Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Eastern European and Baltic countries /

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to present and analyse the current state of perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries as this issue has barely been raised in the literature. It is connected to the fact that in described region such programmes are still relatively new phenomena and, compared to other European Union countries (mostly in Western and Northern Europe), the number of the programmes is still insufficient. Moreover, the number and character of the perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries is to a large extent determined by traditional gender relations, glorification of the traditional family and specific definitions of masculinities and femininities, as well as by the nature of the anti-violence legislation that exists in particular countries. The presented findings result from research on the specificity of work with perpetrators of domestic violence in the region. The analysis is based on the cases of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. It is to a large extent the result of research conducted within the Daphne III project *IMPACT: Evaluation of European Perpetrator Programmes* (2013–2014) and of analysis of national reports delivered by country experts for a project conducted by the Work with Perpetrators – European Network in 2013.
Key words: domestic violence, work with perpetrators, Eastern European and Baltic countries

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Programmes for (male) perpetrators of domestic violence[1] are an important part of the system of combating violence against women and children. According to the *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (*Istanbul Convention*, Council of Europe 2011), one of the tasks for governments that ratify this convention is to: 'set up treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and for sex offenders'.[2] This has already resulted in, and will continue to result in, an increase in the number of such programmes across Europe. Therefore, an overview of current work with perpetrators seems to be one of the most crucial steps in the ongoing debate on male violence against women and combating it.

To date, the overall situation of European and some national programmes for perpetrators has been analysed in a number of scientific papers and reports (see Scourfield 1995; Scourfield, Dobash 1999; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, Lewis 1999; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, Lewis 2000; Rothman, Buthart, Cerda 2003; Debbonaire 2004; Akoensi, Koehler, Löser, Hamphreys 2013; Hamilton, Koehler, Lösel 2013; Geldschläger, Gines, Nax, Ponce 2014; Hester, Lilley, O'Prey, Budde 2014). However, even in general European studies programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries[3] are not described at all or are only briefly mentioned. This has to do with the fact that the programmes in these countries are relatively new (they have existed for less than 8 years) (see Geldschläger, Gines, Ponce, Nax 2014), are therefore not well known, and have not yet been (properly) analysed.

Consequently, the aim of this paper is to present the current state of perpetrator programmes conducted in several Eastern European and Baltic countries. Work with perpetrators in Europe is in general a complex issue and it varies in nature between different European regions and/or countries owing to different historical backgrounds, cultural factors, and social and economic conditions. Such differences are also observed in the region analysed in this paper, which differs from the regions of Western, Northern and Southern Europe, where the tradition of working with perpetrators is longer and attitudes and beliefs regarding such programmes, their effectiveness and their founding ideologies are distinct from the Eastern European and Baltic situation. The analysis conducted in this paper aims to provide answers to key research questions such as: In which countries of the region do programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence already exist? What are the main characteristics of perpetrators programmes located in Eastern European and Baltic countries? What are the main needs and challenges of working with perpetrators in this region? Are there differences between the programmes in this region and those in the rest of Europe, and if so, what are the reasons for the differences? How do historical backgrounds, cultural factors, social conditions and economic and legislative statuses influence the specific character of work with perpetrators in Eastern European and Baltic countries?

As work with perpetrators is implicated in a number of ideological disputes, in this paper a profeminist approach[4] will be the framework of the analysis. According to this approach, work with perpetrators is supposed to be focused on men, as more than 90% of domestic violence acts are committed by men (see Scambor, Wojnicka, Bergmann 2013) and male violence is seen 'as an expression of the power and control that men exert over women in the society' (Gondolf 2002: 9).

During treatment, men are 'prompted to take responsibility for their behavior and face consequences when they do not' (Gondolf 2002: 11). The main goal of profeminist treatment is to protect women and children, the victims of domestic violence, by working to hold male perpetrators accountable.

Data

There is much variation amongst perpetrator programmes across Europe and this is due to differences in legislative and economic circumstances, but also to different social, political and cultural patterns. However, there is little systematised knowledge about the differences between and within European countries in general, and no knowledge about the Eastern European and Baltic context in particular. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to present the findings of three European (research) projects in which the situation of Eastern European and Baltic work with perpetrators was investigated. In order to obtain well-founded background knowledge about the character of this phenomenon, triangulation of the data and methods (Konecki 2000) was applied.

In six of the nine Eastern European and Baltic countries belonging to the European Union,[5] seven[6] qualitative national reports were compiled by experts working with perpetrators or/and conducting research in the field. In this way, basic knowledge of the current situation in the region was collected, as well as information on the most important trends and challenges. The national reports (in total 22) were produced in 2013 within the European project 'Work with Perpetrators – European Network', coordinated by the Dissens – Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V. team in Berlin (hereafter WWP – EN).[7]

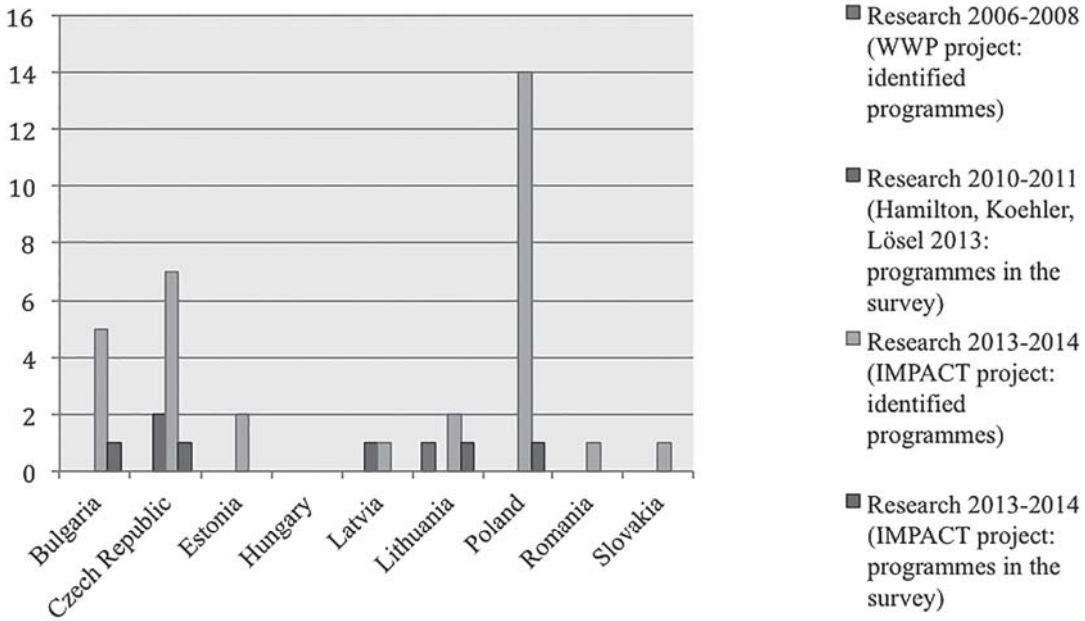
A quantitative data set at the European level was gathered in two research projects: 'Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Europe' (2006–2008, hereafter WWP; total sample n=218),[8] and 'IMPACT: Evaluation of European Perpetrator Programmes' (2013–2014, hereafter IMPACT; total sample n=134).[9]

Two workshops and one conference were organised over 2013 and 2014 in Bristol, UK, Copenhagen, Denmark, and Barcelona, Spain, with international experts, and their input enriched the heuristic basis of this paper as the goal of all the events was to exchange knowledge on work with perpetrators conducted in Europe.

Results

In the very first research on European perpetrator programmes, WWP, the mapping of existing programmes for male perpetrators of domestic violence was followed by the collection of basic information such as: the name and address of the project, the number of programme staff, the funding situation, cooperation and context, the programme's context, cooperation with victims and quality assurance. However, among the 209 programmes that took part in the survey, there was only one Baltic programme identified. Researchers were not able to collect more information from this region, which gives the impression that during the period of investigation such programmes, except in Lithuania, did not yet exist. A slightly better situation regarding information on Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes was identified by Leah Hamilton, Johann A. Koehler and Friedrich A. Lösel, who between 2010 and 2011 conducted similar research on the European perpetrator programmes (2013). The investigators gathered responses from 54 programmes in 19 EU countries, and three of these programmes were situated in the analysed region (two in the Czech Republic and one in Latvia). Moreover, the researchers identified some programmes in Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, but did not receive answers

Figure 1: Number of perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries identified/analysed in 3 research projects.



Source: WWP project data; IMPACT project data; Hamilton, Koehler, Lösel (2013).

Table 1: Basic information on the programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries that completed the IMPACT project survey.

	Age (when the programme started)	Size (men in attendance last year)	Combined with alcohol or substance abuse treatment	Combined with victim services (children/ women)	Support for victims of domestic violence (children/ women)	**Work with female perpetrator services**
Bulgaria	2010	8	YES	NO	YES/YES	NO
Czech Republic	2009	54	YES	YES	YES/NO	YES
Poland	2008	203	YES	YES	YES/YES	YES
Lithuania	2009	70	YES	YES	NO/YES	YES

Source: IMPACT project data.

from their managers/facilitators. In four countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary and Romania) authorities reported a lack of perpetrators programmes (Hamilton et al. 2013: 1193). Three years later, the information about Eastern European and Baltic (male) perpetrator programmes was complemented by the results of the already mentioned IMPACT project.

In 2013, through internet research and networking at international workshops and conferences on domestic violence, as well as from the WWP – EN and assistance from the national ministries of justice, over 30 Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes (or initiatives that at first glance seemed to be perpetrator programmes, such as (pro)feminist organisation campaigns, group meetings conducted by NGOs for men and focusing on the issue of violence, etc.) were identified. Nevertheless, the response rate was not much higher than in previous research (see Figure 1). The IMPACT team received only four questionnaires[10] from the region (one each from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Poland). Therefore, any quantitative analysis regarding the characteristics of Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes would have been inadequate, and only basic information (relevant to the topic of this article) can be mentioned.

As Table 1 shows, the Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes are young (they have existed for less than eight years) and come in all kinds of sizes (from small to big).[11] All the practitioners/facilitators/programme managers use alcohol or substance abuse treatment as well as victim services (in some cases both children's and women's services, in others only one type of service). Moreover, all the programmes have services for victims of domestic violence (children and/or women), but at the same time the majority of them work not only with male but also with female perpetrators of domestic violence.

A much richer and in-depth source of information about work with perpetrators in this region is the national reports prepared by experts (practitioners and/or researchers) in the area and written for the WWP – EN in 2013. At first glance the reports seem to confirm the data that were collected in the IMPACT project. First, in almost all the countries analysed it is possible to find both organisations working with perpetrators and specific programmes.

Table 2: Experts' estimates of the number of perpetrator programmes in their countries

	Number of perpetrator programmes/locations conducting programmes
Bulgaria	3
Czech Republic	8
Estonia	2
Hungary	0
Lithuania	5
Poland	200

Source: WWP – EN national reports (Bubniene 2013; Dyjakon 2013; Herdova 2013; Kutrovátz 2013; Reitelmann 2013; Videva 2013).

The only exception is Hungary, where researchers did not identify any programmes, and the expert confirmed that there are as yet no such programmes in the country:

> There is no specific program for work with perpetrators in domestic violence at all. There is [only] a project, called Stop Male Violence[12] which main target is awareness raising about the domestic violence and other type of male violence with publications, books, flyers or film club etc. The project runs a hotline to support also men who wish to change the violent behaviour in their own lives. (Kutrovátz 2013: 1)

However, compared to the other European regions the number of programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries is rather low. According to the experts in each country, the number of functioning programmes varies from zero in Hungary to 200 in Poland[13] (see Table 2).

In contrast, in Spain, Germany and the UK, 34, 27 and 16 programmes, respectively, took part in the IMPACT survey.[14] Moreover, experts from other countries mentioned more than 30 programmes in Spain, 49 programmes conducted solely by the members of the national umbrella organisation Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt – BAG TäHG e.V in Germany, 30 members of the French national umbrella organisation Federation Nationale des Associations et des Centres de prose en charge d'Au-

teurs de Violences conjugales et familiales (F.N.A.C.A.V), and around 30 programmes in Finland (see Depeyre 2013; Holma 2013; Geldschläger 2013; Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt – BAG TäHG e.V. 2013). This difference between the number of programmes in Eastern European countries (except Poland) and other European regions proves that the analysed countries are in the initial stages of developing work with perpetrators.

The variety of European 'systems' of work with perpetrators is reflected in many dimensions, although the most significant is the character of the organisations that deal with perpetrators and the character of the particular programmes for perpetrators that exist in different European countries (see Wojnicka, Nax 2013). Among organisations that work with perpetrators in Eastern European and Baltic countries, specialised NGOs conducting perpetrator programmes and organisations without perpetrator programmes can be singled out. As already mentioned, the biggest group of organisations dealing with perpetrator issues in the region are specialised NGOs, where work with perpetrators is defined as work with male but also female batterers. Therefore, the profeminist approach is not being implemented, and often domestic violence is seen as a gender-neutral problem:

> Our experience shows that in many cases domestic violence is rooted in mutual aggression and conditional pathological interactions between the partners. (Vichova 2013: 4)

Yet, a profeminist approach can be found in the organisations that deal with perpetrator issues but do not conduct specific perpetrator programmes. A situation very typical for Eastern European and Baltic countries is that feminist, profeminist, and victims' organisations participate (and sometimes dominate) in the discourse about work with perpetrators but at the same time do not conduct any programmes. Such organisations may provide victim support systems[15] and only 'promote' the need for work with perpetrators, or they may concentrate on counselling rather than systematic work with perpetrators:

> The League of Open Men 2006, LOM promotes issues such as active fatherhood, men in education system, men's solidarity and health, gender sensitivity and prevention of gender-based violence … offering to those who use violence in relationships internet and direct counselling, seminars preventing aggression in family. (Herdova 2013: 1)

> Moreover, unlike in many other countries in Europe (Germany, the UK, Norway, Finland, France, Ireland), in the countries in the analysed region there is a lack of national networks or umbrella organisations that could promote work with perpetrators, create minimum standards for such work, conduct training and transfer knowledge and so forth. The only umbrella organisation that brings together some organisations in Eastern European and Baltic countries is the aforementioned WWP– EN (see Wojnicka, Nax 2013).

> Differences can also be seen regarding particular programmes for perpetrators. As the IMPACT project results show, in some of the programmes practitioners work only with perpetrators and in some they also work with victims of domestic violence (women and/or children). The programmes differ in length, type of therapy (group, individual, couples therapy, mixed), type of participation (voluntary or mandated by an authority), the approach to gender, the number of facilitators and the type of financing (free of charge, for a fee). Apart from conducting programmes for perpetrators, organisations dealing with the issue are active in areas such as: promoting a society that is free from violence, organising workshops, conferences, and so on, for practitioners, schools, the police and the general public, organising and taking part in national and international social campaigns such as the *White Ribbon Campaign*, *16 days against Violence against Women*, PR activities, research activities and school and university teaching (see Wojnicka, Nax 2013).

Last but not least, the organisations and programmes from the region face specific obstacles and have special needs, the fulfilment of which could have an influence on the development of their work. One of the biggest challenges in all Eastern European and Baltic countries is the lack of resources, both financial and human. Almost all the organisations and/or programme managers reported that a lack of money is currently the biggest problem:

> It is important to underline that limited funds influence work with perpetrators in different ways. Sometimes is can be the inability to increase the number of clients. In the worst case the lack of money results in the fact that professionals act as volunteers and are not paid for their work, for example in Lithuania, or the programmes are not developing and new initiatives cannot be undertaken. Another challenge is the lack of professionals who might work with perpetrators. (Wojnicka, Nax 2013: 28)

The national experts highlight the need for an increase in both the number of practitioners and the amount of training for programme facilitators:

> The first point is increasing human professional resources with trainings for specialization skills for work with perpetrators. (Videva 2013: 6)

Finally, an urgent need is the improvement of cooperation between organisations/programmes for perpetrators and both the social justice systems and victim support servic-

es, as such cooperation seems to be a significant factor of success (see Wojnicka, Nax 2013). Wider European cooperation also seems to be very crucial for the development of work with perpetrators in the analysed region:

> What is needed now for us – to have an exchange and support from European and other foreign networks and programmes, to have exchange visits to other countries and see other models. To have financial support for projects with EU partners, to apply and improve our methods. (Videva 2013: 7)

Discussion

After analysing the quantitative data on Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes, the first impression one gets is that such phenomena barely exist there. In the most current IMPACT survey only four programmes, in a region that has a population of almost 100,000,000 inhabitants, took part, which seems to show that work with perpetrators is not seen as an important method of combating domestic violence in the region. A more in-depth look, both at the number of identified programmes in each country and at the national experts' findings, reveals that there are more than four programmes in the region, but at the same time raises questions about their invisibility and inactivity. The faint presence of Eastern European and Baltic programmes in the research and literature on work with perpetrators may be indicative of a specific situation in the region. Perpetrator programmes already exist, but they are still marginal, fresh and often ephemeral phenomena, and the practitioners, facilitators or authorities responsible for establishing them do not consider participation in research projects to be important or necessary. Such an attitude may reflect an underestimation of the importance of work with perpetrators, but may also indicate a lack of structures and communication, not only between programmes on the one hand and researchers on the other, but also between programmes themselves (on the national and European levels). Moreover, owing to the lack of specific structures and the decentralisation of particular phenomena there are no minimum standards relating to work with perpetrators, which could affect the quality of such work in the region. The result of this situation is that many existing programmes do not have clear, established goals, and their founding ideologies are far from those of the profeminist approach. Ultimately this could result in programmes ignoring priority measures, such as ensuring victim safety, naming men as the main perpetrators, and cooperating with wider victim protection systems. It could also lead them to apply a selective approach to clients (see Hearn 2009) and to work in a 'free-style' system, with no clear approach and with dubious founding ideologies (e.g. for commercial purposes; the religious 'save the family' approach; positions inspired by the masculinist/men's rights movement).

However, over the last several years the situation in the region has begun to change. Research shows that since mid-2000 the number of perpetrator programmes has significantly increased. The increase in the number of perpetrator programmes has much to do with European Union policy, new funding opportunities and the possibility of cooperation with partners from countries where work with perpetrators has longer traditions:

> We have been working with domestic perpetrators since 2009. In cooperation with Danish partner, we were authorised to use the DADV programme in our work [in Lithuania K.W]. (Bubniene 2013: 1)

> In Estonia, programmes targeting perpetrators of violence started to be developed in the mid-2000s when Norwegian and trainers were invited to Estonia. (Reitelmann 2013: 2)

> The beginning started in 2009 with the Daphne project SPREAD, led by the Spanish NGO – SURT Barcelona. The programme was conducted in three prisons in Bulgaria and the main topic was work with perpetrators of gender violence. After this project we adopted a methodology for work with perpetrators of domestic violence. (Videva 2013: 1)

Nevertheless, to this day there is a significant gap between the analysed region and the rest of Europe. The disproportion in the number of organisations and programmes for work with perpetrators is connected to several factors. First of all, it is has to do with the political and historical background of post-communist countries in Eastern Europe. This is reflected in the relatively short existence of civil society and therefore of social movements and NGOs, which are usually catalysts for activities aimed at combating domestic violence.

Another important factor is the relatively late entry of these countries into the structure of the European Union (2004 for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia and 2007 for Bulgaria and Romania). This is the reason for the weaker implementation of gender mainstreaming policies (see Bergmann, Scambor, Wojnicka 2014), which are strongly connected to the promotion of women's rights and the fight against domestic violence.

Other factors influencing the small number of perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries are the economic conditions and legal situations of the analysed countries. First of all, the majority of the analysed countries are still not wealthy[16] and therefore the development of civil society organisations (which conduct the majority of work with perpetrators) is limited. The experts in these countries highlighted the difficulties they had obtaining financial support from the state and from clients, which has resulted in the underfunding of programme staff, facilities, etc.:

> This year [in Lithuania K.W.], the state allocated the funding for work with perpetrators of €2300 per year. (Bubniene 2013: 2)

Moreover, the legal situation of the countries and the (non) existence of law relating to work with perpetrators, which is seen as a tool for fighting domestic violence and its efficacy, have a strong influence on the state of work with perpetrators in these particular countries. In general, for the majority of the analysed countries the most critical changes in the legal system were introduced in the (late) 2000s (see Wojnicka, Nax 2013). For instance, in 2005 Bulgaria introduced a law on protection against domestic violence:

> There are few measures for protection of victims of violence. The programs for work with perpetrators are required to implement the measures taken by the Court under Article 5 paragraph 1, item 5 of the LPDV – obliging the perpetrator of violence to attend a special program in order to further and more effective protection of victims of violence. (Videva 2013: 6)

In Lithuania the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence came into effect in 2011, and in Hungary, in 2013, a provision criminalising domestic violence was introduced into the penal code. In the Czech Republic different legal measures on combating domestic violence have been introduced since 2006, including:

> The National Action Plan of Domestic Violence Prevention for the period of 2011–2014 (hereby referred to as NAP DV). The NAP DV presents a complex tool embracing the main goals and respective measures to prevent domestic violence, from the perspectives of prevention, education and awareness raising, research, coordinated assistance for victims of domestic violence, establishment of perpetrators programmes and legislation measures .... Among the main tasks, the current NAP DV lists the 'work with violent persons'. More specifically, the action plan aims at systematisation and long-term sustainability of perpetrators programs as one the most important elements of domestic violence prevention. (Herdova 2013: 3)

However, despite the legislative 'renaissance' in the region, the situation is still far from perfect:

> Some countries accepted laws on protection against domestic violence (the Czech Republic, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Cyprus), while others used a gender-sensitive approach in soft papers, such as Slovakia or Lithuania. Some countries are completely gender-blind in their legislation on domestic violence, as is the case in Poland, Estonia or Hungary. (Hearn 2009: 47)

Moreover, *The Istanbul Convention,* one of the most important European documents aimed at combating violence against women and children, has not been ratified.[17] To date (April 2015), six of the analysed countries have signed the *Convention* (Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and only one of the Eastern European/Baltic country has ratified the document. In fact, in some countries, like Poland, political resistance (driven by right-wing parties and the Catholic Church) to the *Convention* has been very strong, which has resulted in the repeated rejection of the document in both houses of Parliament.[18] Furthermore, there must be legal efficacy behind any changes to the legal system, and this seems to be lacking in the analysed countries. A high degree of efficacy leads to the development of perpetrator programmes, and conversely a lack of efficacy negatively influences work with perpetrators. This is visible in the majority of the analysed countries:

> Work with perpetrators is required but lack of appropriate social services makes the law unenforceable measure and victims of domestic violence are not adequately protected from the further violence. (Videva 2013: 6)
> It should be nevertheless noted that to date (fall 2013), only few programmes have been implemented and their impact and effectiveness has not yet been evaluated. The Czech organisations do not work according to any common minimal standards and lack financial support necessary for systematic work with perpetrators. (Herdova 2013: 4)

Finally, the analysed countries are part of a specific gender regime (Lewis, Ortner 1994) where understandings of the nature of domestic violence, gender inequality and gender roles as well as definitions of masculinity/ies and femininity/ies might be different to what is observed in the rest of Europe:

> In our society ... domestic violence was traditionally considered a private family matter and abuse was justified by the victim's wrong behaviour. (Reitelmann 2013: 2)

> Lithuanian men ... believe that "complaining is not manly", "men do not cry", etc. They tend to solve their problems by consuming alcohol, taking risks when driving, committing violent acts against themselves and others. (Bubniene 2013: 1)

This particular gender regime is reflected in the fact that very often domestic violence and work with perpetrators is not seen as a gender-related issue. In the rhetoric of many Eastern European and Baltic practitioners working with aggressive people, violence is not gendered and can be equally perpetrated by men and women. The fact that the vast majority of violent acts in the household are perpetrated by men is often interpreted as a coincidence or as a result of the fact that male victims do not report such violence. A reflection of such beliefs is that the majority of Eastern European and Baltic programmes provide services both for male and female perpetrators and treat

both groups of clients equally: men and women are treated in the same way and repeatedly placed together in group therapy. (Domestic) violence is seen as a gender-neutral problem of individuals (or/and separate families), and the social factors influencing it, such as men's domination, connections between hegemonic masculinity and power over women and children, the social acceptance of male aggression, etc., are not acknowledged. As a consequence, in many programmes gender issues are not discussed, and changing the perpetrator's beliefs about his position and role in the relationship and/or society and the position of his partner, etc., is not part of the expected treatment results. Such a practice results in domestic violence not being seen as a male problem, which limits the effectiveness of work with perpetrators. When this type of violence is not identified as male violence, the chances of perpetrator programmes being successful are rather slim, as an effective struggle against domestic violence must include identifying and recognising male violence, holding men responsible, seeing male violence as a wider, social problem, and working for gender equality in all areas of social life (see Hearn 2009).

The preceding statement relates to the specific situation that can be observed in the biggest country in the region, Poland, where not only cultural and social norms but also policy and even legislation are strongly influenced by the Catholic Church. One of the consequences of the Church's dominant influence is that domestic violence is seen not as a social problem of men perpetrating violence, but as a private family issue that should be solved, not by the state and by legal regulations, but rather inside the community. Moreover, 'solutions' to this problem are guided by the aim of keeping the family together, and therefore the only type of work with perpetrators that is generally accepted is that which seeks to prevent the breakdown of the family and places 'family interests' above the rights of women and children to safety and to a life without violence. Interventions focused on keeping the family together instead of protecting women and children are also popular in the Czech Republic, where couples therapy seems to be a dominant type of perpetrator treatment (see Vichova 2013).

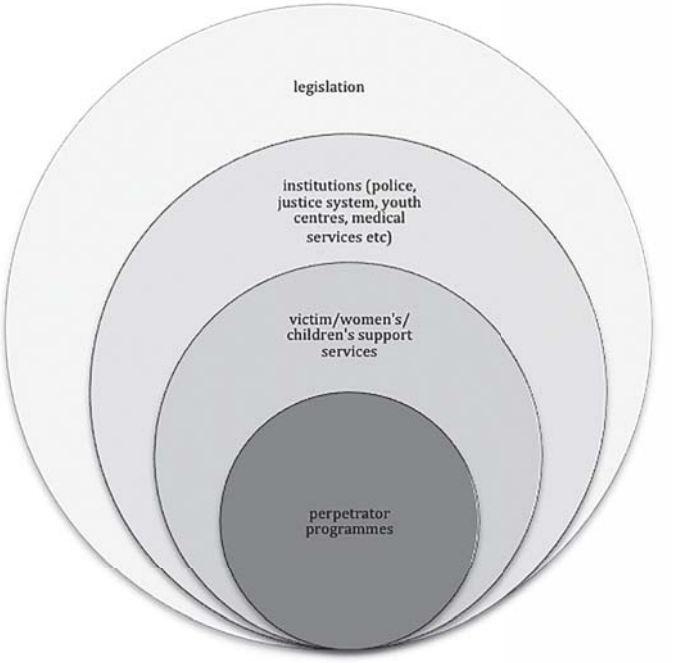
This state of affairs is questioned by feminist and victims' organisations in the region. However, the position of such organisations is very specific, as many of them are trapped in the paradoxical situation of promoting work with perpetrators but at the same time competing with each other for financial support from the state. This paradox of competition with and support for perpetrator programmes is rooted in the fact that Eastern European and Baltic feminist/victims'/women's organisations are very often advocates for coordinated and integrated work with perpetrators:

> EWSU [Estonian Women's Shelters' Union K.W.] is a national umbrella and its member organisations do not provide services to perpetrators of violence; our primary target group consists exclusively of women victims of violence and their children. Given that we work with limited funding and resources, we have no intention to expand our target group. However, we have initiated cooperation with the executors of the programme targeting male perpetrators so as to make sure the victims feel secure and get full support during the programme. (Reitelmann 2013: 1)

On the other hand, they very often have to compete with organisations that conduct programmes that take a gender-blind approach to work with perpetrators, as in many countries funds for combating domestic violence are not divided between focus groups for victims and focus groups for perpetrators.

Moreover, in some countries (Poland, Bulgaria) the first perpetrator programmes were established by feminist/victims'/women's organisations, which have tried to fill the existing gap and draw attention to the men in this situation and to the fact that domestic violence is not only the problem of victims. Last but not least, for some members of the feminist community, perpetrator programmes represent nothing more than competitors for funding and opponents in terms of their ideology and political goals. Therefore, those feminist organisations that support work with perpetrators, collaborate with existing programmes or conduct their own programmes for violent men are sometimes viewed even by other feminist organisations as oddities dealing with specific community conflicts. This situation is a reflection of the lack of awareness and acceptance of the fact that only an integrated and cooperative system (see Figure 2) can result in effective work with perpetrators.

Figure 2: Coordinated system of effective work with perpetrators.



As long as this fails to be understood and implemented, perpetrator programmes may continue to be seen as a controversial way of combating domestic violence:

> The professionals argue that according to the best practices from abroad the efficiency of these programs is questionable and also ethically it is very problematic part of the issue. Since there is a lack of adequate shelters and the protection of the victims is also not resolved, the work with perpetrator programme – in consequence of the above mentioned findings and judgement – has no priority. (Kutrovátz 2013: 3)

Conclusion

Eastern European and Baltic perpetrator programmes are very new and to some extent ephemeral phenomena, and therefore it is rather difficult to deliver a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of them. There is not much research on the topic in the region and there is also a very limited amount of national literature on work with perpetrators. The most problematic issues connected to work with perpetrators in the region are, first, the insufficient number of programmes and organisations dealing with the problem of violent men and, second, the lack of a coordinated system of work with perpetrators. This situation is the result of the still prevailingly widespread belief that domestic violence primarily has to do with the victims, a belief that is reflected in the underfunding of such activities and in a lack of adequate legislation.

Moreover, a specific feature of Eastern Europe and the Baltics is too often the absence of any connection made between domestic violence and gender issues and the conviction that violence is the problem of the individual and/or of a particular family. The social context, which is based on gender inequality and men's domination, is ignored. As a consequence, the profeminist approach is almost exclusively found in programmes that are conducted or counselled by feminist/victims'/women's organisations, and work with perpetrators remains an arena of ideological dispute between advocates of the traditional/conservative social order, where domestic violence is defined as a gender-neutral issue, and progressive actors, who link the problem of violence to male domination and the patriarchal character of contemporary Eastern European and Baltic societies.

The analysis presented in this paper shows that in Eastern European and Baltic countries domestic violence is not seen as a serious social problem and there is still a tendency to treat this phenomenon as a private family issue in which the state should not be engaged. As a result, victims of domestic violence are very often left on their own, and many existing interventions focus on *ad hoc* and occasional help instead of being based on a systematic policy that reflects the fact that 'men's violence is not a "thing"; nor is it simply a collection of "incidents". It is social structures and social processes, sometimes over a long period of time' (Hearn 2009: 133–134). Another problem relating to domestic violence and work with perpetrators concerns the neglect of the role of men in domestic violence and the failure to underline the dominant responsibility they bear for the perpetration of such violence. In public discourse and, consequently, in work with abusers, domestic violence is very often portrayed as gender-neutral and the issue of masculinity is not explored. Therefore, two of the most important issues regarding combating domestic violence in Eastern European and Baltic countries are: (1) The need to change public and political discourses in which domestic violence is still seen as an individual/family issue and to start treating this phenomenon as a serious social problem, which can be only done by strengthening anti-violence legislation and creating accountable, coordinated systems of effective work against domestic violence, which includes work with perpetrators. (2) The need to situate the problem of domestic violence in gender-focused discourse and to concentrate mostly on work with violent men (and not women or families with a history of violence), but also to focus on other (non-violent) men, who need to take more responsibility for ending gender-based domestic violence.

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Notes

1 For the purposes of this article domestic violence is defined as 'violence occurring within the family or domestic unit, including, inter alia, physical and mental aggression, emotional and psychological abuse, rape and sexual abuse, incest, rape between spouses, regular or occasional partners and cohabitants, crimes committed in the name of honour, female genital and sexual mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, such as forced marriages' (Council of Europe 2002). Consequently, a perpetrator of domestic violence is a person who commits this type of violence, and the term will be used as a gender-neutral term, despite the fact that the majority of domestic violence perpetrators are men (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, Lewis 2000; Scambor, Wojnicka, Bergmann 2013). However, the gender-neutral definition has been chosen due to its popularity in the analysed countries, not because of the author's attitude regarding the issue of work with perpetrators and the problem of de-gendering such work. Last but not least, a perpetrator programme is defined as an institutionalised, voluntary or court-mandated correction programme intended to assist violent people in changing their behaviour (see Nakray 2013).

2 http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/brief_en.asp.

3 For the purposes of this paper, in the group of Eastern European and Baltic countries I include those European Union member countries that are situated on the eastern side of the EU (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria) and on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). This group of countries forms a specific EU region, not only owing to their geographical location, but also because of their specific historical background (post-communist countries) and social and economic conditions, and because they acceded to the EU at similar times. Therefore, regarding the issue analysed here, they have a specific gender regime (Lewis, Ostner 1994).

4 In addition to profeminist approaches, psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural treatments are the most popular approaches used in practical work with perpetrators in Europe (see Hamilton, Koehler, Lösel 2013: 1193).

5 Out of the Eastern European and Baltic countries presented in this paper, only countries belonging to the European Union, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, were taken into consideration. This had to do with the fact that the analysed data were collected within a research project founded by the European Commission, and therefore only countries belonging to the EU could be investigated.

6 Two reports from the Czech Republic, one from Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland.

7 The project was funded by the European Commission Daphne III Programme; see http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=28&L=-1%27.

8 The project was funded by the European Commission Daphne II Programme; see http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=19.

9 Detailed information on the methodology of the IMPACT project can be found in *Outcome Measurement in European Perpetrator Programmes: A Survey* (Geldschläger, Gines, Nax, Ponce 2014) and *Changes in European Perpetrator Programmes: Characteristics and Quality* (Nax, Geldschläger, Gines forthcoming). The project was funded by the European Commission Daphne III Programme; see http://www.impact.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=13.

10 The general response rate was 134 completed questionnaires (the total sample of programmes approached was 308), which gives a response rate of 44%.

11 The age and size criteria can be found in *Outcome Measurement in European Perpetrator Programmes: A Survey* (Geldschläger, Gines, Nax, Ponce 2014).

12 http://www.stop-ferfieroszak.hu/en.

13 Poland seems to be an exception in the region with regard to the number of existing locations conducting programmes. According to the national expert: 'In Poland, approximately 200 locations conduct programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence. They are attended by 3500 people annually. These programmes are implemented by the Centres for Crisis Intervention, among others, but are dependent on local authorities in the area.' (Dyjakon 2013)

14 The number of programmes that took part in the IMPACT survey does not reflect the number of all perpetrator programmes in the particular countries.

15 In several organisations, work with perpetrators has grown out of earlier work with victims of violence, e.g. in Italy and Bulgaria.

16 In 2013 GDP per capita in PPS in Eastern European and Baltic countries was lower than the EU–28 average (100)

and varies from 55 in Romania to 82 in the Czech Republic (Eurostat 2014).

17 The process of the *Convention's* ratification differs in each country. In Poland, for example, the Prime Minister must agree to the initiation of negotiations on the document, and then the Council of Ministries must approve the document's signing. When the document is signed, the Council of Ministries must approve its ratification. After that, both houses of Parliament (lower and upper, separately) must approve the document, and the approval must be confirmed by the President of the Polish Republic. The *Convention* is ratified after the President's announcement of a decision.

18 In March 2015, after several failed attempts, the Polish Parliament approved the *Convention* and the Polish President signed its ratification.

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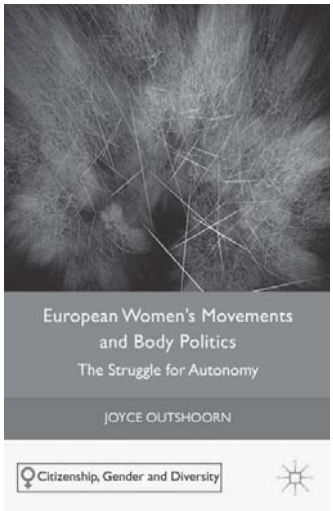

Outshoorn, Joyce (ed.), Dudová, Radka, Freidenvall, Lenita, Prata, Ana. 2015. *European Women's Movements and Body Politics. The Struggle for Autonomy. Palgrave Macmillan.*

Taking a long-term historical view, this book examines how women's and feminist movements have contested the dominant discourses and state politics that have impeded women's autonomy over their bodies since the late 1960s. Citizenship is usually understood as guaranteeing political, social and economic rights, but women's movements have sought to extend it to include women's rights to bodily integrity. This book examines two important facets of this struggle, namely prostitution and the right to abortion, as they relate to four countries – the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden – with special attention paid to how migration and Europeanization have affected political debates and policies. The authors show how policy legacies from the past partly determine outcomes, but also how women's groups have been key to policy change. They also make the case for expanding how we define citizenship to include bodily integrity, reinforcing women's right to autonomy in this new era of biotechnological revolution.