, therefore, entail particular mental geographies and perceptions of particular landscapes and territories. They entail particular ways of approaching and dealing with the land, of how to move within it and how to change and order it. Thus, they are not simply descriptions of what is, but are also prescriptive of how one relates to the land and tries to shape it. Walters contends that multiple geostrategies are evident in EU border policies. Furthermore, these can coexist in the discourses surrounding individual policies, with particular geostrategies being more important in some contexts and times than at others. As such, Walters asserts that geostrategies should not be seen as totalizing descriptions of reality, but as frames built on particular logics” (p. 526).

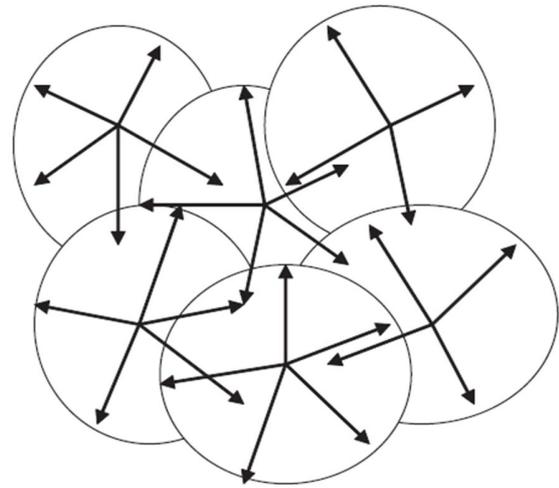


Figure 2.4: The neomedieval model of the EU. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.5 Geostrategies

Walters makes a distinction between four geostrategies, i.e. the 'networked (non)border', the 'march', the 'colonial frontier' and the 'limes'. Browning and Joenniemi (2008) emphasize that these geostrategies should be considered as dynamic and complex phenomena, as they are not mutually exclusive, and the dominance of one geostrategy can at any time be replaced by the domination of another one. The series of geostrategies will be explained in the next parts.

2.5.1 The networked (non)border

The first geostrategy Walters (2004) distinguishes is the *networked (non)border* (2.5), which "resonates with ideas of deterritorialization and a borderless world that are clearly evident in postmodernist debates about Europe, as well as in globalization studies. This geostrategy, he notes, is underlain

by neoliberal concerns to remove obstacles to the free movement of people, goods and services and of

overcoming the barriers which divide Europe — all goals clearly stated in the core EU treaties (Walters, in Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Also central to this geostrategy is the view that spatial borders — lines on the ground — are becoming less relevant" (p. 527).

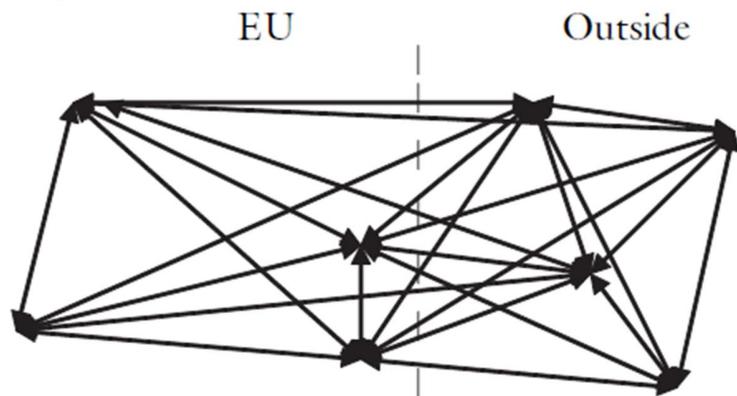


Figure 2.5: The networked (non)border geostrategy. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.5.2 The march

Secondly, there is the *march* (figure 2.6): "Marches can be understood as indistinct zones separating different entities; a kind of running out and intermingling of space between groups [...] In other ways the march might be perceived as a border area, 'an interzone between powers', or even as a buffer zone (Walters, 2004: 683–4). Understood as a buffer zone, however, the implication is that the march is a geostrategy that perceives a particular space as a security zone separating the cosmos from the chaos outside, it is a protective belt keeping the disorder (beyond Eastern Europe) at a distance" (p. 529).

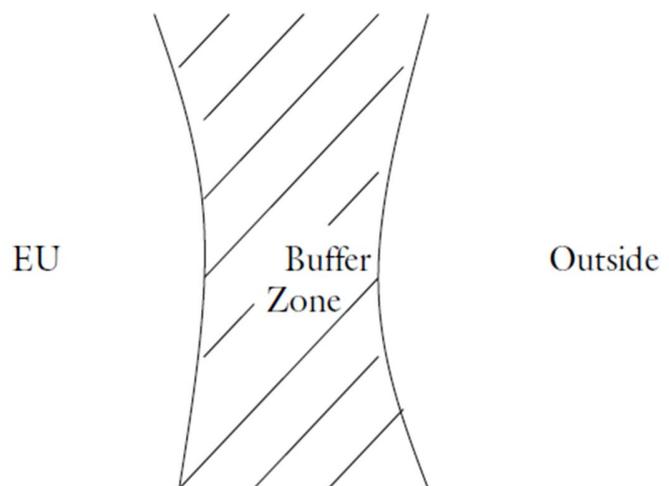


Figure 2.6: The march geostrategy. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.5.3 The colonial frontier

The third geostrategy consists out of the *colonial frontier* (figure 2.7): "This geostrategy conceives of the frontier as 'a dynamic space, a meeting point between a power, a culture and its outside. It is a space of interaction, assimilation, violence but also

pacification" (Walters, 2004, p. 687).

"Importantly the

colonial frontier is mobile and conceived as something to be expanded and projected outwards. More particularly, the notion of the colonial frontier is also infused with a power asymmetry in which "the expanding power assumes a right to define what is appropriate and just. It is an organization of political space in which the centre is the acknowledged repository and arbitrator of what is proper" (Walters, 2004, p. 688). Central to this geostrategy, therefore, is the idea of the transformation of the outside in line with the preferences of the inside and what is called 'the outside's gradual incorporation within the inside'.

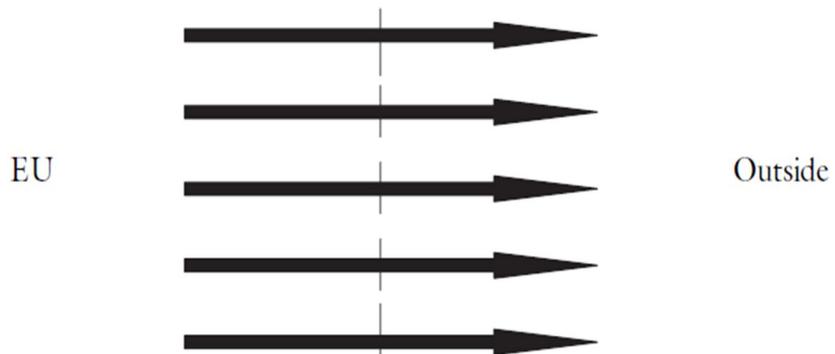


Figure 2.7: The colonial frontier geostrategy. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.5.4 The limes

The fourth geostrategy is that of the *limes* (figure 2.8). Walters (in Browning & Joenniemi, 2008) describes this strategy as follows, whereby he also compares the limes with the colonial frontier: "If the space of the march is an area between powers, an interzone, and that of the modern frontier a finite line demarcating and separating territories, then the limes is more like an edge, fringe or limit.' In some respects the limes is similar to the spatial imagination of the colonial frontier, with one significant difference. While the geostrategy of the colonial frontier perceives the frontier as open to expansion, a geostrategy of the limes perceives the frontier as more permanent, even if somewhat hazy. Like the colonial frontier the limes draws a hierarchy between the inside and outside and institutionalizes

asymmetric relations between unequal powers; however, whereas the colonial frontier aims to incorporate the outside into the inside, the limes is more about drawing a limit of expansion and consolidating and

preserving what the empire has achieved and incorporated" (p. 529).

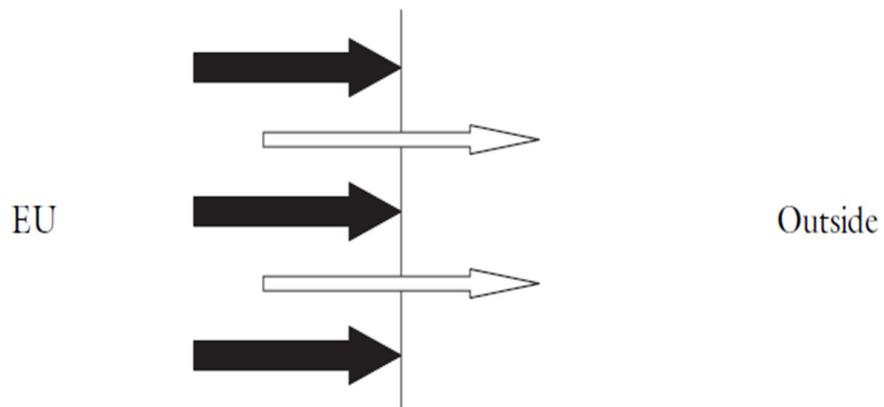


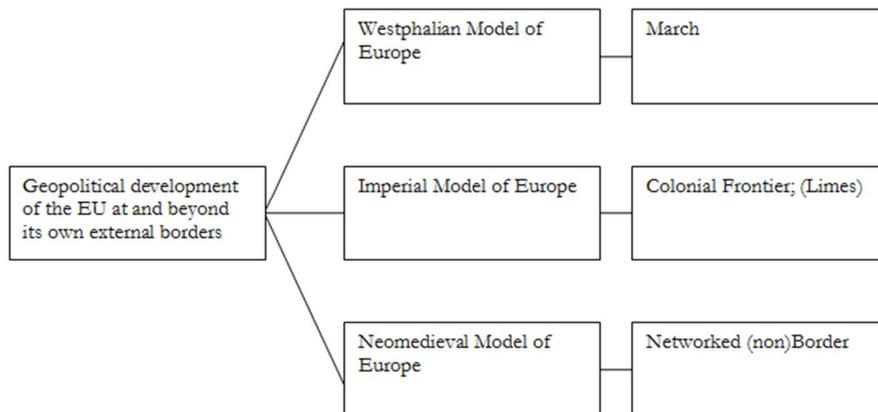
Figure 2.8: The limes geostrategy. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

2.5.5 Geopolitical models and geostrategies combined

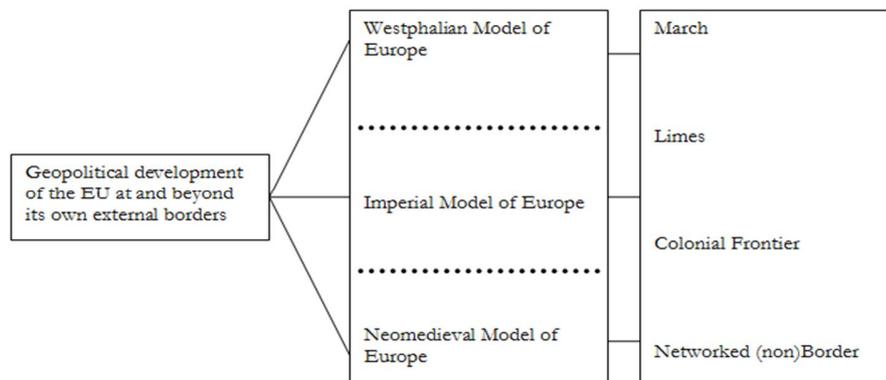
It should be noted that Browning and Joenniemi argue that, although it is tempting to associate specific models of the EU's geopolitical development with specific geostrategies (e.g. to *a priori* relate the model of imperial Europe with the colonial frontier; or the neomedieval model with the networked (non)border), it is important to remain open to the various combinations that are possible, and also to acknowledge that the EU often makes use of different geostrategies at the same time. Browning and Joenniemi (2008) describe the potential problems as follows: [L]inking the models and geostrategies too closely arguably precludes two things. First, it makes it harder to conceptualize the fact that the different models and geostrategies will be present in different strengths at the same time and in different locations. Second, it also makes it harder to see that the geostrategies and models might actually meld into each other over time [...]” (p. 530).

2.6 Conceptual model

Not just simply one model with one *a priori* related geostrategy...



...but more open and interrelated, less strictly categorized (and then the question still, as mentioned above, remains: is this conceptualisation, with the three models, whether combined or not, able to explain the context specific applications of the geostrategies in Ukraine and Moldova, or should we refrain from such modelling practices?)



Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is meant to make clear how the research will be conducted, i.e. in what way the main and sub questions will be answered (the 'empirical framework'). I have chosen to take up a very much qualitative approach, which will be given form through 'discourse analysis'. For reasons explained below, I feel this research technique is the most appropriate for coming to a well-informed research conclusion. Before discussing the method of discourse analysis, however, I will address the selected research strategy and the concrete data that is going to be the subject of the analysis.

3.2 Research strategy and data: text and image

Verschuren and Doorewaard (2007) make a distinction between five types of research strategies (the whole of interrelated decisions on the way a research is going to be conducted), in the form of the survey, the experiment, the case study, the grounded theory approach and desk research. Out of these five, I have identified the case study and desk research as being the most appropriate for answering the research questions as presented in chapter one.

The case study strategy aims at getting an in-depth and detailed insight into one or a few specific processes or objects, which are (artificially) delimited in time and space. Other characteristics are e.g. that the number of research objects is limited, the data collection is labour-intensive, the strategy is more about depth than width, the strategy makes use of a selective (strategic) sample and the use of qualitative data and methods. These are all properties of the strategy that can very clearly be related to my research question (e.g. getting an in-depth understanding of one specific research object EUBAM (as the strategically selected 'sample'), which is limited in time (since 2005) and space (in Moldova and Ukraine)).

The other relevant research strategy consists out of desk research. The desk research strategy is based on using materials that have been produced by others, and the researcher reflects on this already existing material to come to new insights. Furthermore, the researcher has no direct contact with the research object (this means, for instance, no interviews or observations), and the material is reflected upon from a different perspective than the one used to produce the data. Verschuren en Doorewaard make a distinction between three categories of data that can be used for conducting desk research: literature (books, articles, papers), secondary data (empirical data brought together by researches through other inquiries, such as transcripts of interviews) and official statistical data (collected periodically for a wider audience).

Looking at my research goal and questions, I feel a combination of these two strategies can be considered to form an appropriate approach for my thesis. This 'hybrid research model' thus mixes elements of the case study and desk research. As mentioned, I want my research, which centres one specific case, to go more into depth, and I will use more qualitative methods to reach this in-depth understanding. This can very much be related to the principles of the case study. However, as I stated earlier, I won't be using the technique of on-site observation. Instead, I want to look at existing data/materials for eventually coming to my conclusions (see the next section for a more detailed description). It is in this respect that my thesis will clearly also show some of the characteristics of a desk research.

The next issue to be tackled has to do with the selection of the data, the raw material to be analyzed to answer the research questions. The bulk of the data I will be using for achieving this goal has been produced and published by EUBAM itself; I very much want to focus on the perspective of the EU: which strategies is the EU, through EUBAM, using in trying to influence the Moldova-

Ukraine border space, and how do they discursively present and 'wrap up' these strategies? Because of this specific perspective, it is in my view the best option to work with materials produced by the EU itself (although of course drawn up in close cooperation with both Moldova and Ukraine), as this would also provide the best insight into the specific ways in which EUBAM is presented and legitimized by the EU. On the website of the mission (www.EUBAM.org), a wide range of official reports and documents (such as annual action plans, summaries of activities undertaken and press brochures) can be found, which makes it a very rich source of highly interesting and relevant information. Obviously, it would be an impossible task to go through all of the documents in detail, so it is inevitable to be selective. Of all the summaries, fact sheets, plans and reports available on the EUBAM website, I have singled out two documents which I consider to be best suited for coming to well-informed answers to the research questions which deal with the geostrategies (discourses), in terms of both representativeness and surveyability.

The first document that is going to be subject to scrutiny is the most recent version in the series of so-called 'annual Action Plans'. These documents serve as a(n internal) framework for all the EUBAM activities taking place in the year to come, which make them the most important mission guideline for the period in question. I will focus on what is called the 'Phase 8 Action Plan', which was endorsed in October 2010 by the 'EUBAM Advisory Board', and forms the policy framework for the period 1 December 2010 to 30 November 2011 (EUBAM, 2011b).

The second textual source I will be looking at is the 2011 version of the 'Press Pack', released annually to inform 'the outside world' of the goals and activities of EUBAM, and to provide an update on the progress that has been made. Whereas the action plans consist of a list of goals, the press pack is set up in a more narrative way, trying to making clear to external actors how the EUBAM mission has its value in a range of policy fields.

I will be examining the Action Plan by looking at the eight main goals which form the heart of the document, and complete the textual analysis by looking for the most telling and noticeable manifestations of the use (presentation and enactment) of certain geostrategies in the Press Pack. I feel that by combining both these documents (one somewhat more internally oriented, the other one explicitly produced for the 'outside world'), a detailed yet practically manageable insight into the strategies as enacted through EUBAM can be gained.

It should be instantly noticed that these documents are, of course, far from neutral. They entail a specific vision, which is the vision of EUBAM. The logics that form the foundation of this EUBAM perspective can, in turn (at least partly) be ascribed to the EU. This, however, is not an insurmountable methodological barrier for answering my research questions. From the above, the observation can be derived that I am, in essence, interested in uncovering two things. Besides paying attention to the actual impact of EUBAM, the prime focus of the inquiry is on the geostrategies, the 'spatial imaginations' and perceptions of the EU on how the Moldova-Ukraine borderland should be organized and dealt with in order to achieve its wider objectives. By analyzing the documents mentioned above, I will try to uncover how the 'political ambitions', the aspirations that form the foundation of this EU mission are being discursively presented and 'wrapped up'. The main task of analysis, then, is to 'read between the lines', and identify the discourses (i.e. geostrategies, see the next paragraph) that are (more or less) hidden within these documents.

When it comes to determining the impact that the EUBAM has had up to this point, as part of the research goal and one of the sub questions, I must immediately admit that turning to EU policy-evaluation documents should be done with a certain amount of care. However, from a practical point of view, these documents are the only ones available with detailed statistics on the progress that has (or has not) been made in the EUBAM mission period. As mentioned, little has been written on the mission up to this point, let alone that there is detailed information available on the impact and the results of the mission provided by a different institution than the EU (EUBAM)

itself. For this reason, I will mainly use these EUBAM evaluation reports to answer this specific research question, complemented with some secondary literature when possible.

Besides analyzing these textual data sources, however, I would like to add an extra dimension to the research by including some visual data in the inquiry. The EUBAM website and its documents and reports contain several pictures and images (e.g. maps, pictures of activities in both Moldova and Ukraine), which are also quite telling and highly interesting when looking at them from the perspective of the geostrategies. I feel that incorporating a small selection of visual elements (again the inevitable selectivity) would add to both the originality and quality of the research.

The importance of paying attention to 'the visual' is being stressed by an increasing number of scholars, coming from a range of fields such as sociology, history, anthropology and cultural studies. For instance, the work of the historian Michael Wintle, 'The Image of Europe' (2009), contains an extensive overview of the ways in which Europe has been visually represented (vis-à-vis the rest of the world) over the centuries. Although maps, and even more so photographs, are often seen as being objective, it is also increasingly acknowledged that analyzing them critically can result in, as Wintle (2009) states, "deep insights into contemporary political and moral feelings, when combined with careful study of other sources" (p. 15). He, referring to Marcus Bank, states that "we need to exercise the most rigorous source criticism with the visual image, and never take anything at face value [...]. Most images used for official purposes are a form of theatre rather than reality, and 'documentary' pictures invariably have an agenda or moral aspiration" (p. 14). Wintle argues that paying attention to 'the visual' can lead to revealing things "which are very hard to discern elsewhere, and Burke shows us how pictures can be particularly useful in uncovering a mentalité" (p. 15). It can be stated that is this 'mentalité', the EU logics forming the foundation of the EUBAM mission, that I'm interested in uncovering.

The visual obviously should also be seen as very much related to the concept of discourse. As Wintle (2009) writes:

Michel Foucault pronounced, in *Discipline and punish*, that the visual is privileged in Western society, and our obsession with it has been called 'ocularcentrism'. There is talk of 'the pictorial turn'. This 'visual culture' covers an immense range of subject matter and methods, from iconography and semiology to reflexivity and discourse analysis. The crucial insight which seems to link all the various strands of the study of visual culture is the point which we have already mentioned, namely, that vision, or seeing, is socio-culturally conditioned and spatially and temporally specific. The eye is not an objective organ: it selects. Similarly, all artefacts made for visual consumption, from high art to advertisements, and from wallpaper to the built environment, have a cultural content, whether it is overtly intended (as in advertisements) or not (as in some decorative art). (p. 17)

It is here that also the concept of 'power' should be highlighted:

[A] discourse [...] contains significant elements of power, with social, cultural, economic and political consequences [...]. [T]he same applies to images of the continents. The images which contain representations of the 'parts of the world' [...], contain references or 'signs' which correspond to a knowledge system or discourse that lays down a way of thinking about the world and its people. The ability to comprehend those signs and references implies an acceptance of the knowledge system, and the power relations involved in it. *Art and images define things and declare how things should be viewed and dealt with*: to understand the discourse is to submit to it, and thus knowledge is power [emphasis added]. (p. 17)

Wintle (2009) concludes that “it seems that a scholarly and systematic use of visual images [...] is not only illuminating and interesting, but even essential” (p. 21).

It is here that we can return to Dalby and O’ Tuathail (as quoted in the beginning of chapter two in the context of critical geopolitics), who emphasized the importance of the imagined nature of international politics, the “contested nature of geographical orders”, and the “geographical discourse used in representations of international politics [as] the product of cultural context and political motivation.” It is this creative process of ‘geo-graphing’, as O’ Tuathail named it, going on in the geographical reasoning on which the EU policy in the Moldova-Ukraine borderland is based, that I will try to uncover, using the vocabulary of the geostrategies. I will try to do so through discourse analysis, a qualitative research technique suitable for analyzing both textual and visual data.

3.3 Exploring the data: discourse analysis

Obviously a lot has been said and written on the issue of discourses and the analysis thereof. In the context of this inquiry, however, I feel the definition of Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts & Whatmore (2009, p. 166) is one that can serve as a good starting-point for conducting discourse analysis in a feasible way: “[Discourse is] [a] specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible”. And: “Instead of seeing the world as independent of ideas about it, with language transparently reflecting a pre-existing reality, theories of discourse understand reality as produced via practices of interpretation deploying different modes of representation” (p. 166).

Seen from this perspective, it is of great importance to state that the four geostrategies should also be considered as discourses, as also Browning and Joenniemi (2008) note: “Geostrategies can be seen as sets of competing and overlapping discourses concerned with how to organize territory and space at the border, and how to relate to the otherness beyond” (p. 521). Geostrategies (as spatial imaginations, perceptions) are also very much related to the issue of representation, and they, as I will also hope to show through my analysis, entail certain practices that, for instance, create and remove particular relationships. Furthermore, it is through the use of geostrategies that certain political outcomes are made feasible (e.g. fortified or softened borders), whereas others might become much more unlikely.

It is important to note that I will try to perform what is called a ‘critical discourse analysis’, a form of analysis that can be distinguished from a non-critical approach, which “tends to treat social practices solely in terms of patterns of social interaction (mainly through language). In contrast, Gee (2011), whose work serves as a useful and practical guideline for performing discourse analysis, states that “[c]ritical approaches [...] go further and treat social practices, not just in terms of social relationships, but, also, in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power [...]. In fact, critical discourse analysis argues that language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power” (p. 68).

As mentioned, in a way, it could be stated that the ‘main discourses’ in my research are already known beforehand, in the form of the geostrategies (these will form the foundation, the ‘lens’ through which I will look at the data). The issue that remains, however, is the specific ways in which the geostrategies (or geostrategy) are (is) being used/applied in the case of EUBAM, and which one is dominant, if any. I’ll therefore have to look at the data looking for ‘sub-’ of ‘mini-discourses’ that can be placed under the heading of one of the geostrategies.

The main research task is, then, to look for and identify the here relevant 'sub-discourses' in the data (representations and spatial imaginations relevant in the light of the geostrategies, and also the way they are being translated into 'social practices', concrete activities). Next, I will place these 'sub-discourses' under the heading of the geostrategies (i.e. the main discourses, 'the lens') that play a role within the construction and legitimation of EUBAM, and on that basis analyze the specific ways in which these geostrategies are being build up, presented and put to practice, and also how they can be 'deconstructed'. This, for instance, means that when I find a sub-discourse/representation that states that EUBAM, through one or a number of activities, aims at and facilitates trade liberalisation, this will be considered to part of the networked (non)border geostrategy/discourse. On this way, looking through the lens of the geostrategies and their characteristics as discussed in the theoretical framework, it is possible to determine the specific ways in which these discourses are being used in the context of EUBAM, and which of the discourses is dominant. What do the ways the geostrategies are being used in the case of EUBAM tell about, to speak with Gee, things such as power and solidarity? And who is served by these discourses? On this basis it should also be possible to draw conclusions on the three models of the geopolitical development of the EU: do the discourses of the geostrategies, and the way they are being enacted with and through EUBAM, 'fit' and resonate with the tone, the central ideas of (one of) the three models, or are the models not or only to a limited extent capable of describing and explaining the specific characteristics of the discourses (i.e. geostrategies) in this EUBAM-case, and what could be the theoretical implications of this?

Before the actual analysis is presented, however, it is important to provide the necessary background information on the both the Moldova-Ukraine borderland and the (institutional) context within which the EUBAM mission takes place. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – EUBAM: changing the borderland

4.1 Introduction

Before moving on to the (results of the) actual analysis, this chapter addresses a number of more contextual, yet fundamental issues: the characteristics of the border(land) between and Moldova and Ukraine and the (institutional) background and 'key facts' on the EUBAM mission taking place in both these countries. This section, then, should be considered the more 'factual' overview of the EUBAM mission, providing the framework of understanding for the analysis in the next chapter.

As I will hope to make clear in the next chapters, it can be stated that the EUBAM mission fits perfectly within the EU's general objective to create borders that are "friendly, but transparent and secure as well. [Borders] should not constitute an obstacle to people crossing and communicating, but at the same time have to operate efficiently to combat international cross-border problems, such as illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, and organised crime in general. These common challenges have become increasingly important in international cooperation, and in the EU's relations with its neighbours in the east" (Sushko, 2006, p. 2). In this light, Sushko (2006, p. 2) states that the new eastern neighbours of the EU have their own specific border issues, in the form of "incomplete legal frameworks, unfinished delimitation and demarcation processes, a lack of efficient infrastructure, and the existence of so-called frozen conflicts" (p. 3). In this chapter I will make clear that, looking at this description, the Moldova-Ukraine borderland can be considered to be a textbook example of a problem-ridden eastern-European border region.

4.2 The Moldova-Ukraine borderland

Figure 4.1 gives an overview of the current border situation between Moldova and Ukraine. The border between these (non-EU) countries stretches an area with a length of about 1.222 kilometres, with the direct frontier between the two countries being interrupted for 472 kilometres by the secessionist Transnistrian region (EUBAM, 2011a).

As mentioned before, it is this 'Transnistrian situation' that gives an extra, highly interesting, unique and certainly also topical dimension to this case study of the border between Moldova and Ukraine. As Fairclough (2011) writes, Transnistria and the

security challenges related to the region, have now returned on the international political agenda: "[F]or years, the frozen conflict over Transnistria's status languished, in a largely forgotten and impoverished corner of the continent. But as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization have rolled eastward, it is back in the spotlight." Without going into too much detail, it is both interesting and necessary to provide some very basic information on the characteristics and the historical development of this quite unknown region, since the EUBAM mission is to a large extent called upon because of the problems running across and stemming from this specific area.



Figure 4.1: The Moldova-Ukraine borderland. Source: Travel Experience (2009).

Transnistria (also called Trans-Dniester or, as the authorities of the region name it, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR)) is a separatist region with a size of 4.000 square kilometres, located between the Dniester river and Ukraine. The area, currently home to 530.000 inhabitants (with 130.000 of them living in Tiraspol, the second city of Moldova), proclaimed its independence from Moldova in 1990, although “[t]he international community [i.e. the UN] does not recognise its self-declared statehood” (BBC, 2011). The region, ruled as a presidential republic, has its own border controls, money, constitution, parliament, anthem and flag etc. (see figure 4.2 and 4.3), but at the same time it can be considered a ‘country that doesn’t exist’ (Elgersma, 2009), as it is legally still part of Moldova (Sushko, 2006, p. 4).

Importantly, whereas Moldova has been setting a very much pro-European course since the 2009 revolution, that paved the way for the liberal prime-minister Vlad Filat and his Alliance for European Integration (replacing the communist party), these changes have hardly been affecting the region of Transnistria, of which both the inhabitants as the political leaders are still too a large extent oriented towards Russia (Rettman, 2011). For instance, in 2006 a referendum was held in Transnistria (of course not recognized by Moldova nor the rest of the international community), emphasizing the wish to, after becoming independent, join Russia. Located between both these major powers, it is sometimes argued that the region forms the new frontline between the east and west (Fairclough, 2011).

The *communis opinio* on both the history as the future focus of the region towards Russia has been expressed by Igor Smirnov, the “Lenin look-alike president [and] 69-year-old one-time Communist Party apparatchik” (Fairclough, 2011) as follows: “[Transnistria] is the Russian empire’s frontier [...]. We have Slavic roots. We will always be with Russia” ((Fairclough, 2011). Or, as Hamilton (2009) describes the region: “The Pridnestrovskaja Moldavskaja Respublika is one of the few remaining scars the Soviet Union left on South East Europe – a province suspended in a frozen conflict and stuck in a time warp where grand statues of Stalin and Lenin still dominate the skyline.” This dominating orientation towards Russia in the hearts and minds of the Transnistrian people and politicians should not come as a surprise given the historical development of the region, as can be noted from the country report on the BBC website: “In the post World War II carve-up of the region, Moscow created Moldova’s forerunner, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, from two disparate elements: the mainly Russian-speaking Dniester region, formerly an autonomous part of Ukraine, and the neighbouring region of Bessarabia, which had been part of Romania from 1918-1940.” However, “[...] in the Soviet Union’s dying days, alarm grew in the Dniester region over growing Moldovan nationalism and the possible reunification of Moldova with Romania. A 1989 law which made Moldovan an official language added to the tension, and Trans-Dniester proclaimed its secession in September 1990” (BBC, 2011). After the separatist paramilitary forces took over the public institutions of Moldova, the fighting intensified, resulting in up to 700 casualties in 1992 during the War of Transnistria. In the same year, a cease-fire was agreed upon, and a demilitarized security zone was established. Importantly, this security-zone has up to this point been enforced by the Russian 14th army forces, which were already present in the region (BBC, 2011), resulting in a stalemate with the Transnistrians looking for independence (as a first

step) and Moldova, not recognizing the secession, considering the region part of its own territory.



Figure 4.2: Transnistrian symbolism. Source: Elgersma (2009).

Meanwhile, Russia has been playing a prominent and special role in the conflict, as also Fairclough (2011) recognizes: “Despite Transnistria's devotion to Russia, Moscow remains ambivalent. Russia has declined to recognize Transnistrian sovereignty. But it helps keep the territory afloat financially. And it hasn't withdrawn troops—remnants of the old Soviet Fourteenth Army—stationed here. The soldiers guard a stockpile of outdated munitions left behind when the Soviet Union collapsed. Along with a detachment of peacekeepers, they also serve to prop up Mr. Smirnov's government, and give Moscow a say in Moldova's future. Russia says its soldiers are necessary to protect the people of Transnistria, and Moscow supports a negotiated solution that would guarantee substantial autonomy for the region.” Up to this point, numerous attempts have been made to end this ‘frozen conflict’, but the status quo has not yet been resolved: “The ongoing presence of Russian troops has been a stumbling block in peace talks and the West is concerned about the Soviet-era arsenal in the territory. A pull-out began in 2001 but was halted when Trans-Dniester blocked the dispatch of weapons. Subsequent agreements to resume failed to reach fruition. Long-running talks supervised by the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine have yet to yield a political solution. Attempts by Moldova to exert economic pressure on the Dniester authorities have failed to produce the desired result” (BBC, 2011). As Dempsey (2010) writes in this light: “The [5+2 talks, which included Russia, along with Ukraine, Moldova, Transnistria, the O.S.C.E, the European Union and the United States] were stopped [five] years ago by Russia and Transnistria. Moscow preferred bilateral negotiations in which it could wield bigger influence.”



Figure 4.3: Military parade in Transnistria. Source: Fairclough (2011).

Furthermore, also language issues play a prominent role in the region, with Russian being the dominant language, but with a very large minority of 40% of the population speaking Moldovan as their first language (BBC, 2011), a state of affairs not increasing the chances of conflict resolution within the near future.

Moreover, also language issues play a prominent role in the region, with Russian being the dominant language, but with a very large minority of 40% of the population speaking Moldovan as their first language (BBC, 2011), a state of affairs not increasing the chances of conflict resolution within the near future.

Meanwhile, in the midst of this frozen conflict, the region is characterized by corruption, organised crime (e.g. illegal arms sales and money laundering), smuggling, and, not in the least, poverty (although Transnistria contains most of the industrial infrastructure Moldova has at its disposal, the isolated position of the region severely hampers its economic growing possibilities (BBC, 2011)). Hamilton (2009) gives a description of the state of affairs at the Transnistrian border, with the local border authorities unable or, in some instances, unwilling to improve the situation: “On an amusing note, the European Union Border Assistance Mission figures show that enough chicken meat is imported into Transnistria for each resident to consume an average of 90kg of the foodstuff each year. In Germany, the annual figure is 10kg per head. The reality for Moldova - Europe's poorest country with average annual earnings of less than \$US2000 - isn't so funny. Figures estimate that the total financial cost of fraudulent imports passing through Transnistria each year is equivalent to double the country's annual GDP.”

More problematic than the chicken meat, is the smuggling of arms through Transnistria: “Since the collapse of the USSR, the former Soviet weapons stockpiles in Transnistria have been almost entirely neglected by Russia. No formal audits have been carried out by Russia to assess the types of amount of weapons stored in Transnistria and no real attempts been made to remove any remaining weapons from this South East European province. As a result of this, numerous Soviet weapons – from handguns to nuclear suitcase bombs - have simply gone missing from Transnistria.” And: “Weapons directly traced back to Transnistria have been found in use in Iraq, Afghanistan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, to name but a few of the global conflicts fuelled by Tiraspol. Little is known about how these weapons leave Transnistria although the OSCE has identified smuggling (uninspected) through the Ukrainian port of Odessa, across the 500km Transnistria border and by air from the former Soviet air base in Tiraspol as the most likely routes” (Hamilton, 2009). In the same respect, it should also be noted that the region is characterized as a place of little political and cultural freedom: “[A]ny opposition is quashed, and the media are highly censored, according to human rights organizations. The Romanian language is publicly banned, and teachers are arrested if caught teaching it. In its annual 2009 human rights report, the U.S. State Department documented cases of torture, abuse of prisoners, arbitrary arrest and human trafficking” (Dempsey, 2010).

In this light, it should not come as a surprise that also on the EUBAM website, the borderland between Moldova and Ukraine, with obviously a very prominent role for the Transnistrian area, is described as a hotspot of “illicit cross-border activity, including trafficking of human beings, smuggling and other illegal trade” (EUBAM, 2011a). It is mainly for this reason that the EUBAM mission was set-up in November 2005, at the joint request of the presidents of Moldova and Ukraine. The next section deals with the specific characteristics of the mission, beginning with a more detailed description of its objectives.

4.3 EUBAM

The EUBAM website forms a rich source of information on the characteristics of the mission, ranging from its goals and mandate to even a detailed description of the career of the head of the mission. It would of course be impossible and also redundant to mention all of this information in this paragraph. However, I will try to select the most important elements of the website, in order to give a general overview of what EUBAM is about, and how the mission is being organized and executed. A more critical, in-depth analysis of EUBAM and its presentation and legitimization will, as announced, be given in chapter five.



Figure 4.4: EUBAM's field of operations. Source: EUBAM (2010).

4.3.1 Objectives

The joint request of the presidents of both Moldova and Ukraine which eventually led to EUBAM should be considered in the light of the border situation as explained in the previous section. The EUBAM website describes the 2005 state of affairs in the region as follows: "A range of illicit cross-border activity, including trafficking of human beings, smuggling and other illegal trade, was occurring along the 1,222km-long MD/UA border, a phenomenon not helped by the secessionist region of Transnistria in Moldova [...], over which the government of Moldova has no control. As a result both governments were losing substantial amounts in revenue to organised crime" (EUBAM, 2011a). It is as a result of these illegal activities that the mission was established.

EUBAM describes itself as an "advisory, technical body mandated to enhance the capacities of our partners – the border guard and customs authorities and other law enforcement and State agencies of Moldova and Ukraine. By offering comprehensive support to our partners on EU best practice from its headquarters in Odessa and six field offices on either side of the Moldova/Ukraine common border, EUBAM envisages that border and customs procedures and standards in MD/UA will ultimately mirror those prevalent in the European Union." And: "[EUBAM is] "a unique instrument by which the EU strives on the one hand to encourage the movement of legitimate trade and travel, and on the other hand to guarantee security for its citizens and tackle criminality" (EUBAM, 2011a).

In essence, the EUBAM mission is centred around achieving, in what is called a 'sustainable way', three main goals (EUBAM, 2011a):

- Contribute to enhancing the overall border and customs management capacities and the abilities of Moldova and Ukraine to fight against cross border and organised crime and to approximate the standards of the border and law enforcement authorities to those of the EU;
- Assist Moldova and Ukraine in fulfilling their commitments under the European Neighbourhood Policy Action plans and partnership cooperation agreements;
- Contribute to a peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian conflict.

As can be noted frequently on the website and in the reports and documents issued by EUBAM, the mission 'cherishes' six core values (which can be seen as a sort of overarching principles), in the form of neutrality, partnership, reliability, results, service and transparency (see figure 4.5).

4.3.2 Institutional context

EUBAM is being funded by the European Union in the context of the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which is the financing instrument designed to "target sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and standards - supporting the agreed priorities in the ENP Action Plans" (European Commission, 2011). On the EUBAM website, the importance of a secure, prosperous and stable EU environment (both for the EU and its ring of friends, including the ones at the eastern fringes) is once again underlined, e.g. when it comes to cross-border relations such as trade: "Along the entire Moldova-Ukraine border, the Mission supports efforts to make border checks more efficient to further enhance legitimate trade. Streamlining border and customs controls, supporting the effective use of border resources to target threats and supporting cross border and international information exchange all in turn support European and international trade" (EUBAM, 2011a).

The United Nations Development Programme is serving as an implementing partner of the mission (providing administrative and logistical support), which was formalized in 2005, when the involved actors signed a “[m]emorandum of Understanding by the European Commission, the government of Moldova, and the government of Ukraine in late 2005 [and which serves as] the legal basis for EUBAM.” The mission’s mandate has been extended twice (in 2007 and 2009), and currently runs until 30 November 2011 (EUBAM, 2011a).

Concerning the institutional organisation and the accountability of the mission itself, it is mentioned (in a somewhat predictable way) that

“EUBAM is ultimately accountable to the people of the EU and seeks to be as transparent as possible. In return it enjoys a high level of support from EU institutions and from member states” (EUBAM, 2011a). In a more formal sense, it is noted that “[t]he Head of Mission reports to the EU delegations in both Ukraine (Kiev) and Moldova (Chisinau), but is ultimately accountable to the Head of the EU Delegation in Kiev. From time to time the Mission also reports directly to the European Commission, and to EU member states via the EU delegations in Kiev and Chisinau” (EUBAM, 2011a). Furthermore, it is important to mention the ‘Advisory Board’, which is the governing body of EUBAM and “is composed of the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Moldovan and Ukrainian Customs and Border Guard Services, the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the EU Presidency, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Board meets twice a year to review progress and chart the way forward for the Mission” (EUBAM, 2011a). Attachment A provides a more detailed overview of the organisational structure of the mission.



Figure 4.5: EUBAM’s core values. Source: EUBAM (2010).

4.3.3 Instruments

The EUBAM mission covers a border area of 1.222 kilometres, 955 of which is ‘green’ (land), and 267 is ‘blue’ (water) (see figure 4.4). 470 kilometres of this border are under control of the Transnistrian authorities. To oversee this quite extensive border region, six field offices (three in Moldova and the three in Ukraine) have been established, along with a liaison office in Chisinau and a mission headquarter in Odessa, Ukraine (see again figure 4.4). The border region under EUBAM ‘control’ contains 67 permanent official border crossing points, 25 of which are crossing points linking Transnistria with Ukraine.

Concerning the resources the mission has at its disposal, EUBAM has been provided an annual budget of 12 million euro, with the number of staff members being over 200. Of these employees, 4 come from the UNDP, 100 are contracted from nineteen different EU member states, and a total of 126 are from Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM, 2011a). These EUBAM staff members use the annual budget to carry out quite a wide range of activities: “EUBAM provides on-the-job training, technical assistance and advice to the Moldovan and Ukrainian border guard and customs services, reinforcing their capacity to tackle customs fraud, detect cases of smuggling and THB (trafficking in human beings), and carry out effective border and customs controls and border

surveillance. The Mission provides dedicated training courses on key customs and border-control issues such as risk analysis and anti-smuggling techniques, organises study visits to EU member States in order to observe EU best practice and engage in information exchange, and at all stages tries to encourage improved inter-agency cooperation and harmonization within each State, and on the cross-border level between the counterpart services of Moldova and Ukraine" (EUBAM, 2011a). Furthermore, "EUBAM conducts regular joint border patrols with its partners, as well as special joint border-control operations, the most recent of which – Tyra 2010 – resulted in a series of arrests, detections of fraud and smuggling, and investigations" (EUBAM, 2011a).

Besides being involved in these kind of activities, EUBAM is also very much focussing on engaging the civil society of Moldova and Ukraine, especially when it comes to informing its younger generations on 'EU values' and fighting corruption: "The Mission communicates with border communities through road shows and school presentations on a regular basis, and disseminates public information material on border-control issues and customs procedures. The Mission also hosts anti-corruption and summer schools for university students, and has to date signed partnership agreements with six universities in Odessa, Ukraine, and Chisinau, capital of Moldova" (EUBAM, 2011a). It is all these activities and the presentation thereof that will be analyzed in the next chapter, as they form the manifestations of the geostrategies, the 'spatial imaginations' which together form the construction that is EUBAM.

On the website, it is summarized what the mandate of EUBAM allows the mission to do :

- Be present and observe customs clearance and border guard checks
- As part of our advisory role, to examine border control documents and records (including computerised data)
- Provide assistance in preventing smuggling of persons and goods
- Request the re-examination and re-assessment of any consignment of goods already processed
- Make unannounced visits to any locations on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, including border units, customs posts, offices of transit, inland police stations, revenue accounting offices and along transit routes
- Move freely within the territories of Moldova and Ukraine
- Use all roads and bridges without payment of taxes and dues
- Cross the Moldovan-Ukrainian state border with only strictly necessary control and without any delay
- Have access to appropriate telecommunications equipment
- Import and export goods which are for official use of the Mission

It is emphasized that, despite these privileges, the EUBAM mission has no executive powers. Also, concerning the Transnistrian situation, which has played a fundamental role in the request for the mission, "the Mission does not intervene on a political level or play a direct role in any political process. Nevertheless, EUBAM hopes that support it can offer on a technical/advisory level, and in support of confidence-building measures, will contribute meaningfully to an eventual settlement of the conflict" (EUBAM, 2011a).

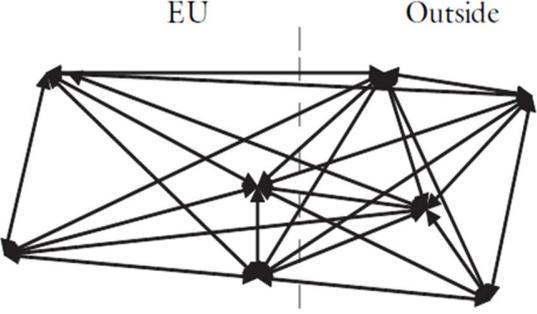
Chapter 5 – EUBAM analysis: geostrategies, geopolitical models and results

5.1 Introduction

Now that the first four sub questions have been answered and the framework for the actual analysis has been formed, this chapter will be devoted to answering the remainder of the research questions. As stated in chapter three, I will first and foremost look at the most recent version of the 'Press Pack' and the 'Phase 8 Action Plan', complemented with visual materials collected from the EUBAM website, to identify the ways in which EUBAM is discursively constructed and legitimized. I will do so through the 'lens' of the four geostrategies, as presented in chapter two. By using this 'lens', it is possible to identify the spatial imaginations, the EU's perceptions of how the Moldova-Ukraine borderland should be organized and dealt with, and how these imaginations are translated into concrete actions and projects. Furthermore, the final paragraph of this chapter deals with the actual (spatial and social) consequences of the mission, i.e. the actual impact of EUBAM up to now.

5.2 Presentation and legitimation: EUBAM as a combination of geostrategies

In the second chapter of this thesis, four EU geostrategies were presented, and it has been explained that these strategies can be considered as discourses on how the EU wants do shape and organize the (border) space in which it is involved. Table 5.1 summarizes the main characteristics of these 'spatial imaginations', and serves as the guideline for the identification of the geostrategies as enacted under the heading of EUBAM.

Geostrategy	Essence/main characteristics	Visual
Networked (non)border	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deterritorialization, decentralization - Cooperation - Postmodernist 'borderlessness' - Globalization - Neoliberalism - Remove obstacles that hinder free movement of people, information, goods & services - Traditional spatial borders less relevant; 'diffusion of the border' - Mobile surveillance, information exchange, cross- border police cooperation, common visas etc. 	

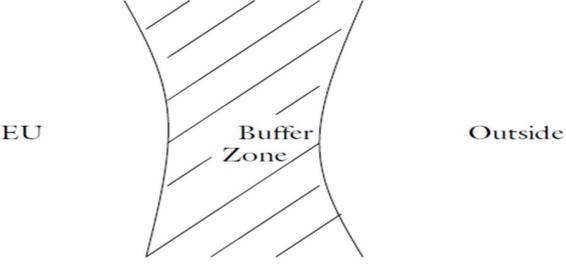
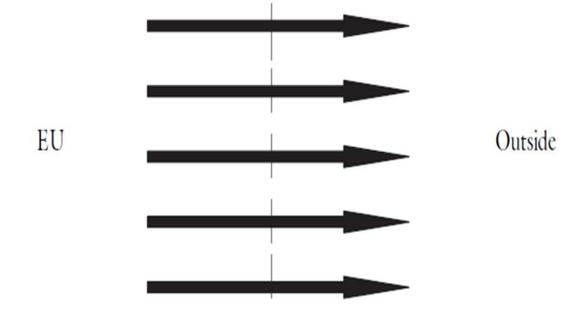
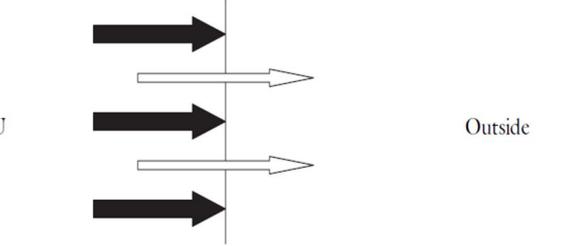
<p>March</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interzone/buffer area between powers, between different entities; a space 'in between' - Security zone, separating inside order and security from outside disorder and chaos 	
<p>Colonial frontier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A dynamic, provisional line between 'Empire and Barbarians', between cosmos and chaos - Interaction between different cultures - Aspiration to assimilate - Violence - Pacification - Transformation - Mobile, directed towards expansion - Power asymmetry: the organized power vs. its outside - Incorporation of outside within inside - The 'centre' as the arbitrator of what is 'just' 	
<p>Limes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More an edge/front/limit than a finite line - Hazy, yet permanent frontier - Power asymmetry, tension - Limit of expansion; not focussing on assimilation and expansion - Persevering the achievements, the stability of 'the empire', the inside 	

Table 5.1: The essence of each geostrategy summarized.

Looking at the 'Phase 8 Action Plan' (EUBAM, 2011b), the '2011 Press Pack' (EUBAM, 2011c), and some of the visual material on the EUBAM website, it can be argued that the mission, and the discourses and activities it entails, shows the characteristics of all of the four geostrategies, although it must be immediately noted that some of the geostrategies are far more prominent than others. I would also like to add in advance that some of the objectives are more telling when it comes to the enactment geostrategies in terms of the organization of the border (e.g. who decides what?), whereas others say more about the way the border would actually come to work in practice. I will kick-off this analysis by looking at the content of the Action Plan.

5.2.1 EUBAM geostrategies I: Phase 8 Action Plan

The action plan contains a detailed description of EUBAM's activities, which are placed under the heading of eight main objectives, (implicitly legitimizing the EUBAM mission). I will analyze each of these main goals separately, looking at them through the lens of the geostrategies.

Objective 1:

To evaluate the border control and surveillance measures by the Moldovan and Ukrainian border guards and customs authorities on the basis of, respectively, relevant Moldovan and Ukrainian legislation and EU-standards with particular attention in this regard to the Moldova-Ukraine State border.

Taking a look at this first objective, it would be tempting to focus solely on the words 'evaluate' and 'EU standards'. An initial argumentation could then be as follows: EUBAM offers the EU, as the powerful player in the relation with the 'subordinate outside', a position from which the border controls and surveillance measures, as executed by the Moldovan and Ukrainian border guards and authorities, can be evaluated, applying the standard it has set itself to come to a final judgement. This judgement, in turn, would be the fundament on the basis of which policy improvements can be made, the definition of the term 'improvements' again set by the powerful actor, the EU. This state of affairs would be very much the manifestation of a colonial frontier geostrategy, with the EU looking to transform and organize the borderland according to its own insights, whereas the actors representing the 'outside chaos' would have no other role than sit and listen to what the powerful actor has to say.

EUBAM, however, has been careful to make clear that the EU-standards form just one of multiple criteria used for the border control and surveillance measures evaluation. Actually, the EU standards are mentioned only *after* the role of relevant Moldovan and Ukrainian legislation has been emphasized. Although the formulation of this first objective obviously doesn't make clear which criteria are more important in actual practice, it is in itself interesting to note that the Moldovan and Ukrainian legislation are presented as being at least as important as the EU-standards. Obviously, hints of the colonial frontier geostrategy still remain over this first main objective, but it is also very well possible to explain it as containing some elements of the networked (non)border. This is not so much true for the content of the objective (more effective border control and surveillance), but this argument does hold looking at the way it has been put on paper and the particular spatial imagination or perception it entails. Looking at the characteristics of this geostrategy, it is, for instance, certainly possible to relate this first objective to 'sub-discourses' such as organisational 'cooperation' and 'decentralization' (it is not just the EU/Brussels that is setting the standard, the ultimate goal, but this is done together with the other partners).

From a somewhat different perspective, it is unclear what this evaluation of the border control and surveillance measures will actually mean for the way the border between Moldova and

Ukraine actually should and will be managed. Do 'EU standards' mean the transformation into a networked (non)border, or is the EU attempting to create a limes out of this specific border region? Of course, there are numerous EU policy documents available containing descriptions of what the EU considers to be 'best practices' in border management. Focussing solely on the EUBAM case and documents, I will, however, not incorporate them in the analysis. However, by looking at the remainder of the objectives, it is possible to get a better picture of the nature of the 'ideal' Moldova-Ukraine border the EU has in mind.

Objective 2:

Building capacity and knowledge of EU and other international standards/best practices.

To contribute to the development and the implementation of effective border control and surveillance measures in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine by strengthening the border guards, customs and (other) law enforcement agencies and/or other relevant authorities administrative capacity.

Whereas the first objective deals with the *evaluation* of border control and surveillance, this second one concerns coming to actual appropriate measures to improve the situation. Interestingly, when it comes to this goal, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are not so much presented as equally influential partners with a high degree of agency (as was the case with objective one; with Moldova and Ukraine in the position to, at least to a certain extent, 'set the evaluation standard'). Although not explicitly expressed like this, it seems that when it comes to capacity building and gaining knowledge (the actual, practical measurements to change the current state of affairs), the EU standards (along with 'other international ones') have regained their position to set the tone (which, in the terms of Gee, can be considered as a different social relation, a different power balance). EU and international knowledge and capacity are presented as being indispensable for and the ultimate roadmap ('best practices') towards creating what is named 'effective border control and surveillance measures'. Moldovan and Ukrainian border guards, customs, law enforcement agencies and other relevant authorities are presented to having to act as a sponge and just take in the knowledge that is based on EU and international criteria.

Although, as also Walters (2004) noted, the political and economic values and norms the EU propagates are often considered to be 'neutral', 'universal' and 'technical', it can still definitely be argued that the geostrategy of the colonial frontier is clearly underlying this second objective. This goal is about transformation (expressed as 'development and implementation') towards standards that are set by actors more powerful than Moldova and Ukraine. Although perhaps 'universal' and 'neutral', the EU is still evidently looking to propagate the practices that this 'arbitror' considers to be 'the best'. With this, it can even be stated that this goal is about two different cultures (cultures on border control and surveillance) meeting each other, with the dominant culture looking to expand, assimilate and change the area of the 'inferior' border control culture on the basis of its own 'ultimate' criteria.

Objective 3:

To contribute to preventing border related crimes such as trafficking in persons, trafficking in drugs, smuggling of goods, customs fraud and the proliferation of weapons.

Taking the claim of Luiza Bialasiewicz in mind, who states that the EU is now in the position to have a say over a 'remote control border', this third objective of the Action Plan is probably the one most related to this conceptualization. Through EUBAM, the EU is hoping not only to decrease border related crimes in the space of Moldova and Ukraine, but is obviously also looking to put a hold to (the consequences of) criminal activities in the EU that are originating from the problems in the Moldova-Ukraine border region. The mission allows the EU to, from a distance, tackle criminal activities such as people, drugs and weapon trafficking/proliferation at their (spatial) source.

This goal could be considered as the manifestation of the limes geostrategy. As can be noted from table 5.1, the limes is the geostrategy that makes the border in question into a 'hazy yet permanent limit' that has the function to preserve that what the empire, the powerful actor, has established. Walters describes the limes as having the function to "create around the Empire a zone of stability and peace", via the "institutionalization of asymmetries of economy, culture and order" (2004, p. 691). With this third objective, the EU, through EUBAM, seeks to (among others) prevent this 'Wild East hotspot of criminal activities' from spilling over into the inside of its own territory. In this sense, this third main goal is quite defense-oriented, looking to protect 'the internal', from the chaos outside. Looking merely at this 'defense/internal security discourse', it would also be tempting to attach the label of the march geostrategy on this particular goal. However, this objective is not so much about creating a buffer zone between two powers (more on that in the context of the analysis of objective seven), but leans more towards forming a hazy (as it is still about intervening beyond its own territory), yet permanent (intensifying border controls), frontier.

Objective 4:

Enhancing customs revenue

To contribute to increasing customs revenue and to create the necessary conditions for the correct implementation of the national trade policy of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine by upgrading the administrative and operational capacity of their customs administration.

Objective four is the second of the aspirations showing how EUBAM also contains elements of the networked (non)border strategy. As described in the Action Plan, this objective is about better securing, and with that facilitating trade in the region (in accordance with requirements as set by e.g. the WTO). Of course, this objective is not about completely removing the border in the sense of e.g. the Schengen treaty within the EU, as it is, in essence, centred around strengthening the border customs institution. However, through increasing the administrative and operational capacity of the customs at the Moldova-Ukraine border, EUBAM is very much oriented towards forming a transparent, secure and legal trade network in the region. This, in turn, should lead to an economic boost in both countries, as a more stable, trade facilitating network would increase the attractiveness of setting up a business in the border region. With this, this ambition is obviously very much based on neoliberal discourses and normative perceptions that stress that developments such as globalization and the removal of barriers that hinder the movement of goods/people/services should be made use of and even stimulated. More on this in the light of objective number six.

Objective 5:

To support the partner services' anti-corruption efforts.

Objective five makes clear that it is not always quite clear which geostrategy is underlying a certain EU activity in its 'near abroad'. It could be argued that this objective has a sort of a neo-colonial undertone; a somewhat cynical interpretation in this light could be that Moldova and Ukraine are doing their best to fight the omnipresent corruption, but they can't solve this problem on their own, so that the powerful party (the EU) has to step up to do it 'the right way' by spreading its norms and practices. This claim could be defended by stating that the goal is about different cultures meeting each other, with the intervening and with that expanding culture attempting to transform the 'corruption-ridden' outside on the basis of its own standards, its own estimation of what is 'right'.

I would, however, feel uncomfortable to fully back this rather cynical analysis. Of course, the objective as presented here is about cultures meeting each other, about transformation and expansion of EU values. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that there is an important power asymmetry surrounding the relation between Moldova and Ukraine on the one hand, and the EU on the other hand; a power asymmetry not becoming more balanced by the fact that both Moldova and Ukraine are, eventually, looking to become EU members. However, I feel a networked (non)border geostrategy would form an interpretation that does more justice to the nature of this particular aspiration. Moldova and Ukraine are explicitly labelled as 'partners', which (in contrast to goal number two) implies a certain degree of agency on their part. It would seem that they, despite the imbalance of power, have a say when it comes to determining the right means for fighting corruption. It looks as if the EU is not merely making the Moldova and Ukraine into passive actors, having to just take follow up the commands of the stronger side, but they are 'supported' in their own plans and efforts to make an end to the corruption issues in the border region. It would, therefore, be more appropriate to characterize this objective as an attempt to cooperate on a decentralized level instead of to instruct top-down. Although it must be admitted that this objective is not a textbook example of what the networked (non)border is about, it certainly tends towards this 'spatial imagination' to a larger extent than it does to the other ones.

Objective 6:

Implementing the national Integrated Border Management concept by:

- 1. improving intra-agency cooperation;**
- 2. improving inter-agency cooperation;**
- 3. improving international cooperation:**
 - a. bilateral;**
 - b. multi-lateral.**

Together with objective four, this objective forms the clearest manifestation of the fact that also the networked (non)border geostrategy forms a very important normative political aspiration within the

EUBAM mission. Key concepts in this respect are the 'Integrated Border Management concept' (IBM) and (the different forms of) 'cooperation'.

The IBM model is "one of the main elements of the EU security strategy [...] [and] involves intensive cooperation between border agencies" (ENPI, 2010). The rationale behind this initiative is presented as follows (European Commission, 2008):

- Integrated border management (IBM) structures aligned to EU standards are necessary to facilitate mobility of persons.
- By effectively tackling customs fraud, trafficking and illegal migration progress can be made in key policy areas such as trade, customs and visas.
- Assistance for demarcation of internationally recognised borders could also be provided in the frame of this initiative.

There are three main goals underlying the project, which are all very much related to the eight goals of the EUBAM mission as presented in the Action Plan as analyzed here:

- Improve security, reduce smuggling and human trafficking, and facilitate mobility of people across non-EU borders, particularly along the Pan-European Transport Corridors and TRACECA.
- Help partners develop IBM strategies, align border management rules and adopt best practices in line with EU standards.
- Enhance multilateral cooperation and networking among partners, candidate countries and EUMS.

Interestingly, EUBAM (through the Action Plan) is, when it comes to implementing the IBM, focussing first and foremost on the third of these goals, which concerns cooperation and networking between border agencies/partners, candidate countries and the European Military Staff. It should be clear that the content of this goal very much leans towards the characteristics of the networked (non)border, especially when it comes to the issue of decentralization, with all the relevant actors being involved in the process of creating effective border management in the region. Although this goal is not so much about the actual way the Moldova-Ukraine border should come to work in practice (as were for instance goal numbers three and four), this objective emphasizes the importance of the *organizational* cooperation between different (border) agencies for creating effective border *management* (e.g. EUBAM, Frontex, the UNDP and civil society) and, importantly, between countries. The international cooperation not only concerns the most important bilateral one, i.e. between Moldova and Ukraine, but also has a very much multilateral character. A good example of this would be the fact that EUBAM staff members are contracted from a wide range of EU countries, as also mentioned in chapter four. In this light, by emphasizing the need to cooperate (internationally), it can be stated that the EUBAM mission makes use of the geostrategy of the networked (non)border to push different actors to look beyond their own familiar borders of e.g. a country or a certain organization or agency, and it is stimulated to e.g. exchange information and services, with the traditional borders becoming somewhat less relevant. It can be argued that this objective, with the emphasis it places on discourses of (international) 'cooperation' and 'integration', fits perfectly within the framework of globalization and even neoliberalism, as characterizing the networked(non)border geostrategy. Indeed: of the EUBAM objectives presented in the action plan, this is the one the most clearly contributing to creating an actual, international (albeit not completely borderless) network in and even beyond the Moldova-Ukraine border region. Or, to speak with

Walters, this objective forms a good example of the ways in which “networks of control come to substitute for the functions that were physically concentrated at the border” (2004, p. 680).

Objective 7:

Contributing to the settlement of the conflict in Transnistria

To make a positive contribution towards the settlement of the conflict in “TN” and, in case a settlement is achieved within the duration of this action, to promote post settlement consolidation.

A special place within the Action Plan is taken in by this seventh objective, which pays attention to the Transnistrian situation. As described in chapter four, the Transnistrian conflict has quite long historical roots, and there are numerous factors hampering the possibilities of coming to a final settlement. One of these factors is formed by the presence of Russian soldiers within the Transnistrian region. According to Russia, these will remain in the region with the goal to “protect the huge stockpiles of munitions until they have been destroyed.” Furthermore, Vladimir Chizhov, the Russian Ambassador to the European Union, states that the Transnistrian authorities regard the Russian presence as a ‘security guarantee’ (in Dempsey, 2010). Taking into mind these EU-Russia dynamics when seeking to label this objective in terms of the geostrategies, complemented with Fairclough’s claim that the Transnistrian region forms the new frontline between east and west, it would be highly interesting to have a more detailed look at the march strategy. As can be seen in table 5.1, this geostrategy is enacted to form a border into a buffer/security zone between two powers, between two different entities. In this post Cold-War era, it is of course not that the EU, because it would fear a military invasion from the east, seeks to form a security zone between its own territory and Russia. However, as also Walters (2004) has noted in the light of discussing the march strategy, the EU does fear “the permeation of criminal networks, and above all the entrance of clandestine migrants” (p. 684). For this reason, “the post-Cold War subject now known collectively as the ‘central and eastern European countries’ (CEECs) find themselves located within a framework of policies which seeks to organise them as a buffer zone, insulating the EU from what many strategists perceive as the turbulent, chaotic spaces of the crumbling Soviet empire to the east, and more generally, from global movements of refugees and economic migrants.” (Walters, 2004, p. 684). These measures also include “the various programmes and policies which, either in exchange for aid, or as a condition for future membership, ‘encourage’ bordering countries to close down known routes of clandestine entry, to improve their detection and surveillance procedures” (Walters, 2004, p. 684). That this description can very much be related to the objective as mentioned above, comes to the front when looking at what is called an ‘associated objective’, a sort of ‘sub-objective’, as mentioned in the Action Plan:

To provide assistance to the border demarcation along the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Here again we come across the discourse of the need of strengthening the border between Moldova and Ukraine as was also the case with the third objective. The Transnistrian region, before EUBAM was active, considered a “hotspot of illicit cross-border activity, including trafficking of human beings, smuggling and other illegal trade”, not in the least because of its institutional and technical shortcomings when it comes to border management (EUBAM, 2011a), should be dealt with. Besides settling the conflict in a peaceful way, it seems that a clear line, a solid demarcation needs to be

constructed. On the one hand, both the networked as well as the limes strategy could be seen as appropriate labels for the EU's ambitions concerning this objective (improve cooperation in the region to achieve conflict resolution, but at the same time, as was the case with objective three, also the aspiration to create 'a zone of stability and peace' could be mentioned here). On the other hand, however, looking at the role of Russia (or the wider eastern region for that matter), it could even be argued that the strategy of the march, in the form of a 'remote control buffer zone' between west and east, should keep a place in the back of our minds when critically examining the further progress of EUBAM (or the EU as a whole) is making when it comes to border demarcation in the eastern region. Obviously, given all the objectives focussing on cooperation and bringing improvements to the region, the EU is definitely not seeking to make the Moldova-Ukraine borderland into a textbook example of the march (as a sort of no-man's-land between two powers). However, it remains quite interesting to see whether small glimpses of this geostrategy might come to the fore in the ways the west-east dynamics are going to develop in the future in this particular region, not in the least, from another perspective, when it comes to Russian activities in the region).

Objective 8:

Enhancing public awareness on border management and security.

a. To contribute to the improvement of public relations capabilities of the public relations sections of the Moldovan and Ukrainian partner services;

b. To provide objective information to the local population in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the EU regarding EUBAM mandate and assistance provided to the countries.

This final objective of the Action Plan for this year deals not so much with the way the actual border should be controlled and managed (whether through softening or strengthening of the border), but aims at informing the Moldovan and Ukrainian public, the civil society on border management and security issues in the region. As the nature of this objective differs fundamentally from the other seven, it is not an easy task to identify it as the manifestation of a certain geostrategy. However, in the paragraphs dealing with the Press Pack and the visual materials, it should become clear that the activities related to and enacted under the heading of this objective, do show that also in this context geostrategic interests and ambitions certainly have an important role to play.

5.2.2 EUBAM geostrategies II: Press Pack Edition 2011

As mentioned, the Press Pack edition 2011 obviously is, more than the Action Plan, produced with the goal to inform the outside world about the EUBAM mission. Through an attractive, well-designed brochure, information on the background, the head of the mission and the different goals and achievements of EUBAM is provided to anyone who is interested (EUBAM, 2011c). Obviously, I won't report on the Press Pack word for word. This in the first place because of practical reasons (it would add a disproportional amount of pages to this thesis in relation to the added value of the content), but also because of the fact that, to a certain extent, the Press Pack mirrors the objectives as summarized in the Action Plan, albeit slightly more elaborated on. However, I hope to make clear that this second document also shows some subtle differences in both discursive tone and content compared to the Action Plan, which also has some consequences for the (nature of the) geostrategies that can be identified.

When reading through the brochure, it is quite remarkable to see how much emphasis is placed on the 'cooperation discourse'. The document is ridden with phrases such as:

"work with Moldova and Ukraine to harmonise their border management standards and Procedures"

"improve cooperation between the border guard and customs services and with other law enforcement agencies"

"increase cooperation between the national agencies involved in border issues and also between the border services of Moldova and Ukraine"

"EUBAM supports the partners in joint analytical products such as monthly and quarterly common border security assessment reports"

"to counter cross border and international crime you need the big picture and all involved must work together. This means effective intra-agency, inter-agency and international cooperation"

"EUBAM builds bridges"

"Through its work, the Mission contributes to [...]cross border cooperation and confidence-building and helps to improve transparency along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border"

More similar examples, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and bridge-building between different actors, can be found in this document, which is actually only sixteen pages long. When seeking to label these discourses in terms of geostrategies, the networked (non)border is obviously the one that comes to mind. Actually, when analyzing the Press Pack, it is quite clear that this geostrategy is the dominant one in this particular the document. Both when it comes to the language used (the choice of words, the tone) as well as when it comes to the selection of activities that are being described, this particular 'spatial imagination' plays the most prominent role. Although the networked (non)border certainly also has a prominent place within the Action Plan, it absolutely dominates the Press Pack. I want to underpin and illustrate this statement somewhat extra, by highlighting three elements which I consider to be clear manifestations of the important role the discourse of the networked (non)border geostrategy has to play in this context.

A first aspect I want to mention concerns the emphasis that is placed on the role of information exchange. It is, for instance, noted that EUBAM has contributed to the development of the 'Pre-arrival Information Exchange System' (PAIES), which "allows the [real time] exchange of import/export information between Moldova and Ukraine", and also allows to electronically receive information on commercial activities in the "Transnistrian segment of the border where Moldovan authorities are not present" (EUBAM, 2011c). Furthermore, it is noted that EUBAM helps the Moldovan and Ukrainian (border) authorities when it comes to creating "joint analytical products such as monthly and quarterly common border security assessment reports" (EUBAM, 2011c).

EUBAM not only stimulates information exchange between Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities, but it is explicitly emphasized that "EUBAM builds bridges between the border services of Moldova and Ukraine, key EU agencies like Frontex and Europol as well as services in EU Member States and international organisations" (EUBAM, 2011c). In specific instances, EUBAM

has also supported the exchange of information with other EU member states and international bodies, one of them being the United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

Another issue, also showing the important role of the networked (non)border strategy, is formed by the emphasis placed on stimulating legal trade and legal person border crossing. Obviously, it is especially the Transnistrian region getting quite a lot of attention from EUBAM. In this light, EUBAM has contributed to the signing of the "Joint Declaration (JD) on the mutual recognition of the official customs stamps and documentation of Ukraine and Moldova proper" (EUBAM, 2011c). After this measurement was implemented in 2006, exports from the whole of Moldova to or via Ukraine must have all the necessary Moldovan documentation and stamps. It is argued that the implementation of the JD offers "more transparency over the commodities flow", and [a] consistent increase in 'TN' based businesses registering with the Chisinau authorities has occurred" (EUBAM, 2011c). Concerning persons crossing the Moldova-Ukraine border, it is mentioned that EUBAM has contributed to the resumption of passenger train traffic, as the railway from Chisinau to Odessa, going through Transnistria, which was out of order, was restarted in November 2010.

A third aspect taking in a prominent place within the Press Pack, concerns the emphasis that is placed on building confidence and trust between different actors. In this light, it is described how EUBAM has organized a range of 'fun activities', all focussed on getting the implementing partners together and letting them build up a 'cross border and international' relation that is characterized by trust and confidence. For instance, several football tournaments for the border services staff have been organized, along with a women's volleyball tournament, bringing together teams of a wide range of institutions: "The border guard and customs services of Moldova and Ukraine, border guard services of Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, Council of Border Guard Forces Commanders of CIS, the Romanian border police, National Customs Agency of the Republic of Bulgaria, FRONTEX (the EU agency that coordinates operational cooperation between Member States of the EU in the field of border security), Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) Center, Odessa universities, Odessa regional authorities, and EUBAM, participated in the tournament" (EUBAM, 2011c). Emphasizing the importance of cooperation, the Chairman of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, Mykola Lytvyn, made clear how "[t]hrough such games we learn to better understand each other. The fact that we are holding such a sport competition between border services is evidence that borders unite both countries and people" (EUBAM, 2011c).

A final element I want to mention concerns the creation of networks with the general public and institutions at first sight not so much related to border management. EUBAM having, as they describe it, an 'unparalleled public reach', use "six field offices along the entire Moldovan-Ukrainian border, in Chisinau and Odessa Port, [which] have communication focal points. Each [of them] engages in regular public outreach in schools, boarding schools, local communities and local media" (EUBAM, 2011c). In this context, about 100 EUBAM public relations events and 55 school presentations take place every year at different types of institutions. In the Press Pack, some extra attention is paid to relations that have been set up with students and universities (more on this later).

I feel that these examples (descriptions of activities and policy objectives) clearly show how the EU, through EUBAM, is stimulating and heavily emphasizing the need to create networks and build bridges between (different types of) actors. Examples of more concrete goals in the light of this aspiration are e.g. the facilitation of legal trade and person border crossing and making border management more transparent. In the terminology of Walters, it can be stated that these examples

represent sub-discourses of globalization, deterritorialization, cooperation, decentralization and neoliberalism, as can be placed under the heading of the main discourse of the networked border.

However, although it is definitely the most prominent one, the networked (non)border is not the only geostrategy underlying the (content and tone) of the Press Pack. The document also contains descriptions and justifications of activities that could be considered to be manifestations of the colonial frontier strategy. Besides teaching the border authorities and services on the 'best practices' of border management (as already mentioned in the previous paragraph), a somewhat different yet prominent example is related to the relations EUBAM has set up with civil society institutions such as schools and universities, as also mentioned above. In this context, EUBAM organized a first edition of a summer school in 2010, an event that will be repeated this summer. During the event, students coming from both Moldova and Ukraine are taught about 'EUBAM and the values and culture of the EU'. Fully funded by EUBAM, during the International 'Youth against Corruption' summer school 26 students were encouraged to develop an awareness and simultaneously a 'zero-tolerance attitude' towards the issue of corruption: "Nobody should accept corruption as the norm and it should be exposed wherever it hides", said Udo Burkholder, Head of EUBAM. "These young people are some of the best and brightest and they will go on and lead the fight against corruption by example." And: "To fight corruption we need full media freedom and structures of accountability. We must use the education system and the media to increase public awareness, raise consciousness and increase feelings of responsibility" (in EUBAM, 2011c).

As mentioned earlier, such values and norms are often considered to be universal and neutral (e.g. information concerning human rights and the ways in which the EU fights crime is provided). Nevertheless, it still can be argued that these kinds of activities (also e.g. the celebration of Europe Day on the 9th of May could be mentioned) are, at least to some extent, about teaching how it 'should be done', and focus on the expansion of the order that is seen as a characteristic of the 'Empire'. In essence they are, although of course not explicitly mentioned, oriented towards transforming the outside chaos and assimilating it into the sphere of influence of the cosmos, the 'arbitrator of what is proper'. It is for this reason that, although the norms and values that are taught might be hard to criticize, a colonial 'spatial imagination' also definitely can be identified.

It would also be interestingly to note that, when looking at the tone of the Press Pack, the issue of corruption is almost discursively presented as if it can be found everywhere in both Moldova and Ukraine, with which this issue serves as a clear justification for the presence and activities of EUBAM. For instance, it is described how "[a] final presentation by students titled 'Life without corruption at my university' rounded off the event [i.e. the 2010 summer school]. Looking at this specific assignment, it is almost as if corruption is considered to be a natural fact of life, even at universities, with a university life without corruption being presented as almost an unattainable dream, an Utopia ('imagine what it would be like...').

This aspiration of 'having to teach that corruption is something negative', not only comes to the fore when it comes to the activities EUBAM undertakes with students, but forms a prominent aspect within the mission as a whole. For instance, it is stated that "[e]ach of the six EUBAM field offices have designated anti-corruption assistants that work with the border services on the ground and the EUBAM *anti-corruption advisor* based at Headquarters. The Mission is supporting partners' efforts in enhancing control processes and preventative measures at border crossing points. As part of this, *training in ethics* and awareness and other areas has been delivered to over 370 practitioners since December 2009. These servicemen also took part in *integrity testing procedures*" [emphasis added] (EUBAM, 2011c). Again, the Moldovan and Ukrainian 'ways of doing', at all levels, are presented as if they are fundamentally characterized by the virus that is corruption, awaiting the medicine that is EUBAM.

Finally, it can be argued that of the other 'spatial imaginations', that of the limes, and perhaps also that of the march, have a role to play in the EUBAM mission, based on the content of the Press Pack. To identify the march geostrategy, however, a very critical and perhaps even a somewhat cynical attitude would again be necessary, as also was the case with one of the goals of the Action Plan. In theory, it would be possible to explain EUBAM's efforts to 'improve the border controls' between Moldova and Ukraine and to 'strengthen border security' as a first step towards creating something of a new safe and secure buffer zone between west and east. However, in my view, it would be a bridge too far to identify EUBAM's activities as the manifestation of (the quite radical) march geostrategy. This 'spatial imagination' is quite close to creating something of an empty spatial interlude, a no-man's-land, separating two completely different entities, two fundamentally contrasting cultures. Obviously, looking also at the almost colonial like activities (I wouldn't go as far as calling them civilizing) that are being undertaken via EUBAM (see above) it would be very hard to maintain such a stance. Also, in the Press Pack it is, (one again) underlined how much the EU, including EUBAM, is looking to bring security, stability and prosperity 'for all involved'. However, it would do justice to the current state affairs to identify all the efforts to strengthen the border, as described in the Press Pack (e.g. the more efficient checking of vehicles, goods and people at the border crossing points on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, in order to cut criminal activities such as illegal migration and the smuggling of goods such as drugs, weapons cigarettes and alcohol), (also) as attempts to create something of a limit that serves an EU interest: the creation of a hazy yet permanent frontier, not in the least meant to also provide some extra protection for the (stability of the) EU, in the form of an eastern 'zone of stability and peace'. Indeed: the creation of a limes.

5.2.3 EUBAM geostrategies III: Visual Data

Having identified the relevant geostrategies as enacted via EUBAM on the basis of textual data, I will now complete this (most important part of the) analysis by taking a look at (only a very small selection) of the visual data that can be found on the EUBAM website. The images I have selected do not so much serve the goal of providing a whole new perspective, as they should be considered as complementing and further illustrating the comments I have made in the previous section (and they, in my view, form a perhaps somewhat more appealing conclusion to an otherwise quite textual analysis). However, it can definitely be argued that they are at least as meaningful when it comes to identifying the geostrategies that the EU is enacting through EUBAM.

1. Representing the **networked (non)border**:



Figure 5.1: The 'EUBAM family'. Source: EUBAM (2010).



Figure 5.2: EUBAM football tournament. Source: EUBAM (2010).



Figure 5.3: The EUBAM logo. Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.4: EUBAM's 'area of responsibility'. Source: EUBAM (2010).



Figure 5.5: Discussing the EUBAM policy. Source: EUBAM (2010).



Figure 5.6: Celebrating Europe Day. Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.7: Crossing the Modova-Ukraine border. Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.8: Trade activity at the Odessa Port. Source: EUBAM (2011a).

2. Representing the colonial frontier:



Figure 5.9: EUBAM visiting a school (I). Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.10: EUBAM visiting a school (II). Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.11: EUBAM training session (I). Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.12: EUBAM training session (II). Source: EUBAM (2011a).

3. Representing the **limes**:



Figure 5.13: EUBAM bus surveillance. Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.14: EUBAM truck surveillance. Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.15: Safeguarding the border (I). Source: EUBAM (2011a).



Figure 5.16: Safeguarding the border (II). Source: EUBAM (2011a).

As stated in chapter three, Wintle notes that “most images used for official purposes are a form of theatre rather than reality, and ‘documentary’ pictures invariably have an agenda or moral aspiration.” (2009, p. 14). And, quoting Burk, he argued how ‘the visual’ reveals things “which are very hard to discern elsewhere” (2009, p. 15). Looking at the visual material available on the EUBAM website, it can, again, be noted that it is not possible to explain the mission as the manifestation of only a single geostrategy (or, in Wintles terms, ‘agenda’ or ‘moral aspiration’). As was the case with both the Action Plan 2011 as the Press Pack edition 2011, it can be claimed that at least three of the four geostrategic discourses have a role to play. With this, one could say that also these images (as a sort of ‘documentary’) reveal the existence of multiple EU ‘border mentalités’

Looking at the first of the selected images, it can once again be argued how much emphasis is placed on the value of cooperation and the metaphor of building bridges between different actors. For instance, a picture of the staff members is put on the EUBAM website, presented not just as ‘the EUBAM staff’, but, instead, they are said to form ‘the EUBAM family’ (figure 5.1). EUBAM wants to make clear that it doesn’t matter where you, as a EUBAM staff member, are from, whether you originate from Moldova, Ukraine or another country. The thing that matters is that working together as a family is needed to fulfil the EUBAM goals. A similar discourse can be identified when looking at figure 5.2, which is a picture of the 2010 football tournament organized to create a relation of ‘trust and confidence’ and to reinforce international partnerships among EUBAM staff members. This time, not presented as a family but as a team, this image also shows the value of and the need for cooperation as underlined by EUBAM. Another image in this section is figure 5.3, the EUBAM mission logo. The logo contains the flags of the EU, flanked by those of Moldova and Ukraine. Of course, it can be noted how the EU flag is the biggest one, and the one located in the middle, which would represent the dominant, most influential position of the institution within the alliance. However, it can also be argued the logo is meant to represent something of a trinity of equality, an

alliance of genuine cooperation. In terms Wintle, I feel, also looking at the other images in this section, this is exactly the 'moral aspiration', the 'agenda' the EU wishes to express. That there is, however more to EUBAM than only this trinity, is again shown by figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6. Figure 5.4 is a map of the 'action area' of the mission. However, not only (the border region between) Moldova and Ukraine are (is) highlighted, also all the countries surrounding them are presented, once again stressing the role other countries have to play in the mission. Furthermore, figure 5.5 is a picture in the same tradition, visualizing the need to collectively discuss the course to be set (also note the headphones worn by some of the participants, showing the international character of the debate). Also, there is figure 5.6 which is taken in 2008, during the celebration of Europe Day. It, once again (symbolically) represents the many ways in which EUBAM is stressing the international character of the mission, as it shows the different caps worn by the border authorities of a wide range of countries. I feel that all of these images are the representations of the networked (non)border. They show how the EU imagines the organisation of the Moldova-Ukraine borderland in terms of discourses such as cooperation, decentralization (not Brussels decides, but decentralized networks working in the regions themselves), globalization and even somewhat of a 'borderlessness'.

Whereas these images represent the emphasis that is placed on the need to cooperate when it comes to the organisation of the border, the final two images (figure 5.7 and 5.8) symbolically represent, in my view, how the geostrategy of the networked (non)border also impacts the way this specific border actually comes to function (or at least how the EU envisions it). Figures 5.7 (a waving man crossing the opened border gate), and 5.8 (taken at the Odessa seaport) are examples of the way EU discursively wants to bring to the fore the message (or spatial imagination) that the Moldova-Ukrainian border can also have a sort of an open, networked character. It is as if the EU wants to make clear that legal person border crossings and trade are stimulated and also facilitated by the mission, as one of its ambitions/aspirations. In that sense, they represent a neoliberalist discourse, stimulating the removal of obstacles that hinder the free movement of people, information, goods & services. However, as section three will show, EUBAM is definitely not about coming to an absolute softening of the border, as border controls still remain very important.

The second section of images shows again how also the colonial frontier geostrategy has an important role to play. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 have been taken during the visit of a EUBAM delegation to a school in the Odessa region. The pictures show how the (obviously happy children, all dressed up and eagerly awaiting the important visit) receive different kinds of presents, including of course the most prominent and inevitable EU symbol, its flag. During these kinds of visits, the children are told (taught?) about the EU (its values and traditions) and the activities EUBAM undertakes in the region. Of course, on the one hand these visits form a great opportunity for these children to get to know more about the EU, and it can't be denied they are seem to be enjoying the visit of the delegation. On the other hand, however, it very much seems as an attempt of the EU to especially talk about how wonderful life is 'over there', something I think the EU should be very careful with.

Figures 5.11 and 5.12 are of a somewhat different nature, showing a training session for border guards and the customs services in Moldova and Ukraine. Sitting in a classroom, the border guards listen to the EU border experts standing in front of the classroom (power asymmetry), who teach them the details of the EU's 'best border practices'. Without giving a moral judgement, I feel all of these images can be explained as the manifestations of a colonial frontier geostrategy. They once again show how the EU is, in a way, looking to assimilate, or at least transform 'the outside'. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 show how the EU is looking to make the younger generation of, in this case Ukraine, familiar with the EU culture, its norms and values. It shows an interaction of cultures, whereby it could be stated that the intention is to show the Odessa youth the greatness of the one of the EU. Figures 5.11 and 5.12 are somewhat more explicit in this sense, with it being quite clear that

the EU sets the standard when it comes to border management, and in this sense acts as the arbitrator of what is 'proper'. Of course, it can once again be argued that these teaching sessions concern 'neutral and technical values' and are indeed in the best interest of Moldova and Ukraine. Yet, the argument remains that it can be considered as a quite explicit attempt of the EU, as the 'cosmos', to spread its values, norms and practices beyond its own territory, 'the chaotic outside'.

The final images, figures 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16, I've put under the heading of the limes geostrategy. As I wrote during the analysis of the textual data, I feel the attempts of EUBAM to improve border controls should not only be seen as contributing to the safety in Moldova (including Transnistria) and Ukraine, but also serve, at least to some degree, the interest of the EU itself. Indeed, the remote control border Bialasiewicz talks about. Figures 5.13 and 5.14 show how EUBAM also is clearly attempting to help creating a more safe and secure border region. This not so much through educating e.g. border guards, customs services or the younger Moldovan generations about EU values etc., but through (indirectly) improving the surveillance of both persons (figure 5.13) and goods (figure 5.14). In this sense, these activities can be best explained as the manifestation of a limit of expansion, the creation of a 'hazy, yet permanent frontier' (in contrast to the training sessions, which are more about spreading EU ethics, values and norms, a more mobile, expansionary frontier), and contribute to the creation of a 'zone of stability and peace'. Figures 5.15 and 5.16, I believe, make this point even more clear. In my view (believing that these images are not published without a reason), they show how the EU is emphasizing the fact that strict border controls and armed surveillances (almost military operations in empty, march-like zones) remain a key policy activity in the Moldova-Ukrainian border region (as a political aspiration/ambition), necessary for the good of Moldova, Ukraine, but, I want to argue, certainly also for the EU itself.

5.3 EUBAM: geostrategic discourses and the explanatory power of the Westphalian, imperial and neomedieval model

Having finalized the analysis of the EUBAM geostrategies, it is now possible to return to and elaborate on the value of the models on the geopolitical development of the EU, as presented in chapter two. These 'classic' models, conceptualizing the ways in which the EU nowadays attempts to 'organize the broader European space', were described by Browning and Joenniemi (2008) as "rather fixed geopolitical vision[s] of what the EU is about" (p. 519). Indeed, it can be noted that also the EUBAM case shows that it is impossible to catch the geopolitical development of the EU in one single model. As the analysis has hopefully made clear, even a relatively comprehensible border mission in the Moldova and Ukraine has a multi-dimensional nature and contains such a wide range of activities (and with that, underlying geostrategies) that putting a single label on it would not do justice to the complexity of the actual state of affairs. The individual models are just too fixed, too one-dimensional and not dynamic enough to be able to serve as valid conceptualizations of such multi-faceted projects in the EU's 'near abroad'. Also, the models obviously remain at quite a high level of abstraction, and describe the geopolitical development of the EU in rather general terms. The models focus first and foremost on describing and summarizing the geopolitical nature of 'European governance', as these models are more oriented towards the essence of the organisation and structure of European geopolitics, and not so much on describing the changing nature of how borders actually come to work as a result of specific forms of European governance. For this reason, it is, for instance, quite difficult to also incorporate the actual, on the ground 'networking' of borders with(in) (such as the mission's attempts to facilitate and stimulate legal trade and travel) within these conceptualisations alone, even with the neomedieval model of the EU.

This is not to say that this EUBAM analysis would result in the conclusion that the models should be done away with, as a combined ('hybrid') model, when integrated with the geostrategies, certainly has its added value when it comes to trying to capture the 'EUBAM story'.

I want to argue that EUBAM can be seen as the geostrategic manifestation of a combination of both the imperial as well as the neomedieval model of Europe. This hybrid model is given form by a combination of geostrategies, with the colonial frontier and the networked (non) border being the most important ones, but whereby also the limes has an important role to play. Whereas the networked (non) border is constantly being explicitly emphasized in the EUBAM policy documents, the reading 'between the lines' and the analysis of the visual data have also made clear how, far more implicitly, also the colonial frontier and the limes form important 'spatial imaginations' underlying this EUBAM mission. The next section will elaborate on this somewhat more.

When looking at the three models as they were presented in chapter two, it is possible to identify at least one or two characteristics of each of them when looking at the EUBAM mission, although two of them are clearly more applicable when it comes to this specific case. First of all, there was the Westphalian model of Europe, which, in essence, states how "the characteristics of modern statehood is steadily moved away from the states to the Commission in Brussels", with power assumed as held at the centre, and applied over the whole of the European territory and beyond (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 522). Looking at the EUBAM mission, it can of course be argued that the European Commission definitely has a role to play, not in the least when it comes to the financing of the mission, which takes place under the umbrella of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Most notably, it was the European Commission that reacted positively to the joint request made by the presidents of Moldova and Ukraine in 2005, and it has also accepted the different prolongings of the mission. Also, regular meetings between the EUBAM mission and representatives of the EC are held to monitor and evaluate the progress that has been made. However, besides these formal and organisational connections with 'the Brussels centre', based on the analysis, it should be quite clear how much emphasis the mission is placing on creating more or less decentralized networks of cooperation. By making use of the networked (non)border geostrategy, it is underlined that EUBAM is seeking to 'build bridges' between the EU, Moldova, Ukraine, but also with a wide range of other countries and institutions. EUBAM is not about making a fully demarked, gated and unitary actor out of the EU (as the Westphalian model would argue), but, in contrast, is (presented as) a mission (also) focussing on constructing international relations of trust and confidence.

An important issue to be addressed somewhat extra in this light concerns the strengthening of the Moldova-Ukraine borderland through improved, more effective surveillance. In the previous section I placed this under the heading of the limes geostrategy, as I see them as contributing to the 'political ambition' of creating a 'zone of peace and stability' around the EU. I won't, however, see these activities as the manifestation of the Westphalian model of the EU. Concerning security issues, it is explicitly stated that this specific conceptualization focuses merely on the territory that is the EU, with clearly defined "statist borders across which governance is relatively uniform" (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 522). Examples could be the creation of a single European army, and the further institutionalisation of the Schengen treaty, with softened inside, but fortified outside borders. Obviously however, the EUBAM mission is being enacted in a non-EU territory. In this sense, the Westphalian model, focussing purely on the 'EU inside', can be seen as having rather little explanatory power at all when it comes to EUBAM or any other EU project in 'the near abroad'. The strengthening of the Moldova-Ukraine borderland, although definitely also helping to cut different kinds of crime that could have an impact in the EU, can because of its distant, 'remote control border' nature, not be 'handled' by the Westphalian model very easily.

Then there are two other models remaining: the imperial model of Europe, and the neomedieval conceptualisation, elements of which are both recognizable when scrutinizing the EUBAM mission.

The imperial model understands power as “located in the centre in Brussels and dispersed outwards in varying, multilayered and declining degrees” (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 524). It can be argued all the activities undertaken to organize the ‘wider European space’ and to ‘spread European values, norms and practices’ (Europe as the powerful centre, the arbitrator setting the standard in its outside, determining what is ‘proper’ and further expand this ‘properness’), might be considered as the manifestations of this particular model. In the case of EUBAM, this could, for instance, be related to activities such as the anti-corruption summer camps, and the training in ethical conduct for border guards and customs services, activities which I have placed under the heading of the colonial geostrategy. It is through aspirations such as ‘freeing’ Moldova and Ukraine from e.g. corruption and border related crime, that the mission contributes to the notion of an ‘imperial Europe’, sometimes in ‘expansionary mode’, actively opening up, expanding and spreading its norms and values around beyond its own empire to change and assimilate ‘the outside’, sometimes also spreading its ‘best practices’ (merely) in order to defend the empire through creating a ‘zone of peace and stability’ (‘one can be Westphalian, imperial or neomedieval in different ways’).

Finally, there is the model of a neomedieval model of Europe, which “depicts power as dispersed in a more radical fashion than the imperial or Westphalian models, with power no longer fixed on a single centre in Brussels, but as being far more regionalized and corresponding to logics of transnationalism and network governance” (Walters and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 525). Looking at the analysis, this is the conceptualization that is pushed to the fore the most explicitly by the EU. By presenting and constantly emphasizing the geostrategy of the networked (non)border, through discourses of cooperation, communication, information exchange, in short, of ‘building bridges’, the EU is clearly eager to bring to the fore the neomedieval characteristics of the organisation of the EUBAM mission. With representatives of different countries and institutions, all located in different ‘field or liaison offices’, it would be quite accurate to describe the mission as the manifestation of a neomedieval and decentralized ‘geopolitics of dimensionality’, where geopolitical thought is informed by many “centres” rather than one dominant ‘core’ (multilevel governance) (Browning and Joenniemi, 2008, p. 525).

Coming to a conclusion on the issue of the value of the ‘classic models’ on the geopolitical development of the EU, it cannot be denied the models have their role to play when one is seeking to come to a complete framework for describing and explaining all of the facets of the multidimensional and complex European geopolitical development. Importantly, more explicitly than the geostrategies, the three models attempt to describe what *is* a certain, eventual state of affairs when it comes to the geopolitical development of the EU, whereas the geostrategies should be considered as political ambitions, perceptions of what *should* be and, subsequently, how these ‘spatial imaginations’ and aspirations on organizing and changing a particular borderland should be materialized through different kinds of projects and activities. In the end, it is as a result of these concrete activities (e.g. organizing football tournaments for border authorities), which, in turn, are the manifestation of certain aspirations, ambitions and ‘spatial perceptions’ (e.g. ‘building bridges’), that the EU’s geopolitical nature evolves in a certain direction. Looking specifically at this particular EUBAM case, I would argue this direction could be best summarized as ‘neomedieval imperial’. Of course, other cases might lead to other conceptualisations, and therefore further inquiries are needed to come to a more well-informed and complete conceptual framework (see the recommendations in the concluding chapter).

5.4 EUBAM: improving the borderland?

Moving somewhat away from the theoretical debate, I want to finalize this chapter by taking a look at the actual impact the EUBAM mission has had up to this point. Of course, some of the consequences of the mission's activities have, to some extent, come to the fore throughout the analysis (for instance when it comes to more effective border controls through capacity building, improved information exchange and anti-corruption efforts). However, a somewhat more detailed description is definitely also called for, if only in order to also further highlight the practical and policy related aspects of this thesis. As written earlier, there are very few recent evaluation reports available that have been published by other parties than EUBAM. Although one obviously could (and probably also should) always question the objectivity of such EU documents, I don't believe this forms an insurmountable barrier for the objective at stake here: coming to a general overview of the results of the mission up to now.

First of all, it is interesting to mention the fact that EUBAM has periodically held polls among the citizens of Moldova and Ukraine, surveying several aspects of the mission. For instance, during the 2010 celebration of Europe Day, 539 people from eight different locations (mainly around border crossing points) were interviewed on both the usefulness of and the familiarity with the mission. In this year, 62% of the people interviewed were aware of EUBAM (against 56% in 2009), and 84% of the people thought EUBAM was useful (against 56% in 2009) (EUBAM, 2011d). Looking at these numbers, it is clear that there must be something EUBAM is doing right. In fact, it can be argued that EUBAM is performing quite well on two dimensions. First, the activities of the mission have had, certainly in relation to its mandate and quite limited financial resources, quite a significant impact on the social-economic situation in the border region (more on this below). It is also very important to mention, however, that EUBAM is doing everything in its power to communicate quite extensively on all of its achievements, big or small, to the outside world. Earlier in this thesis, I've mentioned the role of the six field offices the mission has at its disposal, and from which all kinds of PR-activities are undertaken to convince anyone who wants to hear about it about the benefits and achievements of EUBAM, and, in its slipstream, the greatness of EU values, practices and norms. Through inviting journalists, releasing press pecks and other fancy brochures, setting up stands at carefully made use of festivities such as Europe Day, holding a large number of presentations at schools and other institutions, and organizing activities such as road shows, photo exhibitions and summer schools, the EU has, through EUBAM, developed its own, one could almost say, Moldova and Ukraine based 'propaganda department'. I would want to argue that this is the first explanation for the good and improving survey grades the mission can present.

However, besides this communication related aspect, the EUBAM mission has definitely also had an actual social and economic impact in the region up to now, bringing different kinds of improvements for quite a lot of people (and making the situation a bit harder for some, e.g. when it comes to smugglers of weapons and drugs). Having mentioned that EUBAM has a very active department dealing with external communication, a lot of policy documents are being issued ridden with rather hollow phrases such as: "Our partners, with support from the Mission, have continued to improve the facilitation of the free movement of people and legitimate trade, without compromising security. They made clear strides in adopting EU standards and best practices". And: "The Mission continued to provide technical contributions to support the peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian ('TN') conflict, through monitoring the implementation of the Joint Customs regime, confidence building measures and other technical initiatives" (EUBAM, 2010). These expressions, in these case coming from Udo Burkholder, the head of the mission, obviously sound very positive,

but they lack a certain specificity, making it hard to draw any significant conclusions on the basis of merely these quotes.

Looking at somewhat ‘less shaky’ data for examples of concrete achievements of EUBAM, the most profound and eye-catching result of the mission is probably formed by the decrease in crime related activities in the region. Concerning this aspect, quite a detailed overview of statistical data is provided by the border guard and customs agencies of Moldova and Ukraine. The EUBAM evaluation report covering the period 2005-2010, for instance, contains a general overview of the achievements concerning issues such as the number of detained individuals (figure 5.17), drug seizures (figure 5.18), forged documents (figure 5.19), weapon seizures (figure 5.20), car seizures (figure 5.21) and the seizure of smuggled goods such as alcohol and meat (figure 5.22) (EUBAM, 2011e). Without going into too much details, these images give a general, quantitative picture of the current state of affairs at the Moldova-Ukraine border, both when it comes to official border crossing points (BCP's) as well as at the ‘green’ land border.

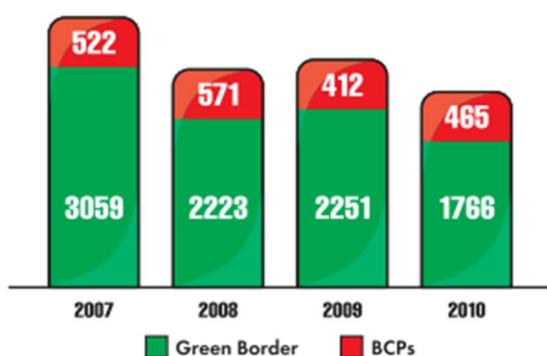


Figure 5.17: Number of detained individuals at the border in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

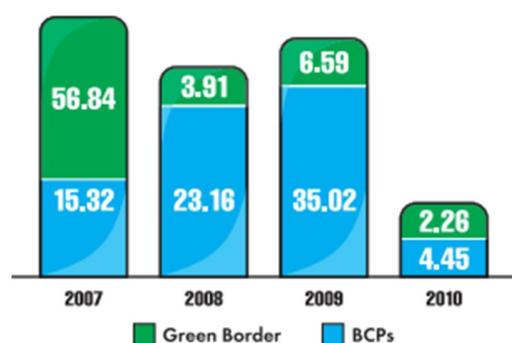


Figure 5.18: Quantity of seized drugs (in kilograms) at the border in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

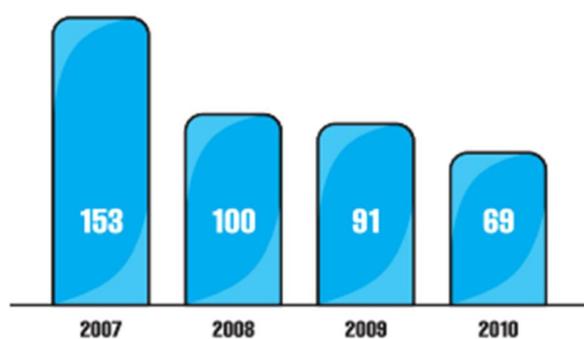


Figure 5.19: Number of forged documents detected at the border in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

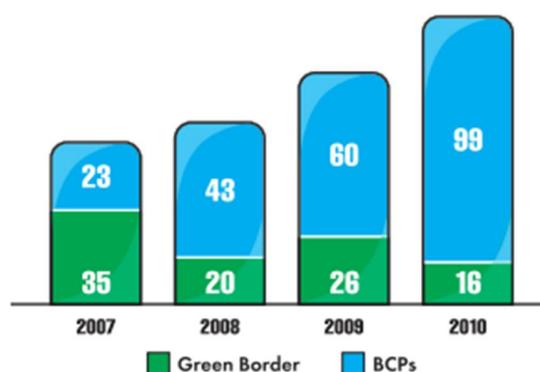


Figure 5.20: Number of weapons seized at the border in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

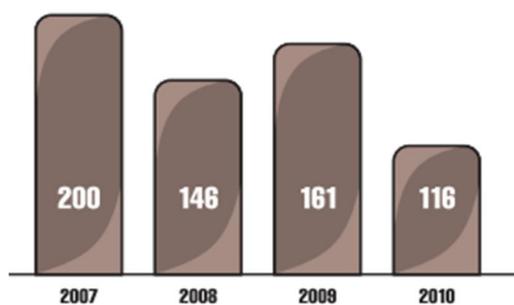


Figure 5.21: Number of seized motor vehicles at the border in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

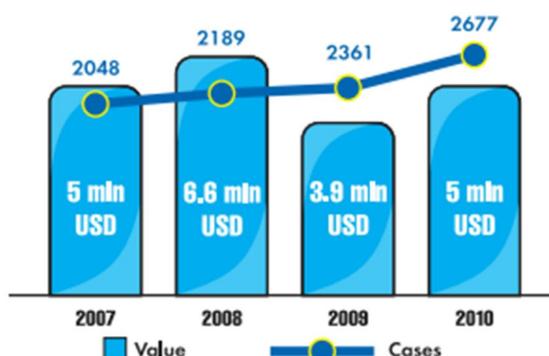


Figure 5.22: Value of seized smuggled goods in the 2007-2010 period. Source: EUBAM (2011e).

Although these tables showing the trend from 2007 to 2010 could be explained in two ways (for instance, when it comes to number of forged documents detected, either the total amount of attempts to use this kind of documents went down (as a consequence of a deterrent effect), or, far less likely of course, the controls and surveillances have become less effective), it can very safely be argued that EUBAM and the activities it is enacting to make the border controls more effective, do have an impact in the border region when it comes to detecting criminal border activities. Therefore, it can be stated that also results such as these have contributed to the poll results as mentioned. Of course, as data on the pre-EUBAM period is not available, it is hard to compare the current situation with that of before 2005. Nevertheless, given the request made by the Moldovan and Ukrainian presidents (something just had to be done), and the fact that all of the involved implementing actors have expressed their satisfaction about the results of the mission, it would be fair to say that EUBAM has made a profound contribution in this particular field.

As EUBAM itself also does, I want to pay some extra attention to the more recent results the mission has had when it comes to cutting border related crime. In this light, is noted how the seventh edition of the Joint Border Control Operation (JCBO), with the name 'TYRA 2010', bringing together representatives of the Moldovan and Ukrainian border services, representatives of FRONTEX and EUROPAL and other EU countries, was very successful when it comes to discovering illegal border activities. For instance, large-scale cases of person, drug and cigarette smuggling were discovered, as well as cases of illegal migration. In July 2010, the Ukrainian border services seized 1192 kilograms of cocaine at the port of Odessa, with a value of

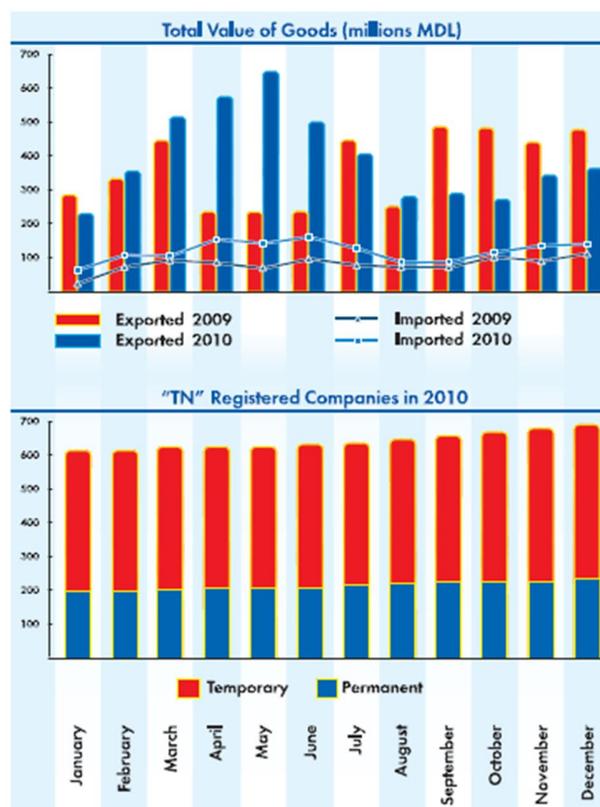


Figure 5.23: Transnistrian trade value and number of registered companies in the region. Source: EUBAM (2011d).

140 million Euro, the largest ever found by Ukrainian law enforcement services (EUBAM, 2011d).

From a somewhat different perspective, a positive comment can also be made on the results the mission has had when it comes to stimulating legal business activity, especially in the light of the Transnistrian situation. As figure 5.23 shows, the number of registered businesses in the Transnistrian region has risen steadily in 2010 (although the total value of imported and exported goods is still fluctuating quite a bit). It is said this is to a large degree due to the contribution the mission has made to the implementation of the 'Joint Declaration' as mentioned earlier, which obliges all economic agents in Transnistria to register in Chisinau when trading across the Ukraine-Moldova border, in order to cut crime and increase trade transparency. It is claimed this measure "has improved Moldovan oversight of foreign trade activities from 'TN,' and has helped to encourage increasing numbers of 'TN' based businesses back into the Moldovan legal framework." And: "The JD facilitates the granting of trade preferences, enabling lower tariffs or duty free access to goods exported from the 'TN' region. In order to benefit from such preferences, 'TN' companies increasingly cleared their goods with the Customs Service of Moldova" (EUBAM, 2009). Given its legal mandate, it is only through activities such as these that EUBAM could provide a first stepping stone towards conflict resolution when it comes to the region of Transnistria. Although there obviously is still a long way to go and such measures only form an indirect contribution to conflict settlement, they can definitely be considered as necessary steps in the right direction. It is noted, for instance, that an agreement similar to the Joint Declaration existed earlier, in 2003 and 2004, but this was forced to be put on a hold after "Moldova suspended the issue of licenses in retaliation for Transnistria's attempt to close down Chisinau-governed schools on the left bank of the Dnestr River. Ukraine then gave Transnistrian enterprises permission to trade without Moldovan customs stamps" (EUBAM, 2009). With EU help and pressure, the parties eventually came to an agreement, with EUBAM helping to implement and monitor the Declaration, relieving Javier Solana, at the time the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy: "I welcome that the Joint Declaration of the Ukrainian and Moldovan Prime Ministers of 30 December 2005 is now being implemented, whereby Ukraine only recognizes Moldovan customs stamps and Moldova facilitates the registration of Transnistrian enterprises in Chisinau. I call on the economic agents of the Transnistrian region of Moldova to register with the relevant authorities in Chisinau in order to promote the unimpeded flow of goods across the border" (in Sushko, 2006, p. 9).

Sushko (2006) describes the new customs regime between Moldova and Ukraine as "an example of efficient policy coordination of EU institutions, member states and European aspirant countries" (p. 10). Immediately also noting that this measure forms "just a first step towards efficient cooperation between the EU and its new neighbours in the area of border management, anti-corruption policy and frozen conflict solution" (p. 10).

Other examples of concrete progress worth mentioning consist of the following issues. Concerning the border demarcation between Moldova and Ukraine, it is noted how EUBAM has supported the Joint Ukrainian-Moldovan Commission on Border Demarcation (JUMCBD), for instance by defining the places where border signs should be placed, and by providing the commission with modern cartographic material (e.g. satellite images). In this respect, 120 kilometres of the border have now been preliminary marked.

Another more social-spatial related result has to do with the resumption of the Chisinau-Odessa train line, a project for which EUBAM provided (technical) assistance to help it restart: "On 10 September 2010, the Railways representatives of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova agreed to resume the Chisinau-Odessa train, starting from 1 October 2010. Currently, the passenger train in question is running smoothly via Transnistria, where passengers are checked by border/police and customs service officers of the respective agencies/authorities" (EUBAM, 2011d).

It should be noted that also the head of the EUBAM mission, Udo Burkholder, admits that “[t]he work is far from done, with the Mission and our partners facing many new challenges”. Plans and ambitions for the future focus e.g. on the further development of human rights, data protection and visa liberalization, all in line with the objective of implementing further reforms towards achieving EU standards. (EUBAM, 2011d). Of course, these challenges will not be easily dealt with, and they demand the full cooperation of all the parties involved, as also Sushko (2006, p. 8) states (and thereby hinting once again at the most important geostrategies underlying the mission, the networked (non)border and the colonial frontier): “EUBAM is the first EU mission of its kind, [...] and is now an element of the regional political process and substantially contributes to increasing the security of the region by dealing with problems that go beyond the border agenda itself. The EU initiative will be efficient only if regional players like Ukraine and Moldova are consistent in their political will to search for a political solution on the basis of *mutual commitment* to an approach based on *European values and principles*” [emphasis added].

However, looking at the impact up to this point, it can most certainly be stated that the mission as it has been conducted up to now seems to have some clear benefits (not in the least for the general public) as e.g. safety, transparency and legal cross-border mobility in the Moldova-Ukraine border region seem to have improved quite significantly.

Chapter 6 – Concluding remarks

6.1 EUBAM: a multi-geostrategy construction

By writing this thesis, I've attempted to come to a well-informed answer to the main research question as presented in the introduction chapter:

Which of the four EU geostrategies, as identified by Browning and Joenniemi, are enacted by 'EUBAM' on what ways in the border region between the Ukraine and Moldova, and what are their social and spatial outcomes?

In order to form an answer to this main question, I've taken up a discursive approach (in the tradition of the critical geopolitics stream) and subjected the Annual Action Plan 2011, the Press Peck edition 2011 and a selection of visual data from the EUBAM website to an analysis. On the basis of this inquiry on the ways in which EUBAM is discursively constructed, it can be argued that of the four geostrategies, the networked (non)border, the colonial frontier and the limes are the 'spatial imaginations' the most explicitly underlying the EUBAM mission. The march, on the other hand, although it shouldn't be completely overlooked, takes up a far less prominent role.

Concerning the question how these geostrategies are being enacted, it is possible to mention quite a wide range of EUBAM activities, all of them being the manifestation of certain political ambitions, aspirations and imaginations, of certain perceptions and discourses on how the Moldova-Ukraine borderland should be organized and dealt with. For instance, the networked (non)border discourse is shaped by the constant emphasis that is placed on the idea that the mission is a 'team effort', the need to cooperate in order to 'build bridges' and to 'strengthen the relationship of trust and confidence with our Moldovan and Ukrainian friends'. In addition, the mission's more concrete objective to facilitate legal cross-border mobility and trade can also be placed under this heading. Such discourses are clearly related to characteristics of the networked (non)border, such as decentralisation, globalisation and neo-liberalism. On the other hand, activities such as improving border controls and those projects focussing on border demarcation can be considered as manifestations of a limes perception (oriented towards creating a zone of stability and peace around the EU), while the wide range of activities undertaken to 'spread around' European values, norms and practices are clear examples of the fact that the colonial frontier also has a prominent role to play (with a central, powerful actor, the 'arbitrator' setting the standard, determining what is just and looking to assimilate the 'chaotic outside' and transform it according to the norms of 'the inside').

Concerning the value of the classic geopolitical models (the Westphalian, neomedieval and imperial conceptualization), I have stated that they, also in the light of this specific EUBAM case, clearly have their value when it comes to describing the evolving nature of the geopolitical development of the EU. In interplay with the more normative geostrategies, they remain necessary for coming to a complete understanding of this complex and multidimensional process. However, as this specific research has also shown, the models, when applied individually, are indeed somewhat too abstract and not dynamic enough to tell the whole 'EUBAM story'.

When it comes to the outcomes of the mission up to this point (i.e. the impact of the way the geostrategies, the spatial imaginations, have been translated into practice), it is actually quite difficult not to take a positive stance. Although there are obviously a lot of challenges remaining for the future, it can be argued that both the Moldovan and Ukrainian people, as well as all of the implementing partners, seem to be satisfied about the role the mission is playing in the region. And

although it cannot be denied that the wide range of the communication activities EUBAM is undertaking are very much focused on bringing to the fore all of the achievements of the mission, there is also data available showing the actual, on the ground effectiveness of the mission, certainly in the light of its relatively small budget and limited mandate. Some of the most prominent achievements of the mission up to this point have to do with the improvement of the border surveillances (e.g. through training and technical assistance), the stimulation of business activity in the Transnistrian region and the further facilitation of legal cross border mobility.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I mentioned the issue of the nature of the EU(BAM)'s intentions on the one hand, compared to the way the mission actually has come to function in practice on the other. It should be quite clear by now that, in terms of geostrategic discourses, the EU is quite explicitly communicating about and is pushing to the fore the networked (non)border as the prime political aspiration, the main underlying ambition of the mission. As shown, there are indeed also quite a lot of activities and projects being enacted that could be considered as manifestations of this particular 'spatial imagination'. However, besides the discourses emphasizing cooperation and decentralization, it is also possible to spot manifestations of 'spatial imaginations' hinting at the presence of the limes and, to an even greater extent, the colonial frontier. This is the case when looking both at textual data, as well as at the visual material. As could be expected, these discourses and the activities that are related to them are of course carefully communicated about and 'wrapped up' (often in terms and notions that can be related to the networked border strategy), in order to avoid the look of the EU undertaking some sort of missionary and civilizing mission in Moldova and Ukraine. For instance, on the front page of the mission, it is explicitly claimed that the mission is about 'supporting, not teaching', again underlining the so-called equality of the involved 'partners', and carefully avoiding the appearance of a certain hierarchy. However, through different activities, which certainly contain elements of teaching (of e.g. 'best border practices', of EU values and norms etc.) it can be argued that, in such cases, there does exist a discrepancy between the communication and presentation of the mission on the one hand, and the actual practice on the other. With this, I'm not so much criticising the activities that are being undertaken by EUBAM, but I do feel the external communication about them could definitely do more justice to the actual state of affairs.

Finalizing the first part of this concluding chapter, I would like to tie up some loose ends by readdressing some of the authors mentioned earlier, and briefly link up the findings of the analysis to some of their concepts and ideas. Not quite a scholar, though still interesting, was Barroso's controversial expression as mentioned in the introduction chapter, hailing the 'European Empire'. A remark that instigated the need for some serious damage control on behalf of some of his 'nervous aides'. Looking specifically at the EUBAM endeavour, it can, however, definitely be argued that the 'empire conceptualization' is not too far off the mark. Hidden within this specific case (discursively somewhat 'wrapped up' and not too clear at first glance), there are certainly hints pointing at a Europe that is thinking and acting as the centre, as a cosmos in 'expansionary mode'. This 'cosmos' is looking to determine what is just; what norms, values and practices should be considered as proper, and is seeking to, in what even could be considered a neo-imperial fashion, spread these around, also beyond the borders of the own empire. However, this label of an 'empire in neo-imperial expansionary mode' does not do justice to the whole of the EUBAM story. Besides the activities focussing on spreading those norms and practices the EU considers to be 'right', the EUBAM case also makes clear that the EU can be, as it were, multiple types of empires at the same time. Although the notion of the EU as the centre, the powerful actor remains, it can be argued that in some instances this centre is not so much seeking to expand its values and assimilate, but is

oriented towards a form of self-defence, looking to protect the order ('the achievements') of its inside. In again other instances, its prime focus seems to be to cooperate and build relations with 'the otherness beyond'. In these cases, the 'EU's outside' is thoughtfully being presented as 'friends', as 'partners', as if the relation is indeed characterized by full equality. With this, it can be, in line with Dalby and O' Tuathail, argued that 'the construction' EUBAM shows how different political motivations lay at the heart of different geopolitical representations and the use of different discourses and visions by the EU. In other words, it shows how the EU is applying the discursive process of 'geo-graphing' ('earth-writing') on the 'paper' that is the Moldova-Ukraine borderland.

Secondly (and related to this), I want to briefly mention Gee, and his approach to the concept of discourses as summarized in the third chapter. It should be clear that, within the analysis of the data, issues such as social relations, solidarity and power, as highlighted by Gee, have played a prominent role. The explicit discourses the EU is applying focus on cooperation between partners, and the need to help and support Moldova and Ukraine. It can be stated that these are very telling in the light of the kind of social relations the EU wants to communicate about towards the outside world, as well as when it comes to its ideas on the need for solidarity within and also beyond the frontiers of the EU. On the other hand, I have argued that in some instances, there are also definitely signs of the presence of a power discrepancy; a sort of a hierarchy within the relationship between EU, Moldova, Ukraine and other institutions, despite that fact that this type of relation is also almost constantly communicated about in terms of mutual trust, confidence and friendship. With this, it can be stated that although solidarity is definitely an important feature of the mission and the premise behind it, in practice this solidarity is often translated into almost 'missionary like' activities, emphasizing once again the difference in power between the involved actors.

Finally, and very much related to this, I once again want to mention the ideas of Wintle (2009). He argued that analyzing visual data can reveal "deep insights into contemporary political and moral feelings, when combined with careful study of other sources" (p. 15). Having attempted to conduct such an endeavour, I have hopefully shown that the geopolitical development of the EU is a very complex and multidimensional one, the essence of which is very hard to capture. Even when it comes to a relatively comprehensible mission such as EUBAM, the EU seems to have a myriad of underlying political aspirations and ambitions, a multitude of 'spatial imaginations', and a range of different 'mentalités' forming the guideline for the activities that are being undertaken in its 'near abroad'. With this in mind, it is time for some recommendations, especially for further research.

6.2 Recommendations

By writing this thesis, I've subjected the three geopolitical models to critical scrutiny, while the geostrategies, to some extent, have been used as a conceptual lens, taken at face value. When it comes to this specific EUBAM case, I have stated that these geostrategies have quite a high level of explanatory power, as they are able to capture and conceptualize accurately the normative aspects, the 'spatial imaginations' of the EU when it comes to the Moldova-Ukraine borderland.

However, it is definitely conceivable that in other specific instances, the geostrategies are far less usable and applicable. It is therefore advisable to also critically look at the geostrategies, as they might not be exhausting and fully able to capture the nature of other cases of EU intervention in, for instance, one of its ENP partners. In this light, the geostrategy conceptual framework possibly needs to be further elaborated on, coming to new conceptualisations or combinations that do (more) justice to the ever evolving state of affairs in the world of EU border practices. Or, as also Kramsch and Hooper (2004) have noted in this context: "In characterizing these border regimes as such, we do not want to suggest that exist in any 'pure' form, nor that they exhaust the logics of

individual case studies [...]. Rather, they are to be viewed as *tendencies* in contemporary European 'arts of rule', only partially capturing modes of governance which in fact may overlap, producing unpredictable and hybrid formations" (p. 7).

Secondly, it would be useful to, from a scientific perspective, keep (or perhaps better, start) monitoring the EUBAM mission more critically. As the mission has set quite ambitious goals for the future, it would be highly interesting to see if EUBAM is indeed able to improve e.g. the human rights situation, to assist in coming closer to a solution for the 'Transnistrian situation' and to further build upon achievements of the mission up to now. Also, more scientific attention could help in getting more (fully) objective data on the missions performances over time, something lacking somewhat at this point. Furthermore in this light, it would be highly interesting to ask the question what impact the mission has on the issue of identity. With the EU attempting to make the people of Moldova and Ukraine familiar with EU norms and values (e.g. through the celebration of Europe day) and undertaking a range of activities to actually spread these norms and values around (e.g. anti-corruption summer camps), it would be very worthwhile to investigate the question to what extent such activities actually contribute to the creation of a feeling of 'being European' among the citizens of these countries. This is especially the case for the region of Transnistria, where EUBAM is highly active, but which is also the region still the most explicitly oriented towards the east (Russia).

Finally, perhaps the most obvious but also the important recommendation is probably that the mandate of the mission is to be further extended. With the current mandate expiring in November of this year, and it being clear that the work is far from complete, it is important to further build upon the achievements up to now. Only then it will be possible for the mission to make a profound contribution to wider EU aspiration of bringing prosperity, security and stability to both the EU as well as to the 'space beyond'.

6.3 Reflection

In want to finalize this thesis by briefly reflecting on the quality of the research, i.e. the way it has been set up and conducted. Of course, there are several aspects of this inquiry that could have been done differently, or perhaps simply better.

A key term in this respect is selectivity. Throughout the research process, I have had to make some important choices, for instance looking at the authors I wanted to include in the theoretical framework, but even more importantly, when it comes to the data I wanted to analyze. A good example would be the selection of the visual data; I wanted to show that there is more than one geostrategy that is being represented by the maps and pictures on the EUBAM website. Because of this reason, I obviously made a specific, goal-oriented selection out of many more possible images. Also, when it comes to the textual data I have used, it can be noted that there was a range of other documents available, also very usable for an in depth analysis in this specific context. Although I feel I have selected two documents that form a good, representative sample of what EUBAM is about and how the EU perceives the mission and the Moldova-Ukraine borderland, the discursive analysis of other documents might render some (slightly) different conclusions.

Finally, it is of course a drawback that I did not actually go to the Moldova-Ukraine border region itself, in order to see the current situation as well as the activities and impact of the EUBAM mission with my own eyes. Having to rely on secondary data obviously hampers the ideal of gaining a full and objective overview of the mission. On the other hand, as I was first and foremost interested in the discursive presentation of the mission by the EU, I feel that analyzing EU reports and images (again: they are put there for a reason) is definitely also one of the ways to come to a proper understanding of what the mission is about, not in the least in the eyes of the EU. And, as I hopefully have shown, there is more to it than one would probably expect at first glance.

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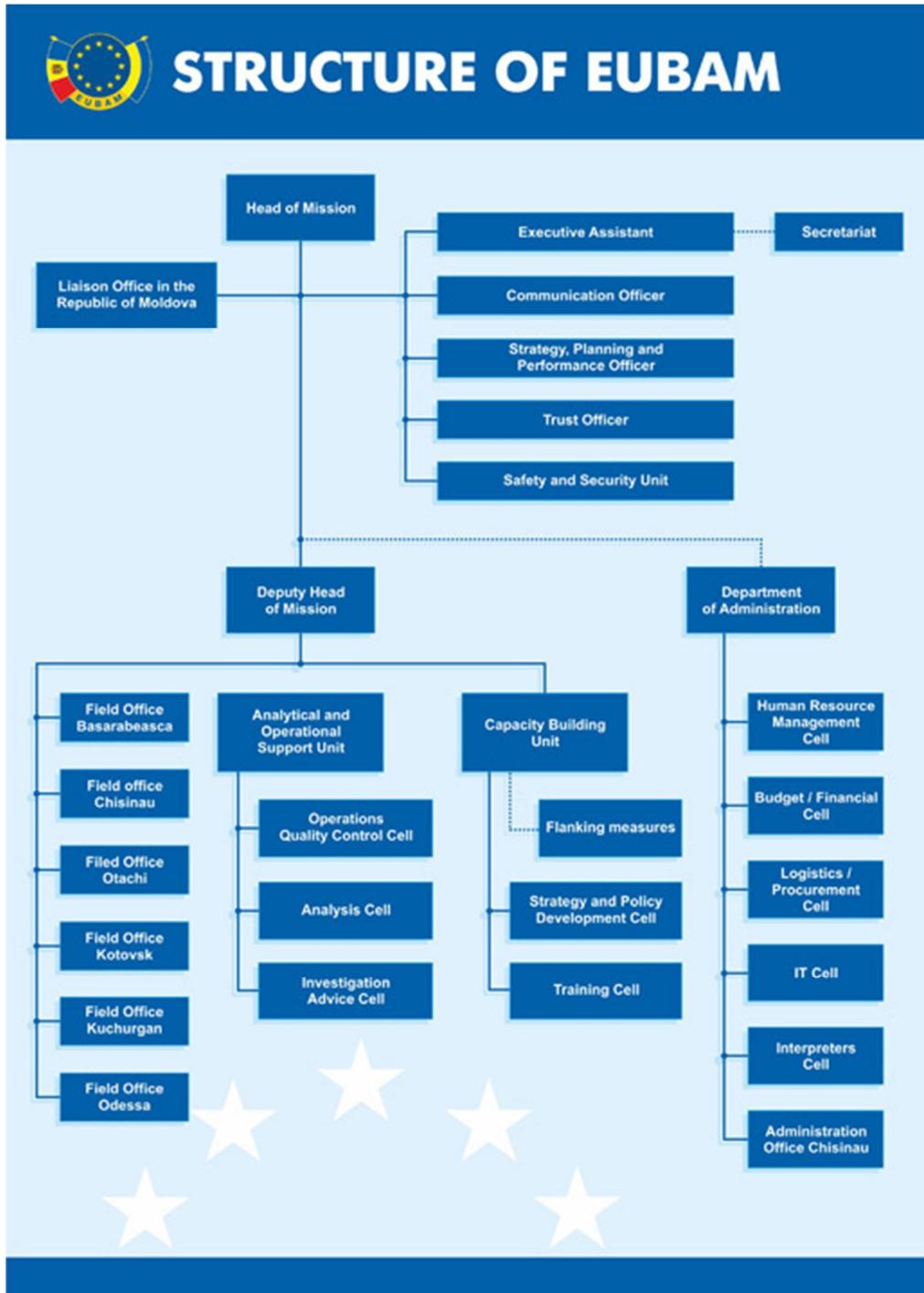
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Appendix A: The structure of EUBAM



Source: EUBAM (2011b).