



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Oluwaseun Ayotunde Jegede

Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth

Supervisor

Dr. Phil Lolita Vilka

Rīga Stradiņš University

May 2023

(Wordcount: 31, 600)



ABSTRACT

Title: Domestic Violence and Social Work Interventions in Families with Children

Author: Oluwaseun Ayotunde Jegede

Keywords: Domestic violence, families with children, and social work interventions.

This study aimed to examine the entry-point of social workers (engagement) into domestic violence (DV) issues and how social work interventions can be timely and effective in cases of domestic violence involving children in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. A mixed-methods research design was employed to investigate social workers' (SW) involvement and engagement process with families with children in cases of domestic violence. Eighteen social work professionals were selected using maximum variation and expert purposive sampling, and two offices (Police Department and State Social Municipal) were selected from each of the three countries studied using stratified random sampling technique. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face and online via Zoom. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis while the quantitative data were analyzed descriptively.

The results indicated a steady increase in reported incidents of DV, especially against women, a disturbing trend of partner-perpetrated homicides of women, and an increase in child victims of all types of family violence in all three countries. The study revealed insufficient support and attention to child victims of DV. The study highlighted themes that explained social workers' involvement and engagement with DV-affected families, factors contributing to DV, government policies and support, the impact of cultural factors, and challenges interfering with social work interventions aimed at addressing DV in families with children. It revealed that social workers are introduced to families experiencing domestic violence when the victim voluntarily requests assistance, which may occur through referrals from third parties, such as various organizations, or when mandated by law to undertake rehabilitation. The study found that social workers' engagement with DV-affected families is hindered by insufficient government policies and resources, social stereotypes and harmful myths, victims' motivation and resources, and insufficient competencies among social workers including multidisciplinary collaboration among social work professionals.

The impact of the study is for professionals (SW) and policymakers to consider children in families that report violence as victims and the mothers or women in such families as caregivers on whom the child's well-being is dependent. The study concluded that social workers and victims would benefit from improved government policies and support. The study recommends social work interventions informed by the principles of crisis intervention, critical social work, and ecological systems approach for families with children experiencing domestic violence.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENT	III
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	VII
PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE THESIS.....	VIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS	IX
PRELIMINARY OUTLINE.....	1
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
III. NOVELTY OF THE STUDY.....	2
IV. PRACTICAL RELEVANCE	2
V. SCOPE OF THE STUDY	3
VI. RESEARCH OBJECT, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND QUESTIONS	3
VII. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	4
VIII. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	5
CHAPTER ONE.....	6
1.0. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
1.1 PUBLIC POLICIES REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH CHILD	6
1.2 LEGAL DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	8
1.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	10
1.3.1 Common Characteristics of DV in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia	10
1.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	11
1.4.1 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Latvia.....	11
1.4.2 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Lithuania.....	13
1.4.3 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Slovakia	13
1.4.4 COVID-19 Pandemic and Domestic Violence	14
1.5 DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.....	15
1.6 SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS.....	18
1.6.1 National Economy and Family Support.....	18
1.6.2 Examples of National Good Practice	19
1.6.3 Social Work Procedure in Working with Victims of Domestic Violence	21
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	21

1.7.1	Theoretical Understanding of Domestic Violence and Risk Factors	21
1.7.2	Theoretical Understanding of the need for Social Intervention in cases of Domestic Violence .	23
1.7.3	Summary of Theoretical Approaches	26
1.8	CHAPTER SUMMARY	27
CHAPTER TWO		29
2.0.	METHODOLOGY	29
2.1	INTRODUCTION	29
2.2	TYPE OF RESEARCH.....	29
2.3	SAMPLING PROCEDURE	29
2.4	PARTICIPANT’S RECRUITMENT.....	31
2.5	DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE.....	32
2.6	RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION	33
2.7	LOCALE	35
2.8	DATA ANALYSIS	35
2.9	ETHICAL ISSUES.....	36
2.10	LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH	37
2.11	CHAPTER SUMMARY	37
CHAPTER THREE		38
3.0.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS I.....	38
3.1	INTRODUCTION	38
3.2	PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	38
3.3	PARTNER-PERPETRATED HOMICIDE	39
3.4	CASES OF POLICE SEPARATIONS	41
3.5	CASES OF CHILD VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.....	43
3.6	DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR		46
4.0.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS II	46
4.1	ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS.....	46
4.2	THEME 1: SOCIAL WORKERS’ INVOLVEMENT IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES....	46
4.3	THEME 2: FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN	52
4.4	THEME 3: CULTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND IMPACT ON SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS.....	56
4.5	THEME 4: GOVERNMENT POLICY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.....	60
4.6	THEME 5: CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS	64

4.7	MAIN FINDINGS.....	71
5.0.	CONCLUSIONS.....	73
6.0.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	78
6.1.	EXTENDIBILITY	79
6.2.	PERSONAL REFLECTIONS	80
	REFERENCES	82
	APPENDICES	97
	Appendix I: Raw Data from Police and State Municipals	97
	Appendix II: Informed Consent	100
	Appendix III: Interview Guide.....	101
	Appendix IV: Introduction Letters	103
	Appendix V: Non-Plagiarism Declaration.....	106

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework	5
Figure 2: Victim-Blaming Perception in the Special Eurobarometer 449 “Gender-based violence” Report	12
Figure 3: Expenditure on Family and Children Benefits, 2019 (% of GDP).....	18
Figure 4: Common examples of good practices identified in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia.....	20
Figure 5: The Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory	22
Figure 6: Study Sample Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.....	31
Figure 7: Study Data Sources	33
Figure 8: Women Homicide (killed by partner)	39
Figure 9: Persons who were Victims of Domestic Violence by Gender in Lithuania from 2017 to 2022 ..	40
Figure 10: Persons who were Victims of Domestic Violence by Gender in Slovakia from 2017 to 2021 ..	41
Figure 11: Number of separations by State Police in Latvia	42
Figure 12: Cultural factors contributing to domestic violence and impact social work interventions (ALAS data coding, by author)	56

List of Tables

Table 1: Conventions Protecting Women and Children against Violence in Europe and Abroad	7
Table 2: Effects of Domestic Violence.....	16
Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Participants	32
Table 4: Number of Domestic Violence Cases Registered by State Police	38
Table 5: Children Victims of Domestic Violence	44
Table 6: At what point do Social Workers engage in Domestic Violence cases?	46
Table 7: Factor Contributing to Domestic Violence in Families with Children.....	52
Table 8: What are Government Policy Priorities on Domestic Violence?	60
Table 9: What are the Challenges of Social Work Interventions on Domestic Violence in Families with Children?.....	64
Table 10: Main Findings.....	72

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to the LORD, God my Savior, for being my best friend and source of inspiration, wisdom, success, sound mind, and good health, which have supported me in successfully completing this thesis.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the European Commission and ESWOCHY Consortium for providing me with the opportunity to pursue the Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth. This program has been a remarkable experience, offering numerous learning opportunities. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of meeting and learning from exceptional professors, lecturers, professionals, and fellow students who bring diverse expertise and experiences. I extend my thanks to my thesis supervisor, Professor Lolita Vilka, for her valuable comments, support, accessibility, and encouragement throughout the learning process of this thesis. Additionally, I appreciate the support of the coordinators at MRU, RSU KU, and ISCTE-IUL, who assisted in the progress of this thesis across the semesters until its completion.

I am immensely thankful to all the participants of this study, although their identities cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality reasons. Their willingness to be interviewed on a sensitive topic and share their expertise has been invaluable. I appreciate their contributions to this project and for generously giving their time to participate in the study. Furthermore, I extend my gratitude to the offices in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia that provided the necessary statistics and those involved in compiling or verifying the statistics for this study. I also want to acknowledge the professionals, social workers, lecturers, researchers, volunteers, colleagues, and friends who contributed ideas and perspectives to this research project and its topic.

I am grateful to have shared this program journey with my exceptional and intelligent colleagues and friends from ESWOCHY. I have learned so much from them, and I want to express special thanks to Rozina, Noah, and Leila for engaging in conversations and for their support throughout this research project.

I would like to offer my special thanks to my lecturers from Adekunle Ajasin University in Nigeria, particularly Professor Kunle Oloruntegbe, for consistently checking on my well-being, academic performance, and thesis progress even during this program, who also took his time to proofread this thesis. I also extend my appreciation to my wonderful friends for their encouragement throughout the research project, with a special mention to Tunde and Johnson for their valuable suggestions and support with analysis software.

Lastly, I want to convey my deep love and gratitude to my dear mother and siblings for their unwavering love and support throughout this program.

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE THESIS

During the course of this research, four conference papers were produced and presented at international conferences on domestic violence and social work practice. These studies engaged in scholarly discussions, peer review, and direct input from journal and conference publications and provided useful insights that aided in the advancement of the study goals. The journal's concept and the initial draughts of the published articles were created by the author Oluwaseun Jegede, who worked under the supervision of Professor Lolita Vilka. The author additionally improved the paper in response to feedback from her supervisor. Other experts in the field were invited to collaborate by co-authoring one of the papers and providing general input, which the candidate revised and enhanced in order to build a comprehensive work. In addition, the applicant was in charge of all revisions and responses to journal reviewer comments, as well as serving as the corresponding author for all publications.

List of Publications

1. **Jegede, O. A.** (2023). What Happens to Children in Cases of Domestic Violence?. International Conference on Shared Parenting (ICSP), 05-07 May, 2023. Athens, Greece. <https://athens-2023.org/full-conference-program/> (Conference proceedings).
2. **Jegede, O. A.**, Vilka, L., Trapenciere, I., Markovič, D., & Žemaitaityte, I. (2023). Domestic Violence and Social Services in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Nigeria: Comparative Study. 'Society.Health.Welfare' Rīga Stradiņš University, Research Week (RW2023), Riga, Latvia, 29-31 March, 2023 <https://live.rsu.lv/> (Conference proceedings).
3. **Jegede, O.** (2023). Domestic Violence: Parental Alienation and Emotional Distress in Families. International Seminar on Social Work Update, 1(1). Bandung, Indonesia. 23rd to 24th November 2022. <https://prosiding.poltekesos.ac.id/index.php/issw/article/view/215>.
4. **Jegede, O. A.** (2022). Male Victims and Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Social Support Services. Mykolas Romeris University Scientific Festival. (Under peer-review).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

List of Abbreviations

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Preventions
CoE	Council of Europe
DV	Domestic violence
IC	Istanbul Convention
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SW	Social Workers
VAW	Violence against women

Definitions of Concepts

Family: an ideal family, including a male performing the father role, a female performing the mother role and child/ren performing the child role. Charles states, "family is generally regarded as a major social institution and a locus of much of a person's social activity. It is a social unit created by blood, marriage, or adoption, and can be described as nuclear (parents and children) or extended (encompassing other relatives)" (2004).

Intervention: Women's Aid defines interventions as "any strategies aimed to help children in abusive homes" (Women's Aid, 2001).

Social work interventions: client challenges, needs, and strengths determine social work interventions. Social workers gather considerable information to understand the client and the presenting challenges thoroughly. The evaluation is used to develop an intervention plan for the client, including strategies, action stages, and target goals. These intervention modes range from micro to mezzo levels.

Domestic violence (DV): According to the Council of Europe, "All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim" (CoE, 2011).

This study concentrates on the violence between domestic partners (couples) that have a child or children. While this study acknowledges the distinction between domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV), whereby DV can occur between any two individuals living within a household, including parents, children, siblings, or grandparents. In contrast, IPV is limited to romantic partners who may or may not cohabit. Despite this distinction, IPV is often considered a form of DV and referred to as family or domestic violence. The study focuses on families with children and adopts the Council of Europe's definition of DV, which encompasses all forms of violence within the family. Nonetheless, this study focus is on the nuclear family and the systems (ecological systems) that surround them and do not incorporate violence between siblings, uncles, grandparents and others found in the extended family unit.

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

Those who have survived experiences of domestic violence (DV) display signs of increased anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and despair. According to the United Nations (2006), 133 to 275 million children worldwide suffer as a result of domestic violence each year. The effects on children include behavioural, cognitive, and emotional difficulties, which may lead to mental health issues such as sadness and anxiety, as well as poor academic performance and truancy, including interpersonal relationships and poor social skills (Mueller & Tronick, 2019; Pingley, 2017; Hester, 2009). Additionally, studies revealed that children who lived in households with a history of domestic violence frequently experienced direct physical and sexual assault (Eriksson et al., 2022; Al-Majali & Alsrehan, 2019; Lloyd, 2018) and a certain study revealed that 10 percent of these children had witnessed their mother being sexually assaulted (Mullender, 2004). It is reasonable to say domestic violence is a leading cause of child abuse in the home, talking about neglect, deprivation, wrong accusations, exposure to traumatic experiences, and much more. This study focuses on the social interventions provided by social work professionals to respond to domestic violence in families with children.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Domestic violence (DV) is a global issue requiring attention, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Notably, about 30-60% of intimate partner violence (IPV) cases include child maltreatment (UNICEF, 2006); even though most DV victims are women, it is important to note that many of them have children. Unfortunately, prevention measures are limited; Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia are among the member states that have yet to ratify the Istanbul Convention (2011) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic abuse (EIGE, 2022). In Latvia, according to the information given at the Lanzarote Committee Chair and Vice Chairperson meeting in 2020, there were increased occurrences of domestic violence during the COVID-19 epidemic, and luckily there was a 173-capacity specialised state-financed crisis centre (shelters) for DV victims. According to the report delivered at the meeting, there were 124 DV victims (111 were children) as of March 23, 2020, and there were 119 victims as of April 22, 2022 (102 were children); as of May 20, 2022, there were 110 victims (98 were children); these updates were respectively sent to the Ministry of Welfare (Latvia Report, 2021). According to a journalist at Lithuanian National Radio and Television, Gytis Panknas, "domestic violence is the second-most common crime in Lithuania" (2019). Similarly, many children in Slovakia are at increased risk of domestic violence (Hanesová & Niklová, 2022).

As a result, it is important to investigate social interventions and social workers' engagement with families in case of domestic violence and whether these interventions are timely and sufficient to make it possible for the child to remain in the family. It is equally important to examine the multidisciplinary collaboration of social work professionals in supporting the family in case of domestic violence in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. These researchers (Balogová & Poklembová, 2019; Strautmane, Behmane, & Ludviga, 2019; Petrauskiene, 2011) from Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia emphasise the importance and need for interdisciplinary collaboration in order to meet the needs and provide assistance to various social risk groups; specifically, the importance of social workers collaborating with other professionals while incorporating flexibility and ethical principles in order to provide holistic support to help-seeking individuals and groups. This study will also contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDG 16.1 to "significantly reduce all types of violence and related death rates worldwide," SDG 16.2, which seeks to "eradicate child abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture" and UNICEF's suggestions to nationwide to keep children with their families wherever feasible to prevent family separation in order to increase the well-being of youngsters (UNICEF, 2006).

III.NOVELTY OF THE STUDY

Domestic violence has been acknowledged as an international public health and social problem that has been examined in many regions of the world, and it is such a huge topic that academics have been compelled to study it from diverse perspectives. However, the focus of most studies has been on theories and the impact of domestic violence on women, with limited attention given to the relationship between domestic violence and child well-being. Femi-Ajao, Kendal, & Lovell (2020) and Eriksson, Broberg et al. (2022) addressed some aspects of domestic violence involving children; however, they did not specify when social workers become involved in family violence and how they provide support. Thus, this study will examine social workers' engagement with DV-affected families and the social work intervention process to determine its response to domestic violence in families with children.

IV. PRACTICAL RELEVANCE

Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia are still in the process of designing a firm national policy to address domestic violence; therefore, this research will provide social workers who participated in the study with up-to-date information on the need for timely and integrated support in cases of domestic violence. Most importantly, this study will provide relevant data and knowledge on the topic of who and what should be included in the intervention plan and implementation process and on the competencies required of social workers who provide support to families in cases of violence or abuse. This will contribute to the battle

against domestic violence, thereby reducing child abuse, VAW, and partner-perpetrated homicide cases in families and the larger society in Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), and Slovakia (SK).

V. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The target of this study was social workers' engagement with families with children in cases of domestic violence, and data were collected from Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. The study conceptualized critical social work, crisis intervention, and the ecological systems model, as incorporated in the literature review and data analysis, to aid in understanding social work intervention and domestic violence. The study focused on violence between domestic partners who had children, specifically within the nuclear family and the surrounding ecological systems. It did not include violence between siblings, uncles, grandparents, and others in the extended family unit. Interdisciplinary collaboration between social workers and specialists such as doctors and lawyers was explored as an important aspect of domestic violence intervention, and discussed the causes and effects of domestic violence briefly. To investigate when and how social workers work with families in cases of domestic violence, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative data was gathered from state police, state social services, and published reports on the number of domestic violence cases and victims. Qualitative data was obtained from social workers working in various settings, including municipalities, crisis centers, women's shelters, orphan and family courts, NGOs, and police stations. The collected data covered various aspects such as family resources, government policies, social workers' resources and ethical principles, their skills and engagement with families, and other relevant information. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data to illustrate the prevalence of domestic violence, while thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data using the ATLAS 5.0 version software to identify patterns, establish codes, and group them into themes.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECT, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND QUESTIONS

The following parameters guide this study: the research object, the goal, the objectives, and the questions.

Research Object: social work interventions in case of domestic violence in families with children.

Research Goal: to examine the entry-point of social workers into family violence issues and ways social work interventions can be timely and effective in case of domestic violence that involve children in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to investigate when social workers become involved with DV-affected families with children and their engagement process, with the aim:

1. To study the public policies and native perceptions across Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia that address domestic violence when a child is present.
2. To explore factors contributing to domestic violence in families
3. To identify the point at which social work professionals become involved in providing support for family or individual family members in cases of domestic violence.
4. To examine social workers' resources and engagement with families with children affected by domestic violence.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of domestic violence in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia?
2. At what stage are social workers engaged in domestic violence cases?
3. What cultural factors impact social work interventions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia?
4. What are government policy priorities on domestic violence?
5. What are the challenges of social work interventions on domestic violence in families with children?

VII. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research examined social workers' entry points into family violence concerns and explored how social work interventions (independent variable) can be timely and improved in cases of domestic violence (dependent variable) in families with children (moderator variable). Figure 1 illustrates the path diagram outlining the conceptual paradigm for the study (see Figure 1). The research investigated government policies and expenditures on families, social workers' resources and competencies, ethical principles and engagement with families, and family resources to determine how social workers can better support children in domestic violence cases. Families with children played a moderating role in the study, with children being the primary focus. However, it is important to note that women are the primary victims of domestic violence, and children suffer alongside them as they are also dependent on their mothers as caregivers.

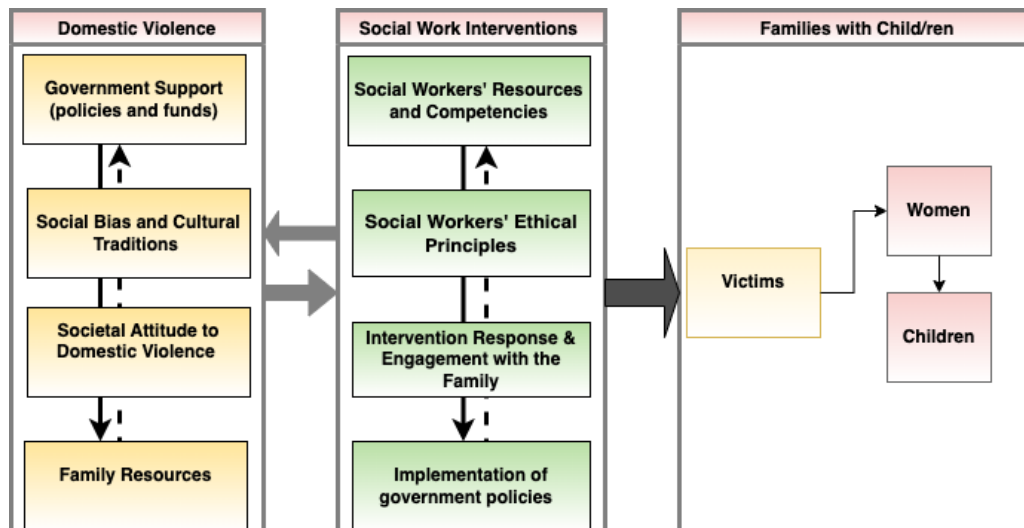


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Author, 2023

Thus, it was challenging to investigate social work interventions for children-victims of domestic violence without collaborating with services aimed at their mothers, as the support provided to children in cases of domestic violence is often influenced by the well-being of their mothers.

VIII. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This study was structured into a preliminary outline (introduction) and four chapters. The preliminary outline provided an overview of the investigation, highlighting its significance, problem statement, research goals, objectives, and questions. In the first chapter, a literature review and theoretical framework were presented, focusing on domestic violence, government policy, intervention implementation procedures, and social work interventions and operations in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. These aspects rationalized the chosen conceptual framework for data interpretation and analysis. The second chapter discussed the research methods employed, including suggested analytic frameworks for intervention analysis. Chapter three delved into the description and discussion of quantitative data analysis, exploring the importance of the findings in relation to conceptual frameworks and previous research. Lastly, the fourth chapter presented the qualitative data, including interviews with experts, and provided discussions. It concluded the study by summarizing the findings, discussing their significance and implications for practice, policies, and future research, and providing recommendations for new research directions.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview. In this chapter, a comprehensive synthesis of existing literature was presented, shedding light on the various aspects of domestic violence and social work interventions in the selected countries. The literature review was conducted to explore the experiences of families and victims of domestic violence, as well as social work interventions, in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. The review followed an explorative and narrative approach, aiming to provide a critical overview of previous studies in the field (Collins & Fauser, 2005). This method allowed the review to cover a variety of study-related topics. The narrative review was enhanced by a systematic literature review using search techniques applied to search engines such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, EBSCOhost and more and the use of university library materials (Bryman, 2012). The content presented in this chapter was drawn from books, peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, reports, publications, and website data. The review of the literature included prior investigations into domestic violence, including its prevalence, contributing factors, perceptions and causes in the relevant nations, characteristics of domestic violence, illustrations of best practices, and other pertinent studies. Furthermore, theoretical approaches such as the ecological systems theory, critical social work theory, and crisis intervention theory were examined within the context of the study.

1.1 PUBLIC POLICIES REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH CHILD

The Istanbul Convention is the first legislation in Europe that establishes statutory criteria explicitly to prevent gender-based violence, protect victims of abuse, and punish offenders. It was designed by the Council of Europe to prevent and combat violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence; approved in 2011 and became effective in 2014. It describes what nations must do to stop and combat domestic violence and violence against women. Various types of violence against women, including physical, sexual, economic and psychological abuse, stalking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion, and forced sterilisation, are defined and made illegal by the Convention. The Convention includes protections for children, and the Convention is inclusive of every victim of domestic violence, including boys or men victims. By ratifying the Convention, it ensures that acts of violence cannot be justified by invoking culture, custom, religion, tradition, or the concept of "honour" (Article 12, paragraph 5). This ratification will establish measures, provisions, and assistance to effectively tackle various forms of violence and discrimination, encompassing gender-based violence. The Convention guides to identify and meet the unique requirements of women and girls who are in vulnerable situations (Article 12, paragraph 3). In accordance with Article 15 of the Convention, professionals who interact with victims of

all types of violence against women should get training. However, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia have not ratified this Convention as of December 2022.

Table 1: Conventions Protecting Women and Children against Violence in Europe and Abroad

Social Policies	European Union (EU)	Latvia (LV)	Lithuania (LT)	Slovakia (SK)	References
Ratification of the Instabul Convention	X	-	-	-	European Parliament (2023)
There is GV or domestic violence law ¹	X	-	X	-	EIGE (2020) OECD (2019)
Differentiates GV from domestic violence	X	-	-	-	EIGE (2020)
Istanbul Convention legislation	X	-	-	X (Act on victims of crime, other legal acts and some prevention services)	European Parliament (2020)
Violence against women (EIGE severity score)	46.3%	58.4%	44.3%	48.7%	EIGE (2017)
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	X	X	X	X	United Nations (1948)
Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	X	X	X	X	United Nations (1988)
Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	X	X	X	X	United Nations (1989)
Lanzarote Convention	X	X	X	X	Council of Europe (2007)

Source: Adapted from different reports and publication as referenced. GV-Gender-based violence. – (No), X (yes)

Nonetheless, it is essential to note that not ratifying the Convention does not preclude signatory parties from legislating some of the acts; in the case of Slovakia, as shown in the table above (see Table 1), some legislative preventive measures to address domestic violence, such as the Act on Victims of Crime, other legal acts, and some prevention services, are being legislated. On the other hand, Lithuania and Latvia were classified as having no significant legislative developments (to have not implemented any legislative changes since 2014), and neither has ratified the Convention (European Parliament, 2020). The Convention, for example, criminalises stalking and spousal rape, which is related to harassment; research has shown that

¹ https://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0212-97282020000300002#t2

stalking is a cause of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as anxiety and depression among people stalked by former intimate partners (Tompson, Belur, & Jerath, 2021; Acquadro Maran & Varetto, 2018), but stalking² is not criminalised in Lithuania. Furthermore, no specific statute in Latvia criminalises marital rape (European Women's Lobby, 2014). The Ministry of Justice in Latvia does not distinguish between spousal rape and non-spousal rape cases containing aggravated circumstances, according to the UN 2022 Human Rights Report. There were no reports on whether any spousal rape cases had been prosecuted.

Although, admittedly, these countries are working to protect people from violence, including violence against women and children, through treaties other than the Istanbul conventions as shown in the table above (see Table 1). For example, the three countries are signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects people's rights to life, safety, motherhood, and childhood to special care and support, and that no one is tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman, or cruel punishment (Articles 3, 5, & 25, United Nations, 1948). These three countries are also signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a United Nations treaty that defines women's fundamental right to equality and condemns gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence³. Furthermore, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia are state parties of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which oblige state parties, parents and responsible stakeholders to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (Article 19) and the Lanzarote Convention which protect children from sexual abuse including sexual offences such engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child (in likes of marital rape).

1.2 LEGAL DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The need for more effective prevention strategies and supportive interventions to address domestic and family violence stays important as survivors and the community witness and experience the effects of domestic violence (DV). Black et al. (2011) estimate that 12 million Americans experience intimate partner violence annually. In 2021, Spain recorded 38,717 victims (only men and women) of domestic or gender-based violence, 2.4% more than in 2020 (INE, 2021). On the question of what domestic violence is, the Council of Europe's definition of domestic violence takes a more ecological perspective. It defines DV as "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic

² <https://hrmi.lt/seimas-emesi-kriminalizuoti-persekiojima/>

³ https://www.stopvaw.org/un_treaties_on_violence_against_women

unit, regardless of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, regardless of whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim," (Council of Europe, 2011). There are other definitions of domestic violence that take a more sociological approach the United Nations defines domestic violence as "a pattern of behaviour intended to gain or retain dominance and control over an intimate partner in any relationship." Abuse can involve physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological activities or threats of such actions, according to the United Nations' definition of DV. Notably, domestic violence is synonymous with domestic abuse and intimate partner violence; these terms are used interchangeably throughout this study. Meanwhile, this study appreciates and agrees with the concept of domestic violence described by the Council of Europe.

It can be deduced from the definition of DV by the CoE and that of the UN that DV affects every family member, going on the understanding of the ecological system theory, which is further discussed in this study. In our contemporary world, DV does not only happen in the home alone but everywhere and consequently, affects every aspect of the victims' life, both mental and physical health (Adhia et al., 2019; Wathen, MacGregor, & MacQuarrie, 2018) including work life (Livingston, Delavier, & Banaben, 2021; Wathen et al., 2015). DV victims (survivors) could be any of the partners, and most times children; however, women and children are the common victims of DV (Ertan et al., 2020; Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015) and are central to this study. Children may not be as battered as women, but the effect on their emotions, health, developmental growth and adulthood life is enormous. The recent global survey on violence against women estimates 736 million women have experienced intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence based on data from 2000-2018 (WHO, 2018). Similarly, 1 in 3 women has been a victim of gender-based violence in the European Union. In 2018, the European Institute for Gender Equality reported that over 600 women were murdered by an intimate partner, a family member or a relative in 14 EU Member States (EIGE, 2018). Latvia is one of the Member States where family members committed murders (killed 12 women) and partners (killed 3 women). (Eurostat, 2018). In Lithuania, 36 % of women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence experienced it in their homes (EIGE, 2018). Furthermore, the reported lifetime prevalence of IPV (physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse) in Lithuania is 51.2% (Žukauskienė et al., 2021). Also, 34 % of women in Slovakia have experienced violence, which is about the same as in the EU overall (EIGE, 2017).

Unfortunately, domestic and gender-based violence victims does not only include women but also children; in 2006, UNICEF's most recent data on forms of domestic violence estimated that 30 to 60 percent of intimate partner violence cases involve child maltreatment. According to statistics provided by the United States Department of Justice, approximately 25% of domestic violence cases reported in state courts involve

a child who has witnessed the violence. Based on a recent study conducted by Lloyd (2018) in the United Kingdom, 50% of domestic violence cases involve child abuse. These findings are consistent with previous data on the frequency with which children witness or are victims of DV. Similarly, recent public data on domestic violence in Portugal, published by "Safe Communities Portugal," indicate that in 35% of domestic abuse instances involving female victims, children were present (2019)⁴.

1.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Statistics and evaluated research from the prior discussions reveal that the victims of domestic violence are mostly women, and the perpetrators are men, while children suffer the effects, which sadly resonate in their adulthood relationships. Domestic violence occurs on a continuum of severity, ranging from pushing and kicking to strangulation and threats to physical or sexual violence. **Physical violence** involves the use of physical force, such as biting, punching, the use of weapons, beating, shoving, gripping, smacking, confining, choking, burning, and forced drug or alcohol use. **Sexual violence** entails the violation of a person's bodily autonomy or sexual assault, such as rape, sexual exploitation, and unwanted sexual behaviour, such as sexually insulting behaviour or other sexual activity, physical, verbal, or non-verbal, as well as restricting contraceptive use and forced abortion, among other forms of violence. (Saltzman et al., 2002).

Emotional or psychological violence is any pattern of behaviour threatening or dehumanising a family member, including neglect, controlling an individual's movements and activities, sporadic sulking, destroying property or valuables, stalking, driving recklessly, victim-blaming in a relationship, and more. (Hoffman & Edwards, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2002). **Economic violence** involves the victim being financially dependent on the abuser. This may consist of preventing a spouse from working or pursuing an education, providing an insufficient allowance, pressuring the victim to sign or make false declarations, controlling financial resources, and withholding economic resources, among other behaviours.

1.3.1 Common Characteristics of DV in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia

Psychological and, to a lesser extent, physical violence was identified as the most prevalent forms of domestic violence **in Lithuania**, but economic and sexual violence were less frequently cited (ŽTIS, 2018). Similarly, a recent study by Žukauskienė et al. (2021) in Lithuania reveals that the lifetime prevalence of

⁴ <https://www.safecommunitiesportugal.com/find-information/domestic-violence/>

psychological, economic, physical, and sexual IPV among women who have experienced abuse is 50.1%, 29.9%, 21.5%, and 16.5%, respectively. Žukauskienė et al. (2021) appear to have found an increase in economic and psychological violence among battered women in Lithuania compared to a study conducted three years prior by ŽTIS (2018). Similarly, **in Latvia**, according to Statistics Latvia (2021), psychological violence is the most prevalent kind of abuse among intimate partners, with 28.8% of women have experienced it. According to the "Gender-related violence survey" conducted in 2021, 15.4% of women in Latvia had suffered physical violence (including threats), and 4.4% suffered sexual violence.

Psychological violence (12%), physical violence (7%), economic violence (7%) and sexual violence (3%) are the most prevalent forms of intimate partner violence against women **in Slovakia**, according to a representative study conducted in 2017 (Zajac, 2019). Similarly, in 2020, Slovakia's statistics stated that the most commonly reported kind of domestic violence is psychological violence, encompassing the most frequently recorded act of threatening behaviour. Over half of the reports of psychological violence involved partner violence against women, followed by domestic violence at 44% and partner violence against males at 7%. Economic violence was the second most prevalent kind, followed by physical violence (39%) in intimate partner violence against women, and sexualized violence was the least documented. Overall, it can be concluded that the prevalent forms of domestic violence in Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia (psychological, economic, physical, and sexual) are identical to those observed in other parts of the world, with psychological and economic violence being the most prevalent in the three member states and having a significant impact on women's mental health, empowerment, access to resources, and ability to support their children.

1.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

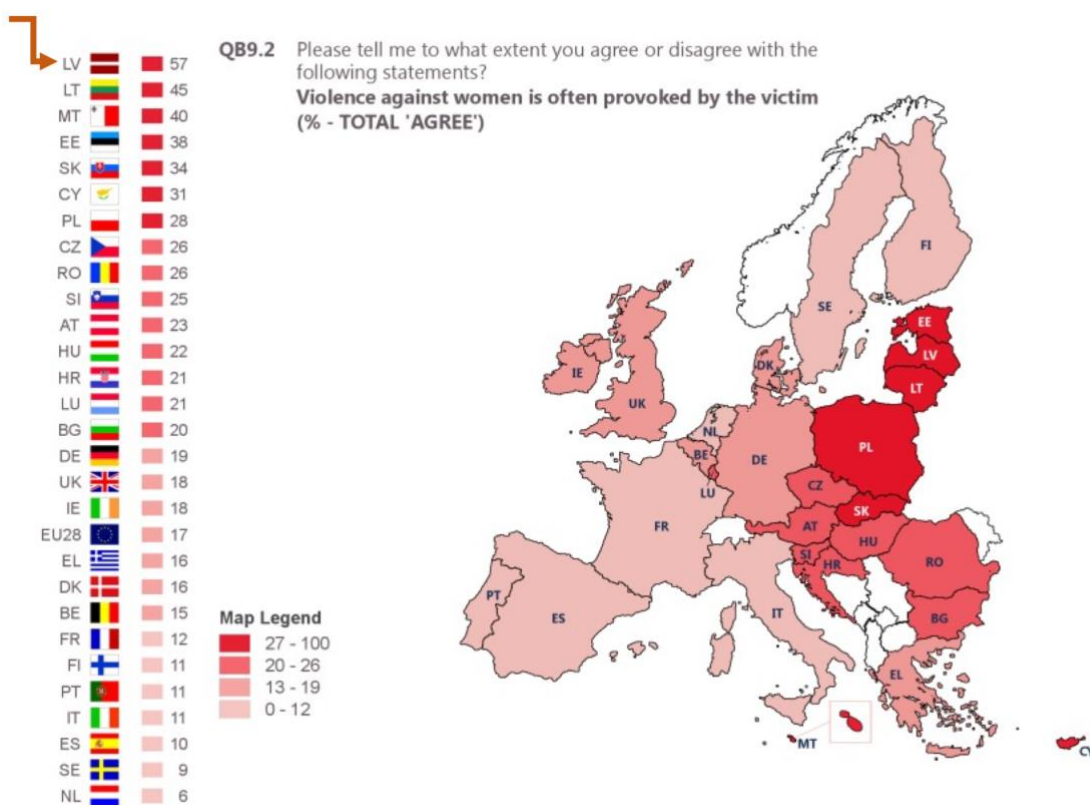
Considering the magnitude of DV prevalence, one may wonder about the factors that contribute to domestic violence; while it is difficult to describe and explain the reasons for domestic violence and/or violence against women, research has demonstrated that they are historically and socially determined.

1.4.1 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Latvia

It is challenging to analyse the reasons of domestic violence in Latvia because of a lack of empirical studies. Some of the reasons for domestic violence in Latvia are revealed in an interview with Dace Kavasa, the Human Rights and Gender Equality Consultant who represented Latvia at the European Institute for Gender Equality; according to Kavasa, *"Still, there is a high level of tolerance and acceptance of violence in our society. The fact that we tolerate, we don't consider any specific behaviours to be violent. We simply don't identify it as violence. For the sake of simplicity, let's look at spanking. Many individuals don't consider it*

to be a kind of violence. "They," say what now?" I slammed the bottom with my hand. Even at a young age, there is a lot of work to be done." This suggests a lack of sufficient understanding of violence or abuse in Latvia, potentially influenced by cultural norms, traditions, or other unexplored factors mentioned in a news report published on Baltic Network News (BNN) in March 2017. The report titled "Laizane: Domestic violence against women in Latvia remains a common problem" highlights statements made by representatives from the Welfare Ministry, who expressed concerns about Latvia's significant tolerance towards domestic violence. Only 64 percent of locals agree that it is fair to penalize those who commit domestic violence against women and that such behaviour should be considered undesirable. This implies that the remaining 36 percent are somewhat in disagreement. This suggests a need for orientation on what human rights and child abuse entail and legal definition of violence.

In another survey, 31% of Latvian inhabitants are of the opinion that issues of domestic abuse should be dealt with on a family level since they are a private matter. These surveys suggest a call to concerned stakeholders on the need for orientation on what human rights and child abuse entail and the legal definition of violence in Latvia.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818).

Figure 2: Victim-Blaming Perception in the Special Eurobarometer 449 "Gender-based violence" Report

European Commission (2016).

Furthermore, the level of tolerance for violence and domestic violence being perceived as private affairs are not the only factors contributing to domestic violence in Latvia. That is, the question of people's perception and attitude towards DV largely contribute to DV causes and prevalence in the case of Latvia as shown above (see Figure 2), more than half (57%) believe that gender-based violence is often provoked by the victim (European Commission, 2016). i.e., victim blaming is another factor contributing to domestic violence in Latvia; victim blaming hinders victim help-seeking possibilities and reinforces perpetrators' violence (Grandgenett et al., 2020; Stoner & Cramer, 2019).

1.4.2 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Lithuania

Victim blaming attitude is not only particular to Latvians but more predominant in the Lithuania community, particularly among the men. According to Irwan and Margaretha (2020), men in Lithuania have a higher level of gender role bias than females, as seen by their attitudes about violence against wives and victim-blaming. A survey conducted by the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (TIS, 2018)⁵ indicated that domestic violence victims are blamed for the violence, and the majority must wait until the violence becomes physical to gain the attention and support of the authorities. The Human Rights Monitoring Institute (TIS) also conducted representative research of 1,017 Lithuanian women of varying ages in 2019 and found that they believe domestic violence-related social initiatives are required (especially, to address the victim-blaming mentality prevalent in society). According to the report, for the majority of women (83%) in the past year, domestic abuse has become a topic of debate. Besides this, empirical research evaluating the perceptions of police officers on DV in Lithuania revealed that one-third of them were unsure if they ought to intervene in domestic violence, which they viewed as "personal affairs" (Ruibyt & Veliūt, 2012).

1.4.3 Natives' Perception and Causes of Domestic Violence in Slovakia

Similar to the perception of Lithuanian police officers, many Slovaks view domestic violence as a private or familial matter. During the most recent EU survey, 25% of Slovaks agreed that domestic violence is a private concern and should be addressed inside the family, compared to 2% and 6% of respondents in Sweden and Denmark, respectively (European Commission, 2016). In Slovakia, religious and cultural traditions directly or indirectly dictated the right of men to view women and children as their property and make decisions regarding them. This patriarchal perception and attitude contribute to men's aggression

⁵ <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/domestic-violence-from-the-perspective-of-lithuanian-women/15790>

against women and makes women and children remain silent and tolerant. Religion, traditional social and power structures are some of the contributors to domestic violence in Slovakia; for instance, prior to 1989, public discussion of domestic violence and gender-based violence was a taboo in Slovakia; in the pre-socialist period, strong traditionalism confined domestic violence to the privacy of the family environment; and under the socialist regime, there was also a publication ban on negative social phenomena.

A poll of Slovakian women's perceptions of domestic abuse revealed that Slovak women view domestic violence as a private or hidden issue and perceive a typical perpetrator as an alcoholic, egocentric, and aggressive individual. Women with an elementary education are more tolerant as they tend to rationalise their husbands' use of violence in particular situations (Vanya, 2001). From the preceding, it is evident that religious and cultural traditions, the notion that domestic violence is a private affair and tolerant women all contribute to the reasons for domestic violence in Slovakia. Also, based on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and Eurostat databases, there are few studies on domestic violence in Slovakia. The available studies are not contemporary, including statistics on domestic and gender-based violence in Slovakia. Systematic studies are encouraged to assist the community in recognising the significance of solidarity and support; additional research and statistics will also aid social intervention specialists and policymakers.

1.4.4 COVID-19 Pandemic and Domestic Violence

According to De Paz Nieves, Gaddis, and Muller (2021), the lockdown increased the likelihood of domestic violence, especially violence against women and children. During this period, DV was recorded in many households due to the complex interactions between isolation, anxiety, health problems, being entrapped in abusive relationships, financial concerns, and barriers to adequate services (Brooks-Hay, Saunders, & Burman, 2022; Proudman & Lloyd, 2022; Wijk et al., 2021; Gresham et al., 2021). Berniell & Facchini (2021) estimate the highest level of the increase in domestic violence to have become apparent a few weeks after the onset of the lockdown, with greater impact as many more individuals stayed at home due to the intensity of the lockdown. The trend was noticeable worldwide; Berniell & Facchini (2021) consider the trend a widespread phenomenon, observable in developed and developing countries. Sadly, the number of referrals to services also decreased (Panovska-Griffiths et al., 2022), meaning persons affected by DV were not receiving needed help, which could have an adverse effect on children's health and development (Grzejszczak et al., 2022). Recent studies on domestic violence and the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically the one conducted in Greater London and Spain, revealed that there was under-reporting of abuse and calls for help during the lockdown and that most of the few reports were driven by third-party reporting (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2023; Ivandic, Kirchmaier & Linton, 2020).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2020 survey on Gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere, there has been an observed rise in female homicides during the pandemic. The survey's global data on the impact of COVID-19 reveals an 11% increase in gender-related killings of women in Western Europe and a 5% increase in Southern Europe when comparing the years 2019 and 2020. There was no discernible shift in Northern Europe, whereas there was a minor drop in Eastern Europe. In comparison, the number of killings of women and girls scaled by 8% in Northern America, 3% in Central America, and 5% in South America. This increase was seen throughout all three regions. The increases were of a size that was comparable to those of previous annual variations observed over the course of the previous decade. (UNODC, 2020)⁶. Nonetheless, when examining national-level data from a select few countries spanning from October 2019 to December 2020, it becomes apparent that there is significant variation in trends among these countries. However, the data does indicate that, on the whole, lockdown measures had a minimal impact on intimate partner or family-related homicides of women. (UNODC, 2020)⁷. Nevertheless, the limits imposed by the lockdown appear to heighten the severity of the abuse and make it difficult for victims to flee or seek help. As a result, victims are left to endure a variety of adversities, such as depression, traumatic experiences, as well as economic and different forms of abuse.

1.5 DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The detrimental effects of domestic violence on children's well-being and development is devastating; some children become disabled due to intimate partner violence, which affects not only their intellectual capacity but also leads to speech and language disability, growth defects and hearing disability (Ravi & Black, 2022; Chisholm, Bullock, & Ferguson II, 2017), while many adolescents and youth struggle with mental health issues due to parental family instability caused by domestic violence. Women who have experienced domestic violence have higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress disorders, eating disorders, low self-esteem, self-injury, and suicide attempts as a result of their exposure to the dread of uncertainty, instability, and poverty, as shown in the Table 2 below.

⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN_BriefFem_251121.pdf

⁷ Ibid⁸

Table 2: Effects of Domestic Violence

Detrimental Effects	Target	Reference
Increases the likelihood of IPV in any life stage	Children	Sanz-Barbero, Barón & Vives-Cases (2019)
Victims of abusive control	Children	Callaghan et al. (2018).
Mental health issues with increase in depression symptoms, higher suicide risks, and decreased life satisfaction due to DV experience	Women	Liu et al. (2021); Ali, Rogers & Heward-Belle (2021) Chisholm, Bullock, & Ferguson II (2017)
Higher risk for problems in holistic development	Children	Pingley (2017)
Poor school attendance and academic performance	Children	Orr et al (2022)
Child abuse victimization and maltreatment	Children	Nam, Kim, Bright & Jang (2022) van Berkel, Prevoo et al. (2020)
Disrupts the infant's emotional and cognitive development and caregiving	Children and Women	Mueller & Tronick (2019)
Suffer self-blame, shame, fear of disclosure and family separation	Children	Sweetman (2021)
Feelings of fear, worry, powerlessness, and sadness	Children	Noble-Carr, Moore & McArthur (2020)
Physical injuries, traumatic brain injury on CNS symptoms	Women	Campbell et al. (2018); Lutgendorf (2019) Haag et al. (2022)
Homicide, and pregnancy-related death	Women	Lutgendorf (2019)Chisholm, Bullock, & Ferguson II (2017)
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies	Women	Chisholm, Bullock, & Ferguson II (2017)
Pre-term babies	Children and women	Pun et al. (2019)
Negative impact on childbearing preferences (demographic)	Family structure / community	Samarasekera et al. (2022)
Terminated pregnancies and infant mortality (demographic)	Impact on all	World Health Organization (2018)
Negative impacts on future human capital formation	Community	SLDHS (2016)
Parental instability (e.g, divorce,)	Family structure	Stritzel et al. (2021)
Gender-based violence cost the EU €366 billion per year (79% of which is due to violence against women). Intimate partner violence cost €174 billion	EU community	EIGE (2021)
Gender-based violence cost Latvia €1.6 billion	Latvia community	EIGE (2021) Latvian Radio (2021)
Gender-based violence cost Lithuania €2.3 billion	Lithuania community	EIGE (2021)
Gender-based violence cost Slovakia €4.4 billion	Slovak community	EIGE (2021)

Source: Adapted published articles and reports as referenced above

The costs of healthcare, housing, and access to lawyers experienced by abused women may push them into poverty. Poverty, on the other hand, makes it more difficult to end domestic violence, which may result in women and children developing a tolerance for violence or being homeless. For example, when a woman decides not to suffer or endure IPV, she may leave without adequate assistance, becoming homeless and susceptible to further abuse. Violence at home cause regular conflict, creating instability and anxiety. These two can destroy family environments and lead to family dissolution, as well as frequent attempts to get away from the abuser, divorce and separation, trust issues, child developmental issues, and loss of parental rights.

Furthermore, violence has short- and long-term economic consequences because it reduces productivity and economic activity, weakens institutions, and undermines businesses. Women whose partners have battered claim that their batterers have made it difficult for them to get and keep jobs and that they cannot use their earnings to improve their financial security, resulting in low female employment participation (NSW, 2019). According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the annual cost of gender-based violence to the European Union (EU) is around €366 billion, of which €289 billion is solely related to violence against women and €174 billion is owing to intimate partner violence (IPV), of which €151 billion is due to intimate partner violence against women. This reveals the monetary and human resources lost due to domestic violence over the course of a year and its implication on national economy.

Overall, considering that domestic violence affects individuals and society, social work interventions are crucial. It has been established above that DV can contribute to children's cognitive, speech, linguistic, physical, and hearing difficulties (Chisholm, Bullock, & Ferguson II, 2017), which is terrible (see Table 2). Moreover, DV victims suffer from depression, anxiety, stress disorders, and eating disorders, which compound their exposure to uncertainty, instability, and poverty, making it difficult for them to support their children's development and healthy social integration. Domestic violence affects businesses, organisations, and productivity. Perpetrators' financial control hampers women's employment, keeping them in a cycle of financial insecurity. Gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, drains societies' resources annually. Professionals can give vital support, protection, and resources to survivors of domestic abuse by engaging with families to implement social interventions (Chhun, Giordano, & Huebner, 2020). These interventions will seek to disrupt the cycle of violence, address root causes, and empower individuals to reconstruct their lives. Furthermore, social work interventions contribute to a community's overall well-being, stability, and economic prosperity.

1.6 SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

The prevalence and severe consequences of domestic violence, as indicated above (see Table 2), highlight the urgent need for high-quality, comprehensive, and dynamic social interventions to effectively address this escalating issue, particularly in the three countries studied. Social work professionals, specifically those working with domestic violence victims, play a vital role in supporting victims and striving for a reduction in the incidence of domestic violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). To achieve meaningful impact, it is crucial for social work professionals to enhance their understanding of government policies, access improved and up-to-date social resources, uphold ethical principles, and develop the necessary skills for engaging with families and victims, as well as fostering interdisciplinary collaboration (Boys et al., 2015). The analysis section of this study delves into each of these essential components, drawing on data obtained from interviews with experts. Without accessible social worker interventions and adequate government support and policies, it becomes challenging for victims, especially children, to benefit from the assistance of social workers. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize the provision of necessary resources and support for social workers to maximize the positive outcomes of their interventions in addressing domestic abuse.

1.6.1 National Economy and Family Support

Figure 3 below depicts government spending on families and children in 2019. On average, most EU member states spent 2.3 (% of GDP) to support families and children in cases of social risks and needs. In contrast, Lithuania spent 1.7, and Latvia and Slovakia spent an equal amount of 1.6 (% of GDP).

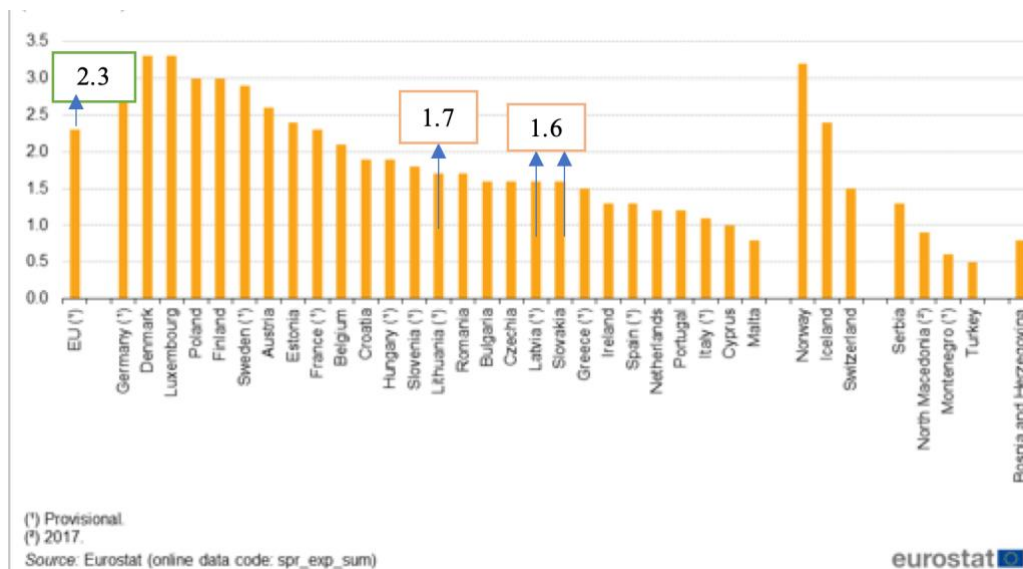


Figure 3: Expenditure on Family and Children Benefits, 2019 (% of GDP)

Eurostat (2019).

This figure is an excerpt from the European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS)⁸, which uses annual data on social protection benefits to address the risks and needs of families and children. Social protection benefits (healthcare, disability, old age, survivors, family/children, unemployment, housing, and social exclusion) are cash or kind transfers given to alleviate the burden of one or more social risks or necessities on families and individuals. According to the data presented above (see Figure 3), Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia need to increase their spending on families and children, particularly on social services and welfare in domestic violence cases to support and provide resources for social work professionals working affected households.

1.6.2 Examples of National Good Practice

In **Latvia**, social services are available for victims (women and children) of domestic violence. According to the Latvian Ministry of Welfare social services in Latvia aim to provide support, protection, and assistance to individuals who have experienced abuse and violence in their homes. Some of the social services available in Latvia for domestic violence are as follows and illustrated in the diagram below. National helplines: managed by state municipalities and crisis centres (116006 or 112), the crisis hotline by the NGO "SKALBES" (available 24/7) and the MARTA Centre hotline. Shelters: Municipal social services provide assistance to victims of domestic violence, including children, such as financial assistance and temporary housing for victims, for example, the Women's Crisis Center "Dardedze", Biedrība "Marta Centrs", "Dzintara zeme" Liepaja, "Zvannieku maja" Ventspils, Crisis centre "Burtnieks", as well as Redcross. Counselling services and advocacy: Municipal social services, represented by social workers, are dedicated to providing social rehabilitation and counselling services to individuals affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, or rape. These professionals advocate for the rights of victims, assist them in accessing appropriate services, and ensure necessary follow-up support. "One step closer" is a Latvian initiative supported by the European Union's Rights, Equality, and Citizenship (REC) Programme (2014-2020), aimed at advancing these efforts.

A Coordinated Community Response to Violence Against Women produced three excellent tools that contribute to good practice examples in Latvia, such as the police risk assessment questionnaire, which must be completed by the Municipal or State Police and given to social services. A standardised cooperation

⁸ European Union, Regulation (EC) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 April 2007 on the European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_113/l_11320070430en00030008.pdf

model monitoring for tracking cases and the third one was the risk assessment questionnaire (MARAC)⁹, used by Tukums Municipality Social Services for caseload management (Latvian project, 2019). Similarly, in **Lithuania**, there are social services available for victims of domestic. Here are some of the services available to victims of domestic violence in Lithuania, according to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. National helpline-Women's Line (8800 66 366), and preventive services (awareness programs).

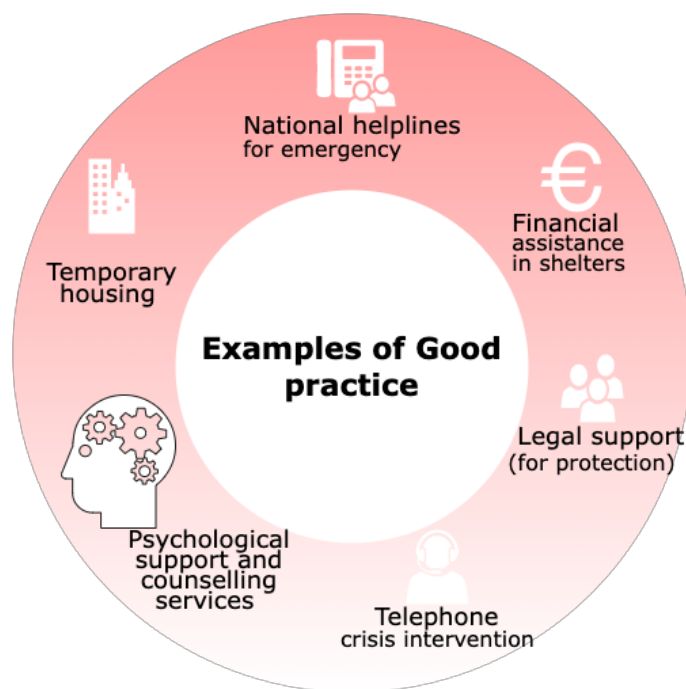


Figure 4: Common examples of good practices identified in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia

Author, 2023

Social and healthcare: Psychological support is provided by specialized assistance centres coordinated by Municipal institutions that work with and buy the services of nongovernmental organizations that assist victims of violence. Temporary accommodation: Shelters and crisis centres are available across the country to house children and women victims of DV, for example, the Vilnius Womens House Crisis Center, Lietuvos caritas, Women's Information Center, Vilniaus moteru namai and more. Legal assistance and advocacy: Specialized support centres provide help to victims by acting as mediators in order to ensure legal support, and provide information on issues concerning to a victim.

⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/roadmap-for-establishing-specialist-support-services-for-victims-in-la/1680a1f4aa>

Likewise, according to Vytvorenie koordinačného a metodického centra (KMC)-Creation of a Coordination and Methodology Center (KMC), there are social services available to prevent DV and support victims of domestic violence in **Slovakia**. Some of which are the national free non-stop helpline (0800 212 212 24 or 112 emergency line) which provides telephone crisis intervention and is designed within the minimum standards of the Council of Europe regulations on preventing DV (Istanbul convention) and managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MPSVR SR). Counselling and social service facilities provide social and legal counselling services and psychological support to women and their children. Temporary accommodation: women's shelters and counselling facilities, where the specialists provide comprehensive services for female clients and their children and easy access to police, court, and prosecutors to encourage reporting and help-seeking.

1.6.3 Social Work Procedure in Working with Victims of Domestic Violence

When providing support to victims of domestic violence, social workers often follow a precise method. The procedure may differ slightly depending on the specific organization or agency in each country; the steps involved in social work interventions are required to understand the intervention process and identify areas for improvement to achieve better outcomes, including examining the policy responses that describe the protection of victims of violence - protection measures and temporary protection of victims orders. All of these are questions the study participants (experts) interviewed answered and are discussed below in the data analysis chapter of this thesis. Knowledge gap - each member nation is working and putting resources together to combat domestic violence and support victims (see Figure 4). However, the services available in Latvia and Lithuania do not meet the Council of Europe Convention's minimum standards for preventing and addressing violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). In contrast, Slovakia has a few services that meet these minimum standards, including a 24-hour national helpline that offers comprehensive support to victims in need. This suggests more efforts and development of existing national social services to support victims of domestic violence better.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter overview this chapter explains the rationale behind this study. It describes the theoretical perspectives used in this study.

1.7.1 Theoretical Understanding of Domestic Violence and Risk Factors

Why domestic violence? The ecological system theory explains that a four-level social-ecological perspective (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) enables one to comprehend the

various factors that put people at risk for violence (see Figure 5) and generate ideas for prevention strategies. Uri Bronfenbrenner created this model in 1979; before that, Edgar Auerswald was the first scholar to use the concept of the ecological approach to describe family processes and explain the intricate relationship between families and communities in 1968. Roger Barker equally articulated how our physical surroundings and societal settings affect our behaviour circa 1969. Luckily, Uri Bronfenbrenner took the initiative to develop a four-level ecological schema that provides a comprehensive understanding of Edgar Auerswald and Roger Barker's thoughts on elements that contribute to variances in individual behaviour that can make one a victim or perpetrator of violence.

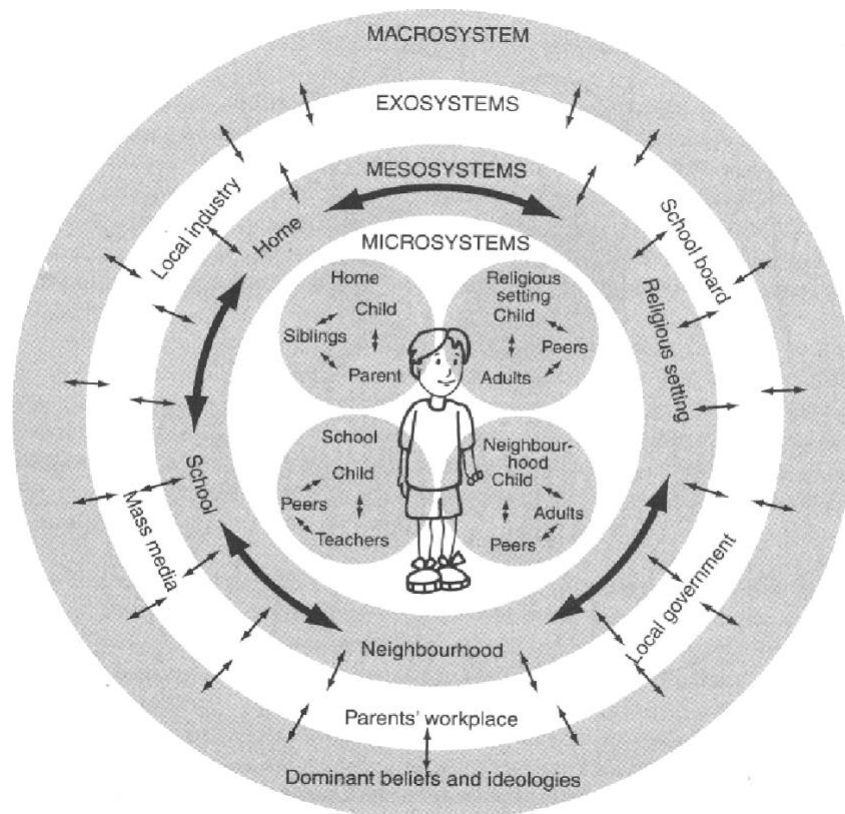


Figure 5: The Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory

Härkönen, 2008.

This study focuses on victims of domestic violence; according to the ecological model, risk factors for violence could be examined at the microsystem level in the context of individual and family factors. For example, early childhood exposure to violence can affect adulthood relationships, which could make the child aggressive and a perpetrator of family violence (Shields et al., 2020; Al-Majali & Alsrehan, 2019). Institutions (school, home, friends, religious centres, social workers) surrounding the individual and family (mesosystem) also contribute to the violence risk factors, whether they provide a supportive environment

which empowers the individual with resources to recover from their traumatic experiences of violence and learns new and healthy relationship skills or not.

At the exosystem level, as seen in the Figure 5 above, the model emphasises that the community in which a person grows up influences their personality and behaviour. For example, a child who grew up in a neighbourhood/community rife with violence, hooliganism, hostility, and the like may find it difficult to maintain relationships free of violent behaviour (Bacchini & Esposito, 2020; Mueller & Tronick, 2019). At the macrosystem level of the ecological model, the influence of the cultural traditions, values, norms, and rules of the community in which a person grows up and their potential for posing as a violent risk factor was examined, using the case of Slovakia, where cultural traditions are ingrained in the society and consequently make women tolerant of family violence, in most Latvian and Lithuanian communities, where victim blaming is prevalent and consequently discourage victims from seeking help. Uri Bronfenbrenner taught us that these systems are transactional, meaning that each factor at one level can affect, shape, or constrain factors at a higher level. This suggests that each degree of need will be addressed with tailored interventions to support individuals and families. Furthermore, this intervention must be timely in order to be effective; in 1986, Bronfenbrenner added the Chronosystem (time) to the ecological schema, which is further discussed in detail in this study.

1.7.2 Theoretical Understanding of the need for Social Intervention in cases of Domestic Violence

Social workers who work with women and children who are victims of domestic violence need to explore beyond the unilateral theories, which do not provide a rich and complex understanding of the power dynamics and resistance operations that occur as society and individuals interact with one another continually (Rossiter, 1997).

1.7.2.1. Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner established this theory, which focuses on the various layers of influence that form an individual's growth and behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). According to ecological systems theory, individuals are not independent entities but components of interconnected systems such as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Social workers use ecological systems theory to understand how diverse influences at each level of the system might affect an individual's well-being and behaviour. For example, a child's academic success may be influenced by his or her family's support, their teacher's teaching style, and the resources available at their school. In the event of domestic violence, social workers can intervene at many system levels to address issues and encourage

beneficial impacts (McClennen, Keys & Day, 2016). They may work with families to strengthen relationships, collaborate with other institutions to implement supportive programs or advocate for policies that benefit the larger community, such as assessing family systems and resources, as well as other connected systems such as schools, parents' workplaces, and the environment in which they live, including neighbours, religious organizations, and others.

1.7.2.2. Critical Social Work Theory

This is an approach to social work that focuses on understanding and addressing the underlying causes of social injustice and inequality. Social workers who work with DV victims, particularly children, will benefit from this perspective. This theory emphasizes the necessity of recognizing and challenging the social structures and power dynamics that foster inequality and oppression in units (Pease, Allan & Briskman, 2020). This theory challenges authors and practitioners who employ individualistic, pathology-oriented, or adjustment-centred approaches when addressing challenges that are evidently influenced by multiple systems and complexity, as in the case of domestic violence victims (Rossiter, 1997). According to Tittlova & Papáek (2018), factors that contribute to DV include individual factors such as (psychological problems, stress, alcoholism, and more), social factors, relationship factors, and kinship community factors. This suggests that domestic violence victims will not fully benefit from the interventions if the social workers only view their challenges as resulting from individual problems. Domestic violence is not solely driven by the pathology of individuals but also by social, cultural and economic factors such as poverty, patriarchy, as well as institutional racism against women of colour, as shown in recent research conducted in Brazil by Pereira and Gaspar (2021).

On the subject of patriarchy, as revealed as a factor contributing to DV in Pereira & Gaspar's study, it is appropriate to evaluate DV's determinants on the vulnerable in society from a patriarchal perspective, according to violence against women and children. Factors of violence against women, in light of prevailing social and gender norms and their influence on relationships, the causes of violence against women could be further explored, and the structural approaches aid the understanding of domestic violence against women. These approaches emphasise that gender norms influence society and that violence against women in families is a manifestation of power inequalities that might manifest in the domestic, political, economic (e.g., job, wage, and more), and human rights spheres.

In addition, the feminist paradigm describes intimate partner violence as the patriarchal oppression of women as well as gender inequality (Franzway et al., 2018; McPhail et al., 2007; Walker, 1981). Meanwhile, some studies assert that IPV is gender symmetrical and cites their findings as evidence that

men can also be victims of IPV (Chen & Chan, 2019; Straus, 2011). The findings of Yoshihama, Blazeovski, & Bybee (2020) and Hamel (2020) contradict the gender-symmetrical assertions of IPV. In addition, a new figure indicates that men are the predominant offenders of domestic abuse, as the Central Registry for the Protection of Victims of Domestic and Gender Violence in Spain recorded 3,834 registered male perpetrators in 2021 compared to 1,455 female perpetrators (INE, 2022). Furthermore, a study conducted in Chile by Saavedra, Contreras-Urbina, & Inchauste (2022) investigated women's risk of experiencing partner violence and found that younger women, women with less education, women with disabilities, and women who were sexual abuse victims as children were vulnerable to domestic violence, indicating the trend of inequality and imbalance in society, which makes the vulnerable in society susceptible to violence, e.g, children.

In many cases, domestic violence in relation to children is similar to violence against women. It is an expression of a man's domineering and authoritarian role in the family or household, used to impose obedience and accept gender power inequalities. An explanation for why most youngsters grow-up knowing who the boss (male) in the home is. The perception of a man's significant place in our cultures persists, and certain parents who desired a male child but received a female child no longer care for or cherish their children. Neglect as a kind of child abuse is displayed as goodwill towards their children; used in the form of education strategy - punishing a child or attempting to control a child's behaviour. Exposure to violence, sexual abuse, and child maltreatment are not simply sorts of child abuse, but they may cause the child to face similar occurrences as an adult. Several studies on violence against women observed that childhood experiences of sexual abuse, child maltreatment, domestic violence, and other forms of violence were common experiences of women domestic violence victims (Das, Mohandas & Killi, 2022; Han & Choi, 2021; Loxton, Townsend et al., 2018). This demonstrates that childhood exposure to domestic violence plays an important role in the intergenerational cycle and incidence of domestic violence, which could have been managed if the victim received timely and comprehensive services that not only work with the individual to treat physical injuries but also holistically assess the situations of the crisis and address all systems involved in which the victim equally participates, thereby learning from the process and gaining skills. This is the crisis intervention theory's point of view, and it is a framework that mental health practitioners, therapists, social workers, and other professionals use to respond to individuals and groups in crisis.

1.7.2.3. Crisis Intervention Theory

The goal of crisis intervention is to provide immediate, short-term assistance to help the individual cope with the crisis; stabilize their emotional and psychological state so that the individual will not only survive

the crisis but also gain strength to address a similar situation in the future. In his article published in 1984, Michael Hobbs, a psychotherapist, characterized crisis intervention theory as a significant preventive instrument in the helping field that, in addition to its intervention in crisis resolution, maximizes the linked potential for mental growth and maturation. (Hobbs, 1984). In addition, crisis intervention theory is applicable to the understanding of effective social intervention in cases of domestic violence because this theory is based on constructivism and systemic theory perspectives; it views crises in the context of multiple systems and human interactions and accounts for individuals as a system within themselves, their relationships within their families and cultural backgrounds, and the complex social networks that lie within which they have roots (Cassell, 1995; Lindemann, 1944).

Crises indicate a critical or potentially dangerous circumstance that presents a possibility for change; if an individual is unable to cope with the stressful changes, he or she may be driven into a state of psychological disequilibrium, a crisis. (Caplan, 1964). If assistance is not available during this crucial period, the individual or family may become completely stationary or unproductive or exhibit inappropriate behaviours (Aguilera, 1998). Relating this approach to social work practice, social workers are encouraged to use Aguilera's (1998) Crisis Model when working with victims of domestic violence (crisis) to aim to identify, assess (assess clients' perception of the problem and whether it is reinforcing strength to recovery or not, situational supports such as family and friends support, and coping skills that influence change and equilibrium), and intervene in order to return the family or individual to his/her previous state of functioning. Occasionally, new skills and coping mechanisms are learned during this process, resulting in change and the capacity to manage future situations. As covered in the previous session on ecological systems theory to explain levels of systems that contribute to domestic violence, this theory is further explored to explain why social workers must consider these systems when dealing with and developing interventions for victims of DV. Ecological systems theory is a theoretical framework frequently used in social work practice to describe the complex relationships between people and their surroundings.

1.7.3 Summary of Theoretical Approaches

Critical social work theory recognizes that social, cultural, and political factors that sustain gender inequality and oppression cause domestic violence and that domestic violence victims confront sexism, racism, and poverty. Critical social work theory promotes social transformation and challenges power imbalances to address structural concerns. Good knowledge of critical social work theory can help practitioners empower domestic violence victims and eliminate institutional constraints, prompt social workers to help victims find secure housing, legal aid, and therapy to exit abusive relationships. Social professionals may also campaign for gender equality, domestic violence shelter funding, and legal

protections. It empowers victims and promotes social change by recognizing systemic causes of domestic abuse. Social workers can reduce domestic violence and protect victims using this method.

Furthermore, the crisis intervention theory understands that people in crisis are often stressed, anxious, and distressed. Social workers using this method, provide immediate support and assistance to help people cope and recover. Crisis intervention theory-based social workers may help domestic abuse victims find temporary accommodation, get restraining orders, and plan for safety. Crisis intervention theory can help social workers assist domestic violence victims. Social workers can help victims cope and heal by providing immediate safety and support, helping domestic abuse victims in peril, and connecting them to long-term resources. Ecological systems theory helps social workers understand complicated human-environment connections. It provides a comprehensive view of the factors that affect an individual's development and behaviour and can lead to system-level interventions to improve outcomes. For social workers working with a child victim of domestic violence to deliver comprehensive and timely interventions, they should be aware of and appreciate these three theories.

Employing the critical social work theory will help social workers meet the needs of women at risk and promote the response to their fundamental right to safety and dignity. It is crucial for social workers working with DV victims to understand that most women are battered and abused simply because they are women gender-based violence (Article 3d of Istanbul Convention). Additionally, it facilitates understanding of the misuse of power perpetrators employ to manipulate and induce victims and offers a deeper understanding of how to assist the victim in being empowered to resist the power their partner abuses by abusing them (Council of Europe Latvia report, 2021). According to the understanding of the theories above, it is unfair to regard domestic violence as the victim's cause and personal problem; victim-blaming is an issue in Lithuania. The ecological system theory, for instance, outlines the significant effects of domestic violence on the family, children, and the community at large. However, many social workers in Lithuania are not skilled in comprehending domestic violence's various manifestations and effects (Resolution No 485 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania). The importance of interdisciplinary collaboration across disciplines, as suggested by the crisis and ecological system theories, is poorly understood by Slovakian specialists who aid violent victims (Mravíková, 2020).

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This review has highlighted historical and contemporary literature discussions, as well as important areas of ambiguity about domestic violence and the necessity for social work interventions. Numerous research works and statistics from national and international databases on the prevalence of domestic violence,

characteristics of DV identified in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, and contributing factors, people's perceptions and attitudes toward domestic violence, conventions, the impact of domestic violence on family structure, victims and the child were also examined. Government expenditures, the importance of social work interventions, as well as examples of good practices in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia in response to domestic violence were all explored. This research has also spurred scholarly discussions on the appropriate theoretical framework in social work practices when working with domestic abuse victims, as well as knowledge gaps. In response, the next chapter describes the methodology used to answer the research questions, as well as how certain discovered knowledge gaps could be filled.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the methodology used to perform this study. The research type, sampling technique, including selection criteria, logical steps taken to recruit participants, and study sample description are all provided here. The research instrument, data collection process, and analysis procedures were all critical stages the study went through to guarantee that adequate data were collected, analyzed, interpreted and logical and transparent research conclusions all were drawn. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research's ethical issues as well as its limitations.

2.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH

This study adopts the Mixed-method research design, which collects and analyses qualitative as well as quantitative data (Creswell, 1999) to provide broad insight into study variables and inform interpretation. This type of research is essential in social research as it helps to provide both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions and to capture expressive information for a deeper understanding of study variables. Mix-method research allows the researchers to examine and comprehend the thoughts and feelings of research participants, allowing the researcher to develop an understanding of the importance that people attach to their experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015) and relate or compare this with true outcome data generated by quantitative research (Steckler et al., 1992) to aid a deeper comprehension of the study population and concepts. It aids the researcher in understanding the scope of their research and improving the analytic capability of their investigations (Sandelowski, 2000). This research type is appropriate for examining and comprehending the prevalence of domestic violence, the depth of its impact, the affected, the outcome of implemented social interventions, and the difference observed over time, which assists researchers in identifying gaps and making recommendations. Using mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative), research for this study will provide depth and richness since it explores the professional experiences of social workers who work with domestic violence victims (women and children).

2.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

This study employed the purposive non-probability sampling specifically the maximum variation and expert sampling technique. The participants were selected based on the researcher's subjective judgment, and the population selection probability is undetermined (Tansey, 2009; Sandelowski, 2000). The

researcher set out the sample selection criteria based on the understanding and knowledge from previous studies and also informed by the characteristics of variables, research objectives and the researcher's available resources (Taherdoost, 2016).

The study employed a stratified random sampling strategy to select participants for the collection of quantitative data (Parsons, 2014; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Hansen & Hurwitz, 1943). This methodology was selected to provide a representative sample of offices (police department and state social municipal) from each of the three investigated countries: Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. In order to implement the stratified random sampling method, the population was divided into distinct strata based on the countries under study. For each country, a comprehensive list of offices involved in addressing domestic violence cases, possessing domestic violence statistics, and legally permitted to share data was compiled. Two offices were chosen at random from each stratum to participate in the study. This selection procedure was conducted using a random number generator (Random-org) to guarantee an unbiased and random distribution of offices within each country.

The use of disproportionate stratified random sampling allowed the study to capture the diversity and complexity of domestic violence response systems in each country while ensuring that the selected offices were statistically representative. By including two offices from every country, the research intended to enhance the generalizability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Nonetheless, Tracy and Carlin (2014) noted that the major drawback of this design is the inability to weigh the sample data in order to change population estimates because the author uses secondary data from police and municipalities and is unfamiliar with the original sample design of collecting the data and thus is unable to revise or adjust the data. Meanwhile, it is important to note that this sampling approach was employed specifically for the collection of quantitative data, which will be complemented by qualitative data obtained through purposive sampling methods (interviews with social work professionals). The combination of these approaches will provide a holistic and nuanced exploration of the research topic, ensuring a robust and comprehensive analysis.

The inclusion criteria for this study are depicted in the diagram below, which include at least three years of professional experience with victims (women and children together or children only), employment in state or NGO institutions that locals know to assist victims of domestic violence, and others inclusion and exclusion criteria as illustrated below (see Figure 6).

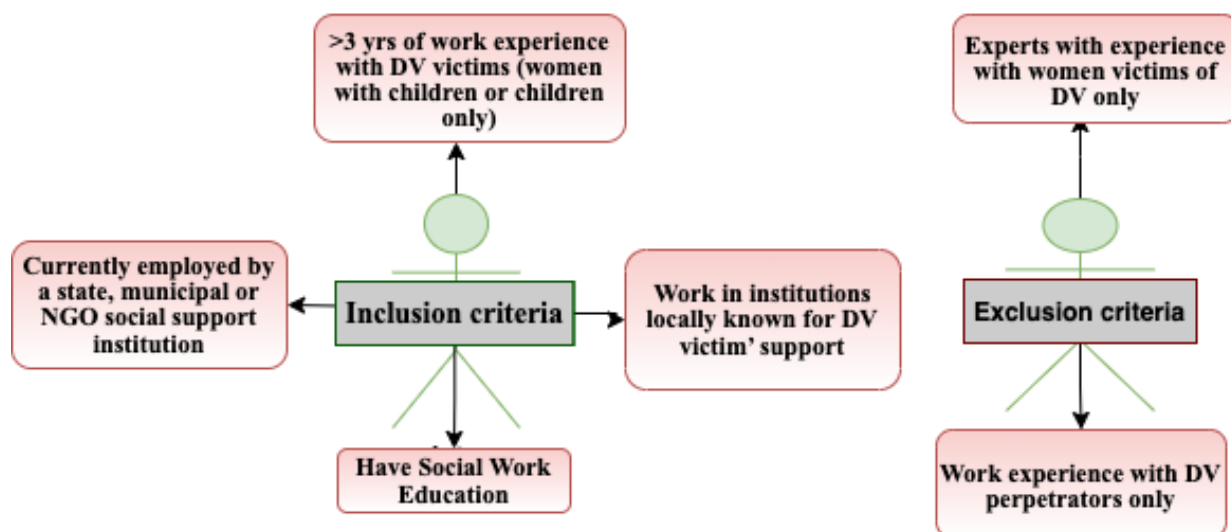


Figure 6: Study Sample Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Author, 2023

This was done to ensure excellence in research protocols and that data collected from the sample will provide an adequate comprehension of the study on the state of domestic violence and social interventions offered by social workers to support victims of domestic violence that cannot be obtained from a different sample (Hulley, 2007).

2.4 PARTICIPANT'S RECRUITMENT

Following the development of study criteria, the researcher sought the assistance of national and municipal social services professionals to compile a list of institutions (state and non-governmental organizations) designated to respond to domestic abuse, including those working with domestic violence victims across the three countries of this study. The researcher contacted those identified using the contact information provided while compiling the list and also invited some to participate in the study by searching Google for the institution's webpage. In total, forty-two social work professionals were invited to participate. Only 20 social work professionals accepted the invitation and were interviewed; however, two were excluded because they did not meet the study's criteria – the participant had different perspectives – and one was excluded because the social worker only worked with women who were victims of domestic violence and did not have children. In this study, 18 participant interviews were regarded as complete, met study requirements, and were suitable for analysis (see Table 3). For the quantitative data, the dataset was collected from 2015 to 2019 by three police departments (national police from Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia).

2.5 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

This study has an adequate number of samples, which suggests that it may have captured the plurality, dimension, and complexities of the issues examined and has sufficient data to draw necessary conclusions, thus demonstrating the study's content validity (Francis et al., 2010). Data saturation was essential to this study; the researcher transcribed and coded after each interview with study participants; this process continued as experts who expressed interest in participating were interviewed until the researcher began to identify similar experiences, issues, and lines of work, which reflected in the coding; as no new codes were discovered in the data, this prompted the researcher to stop the interview. Scholars explain in the literature that the stage in coding where no new codes are discovered in the data is referred to as saturation, indicating that data collection should cease (Saunders et al., 2018; Francis et al., 2010). Participants' information is provided in the Table below (see Table 3). Most participants have more than five years of experience working with victims of domestic violence, and all the experts have a degree in social work education, except for the family lawyers, who confirmed they had completed a short-term social work education before joining their institutions.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Participants

S/N	Education	Role	Experience (years)	Type of organization	Pseudonym
1	BSW and MSW	Social worker	7	NGO	SKSW.1
2	Social Work, MSW	Crisis counsellor	8	State	SKCC.2
3	Social Pedagogy, MSc	Social work counsellor	15	NGO	SKSW.3
4	BSW and MSc in Law	Lawyer (Legal counselor for DV victims)	15	State	SKFL.4
5	Social work, MSW	Social worker	8	NGO	SKSW.5
6	Social work, MSW	Expert Counsellor and police officer	5	State	SKSP.6
7	Social Work, BSW	Family Social worker	9	State	LTSW.1
8	BSW	Domestic Violence Specialized Worker	12	NGO	LTDW.2
9	Social Work, MSW	Case Manager	9	State	LTCM.3
10	Clinical Psychology, MSc	Psychologist and crisis counsellor	17	NGO	LTPC.4
11	Social Work, MSW	Social Worker	7	State	LTSW.5
12	Legal Science, MSc	Lawyer (Child protection)	15	State	LVFL.1
13	Social Work, BSW Psychodrama, MSc	Social worker	15	NGO	LVSU.2

S/N	Education	Role	Experience (years)	Type of organization	Pseudonym
14	Social Work, MSW	Social Worker (supervisor)	22	State	LVS.W.3
15	Social work, BSW and MSc in HRM	Social worker	16	State	LVS.W.4
16	Social work, MSW	Senior Social Worker	4	State	LVS.W.5
17	Social Work, MSW	Social Worker	7	NGO	LVS.W.6
18	Social Work, BSW	Social worker	6	State	LVS.W.7

BSW-Bachelor's Degree in Social Work; MSW – Master's in Social Work; MSc – Master of Science. Sources: Collated by Author, 2023

2.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

The researcher created a semi-structured interview guide, which was then enhanced by the study supervisor. The study guide was then utilized for a pilot study, contributing to its improvement. As an instrument for the study, the Semi-structured Interview Guide was deemed appropriate because it allows the researcher to prepare in advance, review, and become familiar with the questions before meeting with participants and because it allows participants to express their opinions in their own words and it gives researchers the opportunity to obtain reliable and comparable data (Cohen, & Crabtree, 2006). The interview guide contains 9 questions items that collect data on family resources, government policies, social workers' ethical principles, social workers' resources and competencies, and social workers' engagement with the family, as well as other pertinent data required for the study in each of the three countries chosen for the study. The research collects information from municipal social workers, crisis centres, women's shelters, orphan and family courts, non-governmental organizations, national social services, and police departments. 12 of the interviews were conducted in-person, 4 via Zoom, and 2 on paper.

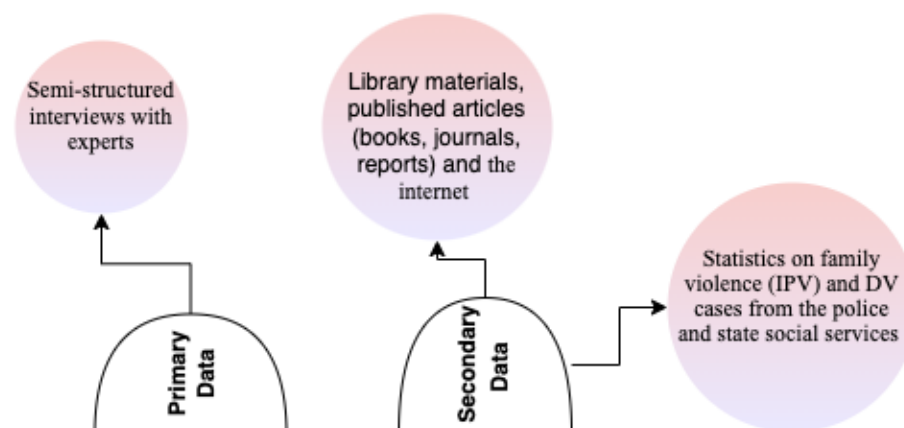


Figure 7: Study Data Sources

Author, 2023

The data used in the study were derived from primary and secondary sources that are pertinent to the study's topic, "social work intervention and domestic violence in families with children," across the chosen countries. The primary data are derived primarily from semi-structured interviews with experts in the study area (see Figure 7). Data collected from the police and state social services are classified as secondary data for this research and was collected to provide a fuller qualitative description, as described by Sandelowski (2000) in mixed-method research design. Secondary sources of data – These data were gathered from published materials such as books, journals, reports, databases, the internet (news, articles, institution's webpages) and police and state social services statistic and open data to the capacity that they are deemed relevant to the study.

Offsite Interviews

Why? Four interviews were conducted using Zoom (version 5.2.0), while two were conducted on paper (participants supplied written responses following the interview guide). Reasons for the offsite interviews include participants' choice of mode of participation, the need to use a translator who can only assist online, and national regulations on visits to women's shelters; for instance, some study participants work in women's shelters in Slovakia, and strangers are not permitted access to women's shelters there. According to research, using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection is efficient, helps save time and money, and is budget-friendly (Keen, Lomeli-Rodriguez & Joffe, 2022; Oliffe et al., 2021; Archibald et al., 2019). People now prefer online meetings in situations that would make in-person meetings impossible, such as illness with the COVID-19 virus or scheduling conflicts.

According to Oliffe et al.'s (2021) study on their experience using Zoom for therapeutical support for men to strengthen intimate partner relationships, the platform supports the rich therapeutic value and is inexpensive. The researcher possesses a diploma in computer operator and exceptional interviewing skills, enabling them to manage online interviews and adapt to circumstances beyond their control. The interviews were conducted in a calm, interference-free environment to ensure the participants' Privacy, and the participants gave their permission for the interviews to be recorded using, which was recorded by ApowerREC (V1.5.6.20) and saved for the purposes of the study. Participants' paper interviews were collected via institutional email; the researcher read the responses and followed up with participants in cases of a need for additional information that ensured content validity.

2.7 LOCALE

This study focuses on the relationship between social work intervention and domestic violence in three EU countries: Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. Throughout the three jurisdictions, data were collected from social work professionals and state police and social services. What are the researcher's reasons for choosing the three countries? First, the researcher spent at least a semester (lived and studied for six months) in each of the three countries, allowing for interaction with local social workers and citizens. The researcher volunteered with an organization, a youth municipal centre in Riga, Latvia, and worked with social workers who work with children in an orphanage, gaining an understanding of the effects of domestic violence on children, which spurred an interest in investing in social work interventions for families with children in the event of domestic violence in order to determine which recommendations could be made to improve support for children and families.

The researcher discovered that this problem is shared by Lithuania and Slovakia and decided to include them in the study. Interestingly, these three countries have not ratified the Istanbul Convention as proposed by the Council of Europe (2014), but they are all in the process of making efforts to ratify this convention; therefore, this study will contribute to studies which seek to provide findings on domestic violence prevalence, impacts, and the need for government to respond with improved social interventions and for social workers to increase their support for domestic violence victims across the three countries.

2.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data were analysed using the thematic analysis to identify significant patterns across data gathered from experts. The process of identifying patterns or thematic areas within qualitative data is called thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The interview material, the text from the eighteen interviews, was read numerous times and audio records were replayed many times to ensure a thorough comprehension. This helped to increase the validity of the findings of this study, as it ensured plain interpretation of data intending to generate detailed results (Noble & Smith, 2015). Relevant words, phrases, and paragraphs were classified and organized based on the objective of the study. The meaning units were merged and coded using ATLAS.ti (version 5.0), the best and most valuable tool for qualitative analysis (Frieze, 2019; Lewis, 2004), to identify associations, linkages, similarities, and differences and organize them into themes, subthemes and emerging themes. The emerging themes classification involved the identification and organization of codes that represented insightful concepts and ideas. These codes originated naturally from the data, reflecting the genuine experiences and perspectives of the participants

(Williams, 2008). It was crucial to note that these themes were not predetermined or imposed by the researcher but arose organically during the analysis process.

Pseudonym allocation follows country and experts' roles and used consistently throughout the presentation of the study's findings. For this study, a total of 18 social workers were interviewed. To offer readers a clearer understanding of the level of agreement or response similarity among the participants, the researcher utilized the following measures of the gradations of consensus based on participant responses. 'All participants' indicates unanimous agreement or similar responses from all 18 participants, 'Almost all' or Majority represents agreement or similar responses from 15 to 17 out of 18, 'Substantial or More than half' suggests agreement or similar responses from 10 to 14 out of 18, Some of the participants' indicate similar responses from 5 to 9 out of 18, and lastly, If a response was specific to fewer than 5 participants, the researcher explicitly states the number and provides detailed information in the qualitative data chapter. Using Microsoft Excel 2023 (Version 2302) software package, the quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to show the prevalence and percentage variation over the course of five years. *Trustworthiness*, the combination of qualitative and quantitative data, adds credibility to this study's robust dataset, which provides substantial support for result interpretation (Pilot & Beck, 2014).

2.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

This study prioritized ethical considerations and concerns regarding personal data because they are integral to social research (Sanjari et al., 2014). This research obtained ethical consideration documents from the research community at the Department of Social Work at Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania, Riga Stardins University, Latvia, and Catholic University, Slovakia, which were presented at each institution visited; this document contains the researcher's personal information, affiliation with the universities, the purpose of the research, the researcher's research skills, and contact information for the authority. *Informed Consent*. Each participant read and consented to participate in the study before any interviews were conducted (Byrne, 2001), as a consent message was included with the invitation email sent to participants. The same (consent form) was presented to participants before the interview began to affirm consent to provide data for the study. Clarity: The participants were given information about the study, and its purpose was described in detail. Participants were assured of *confidentiality and anonymity* of their personal information and made aware that their participation was voluntary. Appreciation. Most participants interviewed face-to-face were appreciated with some gifts (materials not monetary). Those who were interviewed offline received an 'appreciation email' after the interviews to show gratitude for their time and effort in participation, as most of the interviews lasted between 35 and 55 minutes; this attitude is

recognized and is standard research practice (Abdelazeem et al., 2022; Massey, & Tourangeau, 2013; Singer & Ye, 2013; Ryu, Couper & Marans, 2006). The collected information was stored securely.

2.10 LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

In-depth interviews allow asking follow-up questions, probing for additional information, defending earlier responses, establishing a connection between numerous issues, and providing abundant data. This data collection method creates an atmosphere where individuals may feel more comfortable initiating a conversation (Creswell, 2018). If there is a language barrier or the interviewer cannot meet the interviewee in person, it becomes difficult to achieve this claim. In Slovakia, for example, access to women's shelters is restricted, and some of the social workers who participated in this survey work in crisis and women's shelters where victims of domestic violence seek protection. About four interviews were conducted in the experts' native language, but with the assistance of a qualified translator, and two social workers completed the interview survey in written form (also in the expert's native language and translated to English before sending it to the researcher), without many opportunities to ask clarifying questions. However, participants were contacted via email if written responses were unclear. Nonetheless, this is a limitation, as some significant meanings may have been lost in the translation to English, which may have an effect on the interpretations.

2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes a thorough explanation of the research methodology. It emphasizes why mixed-method research is appropriate for this study and the suitability of semi-structured interviews and state police and social services data for answering the research questions and achieving the research objectives. Participants and data analysis procedures were described in depth, including sampling techniques, inclusion criteria, selected participants, data source, and analysis method. Several ethical issues that guide the study to safeguard the dignity, rights, and well-being of research participants as well as a number of research limitations, are identified.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS I

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter carefully interprets the study's results. The data gathered from the State Police and Social Services are first subjected to descriptive analyses and then presented in the charts and tables below. The second phase of the analysis presented in the following chapter is the thematic analysis; the themes and subthemes are illustrated and described using tables and diagrams, along with interpretations. It covers the competencies and resources and engagement of social workers, government policies and support, societal impacts, and how victims (particularly children) of domestic violence can be supported more effectively. The findings are then analyzed and discussed in light of previous research and Critical Social Work, Crisis Intervention, and Ecological Systems theories. The results attempt to answer the research questions as set out in the introduction: What is the prevalence of domestic violence in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia? At what stage are social workers engaged in domestic violence cases? What are government policy priorities on domestic violence? What cultural factors impact social work interventions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia? What are the challenges of social work interventions in working with families with child/ren experiencing domestic violence? The appendix (appx.2) also contains a detailed table of the study quantitative data and the qualitative results (themes, subthemes, and participant responses) are presented in tables and figures below.

3.2 PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Table 4: Number of Domestic Violence Cases Registered by State Police

LATVIA		LITHUANIA		SLOVAKIA	
2017	8,448	2017	47,941	2017	1,568
2018	7,393	2018	41,531	2018	1,608
2019	9,027	2019	53,075	2019	1,639
2020	11,534	2020	58,553	2020	1,700
2021	10,698	2021	55,815	2021	1,413

The data presented in Table 4 comprises Police records on domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, across the studied countries. The tables are not presented comparatively as the author is not seeking to highlight the differences between the countries in this case, which have varying population sizes, data collection systems, and histories. However, the table illustrates the incidence of domestic violence in

each country. On closer inspection, it is evident that the numbers have increased steadily from 2018 to 2020, with the exception of Latvia, where there was an increase from 2017 to 2020. The lockdowns imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to the significant surge in the number of reported cases of domestic violence in 2020, as observed across all three countries. For instance, Latvia reported 11,534 cases, Lithuania recorded 58,553 cases, and Slovakia had 1,700 cases. The data depicted above (see Table 4), it shows the incidence of DV and also demonstrates a steady increase in domestic violence cases in all three countries studied (Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia).

3.3 PARTNER-PERPETRATED HOMICIDE

The issue of women's homicide is a significant concern not only for the social workers interviewed for this study, as conveyed in their narratives but also for the community and policymakers. Typically, such incidents provoke public outrage and criticism of government policies. A recent case in Latvia in April 2023 involved a woman whose ex-partner stabbed her to death in front of her child and mother, sparking public outrage, accusations against the police, and criticism of government policy.

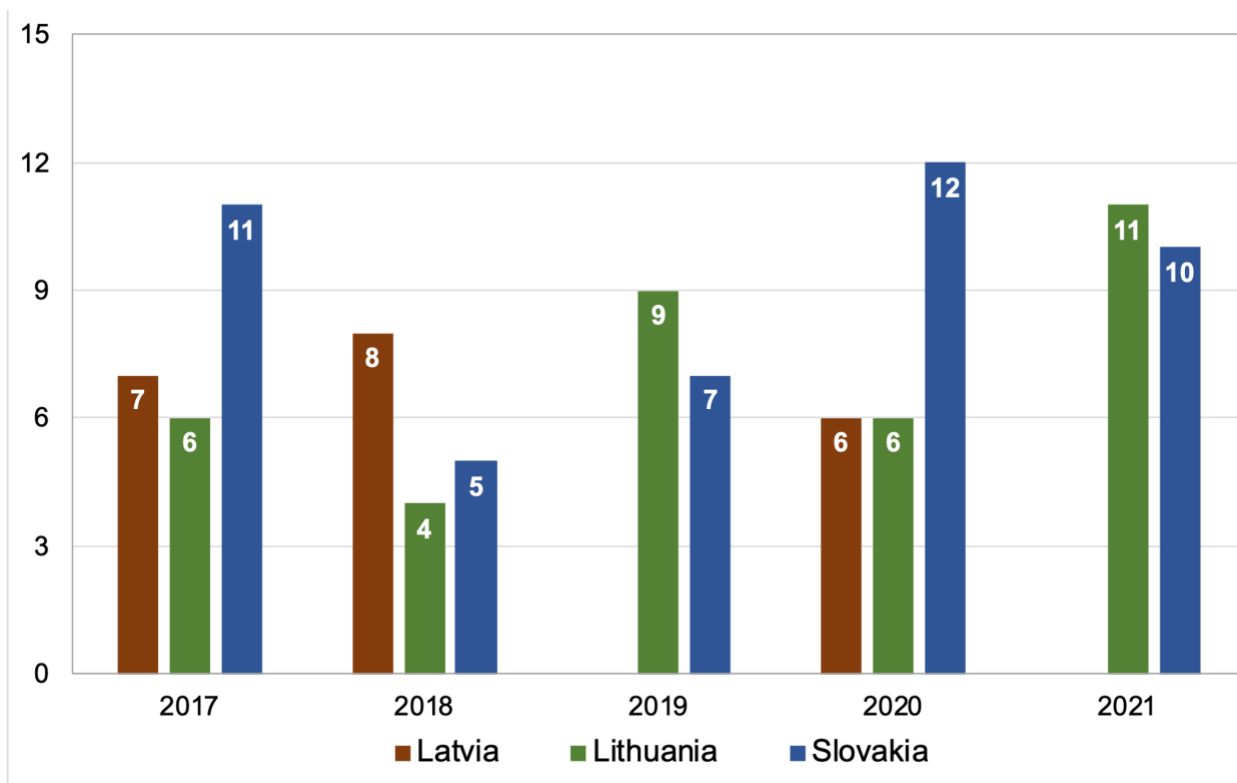


Figure 8: Women Homicide (killed by partner)

Figure 8 illustrates the number of women killed by their partners from 2017 to 2021, although data for Latvia is missing for 2019 and 2021. However, the figure shows that in 2018, Latvia recorded the highest number of women killed by their partners, with eight victims. In contrast, Lithuania had the highest number

of women homicides in 2021, with 11 women killed by their partners, totalling 36 women killed from 2017 to 2021. From 2017 to 2021, Slovakia documented 45 women homicides, with a peak of 12 cases in 2020, similar to the 11 cases recorded in 2017.

The homicides of women demonstrate the prevalence of domestic violence by highlighting the extreme and tragic effects of domestic violence. When women are murdered by their partners, it is frequently the result of a pattern of unresolved abuse and violence. Figure 8 demonstrates that partner-perpetrated homicides of women are not isolated incidents, as they occur in all three countries analysed for this study. While data is not available for all years in Latvia, the fact that the country recorded the highest number of women homicides by partners in 2018 suggests that domestic violence is a significant issue in the country.

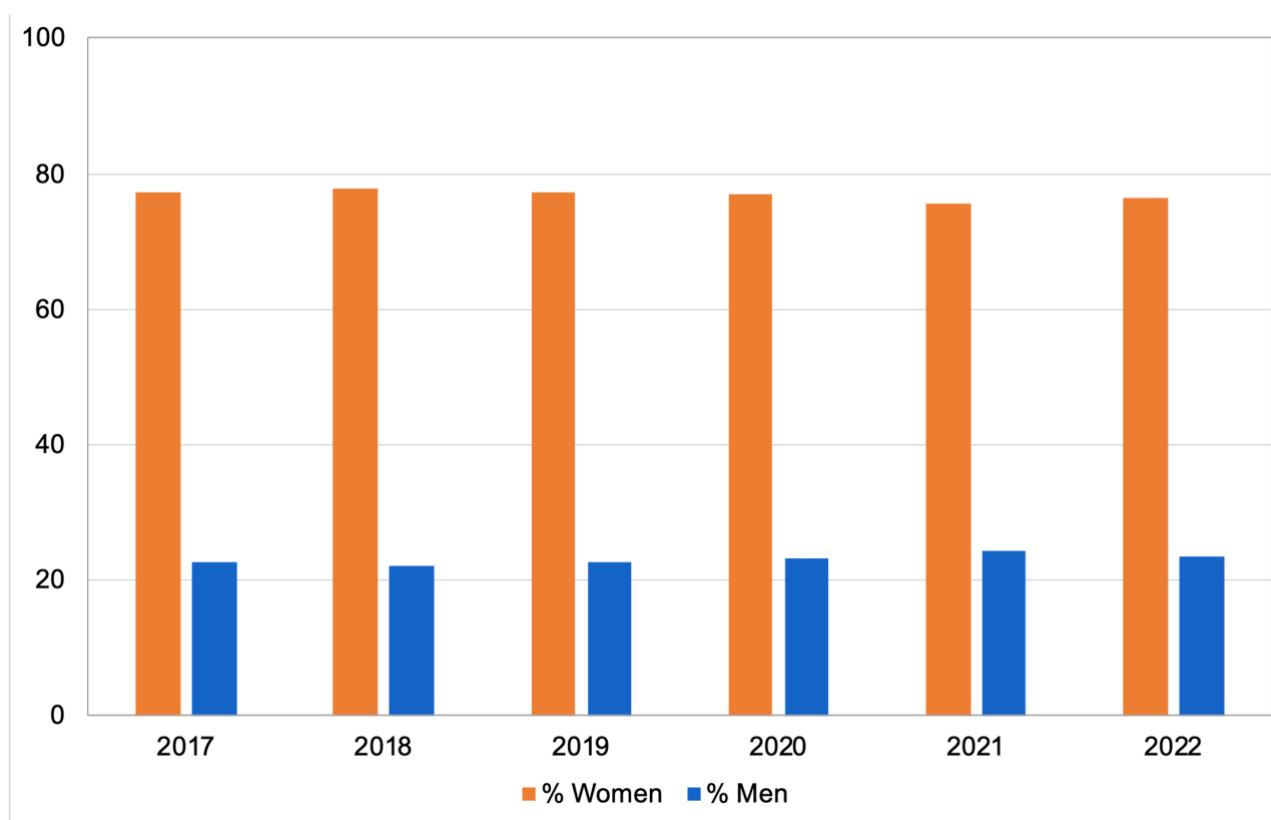


Figure 9: Persons who were Victims of Domestic Violence by Gender in Lithuania from 2017 to 2022

Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of domestic violence victims by gender in Lithuania using the data gathered by police from 2017 to 2022. The figure shows that most of the victims are women and suggests that each year, for the space of 5 years, above 50% of the DV victims are women in Lithuania. It is also important to note that this data does not specify IPV from DV, as in the case of Slovakia presented below. This suggests that domestic violence is a prevalent problem in Lithuania, impacting women in particular.

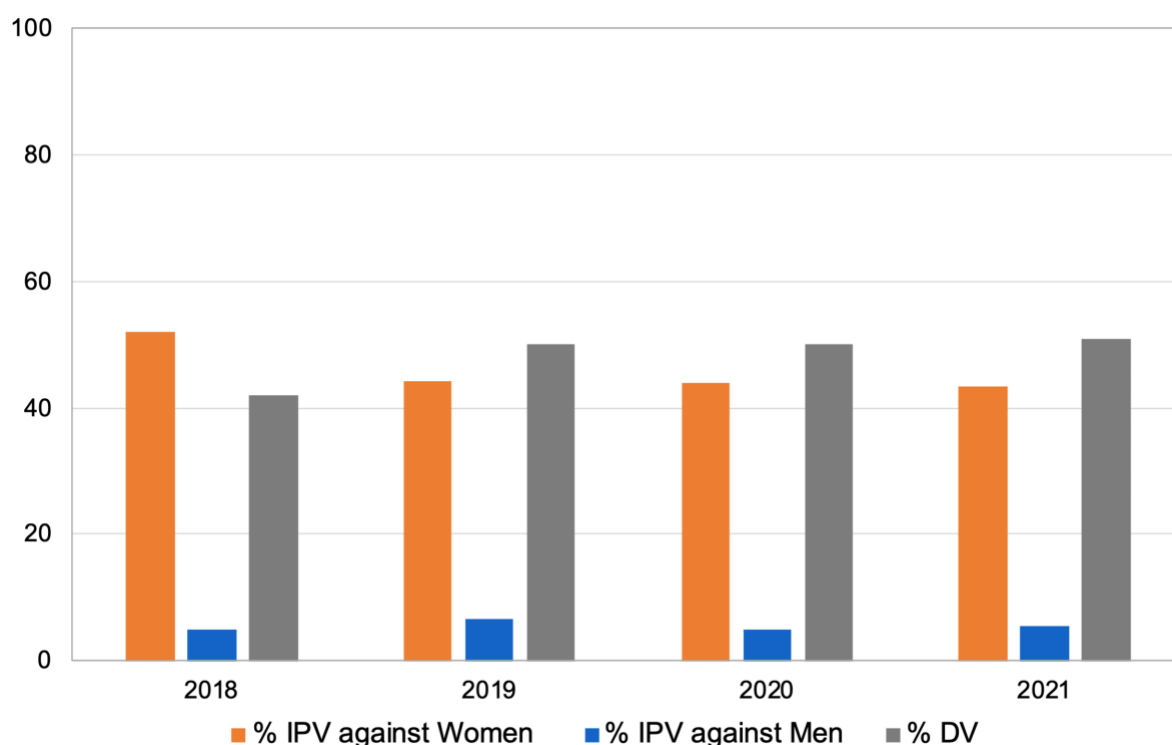


Figure 10: Persons who were Victims of Domestic Violence by Gender in Slovakia from 2017 to 2021

The police report in Slovakia distinguishes family violence as either intimate partner violence (IPV) against married or cohabiting partners or domestic violence, which includes violence in other family relationships such as children against parents, parents against children, and violence against siblings or grandparents. Figure 10 displays the breakdown of IPV victims by gender and DV. As seen in Lithuania's case in Figure 9, women are the majority of IPV victims, and IPV is as prevalent as domestic violence within the family. For instance, in 2019 and 2020, DV victims comprised 50% of the total family violence, while the remaining 50% were victims of IPV against women and men, except in 2018, where IPV was 52% and 43% in 2021. This data suggests that domestic violence and IPV are prevalent issues in Slovakia and that women are disproportionately affected by IPV.

3.4 CASES OF POLICE SEPARATIONS

Latvian data regarding the gender distribution and percentages of intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV) victims, as described for Lithuania and Slovakia, are currently unavailable. Nevertheless, Figure 11 displays the number of family separations carried out by the Latvian State Police (SP) due to violence. According to Article 12 of Latvian Law, when a victim of family conflict submits a written application or complaint, the SP can require the perpetrator to vacate the home where the victim resides permanently and not return for up to eight days if there is a risk of harm to the victim's life, freedom,

or health (hereinafter- police decision on separation)¹⁰. In 2022, this law was amended to allow the SP¹¹ to separate parties without the victim's written application in response to recorded casualties resulting from the victim's refusal to consent to the police decision on separation.

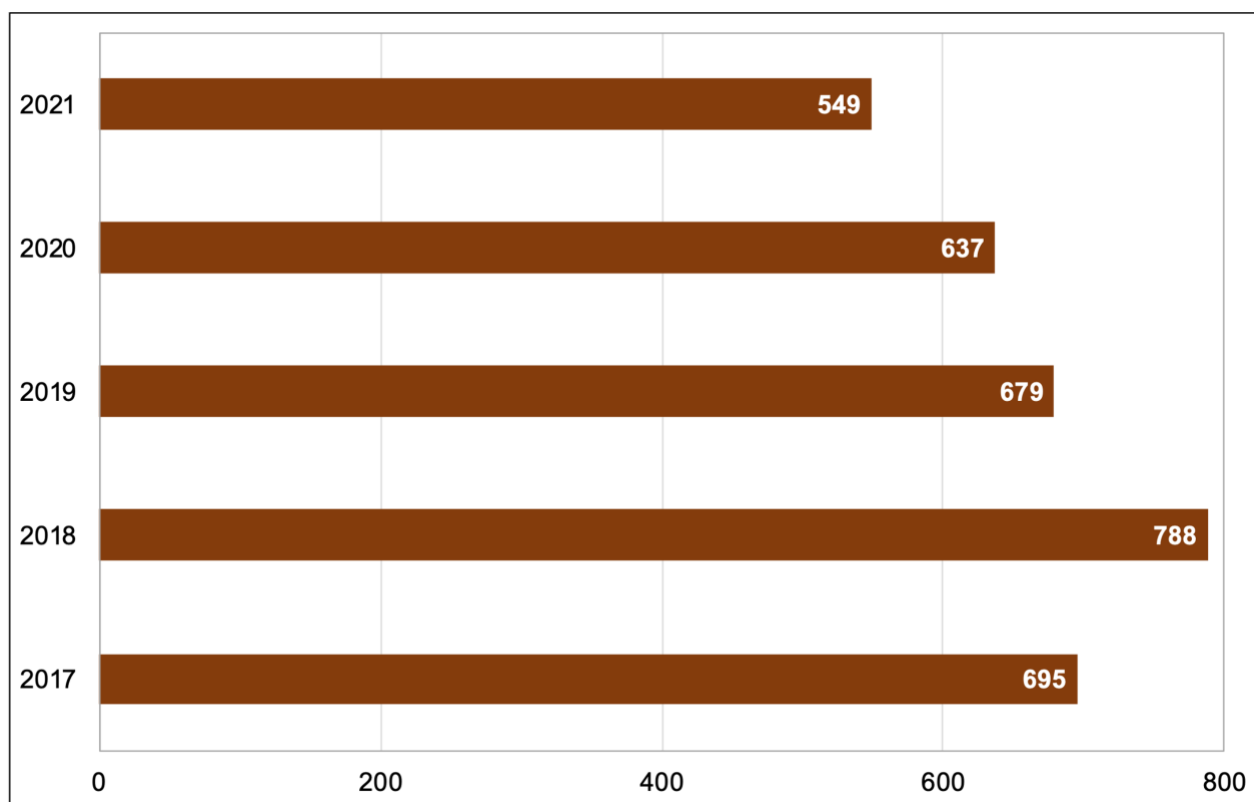


Figure 11: Number of separations by State Police in Latvia

The number of separation decisions made by the SP and requested by victims in 2018 was the highest, at 788, while the most recent was 549 in 2021. However, according to an article by Linda Nikon published on the LV portal (Latvijas Vēstneša, 2022) the Republic of Latvia's publisher¹², the SP identified the risk of violence in over 4,000 cases out of the 10,698 registered family violence incidents in 2021 (Table 4). Nonetheless, the SP could only execute the requested separations in 549 of those cases, as separation was only permitted if the victim had requested it prior to 2022.

¹⁰ <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/67957-par-policiju> (Accessed 02/05/2023)

¹¹ <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/329682-grozijumi-likuma-par-policiju> (Accessed 02/05/2023)

¹² <https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/337852-turpmak-policija-vares-lemt-par-personas-noskirsanu-bez-cietusa-iesnieguma-2022> (Accessed 02/05/2023)

Moreover, the Latvian Chief of Police, Mr. Armand Ruks, revealed in a public interview on 19 April 2023¹³ while reacting to public accusations over the murder of a woman by her ex-husband (pg 45) that *"there are many cases of domestic violence, domestic violence is a common phenomenon in Latvian society. About 9,000 such cases were registered last year (2022), and there are about 4,000 people who have court rulings on temporary protection. Accordingly, 500 cases of evasion of court rulings were registered last year"*. The statement suggests that domestic violence is a prevalent issue in Latvian society, with many cases being reported and documented by the court system. The speaker, Latvian Chief of Police, Ruks, specifically mentions that there were approximately 9,000 registered cases of domestic violence in the previous year, which is 2022. Additionally, there are about 4,000 people who have court rulings on temporary protection, which suggests that they have been victims of domestic violence and have sought legal protection from their abusers. Furthermore, the statement also indicates that there were 500 cases of evasion of court rulings last year. This suggests that some persons who have been identified as perpetrators are not complying with court orders or are avoiding legal consequences for their actions.

Although there is insufficient data available on the number of domestic violence (DV) victims in Latvia, the existing data in Figure 11 provides some indications that DV is a significant problem in the country. Furthermore, the relatively high number of separation decisions made by the Latvian State Police - 788 in 2018 and 549 in 2021 - implies that a considerable number of people are experiencing family violence to the extent that they require the police to intervene and protect them. Moreover, the fact that the State Police identified a risk of violence in over 4,000 cases out of the 10,698 registered incidents of family violence in 2021 suggests that family violence is relatively prevalent in Latvia. This information is supported by the recent 2022 amendment to the police decision on separation law. Overall, while data on the number of DV victims in Latvia is limited, the available evidence points towards a significant issue with family violence in the country.

3.5 CASES OF CHILD VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Children not only witness intimate partner violence but are also victims of both domestic abuse and intimate partner violence, which includes all types of abuse, including sexual abuse. Table 5 presents data on the number of child victims (under 18) of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) across three countries studied. The data collected for Latvia is only from the population of Riga, as data from other

¹³ <https://www.1188.lv/en/news/ruks-policijai-trukst-pilnvertigu-instrumentu-lai-verstos-pret-vardarbibu-gimene/14948> (Accessed 25/04/2023)

cities and towns were not available. The data is a combination of physical, psychological, sexual, and economic types of violence within the family, and it is challenging to differentiate child victims of DV from IPV as the available data hardly differentiate, which is a common issue across the studied countries. The table shows an increase in the number of child victims of DV from 2018 to 2021, with the highest being 1,438 in 2021 in Riga, Latvia. This is significant, considering that Riga's total population was 628,000 in 2021.

Table 5: Children Victims of Domestic Violence

Country/Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Latvia*	1036	1106	1148	1263	1438	NA
Lithuania**	NA	NA	5301	5236	5184	5894
Slovakia***	NA	NA	11%	12%	12%	NA

* Data about Riga, not state level. ** SKPC - Specialized Complex Assistance Centers. NA – data is Not Available.

***Slovakia data is presented as collected, in percentage.

The data for Lithuania in Table 5 were collected directly from the Lithuania Specialized Complex Support Centres (SKPC), a 2011 government initiative designed to implement the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Protection from Domestic Violence. SKPC is responsible for providing specialized services to victims of domestic violence following the filing of a police report. The number in the table represents the total number of children who have experienced DV, witnessed IPV, or lived in a violent environment. There are no data for 2017 and 2018, but 5,894 children were victims of domestic violence in 2022, according to the data. Similarly, in Slovakia, there is no data for 2017, 2018, and 2022, but available data suggest that about 12% of the victims of domestic violence in 2020 and 2021 were children (see Table 5). Overall, the data in Table 5 demonstrate the prevalence of domestic violence and its impacts on children in the countries under study. It demonstrates that children victims of domestic violence are prevalent and that their numbers have increased over time, indicating the need for immediate action to prevent and address this problem.

3.6 DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Subsequently, the findings of this study indicate an alarming prevalence of domestic violence in the three countries examined, with a constant rise in the number of reported incidents. Figure 8 illustrates a disturbing trend of partner-perpetrated homicides of women in all three countries, with 36 women murdered by their partners in Lithuania and 45 in Slovakia between 2017 and 2021. As shown in Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11, the research also highlights the widespread prevalence of domestic violence, particularly against women. In addition, the data indicate that intimate partner violence is as prevalent as domestic violence

within the family and that women are disproportionately affected by both types of violence. Lastly, the research reveals a substantial increase in the number of child victims of domestic violence, indicating that children are frequently affected by domestic violence.

These results are consistent with recent research on domestic violence in three countries and across Europe. A study by Bermúdez and Meléndez-Domínguez (2020) on the prevalence of Gender-based violence (GV) and femicides in the European Union found that Latvia and Slovakia are among the eight countries with high rates of GV and femicides in the EU-28. Other studies and reports conducted in Lithuania (Michailovič et al., 2022; EIGE, 2021; Pilinkaitė-Sotirovič & Vaigė, 2017) have also identified domestic violence prevalence. Moreover, the results indicate that intimate partner violence is as common as domestic violence within families, and children suffer domestic violence, which is a form of co-occurrence of violence in the home environment. This co-occurrence has been identified in cases of domestic violence by Tolan, Gorman-Smith, and Henry (2006) and Lawson (2019). It is crucial to note that women victims of domestic abuse are almost synonymous with children's victims of the same type of violence. Women are usually the caregivers for children, and both are interdependent. The well-being or suffering of a woman directly or indirectly affects the child, rendering the child a victim as well.

Overall, the quantitative data collected revealed that domestic violence is increasing in the three countries studied, with partner-perpetrated homicides of women widespread in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. Intimate partner violence is as prevalent as domestic violence within the family, women are disproportionately affected, and children are frequently affected by domestic violence. The findings emphasize the need for social workers to create and implement effective domestic violence intervention techniques that protect women and children amidst DV prevalence. The finding indicates the need for social work professionals working with families with children to support all domestic abuse victims, including men, and bring perpetrators accountable and also address all forms of domestic abuse, regardless of the perpetrator's relationship with the victim, because intimate partner violence and other family violence can co-occur.

The findings highlight the urgent need for a crisis intervention response to address the immediate danger faced by victims of domestic violence. Social workers must prioritize the safety of victims and act swiftly to intervene in these crises, not only to provide support but also to prevent further victimization and ensure justice. Within the crisis intervention framework, social workers working with families impacted by domestic violence would offer emotional support to those affected, including children, while empowering them. They would also provide practical assistance, such as facilitating access to secure housing, medical care, and legal services.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS II

4.1 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS

In this session, the study's empirical data is presented in relation to theoretical perspectives, interpretations, results and discussions using the integrated model. This approach is used to avoid repetitions and aid readers' understanding. Table 6 below illustrate the study's primary data results in response to the research questions. Each table is immediately followed by the main arguments presented in the Master Thesis, including the results and interpretation of the primary data and discussion. It is expedient to combine these sections (not have them in different chapters) because the discussions aid the understanding of the results presented. Please note that the terms "participants" and "social workers" are used interchangeably in this chapter.

4.2 THEME 1: SOCIAL WORKERS' INVOLVEMENT IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

Table 6: At what point do Social Workers engage in Domestic Violence cases?

Theme	Sub-Themes	Participants' Statements
Point of Social work professionals' Entry into Families in cases of domestic violence	When: (1). Directed/sent by police (2). Family or individuals call for help (3). Obligation by government organisations/social services/child rights agency (4). Referred by child support systems such as schools, hospitals and related organisations, NGOs, previous beneficiaries or neighbours	<i>"The society know us and our services people who have family problems and need help visit themselves"</i> <i>"When people notice a neighbor is frequently abused by a partner or someone in the family they call to us to report so that we can help"</i> <i>"sent by doctors, street social workers"</i> <i>"..usually children's rights organization decides who gets our services"</i> <i>"If the case is reported to the police, the police reach out to our institution to work with that family"</i>
Emerging themes	(1). Child abuse -violence against child in the family (2). Barriers to SW access to families in case of DV ✓ Low reporting ✓ Societal norms ✓ Punitive nature of the social services and not family-friendly policies	<i>"But we think that it domestic violence is quite more than will than we know"</i> <i>"they are afraid that their kids will be taken away from them and husband jailed"</i> <i>"What happens in the family remain in the family"</i>

Domestic Violence Victims referred by Police

The rationale behind research question number one in Table 6 (when do social workers become involved with families in cases of domestic violence) is to determine whether social work intervention is timely, whether people are aware of these social work interventions in cases of domestic violence in families,

whether people find it easy to access social services and to identify barriers between people and social support services in cases of domestic violence. In this study, almost all the social workers who were interviewed mentioned that they had become involved with families experiencing domestic violence through the police. It is worth noting that, according to the policies of the three countries included in this study (Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia), the police are typically the first point of contact for reporting incidents of violence. For example, in Lithuania, people will call the police to report violent acts, and the police will then reach out to social intervention institutions such as Specialised Complex Assistance Centres and municipalities to provide support to victims. A participant (LTDW.2) stated, *"If a case is reported to the police, they will notify us via email to request support for the victim."* This is an option by which social workers (SW) could be introduced into families in order to provide support, but only if the case is reported to the police.

Obligation by Government Organizations

Majority of the participants indicated that victims of domestic violence (also known as intimate partner violence or IPV) typically reached out for help themselves, either by calling for assistance or visiting social support service websites. *"Some of our clients come to us anonymously for family violence support, especially if they live in small cities where everyone knows each other, need help coping with sexual abuse, or are afraid of what people will say"* (LVSW.6). This suggests that individuals may be more inclined to seek support from social support services privately rather than reporting incidents of domestic violence to the police. While they may be willing to report other acts of violence to the police, they may hesitate to do so in cases of domestic violence (IPV) and may prefer to seek help directly from social workers. Some of the participants also mentioned that some of the help-seeking victims were encouraged by relatives or previous service users to seek help.

Victims referred by Child Support Systems and Others

More than half of the social workers also mentioned getting involved in family violence through former referrals from social services, child rights agencies, schools, hospitals, and NGOs. One social worker from Slovakia noted, *"There is an office from the government that typically refers clients to us who require assistance or support in cases of domestic violence"* (SKSW.5). For instance, in Latvia, if the police receive a report of domestic violence in Riga, they assess the situation and inform the Riga Social Services (RSS). The RSS then assigns social workers to support the affected family. If the social workers do not have all the necessary resources to help the family, they may purchase services from NGOs, such as Centrs Marta, Centrs Dardedze, RedCross Crisis Center, and others. This approach is similar in the other two countries

studied. In summary, social workers may gain entry into families experiencing domestic violence through self-referrals or referrals from various organizations.

Child Abuse - Violence against Child in the Family

This study data was not only analysed for themes and subthemes but also emergent themes (Williams, 2008) through the process of abstraction involved in distilling the data down to its essential elements and creating categories that capture the most important aspects of the data. These emerging themes were not predetermined or preconceived but emerged from the data itself and helped reveal important findings. The data collected to address the research question of 'at what stage social workers get involved in families affected by domestic violence' revealed two emerging themes: violence against children in the family, also known as child abuse, and barriers to social workers' access to such families. These themes shed light on the experiences and perspectives of the research participants and offer insights into the complex issue of domestic violence in families and social work intervention. According to the majority of social workers who participated in the study, they are typically involved with families in cases of reported child abuse. This involvement is mandatory by law, as families are required to work with social workers to address any issues that may be contributing to dysfunction and negatively impacting the child's well-being.

A social worker from Lithuania stated, "*When a child's rights are violated, we receive a request from the child's rights agency to begin case management for the family*" (LTCM.3). This practice is prevalent in all three countries being studied, but it appears to be more effective in Lithuania and Latvia. In Lithuania, for example, teachers and other professionals who work with children are required to report any physical injuries or abuse they notice on a child to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (CRPAS) or a local municipality social services department, who may temporarily remove the child from the family for safety reasons, require the family to visit social support services to address issues contributing to the abuse, or potentially terminate the parental rights of the family. In Latvia, such cases are managed by the orphan court. However, if this is not well managed, it could create barriers between victims and SW support; for example, a participant cited that "*...in domestic violence cases, parents are like, Oh, if you really report, you think in the orphanage will be better?*" (LVSW.6), the parents are aware if a child reports DV in the family it is possible that the child is removed for safety reasons and are using this to threaten the child.

Barriers to SW access to Families in case of DV

The barriers to social workers' access to families in cases of domestic violence include low reporting by victims, societal norms of social stigma, societal perception of domestic violence, timeliness and effectiveness of social support services, and the punitive nature of social services. Victims' reluctance to

report abuse is often attributed to social stigma and the perception that social support may not be timely or supportive. Recent incidents of domestic violence, *such as the reported killing of a woman (stabbed by her partner in front of her child) in Latvia in April 2023¹⁴, despite her call to the police for help*, further underscore the challenges of societal perceptions and support. Majority of the participants also noted that some of the victims are reluctant to disclose what occurs in their families because they believe it to be private and that such information should remain within the family; this reluctance is complex, as some are due to a fear of confidentiality, others to the victim's orientation, and still others to a fear of what might happen to the perpetrator if they are exposed.

The punitive nature of social services, such as policies that do not support families staying together, could impact victims' willingness to seek help immediately they are abused or contribute to their tolerance for violence to avoid separation from their families. A participant reflected on what children say when asked about their reasons for enduring abuse in the family for years *"they are my parents; I don't know, I don't want to put my father in Jail"* (LVSW.6). Overall, addressing these barriers is critical to ensure effective social work interventions and promote the safety and well-being of victims of domestic violence and their families.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore how social workers can effectively engage with families with children in domestic violence cases and provide timely and inclusive interventions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. The analysis of the above-mentioned first research question answers the question of when social workers become involved with families in domestic violence cases. The findings revealed that social workers might be introduced to families experiencing domestic violence when the victim voluntarily requests assistance, which may occur through referrals from third parties, such as various organizations, or when mandated by law to undertake rehabilitation. Findings indicated that social workers are aware that domestic violence is a crisis that requires crisis intervention and that social workers of both public and private social support institutions are making efforts to make their services known to the public and are collaborating with the police to be available to work with families in the event of DV.

Nonetheless, the study data revealed a number of barriers between the affected families and social workers' response that impacted the promptness and effectiveness of the services, namely low reporting of incidents

¹⁴ <https://www.1188.lv/en/news/ruks-policijai-trukst-pilnvertigu-instrumentu-lai-verstos-pret-vardarbibu-gimene/14948>

of domestic violence, societal norms that stigmatize victims, societal perception of domestic violence as a private family matter, and a punitive nature of social services that result in policies that are not family-friendly. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Heron & Eisma (2021) on adult victims' disclosure of domestic violence to healthcare professionals. Heron & Eisma found that the barriers to disclosure included negative attitudes of healthcare professionals, victims' perceptions of safety, and concerns about the consequences of disclosing, similar to the barriers identified in this study. In this regard, reflecting on the critical social work perspective is essential. The societal norms of social stigma and perception of domestic violence as a private family matter can be traced back to broader societal power structures and ideologies perpetuating gender inequality and violence against women. These norms influence victim help-seeking attitudes and interfere with social work interventions in DV cases.

The third barrier identified to social workers (SW) involvement in cases of domestic violence (DV) in families is the punitive nature of social services. Policies prioritising family separation over support impact victims' willingness to seek help immediately after being abused and contribute to their tolerance for violence in the long run as they seek to avoid being separated from their families. Clark's (2010) study titled "What is the justice system willing to offer?" aligns with these findings as it reveals that criminal justice system procedures are upsetting and traumatising for victims of sexual violence. The system's inability to meet their justice expectations weakens their faith in it, creating barriers to SW interventions in cases of DV in families with children. While this issue may be more relevant to the police, it has been established from participants that domestic violence cases are initially reported to the police and then handed over to social workers. The two systems work collaboratively in addressing cases of domestic violence.

Moreover, the punitive aspect of social services also has an impact on victim treatment. Brooks-Hay, Burman, and Bradley (2019) discovered in a study done in the United Kingdom that the removal of personal possessions as part of the investigation was perceived as both punishing and degrading by victims/survivors. While this issue may be more relevant to the police, it has been established from participants that domestic violence cases are initially reported to the police and then handed over to social workers. The two systems work collaboratively in addressing cases of domestic violence. Victims may also face punitive treatment in women's shelters, crisis centres, and orphanages. In Slovakia, for example, no one other than the victim and social workers is permitted into women's shelters, which can make victims feel alone and controlled. Laws and regulations requiring social workers and teachers to report child abuse or neglect may also influence women's willingness to disclose abuse to social workers, particularly if the aggressor was also aggressive to the child. This strengthens power structures which favour punitive measures over holistic, family-centred approaches that prioritise victim protection and healing.

Critical social work theory emphasises the need for social workers to challenge underlying power structures and ideologies in their practice, advocating for systemic changes that prioritise victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches to DV. By doing so, social workers can help break down the barriers that prevent effective and timely interventions in DV cases. It is important to note that the scope of this study's findings is not limited to the impact of intimate partner violence on the child but also extends to any form of violence against the child in the family. While discussing their engagement with families in cases of domestic violence, the social workers also elaborated on the issue of violence against children in the family. However, the primary focus of this study remains on domestic violence, specifically intimate partner violence, and its impact on the child, as well as social work interventions. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize other forms of violence in the family that affect the child's development and well-being, which were significant concerns for the social workers who participated in this study.

This study interviewed social workers from public and private (NGOs), and the workers appear to have slightly differing engagement experiences with families in cases of domestic violence, particularly with clients who independently seek out the services of NGOs. According to participant interviews, victims find discussing family violence issues with NGOs easier than public or state services. This may be because victims and perpetrators regard NGOs as less punitive than public or state services. However, these results contrast with a study conducted in Iraq by Strang et al. (2020) to determine the pattern of help-seeking in cases of violence against women, including IPV. According to a study by Strang et al., lack of trust is a significant barrier to stronger engagement with available NGO services, particularly among displaced women (women with poor livelihoods and shelter). On the other hand, the review of Strang et al.'s study suggests that the women were not very connected to or aware of the NGO services, and some believe that NGOs are much more concerned with women leaving their abusers. It is, therefore, crucial to note that this finding may not be generalizable to all settings and situations, as the experiences of social workers and their clients can vary based on a number of variables, such as cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Overall, the study emphasizes the significance of social workers creating secure and supportive environments for victims and perpetrators to disclose their domestic violence experiences and seek the necessary assistance.

4.3 THEME 2: FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Table 7: Factor Contributing to Domestic Violence in Families with Children

Theme	Subthemes	Participants' Statements
Contributing factors to Domestic violence (IPV)	(1). Vulnerability of women – having underage children and poor livelihoods. (2). Tolerance for violence (3). Childhood experiences (of both IPV and domestic abuse) (4). Poor parenting skills and relationship management (children from out of family care, addictions and mental illnesses).	<i>"So common problem is women are afraid to go from abuser because they have nothing like money, degree or more."</i> <i>"Because, for example, children are so little."</i> <i>"A significant group are the foster children of children's homes."</i> <i>"Another problem is the mother of the children is with another partner, a stranger to the children."</i> <i>"Most of them have experience with violence from earlier – from their birth families."</i>
Emerging theme	(1). Emotional disparity – stepfathers and mothers, foster child. (2). Domestic violence (against the child) ○ Use of inappropriate punishment methods (starving, sparking) ○ Parental alienation ○ Neglect and maltreatment	<i>"Parenting skills....communication skills among couples are also problems."</i> <i>"Parents are fighting, and the child is in the middle....one parent is trying to take the child on their side and to show that he's the better one"</i>

This theme, 'factors contributing to domestic violence in families with children', emerged from the abundance of data collected from the 18 specialists interviewed. This theme aligns with one of the research objectives (obj 4) addressed in the literature review. It is crucial for social workers and other concerned stakeholders to understand the contributing factors to domestic violence in families, as this knowledge can aid in developing prevention activities and interventions. The participants noted six key factors contributing to DV, common among the families and victims of domestic abuse with whom they have worked or are currently working. These factors include women's vulnerability, tolerance for violence, childhood trauma related to domestic violence, poor parenting skills and relationship management, child maltreatment, and emotional disparities.

Vulnerability of Women – having Underage Children and Poor Livelihoods

The first identified factor is women's vulnerability, which renders them more vulnerable to abuse and long-term victimization. For example, the majority of social workers interviewed mentioned that most women (mothers with children) who were victims of domestic violence often had poor livelihoods and low education, which left them vulnerable. Also, a participant stated, *"She was very socially isolated; this was the only place she could come over because she got approval from her husband for the kids"* (LVS.W.6). This means the woman has a poor connection to families and friends who could provide emotional or material support. Some participants also indicated that some of the women live in rural regions with little

to no access to supportive services, making it challenging to report violence due to social judgment or fear of unnecessary attention.

Furthermore, Majority of the participants pointed out that many women had underage children, making it difficult for them to leave their abusers, especially when they lacked resources to care for themselves and their children. A participant stated, *"They feel forced to stay in those relationships so their children will not be taken away from them,"* (LVFL.1). This implies that women are not only vulnerable, but also threatened and made to tolerate violence, *"sometimes abuse is taken as some deal just to keep a roof above the head"* (LTPC.4), knowing that if the violence is reported, the woman may lose custody of the child to the abuser, who is more affluent or to an orphanage because the woman lacks the finances to care for the underage child. The tolerance for violence among domestic violence victims is not solely due to their vulnerability and fear of leaving abusive relationships.

According to some of the study participants, women who hold high positions and prestigious careers in society or whose partners are well-known and respected also feel ashamed to disclose that they are experiencing abuse. A participant stated, *"Also, women are ashamed to tell them that then they have had this type of experience coming through"* (LVSW.4). This reluctance to speak out may stem from a fear of societal stigma, as well as issues related to low self-esteem and confidence, which the social workers noted were common among victims. Furthermore, some victims may have difficulty recognizing that the abuse they are experiencing is not normal or acceptable. Social workers emphasized that this lack of awareness is a major problem among victims; a participant stated, *"Also, women are ashamed to tell them that then they have had this type of experience coming through"* (LVSW.4). This disorientation may be due to the victims' upbringing, which makes it difficult for them to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Tolerance for violence as a contributing factor to DV was more evident in data gathered from Latvia.

DV Childhood Experiences and Poor Parenting Skills

Childhood exposure to domestic abuse, which includes intimate partner violence, not only impacts the abusive relationships that victims of domestic violence find themselves in as adults, but it also affects their attitudes and responses to abuse. Majority of the study participants reported that this experience is linked to victims' and perpetrators' low self-esteem, anxiety, and aggressive behaviours. A participant stated, *"When we take a close look at the situation, we normally find out that victims or perpetrators have similar experiences in their childhood."* (SKSW.1). This implies that children who are exposed to domestic violence are not only at the risk of mental health and behavioral issues but of repeating the same patterns in their

adult relationships, particularly if they did not receive interventions to help them heal and develop healthy relationship skills.

A participant also noted that some family issues related to violence and its impact on the family could foster childhood trauma. *"I also think that violent experiences and events that leave a long-time effects matter and parenting gaps."* (LTSW.1). Furthermore, all participants emphasized that poor parenting skills and relationship management contribute to domestic violence in families with children. For instance, some participants noted that some women who become victims of domestic violence were children from out-of-family care and may not have developed the necessary skills to manage a family or considered marriage because they wanted to make their own families and we not skilfully prepared enough. Others struggled with alcohol addiction, which could make them aggressive or accept blame for not being a good parent or partner, impacting their mental well-being.

Emotional Disparity and Child Abuse

Finally, two contributing factors to domestic violence within families with children stood out as notable due to their identification with different types of domestic violence, including intimate partner violence and child abuse within a domestic environment. One factor identified was emotional disparities between parents and children. *"He had no emotional connection with the children."* (LVFL.1). Some participants mentioned that in cases of domestic violence, ex-husbands were the abusers, and some of them, being stepfathers had little emotional attachment to the children and were abusive. In other cases, stepmothers or foster parents were identified as the abusers. In cases of direct abuse against the child, social workers in crisis centres noted that parents' high expectations and controlling behaviour towards the child aggravated violence in the family. One social worker cited a case study where a parent maltreated a child because the child could not learn a skill the parent wanted them to learn. Inappropriate punishment methods, such as deprivation, starvation, or physical abuse, were also noted as ways in which some parents inflicted harm on their children. Additionally, social workers pointed out that domestic violence is prevalent in families with child abuse, such as sexual abuse, parental alienation, and threats not to report abuse, occurs, resulting in disagreements between a parent that is abusive and a non-abusive parent.

DISCUSSION

This study's primary data supports the existing research on the various factors that contribute to domestic violence, as identified globally and across the three countries studied in the literature review. Consequently, these results reinforce and add weight to the previously identified factors. Specifically, the primary data revealed that women's vulnerability, such as having underage children and poor livelihoods, along with

tolerance for violence, childhood experiences of intimate partner violence and domestic abuse, poor parenting skills and relationship management, emotional disparities (foster family, attachment relationship), and violence against children were among the contributing factors to domestic violence in families with children. The results of this study are consistent with a report by Fahmy, Williamson, & Pantazis (2016) on domestic violence and poverty in the United Kingdom; the report's summary highlighted that poverty and women's caregiving responsibilities play a significant role in increasing women's susceptibility to domestic violence and abuse. Similarly, the World Economic Forum (2022) research stated that poverty increases women's vulnerability to violence, ranging from DV to trafficking.

Childhood experiences of domestic violence have been studied to be a factor contributing to domestic violence (Shields et al., 2020; Kimber et al., 2018) and tolerance for violence (Han & Choi, 2021; Wagner et al., 2019; Abd Aziz et al., 2018) these studies revealed that the violence experiences had impacted the attitude of the children, development and response to similar situations. A striking aspect of this finding on contributing factors to domestic violence in families with children is direct violence against the child in cases where a non-abusive parent is conflicting with an abusive parent regarding child maltreatment and emotional disparities (stepparents, foster child, attachment relationships) in the family.

This finding is consistent with previous research, such as McKay's (1994) study, which found that 45% to 70% of battered women in women's shelters reported the presence of child abuse. Similarly, other studies have shown that child abuse suggests domestic violence in families (Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2006; Lawson, 2019). Moreover, social workers must consider the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse issues when assessing victims of domestic violence. For instance, identifying child abuse among school children is essential for social workers in Slovakia and Latvia. They confirmed in interviews that this strategy has helped them support women who could not ask for help or leave abusive relationships. While this study found that emotional disparities also contribute to domestic violence, particularly on the part of parents, there is insufficient research to back up this finding; however, the study as well found that being a foster child or parent in a family also contributes to emotional disparities, which is consistent with previous studies that show that foster children struggle to form emotional attachments and are at a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and aggressive behaviour (UCLA, 2021; Ellis, Yilanli & Saadabadi, 2019; Sternberg et al., 2005). These factors could potentially contribute to domestic violence in families.

The ecological systems theory provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the various factors that contribute to domestic violence, including the individual, family, community, and societal factors that shape an individual's behaviour and development. In social work practice with families experiencing domestic

violence, the ecological systems approach is vital as it provides a holistic framework for assessment, intervention, and evaluation (Ghoddousi, Loos, & Kuemmerle, 2021; Sewpaul, 2020; Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Social workers using this approach can examine the multiple levels of influence that contribute to domestic violence in families with children, including individual and family factors, such as parenting skills (O'Hara et al., 2019) and emotional disparities, and broader societal factors, such as poverty and inadequate social support systems as depicted in the results above. These findings provide valuable insights into the complex nature of domestic violence and emphasize the importance of addressing the underlying factors that perpetuate this social problem.

4.4 THEME 3: CULTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND IMPACT ON SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

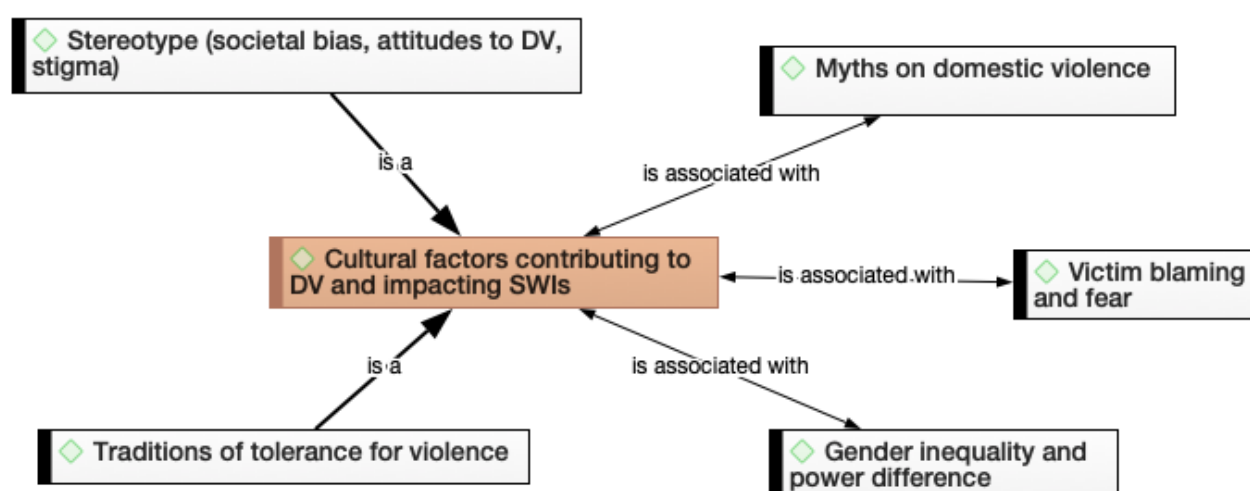


Figure 12: Cultural factors contributing to domestic violence and impact social work interventions (ALAS data coding, by author)

Participants' statements
○ "Abuse is not only problem in the family but a societal problem of gender inequality, and women position in the society." ○ "I don't want to note any culture, but there are some cultures where women don't have the right to say something, choose or make decisions." ○ "And some victims also are afraid to say that they are abused and not happy in a marriage." ○ "There is also some blame from society." ○ "It's a stigma; for example, in our country, people are not used to going to a psychologist to solve problems." ○ "I think still in most families in our country, the roles are – father is the breadwinner, mother – takes care of the house and children." ○ "There is a saying in our country that when a man beats his wife, it's like wetting a flower."

Social Stereotype

This theme, as well as its associated themes (subthemes), were derived from interviews with social workers, who were asked to reflect on cultural factors that impact their engagement with families experiencing DV,

and some of these factors were also identified in the interviewed social workers' narratives on factors that contribute to domestic violence among families with whom they have worked. Almost all the participants mentioned that gender inequality and power difference contribute to domestic violence, in that women do not have equal opportunity as men in the society and other inequalities limit women and make them dependent on men for financial support such as salary difference, caring responsibilities, access to resources such as employment, particularly the vulnerable women who do not have much privileges to combat inequality (low education, disable) a participant stated *"I don't want to note any culture, but there are some cultures where women don't have the right to say something, choose or make decisions."*(LVSW.2). Patriarchal ideas that regard women as inferior to males and that women and children are the men's property in the family cause men to believe they are superior to women and use such beliefs to excuse their violence in order to maintain power and control, resulting in domestic violence. Furthermore, a woman who believes the family is a man's property may feel vulnerable and see no reason to seek help when abused, leading to tolerance for violence.

Gender Imbalance and Power Difference

Participants note not only the imbalance of power between husband and wife but also the impact of social stereotypes and judgements on DV and social work interventions. For example, some participants noted that some extended families' and friends' attitude towards women when they complain about domestic abuse appears unhelpful, as they often urge the abused woman to endure, to be patient, and to be resilient; a participant stated: *"a woman said her mom told her that she also had a similar experience and endured the pain, that it is a normal marital experience"* (LTPC.4). Society often urges women to stay in violent relationships and attempts to reinforce traditional attitudes and cultural expectations about gender roles, such as men dominating and in control and women being subservient and passive. Making women believe that they have to tolerate abusive behaviour in order to be a "good wife" or "good mother." *"But she has to dance to society's expectations,"* one study participant (LVSW.2) stated. Furthermore, in cases where women dared to flee the abusers for their own safety, society blamed them for the violence; these social stereotypes affect the help-seeking attitudes of DV victims, who may feel ashamed or embarrassed to talk about their experiences.

Tolerance for Violence

Consequently, social stereotypes and societal views about domestic violence appear to contribute to victims' attitudes towards tolerance for violence; during interviews with study participants, Lithuanian and Latvian participants (majority) attempted to reflect on their country's history and perception of domestic violence

in their societies, as well as how it has evolved over time, even though some people especially older people are still grappling with the acceptance of transformations and respect for human rights conventions, a participant said: *"I think it's because of our history; we were part of the Soviet Union and another time part of Russia....we learnt that what happens in families stays in families"* LVS.W.6. On the other hand, Slovakia is a predominantly Christian country with robust familial ties, where individuals who experience abuse may be hesitant to report it due to concerns regarding potential consequences.

Domestic Violence Myths

Majority of the study participants also emphasise several myths regarding domestic violence, which reinforce negative beliefs like the stereotypes mentioned above. Myths about domestic violence were identified in the three countries studied; while some myths may be specific to a particular culture and country, others are more general, such as *"a strong perception that violence only exists in poor families."* (LVS.W.4). Contrarily, domestic violence can occur in any household, regardless of socioeconomic class, education level, or other circumstances. Another myth identified in the interviews is that 'DV exclusively entails physical abuse'; mostly, all participants regarded this as a major difficulty in reporting violence to the police and other authorities, particularly in countries where other types of domestic violence are not criminalised. Stalking, for example, is not a crime in Lithuania, marital rape is not a crime in Latvia, and Slovakia has yet to satisfy international criteria for responding to violence against women (Table 1). A participant stated, *"If the abuse is physical, it is easy to show and to have reasons for crying for help, but what happens when it is psychological?"* (LVS.W.4) Furthermore, domestic violence is perceived as a private matter; this myth not only prevents victims from reporting domestic abuse but also from seeking help, and it influences children's perceptions of family violence and appropriate support.

DISCUSSION

Recognizing the intricate nature of domestic violence, and the fact that families are integral components of society that cannot be studied in isolation, it was imperative to gain insight into the cultural factors that impede social work interventions in cases of DV. In order to identify these factors, participants in the study were asked to reflect on their experiences working with DV victims and indicate any cultural elements that hindered their interactions with affected families or individuals. An examination of the collected data revealed certain cultural factors evident in the participants' accounts of their client's circumstances and the engagement process. The analysis of the data indicate that cultural factors not only play a role in the occurrence of domestic violence but also influence the implementation of social interventions aimed at combating DV. Such cultural factors encompass gender inequality and power imbalances, societal

stereotypes surrounding domestic violence, tradition of tolerating violence, fear of societal judgement and victim-blaming attitudes and harmful myths regarding domestic violence, as illustrated in Figure 12 above.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that found a positive relationship between cultural factors and the occurrence of domestic violence (Hodges et al., 2022; Chikhungu et al., 2021; McGee, 2019) and other studies that specifically identified gender inequality (power difference) as a contributor to domestic violence (Wemrell et al., 2022; Mshweshwe, 2020; Willie & Kershaw, 2019). Furthermore, a study revealed that gender stereotypes might influence misconceptions in how people view and approach DV and sexual violence interventions (Bates et al., 2019); this aligns with this study's findings that stereotypes can influence the effectiveness of DV interventions as stereotypes may prevent victims from reporting abuse or asking for help (due to fear and shame), or not cooperating with social workers (Colagrossi et al., 2022) creating a barrier between social workers and DV victims.

Additionally, this study reveals that tolerance for violence, victim blaming and harmful myths on DV interfere with social work interventions with DV victims. This finding is consistent with finding of recent studies on domestic violence including IPV, Li, Sun, & Button (2020) found that victim's tolerance for violence attitude could be because of gender role and gender-based violence, Jesmin (2017) found that living in communities with strong patriarchal norms is associated with a greater tolerance for IPV. Similarly, Rodrigues et al. (2021) found that stigma and victim blaming are barriers to help-seeking. According to Twis, Nguyen, and Nordberg (2018), the stigma associated with domestic violence crime and victimisation, which is exacerbated by the mythology of DV, continues to be a barrier to victims receiving available support, including that provided by police forces.

Critical social work theory is particularly relevant to the study's findings because it emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the fundamental causes of social issues such as domestic violence, which include cultural factors such as gender inequality, power imbalances, and societal stereotypes. The study's findings imply that cultural factors influence not only the frequency of domestic violence but also the effectiveness of social work interventions targeted at preventing it. To address the core causes of social problems, critical social work theory draws attention to the significance of understanding power systems and bringing for social change. In the context of domestic violence in families with children, social workers could advocate for policies and programmes that address the underlying causes of domestic violence, as well as empower victims to seek help, take control of their lives and advocate for their rights.

Furthermore, critical social work theory emphasizes the significance of cultural competence in social work practice, recognizing the role of culture in shaping social issues such as domestic violence. Social workers could better understand the societal factors that contribute to domestic violence and design culturally appropriate interventions that address the specific needs of victims from various cultural backgrounds. Subsequently, critical social work theory provides a framework for social workers to identify and address the cultural factors that lead to domestic violence and strive towards societal change to prevent it from occurring. It urges social workers to question power dynamics, advocate for social change, promote empowerment, challenge victim-blaming attitudes, and include cultural competency in their work.

4.5 THEME 4: GOVERNMENT POLICY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Table 8: What are Government Policy Priorities on Domestic Violence?

Themes	Sub-Themes	Participants statement
Government policies	(1). Policies (Laws and regulations in case of DV including child rights) (2). Inadequate resources and support (not tailored to victim groups) (3). Poor support for NGOs	<i>"The problem is with the policies execution/application, and there is a huge space to improve."</i> <i>"Government is not doing enough for the social support."</i> <i>"In my practice, I perceive that the topic of domestic violence was rather on the fringes of interest."</i> <i>"Not much government support but maybe only psychological help."</i> <i>"I don't think so, don't remember any new policies or support in the last five years regarding DV"</i>
Emerging themes	(4). Little to no support for perpetrators.	<i>"I am not sure of any institution that provides services and interventions to the perpetrators in our country, maybe very few if they exist."</i>

Policies (Laws and Regulations in case of DV including Child Rights)

Overall, the social workers acknowledged the government's efforts to address domestic violence but emphasized the need to develop effective policies and provide funds to better support victims. The Istanbul Convention on combating domestic violence was a key topic among social workers, who recognized its potential benefits for their work and families experiencing domestic violence. A social worker stated that *"Still, the Istanbul convention hasn't been ratified, and there's a lot of discussions about that"* (LTCM.3). Despite this, the Convention has not been ratified in the three countries being studied, even though the Council of Europe recognizes it as the most comprehensive and effective tool to address domestic violence, with provisions for all victims regardless of gender or age. Although the countries being studied have national policies that cover and offer provisions in cases of domestic violence; however, statistics indicate that the occurrence of domestic violence continues to increase, as shown in the country's statistics (Table 5) and some acts of violence that contribute to DV are not criminalized, for example stalking in Lithuania,

marital rape in Latvia and gender-based violence in Slovakia. A Participant noted that the *"problem lies in the application of these policies and that there is ample room for improvement"* (SKFL.4). The Istanbul Convention also includes provisions to support and improve the skills of experts responding to domestic violence. Its ratification would benefit families and individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Inadequate Resources and Support (not tailored to victim groups)

Insufficient government policies and resources not only affect social workers' ability to engage with domestic violence (DV) victims but also hinder their ability to provide adequate support. One participant noted that although *"there is a DV law from 2011 that sets aside funding for DV victims, it is not enough to address the magnitude of the problem"* (LTDW.2). Social workers need material resources to assist DV victims, who often escape their abusers with no basic resources to survive. It is critical for social workers to secure provisions from the government to help victims with shelter, clothing, and food. Besides from food and shelter, victims also require legal support; a lawyer to consult with, especially in cases where domestic violence leads to divorce. Without legal support, victims may lose custody of their children and property to their abuser. Unfortunately, many victims do not receive this type of support, contributing to the tolerance of violence in families with children. A participant said: *"Not much government support but maybe only psychological help"* (SKSP.6). Furthermore, some government provisions are generic and not tailored to specific victim groups, resulting in children who witness intimate partner violence not receiving comprehensive support and being treated as non-victims.

Poor Support for NGOs

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in supporting families and individuals experiencing domestic violence (DV), but this study found that there is little government support for these NGOs. The study interviewed social workers from seven NGOs in the three countries being studied, and none of them received close to 40% of their funding from the state government. A participant stated, *"The Government is not doing enough for social support. It was even worse in the last three years; DV is underestimated in our country. We have received a little support from the government, which is not enough for sustainability; a lot of the support is from grants, Norway, Brussels, and EU funds"* (SKSW.1). Nonetheless, there are some cooperation between NGOs and the government, as the government refers victims to the NGOs and buys their services for people who are victims of DV. However, for NGOs to be sustainable and for new ones to develop, the government needs to improve its support not only with funding but also with favorable policies. Majority of the participants emphasized the need for government support.

Little to no Support for Perpetrators

Furthermore, an examination of the social workers' interviews reveals that their clients are dissatisfied with the justice system's response when they report domestic violence and that there are few to no services available for perpetrators of such violence. One social worker stated, *"Our target group is victims (women with their children) only; we do not get approval for another target group"* (LTPC.4). While it is important to hold DV offenders accountable, simply imposing fines is inadequate as it fails to address the underlying issues. As one social worker remarked, *"Domestic abuse is a crime is should be punished....perpetrators here who are not punished are the problem; they are made to pay fines, which is nothing, that's not punishment"* (LVS.W.2). For instance, a perpetrator who is fined 500 euros can easily pay the amount, and it does not adequately address the harm caused to the victim. Additionally, victims are not reporting abuse with the main goal of having the perpetrator fined, but rather for justice to be served. Therefore, the government needs to improve laws and regulations regarding domestic violence victims and perpetrators.

Moreover, services for perpetrators of domestic violence are scarce or non-existent. When asked if they worked with perpetrators of DV, almost all social workers reported that they did not, and when asked if they were aware of institutions that work with perpetrators, almost 70% were uncertain. Those who did list such institutions mentioned mostly NGOs founded by community members who felt that social interventions were necessary for DV perpetrators and male victims of DV. However, the author followed up with these organisations and discovered that many of these NGOs were not functioning, and others only had an online presence to disseminate educative articles via social media. Only 10% of the institutions mentioned were government-owned and provided occasional skill training to DV perpetrators. One social worker remarked, *"No, I do not know any of the organisations that work with men or DV perpetrators in my country, and I am not sure they exist...well, generally, I think this is missing"* (SKSW.1). There was few to no institution that provided holistic assistance to DV perpetrators, such as counselling, addiction therapy, mental health services, shelter, and training on anger and relationship management, among other services. Meanwhile, Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention requires state parties to provide preventive assistance to DV abusers.

DISCUSSION

Subsequently, interviews with the SW regarding government policies and support revealed that the government policies and provisions are insufficient to address DV in that some types of violence are not criminalized, and the policies are not tailored to specific acts of violence in families but somewhat generalized. The results revealed inadequate support for NGOs, and perpetrators of domestic violence. The

social workers acknowledge the potential benefits of the Istanbul Convention in combating domestic violence, but its ratification remains a concern in the three countries. A recent report by the European Parliament (2023) revealed that as of December 2022, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia have not ratified the Istanbul Convention. During the interview, social workers expressed their interest in the convention, believing it was a good instrument for practice while working with individuals or families experiencing DV. Social workers and families dealing with domestic violence require essential government policies and social support.

Nevertheless, the present study found that these resources are inadequate, which aligns with previous studies that have suggested that a lack or insufficiency of government services could contribute to DV and impact the effectiveness of the work of social professionals (Jegatheesan et al., 2020; Vrabiescu, 2019; Roldós & Corso, 2013). Moreover, the study found that very few social interventions exist for domestic violence perpetrators, who are usually family members. It's worth noting that a family-centred approach should not only aim to punish the offender but also aid in their rehabilitation for overall family well-being. As per Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention, countries must establish and support perpetrator programs as part of their preventive measures to break the cycle of violence (WWP-EN, 2022). The study highlights the crucial role of government policies and social support in addressing domestic violence. A social worker can use the ecological systems theory to better understand the impact of these external factors on their clients and advocate for policy changes and resource access.

The Istanbul Convention is a valuable tool for social workers, emphasizing prevention and perpetrator programs, furthermore, the DRIVE Partnership (2020) has emphasized the importance of intervention programs for perpetrators of domestic abuse. The DRIVE Partnership is a collaborative initiative that seeks to revolutionize the approach to addressing domestic abuse, which align with the ecological systems theory's emphasis on broader systems and contexts. Additionally, the study indicates the need for social interventions for perpetrators, considering their impact on overall family well-being. Collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is crucial, as they play a vital role in providing services to individuals and families who experience domestic violence. According to Zastrow and Hessenauer (2022, p. 7), who hold a conservative perspective, it is essential that NGOs receive adequate funding to carry out their work effectively. Using the ecological systems theory, social workers can understand how to approach this external barrier and recognize the importance of collaborating with these organizations (public and private) to access additional resources and support for their clients.

4.6 THEME 5: CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

Table 9: What are the Challenges of Social Work Interventions on Domestic Violence in Families with Children?

Themes	Sub-Themes
Challenges of social work interventions	(1). Poor multidisciplinary collaboration of professionals (2). Codependency, victims' motivation problems and issues on victims returning to abusers (abuse cycle) (3). Victims' insufficient resources and poor government support (money, education, skills, location, mental health, poor social exclusion) (4). Inadequacies of social workers • Poor approach and practice (seeing DV as individual pathology, not-inclusive interventions) • Inadequate support for children's victims of domestic violence (IPV)- poor skills, focus is on placement instead of individualized intervention for the affected child. • Insufficient resources: shortage of social workers, funding, limited by policies.
Emerging themes	(5). Victims seeking private support locally and internationally. (6). COVID-19 negative impacts on DV and interventions **Good practices and need for improvement: empowerment, preventive services, family conferences
Participants' statements	<i>"Collaboration is difficult; we cannot call the school or the clinic and ask how our family or children are doing according to the law on data protection."</i> <i>"But all decisions are made by our clients, and if they are not motivated to cooperate, it's impossible to help"</i> <i>"most of my clients are from low income families"</i> <i>"We also have the problem of a shortage of social workers"</i> <i>"He's been violent, but the woman is making excuses for the man."</i> <i>"Victims are not ready to leave the oppressors"</i> <i>"Many victims did not have the opportunity to escape to safety due to the COVID-19 pandemic; many situations got worse."</i>

Poor Multidisciplinary Collaboration of Professionals

In this study, social workers were asked about the challenges they faced when engaging with families experiencing domestic violence with children. The author identified eight overarching challenges, one of which was poor multidisciplinary Collaboration among professionals. Some barriers to Collaboration were strict government policies on data protection, poor professional competence, lack of availability and willingness of other professionals to collaborate, and shortage of necessary specialists. For instance, an SW stated, *"It's not so easy to collaborate because we can't share information, let's say, via the telephone. But it's a rule in Europe about all personal information. It's called GDPR; it's an EU Law"* (LTPC.4). Social workers expressed their interest in collaborating; a social worker said, *"Collaboration does not sometimes work because somebody is not so professional or so busy to support or attend meetings, but of course, it's our aim to collaborate"* (LVSW.3). However, some offices did not find it necessary to work with other service providers, a participant said, *"This office does not work with other professionals connected with our target groups, but only with police and state police. We are like municipal police"* (SKSP.6). Collaboration

among professionals is essential for DV victims holistic support. However, it can be challenging when other professionals are not cooperating.

Discussion. Domestic violence often necessitates the engagement of police, courts, shelter providers, medical services, and counsellors (Miranda & Lange, 2020; Richards & Gover, 2018). This study, however, identified insufficient collaboration among social workers and other social professionals. This finding is consistent with prior research, which has found a variety of barriers to effective collaboration, including power disparities across partner organizations, data sharing, confidentiality issues and restricted access to resources (Allen, 2005; Mills et al., 2000). The current study discovered similar challenges to collaboration. Furthermore, Allen (2005: p. 58) emphasizes the importance of inclusivity in professional collaborations dealing with domestic violence. This means that social workers must include every required specialist to combine expertise and resources to assist the DV victims.

Abuse Cycle: Victims returning to Abusers, Codependency and Motivation Problems

During the interviews, almost half of the social workers mentioned that one of their significant challenges is seeing victims return to their abusers even after receiving help. For instance, one social worker cited a case where a woman had sought refuge in a shelter due to repeated abuse three times. The social workers also noted that some victims were not motivated to receive the empowerment services offered as they were not ready to leave their abusers, a social worker said *"victims are not ready to leave the oppressors.....in practice we've seen many women remain in violent relationships with their children throughout their lives"* (SKSW.1). This study has previously explored factors that could contribute to this cycle of abuse and non-leaving of abusers, such as financial difficulties, childhood experiences of domestic violence, low self-esteem, and societal stereotypes.

Some social professionals have found concerning codependency relationships between victims and perpetrators. They have witnessed victims making explanations for the perpetrators' destructive or aggressive behaviour. One social worker, for example, stated, *"He's not a bad husband; he becomes violent because he's tired from work... He is the one responsible for the family, and he's under stress... He hurt me because I didn't perform well; it's not his fault"* (LVSW.5). This highlights how victims frequently blame themselves and justify why reporting the abuser is unreasonable. Additionally, some social workers reported that some women refused to accept social support or comply with social services. Two social workers discussed this in the context of mandated family rehabilitation processes initiated by child rights

agencies or courts that could lead to losing child custody. Such parents might feel forced to receive social services. One social worker stated, *"They think they are fine and do not accept help or resources because they think everything is fine with their family, and that is how they were raised as children"* (LVSW.7). The behaviors mentioned above could be associated with their childhood experiences and exposure to violence, as previously discussed in this study, or potentially linked to social workers' competency and resource deficiencies, as discussed in the following section.

Discussion. Studies have revealed that some victims of domestic violence may return to their abusers, and Hill (2020) referred to this as mental captivity. "The victims sometimes even plead for their abusers to take them back" (Hill, 2020: p. 6); this 'mental captivity' may also be responsible for the condempnatory observations above, which emphasise the complicated dynamics at work in abusive relationships, where victims may internalise blame and feel obligated to defend the abuser, thereby jettisoning social interventions aimed at liberation. It emphasises the significance of multifaceted solutions that address not just immediate safety concerns but also the codependent relationship's underlying psychological and emotional aspects. This finding aligns with Heron and Eisma's (2021) recent study on barriers to disclosing domestic violence to healthcare services, as victims of domestic violence are in regular contact with healthcare services but often fail to disclose. The Hill and Eisma identified positive and negative outcomes associated with abuse, including the ability to leave the abuser or, conversely, the victim's situation remaining unchanged. Thus, the consequences of abuse are not always the same and can vary from person to person. Social workers must recognize this to avoid becoming discouraged or experiencing burnout and to remain objective when working with all domestic violence victims.

Victims' Insufficient Resources and Poor Government Support

When striving to empower and sustain their clients who lack resources such as education, skills, and livelihood, live in rural areas, have mental health difficulties, or are socially excluded due to inadequate government support, social workers confront challenges. Majority of the social workers mentioned that the majority of the families they work with are at risk of poverty. For example, one social worker stated that *"most of my clients are from low-income households"* (SKFL.4), while another stated that *"our clients here are people with fewer opportunities and resources"* (LTPC.4). These vulnerable persons require the most assistance; nevertheless, social workers without adequate government funding can only provide assistance for a limited time, especially when clients lack certain means to leverage. For example, after leaving a women's shelter, a woman without friends or parents but skilled or educated could find a job and enrol her child in government-subsidised childcare, avoiding the need to return to the abuser for financial support.

However, it is difficult for social workers to provide real support to a mother with children who have no education, skills, or social connections and is faced with a lack of government-supported childcare. Meanwhile, Women's shelters have a restricted stay period, which contributes to women returning to their abusers since they have nowhere else to go. In such circumstances, social workers must advocate for their clients by recommending that they stay in the shelter for a longer period of time, pushing for childcare services, supporting further education or skill acquisition, and connecting clients to relevant resources. However, this can be difficult because social workers must manage limited government resources for long-term sustainability, and some countries have stringent limits on the number of days a victim can stay in a crisis centre or women's shelter.

Discussion. Subsequently, this study emphasises the necessity of government support and resources in social work interventions as well as how victims' lack of resources interferes with social workers' engagement with individuals or families facing domestic abuse, particularly women. Women, unlike children, have major barriers to receiving assistance. This study is consistent with other studies that have found that having stronger family support increases the ability to deal with psychological distress and abuse (Saltzman, Hansel & Bordnick, 2020; Harandi, Taghinasab, & Nayeri, 2017). Additionally, Mahapatro and Singh (2019) found that a woman who stays with an abusive spouse and his family is twice as likely to develop psychological distress as a woman who has the support of her parents support. Studies have revealed that access to emotional support, social network, and financial resources are associated with positive health outcomes (Asante & Karikari, 2022; Bialowolski et al., 2021).

Inadequacies of Social Workers

Certain gaps in the competencies of social workers who work with individuals and families facing domestic violence (DV) were discovered during the interviews and the data gathered, which may impact their level of engagement and the quality of services they provide. Some of the flaws identified include inadequate approach and practice in their perception of DV. For example, some social workers viewed DV as an individual problem, as indicated by an SW's statement, *"I think it is an individual problem"* (SKSP.6). Additionally, interviews revealed that there was insufficient support for children who are victims of IPV. Instead of providing individualized interventions for affected children, the focus was more on placement. For instance, one social worker stated that *"Children usually stay with their relatives – aunties, uncles (if relatives have accommodations, proper living conditions if they can take care of kids) if no – kids are being put in temporary care institutions (until parents are again available to take care of them) and if no – in permanent care institutions (care houses)"* (LTSW.5). This lack of support and attention may be due to the

fact that most of the children do not have physical injuries but instead suffer from emotional and other forms of abuse.

It was also observed that in cases where children are with their mothers in women's shelters, there are few or no child psychologists or specialists who have the necessary training to work with children. Consequently, these children are often overlooked in cases of domestic violence. The focus is usually on allowing the parents to resolve the case of DV, such as through divorce or prosecution, without considering the emotional well-being of the children. In addition, social workers face challenges with limited resources, including a shortage of personnel and funding. Furthermore, some non-family-friendly policies also restrict their operations. For example, a social worker with 22 years of experience in a local crisis and women's shelter expressed that *"We lack human resources; professionals not enough in our institutions....we have a lot of problems....but still, we are sharing responsibilities" (LVSW.3)*. In cases where specialists are unavailable, victims are left with the alternatives provided by social services, which may not always be adequate. For instance, another participant stated, *"Children are supposed to receive psychological help from school help if the case is reported to them, but unfortunately, there are fewer psychologists in the schools to provide this help" (SKSP.6)*.

Discussion. After analyzing the data and comparing it to previous research, this study concurs with previous research that suggests there is a problem with social workers' competencies in handling domestic violence cases effectively (Barton-Crosby et al., 2022; Hefferman, Blythe, & Nicolson, 2014) and that they also struggle with inadequate resources required for better service provisions (Zimbelman, 2018. p. 8; Loddell, 2008). It is evident that social workers are not adequately trained to handle domestic violence cases, particularly when children are present, which can impact the quality of services provided to victims. Therefore, it is crucial that social workers receive necessary funding and more comprehensive and specialized training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of how to address domestic violence in families with children effectively, as suggested by previous studies that improving training programs can help bridge this gap and ultimately improve the overall response to domestic violence (Witt & Diaz, 2019).

COVID-19 Negative Impacts on DV and Interventions

The COVID-19 lockdown had a severe impact on social workers' engagement with families and resulted in a variety of challenges; according to one social worker, *"many victims did not have the opportunity to escape to safety due to the introduction of the COVID-19 curfew" (SKSW.3)*. Many studies have shown that the pandemic contributed to domestic violence in families, which appears to be true based on social worker narratives. One social worker stated, *"The pandemic made those two years very bad, and we had lots of*

cases because people lost their jobs and had no basic things for their lives....woman and man could not handle the pressure...in the family, there was yelling, hitting, and other forms of abuse" (LVSW.5). Absolutely, the pandemic is found to have affected the social worker's involvement with the family. Despite being a temporary challenge, majority of the social workers identified it as a significant issue that affected their engagement with families in cases of domestic violence during the lockdown, and the effect still impacts certain families.

Discussion. The findings on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social workers' engagement with families affected by domestic violence are consistent with previous research that found the pandemic contributed to DV incidents and help-seeking attitudes (Collins et al., 2023; Pfitzner, FitzGibbon, & Meyer, 2022; Caridade et al., 2021). Furthermore, Pretto's (2020) study in Italy found an increase in domestic violence cases during the pandemic, which is consistent with the quantitative data of this study in Table 5. Additionally, Pretto (2020) and Holt et al. (2023) discovered in their studies that some changes and challenges in social work practises limit social workers' ability to effectively support and maintain quality contact with affected families, with Holt et al. (2023) highlighting changes in the way victims and survivors of domestic violence seek help as a result of limited access to social workers' support. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged the development of innovative practices and techniques in social work practice, which must stay adaptable to the changing COVID-19 setting or similar context and continue to evolve (Holt et al., 2023; Pretto et al., 2020).

Victims Seeking Private Support Locally and Internationally

It is worth noting that while some social workers encounter DV victims who are unwilling to take assistance, others have reported occasions when DV victims actively seek assistance both within and outside their countries of residence. One participant commented on the inadequacy of services provided by social workers, stating that *"women are asking for help, but social workers are not providing as good services as the women are expecting or as they should"* (SKSP.6). Also, conversations with social workers revealed that not only victims but also perpetrators are looking for help. A social worker stated, *"Perpetrators are looking for help but have no access to much support, and most web pages about perpetrators' support are not accessible."* (LVSW.4). This suggests that the social workers' approach and competence need to be improved to serve DV victims better. Some participants also noted that some DV victims travel from other cities to seek services, potentially due to confidentiality concerns or service preferences.

Nonetheless, the fact that people are intentionally seeking help highlights the need to enhance services to address domestic violence. When asked about the needs of DV victims, some social workers reported various requirements, including financial support, emotional support from specialists, and legal assistance. This indicates that DV victims are seeking help and have diverse needs. According to the social workers, *"some of them need to know everything from a paper where they can get money like financial support" "how to fill the papers" "Some of them just need to talk with specialists about their emotions and worries,"* another said, *"some of them just need a lawyer or specialist."*

Discussion. Subsequently, this study reveals that domestic violence victims and perpetrators are seeking help and sometimes encounter barriers such as professional inadequacies, limited resources, and stereotypes, as has been reported in prior research (Hulley et al., 2023; Bates, 2015). For example, a study conducted by Silva et al. (2022) discovered that women prefer healthcare professionals (HCPs) to initiate dialogues regarding domestic violence during consultations, value confidentiality, and allow adequate time for discussing DV-related concerns. This emphasizes the importance of specialists receiving proper training to recognize and respond appropriately to domestic violence in a confidential, polite, and supportive manner in order to meet the need of DV victims and foster increased help-seeking attitudes in the instance of DV.

Examples of Good Practices Identified during Data Gathering

During the interviews with social work professionals, there were some good practices that were identified in their narratives which have contributed to their response to domestic violence and engagement with families; they include government services such as women's shelters and helplines, an example is the 'Specializuota kompleksinė pagalba moteriai' (SKPC)¹⁵ in Lithuania (Specialized Complex Support Center) which provides immediate counselling to DV victims; some women's shelters have extended the stay duration by a few days to ensure the protection of women; an example is in the case of Slovakia a social worker from Slovakia said *"in the past, the government provide for the woman 10 days while is the safe house, and the government through the police is trying to ensure protection for DV victims such as in the case of Latvia where is now a law that the police can order the removal of the abuser if they post a threat to the life of the victim now it has increased to 14days of protection and provisions"*. In Latvia, the government has improved protection for DV victims by granting police access to remove abusers who endanger victims' lives from shared residential areas. Good practices highlighted by social workers include

¹⁵ <https://www.ksppc.lt/specializuota-kompleksine-pagalba?lang=en>

conferences and seminars for social workers. Even though the conferences are not held regularly and are sparsely attended by social workers and other professionals, they are an act of progress. There were discussions of school-based prevention programmes and social worker-led educational programmes for young people on domestic violence. This was noted by all three countries' social workers. Social workers from Slovakia mentioned the CAN syndrome and the "Before it is too late" programmes aimed at educating children on DV organised by Náruc¹⁶, as well as educational and preventive programmes about DV in Latvia by Centrs Marta¹⁷ and Centrs Dardedze and in Lithuania by the Specialized Complex Support Centre.

Summary

The final theme examines the challenges that interfere with social workers' engagement with victims of domestic violence. These challenges include inadequate resources available to families, which limits the effectiveness of social interventions provided, insufficient government support for social services that social workers can leverage, lack of competencies among social workers to meet the needs of victims seeking help, and difficulties in dealing with unmotivated victims. Crisis intervention theory emphasizes the need for immediate interventions to address domestic violence victims' immediate safety concerns. The challenges identified in the study, such as inadequate resources and competencies, may hinder the capacity of social workers to provide timely and effective crisis interventions. Therefore, social workers must be equipped with the skills and resources necessary to provide immediate and effective interventions to victims of domestic violence, particularly when children are involved.

4.7 MAIN FINDINGS

Table 10 below presents the main findings of this study alongside the research questions for a quick snapshot.

¹⁶ <https://eeagrants.org/archive/2009-2014/projects/SK10-0069>

¹⁷ <https://marta.lv/en/marta-in-action/domestic-violence/>

Table 10: Main Findings

Research Questions	Answers from Analysis
What is the prevalence of domestic violence in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia?	The study shows a concerning prevalence of domestic violence in the three countries studied, with a steady increase in reported incidents, especially against women. There is a disturbing trend of partner-perpetrated homicides of women in all three countries, and the research also highlights a significant increase in child victims of all types of family and domestic violence, indicating that children are often affected by these types of violence.
At what stage are social workers engaged in domestic violence cases?	This study reveals that while social workers are happy to get involved with families with children experiencing domestic violence, there are some barriers between social workers and affected families that are affecting the promptness and effectiveness of services, such as low reporting of domestic violence incidents, societal norms that stigmatize victims, and societal perception of domestic violence as a private family matter.
What cultural factors impact social work interventions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia?	The analysis of the data indicate that cultural factors not only play a role in the occurrence of domestic violence but also influence the implementation of social interventions aimed at combating DV. Such cultural factors encompass gender inequality and power imbalances, societal stereotypes surrounding domestic violence, tradition of tolerating violence, fear of societal judgement and victim-blaming attitudes and harmful myths regarding domestic violence.
What are government policy priorities on domestic violence?	Interviews with the social workers revealed that the government policies and provisions are insufficient to address DV in that some types of violence are not criminalized, some policies are not family-friendly and are not tailored to specific acts of violence in families but are somewhat generalized. In relation to insufficient government policies, inadequate support for NGOs and perpetrators of domestic violence was also underscored.
What are the challenges of social work interventions on domestic violence in families with children?	The study found several challenges that interfere with social workers' engagement with victims of domestic violence, which include inadequate resources available to families, which limits the effectiveness of social interventions provided, insufficient government support for social services that social workers can leverage, lack of competencies among social workers to meet the needs of victims seeking help, and difficulties in dealing with unmotivated victims. Further findings revealed insufficient support and attention to child victims of DV.
What are the factors contributing to domestic violence in families with children?	The study found several factors contributing to domestic violence in families with children, which include women's vulnerability, such as having underage children and poor livelihoods, tolerance for violence, childhood experiences of intimate partner violence and domestic abuse, poor parenting skills and relationship management, emotional disparities, and violence against children, these factors were also noted to interfere with social workers' engagement with families experiencing DV.

5.0. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to examine the entry-point of social workers (engagement) into family violence issues and how social work interventions can be timely and effective in cases of domestic violence involving children in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. The following conclusions have been drawn based on the results and discussion:

- Statistics and literature indicate global concerns about the effects of domestic violence; to determine whether the same problem exists in the countries studied, the study aimed to answer the question of the prevalence of domestic violence in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. The result indicates a steady increase in reported incidents of DV, especially against women, a disturbing trend of partner-perpetrated homicides of women and an increase in child victims of all types of family violence in all three countries. Further findings show women's vulnerability (having underage children and poor livelihoods), tolerance for violence, childhood experiences of DV, and emotional disparities contribute to DV in families with children in the countries analyzed.
- The gap in the literature identified by the study is that there are few studies that examine the relationship between domestic violence and child well-being; the few available emphasise the need for social workers to support families in cases of domestic violence but do not specify when social workers become involved in family violence, and their engagements with affected families, which lead to the current study to examine the social work intervention in families particularly families with children. The current result shows that social workers are introduced to families experiencing domestic violence when the victim voluntarily requests assistance, which may occur through referrals from third parties, such as various organisations, or when mandated by law to undertake rehabilitation. Further findings revealed that more cases are being reported to the police, who then link victims to social services, but many victims still do not seek help or report their cases. This finding provides insight into when social workers engage with families and will inform concerned stakeholders on ways to improve reporting in society to ensure timely assistance is available to victims.
- The study aimed to examine the entry-point of social workers (engagement) into family violence issues and ways social work interventions can be timely and effective in cases of domestic violence that involve children. This study revealed that although social workers are eager to help families with

children experiencing domestic violence, barriers such as low reporting of DV, societal norms fostering stigmatisation, and societal perception of DV being a private family matter interfere with the possibility of timely social worker engagement. Further findings suggest that inadequate government support, insufficient competencies among social workers in working with children's victims, and challenges in engaging with uncooperative victims are among the key challenges that impede effective social work interventions in DV cases in families with children in the analysed countries. (Table 6 and 9).

- The study investigated the impact of government policies and cultural factors on domestic violence and social work interventions. The study indicates insufficient government policies as victims and social workers struggle with generalized policies that are not family-friendly and untailored to specific acts of violence in families, with inadequate support for NGOs and perpetrators of DV. Furthermore, results on cultural factors show that gender inequality and power imbalances, societal stereotypes, tradition of tolerance for violence, victim-blaming and harmful myths regarding DV were some of the key cultural factors noted not only contribute to domestic violence but also interfere with social interventions aimed at combating DV.
- The study indicates the prevalence of DV in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, highlighting the importance of preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, particularly its impact on children, as noted in the significance of the current study. While the study established that the countries studied had not ratified the Istanbul Convention, a comprehensive instrument for addressing Domestic Violence, the study also noted that the countries studied have other policies to respond to DV, which this current study suggests is insufficient. Therefore, this study recommends that these countries consider ratifying the Istanbul Convention and equally suggests that individuals and families experiencing domestic violence will benefit from improving the current policies.
- Insufficient competencies were identified among social workers; however, social workers dealing with families affected by domestic violence and child victims can enhance their competencies and deliver timely and effective interventions by improving their knowledge and skills in the three theories that governed this study: critical social work theory, crisis intervention theory and the ecological systems theory. For example, critical social work theory emphasises the importance of addressing power imbalances and social inequalities in the context of practice units (Pease, Allan & Briskman, 2020), as well as the need for social workers to engage in critical self-reflection and

ongoing learning to challenge their own biases and assumptions and work towards social justice and equity. Such proficient social workers will not blame victims, will maintain confidentiality, will gain victims' trust, will not see DV as an individual problem but as a social problem that can affect anyone, and will treat all victims with dignity, which will help victims feel safe and open up their problems to social workers. This can help social workers be more sensitive to the needs of DV victims' children and deliver more culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions.

Location and Context Contributed to the Knowledge of the Study. In the study, the definition of domestic violence by the Council of Europe, which sees DV as all acts of violence within the family, was adopted, not just because the study was conducted in three member states (Europe) but also because intimate partner violence (IPV) is not differentiated from DV and do not have a legal definition in these countries. For instance, in Lithuania and Latvia, the term "domestic violence" encompasses all forms of violence that occur within the family setting (EIGE (2019)¹⁸. Furthermore, Latvia's governing acts do not precisely define "violence in the family," making it impossible to distinguish domestic violence from other offences. In Latvia, DV is commonly known as "family violence." In Slovakia, however, there is no law against violence against women, and IPV is not acknowledged as a particular violation. Instead, it is punishable under many sections of the Criminal Code (Act No. 300/2005 Coll).

Another concern was how the countries collect data on DV; because their definitions do not differentiate IPV from DV, they hardly record IPV cases, particularly the number of children who suffered IPV. However, the researcher acknowledged that IPV is a form of DV but chose to study IPV specifically but as DV due to the issues discussed above and the United Nations also refers to IPV as synonymous with DV. This decision was made not only due to the lack of a legal definition of IPV in the countries but also because of the researcher's interest and focus on children in the family, the nuclear family specifically. Therefore, the term DV was adopted for the study. Meanwhile, the absence of the legal definition of IPV and DV highlights the need to improve government policies suggested in this study. Social work practice and other social care professions will benefit from clear and tailored policies and provisions as they will guide social workers and inform police in assessment and the public about their actions.

¹⁸ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/regulatory-and-legal-framework/legal-definitions-in-the-eu/lithuania-intimate-partner-violence>

Publications from the Thesis. During the research process, the author produced four conference papers, which were presented at international conferences focused on domestic violence and social work practice. These papers facilitated discussions among researchers and professionals on joint efforts to prevent and combat DV in families with children. The author published and presented papers on various topics related to DV and its impact on children's well-being. One paper focused on parental alienation as a form of DV that affects the emotional well-being of the child. Another paper called for action to support male victims of DV and challenge gender stereotypes. The third was a comparative study on domestic violence and social support in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Nigeria, co-authored by the researcher's supervisor and three professionals from each of the three countries under study and presented at the Riga Stradins University Research Week 2023 titled "Society.Health.Welfare." The last paper presented at a conference on shared parenting in Greece aimed to improve parents' and professionals' understanding of what children face in cases of DV and how to support them during DV crisis to prevent childhood trauma that could impact their future relationships. These studies engaged in scholarly discussions, peer review and received direct input from journal and conference publications providing valuable feedback and insights that helped advance the current study goals.

Overall, these conference papers and publications contributed to the author's efforts to increase awareness and improve support for children and families affected by domestic violence. The current study findings of this study provide policymakers and social workers with the situation of domestic violence, provide recommendations and seek to inform practice and policy, thereby contributing towards the possibility of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDGs 16.1, "significantly reduce all types of violence and related death rates worldwide", SDG 16.2 seeks to "eradicate child abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture" and UNICEF recommendation on keeping children with their families, wherever feasible to prevent family separation in order to increase the well-being of youngsters.

Contributions to Social Work with Children and Youth Practice

This study suggests poor **multidisciplinary collaboration** among social workers; domestic violence is complex and is accompanied by a variety of complex and complicated issues that may be difficult for an institution or a social worker to handle effectively; collaborating with other professionals that could help or assist the victim is essential for the social worker's development and competency, as well as for the victim's holistic support, so social workers have to recognise the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration. The ecological system theory is one of the three theories utilised in this study; it emphasises the

interconnectedness of various systems that influence individuals and families (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Social workers can use this knowledge to facilitate collaboration and communication with professionals from diverse fields, such as law enforcement, child protection services, mental health professionals, and educators. Recognising the function of each system in combating domestic violence can facilitate effective collaboration. They can acknowledge that everyone has a role in addressing the issue and enhancing the outcomes for victims and children. This cooperation may enhance collaboration and foster a coordinated strategy.

The Original Contribution of this Research lies in emphasizing the importance of treating children and young people who are exposed to domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, as victims in their own right. This study revealed inadequate support and attention to child victims of DV. Social workers have a crucial role in providing them with individualized and developed interventions, ensuring they receive support comparable to women who exhibit visible signs of abuse. It is important to note that physical bruises may not always be present in these children, but the other forms of abuse they have experienced, such as emotional and psychological harm, have profound effects on their mental health, behaviors and attachment relationships, to address these impacts, collaboration with specialists, including child psychologists, is crucial. By linking child victims to these specialists, social workers can ensure they receive specialized support tailored to their unique needs. It is essential to recognize that the consequences of domestic violence endured during childhood can extend into adulthood, putting these individuals at risk of perpetuating or becoming victims of similar patterns of violence later in life. By acknowledging and addressing the specific needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence, social workers can make a significant contribution to breaking the cycle of violence and promoting their overall well-being. This research highlights the necessity of treating these children as victims, providing them with appropriate interventions, and collaborating with specialists to ensure they receive comprehensive support.

Summary

The impact of this study is to think of children in families that report violence as victims and the mothers or women in such families as a caregiver on whom the child's well-being is dependent. The current study also revealed that social workers' engagement with DV-affected families is hindered by insufficient government policies and resources, victims' motivation and resources, insufficient competencies among social workers, and social stereotypes and harmful myths.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Policy. The findings of the current study shed light on several critical issues that impact the effectiveness of government support systems, policies, and societal attitudes towards domestic violence. This includes insufficient government support, not family-friendly policies that are more punitive than supportive, victims not receiving the justice they expect or deserve, social work professionals not being adequately supported by resources and clear/tailored policies, and an increase in harmful cultural stereotypes and DV myths, which have all contributed to a challenging environment for victims seeking help. These factors have led to negative consequences, including victims' hesitancy to report abuse due to uncertainties about receiving adequate support and protection. Tragically, this uncertainty can even put victims at risk of harm or fatality. In some cases, victims choose to remain in abusive relationships as a means to avoid frustration or due to a lack of viable alternatives.

Social work professionals find themselves caught between the government and the public, tasked with implementing policies while operating within the limitations and provisions provided to them. The study emphasizes the urgent need for policymakers to address these issues by improving policies and laws concerning family violence. Specifically, there is a call for tailored laws that address direct forms of violence within the family, providing clear distinctions and provisions that inform professional activities. The current study advocates for an inclusive approach that involves bottom-up engagement, ensuring that the timely concerns of the public inform the development of effective public policies. Furthermore, it is crucial to increase public spending on social support and family welfare, which would benefit both families in need and the social workers serving them. Additionally, efforts should be made to improve the justice system's response to domestic violence crimes, ensuring appropriate measures are in place to hold offenders accountable. Debates and public opinion should be incorporated into the decision-making process to enhance these measures.

Recommendations for Prevention. This research has made significant contributions to raising awareness about domestic violence through various articles presented at international conferences in Latvia, Greece, and Indonesia, as well as a submission in Lithuania, all focusing on domestic violence and social support. The findings of the study highlight the proactive efforts of social workers in preventing domestic violence, particularly through the development of programs targeting school children and young people identified in data collected in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. The prevention of domestic violence is of paramount importance. To achieve this, it is crucial to enhance public awareness and challenge social stereotypes that perpetuate harmful myths leading to victim blaming and co-dependency. Empowerment programs are essential for supporting women, boosting their self-esteem and self-worth. Encouraging women to pursue

skills acquisition, advanced education, and expanding their opportunities can help them avoid being solely reliant on men for financial support.

Overall, this study emphasises the importance of proactive efforts to reduce domestic violence, such as awareness campaigns, empowerment programmes, and the promotion of gender equality, by shedding light on these crucial factors. These activities are critical for fostering a society that rejects violence, supports victims, and develops environments that promote women's general well-being and liberty. Moreover, the present study highlights the importance of addressing the identified shortcomings in government support, policies, societal attitudes, and resource allocation surrounding domestic violence. By implementing tailored laws, improving public spending, and actively engaging in bottom-up approaches, policymakers can make significant strides towards creating a safer and more supportive environment for victims, social work professionals, and families affected by domestic violence.

6.1. EXTENDIBILITY

Recommendations for Future Research. The study acknowledges its limitations in the methodology section, particularly regarding data participant selection and language barriers. To address the current research objectives, a combination of an explorative and narrative review (Collins & Fauser, 2005) and empirical research (Patten & Galvan, 2019) was conducted. A mixed-method research approach was employed to collect and analyze primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained from experts working with domestic violence (DV) victims. However, this approach may have limited the inclusion of the perspectives of the actual victims. Future research should consider collecting data directly from child victims and affected families to gain a better understanding of their perceptions of the services provided in cases of domestic violence. Specifically, future studies could focus on families that have reported DV multiple times to explore their experiences with social work interventions and gather insights on potential areas for improvement or alternative approaches. This approach would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of social work interventions in domestic violence cases.

The primary focus of this study was intimate partner violence (IPV); however, due to the absence of legal definitions and insufficient separate data for IPV, the study approached the topic through the lens of domestic violence (DV). The utilization of mixed methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of IPV-specific questions through qualitative data collection. However, missing data became apparent due to the lack of distinction between DV and IPV in certain countries, limiting the quantitative data analysis to descriptive only. To address this issue in future research, a broader perspective could be adopted, encompassing all forms of violence within the family. The incorporation of quantitative research methods,

supplemented by qualitative approaches involving social workers, would prove valuable. Employing a mixed-method approach remains effective in studying domestic violence and social interventions (Thorvaldsdottir, Halldorsdottir & Saint-Arnault, 2022). By studying the broader spectrum of violence within the family, researchers and stakeholders can gain a comprehensive understanding of the various types of violence present. The current study revealed the co-occurrence of child abuse, IPV, DV, and violence against women within the family. Conducting research that encompasses all these forms of violence provides insights into their relationships and the experiences of the victims. Furthermore, such research can shed light on commonly experienced characteristics of violence, including psychological, emotional, physical, and economic aspects.

Finally, it is critical to note that this study discovered gaps in victims receiving the justice they expect and deserve. Further findings revealed cases of limited or no support for perpetrators, as well as codependency interactions between victims and perpetrators. Although this study focuses on victims rather than perpetrators, it recognises the complexities of this issue. Due to the study's reliance on expert data rather than direct input from victims, further investigation into victims' justice expectations behind what should be done to abusers or how abusers should be punished and the grounds for codependency was limited. Future research should aim to address these gaps by collecting data directly from both IPV and DV victims and perpetrators. Through thorough analysis, such research can delve deeper into the reasons underlying codependency, which this present study identified as a factor interfering with social work interventions. Additionally, investigating victims' justice expectations regarding the appropriate actions and punishments for abusers will provide valuable insights for informing policies aimed at holding perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, understanding how to appropriately support the rehabilitation of perpetrators can be crucial in breaking the cycle of violence. Policymakers and practitioners can get a greater knowledge of the intricacies surrounding domestic violence by extending research efforts in these areas, leading to more effective interventions and legislation that fulfil the needs of both victims and perpetrators.

6.2. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I am originally from Nigeria, where I obtained my first degree in Guidance and Counselling. I am also the founder of an NGO that focuses on working with children and young people dealing with mental health issues, including career counselling. Prior to starting my postgraduate study, I gained three years of experience working with children who have been impacted by domestic violence, such as those whose parents divorced due to high-conflict violence, those affected by parental suicide, and those facing parental alienation and family violence. Although social work practice in Nigeria may not be as developed as in

some other countries, social workers, counsellors, NGOs, and religious leaders are making efforts to address these issues despite limited government support.

Coming to Europe, I was intrigued by the well-structured social work system and aimed to understand how Europeans effectively engage with domestic violence victims. This motivated me to undertake research on domestic violence and social interventions in families with children, which became the focus of my thesis. Throughout my research journey, I had the opportunity to visit various institutions and organizations, including women's shelters, crisis centers, NGOs, family courts, municipalities, police departments, and state social services offices in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia. These visits were invaluable as they allowed me to meet and learn from professionals such as social workers, case managers, psychologists, lawyers, and others. They generously shared their knowledge, orientations, and provided me with brochures outlining their recent programs and institutional histories. I greatly appreciated their support and as they received me as colleague, I believe these experiences will be instrumental in shaping my work when I return to Nigeria.

As a trained counselor, the explorative process of this research journey has enriched my understanding of domestic violence and social interventions. I have gained new knowledge, skills, and insights into various theoretical approaches and practical strategies through my two years of pedagogical training in social work with children and youth, as well as through my progressive research on domestic violence. This has expanded my perception of social problems, shifting my perspective from a counselor-focused approach to one that encompasses the broader scope of social work and psychotherapy. I am immensely grateful for the guidance and support of my supervisor, who provided valuable suggestions throughout this thesis. We carefully selected theories that provided multifaceted perspectives on domestic violence, acknowledging its complexity. Completing this thesis has not only deepened my understanding of the subject matter but has also enhanced my research skills, methodological understanding, and approach. I am excited to apply these learnings in future research endeavors, particularly as I pursue my doctoral studies.

REFERENCES

- Abd Aziz, N., Idris, S., Ishak, M., Abd Wahid, N., & Abu Yazid, Z. (2018). Factors affecting domestic violence against women: A conceptual model and research propositions. *International Journal for Studies on Children, Women, Elderly And Disabled*, 4(1), 191-198.
- Abdelazeem, B., Abbas, K. S., Amin, M. A., El-Shahat, N. A., Malik, B., Kalantary, A., & Eltobgy, M. (2022). The effectiveness of incentives for research participation: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *PLoS One*, 17(4), e0267534.
- Acquadro Maran, D., & Varetto, A. (2018). Psychological impact of stalking on male and female health care professional victims of stalking and domestic violence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 321.
- Aguilera, D. C. (1998). *Crisis intervention theory and methodology*. (8th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby-Year Book, Inc.
- Al-Majali, S., & Alsrehan, H. (2019). The impact of family violence on the social and psychological development of the child. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 24(5), 199-207.
- Ali, P., Rogers, M., & Heward-Belle, S. (2021). COVID-19 and domestic violence: Impact on mental health. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, 11(3), 188-202.
- Allen, N. E. (2005). A multi-level analysis of community coordinating councils. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 35, 49-63.
- Amendments to the Law "On the Police". (2022). Police Decision on Separation, Law of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/329682-grozijumi-likuma-par-policiju> (03/05/2023).
- Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1609406919874596.
- Asante, S., & Karikari, G. (2022). Social relationships and the health of older adults: An examination of social connectedness and perceived social support. *Journal of Ageing and Longevity*, 2(1), 49-62.
- ATASK. (2000). Asian Family Violence Report. Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2006). Personal safety survey, Australia 2005. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.
- Bacchini, D., & Esposito, C. (2020). Growing up in violent contexts: differential effects of community, family, and school violence on child adjustment. *Children and peace: From research to action*, 157-171.
- Balogová, B., & Poklembová, Z. (2019). Interdisciplinary Cooperation In The Context Of Autism Spectrum Disorders In Slovakia. *Ad Alta: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 9(2).
- Barton-Crosby, J., Sharrock, S., David, M., & McDonough, T. (2022). Understanding how social workers identify and respond to perpetrators of intimate partner violence.
- Bates, E. A., & Graham-Kevan, N. (2016). Is the presence of control related to help-seeking behavior? A test of Johnson's assumptions regarding sex differences and the role of control in intimate partner violence. *Partner Abuse*, 7(1), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1891/1946-6560.7.1.3>
- Bates, E. A., Klement, K. R., Kaye, L. K., & Pennington, C. R. (2019). The Impact of gendered stereotypes on perceptions of violence: A commentary. *Sex Roles*, 81, 34-43.
- Bennett, L. W. & Williams, O.J. (2017). Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.996>. (Accessed 09/02/2023)
- Bermúdez, M. P., & Meléndez-Domínguez, M. (2020). Epidemiological analysis of gender violence in the European Union. *Anales de Psicología*, 36(3), 380-385. Epub 21 de diciembre de 2020. <https://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.36.3.428611>

- Berniell, I., & Facchini, G. (2021). COVID-19 lockdown and domestic violence: Evidence from internet-search behavior in 11 countries. *European economic review*, 136, 103775. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2021.103775>
- Bialowolski, P., Weziak-Bialowolska, D., Lee, M. T., Chen, Y., VanderWeele, T. J., & McNeely, E. (2021). The role of financial conditions for physical and mental health. Evidence from a longitudinal survey and insurance claims data. *Social Science & Medicine*, 281, 114041.
- Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Boys, S. K., Quiring, S. Q., Harris, E., and Hagan, C. A. (2015). Social Work and Law Interdisciplinary Service Learning: Increasing Future Lawyers' Interpersonal Skills. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 35(4), 410–424.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1997). The ecology of developmental processes. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development*. New York: Wiley.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development. sage.
- Brooks-Hay, O., Burman, M., & Bradley, L. (2019). Justice journeys: Informing policy and practice through lived experience of victim-survivors of rape and serious sexual assault.
- Brooks-Hay, O., Saunders, K., & Burman, M. (2022). A toxic mix: the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the post-separation experiences of domestic abuse survivors, *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, 6(3), 426-441. Retrieved Apr 4, 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1332/239868021X16536613142067>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*, Book (4th ed.; A. Bryman, Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Byrne M. (2001). The concept of informed consent in qualitative research. *AORN journal*, 74(3), 401–403. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-2092\(06\)61798-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-2092(06)61798-5)
- Callaghan, J. E., Alexander, J. H., Sixsmith, J., & Fellin, L. C. (2018). Beyond “witnessing”: Children’s experiences of coercive control in domestic violence and abuse. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 33(10), 1551-1581.
- Campanella, M. (2020). Violence Against Women In Africa. Retrieved from <https://borgenproject.org/violence-against-women-in-africa/#:~:text=Domestic%20violence%20is%20another%20alarming,experience%20beatings%20from%20their%20husbands>.
- Campbell, J. C., Anderson, J. C., McFadgion, A., Gill, J., Zink, E., Patch, M., ... & Campbell, D. (2018). The effects of intimate partner violence and probable traumatic brain injury on central nervous system symptoms. *Journal of Women's Health*, 27(6), 761-767.
- Caplan, G. (1964). *Principles of preventive psychiatry*. New York: Basic Book
- Caridade, S. M. M., Saavedra, R., Ribeiro, R., Oliveira, A. C., Santos, M., Almeida, I. S., & Soeiro, C. (2021). Remote support to victims of violence against women and domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Journal of Adult Protection*, 23(5), 302-316.
- Catalano, S. (2007). *Intimate Partner Violence in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, November 2). Preventing intimate partner violence | violence prevention | injury center | CDC. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>

- Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Retrieved <https://stat.gov.lv/en/statistics-themes/population/gender-equality/6297-gender-equality-crime-and-violence>. (Accessed 04/05/2023).
- Chadwick-Charuma, P. M., Tsvere, M., & Mutopo, P. (2022). Effects of Domestic Violence on Child—A Case Study of Chinhoyi. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(10), 203-212.
- Charles, N. B (2004). The Concept of The Family: Demographic and Genealogical Perspectives. In: *Sociation Today*, Vol.2, Number 2. <http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/v22/family.htm>. (Center for Demography and Population Health, Florida State University)
- Chen, M., & Chan, K. L. (2019). Characteristics of intimate partner violence in China: Gender symmetry, mutuality, and associated factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(13-14), NP6867-NP6889.
- Chhun, S., Giordano, K., & Huebner B., (2020). The Legal-Social Work Collaborative: Working Together to Serve Bay Area Clients. *Stanford Law School Blogs*.
- Chikhungu, L. C., Bradley, T., Jamali, M., & Mubaiwa, O. (2021). Culture and domestic violence amongst ever-married women in Malawi: an analysis of emotional, sexual, less-severe physical and severe physical violence. *Journal of biosocial science*, 53(2), 199-213.
- Chisholm, C. A., Bullock, L., & Ferguson II, J. E. J. (2017). Intimate partner violence and pregnancy: epidemiology and impact. *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, 217(2), 141-144.
- Cietusajiem (2015). Campaign about zero tolerance towards violence against women “Violence likes silence”. Retrieved from <https://www.cietusajiem.lv/en/about-us/news/project-violence-likes-silence/> (Accessed 04/05/2023).
- Clark, H. (2010). " What is the justice system willing to offer?" Understanding sexual assault victim/survivors' criminal justice needs. *Family Matters*, (85), 28-37.
- CLEEN Foundation (2013). "National Crime Victimization Surveys". National Crime and Safety Survey, Nigeria.
- Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). Semi-structured interviews. *Qualitative research guidelines project*, 2.
- Colagrossi, M., Deiana, C., Geraci, A., & Giua, L. (2022). Hang up on stereotypes: Domestic violence and an anti-abuse helpline campaign. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 40(4), 585-611.
- Collins, J. A., & Fauser, B. C. (2005). Balancing the strengths of systematic and narrative reviews. *Human reproduction update*, 11(2), 103-104.
- Collins, M., Crowe, M., Cleak, H., Kallianis, V., & Braddy, L. (2023). The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Patients Experiencing Family Violence Presenting to an Australian Health Service. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(2), 1161-1182.
- Council of Europe (2011). *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No 210.
- Council of Europe report (2021). Roadmap for establishing specialist support services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence in Latvia in line with the Council of Europe standards. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/roadmap-for-establishing-specialist-support-services-for-victims-in-la/1680a1f4aa> (Accessed 04/05/2023).
- Council of Europe. (2007). Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 201. Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201). Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatynum=201> (Accessed 01.04.2023)
- Creswell & Creswell (2019), The total number of questions should be between 5 to 10. Semi-structured interview
- Creswell, J. W. (1999). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455-472). Academic press.
- Creswell, W. J., & Creswell, D. J (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Sage publications.

- Cummings, E.M., Zahn-Waxler, C. and Radke-Yarrow, M. 1981, 'Young children's responses to expressions of anger and affection by others in the family', *Child Development*, vol.52, pp.1274-82.
- Das, B. N., Mohandas, A., & Killi, B. (2022). Prevalence and associated factors of domestic violence among married women in an urban slum in South India. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 11(3), 1006.
- De Paz Nieves, C., Gaddis, I., & Muller, M. (2021). Gender and COVID-19. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/446791624368460544/pdf/Gender-and-COVID-19-What-have-we-learned-one-year-later.pdf>
- DePanfilis, D. (1998). Involvement with families when children are neglected. In H. Dubois, (Ed.), *Neglected children: Research, practice and policy* (pp. 211-236). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Duluth Model (2022) Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth Minnesota, Retrieved from www.theduluthmodel.org (Accessed 04/01/2023).
- Ellis, E. E., Yilanli, M., & Saadabadi, A. (2019). Reactive attachment disorder.
- Eriksson, M., Broberg, A. G., Hultmann, O., Chawinga, E., & Axberg, U. (2022). Safeguarding children subjected to violence in the family: Child-centered risk assessments. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(21), 13779.
- Ertan, D., El-Hage, W., Thierree, S., Javelot, H., & Hingray, C. (2020). COVID-19: urgency for distancing from domestic violence. *European journal of psychotraumatology*, 11(1), 1800245.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), pp.1– 4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- European Commission (2013), Exchange of good practices on gender equality. Comments Paper Latvia, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/exchange_of_good_practices_lv_comments_paper_en.pdf
- European Commission. (2016). Special Eurobarometer 449 Report: Gender-Based Violence. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu> (PDF assessed March, 2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2018). Gender Equality Index — Report. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf> (Accessed 29/4/2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2019). Latvia - Intimate Partner Violence Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/regulatory-and-legal-framework/legal-definitions-in-the-eu/latvia-intimate-partner-violence> (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2022). Gender Equality Index — Report. Retrieved from <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf> (Accessed 25/03/2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2014). Costs of gender-based violence in the European Union. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/costs-of-gender-based-violence-in-eu>. (Accessed 17/02/2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). Combatting Violence against Women in Latvia, <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eigepublications/combating-violence-against-women-latvia> (Accessed 09/06/2022).
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2017). Gender Equality Index, violence severity comparing scores for 2017. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2017/compare-countries/violence/2/bar> (Accessed 25/03/2023).
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2019). Lithuania - Intimate Partner Violence Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/lithuania> (Accessed 12/05/2023).

- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2020). Gender Equality Index, comparing scores for 2019. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/genderequality-index/compare-countries> (Accessed 25/03/2023).
- European Parliament (2015), The Policy on Gender Equality in Latvia, Retrieved from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510008/IPOL_IDA\(2015\)510008_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510008/IPOL_IDA(2015)510008_EN.pdf) (Accessed 25/03/2023).
- European Parliament (2020). Tackling violence against women and domestic violence in Europe: The added value of the Istanbul Convention and remaining challenges, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, October 2020. Retrieved [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/658648/IPOL_STU\(2020\)658648_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/658648/IPOL_STU(2020)658648_EN.pdf) (Accessed 26/03/2023).
- European Parliament. (2023). EU accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women ('Istanbul Convention') In "A New Push for European Democracy". Legislative Train 02.2023. Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention> (Accessed 26/02/2023).
- European Union, Regulation (2007) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 April 2007 on the European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS).
- European women's Lobby (2014). National Analysis Latvia. H
- Eurostat. (2019). Expenditure on family children benefits, 2019 (% of GDP) v2.png. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=File:Expenditure_on_family_children_benefits_2019_\(%25_of_GDP\)_v2.png#filelinks](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=File:Expenditure_on_family_children_benefits_2019_(%25_of_GDP)_v2.png#filelinks) (Accessed 26/03/2023).
- Fahmy, E., Williamson, E., & Pantazis, C. (2016). Evidence and policy review: Domestic violence and poverty. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/80376377/JRF_DV_POVERTY_REPORT_FINAL_COPY_.pdf
- Femi-Ajao, O., Kendal, S., & Lovell, K. (2020). A Qualitative Systematic review of published work on disclosure and help-seeking for domestic violence and abuse among women from ethnic minority populations in the UK. *Ethnicity & Health*, 25(5), 732-746.
- Francis, J. J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. P., & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and health*, 25(10), 1229-1245.
- Franzway, S., Moulding, N., Wendt, S., Zufferey, C., & Chung, D. (2018). The sexual politics of gendered violence and women's citizenship. In *The Sexual Politics of Gendered Violence and Women's Citizenship* (pp. 1-10). Policy Press. (book)
- Friese, S. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS.ti*. Sage
- Fritz, P. A. T., & Roy, E. (2022). Relation between exposure to parental intimate partner violence during childhood and children's functioning. *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan: A project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, 2463-2483.
- Galarneau, T. (2018). Overlooked and Underserved: Supports for Male Victims of Domestic Violence. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324728816_Overlooked_and_Underserved_Supports_for_Male_Victims_of_Domestic_Violence
- Ghoddousi, A., Loos, J., & Kuemmerle, T. (2021). An Outcome-Oriented, Social-Ecological Framework for Assessing Protected Area Effectiveness. *Bioscience*, 72(2), 201–212. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biab114>

- Gilbert, L.K., Breiding, M.J., Merrick, M.T., Parks, S.E., Thompson, W.W., Dhingra, S.S., Ford, D.C. (2015). Childhood Adversity and Adult Chronic Disease: An update from ten states and the District of Columbia, 2010. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*; 48(3): 345-349. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25300735>
- Gleeson, H. (2020). 'Invisible' victims of teenage violence are already suffering in silence. The legal system is making the problem worse. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-14/adolescent-family-violence-victims-slipping-through-cracks/12034112?nw=0> (Accessed 25/09/2022).
- Grandgenett, H. M., Steel, A. L., Brock, R. L., & DiLillo, D. (2020). Responding to disclosure of sexual assault: the potential impact of victimization history and rape myth acceptance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(5–6), 2102–2125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519898429>.
- Gresham, A. M., Peters, B. J., Karantzas, G., Cameron, L. D., & Simpson, J. A. (2021). Examining associations between COVID-19 stressors, intimate partner violence, health, and health behaviors. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38(8), 2291-2307.
- Grzejszczak, J., Gabryelska, A., Gmitrowicz, A., Kotlicka-Antczak, M., & Strzelecki, D. (2022). Are children harmed by being locked up at home? The impact of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic on the phenomenon of domestic violence. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(21), 13958.
- Haag, H., Jones, D., Joseph, T., & Colantonio, A. (2022). Battered and brain injured: traumatic brain injury among women survivors of intimate partner violence—a scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(4), 1270-1287.
- Hamel, J. (2020). Explaining symmetry across sex in intimate partner violence: Evolution, gender roles, and the will to harm. *Partner abuse*.
- Han, Y. R., & Choi, H. Y. (2021). Risk factors affecting intimate partner violence occurrence in South Korea: Findings from the 2016 Domestic Violence Survey. *Plos one*, 16(3), e0247916.
- Han, Y. R., & Choi, H. Y. (2021). Risk factors affecting intimate partner violence occurrence in South Korea: Findings from the 2016 Domestic Violence Survey. *Plos one*, 16(3), e0247916.
- Hanesová, D., & Niklová, M. (2022). The role of social pedagogy in Slovakia during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*, 11(1), 1-10.
- Hansen, M. H., & Hurwitz, W. N. (1943). On the theory of sampling from finite populations. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 14(4), 333-362.
- Harandi, T. F., Taghinasab, M. M., & Nayeri, T. D. (2017). The correlation of social support with mental health: A meta-analysis. *Electronic physician*, 9(9), 5212–5222. <https://doi.org/10.19082/5212>
- Härkönen, U. (2008). The Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory of human development.
- Heffernan, K., Blythe, B., & Nicolson, P. (2014). How do social workers understand and respond to domestic violence and relate this to organizational policy and practice?. *International Social Work*, 57(6), 698-713. <https://doi:10.1177/0020872812453188>
- Heron, R. L., & Eisma, M. C. (2021). Barriers and facilitators of disclosing domestic violence to the healthcare service: A systematic review of qualitative research. *Health & social care in the community*, 29(3), 612–630. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13282>
- Heron, R. L., & Eisma, M. C. (2021). Barriers and facilitators of disclosing domestic violence to the healthcare service: A systematic review of qualitative research. *Health & social care in the community*, 29(3), 612–630. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13282>
- Hester, M. (2009). Who Does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators. *European Journal of Criminology*. DOI: [10.1177/1477370813479078](https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370813479078).
- Hill, J. (2020). *See what you made me do: Power, control and domestic abuse*. Oxford University Press. (Book)
- Hobbs, M. (1984). Crisis intervention in theory and practice: A selective review. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 57(1), 23-34.

- Hodges, T. J., Sharma, S., Nicolas, D. S., & Moore, B. A. (2022). Conflict resolution workshops for service members and families: The potentials of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) to address military domestic violence. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 66, 101736.
- Hoffman, K. L., & Edwards, J. N. (2004). An integrated theoretical model of sibling violence and abuse. *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(3), 185-200.
- Holt, S., Elliffe, R., Gregory, S., & Curry, P. (2023). Social workers response to domestic violence and abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(1), 386-404.
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_113/l_11320070430en00030008.pdf
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/regulatory-and-legal-framework/legal-definitions-in-the-eu/lithuania-intimate-partner-violence>
- Huecker, M. R., King, K.C, Jordan, G. A, & Smock, W (2022). Domestic Violence. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/>
- Hulley, J., Bailey, L., Kirkman, G., Gibbs, G. R., Gomersall, T., Latif, A., & Jones, A. (2023). Intimate partner violence and barriers to help-seeking among Black, Asian, minority ethnic and immigrant women: A qualitative metasynthesis of global research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(2), 1001-1015.
- Hulley, S. B. (Ed.). (2007). Designing clinical research. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Huntley, A. L., Potter, L., Williamson, E., Malpass, A., Szilassy, E., & Feder, G. (2019). Help-seeking by male victims of domestic violence and abuse (DVA): a systematic review and qualitative evidence synthesis. *BMJ open*, 9(6), e021960. <https://doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en>.
- INE (2022). Statistics on Domestic Violence and Gender Violence (SDVGV) Year 2021. Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). https://www.ine.es/en/prensa/evdvg_2021_en.pdf
- Irwan, G. C., & Margaretha, M. CONTRIBUTION ERROR TO THE VICTIM IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CONTEMPLATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OBSERVER. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 19(1), 72-79.
- Ivandic, R., Kirchmaier, T., & Linton, B. (2020). Changing patterns of domestic abuse during Covid-19 lockdown. <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/108483/1/dp1729.pdf> (Accessed 21/08/2022).
- Jegatheesan, B., Enders-Slegers, M. J., Ormerod, E., & Boyden, P. (2020). Understanding the link between animal cruelty and family violence: The bioecological systems model. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(9), 3116.
- Jesmin, S. (2017). Social determinants of married women's attitudinal acceptance of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32, 3226-3244. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0886260515597436> (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Keen, S., Lomeli-Rodriguez, M., & Joffe, H. (2022). From challenge to opportunity: virtual qualitative research during COVID-19 and beyond. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 21, 16094069221105075.
- Kimber, M., Adham, S., Gill, S., McTavish, J., & MacMillan, H. L. (2018). The association between child exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) and perpetration of IPV in adulthood—A systematic review. *Child abuse & neglect*, 76, 273-286.
- Latvia Radio (2021). Gender-based violence costs Latvia €1.6 billion annually, estimate shows. Latvian Public Broadcasting. Retrieved from [Kristaps Feldmanis at Eng.LSM.lv](https://www.kristapsfeldmanis.lv/eng/LSM.lv) (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Latvian Law. (1991). About the police "On the Police" Police Decision on Separation, LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA. Retrieved from <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/67957-par-policiju> (03/05/2023)
- Latvian Project (2019). ONE STEP CLOSER: A Coordinated Community Response to Violence Against Women (No.JUST/2015/RDAP/AG/MULT/9830). The European Union Programme "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" grant project. 2017/2019.

- Lawson, J. (2019). Domestic violence as child maltreatment: Differential risks and outcomes among cases referred to child welfare agencies for domestic violence exposure. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 98, 32-41.
- Lewis, R. B. (2004). NVivo 2.0 and ATLAS.ti 5.0: A comparative review of two popular qualitative data-analysis programs. *Field methods*, 16(4), 439-464.
- Li, L., Sun, I. Y., & Button, D. M. (2020). Tolerance for intimate partner violence: A comparative study of Chinese and American college students. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 35(21-22), 4533-4557.
- Lind-Haldorsson, O. (2017). Interdisciplinary And Interinstitutional Action Children And Witnesses Of Violence Promotion For Victims. Quality standards of the European model "Children's House. Funded by EU Retrieved from <https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/media/2143/download> (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Lindemann, E. (1944). Symptomology and management of acute grief. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 11, 141-148.
- Liu, M., Xue, J., Zhao, N., Wang, X., Jiao, D., & Zhu, T. (2021). Using social media to explore the consequences of domestic violence on mental health. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 36(3-4), NP1965-1985NP.
- Livingston, B. A., Delavier, L., & Banaben, Y. (2021). Intimate partner violence is a workplace issue. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2021/02/intimate-partner-violence-is-a-workplace-issue>. (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Lloyd, M. (2018). Domestic Violence and Education: Examining the Impact of Domestic Violence on Young Children, Children, and Young People and the Potential Role of Schools. *Front. Psychol.* 9:2094. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02094
- Lloyd, M. (2018). Domestic Violence and Education: Examining the Impact of Domestic Violence on Young Children, Children, and Young People and the Potential Role of Schools. *Front. Psychol.* 9:2094. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02094.
- Loffel, J. 2008. Developmental social welfare and the child protection challenge in South Africa. *Practice*, 20(2):83-91. 10.1080/09503150802058889
- Loxton, D., Townsend, N., Forder, P., & Coombe, J. (2018). Domestic violence, risk factors and health. *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health. Research Centre for Generational Health and Ageing.* <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/domestic-violence-risk-factors-and-health-2018.pdf>
- Lutgendorf, M. A. (2019). Intimate partner violence and women's health. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 134(3), 470-480.
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.
- Mahapatro, M., & Singh, S. P. (2020). Coping strategies of women survivors of domestic violence residing with an abusive partner after registered complaint with the family counseling center at Alwar, India. *Journal of community psychology*, 48(3), 818-833.
- Massey, D. S., & Tourangeau, R. (2013). Introduction: new challenges to social measurement. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 645(1), 6-22.
- McClennen, J., Keys, A. M., & Day, M. (2016). *Social work and family violence: theories, assessment, and intervention*. Springer Publishing Company. (Book).
- McGee, M. P. (2019). Cultural Values and Domestic Violence. In *Cross-Cultural Practice with Couples and Families* (pp. 129-140). Routledge.
- McKay, M. M. (1994). The Link between Domestic Violence and Child Abuse: Assessment and Treatment Considerations. *Child Welfare*, 73(1), 29-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45398958>
- McPhail, B. A., Busch, N. B., Kulkarni, S., & Rice, G. (2007). An integrative feminist model: The evolving feminist perspective on intimate partner violence. *Violence against women*, 13(8), 817-841.

- Michailovič, I., Justickaja, S., Vaičiūnienė, R., & Banach-Gutierrez, J. B. (2022). Domestic Violence Against Women in Lithuania and Poland: Seeking Adequate Protection of Victims. In *Legal Protection of Vulnerable Groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland: Trends and Perspectives* (pp. 263-286). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Mills, L. G., Friend, C., Conroy, K., Fleck-Henderson, A., Krug, S., Magen, R. H., . . . Trudeau, J. H. (2000). Child protection and domestic violence: Training, practice, and policy issues. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 315-332.
- Miranda, R. B., & Lange, S. (2020). Domestic violence and social norms in Norway and Brazil: A preliminary, qualitative study of attitudes and practices of health workers and criminal justice professionals. *PloS one*, 15(12), e0243352.
- Monnat, S.M., Chandler, R.F. (2015). Long Term Physical Health Consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences. *The Sociologist Quarterly*; 56(4): 723-752.
- Mravíková, A. (2020). Social Workers' Approach to Child victims of Domestic Violence. Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Department of Social Policy and Social Work. https://is.muni.cz/th/btece/Pristup_socialnych_pracovnikov_k_detskym_obetiam_DN
- Mshweshwe, L. (2020). Understanding domestic violence: masculinity, culture, traditions. *Heliyon*, 6(10), e05334.
- Mueller, I., & Tronick, E. (2019). Early life exposure to violence: Developmental consequences on brain and behavior. *Frontiers in behavioral neuroscience*, 13, 156.
- Mullender, A. (2004). Tackling Domestic Violence: Providing Support For Children Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence. Retrieved from <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8464/1/dpr33.pdf>.
- Nam, B., Kim, J. Y., Bright, C. L., & Jang, D. (2022). Exposure to family violence, peer attachment, and adolescent-to-parent violence. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 37(7-8), NP4718-NP4739.
- Nikon, L. (2022). 'From now on, the police will be able to decide on separating a person without the victim's application'. "Latvijas Vēstnesis" is the official publisher of the Republic of Latvia, Retrieved from <https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/337852-turpmak-policija-vares-lemt-par-personas-noskirsanu-bez-cietusa-iesnieguma-2022> (03/05/2023).
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursinf*, 34-35.
- Noble-Carr, D., Moore, T., & McArthur, M. (2020). Children's experiences and needs in relation to domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis. *Child & Family Social Work*, 25(1), 182-191.
- O'Hara, K. L., Sandler, I. N., Wolchik, S. A., Tein, J. Y., & Rhodes, C. A. (2019). Parenting time, parenting quality, interparental conflict, and mental health problems of children in high-conflict divorce. *Journal of family psychology : JFP : journal of the Division of Family Psychology of the American Psychological Association (Division 43)*, 33(6), 690–703. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000556>
- OECD (2019). Gender, Institutions and Development Database, Retrieved from <https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019>. (Accessed 25/12/2022).
- OECD (2019). SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Social Institutions and-Gender Index.
- Official statistics of Latvia. (2021). Gender Equality: Crime and Violence. Official Statistical Office. Retrieved from: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/labklajibas-un-vienlidzibas-raditaji/dzimumlidztiesiba/6297-dzimumu-lidztiesiba> [Accessed on 24.03.2023]
- Official statistics of Slovakia (2020). Analysis Of External Data Administrations On Criminal Procedure In Cases Of Partner And Domestic Violence From Police And Justice Statistics. Institute for Labour and Family Research. Editorial, Mgr. Zuzana Oyenassova.
- Oliffe, J. L., Kelly, M. T., Gonzalez Montaner, G., & Yu Ko, W. F. (2021). Zoom interviews: benefits and concessions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 16094069211053522.

- Orr, C., Fisher, C., Bell, M., O'Donnell, M., Martin, K., Glauert, R., & Preen, D. (2022). Exposure to family and domestic violence is associated with lower attendance and higher suspension in school children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 105594.
- Panovska-Griffiths J, Szilassy E, Johnson M, Dixon S, De Simoni A, Wileman V, Dowrick A, Emsley E, Griffiths C, Barbosa EC, Feder G. (2022). Impact of the first national COVID-19 lockdown on referral of women experiencing domestic violence and abuse in England and Wales. *BMC public health*, 22(1), 504..
- Parsons, V. L. (2014). Stratified sampling. Wiley StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online, 1-11.
- Patten, M. L., & Galvan, M. C. (2019). Proposing empirical research: A guide to the fundamentals. Routledge.
- Pease, B., Allan, J., & Briskman, L. (2020). Critical social work: Theories and practices for a socially just world. Routledge.
- Pereira, M. U. L., & Gaspar, R. S. (2021). Socioeconomic factors associated with reports of domestic violence in large brazilian cities. *Frontiers in public health*, 9, 623185.
- Petrauskiene, A. (2011). Interdisciplinary cooperation in social work practice. Retrieved from <https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/social-inquiry-into-well-being/article/view/691> (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K., & Meyer, S. (2022). Responding to women experiencing domestic and family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring experiences and impacts of remote service delivery in Australia. *Child & Family Social Work*, 27(1), 30-40.
- Pilinkaitė-Sotirovič, V., & Vaigė, L. (2017). Challenges for preventing violence against women in Lithuania. *Filosofija. Sociologija*, 28(4), 268-276.
- Pingley, T. (2017). The impact of witnessing domestic violence on children: A systematic review.
- Polit, D.F., & Beck, C.T. (2014). Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice (8th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Pretto A. (2021). Coronavirus and domestic violence: Practices for dealing with a double emergency. *Qualitative social work: QSW : research and practice*, 20(1-2), 494–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325020981091>
- Proudman, C., & Lloyd, F. (2022). The impact of COVID-19 on women and children in the UK who were victims of domestic abuse: a practitioner perspective. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, (ahead-of-print).
- Pun, K. D., Rishal, P., Darj, E., Infanti, J. J., Shrestha, S., Lukasse, M., & Schei, B. (2019). Domestic violence and perinatal outcomes-a prospective cohort study from Nepal. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6967-y>.
- Ravi, K. E., & Black, B. M. (2022). The Relationship Between Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence and an Emotional-Behavioral Disability: A Scoping Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(3), 868-876.
- Resolution No 485 of 28 May 2014 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. National Programme For The Prevention Of Domestic Violence And Provision Of Assistance To Victims For The Period Of 2014-2020.
- Richards, T. N., & Gover, A. R. (2018). Domestic violence offender treatment and multidisciplinary treatment teams: The role of "treatment" victim advocates. *International Journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 62(4), 851-867.
- Rivara, F., Adhia, A., Lyons, V., Massey, A., Mills, B., Morgan, E., Simckes, M., & Rowhani-Rahbar, A. (2019). The effects of violence on health. *Health Affairs*, 38(10), 1622-1629. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00480>
- Rodrigues, N. C., Ham, E., Kirsh, B., Seto, M. C., & Hilton, N. Z. (2021). Mental health workers' experiences of support and help-seeking following workplace violence: A qualitative study. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 23(2), 381-388.

- Roldós, M. I., & Corso, P. (2013). The economic burden of intimate partner violence in Ecuador: setting the agenda for future research and violence prevention policies. *Western journal of emergency medicine*, 14(4), 347.
- Romans, S. E., Poore, M. R., & Martin, J. L. (2000). The perpetrators of domestic violence. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 173(9), 484–488. doi:10.5694/j.1326-5377.2000.tb139302.x.
- Rossiter, A. B. (1997). A perspective on critical social work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 7(2), 23-41.
- Ryu, E., Couper, M. P., & Marans, R. W. (2006). Survey incentives: Cash vs. in-kind; face-to-face vs. mail; response rate vs. nonresponse error. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18(1), 89-106.
- Saavedra, T., Contreras-Urbina, M., & Inchauste, G. (2022). Intimate Partner Violence against Women. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/37336>.
- Safe Communities Portugal*. (2018). *Domestic Violence* | [Safecommunitiesportugal.com](http://safecommunitiesportugal.com).
- Saltzman, L. E., Fanslow, J. L., McMahon, P. M., & Shelley, G. A. (2002). Intimate partner violence surveillance: Uniform definitions and recommended data elements: Version 10. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.
- Saltzman, L. Y., Hansel, T. C., & Bordnick, P. S. (2020). Loneliness, isolation, and social support factors in post-COVID-19 mental health. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), 55–57.
- Samarasekera, N. U., Rajapaksa, D., Dilrukshi, U. S., & Gunawardena, U. P. (2022). Domestic Violence, Family Structure and Women's Childbearing Preference: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Regional Economic Development Research*, 215-230.
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Combining qualitative and quantitative sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques in mixed-method studies. *Research in nursing & health*, 23(3), 246-255.
- Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. A. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: The necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of medical ethics and history of medicine*, 7.
- Sanz-Barbero, B., Barón, N., & Vives-Cases, C. (2019). Prevalence, associated factors and health impact of intimate partner violence against women in different life stages. *PLoS one*, 14(10), e0221049.
- Sanz-Barbero, B., Estévez-García, F., La Parra-Casado, D., Lopez-Ossorio, J. J., & Vives-Cases, C. (2023). Intimate partner violence complaints during COVID-19 lockdown in Spain: a cross-sectional and a case-control study. *European journal of public health*, ckad014.
- Semahegn, A., & Mengistie, B. (2015). Domestic violence against women and associated factors in Ethiopia; systematic review. *Reproductive health*, 12(1), 1-12.
- Sewpaul, V. (2020). Systems and Ecological-Systems Theory. The University of Stavanger. <http://msw.uis.hopto.me/2-systems-and-eco-systems-theory/article-2/>
- Shields, M., Tonmyr, L., Hovdestad, W. E., Gonzalez, A., & MacMillan, H. (2020). Exposure to family violence from childhood to adulthood. *BMC public health*, 20, 1-15.
- Shields, M., Tonmyr, L., Hovdestad, W. E., Gonzalez, A., & MacMillan, H. (2020). Exposure to family violence from childhood to adulthood. *BMC public health*, 20, 1-15.
- Silva, T., Agampodi, T., Evans, M., Knipe, D., Rathnayake, A., & Rajapakse, T. (2022). Barriers to help-seeking from healthcare professionals amongst women who experience domestic violence-a qualitative study in Sri Lanka. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1), 1-11.
- Singer, E., & Ye, C. (2013). The use and effects of incentives in surveys. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 645(1), 112-141.
- SKDS (2018). Survey on tolerance of gender-based violence. Available (in Latvian): http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/ataskaite_lm_042018_iesniegta.pdf

- SLDHS. (2016). Sri Lanka Demographic and Health Survey Report. Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) and Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine 2017. <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Resource/en/Health/DemographicAndHealthSurveyReport-2016-Contents.pdf>
- Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based violence (v1.00). (2016). [Data set]. European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication. Retrieved from http://data.europa.eu/88u/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG (Accessed 25/04/2023).
- Steckler, A., McLeroy, K. R., Goodman, R. M., Bird, S. T., & McCormick, L. (1992). Toward integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: An introduction. *Health education quarterly*, 19(1), 1-8.
- Sternberg, K. J., Lamb, M. E., Guterman, E., Abbott, C. B., & Dawud-Noursi, S. (2005). Adolescents' perceptions of attachments to their mothers and fathers in families with histories of domestic violence: A longitudinal perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29(8), 853-869.
- Stoner, J. E., & Cramer, R. J. (2019). Sexual violence victimization among college females: A systematic review of rates, barriers, and facilitators of health service utilization on campus. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(4), 520–533. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017721245>.
- Strang, A., O'Brien, O., Sandilands, M., & Horn, R. (2020). Help-seeking, trust and intimate partner violence: social connections amongst displaced and non-displaced Yezidi women and men in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. *Conflict and health*, 14, 61. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-020-00305-w>
- Straus, M. A. (2011). Gender symmetry and mutuality in perpetration of clinical-level partner violence: Empirical evidence and implications for prevention and treatment. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 16(4), 279-288.
- Strautmane, B., Behmane, D., & Ludviga, I. (2019). Palliative care in Latvia: Availability and the role of the family doctor. In SHS Web of Conferences (Vol. 68, p. 02005). EDP Sciences.
- Strickland, P. & Allen, G. (2018). BRIEFING PAPER Number 6337, Domestic Violence in England and Wales. The House of Commons. Retrieved from <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06337/SN06337.pdf>. (Accessed 25/10/2022).
- Stritzel, H., Gonzalez, C. S., Cavanagh, S. E., & Crosnoe, R. (2021). Family Structure and Secondary Exposure to Violence in the Context of Varying Neighborhood Risks and Resources. *Socius : sociological research for a dynamic world*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023121992941>
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, 68(3), 226–231. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Sweetman, N. (2021). “I Thought It Was My Fault Just for Being Born”. A Review of an SEL Programme for Teenage Victims of Domestic Violence. *Education Sciences*, 11(12), 784.
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. *International Journal for Academic Research In Management (IJARM)*, 5(2), 18-27.
- Tansey, O. (2009). Process tracing and elite interviewing: a case for non-probability sampling. *Methoden der vergleichenden Politik-und Sozialwissenschaft: Neue entwicklungen und anwendungen*, 481-496.
- Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(1), 77-100.
- The Lanzarote Committee Chair and Vice Chairperson meeting on stepping up protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/latvia-covid-19/1680a02271> (Accessed 25/11/2022).
- Thorvaldsdottir, K. B., Halldorsdottir, S., & Saint Arnault, D. M. (2022). Understanding and measuring help-seeking barriers among intimate partner violence survivors: Mixed-methods validation study

- of the Icelandic Barriers to Help-Seeking for Trauma (BHS-TR) scale. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(1), 104.
- Tittlova, M., Papáček, P. (2018). Factors Contributing To Domestic Violence. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Knowledge*, 6(2), 117-124. doi: 10.2478/IJEK-2018-0019.
- Tolan, P., Gorman-Smith, D., & Henry, D. (2006). Family violence. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 57, 557-583.
- Tompson, L., Belur, J., & Jerath, K. (2021). A victim-centred cost–benefit analysis of a stalking prevention programme. *Crime Science*, 10, 1-11.
- Tongco, M. D. C. (2007). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection.
- Tracy, P. E., & Carlin, D. M. (2014). Adjusting for design effects in disproportionate stratified sampling designs through weighting. *Crime & Delinquency*, 60(2), 306-325. https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/2714_latvia_lr.pdf
- Twis, M. K., Nguyen, A. P., & Nordberg, A. (2018). Intimate partner violence myths in police reports: a directed content analysis. *Violence and victims*, 33(2), 351-367.
- UCLA Pritzker Center (2021). Child Welfare and Domestic Violence: The Report on Intersection and Action. Retrieved from http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dvcouncil/research/Docs/Pritzker-Domestic-Violence-Report-Endnotes_final.pdf (Accessed 08/01/2023).
- UNICEF (2006). Keeping families together. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/eca/child-protection/keeping-families-together> (Accessed 11/05/2023)
- United Nations (2022). Reports on Human Rights Practices: Latvia. Executive Summary. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/latvia/> (Accessed 10/01/2023).
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2020). Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN_BriefFem_251121.pdf (Accessed 04/01/2023).
- United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of human rights. UN General Assembly, 302(2), 14-25. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (Accessed 08/05/2022).
- United Nations. (1988). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>.
- United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. Treaty Series, 1577, 3. Ratification Status for CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CRC&Lang=en. (Accessed 08/01/2023).
- UPR (2016). National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21- Latvia, https://www.uprinfo.org/sites/default/files/document/latvia/session_24_-_january_2016/a_hrc_wg.6_24_lva_1_e.pdf (Accessed 16/03/2022).
- US Department of State (2016), Latvia 2016 Human Rights Report, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265650.pdf> (Accessed 19/12/2022).
- van Berkel, S. R., Prevoo, M. J., Linting, M., Pannebakker, F. D., & Alink, L. R. (2020). Prevalence of child maltreatment in the Netherlands: An update and cross-time comparison. *Child abuse & neglect*, 103, 104439.
- Vanya, M. (2001). What Slovak women perceive to be domestic violence. *Sociológia*, 3, 275-296.
- Vargas, L. Cataldo, J., Dickson, S. (2005). Domestic Violence and Children. In G.R. Walz & R.K. Yep (Eds.), *VISTAS: Compelling Perspectives on Counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association; 67-69. https://www.counseling.org/docs/disaster-and-trauma_sexual-abuse/domestic-violence-and-children.pdf?sfvrsn=2 (Accessed 19/12/2022).

- Vrăbiescu, I. (2019). Creating solidarity: Intimate partner violence (IPV) and politics of emotions in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in Romania. *European Journal of women's studies*, 26(2), 150-164.
- Wagner, J., Jones, S., Tsaroucha, A., & Cumbers, H. (2019). Intergenerational transmission of domestic violence: practitioners' perceptions and experiences of working with adult victims and perpetrators in the UK. *Child abuse review*, 28(1), 39-51.
- Walker, L. E. (1981). A feminist perspective on domestic violence. *Violent behavior: Social learning approaches to prediction, management and treatment*, 102-115.
- Walker, L. E. (2016). *The battered woman syndrome*. Springer publishing company.
- Wathen, C. N., MacGregor, J. C. D., & MacQuarrie, B. J. (2019). Relationships Among Intimate Partner Violence, Work, and Health. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(14), 2268–2290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515624236>
- Wathen, C. N., MacGregor, J. C., & MacQuarrie, B. J. (2015). The Impact of Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Results From a Pan-Canadian Survey. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, 57(7), e65–e71. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000000499>.
- Wemrell, M., Stjernlöf, S., Lila, M., Gracia, E., & Ivert, A. K. (2022). The Nordic Paradox. Professionals' discussions about gender equality and intimate partner violence against women in Sweden. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 32(5), 431-453.
- Wijk, D., Beltran Galindo, L., Nouri, E., & Mason-Jones, A. J. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on intimate partner violence in Europe. *Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region*, 1-13.
- Williams, J. P. (2008). Emergent themes. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 248–249), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Williams, J. P. (2008). Emergent themes. *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, 1, 248-249.
- Willie, T. C., & Kershaw, T. S. (2019). An ecological analysis of gender inequality and intimate partner violence in the United States. *Preventive medicine*, 118, 257-263.
- Witt, L., & Diaz, C. (2019). Social workers' attitudes towards female victims of domestic violence: A study in one English local authority. *Child & Family Social Work*, 24(2), 209-217.
- Women's Aid, (2001). Domestic Violence. <https://www.womensaid.ie/services/> (Accessed 20/11/2022).
- World Economic Forum (2022). To tackle violence against women, we need to alleviate poverty. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/to-take-violence-against-women-alleviate-poverty/> (Accessed 14/10/2022).
- World Health Organization. (2018). Country profile on gender-based violence in Sri Lanka. World Health Organization. Country Office for Sri-Lanka. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/273193> (Accessed 19/12/2022).
- WWP-EN (2022). The Istanbul Convention. European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of domestic violence e.V. Retrieved from <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/ic#:~:text=Article%2016%20of%20the%20Istanbul,take%20a%20multi%2Dagency%20approach> (07/04/2023).
- Yoshihama, M., Blazeviski, J., & Bybee, D. (2020). Gender (a) symmetry in correlates of perpetration of intimate partner violence: Gender (a) symmetry in IPV and the role of gender attitudes. *Violence against women*, 26(9), 1033-1054.
- Zajac, J. (2019). Domestic Violence – Slovakia Corps of Prison and Court Guard. EuroPris Expert Group DV. <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Slovakia.pdf> (Accessed 24/03/2023)
- Zastrow, C., & Hessenauer, S. L. (2022). *Empowerment series: Introduction to social work and social welfare: Empowering people*. Cengage Learning. (Book)

- Zimbelman, J. (2018). Lack of services in rural social work: Ethical issues and the impact on parenting.
- ŽTIS (2018). Public Outcry over Child Protection Reform in Lithuania. The Human Rights Monitoring Institute (ŽTIS). <https://hrmi.lt/public-outcry-over-child-protection-reform-in-lithuania/> (Accessed 09/2/2023).
- ŽTIS (2019). Population survey: social campaigns against violence against women are needed. <https://hrmi.lt/gyventoju-apklausa-socialines-kampanijos-pries-moteru-patiriama-smurta-yra-reikalingos/> (Accessed 30/03/2023).
- Žukauskienė, R., Kaniušonytė, G., Bakaitytė, A. & Truskauskait-Kunevicien, I. (2021). Prevalence and Patterns of Intimate Partner Violence in a Nationally Representative Sample in Lithuania. J Fam Viol 36, 117–130 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00126-3>. (MRU Library).

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Raw Data from Police and State Municipals

LATVIA: Table 1: Data on domestic violence in families with children in Latvia from 2017 to 2022						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women victims of physical violence*	75	88	98	106	126	92
Women victims of psychological violence *	94	135	153	154	159	127
Women victims of economic violence*	1	26	32	33	47	20
Women who suffered sexual violence from spouse*	5	6	12	17	18	21
Partner Victims (women in total) *	175	255	295	310	350	260
Victims of the four types of DV within family* including children men and grandparents	831	928	1181	1266	1748	^^
Children victims of all forms of violence within the family (under 18)*	1036	1106	1148	1263	1438	^^
Women Homicide (killed by partner)	7	8	^^	6	^^	^^
Total number of registered family violence by national police	8448	7393	9027	11534	10,698	
Number of separations (BY POLICE)	695	788	679	637	549	^^
Sources ○ Riga Social services (RSS, collected directly from RSS by author in April, 2023). ○ State Police (https://www.la.lv/tolerance-pret-var darbibu-iet-mazuma) ○ Latvia Portal (2020). Domestic violence in numbers. Linda Nikon & Aiga Zero. Infographics (rubric), security. Retrieved from https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/315707-var darbiba-gimene-skaitlos-2020 (14.03.2023).						

* Data about Riga, not state level. DV – Domestic violence or intimate partner violence or family violence or domestic abuse. W- women. M-men. ^^ No data

LITHUANIA: Table 2: Data on domestic violence in families with child or children in Lithuania from 2017 to 2022						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Victims (women)	6253	8158	7131	5604	4597	4628
Victims (men)	1840	2332	2107	1689	1485	1428
Children victims under 18	1326	1211	966	757	747	613
Physical violence	5288	6969	5942	4772	3799	3587
Psychological violence	559	650	384	168	140	97
Property damage	182	169	180	146	117	108

LITHUANIA: Table 2: Data on domestic violence in families with child or children in Lithuania from 2017 to 2022						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Sexual coercion	22	28	25	27	24	36
Neglect	25	35	44	32	26	26
Homicide	31	14	22	29	22	25
Number of women killed by partner or husband	6	4	9	6	11	8
Number of domestic violence (Intimate partner violence) reported to SKPC by police	-	-	11704	11223	10514	14138
Number of domestic violence (Intimate partner violence) reported to SKPC by others	-	-	767	723	1275	1124
Total number of children who have suffered domestic violence, witnessed domestic violence and (or) live in a violent environment identified by SKPC	-	-	5301	5236	5184	5894
Persons convicted of domestic violence	^^	2117	2536	2219	2262	2309
Reports of DV registered with police	47,941	41,531	53,075	58,553	55,815	56,187
Sources - Open statistics and offline contacts. The data were gathered online and some were collected directly from the Department of Informatics and Communications -ird and Statistics Lithuania (State Data Agency) - OSP by author in April, 2023). - Lithuania statistics (2017-2022). Data On Persons Registered in Pre-Trial Investigation Institutions, Victims Of Criminal Acts Related To Domestic Violence (Form Nuk_Dël Smurto-Itij). Retrieved from https://www.ird.lt/lt/reports/view_item_datasource?id=8916&datasource=55181.(04.03.2023). - Lithuania police (Cases of domestic violence reported to the police) https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?indicator=S3R0077#/						

DV -Domestic violence. IPV- Intimate partner violence. ^^ - no data. SKPC - Specialized Complex Assistance Centers

SLOVAKIA: Table 3: Data on domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence in families with children in Slovakia 2017 to 2021					
	2017¹⁹	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sexual violence and abuse FV-IPV	21	18	20	20	12
Psychological violence FV-IPV (Plus §208)	^^	712	572	440	492
Economical FV-IPV	^^	16	30	32	31
No of women victims of IPV	677	844	726	734	613

¹⁹ Statistics of the Presidium of the PZ (<https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/statistiky/>)

SLOVAKIA: Table 3: Data on domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence in families with children in Slovakia 2017 to 2021

	2017 ¹⁹	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total cases of domestic violence (general)	865	702	804	828	721
Homicide (IPV) by husband or partner	11	5 (15.6%) ²⁰	7 (33.3%) ²¹	12 (38.7%) ²²	10 (43.5%) ²³
Records of partner or/& DV in police statistics	1568	1608	1639	1700	1413 (17% < than 2020)
Judicial data (children's victims of general domestic violence)	^^	^^	11%	12%	12%
% of DV and % of women victims of IPV and men victims of IPV	44.5% IPV-W	52% (IPV-W) 42% (DV) 5% (IPV-M)	44.3% (IPV-W) 50% (DV) 6.6% (IPV-M)	44% (IPV-W) 50% (DV) 6% (IPV-M)	43.38% (IPV-W) 51.02% (DV) 5.59% (IPV-M)

Source

- Police data -- [https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/statistiky/Institute for Work and Family Research \(2020\). Administrative Data on Partnership Violence for the Year 2018. "Home must be a safe place for all". Zuzana Očenášová, Bratislava. Retrieved from \[https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/resources/data/admin-data-sprava_2018_layout.pdf\]\(https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/resources/data/admin-data-sprava_2018_layout.pdf\) \(10.04.2023\).](https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/statistiky/Institute%20for%20Work%20and%20Family%20Research%20(2020).Administrative%20Data%20on%20Partnership%20Violence%20for%20the%20Year%202018.%20%22Home%20must%20be%20a%20safe%20place%20for%20all%22.%20Zuzana%20Očenášová,%20Bratislava.%20Retrieved%20from%20https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/resources/data/admin-data-sprava_2018_layout.pdf)
- Institute for Work and Family Research (2020b). An Analysis of Administrative Data on Criminal Action in Parent and Domestic Violence Cases From Police and Judicial Statistics Year 2019. "Home must be a safe place for all" Zuzana Očenášová, Bratislava. Retrieved from https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/resources/data/admin-data-sprava_2019_statistiky.pdf (10.04.2023).
- Institute for Work and Family Research (2021). An Analysis of Police and Judicial Data in Partner and Domestic Violence Cases For The Year 2020 . "Home must be a safe place for all" Zuzana Očenášová, Bratislava. Retrieved from https://ivpr.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/analyza_polic_a_justic_dat_v_pripadoch_partner_nasilia_ocenasova_2021.pdf (10.04.2023).

FV-IPV--Female Victims of Intimate Partner Violence. §208--- abuse of a close person and of the entrusted person. IPV-W – women victims. IPV-M- Men victims. ^^--missing data

²⁰ According to police statistics, 32 women aged 19 and over were murdered or killed in 2018.

²¹ According to police statistics, 21 women aged 19 and over were murdered or killed in 2019.

²² According to police statistics, 31 women aged 19 and over were murdered or killed in 2020

²³ According to police statistics, 23 women over the age of 19 were murdered or killed in 2021.

Appendix II: Informed Consent



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Declaration of informed consent for fieldwork

Informed consent

The following is a presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

In order to ensure that projects meet the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether they will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project, the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

.....

Student name & e-mail

.....

Supervisor name & e-mail

.....

Interviewee



Appendix III: Interview Guide

Exploring Domestic Violence (DV) and Social Work Interventions in families with children

Demographics

- Name of institution (for overview analysis):
- Position title/office:
- Education: BSc/MSc in Social work education
- Years of experience: in present office and in social work profession?
- Type of organization: NGO or government owned
- Sources of funding?
- When last did your organization receive funding or other support from the government?

Semi-structured interview questions for social intervention professionals

1A). How do clients or your service users come to you? 1B). Please list few services or support that your organization provides to clients when they reach out in cases of domestic violence.

2). Who are the main beneficiaries of your interventions for domestic violence; the victims alone, the perpetrators, the children or the whole family?

3). How are the cultural impacts of your country's culture or myths contributing to domestic violence? (Please reflect on your interaction with your clients; what are the ideal expectations from family members in a typical Lithuania family? What are the wife's expectations from the husband and vice versa, and what are the expectations of a child from parents and vice versa? For example, In a traditional family wife expect the husband to meet almost all the financial needs of the family, including her needs and children. There is also the issue of unequal power/authority distribution in the traditional family, where the wife has less power in decision-making. Is it the same in many families in Lithuania?) What are the impacts of culture on domestic violence in Lithuania?

4). When do social workers become involved with people or families who are subjects of domestic violence in Lithuania?

4b). Please highlight the steps for becoming involved till termination of involvement with individuals or families in case of domestic violence.

5). What do you think about government involvement in social services in cases of familial domestic violence (DV) in Lithuania? Are they seriously concerned about domestic violence in families? If so, please could you cite examples of recent government initiatives in the past 5 years, maybe the provision of more funds or making new policies to improve interventions and reduce DV in families.

6A). What do you think about your clients' level of resources, both skills and materials? In your experience working with DV victims/perpetrators, do you think the cause of the violence is because of their lack of skills to manage relationships or money to meet the basic needs of the family?

6B). Please describe the characteristics or qualities of clients you have worked with who have experienced domestic violence, including their level of education, social status, age range, and any common situations you may have observed.

- 7). Kindly list those services that children receive in cases of familial domestic violence? (7B). Where do the children stay if their mother or father is not available to care for them due to DV?
- 8). What are the challenges in working with other professionals who work with your clients, or does your organization provide all the necessary services for the client? For example, in cases of domestic violence, there might be court cases, health issues, and employment issues; in the effort to collaborate with police, schools, doctors, lawyers etc., in addressing the client's problems, what are the challenges of collaboration?
- 9). Prevention of domestic violence is key; how are social intervention professionals making efforts to prevent domestic violence in Lithuania? Could you please describe any program designed to prevent domestic violence in Lithuania?

Appendix IV: Introduction Letters



RIGA STRADINS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE
Welfare and social work department

To Whom It Might Concern,

By this I certify that **Oluwaseun Ayotunde Jegede**, is the 2nd -year full-time student in Erasmus Mundus European Joint Master Social Work with Children and Youth (ESWOCHY) program and is carrying out her research for her Master thesis on the topic "Exploring Social Work Interventions in Combating Domestic Violence in Family with Child". Aim of the research: to identify the inclusive nature of social worker interventions to domestic violence when a child is present in the family.

I hereby confirm that she is acknowledged about the research ethics in social science and social work ethics in her research activities.

ESWOCHY is implemented by the universities of the Consortium that is Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Riga Stradins University (Latvia), The Catholic University in Ruzomberok (Slovakia) and ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).

ESWOCHY program director
Riga Stradins University
Welfare and Social Work department
+371 67061541, +371 27222201
E-mail: anna.broka@rsu.lv

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Anna Broka".

Anna Broka



**MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
AND SOCIAL WORK**

To Whom It Might Concern,

By this I certify that **Oluwaseun Ayotunde Jegede** is the 2nd-year full-time student in Erasmus Mundus European Joint Master Social Work with Children and Youth (ESWOCHY) program and is carrying out her research for her Master thesis on the topic “Exploring Social Work Interventions in Combating Domestic Violence in Family with Child”. Aim of the research: to identify the inclusive nature of social worker interventions to domestic violence when a child is present in the family.

I hereby confirm that she is acknowledged about the research ethics in social science and social work ethics in her research activities.

ESWOCHY is implemented by the universities of the Consortium that is Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Riga Stradins University (Latvia), The Catholic University in Ruzomberok (Slovakia) and ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).

ESWOCHY Programme Coordinator
Mykolas Romeris University
Faculty of Human and Social Studies
+ 370 6 2714533
E-mail: raminta@mruni.eu

Dr. Raminta Bardauskienė



ERASMUS MUNDUS JOINT MASTER IN
**Social Work with
Children and Youth**

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK

Shaping minds and hearts

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Hrabovská cesta 1, 034 01 Ružomberok

www.ku.sk ; phone contact 1: +421 44 432 68 42, phone contact 2: +421 918 722 111, e-mail: dekan.pf@ku.sk

To Whom It Might Concern,

By this I certify that Oluwaseun Ayotunde Jegede, is the 2nd -year full-time student in Erasmus Mundus European Joint Master Social Work with Children and Youth (ESWOCHY) program and is carrying out her research for her Master thesis on the topic "Exploring Social Work Interventions in Combating Domestic Violence in Family with Child". Aim of the research: to identify the inclusive nature of social worker interventions to domestic violence when a child is present in the family.

I hereby confirm that she is acknowledged about the research ethics in social science and social work ethics in her research activities.

ESWOCHY is implemented by the universities of the Consortium that is Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Riga Stradins University (Latvia), The Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia) and ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).



KATOLICKÁ UNIVERZITA
V RUŽOMBERKU
Pedagogická fakulta
Hrabovská cesta 1
034 01 Ružomberok
-1-

Mgr. Daniel Markovič, PhD.

ESWOCHY program coordinator

Catholic University in Ružomberok

Department of Social Work

E-mail: daniel.markovic@ku.sk



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Appendix V: Non-Plagiarism Declaration

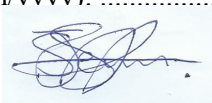
Non-plagiarism declaration

Submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Child and Youth:

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College
- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work
- Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work
- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize and will result in a failing grade in the programme.

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 27/05/2023

Signature: 

Name (in block letters): OLUWASEUN AYOTUNDE JEGEDE

