

# New identity

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



I managed to talk to a friend who happens to know a Filipino, Amang Dado (Father Dado), a 75-year old farmer from the Quezon Province in the Philippines. He came from a family whose life has moved around in planting root crops sold at the local public market for three generations. He had his only son, Eleazar, who was able to study at the University of the Philippines in Manila. The Filipinos highly value education for they believe that it is the only way out of massive poverty especially in the rural areas which happened to include Amang Dado's family. Eleazar was an intelligent college student and was also active in the school paper of the university.

All that changed when Eleazar went missing after he was taken by the military after being mistaken for a communist rebel. It was the Martial Law Era under then President Marcos and he was never to be found again. This struck Amang Dado as his only son went missing up to this date. Since he was poor and would have to travel miles to get to the capital, he could not follow up the loss of his son if he really was dead or alive. Eleazar became part of the local term, "desaparados" or the missing.

This changed his view on justice in a society he believed that vowed to help and protect citizens like him. His view on life suddenly changed as his only hope in getting out of their less-fortunate situation was stolen away from him and therefore depriving him of the opportunity of having a son.

Next was the grandmother of another friend in California who also happened to be a Filipina who lived during the Second World War. At that time, she was 19 when the Japanese invaded the Philippines and declared Manila as an Open City. Not long after that, the Japanese held everyone hostages. Filipino

and American soldiers prisoners-of-war after the Fall of Bataan. She told me that she was at the path of the infamous Death March of prisoners-of-war from Bataan to Tarlac, more than 150 miles apart.

Not enough food was available, the currency was of no value, and worse, the Japanese soldiers kidnapped local women and brought them to the garrisons and held them as sex slaves, locally termed as comfort women. Lola Ida was one of them. I can feel the tears coming down from her eyes even from the phone as she recalls that fateful event in her life.

She and the other comfort women were fed horrendously and were battered and were used up for sex by the Japanese soldiers continuously at their will. She even recalled a stick put up into her by one of the soldiers. This situation really stricken her as Filipino women value their dignity and virginity very highly and she was lucky to still be alive at the time of the liberation. The war not only destroyed the local economy, but entrenched into the society disrespect for gender.

The notion of justice is through fear and all that the people could do is to stay alive. She was able to marry and migrate into where she was right now in Panorama City where she tried to forget the horrendous tragedies of war. “Life is all about standing up again after every fall”, said Lola Ida. Resiliency is one particular trait that not only Filipinos have but for the rest of the Asians as well.

Part II: An Entry on my Autobiography: The Place I Live In

I can say that I'm living in a quiet diverse neighborhood, wherein you see people who don't look like you, or doesn't speak like you. They have a different skin color, unlike mine which is brown. Well, the majority of people living in my neighborhood are Filipinos, which comprises more than 80% of the population. I have seen and met white people who occupy less than 10% of the total population. I have also seen some other Asian people wandering around like Korean students studying English, and some indigenous natives.

These three, along with the other foreign races in our community comprise only less than 10% of the total population combined. Comparing it with other American states, the number of whites in my neighborhood is a little more than the normal, but still has a significant presence of other races, which are not far behind compared to other states.

This diversity has clearly put an interesting twist in living in our neighborhood. Since they are different from the rest of the brown population, I can't help but think that they are not given a fair treatment by the rest of the brown population. This may be because of their appearance, wherein they are often looked down by the other members of the society. This includes every representative member of the society, from the household members, up to the leaders of the society. They may be given special attention by these people, or worse may even be ignored (Northampton). But because of their position in the society, they try their best to treat each and every member of the society with utmost fairness and equality.

In my case, I've experienced getting ignored by a policeman when I asked for directions. It happened to me only once, I don't know if it is because of

the fact that I'm part Korean and looked like an American, and it is noticeable in my physical appearance. But that incident was not repeated, so I guess the policeman was just being rude or was having a bad day. In other instances that I asked for something from these community leaders, they try their best to address my inquiries and needs.

I haven't had any first hand experience or haven't witnessed any instance that these community leaders treated other people from another race or culture differently, but I have a friend who was able to witness something like that. It was on a public office, when a clerk attended to the inquiries of a white person before a black man, even though the black man came to ask first. It is a public office, the office of the District Attorney, someone who is expected to help us in times of need. But if they act like this, they are marginalizing other people (" Demographic Profile").

The people in my neighborhood treat me normally; they don't look down on me. I don't know if it has to do with the color of my skin, but as far as I can remember, I was never treated indifferently by any of them. The worst experience (and hopefully the last) was being called an American-wannabe by my grade school teacher. I don't know if it was intended to mock me because although I am Filipino, I looked like an American or just her way of addressing me, but I guess she based it on my look. She was pertaining to my physical appearance, but I have never considered it as a big deal.

I have seen worse, especially to those people who have a different skin color. Well, addressing someone as white, or calling names like "whitie" can be considered as marginalizing, but what about beating someone because he's

white, or Asian, or whatever that is different from being normal? I have actually witnessed a black boy being beaten by three guys of his age, who happens to be rich brown Filipinos who are sons of a sugar plantation owner.

They are calling names while punching him, until some policeman came by and chased them away. What does color have to do with his personality? Why do they have to resort to violence with small matters like a different color of skin or different accent? These are but some of my questions regarding the difference in cultural orientation which are still unanswered.

When I was browsing some of my manuals and school readings, I happen to read by a phrase or Germans. It was about the previous World War II, wherein the Philippines was under the Axis powers, Japan in particular. It has an understatement saying that at that time that the Japanese are ruthless people who derive happiness from the hardships and sufferings of other people.

But this is a hasty generalization. The text may be about the previous war, but it is not true that all Japanese are like that. Maybe it was pertaining to Emperor Hirohito and General Yamashita, the famous Japanese leaders who drove Filipinos, Koreans, and the Chinese to their painful deaths. But not all Japanese are like that person, they are but one of the few who has issues for themselves, not for the whole of the people from Japan.

When it comes to entertainment and local media, the common people who are usually seen are brown people, addressing the needs of the brown population of our community. But they do feature other people in certain

events which prove to be relevant. The most common instance that Chinese or Korean and Filipino people are featured by the media is when it comes to sporting events. They highlight various people who excel in some sports they are also featuring ("Football Unites, Racism Divides"). If a player who is from a different culture excels in that field and he advocates the media, he'll surely end up getting presented.

In relation to the people who are in leadership positions in my community, I could clearly say that they are the same as me when it comes to treating people from other races. I try not to consider their differences, and as much as possible, treat them fairly, just like any person in the community. I also encourage some of my friends to do so, just like what they do, promoting equality for all the people. The only difference I have from them is that I don't have the power to make rules that protect these minorities from the cruelty of those who doesn't see them equally.

They can affect a larger number of people as compared to what I can do. People listen to them, as compared to a small voice such as I. They can make a difference, everything lies on their hands. They could punish those who treats the people with different cultural orientation unfairly, so that other people would not commit the same mistakes such as beating guys just because they are black, or mocking the people by calling their names pertaining to their culture.

If given the chance that I can resolve inequalities in my community, I would like to resolve racism in grade school levels. It is undeniably a very alarming thought that even at the early age, there are kids that are already

discriminating others. This is because they can see that there is really discrimination in the society, and it is said that in the eyes of a child, something that is awfully wrong can be perceived as a right thing to do ("Help Arrest the Racism in Your Community").

I would like to promote a fair, equal treatment to kids in these schools. Their exposure to racial discrimination is very crucial in the formation of their thoughts. These kids will grow with the thought of having hatred towards the minority, wherein they would marginalize these people and treat them as inferior to them. Childhood is the stage in a person's life wherein we learn things, our orientations and preferences slowly developing, having a proper focus.

If we could just let these kids see that racial discrimination is wrong, and then they would grow up with the belief that it is wrong, thus they won't do it. With these in hand, we are assured of a better future for the marginalized minorities, since these kids view them as their equals. But if they are continually exposed to just injustice and unfair treatment, they would grow up thinking that they are more superior to these people.

The preferences of a person are directly affected to race. The way they dress, their food preferences, the way they speak, the way they eat their food; these are all affected to or accounted to the person's race. Looking closely, it could be a basis for judging a certain person, whether it is a constructive judgment, or destructive wherein you tend to destroy or stain the morality of a certain person. It is related to race because these



preferences are the basis of the race itself, how it is affected by each of these parts, and how important are they to race.

## **References:**

" Demographic Profile". 2005. Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. June 24 2007. .

" Football Unites, Racism Divides". 2004. June 24 2007. .

" Help Arrest the Racism in Your Community". Miami, FL, 2007. June 24 2007. .

Northampton, The committee for. " A Community Tackles Racism". 1994. Andrea Ayvazian. June 24 2007. .