

# **LIFE IN A BIG CITY AND MENTAL HEALTH**

## **Class Positions, Forms of Labor and Mental Health**

### **Thanassis Alexiou**

In the present paper, we examine the relation between class positions, forms of labor and mental health, according to qualitative and quantitative data derived by research in the Urban Area of Thessaloniki. Our findings demonstrate that regarding their health and mental health, individuals are unequally exposed, depending on their class position (bourgeoisie, self-employed individuals, workers). Class position also holds a decisive role in individuals' access to health services and insurance resources, as well as in health restoration. Both the content of labor (autonomous-highly skilled labor or de-skilled-executive labor) and employment status (stopgap jobs, unemployment and so on) have to do with social class. It is shown that these factors unequally equip individuals with the financial means and psychosocial resources needed to handle biographical breaches and discontinuities, as well as social impasses, which become personal. In fact, class positions of self-employed individuals, unskilled and semi-skilled workers are far more exposed to the destructive consequences of a financial crisis than the positions of bourgeois strata, whatever this might imply regarding individuals' mental health.

## **Exacerbation of psychopathology due to urbanization**

### **Christos Theleritis**

In 1950, more than 70% of the world's population lived in rural areas. The urban population has grown rapidly and since 2014 more than half of the world's population resides in towns and cities and this proportion is growing. Urban environment seems to be associated with increased prevalence of psychopathology including psychosis, anxiety and mood disorders. This association does not appear to be explained solely by population characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, social class or ethnicity. Various social environment features (such as higher rates of criminality, mortality, social isolation, air pollution and noise) seem to be more prevalent in urban settlements compared to rural environments and may predispose susceptible individuals to the development of psychopathology. Mental health clinicians and government agencies should be aware of this increased demand in mental health services in urban environments.

## **From alcohol to the city to city alcohol**

### **Eirini Segredou**

Alcohol dependence is a debilitating, common, chronic and relapsing psychiatric disorder worldwide which is characterized by persistent, compulsive and uncontrolled drinking, and with prevalence varying among different ethnic populations. It

determined by a combination of genetic, physical, psychological, social, and environmental factors. We look at the environmental factors that have to do with the environment of an urban city. Ghetto groups of low socio-economic status, violence and crime, unemployment, isolation, immigration, social competition are some of them. Generally, from morbidity, mortality, and economic perspectives, alcohol cost our society much more than other drugs and it remains a major problem for both urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, it appears to be a greater problem in rural areas.

## **The social determinants of mental health**

### **Michail Poulimas**

The prolonged economic recession in Greece threatens to increase the risk factors associated with mental health and, thus, requires us to reexamine the relationship between socio-economic inequality and mental health. An individual's mental health is shaped by the various social, economic and physical conditions experienced at different stages in life. Risk factors for common mental disorders are heavily associated with social inequalities; in particular, the greater the social inequality, the more an individual is exposed to mental health risk factors. We employ the neo-Marxist approach about social classes to explore the mechanisms through which the socio-economic inequalities contribute to mental health problems. The term 'social class' is widely used in social inequality academic research and shapes new directions to better explain the links between social class and mental health. We also discuss a small subsample of data collected in a community research project in Thessaloniki during the period of socio-economic crises. The results allow us to support the argument that inequality reinforces mental illness and vice versa.

## **The effect of criminality on the mental health of the population**

### **Athanasios Douzenis**

Is violence more present at this point in time? Most people would agree. However, if you think about it, that answer is incorrect. As violent as today's world is it cannot be compared to a time period 70 years ago (World War II). In western societies without a doubt the last fifty years are the most peaceful in history. But we are all conscious that our world is violent and that violence is present in many aspects of our daily life. What is this the results of? Violence is more visible in today's time. The television and the internet (mainly) are the main reasons why. What is happening now is that we are seeing more violence on the tv and on our computer screens. The violence we see, we watch as viewers, we hear the voices of the victims, but we don't "live" it, we are not close to the victims.

In psychiatry and psychology it has been proven that "exposure" to a stimulus leads to "familiarity" and familiarity of stimuli that produce strong reactions either those of happiness, disgust, sadness, or fear lead to the reduction of this emotional reaction. The result is that we see something horrible and not feel horror, and after some time we see something that originally caused disgust and abhorrence and after repeated exposure to that spectacle we no longer have those feelings. It is familiarity that

makes us look past something, that originally for example induced disgust, and not induce that same feeling.

In this presentation, we are going to discuss the complete psychological burden of society and how that is expressed through the increased search for psychological support in our current time.

## **Exercise in the city and mental health**

### **Georgios Xiarchos**

Exercise and physical activity have an undoubted positive affection to human organism approximately in biological parameters. Consecutively, the positive affection in mental health is indicated in many researches, fact that enhances the usefulness of them in modern life. Although, one serious parameter that has not investigated in wide range is the affection of physical exercise which takes place into the modern urban environment and how this exercise can have positive or negative effects to the mental mood and health, if we take in sight the adverse conditions which take place into the multiply overcharged environment as it is that who faces the resident of the modern cities (overcrowding, lack of proper infrastructure, high levels of pollutants, noise etc.), who is undoubtedly exposed to several and more serious risk factors for his health and mental condition, in relation with people who live in closer contact with nature.

## **The philosophy of coexistence in Metropolitan cities**

### **Stavros I. Baloyiannis**

The city is a model of symbiotic society. It is a model of harmonious coexistence of people, which would start growing out of the family, then expanding to the community and ultimately developing in the city (polis), especially in the large multicultural Metropolitan centers of our time, under their impressive multidimensional polymorphism. The substantial symbiotic principle, on which the inner functional mechanism of the city is based, is the principle of the social cooperation, which is developed on the background of justice, truth, freedom, compassion, solidarity and on the persistent culture of values and merits, which aimed at the common good, and especially at the genuine profound respect to the personhood of every human being.

Shared responsibility of citizens is the orthopraxis, which is expressed as benefaction, under the proper responsible instruction, which may inspire unto each citizen the feeling of self-respect, self-control, the freedom and autonomy, the importance of authentic insight and the value of inner peace illuminated by the moral values.

Through spiritual cultivation, the citizen recognizes the importance of equity and justice and undertakes the joint struggle for the common good, in the context of a Government, which respects the freedom, the dynamism and the feeling of personal responsibility of citizenship. The constant self-criticism by the rulers is essential for the maintenance of the constant endeavor for social harmony.

The ideal state, according to Plato, is the meritocratic Democracy, in which the supreme purpose is "the vision of good ' and ' the beatitude society". The proper

education is the background of the functional expression of the harmonious interactions in the society, forming also the cultural profile of the city, in which the virtues, especially the bravery, wisdom and justice compose the triptych of the ethical ruling code the State.

The supreme Good of the citizen's life, according to Spinoza, is bliss (*felicitus*), Salvation (*salus*), happiness (*gaudio*), benevolence (*beatitudo*), the peaceful acceptance of hardship (*animi acquiescentia*), glory (*gloria*), love (*amor*) and above all freedom (*libertas*).

According to Heidegger the City (*Polis*) is the place of birth of the man's historical Being and particularly it is the place of the social evolution of the human being. The essential properties of the real citizen, according to the same author, is the capacity to respect the unity of the Earth, to accept the heaven and to have the ability to die.