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"Why So Heteronormative?": A Multimodal Analysis of GBV Representations in Campaign and Advocacy Materials

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Abstract

While the Philippines continues to be recognized as one of the LGBTQIA+-friendly countries globally, cases of gender-based violence (GBV) against members of the LGBTQIA+ community continue to raise concern. However, mainstream discourse around gender-based violence is dominantly defined by the male-perpetrator-female-victim narrative. I argue that a heteronormative conceptualization of GBV leads to the exclusion of LGBTQIA+ experiences and other forms of GBV that do not fall under this category. Current campaign materials against GBV provide a more expansive representation of GBV. This study is concerned with investigating these materials and analyzing how these new iterations possibly challenge or reinforce heteronormative constructions of GBV. I analyzed four selected posters that included LGBTQIA+ identities using multimodal discourse analysis. My findings revealed that, while there is a considerable attempt to include members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the GBV discourse through representation, the materials reproduce harmful stereotypes about GBV, women, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Stereotypes include

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hypersexualization, revictimization, and stigmatization of victims. I suggest that the process of producing these posters be reviewed and a more participatory framework be adopted in the future. I also strongly recommend the legalization of the Anti-Discrimination Bill to strengthen the campaign against GBV.

Keywords: gender-based violence, heteronormativity, multimodal discourse analysis

Gender-Based Violence in the Philippines: An Overview

The Philippines is often cited as one of the most LGBTQIA+[1]-friendly countries in Asia. From 2013 to 2019, 73% of adult Filipinos agreed with the statement that "homosexuality should be accepted by society" (see Tubeza, 2013; Abad, 2020). In popular media, new shows that showcase queer talents and personalities continue to be produced while gay beauty pageants have become staple events in local municipalities. Several known celebrities who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community enjoy popularity among the national audience. However, the data belie the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community in the country. The Human Rights Watch reports that "many LGBT youths continue to experience bullying and harassment in school". Since 2010, at least 50 trans people have been killed in the Philippines, and many were unidentified (The Fuller Project, 2021). Despite the impression of an LGBTQIA+-friendly society, the prevalence of gender-based discrimination and violence (GBV) against the members of the LGBTQIA+ community is a real and urgent problem that needs immediate action.

GBV is considered to be one of the major barriers to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 set by the United Nations. SDG 5 refers to the goal of achieving gender equality. According to the World

[1] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other non-heterosexual identities (for the sake of uniformity, this term will be adopted in the paper).

Bank, one in three women is affected by GBV while national and international reports (see Council of Europe, n.d.; Philippine Commission on Women, 2022*)* claim that forms of gender inequality are inextricably linked with cycles of poverty. Incidences of GBV cost a country 3% of its gross domestic product (GDP). In the EU alone, €226 billion are lost annually due to the prevalence of GBV in intimate partner relationships. Meanwhile, the Philippines spent an estimated ₱6 billion in 2002 to treat violence against women (VAW) survivors. This amount covered the medical treatment of VAW injuries, psychological therapies and programs for survivors, maintenance of shelters, cost of legal and court proceedings to prosecute perpetrators, training costs of service providers, and other indirect social costs to family members of VAW survivors and perpetrators (Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2022). Moreover, survivors of GBV are associated with significantly lower academic achievements, as well as higher absentee rates, more sick days, and poorer health of employees in the workforce. Societal impacts of GBV include loss of social cohesion, financial divestment, and the increased burden on the healthcare and justice systems (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Several laws are already in place to eliminate GBV in the Philippines. Some of these laws include Republic Act (RA) 7877 or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act and RA 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act. However, cases of GBV in the Philippines continue to rise despite the many legislative initiatives carried out to address them. Moreover, dominant conversations on GBV remain heteronormative and are confined within cisgender definitions. In most, if not all, state-sponsored campaigns against the elimination of GBV such as sexual harassment, there is a noticeable absence or deficiency of LGBTQIA+ representation. In 2018, RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act lapsed into law. It is premised upon the policy of the State to include women in nation-building and the fundamental gender equality and is founded on the concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). The Act aims to expand the coverage of acts of gender-based sexual harassment from the confines of education and training settings to public spaces. This new legislation is a departure from the previously exclusive definitions of GBV that do not consider

nonheteronormative categories. At present, there are currently limited studies on the new law and its translation into advocacy work. The inclusion of the concepts of SOGIESC in the legal discourse is a worthy and urgent point of inquiry and research.

Defining Gender-Based Violence

According to the United Nations, *GBV* is a form of human rights violation and refers to "any type of harm perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity" (Council of Europe, n.d.). "Gender" in gender-based violence explains the use and performance of violence and the experiences of violence (Robinson, 2004, as cited in Haynes & DeShong, 2017). Robinson (2004) further elucidates how gender as a concept operates as a tool to describe the relations of power as embedded in ideological and material dimensions and explain identity, embodiment, and performance. It answers the questions, "Who does it and why?" and "Who experiences it and why?". This definition expands the coverage or the range of possible victims from women to anyone as long as the grounds are based on gender.

A quick Google search of the keywords "gender-based violence in the Philippines" will lead you to the PCW's webpage which outlines the definition of VAWC. RA 9262 (2004) defines *VAWC* as "any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, with or without the family abode, which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty." The PCW explains that VAW is used as a tool for men's expression of control over women to retain power. Thus, it is an act that is linked closely with the "unequal power relations between men and women otherwise known as 'gender-based violence.'" This definition maintains that the gender of women is the cause of their

victimization. Technically, VAWC is only one of the many forms that gender-based violence can take.

The interchangeability of definitions suggests that GBV is framed within the conceptualization of VAWC. However, Haynes and DeShong (2017) argue that this conflation can lead to the failure to capture forms and experiences of GBV outside of heterosexual relations. Their study on queering gender-based violence content claims that the synonymity of VAW with GBV can be explained by the "overrepresentation of women victims in cases of gender-based and intimate partner violence" (p. 110). As a result, experiences of GBV by members of the LGBTQIA+ are excluded.

Gaps in GBV Discourse

It can be argued that this conflation reflects reality anyway. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2016), the number of sexual harassment cases experienced by women increased in 2019. Sixty-six percent more women were reported to be trafficked and 30% more women were raped. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Philippines (2019) also reports that 1 in 20 women and girls aged 15–49 years have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, according to the 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey.

However, this conflation can lead to the invisibilization or exclusion of other forms of violence that do not fall under the VAWC category. To illustrate, current statistical data render similar experiences of GBV from the LGBTQIA+ community invisible. The Fuller Project (2021) reports that when a trans woman is murdered, the Philippine National Police (PNP) logs her gender as male (and vice versa for trans men), while many LGBTQIA+ activists say that the stigma that continues to shadow homosexuality and queer identities often dissuades family members and friends from speaking out. Most national and international reports on LGBTQIA+-related harassment are records of narratives by the survivors but do not include statistical data. Consequently, little data exists to illustrate the scale of the problem (The Fuller Project, 2021). There is currently no mainstream database for recording these cases because most survivors do not report their experiences (Thoreson, 2017). As

demonstrated by the case of the murder of a trans woman, whenever an LGBTQIA+ member reports, the violence is not flagged as gender-based.

In 2009, Pemberton, a member of the US military assigned in the Philippines, murdered Jennifer Laude. While the case was given extensive media coverage, it was considered an isolated case (Aliliran, 2020). In reality, Jennifer's case is one of the many cases of violence against trans women that remain undocumented. Besides being treated as an isolated case, her murder prompted transphobic sentiments to surface. Some people defended the action of Pemberton because they believed that Jennifer deceived him by pretending to be a "woman." These harmful and violent ideas towards trans women in the country reflect the normative culture of transphobia and GBV against members of the LGBTQIA+ society.

The Philippine government has not yet taken sufficient action to combat violence against LGBTQIA+ people. Although the Philippines is officially secular, laws continue to closely adhere to a socially conservative agenda that is closely governed by Catholicism, disenfranchising LGBTQIA+ people (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission et al., 2008). There is currently no national legislation to protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination in the Philippines. In 2017, House Bill No. 4982 entitled the Anti-Discrimination Bill or the SOGIE Equality Bill was filed in Congress. It seeks to provide LGBTQIA+ individuals protection against hate speech and SOGIE-based discrimination in private and government workplaces, and schools (including parents/legal guardians). The bill also prohibits forced medical or psychological evaluations and harassment in the handling of criminal cases. The bill has since languished in the Senate (Casal, 2019). This delay leaves members of the LGBTQIA+ in a vulnerable state and further invalidates the worsening cases of GBV experienced by the community.

Heteronormativity in Popular-Visual Culture

In popular culture, portrayals of GBV often reinforce gender stereotypes and reproduce simplified tropes. Cuklanz's (2019) study on media representations of gendered violence in detective shows highlights the heroism of the male detective rather than the experiences of the victim-survivors and their process of recovery. It surfaces the reproduction of

racialized and gendered tropes of the victim-perpetrator binary. Meanwhile, Haynes and DeShong's (2017) investigation of the representation of GBV in newspapers in Honduras exposes how men's narratives continue to frame the cases of GBV. Articles foreground men's "proprietary attitudes towards women's bodies as sites of sexual release" (p. 122). Furthermore, their study reports the preoccupation with sexualizing the bodies of the victims and highlighting the violence inflicted instead of the ones who inflicted the violence. These studies show how mainstream news and popular media outlets "tend to make use of harmful tropes and stereotypes when reporting on and presenting cases of gender-based violence" which contributes to the "normalization of violence and perpetuation of discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes."

Even in these cited studies, GBV representations are heteronormatively defined. Limited studies have been done on the media representations of GBV among members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Most studies that are concerned with media representations of queer identities are focused on actual representation only (see Cook, 2018; Seif, 2017; Uy, 2021). One study by Caprioglio (2021) entitled, "Does 'Queer Narrative' Mean 'Trauma Narrative' on TV? Exploring Television's Traumatized Queer Identity," demonstrates that increased queer visibility in media seems to be contingent upon trauma. This goes to show that, along with limited media representation, queer narratives are also poorly written because of the hyperfocus on trauma and suffering. As a consequence, these kinds of portrayals only maintain the normative expectation that queer lives are just, by default, already violent and traumatic. Given these realities, it is not surprising that in dominant discourses about GBV, the struggles of LGBTQIA+ remain at the margins, or at worst, invisible.

Heteronormativity in Anti-GBV Campaign and Advocacy

The conflation of GBV and VAWC is translated into advocacy discourse. For example, a review of past campaign and advocacy materials shows that male-female is the common formula of victim-abuser relations. In 2016, the Quezon City local government unit implemented an ordinance that penalizes acts of sexual harassment in public places. A series of

campaign materials was released to raise awareness about the ordinance. Below are two posters released from the set.

These campaign materials were produced to strengthen the call for safe spaces. A quick analysis of the portrayals reveals the dominant visual construction of a heteronormative, binary representation of gender-based violence, specifically, sexual harassment committed in public. Heteronormativity refers to "how heterosexuality is institutionalized, naturalized and regulated, both explicitly (by excluding LGBT people from the analysis) and implicitly (by assuming that all people are heterosexual; marriage is a given and all men and women fit more or less into traditional gender roles)" (Gosine, 2010). This gender scripting implies that, in instances of sexual harassment in public spaces, only heterosexual configurations of violence are possible.

Other studies that concern the representation of gender-based violence in mainstream and multimedia platforms echo the same themes (Deocampo, 2014; Haynes & DeShong, 2017; Fehringer & Hinden, 2014). In Deocampo's (2014) and Fehringer and Hinden's (2014) studies, attention is given to the experiences and portrayal of women victims. In these cases, women who experience gender-based violence are portrayed as silent and stigmatized.

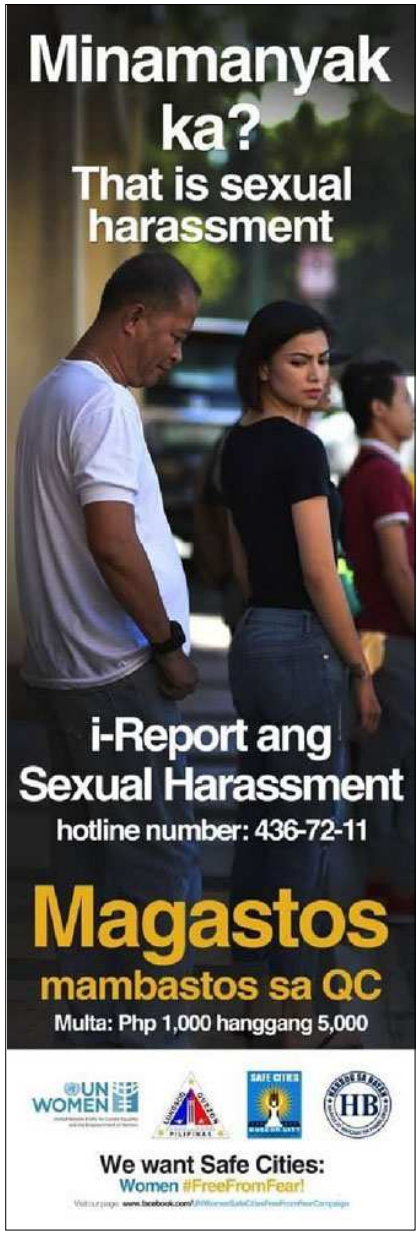
These studies demonstrate the complicity of media in the "exclusionary politics of belonging," marking the members of the LGBTQIA+ community as the "gender and sexual other" (Haynes & DeShong, 2017, p. 114). Unless sufficient attention is given to the exclusion of LGBTQIA+ in GBV discourses, heteronormative definitions and performances of violence will continue to persist.

As Hall (1996, as cited in Cranny-Francis et al., 2003) posits, "identities are constituted within and not outside of representation" (p. 95). Thus, a heteronormative discourse is not only a misrepresentation of the composition of society but more importantly, it narrows the range of representation with which the individual can include within the formation of their identity. Because heteronormativity polices the range of representations in media, identities outside of heteronormative configurations, such as that of the LGBTQIA+ community, are not permitted.

Figure 1
Magastos Mambastos sa QC

Note. (Cabato, 2017).

Figure 2
Magastos Mambastos sa QC



Note. (Cabato, 2017).

It is crucial to locate heteronormativity as reproduced in discourse because powerful discourses dictate taken-for-granted truths about gender and sexuality (McSherry et al, 2015). Materials that are produced within the discursive context of GBV are strategic sites for investigation. Specifically, campaign materials as a genre carry with them a set of conventions that are bound in spatio-temporal conditions, implicit sociocultural assumptions, and relationship of assumptions to the discourse (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 106). They were produced with the specific agenda of raising awareness and disseminating information to the public (Lirola, 2013, as cited in Deocampo, 2014, p. 87).

Heteronormative Representations Can Lead to Structural Violence

If "mainstream media could only convey the idea of violence or aggression if the victims were seen as legitimate victims—that is, according to certain gender heteronormativity and sexual morality," it assumes that "violence is non-existent in queer communities" (Almeida, 2015). This is a harmful and violent assumption. According to Almeida (2015), the possible consequences for legislative and sociocultural gaps in the issue of GBV include: (a) the isolation of queer people from outside their community but also from within their community and (b) the difficulty in accessing services for assistance and support. Isolation within and outside the community stems from the unacknowledged reality that forms of violence are experienced and inflicted by members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The continued silence and invalidation of these acts can lead to the alienation of the victims from their immediate support system. Secondly, while there are existing services for trauma and support for victims and survivors of GBV, these services are not tailor-fit to address gender-specific nuances of an LGBTQIA+ survivor's needs because most of the available services are for cis-women survivors.

In a briefer prepared by the Asia-Pacific Institute on Gender-based Violence (2020), research revealed that "queer identities are extremely vulnerable to various manifestations of violence, including verbal,

physical, and sexual abuse by passers-by; intimate partner violence; rejection by friends and family; discrimination by state institutions" (paras. 3–4). Moreover, there is an existing assumption of sexual deviance among queer communities, thus, sexual violence is not possible. A national study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people experience intimate partner and sexual violence at the same or higher rates as heterosexual people, although bisexual women experienced violence at overall higher rates."

> Domestic violence in heterosexual relationships, particularly within Asian communities, generally reflects heteronormative patriarchal power dynamics where men are most frequently the abusers—complicated by the added dynamic that women perpetrators of family violence target other heterosexual non-intimate women in the family. In same-sex relationships, advocates must carefully assess for risk and power dynamics to identify lesbian/bi/trans women survivors and gay/bi/trans men survivors (clearly, masculinity cannot be read to signify who the abuser is). (para. 5)

The report suggests that elements of control, exploitation, and other harmful tactics should be interrogated to recognize the patterns of gender-based abuse in the context of LGBTQIA+ lives. This is because "many of their lives and choices often challenge notions of gender, sex, and sexuality" and mainstream iterations will be unable to fully capture their experiences. For example, Outright International (2018) reports that "lesbian, bisexual, and trans people (LBT) experience high levels of intimate partner violence, where perpetrators tend to be same-sex partners, dating partners, and heterosexual male partners of bisexual women or lesbians coerced in heterosexual marriage."

Objectives

This research is concerned with analyzing the multimodal representation of gender-based violence discourse in the Philippines. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Investigate how public forms of gender-based sexual harassment are portrayed and enacted in campaign and advocacy materials against gender-based violence.
2. Explain how these portrayals are represented and possibly, challenge the heteronormative constructions of gender-based sexual harassment.
3. Surface new ways of understanding issues around inclusive and just interventions against gender-based violence in public spaces.

Scope and Limitations

This study chose four campaign and advocacy materials that were produced and disseminated through the official Instagram (IG) page of Intramuros during the observance of the International 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women from November 25 to December 5, 2021. There were a total of 12 posters released through their IG account, but for the purpose of brevity, I selected the top 4 posts based on online engagement and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ identities within the materials. Through the campaign, the Intramuros Administration, in adherence to its role as a public historical park in the country, also promoted the ratification of the Safe Spaces Act.

Methodology

This study applied multimodal discourse analysis to analyze the linguistic and visual elements of the selected posters. It serves as an important conceptual tool for gender scholars and advocates "because it provides a way of understanding and reconceptualizing the elements of identity formation" (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 94). As a genre,

campaign and advocacy posters privilege the multimodal organization of information. As these materials are expected to carry public service advisories, they must be constructed with high engagement in mind. They demonstrate that language or written text is not the singular source of meaning, but rather, informs each other and thus, creates new meanings and representations

Kress (1985), as one of the proponents of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), claims that MDA suggests three questions for discursive investigation. The questions were modified for this study:

1. Why is gender-based violence written about/constructed in the posters?
2. How is gender-based violence written about/constructed?
3. What other ways can gender-based violence be written about/constructed?

The first question leads to the strategy that is used to generate the discursive construction of GBV. The second question aims to reveal the rhetorical strategies used (linguistic and nonlinguistic modes), while the third question aims to surface suppressed discourses or representations that are not readily apparent.

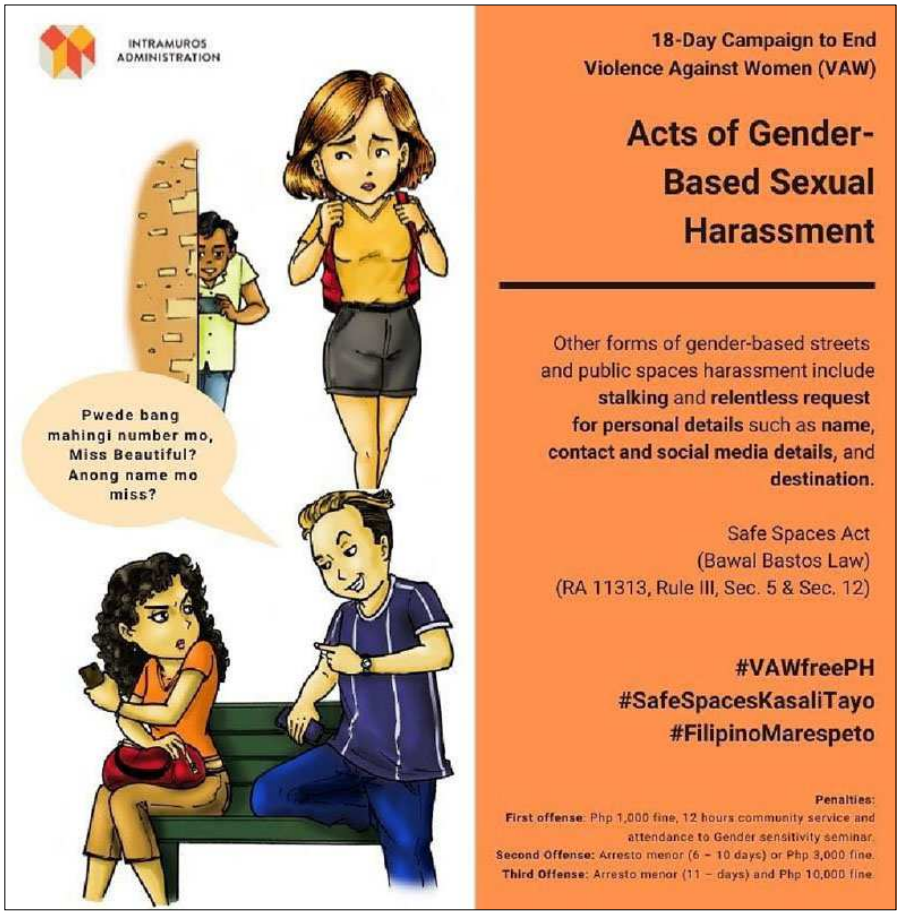
Using the three questions proposed by Kress (1985), this paper attempts to analyze the selected materials and investigate their definition and representation of gender-based violence in the form of sexual harassment and to surface opaque discourses surrounding the topic.

Analysis

The first poster contains two scenes. The first scene is located in the top left part of the page. Foregrounded is a woman character shown to walk in a straight direction. Behind her is a man lurking behind the wall holding up a phone as if to indicate that he is taking a photo or a video of the woman. The bottom scenario, on the other hand, also depicts two main characters: the woman is seen to be moving away from the man who is talking to her. As shown in the thought bubble, he is asking the woman for her number.

Figure 3

Poster 1. Acts of Gender-Based Sexual Harassment



Note. Intramuros Administration [@intramurosph]. (2021, November 30). *The Intramuros Administration joins the Philippine Commission on Women in the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women* [Poster]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CW45I4IvF-z/

The layout is divided into two panels. The left side is a visual-heavy portrayal of GBV while the right side is text-heavy. The division suggests that the left panel serves as the point of reference or the "old information" while the right panel serves as the "new information" configured from the information provided by the left panel (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

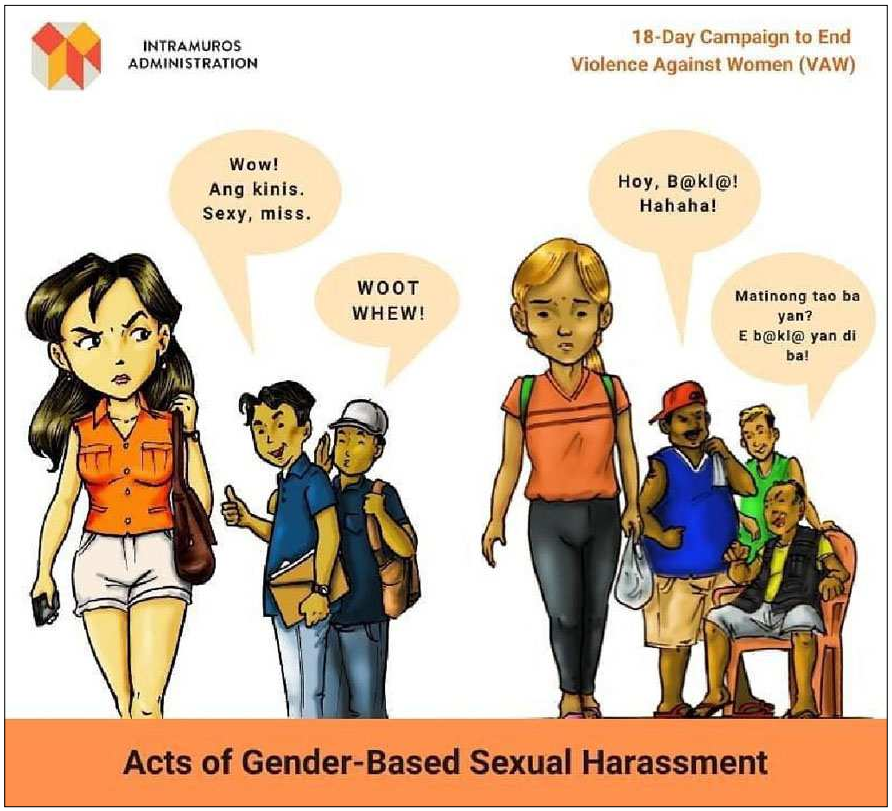
The right panel begins with the title, 18-Day Campaign to End VAW. It provides the context as to why the poster was produced. The statement is then followed by a list of acts of gender-based violence such as stalking and relentless requests for personal data, among others. The visual on the left panel represents the point of reference. Taken as a whole, the poster assumes that before the law, these acts were deemed as "normal" before being criminalized. The visual enactment was necessary to provide the readers with a point of reference and to raise awareness. The categorization of these acts as criminal is further strengthened by the inclusion of the text, "Safe Spaces Act" and the hashtags that follow. These texts signify the legal context that frames the narratives that are presented in the poster. The penalties are also included, however, the font size is noticeably smaller than the other written texts. This poster serves as a foundational source of information for the Safe Spaces Act.

Notably, the linguistic features of the poster demonstrate the use of two languages. The language employed in the speech of the male character (as depicted to be the perpetrator) is Filipino. Meanwhile, the definition of gender-based violence is written in English. The choice of language in itself can be another source of meaning here. Because Filipino is the more accessible language, it was used to signify the "realistic" element of harassment. Meaning, the speech of the perpetrator here can be very well a possible statement coming from an actual perpetrator. The use of Filipino increases the believability of the scenario being depicted.

While the first poster incorporated a combination of texts and visuals, this second poster employed a dominantly visual messaging. This poster is also divided into two narrative panels. The panel on the left foregrounds a main character whose eye vectors are directed to her background, where the male characters are placed. The male

Figure 4

Poster 2. Acts of Gender-Based Sexual Harassment

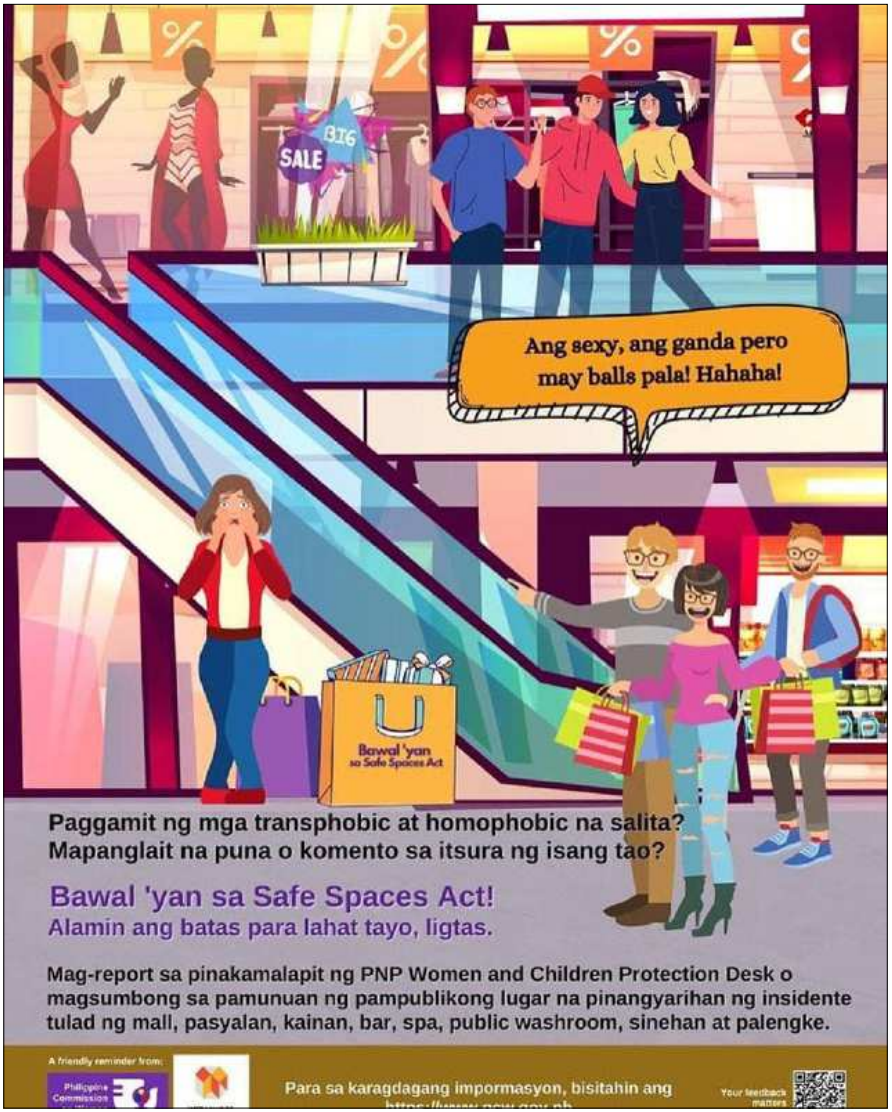


Note. Intramuros Administration [@intramurosph]. (2021, November 27). *The Intramuros Administration joins the Philippine Commission on Women in the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women* [Poster]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CWw1E69vckh/

characters are portrayed to be talking as evidenced by the presence of speech bubbles. In the left panel, the men are catcalling the woman as evidenced by their statements, "Wow! *Ang kinis.*" The second man said, "Woot whew!" which is an onomatopeic approximation of a wolf-whistle. Similar to the first poster, this portrayal is a visualization of another form of GB sexual harassment in a public space. The right panel has a similar formula, wherein there is a main character in the foreground and a group of male characters in the background saying something. The difference between the two panels is the content of the speech bubbles. Instead of catcalling the main character, the man in the background is calling her "*bakla*" which translates to "homosexual" in English. The second speech bubble says, "*Matinong tao ba yan? Eh bakla yan.*" Which is roughly translated to, "How can he be a decent human being when he's gay?" Notice that the word *bakla* is typed as if it is a curse word that needs to be censored. The placement of the panels suggests that the narrative portrayed on the left serves as the point of reference or the "old information." Meanwhile, the right panel presents a "new idea," this idea being that gays are also subject to acts of gender-based violence. This is an important development that serves as a departure from the traditional male-female configuration present in GBV-related campaign materials. It challenges the dominant representation of GBV as explained in the earlier section. Moreover, it also makes visible and articulates the reality that gender-based violence is also experienced by members of the LGBTQIA+ community because of their gender identities. The depiction also reconfigures the normalcy of this experience and asks the audience to categorize this behavior from normal to violent. This is a crucial shift in the scripting of GBV as it deviates or expands what gender-based violence looks like. It introduces new characters and surfaces experiences that have not been considered in the traditional narratives of GBV in public spaces. The parallel placement also implies that both narratives are equally valid and fall under the same category of GBV as evidenced by the text below.

Figure 5

Poster 3. Bawal 'yan sa Safe Spaces Act!



Note. Intramuros Administration [@intramurosph]. (2021, December 6). *The Intramuros Administration joins the Philippine Commission on Women in the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women* [Poster]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CXI9l6sPeZ9/

The third poster is set as a single panel with one clear narrative. The scenario is set in a shopping mall as evidenced by the shopping store background. In the center of the page, there is an imaginary divide between the character on the left and a group of characters on the right. It can be deduced that the character on the left is the character who is being harassed as observed by the closed-off body language and the look of terror in the facial features. The characters on the right represent the perpetrators. Similar to the earlier posters, speech is assigned only to the perpetrators and the victim is silent. This formula is present in all of the analyzed posters in this study. The text on the speech bubble says, "*Ang* sexy*, ang ganda, pero may* balls *pala! Hahaha!*" When translated, "She's beautiful and sexy, too bad she has balls." This statement implies that the character being harassed is probably a trans woman and that she is being ridiculed because of her gender identity. It is noteworthy that there is a woman included in the group that is mocking the victim. In the first two posters, it was clear that the perpetrators or harassers are all men. In this case, the woman included in the group is not the direct harasser; she merely laughs along with the harasser and the other man. However, this particular portrayal is vital in highlighting the various levels of complicity in gender-based violence. While accountability should weigh heavily on the shoulders of the perpetrators, participating and condoning enables violence and maintains the culture of discrimination in society. It also extends the responsibility of ensuring the safety of spaces from individuals to the public at large.

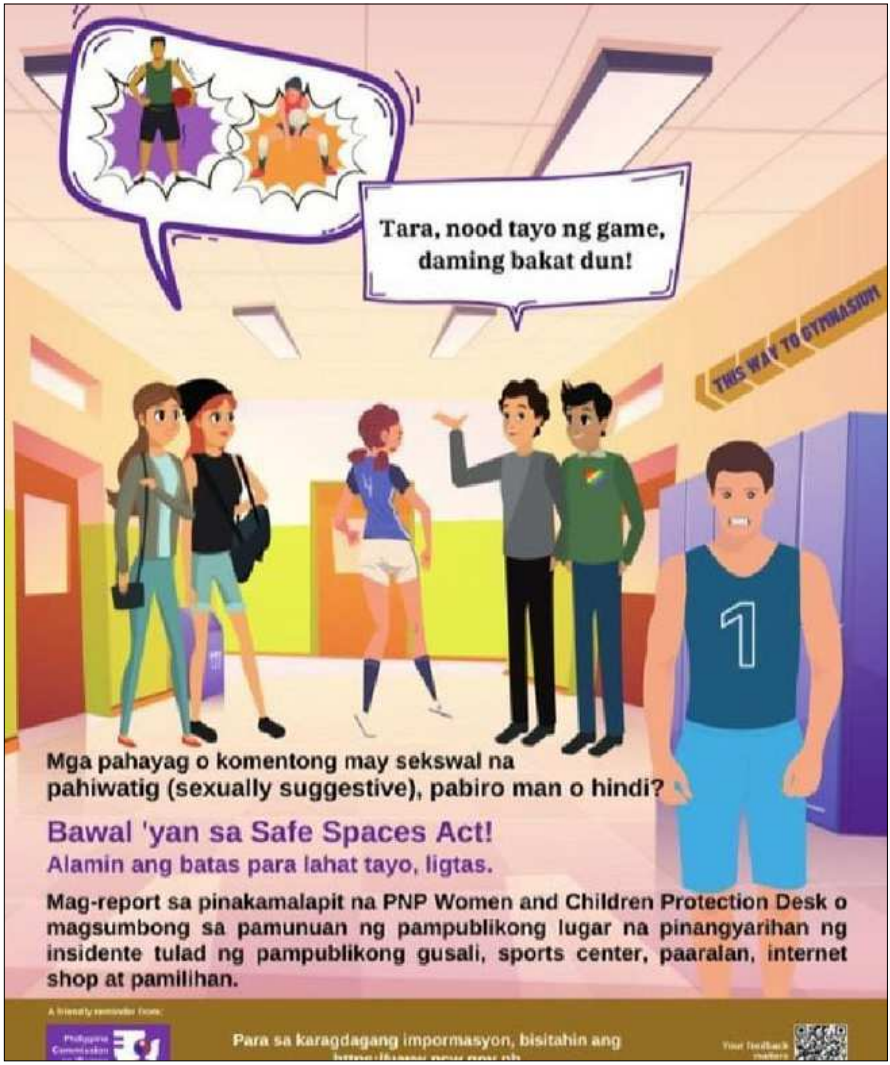
The visual representation of GBV against the trans character is reinforced by the text placed below. The text reads, "*Paggamit ng mga* transphobic *at* homophobic *na salita? Mapanglait na puna o komento sa itsura ng isang tao? Bawal 'yan sa* Safe Spaces Act*! Alamin ang batas para lahat tayo, ligtas.*" Here, another definition of gender-based violence is introduced. This new definition may explain the choice to explain the concept in a combination of Filipino and English. By using Filipino, the text increases accessibility which in turn, can increase the chances of comprehension among the audience. The statements are also structured as a question. The choice to code it as an interrogation suggests that there is a level of inquiry necessary to understand that the act being portrayed falls under sexual harassment.

Again, the verbalization of this insult surfaces the violent aspect of what seems to be previously accepted or normative humor. It confirms that the statement is meant to be a joke or source of entertainment for the nearby audience. The markedness, in the form of calling attention to the "supposed" common joke, underlines the violence of the act. New information is included in this poster: the inclusion of the call to report. It includes details on where to report and what to do in case an act of GBV takes place. It does not however specify whether the imperative is directed to the victim or a witness.

This is the last poster in the series of campaign materials released during the launch of the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW. Similar to Poster 3, it also depicts a narrative in a single panel. The space is dominated by visual narrative; below the space is the text. The narrative is depicted to take place in a locker area, perhaps in a school setting. There are two pairs of characters in the center, on the left panel is a pair of women and on the right is a pair of men. The two women seem to be describing a sporting event, volleyball to be specific, based on the speech bubble assigned to them. As a response, the pair of men said, "Come, let's watch the game. We'll see some bulges there." The speaker is referring to ogling men in tight-fitting uniforms. To further contextualize the statement, the text found in the lower center of the poster states, "Comments laced with sexual innuendos that are sexually suggestive, whether meant as a joke or not? That's not allowed according to the Safe Spaces Act." This poster portrays a configuration not commonly shown in previous campaign materials against sexual harassment: gender-based violence between the same sex. It suggests that the characters guilty of harassment are the two onlookers who are depicted as men. Notably, one of them is wearing a rainbow pin, indicating that he is a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. It suggests that members of the LGBTQIA+ themselves, aside from being possible victims of sexual harassment, can also perpetuate it. The victim here is shown to be another man. Instead of feeling terrified or ashamed, he is portrayed to be clenching his fists and baring his teeth. These physical cues indicate anger or in this context, controlling one's anger. However, the gender identity of the victim is not established. It can be

Figure 6

Poster 4. Bawal 'yan sa Safe Spaces Act!



Note. Intramuros Administration [@intramurosph]. (2021, November 25). *The Intramuros Administration joins the Philippine Commission on Women in the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women* [Poster]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CWsYrwnvHcZ/

assumed that the absence of the rainbow pin indicates his heterosexuality. In that case, assigning his character as the victim inverts the mainstream script; instead of the cis-man perpetrating violence toward marginalized identities such as members of the LGBTQIA+ community, he becomes the target of this violence.

Emerging Themes

Shifting Language Regarding the Boundaries of GBV

The ratification of the Safe Spaces Act demonstrates the evolution of the language that is employed in gender-based violence discourse. It has expanded from private, confined spaces such as homes, schools, and offices to the bigger and public spaces of civil society. It reconfigures the spatial-temporal dimension of the experiences of GBV. The inclusion of the public space in GBV discourse also impacts the categories and nuances of power relations. Previously, acts of sexual harassment are bound within relations that are dictated by institutions: teacher-student, manager-trainee, boss-employee, among others. The creation of the new law acknowledges the possibility of violence occurring outside traditional, organized power relations that are confined within institutional structures. The wording, "Safe Space," also provides a language for and expands the imagination and a vision of a violence-free society. It opens up the discussion of what safety means and for whom. The need to keep spaces "safe" presupposes the existence of threat or danger. Thus, it is crucial to map out the sources of these threats and eliminate them. In the context of GBV, who is being threatened and who is enacting the threat is laid out in the composition of the posters. Aside from the experience of violence, it also creates and surfaces how acts of violence performed in the public lead to feelings of "un"-safety. Multimodality as a strategy captures the entire picture of the law, something that linguistic elements will not be able to accomplish, therefore demonstrating the crucial role of employing a diverse set of semiotic devices. It is crucial to highlight that the new linguistic configuration of GBV opens up the discussion toward a more gender-transformative iteration of GBV legislation. While I recognize that the discursive implications of the language of the law merits more

academic attention, this study will not be able to fully expound on this further given the scope and limitations.

The linguistic elements also reintroduce the concept of gender-based violence and expand its vocabulary specific to the context of sexual harassment. Acts of sexual harassment are labeled as "gender-based" and not just "sexual harassment." The emphasis on the gendered dimension of sexual harassment through language draws attention to the more inclusive category of gender and highlights the experiences of gendered identities. As mentioned earlier, the posters that are related to LGBTQIA+ identities contain statements in interrogative form. It can be inferred that the information being introduced has not been established yet as general or common knowledge. Words such as "transphobic" and "homophobic" are new and necessary categories that need to take up public space.

Embodied and Heteronormative Construction of Violence

While the linguistic component serves to expound on the legal aspect of GBV, the visual elements of the posters illustrate the dynamics of threat and danger. Although heteronormativity is not explicit in the legal vocabulary of the existing policies, it becomes evident when translated into advocacy and campaign work.

The posters have consistently portrayed men or male characters and make visible the threat and danger that their presence in public spaces brings. Meanwhile, women and queer people are dominantly portrayed to be on the receiving end of danger. In terms of physical appearance, victims[2] are drawn to be hyper-feminine, with emphasis on curves and other "feminine"-coded elements such as hints of make-up and hair length. Perpetrators are drawn with particular emphasis on darker skin tones and neutral-colored clothing, elements that are traditionally coded as masculine. Based on how the victims are visibilized in the posters, there is an expected bodily effect and reaction towards the presence of danger

[2] While I recognize the political dimension of using "survivor" in the GBV context, I am using "victim" here as a reference to the legal framework that is being referred to in the study.

brought by men. Victims are drawn with facial tension as evidenced by the lines that are drawn conspicuously. Their bodies are closed off, accompanied by body gestures that indicate hiding or covering certain parts of their body. The posters make visible the embodied dimensions of fear and danger.

In all the posters, the threatened characters are not assigned any speech and are drawn to express a feeling of anger, fear, or irritation. The perpetrators on the other hand, while positioned in the background, are the ones who are given the voice as evidenced by the speech bubbles. This configuration continues to affirm the notion that victims are or should be silent and vulnerable when confronted with harassment.

The patterns demonstrate the assumed vulnerability that victims of sexual harassment experience. Their portrayal reproduces the typical portrayal of GBV victims as "weak, silent, and embodying shame." While it can be argued that this portrayal has an element of truth, feminist discourses surrounding gender-based violence propose that portraying GBV victims in this manner reinforces the notion that gender-based violence is a source of shame and stigma (Deocampo, 2019). More importantly, it essentializes shame and silence as the only possible and acceptable response for a victim. This perpetuates the emergence of the "model" victim persona in a heteronormative rendering of violence. Research conducted on rape and domestic violence prove that mainstream media only convey the idea of violence or aggression of "legitimate victims"—those who conform to certain gender heteronormativity and sexual morality rules (Almeida, 2015). This implies that when someone is a victim of GBV, they are expected to be silent and afraid. Any deviation from this "model" victim persona can invalidate the credibility of the victim and dismiss the act of violence.

Another visual highlight is the representation of LGBTQIA+ identities. The inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters demonstrates the departure from the binary construct of GBV where only cis-man and cis-woman characters are seen. Posters 2, 3, and 4 are clear examples of a change in the usual male-female configuration of sexual harassment. This shift reflects the growing consciousness of the violence that is experienced by members of the LGBTQIA+, especially in public spaces.

Previously, any case of violence perpetrated against a member of the LGBTQIA+ community is deemed irrelevant and invalid because it does not fall under the acceptable heterosexual-binary construct of violence (Almeida, 2015; DeShong & Haynes, 2017). However, a closer investigation reveals the hypervisualization of the characters' sex characteristics. This affirms Haynes and DeShong's (2017) findings that LGBTQIA+ identities are defined by the hypersexualization of their bodies. The reference to the "balls" or the testicles of the individual stereotypes the LGBTQIA+ identity as singularly understood and represented in sexual terms. Even the comment of the supposed "gay" character about the possibility of "catching some balls" in Poster 3 is a stereotypical portrayal of the fixation of LGBTQIA+ toward sexual innuendos.

Moreover, the hyper-focus on the victims rather than the perpetrators dilutes or removes the attention required to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. While centering the narratives of the victims can be an opportunity to highlight the harmful effects of GBV, it further frames GBV as something that is done to the victims rather than something being done by the perpetrators.

The narratives in the campaign materials reveal that, while there has been a significant and noticeable shift in the representation of GBV in advocacy materials, the dominant construction continues to adhere to heteronormative scripting.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has outlined the context of gender-based violence discourse and legislation in the country. By analyzing a selection of campaign and advocacy materials against gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, the study reveals that there is an ongoing attempt to expand the represented identities in GBV discourse. The linguistic elements in the materials highlight the legislative dimension of GBV and provide labels and categories to further define the concepts involved. Meanwhile, visual elements serve to locate the relations where instances of GBV occur: cis-men are commonly portrayed as perpetrators, and women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community are portrayed as victims. In the context

of the Safe Spaces Act, this formulation suggests that acts of GBV by men lead to feelings of unsafety for women and members of LGBTQIA+. However, while there is a commendable attempt to expand the representations of identities in the campaign materials, the analysis surfaced the embedded heteronormativity within these representations. There continues to be a reproduction of the "silent and stigmatized victim" narrative. Representations of queer identities also tend to fixate on sexual characteristics which further reinforced the hypersexualized representation of queer people. Lastly, the portrayal of the perpetrator's behaviors carry contradicting interpretations. While the posters expose normalized behavior and actions that are now considered forms of violence, the reenactment of these behaviors, such as foul language and stalking, can serve to magnify the platform on which GBV acts are performed. Based on these findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Continued support for the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Bill

   The Anti-Discrimination Bill (ADB) aims to ensure the elimination of gender-based discrimination, with specific attention to the SOGIE of an individual. This Bill questions the notion that gender-based forms of discrimination are only experienced by a specific group of women. The passage of the bill will facilitate the necessary and long-delayed reforms in localized policies in both the public and private sectors. Since there is currently no national legislation that would protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination in the Philippines, the ADB would see those who discriminate against LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Philippines face fines or jail time (Casal, 2019).

2. Formulation and implementation of heteronormative audit on the existing GBV-related legislation

   As part of the gender and development goals, gender audits are often employed to ensure the gender sensitivity of the policies and programs of different offices. However, the existing models for gender audits operate within the binary of "men

and women" needs. A more targeted heteronormative audit should be designed and implemented to identify the potential areas for improvement in ensuring the inclusion of the needs of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Policymakers and advocacy groups should adopt strategies that "challenge the binary distinctions between sex and gender and explore new, queer ways of understanding sex and gender" (Jolly, 2000). Heteronormative audits will be able to surface the areas that need to be improved in ensuring that the needs of the LGBTQIA+ community are also considered (see GALANG Philippines, 2013).

3. Creation of a participatory model for advocacy and campaign initiatives

   Policymakers, specifically advocacy groups, can surface the issue of heteronormativity within the public arena by reviewing narratives of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence as portrayed in campaign and advocacy materials. There should be a concerted effort in ensuring the inclusivity of campaigns that are initiated and implemented. This can be done by designing a participatory model where members of the community are included in the entire process of conceptualizing and implementing a campaign program. Ensuring that the members of vulnerable groups are represented and given a space to express their needs is vital in successfully eliminating all forms of gender-based violence.

As Jolly (2000) states, "if we are to move forward into an era where sexual development and freedom is realized, then the first step is to reconsider the way we conceptualize and negotiate the gendered and sexualized constructions of some of our most personal actions and identities" (p. 86). When marginalized members of society have the chance to occupy and create spaces for themselves, they have more chances to ask and work toward the changes they ask for. If everyone contributes their efforts, knowledge, and passion in continuously defining and

redefining the conversation on gender-based violence, there are more chances of seeing a world where no one individual or group suffers. Anyone's gender identity should never be an excuse for people to harm, punish, or inflict violence. The time to end all forms of violence should start now.

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