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SPECIAL ISSUE: Research on LGBTQ+ Youth

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Main Editor
Karina Weichold

ISSBD Bulletin
Department of Youth Research, Institute of Psychology
University of Jena
Am Steiger 3 / Haus I
D-07743 Jena, Germany
Email: karina.weichold@uni-jena.de

Co-Editor
Deepali Sharma

ISSBD Bulletin
Mental Health Services Oldham
Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
United Kingdom
Email: deepali.sharma3@nhs.net



Introduction to the Special Section: Research on LGBTQ+ Youth

The rainbow flag has attained worldwide recognition in recent years and a growing acceptance of the message associated with it. The many colors reflect diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation, a symbol of pride in and support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other community (LGBTQ+). All age groups are nowadays more aware of gender and sexual minority groups and show increasing acceptance towards them; however, discrimination toward individuals who do not belong to the cisgender heterosexual mainstream persists. As a consequence, in particular youth struggling with the process of developing gender identity and sexual orientation are afraid to come out and have a higher likelihood to develop a broad spectrum of adaptation problems. This state of affairs has been the focus of recent research activities, in attempts to prevent discrimination, bullying, and alienation of LGBTQ+ youth in schools and communities via theory and evidence-based programs.

The growing interest in studying the developmental mechanisms in gender identity and sexual orientation among minorities worldwide is also reflected in the program of the upcoming ISSBD Biennial Meeting, where some of our authors of the special section will present and discuss future avenues in the field. The symposium is chaired by Stephen Russel from the University of Texas, USA, who introduces the readers of the special section to the development and adaptation of LGBTQ+ youth in schools. Further, Poteat and his international co-authors, who are also part of the ISSBD invited symposium, point to the positive developmental processes and address options for promoting thriving in LGBTQ+ youth in the school setting. Apart from these two papers mainly relying on data from the Western industrialized world, we are happy to include a paper by Rahman, reviewing the

evolution of transgender acceptance across different cultures. We conclude the Special section with two papers on minorities in gender identity and sexual orientation from Asia. Thakur and colleagues thereby address the case of an Indian gay man and Alibudbud focusses on the situation of LGBTQ+ individuals from the Philippines.

We are excited that this truly international group of authors has contributed to the Special Section. The papers help us to understand that developing own gender identity and sexual orientation under particular circumstances, even nowadays with a greater acceptance of diversity, can be difficult. They also may stimulate future research activities, in basic and applied developmental science, and the communication of findings to the public to reduce possible stigmas associated with deviations from a cisgender heterosexual life worldwide.

Along with the special section, we publish the notes from our president, Toni Antonucci in this issue of the Bulletin, and Minutes of the past meetings of the executive Committee of ISSBD as summarized by the secretary general Luc Goossens. Additionally, the society is happy to announce the new editor of the IJBD, Professor Lansford – congratulations!

Lastly, we are all looking forward to the ISSBD 2022 Biennial Meeting in Rhodes, Greece – after several years we will be able to get together and meet colleagues and friends again and to present and discuss research. We say this with hope that the worldwide corona pandemic not only pauses, but that we will overcome this crisis. Enjoy this issue of the Bulletin and also the scientific get-together in June 2022!

Karina Weichold & Deepali Sharma
Email: karina.weichold@uni-jena.de

The Development and Adaptation of LGBTQ+ Youth in Schools

Stephen T. Russell¹

¹Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor in Child Development, Amy Johnson McLaughlin Director, School of Human Ecology, The University of Texas at Austin, US

Email: stephen.russell@utexas.edu

For several decades there has been growing attention in developmental scholarship to the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) children and youth. This scholarly attention has been parallel to dramatic shifts in public attention to LGBTQ+ people and lives over recent decades. In this essay I focus attention on the now mature research on LGBTQ+ and their experiences in schools. I focus on schools because compared to a decade ago, we now have such clear evidence regarding strategies to create safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ+ students.

Before turning to schools, there are several emerging areas of tremendous new innovation research on the development and adaptation of LGBTQ+ youth that bear briefly highlighting here. There is important new and emerging work focused on, for example: developmental processes (Bishop et al., 2020; Calzo et al., 2020); the complexities and intersectionality of LGBTQ+ youth identities and experiences (National Academies of Sciences, 2022); and the ways COVID-19 has altered the lives of LGBTQ+ youth (Fish et al., 2020). Further, we are witnessing moral panics regarding gender diversity and transgender youth.

Trans/Gender Panics

Before turning attention to schools, it is impossible to be in the United States in 2022 and write about LGBTQ+ youth without confronting the politicized attention (attacks) on transgender people, particularly youth. U.S. religious conservative groups have turned attention to transgender rights (and importantly, to abortion rights, as well as to LGBT youth in schools) (Peters, 2017). The result has been a coordinated series of legislative and policy actions, including book bans, pride flag removals, and the “Parental Rights in Education” bill in the state of Florida that prohibits instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity in primary

schools. Perhaps the greatest attention has been garnered by more than 100 proposed laws across the United States that prohibit access to sports, bathrooms, and gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth (Feliciano, 2021). This politicization of sexuality and gender in the lives of children and youth is not new, nor is it limited to the United States context. The recent opposition to gender studies in Europe (Apperly, 2019) is one instance of a growing anti-gender movement (Wilson-McDonald, 2021) tied to similar movements across the globe.

So much of the focus in the public debates about transgender youth in the United States has focused on gender-affirming medical care; notably, for most youth and families, medical intervention in childhood or adolescence is a small component of the landscape of gender affirmation. Yet there is strong evidence that medical intervention can be effective and affirmative for transgender youth (de Vries et al., 2014; Park et al., 2021). Further, research is clear that policies and practices in schools, families, and communities that affirm youths’ gender identities are crucial to the health and well-being of transgender and gender nonbinary youth (Russell et al., 2018). Notably, much of the relevant research evidence has focused on schools.

School Strategies to Support LGBTQ+ Youth

LGBTQ+ students often experience negative school climates, where they are subjected to bias-based bullying and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These negative school climates can threaten LGBTQ+ students’ health and well-being. At the same time, a large and consistent body of research has identified strategies to help to keep LGBTQ+ and all students safe and supported at school. These strategies have been identified in reviews by scientific societies (Russell et al., 2010), and by recent reports by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies of Sciences, 2019, 2020) and UNESCO (UNESCO, 2021).

First, the presence of enumerated non-discrimination or anti-bullying policies (policies that list characteristics or traits of students that may be the basis of bullying or discrimination at school) is associated with more positive school experiences and health for LGBTQ+ and all youth. Multiple studies in the United States (Hatzenbuehler & Keyes, 2013; I. H. Meyer et al., 2019) and other nations (Berger et al., 2019; Konishi et al., 2013) find that enumerated school policies are associated with health and safety for LGBTQ+ and all students.



Second, training for teachers and other school personnel can scaffold the use of practical tools to support and protect all students effectively. Caring and supportive adults are critical for supporting the wellbeing of all students, especially LGBTQ+ and other marginalized students (Kosciw et al., 2018). A lack of intervention by school personnel may be traced to lack of education about LGBTQ+ issues, lack of institutional support, and fear of backlash (E. J. Meyer, 2008). There are relatively few studies of the efficacy of teacher training, yet a new study shows that victimization was lowest in schools that had over a decade of support for professional development for school personnel on issues related to sexual and gender identity (Ioverno et al., 2022).

Third, students report safer school climates when their school curricula incorporate attention to sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum integrates sexual orientation and gender identity in the content of school curriculum (e.g., health education, literature, science, or mathematics) (Snapp, McGuire, et al., 2015). In addition to the formal curriculum, information and resources can be provided in libraries, by identifying supportive school personnel, during in-school assemblies and announcements that highlight resources and support, and through visible images of LGBTQ+ topics and people in posters in classrooms and hallways. Multiple studies have shown the importance of access to these kinds of resources and inclusive curricula for student safety and belonging (Snapp, Burdge, et al., 2015).

Finally, school clubs have been a longstanding feature of U.S. schools. LGBTQ-focused student-led, school-based clubs (often called gay-straight alliances, or gender-sexuality alliances, i.e., GSAs), are extracurricular organizations composed of students and advisors. Their presence in a school, as well as students' participation in them, can improve students' school experiences and well-being. GSA participation is linked to academic performance (higher grade point average), more school belonging, feeling safe at school, and better mental health (Ioverno et al., 2016; Poteat et al., 2020; Toomey & Russell, 2013). Research has also consistently shown that simply having a GSA at school is linked to less homophobic language, less bullying, and greater sense of belonging for LGBT students (Kosciw et al., 2018). In addition to these influences on school-related factors, another body of research has shown the connection between having a GSA at school and better mental health and health behavior for LGBT students (Poteat et al., 2013). One of the few longitudinal studies showed that having a GSA was associated with decreasing homophobic bullying and increasing feelings of safety one year later (Ioverno et al., 2016).

The last decade has seen solidification of evidence on the strategies to create safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ+ students. What is clearly needed now is alignment of the evidence with education policy and practice.

Looking forward to ISSBD 2022

This summer in Greece, colleagues and I look forward to discussing these issues in a symposium: The School Experiences of LGBTQ+ Children & Youth. The symposium includes scholars from around the world, with four studies from remarkable new large-scale samples, each with distinct design

advantages. Each focuses on student attitudes or adjustment, and three directly account for school-level climate. Two are designed based on general samples of students; two on samples of LGBTQ+ students. Dr. Makiko Kasai (Naruto University of Education, Japan) investigates knowledge and attitudes about LGBTQ+ people and issues in a nationwide sample of students in Japan. Dr. Paul Poteat (Boston College, USA) and colleagues uses a sample of LGBTQ+ students from the United States to examine how supportive student organizations attenuate depression over the course of a school year. Dr. Salvatore Ioverno (Roma Tre University, Italy) investigates school and community influences on the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ students in schools in a new multi-national study of youth across Europe. Finally, Dr. Josafá Cunha (Federal University of Parana, Brazil) and colleagues explore how school climate for diversity shapes the association between homophobic bullying and academic achievement in a large sample of Brazilian schools. The papers in this symposium represent distinct approaches to the use of large-scale surveys and together, advance understanding of the experiences of LGBTQ+ students in schools around the world.

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A Research Agenda for Thriving among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

V. Paul Poteat¹, Salvatore Ioverno², Eddie S. K. Chong³,
Jessica N. Fish⁴ and Ryan J. Watson⁵

¹Boston College

²Roma Tre University

³The University of Hong Kong

⁴University of Maryland

⁵University of Connecticut

Email: poteatp@bc.edu

Sexual and gender minority youth (SGMY; e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual, transgender, gender non-binary, or intersex youth) continue to experience disparities in health and developmental outcomes as a consequence of ongoing marginalization (Delozier et al., 2020; Russell & Fish, 2019). It remains important to document the persistence of discrimination in the lives of SGMY, its harmful effects, and continued efforts to counteract it. At the same time, SGMY thrive when peers, adults, and systems support and affirm them (Johns et al., 2019; Tankersley et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there has been far less scholarship on how SGMY flourish, even in the face of discrimination, or to factors and conditions that promote their healthy development. We highlight several avenues for future research that could go far in advancing our understanding and promotion of positive SGMY development. We focus on youth's positive identity development and translational research aimed at facilitating thriving.

Positive Identity Development and Thriving

Sexual orientation and gender identity development are both a normative part of forming one's overall identity (Meeus, 2011; Russell & Fish, 2019). Individuals come to develop a richer understanding of their sexual orientation and gender identity throughout childhood and adolescence (Stewart et al., 2019). A growing number of youth are drawing upon an expansive range of identities to describe their sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., pansexual, demisexual, asexual, genderqueer, among others; Gower et al., 2022; Watson et al., 2020). This raises several questions for research. How do youth view and continue to add to this extensive range of identities, and in what ways does this enable some youth to express themselves more authentically?

How do youth come to a shared understanding of these identities? At the same time, how do youth navigate settings in which these identities are deemed illegitimate or go unrecognized? In addressing these questions, it would be important to consider how youth's development and understanding of their sexual orientation and gender identities are shaped by their other social identities: peer and familial relationships, cultural background, and language (Shao et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2021)? These points all come to bear on our ability to understand the diverse experiences of youth within the broader SGMY community.

Identity disclosure and coming out—the process of sharing one's identity with others—is considered a part of the process of identity formation for SGMY (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). Generational trends suggest that contemporary SGMY's first disclosure occurs at younger ages than in prior generations (Bishop et al., 2020; Puckett et al., in press). More research is needed on what identity disclosure and visibility look like for contemporary SGMY. To some extent, “coming out” is a product of SGMY developing their identities within a hetero- and cis-normative world. What would sexual orientation and gender identity disclosure look like, absent such norms? Would identity disclosure be as prominent a milestone of identity development as it is currently seen? Would it be necessary at all? The process of coming out to others may still be a practical necessity, akin to sharing something about oneself that is not immediately visible to others. Still, the supportive or oppressive conditions under which SGMY share their identities could affect whether youth experience this process in a positive, negative, or neutral way.

Identity disclosure and the degree to which one is out across myriad contexts can carry benefits as well as challenges. Greater outness is associated with greater self-acceptance and stronger ties to SGM communities (Cox et al., 2010; Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). It may also grant access to supportive resources and supports (e.g., to SGMY-affirming peers, adults, or social settings). However, at times, greater outness is also associated with experiencing greater discrimination (Dewaele et al., 2013; Poteat et al., 2021; Watson et al., 2015). Ultimately, it will be important for research to identify supportive conditions for SGMY when they choose to share and express their sexual orientation and/or gender identities with others, that maximize the benefits of doing so, and protect them against potential stigma and discrimination.

Given the significant ways in which outness can shape SGMY's social experiences and development, we would argue that measures of outness should be included more regularly in SGMY studies. Outness tends to be assessed or reported in papers only when it constitutes the focus of a study. Still, this

information would be important even if only for researchers to describe their SGMY samples. First, however, we need stronger measures of identity outness. Extant measures sometimes assume the presence of certain individuals in a youth's life (e.g., siblings, coworkers) or fail to distinguish between other individuals (e.g., assessing outness to family members in general, without attention to a youth's specific family structure or youth's potentially selective disclosure to those within it; Caba et al., 2022). Similarly, it may be important to consider subtle indicators of visibility and affirmation experienced by SGMY (e.g., whether caregivers or peers recognize and include a youth's romantic partner in social events).

Adding to this, it would be important to contextualize youth's disclosures and visibility. Under what conditions do SGMY share this information with others? Cultural norms and values can influence an individual's decisions throughout the coming out process (Choi & Israel, 2016). Understanding how cultural and personal values interact and shape the ways in which SGMY make meaning of their identities and express their identities could shed light on how disclosure factors into youth's positive identity development.

As research continues to explore identity disclosure as part of the process of youth's identity development, we pose this question: how would SGMY *like* to see such a process as a part of their lives? How can SGMY find such a process empowering, meaningful, and fulfilling as they grow as an individual and in their relationships with others? How can adults and peers affirm and support SGMY throughout this process?

Here we reemphasize the need for research to give more coverage to indicators of positive development among SGMY. Drawing from the field of positive psychology (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligma & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), such work could consider hope, joy, purpose, creativity, gratitude, compassion, and humor. Scholars have considered hope a key marker of resilience among youth who experience marginalization, and have framed it as a means to heal from oppression (Ginwright, 2015; Te Riele, 2010). Self-compassion also underlies wellbeing among SGMY (Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2018), as does an ability to be authentic with oneself and others (Gamarel et al., 2014; Riggle & Rostosky, 2011). Similarly, SGMY often use humor to combat discrimination and other stressors (Craig et al., 2018). This more expansive view of resilience and positive developmental outcomes would provide a richer and more holistic account of how SGMY persevere through adversities, gain strength from affirming individuals and settings, and ultimately thrive.

More Action: Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating Affirming Programs and Policies

The preponderance of research on SGMY development has sought to describe individual and social experiences and developmental processes as they naturally occur. There is a pressing need for more translational research that *applies* this knowledge. There is much to be done in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs tailored for SGMY at various levels of prevention or intervention (Fish, 2020). Such programs are needed across the contexts in which SGMY develop, including families, schools, healthcare

settings, other community settings (e.g., community centers, faith-based settings), and virtual spaces. We raise several points here to consider as researchers take greater strides to advance this work.

Programming and interventions for SGMY could address a range of relevant topics, such as issues around physical, mental, behavior, and sexual health; cultivating healthy relationships with family members, friends, or romantic partners; or promoting various positive developmental outcomes such as contribution to one's community, cultivating hope, or fostering a sense of purpose. This is not to say that work is not already being done on these issues. Reviews have been published, for example, that highlight educational programs focused on SGMY sexual health (Pampati et al., 2021), mental health (Bochicchio et al., 2022), and family-centered interventions (Malpas et al., 2022; Newcomb et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2018). Nevertheless, a common refrain in these papers is that few SGMY interventions have undergone rigorous systematic evaluation. Thus, there is a clear need for researchers to evaluate the appropriateness, acceptability, feasibility, adaptability, and effectiveness of programs for SGMY.

Programs and policies are also needed that target the settings in which SGMY live and develop. Research should give attention to the policies, practices, and people in these settings that aim to create SGMY-inclusive spaces and provide competent support to SGMY. Some efforts have sought to build adults' knowledge and skills in providing services to SGMY. For example, there has been some research on professional development for healthcare providers (Morris et al., 2019), school counselors (Whitman et al., 2007) and educators (Ioverno et al., 2022; Payne & Smith 2011). Other work has highlighted the importance of SGMY-inclusive policies. For example, SGMY in schools with inclusive policies report a more positive school climate and sense of safety and less victimization than SGMY in schools without inclusive policies (Day et al., 2019; Kull et al., 2016).

Beyond considering the presence of inclusive policies, there is a need to consider their effective implementation. Is a given policy understood, supported, and followed consistently? What are key facilitators and barriers to their successful implementation and maintenance? Do some policies have unintended negative effects; how can these policies be improved? The field of implementation science provides guidance for undertaking this work (Bauer et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is unlikely that any one policy, program, or effort among adults or youth will serve as a panacea to foster thriving among SGMY. Rather than considering policies, programs, or practices in isolation, future research should consider how multiple affirming efforts operate together to promote positive SGMY development.

Finally, it is important to recognize that youth are not only affected—either positively or negatively—by their larger social environments; they are also agentic and can shape their environments in ways that promote their development (Lerner et al., 2015). SGMY themselves play powerful roles in challenging oppressive norms, intervening against bias-based bullying, and promoting affirming norms among their peers (Hillier et al., 2020; Ioverno et al., in press; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2017; Vella et al., 2009). SGMY also support one another in youth-led school, community, and virtual groups (Fish et al., 2019; McInroy et al., 2019; Poteat et al., 2017), and engage in collective action to counteract



discrimination (Ridwan & Wu, 2018; Roberts & Christens, 2021). At the same time, it is important to recognize that advocacy can bring challenges, setbacks, and other stressors that could compound existing concerns faced by SGMY and youth with other marginalized identities (Godfrey et al., 2019; Vigna et al., 2020).

With these points in mind, SGMY-led efforts aimed to support their peers or to resist and reshape their larger social environment should be considered and evaluated. What common elements to various SGMY-led efforts underlie their success? What are examples of advocacy efforts that have successfully changed oppressive systems while also adequately supporting the youth who undertook such work? What efforts tend to have larger immediate and/or lasting effects in promoting SGMY positive development? More broadly, how do youth from different social backgrounds and identities work with one another to counteract multiple forms of marginalization, whether based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or other identities (e.g., [dis]ability, immigration status, race, or religion)? This larger view could capture how youth act radically and collectively against interrelated systems of oppression and act compassionately to promote one another's thriving.

Conclusion

We aimed to highlight several avenues for future research that could stand to make advances in promoting positive SGMY development. Ultimately, these and other efforts will require multidisciplinary collaborations among researchers, interventionists and practitioners, policymakers, adults in the lives of youth, and youth themselves. We believe that these collective efforts can go on to cultivate the relationships, settings, and conditions that enable SGMY to thrive.

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The Evolution of transgender across different cultures and communities: A panoramic view

Nilofar Rahman¹

¹Clinical fellow, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Bury, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Email: nilofar.rahman@NHS.net

There is historical evidence mentioning transgender individuals whose perceived gender is not in synchronization with their assigned gender. The recognition and level of acceptance in society for this population keeps altering over a long period across the world. Considering the vitality of transgender health and managing gender dysphoria is a relatively recent development within the health care system, it is important to understand and explore this topic for better dissemination of support and care.

The first documented care for persons with gender dysphoria was provided in Berlin by Magnus Hirschfeld. Starting in 1918, this German physician offered care based on his technique of “Adaptation therapy” (Mancini, 2007). To educate and sensitize the society as well as the medical fraternity, it is important to have a good hold on their history and cultural diversity to deal with the myths and the facts and decrease stigma against the LGBTQ community enabling the system both at the care provider and policy-maker levels to serve the transgender population and frame better care plans more efficiently for their health and social requirements.

The prevalence reported in DSM5 (0.005–0.014% for birth-assigned males; 0.002–0.003% for birth-assigned females) is based on people who received a diagnosis of GID or transsexualism and were seeking hormone treatment and surgery. In 2016, data from the Center for Disease Control’s behavioral risk factor surveillance system suggested that 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender (Flores, et al., 2016). In a large Massachusetts phone survey, 0.5% of the population (age 18–64 years) identified as transgender. In India, the overall meta-prevalence per 100,000 population was 9.2 for those seeking surgical or hormonal gender affirmation therapy (Collin et al., 2016).

Transgender individuals frequently feel marginalized and alienated, believing their sense of body dysphoria to be unique, with the result that they do not seek help. This leads to the vicious cycle of low mood, disabling them to enjoy a quality life and perform to their best, especially during the adolescent period. They fear being criticized and rejected by

family and peers and they suffer silently. This article attempts to make a smooth trail through the cultural evolution of the transgender community across different cultures and communities, and highlights the insight that such dysphoria has existed throughout the ages.

Asian Subcontinent

The *Rigveda*, one of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism says *Vikriti evam prakriti* (meaning what seems unnatural is also natural) which recognizes homosexual/transsexual dimensions of human life as one of many forms of universal diversities (Rastogi, 2017). The ancient Indian text *Kamasutra* written by Vatsyayana devotes an entire chapter to homosexual behavior. History indicates that homosexuality has been prevalent across the Indian subcontinent and that homosexuals were not necessarily considered inferior in any way. In the *Ramayana* (Bockrath, 2003), written by Valmiki, Lord Rama went into exile for fourteen years. Many people of his kingdom followed him to the forest, but he eventually ordered all the men and women to return to their homes. His followers, known as *Hijras*, seen as neither men nor women had waited in that place for fourteen years and welcomed back lord Rama on his return from exile. Pleased with their devotion, he bestowed on the *Hijras* the superpower to bring luck and bless people on various auspicious occasions like childbirth and marriage called ‘*Badhai*’. *Hijra* is a caste of the third gender, who live a feminine role, may be born male or intersex, and some are born with ambiguous genitalia. Many *Hijras* were subjected to childhood castration.

The *Mahabharata*, which is one of the sacred Indian mythological books, describes Shikhandini, who was born female but raised like a man and trained in warfare. Shikhandini came back from war as a man, was called Shikhandi, and fathered children. Arjuna, (Gopal & Gautam, 1990) one of the fiercest warriors of his time, spent a year of his life in an intersexed condition. Indian mythology makes many references to altered sexual states. The name *Ardhanarishwara* refers to a God who is half man and half woman, an androgynous deity, also known as Shiva and Parvati.

In the Philippines, *Bayog* and *Asog* in *Visayas* & *Babaylans* dress in women’s clothes, invoke spirits, and have been considered spiritual leaders (Francisco & Demetrio, 1973). It is difficult to apply transgender insights to Chinese culture in a historical context due to the paucity of adequate resources. However, terms like *kuaxingbie* (跨性别, *kùaxìngbié*), used in Mandarin, which means “cutting across sex distinctions,” can be translated to the English term of “transgender” and

its use has also extended to different academic contexts (Chung wai Literary Quarterly, Sept. 1973).

Public accounts of transgender people in Japan began during the EDO period. Effeminate male performers took on the roles of women and it was believed that only men could know what beauty in a woman looked like (Griswold, 1995). Moreover, if a man acted like a woman, he was simply socialized as one. The latter is a result of how Japan conceptualized gender & sexuality in terms of adopted social roles. In 2017, Japan became one of the first countries to elect a transgender man to a public office when Tomoya Hosoda was elected as a councilor for the city of Iruma. [12]

In Thailand, the term Tom is used to describe a female who acts, dresses, and speaks in a masculine fashion. A Dee is a homosexual/ bisexual female following typical Thai female gender expression who engages in a relationship with a Tom. A Kathoey or “ladyboy” refers to a male who dresses & adopts the mannerisms and identity of a woman. Thailand has become a center for performing sex reassignment surgery & now performs more than any other country (Wilson, 2004).

In Iran, Under the Shah, transsexuals and crossdressers faced the punishment of lashing or even death. As of 2008, Iran carries out more sex change operations than any other nation except Thailand. (Tait, 2008). In Gulf Arab states, the *khanith* is a third gender category in Oman and the Arabian Peninsula who function sexually and in some ways socially, as women. (Haggerty, G., 2013).

Ancient Greek Society

During the ancient Greek era, people didn’t distinguish sexual desire/behavior by the gender of participants, but rather by the role, each participant played in the sex act, that of active penetrator or passive penetrated. This active/passive polarization corresponded with dominant and submissive social roles (Davidson, Feb. 2001). Writers such as Herodotus, Plato, and Xenophon also explored aspects of homosexuality in their work.

American subcontinent

Before western contact, some native American tribes had third-gender roles and were included as “berdache” (a born male, who later assumed a traditionally feminine role) and “passing women” (born female, later took on a traditionally masculine role). It is also claimed that they cared for the sick and conducted burial rituals (Hilleary, 2018). In the USA, during the civil war, over 200 women dressed up in men’s clothing & fought as soldiers; some were transgender & lived the rest of their lives as men, such as Albert Cashier (June; 2018). In 1952, Christine Jorgensen of New York City became the first widely publicized person to have undergone sex reassignment surgery (McQuiston, May 1989). Transgender & gay activism began with riots in 1966 at Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco and 1969, the Stonewall riots in New York (Armstrong, 2006).

The 1990s saw the establishment of the transgender day of remembrance to honor those lost to violence, transgender marches & parades around the time of GAY PRIDE celebrations. May 17 is considered the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia and aims to raise

awareness against violations toward such communities. This day also commemorates the removal of homosexuality from the international classification of diseases by the world health organization (WHO) in 1990, and the Council of Europe, in May 2020). With increasing awareness and visibility of transgender status, many famous personalities declared their identity; examples include Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner who came out to the public in 2015 (Bissinger, 2015). In 2016, the Obama administration issued guidance that clarified Title IX protections for transgender students, allowing transgender students to use bathrooms & locker rooms matching their gender identity (Emma, 2016). Canada witnessed the addition of gender identity and gender expression to the Ontario human rights code, and of gender identity to the Manitoba human rights code in June 2012. Vancouver resident Jenna Talackova successfully became the first transgender woman to compete in a Miss Universe pageant (CBS News, May 2012).

Europe

The history of Europe from early classical through medieval to recent times shows an unstable trajectory with eras of transgender acceptance. King Henry III of France in the 16th century was frequently cross-dressed and was often referred to as ‘Her Majesty’ by courtiers (Walker & Dickerman, 1998). In the 17th century, Queen Christina of Sweden gave up the throne, cross dressed and renamed herself ‘Count Dohna’ (Hoffman, 2002). There are other examples like the Balkans of North Albania, who were the sworn virgins who take a vow of celibacy, and live as men in the patriarchal society. This tradition goes back to a 15th-century code of laws (National Geographic, 2017). In Denmark, Lili Elbe, a Danish transgender woman became one of the first recipients of sex reassignment surgery. She transitioned in 1930 and died from complications involving a uterus transplant (DeCarlo, 2018). In 2006, Vladimir Luxuria became the first openly transgender woman to be elected as a member of the Italian parliament and the first transgender member of the parliament in Europe (The Standard, Hong Kong, Feb. 2006).

In Great Britain, Molly houses appeared in 18th century London & other large cities. This is used as an archaic in the 18th century for a tavern or private room where homosexual & cross-dressing men could meet each other & possible sexual partners sometimes enacted mock weddings, at times with the bride giving birth (The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats, 1998).

In Germany, Anna P, who lived for many years as a man, was photographed for Magnus Hirschfeld’s book *Sexual Intermediates* in 1922. In 1919, Hirschfeld also co-founded the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sex Research, 1919-1933). The word *transvestite* was coined by Hirschfeld in the 1910 book, *The Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress*. During the Weimar Republic, Berlin was a liberal city and had the most active LGBT rights movements in the world (Taylor et al., 2017).

African subcontinent

It was claimed by a certain school of Egyptologists that there is the possible earliest case of homosexuality in ancient Egypt of the two high officials Nyankh-Khnum-hotep



(c. 2494-2345 BC) (Parkinson, 1995). Each of them had their own families but when they died, they were buried together in a tomb with paintings depicting both the men touching their faces. In the 19th century, the word *Khawalat* was used to refer to transgender female dancers who performed in public celebrations. However, with time, *khawalat* has since turned into a derogatory term in Egypt.

The continent of Africa historically recognized, and often accepted homosexuality and gender non-conforming individuals as members of their communities (Geoffrey et al., 2012). On March 15, 2004, the alteration of sex description and sex status act 2003 came into force in South Africa, allowing transgender and intersex people to change their legally recognized sex (Jugroop, 2016).

TRANSGENDER-RELATED NOSOLOGY

DSM I (1958) & DSM II (1962)	Did not include any gender diagnosis.
ICD 9 (1975)	Transsexualism term used.
DSM -III (1980)	Category, sexual deviations (under the parent) – “gender identity disorder of childhood” (GIDC) Both transsexualism & GIDC were carried over into DSM-III-R but were no longer categorized as sexual deviations Added, gender identity disorder of adolescence & adulthood non-transsexual type (GIDAANT).
DSM-IV (1994)	Diagnoses of transsexualism & GIDAANT- discontinued
ICD10 (2013)	GIDC, GIDAA & GID NOS- retained & placed under a new parent category, ‘sexual & gender identity disorders’, (a category that also included the unrelated sexual dysfunctions & paraphilias.) (American psychiatric association, 1994). Retention of the word “disorder,” was perceived by many as stigmatizing & contributing to societal discrimination against transgender individuals. (Karasic, 2005).
DSM-V (2013)	Changed the terminology to gender dysphoria (GD), shifting the focus to dysphoria as the target symptom for intervention, rather than gender identity itself (Zucker et al., 2013).
ICD-11 (2019)	Diagnosis of gender incongruence (GI) (corresponding to GD in DSM-5 terminology) has been moved out of the section on mental disorders & placed in a separate section tentatively named sexual and gender health.

Discussion

The evolution within the transgender community has been a varied route with troughs and peaks. As we view the biopic of the transition, the existence and recognition of transgenders in the community have been present from square one. In the ancient cultures, they were proclaimed as a part of normative society but, there were patches in different civilizations when they faced discrimination.

Regarding psychological distress, one important factor to emerge was support and social acceptance. This again is a cultural validation regarding trans normativity and aided by the customs adopted and followed in the past, tracking to the present. Although previous studies have shown that social support is an important protective factor for transgender mental health, (Bariola et al., 2015), the relative significance of different sources of support has been less explored, e.g. peer support, coping skills, and individual resilience.

In the current scenario, the global acceptance of the LGBTQ community varies among cultures. In a study reported by Clark et al. in 2015., carried out in 16 different countries, most of the population would prefer their country to provide care and protect transgender people (60%). Seventy percent of participants in Spain and 67% in Argentina are in favor of supporting the transgender community and their rights. On the other hand, only 39% in Poland and Hungary, and 41% in Japan agreed to it. People across the globe are inclined to agree that the policymakers need to protect transgender people from discrimination (70%).

Conclusion

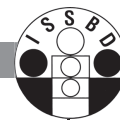
In the current world situation, several countries are reforming their policies thereby decriminalizing homosexuality and promoting transgender rights, health, and wellbeing. Most of these changes have been witnessed in the last decade.

Witnessing the transit across the time in societies is a positive way of learning the facts regarding transgender acceptance in an individual’s own culture and community thereby emphasizing trans normativity. There have been lacunae in knowledge and understanding about the transgender population which need further exploration by means of quantitative and qualitative methods.

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The Tug of War for an Indian Gay Man - The Past, the Present, and Towards a Hopeful Future!

Ashish Thakur^{1,4}, Dr Prerna Khar^{2,4}, Diya Khatri^{3,4},
Forum Lalka^{3,4} and Dr Anjali Chhabria^{2,4}

¹Mental Health Counselor

²Consultant Psychiatrist

³Psychologist

⁴Mindtemple Clinic, Mumbai, India

Email: amt670@nyu.edu

Abstract

Homosexuality across the globe has been addressed with a varied mix of emotions, thoughts, and beliefs. The present view of Indian society after the striking down of Article 377 is that the country is in the midst of a transition on an individual, familial, societal, and legal front. This article highlights that transition with some past evidence and some future directions revolving around this psychologically daunting tug of war for an Indian gay man. The entire legal battle that kept swinging the hopes of the gay community until 2018 has left scepticism as a scar on its members. The future directions are thus suggestive of making this transition act as a soothing balm resulting in an inclusive society that we all belong to.

Keywords

Homosexuality, Section 377, India, Gay Men, Mental health

Introduction

Homosexuality has been a crime in India since British colonial rule, which began in 1861 and lasted until 1947 (Trivedi, 2014). While India gained freedom in 1947, Section 377 of the Indian penal code, which prohibits sexual activities between same-sex consenting adults, continued to exist. Section 377 has been loosely referred to as the anti-sodomy law, which makes a futile attempt to stop sexual contact between consenting adults. Maneka Guruswamy called Section 377 “a colonial stain on our collective national conscience” – an archaic law that sowed debilitating fear and

stigma among sexual minorities (“Columbia lawyers win historic LGBT rights victory in India”, 2018). Section 377 has long been used as a means to violate the constitution by depriving citizens of their rights to equality, privacy, and freedom of expression. Violation of members of the gay community by blackmail, extortion and forced outing is known to be a common experience, often even by members of law enforcement (Trivedi, 2014). The long-term atmosphere of marginalization, repression and suppression has had a catastrophic impact on members of the homosexual community. An individual’s sense of self is closely entwined with the aspect of feeling safe. This sense of self must not be shaken on account of their sexual orientation (Badgett et al., 2014). Human beings need to be the beginning and end of our concerns.

Legal status is a critical determinant of multiple factors in the narrative of gay people. In December 2013, in a shocking judgement, the Supreme Court of India overturned a 2009 ruling by a lower court that decriminalized consensual sex between homosexual adults (Trivedi, 2014). This appalling reversal raised this critical question: “how were individuals who had come out as gay post 2009, supposed to go back into the closet in 2013?” The complex Indian cultural context combined with the trauma of being labelled a criminal, simply by sexual preference, presented unfathomable challenges, not limited to mental health, for members of the gay community.

This article illustrates the tug of war faced by the Indian gay man over the consistent change in legal scenario. As a result, aspects of safety, sense of well-being, and social acceptance have been compromised. Through this paper, we endeavor to provide an overview of the journey experienced by the community, in the past that has shaped the present. Mental health concerns experienced by the community are a critical element of this journey. In addition, we aim to provide various stakeholders with suggestions and future directions.

Prevalence of mental health conditions

Unfortunately, we do not have scientifically determined data on the number of LGBTQIA+ individuals in India, owing to the paucity of research on this population. According to an estimate by Gates Williams Institutes, LGBTQIA+ individuals constitute roughly 3.8% of the population, i.e., 45.4

million in 2011, and approximately 2.2% of the male population identify as gay (Bateman, 2018).

A comparative study was done by Deb et al. on 108 homosexual and 98 heterosexual men attending a sexually transmitted disease clinic in Kolkata. The results showed that homosexual men had higher scores on the General health questionnaire (GHQ) compared to heterosexual male clients attending the clinic. The scores were higher for anxiety, depression and insomnia for homosexual men compared to heterosexual men (Deb et al., 2010). In a study done by Hebbar et al. (2018) on 20 gay men in Manipur, 65% had alcohol abuse, 30% had depression and 10% had suicidal ideation. Prajapati et al. (2014) in their study on men who have sex with men (MSM), found that 52.9% of them had some psychiatric morbidity. A few studies have shown that depressive symptoms had a negative correlation with age (Soohinda et al., 2018) while others have suggested higher rates of depression in older individuals (Sivasubramanian et al., 2011; Tomori et al., 2016). The rates of depression were higher for those who had faced negative reactions while coming out. Unsafe sexual practices were not only found to be a predictor of individuals with depression but also a consequence of depression. One study reported a higher risk for substance use amongst those individuals who had come out; and in those who had more sexual partners or had experienced intimate partner violence (Wandrekar & Nigudkar, 2020).

Research has well established that social and cultural constraints induced by being a focus of discrimination have been critical to an impaired sense of psychological well-being. (Becker, 2014). It is essential to understand the role of internal and external factors in psychological distress experienced by gay individuals. Meyer (2003) presented a theoretical framework for understanding the process of minority stress in LGB individuals. In this model, he delineates two broad pathways through which minority stress affects LGB persons. In one pathway, a person's classification as having minority status leads them to be exposed to prejudiced events, which Meyer (2003) refers to as 'distal stressors'. The other pathway involves internalized homonegativity and concealment that would affect the individual immediately, known as 'proximal stressors'. In this pathway, LGB persons are both assigned minority status and identify as a member of a minority group. Identifying as a minority leads individuals to experience proximal stressors, which contrary to distal stressors, are internal and subjective.

Epidemiological research has clearly established the contributing role of self-stigma to the development of psychopathology experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals (Cochran, 2001). As internalized homonegativity is a strongly linked factor to minority stress, the findings in a study done by Outland (2016) suggested that participants with higher levels of internalized homonegativity reported more mental health problems. Gay men reportedly indicated higher levels of internalized homonegativity as compared to lesbians (Outland, 2016).

Gay individuals face critical challenges as a consequence of the predominant heteronormative attitude of society. Hence, it is essential to deepen our understanding of protective factors. In essence, factors like social stigma, victimization, and rejection anticipation can contribute to minority stress; however, social support from one's romantic partner

has proven to be a robust protective factor (Rotosky & Riggle, 2017).

To come out or not – The perennial tug of war

Attitudes toward homosexuality have had a radical shift from 'crime', 'sin', or 'mental illness' to now gaining recognition as a model of sexuality (Ball, 2014). After article 377 was abolished in 2018, many individuals of the gay community saw this as a ray of hope. However, the 2009-2013-2018 (decriminalized-recriminalized-decriminalized) saga has left the gay community feeling sceptical about revealing their sexuality. Coming out to oneself often brings with it internalised homonegativity. The process within the Indian socio-cultural and socio-religious context also entails confronting the distinct possibility of a lack of family support and rejection from society at large. In addition, coming out to others, unfortunately, is not a one-time affair. It happens time and again at various stages of their life - with family, friends, employers, colleagues and others. Coming out needs to be the right and privilege of a gay man. The process must be at the pace, in the manner and with the choice of whom the individual chooses to come out to. Sometimes the homosexual population also faces forced coming out. At times, employers/institutions may push them to do so, to portray their organizations as 'all-inclusive'. 'Forced coming out' can have a severe long-term psychological impact on the individual.

Role of Mental Health Professionals

a) Role in the coming out process. As MHPs we must educate the individual about being in the seat of control with regards to the choice being made about coming out. Individuals may also seek the support of MHP's in facilitating the process. Our role also extends towards psycho-educating the family members, addressing their concerns, getting them in touch with support groups and providing them with appropriate reading material. Family members often take years to accept the individual and often it comes with terms and conditions. In certain cases, family members may often request "conversion therapy" or "re-orientation therapy." Educating the family members regarding the unethical, unscientific and ineffective nature of these "therapies" is imperative so that they reconsider pursuing these further. It is also important to help the individual build a good support system and have some financial resources accessible in case they are cut off by family members after they come out to them (Kalra, 2012).

b) Addressing psychiatric comorbidities. Psychiatric comorbidities are often present in homosexual men. It is important to address these as well at the earliest. Often internalized homophobia and the guilt of not living up to the expectations of the family members/society is the root cause of the dysphoria. Addressing it resolves the dysphoria to a certain extent. Frustration and minority stress can often lead to suicidal ideation/non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behaviour. It is thus pertinent to watch out for the red flags and take appropriate measures in the form of medication, therapy, inpatient care and enhancing social support.



c) *The Road ahead: Reducing the speed bumps.* As MHPs our role also extends towards becoming an ally for the community. Psycho-educating the public, conducting workshops/talks/writing in media is the need of the hour to create awareness, garner support and sensitize the population at large. Society needs to be sensitized about the delicate nature of the coming-out process and the possible repercussions associated with mismanagement of this process must be made known to stakeholders. National initiatives need to be undertaken by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to incorporate LGBTQIA+ sensitization across all curricula. This can be done by linking up with schools and educational institutions to include homosexuality as a part of sex education. The participation of MHPs in these initiatives can go a long way to bust myths, clarify queries and provide an accurate understanding of homosexuality. The ripple effect will ensure that future generations are more understanding and accepting of homosexuality as a way of life.

MHP's may often be the first point of contact and hence expressing empathy is of paramount importance. This is critical to ensure that the gay individual does not lose hope in what may be their only support system. Shame, self-stigma, and embarrassment play a pivotal role in inhibiting them from approaching mental health services. In our clinical set-up, we must try to keep brochures/reading material handy so that the individuals feel assured that the clinic is a safe space. This also communicates that the MHP's within the clinic are LGBTQIA+ inclusive. Gender-affirmative therapies can be included in the psychiatry and psychology curriculums so that there is more help available.

A recent article highlighted a 15-year-old dying by suicide after being bullied by his peers for being gay. Many such instances are occurring across the country which are under-reported due to lack of data collection and in-depth research ("Faridabad Teen Kills Himself, Family Accuses School of 'Bullying Over Sexuality'", 2022). The World Bank defines social inclusion in this way: "The process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society" (World Bank 2013, p. 4). Thus, the future well-being of the gay community depends on how we bring about these changes in the present. In a study by Berg et al. (2013), findings suggested the advantages of creating legal and gay affirmative policies which improved their well-being. On the most basic individual level, whether a country recognizes the human rights of gay people determines the conditions in which they exist, both emotionally and behaviourally (Badgett et al., 2014). While the abolition of Section 377 recognizes the right of adult individuals to practice same-sex consensual relationships, Indian society is far from recognizing basic rights like same-sex marriages, and domestic/civil partnerships which are essential to the healthy existence of members of the gay community.

Conclusion and future directions

Future directions begin with normalizing our views and perspectives towards our own as well as others' sexualities. Confusion regarding sexuality often results in taking measures that later turn out to be futile. There are a few organizations that are involved in drafting policies for gay men's rights; however, the implementation is a long road ahead.

Future directions need to focus on encouraging the law- and policy-makers to involve members from the community to be an active part of drafting and implementing inclusive legal and social laws. A large number of isolated instances of mental health make a brief appearance in the media and are then found in archives. This highlights a need for dedicated research in the field to help us better serve the homosexual population.

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Repercussion of gender inequality in a highly-ranked gender-equal country: Depression and anxiety among Filipino LGBT+

Rowalt Alibudbud¹

¹Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Email: rowalt.alibudbud@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract

This paper explores the mental health repercussions of gender inequality in a highly-ranked gender-equal country, the Philippines. Abuse, discrimination, and marginalization among Filipino sexual minorities is frequently reported. In this regard, this paper discussed the relationship between mental health and abuse, lack of civil rights, social conformity, sexual health, and the healthcare system among Filipino LGBT+ individuals. Several avenues for scholarly exploration were suggested.

The Philippines and Gender Equality

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo established the goal of gender equality across the globe (Riley, 1997). Since then, the Philippines has notable improvements in closing the gender gap. This was reflected by the Philippines ranking as the leading country in Asia in closing the gender gap (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Similarly, the Philippines was considered one of the more lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+)-friendly countries in Asia (Manalastas, 2016). In 2013, it was found that 73 percent of Filipinos believed that society should accept homosexuality, up from 64 percent in 2002 (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Nonetheless, Filipino LGBT+ individuals continue to report abuse and discrimination in contemporary Filipino society (Manalastas, 2011). In this context, Filipino LGBT+ often confront social pressures to hide and change their identities and expressions as conditions for their acceptance and rights (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Likewise, the Philippines did not support the United Nation's statement aimed at ending violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These realities are apparent despite the Philippines' commitment to upholding the dignity, equality, and human rights of all persons (UNDP & USAID, 2014).

Thus, Philippine society, itself, may become a prison for Filipino LGBT+. The barriers to escape are mostly invisible. Reported Philippine societal behaviors, norms, and positions reflect the lack of gender-equal provisions and rights for its LGBT+ community, with resultant suffering that may potentiate an individual's propensity towards depression and anxiety.

Research Context

This paper elucidates elements in Filipino society that may contribute to the development of depression and anxiety among LGBT+. A review of available research articles vis-à-vis Philippine country reports of the daily struggles of Filipino LGBT+ individuals was done. This provides areas for scholarly exploration that may improve the mental health outcomes of LGBT+. The Philippine country reports reviewed in this paper were: Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report published by the UNDP & USAID (2014), Just Let Us Be: Discrimination Against LGBT Students in the Philippines published by Human Rights Watch (2017); and the Universal Periodic Review: Joint Submission of the Civil Society Organizations on the Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in the Philippines published by the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (2016).

Filipino LGBT+ in the Diverse World

Evidence suggests that LGBT+ individuals experienced worse mental health disparities and outcomes than did the general public in every country across the globe. These health disparities include higher rates of chronic stress, social isolation, and disconnectedness from health services (PAHO & WHO, 2013). These can result in magnified poverty and ill-health (PAHO & WHO, 2013). In this regard, the increased prevalence of depression and anxiety among the LGBT+ community ranged from 12.4 to 50 percent across the globe including higher rates of suicidality (Ahanekua et al., 2016; American Psychiatric Association, 2018; Hu et al., 2019; Klein, 2014; Miltz et al., 2017; PAHO & WHO, 2013; Reisner et al., 2009; Secor et al., 2015; Tao et al., 2017; Yan et al., 2019). While the Philippines has no national reporting system for mental health cases, data from fragmented

epidemiological studies showed that a quarter of Filipinos struggles with mental health problems (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). Thus, the prevalence of mental disorders in the Philippines was similar to the global prevalence of about 25 percent (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; ASEAN Secretariat, 2016; Sadock et al., 2015; Tolentino, 2004). If social injustices can magnify the prevalence of mental disorders among LGBT+, it can be posited that mental disorders among Filipino LGBT+ may be higher than among the general population.

The Depressed and Anxious Filipino LGBT+

Globally, depressed and anxious LGBT+ individuals tended to be young, married, and poorly educated. They also have low income, poor social support, and poor living situations (Hart et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2019; Klein, 2014; Miltz et al., 2017; Secor et al., 2015; Semple et al., 2011; Stableman et al., 2015; Yan et al., 2019). While data regarding the sociodemographic profile of depressed and anxious Filipino LGBT+ remains lacking, Philippine LGBT+ reports showed that depression and anxiety symptoms were notable from children to the elderly, across a variety of living situations and income groups, from informal workers to professionals, and across individuals with different educational attainment (Alibudbud, 2021; ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2017; UNDP & USAID, 2014).

Notably, Filipino LGBT+ students have higher depressive symptoms compared to their peers (Alibudbud, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2017). This may be due to reportedly gender-based school bullying (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017). This heightened vulnerability of young Filipino LGBT+ can be due to their formidable tasks of adapting to social adversities and compensating for the failures of societal protection using their immature psychological and coping mechanisms (Herman, 1992; Sadock et al., 2015).

Aftermath of abuse among Filipino LGBT+

Abuse and discrimination were highly correlated with depression and anxiety among LGBT+ (Alibudbud, 2021; American Psychiatric Association, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2017). Aside from the experience, it has been observed that the expectation of gender-based discrimination was associated with higher depression and anxiety (Murphy et al., 2018; Stahlman et al., 2015; Wohl et al., 2013; Yan et al., 2019).

Similar incidents of abuse and discrimination have been reported by Filipino LGBT+. The most common forms of abuse that Filipino LGBT+ reported were verbal and online harassment including chants of vernacular terms for LGBT+ in a mocking fashion. Moreover, numerous anecdotes have noted that Filipino gay Muslims have been disowned and harmed by their families due to their deviation from Filipino heteronormative norms (UNDP & USAID, 2014).

Physical abuse has also been reported by Filipino LGBT+. For instance, a documentary showed an underage Filipino gay boy who started offering sexual services when he was 10 years old after his father put him in a sack and violently hit him after finding out he was gay (UNDP & USAID, 2014).

Other reports showed that some teachers reinforced the idea that being gay was immoral through their disapproval and harassment of gay students (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

These gender-based harassments were associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety among LGBT+ compared to the general public (Ahanekua et al., 2016; Alibudbud, 2021; Klein, 2014; Semple et al., 2011; Secor et al., 2015). Thus, Filipino LGBT+ individuals can be at higher risk for depression and anxiety.

Filipino LGBT+ individuals and the struggles for civil rights

Historically, LGBT+ civil rights have long been criticized by various religions and political institutions. The stress arising from this lack of rights has been associated with higher rates of mental health problems among the LGBT+ community (American Psychiatric Association, 2018). In the Philippines, anti-discrimination policies and marriage equality have been a long legislative endeavor (Alibudbud, 2021). This can be observed in both local and national government, and religious institutions. For instance, a city councilor and mayor supported a resolution to prohibit same-sex ceremonies (UNDP & USAID, 2014). Likewise, a Philippine senator also said that couples in same-sex relationships are worse than animals (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017).

The resultant struggles for civil rights can be worsened by the predominant Philippine religion, Catholicism. In 2015, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a statement urging all Catholics to “resist all attempts to normalize homosexual behavior and homosexual unions in their culture” (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017). The stresses that result from the lack of civil rights can put Filipino LGBT+ at risk for depression and anxiety.

Social conformity of LGBT+ individuals in Philippine society

Gender identity can manifest in societal structures and culturally-determined behavior (Sadock et al., 2015). In this regard, a member of a Philippine city-based LGBT rights commission observed that LGBT+ often face considerable pressure and have different ways of coping including hiding their identities (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Hiding one’s gender and sexual minority identity has also been portrayed in Filipino Media. In 2013, a Filipino soap opera, “My Husband’s Lover”, portrayed the contemporary struggles of hiding a same-sex relationship to conform to societal norms of having a wife (Ching, 2013). Evidence also showed that this bisexual behavior in the context of homosexual orientation has been found to increase the likelihood of depression and anxiety among LGBT+ (Ahanekua et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2019). Thus, identity concealment as a means of social conformity among Filipino LGBT+ can be detrimental to their mental health.

Destructive coping with social adversity

Globally, alcohol and drug abuse were associated with anxiety and depression among LGBT+ such as gay and bisexual men (Klein, 2014; Secor et al., 2015; Semple et al., 2011).



In the Philippines, experiences of abuse, depression, and poor self-acceptance among LGBT+ individuals have been linked to destructive substance use (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Thus, Filipino LGBT+ individuals, similarly to those in other countries, can display higher rates of substance abuse. Substance abuse could be a coping response to self-medicate one's inner suffering and mental struggles (American Psychiatric Association, 2018; Sadock et al., 2015).

Beyond mental health: Sexual health problems

Gay and bisexual men who have sex with men (MSM) remains a key population affected by sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection (WHO & UNAIDS, 2013). Several risky sexual behaviors have been associated with depression and anxiety among MSM. These include having sex with casual partners, having a high number of sexual partners, having unprotected anal intercourse, lack of HIV counseling, engagement in transactional sex, and seeking sex partners at venues for illegal drug use. Moreover, HIV infection and other STIs have been associated with depression and anxiety disorders among MSM. It was also found that protective factors for risky sexual behaviors were also protective against mental disorders (Ahanekua et al., 2016; Hart et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2019; Miltz et al., 2017; Reisner et al., 2009; Reisner et al., 2009; Semple et al., 2011).

While HIV can affect anyone, Filipino MSM remain significantly affected “not only because of the epistemology of the disease but because of the social and legal issues; i.e. human rights issues” (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017). Sadly, the risky sexual behaviors that can predispose them to these infections can start in the young. According to a city LGBT+ rights council member, young Filipino MSM faces pressure and bullying to be sexually active (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This leaves young Filipino LGBT+ ill-equipped to protect their sexual health and at higher risk for STIs including HIV.

Addressing the healthcare need of LGBT+ beyond sexual health

The Philippines is committed to upholding every person's right to the highest attainable standard of health based on its constitution. However, “the Department of Health (DOH) has consistently failed to protect and promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of LGBTIQ” (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017). Moreover, Filipino MSM faced disqualification from claiming their health insurance benefits upon subsequent contraction of HIV. Likewise, their access to sexual health services remained inadequate and inaccessible (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, 2017; Department of Health, 2019; WHO & UNAIDS, 2013). This difficulty accessing healthcare was associated with severe depression among LGBT+ in a previous study (Reisner et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, reports also showed that healthcare services for LGBT+ were highly concentrated on addressing the HIV. This focus on HIV-related services contributed to the neglect of other health-related concerns of Filipino LGBT+ individuals including depression and anxiety (UNDP & USAID, 2014). These psychosocial problems were compounded by

the lack of service providers trained on sexual and gender-related issues. Moreover, most of the psychosocial support remained limited to HIV counseling. Nonetheless, there are positive developments such as the position of the Psychological Association of the Philippines which calls upon psychologists to respect sexual diversity (UNDP & USAID, 2014). Thus, service provision for the psychosocial health needs of Filipino LGBT+ may be inadequate.

Conclusion and research gaps

Overall, mental health problems may be higher among Filipino LGBT+ compared to the general population. Moreover, the lack of a Philippine law that upholds the civil rights of LGBT+ can contribute to depression and anxiety. Alcohol and drug abuse can be destructive coping mechanisms among Filipino LGBT+. Social pressure and lack of sexual health knowledge can contribute to risky sexual behaviors that compound their mental adversities. Despite the large focus on sexual health, HIV-related services for LGBT+ remained inadequate.

Several research gaps can be explored by future researchers. First, reports showed that epidemiologic estimates of anxiety and depression among Filipino LGBT+ were lacking. Thus, prevalence studies can be done to establish the burden and disparity that may guide interventions. Second, it showed that depression and anxiety may affect any LGBT+ across the lifespan in various contexts. Thus, research to determine the profile of the heavily affected LGBT+ subpopulation is needed to target individuals who need it the most. Third, discrimination of Filipino LGBT+ exists in the form of state policies, prejudices, and abuse. However, local studies regarding the depth of stigma including misconception and prejudices were yet to be explored. Thus, qualitative studies may elucidate the relationship between these adversities and mental health. Fourth, risky sexual behaviors among Filipino LGBT+, especially MSM, were also reported. Future studies can be done to determine the relationship between sexual behaviors and mental health. Lastly, studies across countries have found that inadequacies in the health system were associated with mental health problems among LGBT+. Moreover, local services remained largely focused on sexual health leading to the neglect of other health needs. Thus, exploration of other healthcare needs through qualitative studies can help elucidate both the depth and extent of their health problems.

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Notes from the President

Dear ISSBD Friends and Colleagues,

I write looking forward to our biennial meeting in Rhodes, Greece next June. It is so uplifting to plan an in-person meeting! More generally, I know that we are all looking for something to celebrate, for encouraging news in many different areas of our lives. There seems to be some relief from the pandemic. Fortunately, even with new surges, fewer people are dying and most symptoms are mild. Countries are starting to open up. At the same time, no one needs to be reminded that we are living in unprecedented and very difficult times. No one has gone untouched by the trials and tribulations of the last few years.

In these difficult times, we have all noticed that people are weary. My question is: What can we, as developmental behavioral scientists, do to get through these difficult times?

Professionally, I try to be as optimistic, but also as realistic, as possible. A day does not go by without something really annoying happening professionally. A paper gets rejected; a grant is not funded; someone misses a meeting; a colleague makes an unpleasant or critical remark. Under normal circumstances, these would all be pretty upsetting events. But now I tell myself, in the larger scheme of things, how important is this little inconvenience or setback? People are dealing with much bigger issues. We all are. So, I tell myself to take a deep breath and move on.

But, of course, this is not only happening on the professional front. It is also a phenomenon occurring ever so much more frequently on the personal front. Life is certainly more challenging. Some people have lost close relatives to the pandemic. Some families have several adults working remotely. Trials and tribulations of working remotely include not having space needed or having to share space with partners or small children. Some cannot work remotely, or have close family who cannot, and must face the risk of in-person employment, thus placing themselves and vulnerable relatives at risk. Usually, but not always, these are service occupations from low wage grocery workers to health care professionals. Many leisure activities are also no longer readily available, e.g., sporting events, dining out. But also, more serious limitations are being experienced, e.g., children being schooled remotely, inability to see or provide care for loved ones, uncontrollable schedules due to covid diagnosis of self or family. In Africa the pandemic has not been so deadly as in some other parts of the world but the lockdown has created dire economic circumstances for many.

I could go on, but I think we all get the point. The question I ask, and we all should ask ourselves: as developmental behavioral scientists, is there anything we can do professionally or personally to help others through these difficult times? I suggest there is.

As with so many things, we should think globally but act locally.

At the professional level, we can find ways to help individuals who are in crisis – both minor and major. Is there a deadline not met? Instead of being overly critical with the person who did not meet the deadline, is there a way to both understand the reason for the missed deadline and find another way to get it met? How can goals be set and shared as a group. How can each difficult goal be reconfigured to lighten the burden on any specific person or group? If that is not possible, is there any way to remove the stigma of a goal/deadline not met? It may be something as simple as deciding that goal is no longer critical, assigning the deadline to someone else, or just doing it yourself.

The situation is not different personally. Here we, hopefully, know the individuals or situations more intimately. Is it possible, therefore, to anticipate and intervene to forestall a crisis? If we know money is short this month for a loved one, how about bringing over groceries or inviting someone to dinner. Transportation can be tough because gas prices are high or there is no available means of transportation; offer to give someone a ride because you are ‘going that way’ or lend them a bike/scooter to get them where they need to go. If you know a parent of small children is overwhelmed, offer to take her children to the park, out for a treat, or just stay with them while the parent gets a much-needed break to go to the doctor, grocery shopping, or just take a walk.

While I know my examples tend to be very Western-centric, I do believe the point I am making transcends cultures. Many groups have strong norms of helping those in need. Others need a little bit of a push. I think we, as developmental behavioral scientists, can provide that push.

One thing the pandemic has taught us is that we are all connected. At first, people from certain countries were targeted as the ‘source’ of the disease, then old people were targeted as the most vulnerable, then certain ethnic or racial groups, but eventually it became clear that we are all vulnerable. Yes, perhaps some more than others, but in the end there are many connecting dots. So far, I have mentioned only the pandemic, but I am sure you have noted that we have lots of other crises, of refugees and immigrants, climate change, war and conflict zones. The United Nations has taken a global approach by identifying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which serve to identify areas that are needed to increase the health and well-being of all. Clearly, we must take these SDGs to heart. The current crises we are experiencing have actually resulted in a reversal of some of the most significant gains. For example, for the first time in decades life expectancy has *DECREASED* in many parts of the world, including the US.

As developmental behavioral scientists we need to be creative about how this can be done for ourselves, the people around us, and the situations in which we live. I do not make these suggestions lightly or from a point of naiveté. These are tough times; changing the way we address them will be even tougher. Nevertheless, I believe we have the best chance of



meeting these challenges because we, at least, attempt to understand human behavior and to do so in a developmental context.

I celebrate our profession and what we have done to improve the health and well-being of all. I challenge you to think about what you do, what the world needs and how you can contribute to it, in a new and different way. I believe we can and will make important contributions to successfully meeting the many challenges we face as individuals, societies and as a global village. The best part is the more we give, the more we receive. This is not a one-size fits all endeavor. What is needed in your world and what you can contribute will

differ depending on your circumstances. But every bit helps. Even better, and as I am sure you have all noticed, it makes us feel good when we help others.

We missed getting together in 2020. We are now looking forward to our first biennial meeting in four years in beautiful Rhodes, Greece. The world has changed a lot and we have a lot to talk about. I know not everyone can make it but for those of you who can I very much look forward to greeting you there and to enjoying the important opportunities for growth, development and fellowship.

Toni Antonucci, President of ISSBD



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee Meeting

**December 18, 2020 Skype for Business, 2 to 4 p.m.
(Brussels, Belgium time)**

Present at the Skype for Business meeting of the EC:

Toni C. Antonucci	(President)
Tina Malti	(President-Elect)
Luc Goossens	(Secretary General)
Julie Bowker	(Membership Secretary)
Julie Robinson	(EC Member)
Rita Zukauskienė	(EC Member)
Kristine Ajrouch	(EC Member)
Silvia Koller	(EC Member)
Frosso Motti	(EC Member)
Given Hapunda	(Early Career Scholar Representative)
Marcel van Aken	(ISSBD Representative at ICDSS; Guest)

Opening by the President, Toni Antonucci

Toni Antonucci welcomed the members of the Executive Committee of the ISSBD and thanked them for their willingness to take part in the Skype for Business meeting.

Approval of the Minutes of the EC meeting associated with the Rhodes conference (online Zoom meeting) June 21st 2020

Several small inaccuracies were found in the minutes, which will be corrected by the secretary general. With these corrections, the minutes of the online EC meeting of June 21st 2020 were approved by all members of the meeting. The secretary general will contact newly elected EC member Paul Oburu who – due to an apparent oversight - does not appear on the EC member list.

Action => The Secretary General sends the Minutes of the June 21st meeting, as approved at the EC Meeting, to the ISSBD Bulletin Editor for publication in the bulletin.

Update on Rhodes ISSBD conference

The biennial ISSBD conference on the island of Rhodes, Greece, initially scheduled to be held from 21 to 25 June 2020, had to be postponed by two years to 19 to 24 June 2022, due to

the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Frosso Motti, organizer of the Rhodes conference, recounted that the losses incurred while attempting to organize the 2020 conference (i.e., 57,000 euro (EUR) or approximately 69,700 US \$ (USD)) were generously covered by ISSBD. As she needed to sign new contracts with both ISSBD and the professional conference organizer (Global Events) for the 2022 conference, she made two requests. First, she wanted to get a 50,000 US \$ (USD) loan from ISSBD. Second, prompted by other EC members who pointed out the dire financial consequences of the ongoing health crisis for researchers in developmental science, she requested that conference fees be lowered. Extensive discussion ensued concerning these two issues.

Regarding the first request, the EC members voted unanimously to grant conference organizer Frosso Motti the 50,000 US \$ (USD) loan requested. Regarding the second request, there was general agreement to offer a lower conference fee for both students and early career scholars, in line with the Society's tradition regarding the conference fee structure. In addition, all agreed to examine the possibility to offer a lower conference fee also to participants from low and low-middle income countries, which make up a large section of the Society's membership. This possibility will be discussed in different committees in a two-step approach. First, the Membership Committee will determine exactly how many members the Society has in the different categories that could qualify for a lower conference fee (i.e., students, early career scholars, and members from low and low-middle income countries). Second, the Finance Committee will come up with an estimate of the financial costs involved in lowering the conference fee for those categories of members. The net result of this exercise should be a clear answer to the question "If we subsidize that particular number of people, how much will that cost the Society?". The decision on lower conference fees will have to be made in the next 2 to 3 months, because the fee structure for the Rhodes conference will have to be announced soon thereafter. All of the members further agreed that the EC has to monitor continuously how the current pandemic evolves, as they all continue to be concerned about the global situation.

Action => A loan of 50,000 US \$ (USD) will be made available to conference organizer Frosso Motti (Treasurer).

Action => The Membership Committee followed by the Finance Committee prepare a clear proposal for lower registration fees for the 2022 Biennial Meeting, for those categories of members who are most in need of them, by February - March 2021 (Membership Secretary and Treasurer).

Committee updates

The chairs and officers present at the EC meeting presented a brief update about the activities of their respective committees during the last few months.

Awards Committee

Silvia Koller informed all of the colleagues on the 2020 Awards list (who were all very happy) and told them they would get the opportunity to present a talk at the 2022 Biennial Meeting. It is important to keep up the tradition of handing out awards at the biennial meeting, because the awardees stay connected to the Society and will be involved in its future activities. All agree that a double recognition session (i.e., for the awardees of both 2020 and 2022) should be held at the 2022 Biennial Meeting and that we should start thinking about the 2022 awards.

Action => Silvia Koller will present a report on the committee's list of recommendations for awardees at one of the next EC meetings.

Finance Committee

Kristine Ajrouch announced that an e-mail conversation about financing will be held in the near future. It will be important to have a clear idea about the expected expenses for the 2022 conference at that e-mail meeting.

Action => Conference organizer Frosso Motti sends the budget for the 2022 Biennial Meeting to the Treasurer and to Kristine Ajrouch (member of the Finance Committee) as soon as possible.

Jacobs - ISSBD capacity building partnership

President Toni Antonucci gave an update on this program for which 6 Ph D fellows were selected from the Ivory Coast and 10 professional development fellows from Africa more generally. On behalf of ISSBD, the President, Julie Robinson, and Anne Petersen are actively involved in the program and the Jacobs Foundation has been very supportive. Jacobs has contributed 400,000 Swiss francs (CHF) (approximately 451,760 US \$ (USD)) to the 3-year program and ISSBD 100,000 Swiss francs (CHF) (approximately 112,940 US \$ (USD)). A meeting scheduled for April 2020 had to be cancelled due to the ongoing health crisis, which was very disappointing, but the program has done well online. The President is working on a report on the program's activities and will request another year because one year was lost due to the pandemic. It is an exciting program that regularly runs into real barriers and it has been a learning experience. However, it can serve as a model for future capacity-building partnerships and similar joint projects.

Early Career Scholars Committee

Given Hapunda presented an update on the virtual symposia and poster sessions, which were organized for the **Developing Country Fellowships (DCF)**, because these fellows could not

meet in person at the ISSBD 2020 Biennial Meeting. Unfortunately, there were few registrations for these activities. A scientific webinar by Bill Bukowski, however, was well attended and a scientific presentation by EC member Antonella Marchetti was recorded and made available to young scholars. Several webinars on practical and organizational issues directly relevant to early career scholars were organized in December 2020 (e.g., one on how to apply for Jacobs funding). The Early Career Scholars Committee also nominated a member to the Publications Committee and another one to the Preconference Workshop Committee (Marcel van Aken and Julie Bowker). President Toni Antonucci, on behalf of the entire EC, thanked both EC representatives, Given Hapunda and Cinzia Di Dio (who was excused from the EC meeting because she attended one of the December seminars at the same time), and all of the members of the Early Career Scholars Committee for all their hard work for the junior members of the Society. She asked the representatives to make sure that all this information reached our African early career scholars as well.

Other organizational issues (as a reminder):

No **regional workshops** could be organized lately because of the ongoing health crisis. The next one will be held in Côte d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast).

Peter Smith will most likely continue to take care of the **Developing Country Fellowships (DCF)** program.

Marcel van Aken will continue to invite nominations for the **ISSBD Fellows**. However, it might be advisable to involve a current member of the EC in this process as well.

Action => The Secretary General will contact Marcel van Aken and enquire about his continuing involvement in, and more generally, future plans for the ISSBD Fellows.

The EC needs to check whether the term of office expires by 2022 for any of the current EC members and whether nominations are needed for the 2022 elections.

Action => The Secretary General will check on the Society's website which nominations are needed for the 2022 elections.

ISSBD website and the society's link with the publisher SAGE

Several EC members voice concern about ISSBD's link with SAGE. The most pressing concern is that key information regarding the EC and other committees should be updated on the ISSBD website. The President has contacted SAGE about this issue several times, but they are slow in taking this up. They seem to be understaffed and overcommitted to other projects as we clearly are not a priority for them. It is unclear whether this situation is mainly due to the current pandemic, but some problems (e.g., registering African students) have existed for quite some time. All agree that this is a difficult and annoying situation.

Action => The President Toni Antonucci will talk with the Chair of the Publications Committee, Denis Gerstorff, and either one of them will contact SAGE.



Next EC meeting and choice of online platform

The EC decided that the next EC meeting will be held in early March 2021. There was general agreement that future EC meetings should not be held on the Skype for Business platform, in view of the inherent limitations of that platform and the numerous failings experienced throughout the EC meeting. The secretary general will schedule the next EC meeting and select a solid and reliable alternative for the Skype for Business platform, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

ISSBD and ICDSS

Frosso Motti, the president of the International Consortium of Developmental Science Societies (ICDSS) and ISSBD EC member, gave a PowerPoint presentation about the consortium. ICDSS is a world-wide umbrella organization of learned societies in the field of developmental psychology that counts 12 such societies as its members. ISSBD figures prominently among these members as a truly international society, along with several larger US-based societies such as the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA), and some smaller European societies such as the European Association of Developmental Psychology (EADP) and the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA). Marcel van Aken (ISSBD representative at ICDSS) joined the meeting as a guest, as the EC members discuss three key issues regarding the ISSBD – ICDSS linkage, that is, (a) ISSBD's membership of ICDSS, (b) the society's financial contribution to

ICDSS for the year 2021, and (c) the governance structure of ICDSS. Following extensive discussion, the EC members voted unanimously (a) to join ICDSS, (b) to pay the Level 1 membership fee of 5,000 US \$ for the year 2021, and (c) to endorse a one member - one vote principle regarding the ICDSS governance structure. At a broader level, the EC strongly recommends that geographical and other types of diversity be actively monitored and ensured, as various committees start taking shape in the next step of the continuous development of ICDSS, so that different voices can be heard. The rich diversity within ISSBD, geographical and otherwise, can be an important asset in this regard.

New Committee on Global Issues and Behavioral Development

Due to time constraints, the new Committee on Global Issues and Behavioral Development, as initiated by President Toni Antonucci, will be discussed at the next EC meeting in March 2021.

Matters arising/New Business

The **Early Career Grants Committee** (Julie Bowker) will meet in January 2021. At this meeting, the committee will discuss the grants which will be advertised over the Summer for the Rhodes conference in 2022. An update on this meeting will be presented at the next EC meeting in March 2021.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General

Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee Meeting

**April 15th, 2021 Zoom, 2 to 4 p.m.
(CEST; i.e., Brussels, Belgium time)**

Present at the Zoom meeting of the EC:

Toni C. Antonucci	(President)
Tina Malti	(President-Elect)
Luc Goossens	(Secretary General)
Julie Bowker	(Membership Secretary)
Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck	(Treasurer)
Julie Robinson	(EC Member)
Rita Zukauskiene	(EC Member)
Kristine Ajrouch	(EC Member)
Silvia Koller	(EC Member)
Frosso Motti	(EC Member)
Antonella Marchetti	(EC Member)
Cinzia Di Dio	(Early Career Scholar Representative)

All of the 2020 papers will be accepted (provided that they have not been presented at another conference) and a new announcement and call for submissions will be sent out in mid-May 2021. A hybrid meeting will be offered as an option. As a courtesy to the 2020 keynote speakers, they will be asked again and all EC members can make additional suggestions. A one-day preconference event (with some places reserved for young scholars) will be held, funded by the Jacobs Foundation. All members of the EC hope to attend the conference in person.

Action => Toni Antonucci will further discuss the proposed changes with Frosso Motti.

Action => Frosso Motti, Julie Bowker, and Toni Antonucci, will discuss the relation of the proposed preconference event to other preconferences.

Opening by the president, Toni Antonucci

Toni Antonucci welcomed the members of the Executive Committee of the ISSBD and extended her support and sympathy in the current difficult period. In normal times, the EC holds an all-day meeting in April during off-years (i.e., when our biennial conference is not held) before the SRCD conference. Due to the ongoing health pandemic, this meeting was now held online using Zoom.

Approval of the Minutes of the EC meeting associated with the Rhodes conference (online Zoom meeting) June 21st 2020

The minutes are approved by the EC.

Update on Rhodes ISSBD conference

Frosso Motti, organizer of the Rhodes conference, gives an extensive update on the preparations for the biennial ISSBD conference on the island of Rhodes, Greece, postponed by two years to 19 to 23 June 2022, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Several changes from the 2020 conference setup are proposed. The Scientific Committee will be updated.

Potential Reduced Membership Fee for Early Career Scholars and Membership Report

Supporting Early Career Scholars

The EC extensively discussed several options to support the Early Career Scholars (ECS) of the Society (i.e., those within 7 years of receiving their Ph.D.), which make up a very diverse group who frequently experience financial hardship due to the ongoing pandemic. The EC voted unanimously in favor of a proposal that the registration fee for Early Career Scholars (ECS) will match the student registration for the biennial conference. This decision of course implies that the Society pays the difference between the student registration fee and the ECS fee. This policy only applies to members of the Society, will hold for the next conference only, and may be revised in the future.

Early Career Grants Committee

This committee will have to organize an entirely new competition for travel awards for the conference (as some of the 2020 applicants no longer qualify for ECS status). A targeted effort is needed to recruit new regional coordinators (as the number of applicants for travel awards for the conference by far exceeds the number of these coordinators).



Membership report

At a broader level, the Society seems to experience a membership drop. Membership renewal is difficult, due to problems with SAGE, but Membership Secretary Julie Bowker is working on this problem. President Toni Antonucci created a Communications Committee with Josafa da Cunha as a key member to address the broader issues with SAGE regarding the website. The EC thanks Julie Bowker, Membership Secretary and Chair of the Early Career Grants Committee, for all her hard work.

Awards Committee

Silvia Koller, Chair of the Awards Committee, explains that one member had to leave the committee (because he was an awardee himself). We should start thinking about the 2022 awards.

Action => Silvia Koller comes up with a list of recommendations for awardees by February 2022.

2022 Elections

The EC briefly discusses the next round of elections for the EC. The term of office seems to expire in 2022 for two regular members of the EC.

Action => Luc Goossens, Secretary General, will start the nomination process for the 2022 elections.

Early Career Scholars Committee (ECS)

Cinzia di Dio, ECTS representative in the EC, presented an update on the activities of the Early Career Scholars Committee, including well-attended webinars by Bill Bukowski and Antonella Marchetti, a planned online session by Qi Wong, and a webinar on how to prepare applications for the Jacobs Foundation (with Board members of the foundation). An informal online committee meeting revealed a need for networking, mentoring, and the establishment of international collaborations. The committee also created a data base for the young scholars and pushed for support from IJBD. One member joined the Publications Committee. The activities of the ECS committee are open to everyone, but participants should be reminded to join the Society or renew their membership.

Participation in a virtual workshop “Enhancing International Perspectives in U.S. Psychological Science Journals”

President-elect Tina Malti gives a brief update on a similar event held in 2017. All of the Society’s editors (Brett Laursen, Josefa da Cunha, Karina Weichold, and Deepali Sharma) agreed to participate in the current (June 2021) workshop

and to offer their expertise. However, the EC decided not to provide financial support to the workshop organizers.

President’s Update

Jacobs - ISSBD capacity building partnership

President Toni Antonucci gave a brief update on this program for which 6 Ph D fellows were selected from the Ivory Coast and 10 professional development fellows from other African countries (with Julie Robinson and Anne Petersen actively involved in the program). This project is going along very well.

Foundations of Human Flourishing Project

President Toni Antonucci got a 100,000 US \$ donation from the World Templeton Charity Foundation for a project on the foundations of human flourishing. In this project, in which Anne Petersen is also involved, the investigators want to explore the idea that people in Africa have a much more communal concept of flourishing. The project can build on the Professional Development fellows initiative and senior people from Africa will be invited to participate in the project (e.g., Robert Serpell and Therèse Tchombe). The project has enormous potential and can lead, in a next step, to a major grant from Templeton.

New Senior Scholars Initiative

President Toni Antonucci proposed that we launch a new initiative that taps into the resources of older members of the Society, particularly from countries where mandatory retirement at a fixed age applies to people in academia. These members could offer substantive and linguistic support to junior members of the Society from countries where such support tends to be in short supply. The name for this initiative can be decided upon later. Potential names are the Scholars Corps or the Academic Corps (inspired by the Peace Corps but without the colonial twist).

Publications Committee

The Publications Committee has been revitalized. Denis Gerstorff and Noah Webster act as Chair and Chair-Elect of this Committee (and act almost as co-chairs). They are looking for a new editor for our journal IJBD and they have submitted a brief report to the EC. Regarding the ISSBD Bulletin, we will consider their request to get DOIs for relevant articles.

Next EC meeting

The EC decided that the next EC meeting will be held online in the month of October 2021. A doodle for an entire month will be sent out to all EC members to schedule this meeting.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General

ISSBD Bulletin

News from the Society

Lansford appointed next Editor-in-Chief of IJBD



The ISSBD Executive Committee has appointed Jennifer E. Lansford, Ph.D. from Duke University as the next Editor-in-Chief of ISSBD's flagship journal, the *International Journal of Behavioral Development* (IJBD). Dr. Lansford has been appointed for a five-year term effective January 1st, 2023.

This appointment follows a broad search conducted by the ISSBD Publications Committee. "We received applications from a number of highly qualified scholars" said Denis Gerstorff, co-chair of the committee. "Dr. Lansford stood out as an exceptional candidate due to her highly visible and productive record of scholarship, wealth of editorial experience, history of commitment and service to IJBD, and future vision for the journal" adds Noah Webster as co-chair of the committee.

IJBD, published by SAGE on behalf of ISSBD promotes the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge about developmental processes at all stages of the life span within as well as across geographical regions. Under the guidance of the outgoing Editor-in-Chief Brett Laursen, IJBD has an impact factor of 2.48 and is a leading international, peer-reviewed outlet devoted to reporting interdisciplinary research on behavioral development.

Dr. Lansford asserts that she is "deeply committed to advancing developmental science by incorporating international and cultural diversity in all its forms, including in editorial boards, reviewers, authors, and research participants, all of which are central to strong science." She adds that "Compared to other developmental journals, one of *IJBD's* most important strengths is its truly international scope. In the next five years, I will build on *IJBD's* existing international strengths by trying to increase representation of historically under-represented groups, particularly from low- and middle-income countries."

Dr. Lansford is a Research Professor at the Sanford School of Public Policy and Faculty Fellow of the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University. She has authored more than 275 publications on parenting and child development and leads the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development-funded Parenting Across Cultures project, a longitudinal study of children, mothers, and fathers from nine countries.

Since 2016, Dr. Lansford has served as Associate Editor of *Developmental Psychology*, and previously served as Associate Editor of *IJBD* (2015-2019). She also recently chaired a workshop for journal editors sponsored by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine focused on ways in which psychological science journals can encompass perspectives from diverse cultures, countries, and backgrounds by supporting scholars, peer-review, and high-quality science. Lansford received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Michigan and is a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and the American Psychological Association.



MAJOR CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

June 19 - June 23, 2022

Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development

Location: Rhodes, Greece

Web: <https://www.issbd2022.org/>

June 27 - June 28, 2022

International Conference on Psychology and Social Harmony

Location: London, England

Web: <https://waset.org/psychology-and-social-harmony-conference-in-june-2022-in-london#:~:text=International%20Conference%20on%20Psychology%20and%20Social%20Harmony%20aims%20to%20bring,of%20Psychology%20and%20Social%20Harmony>

July 19- July 20, 2022

International Conference on Computational Cognitive Modeling

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Web: <https://waset.org/conferences-in-july-2022-in-copenhagen/program>

August 16-August 17, 2022

International Conference on Addiction and Addictive Disorders

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Web: <https://waset.org/addiction-and-addictive-disorders-conference-in-august-2022-in-istanbul>

September 08 - September 09, 2022

International Conference on Psychology

Location: Prague, Czech

Web: <https://waset.org/psychology-conference-in-september-2022-in-prague>

October 06 - October 07, 2022

International Conference on Consulting Psychology

Location: Beijing, China

Web: <https://waset.org/consulting-psychology-conference-in-october-2022-in-beijing>

