

Untitled

Good afternoon.

% Are you aware of what happened last August where a transgender woman was denied by a janitor to enter the women's bathroom? Probably, it was on the news for a whole month. It talks about the issue of gender discrimination.

Do you know the feeling of walking on the streets in the middle of the night, while holding the hands of someone of the same sex? Do you know the uneasiness and the danger that the two persons feels when they see other people staring at them?

Being part of the LGBT Community is hard here in the Philippines. It is hard for gay kids at school who are having a hard time expressing themselves because no one ever talks about LGBT and everyone thinks that being gay is wrong. It is hard for kids, and even adults, out there being beaten up by their families just because they are being too feminine or masculine. It is hard for the LGBT Community because of the stereotypes dictated by the heteronormative society.

Promoting stigma, hate crimes, and gender profiling are some forms of discrimination experienced by the LGBT community. Now having a bill that penalizes these discriminations based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression can legally protect the LGBT people. This bill, or the SOGIE bill, is something that the LGBT Community can hold on to and something that can back them up.

[pause, walk siguro]

As I said earlier, discrimination against LGBT still exists in the Philippines. The catholic church, which comprises approximately 80% of the population, actively oppose same-sex relationships and the legalization of it. Though they claim that homosexuality is not a sin, they also said that the LGBT Community should be welcomed with respect and sensitivity. But these ideas seem to oppose the pope saying that the church should welcome even the gays. Iglesia ni Cristo, another dominant religion in the Philippines, has been known to be the most discriminating religion for the LGBT filipinos. Their Templo Central backed different hate crimes and forced conversion therapies towards LGBT INC members. Their belief is that gay people would still end up in hell, no matter what they do.

With regards to politics, There was a time before that the COMELEC denied the Ang Ladlad LGBT party to run in the 2010 elections, on the grounds of immorality. Probably one of the most prominent figure known to discriminate the LGBT is your president, not mine, Mr. Duterte. He uses gay, bakla, or bayot, as terms to insult his opponents and even jokingly said that being 'gay is just a phase' by saying that he used to be gay until he met his ex-wife.

In media, the MTRCB released a memo that states that lesbian and homosexual relationships are abnormalities to primetime TV programs. Tulfo, stated that being gay should not go around town saying they're gay as if it was a badge of honor. Mis-addressing transgender people by different media practitioners is also a common form of discrimination, mostly felt by transgender people, specifically after trying to correct them.

These are examples of different discrimination and hate speech done to LGBT community. If you think that these are harmless then you're part of the problem. Not calling out these types of actions would only mean that using gay people as jokes or mis-addressing people are just normal.

[pause]

Here in the Philippines, there are no specific laws protecting the LGBT Community in a nationwide context in the Philippines. In some countries, for example Canada, they have a criminal code as the criminal code. Spain is also another country which accepts LGBT people. In the 2018 Miss Universe, Spain sent the first transgender woman to compete in this competition. Also Spain also allows same-sex marriage and since 1995, there have been no hate crimes nor discrimination against LGBT that happened in this country. Spain is one of the countries that colonized us and the fact that they have made laws preventing hate crimes against LGBT and we have not is still weird.

Out of all the laws in the Philippines, this act is the only one I can find that includes SOGI as a basis of bullying. But this is not enough because this only covers school bullying. SOGIE Bill, in summary, states that people, regardless of sex, age, class, status, color, religion, and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression), should be free from any form of discrimination. The type of discrimination covered by this bill refers to anything that tries to exclude, prefer, restrict, anyone just because of their SOGIE. ie. The things that I have mentioned before. SOGIE Bill also penalizes those who promotes stigma (HIV cases are increasing because of gay sex), treats employees differently, and those who denies access to public establishments and facilities (Gretchen Diez example). I also want to mention that it does not include same-sex marriage.

Most of straight people, and a classmate of us, mentioned that I should also discuss what would happen to the heterosexuals once the bill is passed, or not passed. Let me remind you that even straight people have SOGIE. For example, a straight male is a heterosexual masculine male. This means that they are also covered by the bill.

One famous anti-SOGIE bill, Eddie Villanueva, a lordie person, said that SOGIE bill will not promote equality but will give special treatment to the LGBT people. Their examples include limiting the freedom of speech of people who shares their bible-based beliefs regarding homosexuals and transgenders. Let me just say that your belief is a belief but my existence is a reality. We should not base our laws on religion, this is according to our 1987 constitution stating that there should be a separation of the church and state. Our laws should be made based on the needs of our people, including the minority.

% Other people who tries to be know it all claims that only the XX and XY chromosomes are possible, which is why there is only man and woman. But what do you call people missing an X chromosome? A person with extra X chromosome? Heck, Jesus was born without a father which technically means 'he' only has an X chromosome. This makes 'him' a woman. I am reaching far here but probably the only reason why Jesus was a male was because during the ancient times, males rule the world. [can be removed I think]

Lastly, almost all people who opposes the SOGIE Bill states that Philippines is already an accepting country with regards to the LGBT community. My question is, are we? Yes we can see LGBT people being successful in their careers but there are still many out there being discriminated, because of their gender and sex. We only tolerate the LGBT, especially when they are viewed as someone funny.

[pause and think of transition for conclusion]

We only like the idea of gays fitting inside their stereotype box: funny, feminine, flirts with everyone, etc. Filipinos are also accepting of the idea that the LGBT people are a class lower than straights. But when the LGBT try to take a step up the class ladder, the heteronormative society suddenly feels attacked.

Filipinos are so used on using gay, bakla and even saying that HIV comes from gay sex that they feel that it is normal. But this is not true. These are hate speech being done against the LGBT community. And there also other forms of discriminations against the LGBT and that no nationwide law is there to act as a legal protection. SOGIE bill is there to penalize those who attack anyone because of sex and gender.

Honestly, we do not need this bill if only we know how to treat other humans like humans. But because of our country being dominated by conservative religious people, it is hard to remove the stigma against LGBT. No one teaches about LGBT in schools because a lot of people have created a stigma that children will become gay if exposed to gay scenes. Hell, did I become straight after watching those cringey pinoy movies showcasing straight sex/kissing scenes? Did I become religious after being forced to go to church? No. So sit down.

Also, for gay people do not give me your 'I was never discriminated throughout my life so I really don't see the need for the bill' bullshit. Get off your fucking high horse and get your privileged ass back to the ground and see that most of your LGBT brother and sisters are being killed, removed from work, raped by their family members, bullied at school because of their SOGIE.

And for you heterosexual people, we ask you to support this bill because it also covers you, though it mostly focuses on the LGBT people because we are the ones who need immediate protection. Not you. Have you ever been thrown out of the house for a week because you're straight. Or have you ever been scared to admit to your parents that you're straight?

I believe that passing SOGIE Bill is a big step towards equality.