


The Image of Social Work in the Public

The Danger of Categorical Thinking: Omission and Blame

The media play an important role in changing the image of social work, as they shape public perceptions and often serve as the primary source of information about various professions.

22:39

LTE

 IZ MINUTE U MINUTU

UŽIVO

KOMENTARI

Prije 3 sata

"Dječak koji je na početku bio problem, sada je postao žrtva"

Problem i dalje nije riješen, rekao je Ivan Vrdoljak, odvjetnik grupe roditelja i dodao kako još nije odlučeno hoće li djeca sutra ići u školu.

"Ravnatelj koji je dao ostavku pozivamo da se vrati. Činjenica je da svi mi iz zbornice moramo sada biti zajedno u ovoj situaciji jer ovdje ne treba tražiti krivca, a osobito ne u ravnateljima, stručnoj službi ili nastavnicima. U ovoj situaciji škola je bila nemoćna", rekla je Antonija Miroslavljević, predsjednica Udruge ravnatelja osnovnih škola.

Miroslavljević kaže da je dječak koji je na početku bio problem, sada postao žrtva.

"Netko je problem trebao detektirati puno prije škole. Između ostalog, psihofizičko stanje djeteta određuje osnivač, odnosno Grad Zagreb u ovom slučaju", navela je

index.hr

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tko je kriv za smrt djeteta - Recherche Google

Jutarnji list - #smrt djevojčice iz Nove Gradiške

J

premium

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sport

j2

kultura

video

novac

scena

pretplata

07.2021. u 12:15

PRIPREMAJU REFORMU

Savjetnica ministra o tragičnoj smrti djevojčice: 'Dijete je trebalo ranije oduzeti roditeljima'

27.04.2021. u 09:29

PRAVOS



Gotovo je godinu dana prošlo od strašnog ubojstva u Centru za socijalnu skrb u Đakovu: Koliko su socijalni radnici danas sigurni?

Prošla je gotovo godina od ubojstva u đakovečkom centru za socijalnu skrb. Kakva je danas situacija u centrima?

Piše **Marina Bešić Dukarić**, 03. lipnja 2020. @ 19:34



socijalnim radnicima osjećaju - danijske zapamte.

"Zalaganje za status službene osobe i postavljanje detektora u centrima za socijalnu skrb i obiteljskim centrima jesu pozitivni su iskoraci i pokazatelji brige države, ali ustanove socijalne skrbe su i dječji domovi, centri za pružanje usluga u zajednici i domovi za starije osobe, a tamo ih nema", rekla je Barišić.

Dodala je da treba promijeniti puno toga.

"Pozitivni iskoraci postoje, i njih treba naglasiti, ali treba povećati ulaganja u resurse u sustavu socijalne skrbi, raditi na poboljšanju međesektorske suradnje sa sustavom zdravstva, obrazovanja, pravosuđa itd., i dati priliku struci da se nas glas čuje i ekspertiza uvaži", rekla je Barišić.

Dnevnik Nove TV gledajte svakog dana od 19:15, a više o najvažnijim vijestima čitajte na portalu **DNEVNIK.hr**.

Propustili ste Dnevnik? Pogledajte ga [besplatno na novatv.hr](#)

Corusica: Kolona ljudi na Mirogoju, među njima i brojne poznate osobe



LIJEPO IME

Rodila Izabel Kovačić, evo koje su lijepo ime roditelji odabrali za svoju djevojčicu

What impact do the media have on the protection system? 1/2

- Goddard and Lidell (1995) consider that the media have a significant impact on shaping the direction and orientation of the protection system, for example, child protection.
- The literature often references the case of the death of Maria Colwell, which led to the enactment of the “Children Act” in Britain in 1975 (Mendes, 2001).
- Blomberg (2017) also notes that in Sweden in 2006, due to media coverage of the murder of a 10-year-old boy by his mother and stepfather, a new law, “Lex Bobby”, was enacted.

What impact do the media have on the protection system? 2/2

- Besides influencing legislation, the media also impact the actions of social services in cases of child abuse.
- Lindsey (1994, as cited in Stanić 2021) describes the removal of children following reports of tragic events as a "pendulum."
- **“Initially, social workers are more likely to remove children from families due to abuse because the public views this as an appropriate intervention, but after some time, the public believes that social workers have too much power, and the number of children removed decreases” (Stanić, 2021: 319).**
- The findings of Saint-Jacques et al. (2012) indicate that a **greater number of media reports on child abuse contributes to a higher number of cases reported to social services.**

But...what do the media actually investigate when reporting on social workers? (according to Stanić, 2021)

- Aldridge (1994) notes that **there is a perception that the British media report negatively on social workers.**
- Clackson, Lindsey, and MacQuarrie (2007), in their study on reports about institutional care, concluded that **most media articles focus on child abuse in care and the inappropriate behaviour of social workers.**
- Mendes (2001) writes that in cases of child abuse, both the parents who abused the child and the social workers are portrayed as “**folk devils**”. **Social workers are seen as incompetent and unprofessional when they fail to remove a child from the family, but are viewed as violent child-snatchers when they decide to remove a child.**

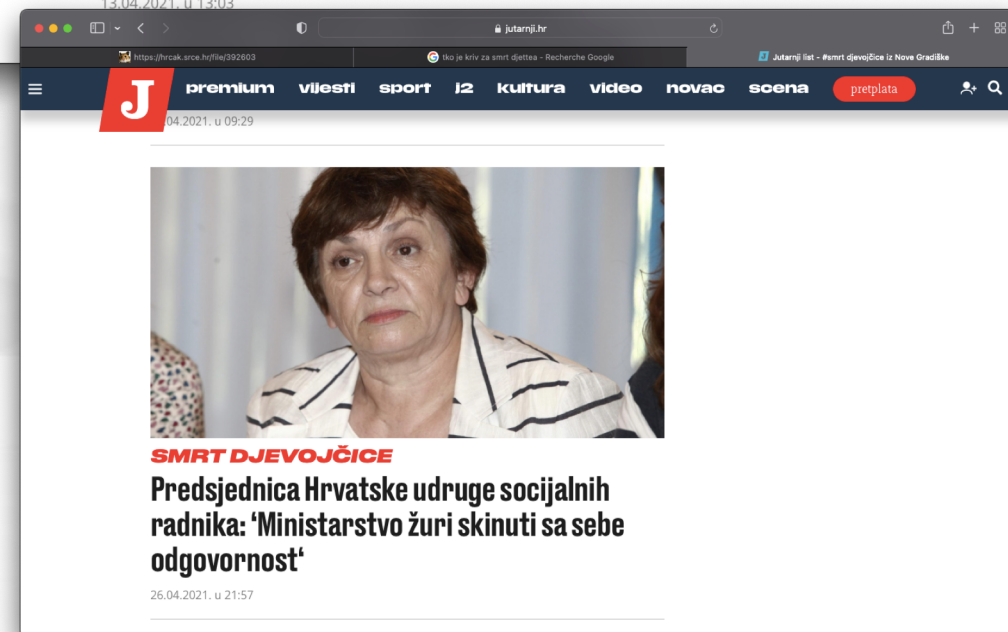
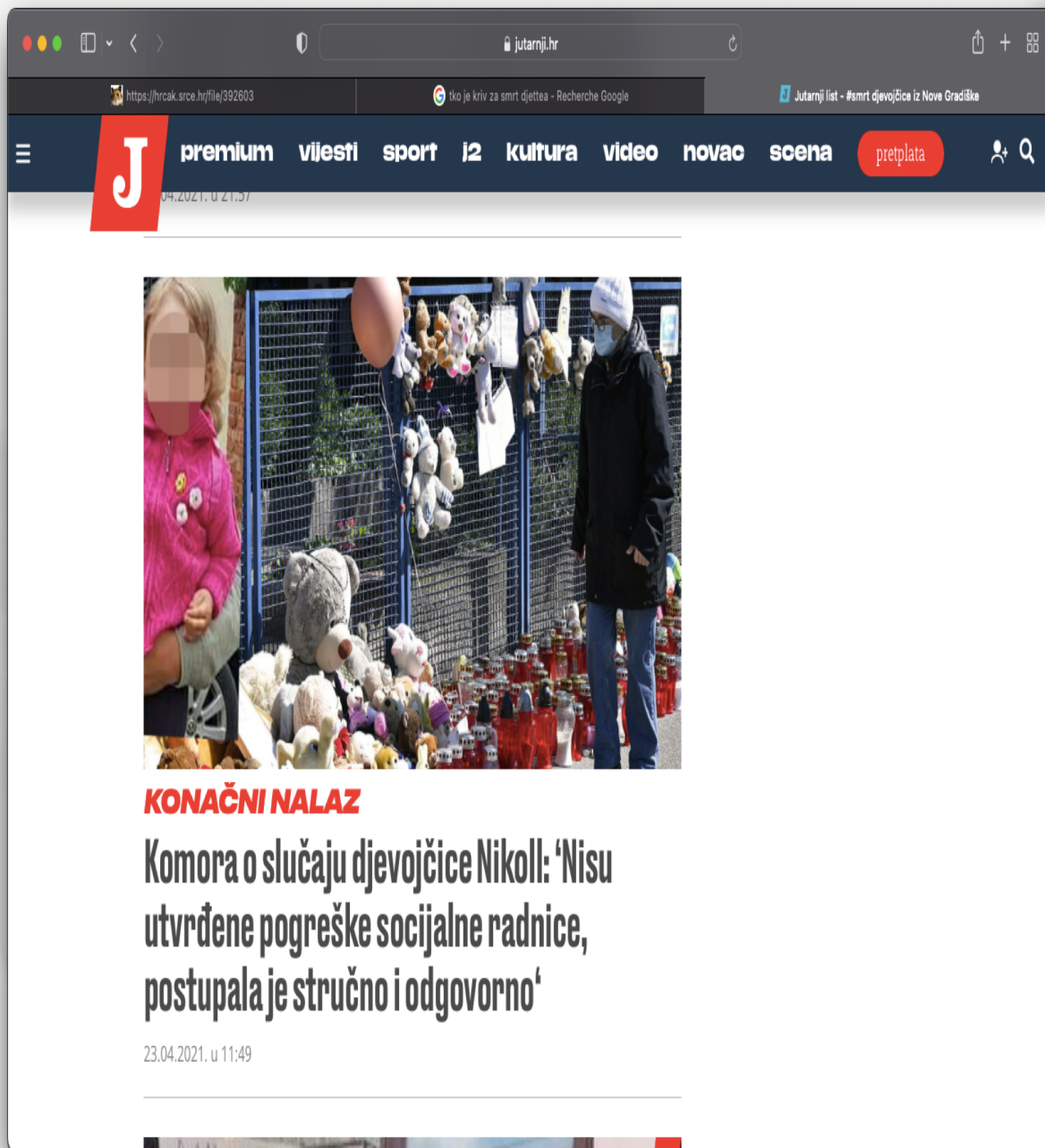
- The English media tend to express a more negative attitude towards social workers, whereas the Australian media focus on the shortcomings of the system rather than individual mistakes, although in such reporting, all social workers are portrayed negatively.
- In Sweden, Blomberg (2017) analysed articles that discussed social workers and found that the majority of articles (56%) focused on reporting issues and deficiencies within the social welfare system, and social workers were characterised relatively positively in these articles.

Media Reporting in Croatia - The Social Welfare System

- In recent years, several tragic cases of child abuse have captured the attention of the media and the public, leading citizens to express dissatisfaction and mistrust towards the work of institutions.
- This discontent prompted the Croatian Chamber of Social Workers to organise a roundtable in 2019 titled **“Social Workers on the Front Page – A Dialogue with the Media”**.
- During the discussion, it was concluded that the cooperation between social workers and the media needs to be strengthened, and it was noted that the system will implement training on communication during crisis situations.

<https://husr.hr/web/?p=786>

Protocol on the Procedures and Cooperation of Regional Associations of Social Workers and HUSR in Protecting the Dignity of the Social Work Profession




Social workers, through professional organisations...

- According to Stanić (2021), they call on the authorities **to undertake necessary reforms**. Social workers are characterised as skilled and dedicated to their work.
- Additionally, two other narratives emerge: **“problems within public services”** and **“a call for change”**.
- In the narrative about problems within public services, **lawyers and judges** point out issues in legal proceedings related to the protection of children's rights, **while also questioning the knowledge and expertise of social workers**.
- In the narrative calling for change, professional organisations urge the authorities and the public to focus on reforms rather than criticising social workers (Stanić, 2021).

Browser window showing the Jutarnji list website. The address bar displays <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/392603>. The page title is "Jutarnji list - #smrt djevojčice iz Nove Gradiške". The navigation bar includes links for premium, vijesti, sport, j2, kultura, video, novac, scena, and a pretplata button.

The main article is titled "REFORMA SOCIJALE" and "‘Slučaj Nova Gradiška može biti točka preokreta ako se uključe stručnjaci’". The article is dated 08.04.2021. u 14:07.



The image shows a man with a beard, wearing a dark suit and tie, speaking at a podium. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a solid blue color.

Professional Stress of Social Workers – Is It Related to the Public Image of Social Work?

Professional stress, which, according to Ajduković and Ajduković (1996), refers to the mismatch between the workplace and the environment in relation to our abilities, desires, and expectations to meet those demands.

Professional Stress of Social Workers – Is It Related to the Public Image of Social Work?

- Ilijaš (2023), in a study conducted on 884 social workers employed at PU HZSR, stated that the respondents identified the most frequent sources of stress as those related to the nature of social work itself, followed by stressors associated with rewards and career advancement, organisational climate, and finally, working conditions.
- The most frequent sources of stress for social workers include work overload (deadlines, a large number of clients), which is also the most intense stressor, working with clients facing a variety of problems and pathologies, a lack of institutions for further specialised treatment of clients, **media scrutiny (television, online portals, social networks), and the devaluation of the social worker's role by other professionals.**
- The 2019 HKSR study also identified the strongest sources of stress as **media scrutiny (newspapers, television, online portals)**, a lack of accommodation capacities, insufficient institutions for further specialised treatment, **frequent public criticism**, and work overload (deadlines, large client numbers) (Ilijaš, Štengl, and Podobnik, 2020).
- Similarly, Ravalier's (2018) research on a sample of 1,333 social workers confirmed that professional stress is exacerbated by **a culture of blaming social workers in society and the media**, as well as poor working conditions. **The negative perception of social workers in society creates pressure and, consequently, stress (Ogresta and Rusac, 2007).**

What are the other consequences of uncooperative reporting?

- Parton (2014) notes that negative reporting leads to a risk-averse professional who strictly adheres to legal regulations, often ignoring the specific circumstances of individual cases.
- As a result, practice shifts from "we followed the law" to "we did the best thing in this situation" (Lonne and Parton, 2014: 11).
- Westrum (1993, as cited in Munro, 2018) refers to this as a pathological organisational culture. In such a culture, professionals fear being blamed for not adhering to regulations rather than for failing to provide quality services to families. Consequently, professionals avoid taking risks, using their professional judgment, and lean toward a literal interpretation of the rules (Munro, 2011).
- An increase in the number of reports, as well as the fear of making mistakes, may be reasons why the number of child removals rises following media coverage of critical events (McDevitt, 1996; Saint-Jacques et al., 2012).

The problem also arises when...

...only those stories that are simple and easily understandable are chosen, which are mostly scandals and failures (Branica and Jerbić, 2003).

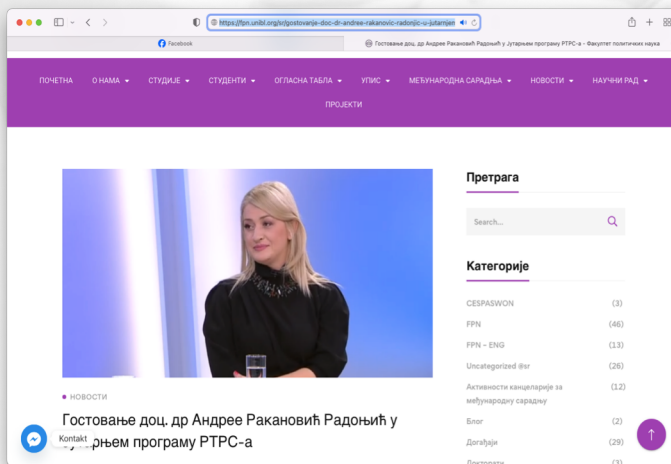
- Chenot (2011) states that the public and the media place overly high expectations on social workers, which, when not met, result in a negative impression.

And what can be done?

- Do not set unattainable ideals for social workers (Chenot, 2011).
- Cooper (2005) suggests that the solution to this problem lies in **continuous reporting and educating the public about the role and profession of social work, as well as strengthening the relationship between the public and social workers.**

As has recently been done here through the activities of the CESPASWON network... follow along at the link:

https://fpn.unibl.org/sr/gostovanje-doc-dr-andree-rakanovic-radonjic-u-jutarnjem-programu-rtrs-a/?fbclid=IwY2xjawGGvGdleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHZKHDzDQcBDRQG1GHAOYU3sax05PAoOPBtMAOsmiumRBX35BbMwYiahlg_aem_mStbhpCcy2UXPTYsDvP4A



Thank you for your attention!

...and be mindful
...of where you direct your focus.



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