

GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

Filipino LGBT Psychology:
Moving Beyond
“Homosexual” Street Corners
to Advancing Contemporary Visions

The earliest published references to same-sex sexualities in Philippine psychology are two descriptive field studies from more than three decades ago. One was an unobtrusive study of attitudes toward being gay using graffiti in public toilets (Sechrest & Flores, 1969). The other was an ethnographic inquiry into “male homosexual” sex work (Nery, 1979). Both papers were highly exploratory, took place in the street corners of the city of Manila, and as one author wrote, were “necessarily incomplete” (Nery, 1979, p. 32).

The time has come for Filipino LGBT psychology research to move from these dark confined margins to the bright center, with rigor and rainbows in tow.

This special issue of the Philippine Journal of Psychology aims to highlight scholarly contributions that further our understanding of Filipino LGBT lives and experiences. It gathers nine original articles — including one review essay, three full-length papers, and five short reports — that delve into a range of topics, from promoting LGBT-inclusiveness in academic research, to the experiences of coming out to one’s parents and to oneself, to anti-gay prejudice and transphobia, to sexual roles like *top*, *bottom*, and *versatile*, to friendships and *babaeng bakla* women. The articles in this issue take us on a journey to diverse locations — from contexts like family spaces in Tacloban, Leyte and bedrooms in Iloilo City, to a rehabilitation center for children in conflict with the law, to the warm intimacy of Filipino gay and lesbian romantic relationships, to the potentially emancipatory airwaves of broadcast media. And these articles do so using multiple

and diverse methodologies, including life story interviews, focus groups, personality trait inventories, a quasi-experiment, an in-depth case study, and correlational and comparative analyses.

In many ways, this special issue is a historic one, which all Filipino psychologists, LGBT and non-LGBT, can take pride in. It is the first time a local research journal has put forth an issue solely dedicated to the psychology of LGBT lives. Indeed, it is a first, not just in the Philippines but in Southeast Asia, where being LGBT is still considered by some to be a blight or misfortune, a diagnosis or counseling concern, an immorality best kept private, or even a criminal offense punishable by law.

This issue also establishes a standard for LGBT psychology research in the Philippines — scientific knowledge that is both relevant and interesting, constructed and written using non-heterosexist and non-transphobic language, attuned to cultural contexts and realities, and true to the very spirit of LGBT psychology — defined as the subfield of contemporary psychology that investigates the lives, experiences, and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, families, and communities in positive, affirming, and non-stigmatizing ways (Goldfried, 2001; Hancock & Greenspan, 2010; Sandfort, 2000).

Four decades ago in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association delisted “homosexuality” from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. And in 2011, the Psychological Association of the Philippines joined the global mental health community when it called upon all Filipino psychologists, through its LGBT-affirmative policy, to recognize the dignity and rights of all human beings. This includes the right to be free from harm and discrimination, toward a society where each person is born equal, and where everyone lives — and loves — freely.

This issue is our out, proud, and happy nerdy academic contribution toward that vision.

Eric Julian Manalastas
Department of Psychology & Center for Women's Studies
University of the Philippines

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THE SPECIAL LGBT PSYCHOLOGY ISSUE

Special acknowledgments go to former PJP editor Allan B. I. Bernardo, for facilitating a special two-day writers workshop on publishing made possible by a grant from the Arcus Foundation, to PAP president Ma. Regina M. Hechanova and PJP editor Melissa J. Macapagal, for their trust and support throughout the publication process, and to Eds Lantin, for taking on the challenge of backstage production for this issue, with no less than cheerfulness, dedication, and appropriate gaiety. Thanks also to Jan Castañeda of the UP Center for Women's Studies, who assisted at various stages in editorial production.

The following fabulous pool of invited scholars and practitioners generously contributed their time and expertise in reviewing manuscripts for this special issue.

Roberto Baiocco
Sapienza University of Rome
Italy

Mark L. Pope
University of Missouri - Saint Louis
USA

Cherrie Joy Billedo
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Netherlands

Heliana Ramirez
VA Palo Alto Health Care System
USA

Jerel P. Calzo
Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard
Medical School
USA

Marc Eric Reyes
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Clark University
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Elizabeth L. Enriquez
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Claremont Graduate University
USA

Aarti Iyer
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B-Change Foundation
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University of Auckland
New Zealand