



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

The EU as a global actor

Is the EU diffusing norms in third countries through NGOs?

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This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the role of the European Union as a global actor and as promoter of gender equality in third countries.

The thesis consists of a case study of the relation between the EU and a Mexican NGO, where I am trying to determine its effect on the formulation of public policies protecting women's rights.

To analyze the case study I benefit from the role theory, normative power and inter-regionalism.

The findings of the study suggest that the EU is employing instruments such as political dialogue together with the principle of conditionality in order to spread ideas, norms and values. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the collaboration with the civil society is an important element in the way the EU diffuses norms and values in third countries.

Preface

As a Mexican, I am familiar with the situation of women in the country. I am aware of the existence of a social situation afflicted by inequalities and how this is creating barriers for gender equality in the country. Since I moved to Norway, I have learned about the importance of international cooperation for the protection of human rights, therefore it was natural for me to write my master thesis about the EU's role in the promotion of human rights in third countries.

It was after my visit to the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels that I came across the following sentence “ *By financing projects that implement this legislative initiative, the EU has helped Veracruz to become one of the most advanced states in protecting women's human dignity*” (EuropeAid, 2007), referring to a project financed by the EU in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. The formulation of this sentence motivated me to have a closer look into this case described as a “success story” by the EU, and to study the components leading to this conclusion, it was then when it became clear to me that this was the right subject for my thesis.

When it comes to studying the formulation of policies addressing gender violence, I believe there should be a holistic approach to understanding this phenomenon, meaning that it is important to study the phenomenon, the process and outcome. However, due to the complexity of the subject, the distance and a limited timeframe to write this thesis, I choose to concentrate on the EU's role on the protection of women's rights in Mexico.

Writing this thesis has been both an utterly challenging and an incredible interesting process. I first want to express my gratitude to the University of Agder and to my supervisor Anne Elizabeth Stie, for her guidance, thorough advice and encouragement along this process. I also want to thank the informants in Mexico City, Veracruz and Brussels for sharing your time with me. Finally, I want to thank my friends and family in Norway and in Mexico for their constant support and patience, especially to my husband Ronny for his care and love and for always believing in me.

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List of abbreviations

CIDEM Women`s Collective Action on Research, development and Education
CMDPDH Comision Mexicana de la Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos
CONAVIM Comision Nacional para Prevenir y Erradicar la violencia Contra las Mujeres
CSO-LA Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities
EEAS European External Action Service
EIDHR European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU European Union
FTAA Free Trade Area of the Americas
INEGI Instituto Nacional del Estadísticas y Geografía
MGD Millennium Development Goals
MOU Memorandum Of Understanding
NAFTA North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
PAN Partido Action Nacional
PCD Policy Coherence for Development
PRD Partido Revolucionario Democratico
PRI Partido Revolucionario Institucional
SCL Social Cohesion Laboratory
SME Small and Medium Enterprises

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2007 a new legislation against gender violence in Mexico was presented as a response to the increasing gender-related crimes in the country. The initiative was taken by Dr. Marcela Lagarde, a politician from the Partido Revolución Democrática (PRD) known for her engagement on women`s rights in Mexico. The proposal was approved unanimously by the Mexican House of Representatives (Cámara de Diputados) in 2008 and received the name of General Law on Women`s Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV), also known as law against gender violence, by general law is understood that the legislation is valid on federal level, but that the local authorities on each state have the responsibility of adapting, formulating and implementing the law in accordance to the local situation.

To formulate this law it was considered the conclusion and recommendations provided by among others, the National Commission on Human Rights, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), and the National Institute of Women, which were based on international agreements, conventions and recommendations from international actors such as the United Nations (UN) European Union (EU) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR).

The adoption and the implementation of this law is important for the protection of women`s rights in Mexico and there are some indicators of the EU`s involvement on this process. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the EU`s impact on the adoption and implementation of law.

The law against gender violence has as general provisions, not only to eradicate all forms of gender-based crimes, but it also seeks to empower women in Mexico through regulations and penalizations of institutional crimes. As article 1 informs, the purpose of the law is prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women by establishing a coordination between the federal and the state level, including the municipalities.

Through definitions, classifications and typifications of the different forms of violence, this new legislation provides a conceptual and theoretical base not only from a gender perspective, but also from the basic human rights of women. In addition to this, the law provides protocols for investigation and penalizations of crimes based on gender inequality,

as well as a set of preventive guidelines for the authorities to follow in the implementation of the law (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública Del Estado de Veracruz, 2008)

The process leading to presentation of the bill started with an intensive study made on national level aiming to show the seriousness of this situation and the causes leading to gender violence resulting feminicides in the country. This study needed a high-level coordination between the 31, states additional to the capital, Mexico City.

In the state of Veracruz, located on eastern Mexico, a well-established non-governmental organization (NGO) named Women`s Collective Action on Research, Development and Education (CIDEM) had the task to perform the studies and to lead the process towards the adoption of the aforementioned law. The process initiated with a strong awareness raising campaign where politicians, academics and public servants and activist collaboration making the issue known for politician`s, media and the population. To lead such initiative, CIDEM responded to a call for proposal by applying for financial support from the European Union (EU).

Since the project presented by CIDEM fulfilled the EU's conditions for funding, a new EU-NGO collaboration started in the country. This relation developed from being a merely financial cooperation to a collaboration program lasting for over 7 years, where CIDEMs initiatives addressing women`s rights were officially supported by the EU`s delegation in Mexico. During the collaboration period, the EU provided technical assistance and financial aid to this NGO on several projects and actions that were created to influence the decision making and the inclusion of a legal framework to protect women`s rights in Mexico, particularly in the state of Veracruz where CIDEMs work has a stronger impact. These projects are considered among the factors leading to the passing of the bill on gender violence in the state. Furthermore, during the collaboration period, CIDEMs actions addressed the authorities for the correct implementation of the law on gender violence and for several of its reforms, including the typification of feminicide.

CIDEM`s goal on the eradication of gender violence is consistent with the EU`s guidelines on development policy in which the Union intends to spread core values, such as the protection of the basic human rights of women, through the funding of projects and through its relations with third countries. These guidelines are a part of the EU`s gender mainstreaming strategy, a concept used since introduced by Anderson (1993) to describe the efforts to scrutinize and

reinvent the process of policy formulation and its implementation across all issues and at all levels from a gender-differentiated perspective (True, 2003). The idea behind this concept is not only to address, but to rectify issues leading to gender inequality. With this in mind, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on gender mainstreaming to the member states where it is argued that the correct implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy will not only “promote equality between genders, but it also result in a better use of human resources, improve the decision making and enhance the functioning of democracy” (Council of Europe, 1998).

Following these recommendations gender mainstreaming became an important approach for the formulation of the EU’s development policy where norms and values such as gender equality were integrated into the Unions relations with third countries (European Commission, 2007b).

The EU’s commitment to promote such values in other regions can be what scholars refer to as diffusion of norms, which Börzel and Risse (2009b) define as “*processes through which ideas, policies, and institutions spread transnationally, i.e., cross-borders and cross-regions, across time and space*”. Furthermore, they argue that in order for diffusion of norms to occur, there has to be some relation or partnership between countries or regions and the EU. This will allow the Union to use different mechanisms of diffusion going from: manipulation of utility calculations (conditionality) to persuasion (political dialogue) and emulation. The aim of external diffusion is not limited to the promotion of European values in third countries, as it is considered an instrument to protect European interests by contributing to stability, security and prosperity in partner regions (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

In the context of development policy, the EU is assuming a role as a promoter of human rights and democracy in third countries. Traditionally, this role involves a close collaboration with the civil society and NGOs by supporting their contribution to policy-making (European Commission, 2007b).

There are several NGOs in Mexico wanting financial support from the EU. However, the resources are limited, which is why the EU has set guidelines for the types of project qualifying to receive EU-funding. The EU delegation in Mexico highlights the importance of supporting projects related to gender equality (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

In the EU-CIDEM relation, the Union as a donor is financially supporting an NGO to pursue its goal on influencing the decision making in the state of Veracruz for the recognition and the strengthening of women`s rights.

1.1 Research objective and research question

In the context of the EU development policy, this thesis is a qualitative case study of the relation between the EU and CIDEM and its significance for the formulation of policies regarding women`s rights in the state Of Veracruz, Mexico. For this, I will consider as a background the EU-Mexico bilateral relations which were formalized under the consolidation of the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement (Global Agreement) in 2000. The Global Agreement is important for this research because it facilitates the direct financial co-operation from the EU to NGOs working with projects regarding human rights in Mexico (European Union, 2000) and because scholars consider such agreements as instruments used by the EU for the diffusion of European norms and values in third countries (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

To analyze the EU-CIDEM relation I decided to focus on the EU`s multi-level gender mainstreaming strategy for Mexico which includes working together with Mexican authorities parallel to assisting the civil society in the country, an approach that was a particular element of resistance from the Mexican side when negotiating the Global Agreement, as they opposed to the direct funding of Mexican NGOs by arguing the importance of the Mexican authorities being the only receiver of the EU-donations (Szymanski & Smith, 2005). This position created challenges for the consolidation of the agreement and became one of the more debated elements during the negotiation period.

The global agreement functions as an institutional and operational framework where both parties are committed to yearly political dialogues. These high level political dialogues are perceived as instruments of influence for both parties as they function as platforms for exchange of ideas, experiences and concerns in which is intended to cover bilateral and international matters of mutual interest. The idea behind this is to deepen and strengthen the bilateral cooperation on specific sectors and to solve common issues (EuropeAid, 2010).

Though the EU and Mexico had collaborated in trades in the past, this agreement expanded and strengthened the collaboration field of human rights between both parties by including a platform for co-operation on social cohesion. The main priorities for cooperation for each period are stated on the Country Strategy Paper (CSP). For the period 2002-2006, the EU stated the following list as the main priority for cooperation, underlying with this the EU's engagement in the protection of human rights and democratic principles (European Union, 2002):

1. The fight against poverty and social development.
2. Co-operation in the economic sector.
3. Scientific, technical, educational and cultural co-operation.
4. Consolidation of the rule of law and institutional support.

Moreover, on the CSP 2002-2006, the EU attributes the political dialogue as an important instrument to achieve common goals. On the same paper, gender equality is described as a matter of mutual interest for both parties, calling with this for closer collaboration on this issue. *“Mexico and the EU should pursue a close political dialogue on social topics of mutual interest, such as for example the equitable distribution of incomes, equality of opportunity, gender equality, the fight against all forms of poverty, the problems of migration and regional development”* (European Union, 2002).

Considering the collaboration between EU and CIDEM, this thesis examines the impact of this relation on the policy-making in the state of Veracruz, where I formulate my research question as follows:

“What role did the EU play in the process surrounding the adoption and implementation of the law on gender violence in the state of Veracruz, Mexico and to what degree can it be argued that the EU-CIDEM relation is a case of Norm diffusion in which the EU is influencing state actors through the collaboration with NGOs?”

The background for my research question is the long-lasting relation between the EU and CIDEM which according to the EU, has helped the state of Veracruz to become “one of the most advanced states in protecting women's dignity”. Furthermore, the EU describes Veracruz's legislation as the strictest legislation on women's rights in Mexico (EuropeAid, 2007).

For the EU, cooperating with NGOs across the world complies with the Union's role in promoting human rights and democratic principles in third countries. This commitment with the civil society is distinctive of the EU's self-image as a normative force in the international scene (Lerch and Schweltnus, 2006), as well as a stablishing a collaboration framework on state-level where political dialogue is used as a mechanism of diffusion (Börzel & Risse, 2009a). Through these dialogues, the EU seeks to influence its partners to adopt ideas and norms which are in accordance with the Union.

1.2 Relevance of the research

The importance of this research lies in the insight it provides on the different mechanisms the EU benefits from on issues regarding human rights and democratization during the negotiation of agreements with third countries; moreover, considering the EU as a normative power (Manners, 2002), this thesis will examine the significance of the role the EU played in the process towards the adoption of the law on gender violence in Veracruz, Mexico where the cooperation between the EU and CIDEM is regarded as an instrument for the EU to diffuse norms and values that are coherent with the Union's.

The relation between the EU and Mexico formalized under the Global Agreement has an inter-regional nature (Sanahuja, 2000b), meaning that the relation is founded on three pillars: institutionalized political dialogue, trade and cooperation as well as a "democracy clause" which attempts to guarantee the democratic practices and observance for human rights as the foundation of the agreement (Sanahuja, 2000b). These three pillars facilitated the EU assistance and financial cooperation on human rights with the civil society on projects related to the rising of public awareness, education and training of public servants; furthermore, they are consistent to the EU development policy as a civilian power where regional integration or inter-regionalism is perceived as the best way of managing social and political conflict by stimulating stability (Börzel & Risse, 2009a). Inter-regionalism is therefore a mean to address and tackle the challenges resulting from globalization and interdependence in the world economy (Doctor, 2007); furthermore, Börzel and Risse (2009a), argue that inter-regional agreements are a reflection of the EU's "actorness" in the international scene and are characterized by the complexity of its content, the policy instruments and the outcomes.

While some scholars refer to inter-regionalism as a strategy to maintain the stability in Europe, others refer to it as a strategy to enhance the union's identity as a normative power. Farrell (2007) refers to inter-regionalism as an instrument used by the EU to export the Union's model of governance to other regions and to strengthen its own identity as a promoter of democracy; thus facilitating norm transferring in third countries even without the prospect of accession (Farrell, 2007). However, the diffusion of European ideas in other regions might encounter resistance, which is why the Union has developed a toolbox for the diffusion of external ideas, where manipulation of utilities, conditionality and persuasion are among the instruments used by the EU when seeking to influence third countries with European norms and values (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

Usually these mechanisms go "hand by hand", meaning that the EU as the donor can manipulate utilities by offering to the beneficiary financial and technical assistance or by incurring sanctions if the requisites of the partnership are not fulfilled. At the same time, the donor can diffuse external ideas by persuading its partner through communication and reason giving. The use of normative statements is regular under practice because it gives the diffuser the opportunity to communicate its standing point as well as to disseminate ideas and norms in accordance to its own values. Furthermore, persuasion emphasizes the role of international organizations, that have the means to teach state actors international ideas (Börzel & Risse, 2009a) and (Farrell, 2007).

In this context, NGOs play an important role when it comes to diffusion of norms as they have the channels to introduce new ideas, initiate actions as well as to lobby for policy change (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). Usually NGOs are part advocacy networks created to enable the outcome of an action by building a link between actors in the civil society, state and international organizations. NGOs seek collaboration with an international organization when their causes and actions are ignored by the state; the purpose of such collaborations is to bring pressure on states from the outside (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).

As mentioned earlier, the negotiations of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement faced several obstacles regarding the "democracy clause" and the cooperation chapter which enables the EU to finance NGOs in Mexico (Sanahuja, 2000b). These obstacles were tackled though five rounds of negotiations where both partners discussed their concerns. On one side, the Mexican authorities had a vision of a free trade agreement rejecting political interference,

including any direct funding to Mexican NGOs, on the other side, the EU's expectation of the agreement was to create a relation with a strong political and social dimension. As far as the democratic clause, the European Parliament characterized it as nonnegotiable and demanded that the applicability of the agreement would be conditioned to the respect of the clause (European Parliament, 1998).

1.3 The method

To answer the aforementioned research question I will first review the role theory (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012) to have a better understanding of EU's role conception as a promoter of human rights in third countries. I will then benefit from Normative Power (Manners, 2002), which exemplifies how the EU promotes democratic principles in other regions, continuing with a review over the different mechanisms the EU applies on its external relations in order to persuade its partners into adapting European norms and values. For this, I will benefit from the concept of Inter-regionalism (Börzel and Risse 2009), in which the principle of conditionality is employed as a one of several tools to complement the EU's diffusion of ideas and norms in third countries.

The data for this study will be collected through qualitative methods. Essentially, I choose to concentrate on document analysis and interviews to key informants in Mexico City, Veracruz and Brussels and secondary sources such as academic articles and newspapers. For the document analysis I will review the EU's commitment to the promotion of women's rights in Mexico and how this commitment reflects on the EU's official documents. Though my main focus will be on the CSPs, I will also examine the Global Agreement between the EU and Mexico, aiming to identify if the EU's commitment to gender issues has being formalized since the consolidation of the agreement, or if this engagement has developed over the course of time.

As I consider that normative statements also play an important role in this case, I will analyze the different statements from the EU regarding gender issues in Mexico.

The informants selected for the interviews are strategically chosen according to their position on institutions, such as; EuropeAid, The EU's delegation to Mexico, CIDEM, The National Human Rights Commission, Mexican Embassy to the EU, and other members of the civil society working on policy making for gender equality in Mexico.

1.4 The outline of the thesis

This thesis contains five chapters. The first chapter introduces the objective and relevance of the study; it first describes the background of the relation between the EU and CIDEM, than it presents the research question accompanied by a description of how this will be answered. In chapter two I will go through the analytic framework. Here I will start by analyzing the EU's commitment and strategy as a global actor within the framework of Normative Power Europe and Inter-regionalism. I will then continue with an explanation of the methodology used for this study, where I will present the process of data collection step-by-step.

On chapter three I will undertake a case study of the process leading to the adoption of the law on gender violence in Veracruz, Mexico. The case study will be focused on the relation between the EU and CIDEM. Therefore, I chose to illustrate this by making a timeline of events which will describe the projects led by CIDEM and finance by the EU that were directed to the policy making in Veracruz.

Chapter four is where I will answer my research question by applying the theoretical framework to my empirical data and by discussing the research findings. The results from this chapter will answer if the EU-CIDEM relation regarding the law on gender violence is a case of diffusion of ideas and if the EU has whether or not influenced the adoption of the law on gender violence through its collaboration with this NGO.

Finally, on chapter five I summarize and conclude the findings of this study.

Chapter 2: Analytic framework

This chapter reviews the analytic framework which will be used to examine the empirical data collection and to answer my research question. On the first part of this chapter, I will benefit from the role theory to understand the role of the European Union as global actors, I will then examine the EU's "actorness" and engagement on the protection of human rights and democratization through the concept of Normative Power Europe, a concept introduced by Ian Manners in 2002 which suggests that the EU is not only founded on a normative basis, but because of this basis, it also acts in a normative way on its relations with third countries (Manners, 2002). Furthermore, this chapter will also review the concept of inter-regionalism where (Börzel & Risse, 2009a) present an analysis of the different mechanism applied by the EU in order to fulfill its own goal on the promotion of democratic principles and to preserve its identity as global actor.

Theoretical approach

2.1 The role theory

The EU's active promotion of the Union's core values, such as the protection of human rights, rule of law and the promotion of democratic principles characterizes the EU as an international actor (Manners, 2002). Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), apply the role theory to analyze the EU's role as a normative power and to explain the perception and expectations for the EU's international commitment, arguing that the behavior of an institution is often influenced by the assumption of internal and external expectations.

Role is defined as social positions that are constituted by ego or identity and external expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organized group (Harnisch, Frank, & Maull, 2011).

The process of *role conception*, consist in both an actor's consideration of its own place and position given a social context and the external expectations on how the actor should behave considering the social context (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). Such behavior is believed to be persistent, as it is often related to the actor's character; however, this behavior might be confronted by situations leading to adjustments or re-shaping (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012).

Thus, role conception is part of a social process developed from an institution's identity, its performance and the perception from others (Harnisch et al., 2011).

In the context of the EU's foreign policy, an actor might be influenced by its identity and by the assumptions from third parties over the expected behavior in a given context, Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), refer to this as *role expectation*, and implies that it is the strength of the institutional identity recognized by external actors what creates the assumptions surrounding how the institution is to respond to a given situation. In other words, this role expectation is to some extent about fulfilling third-parties' expectations in order to maintain an already established recognition (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). Moreover, the concept of role expectation is not only regarding third parties, as it also relates to the domestic assumptions over what is appropriate and what is not, and how an institution should reflect its identity through its performance, for an institution like the EU, role expectation is as much as fulfilling domestic and third parties' expectations (Harnisch et al., 2011).

The balance between the role conception and the role expectations leads to a policy-making, in the role theory this policy making is known as *role performance*, which is defined as the actual policy behavior of an institution in a given context (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). This performance is a result of the actor's background and identity together with the domestic and external expectations. For Harnisch et al. (2011), institutions' actions are often affected by a process of internal interpretation, and by the third parties' expectations, these interpretations shape the institution's behavior, its policy making and its performance both internally and externally (Harnisch et al., 2011). The interactions between the EU's role conception and the role expectations leading to the role performance are part of socialization interplay between the role beholder and external actors. According to Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), such interplay among actors leads to specific international roles linked to a formal position and power status, in the case of the EU's foreign policy, the position as a normative power.

2.2 Normative Power

Normative Power Europe (NPE) is a concept introduced by Ian Manners in 2002. In his contribution he argues that a normative power is characterized by the ability of influencing the thinking of other actors on an international system (Manners, 2002). Manners associates

NPE with the concept of *idée force* also known as ideological power, introduced by Duchêne in 1973. This association has its roots on the assumption that the Union's desire to highlight its own values in other regions is decisive for the Union's international identity. Moreover, Manners makes use of this assumption on the arguments regarding the different roles the EU can adopt, referring to the role as a civilian power or military power, where he argues that the EU's ability to shape the conception of normal in international relations needs to be recognized as a normative power (Manners, 2002). Furthermore, he outlines that the EU promotes its ideas and values through diplomatic acts, labelling and shaping conception of others. Contrary to a civilian or a military power which are normally characterized by the use of other instruments; such as economic motivation, punitive actions and ability of using military strategies to its disposal.

According to Manners (2002), the normative basis of the EU has been present since the Schuman declaration in 1950 where the principle of peace was a key element for the declaration and a fundamental principle leading to the development of the Union's policy-making. Furthermore, the incorporation of liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights as the principles marking the core of the EU's policies and treaties. Through the promotion of these principles in the world's politics, he argues, the EU enhances its role as a normative power by including these criteria on its agreements with third countries (Manners, 2002). With these observations, Manners argues that the EU's role as a normative power is a result of the Union's history and that not only the EU is constructed on normative basis, but most importantly, because of these basis the EU is predispose to act in a normative way in the world politics (Manners, 2002).

2.2.1 How does the EU diffuses norms and values in third countries?

For the EU to be considered a normative power is necessary to see beyond its ability or intentions to shape the conception of normal in the international scene. Manners (2002), suggests therefore six factors that contribute to the way the EU diffuses norms and values in its international relations. To formulate these, he takes into account previous research by Whitehead (2001), Manners and Whitman (2000), Kinnvall (1995) to categorize the different approaches the EU benefits from to further promote desirable norms and values. He classifies these factors from softer and general mechanisms to concrete activities; starting with

Contagion, which implies the unintentional dissemination of outcomes from existing EU's norms. Contagion is related to example setting in world politics.

The second factor observed by Manners is *Informational diffusion*, a well-established mechanism the EU benefits from on the process of shaping others conceptions. This idea is a result of strategic communications such as dissemination of new policies or declaratory communications.

Following this, the Union practices the *Procedural diffusion*, which involves the institutionalization of relations between the EU and its international partners in form of an inter-regional co-operation agreement or a membership. As part of procedural diffusion, partners benefit from the outcome resulting from political dialogues because it gives other actors the opportunity of to being a part of the decision- making process.

Following procedural diffusion, *transference* comes as a natural step, usually observed when the EU exchanges goods, aid, or technical assistance with third parties. In other words, transference is related with financial means resulting from agreements between two parties. Manners underlines that both procedural diffusion and transference go hand in hand with the principle of conditionality as it is often manifested in financial rewards or sanctions from the EU to its partners.

Overt diffusion is the outcome of the EU's physical presence in third states. This might be identified on the monitoring routines and evaluations as well as in the presence of EU delegations and embassies in third countries. Another factor contributing to the diffusion of norms is the *cultural filter*, this factor marks the effect of international norms and political learning, in which actors are involved on a cultural interplay regarding the construction of knowledge and the building of political identity.

The Union uses cultural filter through programs related to education and dissemination on human rights and democracy.

According to Manners, the above-mentioned factors are the main contributor to the EU's diffusion of norms. He argues the importance of these factors for the EU's standing point on the global politics, leading the Union to a position as a normative power (Manners, 2002).

Despite the well usage of distinct mechanisms and strategies to promote the EU's core values in third countries, there are internal and external factors determining its success. Börzel (2010), outline the factors which are decisive for the impact of the EU's normative power. She first points out the *cost of the adaption* as the first challenge, referring to the cost of possible reforms, cultural changes and the cost of implementation of new law on the target

country. Secondly, she points at the *external push* to adopt the EU's requirements. On this, she refers to political pressure during the negotiation faces before two parties consolidate an agreement. The third factor will be the target country's capacity *to adapt* to the EU's requirements. This not only refers to the financial side, but it includes the institutional ability to formulate and implement reforms. Following this, the target country should also have the *willingness* to respond to the EU's demands and promote domestic changes and finally, the power from the target country to resist to the EU's pressure (Börzel, 2010).

This can also be related with the economic situation of the target country balanced with the mechanism of transference used by the EU in order to shape conceptions.

Moreover, Börzel (2010) argues that the interdependence between the EU and the target country can play a significant role in the degree of political pressure the EU can exercise on a third country. With this observation, she suggests that target countries might have a positive outcome from improving the relations with the Union as it means access to trade possibilities, economic integration and other rewards. However, she points out that it is not unlikely that the target country is in possession of resources, such as oil and gas, which might be of interest for the EU. A scenario like this has as a result an increased interdependency between actors which affects the way the EU negotiates deals with third countries.

Bengtsson and Elgström (2012) analyzes the role the EU has in global politics as normative power, where they define a normative power as an actor that influences the thinking of other actors rather than using coercive means to achieve goals (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). On their studies, they argue how acceptance and legitimacy in the international scene may increase as a result of this influential power, drawing parallels to Nye's (2004) notion of Soft power which implies that actor's foreign policy is based on persuasion rather than coercion and indicates that through normative actions, an actor might have the possibility to form part on a "key position" on a policy area (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012).

Additionally, the success as a normative power relays on the actor's ability of managing its resources in order to achieve goals. In the context of this argument, Bengtsson & Elgström exemplify the use of benefits in form of technical assistance or financial aid in exchange of desirable means.

Other than the use of resources as instruments, in order to be acknowledged by external actors as a normative power, an institution is required to have leadership and the ability of using it in order to influence others. In this context, Bengtsson and Elgström (2012) describe three types of leadership considered necessary for the shaping of conceptions. On one hand, an actor needs to have *intellectual leadership*, which is related to an actor's ability to establish a common ground for vision and objectives that are set to guide the development of the negotiations between partners. This is possible through the formulation of challenges and an actor's ability to inspire others towards a mutual solution. Secondly, a normative actor needs to have *structural leadership*, referring to the significance of material and immaterial resources during the negotiations period (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012), the effect of which depends on the leader's pre-established recognition and acceptance from other actors. Such recognitions are usually linked to the interaction between leader and followers, more importantly, to the outcome of these interactions, which is, to some degree, influenced by external expectations and perception of the leader and by the leader's level of legitimacy (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). Finally, they describe *entrepreneurial leadership*, which takes place by the use of informational advantage (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012).

On the debate of the EU as a normative power, Lerch and Schweltnus (2006) argue that such recognition is not only reflected on an actor's ability to influence others, but it also corresponds to the degree of coherence between an actor's rhetoric and the actual practice. In other words, between the intentions of promoting normative values and the practice of these intentions (Lerch and Schweltnus, 2006).

This argument is based on Franck (1990) who suggested that legitimacy and coherence are interconnected, in a way that the degree of a rule's legitimacy depends to some extent on its coherence between intention and outcomes (Lerch and Schweltnus, 2006). With this in mind, Lerch and Schweltnus (2006), argue that incoherence in the policy-making might become an obstacle for an actor to establish legitimacy. Hence, it will create difficulties for a normative power to shape other's conceptions of normality among its partners.

2.3 Inter-regionalism

Inter-regionalism is often described as the institutionalized relations between two blocs with the purpose of establishing a secure multilateral order to deal with economic and security

challenges beyond regions (Doctor, 2007). The description is related to Robson's (1993) argument where he classifies inter-regionalism as an extension of a “new” regional strategy adopted by state and non-state actors as a response to globalization and economic interdependence. In the context of the EU and its foreign policy, Doctor (2007) argues that inter-regional agreements fall into the description of “partnerships”, which to some degree, increases the EU’s ability to influence its partners with normative ideas (Doctor, 2007). “New” regionalism is therefore related with governance as it is based on openness and interdependence, contrary to the “old” regionalism, which was based on protectionism and sealed internal markets (Grugel, 2004).

Börzel and Risse (2009a) argue that inter-regionalism is an strategy designed to tackle cross-border problems by managing social and political conflict and fostering economic growth with the intention of ensuring peace and security (Börzel & Risse, 2009a). Furthermore, they argue that co-operation between regions has become a part of the EU’s governance package through which the EU diffuses ideas of regional integration in other countries functioning as mechanism for diffusion of norms, as it intends to promote democracy and socio-economic development through dialogue and mutual cooperation (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

2.3.1 Mechanisms of diffusion

The EU’s ability to diffuse European ideas and norms in third countries is conditional to the relation among parties. With this observation, Börzel and Risse (2009b) emphasize the importance of the EU’s cooperation agreements with third countries as they increase the EU’s ability to spread desirable norms and values. In this context, diffusion receives the following definition:

“...processes through which ideas, policies, and institutions spread transnationally, i .e., cross-border and cross-regions, across time and space” (Börzel & Risse, 2009b).

With this in mind, Börzel and Risse (2009a) identify five mechanisms of diffusion the EU benefits from on its external relations; the first mechanism known as *coercion* implies that an actor has no choice but to accept an idea because the legal and/or physical imposition from the EU’s side is far too powerful. This mechanism is drawn from research done by Ian Hurd (1999) on legitimacy and authority in international politics. However, Börzel and Risse (2009a) clarify that on its external relations, the EU does not have a coercive power. The

reason behind this is that such mechanism is too demanding both in time and resources which is why the EU invests in the use of mechanisms that involve dialogue and social learning.

The second mechanism identified by Börzel and Risse (2009a) is known as *manipulation of utility calculations*, in which the EU provides positive incentives by giving access to markets, financial and technical assistance, or negative incentives, in form of sanctions or by empowering domestic actors who push for the adoption of ideas and sanctions.

As part of this mechanism, the EU relies on the use of external incentives or conditionality as an instrument of persuasion. With conditionality the EU tries to manipulate the cost-benefit calculations of target actors through creating positive or negative incentives (Börzel & Risse, 2009a). The principle of conditionality is usually manifested on the cooperation agreement between the EU and its partner and it's defined by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2011) as "*bargaining process in which an international actor uses selective incentives in order to change the behavior of actors in the target country*".

In the context of the EU's role as a promoter of human rights in third countries, this definition implies that the principle of conditionality is perceived as an instrument in which democracy can be promoted by the EU when negotiating a partnership agreement. (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011).

Socialization as the third mechanism is based on a social constructivism approach on the "logic of appropriateness" and normative rationality. Socialization implies that an actor is pursued to adopt norms because it is the right thing to do and not because it is the profitable thing to do, such process is related to a normative pressure from one actor to the other, and involves a complex learning process that includes habitualization in which actors redefine their interest and identity (Börzel & Risse, 2009a). Youngs (2010) argues for the importance of including political dialogues among actors during the socialization process as they are considered essential in the EU's external relations because they increase the EU's chances to influence other state actors into adapting norms and values that are recognized by internal and external actors as appropriate (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

Persuasion is the mechanism that involves communicative rationality and it refers to the actor's ability to pursue each other by the use of argumentations, reason giving and normative statements. This mechanism acknowledges the importance of including non-state actors and transnational organization in the process of persuasion. Börzel and Risse (2009a), argue the

importance of including NGOs on this mechanism as they have the ability of presenting domestic actor's international ideas and to influence state actors into accepting them.

As the fifth mechanism of diffusion outlined by Börzel and Risse (2009a), *emulation* is characterized by indirect influence rather than persuasion from the EU. This mechanism is based on the principles of lesson-drawing and competition, where actors turn to each other to borrow ideas in order to improve their performance. As part of this, actors might also examine how policies help other actors to tackle challenges before they transfer them into the domestic context. This principle relies strongly on bench-marking and usually applies to policies on the sectors of education, employment and health. Emulation is often supported by political dialogue and conditionality (Börzel & Risse, 2009a).

Figure 1 *The EU toolbox for external diffusion of ideas* (Börzel & Risse, 2009a)

Diffusion mechanism	Instrument
Coercion	Legal or physical force – military intervention
Manipulation of Utility Calculations	Conditionality
Socialization and Persuasion	Political dialogue
Emulation	Conditionality, political dialogue

The toolbox illustrated on Figure 1 summarizes how instruments like political dialogue and conditionality are decisive in the way the EU diffuses ideas on its external relations in order to ensure the successful promotion of desirable norms and values such as the protection and promotion of human rights.

Furthermore, the toolbox also shows how the mechanisms of persuasion and socialization benefit from the use of political dialogue as the main instrument of diffusion. Meaning that the process of social learning is important for both mechanisms, Börzel and Risse (2009a) argue that while socialization bases on the logic of appropriateness, in which an actor seeks to do “the right thing”, persuasion is based on the logic of arguing, in which actors intent to pursue each other through reason-giving and normative statements.

Methodologic approach

To answer my research question I choose to conduct a qualitative case study of the relation between the EU and CIDEM during the process towards the adoption of the law on gender violence, including the reform on the typification of feminicide, in the state of Veracruz. Such analysis requires an in-depth understanding of the reason why this relation is regarded as a successful one. Therefore I consider that a qualitative approach to this research is far more appropriate than a quantitative one, as a qualitative case study provides the researcher the opportunity to have a personal contact with the chosen case (Hellevik, 2003) and because a case study gives a deeper and more detailed understanding of a single phenomenon (Yin, 2013).

2.4 Data collection

Qualitative researches intent to understand, describe and explain social developments through a variety of approaches (Gibbs, 2008). As part of the qualitative approach for this study, I will benefit from document analysis together with semi-structural interviews.

The document analysis consists of primary documents; such as the CSPs from 2002-2006, 2007-2013 and official action plan documents for the bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico, statements from EU officials on issues regarding women`s rights are also a part of the data collection, as well as recommendations from the European Parliament on gender violence in the country. As secondary literature, I will benefit from newspapers article and other media coverage in order to understand the process prior to the adoption of the law against gender violence.

The interview process started out on a visit to Mexico City and Veracruz. On these visits, I interviewed officials from the EU delegation in Mexico, as well as part of the staff from CIDEM and the National Human Rights Commission in Mexico. The objective of the last-mentioned interview is to understand the situation of gender violence in Mexico and why it is important for NGOs to collaborate with international organizations such as the EU. The interviews to the EU delegation in Mexico and to CIDEM provide a deeper understanding of their collaboration between these two actors, as well as it clarifies how EU addresses social

issues through high-level political dialogue and also the potential role the EU has played in the process of the adoption of the law and its implementation.

Moreover, these interviews are complemented with interviews to the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development - EuropeAid (DG DEVCO), also known as EuropeAid, and with the Mexican Embassy to the European Union in Brussels. The first interview has as an objective to understand if and how the EU prioritizes gender for its development cooperation with third countries; furthermore, this interview sheds light on the case of gender violence in Mexico and how the EU selects the NGO receiving financial aid for projects addressing this issue. The second interview has as objective to understand the process of negotiations of agreement between the EU and Mexico and how both partners collaborate to address this phenomenon.

The criteria for the selection of informants that I interviewed in Mexico, are their key positions on the different the organization, their knowledge and involvement on women's rights in Mexico, particularly in the state of Veracruz. For the informants that I interviewed in Brussels, the criteria are based on their knowledge of the situation of women's rights in Mexico together with the geographical challenges in the country and the bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico.

The interviews that took place in Mexico and to the Mexican Embassy to the European Union where conducted in Spanish, the interview to EuropeAid was in English. Despite the clarifications of the anonymity of the interviews, my informants did not want to be recorded, except for one.

2.4.1 Methodological challenges

There are methodological challenges to each research design. As this thesis examines an understudied area where both the thematic of gender violence in Mexico is not all together a known fact and having in mind that there are few researches on the EU's diffusion of norms in Mexico, I consider that these two issues set limitations to the data collection. Moreover, there is the issue of the distance as I am writing this paper in Norway. Despite the fact that my interviews were done face-to-face in Mexico and in Brussels, a lot of the data has been collected through the internet, which makes it important to have a quality check on these before I include them on the research design. This has to be done in order to enhance the

credibility of the findings as such credibility depends on the quality of the data collection (Midtbø, 2007).

Because of the above mentioned issues, I consider that the methodological challenges for this thesis are the validity and the reliability of the data collection. Validity refers to the relevance of the research design with respect to the research question (Hellevik, 2003). It raises to the question, if the research design measures the data that was intended to be measured in order to get a valid result (Midtbø, 2007).

The reliability refers to the consistency and the accuracy of the research design. It deals with the quality of the data collected and refers to the probability of other researchers making the same observations when studying the same object (Gibbs, 2008).

High reliability is necessary to have high validity (Hellevik, 2003). A successful case study relies on the data collection, assuming it has both high validity and that the data collected is highly accurate in relation to the theoretical framework.

Considering that the main source of the data collection are the official documents from the EU, it can be assumed that this represents a challenge for the reliability of the study as it is likely that these documents are providing unilateral information and that they function, to some degree, as example- settings of the EU's development policy. To tackle this challenge, the informants selected for my interviews are chosen from different organizations and institutions which will give a more holistic and impartial understanding of the case study. Additionally, the secondary sources of literature such as articles from the newspaper also help to better understand this case study and to control the reliability of the data collection.

Another challenge is that a single case study sets limitations to identify the EU's role as a promoter of normative values in Mexico and to identify if other international actors are also promoting normative values in the country as well. There are several reasons behind the choice of a single case study (1) the fact that the EU acknowledges its relation with CIDEM as a successful one, (2) the fact that the EU-CIDEM relation has lasted for so many years, (3) the fact that there was an actual policy change during the period of the relation.

Moreover, I consider that a single case study allows me to go in-depth on the EU-CIDEM relation and will facilitate the approach employed to determine whether or not the EU is diffusing normative values in Mexico through its collaboration with NGOs.

2.4.2 Summary of the chapter

This chapter is divided in two parts. In the first part, I have gone through the analytic framework applied to answer my research question. I started with a review over the literature selected focusing on the concept of Normative Power Europe, the role theory and Inter-regionalism, in order to shed light over a variety of mechanisms applied by a global actor, in this case the EU, to promote ideas and norms in third countries. The second part of the chapter includes a step-by-step description of the methodological approach and challenges of the research design.

Chapter 3: Case Study: The law against gender violence in Veracruz, Mexico

Despite this case's limitation to the state of Veracruz, gender violence is a national challenge in Mexico; which is why I consider important to start with a brief review over this phenomenon, in order to understand why it has attracted the attention from many international organizations including the EU.

I will then continue with a review over the EU-CIDEM relation in the context of the adoption of the law on gender violence, its implementation and the typification of femicide in the state of Veracruz. This relation will be illustrated with a timeline of events highlighting the initiatives in which the EU was involved in. The timeline will shed light over the development of the EU-CIDEM relation and it will contribute to clarify the EU's possible effect on the adoption and implementation the aforementioned law.

3.1 The phenomenon of gender violence in Mexico – A contextual background

Violence against women is an international phenomenon often influenced by a considerable amount of social factors. Not only does it affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of the victim, but it also has a negative impact on the development of society in general. The UN reports that this phenomenon is most common in places where there is greater gender inequality and where women do not have control over the decision-making, which is why the goal on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women also addresses this phenomenon and is included in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (United Nations, 2005).

There are several social aspects that have a significant effect on this phenomenon. Usually, violence against women is related to socio-economic instability, accompanied by general inequality and impunity (Vásquez, 2009). However, it's known that traditions and religious views have an effect on this phenomenon, which creates new challenges for international actors to promote gender equality worldwide (Merry, 2009). Meaning that to achieve the

goal on the eradication of gender violence, actors need to tackle this phenomenon through a variety of strategies addressing different levels.

In 2011 the UN Women in collaboration with the National Institute for Women in Mexico (INMujeres) conducted a national study on femicide. The objective of which was to fill the gap of the data collected to formulate the law on gender violence by showing the tendencies of femicides in Mexico and the factors behind such phenomenon.

The study reported an amount of 36.606 cases of gender-based violence resulting in death during a period from 1985 until 2010 (UN Women, 2011). Furthermore, the study links these casualties to poverty, impunity and lack of institutional trust, and shows as well that gender-based violence has higher tendencies in rural zones where victims have more difficulties to access the legal system due to lack of knowledge or lack institutional trust (UN Women, 2011), two problems that add invisibility to this phenomenon.

The National Institute for Statistics and Geography in Mexico (INEGI) agrees on these observations, giving as an example; Ciudad Juarez, a city which is internationally known for the high number of femicides, violence and poverty. In this city, 70% of the population lives under poverty (INEGI, 2011), The studies coordinated by UN women (2011), reports three elements that aggravates this phenomenon: its invisibility, its normality and the impunity surrounding it. These three elements stands as obstacles for authorities to be able to tackle the situation on gender violence and femicide in the country, and allows this phenomenon to spread (UN Women, 2011).

3.2 International engagement on gender violence in Mexico

According to CNNMexico (2011), the phenomenon of gender violence in the country started to draw negative attention from international organizations since the mid 90's due to the high number of femicides in Ciudad Juarez. As a result of this, NGOs working for gender equality emerged on national basis, proclaiming that the gender violence in Mexico is not an isolated phenomenon in Ciudad Juarez, but is in fact a problem spreading across the country (Torres, 2011). The strong engagement from NGOs and various human rights organizations capture the commitment of international organs; such as the UN, the EU and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which addressed this issue for the first time in 2002 by

starting a case against the Mexican state for the feminicides in Ciudad Juarez ("Cotton Field," 2009).

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that gender equality and women`s basic human rights became a subject of debate and international engagement, subsequently to the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which took place in Beijing in 1995. Following this, the phenomenon of violence against women in Mexico received more attention from the media and from different institutions across the country (Informant Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2015) , It became a matter of debate in the society and it has been supported through initiatives taken by NGO`s, institutions and politicians.

In the aftermath of the CEDAW in 1995, the EU revealed signs of concern on the development of the gender-based violence situation in Mexico, and the rest of Latin-America for that matter. This concern was emphasized during the EU-Latin America and Caribbean summit (EU-CELAC) in 1999. Where the Union stated the importance of gender mainstreaming as part of the bi-regional relations, affirming that "The gender aspect will be taken into account as a basis for all co-operation programs" (Debusscher, 2012). This statement expresses not only the EU`s awareness on the situation, but also the EU`s willingness to collaborate towards a solution by mainstreaming gender issues to the Union`s bilateral relation with Mexico. From then on, this issue has been, to some extent, formally addressed by the EU on negotiations with Mexico.

However, despite the international engagement, this phenomenon has not stopped. Rather violence against women is increasing in the country. There are many elements affecting this development, Wright (2011) argues that gender violence in Mexico, especially since 2006, is a side effect of the general situation in the country combined with a high level of impunity and lack of trust in the institutions (Wright, 2011).

Despite these arguments, the Mexican authorities in collaboration with the civil society have tried to address this issue by creating a legal framework in accordance to the international agreements Mexico is part of. According to my informant at CIDEM, such agreements are decisive factors on the engagement of NGOs on gender equality and on the creation of a legal framework protecting. Through these agreements it is easier to be heard since they serve as argumentations and reminders to the Mexican authorities of their international responsibilities (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

3.3 EU-CIDEM co-operation towards the adoption of the law on gender violence.

The beginning of the EU-CIDEM cooperation traces back to 2004 when CIDEM was invited to join a partnership with a French NGO also working for women`s rights. Through this partnership, both NGOs worked together on a platform of exchange of experiences and ideas in the city of Xalapa in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. During the partnership-period, representatives of the EU delegation in Mexico visited Xalapa where several NGOs were working together on a workshop. On this visit, CIDEM had the opportunity of both informing the EU officials about the situation of women in the state of Veracruz and of showing how CIDEM addresses these issues by collaborating with other NGOs, politicians and scholars and the media (Informant CIDEM, 2014).

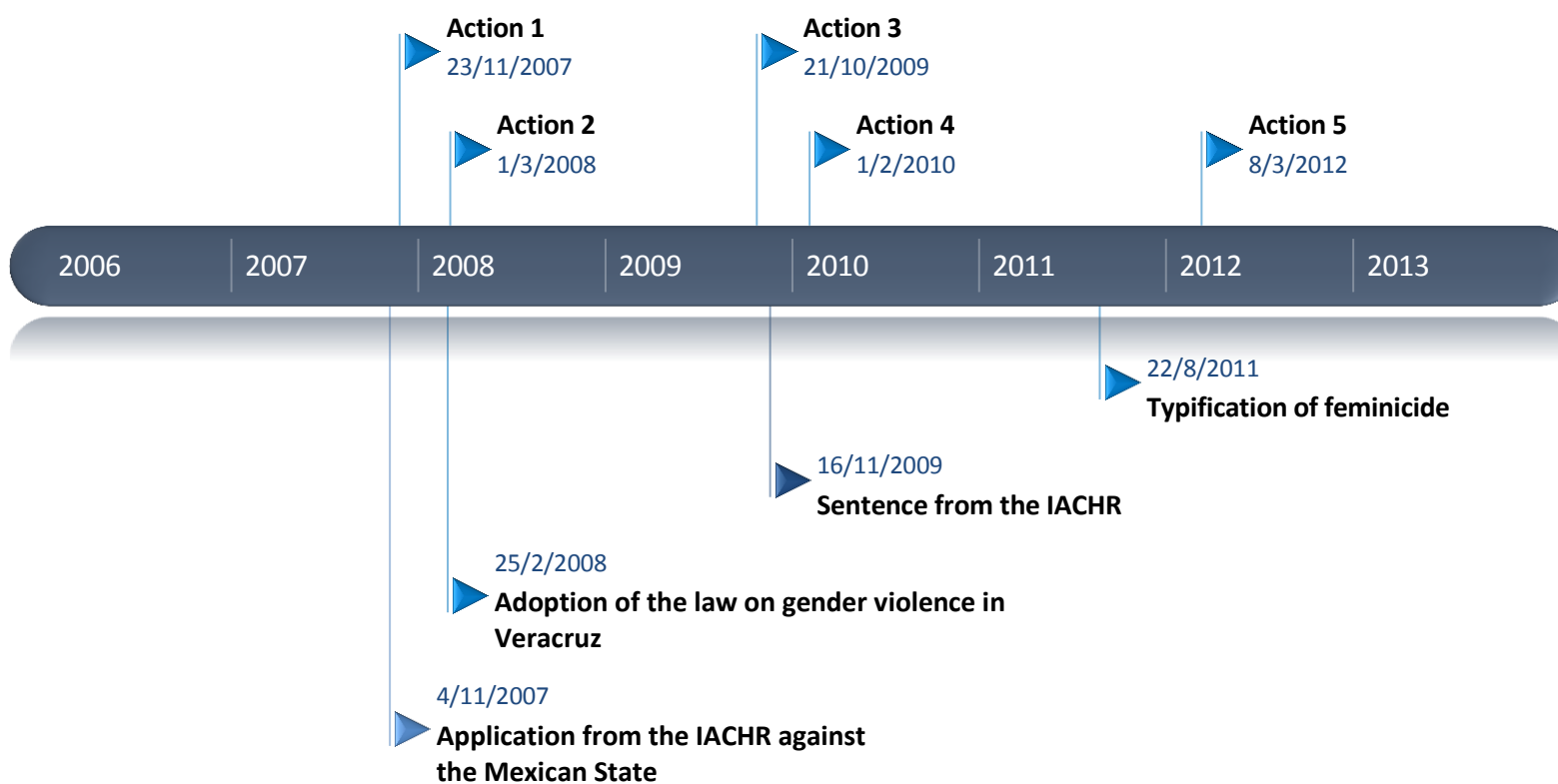
Thereafter, in 2006 CIDEM applied to an open call for proposal from the EU delegation in Mexico where projects related to human rights, democracy and gender equality were described in the guidelines (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). CIDEM`s application was granted for funding in early 2007, giving light to a cooperation project developed into five different actions under the name “*Por la Vida y la Libertad de las Mujeres*” (For the Life and Freedom of Women). The projects received the funding from the EU delegation in Mexico through the European Instrument of Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The ambition behind each of the five actions was to integrate the activities within the process of new legislations and/or reforms to the general law on gender violence in Mexico and this law in the state of Veracruz (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

Originally, the EU-CIDEM cooperation was meant to last for one thematic project directed to an awareness raising campaign on gender violence, the objective of which was to create pressure on the decision makers in the state of Veracruz to adopt the law on gender violence (Informant CIDEM, 2014); however, the relation developed to five different thematic projects lasting for over 6 years (See figure 2), the projects were no longer limited to the adoption of the law, but they also addressed its implementation, training of personnel and the actions leading to the reform on the typification of femicide. As a result of the initiatives financed during this cooperation-program, the state of Veracruz is now regarded as one the most pro-active in the promotion of women`s rights (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

As any other NGO, once the guidelines of the thematic cooperation-programs are provided by the EU, CIDEM has to apply for financial assistance. Usually, these type of applications require a description of the initiative, a presentation of the budget, a financial statement, the expected result and once the initiative is completed, a documentation of the outcome (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

EuropeAid points out that there are no limits to how many times an NGO can receive funding from the EU. The condition is that the NGO applies to each proposal, follow the guidelines and present a project in consistence with the EU’s cooperation policy. But in order for an NGO to receive funding for the second time, they have to be able to show the outcome from the first funding and to show positive results at the monitoring and evaluation period (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

For the EU representation in Mexico, the relation with the CIDEM blossomed over the years, due to CIDEM’s ability to present strong applications, their capability of attracting the attention of legislators, as well as its strong network, referring to the way CIDEM interacts with other NGOs, legislators and media. These characteristics made the cooperation with CIDEM more attractive over the years and ensured that the collaboration developed over the years (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015), as it will be illustrated on Figure 2: EU-CIDEM.



1st action: (2007-2008) “Public Policy and administration of justice supporting the rights of women and girls”

The first action started in 2007 prior to the adoption of the law, where CIDEM in collaboration with the authorities of Veracruz, the media, a panel of experts on gender violence and other members of the civil society worked together on the formulation of a law proposal for the protection of women in Veracruz. The proposal was formulated in accordance to Mexico`s international obligations, agreed on conventions such as the CEDAW and the inter-American convention for the prevention, sanction and eradication of gender violence, Belém do Pará.

To support the proposals presentation in front of congress, this action included a set of activities which started with a study of the situation of women in Veracruz. This was followed by an awareness-raising campaign consisting of activities going from workshops, fora for information and consultation to the local community, seminars for human rights and gender equality, to the education programs to public servants, hospital workers and investigators (CIDEM, 2007). The above-mentioned activities helped CIDEM and politicians, to prepare their arguments for the adoption of law by providing them with reliable data; moreover, the activities also increased the engagement from the local population and the local media on the proposal.

On November 23rd of 2007, congresswoman Dalia Pérez Castañeda (PRI) presented for the congress of Veracruz the proposal of the law on gender violence which was formulated by CIDEM. This proposal was highly criticized by members of the congress and public servants. One of the most known critics came from the director of the center for victims of crime in Veracruz, who criticized the term of “Psychological violence” on the proposal. She argued that there are challenges to find the proper tools to measure these types of terms and that it might bring difficulty to the implementation of the law (Hernández, 2007).

Another argument against the proposal refers to the legislator`s responsibility to protect society in general and not only women. For them, a proposal that only focused on the protection of women had discriminative nature against men (Informant CIDEM 2015).

To fight these obstacles during the negotiation period, CIDEM used the results of the studies and statistics showing the tendencies of gender-based violence and different causes of the phenomenon, clarifying that lack of access to proper education combined with low institutional trust were among the factor aggravating the phenomenon, accentuating with this

the authorities' responsibility to establish a legislation protecting women in accordance to international obligations and to integrate actions into the legal framework in order to fight these challenges.

Other important moments prior to the debates on the adoption of the law, were the demonstrations for the approval of law. These demonstrations, coordinated by CIDEM, took place on November 24th of 2007 in several cities of the state of Veracruz. They included the participation of other NGOs on state and national level, which attracted the attention from the local media on the proposal (López, 2007)

During the hearing that took place on January 30th of 2008, each of the congresswomen engaged on the adoption of the law was given ten minutes to present their prepared arguments in front of the congress. In these ten minutes, Dalia Pérez Castañeda (PRI) mentioned how the civil society was included along the process, from the research phase, to gathering information and statements from victims of gender violence. She emphasized how representatives of different political parties collaborated on the adoption of the law, working *“from a human rights perspective rather than for a political standing point”*. Furthermore, she mentioned the importance of the work done by CIDEM through the process, as they formulated the law on gender violence (LXI legislatura, 2008).

Congresswoman Margarita Guillamin Romero (PRD) mentioned how her political party unanimously agreed on the adoption of the law on gender violence, as she voiced the importance of the law for the society in general and as she defended her position by contra-arguing that the law is not a law “against man”, or only protecting women, as the critics pointed out, but rather it is law created to target a social problem that the state of Veracruz and the entire country had to face (LXI legislatura, 2008).

Congresswoman Alba Leonila Perez Herrera (PAN) focused on Mexico's responsibility to protect the fundamental women's rights and how the state of Veracruz was failing to fulfill this international commitment.

After the statements of the congresswomen, the Law on Access for Women to a Life Free from Violence was approved unanimously by the Congress of the state of Veracruz, with a total of 48 votes in favor and zero against (Medina, 2008).

Following the official publication of the law on February 28th of 2008, the state of Veracruz was compelled to create new measures for its implementation, including opening shelters and care centers for women, the practices in the investigation of gender-related- crimes and the

treatment of the victims (Espinosa, 2008).CIDEM, under funding of the EU, also participated on these procedures by designing a framework of routines and capacitation programs to the public servants which was followed on the second action project (EuropeAid, 2008).

2nd action (2008-2009) “Full respect for human rights of women: Implementation of the Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of violence in the state of Veracruz”

The overall objective of the second action is to contribute to the correct implementation of the law on gender violence approved in 2008 by including the participation of the civil society in the decision making and by harmonizing its formulation with practices from the local police, schools and hospitals.

As the first activity for this action, CIDEM organized an informational-workshop for women of lower income, indigenous or previous victims of gender violence. The workshop consisted on providing information about the addition of the law and expected impact of the legislation on the well-being of women in Veracruz.

Following this activity, CIDEM in collaboration with the Veracruz Institute for Women arranged courses where workers from hospitals, care centers, shelters, police offices and schools, were informed about the new legislation and were provided training and capacitation in order to harmonize and integrate the practice of their performance within the framework of the law. As part of its strategy for dissemination and education, CIDEM organized seminars on human rights, feminism and gender equality in collaboration with the state`s university. Other activities on the program were press conferences, informational radio and TV spots. The strategy also included a more active participation online with the addition of a blog on gender violence and a new website.

Together with these activities, CIDEM with representation of congresswoman Dalia Pérez Castañeda (PRI), presented a suggestion for the reform of the law on gender violence that included a more strict punishment to sexual crimes and/ or depravation of freedom, as well as the addition of new chapters that penalized the physical and psychological violence, workplace violence, economic violence and institutional violence (Gaceta Legislativa, 2008). Despite the well-coordinated campaign and the participation of several representatives of the civil society, the reform was not approved until March 5th 2010 (CIDEM, 2009).

The final activity of this action was a national seminar for NGOs across the country in which representatives of the civil society and activists shared different initiatives and ideas to coordinate actions on national level to more effectively address the decision makers in the country (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

3rd action (2009-2010) “Eradicate violence against girls and women: The pathway to democracy and development”

The 3rd action-project was directed to the strengthening of the institutions in the state of Veracruz. The expected result of this action was to improve implementation of the law on gender violence through the collaboration with the civil society, academia, the media and public entities (CIDEM, 2010).

The action was supported by a variety of activities starting with lobby campaign directed towards the legislators for the creation of an inter-institutional collaboration for the monitoring and tracking gender-related crimes. Veracruz became then the first state in Mexico coordinating the routines of social workers from different institutions in accordance to the new legislation on gender violence (Informant CIDEM, 2015). The actions also included an awareness-raising campaign on gender violence and discrimination against women; especially indigenous women in the state of Veracruz. This campaign included a diffusion-strategy of the legal framework protecting women and the mechanisms of implementation. Such campaigns are important because they contribute to the overall knowledge and understanding of women`s rights. As part of this, CIDEM organized seminars of actualization for legislators and public servant about the CEDAW and Mexico`s international obligations.

The action had as a result the creation of the Gender-Violence Observatory Center, and the establishment of a council of experts on gender equality formed by politicians and academics working for the collaboration between sectors and the correct implementation of the law in accordance to Mexico`s international obligations (CIDEM, 2010).

4rd action (2010-2011) “Advocacy of a comprehensive State Policy that sustains prevention, attention, punishment and obliteration of the violent acts against women and girls”

Taking as a starting point the recommendations expressed on the sentence from the Inter-American Court of Justice to Mexico for the case known as “Campo Algodonero”, in which Mexico is urged by the court to guarantee the freedom and integrity of women by providing them access to justice and their institutional rights through a system free from obstacles, impunity and discrimination (“Cotton Field,” 2009), CIDEM’s observatory center for gender-violence directed its work on the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the law and the identification of the institutional obstacles blocking women’s access to justice. The action included courses and seminars on human rights and gender equality for journalists, having as a goal to include the media in the task of monitoring the implementation of the law and to strengthen the freedom of speech.

On the 26th of May 2011, CIDEM together with the EU delegation in Mexico invited to a forum for information on femicide in Veracruz where authorities, representatives of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, UN Women, member of the civil society and the media were presented a quantitative and comparative study of the tendencies of femicide in Veracruz and the rest of Mexico, showing that despite the law on gender violence and its mechanism of implementation, Veracruz still had an alarming number of femicides and expressed the necessity of a reform to the mentioned law that includes the typification of femicide to the penal code (CIDEM, 2011). As a result of this forum, the governor of the state of Veracruz, Dr. Javier Duarte de Ochoa gave CIDEM the task to elaborate a proposal for the reform of the law on Access for Women to a Life Free from Violence (Informant CIDEM, 2015), the proposal was presented on June 2011. During its presentation, the governor highlighted the recommendations Mexico received from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and how Mexico had the responsibility to strengthen the legal framework in accordance to international agreements Mexico is part of (Gaceta Legislativa, 2011a); however, the proposal was not passed for voting the same day as the congress required a panel of experts and several workshops for the negotiation of the reform. The proposal was again presented and unanimously approved on 23rd of August 2011 (Gaceta Legislativa, 2011b). Following the reform of the law on gender violence, CIDEM engaged in new courses

of capacitation of social workers, law enforcers, hospitals and shelters to harmonize the implementation of the law and to reduce the number of institutional obstacles addressed on the sentence from the Inter-American Court of Human rights (Informant CIDEM 2015).

5th action (2012) Citizen Advocacy and Action for Women's Access to Justice and the Eradication of Gender Violence

The last action of the EU-CIDEM co-operation project is based on the results of studies showing that up to 80% of feminicides in Veracruz are under-investigated by the authorities (CIDEM, 2012). Through this action, CIDEM addresses the state to evaluate the performance of the hospitals, shelters, and police force working on cases of gender-based violence, and urges the authorities to incorporate protocols for the immediate investigation of the disappearing of women and feminicides.

The action calls for the empowerment of the civil society in the advocacy of women`s rights and the promotion of gender equality and it formulates initiatives that include the training of public servants. To achieve this, CIDEM participated in the evaluation of the public institutions where several justice-obstacles were identified and rectified through the formulation of new protocols that required a better coordination among the public institutions when investigating gender-based crimes (CIDEM, 2012).

Through this five-year cooperation program under the name “For the life and freedom of women”, CIDEM strengthen its position on local and national level and it became one of the Mexican NGOs with the closest relation to the EU, a relation specially noticed by the EU’s attendance and participation on several events, negotiation meetings, workshops and press conferences organized by CIDEM (Informant CIDEM, 2015). This presence was intensified during the 4th action in 2011, when officials from EU delegation in Mexico accompanied CIDEM to the presentation of an initiative calling for a new reform to the law on gender violence in front the Congress of Veracruz. During which, the advisor for human rights and culture to the EU’s delegation in Mexico Natalia Barreto Silva, addressed the Congress of Veracruz by declaring that the EU officially supported the reform to the law on gender violence and acknowledged the importance of the typification of femicide, and its addition to the criminal code of the state of Veracruz. On the same speech she mentioned that the EU has been working for the strengthening of the Civil Society in Mexico where, giving as an

example the case of Veracruz, issues related to gender-based violence and empowerment of women had been prioritized for funding (Ceballos, 2011).

Although the cooperation program “For the life and freedom of women” was finalized with the 5th action, the EU continues to assist some of initiatives taken by CIDEM. However, this might change in the near future as the EU and Mexico are undergoing new negotiations for the modernization of the Global Agreement which might not involve the same type of development cooperation programs, as Mexico is now perceived as a middle-income country rather than a low-income as when the Global Agreement was consolidated (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). Having in mind that Mexico still faces enormous social inequalities, CIDEM considers this assumption dangerous because it will affect the vulnerable groups in Mexico. For CIDEM and other NGOs receiving funding from the EU, this type of cooperation has also a symbolic effect that makes it easier to be heard by the policy-makers in Mexico. The suspension of the cooperation program between the EU and Mexico and between the EU and the civil society will most probably have a negative impact for the most vulnerable groups in Mexico (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

3.4 How does the EU monitors and evaluates the thematic projects?

The EU has the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating each project that receives financial aid. The monitoring of these projects happens through official visits from the EU delegation to the region and to the NGOs receiving funding. Monitoring also happens through the addition of a protocol known as Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM), a protocol which was adapted as a recommendation from the Council of European Union and that is used to analyze the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the projects funded by the EU (EuropeAid, 2012). The ROM protocol relies on an external contractor who will gather data of the performance of the projects receiving funding from the EU (Informant EuropeAid, 2015), and was is also designed to monitor how the EU’s delegations in third countries are mainstreaming cross-cutting issues on the provided guidelines and on the selection of the funded projects, which underlies the importance of having external contractors performing these studies (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

The evaluation of projects is also an important criterion in order to continue the funding. An evaluation is an in-depth assessment of a completed project; it provides a detailed explanation of the reason for success or failure of project. Like the ROM protocol, evaluation is also performed by external contractors (EuropeAid, 2012).

The result from the monitoring and evaluation period is to be reported back to EU delegation and to EuropeAid, in order to be considered for the next cooperation program.

The monitoring and evaluation also happens “internally”, meaning that the EU delegation has the possibility of designing protocols to evaluate each project (Informant EuropeAid, 2015), this will enable the delegation to have an overview of the development of the project in which the EU has participated either by funding or by providing technical assistance. For this, each delegation has a unit for evaluation of the different cooperation programs in each country, the result of which will be considered for the creation of new programs or for further collaboration on the same programs. It is also important that the NGO receiving the funding is able to show concrete results during the evaluation phase, this will determine the continuance of the collaboration (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

When it comes to NGOs at local level, their resources and ability can be limited and therefore the amount provided by the EU has to be monitored. In some cases, NGOs do not have the capacity to administrate the entire amount or the capacity to produce the desired results, which is why it is not usual that the EU grants the amount as requested; in most of the cases, the funding coming from the EU covers up 40% of the budget, but it also provides assistance during the development of the project, moving with this from the cooperation field to the collaboration field. If the NGO receiving the assistance from the EU has the possibility to document a positive impact, it might be consider for further collaboration, but it usually depends on the dynamism of the NGO, its sustainably and its growth possibilities (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

In the case of the EU-CIDEM relation, the monitoring and evaluation phase turned out to be a decisive element for the continuance of the cooperation program as CIDEM was able to present a significant outcome since the first financed project (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). CIDEM`s ability to influence the formulation of policy-making for the protection of women`s rights made it easier for the EU to consider further collaboration by addressing the projects to the decision makers in the state of Veracruz (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

Additionally, EU delegation in Mexico acknowledges CIDEM's skills to follow the protocols when answering to open calls for proposals from the EU, and the way the organization keeps an open and transparent relation with the EU was also an important element for the long lasting collaboration (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

For CIDEM, to have access to EU funding via the open call for proposals is important because through these means, the organization is able to keep its autonomy and therefore to continue its work without being interrupted, it gives the organization the opportunity to interact with other NGOs, the media and politicians from different political parties.

CIDEM describes the EU's application process as "*simple compared to others*"; referring to funding possibilities given by Mexican organizations that have lower budgets and with far more applicants. Another element is that the guidelines for funding from Mexican organizations are more general and not all of them are including gender equality as a priority, which reduces the impact of CIDEM's applications (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

However, the guidelines from the EU do require a solid institutional knowledge, which CIDEM has obtained over many years of work and through the collaboration with several panels of experts. Other NGOs working at local or regional level do not have the access to the necessary institutional and financial knowledge to fill these applications, in some cases the NGOs applying for funding are rather new and do not have the possibility to make reference to previous outcomes. In these cases, the initiatives taken by CIDEM might be more interesting or attractive to support (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

Despite CIDEM's experience and solid outcomes, the funding coming from the EU is not guaranteed; therefore it is necessary to have a systematic approach in the applications process. My informant explains that in some cases, CIDEM uses up to one month for filling the applications in which financial statements, objective and description of the projects is included (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

The outcome of the collaboration between the EU and CIDEM contributed to expand this partnership beyond the funding of initiatives. Since the beginning of the cooperation program, the EU and CIDEM have tighten their collaboration, as a result of this, CIDEM usually invites the representative of the EU to participate on the workshops and seminars and is not unusual that officials from the EU delegation in Mexico contact CIDEM to discuss certain events (Informant CIDEM, 2015). Furthermore, CIDEM has provided briefings on the

situation of women in Mexico prior to the political and the policy dialogues between the EU and the Mexican authorities.

3.4.1 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I have reviewed the situation of gender-based violence in Mexico, to explain how this phenomenon attracted the negative attention of several international actors and how this reflects on the Union`s bi-regional relations with Mexico through the EU cooperation programs. Moreover, this chapter exemplifies this commitment through a case study of the collaboration between the EU and CIDEM in the context of the law on gender violence in Veracruz, which includes a timeline of events that explains the initiatives supported and financed by the EU delegation in Mexico.

The chapter ends with a review over the different mechanisms the EU benefits from when selecting the cooperation projects and when evaluating the outcome of these.

Chapter 4: The analysis

This chapter initiates with a review of the development of the EU's commitment to gender equality on its bilateral relations with third countries. The idea behind this is to shed light over the driving force behind the EU's commitment on gender equality in Mexico and how this commitment is reflected on the development of co-operation programs. This will help to understand the reasons behind the EU's engagement to collaborate with CIDEM during the program for the life and freedom of women.

To understand the EU's objective to promote women's rights in Mexico, I will analyse the strategic documents that serve as framework and as legal basis for the development of cooperation programs. I will start with an analysis of the Global Agreement in which I will identify if whether or not the EU's bilateral relations with Mexico are outlining a commitment to protect the basic human rights of women and to promote gender equality on this document. I will then continue with an analysis of the CSPs 2002-2006 and 2007-2012 in order to see if and how the EU's rhetorical commitment on gender equality is reflected on the strategy papers.

4.1 Why is the EU committed to promote gender equality in other regions? –a contextual background

The first signs of the EU's commitment to integrate gender in development policy is observed on the program called Women In Development (WID), a program that has its roots in the United Nations decade for women which lasted from 1975 until 1985 (Debusscher, 2011). The creation of the WID-program came as result of an agreement in which institutions are committing to the goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women by addressing the lack of gender awareness on the existing development programs. As part of this goal, WID-program included the creation of projects to give women access to training, education and health services. However, the program received critics by a number of scholars who argued that this phenomenon is a problem beyond the lack of access to education and health services. According to the critics, scholars classified WID-program as ineffective because it was failing to address the underlying cause of unequal gender relations (Debusscher, 2011).

In 1995 following the UN Beijing World Conference on Women, the WID-program was replaced by Gender And Development (GAD) paradigm, which focused on improving women's status through an analysis of the relations between women and men in order to identify the causality of gender inequality. The main objective of this paradigm was to remove the imbalances in society. Moreover, the GAD- paradigm functioned as well as an indicator of a more coherent policy-making also known as Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and suggests a deeper commitment to mainstream the norm of gender equality to all policy making (Debusscher, 2011).

However, this goal has faced more challenges than foreseen when GAD-paradigm was first formulated. Allwood (2013), explains the existing gap between the rhetorical commitment to gender mainstreaming and its implementation. She points out the contradictions between gender mainstreaming as a transformative idea and as an integrationist policy-making, arguing that gender mainstreaming as part of the integrationist policy-making incorporates gender into structures, processes together with norms for its implementation and measurement for success, Meier and Celis (2011) cited on Allwood (2013). In contrast to this, the transformative version is originally proposed as a way of renewing policy, which approaches to gender inequalities from different levels instead of addressing it as a separate issue. As a result of this, gender mainstreaming brought the commitment of achieving gender equality in all policy areas, including on the development programs and the Union's relations with third countries.

Debusscher (2011), takes into consideration the Union's gender mainstreaming strategy and the development of programs created to address the societal practices in which inequalities are embedded. She argues that the integration of gender equality into all policy-making is not the main goal behind gender mainstreaming. As she clarifies, the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to transform gender relations and how this involves the challenging of existing policies in which women are unequal in front of the institutions (Debusscher, 2011).

In December 2005, the presidents of the European Commission, Parliament and Council signed the European Consensus on Development. The document is a statement that commits the EU to the eradication of poverty by building a more stable world, and that for the first time, outlines the framework of the common principles and values in which the EU's development policy should be based on. The document expresses that the EU shall promote democratic norms and values through its bilateral relations with third countries by the means

of political dialogues, which will ensure that these values are upheld by both partners (European Union, 2006). Furthermore, the document acknowledges the importance of including the participation of the civil society as NGOs are recognized to “*play a vital role as promoters of democracy*” (European Union, 2006).

Gender is addressed on several occasions throughout the document, not only is it identified as a fundamental human right, but also as a decisive instrument to achieve the eradication of poverty and to create a more stable society, which is why the Union confirms the responsibility of promoting this norm through political dialogues with third countries and through the formulation of development programs for the co-operation with the civil society (European Union, 2006).

Moreover, the Consensus outlines the importance of responding to the needs of the partner countries, which will be identified through “*a transparent and in-depth dialogue with partner countries on the basis of a joint analysis*” (European Union, 2006). In the context of social cohesion, the document declares EU’s engagement to fight discrimination against all groups, drawing special attention to discrimination against women which should be formally addressed through policy dialogues with partner countries.

For the period of 2006-2010, the EU was committed to follow a roadmap to facilitate actions on the promotion of gender equality. This roadmap outlines the key initiatives that assist the progress of the implementation of the EU’s goal on gender equality in which the reinforcement of the EU’s collaboration with NGOs is set as part of the strategy by including formal dialogues with the civil society and with women organizations on measures to achieve equality between men and women and the empowerment of women in the society (European Commission, 2006). To ensure the promotion of gender equality in third countries, a programming guide for strategy papers was developed by the European Commission which is based on the definition of gender mainstreaming and which outlines the EU’s commitment to promote the norm of gender equality through political dialogue with partner governments, aid and cooperation programs. The document creates a framework of actions for the promotion of gender equality in which is set as specific targets the strengthening of the governmental institutions and the civil society to undertake gender analysis and to stimulate policy making for the protection and the promotion of women’s rights. Furthermore, the document acknowledges the importance of integrating gender equality to the CSPs (European Commission, 2008).

4.2 Is the EU addressing the norm of gender equality in Mexico through the Global Agreement, the high level political dialogues and declaratory statements?

Through several of its articles, the Global Agreement addresses issues related to the protection of fundamental human rights and therefore, to the protection of women's rights.

The first signed of this is observed on the basis of the agreement given on article 1, also known as the *Democracy clause*, which serves as framework in which both parties agree to the protection of democratic principles and the fundamental human rights as the basis of the agreement (European Union, 2000). Following this, Article 3 institutionalizes high level political dialogues to address issues regarding human rights and democracy.

Gender is particularly addressed on article 36; *Cooperation on social affairs and poverty*.

This article formalizes political dialogues with the intention of developing cooperation programs to harmonize the social and economic inequalities of vulnerable groups. Among these, women of low income are identified as priority issue for the dialogues on cooperation.

Furthermore, article 36 mentions the importance of including the participation of civil society on these dialogues (The European Community, 2000).

Gender issues are once again mentioned on the topic of *regional cooperation*, given on article 37, in which both parties are committing to develop joint actions by means of cooperation programs in the region. This article draws special attention to the role of women in society, declaring that all cooperation programs shall address the protection of women's rights and the empowerment of women.

Following this, article 39 *Cooperation on human rights and democracy*, addresses the field of human rights, and the importance of cooperating with the civil society by means of education, training, and public awareness programs (The European Community, 2000). Although gender is not specifically mentioned on this clause, article 39 focuses on measures to strengthen the rule of law and to increase institutional trust as the principal tools for the promotion of human rights and democracy. On article 58 *Fulfillment of Obligations*, also known as the *Conditionality clause*, both parties are committing to adopt the necessary measures to fulfill the obligations given on article 1 of Global Agreement (European Union, 2000).

Prior to the consolidation of the agreement, the EU and Mexico faced several challenges during the negotiation period. These challenges are related to the democracy and

conditionality clauses together with the cooperation chapter. According to the research done by Sanahuja (2000a) and Szymanski and Smith (2005), the Mexican authorities were skeptical to three points of the agreement:

- 1) The democracy clause: since it serves as a binding statement that applies as a condition of validity of the agreement, both parties are bounded to fulfill their international obligations in the field of human rights, otherwise the agreement might be jeopardized. Mexico considered that this clause was humiliating and that had a “unilateral position” typical of a relation of domination (Sanahuja, 2000a).
- 2) The conditionality clause: it was perceived by the Mexican authorities as unacceptable, arguing that global agreement should be focused on trade and not on human rights and democracy, as these were considered internal political themes and had nothing to do with trade policy (Szymanski & Smith, 2005). For the EU, the protection of human rights was a non-negotiable condition as it reflects the EU’s core values that are included on all co-operation agreement with third countries (European Parliament, 1998).
- 3) The cooperation on human rights and democracy: During the negotiation period, Mexico showed skepticism on article 39, where the agreement allows the EU to directly finance Mexican NGOs working on the promotion of human rights and democracy (Szymanski & Smith, 2005). As for Mexico, this type of funding should go directly to the authorities and governmental institutions that have the means to allocate the funds and to facilitate the training of public servants for the implementation of projects with the same goals (Informant Mexican Embassy to the European Union, 2015). However, the European Parliament recommended to facilitate the work of the civil society and ensure the involvement of NGOs in the monitoring of respect for human rights (European Parliament, 1998).

These three points were at the time the main obstacle for the consolidation of the agreement and one of the reasons that the negotiation period lasted for several years, during which the political situation of Mexico changed radically, particularly in the growth of the engagement of the civil society in Mexico, the media and the growth of the Mexican economy, as well as the authorities’ collaboration with the civil society.

In November 1996, Mexico accepted the inclusion of the democracy and conditionality clauses, but demanded that the reciprocal character of which would be explicitly recognized on the Global Agreement. Rejecting with this, any unilateral supervision (Sanahuja, 2000a).

When it comes to the democracy and the conditionality clauses, my informant at the EU delegation to Mexico, clarifies that the EU's diplomatic relations with Mexico are considered good, and that during the negotiations of the agreement, Mexico was undergoing economic, political and social changes which played a factor on the negotiations. For the EU, it's commitment on human rights is not about punishing its partners, but rather helping them to meet its international obligations, adding that the partnership with Mexico has created significant results on the field of human rights and education in Mexico (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

Moreover, during my visit to the Mexican Embassy to the European Union in Brussels, my informant expressed that the Mexican authorities opposed, to a certain extent, to the direct funding of NGOs on the basis that the Global Agreement means a partnership between the EU and Mexico also in cooperation programs, which should mean that all funding entering the country involves the Mexican authorities on the process. Moreover, I was informed that Mexico developed projects addressing social inequality under the name "proyectos semillas" (seed projects). These projects are directed to education and training through a sustainable program, which for Mexico, qualifies for the EU's assistance as they have the necessary means to administrate all donations and better knowledge about the geographical challenges in Mexico, something that is necessary for an equitable distribution of the funds and for achieving positive outcomes (Informant Mexican Embassy to the European Union, 2015).

With the Global Agreement entering into force in 2000, the EU actively participates together with the Mexican authorities and the civil society on thematic projects addressing issues regarding human rights, gender equality, education, climate and training of public servants. Which are areas recognized by the EU as priority and that fulfill the requisites to receive funding and assistance from the EU. The main objective of such projects is to increase the level of institutional trust in Mexico, an issue that have been pointed out by the EU on several reports (Commission of the European Communities 2008).

The funding received for these projects come from the EIDHR and trough the civil society Organizations and Local Authorities programs (CSO-LA) (Informant EuropeAid, 2015). But

in order to address these issues, the EU depends on the institutionalization of high level political dialogues which are perceived by the EU as a platform to facilitate communication and as an instrument for the coordination of position where sensitive global and local issues are addressed (Commission of the European Communities 2008).

Political dialogues occur on different levels, it involves the heads of states, ministers, government officials and members of the European Parliament (Sanahuja, 2000b). With gender identified by the EU as a cross-cutting issue, all policy formulations and agreements resulting of these dialogues should promote gender equality (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). It is also expected that the political dialogues establish a mutual commitment to cooperate and collaborate on projects addressing social inequalities. To achieve this, both parties have agreed on the implementation of the Social Cohesion Laboratory (SCL), a program that requires the funding from both the EU and Mexico (Informant EuropeAid, 2015) and that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women in society as one of several goals.

Recalling the statements given by the EU on gender related issues, which led to the adoption of the GAD-paradigm to pursue gender equality, and considering the Union's commitment to the eradication of gender violence, it can be argued that the Global Agreement is failing to provide a clear structure on the engagement from both parties on issues related to gender equality. Therefore, it seems there is a gap on the rhetorical engagement on gender equality and how this engagement is implemented through the EU's bilateral relations with third countries, in this case, Mexico.

However, despite the lack of clear guidelines on how to approach the goal on gender equality in Mexico, the agreement does recognize the importance of cooperating on projects addressing gender inequalities as one of the main interest areas, more precisely, the importance of addressing the problems surrounding social inequality in which the matter of women with limited resources is recognized as high priority for the implementation of cooperation programs. Bounding with this, both parties discuss gender equality and women's rights during the political dialogues and cooperate on programs addressing these issues. It is part of the EU's transformative agenda to address women's rights through political dialogues, which implies "*efforts to create consistencies that demand change*" Walby (2005) cited on (Debusscher, 2012). This involves representation of the civil society on the political

dialogues, as NGOs are able to channel the voice of women in front of the decision makers and to raise awareness on ignored issues.

Since 2006, representatives of the civil society have participated on human rights seminars, normally taking place the day before the EU and the Mexican authorities conduct the political dialogue. The seminars have different objectives; first of all, they give European and Mexican NGOs the opportunity to discuss issues, practices and experiences with each other by covering three matters:

1. Business and human rights.
2. Security and human rights.
3. Human rights and violence against women.

During the seminar, selected NGOs receiving financial aid and technical assistance have the opportunity to present a description of their work, its impact and the result of their initiatives in front of the representatives of the EU and Mexico (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

The seminar is concluded with a recommendation letter addressed to the EU and the Mexican authorities, which is formulated by the different NGOs and that communicates concerns for the civil society on both regions. Traditionally, the agenda for the high level political dialogues initiates with a designated representative of the civil society reading the recommendations to the officials. The intention behind the letter is to influence the authorities to take into consideration the concerns from the civil society when creating cooperation and collaboration programs resulting from the high level political dialogues. Moreover, the letter sets the agenda for the issues related to human rights that the partners should address under dialogue (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

CIDEM describes this process as interesting and valuable. For an organization working towards the eradication of gender violence, it is important to have a strong network and to have the support of international organizations like the EU because it helps to raise awareness on an issue that remains unseen by the authorities (Informant CIDEM, 2015). As both parties are committing to address the issues presented on the recommendation letter, the seminars on human rights facilitate NGOs to influence the policy-making in the aftermaths of the political dialogues, making it easier to get the attention of legislators and decision makers on this matter.

The intention of the seminars on human rights prior to the political dialogues is to give the civil society the opportunity to dialogue and create a stronger network with the objective to introduce new ideas and lobby for policy change. This type of persuasion is what Keck and Sikkink (1999) define as *accountability politics*, a concept which involves that advocacy networks in form of NGOs or representatives of the civil society, use resources to convince actors into taking positions on a certain issue. For example, on gender-based violence. Such positions become opportunities for the cause of the NGOs, and once an actor has publically committed to the principle, it is easier for the NGO to expose the gap between the rhetoric and the practice behind this commitment. The bigger the actor is, the more important is to channel the commitment into actions in order “save face” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999), which is why is so important for NGOs to convince international actors to express their commitment.

Although women’s rights have been addressed on these political dialogues since the consolidation of the Global Agreement, it wasn’t until 2007 that gender-based violence and femicide were addressed in a more in-depth manner by the European Union. This turn of events might be related to the 2007 resolution on the murder of women in Mexico and Central America in which the European Parliament reminded the role of the EU in fighting this phenomenon and called for bi-regional actions to prevent and eradicate the problem (European Parliament, 2007a). As a result of this, NGOs working for women’s rights saw an increase in the cooperation programs both with the Mexican authorities, but also with the EU (Informant Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2015).

In 2007, the EU and Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in which both parties agreed to a bilateral cooperation with a budget of 55 million Euros directed to the implementation of development programs based on the introduction of *policy dialogues*, as a complement to existing the high level political dialogues (The European Community, 2007). The policy dialogues aim to address problems, approaches and solutions to sectors regarding social cohesion, sustainable economy, education and culture, sectors which are highlighted under for the cooperation programs and that are fused with cross-cutting issues; such as human rights, gender equality and environment (The European Community, 2007). The main objective of the policy dialogues is to increase the cooperation and coordination of activities between the EU, the local authorities and Mexican NGOs with the intention to address sensitive issues by launching initiatives and programs aiming for the protection of human rights and promotion of democracy and economic development (Informant EuropeAid,

2015). Gender is included under the sector of social cohesion, which addresses the policy formulation, implementation and the strengthening of institutional capacity in Mexico (The European Community, 2007).

The same year, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on femicide in Mexico and the role of the Union as a fighter against this phenomenon. The driving force of this resolution was a report on the murder of women in Mexico and in Central America which showed an alarming number of women killed in the region. Deputy Raül Romeva i Rueda, member of the Subcommittee on human rights and the committee of women's rights and gender equality was appointed as the Rapporteur by the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2007b).

On this resolution, the European Parliament reminded the Mexican authorities of the international commitments to protect and promote women's rights ratified by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the convention Belém do Pará (1994) and CEDAW (1999). Furthermore, the European parliament pointed out the basis of the Global Agreement, referring to the democratic clause and urged the Mexican state to ease the role of NGOs working for the victims of gender violence and femicide. At the same time, the European Parliament recommended the Union to promote institutional coordination with Mexico by supporting programs to combat gender violence. It emphasized the importance of increasing the political dialogue between the EU, Mexico and the civil society. Moreover, the resolution proposed an annual report to the gender commission of the European parliament and it recommended that the CSP 2007-2013 covered the fights against femicide and impunity (European Parliament, 2007a).

On the debate prior to the resolution, Spanish Parliamentarian José Ignacio Salafranca spoke against the formulation of such resolutions mentioning that femicide is a global phenomenon and is not concentrated in one region, giving as an example the problems of gender-based violence in southern Europe, suggesting that Europe should first address the situation at home before judging the rest of the world (Frontera NorteSur, 2007). As a response to this argument, Deputy Eva-Brit Svensson answered that the EU has the responsibility to investigate these types of events in the country as Mexico is a partner of the Union, not only in trade, but also in cooperation. She drew the attention to the democracy

clause of the Global Agreement signed by the EU and Mexico in which both parties are committing to the protection and cooperation on human rights (Frontera NorteSur, 2007).

The EU's engagement on the feminicides in Mexico continued and in April 2009, the Council of the European Union issued a statement welcoming the initiation of the IACHR trial on feminicides in Mexico. The statement declared the trial as an "*important milestone in the fight against all forms of violence against women*" (The Council of the European Union, 2007). The statement also mentioned the EU's commitment to the eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, and encouraged the Mexican authorities to ensure good cooperation with the IACHR.

In 2010, the High Representative (HP) Catherine Ashton welcomed the ruling of the IACHR in which the state of Mexico was found guilty of discrimination and of failing to protect women. On her statement she expressed her concerns on this phenomenon in Mexico and condemned all forms of gender violence (European Union, 2010).

The above mentioned resolutions and declaratory statements are indicators of the EU's intentions to promote the norm gender equality in Mexico. These might have played a role in the development of the EU-CIDEM relation as they reflected the importance of the collaboration with the civil society. However the responsibility of translating this engagement into actions lies on how EU's delegation in Mexico addresses the issue by collaborating and cooperating both with the Mexican authorities and the civil society, otherwise the promotion of gender equality in Mexico will not likely succeed. Although the civil society do not have any power over the decision making in Mexico, the funding of thematic projects have an important impact as they are relevant to the social, cultural and economic situation of the country (Domínguez, 2010).

4.3 Is the norm of gender equality addressed through the Country Strategy papers?

A CSP evaluates the political, economic and social situation of a country and it sets out a framework for development cooperation in the region defined by focal points and cross-cutting issues which regards the sectors and areas that should be addressed and prioritized during an established period.

The first CSP for Mexico was released after the Global Agreement entered into force in October 2000, and it takes into consideration the democracy clause as the basis of the agreement for the formulation of development programs.

Considering that the CSP functions as framework for the development cooperation programs and that the issues addressed during the political dialogues with the Mexican authorities are expected to be consistent with the CSPs, it is expected that a norm such as gender equality is present on the strategy papers. Therefore, in order to identify to what extent the Union is addressing this norm, I will analyze the strategy papers from the periods 2002-2006 and 2007-2013, periods in which the initiatives resulting from the EU-CIDEM had the strongest impact.

4.3.1 CSP 2002-2006

The CSP 2002-2006 gives an overview over the social situation in Mexico, focusing on issues regarding human rights as it identifies the weaknesses of the institutions and how the system fails to ensure access to justice, which is aggravated by obstacles like impunity and insufficient geographical coverage. However, the strategy paper also informs that Mexican authorities are working in developing programs to address the institutional obstacles and that Mexico has both the willingness and the capacity to change and to improve the human rights situation (European Union, 2002). Furthermore, the CSP for this period informs about the rise of the civil society and the engagement on human rights on a national level. The paper acknowledges that after 2000, Mexico has shown considerable openness to the international community, shows more willingness to cooperate on issues related to human rights and democracy and how this willingness might play an important role on the rising from the civil society in Mexico.

The CSP 2002-2006 outlines the importance of co-operating with Mexico in the social field and in the fight against poverty, where projects related to the strengthening of the civil society, human rights and democratization are to be considered a priority.

Additionally, the document informs that Mexico is a country of *extreme duality*, where a small part of the population live at the level of the most advanced countries in the world, while a large part of the population live under extreme poverty with limited access to

institutions and public services and that often experience discrimination from these institutions (European Union, 2002).

The objective of the strategy paper is to create a framework of cooperation in order to help Mexico meet its international obligations, to strengthen the rule of law and to integrate its economy to the world's economy. Considering the challenges and the objectives of Mexico, the CSP 2002-2006 sets a budget of 49 million Euros of community Co-operation (EuropeAid, 2010), in which the following sectors are considered priority areas for funding:

- Social development and reduction of inequalities: 30% of the co-operation is allocated on this sector (EuropeAid, 2010), which has as objective to pursue political dialogue on social topic where the equitable distribution of income, equality of opportunities, gender equality and the fight against poverty are set as themes that should be discuss during the dialogues between the EU and the Mexican authorities (European Union, 2002).
- Economic growth/support for the economic reforms/competitiveness: receiving 35% of the co-operation is set to encourage and facilitate the trade between the EU and Mexico and to stimulate the Mexican economy and the access from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to the European market, as well as to stimulate European investments in Mexico. (European Union, 2002). Human rights and gender equality are not mentioned on this sector.
- Scientific and technical co-operation: With 20% of the co-operation directed to higher education, research and participation of European and Mexican scientists in research programs. The document mentions the importance of funding research projects on productivity, sustainable development and poverty alleviation as well as projects that address human rights and institutional resources (European Union, 2002).
- Consolidation of the Rule of Law / institutional support: receives 10% of the co-operation which should be directed to the collaboration in the field of human rights and democratization. The CSP states that the civil society should also be a part of the projects receiving these funds. The objective of the co-operation on this sector is to strengthen the rule of law and to provide institutional support for Mexico to implement reforms on human rights and democratization (European Union, 2002).

Although the CSP does not recognize the protection of women's rights as a priority sector, it is identified as a cross-cutting issue (European Union, 2002), where special attention is to be given to gender equality as it is strongly related to poverty.

The CSP states that there are still many inequalities on access to education, job, salary and services, as well as the increase of gender-based violence in the country. Therefore, gender equality should receive special attention on the development projects agreed by both parties (European Union, 2002).

In the context of social development, the CSP addresses the importance of political dialogues on women's rights. Furthermore, the CSP draws attention to the co-operation program's commitment to vulnerable groups where women of limited resources are named among them.

The state of Veracruz is specifically named as one of several areas of intervention, which refers to areas in need of urgent attention and assistance; this enhances the importance of creating cooperation programs that addresses the problems that this area is facing. In the case of Veracruz, social and gender inequality, lack of access to health services are among the problems that shall be addressed during this period (European Union, 2002).

Through yearly call for proposals the EIDHR have assisted over 50 projects with a budget of 7.5 million Euros where NGOs working on themes related to gender-based violence, freedom of speech and access to justice have received the funds (EuropeAid, 2010).

4.3.2 CSP 2007-2013

The document recognizes Mexico as the largest economy in Latin-America and as a society evolving towards development with a level of income that should be sufficient to face social challenges. However, the CSP observes that Mexico still struggles to overcome the lack of social cohesion in the country, which is why the EU allocates a budget of 55 million Euros for the period 2007-2013 (European Commission, 2007a). The main objective of this cooperation is to support Mexico, as the beneficiary country, to complete the transition towards a sustainable and equitable society (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

The CSP informs about the social and political challenges in Mexico, referring to the lack of consensus among the political parties and the uncertainty in the field of human rights, which despite of Mexico's commitment on this field, the country is still failing to adequately protect

and promote human rights and democratic principles which are often affected by the social inequalities in the country.

The document presents a strategy for EU-Mexico relations which shall be based on: the reinforcement of the political dialogues, a sectoral agreement aimed to promote mutual interest and the introduction of policy dialogues on social cohesion which is Mexico's biggest challenge. Through these dialogues the EU intends to assist Mexico on the creation of policies formulated to grant the protection of human rights and to strengthen the rule of law in the country (European Commission, 2007a). It is expected that the policy dialogues play a role of the development policy making. More importantly, it is expected that the cooperation programs resulting from these dialogues show positive outcomes on cross-cutting issues, such as; gender, environmental protection, governance, rights of children and indigenous people.

To achieve this, the CSP recognizes the importance of working together with the civil society on projects addressing human rights and democratization. With this in mind, the objective of the CSP 2007-2013 is to support Mexico towards sustainable economic development and to increase social cohesion. The funds from the EU-Mexico co-operation program for this period shall be allocated on the following focal points:

- Social cohesion and support to policy dialogues: the CSP states that 40% of the community contribution should address the lack of social cohesion by identifying the institutional obstacles standing against equality of opportunities and access to public services (EuropeAid, 2010). The objective behind this is to discuss such obstacles during the policy dialogues through which the EU has the ambition of offering support to the Mexican legislative process on the implementation of laws created to enhance the social cohesion in the country (European Commission, 2007a). Part of this budget is set for the development of pilot programs on areas of intervention where is instructed that the programs should provide training of public servants, seminars and that they should facilitate official visits from representatives of the European Union and the Mexican authorities to the intervention areas. Furthermore, the CSP mentions the necessity to increase cooperation with the Mexican civil society, especially on sectors such as poverty and gender as the civil society has the capacity to manage awareness raising campaigns on social problems (European Commission, 2007a).

To maximize the impact of the community cooperation on this sector, the strategy paper mentions that all funds should go to areas in need where the contribution can bring a significant effect and should be addressed to legislations for the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women with limited resources, people with special needs, indigenous groups, elderly and rural populations.

- **Sustainable economy and competitiveness:** The community contribution allocates 35% of the funds on these sectors aiming to help Mexico to continue integrate its economy into the world`s economy and to reinforce its competitiveness on the global scale. The idea behind this is to improve the population`s living standards. The outcome from the CSP 2002-2006 shows that the cooperation with SMEs is giving good results in the Mexican economy, therefore the strategy for this period intends to further continue this contribution (European Commission, 2007). Gender is not mentioned on this sector.
- **Education and culture:** 25% of the EU-Mexico cooperation program is allocated as a response to the increasing demand to access to higher education in Mexico and to help Mexican universities to cope with the demand in order to reduce the amount of students without access to higher education, which aims to facilitate access to the education system and to stimulate a more equitable society (European Commission, 2007).

The CSP states that a cultural cooperation with Mexico will help to strengthen the EU-Mexico relation beyond technical assistance. This part of the community collaboration should be directed to university cooperation, scholarships and the creation of a special fund for culture, information dissemination and visibility. The expected result at the end of the period is to increase the cultural exchange between the EU and Mexico, to increase the flow of knowledge and access to higher education both in Mexico and in Europe (Commission, 2007). Gender is not mentioned on this sector.

At first glance one can argue that the EU is failing to address the norm of gender equality, a norm that the Union says to be highly committed to. However, the CSP for the period 2007-2013 is once again characterizing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and

is expected that the projects resulting from the cooperation programs take into consideration the situation of women in Mexico, particularly to the problems related to gender-based violence, access to education, discrimination by the institutions and equal job opportunities (European Commission, 2007). Anexe 4 of the CSP refers to the studies made by the Inmujeres showing that due to inequality and general lack of opportunities, 60% out of those living under poverty are women. Furthermore, the document states that the eradication of gender violence depends on the elimination of inequalities between men and women and that the policy dialogues on the rule of law and institutional strengthening should address the phenomenon of gender-based violence (European Commission, 2007).

4.4 Translating CSPs to cooperation programs

Coherence, as one of the principles guiding the Union's policy-making, requires a consistency in the EU's external relations, security and development programs with the Union's core values (Algeri, 1999). On its relations with third countries, it is the EU representation on the beneficiary country has the task to channel the Union's engagement on human rights through the creation of cooperation-programs in which European norms and values should be reflected (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

As core value of the Union, gender equality is a considered cross-cutting issue by the Union. In the case of the EU-Mexico partnership, the commitment on this value is observed on the CSPs 2002-2006 and 2007-2013. This means that the initiatives addressing the protection of women's rights and the promotion of gender equality are usually prioritized for receiving technical and/or financial assistance by the EU. On a meeting with EuropeAid, my informant clarified that it is up to each delegation to create guidelines describing the purpose of the project and that the selection of the initiatives receiving funding is based upon how these guidelines and requirements are met by applicant (Informant EuropeAid, 2015).

Furthermore, the guidelines should be in accordance with the EU's overall policy on development cooperation, but they should also address the challenges of the beneficiary country (Informant EuropeAid, 2015). To this end, the EU seeks to have as much first-hand information as possible which is why officials and diplomats from the EU travel across Mexico visiting zones that have been characterized by its inequalities (Informant EU

delegation in Mexico, 2015). On these appointments, the officials usually visit public institutions, NGOs, meet the local authorities, and in some cases, victims of crimes related to human rights.

The outcome of these visits is to be reported back to the European Commission and to the EU's delegation in Mexico. Additionally, the EU can release an official statement on a situation based on the observations presented by the officials and depending on the seriousness of the situation, an extraordinary summit or a political dialogue might take place (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). Following this, the EU's delegation in Mexico has the task to consider these observations for the formulation of new guidelines which will be expressed on the annual call for proposals of projects. The intention behind this is to facilitate an equitable administration of the financial resources for this thematic.

Nevertheless, these guidelines should be consistent with the overall EU's cooperation policy, European values, focal sectors and cross-cutting issues, which is why gender equality is always expressed on the given guidelines. Moreover, in the case of the thematic projects on the rural areas in Mexico, a considerable number of the calls for proposals are particularly directed to the eradication of gender violence (Informant EuropeAid, 2015), especially after the resolution on feminicides in Mexico adopted by the European Parliament in 2007.

Having in mind that the guidelines for cooperation in Mexico are focusing on the eradication of gender violence, considering that the state of Veracruz, Mexico is identified as an area of intervention and considering CIDEM's work in the field of basic human rights of women, it can be argued that the established guidelines have given CIDEM a type of preference for the EU assistance. However, as both my informants from EuropeAid and the EU delegation in Mexico expressed, it is the evaluation of the outcome what decides if cooperation programs can be extended or not.

4.5 The impact of the EU-Mexico bilateral relations on women's rights

Although it is difficult to evaluate the transformative effect of the EU's role as norm promoter in the context of the law against gender violence in Veracruz, it can be observed different mechanism utilized by the EU for the promotion of norms and values on its relation with Mexico and with the Mexican civil society, the first signs of this can be observed during the negotiation of the global agreement where it became clear that the EU would not remove

the democracy and the conditionality clauses as these are standards for all EU's partnership with third countries (Szymanski & Smith, 2005), this made the Mexican negotiators realize that if Mexico wanted to have access to the European market and to increase European investment in the country, there wasn't any other choice than to cope with the EU's requirements for the partnership (Szymanski & Smith, 2005).

Considering Mexico's initial resistance to the democracy and conditionality clause in addition to the EU's direct funding to Mexican NGOs, Sanahuja (2000b) argues that EU exercised political pressure on Mexico and ultimately influenced the Mexican authorities into accepting the conditions of the Global Agreement. This indicates that the cooperation partnership with Mexico facilitated the use of incentives that were too powerful to ignore or to risk losing, which gave the EU an advantage during the negotiations. Börzel and Risse (2009a), refer to this type of influencing power over the negotiation period as *manipulation of utility calculations*, a mechanism in which the principle of conditionality is employed by a normative actor, in this case the EU, in order to influence its partner into adopting ideas, norms and values.

Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), suggest that the successful promotion of normative values in third countries does not only rely on positive incentives as it also depends on the EU's identity and credibility among its partners. This argument is linked to the EU's recognition by external actors, which creates a set expectations on how the EU as global actor should perform for the promotion of human rights in a given context, meaning that the EU's strategy to promote ideas and values is often influenced by an assessment of the situation in the region, which outlines the formulation of CSPs. Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), argue that a normative actor has the ability to influence the thinking of another actor without the use of coercive means such as military intervention. Furthermore, they argue that if an actor is in position to use practical means in form of aid and technical assistance to further its own interest, it has greater preconditions to influence other actors. However, the EU's success as a normative actor lies on its ability to communicate core values through socialization processes combined with the possibility of using positive conditionality in form of material rewards. With this in mind, it can be argued that the use of mechanisms such as socialization and persuasion function better if the principle of conditionality is also present.

The incentives of positive conditionality can be observed in the case if the EU-Mexico bilateral relations, usually manifested in form of cooperation programs, assistance, trade and

investments. Considering the Global Agreement and the CSPs, it can be said that the EU aims to promote values in Mexico by combining socialization with positive conditionality. This might suggest that the character of the EU's role in the context of the law against gender violence can be described as *partner for development* (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012), which indicates that the EU promotes norms and values by encouraging policy-making, like in the case of the law against gender violence in Veracruz.

When it comes to the EU's relation with third countries, it can be said that the EU's transformative power without the incentive of a potential membership is likely to be minimal (Domínguez, 2010). Therefore, the EU's successful diffusion of norms depends on having at its disposal valuable incentives to offer to its partner in order to pursue a normative adjustment. These incentives are classified as *positive incentives* referring to institutional membership, access to trade benefits as well as financial or technical assistance and as *negative incentives* that can be observed in form of economic sanctions, "naming and shaming" statements or *démarches* (Domínguez, 2010). Normally, positive and negative incentives go hand by hand as "carrot and sticks", meaning that positive incentives are often accompanied by the principle of conditionality (Börzel & Risse, 2009b).

In other words, the EU's approach to the principle of conditionality follows a strategy of reinforcement by reward, in which the EU as the donor can give a compensation to its partner if it complies with the conditions established on the agreement, or the EU can also hold the reward if its partner fails to comply (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004). The principle of conditionality becomes then a form for social control, meaning that pro-social behavior can be rewarded while anti-social behavior can be punished (Schimmelfennig, Engert, & Knobel, 2002).

According Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2004), the impact of democratic conditionality depends on three elements: (1) the size of reward, (2) the size of the cost (3) the credibility of the donor. This means that the target country in this case Mexico, has to balance the cost-benefit resulting from the adoption of norms and if the benefit overcomes the cost, it is more likely that the adoption of norms will succeed. To put it on a different way, "*A state adopts EU rules if the benefits of the EU rewards exceed the domestic adoption cost*" (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004).

Considering the EU's community donations to the cooperation programs in Mexico and considering that Mexico also benefits from the partnership with the EU, it can be argued that

the benefit resulting from adopting norms is stronger than the cost, especially because the partnership opens the doors for technical and financial assistance from the EU, in such way that both partners are pursuing mutual goals.

Once the third country, in this case Mexico, accepts the conditions of the partnership, the EU's possibility to diffuse normative values increases through what Manners (2002) identifies as *transference diffusion*. This can be observed on the EU's exchange trades that are not restricted to the trade of goods, but that also include partnership on cooperation. Usually such trades offer financial aid, technical assistance and financial rewards, outlining at the same time a framework of responsibility which, in theory, means that if one of the partners is failing to honor the commitments expressed on the agreement, the principle of conditionality can be applied, for example in form of economic sanctions or even the suspension of the agreement (Szymanski & Smith, 2005).

In the case of the Global Agreement between the EU and Mexico, the principle of conditionality can also to be observed on the way the EU intends to promote normative ideas in the country. As the conditionality clause given on article 58 states that both partners should pursue the protection and the promotion of human rights through its bilateral relations, it can be argued that the meaning behind this formulation encompasses not only Mexico's responsibility to create policies for the protection of human rights, but also the responsibility of the EU to allocate funds and to provide guidance in form of aid and technical assistance in order to help its partner to meet its international obligations.

Moreover, the global agreement between the EU and Mexico institutionalizes high level political dialogues in which both parties are committed to discuss mutual concerns and to find mutual solutions. It is expected that through these dialogues both parties address sensitive issues related to human rights and democracy in order to develop cooperation programs in collaboration with the civil society in order to tackle social problems, opening the doors with this to NGOs, like CIDEM, to receive financial and technical assistance from the EU, but most importantly, offering to the civil society a platform to discuss together with the officials from the EU and the Mexican authorities problems related to human rights. In this case, discuss women's rights and gender equality. Manners (2002), refers to this as *procedural diffusion*, a concept that implies that normative values can be diffused through the institutionalization of a relationship between two regions, which is possible through political

dialogues. Procedural diffusion is normally observed on the EU's inter-regional agreement between two blocs, like in this case, the global agreement between the EU and Mexico.

Gender-based violence and gender equality are issues that have been raised during the political dialogues between the EU and Mexico since the consolidation of the Global Agreement (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015). However, the weight of these dialogues became more visible after 2007 when the European Parliament formulated the resolution on femicide in Mexico and Central America recommending that the European Commission strengthen the dialogues and the cooperation programs with Mexico in order to address this phenomenon (European Parliament, 2007a). Such type of declaratory communications can be considered as *informational diffusion*, another factor identified by Manners (2002) for the EU's successful diffusion of normative ideas in third countries.

In addition to the political dialogues and démarches, cooperation programs resulting from the EU-Mexico bilateral relations are usually monitored and evaluated through official visit from the European Union. In the case of the EU-CIDEM relation in the context of the law against gender violence, the program "for the life and freedom of women" which consisted of five actions lasting from 2006 until 2013, was closely monitored by the EU delegation in Mexico and usually received visits from representatives from the EIDHR (Informant EU delegation in Mexico, 2015).

Furthermore, CIDEM often invited the EU's delegation in Mexico to participate on the initiatives funded by the EU, which contributes to the positive relations between the EU and CIDEM. Most importantly, the EU's delegation in Mexico accompanied CIDEM to several of the negotiations meetings with the local authorities in the state of Veracruz (Informant CIDEM, 2015). Such physical presence is what Manners (2002), refers to as *overt diffusion* and often is observed during official visits from the EU's delegation, embassies from member states or visits from commissions on human rights to areas in which the EU has contributed with financial aid and/or technical assistance.

It can be argued that the EU's physical presence in Veracruz as an intervention zone and the participation of the EU on the negotiation meetings with the local authorities are part of the process of overt diffusion through which the EU confirms its commitment on the eradication of gender violence and the promotion of gender equality in this state.

Complementing political dialogues, the EU and Mexico have conducted policy dialogues in which both parties address cross-cutting issues such as gender equality with the intention to influence the policy making, these dialogues can also happen at local level, depending on the issue the dialogue is addressing. As gender equality is a cross-cutting issue for the EU-Mexico relations and the state of Veracruz is defined as an intervention area, policy dialogues on gender equality have happened at local level, including NGOs like CIDEM, among others and the local authorities.

Manners (2002), argues that an important factor shaping the way the EU diffuses norms and values is observed during the interaction between different actors and how this interaction plays a role on the diffusion of international norms which can lead to policy making, this is known as *cultural filter* and is characterized by the inclusion of the civil society on discussions on human rights with third countries (Manners, 2002). It can be argued that the role of the EU as promoter of women's rights is reflected on how the EU addresses these issues through the political dialogues and through the creation of cooperation programs resulting from the dialogues. However, the cultural filter is mostly notorious on the seminars on human rights prior to the political dialogues in which the civil society plays an important role on setting the agenda of issues regarding human rights that should be discussed between the EU and the Mexican authorities. According to Börzel and Risse (2009a), during the political dialogues inter-regional partners go through processes of socialization and ultimately persuasion in which the EU, as the normative actor, addresses social issues and communicates desired norms and values. It is likely that this is the nature of the political and policy dialogues as the physical presence of both partners might lead to mutual decision making. It can be argued that through these dialogues the EU's influence potential in Mexico increases because socialization and persuasion might lead to successful diffusion of norms.

Considering the weight of the promotion of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue on the CSPs 2002-2006 and 2007-2013 and considering that the state of Veracruz is described as an intervention area (European Union, 2002), it is likely that the inclusion of the civil society working for women's rights in the state of Veracruz is an important element of the EU's approach to the promotion of this norm both at local and national level.

Considering the arguments from Manners (2002) and looking at the bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico, I suggest that the norm of gender equality in Mexico, but particularly in the state of Veracruz, has been promoted through informational and procedural diffusion, by means of political dialogues between the EU and Mexico.

The reason why I say particularly in the state of Veracruz is because it seems like the EU-CIDEM relation further the EU's presence in the negotiation meeting with the decision makers in Veracruz.

Moreover, the norm of gender equality is diffused through transference and overt diffusion by means of cooperation programs that give access to financial and technical assistance. More precisely, overt diffusion can be observed by the physical presence of the EU in the areas of intervention through the monitoring and evaluation faces of the EU-CIDEM programs and through the negotiations meeting between the CIDEM and the decision makers in the state of Veracruz on the adoption of the law against gender violence.

Although is difficult to illustrate the full impact of the EU-CIDEM relations in the context of the adoption of the law against gender violence, I suggest that the cultural filter had a significant effect for its adoption. This can be observed on (1) the high level political dialogues between the EU and the Mexican authorities, (2) on policy dialogues with local authorities and NGOs and (3) on the EU's accompaniment to CIDEM to negotiation meetings with local legislators. Considering this, I argue that the EU's collaboration and cooperation programs in Veracruz have contributed to a successful awareness raising campaign on the phenomenon of gender violence and therefore, it is likely that the EU has played an important role in the adoption and implementation of a legal framework that protects women.

Due to the statistics showing a high number of gender violence resulting on femicide, it can be argued that role conception of the EU as a promoter of women's rights in Mexico and its performance to the actively promote this norm through the high level political dialogues with the Mexican authorities is not entirely successful. However, the EU's role as a norm promoter in the state of Veracruz is showing better results when the EU addresses this phenomenon at local level. This can be related to the EU-CIDEM relation and CIDEM's position in Veracruz, a position that allows CIDEM to collaborate with other NGOs and politicians. Which can suggest that the EU's normative power in the context of the law against gender violence is rather soft because even though it has at its disposal the strong cooperation tools, in form of technical assistance and financial aid, it still depends on the network of CIDEM, and how this NGO leads initiatives to address the phenomenon of gender-based violence in order to influence the policy-making. This can be explained by the fact that CIDEM has a strong household in Veracruz, due to its wide network in the state which allows it to be part of initiatives without been considered an observer or an outsider. However, despite CIDEM's

strong position in Veracruz, my informant recognizes the advantages resulting from the collaboration with the EU: *“Having the EU on our side made it easier to book meetings with legislators and the cause of the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality was easier to be heard. Or more difficult to continue ignoring”* (Informant CIDEM, 2015). Furthermore, the cooperation with European NGOs during the seminars on human rights facilitated the benchmarking of the strategies used by other NGOs to raise awareness on the same phenomenon and expanded CIDEMs network both in Mexico and Europe.

The EU’s role as promoter of women’s rights was intensified when the EU started to address feminicides in Mexico through resolutions and declaratory statements on the situation of women in Mexico. It can be argued that these actions had a much stronger impact than addressing the issue only through the political dialogues as these are, to some degree, behind doors.

The impact of the informational diffusion on gender equality in Mexico increased with the notion that the situation of women attracted the negative attention from the European Parliament, the ruling from the IACHR where Mexico was found guilty of discrimination and failing to protect women ("Cotton Field," 2009), the statement from high representative and vice president of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton (European Union, 2010), where she welcomes the IACHR judgement and expresses the concerns about feminicides in Mexico on behalf of the Union (Oikarinen, 2011) followed by the UN’s engagement on the phenomenon (UN Women, 2011). As this thesis is limited to the role of the EU, it is difficult to identify the role of other international organizations like the UN and the IACHR on the phenomenon of gender violence in Mexico. However, it can be argued that the ruling of the IACHR functions as a tipping point on the way the Mexico responds to the phenomenon of gender violence.

I could be said that the above mentioned events led to more attention to the phenomenon of femicide in Mexico and to the increase of the funding of NGOs working for women’s rights. I suggest that they contributed to intensify the EU’s influence over Mexico in the context of the eradication of gender violence and the promotion of women’s rights through political dialogues at national level, but also at local level through the funding of initiatives addressing this issue. A defining moment is when the advisor for human rights to the EU’s delegation in Mexico addressed the congress of Veracruz and expressed the official support from the EU to the reform of the law against gender violence with the typification of

femicide. During this speech she mentioned how the EU is working closely with CIDEM on the creation of programs to tackle this phenomenon (Ceballos, 2011). It could be said that there is a possibility that her speech generated more pressure on the state of Veracruz to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of women. Furthermore, considering the media coverage on this event, it could also be argued that her speech functioned as an example-setting of the EU's engagement on the eradication of gender violence which received more attention from the media both in Mexico and Europe.

Considering the EU-Mexico bilateral relations, it can be argued that the EU's role conception is based on *normative leadership*, meaning that the EU assumes the role of promoter of ideas in accordance to its own core values and pursues to outline a framework of interaction in which partners create cooperation-programs designed to achieve mutual goals. However, the social context of the EU-Mexico relations indicates an interdependence between both partners, which interferes on EU's normative leadership and translates the EU's role into a soft power where the most of resources are directed to socialization, persuasion and giving the illusion that both parties are addressing mutual goals. Hence, the cooperation partnership.

Börzel (2010), suggests that interdependency between two regions play a significant role on the way the EU exercises political pressure. She argues that it is likely that the partner country is in possession of resources that might be interesting for the EU; such resources can be oil, gas or investment opportunities. Considering this, it can be suggested that the bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico can also be influenced by the EU's interest in Mexico. For the EU, the Mexican market also connects the EU to the Latin American market and most importantly, to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Szymanski & Smith, 2005).

Having in mind the social context of the EU-Mexico relations, it can be argued that the EU's approach to address the norm of gender equality on its relations with Mexico is both a result from the awareness of the situation, the EU's identity and the expectations of external actors. In other words, the EU's own conception of its role as promoter of gender equality is driven by the EU's identity and desire to spread core values in order to fulfill the EU's internal and external expectations as a normative actor, together with the social context that in this case would be the situation of women and the partnership agreement with Mexico.

To understand the impact of the EU's role as a promoter of women's rights in Mexico, it is important to consider the background of the bilateral relations and how the EU's identity and legitimacy reflects on this. In this case, it is possible that the EU is recognized as an international actor promoting core values related to the protection of human rights and democracy, but utterly as a partner. This might explain why following the Global Agreement the collaboration in the field of human rights strengthened. This can be observed on the cooperation programs in which the EU and Mexico have financed projects addressing mutual goals by including the Mexican civil society.

The role conception of the EU in front of an NGO like CIDEM, seems to move from the role as partner for development to what Bengtsson and Elgström (2012) define as a *benign partner*, which refers to as a normative actor with a clear notion about what is correct and appropriate and wishes to spread these norms to new regions.

However, it is not enough with a mutual role conception and the coherent role performance as it can be observed on the EU-CIDEM relations, the recognition of the EU as a normative actor depends on the way the EU shows leadership among its partners (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). Considering that the EU has managed to share a vision on mutual challenges in the field of human rights, it can be argued that the EU is showing strong *intellectual leadership* through the political dialogues and through the EU-CIDEM collaboration. Furthermore, the weight of gender equality on the CSPs indicates that the EU is pursuing to enhance what Bengtsson and Elgström (2012) refer to as *structural leadership*, as it uses the possible resources by allocating funds for the protection and promotion of human rights, in this case, on gender equality. It is likely that such leadership styles increases an actor's legitimacy and enhances its influence power in the international scene.

Considering the CSPs, the negotiation meetings, and the way the EU interacts with the Mexican authorities, it can be argued that the EU's role conception as normative actor is defined by a variety of mechanisms in which the EU intends to promote the norm of gender equality in Mexico, particularly in the state of Veracruz where the socialization processes and the collaboration with CIDEM seem to have a much stronger impact than only addressing it through the political dialogues. However, despite the fact the EU financed CIDEM's first awareness raising campaign directed to the adoption of the law against gender violence (2006-2008), it can be argued that the EU's normative power is not necessarily reflected on the adoption of the law in Veracruz, the reason for this is that the law came on federal level

and it delegates each state with the responsibility of adapting this law in consistence to the situation on each state. Nevertheless, the EU's normative power can be observed on the implementation programs (actions 2, 3, 4 and 5), in which the EU's collaboration with CIDEM and the local authorities seem to have a more positive outcome for the implementation of the law and for the reform of the typification of femicide.

It can be argued that the EU's role as a normative actor in Mexico gives a more positive outcome when norms are approached through different mechanisms at different levels; for instance, when the EU combines political and policy dialogues, at both top and local level, with positive incentives in form of aid and assistance in which the principle of conditionality is always present.

When it comes to the EU's relation with CIDEM in the context of the law against gender violence in Veracruz, it can be argued that the EU's engagement as a promoter of women's rights is reflected on the way the EU collaborated with CIDEM by financing the different initiatives. Considering how the EU's involvement in Veracruz was intensified after the second action (2008-2009), it can be said that the EU has contributed to a meaningful start on the formulation and implementation of a legal framework protecting women in Veracruz. Nevertheless, it is important to have in mind that the EU is not the sole actor involved in this process, which is why it is not likely that the EU's role on the process prior to the adoption of the law was decisive.

However, considering the EU's physical presence in the state of Veracruz and the declaratory statements on gender violence in Mexico, it can be argued that the Union's engagement on this process was intensified action after action, which might have increased the probabilities of the collaboration's positive results for the implementation of the law against gender violence.

Due to the nature of the initiatives led by CIDEM and financed by the EU, it can be said that such collaboration contributed to increase the level of interactions between the EU and the local authorities in Veracruz. I suggest therefore that the EU's diffusion of the norm of gender equality in this state was most likely to succeed because of the collaboration with CIDEM, which facilitated the socialization and persuasion process in which the EU diffused the norm of gender equality to the decision makers in Veracruz by emphasizing its commitment on women's rights and by offering financial and technical assistance for the correct implementation of the law.

4.5.1 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I have analyzed the background of the EU's commitment to the promotion of gender equality on its development policy; I followed this by reviewing the reasons behind EU's role as a promoter of gender equality in third countries. Furthermore, I analyzed if and how this commitment is reflected on the Global Agreement between the EU and Mexico and on the CSPs 2002-2006, 2007-2013, trying to identify if the EU is in fact acting in accordance to its role conception as a promoter of gender equality.

Based on the evaluation of the aforementioned documents, I benefited from the role theory, normative power Europe and inter-regionalism as analytic tools to review the EU-CIDEM relation in the context of the law against gender violence and to answer my research question if whether or not the EU played a role on the adoption of this law, its implementation and the typification of femicide.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the role of the European Union in the adoption of the law against gender violence, its implementation and the typification of femicide in Veracruz, Mexico. Through this study I have outlined the background of the EU gender mainstreaming strategy, which gives a better understanding of how gender equality and the eradication of gender violence became a cross-cutting issue for the EU's development policy and how this norm has been identified as an important element for sustainable development, stability and economic growth.

The thesis consists of a case study of the EU-CIDEM relation in which the role of the European Union as a promoter of women's rights is analyzed through the role theory, inter-regionalism and normative power Europe. This framework is employed to determine if whether or not the EU-CIDEM relations had an effect on the adoption and implementation of the law against gender violence in Veracruz. The case study indicates that the EU's role as a promoter of norms and values in Mexico relies on the formalization of the bilateral relations between the EU and Mexico, which is why the consolidation of the Global Agreement is an important factor on the way the EU diffuses norms in Mexico.

The method employed to analyze the EU's role as a promoter of norms in Mexico and its possible impact on the law against gender violence in Veracruz is the analysis of official documents such as the Global Agreement, the CSPs 2002-2006 and 2007-2013, such documents can indicate a rather strong commitment from the EU on the eradication of gender violence and the promotion of women's rights in Mexico. The documents also show that due to the geographical and social challenges in the state of Veracruz, this state is identified as an intervention area.

To confirm the EU's rhetorical commitment on this norm, I have also interviewed key informants in Mexico City, Veracruz and Brussels. The aim of these interviews is to understand if and how this commitment has translated into cooperation programs and to understand how the EU was involved in the process of the adoption and implementation of the law.

In order to have a better understanding of the collaboration between the EU and CIDEM, I decided to illustrate this relation through a timeline of events in which each action of the cooperation program between the EU and CIDEM is reviewed in the context of the law against gender violence. The timeline shows the effect of each action on the implementation of the law and finally, on the typification of femicide.

For this study it is also important to understand the selection process in which the EU chooses the NGOs and the initiatives that will receive financial and technical assistance through the EIDHR, the understanding of this process together with the interviews give an insight on why the EU-CIDEM relation is considered to be a successful one, and it clarifies how and why the EU's delegation to Mexico decided to extend this collaboration program for over 7 years.

Based on the analysis, I suggest that CIDEM, as part of the civil society, is an important element for the successful diffusion of the norm of gender equality in the state of Veracruz. The reason for this is that CIDEM in collaboration with the EU had the tools to lead an awareness raising campaign on the phenomenon of gender violence, which was addressed to the decision makers in Veracruz for the creation of legal framework protecting women. However, despite CIDEM's local stronghold, my informant expressed that this NGO needed to have the financial means and the technical assistance from the EU. Furthermore, she explained that this collaboration facilitated to catch the legislator's attention on the issue of gender violence as the EU is recognized by the Mexican and local authorities as a partner for development (Informant CIDEM, 2015).

The study indicates that the EU benefits from a variety of mechanisms in which norms, in this case the norm of gender equality and the promotion of women's rights, are diffused. It is observed that mechanisms such as socialization (political dialogue), are an important element on how the EU and Mexico discuss mutual goals. Furthermore, the study shows that the interaction between persuasion and the principle of conditionality is important for the successful diffusion of norms. As Manners (2002) points out, the use of positive incentives, transference and procedural diffusion is essential for the EU's role as a promoter of values related to human rights. Finally, the study indicates that the EU relies on these in order to influence state actors and local authorities with norms and values. I suggest that these factors are also observed on the EU-CIDEM collaboration. In addition to this, the study indicates that the cultural filter and overt diffusion in form of the EU's physical presence in the state of

Veracruz, contributed to the success of the EU-CIDEM relation and therefore on the adoption of the law against gender violence, its implementation and the typification of femicide.

In this thesis the focus has been the EU's role as promoter of women's rights in Mexico, particularly in the state of Veracruz. Considering that this is an understudied area, this thesis has contributed with interesting material for further research on this field. As I mentioned earlier, to study policies addressing gender violence is necessary to have a holistic approach to understand the phenomenon, the process and the outcome. As this thesis has focused on the process, it could be interesting with further research on the outcome of the collaborations between the EU and Mexico on this issue. Furthermore, as the EU and Mexico are negotiating the modernization of the Global Agreement (European Commission, 2015), it could be interesting to study to what degree the norm of gender equality is included in this.

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