

# An ethnography assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A couple weeks ago, I accompanied my friend, Pal Austin, for a day of work at her family's restaurant, Baaing. To be quite honest, I was not expecting to learn as many things as I did learn on that trip. Firstly, I was expecting to learn more about the fast food and food service culture, but to my surprise I learned more about the culture of the people who owned the restaurant. Being a close friend of Pal's I had an mimic perspective in the whole experience; Pal was my key respondent.

Through her, I learned a great deal about why each role was assigned to each person at the restaurant, the hierarchy of the efferent members of the family in the restaurant, and why the restaurant has such peculiar hours of operation. Was born in the capital of the Philippines, Manila. Her family, however, did not live in Manila, but traveled there to birth Pal and her siblings because that is where the " most advanced medical technology in the country could be found," Pal informed me. " My mother has always been cautious about things like this, I think she might even be a over cautious.

But I guess it just shows how much she and my dad love my and my siblings," Pal explained to me. She then described how there would be much less implication and a much higher chance of survival if she was born in an actual hospital rather than in her house, which in some of the poorest parts of the country is not uncommon, she mentioned. " Family is the most important thing to Filipinos. There is nothing we treasure more than our family. " We'd give out lives for each other if we to" Pal's mother, May Austin said during a group interview.

The rest of the family seemed to concur. As she said it, everyone nodded his or her head in concord. The Austin family lived in a part of the Philippines called the Pampas's where they spoke the dialect Japanning. In 1996, the family migrated to the United States. Upon opening their family business, they brought the Filipino culture with them into the restaurant. This is evident in the way jobs were assigned which is an example of a cultural construct. Very similar to American culture, Filipino culture has gender roles.

Thus in the restaurant, May and Pal did all the cooking. They were the females, and in the Filipino culture, cooking was a task taken care of by the women. Although men were other jobs were delegated to the men. Ban and RUB, Pal's brothers took care of shipments, inventory and organizing supplies. This job is more off physical labor line of work, the Augustine saw it fitting for RUB and Ban to handle it. Everybody cleaned, however, at various times, they all take part in the scrubbing of dishes, sweeping and mopping. Cleaning is something I want all my children to be able to do, boys and girls alike," May had mentioned in a conversation I had with her. Benjamin was the father the "head of the family" they called him. For this reason, he was also the head of the restaurant manager. He worked in the front counter taking orders and delegating them to his family in the kitchen. As the head, he also worked the register and handled the money; he and he managed all the financial aspects of the restaurant. As mentioned, family is very important to Filipinos. They also have very strict rules for respecting people in the family. The parents are at the top of the list when it comes to respect, I expect respect from my wife and all my children and my wife seeks my respect and the respect of our children as well," Benjamin shared with me. This was very

consistent with western society, I noticed, but the difference is more pronounced when it comes to the relationship between the siblings. There are gender roles just like western society, but there are also hierarchical roles as well. Pal enumerated, " Our parents are the people in our family that we respect above all.

Since I am the eldest next eldest, he was subordinate to Pal but higher in the family hierarchy than Ban. Ban, in turn could be considered subordinate to everyone else in the family because he is the youngest. There's a catch. The youngest child, although subordinate to his or her elder siblings, receives favoritism from his or her parents. In this case, Ban is the youngest child. It was actually something I had noticed. Why is it that Benjamin and May seemed to talk a bit softer and in a sweeter tone when they were talking to Ban than when they were talking to their other children?

I asked Pal in private and she introduced me to the idea of the " bonus" which when translated from Filipino (Toga) to English means " youngest child. " Parents usually play favorites with their youngest child. " I know it's a Filipino thing, I guess," Pal told me. The next part of my analysis deals with the restaurant's hours of operation. The times the restaurant is open are as follows " Closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10-7, Wednesday 10-6 and Saturday 10-4. I asked Pal about the Wednesday hours first, because they seemed the most peculiar to me.

Why would they choose to close an hour early on Wednesdays? " The reason we need to close at 6 on Sundays is because we are very religious people. In fact, the church that we went to in the Philippines has various locations here

in the U. S. Where they preach in Toga. The same goes for Sundays, we worship in the morning on Sundays and in the night on Wednesdays," the times they worshipped were totally arbitrary, as long as they attended genuinely love each other and love to spend time together. " On Sundays after church, the Austin Emily usually has plans. The go places as a family.

They have family activities at home. " As long as were together," were happy, Benjamin added. " We can be at the mall, a theme park, our living room, it really doesn't matter where," May said excitedly. Now Saturdays, Baaing closes very early, at 4. This is because after work on Saturday, Benjamin and May drive to downtown Los Angeles and pick up the fresh vegetables and meat, poultry, pork and various ingredients from whole sale retailers. " We stock up on weeks worth of goods on Saturday afternoon after work so well we ready for Mondays hungry customers," Benjamin uttered.