

## INTRODUCTION

# Intersecting Narratives of Gender, Representation, and Justice in the Philippines

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In a world of ever-evolving social norms, digital transformation, and the continuous pursuit of justice, the Philippines is a space where these intersecting narratives manifest. This journal issue delves into the intricate dynamics of gender, representation, and justice—examining their profound roles in shaping social and cultural discourse. *Review of Women's Studies* vol. 32, no. 2 offers a rich tapestry of perspectives, critical insights, and engaging analyses that aid in our exploration of contemporary Philippine society and the understanding of persisting gender-related issues.

A common thread among the articles in this issue is challenging heteronormative constructs. In the Philippines, often celebrated as an LGBTQIA+-friendly nation, gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive issue, and the dominant narrative typically revolves around a heteronormative framework. This framework inadvertently sidelines the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals and marginalized groups. Deocampo's article serves as a compelling challenge to this status quo, prompting us to question its repercussions on the LGBTQIA+ community.

In a similar vein, Gregorio and Arguelles' article immerses us in the identities of “#InstaMoms” who are actively reshaping the landscape of modern motherhood. The authors argue that these influencers disrupt entrenched gender norms and redefine the very essence of motherhood. In the process, they deconstruct the traditional notion of selfless motherhood, championing financial independence, fostering self-confidence, and promoting self-care. Both articles invite us to reconsider and expand our understanding of gender and motherhood.

A significant concern in multiple articles revolves around stereotypes. Deocampo's scrutiny of GBV campaign materials underscores that, despite genuine efforts to be inclusive of LGBTQIA+ identities, these materials can sometimes inadvertently reinforce harmful representations. The examination reveals problematic portrayals marked by hypersexualization, revictimization, and the stigmatization of victims, highlighting the imperative for a more profound and authentic representation that extends beyond surface-level inclusivity.

“On Consent and Resistance” focuses on rape cases and the presumption of visible resistance as an indicator to a lack of consent. Lopez underscores how persistent gender stereotypes can impact the prosecution of such cases. It becomes evident that these stereotypes lead to unjust outcomes, and the article calls for a gender-sensitive reinterpretation of existing laws to ensure a fair legal framework.

How stereotypes shape the experiences of young mothers is also highlighted in the fourth article, “*Kabuwanan ni Nena*.” Here, Rosario explores the experiences of early adolescent mothers in Metro Manila and reveals the influence of gender, societal norms, and sociocultural factors on these young girls' lives.

The articles in this issue invite us, as well, to recognize the interconnectedness of global and local issues. “Reconceptualizing Victimhood and Resiliency: Transnational Narratives of Filipinas in Canada” navigates the experiences of Filipina women in Toronto, how they resist colonial hegemonies and assert their agency. It challenges conventional narratives of victimhood, recognizing these women as social justice fighters who confront exploring everyday racism and sexism.

Pozon's review of *Violence Against Women in Times of War and Peace* by Aida Santos aligns with this issue's themes by scrutinizing gender-based violence and justice during times of conflict. It reminds us that women's experiences, regardless of their geographical location, often share common elements, and in recognizing this, we embrace a broader call for liberation and social change.

At its core, this issue emphasizes the need to move beyond surface-level representation, question stereotypes, and adopt more inclusive approaches. It urges us to engage with the complexities of contemporary issues, recognize the power of digital media, and challenge traditional narratives to pave the way for a more equitable and just society.