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Revisiting Social Acceptance of Homosexuality Among Filipino Youth: Some Theoretical and Methodological Implications

Christian Joy P. Cruz^{*} and Ruzzel Brian C. Mallari^{**}

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the issue of social acceptance of homosexuality in the Philippines both qualitatively as evidenced by systematically examining emerging themes in the literature, and quantitatively by using data from the Young Adults Fertility and Sexuality Survey of 2002. While in general, “homosexual acceptance” among the young Filipino population is reported to be as high as 50.9 percent, the paper demonstrates that when acceptance is qualified with the activities that characterize homosexual practice – men dating men, women dating women and, sexual attraction to the same sex – the result presents that only 13.5 percent of the young people approve both the homosexual person and the practice of homosexuality. Conceptually, it presents that acceptance of homosexuality must be extended from the acceptance of the homosexual person into incorporating the acceptance of homosexual practice.

Introduction

Human sexuality involves the norms and circumstances that govern the expression of sexual relations between individuals. Sexuality has been seen as a fact of nature, with sexologists such as Masters and Johnson (1966) focusing on the biology and physiology of sex. Since

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sexuality is assumed to be at the core of human beings (i.e., as sexual beings), it is seen as a driving force that motivates humans to action particularly on the drive to procreate thereby stressing a heterosexual norm (Seidman 2003).

This proclivity to underscore the hetero-normative definition of sexuality was a product of the early Sexology movement in Europe that tended to promote the idea that any sexual expression that deviated from the heterosexual aim was abnormal. Noted sexologist Von Krafft Ebings' *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1889), listed homosexuality along with 200 other disorders as abnormal (Hartwich 1959). Freud's revolutionary psychoanalytic approach to sexuality, albeit medical, has led to a distinction between one person's gender and his sexuality. Freud rejected the previous idea that homosexuality was caused by the inheritance of female characteristics by males, or by the possession of a hermaphrodite mind (Westphal and, Ulrich n.d.) and argued that the direction the sexual drive takes has no necessary relationship to inherited sexual characteristics. He theorized that all children are born polymorphously perverse - their sexual desires can be drawn toward any object - and it is their childhood experiences that cause their sex drive to be directed to members of the opposite or the same sex. Since Freud rejected hereditarian theories of the causes of homosexuality, he also rejected the notion that homosexuals or inverts are necessarily feminine. According to Freud, whether a boy grows up to have a masculine or feminine personality has nothing to do with the direction of his sexual desire. Thus, depending on his upbringing, a boy can develop into an effeminate heterosexual, a masculine homosexual, or some other combination of gender and sexuality (Freud, 1905).

The Kinsey Reports (1948) further opened the theorizing on homosexuality by introducing that homosexuality is also present in American society with 10 percent of American men admitting to be homosexuals for at least three years in their lives and four percent admitting to be homosexuals. Homosexuality according to Kinsey was then another option or outlet for the sexual drive, thus no person is generally different in constitution. Individuals, as Kinsey argued, follow a six point scale on whether a person prefers not even a twinge for homosexual outlet (point 0) to purely a homosexual outlet (point six) and further posits that men move in these categories on a continuum between homosexual and heterosexual at some point during their lifetimes.

Along with these developments in homosexuality theorizing in the West came the counterpart stream in the political and social cause for the homosexuals. It may be construed that whatever the prevailing ideologies on how homosexuality is viewed - whether in the medical or psychoanalytic level - influence on how society accepts homosexuality. Any discourse at the scientific level indeterminately affects the social and the political standing of homosexuals or vice versa. Homosexual movements can either be a response or affirmation or countermeasure to prevailing discourses on homosexuality.

Homosexual acceptance is mainly a product of these movements coming from the virtual outlawing of homosexual acts prior to 1860 to moving in to mainstream starting in the revolutionary times of the 1970s. When viewed systematically, homosexuality is seen as a continuously evolving concept whose abstraction is constantly challenged and shaped by its relations with its environment, such relations include: the society where it is practiced, the dominant culture persisting in the society, and the institutions that either recognize or suppress and repress its existence. The interplay of these forces, both the sociopolitical-legal considerations and institutional actors create and re-create homosexual identity and character which in turn yield to the social acceptance of homosexuality over time.

Homosexuality is proving to be a fertile ground with newly evolving concepts proposed in the Queer Theory body of literature. General concepts such as the homosexual-heterosexual continuum are further expanded in the introduction of concepts or classifications such as pansexual (involves no particular sexual preference, i.e., may have sexual relations with any gender), autosexual (someone who prefers masturbation over partnered sex), and even asexual (someone who does not experience sexual attraction at all).

The ability to understand and explain the dynamics of these forces that impinge on the definition of homosexuality at the macro level, will help individuals propagate a better understanding of the concepts regarding homosexual orientation and behavior. Such is most useful when one is in constant challenge to assert individuality especially in the (post) modern globalized world. Considering all these, adolescence becomes a vital stage as it is the transition period between childhood and adulthood. The period is fraught with the simultaneous interplay of changes within the biological and emotional makeup of the child. Adolescence proves to be the time where boundaries are challenged and preferences stated in all aspects of his life including sexual identity. The need to provide understanding assures better coping for the adolescent.

It is the view of this paper to highlight and re-analyze homosexual acceptance among the Filipino youth using data from the 2002 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS3). It also attempts to organize existing literature to provide a clear and realistic picture of the social acceptance of homosexuality by the Filipino young adults and identify the gaps to be filled by future research.

Study Objectives

This paper examines the concept of homosexuality acceptance at the theoretical and methodological level. It seeks to raise concern about the character of the concepts related to how homosexuality is actually viewed by young Filipinos.

Conceptually it seeks to present the various facets of homosexuality as viewed by adolescents and draw the line on what is actually accepted and what is only acceptable. It aims to highlight the nuance between acceptance and acceptability via the framework of how sexuality is constructed by the Filipino youth. Particularly, it will examine how the adolescents accept a homosexual person vis-à-vis accepts a person who just happens to be a homosexual.

As a background, it will put some discussion on the status of social institutions most perceived to create or influence the views on homosexuality such as religion, culture, media, and the law. The roles of these institutions provide some clue as to how a general opinion of homosexuality is constructed in the Philippine setting through the following questions:

1. What is the role of religion, particularly the Catholic Church in the Philippines, in shaping the status of homosexuality?
2. What are the cultural concepts that influence homosexuality and its acceptance in the Philippines?
3. How is homosexuality represented in the media? What are the prevailing stereotypes that characterize homosexuals?
4. What are the legislative initiatives being undertaken that define homosexuality in the Philippines? How is it being received?

More importantly, this paper seeks to revisit and analyze quantitatively the level of acceptability and acceptance of homosexuality among the young people in the Philippines using nationally representative data. Specifically it seeks to:

1. Provide the level of homosexual acceptance among adolescents in the Philippines using YAFSS3 data and analyze its meaning; and
2. Reinterpret the level of homosexual acceptance by juxtaposing this acceptance variable per se versus other variables that may represent acceptance and/or approval of practice of homosexuality.

Data and Methodology

The theoretical or qualitative analysis part of this paper utilizes available literature on homosexuality and its acceptance, both international and local. A thematic approach of documentary analysis is employed.

On the other hand, the methodological analysis used the YAFSS3 data set as its source of quantitative data. YAFSS3 is a national survey which represents the most recent effort to better understand the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of Filipino adolescents in matters related to their gender, sexuality and reproductive health. It is also a pioneer in the addition of homosexuality as a survey component on a national scale. This data set was collected by

the Demographic Research and Development Foundation and the University of the Philippines Population Institute in partnership with academic institutions in all parts of the country, and with funding support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The YAFSS3 fieldwork resulted into a total of 19,728 respondents from 15,463 household in 894 sample barangays nationwide within the 15-27 age range. The survey employed a two-stage, self-weighting design with regions as main domains and large provinces as separate domains.

From the YAFSS3 data set, four variables were examined – acceptability of homosexuals to the respondent, approval of men dating men, approval of women dating women and approval of sexual attraction to the same sex. The respondents were asked “How about you, are homosexuals acceptable to you, in general?” and the answer includes the following categories: Yes, Gay only (male homosexual), Lesbian only (female homosexual), Bisexual only and No. For this analysis, all the first four answers were considered a positive response (Yes).

For the attitude towards homosexual dating by sex, the straight-forward question asked of the young people were “Do you approve of men dating men?” and “Do you approve of women dating other women” with a positive answer of a ‘Yes’ or a negative answer of a ‘No’. A measure to check approval of homosexual dating regardless of sex was created from these two dating variables, wherein a ‘Yes’ response to both questions was coded as ‘Yes’. While a single ‘Yes’ answer to both questions and a ‘No’ response to both question were coded as ‘No’.

For the attitude towards homosexual sex roles, the question used was “It is alright to be sexually attracted to the same sex?” with the following categories as answers – Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree. For purposes of simplicity, Strongly agree and agree were collapsed into the “Approve” category, the Disagree and Strongly disagree were put together as “Disapprove” category and renaming Neither agree nor disagree into “Neither”.

An overall variable to measure practice of homosexuality was created from three base variables – approve men dating men, approve women dating women, and approve sexual attraction to the same sex. This is represented as a dichotomous variable coded as 1 for ‘yes’, they approve the practice of homosexuality (positive response to any of the three variables) and 0 for ‘no’, they disapprove it (negative answer to all of the three base variables).

Cross-classification using the Chi-squared test was employed in evaluating the significant differentials in the acceptability of homosexuals against the practice of homosexuality. For deeper analysis, redistributing the percentages using the total sample size or total n of case as base was employed to give a clear picture of the size of the young people who really accept a homosexual person as against the size of those who find acceptable a person who happens to be a homosexual.

Further, a new variable was also created to represent the sex of those who said ‘Yes’ in the acceptability of homosexuals after which it was cross-tabulated with the created practice of homosexuality variable. This was done to determine if there is a significant difference in the approval of the practice of homosexuality between males and females who said that they accept homosexuals in general.

While there was an attempt to employ a multivariate logistic regression analysis to ascertain the socio-economic-demographic factors that influence the acceptance of the practice of homosexuality, unstable models were generated because of the uneven distribution of most of the identified variables being studied. Hence, they were not included in the analysis.

Discussion of Findings

Revisiting Homosexuality

Homosexuality is a recent Western concept (Foucault, 1980) unique among the conceptualization of male-male sexual bonds of other cultures in several ways. Where the western concept of homosexuality assumes a life-long predisposition, other cultures have typically construed male-male sexual bonds as temporary phases, as in the initiation rites of tribes in New Guinea or ancient Crete, or age-based relationships, as in ancient Greece.

An even more profound uniqueness of the Western concept of homosexuality is revealed when it is contrasted with how male-male sexual and romantic bonds were treated in Imperial China where several male emperors were known to have had male harems and favorite male concubines, and also where male prostitution (for male clients) was prevalent up to the end of the Qing Dynasty. The reason why there was no word for homosexuality in Chinese was because it was never seen as a defining or integral part of a person’s identity. Male-male sexual and romantic bonds were construed as relationships between two people as opposed to a psychological essence that defined either person. Moreover, these same-sex bonds were seen as a perfectly acceptable and natural way of life in Imperial China (Hinsch, 1992).

Homosexuality has been viewed in different ways throughout the years and has been characterized primarily by the prevailing institutions within the society. Societies differ in the extent on how much homosexuality (or some form of same-sex intimate relationship) is sanctioned or rejected. The framework such as the cultural milieu including the moral and religious criteria where homosexuality is viewed, the social and political environment specifically the legal definition where it is protected and/or sanctioned, and the forces such as media that propagate and instill ideas on how it is understood, contribute to the overall acceptance of homosexuality.

In the Philippines, there is a very broad definition of homosexuality. Anyone who does not fit into the hetero-normative ideal of being male or female will be categorized as

homosexual, a *bakla*. To simplify things, the Filipino includes distinct concepts under the homosexual umbrella. Among the concepts included in this general meaning are physicality, gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual roles. Interspersed with these concepts are the general categorizations of homosexuals by the young Filipino.

In a series of focus group discussions and key informant in-depth interviews, Cruz (2006) posits a multi-tiered approach to homosexual definition that starts with the gender identity of a person; if the person presents himself/herself opposite to the assigned physical make-up, then he is considered as a homosexual – a flaunting and flamboyant homosexual. For the male homosexuals of this category they are the *parloristas* or *beauconeras*, those who work in beauty salons and are the ones joining gay beauty pageants. They are characterized as males mimicking a woman by using feminine clothing, sporting long hair and painted nails, talking and acting like a female. *Butch* or *tombutch* are the terms for homosexual females under this categorization.

There are also persons who are comfortable with their assigned biological self and they do not present themselves as the opposite sex but they are romantically and sexually attracted to the same sex with little traces of characteristics of the opposite sex. They are branded as full-blown homosexuals or gays and soft-butch or lesbians.

If the sexuality of a person cannot be determined by his/her appearance and personality, the next tier to be evaluated is the role he/she engages in during sexual intercourse for the person to be considered a homosexual. There are males who belong to the category of *paminta* (coming from the root word, *pa-men*, a homosexual acting like a man) who defies the first two tiers of homosexual definition. Their female counterparts are the *lipsticks* or *femmes* who are females who still present themselves as females but are romantically and sexually attracted to females. This category is equivalent to the western concept of the ‘closeted’ gay. For males, if he takes on the passive role (or penetratee) willingly then he will be considered a homosexual but this categorization is defied when the male takes on this role in exchange for money or any favor.

Another categorization of sexual orientation is the bisexual, who is defined as someone who can get romantically and sexually attracted to members of both the opposite and the same sex.

Homosexuality in Culture

In early Greek civilization for example, pederasty was a relationship and bond – whether sexual or chaste – between an adolescent boy and an adult man outside of his immediate family. Pederasty was seen as an effective means of population control, education, and crime reduction by directing love and sexual desire into non-procreative channels. Military pederasty on the other hand was encouraged as a means to improve troop morale, bravery, and overall

fighting. Pederasty as a practice may be also seen in Japan, Europe, Africa and the Pacific Islands. The practice is not however present in the Philippines or in any of its minority groups.

In the pre-colonial Philippines however, Spanish conquistadors saw gender crossing and transvestism as an early feature in the pre-colonial societies. Local men dressed up in women's apparel and acting like women were called, among other things, *bayoguin*, *bayok*, *agi-ngin*, *asog*, *bido* and *binabae*. They were significant not only because they crossed male and female gender lines. To the Spaniards, they were astonishing, even threatening, as they were respected leaders and figures of authority. To their native communities they were *babaylan* or *catalonan*: religious functionaries and shamans, intermediaries between the visible and invisible worlds to whom even the local ruler (*datu*) deferred (Garcia, n.d.).

In the presence of westernization upon the succession of colonial rulers, the concept of masculinity was given primacy inside the Filipino's subscription to a patriarchal culture. Manly characteristics such as being *malakas*, *matipuno*, *malaki ang katawan*, *maskulado* and, *malusog* (Jimenez et al. 1998 cited in Aguilar, 2006) were exhorted. As males are considered the more superior of the sexes, the image and extent of what being macho means needs constant projection. Machismo takes then the form of virility, and the capacity to impregnate a woman thus becomes the foremost measure (Aguilar 2006). Deviation from this kind of test of manhood leads to serious questions regarding one's sexual orientation. Notice then that given the aforementioned conditions, the construction of homosexuality in Philippine culture is measured by resistance or deviations from norms set at the physical level, and later at the normal sexual partnerships favoring procreation.

Homosexuality and Religion

The relationship between homosexuality and religion varies greatly across time and place, within and between different religions and sects, and regarding different forms of homosexuality and bisexuality. Currently, authoritative bodies and doctrines of the world's largest religions generally view homosexuality negatively, from quietly discouraging homosexual activity, to explicitly forbidding same-sex sexual practices among adherents and actively opposing social acceptance of homosexuality. Some teach that homosexual orientation itself is sinful, while others assert that only the sexual act is a sin.

The dynamic interaction between homosexuality and religion has forever been subject to various interpretations in relation to homosexual acceptance. Religious doctrine is decided upon either by direct interpretation of authoritative books (Bible, Qur'an, Torah) or by church traditions. Primarily, the correct interpretation of these passages is governed and defined by groups in the religion's hierarchy. Among the dharmic religions that originated in India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, teachings regarding homosexuality

are less clear than among the Abrahamic traditions. Unlike in western religions, homosexuality is rarely discussed. However, most contemporary religious authorities in the various dharmic traditions view homosexuality negatively, and when it is discussed, it is discouraged or actively forbidden. On the other hand most Abrahamic Religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, traditionally forbid sexual relations between men and teach that such behavior is sinful.

The introduction of Christianity/Catholicism was an agent in the redefinition of sexuality and the systematic marginalization of homosexuals in history. Throughout Filipino history, the political powers have been submissive to the Catholic Church. The Church is determined to maintain its hold on important aspects of civil life, such as education, the availability of contraception and abortion, and even the registration of major events in the lives of the people like birth, marriage, child adoption, and death (Leyson, n.d.). A very conservative interpretation of Catholic decrees about sexuality and marriage have been inscribed in the minds of the Filipino people, in a way that has proven difficult to alter or delete. Outstanding among these are the Church's views on the social roles of males and females, its insistence that any form of masturbation or premarital intercourse is sinful, and condemnation of homosexuality as unnatural behavior. Under the Catholic view, homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997). Recently, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has explicitly banned the entry of homosexuals into the Holy Orders stressing that while effeminate traits are condoned, actual practicing homosexuals do harm to others through their victims. They do harm to the Church (Philippine Star 2004).

Homosexuality in Media

Apart from the role of the cultural milieu that impinges upon the construction of homosexual views, media is seen as a great propagator of ideas, having explicit capacity of advocacy and implicit ability to frame political issues. Popular representation of homosexuality in mass media cannot be overly emphasized in its power. In the homosexual situation of the Philippines that appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), Frederick Whitam concluded that the Philippines enjoy a reputation as one of the contemporary societies that is most tolerant of homosexuality, as among other things homosexual characters in Philippine media (movies and television) elicit "claps and shouts of approval" from the many children in the audience. The development of gay cinema in the Philippines at least is marked by parallelism with how society developed acceptance for gays and gay culture. In the early history of Philippine Gay Cinema, actors appeared in films as transvestites. They were funny, comical, and ludicrous. The concept of *muherista*, transvestite, crossdressers, *tallada*, *shoke* and *binabae* were introduced in these decades. Though the films of Dolphy were waggish, they put the gay people in a jesting and farcical situation which was

taken as humiliation somehow for the concept “*pangangantiyaw sa mga binabae.*” The roles of homosexuals typified by Dolphy’s Facifica Falayfay to slapstick driven comedy of the early ‘90s have relegated the role of the homosexual to precisely a jesting character. Garcia (1996) reasserts particular gay, mass-media characters that evoke “claps and shouts of approval” do so because they portray ridiculously uproarious roles whose entertainment value singularly derives from their gender anomaly, as well as other equally obtrusive things: neither man nor woman; coward; unreal; *bakla*, precisely.

In the 1970’s portrayal was far different from the 1950s and 1960s. The gays portrayed in the ‘70s were in the closet whose story lines tended to delve on the serious and dramatic. It brought more trauma for it mirrored the embarrassing and unacceptable orates which were death, crime, broken family, and threats. In the 1980s, Roderick Paulate emerged as a screaming faggot in many of his films. Some of the films delved on the closet guy representation, while some portrayed the “handsome guy exploiter” theme. It was a combination of the ‘50s-‘60s and the ‘70s surfing the issue of guilt and acceptance. The ‘90s was the period when acceptance became light. The outing of the *bakla* was manifested and the concept of sisterhood was established. Filipino gay films address issues close to heart; sexual repression, marginalization, acceptance (crime and guilt) and the issue of coming out.

Even within the history of gay-themed cinema, the complexities of the gay character are slowly being fulfilled. In the advent of independent cinema, storylines opened up new explorations on the homosexual theme, from being an agent of comedy to becoming sophisticated protagonists that scuffle with serious situations and dilemmas. Whereas earlier movies delve into the sexual practices and choices of homosexuals, as in Brocka’s *Macho Dancer* (1988) and Chionglo’s trilogy of macho dancers movies, the newer themes veered away from sex and included among other things the life and love travails of homosexuals, giving us a clearer and more holistic representation of the gay Filipino. Critically acclaimed movies like *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* have created new perspectives in the examination of homosexual life, particularly the irony of being a homosexual in an albeit hard-line macho family. It is rather important to note in this case that it is the advancement of technology in the production of cinematic art, and not necessarily the increased acceptance of homosexuality, that has created more space for themes that tackle real and personal homosexual issues, rather than consumer-driven homosexual characters for entertainment’s sake.

While freedom to tackle homosexual issues in cinema is compromised because of the State’s instrument for control (i.e., the Movie, Television Review and Classification Board), the long standing primacy of the print media in the guarantee of freedom of the press is highly accorded. The presence of any formal state instrumentality to censure print material is virtually inexistent. However, the Philippines’ obscenity law, ambiguous as it may seem, becomes the overarching constraint that may compromise expression. Technically speaking,

these obscenity laws prohibit the publication of pornographic materials and the confiscation of which remains within the State's domain. Otherwise, no independent body can exercise any power over these publications.

In an analysis of the rise and fall of the Philippine Gay Magazine publication phenomenon, Lim (2005) identifies the lack of advertisers, and the presence of more daring competition that has led to the demise of the legitimate gay lifestyle publications. While readership remains high, any magazine must rely to some form of advertising support to expand its operations or at least, remain in publication. Lim cites the case of *Valentino* that other than condoms and sex-related products, no advertiser would want to get associated with homosexual-themed magazine. Adding to that fact is the presence of severe competition that highlighted only the *Valentino's* sexual content. In an effort to capture the bigger market share, competition was based on which magazine could present more skin which on most occasions bordered on the pornographic; leaving authorities to use the obscenity law as response to control.

The entry of a serious gay-themed publication such as *Valentino* has received high acceptance as seen from its high readership rates. However market forces, particularly the desire for more profit on the part of advertisers who would put their funds elsewhere than gay magazines; the hardcore competition that took the risk to go beyond the legal aspects of publishing which created a new underground market and economy; and the actual implementation of obscenity laws remain serious forces that impinge on the survival and ultimately, acceptance of gay publications.

Whereas print and broadcast media have at some point, a probability to be censored, the dawn of the Information Age has resulted in an alternative form of expression and transmission of varying ideas. In effect, while the economies of the world are slowly being integrated into one schema, so has the exchange of cultural norms and ideas been made easy with connectivity to the World Wide Web. The emergence of blogs and the relative ease of putting up personal websites have created avenues for discussion of almost every conceivable topic one is interested in without prejudice to the content. Moreover, the possibility of providing instant comments from the reader to the writer ensures a steady exchange of thoughts. Similarly, social networking sites allow a certain user to connect with friends and similar minded peers. Certain sites such as *guys4men*, *dudesnude*, *downelink* and *manjam* cater mainly to the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) community. As it is, the internet provides a powerful tool to force into dialogue divergent views as well as convergent views on LGBT issues which can help mold the young people's perception, attitudes and behavior.

Homosexuality and the Law

The process of legalization of homosexual acts may be seen as the easiest indicator or barometer of how much a society has become liberal or restrictive of its views. The legal

status of homosexuality varies greatly around the world. Homosexual sex acts may be illegal, especially under sodomy laws, and where they are legal, the age of consent often differs from country to country. In some cases, homosexuals are prosecuted under vaguely-worded “public decency” /vagrancy law and morality laws.

Legal recognition of same-sex relationships also varies greatly. Legal privileges pertaining to different-sex relationships that may be extended to same-sex couples include parenting, adoption and access to reproductive technologies; immigration; spousal benefits for employees such as pensions, health funds and other services; family leave; medical rights, including hospital visitation, notification and power of attorney; inheritance when a partner dies without leaving a will; and social security and tax benefits. Same-sex couples without legal recognition may also lack access to domestic violence services, as well as mediation and arbitration over custody and property when relationships end. Some regions have laws specifically excluding same-sex couples from particular rights such as adoption.

Several countries impose the death penalty for homosexual acts. As of 2006, these include Mauritania, Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Pakistan and Chechnya under the Sharia law and some regions in Nigeria and Somalia. Homosexual acts between consenting adults are known to be illegal in about 70 out of the 195 countries of the world; in 40 of these, only male-male sex is outlawed. (Homosexuality Laws cited from wikipedia.org).

While there is no explicit law that penalizes homosexual acts, most often, generic provisions like grave scandal under the Revised Penal Code may be used. This lack of a clear policy statement regarding the rights of homosexuals has necessitated legislative initiatives from sympathetic groups. The first bill that sought to recognize the LGBT community as a sector was filed by the Late Congressman Reynaldo Calalay (District 1 of Quezon City) in 1995. The bill allowed for the participation of the LGBT sector in the party-list elections. The various LGBT organizations and individuals consulted for the Calalay bill started discussions on the creation of LEGACY, or the Lesbian and Gay Citizens Alliance. The Alliance did not materialize.

In 1998, Akbayan Citizens’ Action Party, a party-list organization competing for the 1998 elections, consulted members of the LGBT community to develop a party LGBT agenda. It is the first political party in the Philippines that has included an LGBT agenda in its platform for governance. The consultation has also been instrumental in the creation of the first LGBT lobby group. Discussions among several LGBT organizations and individuals began to create the Lesbian and Gay Legislative Advocacy Network, or LAGABLAB in 1999. “The Lesbian and Gay Rights Act of 1999”, a bill by Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, was filed in Congress. The bill, the first of its kind because of its comprehensive coverage (it includes domestic partnership), received several criticisms from the community, particularly

LAGABLAB, because of its flaws and because of the authors' failure to incorporate LAGABLAB proposed revisions. LAGABLAB joined the public demonstration against Estrada's second SONA. The Anti-Discrimination Bill of 2000, a product of several months of discussions in LAGABLAB, was filed through Senator Miriam Santiago (People's Reform Party) and Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales. The bill would prohibit discrimination in the private and public sector on the basis on sexual orientation. LAGABLAB, along with Amnesty International-*Pilipinas*, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), Lesbian Advocates in the Philippines (LEAP) and other supportive organizations and individuals launched the "Stop Discrimination Now" Campaign to boost lobbying efforts and get the attention of Philippine legislators to approve the Anti-Discrimination Bill 6416. In 2004, civil rights bill passed in Congress, but failed in the Senate.

The same lack of a relevant law for recognizing the LGBT rights have caused the denial of the appeal of a post-operative transsexual woman from updating her name and gender status in the Civil Registry. In its ruling, the Supreme Court pronounced that, "while the petitioner may have succeeded in altering his body and appearance through the intervention of modern surgery, no law authorizes the change of entry as to sex in the civil registry for that reason. There is no special law in the country governing sex reassignment and its effect" (Supreme Court G.R. No. 174689, 2007).

In view of these (under)developments, the acceptance of homosexuality in the Philippines is severely undermined owing to the fact that the law does not simply recognize certain rights that must be accorded to the homosexual person. While the law is permitting in the case of display of homosexual behavior, it provides gray area on what constitutes grave scandal thus allowing popular taste to describe and constrict what is allowable. The continued and repeated denial of initiatives that have been sought for the legitimization of homosexual rights may provide as an indicator of how homosexuality is accepted in Philippine society. The deeply ingrained patriarchal nature of our institutions and the effective force of fundamentalist religious ideology have confounded the issue of basic human rights into a question of politics and mores.

Acceptance of Homosexuality versus Homosexual Acceptability

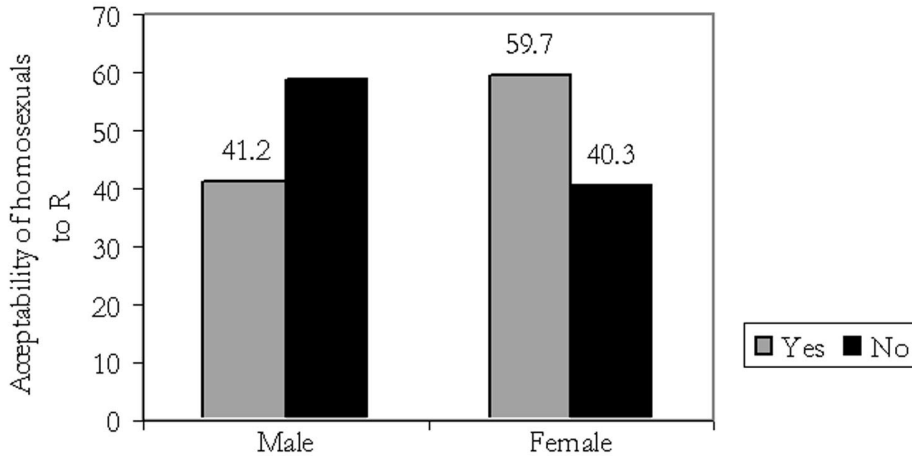
According to the 2002 Pew Global Attitudes Project, about 64 percent of the Filipinos reported that homosexuality should be accepted by society (cited in www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Societal_attitudes_towards_homosexuality). And also gauging from the results of the YAFSS3, there seems to be a general tolerance among the Filipino adolescents for homosexuals. When asked if "homosexuals are acceptable to them in general," half (50.9 percent) of the respondents aged 15-24 gave their approval (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Percent distribution of respondents according to the variables under study

Variable	Percent
ACCEPTABILITY OF HOMOSEXUALS TO R	
Yes	50.9
No	49.1
N of case = 16,884	
APPROVE MEN DATING MEN	
Yes	10.8
No	89.2
N of case = 16,837	
APPROVE WOMEN DATING WOMEN	
Yes	12.4
No	87.6
N of case = 16,837	
APPROVE SAME-SEX DATING FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE	
Yes	9.6
No	90.4
N of case = 16,837	
APPROVE SEXUAL ATTRACTION TO THE SAME SEX	
Approve	11.1
Neither	8.8
Disapprove	80.1
N of case = 16,837	
APPROVE OF PRACTICE OF HOMOSEXUALITY	
Yes	21.1
No	78.9
N of case = 16,837	

Results indicate a significant difference in the acceptability of homosexuals by sex with females (59.7 percent) being more accepting of homosexuals in general compared to males (41.2 percent) as exhibited by Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. Acceptability of Homosexuals to the Respondent
by Sex



N of case (Male = 7,989; Female = 8,894) p-value < 0.01

This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies done on attitudes toward homosexuals with results that say male's attitudes toward homosexuals tend to be more negative than those of females (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1995; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Glassner & Owen, 1976; Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitano, 1995; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite, 1984; Kite & Whitley, 1996, 1998; Kurdek, 1988; Luhrs, Crawford, & Goldberg, 1992; Pratte, 1993; Whitley & Kite, 1995 cited in Schellenberg, 1999). This result may also be supported by the discourse that because socially constructed concepts of appropriate male behavior (or masculinity) are more narrowly defined than concepts of appropriate female behavior (or femininity), departures from the hetero-normative ideals tend to be judged more harshly by male than by female, and for male than for female homosexuals (Feinman, 1981; Hort, Fagot, & Leinbach, 1990; Martin, 1990 as cited in Schellenberg, 1999).

Examining the approval of the young people to men dating men, the study finds that only 10.8 percent answered positively, and a significant difference can be observed in the answers by sex, with more males (11.8 percent) compared to females (9.8 percent) answering yes. On the other hand, 12.4 percent of the adolescents approve of women dating female with no significant difference in the answers between males and females.

With the review of the attitudes of the youth towards same-sex dating, included in the analysis is the new same-sex dating variable which examines the approval of both men dating men and women dating women, wherein, about one in 10 adolescents approve of both men dating men and women dating women, with males (10.2 percent) significantly more approving than females (9.1 percent).

Another variable being assessed is the approval of the youth to same-sex sexual attraction, with 11.1 percent positively approving, of which, there are significantly more females approving (12 percent) than males (10.1 percent). Interestingly, about 9.0 percent neither approves nor disapproves of same-sex sexual attraction with eight out of 10 disapproving it. It seems that those who neither approves nor disapproves of same-sex sexual attraction still want a clearer definition of sexual attraction to help them put into context their replies.

TABLE 2. Cross-tabulation of the variables under study by sex

Variables	Male	Female
ACCEPTABILITY OF HOMOSEXUALS TO R**		
Yes	41.2	59.7
No	58.8	40.3
n of case (Male = 7,989, Female = 8,894)		
APPROVE MEN DATING MEN**		
Yes	11.8	9.8
No	88.2	90.2
n of case (Male = 7,968, Female = 8,869)		
APPROVE WOMEN DATING WOMEN		
Yes	12.8	12.2
No	87.2	87.8
n of case (Male = 7,968, Female = 8,869)		
APPROVE SAME-SEX DATING FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE*		
Yes	10.2	9.1
No	89.8	90.9
n of case (Male = 7,968, Female = 8,869)		
APPROVE SEXUAL ATTRACTION TO THE SAME SEX**		
Approve	10.1	12.0
Neither	8.7	8.8
Disapprove	81.2	79.1
n of case (Male = 7,968, Female = 8,869)		
APPROVE OF PRACTICE OF HOMOSEXUALITY		
Yes	20.8	21.3
No	79.2	78.7
n of case (Male = 7,968, Female = 8,869)		

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

A large proportion of the youth at 85.6 percent who accept a homosexual in general reportedly do not approve men dating men as presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Cross-tabulation of approval of men dating men by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve men dating men		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			
Yes	14.4	85.6	8565
No	7.0	93.0	8244
MALE**			
Yes	17.9	82.1	3276
No	7.7	92.3	4671
FEMALE**			
Yes	12.3	87.7	5289
No	6.2	93.8	3573

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

Consistently, from among those who said they do not accept a homosexual in general, a little more than nine out of 10 also do not approve of men dating men. Comparing the results by sex, from among the adolescents who have a positive attitude towards a homosexual a great majority at four out five males and about nine out of 10 females disapprove of men dating men.

As regards approval of women dating women, from among the respondents who said they accept a homosexual, 83.8 percent change their stand by disapproving of it and from among those who said they do not accept a homosexual, nine out of 10 consistently disapprove of it. From among the males who accept homosexuals, 82.0 percent do not approve of women dating women and from among the females who accept homosexuals, 84.9 percent disapprove of the same. A big share at a little over 90 percent of those who do not accept homosexual in general, regardless of sex, also do not approve of women dating women.

A deeper look of same-sex dating shows that from among the young people who accept homosexuals, only about 13 percent signified their approval to it for both sexes. A vast majority at 94 percent of those who said they do not accept homosexual also do not approve of both men dating men and women dating women.

TABLE 4. Cross-tabulation of approval of sexual attraction to the same sex by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve sexual attraction to the same sex			
	Approve	Neither	Disapprove	N of case
BOTH SEXES**				
Yes	14.3	10.5	75.2	8565
No	7.8	7.0	85.2	8244
MALE**				
Yes	14.3	11.1	74.6	3276
No	7.2	6.9	85.9	4671
FEMALE**				
Yes	14.4	10.1	75.6	5289
No	8.6	7.1	84.3	3573

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

TABLE 5. Cross-tabulation of approval of same-sex dating of both male and female by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve same-sex dating for both male and female		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			
Yes	12.9	87.1	8565
No	6.3	93.7	8244
MALE**			
Yes	15.1	84.9	3276
No	6.9	93.1	4671
FEMALE**			
Yes	11.5	88.5	5289
No	5.5	94.5	3573

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

On the other hand, among those who accept homosexuals, 14.3 percent approve of sexual attraction to the same sex while from among those who do not accept, 85.2 percent disapprove as well of same-sex sexual attraction. Almost the same results can be observed after controlling for sex as can be gleaned from Table 6.

TABLE 6. Cross-tabulation of approval of sexual attraction to the same sex by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve sexual attraction to the same sex			
	Approve	Neither	Disapprove	N of case
BOTH SEXES**				
Yes	14.3	10.5	75.2	8565
No	7.8	7.0	85.2	8244
MALE**				
Yes	14.3	11.1	74.6	3276
No	7.2	6.9	85.9	4671
FEMALE**				
Yes	14.4	10.1	75.6	5289
No	8.6	7.1	84.3	3573

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

Looking at the percent distribution of the aforementioned cross-tabulated variables based on the total sample size of 16,809, only 3.4 percent accept homosexuals in general and also approve of men dating men (Table 7).

TABLE 7. Cross-tabulation of approval of men dating men by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex (recomputed as a percentage of the total n of case)

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve men dating men		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			16,809
Yes	3.4	45.6	
No	7.4	43.6	
MALE**			7,947
Yes	7.4	33.8	
No	4.5	54.3	
FEMALE**			8,862
Yes	7.3	52.4	
No	2.5	37.8	

Meanwhile, 4.2 percent of the total sample size accept a homosexual and approves of women dating women while about two-fifth do not accept homosexuals and also disapproves of women dating women. Three percent of the young people reported an approving response towards a homosexual and same-sex dating for both male and female (Table 8).

TABLE 8. Cross-tabulation of approval of women dating women by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex (recomputed as a percentage of the total n of case)

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve women dating women		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES **			16,809
Yes	4.2	44.8	
No	8.3	42.7	
MALE**			7,947
Yes	7.4	33.8	
No	5.4	53.4	
FEMALE**			8,862
Yes	9.0	50.7	
No	3.2	37.1	

Two-fifth of them reported a disapproving response toward homosexuals and same-sex dating for both male and female. Those who reported that a homosexual is acceptable to them in general and they approve same-sex sexual attraction comprise 7.3 percent of the young people interviewed. Two out of five showed a disapproving stance toward homosexuals and sexual attraction to the same sex.

Breaking down the results by sex, based on the total cases for males (7,968) and females (8,869), 7.4 percent and 7.3 percent respectively, have positive attitude towards both a homosexual and men dating men. On the other hand, 7.4 percent of males and 9.0 percent of females accept homosexuals and at the same time approves of female dating female. Comparatively, 6.2 percent of males and 6.8 percent of females accept homosexuals and at the same time approve of same-sex dating for both sexes. In contrast, a little over half (54.8 percent) of males and one-third (38.1percent) of females have a negative attitude towards both a homosexual and same-sex dating for both male and female.

TABLE 9. Cross-tabulation of approval of same-sex dating of both male and female by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex (recomputed as a percentage of the total n of case)

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve same sex dating for both male and female		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			16,809
Yes	3.1	45.9	
No	6.6	44.4	
MALE**			7,947
Yes	6.2	35.0	
No	4.0	54.8	
FEMALE**			8,862
Yes	6.8	52.9	
No	2.2	38.1	

About only 6.0 percent of males and 9.0 percent of females accept homosexuals and also approves of same-sex sexual attraction, while half (50.5 percent) of males and about one-third (34.0 percent) of females have a disapproving position toward both a homosexual and sexual attraction to the same sex. Among the males and females, 11.6 percent and 15.1 percent respectively, accept both homosexuals and homosexuality practice. Distinctively, half (49.5 percent) of males and about one-third (34.2 percent) of females said they disapprove both of homosexuals and the practice of homosexuality.

TABLE 10. Cross-tabulation of approval of sexual attraction to the same sex by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex (recomputed as a percentage of the total n of case)

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve sexual attraction to the same sex			
	Approve	Neither	Disapprove	N of case
BOTH SEXES**				16,809
Yes	7.3	5.3	38.3	
No	3.8	3.4	41.9	
MALE**				7,947
Yes	5.9	4.6	30.7	
No	4.2	4.1	50.5	
FEMALE**				8,862
Yes	8.6	6.0	45.1	
No	3.5	2.8	34.0	

After aggregating the three approval of homosexuality practice variables – men dating men, women dating women, sexual attraction to the same sex – into one variable, the result shows that one out of five young people approves of the practice of homosexuality. There is no significant difference between the approval of practice of homosexuality between males and females.

Generally, among the adolescents who accept homosexuals, one out of four claims to approve of homosexual practice. Some 85 percent of those who do not accept homosexuals also disapprove of homosexual practice. In the interim, among the males who accept homosexuals, almost three out of 10 approve of homosexual practice while among those who do not accept homosexuals, 84.2 percent remains to disapprove its practice. One-fourth of females who accept homosexuals on the other hand, approve of the practice of homosexuality, and from among those who do not accept homosexuals, 85 percent disapprove of homosexuality practice.

TABLE 11. Cross-tabulation of approval of practice of homosexuality by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve of practice of homosexuality		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			
Yes	26.4	73.6	8565
No	15.5	84.5	8244
MALE**			
Yes	28.2	71.8	3276
No	13.8	84.2	4671
FEMALE**			
Yes	25.4	74.6	5289
No	15.2	84.8	3573

Note: * p-value < 0.05, **p-value < 0.01

Recalculating the percent distribution based on the total sample size, of the youth respondents, only 13.5 percent find homosexuals acceptable and also approve of the practice of homosexuality (Table 12). Thirty seven percent of them accept homosexuals in general but disapprove of the practice of homosexuality. And, four out of 10 showed their disapproval for both homosexuals and the practice of homosexuality. Table 13 shows that from among those who accept homosexuals, there are more males who approve of the practice of homosexuality.

TABLE 12. Cross-tabulation of approval of practice of homosexuality by the acceptability of homosexuals to R of both sexes and as controlled by sex (recomputed as a percentage of the total n of case)

Acceptability of homosexuals to R	Approve of practice of homosexuality		
	Yes	No	N of case
BOTH SEXES**			16,809
Yes	13.5	37.5	
No	7.6	41.4	
MALE** 7,947			
Yes	11.6	29.6	
No	9.3	49.5	
Female**			8,862
Yes	15.1	44.6	
No	6.1	34.2	

TABLE 13. Cross-tabulation of the approval of practice of homosexuality by sex of the respondents who said 'yes' in the acceptability of homosexuals to the respondent

Sex of those who said 'yes' in the acceptability of homosexuals**	Approve of practice of homosexuality	
	Yes	No
MALE	28.2	71.8
FEMALE	25.4	74.6

N of case (Male = 3,276, Female = 5289); **p-value < 0.01

Conclusions and Recommendations

Efforts toward the mainstreaming of ideas relating to homosexuality have been made underway with the advancement of crisscrossing socio-political-economic factors. In the light of the modernizing approach to understanding homosexuality, studies must veer away from the psychiatric perspective of analyzing its etiology. Far more important questions are as to how social institutions have remained in control of the status of the homosexual; how these forms of continued marginalization are proliferated, and in the way, find how these processes can be confronted.

Conceptually, this paper has attempted to demonstrate that the adolescent Filipinos' idea of homosexuality varies. In the attempt to complete the picture of the homosexual by attaching

his practices, the level of “acceptance” within the Filipinos has dropped. It is this paper’s attempt to put forward that acceptance is different from mere acceptability. Acceptability of the homosexuality of a person rests solely on the “possibility to be accepted”, that is, a homosexual may be accepted for reasons other than his homosexuality as defined by his homosexual activities. A society’s acceptance takes into account not merely a topical and physical representation of a homosexual but also the practices that characterize his personality.

Quantitatively, the paper also suggests that when the practice of homosexuality is included in the equation, the level of acceptance of the Filipino youth towards homosexuality (the person and his/her activities) changes. It was viewed that the ‘real’ acceptance - both the person and his/her practice - was only demonstrated by 13.5 percent of the adolescents. The other 37.5 percent who accept the homosexuals but do not approve of the practice of homosexuality seem to represent the religious dogma of the Catholic Church, which is “love the sinner but not the sin.” Still, a significant proportion at over 40 percent do not accept homosexuals and disapprove of the practice of homosexuality which may be anchored on the social stigma attached to being a homosexual.

It can be observed that the practice of homosexuality considered in this paper consists of superficial practices attached to being a homosexual as these are the only factors that can be supported by the available data set. Nevertheless, the quantitative findings still emphasize the point that the level of acceptance will adjust to its real level when the practice factors are incorporated, even with the limitation of the data.

With these things in mind, the following are recommended:

1. A baseline data should be collected to help analyze homosexuality and the social institutions influencing it and the gaps in the existing literature should be filled by future researches and papers along this matter;
2. Qualitative studies focused on gender and sexuality among the young people should be undertaken as preparatory work in comprehending the reality behind their attitudes towards homosexuality;
3. Future surveys/studies should include other appropriate questions in capturing all the dimensions of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular to present a more realistic level of homosexuality acceptance; and
4. Review of existing attitudinal scales towards homosexuality and developing new attitudinal scales towards homosexuality that will be fitting for the Philippine setting.

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