

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Grzegorz Iniewicz** **Minority Stress in bisexual and homosexual persons.** **In search of risk factors and protective factors**

Jagiellonian University Press, 2015, 261 pages, 1<sup>st</sup> edition

Dr Grzegorz Iniewicz's monograph – published by the Jagiellonian University Press – is a very important work on the phenomenon of minority stress in a group of bisexual and homosexual persons, and is the first book in this field in Poland.

Generally speaking, the monograph consists of two parts – divided into 31 chapters – preceded by an introduction, and also containing a comprehensive bibliography, encompassing referenced books and articles.

The first part: “Minority stress in bisexual and homosexual persons” concerns the issue of minority stress in the broadest sense and is composed of 15 chapters.

In chapters 1–4, the author concentrates on the issue of stress, referring primarily to Hans Selye and Richard Lazarus's concepts, Sharon Schwartz and Ilan Meyer's theory of social stress, and lastly, to Ilan Meyer's model of minority stress, which refers to the specific experience of persons belonging to a minority and remains closely related to their position in society. Minority stress is characterized by three dimensions: uniqueness, chronicity and social conditioning, and results in chronic psychological tension, arising as a result of discrimination and stigmatization [1].

Chapter 5 concerns attitudes toward bisexuality and homosexuality, and bisexual and homosexual persons. In this context, the author makes use of the psychoanalytical perspective, gender, Gregory Herek's cognitive process of categorizing [2], and a concept based on the process of sexualizing women by heterosexual men [3].

In chapters 6–12, the author focuses on components of the model of minority stress. He deliberates on homophobia (heterosexism), internalized homophobia and biphobia, the health effects of internalized homophobia, prejudices and stigmas, and the phenomena of aggression and violence, with particular emphasis on the political context of the situation of non-heterosexual persons in Poland, as well as the problem of revealing sexual orientation. Chapter 13 concerns social relations and attachments in

non-heterosexual persons, which constitute an important variable in the occurrence of emotional problems in this group. In chapter 14, the author presents the most important researches on the subject of the mental health of homosexual and bisexual persons, while chapter 15 is devoted to the concept of resilience.

In the second part of the monograph entitled “Own research – in search of factors modulating the influence of minority stress on fear and depression”, the author discusses the methodological bases of researches and presents results. It should be noted that the researches are based on Meyer’s model of minority stress, taking into account modifications introduced by the author, and fit within the model of intra-group research – with comparisons of certain aspects of functioning of homosexual and bisexual persons with those of heterosexual persons.

The research problem, 7 research questions, and the way of sampling and carrying out the research are presented in chapters 16–19. The research group, the used tools (the SMS scale, the Scale of Identity and the Scale of the Sense of Belonging, the STAI, CES-D, PBI, ECR-R-18 and CISS questionnaires, and the Resilience Assessment Scale-SPP-25) and statistical techniques are also described. Chapters 20–29 present results of research on minority stress and also results of the search for factors that may be modifiers of stress. Chapter 30 contains a discussion of the obtained results, and chapter 31 – the end conclusions, which, for greater clarity, have been presented in the form of 12 points.

Summarizing, it should be noted that the following attributes of the reviewed book deserve special attention: the author has focused on a significant and current problem, which is poorly represented in empirical research in Poland (I am referring here to both the phenomenon of minority stress and minority groups). It should be emphasized that all researches concerning minority groups are always desirable – both quantitative and qualitative. Furthermore, the author has managed to show difficult and complex issues in a clear way, and has cohesively combined many aspects that are significant for understanding the functioning of persons struggling with minority stress. The reliably conducted empirical studies using many research tools and their analysis using various statistical techniques together with a clear way of presenting and interpreting the obtained results are also noteworthy.

In the context of the above observations, the monograph should be recommended to a wide range of readers: psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, educators, criminologists, lawyers and therapists. This book can also be a teaching aid to students of social and medical disciplines and humanities, as well as an inspiration for further research.

## References

1. Meyer I. *Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, Gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence*. Psychol. Bull. 2003; 5: 674–697.
2. Herek G. *Psychological heterosexism in the United States*. In: D’Augelli A, Patterson C. ed. *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan. Psychological perspectives*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1995. p. 321-346.

3. Kite M, Whitley B. *Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexual person, behaviors, and civil rights: A meta-analysis*. Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull. 1996; 22: 336–353.

Ewa Czerwińska-Jakimiuk