

## Dissertation topics 2024/2025

### **doc. PhDr. Gabriel Bianchi, PhD.**

- Extimacy within healthy intimacy development
- Individual coping with gender equality as related to women's psychological health

### **Mgr. Barbara Láštiová, PhD.**

- The interplay of social norms, intergroup contact, and social identities in shaping solidarity on behalf of disadvantaged groups

### **doc. Mgr. Miroslav Popper, PhD.**

- Agency and resiliency of single parent Ukrainian families living in Slovakia

### **Mgr. Kamila Urban, PhD.**

- Metacognitive Strategy Instruction for Fostering Complex Problem-Solving

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**Topic****Extimacy within healthy intimacy development**

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**Supervisor**doc. PhDr. Gabriel Bianchi, PhD. (bianchi@savba.sk)

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The research project aims to explore the place and processes of extimation in the development of the subject's intimacy, in the context of its transformation and transmutation, as well as the general sexualization of public space.

Context: The exposure of intimacy and sexuality can be seen as a reflection of a rather strong attack on sexual norms in particular. The transgression of norms is often consensual, and thus a change or shift in social norms (determining sexual subjectivity) rather than just sporadic violations of sexual norms in the media. This statement resonates with the thesis on the need for intimate citizenship (Plummer, 2003), also with the call to understand the transmutation of intimacy (cf. Bianchi, 2010, 2020). However, it also points to the need for a broader discussion of what it means for a subject to be both intimate and public, as Georges Teyssot has recently pointed out (cf. Teyssot, 2010) in the context of the media. Teyssot develops the intimacy-extimation dualism originally proposed and developed by Jacques Lacan (Lacan, 1969, p. 179). Teyssot offers insight into the historical development of the division and later the convergence and fusion of the private and the public, which has resulted in their current apparent fusion through the Internet, where all media are present, and especially through social networking sites. Lacan's dialectic of intimacy and extimation has also been used in a modified way by Serge Tisseron (2002, 2011), who highlights two facts that are relevant to the discussion of media and intimacy: (1) the content of intimacy is not necessarily fully accessible even to the subject; the media can thus "feed" us an intimate topic and replace the content we do not know [in our subjectivity] with banal phrases. And (2) there is a subject's "controlled" opening up and testing of his/her intimate contents through a process of extimation - opening up and offering to other eyes or to the public, that is, a kind of "affirming/testing of the intimate through the 'other. 'The desire for extimation is inseparable from the desire to encounter and risk with the other." (Tisseron, 2011)

Objective: The aim of this dissertation is to explore the diverse constellations of subjective testing of intimacy through extimation, analyzing the risk, social skills and authentication of the subject in doing so; and the alternation of extimation towards different addressees and social environments. Identifying extimation as an indicator of the subject's psychological maturity - willingness to take risks and ability to cope with risk while gaining support/affirmation of our intimate 'world'.

Method: A primarily qualitative approach is assumed, a narrative-phenomenological.

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Individual coping with gender equality as related to women's psychological health</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	doc. PhDr. Gabriel Bianchi, PhD. (bianchi@savba.sk)
<b>Consultant</b>	Mgr. Miroslava Šudila Žilinská

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Along with the critical feminist position that gender inequalities need to be fixed by fixing "the system" (politics, policies, regulations, institutions, norms, rules, etc.) there is the urgent challenge to identify successful individual strategies of women who, in spite of the gender stereotyped environment, live gender authentic lives. Therefore this project is looking for identification of individual psychological capacities: personality traits, developmental processes (e.g. attachment style), related values (e.g. Schwartz model of universal values' structure) and social learning dimensions ( e.g. learned helplessness), along with cultural scripts, which enable certain women develop a functional resilience to gender stereotypes in work & life circumstances and offer a pool of skills/predictors for overcoming discrimination and supporting women's psychological health. Similar studies were performed by Popper et al. and Bianchi et al. addressing successful careers of women and gender specificities in women's resilience.

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>The interplay of social norms, intergroup contact, and social identities in shaping solidarity on behalf of disadvantaged groups</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	Mgr. Barbara Láštiová, PhD. (barbara.lasticova@savba.sk)
<b>Consultant</b>	Mgr. Xenia Daniela Poslon, PhD.

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The thesis will investigate the impact of social norms on intergroup attitudes and behavioural outcomes, including solidarity and hostility towards one of or all three of the following disadvantaged groups: Roma, LGBTQ+, and Ukrainian refugees. The thesis will do this by taking into account the role of socio-cognitive and identity processes, as well as intergroup dynamics in terms of intergroup contact. Through mixed-method research, the thesis will map the various aspects of what is communicated by social norms (political discourse), what is in turn perceived and experienced (subjective perceptions of norms and feelings), how it translates into cognitive representations on the individual level (socio-cognitive and identity mechanisms), and what consequences it has for intergroup relations (e.g., solidarity and hostility). These variations can be linked to individual differences as well as stereotypes ascribed to these groups and their respective status positions within Slovak society. The thesis may also adopt the perspective of disadvantaged groups to investigate how solidarity norms shared by the majority society impact on their identities, empowerment and the perceptions of majority allies.

### References

Kende, A., Nariman, H. S., Nyúl, B. et al. (2023). "Put a Little Love in Your Heart": Acceptance of Paternalistic and Ally Political Discourses Both Predict Pro-Roma Solidarity Intentions Through Moral Inclusion. *Political Psychology*, 44(5), 1077-1095.

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Tankard, M. E., & Paluck, E. L. (2016). Norm perception as a vehicle for social change. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 10(1), 181-211.

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Agency and resiliency of single parent Ukrainian families living in Slovakia</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	doc. Mgr. Miroslav Popper, PhD. (miroslav.popper@savba.sk)

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Single parent families are at risk of inadequate resources (lack of income, time needed to take care of family and household and flexibility), poor employment (low income and precarious conditions) and insufficient policies (to ensure children's standard of living), which are interconnected (Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado, 2018; Aerst et al., 2022; Gornick et al., 2022).

The aim of the project is to map the living conditions, agency and resiliency of single-parent Ukrainian families living in Slovakia.

As a research method qualitative in-depth interviews with Ukrainian refugee single mothers living in Slovakia to investigate personal resilience strategies and agency in various social and individual contexts will be used.

In addition to new theoretical and empirical results, the project has an ambition to produce recommendations to policy makers, civil society organizations as well as single parents in order to promote more ways of support to this group.

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**Topic**

**Metacognitive Strategy Instruction for Fostering Complex Problem-Solving**

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**Supervisor**

Mgr. Kamila Urban, PhD. (kamila.urban@savba.sk)

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This PhD project explores the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on enhancing individuals' abilities to solve complex problems, with a special focus on applications within health psychology. Complex problem-solving is a critical skill in both academic and real-world settings, necessitating not just domain-specific knowledge but also the ability to think critically, adapt, and apply strategic thought processes. Metacognition, the awareness and regulation of one's own cognitive processes, plays a pivotal role in learning and problem-solving. By fostering metacognitive skills, individuals can better manage their cognitive resources, monitor their understanding, and adjust their strategies in dynamic and complex situations. Expected contributions of this research include the development of a framework for metacognitive strategy instruction tailored to CPS, insights into the transferability of metacognitive skills, and practical guidelines for educators and trainers. Ultimately, this project seeks to enhance educational practices by integrating effective metacognitive instruction, thereby preparing individuals to tackle complex problems with greater skill and confidence.