

Filipino Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men: Secondary Analysis of 1996 and 2001 National Survey Data

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Using data from national surveys conducted by the Social Weather Station in 1996 and in 2001 ($N = 1,200$ each), we examined the attitudes of Filipinos as a general population toward lesbians and gay men. Secondary analysis of two heterosexism measures included in the surveys indicated that Filipinos held largely negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Many Filipinos (about 28%) considered being gay/lesbian as "can never be justified" while only 4% thought it could "always be justified." In addition, about 1 out of 4 Filipinos expressed not wanting gay men/lesbians as neighbors. These heterosexist views did not change significantly from 1996 to 2001 and were widespread, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, educational attainment, or religiosity. Respondents from NCR had the least negative evaluations, and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were positively correlated to attitudes toward sex work, abortion, and divorce.

A person's negative attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and their sexualities, including beliefs that being gay/lesbian is wrong, unnatural, pathological, or sinful, is called *heterosexism* (Herek, 1995). Heterosexist attitudes, sometimes called homophobia or anti-gay prejudice, are often reflective of a larger, more cultural heterosexist ideology that privileges only heterosexual forms of sexuality, relationships, and living. Heterosexism includes the belief that same-sex relationships are wrong or dysfunctional, that lesbians and gay men are less capable than heterosexuals as

parents or professionals, and that lesbians and gay men do not deserve the same civil rights as heterosexuals, including marriage, adoption, and protection from discrimination.

Dimensions of Heterosexist Attitudes

A number of social psychological studies have shown that the construct of heterosexist attitudes is highly complex and not unidimensional. In a meta-analysis of sex differences in heterosexist attitudes, Kite and Whitley (1996) identified three factors: (1) attitudes toward lesbian/gay individuals, (2) attitudes toward same-sex sexual behavior, and (3) attitudes toward lesbian/gay people's civil rights. Individuals, for example, may have favorable attitudes toward lesbians and gay men as people, liking them as friends or co-workers, but at the same time frown upon lesbian or gay sex or not support the legalization of same-sex unions or other civil rights.

In a follow-up study, La Mar and Kite (1998) derived four domains of heterosexist attitudes using factor analysis, namely (1) Condemnation/Tolerance (similar to the previous factor of attitudes toward lesbian/gay individuals), (2) Morality (beliefs that being gay/lesbian is immoral and threatens the social order), (3) Contact (attitudes toward interpersonal contact with someone who is lesbian or gay), and (4) Stereotypes (beliefs about characteristics of lesbians and gay men). Significant interactions between these components and other variables like gender of respondent and gender of target were found; for instance, male respondents held more negative attitudes across all factors except on Stereotypes than did women. Men also rated gay men more negatively than they rated lesbians; in contrast, women rated gay men and lesbians similarly on almost all dimensions except on Contact, where women's attitudes became particularly negative. These interactions underscore another important feature of heterosexist views—attitudes toward gay men and attitudes toward lesbians, while correlated, are distinct from one another (Herek, 2000).

Correlates of Heterosexist Attitudes

Demographic variables. A number of variables have been consistently found to be correlated to attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, at least in North American societies. Compared to heterosexuals with favorable attitudes toward gay people, individuals with heterosexist attitudes are more likely to be older, be less well-educated, reside in geographic areas where heterosexism represents the norm, be more strongly religious and subscribe to a conservative religious ideology, be less likely to report having had sex with a person of the same sex, be less likely to self-identify as lesbian or gay, and to have fewer friends who are openly gay or lesbian (Herek, 1995; Yang, 1998). In addition, many studies have shown that heterosexual men tend to be more negative in their attitudes than heterosexual women, especially toward gay males (Herek, 2000; LaMar & Kite, 1998). This gender difference has been explained in terms of differential contact (i.e., that women may be more likely to know and interact with openly gay people, leading to more positive attitudes) as well as a broader, cultural hetero-masculine ideology (i.e., that men are under considerable pressure to affirm their masculinity by rejecting what is perceived as anti-masculine, such as being gay).

Theoretically based predictors. Apart from investigating demographic and attitudinal variables, researchers have more begun to develop more theoretically sophisticated models of heterosexist attitudes. In one earlier social psychological model by Haddock, Zanna, and Esses (1993), individual attitudes toward gay men and lesbians were predicted by stereotypes, symbolic beliefs (measured as perceived value dissimilarity), affective reactions, right-wing authoritarianism, and past contact experiences with gay/lesbian targets.

In another, more recent model, Whitley and Aegisdottir (2000) used path analysis to demonstrate that attitudes toward lesbians and gay men could be predicted by gender-role beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation.

Gender-role beliefs have long been considered an important correlate of heterosexism by many social psychologists, who argue that attitudes toward lesbians and gay men are embedded within the greater context of a generalized gender belief system, defined as how people have come to view women and men, including the purported qualities of femininity and masculinity as well as the ascribed values, roles, and norms surrounding gender in a particular society.

Right-wing authoritarianism, on the other hand, refers to people's degree of deference to in-group authority figures and the traditional values these authority figures endorse. Social dominance orientation, a related construct, refers to the extent to which people wish to maintain a superior social status relative to outgroups. The social dominance perspective argues that individuals who possess social status and power (e.g., heterosexuals, particularly heterosexual men) will be motivated to preserve this status quo by endorsing legitimizing beliefs, including prejudicial attitudes against outgroups (e.g., lesbians and gay men). Combined with authoritarianism, social dominance and gender-beliefs create a conceptually-driven, social psychological view of heterosexism beyond the usual, atheoretical demographic variables.

Filipino Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men

A number of sources suggest that Filipinos have rather negative attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and their sexualities. Observations made by activists and members of the NGO sector, for example, point to prejudice and discrimination against lesbians in many domains including healthcare, education, work, and religion (Women's Feature Service Philippines, 2001). Likewise, as Holmes (1993) asserted:

No psychologist in her right mind could ignore [the topic of being gay because] there is too much unnecessary anguish connected with being different here in the Philippines. There is too much cruelty and hypocrisy that takes place in a country that purports to be Christian. There are too

many families that cause unspeakable pain to their gay members in a nation that claims that the family is the very bedrock and foundation of its society (p. xv).

Qualitative research with lesbian/gay participants supports these observations. Using 32 focus groups and 13 in-depth interviews with Filipino adolescents in Metro Manila and Luzon, Gastardo-Conaco, Jimenez and Billedo (2003) found that young Filipino lesbians and gay men report experiences of heterosexism, especially in contexts like the home, school, and religion. These experiences, according to one recent survey of gay male college students by Mostajo, Saz-Page, and Rasing (2005), may include being called by terms like *bakla* instead of one's name, being subjected to anti-gay jokes, being forced to enter intimate relationships with others of the opposite sex, and being considered sick or abnormal.

Even research that does not specifically focus on gay and lesbian concerns points to the existence of heterosexist views among Filipinos. In their study of Filipino *pagkalalake*/masculinity using interviews with 32 father-son pairs from various areas in the Philippines, Aguilin-Dalisay and her colleagues (2000) found that being gay was considered by participants as "sinful" and antithetical to being a "real" man. Similarly, in their field research on sexual risks among Filipino young adults in Manila and Iloilo, Tan, Ujano-Batangan, and Cabado-Española (2001) noted that many participants held strongly negative views of being gay/lesbian, with gay sex being described as "unnatural" or "filthy" ("*baboy*"). In the words of these researchers: "On the surface, homosexuality seems to be tolerated [in Filipino society] but our research shows that there is strong resentment of and discrimination against gay men and lesbians" (p.116).

One latest addition to local research on Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men comes in the form of the most recent Young Adult Fertility Survey (Silverio, 2004). Using a national probability sample of $N = 16,216$ Filipinos ages 15 to 24, the YAFS3 researchers attempted to obtain data on attitudes

toward lesbians and gay men by including a one-item, dichotomously scored measure that asked respondents if "homosexuals are acceptable to them in general." More young Filipino women reported positive evaluations (60.7%) compared to men (41.9%). Educational attainment was related to attitudes toward lesbians/gay men, i.e., increasing levels of acceptability were found with increasing levels of education. Respondents from NCR had the most positive evaluation (60%) compared to other regions, and Muslim respondents were the least accepting of all the religious backgrounds surveyed.

It is unclear, however, how well the YAFS3 data reveal the general attitudes of Filipinos toward lesbians and gay men, given their particular focus on the young adult population and their use of a rather simplistic, one-item yes-no attitude measure. Similarly, while qualitative research sheds light on the complexities and contexts of certain Filipinos' views of lesbians and gay men, these findings, however interesting, cannot provide generalizability to the Filipino population.

In order to assess the overall attitudes of Filipinos toward lesbians and gay men, we present a secondary analysis of national survey data collected at two time points using probability sampling. Secondary analysis of preexisting survey data can be a useful means to document baseline levels of particular phenomena like population-level attitudes toward social groups while allowing social psychological researchers to take advantage of large probability samples at relatively low expense, effort, and time cost (Zaitzow & Fields, 1996).

Problem

How do Filipinos, as a general population, view lesbians and gay men? Have these attitudes changed from the mid-1990s to a year after the turn of the century? And what are some of the significant correlates of Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men?

Based on survey data collected by the Social Weather Station drawn from national probability samples within a five-year interval ($N = 1,200$ in 1996 and $N = 1,200$ in 2001), we aimed to:

- (1) describe how positively or negatively Filipinos view lesbians, gay men, and their sexualities
- (2) compare these attitudes across the five-year interval (year 1996 versus year 2001)
- (3) identify any correlates of Filipinos' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, etc).

METHOD

Datasets

The two datasets used in this analysis were: (1) the Philippine Round of the 1996 World Values Survey, and (2) the Philippine Round of the 2001 World Values Survey, both conducted in the Philippines by the Social Weather Station (SWS). Both interview-based surveys investigated more than 150 social variables, probing into respondents' views of personal and social values, religion, life satisfaction, social issues, and political attitudes and behavior. Both surveys utilized multi-stage cluster sampling to obtain national representative samples of $N = 600$ male and $N = 600$ female Filipino adults for each year.

Measures

Two items in the SWS surveys tapped into self-reported attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The first was a question that asked respondents to identify who were the people they "would not like as neighbors" ("*Aling grupo ang ayaw ninyong maging kapitbahay?*"). Respondents were presented a list of ten social groups, which included "*mga bakla o tomboy*" as one option. Nominating lesbians/gay men was meant to signify negative (i.e., heterosexist) attitudes while non-selection presumably reflected a less negative evaluation.

The second item asked respondents to rate how “justifiable” they believe a number of behaviors to be, including being gay or lesbian (“*pagiging bakla o tomboy*”), using a 10-point Likert-type scaling with anchors of 1 = *Never be justified/Hindi kailanman mabibigyan ng katuwiran* and 10 = *Always be justified/Palaging mabibigyan ng katuwiran*. Higher scores on this item were meant to indicate more positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.

These two heterosexism items were significantly correlated to each other, $r(2379) = 0.11$, $p < 0.001$, and respondents who mentioned not wanting lesbians/gay men as neighbors were more likely to view being lesbian/gay as “unjustifiable” ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 2.52$) compared to those who did not make any such mention of them ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 2.59$), $t(2377) = 5.51$, $p < 0.001$, suggesting some degree of reliability.

RESULTS

Respondents

1996 Survey. Age of respondents in 1996 ranged from 18 to 89 years old ($M = 38.8$ years, $SD = 15.1$). Various ethnic backgrounds were represented, including Bisaya (34.9%), Tagalog (29.8%), Ilonggo (9.5%), Ilocano (9.5%), Bicolano (3.8%), Sama (3.1%), and Kapampangan (2.8%), among others. Socio-economic status was spread out, with 33.6% reported being from “lower-middle class” backgrounds, 28.7% “lower class,” 20.4% “working class,” 13.8% “upper-middle class,” and 2.8% “upper class.” Majority were Roman Catholic (71.5%), with some Muslim (3.2%), Iglesia ni Cristo (3.4%), and some reporting no religious affiliation (10.9%).

2001 Survey. Respondents from 2001 had a similar age profile, ranging from 18 to 87 years old ($M = 36.2$, $SD = 14.0$). Individuals of Tagalog and Bisaya background were again among the most represented in the sample (35.3% and 30.8%, respectively), followed by Ilonggo (9.8%), Ilocano (6.0%), Waray (3.7%), Kapampangan (2.7%), Aklanon (2.7%), and Bicolano (2.3%). Many respondents

self-identified as “lower-middle class” (42.1%), followed by “working class” (22.2%), “lower class” (16.8%), “upper-middle class” (16.3%), and “upper class” (2.3%). Again, majority of respondents were Roman Catholic (84.8%), with some Iglesia ni Cristo (2.7%), Protestant (1.9%), and Muslim (1.4%).

Filipino Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men in 1996 and in 2001

Not-neighbor measure. Data from the 1996 survey indicate that about one-third of respondents (32.5%) specifically mentioned lesbians/gay men as one social group they did not want as neighbors (see Table 1). The 2001 survey data, on the other hand, show that 24% of respondents did not want lesbians/gay men as neighbors.

Table 1. Proportion of Respondents in 1996 and in 2001 Who Did Not Want Lesbians / Gay Men as Neighbors

Response to Not-Neighbor Item	1996	2001
Named lesbians/gay men as unwanted neighbors	390 (32.5%)	288 (24%)
Did not name	810 (67.5%)	912 (76%)
Total <i>N</i>	1200	1200

In relation to the other nine social groups that respondents in 1996 were asked to consider, lesbians/gay men were mentioned less often than drug addicts (86% of the respondents), criminal record holders (82.3%), persons living with AIDS (73.5%), heavy drinkers (67.9%), and political extremists (43.7%). Respondents in 1996 had relatively less negative attitudes toward Muslims (32.5%), people who were “emotionally unstable” (28.3%), persons of another race (24.2%), and immigrant workers (19.8%). Respondents chose an average of 4.87 social groups ($SD = 2.15$) out of the maximum possible ten as groups of people whom they did not want as neighbors.

In 2001, Filipinos identified drug addicts (80.4% of the respondents), criminal record holders (71.3%), people with AIDS (60.5%), heavy drinkers (54.4%), emotionally unstable people (26.8%), and Muslims (26.5%) more often than lesbians/gay men as social groups that they did not want as neighbors. Again, less negative attitudes were found toward people of another race (21%) and immigrant workers (15.6%), as well as Chinese/Chinese-Filipinos (16.6%). Out of the 10 possible options, respondents chose an average of 3.97 groups ($SD = 2.17$) as unwanted neighbors.

Comparison of 1996 versus 2001. The proportion of respondents who explicitly preferred not having lesbians/gay men as neighbors decreased from 1996 to 2001 (from 32.5% to 24%). This change in proportion was statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 21.38$ ($df = 1$, $p < 0.01$).

However, it should be noted that respondents also nominated significantly fewer groups as unwanted neighbors in 2001 ($M = 3.97$) compared to 1996 ($M = 4.87$), $t(2398) = 10.25$, $p < 0.001$, suggesting a systematic difference in the overall trend of responses for this item. The apparent decrease in heterosexist attitudes may simply reflect a decrease in being “rejecting” of various social groups in 2001 compared to in 1996.

Examination of differences in proportions of responses made regarding the other social groups in the not-neighbor measure bears this out (see Table 2). In addition to lesbians/gay men, respondents in 2001 were less likely to identify drug addicts, people with criminal records, people with AIDS, heavy drinkers, and immigrant workers as individuals they did not want as neighbors (p 's < 0.025).

Table 2. Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Different Social Groups as Unwanted Neighbors (1996 versus 2001)

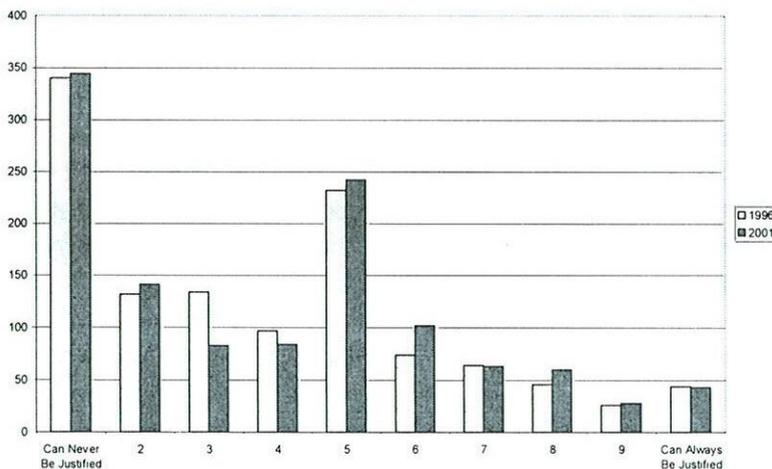
Social Group†	1996	2001	Change	z
Drug Addicts	86%	80.4%	Decrease	3.67*
People with a Criminal Record	82.3%	71.3%	Decrease	6.38*
People with AIDS	73.5%	60.5%	Decrease	6.77*
Heavy Drinkers	67.9%	54.4%	Decrease	6.79*
Gay men / Lesbians	32.5%	24%	Decrease	4.62*
Muslims	29.1%	26.5%	Decrease	1.42
Emotionally Unstable Persons	28.3%	26.8%	Decrease	0.82
People of a Different Race	24.2%	21%	Decrease	1.87
Immigrant Workers	19.8%	15.6%	Decrease	2.70*

* Change in proportion is significant at $p < 0.025$.

† Two options did not appear in both surveys: "Political extremists" (1996) and "Chinese/Fil-Chinese" (2001).

Justifiability measure. For the 1996 data (see Figure 1), 340 out of 1200 respondents (28.3%) rated being lesbian/gay as "can never be justified." This rating which represented the most extreme negative point along the 10-point scale was the most frequently

Figure 1. Frequency of Ratings on Justifiability of Being Gay/Lesbian



occurring response. Overall mean rating was 3.77 ($SD = 2.55$, 95% CI = 3.63 – 3.92), and more than half the respondents (58.6%) made ratings below the scale midpoint, indicating rather widespread negative attitudes toward lesbians/gay men. About a fifth (19.3%) chose the middle value (“5”) of the scale. Only 3.7% believed being lesbian/gay could “always be justified.”

The 2001 survey likewise indicated that Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were quite negative, with 28.7% of the respondents saying that being lesbian/gay “can never be justified.” Again, this was the modal rating on the 10-point scale, with more than half of the respondents (54.3%) scoring below the scale midpoint. Mean rating was 3.90 ($SD = 2.62$, 95% CI = 3.75 – 4.04). About a fifth (20.2%) fell at the middle value of the scale, and only a tiny minority of Filipinos (3.6%) believed that being lesbian/gay could “always be justified.”

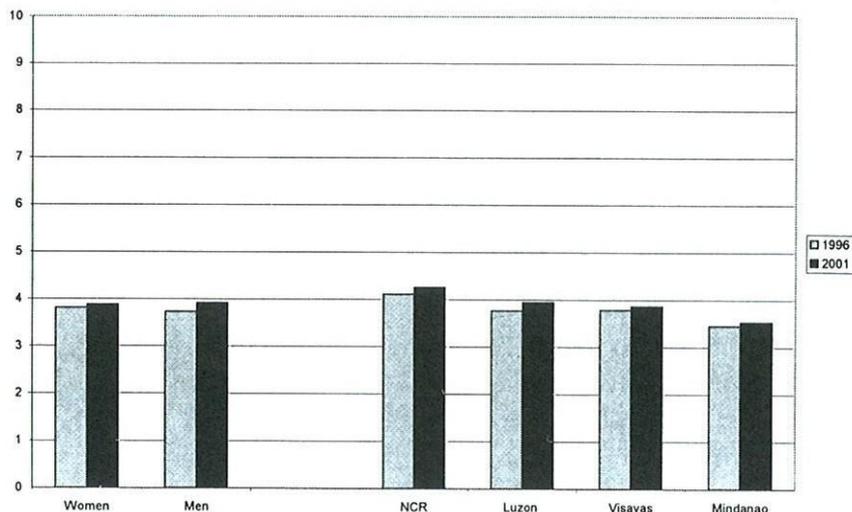
Comparison of 1996 versus 2001. Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, as measured by the 10-point scale item, did not differ significantly from the 1996 period to the 2001 period, $t(2377) = 1.14$, $p > 0.253$, suggesting that Filipinos had not changed much in the five-year span when it came to their mostly negative views toward being gay/lesbian.

Correlates of Filipino Heterosexist Attitudes

Gender. Contrary to findings in the heterosexism literature that suggest that women have more positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men in general, Filipino women and men did not differ significantly in their heterosexist attitudes, as measured by the Justifiability measure, in the year 1996, $t(1187) = 0.54$, $p > 0.59$, or in the year 2001, $t(1188) = 0.16$, $p > 0.88$ (see Figure 2).

A Gender x Response analysis of the Not-Neighbor measure in 1996 did suggest a statistically significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2 = 5.49$ ($df = 1$, $p < 0.02$). Filipino women tended to be less heterosexist compared to men in naming lesbians/gay men as unwanted neighbors (29% of women versus

Figure 2. Mean Ratings on the Justifiability Item by Gender and Geographic Location



36% of men); however, this gender-heterosexism association proved to be extremely weak, $\Phi = 0.07$, $p < 0.02$.

In addition, this association did not appear in 2001, during which roughly the same proportions of Filipino women and men (23% of women versus 25% of men) indicated negative attitudes toward lesbians/gay men by identifying them as unwanted neighbors, $\chi^2 = 0.46$ ($df = 1$, $p > 0.50$).

Region. In terms of geographic spread of Filipino heterosexist attitudes as measured by the Justifiability measure (see Figure 2), respondents from Metro Manila had the least negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 2.57$), followed by Luzon ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 2.58$) and the Visayas ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 2.68$). Respondents from Mindanao had the most negative attitudes ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 2.47$). A one-way ANOVA suggested a significant difference in heterosexist attitudes by region, $F(3, 2375) = 7.216$, $P < 0.001$. Pairwise post hoc analysis using Bonferroni procedures revealed that only attitudes from Metro Manila versus from Mindanao were significantly different

from each other, suggesting that Filipino heterosexist attitudes appear to be widespread geographically, with a slight trend for less negative attitudes in Metro Manila.

Age, educational attainment, and SES. Heterosexist attitudes of Filipinos were not related to age of respondent, $r(2379) = -0.016$, $p > 0.43$; to educational attainment, $r(2379) = 0.001$, $p > 0.98$; or to self-rated socioeconomic status, $r(2379) = -0.031$, $p > 0.14$. Lack of differences within these demographic variables again points to what appears to be an overall prevalent negative view of gay men and lesbians among Filipinos.

Religiosity. Two items that attempt to measure religiosity were identified in the SWS surveys. The first was a nominal measure that asked respondents to categorize themselves as either “a religious person (*relihiyosong tao*)”, “not a religious person (*hindi relihiyosong tao*)” or “a convinced atheist (*talagang hindi nainiwala sa Diyos*).” Majority of respondents in 1996 considered themselves religious (83.6%) compared to others who self-identified as non-religious (15.8%) or atheist (0.2%), while in 2001, 78.3% considered themselves religious, 20.7% were non-religious, and 0.2% were atheist. Comparison of self-identified religious versus non-religious respondents showed no difference in terms of attitudes toward lesbians/gay men on the Justifiability measure in 1996, $t(1191) = 0.48$, $p > 0.63$, and in 2001, $t(1186) = 0.28$, $p > 0.78$.

A second religiosity measure in the surveys asked respondents how important they considered God to be in their lives (“Gaano kaimportante ang Diyos sa inyong buhay?”) using 10-point scaling with anchors of 1 = *Not at all important/Talagang hindi importante* to 10 = *Very important/Talagang importante*. Responses on this item, however, were extremely skewed, with the great majority of respondents choosing “10” (88% in 1996 and 85.9% in 2001). A nonparametric correlation between importance of God and heterosexist attitudes as measured by the Justifiability item was significant in 1996, $r(1189) = -0.12$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that God-valuing Filipinos tended to have less positive attitudes toward being gay/lesbian. This association was not found, however, in 2001, $r(1189) = -0.02$, $p > 0.44$.

Gender-role attitudes. A composite measure of attitudes toward traditional gender roles, particularly adherence to beliefs that privilege men relative to women, was created in order to assess if traditional gender-role attitudes were related to heterosexism as found by other researchers (Kite & Whitley, 1996; Davies, 2004). Two items in the SWS surveys tapping into attitudes toward men and women were identified and summed: (1) "A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl (*Ang edukasyon sa unibersidad ay mas importante para sa isang lalaki kaysa sa isang babae*)" and (2) "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do (*Sa kabuuan, ang mga lalaki ay mas mahusay na mga lider sa pulitika kaysa sa mga babae*). Responses were made on a four-point scaling with 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree. Inter-item correlation for these two statements were $r(1162) = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$ for the year 1996 and $r(1185) = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$ for the year 2001. Contrary to what was expected, however, these gender-role attitudes did not appear to be correlated with heterosexist views in 1996, $r(1162) = -0.03$, $p > 0.39$, or in 2001, $r(1162) = 0.02$, $p > 0.52$.

Other attitudes. Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, on the Justifiability measure, were significantly correlated to attitudes toward a number of social issues, particularly to prostitution, $r(2374) = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$; to abortion, $r(2375) = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$; and to divorce, $r(2372) = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$. In general, Filipinos with heterosexist attitudes were more likely to view sex work, pregnancy termination, and divorce as likewise "unjustifiable."

Authoritarian and Social Dominance values. Respondents in both SWS Surveys were presented a list of ten personal characteristics "that children can be encouraged to learn at home/*na maaaring hikayatin ang mga bata na matutunan sa bahay*" and asked to identify up to five that they believed to be most important. Included among the options were "Obedience (*pagiging masunurin*)" and "Tolerance and respect for other people (*pagtitimpi at respeto sa ibang tao*)." Inasmuch as responses on these items reflect elements of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation

respectively, we compared respondents who cited these “values” as important or not, on their attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Respondents who valued obedience were not significantly different in heterosexism, however, compared to respondents who did not identify it as a key value in 1996 ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 2.57$ versus $M = 3.79$, $SD = 2.54$, respectively) or in 2001 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 2.67$ versus $M = 3.88$, $SD = 2.58$, respectively). Similarly, no differences were found when comparing respondents who placed high value in tolerance and respect for others to those who did not, in 1996 ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 2.52$ versus $M = 3.76$, $SD = 2.59$, respectively) and in 2001 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 2.67$ versus $M = 3.86$, $SD = 2.55$, respectively). Heterosexist attitudes appeared to be common, regardless of how salient Filipinos considered the values of obedience and social tolerance to be.

DISCUSSION

Secondary analysis of national survey data from 1996 and 2001 indicated that Filipinos had mostly negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, and that these heterosexist views were common and widespread, as suggested by the qualitative research literature. Filipino heterosexist attitudes did not change significantly from 1996 to 2001, and many Filipinos—regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status, educational background, or salient values—held being lesbian/gay as “unjustifiable,” with about a third to a quarter of them expressing not wanting lesbians and gay men as neighbors. As measured by the items in the World Values Surveys, attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were correlated to attitudes toward abortion, prostitution, and divorce, but unexpectedly were not related to gender-role beliefs or religiosity.

Filipino Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men: Widespread and Negative

Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were found to be largely negative and these heterosexist views were widespread across many variables that were originally hypothesized to be significant correlates. It seems that indeed, as social psychologists have noted, “stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are too much with us” (Fiske, 1998). The present findings confirm what has been suggested in the qualitative research literature: that many Filipinos have negative views toward lesbians and gay men, considering their sexuality as something “unjustifiable” (as opposed to viewing it as a normal variation in human sexuality, as modern social scientists and mental health professionals have established; see American Psychological Association, 2005). This heterosexist view also emerged when respondents were asked to identify members of Filipino society they would not like as neighbors. Lesbians and gay men were on the unwanted neighbor list of as many as 1 out of 4 Filipinos, suggesting that even in the community-level sphere, lesbians and gay men are among those who are not totally welcome.

These findings have implications for lesbian and gay Filipinos as well as for efforts at promoting a more open and affirmative Filipino society. Lesbian and gay Filipinos, in a sense, can be and perhaps are often situated in a social position where, at least in the minds of many of their fellow Filipinos, they have to provide “justifications” for their sexual orientation and identity to the (presumably) heterosexual majority, who are considered “typical” in terms of social category norms and thus are absolved from the requirement of explaining their sexuality (Hegarty & Pratto, 2001). Plus, given that more than 1 out of 4 Filipinos believe that there was no possible “justification” for being lesbian/gay (as opposed to taking the less extreme, “it depends” position), those “justifications,” however finely articulated, face an uphill attitudinal battle.

Limitations

Given the multidimensionality of heterosexist attitudes, we made use of both available measures of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men found in the World Values Surveys: one that asked respondents if lesbians and gay men were unwanted neighbors or not, and another that required respondents to rate the “justifiability” of being lesbian/gay. Examination of the categorical Not-Neighbor item suggests it may be tapping more into attitudes toward *lesbians and gay men as persons* (akin to a contact or social distancing/exclusion measure), while the Likert-scaled Justifiability item appears to focus more on attitudes toward *being lesbian/gay per se*. The difference in response formats, however, made a direct comparison of the two items impossible.

Though the basic hypothesis that Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men tend to be negative appears to be supported by the data, a number of caveats in the present analysis should still be noted. First, because the objective of the World Values Survey was originally to assess respondents’ personal values in relation to a wide range of variables, attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were measured using only two items. The dichotomously scored Not-Neighbor measure, in addition, may actually be thought of as an embedded, social exclusion measure and should be taken in its proper context in the instrument, i.e., within a list of potentially “unwanted” social groups including drug-dependents and criminal record holders.

Likewise, while the Justifiability measure may be more sensitive to nuances in heterosexist attitudes given its scaling format, it may require higher cognitive demands for respondents to answer in the non-heterosexist direction. That is, since this item asks respondents to judge the “justifiability” of being lesbian/gay, respondents who may have difficulty accessing “justifications” from memory may answer in the heterosexist direction, or simply rate being lesbian/gay as “can never be justified” in order to minimize cognitive load.

In relation to the cognitive processes underlying responses to heterosexism items in surveys (which have been well-documented; see Herek, 2002), potential context effects could have also been operating. Examination of the SWS survey instrument indicates that the gay/lesbian items were closely preceded by questions such as probes into the justifiability of criminal behaviors or items that ask respondents to think about drug addicts. Experimental studies of survey responding have demonstrated that activated negative cognitive evaluations for one item tend to carry over to other items that follow it. Thus, respondents who respond negatively when asked to consider targets like drug abusers, for example, may respond in a similar disapproving fashion toward lesbian/gay items as a function of item order and perseverance effects.

Another limitation of the current study is that though both measures tap into heterosexist attitudes, they did not distinguish between gender-specific forms of heterosexism, namely attitudes toward lesbians versus attitudes toward gay men. It is unknown whether survey responses were made with gay men in mind more than lesbians (as some researchers have found in studies that use generic terms like "homosexuals," e.g., Haddock, et al., 1993) or the other way around. This is an important consideration for future studies, as respondents with positive attitudes toward gay men but negative attitudes toward lesbians (or vice versa) may still respond to a single omnibus item in the heterosexist direction following a negativity bias. Researchers should consider developing measures that tap into attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gay men separately, in order to tease out the confounding effects of collapsing the two groups into a single social category.

Finally, since both heterosexism items focused explicitly on attitudes toward lesbians and gay men only, we have no information about Filipino attitudes toward bisexual individuals and bisexuality, a concern that is left for future researchers interested in exploring the entire spectrum of heterosexism.

Social Psychological Research toward a Less Prejudiced Filipino Society

Social scientists, including social psychologists, are in an important position to contribute to the advancement of social justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities (D'Augelli & Garnets, 1991). As researchers, for example, we are equipped with the conceptual and methodological tools to document and analyze prejudice, discrimination, stigma, and inequalities experienced by LGBT Filipinos. By making these realities known via an empirical research base, we can inform educational efforts as well as public policy (e.g., providing evidence of heterosexism in support of current efforts by human-rights groups and LGBT activists toward the ratification of anti-discrimination laws that will protect all Filipinos from discrimination based on sexual orientation).

The first item in such a research agenda, according to Herek (1995), is to document the scope and prevalence of heterosexism in various populations and settings, its underlying social psychological processes, its consequences, and its prevention and reduction. In particular, the challenge for Filipino social scientists is to bring to the surface what some may consider to be already non-existent (e.g., the largely inaccurate notion that Filipino society is "tolerant" or "accepting" of its LGBT members) or worse, a non-issue (i.e., the modern heterosexist belief that anti-gay prejudice is a trivial social concern and that LGBT people "want too many rights"; see Raja & Stokes, 1998).

Thus while the current secondary analysis of national survey data is a useful way of assessing baseline attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, further investigation of the spread and structure of heterosexist attitudes of Filipinos is needed in order to flesh out the more precise dynamics behind this phenomenon, as well as its implications and impact on Filipinos of diverse sexualities. Social psychological research, based on rigorous quantitative as well as qualitative methods combined with culturally grounded conceptual analyses, will provide us with a better, evidence-based

view of Filipino heterosexist attitudes, which is an important step in moving toward a more gender-sensitive, egalitarian society that is accepting of all of its members regardless of sexual orientation.

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