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Europeanization in Making Policies against Domestic Violence in Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract

This article looks at how Europe matters in the development of policies against domestic violence, a gender equality field outside the core European Union (EU) conditionality criteria. By analyzing the concrete workings and uses of Europe's domestic violence policy-making in five Central and Eastern European countries, it identifies three mechanisms of Europeanization in the field and shows how together they work to expand the reach of the EU to this policy realm. The findings point toward an understanding of Europeanization based on social learning and dynamic, interactive processes of constructing what membership in the EU means in terms of domestic violence policy processes.

Introduction

Policy debates in the European Union (EU) frame domestic violence as a component of gender inequality (Kantola 2006) yet a major difference remains between gender inequality in economic

fields and domestic violence as a form of gender inequality. The EU has no strong competence with respect to domestic violence (European Women's Lobby 2007; Kantola 2006; Kelly 2005). Policy responses to domestic violence, while increasing in the last decade, remain restricted to soft law (Kantola 2006; Montoya 2008). In its soft law documents, the European Commission (Commission) explicitly uses the standards set by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and Council of Europe (CoE) documents, and encourages member states to do so as well.[1] Whereas a specific policy response to domestic violence is not a formal criteria for EU membership, since the late 1990s, responding to the issue has become part of the fundamental norms and beliefs that shape the collective identity of the EU.

This paper asks how Europeanization has influenced processes of domestic violence policy-making during the EU eastern enlargement that took place over the last decade. The paper analyzes the influence of Europeanization in five countries: two first-round accession countries (Hungary and Poland in 2004), two second-round accession countries (Bulgaria and Romania in 2007), and one candidate country (Croatia). This sample was chosen from a pool of ten new EU member states and three candidate countries where reforms to address domestic violence were passed around the same time. Our findings come from a larger joint research project that aims to explain outcomes in domestic violence policies by comparing actors and processes in these five countries at the interface of Europeanization, women's movements action, and the diffusion of transnational human rights norms.

Between 2003 and 2005, amid EU accession processes, Central and East European Countries (CEECs) witnessed major reforms in the realm of domestic violence policy. Domestic violence was first mentioned on the official policy agenda of all five countries to be examined here in the mid-1990s mostly in response to the Beijing Platform for Action,[2] but specific laws and policies on domestic violence were absent until the mid-2000. Amidst widespread social mobilization orchestrated by women's groups, and upon the arrival of favorable governments, all of these countries adopted specific domestic violence laws or strategies: Croatia adopted its domestic violence law in 2003, Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria adopted theirs in 2005, and Hungary adopted a comprehensive Parliamentary Strategy on Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2003. The specific legislation and policies adopted in this period largely framed domestic violence in gender-neutral human rights terms (Krizsan and Popa 2010).

While these changes were the outcome of a complex process of interaction between state and nonstate, national, international, and transnational actors (Krizsan and Popa 2007), the timing of reforms indicates that the influence of the EU cannot be disregarded. The remarkable simultaneity of policy reforms to address domestic violence in Central and East Europe during the EU accession process indicates the potential impact of Europeanization. We argue that Europeanization has influenced domestic violence policy formation across the different CEE countries through a variety of mechanisms. The three Europeanization mechanisms discussed in this paper are: constructing EU accession conditionality to include domestic violence, facilitating collective learning through the funding mechanism of the Daphne project, and strategic use of the EU accession incentive by feminist advocates to motivate policy change. The EU influenced domestic violence policy processes through the combined effect of these three mechanisms.

The paper shows that although some EU external incentives for change can be identified in the process, an analysis of the impact of Europeanization on domestic violence policy during the eastern enlargement has to rely largely on a logic of appropriateness supported by socialization and collective learning (Börzel and Risse 2003, 59). The three mechanisms identified point to the absence of one, unequivocal understanding of what EU integration means in the realm of domestic violence and show different processes of constructing such meanings, at the level of the EU, the national level or in the transnational context of European projects. These processes indicate how "social practices generate the logics of European integration" (Woll and Jacquot 2010, 113).

Although the primary aim of this paper is to answer the question of how the EU matters for these countries, it also points to why Europe matters differently for them. The three mechanisms of Europeanization identify different factors that account for the influence of the EU on policy changes across the five countries. Variations in the strength of each mechanism and in their combined effect can illuminate the EU's uneven impact.

Following a discussion of the theoretical background, the paper looks at Europeanization first through formal EU conditionality and second through funding and capacity-building mechanisms. Third, it analyzes how a norm of abstract Europeanness has been enacted in domestic violence policy debates by policy-makers, who translated aspirations for EU membership into support for reforms to address domestic violence, and civil society activists, who strategically used these norms and aspirations in pursuit of their agendas to end domestic violence.

Europeanization of Domestic Violence Policies

This paper contributes to debates about the impact of European integration and Europeanization in the realm of gender equality policy. Our approach, while making use of both constructivist and rationalist arguments, puts greater emphasis on discursive factors. Based on Radaelli (2004) and following Börzel and Risse (2000, 2003), we define Europeanization as consisting of "processes of a) construction, b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms, which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli 2004, 3).

In formal terms, enlargement has meant the alignment of the institutional and legislative system of applicant states with an *acquis communautaire* of legislative material involving a multitude of policy fields, including gender equality. Beyond the formal criteria established by the *acquis*, however, EU accession and Europeanization processes also influenced policy fields where the EU had no direct competence, but did have a common set of norms established through soft laws. While some scholars (Gavrilova 2008) argue that the EU–CEEC relationship is a state capture relation in which the EU defines, in a top-down manner, the policy agendas of the target states and the direction and substance of change, this paper sides with theoretical arguments for a more complex relationship, in which different mechanisms are at place in various policy fields, reflecting different types of relationships between the EU and CEECs. Europeanization can thus be seen as an interactive process in which the content of the diffused norms is shaped in interaction between EU, national state, and nonstate actors (Börzel and Risse 2003, 74). The eastern enlargement of the EU is a major Europeanization project in which CEECs made accession claims on the basis of their perceived belonging to the normative European community following an unnatural break (Schimmelfennig 2005, 159).

Scholars of Europeanization (Olsen 1996; Checkel 1999; following Börzel 2002; Börzel and Risse 2003) have distinguished between two logics of domestic change as a result of European integration: that of consequences, rooted in rationalist institutionalism and that of appropriateness, which follows sociological institutionalism. The first logic explains domestic change as a process of redistribution of resources, in which Europeanization is conceptualized as an emerging political opportunity structure, "which offers some actors additional resources to exert influence, while severely constraining

the ability of others to pursue their goals" (Börzel and Risse 2003, 63). The logic of appropriateness, especially in the more agency-centered version, focuses on socialization processes by which actors learn to internalize new norms and rules in order to become members of (international) society (Checkel 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Börzel and Risse (2003) emphasize that the two logics of change are not mutually exclusive; rather, they often occur simultaneously or characterize different phases in a process of adaptation.

Looking at which of the two logics was followed and at who initiated the process of adoption (whether the EU or CEEC), Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005, 8–10) differentiate between three mechanisms of Europeanization: external incentives, social learning, and lesson drawing. The *external incentives mechanism* is based on a system of external rewards and sanctions, which is clearly EU-driven and top-down; it adds to cost–benefit calculations of CEECs. The *social learning model*, though EU-driven, does not operate on a sanctions–rewards mechanism, but rather on the basis of CEECs' identification with EU norms, facilitated by the EU with instruments such as persuasion, capacity building, and the promotion of transnational cooperation and exchanges of good practices. The *lesson-drawing model* is based on the adopting state's own initiative to integrate EU norms in its practice because they provide good solutions to policy dilemmas at stake in the country. The functioning of this mechanism is further facilitated by the association of policy actors with EU-centered epistemic communities (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005, 20–25).

Studies of gender equality in the enlargement process draw a clear distinction between gender equality fields covered by hard law and related strong conditionality criteria, particularly the different directives in employment and connected fields, and fields only covered by soft legislation. Where hard law has governed the accession process, it has been argued that the relatively successful formal adoption of rules has not been followed by adoption at behavioral and discursive levels (Beveridge 2009; Falkner *et al.* 2008; Krizsan and Zentai 2006; Open Society Institute Network Women's Program 2005; Sloat 2004). There is widespread agreement that implementation problems abound especially in fields only covered by soft law where the Commission's weakness in keeping gender on the agenda of negotiations has been pointed out. Looking at the mainstreaming of gender equality, Bretherton (2006) argues that eastern enlargement can be seen as an opportunity missed by the Commission. Following an initial pre-accession commitment to gender equality and gender

mainstreaming as central values of the accession negotiations, she contends, gender equality was pushed aside.

The analysis referring to the last years of the accession period and post accession processes in the gender equality field highlights the increasing importance of Europeanization through socialization and collective learning. It is argued that EU influence on gender equality policies has shifted from external incentives characteristic of the pre-accession period, to social learning and capacity building mechanisms typical for employment, social inclusion and structural funds distribution related policy processes (Beveridge 2009; Krizsan 2009). While the first stage almost entirely missed gender equality fields beyond employment, the second stage mechanisms may be seen to apply to other gender equality fields and even to generate some attempts to start mainstreaming gender equality (Krizsan and Zentai 2006).

Previous research thus indicates that the two logics of Europeanization complement each other in the gender equality field, with variation in where the emphasis is placed. Variation across time seems to depend on whether one looks at pre- or post-accession. A logic of consequences dominates before accession, while appropriateness becomes the predominant logic post-accession, when conditionality is no longer in place (Beveridge 2009; Krizsan 2009). Variation across different realms of gender equality takes place in relation to whether gender equality areas are covered by hard law or are only regulated by soft policy and marginal in the accession negotiations. Research on European accession thus far has focused more on gender equality fields that were part of the core accession conditionality. This paper examines the logics of Europeanization in a gender equality field that falls outside the core conditionality criteria: domestic violence policy.

Such an approach becomes particularly important as the EU concept of gender equality is expanding to include issues such as violence against women (VAW) (Kantola 2006). Recently, the Commission and the European Parliament have taken the antiviolence agenda toward the development of hard legislation addressing VAW (see EU Parliament Annual Resolution on Equality between women and men, 10 February, 2010). Kantola (2006) assesses the impact of Europeanization in different gender equality fields, including domestic violence, and finds that meanings of Europeanization might vary, depending on whether the policy fields are seen as central or peripheral to gender equality. Montoya (2008) shows the impact the EU has had on domestic violence policy through building the capacity of NGOs and local institutions and facilitating networking and transnational cooperation. In her analysis of the EU

Daphne Program, which supported community action to prevent and combat violence against children, young people, and women, she shows how the EU has improved the capacity of NGOs to advocate for change and supported cooperation and transnational networking of NGOs and other organizations to change domestic violence policies in the region (Montoya 2008).

This paper shows that Europeanization in making policies against domestic violence, while largely dominated by a logic of appropriateness, also relies on the threat of consequences. Just as much as social learning and lesson drawing, external incentive mechanisms (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005a) are at play in the Europeanization of this gender equality policy field. We claim that understanding Europeanization mechanisms in domestic violence policies adds important knowledge to our general understanding of the complexity of Europeanization processes in the framework of the eastern enlargement.

Widening Formal EU Conditionality in the Formulation of Domestic Violence Policies

Although marginal on the overall EU accession agenda, the issue of domestic violence has at times become part of the strong requirements of EU accession. Granted, the shift has only been incidental, but it merits discussion, as it reveals a particular mechanism of Europeanization. To assess the impact of EU hard conditionality for domestic violence policies, we analyzed the Regular Reports issued by the Commission since 1998 that monitor the fulfillment of the accession criteria in each country. The reports constituted the main form of feedback from the Commission to states and as such, they can be considered a strong instrument. We argue that hard conditionality criteria are widened incidentally to include domestic violence policy-related elements. This is particularly the case when the problem of domestic violence is somehow linked to core conditionality criteria and backed by NGO advocacy. Once the issue of domestic violence reaches the agenda of the monitoring exercise, it seems to become part of the regular criteria.

Table 1 shows that while for some countries, the Commission disregards domestic violence entirely, in others, the issue remains on the agenda. Whereas reports for Hungary and Bulgaria do not mention domestic violence, the issue recurs in most Romanian and Polish reports. These differences are not explained by the presence or absence of debates around domestic violence in national contexts as such debates were taking place in all four countries at the time the reports were written.

Table 1. European Commission Pressure on Domestic Violence in Five Countries

	Hungary	Poland	Bulgaria	Romania	Croatia
1998	NO	NO, but a very general remark on the treatment of women	NO	NO	No accession monitoring
1999	NO	YES: Commission Report notes national policies are not providing support for the victims of spousal violence	NO	YES: Commission report urges changes in the Criminal Code on the issue of domestic violence and abuse	No accession monitoring
2000	NO	YES: Notes that the UN-backed project on spousal violence remains suspended by the government	NO	YES: Underlines the need for legislation to provide redress to victims of domestic violence and facilitate prosecutions against the perpetrators	No accession monitoring
2001	NO	NO	NO	NO	No accession monitoring
2002	NO	YES: Worries that the newly appointed Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men would not cover traditionally sensitive issues such as spousal violence	NO	NO	NO accession monitoring
2003	NO	NO	NO	YES: Urges that the National Agency for Family Protection be made operational as soon as possible, in order to implement the new Law for preventing and combating domestic violence	NO accession monitoring

2004	No accession monitoring	No accession monitoring	NO	YES: Urges the establishment of shelters for victims of violence and specialized centers for preventing and combating domestic violence in order to ensure effective implementation of the new legislation against domestic violence	No accession monitoring
2005	No accession monitoring	No accession monitoring	NO	YES: Urges improvements in the institutional set-up of the National Agency for Family Protection and the speedy implementation of the recently adopted national strategy for preventing and combating domestic violence	YES, It mentions DV against children as a problem but not domestic VAW
2006	No accession monitoring	No accession monitoring	NO	NO	YES: A positive evaluation of domestic violence measures in the country

What can explain this incidental inclusion of domestic violence among the conditionality criteria? The absence of a formal and sustained commitment from the EU to monitoring domestic violence regulations is clearly justified by the EU's lack of competence in the field. Nevertheless, individual negotiations and consultation processes involving the Commission and local stakeholders seem to create opportunities for fields that are not part of the core to be integrated in the reports. Different factors account for the inclusion of the issue of domestic violence on the monitoring agenda. A specific event (Poland) or targeted advocacy from civil society actors (Romania), for instance, might bring visibility and recognition to the issue. For Poland, the main concern that triggered the integration of the issue in the reports was the government's decision in 1998 to suspend a cooperative program between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Government toward the improvement of the shelter system for victims of domestic violence. The decision was taken in the context of the conservative government's opposition to EU-driven gender equality policy developments (Anderson 2006). In Romania, domestic violence was initially integrated within a larger set of changes to the Penal Code that included the decriminalization of homosexuality (2001), an issue that rallied human rights organizations in the country.

While incidental and irregular across countries, attention to domestic violence seems to endure once it has emerged on the monitoring agenda. In Poland and Romania, monitoring continued. In Poland, the Commission first expressed its concern that "national policies were not providing support for the victims of spousal violence" in 1999 (European Commission 1999a, 17). Later, concern with the government's lack of response to spousal violence was included in two more Regular Reports. At the same time, there is reason to be skeptical about the full commitment of the Commission to the issue, since Poland actually became a member of the EU without having specific legislation against domestic violence, which was only passed in 2005. For Romania, the Commission first urged action against domestic violence in the 1999 Regular Report, when it recommended "changes in the Criminal Code on the issue of domestic violence and abuse" (European Commission 1999b, 17). Subsequent reports not only reiterated concern with the governmental response to the issue, but also included monitoring of progress made in the field. After specific legislation against domestic violence was passed in 2003, the Commission went on to review implementation and made specific detailed recommendations on the topic, as if domestic violence constituted a core element of the accession agenda (Commission Regular Reports on Romania 2003, 2004, and 2005).

The case of Croatia is quite different. By 2004, when Croatia became a candidate country for EU membership, specific legislation against domestic violence had been passed (2003) and domestic violence recognized in the Criminal Code (2000). Croatia was ahead of other European countries in the field. In line with previous findings about the higher relevance of accession for reforms in fields where national policies are less developed than EU policies (Kantola 2006), the positive tone of the Progress Report is not surprising: it commends the country for having established "trained around-the-clock teams in police departments to deal with family violence" (European Commission 2006, 10).

In sum, the review of the Regular Reports on progress toward accession for Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania shows that there is no clear pattern of when and why the issue of domestic violence became part of the monitoring framework for EU accession. While the problem of domestic violence is equally present in all countries,[3] the Commission has only paid attention to the issue in some of them—notably Romania, as a result of advocacy from human rights activists, and Poland, where the issue of domestic violence was part of a larger opposition to EU norms on gender equality. The Commission's involvement with domestic violence as part of the EU enlargement process is up for negotiation in the different national environments. EU institutions, in particular the Commission, are more prone to react in situations where compliance with the *acquis communautaire* is contested (Poland), but they might also take a stance in response to concerns from human rights and gender equality activists in civil society.

Social Learning and Capacity Building for Change: The Daphne Project

Alongside the direct external incentive mechanism (monitoring via the Regular Reports), financial incentives aimed at capacity building and facilitating transnational exchange can also be seen as mechanisms promoting Europeanization. To examine this type of mechanism, we looked at patterns of funding coming from Daphne, the core antiviolence program of the Commission.[4] Daphne has influenced the development of policies toward ending violence against women, children and youth through the provision of financial incentives for capacity building and transnational exchange for different level actors, but particularly NGOs (Montoya 2008, 370). Thus, beyond being an ally to organizations working to change domestic violence policy, the Commission has also provided financial support for projects that addressed the issue from before the

accession of the CEE countries, and through these projects to organizations involved in the policymaking process.

Daphne was established in 1997 to focus on all types of violence against children, young people, and women, with emphasis on domestic violence.[5] Until 2006 Daphne has funded some 300 projects and spent approximately 50 million Euros (Montoya 2008, 362–3). The 2004 evaluation of Daphne, which covered the years 2000–2003, roughly concluded that one-fourth of the projects targeted women specifically and another 35 percent included children and youth (European Commission 2004). From the beginning, the main aims of the Project were to support awareness raising, training, and research initiatives, promote cooperation between NGOs and voluntary sector organizations (and from 2000, local public institutions) across member states and beyond, and to facilitate the exchange of good practices through networking.[6] Daphne never proposed to fund directly actions and projects aimed at promoting policy and legislative change. Nevertheless, several activities that it has funded were linked to the development of a common set of norms and practices concerning domestic violence. The program ultimately aimed to promote the social learning of policy actors and European member state polities to adopt those norms.

Funding through Daphne has been open to applicants from CEE countries since 2000. Mid-cycle data on project partners show that organizations from candidate countries received funding as partners in Daphne-funded projects, even though they could not coordinate projects. Thus, in the period 2000–2003, an intense period for advocacy on adoption of domestic violence legislation, organizations from Bulgaria were funded in three projects, Hungary in five, Poland in seven and Romania in six.[7] In 2004–2005, organizations from Poland and Hungary received funding for coordination roles in eight projects and were partners in at least eight. No systematic data are available on funding for 2006–2007; however, we are aware of Daphne funding to Hungary in at least one coordinated project and to Poland and Hungary through a project coordinated by the Women against Violence Europe (WAVE) network. Detailed analysis of Daphne shows the increasing participation of organizations from CEE countries, particularly Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria, in the network of organizations funded by the Project (Montoya 2008, 366).

Indirectly, almost 20 percent of Daphne projects funded in the period 1997–2004 dealt with legislation. These projects included research with the purpose of information and evaluation of national and European legislation on VAW, children and youth, as well as projects that lobbied for new legislation (Montoya 2008, 364).

In addition, more than one-third of the 303 projects that received funding in the Daphne Initiative (1997–1999) and the Daphne Program (2000–2003) reported an impact on legislation, policy, or institutional behavior (European Commission 2004, 41).

Another important contribution of Daphne with potential impact on policy changes is the provision of financial support for capacity building to NGOs, including women's organizations for which very limited funding is available from governments and increasingly less from international donors.[8] For women's organizations in CEECs, EU membership has had the unanticipated effect of a sharp decline in funding, as traditional foreign donors withdrew from the region on the assumption that the EU would fill in the gap (Roth 2007). Alongside financial support for otherwise hard-hit organizations, Daphne also facilitates transnational networking among these organizations. Many observers (Fabian 2006; Johnson and Brunell 2007; Krizsan and Popa 2007; Montoya 2007) have noted the importance of transnational women's networks for the development of policy responses to domestic violence. Transnational cooperation among organizations and the facilitation of exchange of good practice models can be seen as practices of norm creation and norm diffusion at the European level. A total of 34 percent of all project outputs for projects funded before 2004 contributed to the Daphne objective of exchange of good practices, including good practices connected to domestic violence policy (European Commission 2004, 29). In the absence of systematic data about the implementation of the Daphne II Program (2004–2008), we can temporarily rely on examples to illustrate how transnational cooperation facilitated by Daphne funding enables learning of good practices and ultimately the transfer *and* adaptation of norms (lesson drawing).

The three projects in which Hungarian organizations had a lead role, all approved in 2004, are illustrative of the mechanism described here. One of the projects, led by Women's Rights Association (NANE) in Budapest in partnership with the Europe-wide WAVE network, aimed to "apply and adapt the Training Program on Combating Violence against Women developed and piloted by the WAVE Office and the Austrian Women's Shelter Network under Daphne I." Another project aimed at developing a practice for "providing integrated services for victims of violence against women" brought together partner women's and human rights organizations from Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, and Slovakia, as well as local authorities from Hungary. Finally, a project aimed at developing the practice of gender-based treatment for violent men also brought together women's and human rights organizations from Hungary, Bulgaria, and Spain (see "Daphne Toolkit"). At least

one of the organizations involved in two of the projects, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, used the knowledge gained through exchanges of good practices to advocate for changes in the current law for protection against domestic violence in Bulgaria.

On the basis of these findings, we contend that Daphne has had an important indirect impact on the development of policies and legislation against domestic violence in several of our cases. The 2002 evaluation report of the program argues "the Daphne Programme can be seen as successful in continuing the mobilization of the NGO sector at all levels, resulting in many new partnerships and alliances that are working together for more comprehensive European policies on violence" (European Commission 2002, 3). The main features of the program, however, indicate that the larger aim is not to provide a substantive normative direction for policy change, but rather to generate change by facilitating the creation of mechanisms that open space for exchange of good practices, norm diffusion and norm construction through networking among a variety of partners. The overall aim of Daphne transpires to be the promotion of a common European normative basis for dealing with VAW, children, and youth, to be developed starting from the recommendations of the EU and channeled into national policies with the agency of NGOs, the main partners in Daphne. The underlying mechanism is one of norm construction and social learning, much more than one of unidirectional norm transfer from the EU to the countries.

It can be argued that, from the standpoint of Europeanization, Daphne presents a combination of the social learning and the lesson drawing models. A common European normative background is developed by a wide array of transnational, national, and local actors through the mechanisms supported financially by the EU. The appropriateness of the norms developed is clearly considered in the processes of adoption. Meanwhile, Daphne's focus on the transfer of good practice models and the facilitation of transnational networking also exhibits elements of a lesson drawing model, in that local policy actors seek feasible solutions from within the EU norms pool. Daphne is an example of collective learning mechanisms for the development of domestic violence policy in CEE; however, it cannot be viewed as part of a substantive "EU strategy for addressing the issue of VAW in member and candidate states" (Montoya 2008, 361).

Using 'Europe' to Legitimize Policies against Domestic Violence

As we argued above, the EU requested little in the way of institutional compliance in relation to domestic violence. Nevertheless,

EU and "Europe" more broadly have been referred to widely in certain domestic violence debates, especially in three of the five countries—Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. In these debates, references to the EU and to European norms were used as incentives legitimizing action. To understand how the EU was used to legitimize policy change we mapped the discursive use of EU references, broadly defined. For this purpose, we used data gathered in the QUING project, as well as further documents from the 2003 policy debates in Hungary, and interviews and statements from NGO activists.[9] In the coding process, "references" were defined as a specific coding field and understood as actors, documents or events to which the text refers to.

Differentiation between invocation of the EU in the accession process either in the sense of institutional requirements, to which the country wished to accede, or in a more abstract sense, as "Europeanness" was noted by earlier research (Dombos, Horvath, and Krizsan 2007, 250). The latter designates an identity that creates no institutional demands, yet is perceived as the direction of progress. In the framework proposed by Jacquot and Woll (2003), these types of EU references qualify as a "legitimizing usage" by actors seeking to garner public acceptance of policy reforms.

Our analysis of policy debates on domestic violence found that references to Europe or the EU specifically are very much conditioned by the proximity to the accession date. As accession dates near, related debates stretch to include domains of policy not formally within the purview of accession negotiations; "EU accession" tends to become a general framing for issues not core to the accession process, such as domestic violence. The most evident examples of this stretching are the parliamentary debates on the proposals for specific domestic violence laws in Bulgaria (2004) and Romania (2003).

Data on references used by different actors in domestic violence policy debates (QUING project and additional data for the 2003 debate in Hungary) show that the EU was invoked only in deliberations that take place close to the EU accession date. The aggregate picture of domestic violence debates in Bulgaria (2004–2006), Croatia (2003–2004), Hungary (1997, 2003, and 2006–2007), Poland (2004–2006), and Romania (2002–2005) shows that the only direct references to EU appear in Bulgaria and Romania, where these debates took place in the midst of EU accession and in one debate in Hungary that took place in 2003, just before Hungary became a member of the EU. There are no direct references to the EU in Poland, where the sampled domestic violence debates took place after the country became a member of the EU, in Croatia, or

in those Hungarian debates that took place much before (1997) or after the accession date (2006–2007). The type and frequency of occurrence of references used by different actors in domestic violence debates are summarized in table 2.[10]

"European norms" more generally are, however, invoked in all countries through references to the CoE and its regulations on domestic violence specifically and VAW more generally. The UN and the UN instruments on VAW and women's human rights (CEDAW) are the leading international references in all countries. In the context of domestic violence, "European norms" can hardly be distinguished from the global framework of women's human rights, but in the accession context they are nevertheless framed as "European." In four out of the five countries, domestic violence texts also contain references to other European member states (in particular, Austria, Germany, and the UK).

Europeanization provided an important framing for those domestic violence debates that took place in close proximity of EU accession. In 2003, the Hungarian Parliament debated a National Strategy for the Prevention and Efficient Handling of Domestic Violence, which was adopted that year. These debates took place the context of civil society mobilization against domestic violence, which was spearheaded by feminist NGOs but also engaged the general public. In this context, Europe was invoked as a set of "European cultural traditions" which were construed to signify a set of rights, including the right to be free from domestic violence.[11] Deputy Minister Hanko Farago reasoned that: "To belong to Europe again requires a completely different way of thinking, so it is necessary to take a different approach even in the field of [domestic violence]...it's very important that we completely adhere to the European cultural traditions which [condemn domestic violence]."

Members of Parliament (MPs) intervening in the parliamentary debate reasoned that since "European states regard domestic violence policy as a very important task," so should Hungary (MP Nemeth, Parliamentary Debate, 18 March 2003). Some MPs tapped into a much stronger "civilizational" discourse expressing their hope that Brussels would liberate Hungary from patriarchal norms inherited from feudalism that included acceptance and even glorification of domestic violence.[12] Using a discourse analysis of the policy debates taking place in Hungary around the adoption of the National Strategy, Magdalena Vanya argues that feminist NGOs "eagerly exploited the political desire for 'European' values by carefully framing domestic violence in the broader, more general context of Hungary's EU admission." (2006, 140–41). Krisztina Morvai, one of the initiators of the 2003 reforms, mobilized notions of

Table 2. References Used in Domestic Violence Policy Texts

Country/total no. of occurrences	EU and EU instruments	Other European bodies (Council of Europe)	UN and UN instruments	Other countries/ "international"	National actors/processes		Year
					EU-driven	National	
Bulgaria	6	10	13	3	–	12	2004–2006
Croatia	–	1	9	–	1	19	2003–2004
Hungary	2 (from 2003)	9	26	8	(N/A for 2003)	39 (N/A for 2003)	1997, 2003 and 2006–2007
Poland	–	2	8	1	1	14	2004–2006
Romania	7	6	4	8	2	16	2002–2005

Source: QUING database + additional data for the 2003 Hungarian debate.

common European norms and values immediately after Hungary's EU accession, arguing that: "If we want to end wife abuse as a member of the EU, in a European way, ... we need to recognize that domestic violence is a product of discrimination against women" (Krisztina Morvai, quoted in Vanya 2006, 142).

In a similar vein, parliamentary debates on draft laws on violence in the family in Romania were permeated with language invoking "Europe" and the "European Union" as both ideals and abstract sets of norms to be followed. During debates one of the initiators of the law, a woman MP, delivered her support for the proposal in the following way:

> "I would like to remind you that there is a recommendation of the European Union ... regarding domestic violence. This recommendation ... very clearly provides that all member states of the European Union, and that includes us also, if we want to become members of the European Union, should adopt a special law on domestic violence. This recommendation also specifies very clearly what this law should contain. ... The current law proposal fulfills all EU requirements. I would even say that it is *one of the most European laws that our Parliament debated*" (speech by Mona Musca, 18 March 2003; emphasis added).

The MP frames the domestic violence bill as a "European" law and by doing so she taps into the aspirations of Romanian MPs for their country to join the EU. She claims that "adopting a special law on domestic violence" is an accession requirement of the EU.

Women's NGOs in Bulgaria developed a similar strategy of representing the adoption of a special law on domestic violence as a requirement of EU accession. Genoveva Tisheva, President of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and one of the leading activists in the process of advocating for a special law on domestic violence, explained that, in 2003–2004, when the BGRF advocated for the specific law against domestic violence they "tried to *pretend* there was a legally-binding EU standard on domestic violence" (Remarks at the Regional Conference on Domestic Violence Legal Reform, Sofia, 12–14 February 2008; emphasis added). A Law on Protection from Domestic Violence was indeed adopted in Bulgaria in 2005, and during parliamentary debates some of the MPs claimed that Bulgaria should follow the example of the EU in adopting regulations to eliminate domestic violence.[13]

For reasons that we partly explained above, references to Europe were much less important in the debates in Croatia and Poland. In a broader sense, however, ideas about shared European norms, and

a desired Europeanness were also important for advocates in these contexts. An outspoken Croatian feminist from the Croatian NGO Autonomous Women's House, Nela Pamukovic, thinks that "EU and CEDAW have always been the source of feminists' legitimacy." Therefore, she contends that "the EU accession is an important process for women's organizations."[14]

While women's groups in Croatia perceive the EU as a source of legitimacy, EU references were not commonplace in domestic violence debates (table 2). This is easily explained by the fact that domestic violence legislation had already been developed in Croatia by the time the country became a candidate for EU membership. When regulations against domestic violence were debated in Croatia, the EU accession process was not high on the public agenda, therefore it did not provide a strong framework for advocacy. Other opportunity structures, both institutional and discursive, were used by Croatian activists when advocating for domestic violence legislation (Dedic and Jalusic 2007).

Due to internal political circumstances, domestic violence policy reform in Poland lagged behind EU accession, and as such, references to the EU and related norms have been largely absent form Polish debates. Meanwhile, Polish feminists and other advocates of domestic violence reforms in Poland at times mobilized "EU requirements" to shame the Polish state into adopting regulations against domestic violence. In a joint report with the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the leading feminist NGO Women's Rights Center in Warsaw stated that "Poland must respect the human rights of women (and within that, must act against domestic violence) in order to join the EU" (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights 2002, 52). Nevertheless, the Europeanization component has not gained a major role in the process of domestic violence policy change in Poland.

In all three countries where Europeanization seems to have played an important role—Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria—strategic framing of the EU and Europeanness has taken place. Somewhat similarly to rhetoric in the initial stages of EU eastern enlargement by CEECs and favorable member states (Schimmelfennig 2005, 159), we notice a strategic framing of domestic violence as part of European integration criteria in all three countries, regardless of whether or not it was included among the formal conditionality criteria. NGOs and favorable allies strategically integrate the development of domestic violence policies into a larger context of Europeanization in a looser, normative sense. The NGOs' and their allies' agency in the strategic introduction of the EU to the debates seems to be a precondition for Europeanization. The adoption of

policies on domestic violence in all of these countries is evidence that the Europeanization argument influenced mainstream decision-makers. In three countries, movement actors and their allies used the strategic framing of domestic violence as an EU accession issue to seek resonance with what they perceived to be an accepted mainstream frame in the midst of the EU accession process. This frame of "Europeanness" seems to have been a consistent, but somewhat unspecified aspiration, in which references to the EU and Europe were used as internal incentives to legitimize action against domestic violence.

As in the case of Daphne, Europeanization at this discursive level highlights social learning and norms construction processes. Domestic violence is constructed strategically within the EU accession criteria by national policy debates. The common European normative background is appropriated at the initiative of local policy actors in response to a policy dilemma that arrives on national agendas largely due to NGO mobilization. Following the strategic decision that these polities make—to Europeanize in adopting domestic violence policies—when they proceed to search for substantive norms, solutions, and models of policy good practices, the thin normative basis provided by the EU proves insufficient. At this point, references widen from a narrow understanding of EU norms on domestic violence to norms connected to successful EU member state models, as well as norms of CEDAW, and the CoE (see table 2). This step indicates the weakness of substantive EU antidomestic violence norms, and shows the dominance of norms defined at the level of CEDAW or the CoE and in terms of successful national policy-making models in the field.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed how EU accession processes have influenced a policy field that is not part of formal membership criteria of the EU enlargement, but nevertheless falls within the scope of what is seen as norms defining the collective identity of the EU. In particular, actions to address domestic violence are seen as part of a wider commitment of the EU to secure that women rights are observed and that women can thrive as equals in all member states (Kantola 2006). We found that Europeanization extends to domains, like domestic violence, that are not part of the hard criteria of EU accession. Starting from the typology developed by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005), we developed the study of mechanisms of Europeanization. We found that processes of norm construction (Radaelli, 2004) and norms entrepreneurship (Risse and Sikkink

1999) intervene both in the logic of setting the EU demands as well as in the logic of domestic changes. These processes can best be described as dynamic and interactive, with actors in the domestic policy environments adapting to EU pressures, negotiating and interpreting EU norms and requirements to specific domestic circumstances.

We described three different mechanisms that account for *how* Europeanization enables domestic change. First, EU conditionality is somewhat open for negotiation during accession processes. Apart from the core criteria contained in the *acquis communautaire*, the Commission can also take a stance on softer criteria. In this paper, we have shown that the engagement of the Commission with the issue of domestic violence as part of EU enlargement processes was up for negotiation in the different national environments.

The second mechanism is the facilitation of social learning for change. Through Daphne, the EU supports transnational networking among organizations working to end domestic violence. Daphne, as a social learning mechanism and operating on grounds of external incentives (funding), has indirectly influenced the development of domestic violence policies and legislation in Central and East Europe. The third mechanism is strategic discursive action by women's NGOs and their allies. In some countries activists used the "discursive opportunity" (Ferree *et al*. 2002) provided by the idea of a shared and desired Europeanness as an advocacy tool in their efforts to pass specific laws on domestic violence.

All three mechanisms point to processes of norm construction in the European accession process. First, the conditionality criteria were constructed by the Commission in conjunction with domestic civil society voices in different ways for the different countries, so that domestic violence norms had different place in the reports. Second, the Daphne mechanism can be seen as an open call for transnational action to develop substantive content behind the narrowly defined set of European norms for action against domestic violence. Finally, the analysis of discursive action has shown how civil society actors and their allies strategically construct and frame European norms to include the need for action against domestic violence.

By exploring a domain of policy-making outside the formal accession criteria, and thus outside the logic of hard conditionality, this paper pointed to several less explored ways in which "Europe matters." Since domestic violence is a policy field in which EU standards are (still) soft, the constructivist aspects of Europeanization and the working of a logic of appropriateness become especially visible. European norms are shown to be constructed at every

level by the different stakeholders, and often in interaction between them: the Commission, transnational actors, state, and nonstate actors at the national level play a role in developing meanings and usages of Europe for the domestic violence policy field (Jacquot and Woll 2003). In the absence of clearly articulated EU norms for action against domestic violence, Europeanization is mainly driven by the identification of national policy-making environments with an abstract norm of "Europeanness." The norm of "being European" is widely understood to include, beyond formal EU regulations, norms in members states and norms related to other international organizations such as the CoE or the UN. As such, it also has come to include action against domestic violence.

While the main emphasis has been on how the EU influenced policy-making in the five counties, the paper also provides some indication of what explains the uneven impact of the EU across the different analyzed countries. The three mechanisms of Europeanization point to different factors that determine the influence of the EU on policy changes. Variations in the strength of these mechanisms may explain the uneven impact the EU had on the countries of the sample. In accession negotiations, domestic violence becomes an issue for EU conditionality if it can be connected to a policy issue that forms part of the core accession criteria. The importance of social learning through the Daphne project and the related EU influence seems to depend on two factors, first on the status of the country in the negotiations, as access to Daphne funds is more extensively available to member states than it is to candidate states; and second, the connectedness of domestic civil society groups to potential European partners, their role in the transnational networks (Montoya 2008), and their capacity to join successful bids seems to be crucial for determining the strength of this Europeanization mechanism. We also found variation in the strength and importance of the mechanism described as strategic use of EU integration. Activists' choice of whether or not to use this type of rhetorical action depended on proximity of debate to accession date, level of policy development in the country compared with the EU (Kantola 2006), and the strategic role of domestic civil society in policy reform in the EU accession context.

It was not the purpose of the analysis to discuss the specific content of the laws and policies against domestic violence adopted in the five countries between 2003 and 2005. These regulations were the outcome of complex and contentious debates, which have been analyzed elsewhere (Spehar 2007; Fabian 2009; Krizsan and Popa 2010), but deserve more research focused on the interaction between different national and transnational actors, and different levels of

policymaking. In particular, further research is needed to understand the "feedback loops" (Börzel and Risse 2003, 74) to the EU level, particularly in the context of recent civil society calls and concrete initiatives from the Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Spanish Presidency toward development of strong and binding EU norms on VAW and within that, domestic violence.

NOTES

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1. See for example: Resolution on the need to establish an EU-wide campaign for zero tolerance of VAW, Resolution nr. A4-0250/1997; and Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004, on adopting a program of Community action (2004–2008) to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk (803/2004/EC) (Daphne II). Both documents reference the work done in the framework of the UN as guidance for actions to combat VAW.

2. With the exception of Poland where violence in the family was already placed on the policy agenda since 1992 in the context of anti-alcoholism policy.

3. According to a study of the CoE, across CoE member states, "one-fifth to one-quarter of all women have experienced physical violence at

least once during their adult lives, and more than one-tenth have suffered sexual violence involving the use of force" (Hagemann-White 2006, 7).

4. More information on different Daphne programs is available on the Daphne III website, at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/funding_daphne3_en.htm, and the Daphne Toolkit, at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/daphnetoolkit/html/welcome/dpt_welcome_en.html

5. No systematic data are available on the proportion of funding specifically targeting domestic violence projects. Data from the first programming period of Daphne are indicative: approximately 40 percent of Daphne I projects targeted domestic violence specifically (European Commission 2004, 17).

6. See Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004, on adopting a program of Community action (2004–2008) to prevent and combat violence against children, young people, and women and to protect victims and groups at risk (803/2004/EC) (Daphne II).

7. There is no data in the final evaluation of Daphne I about countries of origin for the supported organizations and their partners. The mid-term report covers data for 2000 and 2002 (European Commission 2002).

8. This is less the case for Croatia, where the government has become more or less a regular donor for organizations since the establishment of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in 1998. At the same time, organizations in Croatia are still recipients of more financial contributions from foreign donors than counterparts from CEE.

9. The QUING project (Quality in Gender + Equality Policies in Europe, www.quing.eu) studies comparatively the meaning of gender equality in policy debates around the issues of general gender equality, nonemployment, intimate citizenship, and gender-based violence in the period 1995–2008. QUING covers all member states of the EU, Croatia, and Turkey. For the five countries we have selected, in the issue of domestic violence, the QUING database covers the policy debates around the following regulations: the special law on domestic violence in Bulgaria (2004–2006); the special law on domestic violence in Croatia (2003–2004); marital rape (1997) and the restraining order (2006–2007) in Hungary; the special law against domestic violence in Poland (2004–2006), and the special law against domestic violence in Romania (2002–2005). The sample of texts for each debate contains: the text of the law; text of a policy plan, the minutes of parliamentary debates on the draft bills; at least one civil society text.

10. Table 2 summarizes the references used in fifty-two domestic violence policy texts in the five countries as analyzed within the framework of the QUING project (including laws, policies, parliamentary debates, and civil society texts). This was complemented with analysis of the 2003 Hungarian debate (texts of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, three plenary sessions of the Hungarian Parliament, and four Committee sessions in March and April 2003 debating the Strategy).

11. Press interview with State Secretary Hanko, Ministry of Justice, 2003, quoted in Magdalena Vanya (2006, 137).

12. Intervention by Deputy Minister Agnes Vajda (2003, quoted in Vanya 2006).

13. Minutes of the meeting of the 39th National Assembly of 30 June 2004 on the Law proposal on Protection against Domestic Violence.

14. Interview with Nela Pamukovic, May 2008, conducted by Milja Spoljar.

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