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Review paper

Andrea Rakanović Radonjić, Vesna Šućur-Janjetović, Draško Gajić

PROJECT AND SYSTEMIC ACTIVITIES IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FAMILY VIOLENCE – A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK

The article focuses on the social phenomenon of violence against women and family violence, which marks the everyday life of society in different spheres. Critical social work through its theoretical frameworks and critical reflection has been contributing for decades to raising awareness regarding human rights issues and social phenomena, such as violence against women and domestic violence, but also of the challenges faced by individuals, social workers, and social structures that essentially occupy the central place of critical social work theories. This paper presents research results into systems solutions and project activities in the Republic of Srpska through the prism of theoretical approaches and perspectives of critical social work. The results showed that the system's response to violence against women and family violence is framed by the normative (international and national) framework in the Republic of Srpska, where the Istanbul Convention and the The Law on Protection from Violence in the Family of RS are crucial normative, as well as that significant steps have been taken to criminalize violence as a criminal offence in the The Law on Protection from Violence in the Family of RS. The results show that in the past few years, a series of project activities have been carried out that have contributed to implementation of laws, policies and programs in the area of protection from domestic violence and violence against women. The theoretical framework offers an understanding of structural and post-modern approaches to critical social work in the analysis of the social phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence. Also, the perspectives of critical social work have been used in the discussion on the results of this research concerning the project activities and systemic solutions in combating violence against women and family violence.

Key words: violence against women; family violence; systemic activities; projects; critical social work

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and family violence seems to be one of the “evergreen” topics of science and practice of social work, but also many other disciplines and professions. Combating violence against women and family violence represents challenges in every society, including the society of the Republic of Srpska. Even though one might think that this social phenomenon is the domain of private and personal issues that women and families, as well as societies, have been struggling with for centuries, the times have come when public awareness and combating violence in general, including violence against women and family violence are in the focus of modern society and government systems. One of the essential reasons for being so is the shift in the approach in the international, regional and national legislation that came as the consequence of the fact that many countries have ratified the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence from 2013. The documents have triggered significant changes in legislation concerning combating violence against women and domestic violence. This paper will present the research results on critical analysis of the existing legislative framework (international and national) regulating the area of domestic violence and violence against women, as well as project activities implemented in the Republic of Srpska by government organisations. The underpinning theoretical framework will be focused on critical approaches in social work. These theories and perspectives have a long and influential history in social work practice; therefore, we find them suitable for conducting critical analysis on structural issues that focus on systemic and project activities within the society of the Republic of Srpska. Critical perspectives will offer the framework for understanding legislative combat against this complex social phenomenon but also answer some questions regarding the structural causes that have a direct impact on personal and political issues that social work practitioners face on a daily basis.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL WORK IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Critical social theories underpin the theoretical framework chosen in this paper, which is especially important for social work practice and theoretical understanding of approaches and models of social work with victims/survivors of violence against women and family violence.

The critical tradition has a long and rich history in social work. A crucial perspective in social work enables the analysis and interpretation of factors that are not the direct causes of the problems faced by users of social work services but also by social workers themselves. Through the prism of this approach, social workers avoid the assumption that things must remain as they are, meaning they take them for granted (Škorić and Škorić 2020). Critical social work theories can provide a broader framework for professional understanding of the context in which social workers operate, but also, a good foundation for making connections between the personal and political, which can also be understood as structural in a specific society. As Fook (2012) states, summarising Agger (1998) and recognising the shared common grounds of different theorists within the critical social theories, “domination is both personally experienced and structurally created”. A simple interpretation of such positions can be understood in a way that individuals can participate in the creation of their beliefs about their position in society (social structure) and their own power and possibilities to change (Rakanović Radonjić & Šućur-Janjetović 2023a). Critical social work theory provides the possibility of change in awareness of forms of violence against women and family violence in a given society that are tolerated as part of the cultural structure in traditional environments such as the Republic of Srpska.

It is well known that the development of social work theories and approaches were strongly influenced by critical social theories. Initial ideas were grounded in radical theories that placed the seeds for discussions and activities that focused on class discrimination and inequality, but for the purpose of this paper, the influence of feminist ideas seems to have stronger influence in the theory and practice of social work. Feminist ideas strongly attacked gender inequality, as well as class-based oppression. Dominelli (2002 a:7, in Pease et al. 2009: 23) defines feminist social work as “practice that starts from an analysis of women’s experience of the world and focuses on the links between women’s position in society and their individual predicaments to create

egalitarian client-worker relationships and address structural inequalities” (Rakanović Radonjić & Šućur-Janjetović 2023a). On the other hand, critical social work is founded on recognising that human rights violations are directly connected to the social work practice and social policy documents, not only Constitutions but also different UN and other relevant international documents. It is also worth emphasising that social workers are obliged by ethical and professional standards to challenge human rights issues and violations by engaging and combining advocacy for feminist movements fighting for zero tolerance on violence against women and family violence in the broadest possible sense.

According to Payne (2017), critical social work theories can also be seen as part of the discourse on the nature of social work. The same author analyses the contribution of critical theories of social work through two important dimensions: The ideological position of the role of social work in society and as a practice deriving from social ideology. In the article *Applying Critical Social Work Theory in Practice* from 2017, Payne explains how he sees the role of critical social work theories through three key elements (Payne 2017: 170):

“Reviewing and criticising information and research that claims to represent “knowledge” that is implemented in the practice of social work;
Theories that are critical of existing social relationships and widely accepted ideas about society;
Theory stemming from the sociological tradition, including the ideas of political and sociological theorist Karl Marx and his followers, as well as the political and social theories of the Frankfurt School of Sociology”.

Payne (2017) sees the “sceptical position” as a broad idea, providing the critical theory of social work with two important things: The scientific method (seen through the prism of results and findings obtained through research as temporary and open to new checks), and reflection on phenomenology and the importance of social constructions. Phenomenology claims that knowledge comes from the appearance of things and how human beings see and interpret things. Social construction suggests that knowledge is created within the framework of social relationships in which people share an opinion about the nature of reality. Such thinking leads to the conclusion that knowledge and understanding are always influenced by the cultural, social, and historical experiences that people have now regarding coming up with new knowledge. Thus, the social construct offers us a more open presentation of the knowledge used in human relations and relationships, rejecting the idea that the only recognised knowledge is that resulting from academic research. Suppose we are to apply such

findings in critical social work practice with victims/survivors of violence against women and family violence. In that case, it has to include the experience of clients, in order to understand the “full picture” (Šućur-Janjetović 2023).

Another key element of the critical theory of social work, which focuses on “criticism of existing social relations” Payne (2017) examines through two traditions of social work. The first refers to the long tradition of dealing with poverty issues, while the second (recent) refers to groups of marginalised (individuals and groups in disadvantaged or subordinate positions). In the first tradition, critical social work is aimed at ensuring social justice through addressing inequality issues caused by poverty. This position can be seen in the gender inequality issues, and useful for the understanding of the social phenomenon of violence against women and family violence. In another tradition of critical social work, the focus is on issues of subordination (oppression) and the social identity of disadvantaged groups. In the broadest sense, social workers have always considered it necessary to focus on the social causes of poverty. In this case, we can use this approach to better understand the phenomenon of violence against women and family violence.

The third element of the critical theories of social work refers to the sociological tradition with a special aspect of “social worker’s” reflection, while at the same time linked to the two previous elements, being scepticism and criticism of existing social relations (Šućur-Janjetović 2023). Chenoweth and McAuliffe (2011) emphasise the unbreakable connection between valuing individuals and their right to self-determination. This stance is included in the professional ethics of social work and grounded in the human rights discourses. Connolly and Ward (2008: 18 in Chenoweth and McAuliffe 2011: 43) think that human rights can serve as a good protective zone for all people. This offers significant space for conceptualising what one may consider a “good life”, without any interference from others. Other authors, such as Ife (2008), think “human rights’ perspective” as a critical and powerful framework for social work practice, exploring three generations of human rights throughout the history of our civilisation. This speaks for itself about the importance of the social work profession to be based on the principle of protection of human rights (Šućur-Janjetović, Rakanović Radonjić, Gajić 2023).

As emphasised by Nipperess and Briskman (2009, in Pease et al. 2009), the human rights approach (as a critical social work approach) goes beyond the areas of practice, providing additional tools to analyse the world. It is “vital in forging connections for social workers between the wider, and often global, forces and context of practice” (Rakanović Radonjić & Šućur-Janjetović 2023a). This theoretical framework underpins the interpretation of the research presented in this paper.

2. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the nature of the subject and this study, a number of general scientific methods of analytical-deductive, hypothetical-deductive and comparative method have been used to illustrate the systemic and project activities carried out in The Republic of Srpska in the field of protection of victims of violence against women and family violence. Of the basic scientific methods used in the construction of the work, methods of analysis and synthesis, methods of induction and deduction, and methods of generalisation were used. Of the special methods, the method of content analysis was used, namely descriptive analysis, functional analysis and factor analysis. This was used in the analysis of professional and scientific literature, the results of previous research and normative documentation regulating the research topic.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

This part presents the results of a critical analysis of the existing legislative framework (international and national) regulating the area of domestic violence and violence against women, as well as project activities implemented in the Republic of Srpska by government organizations aimed at improving the social response to domestic violence and violence against women.

There are no official data on all forms of GBV at the state level in BiH. Data collection at the institutional level is incomplete and inconsistent. Different institutions use different methodologies for collecting and documenting data, making it even more difficult to form a clear picture of the incidence of all forms of violence.

In the Republic of Srpska, the number of reported criminal acts of violence in the family and family community is constantly increasing. In 2020, the total number of reported criminal offences was 715, within which 668 female victims of domestic violence were registered. In 2021, the number of reported criminal offences was 740, in which 687 female victims were registered. In 2022, an increase in the number of criminal acts of domestic violence by approximately 25% (861) was registered. 820 female victims of domestic violence were registered, which is an increase of 17% compared to 2021 (Rakanović Radonjić 2023). The data for 2023 are still not publicly available.

3.1. Systemic activities in combating violence against women and family violence in the Republic of Srpska

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was the sixth country to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence back in 2013. From that moment, many efforts have been made in order to harmonise national legislation with the Istanbul Convention (Rakanović Radonjić, Šućur-Janjetović 2023a). This process has been demanding due to divided jurisdictions in BiH at the level of entities (the Republic of Srpska/RS and the Federation of BiH/FBiH) and the District Brcko, and at the level of Cantons of Federation of BiH (FBiH). The implementation of the Istanbul Convention is the responsibility of the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH.

In line with its regulation in the area of violence, BiH has a purely coordinating role at the national level, while at the international level, it ensures unity in meeting international obligations and reporting to international institutions. The general framework for protection against violence is given by: the FBiH Constitution, the RS Constitution, the Brcko District Statute, the FBiH Canton Constitution, the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (Official Gazette of BiH No. 59/09 and 66/16), the Law on Gender Equality (Official Gazette of BiH No. 32/10). To have a “closer look” into the field of protection of victims of violence against women and family violence, this paper is analysing the response of the Republic of Srpska Entity in this field. By ratifying the Istanbul Convention, BiH committed itself to taking legislative and other measures to provide a legal, institutional and organisational framework for preventing violence against women, protecting victims/survivors of violence and punishing perpetrators of violence. The text of the Convention was published in the Official Gazette of BiH, No. 15/13. This document aims to achieve a zero degree of tolerance towards violence against women and domestic violence, as well as the prevention of violence, protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators. These are the main provisions of the Convention (Šćepović & Lepir 2023). The areas covered by the Convention are Prevention, Protection, Policy integration, Basic laws, and Monitoring (monitoring the implementation). Additional topics included in the Convention are gender perspective, migrant women, asylum seekers and refugee women, NGOs and children. The convention covers all women and girls from all backgrounds, regardless of their age, race, religion, social background, migrant status or sexual orientation. Particular attention is drawn to the existence of special groups of women and girls who are often at greater risk of violence (migrant women, asylum-seekers and women

from special regions). The Convention also applies to other victims of domestic violence, such as men, children and the elderly.

The legislative framework regulating violence in the RS contains several laws. Strategic documents, by-laws, and various protocols on procedure make up the whole system of protection and support for victims of domestic violence in the Republic of Srpska.

The Law on Protection from Violence in the Family of RS (Official Gazette of RS No. 102/12, 108/13, 82/15, 84/19) is a *lex specialis*. The law was passed by RS Parliament as early as 2005, which can be seen as a legal solution that preceded the modern regulations contained in the Istanbul Convention. This law was passed due to the lack of visibility of domestic violence in the previous penal code. It was only after some time (after major problems in the application of the law) that significant developments took place in this area, including the activities that followed the commitments set out in the Istanbul Convention. The current Law on Protection from Domestic Violence has eight chapters: Introductory provisions, definition of key concepts, subjects of protection and support, procedure for achieving protection of victims, protective measures, record-keeping obligations, supervision and penal provisions. The RS Ministry of family, youth and sports is responsible for coordinating, implementing and monitoring the application of the Law, together with the RS Centre for Gender Equality.

The Criminal Code of RS (Official Gazette No.64/17, 104/18, 15/21, 89/21 and 46/21) treats domestic violence as a special crime of violence in the area of crimes against marriage and family. By amending and supplementing this law, domestic violence and violence against women has been criminalised as a crime in all its forms. This law defines who all family members are and regulates the prosecution of violent offenders. Criminal prosecution in the area of domestic violence has contributed to the establishment of a preventive system against the commission of a criminal act of domestic violence. This law criminalises crimes against gender identity as well as crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse of a child. In this way, the perpetrators' prosecution is ensured per the Istanbul Convention.

The law on exercising the right to free legal assistance (Official Gazette RS No. 67/20) deals with issues of providing minimum legal mechanisms for socially sensitive groups (free use of services and advice at all stages of the procedure). The exercise of this right is not limited to the place of residence, as is the case with social protection rights.

The Health Protection Act (Official Gazette RS No. 57/22) provides and arranges social care for citizens' health. According to the law, victims of violence can count on full and unconditional health care. Also, victims of violence are compulsorily insured and receive health care free of charge.

The Law on the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings (Official Gazette RS No. 53/12, 9/17, 66/18 and 15/21) stipulates in their regulations that family members who have witnessed violence are entitled to a special regime of necessary safety protection.

The Law on the Protection and Treatment of Children and Minors in Criminal Proceedings (Official Gazette RS No. 13/10, 61/13 and 68/20) deals with issues arising out of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which concern the protection of the interests of the child in criminal proceedings, if he or she is a suspect, accused, convicted, victim or witness. Through this law, children of victims of violence have the possibility of protection, but also professional support during the process in which they participate in any capacity.

The Social Housing Act (Official Gazette RS No. 54/19) regulates the area of residence in the Republic of Srpska under special conditions deriving from the state of social need. Social housing implies the assignment of a housing unit to a non-profit lease for a certain period of time, with the consent of the user, while the need for residential care lasts. This law offers the possibility of more permanent care for victims of violence after using certain specialist services or aftercare in a safe house.

The RS Government adopted *the General Protocol on the Treatment of Cases of Domestic Violence in The Republic of Srpska* (Official Gazette RS No. 104/13, 14/22) to ensure the coordinated, efficient and comprehensive work of the signatories to the Protocol to provide immediate assistance, support and protection to victims of domestic violence, and to prevent the recurrence of violence. According to the legislative document, the ultimate beneficiaries of the Protocol are all family members, including direct victims (mostly women) and victims who witness violence (mostly children), as well as perpetrators of violence. By acting with due diligence and in accordance with the Protocol, it will be possible to increase the security against domestic violence, in a short time and at a lower cost to society and individuals. The first and guiding principle of the Protocol is to protect the safety of the victim by stopping the violence and preventing the recurrence of violence while taking care to avoid further victimisation and injury to the victim.

3.2. Project activities in combating violence against women and domestic violence in the Republic of Srpska

As previously noted, the Gender Centre supports introducing gender equality in all areas of life and work in the Republic of Srpska. A particular aspect of his work is to support the implementation of laws, policies and programs in the area of protection from domestic violence and violence against women in cooperation with national and international organisations and institutions. It was founded by the Republic of Srpska Government in 2001 and was one of the conditions for BiH to join the Council of Europe. Since its establishment, the Gender Centre has been active in improving the protection of victims of domestic violence and violence against women. Between the end of 2017 and today, the centre has implemented a series of projects that have been directly aimed at improving the social response to the protection of victims of domestic violence and violence against women.

The project “Increasing Access to Better Multisectoral Services for Survivors of Violence against Women and the Family at Local Level” was launched in 2017 to achieve efficient and consistent multisectoral cooperation in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence for professionals working on cases of violence. The project took place in three phases. Within the framework of this project, training has been conducted for service providers at the local level of government following the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The training is based on a specifically designed methodology and a specially designed training module to improve multisectoral cooperation. The project was implemented in the area of local communities in eastern The Republic of Srpska.

In project activities, special attention is paid to the interdisciplinary approach, multisectoral cooperation and coordinated response of protection and support subjects in the protection and support of victims of violence in the family and against women (Šćepović & Rakanović Radonjić 2017). The result of one of the activities was the production of a handbook for the treatment of protection subjects called Multisectoral Response to Cases of Violence against Women and the Family (Šćepović 2018). In addition to the above-mentioned, project activities they included continuous research on attitudes and the need for professional representatives of protection subjects, to improve education and introduce new models of support for their work (Šućur-Janjetović, Lepir, Šćepović & Rakanović Radonjić 2018). In line with the results obtained, a new type of support was introduced, specially designed and following the

needs of service providers. It is about Mentor support that has been implemented in local communities through support in finding solutions for working on specific cases in local communities. Mentoring, as a new method of operation of the Gender Centre, meant achieving professional cooperation with an expert/mentor to strengthen further the multisectoral approach in working with victims of violence against women and family violence. The purpose of mentoring support was directly linked to the training of professionals on the principles of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Family Violence, which is aimed at the process of further increasing their sensitivity and willingness to work on cases of violence against women and family violence and strengthening their mutual relations and professional cooperation.

Activities to improve multisectoral cooperation under the Istanbul Convention continued in the coming period and were carried out in other regions of the Republic of Srpska, initially in the northwestern part. These activities were carried out as part of the project's second phase. The activities also included education and mentoring support for service providers. Similarly, following an earlier methodology, the project's third phase covered local communities in the southeastern Republic of Srpska. In order to strengthen the capacity of employees in protection and support entities working on cases of violence against women and family violence, as an integral part of the activities carried out by the educational activities organised for professionals employed in protection and support entities, mentoring support was established. This support proved to be one of the activities in the earlier project that directly affected the improvement of social response in the local community. These project activities lasted until the end of 2022. So, for a period of five years, the Republic of Srpska has been providing continued support to professionals working directly with victims of violence against women and family violence, ensuring their cooperation with each other, with the signing of Local Protocols on handling cases of violence against women and family violence and the formation of coordination bodies in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention as one of the most significant results. These Local Protocols apply at the municipal level of governance.

The importance and contribution that civil society organizations, some of which have a tradition of 25 years of activism in the area, have made in establishing social responses to cases of domestic and gender violence in the Republic of Srpska must not be overlooked. They are to be praised for many of the improvements in the area. Such involvement deserves special analysis, which can and should be the subject of a special scientific work/paper.

4. DISSUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It seems only natural to start the discussion and make conclusions following the main aspects of critical social work perspectives that can broaden our knowledge and improve activities in combating violence against women and family violence. This means that we need to “cover” the main elements that are considered to be especially important from the critical social work theories’ point of view. The research conducted and presented in this paper, underpinned by the chosen theoretical framework, brought a few important conclusions to our attention.

1. *Linking personal to political* – The practice of traditional or conventional social work has “separated” interventions by fields of action, but also by different “levels” or what we define in literature as social work methods. There is a consensus among many authors that this is precisely why a small number of social work practitioners deal with socio-political issues, so it is not surprising that there is a “weak link” between personal and political (Jessup & Rogerson 1999; Mullaly 2007, in Pears et al. 2009). The essence of the approach in critical social work is that problems are discussed within the framework of methods of social work with an individual, unpacking the problem (by explaining all aspects of the terms/words/language used), jointly seeking possible solutions, and connecting individuals with others whose circumstances are similar. Another way may be to help and support the client/service user in developing organisational skills or advocacy and representation skills (Šućur-Janjetović 2023). In recent history, we can find examples where, by raising public awareness and critical questioning, personal is linked to politics. For example, raising awareness on domestic violence by insisting on the perspective that violence against women is a human rights issue, hence a “political issue”, and not a private matter of one family or partners. It should be added that, despite the changes that followed in the later decades of last century, it took almost 20 years for the United Nations, through its Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, to produce a document that defines violence against women as a political issue, that is, a human rights issue. Many of the documents and bodies engaged in the fight, suppression and prevention of violence against women derived from this document at the global, but also regional and national levels, including the documents that were the subject of analysis in this research.

2. *Socio-political analysis and awareness raising* – In the spirit of a holistic approach in social work, the perspective from which a critical social worker observes, assesses and analyses social problems is crucial. Analysis of the relationship between the problems of individuals, dominant ideology and material conditions (which is the focus of structural approaches of socio-political analysis), includes detailed analysis of power relations at all levels of society. This also means identifying social, political and economic barriers to individuals and families, groups, communities and social organizations (Moreau & Leonard 1989, in Pears et al. 2009). From this, it can be concluded that all forms of violence against women and family violence, as well as any form of submission/oppression and marginalization, require structural analysis and social awareness of the existence of problems. Thus, modern critical social work with individuals and families implies, in addition to assessing needs in terms of material, psychosocial, productive, security, etc., evaluating social, political and economic realisation of human rights in order to establish the existence or non-existence of social injustice, it also directs action to the social level, finding solutions at the political level. “Raising awareness” regarding a social problem takes place through both reflection and action, to help individuals and groups gain insight into their circumstances, about who has power and how positions of power can change, i.e. how power can be used for social change (Baines 2007; Mullaly 2007). This means that social workers should actively listen to and explain every single and different meaning that occurs during the talks and have the awareness that there are also different ways of acquiring knowledge (Allan, in Pears et al., 2009, according to Šućur-Janjetović 2023).

3. *Discourse Analysis* – Critical Social Work Approaches based on post-modernist ideas emphasize the importance of discourse and discourse analysis. Suppose we interpret discourse as a set of meanings or a vocabulary used to generate new meanings. In that case, they can also extend ways of understanding different experiences or actions of people. Many terms and “coined phrases” are used in the everyday practice of social work, illustrating the dominant discourse. Also, literature that deals with the analysis of discourse stresses the importance of considering the effects and constantly considering changes in discourse through the changing of the professional language used in social work. The dominant discourse and language used are analysed through the deconstruction process. Deconstruction most often reveals cultural and

family discourses that reveal ideas, beliefs and behaviours that reproduce the ruling structures of power. This is particularly important for the analysis of the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence. The meaning and behaviour that service users/clients of social work have learned and/or adopted influence the position of subordination so that new meaning and behaviour open up the possibility for a different understanding of experiences as well as for changes in thinking and behaviour (Jessup & Rogerson 1999; Rossiter 2005; Goldberg Wood & Tully 2006, in Pears et al. 2009). There are many examples of subservient discourse. For illustration, we can use the example of the subservient discourse that makes women hesitate to report violence. Elements of discourse and explanations often mentioned in the literature include sexually aroused men are difficult to control and helpless. Many members believe this of the police and/or other bodies involved in the social response to violence against women. Hence, women believe that there is little chance that the abuser is responsible for the violence (Šućur-Janjetović 2023).

To better respond to the problem of subjugation/oppression, in an integrated and emancipated way, critical social work advocates the development of more efficient ways of listening to and providing services to social work users/clients. According to Tew (2002), social workers should provide conditions and work with subordinate individuals and groups to train them to resist oppression and channel energy caused by anger towards emancipatory changes (Šućur-Janjetović 2023).

A special conclusion of this paper is the recognition that the legal framework occupies a special place, and represents an extremely important link in the social response to violence against women and domestic violence, as evidenced by the results of the analysis of projects and systems' solutions in the Republic of Srpska, as presented in this paper. Similarly, from the critical social work perspective point of view, a solid conclusion can be drawn, claiming that structural solutions do not imply the mere existence and application of normative acts, but also imply all the above-mentioned dimensions in this discussion. Involving victims/survivors of violence against women and domestic violence in research and shifting the focus of social work from "client/service user" to "individual's" needs can certainly be a useful topic for research and development of mechanisms in combating violence against women and domestic violence in every society, including the Republic of Srpska.

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PROJEKTNE I SISTEMSKE AKTIVNOSTI U BORBI PROTIV NASILJA NAD ŽENAMA I NASILJA U PORODICI – KRITIČKA PERSPEKTIVA SOCIJALNOG RADA

Sažetak:

Rad se bavi fenomenom nasilja nad ženama i nasilja u porodici koji obilježava svakodnevnicu društvenog života u različitim sferama. Kritički socijalni rad kroz svoje teorijske okvire i kritičku refleksiju decenijama doprinosi podizanju svijesti o ljudskim pravima, o društvenim fenomenima, kao što je nasilje nad ženama i nasilje u porodici, ali i o izazovima sa kojima se suočavaju pojedinci, stručnjaci iz oblasti socijalnog rada, ali i društvene strukture koje suštinski zauzimaju centralno mjesto kritičkih teorija socijalnog rada. U radu su predstavljeni rezultati istraživanja sistemskih rješenja i projektnih aktivnosti u Republici Srpskoj kroz prizmu teorijskih pristupa i perspektiva kritičkog socijalnog rada. Ovaj teorijski okvir nudi razumijevanje strukturalnih i postmodernih pristupa kritičkog socijalnog rada u analizi društvenog fenomena nasilja nad ženama i nasilja u porodici. Isto tako, perspektive kritičkog socijalnog rada su korištene u diskusiji o dobijenim rezultatima istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: nasilje nad ženama; nasilje u porodici; sistemske aktivnosti; projekti; kritički socijalni rad

Authors' address

Adrese autora

Andrea Rakanović Radonjić
Univerzitet u Banja Luci
Fakultet političkih nauka
andrea.rakanovic-radonjic@fpn.unibl.org

Vesna Šućur-Janjetović
Univerzitet u Banja Luci
Fakultet političkih nauka
vesna.sucur-janjetovic@fpn.unibl.org

Draško Gajić
Univerzitet u Banja Luci
Fakultet političkih nauka
drasko.gajic@fpn.unibl.org