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23RD RAMIRO AND ZORAN BUJAS DAYS

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COMING OUT AND PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION OF BISEXUALS

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Bisexuality (BS) denotes romantic or sexual attraction toward both men and women. This fact can lead to them being perceived as homo or heterosexual, but also as neither – research suggests that they are sometimes twofold discriminated: by heterosexual majority, but also within the minority - LGB community. In this research we give voice to the bisexual community and (a) their perception of how much BS minority is discriminated against by different groups, but also (b) their perception of how much different groups are discriminated against in the society. A total of 105 BS participants (81% female) assessed (a) how much they feel discriminated by gays, lesbians, heterosexual men and women, and (b) how much the society as a whole discriminates against differently sexually oriented groups. As a proxy for pressure to conform to group norms, we asked the BS people to report the number of times they needed to declare themselves as heterosexual or homosexual. The questionnaire was created in an on-line platform and distributed via social media, using the snowballing technique. Our results show that BS people felt that they are more discriminated by heterosexuals than by homosexuals ($M_{hetero}=12.95$, $SD=3.70$; $M_{homo}=10.59$, $SD=4.27$; $t(104)=6.20$, $p<.001$; Cohen's $d=.59$). On the other hand, BS people perceived that their group was less discriminated than homosexuals by the society as a whole ($M_{homo}=5.76$, $SD=0.89$; $M_{bi}=5.02$, $SD=1.46$; $t(104)=6.32$, $p<.001$; Cohen's $d=.57$). A vast majority - 92.4% of participants reported to have referred to themselves as heterosexuals at least once, which indicates indirect pressure exerted by majority. At the same time, however, a significant number of participants (43.8%) reported to have referred to themselves as homosexuals at least once, which indicates pressure exerted by minority as well. This was further corroborated by linear regression which showed that the only significant predictor of BS declaring as homosexuals is discrimination perceived by lesbians, which has to be interpreted in context of majorly female sample ($\beta=.365$, $p=.000$). These results suggest that minorities use different identity strategies to cope with discrimination by majority and by the other related minority groups.