

Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Organizing in Seattle in the  
1970s

by

Ligaya Rene Domingo

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Catherine Ceniza Choy, Co-Chair

Professor Ingrid Seyer-Ochi, Co-Chair

Professor Zeus Leonardo

Professor Kim Voss

Spring 2010

Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Organizing in Seattle in the  
1970s

© 2010

by

Ligaya Rene Domingo

## Abstract

Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s

by

Ligaya Rene Domingo

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Catherine Ceniza Choy, Co-Chair

Professor Ingrid Seyer-Ochi, Co-Chair

The Asian American Movement emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, Antiwar Movement, Black Liberation Movement, and struggles for liberation in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Activists, including college students and community members throughout the United States, used “mass line” tactics to raise political awareness, build organizations, address community concerns, and ultimately to serve their communities. While the history of the Asian American Movement has been chronicled, the scholarship has been analytically and theoretically insufficient -and in some cases nonexistent- in terms of local struggles, how the movement unfolded, and the role of Filipino Americans. This dissertation focuses on one, untold story of the Asian American Movement: the role of activists in Seattle, Washington who were concerned with regional injustices affecting Filipino Americans. I argue that this local struggle in the Pacific Northwest not only demonstrates the diversity of action and strategy within the Asian American Movement but also deepens our understanding of the broader movement as both local and transnational – unique in its local strategies yet closely aligned with the goals of the era’s social movements.

Based on both historical and qualitative data, this dissertation uses a Gramscian framework to explore the possibilities and limitations of using civil society as instruments for social change. Specifically, I examine the efforts by a group of local activists in the 1970s to seek redress for the exclusion, discrimination and social dislocation experienced by Filipino Americans. I explore two local Asian American Movement case studies in which activists worked within two preexisting organizational formations of civil society, the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Union and the Filipino Community of Seattle, to achieve their goals. This dissertation sheds light on the evolution of their organizing strategies and tactics with regard to broader processes of community and identity formation, as well as to their aims of bringing about revolutionary change. My research explored the following questions about attempts to serve and support the Filipino American community in Seattle in the 1970s: First, how do processes of community, identity, and ideological formation shape social movement organizing strategies? And second, how have changing patterns of immigration, institutional community formation, and international movement ideology shaped the strategies used by activists organizing on behalf of the Filipino American community in Seattle, Washington?

I argue that the efforts to organize in support of the Seattle Filipino American community in the 1970s unfolded in two phases. In the first phase, the activists were influenced and guided by the Civil Rights Movement and the ideas of the larger Asian American Movement. These movements provided activists with a framework from which to understand their grievances and activists started organizing using a Civil Rights and equity-based framework to address

grievances and achieve social reforms. However, the declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972 coincided with a fracture within the Filipino American community in Seattle because one group of activists experienced an ideological shift to a more radical viewpoint. This schism amongst the activists and within the larger Filipino American community was complicated by differences based on time of immigration, class, and generation and was manifested in political questions regarding the mission, goals, and use of both the Filipino Community of Seattle and the Cannery Worker's Union.

In the second phase of organizing, the radical activists were no longer intent on just reforming these local organizations; they also had a broader political agenda, and their organizing strategies changed to reflect this ideological shift. I argue that the strategy of the activists in this second phase was what Gramsci calls a "War of Position," meaning that the activists tried to use civil society institutions – a non-profit and community organization and a union – as a means to build a social movement and as a way to wage an attack on the state. Ultimately, the findings of this study challenge previous claims that the Asian American Movement was either reformist or radical. In this case study of Filipino American activists in Seattle, the data demonstrates that they were agents for social reform and also revolutionaries, not one or the other. The findings of this study point to the need for more nuanced and complex frameworks for understanding social change processes and organizing strategies.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to the manongs and activists whom this dissertation is written about and who have inspired the work I have done and will do in my life. Most notably, of these activists, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother Terri Mast and my father Silme Domingo.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my partner in life, Colin Anderson, whose hardworking spirit and hearty meals I could not have written this dissertation without. And last, I dedicate this dissertation to my son Mahal Silme Domingo-Anderson who has reminded me everyday that the most important thing in life is love.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b>	i
<b>Table of Contents</b>	ii
<b>List of Acronyms</b>	iii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iv
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction	
Building a Movement Through Civil Society: A Framework for Understanding Filipino American Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s	Filipino
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>32</b>
We Fight For Civil Rights: Historicizing the Emergence of Filipino American Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s	
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>58</b>
The Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS): A Contested Terrain	
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>81</b>
Ebb and Flow: The Rank-and-File Movement in The Alaska Cannery Workers Union	
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>101</b>
Conclusion	
Outcomes: The more that changes the more that stays the same	
<b>References</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Sample Interview Protocol	128
Appendix B: Participant Descriptions	131

## List of Acronyms

AAM	Asian American Movement
ACE	Asian Coalition for Equality
ACWA	Alaska Cannery Worker's Association
ASC	Asian American Student Coalition
CJDV	Committee for Justice Domingo and Viernes
FANHS	Filipino American National Historical Society
FAPAGOW	Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington
FAR	Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970s or Filipinos for Action and Reform
FCC	Filipino Community Center
FCS	Filipino Community of Seattle
FCSCD	Filipino Community of Seattle Community Development Corporation
FWC	Far West Convention
FYA	Filipino Youth Activities
IBU	Inland Boatmen's Union
IDIC	International District Drop-In Center
ILWU	International Longshore Warehouse Union
KDP	Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino or Union of Democratic Filipinos
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno or May First Movement
LELO	Northwest Labor Employment Law Office or Legacy of Equality, Leadership, and Organizing
LOM	Line of March
NEFCO	New England Fish Company
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
OSU	Oriental Student Union
RFC	Rank and File Committee
SEP	Special Education Program
SRO	Single Room Occupancy
UCWA	United Construction Worker's Association
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars

## Acknowledgements

And we'll walk down the avenue again  
 And we'll sing all the songs from way back when  
 And we'll walk down the avenue again and the healing has begun  
 And we'll walk down the avenue in style  
 And we'll walk down the avenue and we'll smile  
 And we'll say baby ain't it all worthwhile when the healing has begun<sup>1</sup>

As I finished writing the first full draft of this dissertation, on my late father, Silme Domingo's birthday, I was listening to a song by Van Morrison called "And The Healing Has Begun" (lyrics above). The words resonated with how I was feeling and I realized what this process has really been for me, a healing process. I hadn't realized until the very end that that was what it was for me. This dissertation was a story that I was compelled to tell and to investigate and understand for myself. I realize now that I have come full circle. As the child of two activists, I was taught to understand everything including my father's murder in a theoretical manner. As an adolescent and adult I came to understand the emotional side of his murder and the political implications, as well as the humanity with which people come to the fight for fairness and equity. And as a graduate student I have merged everything, emotions with theory, my disparate life and academic interests including labor union and community organizing, education, and Filipino American and working class identities. This dissertation is a product of all of this.

This dissertation is also a product of the support of family, friends, colleagues, and fellow activists. First, I thank my family for inspiring me to write this dissertation. My mother's undying commitment to the struggle of working people, her belief in my education, and her mantra telling me that I could do anything that I wanted to do has shaped this dissertation more than anything else. My husband's support throughout this process provided me with the ability and freedom to do this project. Without a true partnership like ours, I would not have been able to take the time away from our family to research, write, and present my work.

I would like to thank all of the activists and Seattle Filipino community members who I observed, interviewed, and corresponded with throughout this journey who provided important insight into the organizing described in this dissertation. I am greatly indebted to the following individuals: Rich Gurtiza, David Della, Bob Santos, Odette Polintan, Dorothy and Fred Cordova, Alma Kern, Bert Caoilie, Cindy Domingo, Velma Veloria, Adelina Domingo, Terri Mast, Johnny Crisostomo, Emma Catague, Emily Van Bronkhorst, Rich Gurtiza, Lynn Domingo, David Della, Bruce Occena, John Foz, Nemesio Domingo, Michael Woo, Elaine Ko, Dale Borgeson, Geline Avila, and Alonzo Suson. Please forgive me if I've forgotten anyone!

In the Social and Cultural Studies program at the University of California, Berkeley I found an intellectual home with my cohort of eight amazing and inspiring women. I am appreciative of all of the discussions we have had over the last seven years. I am thankful to my writing buddy Linn

---

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Van. 1979. And The Healing Has Begun. Warner Brothers Records. Retrieved on January 25, 2010 from <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/And-The-Healing-Has-Begun-lyrics-Van-Morrison/C8988EEE964BD38148256A3400084579>



Posey for our writing retreats, phone conversations, feedback, and encouragement. I am also thankful to Erica Kohl who has provided important guidance on my work since the beginning, the one person who understood my project from the beginning. I am also deeply indebted to my dissertation committee: Catherine Ceniza Choy, Ingrid Seyer-Ochi, Zeus Leonardo, and Kim Voss. Each committee member contributed an important piece to this dissertation. Cathy provided important perspectives on Filipino American and Asian American history, guided my archival research, and was an important model from whom I learned how to teach Filipino American history. Ingrid trained me in qualitative research methodologies and throughout the research process was interested in hearing about and supportive of my research process. Zeus and Kim provided important theoretical contributions. In addition, I am extremely thankful for the support of John Hurst and Stuart Tannock, who believed in me from the very beginning. Thank you to Alex DeGuia for all of your letters of recommendation and for hiring me to work at the Student Learning Center where I learned a tremendous amount about teaching undergraduate students. I am also appreciative of the Critical Filipino/a Studies Working Group at UC Berkeley whose friendship and support have been extremely important, especially Gladys Nubla, Geline Avila, Ethel Regis, Joanne Rondilla, and Jordan Gonzales. I would also like to thank the undergraduate and graduate students that I taught at UC Berkeley who will always stay in my memory reminding me why I want to be a professor.

I am extremely thankful for the academic relationships that I have formed outside of UC Berkeley and for the critical insight that each of you have provided in my work. Thank you to Augusto Espiritu, Anna Gonzalez, Dana Frank, Margaret Levi, Rudy Guevarra, May Fu, Estella Habal, Emily Lawsin, Rick Bonus, Emily Ignacio, and Tracy Lai. I am also thankful for the accountability and laughs provided by my newest study buddies in Seattle, Julie Kae and Simeon Mann.

I owe many thanks to individuals outside of the academy who provided a lot of support to me through my journey. Thank you to Kathryn Cunningham for holding me accountable to my schedule, sitting with me in cafes while I wrote, and just being a wonderful friend. Thank you to Katy Spencer for all of your editing and for being the one non-academic friend who actually knows something about my project. Thank you to my mother in-law Mary Rothschild for all of your writing coaching and editing, your feedback has made this dissertation much more polished. Thank you to all of my friends and family who provided emotional support and spent time with Mahal so that I could focus on writing, especially my mother Terri Mast, Hilary Anderson, Mary Keefe, Kalayaan Domingo, Jodie and Lee Scott, Melissa Anderson, Krista Anderson, Alexis Ortega, Alicia Gilman, Malik Owens, and Vangie Keefe. Throughout this process I have truly learned that it takes a community to raise a child and to write a dissertation.

This research was made possible by fellowships from The Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley and the UC Berkeley Summer Grants program. A final thanks is due to the wonderful archivists at the University of Washington Special Collections Library, Dorothy and Fred Cordova at the Filipino American National Historical Society, and all of the individuals who loaned me documents.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Building a Movement Through Civil Society: A Framework for Understanding Filipino American Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s**

On June 1, 1981 two Filipino American activists, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, were murdered in their union hall, Alaska Cannery Worker's Union Local 37. The press coverage interpreted this as a union squabble, however there was a deeper explanation that was connected to the efforts that these men and their fellow activists had been engaged in for over a decade: efforts to reform a community organization, their union, and to build a movement to fight for civil and human rights in Seattle, Washington and in the Philippines. Their efforts were not isolated, but were part of what has become known as the Asian American Movement.

The Asian American Movement emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, Antiwar Movement, Black Liberation Movement, and struggles for Liberation in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The Asian American Movement was intergenerational and included both college students and community members. Activists throughout the United States, in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Honolulu, Chicago, and New York built organizations to serve their communities that were based on the principle of "mass line" organizations, meaning that they consisted of a broad range of people within the community. The results of this movement include a legacy of Asian American civic and political involvement, non-profit organizations and community service agencies to serve the Asian American community, increased awareness of Asian American identity, and Asian American studies departments in universities. While the history of the Asian American Movement has been chronicled, the scholarship has been analytically and theoretically insufficient and in some cases nonexistent in terms of local struggles, how the movement unfolded, and the role of Filipino Americans. This dissertation contributes to the story of the Asian American Movement that has not been told, by focusing on the role of activists in Seattle, Washington, who were concerned with issues affecting Filipino Americans. I argue that a thorough examination of the local struggle of Seattle Filipino Americans is important not only because it shows the diversity of action and strategy within the Asian American Movement, but also because it deepens our understanding of the broader movement as at once local and transnational in nature, as both unique in terms of local strategy yet deeply connected to the broader framings of the social movements of the time. Ultimately, I show how, counter to predominant literature in the field, the movement can be understood as both reformist and revolutionary, not simply one or the other.

This study is driven by a larger theoretical question regarding the use of civil society as a vehicle for social movements and revolutionary change, as informed by Italian social theorist Antonio Gramsci and his conceptions of civil society. Gramsci's notions of social change through civil society offers a compelling theoretical framework from which to understand organizing on behalf of Filipino Americans in Seattle in the 1970s.

#### **Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Organizing on behalf of Filipino Americans in Seattle**

Gramsci's personal experience with revolutions was in the East, specifically the Russian Revolution, which he described as having used "frontal attacks" on the state, or as a "War of Manoeuvre". Gramsci characterized the strategies used in the Russian revolution as a War of

Manoeuvre because the revolutionaries used direct takeovers of the state. In Gramsci's theorization the War of Manoeuvre was an effective strategy in times of crises and with a state that did not have a built-up civil society. Overall Gramsci's theories innovated upon Marx and Lenin's formulations of Marxism.

### Civil Society

Gramsci built upon Marx's original conceptions of civil society in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* and expanded his notion beyond its economic origins (Anderson 1976). In my reading of Gramsci I have come to understand civil society as all institutions that fall directly outside of the state, such as schools, non-profit and community organizations, and unions. Civil society is intimately connected to the state and governed through both finances and rules. Forgacs (1998), editor of *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, offers the following description of Gramsci's definition of civil society: "Civil society is a site of consent, hegemony, direction, in conceptual opposition to the state (political society) which is a site of coercion, dictatorship, domination. Civil society is therefore, in Gramsci, at once the political terrain on which opposition parties and movements organize, win allies and build their social power" (Forgacs 1998, 224). Forgacs argues that although Gramsci saw the state and civil society as being intertwined, he also did not see civil society as being solely reduced to the interests of the state or ruling class.

Gramsci proposed that the difference between Russia and the West was the relationship between the state and civil society. Civil society in the East was very small in comparison to the state where power was held completely by the state. In the West, power was diffused throughout civil society, although the reins of control were held by the state.

In Russia the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks, more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying-but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country. (Gramsci 2008, 238)

When I envision Gramsci's picture of the relationship of civil society to the state, I imagine the state as a circle in the middle with smaller circles around it that represent civil society, much like a daisy flower with the state at the center and petals on the outside demonstrating civil society. The petals are fragile, connected in a slightly invisible manner. The daisy signifies the relationship between the state and civil society in that they are connected, with the state having an impact on civil society and vice versa. A change in one affects the other, which underscores the ability change within civil society has to affect the status quo within the state.

Gramsci says that his distinction between state (political society) and civil society is not 'organic' but 'methodological'...By this he means that, although the two levels must be analytically distinguished from one another, they must also be seen as being intertwined in practice. One might illustrate this by saying that a state education system is at one level clearly part of political society, just as trade unions are when they take part in tripartite planning with employers and government. But this does not mean that everything, which

takes place in schools or trade unions, is subservient to the state or reflects ruling-class interests. By making such a ‘methodological’ distinction between the two spheres, Gramsci avoids on the one hand a liberal reductionism, which sees civil society as a realm of free individuality entirely apart from the state, and on the other a statist and functionalist reductionism, which sees everything in society as belonging to the state and serving its interests (Forgacs 2008, 224).

This argument about how Gramsci avoids reductionism by drawing a distinction between the state and civil society is where we can see hope for the possibilities of the future and the opportunities for the use of civil society to change the state in social movements. For example in the case of organizing in Seattle on behalf of Filipino Americans, civil society was seen as a space for the possibility of change. The civil society organizations in Seattle were seen as a space for change because they were separate from and connected to the state.

### Hegemony

The term ‘hegemony’ is Gramsci’s theorization of how the ruling class leads subordinate groups through both coercion and consent, with particular attention to the latter. The term hegemony originated in political slogans in the Russian Social-Democratic movement in the late 1890s and first emerged in the writings of Plekhanov in 1883 (Anderson 1976), but it originally referred to the proletarian leadership of class alliances in the bourgeois-democratic revolution (Forgacs 1998). Gramsci elaborated on the meaning of hegemony, but as Anderson (1976) argues Gramsci did not depart from the original canon from which it was taken. Anderson notes that Gramsci’s writings “permitted an imperceptible transition to a much wider theory of hegemony than had ever been imagined in Russia, which produced a wholly new theoretical field of Marxist enquiry in Gramsci’s work” (15). According to Anderson (1976) “in the first instance, the term refers in his writings to the class alliance of the proletariat with other exploited groups, above all the peasantry, in a common struggle against the oppression of capital” (14). However, this definition was extended “from its original application to the perspectives of the working class in a bourgeois revolution against a feudal order, to the mechanisms of bourgeois rule over the working class in a stabilized capitalist society” (15). These two definitions come together to form the definition of hegemony drawn upon in this dissertation: a system of rule in which the ruling class has led the rest of society to consent through a system of alliances in political and civil society.

### Coercion and Consent

The Gramscian theory of hegemony is defined by the use of both coercion and consent. However, the main emphasis of hegemony focuses upon the ways in which the ruling class establishes consent through ideology and establishing a shared system of ideas referred to as common sense, in other words creating a consensus of ideas. Coercion through the use of force would only be used as a last resort. Forgacs (1998) sheds light on the definition of hegemony used in this dissertation by explaining that hegemony “presupposes an active and practical involvement of the hegemonized groups, quite unlike the static, totalizing and passive subordination implied by the dominant ideology concept” (424). In other words, hegemony is an active concept that embodies the ways in which individuals consent to being controlled. Stuart

Hall (2002) offers the most comprehensive definition of Gramsci's hegemony:

Hegemony is that state of 'total social authority' which, at certain specific conjunctures, a specific class alliance wins, by a combination of 'coercion' and 'consent,' over the whole social formation, and its dominated classes: not only at the economic level, but also at the level of political and ideological leadership, in civil, intellectual, and moral like as well as at the material level: and over the terrain of civil society as well as in and through the condensed relations of the State (51-52).

It is important to note that according to the Gramscian definition, hegemony cannot be simplified as domination or rule. As Raymond Williams (1977) explains,

Gramsci made a distinction between 'rule' (dominio) and 'hegemony'. 'Rule is expressed in directly political forms and in times of crisis by direct or effective coercion. But the more normal situation is a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces, and 'hegemony' according to different interpretations, is either this or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements (108).

Gramsci's theory of hegemony, as an active process, was specifically employed and elaborated upon to describe "structures of bourgeois power in the West" (Anderson 1976, 15). Gramsci developed a companion theory, the War of Position, to speak to the new challenge of revolution in the West. I use the War of Position throughout this dissertation to illustrate strategies used for organizing in Seattle.

### War of Position

The "War of Position" is Gramsci's conceptualization of how change in the West would occur through civil society (Gramsci 2008). He theorized that a different strategy for revolution would be needed in the West where civil society was developed and more engrained into society. Gramsci's theory on the state, civil society, and the strategy of a War of Position built upon Lenin's theories of the state. Lenin's theory of the relationship between the state and civil society were never fully developed. Gramsci filled the void in Lenin's theorization. "It seems to me that Ilitch [Lenin] understood that a change was necessary from the War of Manoeuvre applied victoriously in the East in 1917, to a war of position which was the only form possible in the West" (Gramsci 2008, 237). Fontana (2002) offers the following definition of Gramsci's War of Position theory:

In the West, a direct assault (war of movement) on the State is not possible because sedimented layers of complex associations of civil society have rendered the 'integral State' both politically powerful and ideologically resilient. Thus, a war of position, that is, ideological, cultural, and intellectual struggle becomes necessary to overcome the established order (30).

According to Gramsci, the War of Position defined as a "strategic and tactical struggle exploiting and working on a number of different contradictions" (Hall 2002, 52) would be achieved by organic intellectuals. These organic intellectuals would "combat a worker's common sense

‘inherited from past and uncritically absorbed’ that leads to ‘moral and political passivity,’ and at the same time elaborate the kernel of good sense that workers share with one another, namely the ‘practical transformation of the world’” (Buroway 2003, 226). Gramsci theorized that organic intellectuals, who came from the working class, would lead the War of Position by creating alliances among the working class masses to create a historical bloc that would carry out the War of Position. He elaborated that this would be done by first educating other workers and transforming their common sense into a kernel of good sense, which would be the impetus for efforts of social change. Stuart Hall (1996) has characterized the War of Position as an ideological struggle that intervenes in common sense as “a historical, not a natural or universal or spontaneous form of popular thinking” (43).

In the case of my research, Gramsci’s theorization of the War of Position is useful in showing how counter-hegemonic organizing appropriates and shapes institutions in civil society in order to confront both the state and the dominant forms of production. The strategy of organic intellectuals such as Domingo and Viernes, the two Filipino activists organizing in Seattle as a part of the Asian American Movement, represents this War of Position in civil society where organizing, such as in unions and community-based organizations, is brought to bear on redefining the terrain of organizing in order to put pressure on both the state and capital production practices.

Using the concept of War of Position to understand the possibilities for and limitations to social change through civil society, I focus on a case study of activists in the 1970s who organized to support the Filipino American community in Seattle, Washington. These activists used the strategy of War of Position to defend the elderly and youth within the Filipino American community who were experiencing exclusion, discrimination, and social dislocation. Guided by my key research questions,<sup>2</sup> this work depicts the evolution of those strategies and tactics with regard to broader processes of community and identity formation. In turn, this work reveals how these strategies and tactics are brought to bear on the use of civil society institutions as vehicles for social change. Specifically I will focus on two case studies at the local level of the Asian American movement and the evolution and outcomes of the strategies and tactics used for organizing.

I explore the evolution of movement strategies across civil society by focusing on two local Asian American Movement case studies and how the strategies and tactics used for organizing unfolded.

I ask the following overall research questions:

How do processes of community, identity, and ideological formation shape social movement organizing strategies? How have changing patterns of immigration, institutional community formation, and international movement ideology shaped the strategies used by activists organizing on behalf of the Filipino American community in Seattle, Washington?

Specifically, I examine questions grouped around the following two themes:

---

<sup>2</sup> These research questions stem from an exploratory research project I conducted in 2004-2005 on the Filipino American community in Seattle through which I found that there are historic divisions within the Filipino American community in Seattle based on class, family immigration history, and generation. In this dissertation I build upon this previous research to understand how those divisions have had an effect on organizing.

1) Social Movement Connections: What were the origins of the strategies and tactics used? Specifically, how did notions of civil rights, (Asian American) identity, and radicalism shape these strategies? What is the relationship between strategy, tactics, and ideology?

2) Identity, Affiliation, Alliance, Space and Difference: How do diverse identities and affiliations across civil society organizations shape organizing strategies, specifically generation, immigration histories, work histories, political affiliations, spatial relationships, and transnational ties?

With regard to these research questions, I argue that there were two phases<sup>3</sup> of organizing to support the Filipino American community in Seattle in the 1970s. In the first phase, the Civil Rights Movement and ideas of the larger Asian American Movement inspired activists. These movements provided activists with a framework from which to understand their grievances. At this time, activists started organizing using a Civil Rights and equity-based ideological and strategic framework. However, the declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972 marked a specific rupture within the Filipino American community in Seattle in which divisions manifested over political questions regarding the mission, goals, and use of both the Filipino Community of Seattle and the Cannery Worker's Union. One group of the activists experienced an ideological shift to a more radical viewpoint. This caused a split amongst the activists and within the larger Filipino American community that was complicated by differences based in time of immigration, class, and generation. The result of these ideological differences was a shift in strategy that demarcates the second phase of organizing. In this second phase, the more radical activists changed their organizing tactics and strategies, which reflected their ideological shift.

Ideology is a key Gramscian term that is defined as a set of ideas that describes the ways in which a person sees the world. According to Leonardo (2003),

...ideology is not something people need to overcome, as in the Marxist notion of false consciousness, but is something that is necessary for consciousness itself...Ideology becomes a particular position subjects take up and from which they read social life. Ideology is a reading of the world from a particular place in the world. (22)

Using this definition of ideology to describe the shift that occurred, I claim that the activists originally understood their struggle as one of civil rights and equality that could be resolved by reforming community organizations and providing services. However, the strategic and tactical shift that occurred reflected a new ideology. I argue that the strategy that these activists used in this second phase was what Gramsci refers to as "War of Position", meaning that activists sought to use institutions within civil society, such as a community organization, a non-profit organization, and a union, as vehicles for social change and larger social movement goals. In this second moment of organizing, activists worked to reform two civil society organizations that were at the center of the Filipino American community in Seattle to become social movement organizations: the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union<sup>4</sup> and the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS). This strategy reflected a broader ideological and political agenda. The findings of this

<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation I refer to the stages of organizing as 'phases' or 'moments' to evoke a meaning that is different from a discreet phase. These moments were overlapping and not cut off from one another.

<sup>4</sup> The union is currently the Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU) Region 37 and during the time period of this study was known as International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 37. For ease I refer to the union as the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union.

study challenge previous claims that the Asian American Movement was either a reformist or radical movement. In this case study of Filipino American activists in Seattle, the data shows that they were both reformist and revolutionary, not one or the other.

In this dissertation I focus on the overall strategy to transform the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union to become social movement organizations. This strategy could also be described as cooptation from the left. In the history of the left wing in our country starting with McCarthyism and perhaps before, there has been much discussion about the ways in which the right wing has made (many successful) efforts to co-opt left wing organizations and causes. However, there has been very little discussion of how the left has also used this strategy. These forms of transformation or cooptation, from the left, are central to the counter-hegemonic War of Position in civil society, the formation and breakage of alliances, and the transformation of organizing frames and agendas. This focus on 'cooptation from the left' makes this study a unique contribution to understanding the formation of social movements and movement organizations.

I claim that the overall strategy was to transform these organizations using specific tactics and frameworks. The findings of this study reveal three thematic areas within which these strategies, tactics, and frameworks fall: 'civil rights', 'radicalism', and 'grass roots organizing'. These themes reflect the strategies, goals, and ideological orientation of the activists within each moment of their organizing efforts and are woven into the three focal data chapters within this dissertation. In Chapter Two I argue that the initial strategies and frameworks used reflected a focus on civil rights, equity, and Asian American identity, which resulted in goals focused on rebuilding community infrastructure. In Chapter Three I contend that activists shifted ideologically and strategically from the civil rights framework to one that was more radical. Rebuilding community infrastructure continued to be the focus and a new goal, to build support for a larger social movement, became integrated into the tactics used for organizing. Chapter Four provides evidence for a strategic focus on grass roots organizing that proved to be effective for the reform of the cannery workers' union. I draw upon Ganz's (2000, 2009) conception of *strategic capacity*, which he argues is important for effective organizing strategy. He defines strategic capacity as strategies employed by an organization that provides greater motivation than rivals, better access to salient knowledge, and learning that comes from deliberations over strategy.

This dissertation highlights some of the long-standing history as well as current examples of Filipino organizing, activism, and overall work towards social change.<sup>5</sup> Seattle, Washington is an important site to understand the history and development of Filipino organizing because of its unique history as an established Filipino community. The Filipino community developed permanent roots in Seattle established very early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century for three reasons: the geographic proximity to Asia, the Pacific Rim, and specifically, colonial interests in the Philippines; the connections to and location on the salmon canning industry routes; and thirdly, educational opportunities available in public schools and universities.

Seattle was a transitional point for Filipino immigrants of the 1920s and 1930s who worked seasonally between the agricultural fields of Eastern Washington, Oregon, California, and the Alaska salmon canneries. Filipinos were recruited from the Philippines by labor contractors and enticed by the prospects of education and employment. Filipinos had these

---

<sup>5</sup> I define social change as collective efforts to transform power relations. I define the transformation of power relations using Lukes' (1986) definition of power, which is the ability to make decisions about people's lives in economic, political, and social ways.



‘opportunities’ because of the Philippines’ status as a U.S. territory, a relic of U.S. colonization in the Philippines following the Spanish-American War, the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1899 that gave control of the Philippines to the U.S, and the squelching of hostility and revolt in The Philippine-American War (1899-1902).<sup>6</sup> The U.S. won territorial annexation of the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> The importance of Seattle as a ‘Filipino’ city is also a reflection of the long-standing U.S.-Philippine relationship.

Fujita-Rony (2003) has argued that Seattle is a unique historic context, a *colonial metropole* within the larger United States Empire, a city through which transpacific interests overlapped. Fujita-Rony (2003) points to the fluidity of transpacific encounters between Asia and the United States, and specifically the “powerful reach of colonialism in Philippine-American relations” (19). She compares the development of Seattle as a city and its proximity to Asia and the subsequent formation of ethnic communities to New York and Boston and the ways in which their roles as entry ports for passenger and cargo traffic from Europe shared the development of those cities. “Transpacific endeavors had a vital impact on the formation of cultures in the Pacific Northwest” (Fujita Rony 2003, 15). She argues that

The very structure of movement to the Port of Seattle and the attraction of educational institutions such as the University of Washington were very much a function of colonialism. Seattle was a pivotal metropolis, one of a number of cities in the United States, as well as in the rest of the world, that drew colonials from thousands of miles away. Through these connections developed due to the American empire, people formed ‘imagined communities’ that linked colony to metropole (Fujita-Rony 2002, 204).

The composition of the community is unique because of this history and unlike other cities in which most people of color prior to World War Two were African American or Chicana/o, Fujita-Rony (2003) points to the fact that the majority of people of color in Seattle were Asian American or Native American. Friday (1994) also points to the importance of Seattle and specifically its role in the salmon canning industry as, “overseas markets and international migrants, both essential to the continued growth of the industry, tied the industry and the region into the burgeoning global economy and aided in the capitalist transformation of the American West” (9).

## Literature Overview

In order to understand how processes of community, identity, and ideological formation shape social movement organizing strategies and how changing patterns of immigration, institutional community formation, and international movement ideology specifically shaped the strategies of activists organizing on behalf of the Filipino American community in Seattle, Washington, this interdisciplinary project engages in, and builds upon four bodies of academic literature: the Sociological field of Social Movements, Asian American Studies, Filipino American Studies, and American Studies. This project engages in specific questions within these areas of study, as are laid out in the sections to follow. Specifically, three thematic concepts are woven throughout the dissertation: ideology, community, and difference. The second chapter of the dissertation

---

<sup>6</sup> The Philippine-American War is a piece of history, which has been often ignored. Filipinos did not give into American rule without a fight and the war resulted in the death of approximately one million Filipinos; the nationalist forces were destroyed.

<sup>7</sup> This was done under the guise of preparing the Philippines for eventual independence (Espiritu 2003).

focuses on the question of origins and emergence. The second half of Chapter Two and Chapters Three and Four focus on the strategies and tactics used for organizing. Chapter Three highlights the question of community and difference and Chapter Four is concerned with the role of grassroots organizing. The final chapter examines the outcomes of organizing efforts and the contribution that the case studies and theories presented in this dissertation tell us about the use of civil society in social movements.

### The Asian American Movement

This project is informed by the question of how social change can be achieved by organizing through civil society using Gramsci's notion of the War of Position, how social movements have used this strategy, and what tactics make this strategy effective. I engage in this question through a case study of activists whose efforts were part of the larger Asian American Movement.

The Asian American Movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the goal of creating a unique and cohesive ethnic pan-Asian identity. Organizing efforts focused on obtaining civil rights and equity for Asian Americans, taking care of the community (specifically the elderly), obtaining social services such as healthcare and housing, creating curriculum and university departments that reflected the history of Asian Americans, and creating ethnic newspapers (Wei 1993). Overviews about the Asian American Movement have been written about in several monographs and anthologies. The first monograph written about the Asian American Movement, William Wei's (1993) *The Asian American Movement* was the first contribution to a literature that was non-existent. Wei's account of the Asian American Movement focuses on the reformist aspects of the movement and claims that it was a middle class movement inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and anti-Vietnam War Movement. Wei (1993) focused mostly on organizing that occurred in California. While it seeks to represent a broad overview of the movement, it predominately highlights Chinese and Japanese involvement.

Wei's (1993) introductory piece was followed by Aguilar-San Juan's (1993) *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*. The focus of this edited volume of essays was not centered on the Asian American Movement in its entirety, but rather Asian American activism in the 1990s. It reflects the legacy of the Asian American Movement in terms of how Asian Americans have continued to mobilize around the ideas set forth by the movement. This collection shows the diversity of actors involved in Asian American activism.

Ho, Antonio, Fujino, and Yip's (2000) *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America* was the third important contribution to the Asian American Movement literature. As one of two influential anthologies to offer first person accounts of the movement this book showed not only the ethnic diversity of the movement, but more specifically the ideological diversity. Ho, Antonio, Fujino, and Yip's (2000) book was framed as a revolutionary history of the movement, in intentional juxtaposition to Wei's (1993) reformist focus. The second anthology, the fourth major contribution to the literature, was Louie and Omatsu's (2001) *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*. This work also showed the additional forms of diversity within the movement that bridged the gap between Ho, Antonio, Fujino, and Yip (2000) and Wei (1993) by publishing first person accounts that showed both the revolutionary and reformist ideologies. Louie and Omatsu (2001) locate the Asian American

Movement on the landscape of the figures and struggles that inspired revolutionary Asian Americans, such as Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, Cesar Chavez, Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton, Leonard Peltier, Mao Tse-Tung, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Gueverra. This is in direct contrast to Wei (1993) whose understanding of the emergence of the movement is not clearly elaborated and draws broad connections between the Asian American Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam War. Louie and Omatsu (2001) argue that Asian American revolutionaries, most of whom believed in a Maoist approach to revolution, wanted to get rid of and replace the current social system, capitalism, and felt that Asian Americans could play a key role.

The fifth and newest piece in this genre, Lui, Geron, and Lai's (2008), *The Snakedance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power* is the first book to incorporate a theoretical analysis using the sociological lens of social movement theory. This has been a critical missing element of the literature. However, the application of social movement theory in this book is limited to one chapter and is not integrated throughout the book.

A key element lacking in the Asian American studies and social movements literature is a thorough application of social movements theory to the Asian American Movement. One defining theme in this dissertation is to directly address this shortfall.<sup>8</sup> The conceptualization of the Asian American Movement as a 'movement' is important because the term provides an analytic tool from which to understand the organizing that occurred on behalf of the Asian American community.

Wei (1993) characterizes the Asian American Movement as one coherent movement. However, subsequent work as illustrated above, has shown that this was not the case. These innovations have illustrated that the Asian American Movement was far from a singular, monolithic movement and encompassed a broad range of organizations with differing ideological orientations from Marxist-Leninist and Maoist to none at all. Some were interested in creating pan-Asian or even cross-racial alliances while others were interested in only including those of their own ethnicity and engaged in activities that were based in cultural preservation, cultural traditions, or cultural performance. Unlike the Civil Rights Movement there was not a Southern Christian Leadership Council or one overarching leader like Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X or the Black Panthers. However, my analysis of the literature finds that the Asian American Movement is similar to the Civil Rights Movement because both contended with a tension between those with reformist versus revolutionary perspectives. In my research in Seattle, I also found that these vying perspectives resulted in differences in strategies of organizing and a multiplicity of diverse leaders and organizations with shifting leadership positions.

Within the Asian American Movement literature the tension between revolutionary and reformist activists is apparent (Wei 1993; Louie and Omatsu 2001; Liu, Geron, Lai 2008). Within this literature scholars have essentialized the movement as having been one or the other, either reformist or revolutionary. Wei (1993) makes the claim that the movement was a reformist, middle class movement, while Louie and Omatsu<sup>9</sup> (2001) argue that it was a revolutionary movement. Liu, Geron, and Lai (2008) meet the two somewhere in between by arguing that the movement encompassed activists who held both of these ideologies and pursued both of these strategies. While both Wei (1993) and Louie and Omatsu (2001) draw a distinction

---

<sup>8</sup> Based on the extent of the literature within Asian American Studies about the Asian American Movement, I do not ask in this dissertation whether the Asian American Movement was truly a movement, specifically with regards to how Sociologists define social movements. Instead I assume that it was a movement.

<sup>9</sup> I focus on the introduction to *Asian American: The Movement and the Moment* (Louie and Omatsu 2001) as a piece that is representative of the anthology as a whole.

between reformist and revolutionary Asian Americans, Wei does very little to delineate their differences. Wei (1993) essentializes the Asian American movement as having been a reformist movement that focused on building community-based organizations, which activists saw as a means to build power in the Asian American community by building influence and advancing their interests. When he discusses Asian American revolutionaries, he argues that they mostly believed in a Maoist approach to revolution, wanted to get rid of and replace the current social system, capitalism, and felt that Asian Americans could play a key role. Wei makes assumptions and dismisses the revolutionary part of the movement because their goal of ending capitalism was not achieved. Fujino (2008) argues in the only historiography of the Asian American Movement that most of the authors have grounded the movement in radicalism. These are important contributions, however Fujino (2008) points to the dangers accompanied by this as well:

These studies discuss how Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, the Black power ideology, and revolutions in Asian and the Third World were the main forces shaping the development of the AAM [Asian American Movement]. This is noteworthy, given the model minority positioning of Asian Americans and social movement literature's tendency towards more moderate, less threatening struggles. One questions whether this gaze towards the radical reflects the actual working of the AAM or the politics of its authors. (149)

Fujino's argument highlights the importance of the findings in this study, that activists in Seattle were neither one nor the other reformist or revolutionary. I claim that in the case of Filipino American activism in Seattle in the 1970s, activists started by using reformist strategies and framings and moved into more radical tactics and framings, although activists continued to use the strategy of working within organizations to pursue larger more systemic, revolutionary goals. I found that while the revolutionary perspective was a divisive issue amongst activists, there was also a common ground and set of goals that united the broad Asian American Movement, which is explored in more depth in Chapter Two.

I offer six major critiques of the Asian American Movement literature, which inform this dissertation. First, I argue that this literature largely focuses on first person accounts and storytelling with very little analysis.<sup>10</sup> While I do incorporate history and first person accounts into my project, I move beyond those frameworks to incorporate analysis of that history. Second, this literature largely focuses upon organizing that occurred in California, specifically the San Francisco Bay Area. Wei (1993) draws a distinction between the organizing that occurred on the West Coast, East Coast, and Mid-West, however this was done to challenge an assumption that the Asian American Movement only occurred on the West Coast. Aguilar- San Juan includes activism beyond the West Coast. This book looks at the legacy of the movement and is not specific about how the movement unfolded. Aside from these two accounts there is very little specific and in-depth written about the organizing that occurred outside of the San Francisco Bay Area and there is not a sufficient acknowledgement of the important organizing that has happened in Hawaii. In my project I move beyond California, which has been explored in-depth, to understand the organizing and activism that occurred in Seattle, Washington.

Third, very little is written about organizing that occurred within the Filipino American community. While the overviews of the movement illustrated by the literature has brought an

---

<sup>10</sup> There are a few exceptions to this: Choy 2005, Lui, Geron, & Lai 2008,

understanding of the history of the movement generally, there is a lack of understanding about the role of specific ethnic groups, namely Filipino Americans. Although several of these works<sup>11</sup> within the Asian American Movement subfield have included pieces about Filipino American<sup>12</sup> protest and organizing, Habal's (2007) study of the International Hotel, focused on Filipino American protest, organizing, movement building, and overall work towards social change is the only comprehensive study on this topic. As Professor Augusto Espiritu (2006a) argued at the 2006 Conference of the Association for Asian American Studies in a Mega session entitled *Legacy of Labor: Filipino Migration to the United States in the Last One Hundred Years*, Filipinos in the United States have a long history of activism and organizing, particularly in the form of what he characterizes as working class protest. Unfortunately this history has been scarcely documented and acknowledged within the broader fields of Asian American Studies and the Sociological field of social movement theory. The social movement literature tells us much about organizing that has taken place to protect the interests of many groups in the United States, however little is known about Filipino American organizing. Wei (1993) contributes to this exclusion because he largely focuses upon Chinese and Japanese American organizing. Louie and Omatsu (2001) included pieces in their anthology that were written by Filipino Americans: however, there is no analysis or acknowledgement in the introduction of the book about the organizing work of Filipino Americans. Lui, Geron, and Lai (2008) also touch upon the role of Filipino Americans, however their book is more of an overview than a comprehensive examination of specific struggles within the Asian American Movement. One chapter of Choy's (2003) *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* discusses the Narciso-Perez case in Chicago, which Filipino Americans organized around the defense of two Filipina nurses accused of murdering ten patients in Michigan. Two important pieces specifically examine the role of Filipino Americans in the larger Asian American Movement. Choy's (2005) article, *Towards Trans-Pacific Social Justice*, shows how the Asian American Movement was both a national and transnational movement by highlighting the role of Filipino Americans generally and the role of women specifically. Habal's (2007) *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* discusses the role of Filipino Americans in the International Hotel fight in San Francisco, which started in 1968, and its connection to the larger Asian American Movement. Habal's (2007) work makes a major contribution to the Asian American Movement literature by showing how diversity in terms of ideology, ethnicity, and generation played out within the movement and larger Filipino American community. Habal's work is the only book length study of contemporary Filipino American organizing. Prior to Habal's book the only glimpse into Filipino American organizing was Carlos Bulosan's (1996) important work describing the early agricultural and cannery work organizing efforts, books about Hawaiian sugar plantation activist Pablo Manlapit (Reinecke 1996, Kerkvliet 2002), and one book about farm worker activist Philip Vera Cruz (Scharlin and Villanueva 2000). The history of Filipino Americans particularly reveals a history of protest that dates back to their migration to the United States. This history of protest starts with labor activism in the plantations in Hawaii, the fields of California and up and down the West Coast, and extends to the Alaska salmon canneries. This dissertation project focuses upon Filipino

---

<sup>11</sup> Ho, Antonio, Fujino, Yip 2000; Louie and Omatsu, 2001; and Aguilar-San Juan 1993

<sup>12</sup> Throughout this paper I use the term Filipino and Filipino American interchangeably to refer to people who are of Filipino descent, but reside in America. I use this term to refer to those who were originally immigrants themselves and those who were American born.

Americans to understand how their history of protest and activism fits into what we already know about the Asian American Movement.

Fourth, the discussion of the Asian American Movement in the literature cited above illustrates the movement as having been insular to the United States. Much of the work in this area operates from the assumption of a movement that occurred within the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, rather than a movement with a transnational aspects history. Recent work has incorporated a transnational analysis of the movement by looking at the role of Filipino American activists in the United States whose activism was connected to struggles in the Philippines. Choy (2005) argues that the history of Filipino American activism shows that the Asian American Movement was also a transnational movement. She argues that Filipino American organizing to support Filipinos in the Philippines during the Marcos Regime was about making connections to their “homeland”, the Philippines, and drawing attention to issues affecting the people there. Espiritu (2009) shows how Filipino American activism in the United States was inextricably linked to political movements occurring simultaneously in the Philippines. My exploration of activism in the Filipino American community in Seattle demonstrates the ways that organizing and activism in the United States is shaped by community members’ previous experiences in the Philippines, the history of colonization, and by concerns about political control in the Philippines.

Fifth, the Asian American Movement literature does not explicitly discuss the strategies used by activists for organizing. Ganz (2000) defines strategies as the targeting, timing, and tactics of an organization, or rationale used for organizing. While the literature shows the ideological frameworks from which activists were working, there is little understanding of local organizing campaigns, strategies activists used within their communities and what shaped these strategies. In this dissertation, I explicitly focus upon the strategies used for organizing within a local context of the Asian American Movement. My analysis is focused on understanding the role of ideology in the strategies and development of the Asian American Movement.

Sixth, the question of the emergence of the movement, specifically how individuals got involved has not been explored in depth. The literature shows that ideas from the anti-Vietnam War, Civil Rights, and Black Power movements played a role and that political activism on the West Coast began with activists organizing around living conditions in San Francisco’s Chinatown and college campuses protesting the absence of their historical experiences in their classes and curriculum (Wei 1993). Studies have not been conducted that show how activists got involved and how this may have differed city to city. This project explores the emergence of the movement in Seattle and how strategies for organizing were shaped the ideology, strategies, and goals originally held by activists.

Wei (1993); Aguilar-San Juan (1993); Ho, Antonio, Fujino, Yip (2000); Louie and Omatsu (2001); and Lui, Geron, and Lai (2008) have made significant contributions to our understanding of the Asian American Movement through the use of historical accounts and storytelling. However, their contributions show us that there is a need for more in-depth analysis of the Asian American Movement in future studies. Such analysis would bring more understanding to the significance of this particular movement and could open up this subject to new applications in disciplines outside of Asian American studies.

Existing Asian American Movement literature tends to use history and first person accounts. I incorporate this approach and use it as a framework for further investigation into local campaign strategies. My research is defined by how Filipino Americans understand and represent their unique history of protest and activism juxtaposed against the greater Asian

American movement. Exploring new locales that have not yet been investigated for insights and sites that have not been explored in-depth enhances the depth of this research. The history of activism in the Filipino American community in Seattle is used to illustrate the transnational relationship of organizing in the United States. This work examines how activism has been shaped by experiences in the Philippines, the history of colonization, and concerns about political control in the Philippines in the 1970s.

### Filipino American and American Studies and The Question of Community

To understand the transnational aspects of the movement I draw upon scholarship within American Studies and Filipino American Studies. Until recently the field of American Studies has had a linear approach. Though migration has been studied by scholars of American Studies for a long time, the concept has mostly been studied from the viewpoint of migration from the home country to the United States and the experience of individuals within the United States has only been understood within this nation state as though the previous experiences no longer shaped the experience of individuals or the communities established in the U.S. Recent work has pointed to two major factors that continue to shape the experiences of migrants and the communities that they develop: transnationalism and the role of U.S. imperialism. In *Cultures of United States Imperialism* Kaplan (1994) argues that within American Studies there has been a denial of the role of American Empire which has resulted in three absences: absence of culture from the history of U.S. Imperialism, absence of empire from the study of American culture, and the absence of the U.S. from the post-colonial study of imperialism. Applications of these arguments have been applied to the study of Filipino American Studies to push both the field of American Studies and Filipino American Studies forward.

Within the field of Filipino American studies scholars have pushed past specific assumptions about Filipino Americans and pushed the literature past early Filipino American works such as Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart* (1946) and Fred Cordova's *Filipino's Forgotten Asian Americans* (1983) that focused on early Filipino American laborer migrants. New scholars in Filipino American studies, Choy (2003), Espiritu (2005), and Fujita-Rony (2002), have taken up the challenge for American Studies set forth by Kaplan (1994) and have made explicit the role of transnationalism and American Empire in the creation of Filipino/a America.

Fujita-Rony (2002), in *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*, makes an important contribution to the understanding of the continuous reverberations of the role of American Empire within the context of the United States, specifically in shaping Seattle as a place, and subsequently influencing the evolution of "community" within Filipino America. Fujita-Rony (2002) argues that the role of colonialism in the development of the American West resulted in a fluid transpacific culture and economy, and colonialism and imperialism shaped how Filipino/as occupied a space in Seattle and the American West.

Other Filipino American scholars have illuminated more consequences of American Empire in the formation of Filipino America. In her study of the role of American Empire in the migration of nurses to the United States, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*, Choy (2003) argues that the culture of U.S. imperialism must be understood in terms of persistent racialized social hierarchies, and that this imperialism informs the reception

of Filipino nurses in the U.S.<sup>13</sup> Choy makes a distinct case for the ways that Filipino nurse migration needs to be understood as a transnational process. Choy argues that U.S. colonization set the preconditions for migration from the Philippines in the specific example of nurses, but also in a general sense. “The culture of U.S. imperialism- specifically, its racialized social hierarchies- does not end with Philippine independence from the United States in 1946, but persists even in more recent times and continues to inform and shape the reception, and incorporation of Filipino nurses in the United States” (Choy 2003). I extend this understanding of Filipino social hierarchies to the dissertation to understand the role of transnationalism in social movements, the development of civil society in the United States, and particularly community development. Specifically, the role of transnationalism is illuminated in Chapter Three of this dissertation where I argue that when activists tried to reform the FCS in the 1970s social hierarchies that came from the Philippines were reproduced amongst Filipinos in the United States in organizations and between individuals in a transnational process. To shed further light on Filipino American community formation and social hierarchies I draw upon the work of Espiritu (2005) and Maram (2008) who have shown that class differences within the Filipino American community are not a new phenomenon.

Espiritu (2005), in *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*, makes an intervention in Filipino American studies by highlighting the class differences that have always persisted amongst Filipinos in the United States. Past studies of Filipino America made it seem as though early Filipino immigrants were all working class laborers. Espiritu shows that Filipino American intellectuals spanned the class spectrum and distinctly shows that there were upper class early Filipino migrants, specifically those who came as *Pensionados*, Philippine government sponsored students who came to the United States to study and went back to the Philippines to undertake leadership roles in U.S.-colonial institutions. Espiritu argues that the identities of the five intellectuals featured in his book were formed through a transnational process.

Linda Maram’s (2008) book, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles’s Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s*, makes an important contribution to the study of the early Filipino American community by highlighting the relationship between class dimensions, community formation, and counterhegemonic practices. Her study of the popular culture practices of Filipinos in Los Angeles in the 1920s to 1950s underscores the ways in which working class Filipinos sought to contest the norms of dominant society through their cultural practices during leisure time. Important to my study is Maram’s (2008) acknowledgement of the diversity of ways in which Filipinos “forged distinct working-class cultures and viable communities despite constant attempts by the dominant culture’s agencies- including bosses, middle-class reformers, and the police- to regulate the behavior of the poor and working class in and out of the workplace” (10). Maram calls into question previous accounts of the formation of Filipino American communities, which underscored a lack of a development of a community due to the transient nature of early Filipino migrants who followed work between agriculture, canneries in Alaska, and service sector positions in cities.

Fujita-Rony (2002), Choy (2003), and Espiritu (2005) point to the transnational aspect of the Filipino American experience and the continual role of colonialism and imperialism in the formation of Filipino American communities and lives. Maram (2008) while not explicitly a

---

<sup>13</sup> Choy (2003) argues that the origins of Filipino nurse migration lie in 20<sup>th</sup> century US colonialism in the Philippines and the desire of nurses to migrate can not be reduced to economics because it is reflective of both an individual and collective desire for social, economic, and cultural success that they felt was unobtainable outside of the U.S.



transnational study shows a deeper understanding of the effects of coloniality on everyday life. I build upon this work to highlight the specific dynamics that I argue are the results of social hierarchies brought from the Philippines and specifically differences based in class, time of immigration, and generation and how these differences shape ideology and strategy and the consequences for Filipino American community building and social movements generally. In this dissertation I show that the strategies that these organizations and individuals use to organize are manifestations of differences based in time of immigration, generation, and class.

### Analytic Framework: Sociological field of Social Movements

The Sociological field of Social Movements provides a framework from which to engage in the questions posed in this dissertation. In Chapter Two I draw upon the Social Movements literature, specifically the political process model (McAdam 1998) and the focus on the emergence of social movements through political opportunities, indigenous organizations, and framing. I also draw upon Snow (2004) who focuses on the role of framing. These theories have informed my understanding of the emergence of activism in Seattle on behalf of the Filipino American community and how the emergence of the movement in Seattle, as well as the specific ideas, shaped the strategies used. In Chapter Two I show the institutional forms that this organizing took on and the strategies that were used in the first phase of activism and their relationship to ideology. I argue that this organizing began with a set of grievances regarding the lives of Filipino Americans in Seattle and activists were pushed into action by an ideological and strategic framework inspired by the Asian American and Civil Rights Movements.

I draw largely upon Ganz's (2000) work on strategy and specifically his definition of strategic capacity. Ganz argues that strategic capacity does not guarantee success, but does make success more probable. He argues that the greater strategic capacity that organizations have, the more informed, creative, and responsive their strategic choices can be in order to capitalize upon opportunities for action. Ganz (2000) argues that an organization's strategic capacity "is a function of who its leaders are- their identities, networks, and tactical experience- and how they structure their interactions with each other and their environment with respect to resource flows, accountability, and deliberation" (8).

This dissertation concludes with a discussion of outcomes. Much analysis of social movements focuses upon a success/failure dichotomy. Andrews (2004) concept of outcomes helps to illuminate the answers to the questions posed in this dissertation as to how this case study informs our understanding of the use of civil society in larger social movements. Andrews (2004) argues "the concept of "outcomes" or equivalent terms such as "consequences" or "impact" provides greater flexibility because scholars can assess the influence of the movement in many different domains of activity and examine intended or unintended impacts of the movement" (17). Andrews (2004) argues that the emphasis of investigations on social movements, specifically the Civil Rights Movement, has focused upon the emergence and origins of the movement and yet little is known about the role of movements in transforming institutions and social relations. Andrews's study of the civil rights movement in Mississippi shows the importance of focusing upon the impact of social movements, both long term and short term. The concept of outcomes is useful for looking at the Asian American Movement because it helps to illuminate what has happened as a result of the strategies of organizing that Asian Americans have used without getting stuck in a success or failure dichotomy. Investigating outcomes also provides the ability to illuminate both intended and unintended impacts.

In the remainder of this introduction I provide background information about the formation of the Filipino American community in Seattle, especially the organizations that were critical to that formation and which are the organizations that activists chose to transform: The Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. and the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union. As a site for the research of strategies and tactics for organizing, analysis of the Filipino American community in Seattle shows how the history of a place and the individuals within it shape the strategies used for organizing. I will close with a discussion of the methods used for this research.

### **The Formation of the Filipino Community of Seattle**

In the early days, way back in the years of 1925, it is really hard for our people. Minority groups to associate with the white people or some social activities, we were limited on that kind of activities in the early days, way back in the years of 1925. Take for instance, some hotels, and restaurants, something like that, we are not as free as we are comparing of today. It was really hard for us...Filipinos<sup>14</sup>.

Carlito delos Santos, quoted above, was one of many Filipino immigrants who arrived in Seattle, Washington to find that exclusionary practices would impact their everyday life experiences. These exclusionary practices restricted their every move: at home, at work, and even where and with whom Filipinos were allowed to socialize.

Filipino migration to the United States started as early as 1907 when the first 150 worker-immigrants were recruited by the Hawaii Sugar Planters Association to work in the sugar plantations in Hawaii (Chan 1991; San Juan Jr. 1995). After 1920, Filipinos were recruited to work on the mainland of the United States (McWilliams 1945) in agriculture and the Alaska salmon canneries. Both of these recruitment efforts occurred after the establishment of U.S. immigration restrictions against Chinese and Japanese laborers who originally provided the labor for these industries. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act suspended immigration for 10 years and was extended by another 10 years by the Geary Act. Japanese laborers eventually became eliminated from the Alaska salmon canneries by three elements: the passage of the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 and Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924; major work shut downs during the Great Depression; and the internment of the Japanese in 1942. Cheap domestic labor within the American continent came to an end with the abolition of slavery, the marginalization of Mexicans in the Southwest when the Box Bill and Harris Bill threatened to restrict Mexican field laborers in California in the 1920s, and Native American cultural destruction. As industrial agriculture expansion increased in the West, specifically in California, Alaska, and Hawaii, a new labor force was needed.

The majority of Filipino immigrants after 1920 went directly to California from the Philippines (McWilliams, 1945). Attracted to the agricultural opportunities available in California's Central Valley, Filipinos streamed into California at the rate of more than 4,100 a year from 1923-1929 (Espiritu 2003). Labor contractors who went to the Philippines in search of

---

<sup>14</sup> Carlito delos Santos Interview. (August 25, 1975). Accession No. FIL-KNG-27ck Tape No. A at the Filipino American National Historical Society Archives. Hereafter referred to as FANHS.

cheap labor either recruited these *manongs*<sup>15</sup> or they traveled independently to the United States to seek out economic opportunity. Many became migratory workers who traveled between Washington, Oregon, California, and Alaska. Seattle was an attractive destination for the Filipino immigrant community as a stop on the migratory route between seasonal work in the Alaska salmon canneries and the agricultural fields of Eastern Washington, Oregon, and California, and for (perceived) educational opportunities. By 1930, 46% of the 3,480 Filipinos in Washington State resided in the city of Seattle (Mejia-Giudici 1998). When labor contractors escorted newly-arrived Filipinos to hotels in the International District<sup>16</sup> of Seattle, a labor-for-debt system resulted in many Filipinos being shipped up to Alaska to work off their debt (Bulosan 1996).

It is because of its unique geographic role, that Seattle offers a distinct contextual opportunity for understanding the development of community and Filipino American organizing. Fujita-Rony's (2003) *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* and Friday's (1994) *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Canned Salmon Industry, 1870-1942* are two important monographs that illustrate this importance. Fujita-Rony's (2003) analysis of Seattle as a *colonial metropole* shows the importance of Seattle's evolution as a community shaped by transpacific encounters between Asia and the United States, and specifically the "powerful reach of colonialism in Philippine-American relations" (19). Fujita-Rony built upon Friday's (1994) original contribution that showed the importance of Seattle in regards to the flow of laborers and its role in the salmon canning industry. Seattle became the center through which laborers heading to the Alaska salmon canneries had to travel because originally labor contractors and later the Cannery Workers Union had their offices located in the city (Friday 1994).

Friday (1994) focuses on the role of Asian Americans in the salmon canning industry. His work specifically shows how Seattle as a site presented specific opportunities as a gateway to work in the agricultural fields of Eastern Washington and the Alaska salmon canneries. Filipino laborers heading to the Alaska salmon canneries had to travel through Seattle where the offices of the labor contractors were originally located and the Cannery Workers Union offices were opened (Friday 1994). Friday (1994) also discusses the attraction Filipinos had to Seattle because of perceived educational opportunities. "Many Filipinos, influenced by American teachers in the islands, migrated as laborers but had higher education in mind as the ultimate purpose of their relocation. For migrants with educational aspirations, earning money in seasonal or domestic work was a means to attend American schools" (Friday 1994, 126). Filipinos like A.B. Santos were told that there were opportunities in the U.S. and that hard work would bring them success.

I did not know much about the United States, but I had heard from the Americans and the other Filipinos that there were many opportunities there. I had an American teacher who used to tell our class that in the United States, as long as you are willing to work and you are not weak, you can survive well. So I was impressed with this. It was this kind of information that gave me all the courage. (Espiritu 2003, 7)

---

<sup>15</sup> Manong is a Filipino term of respect for an older male, often the first male in a family. This term has been used for the first generation of Filipino immigrants, particularly those who worked as laborers in agriculture or the Alaska salmon canneries. This term is often translated as "uncle".

<sup>16</sup> The International District in Seattle is the neighborhood in Seattle where Asian Americans originally settled. It is composed of what was once a vibrant Manila Town, China Town, and Japan Town. It is still the hub of the Asian American community in Seattle. The businesses in the International District are now predominately Japanese and Chinese.

Unfortunately, many of those who came as students or with aspirations of higher education, never got the opportunity to go to school, and even those who went to school were not guaranteed employment after graduation. An example of this is the story of Narciso Della. Della went to school, lived in Seattle, and is an example of someone who was educated but unable to acquire a job related to his degree. His son David Della narrated this story in an interview.

You know my dad came over here to the United States in the 1920s. He came over as a *pensionado*.<sup>17</sup> ...These were people that were...born and raised in the Philippines but came here to get their education so they could take it back to the Philippines. So my dad came over on scholarship he went to he attended what they used to be Broadway highschool here and then went to the University of Washington and got a degree in accounting, And because of his accent and race never was able to ever get a job in accounting and instead worked in the fish canneries for over forty years.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately this is one of many stories in which Filipinos who were actually able to surmount obstacles and obtain an advanced degree were never able to work outside of the service sector because of exclusionary practices.

Exclusionary policies and practices were a part of everyday life for Filipinos in Seattle and anywhere that Filipinos lived in the United States. Many of these practices included violence:

Between 1918 and 1930, anti-Filipino violence rose dramatically throughout the West Coast, much of it occurring in Washington State. The economic pressures of the Great Depression increased animosity toward Filipinos. Harassment and beatings became more commonplace. On November 8, 1927, an irate mob of 300 whites in the Yakima Valley demanded that Filipinos leave the Valley by November 10...Filipino residents were terrorized and beaten. Houses were vandalized.<sup>19</sup>

Segregation was an additional element of the exclusion that Filipinos faced, as exclusionary laws dictated where Filipinos worked and what they did, where they lived, and what stores and restaurants they could go to. The shared experience of discrimination, racism, and isolation brought individuals together to form a community. The first forms of Filipino American community both in Seattle and in the United States began in the 1920s and 1930s and can best be understood as a set of informal relationships developed through common spaces such as school, work in canneries and agricultural fields, restaurants, gambling houses, and hotels. Filipinos congregated and established relationships with one another in almost every town on the West Coast of the United States, These areas called Manila Towns were usually located within or adjacent to China Town. Within these Manila Towns were businesses such as single occupancy hotels, gambling houses, dance halls, and prostitution houses that served predominately Filipinos.

---

<sup>17</sup> There were two classifications of students: those sponsored by the Pensionado program or individuals whose families paid their passage to the U.S. The U.S. Pensionado Act of 1903 was a program setup by U.S. and Philippine governments to sponsor students from upper class Filipino families to come to the United States to study. The intention of the program was for the students to return to the Philippines to help run the country.

<sup>18</sup> Della, D. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>19</sup> The Anti-Filipino Movement. [n.d.] Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. Filipino American National Historical Society. (Hereafter referred to as FANHS.)

Despite the isolation that the early wave of Filipinos experienced, however, they built two organizations, the Alaska Cannery Workers' Union International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 37 and the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. (FCS). I argue that these organizations served a need for both an imagined and real place of their own; a space for their "community" and inclusion for Filipinos. In the late 1920s and 1930s Filipinos across the United States first organized formal organizations such as regional, civic, religious, and fraternal groups many of which continue to exist today. The formation of the union and FCS were part of this broader trend and yet also distinct since they were formed in direct response to discriminatory practices. The FCS and the union were formed to provide a space for their members to deal with the isolation and exclusion that Filipinos experienced socially and economically, at work in the canneries and agricultural fields.

The Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. (FCS) was founded in 1925 by Filipino University of Washington students as the University of Washington Filipino Club. It was created to serve as an organization for Filipinos to gather free from the exclusionary policies and practices they experienced in daily life. Created as a space to bring people together socially, members of the FCS have always had great pride in the form of community that they created. The focus of the FCS has always been socializing and fundraising for their building, the Filipino Community Center (FCC). However, the original goals of the club were twofold. The first goal was to encourage support for issues important to Filipinos in the Philippines and in the U.S. And second, to have interracial meetings because so many spaces at that time were not interracial and they wanted to foster inclusion and partnerships with women were with Caucasians because there were very few Filipinas in the U.S. One of the students had a dream about the idea for a physical space for the organization and the leadership body took up the charge. The lack of facilities amenable to interracial mixing led to a drive to own and operate their own space. Therefore acquiring a physical space to house their organization became the focal point of the organization. At that time Filipinos fell under the purview of the 1921 Anti-Alien Land Law in Washington State, which stated that any "aliens" who were ineligible for citizenship by naturalization could not own land.<sup>20</sup> The FCS challenged this law by attempting to purchase land collectively rather than as individuals. In 1939 FCS President Pio DeCano purchased a piece of land for the FCS, however this purchase was immediately contested by the state of Washington as a violation of the Anti-Alien Land Act. In 1940 DeCano and the FCS sued the state of Washington and won both the first trial and appeal through the argument that Filipinos did not fit the "alien" category because they were U.S. nationals (Bacho 1986a). This was a landmark case.

The FCS had a twofold purpose: to organize social events and to raise funds for their community center. Social events such as banquets, queen contests, bingo nights, and dances fulfilled both of these objectives. As David Della, a Filipino American activist who was born and raised in Seattle, described it:

They had lots of dances and dinners and queen contests. Queen contests were another form of fundraising where if you wanted to be a queen what you did was you raised money amongst your friends and those who raised the most money became queen ... whoever raised the most money became queen...The Filipino community... became a social club and they built a whole organization around...socializing and the culture of Filipinos here in Seattle.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Della, D. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

The Queen contests raised money for the organization, but were also popularity contests. Elections for the Filipino Community Council also became popularity contests, driven by a Filipino term, *utang na loob*, which translates as “debt of gratitude”. *Utang na loob* is reciprocity that can not be repaid by money or goods. It is a concept of debt that has a deeper meaning. Rafael (1993) argues this Tagalog term that under Spanish colonial rule became attached to Christianity, in terms of a debt to god, as Spanish missionaries used it as a way of translating the work of Christ. This reflects the depth of which *utang na loob* has been ingrained into Filipino society. As this was invoked with the FCS, the elections were often awarded to influential person to whom others felt they owed a ‘debt’. From the inception of the organization the major goal of the fundraising was to raise funds to build a clubhouse and community center. This goal was achieved in 1965 when the Filipino Community Center (FCC) opened its doors for the first time. However, opening the FCC was just the beginning of the focus of fundraising for a physical location. From that point forward the FCS has continued to raise funds to renovate and remodel the FCC.

1965 was a major turning point in the broader Filipino American community in Seattle because of two major changes: the establishment of the Filipino community into a physical location when the FCS purchased the FCC and the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, otherwise known as the Hart-Cellar Act. The 1965 Immigration Act established a more equitable ceilings system of immigration and a preference system for immigrant visas. Prior to 1940 Filipinos could come to the United States with Philippine national status. The 1940 Nationality Act made it possible for Filipinos to become U.S. citizens; however, this was restricted due to the 1924 Immigration Act that put the National Origins Quota System in place. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, The McCarran-Walter Act, did not repeal the national origins system put into place by the Tydings-McDuffie Act, however it gave preference to those with special skills and put greater screening procedures into place. The 1965 Immigration Act changed all of this by creating a system that favored specific professional occupations and family reunification. Filipino immigrants utilized the occupational visas widely, with many Filipinos immigrating as health professionals.

The purchase of the FCC and the influx of Filipinos into the U.S. caused a change in demographics and institutions and consequently changed what was conceived of as “The Filipino Community in Seattle”. Community became synonymous with the FCS, first because the Filipino American community in Seattle became institutionalized through the formation of the FCS. And second through the formation of the physical location, the Filipino Community Center in 1965. The second change in definition was because of the shift in the composition of the Filipino community in Seattle due to the change in immigration policies. The actual numbers of Filipinos in the United States increased, the majority of new immigrants were middle class professionals. These changing demographics altered the composition of the Filipino community in Seattle.

As a result of these changes, the agenda of the FCS no longer reflected the needs of the Filipino American community in Seattle as a whole. The FCS remained focused on socializing, which met the needs of many of the newest immigrants who were in search of social outlets. This happened despite the fact that the newer immigrants and old-timers of the community had additional needs. Some of the newer immigrants had needs related to their experiences with job discrimination, problems adjusting to American life, and trauma from having fled martial law in the Philippines. The old-timers had needs related to housing and their work in the canneries.

However, the FCS stayed focused on socializing, which reflects differences of family immigration history and class. These differences generated debates over the purpose of the FCS and FCC. Though differences between Filipinos in Seattle were evident from the beginning, the conflict did not become apparent until the organization shifted and tensions became heightened by the mass influx of Filipino immigrants after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act and the political conditions of the 1970s.

### **The Formation of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union**

In 1933 seven Filipino cannery workers<sup>22</sup> (Koslosky and Laranang 1976) formed the Alaska Cannery Workers' Union, International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 37 as a way to deal with the exploitative hiring practices and working and living conditions that Filipinos experienced in the Alaska salmon canning industry. By 1928 Filipinos were the largest racial minority labor supply in the Alaska salmon industry (Friday 1994). Filipino workers moved up and down the West Coast of the United States between the two predominate sources of employment available to them: working in agriculture and in the Alaska salmon canneries. When the agricultural fieldwork in California, Oregon, and Washington came to an end in the spring many Filipino workers migrated North to Alaska to find the only other unskilled job available to them.

Prior to the formation of the Cannery Worker's Union, work in the canneries was dictated by the contract labor system.<sup>23</sup> Exploitation arose from the initial contact between the workers and labor contractors. To assure themselves a job in the canneries, Filipinos who arrived for the first time in Alaska had to buy as much as possible in the contractor's stores. Contractors received a profit from what they deemed to be "necessary supplies" and "special expenses", as well as hiring fees, gambling, and what was left from employer paid contracts. The hiring system was just the beginning of the exploitation that cannery workers faced through the contract labor system. On board the boats, workers were crammed into segregated, close, and unsanitary quarters. When they arrived at the canneries in Alaska, the gambling and the selling of "necessary supplies" continued.

The work itself was hard and exhausting. "Workers were forced to work up to six months, for no less than 12 hours a day. There were no days off. Workers were paid 10 to 15 cents an hour more for overtime" (Viernes 1977). Filipinos were only able to work in the fish houses, which included all of the preparation work of the fish before the canning line- the gutting and cleaning of the fish. This work was wet and smelly. Before employers mechanized the fishing lines, gutting and cleaning had to be done by hand. There was no room for advancement, except for a select few who became labor contractors or cooks in the Filipino mess hall. The contractors worked to maintain these bad conditions for their own benefit and tried to prevent workers from forming a union because it would eliminate the role of the contractors. Housing was segregated with Filipinos and other non-whites in their own unfurnished bunkhouses, which

---

<sup>22</sup> Fujita-Rony (2003) shows that this organizing was not solely done by these men, but by the hard work of at least two of their wives as well, Virgil Duyungan's wife and C.B. Mislant's wife.

<sup>23</sup> Similar exploitative systems were setup in the agricultural fields in California and in the plantations in Hawaii.

were so poorly built that one could see outside through the walls. They made their own beds of moss or grass from the mountain hills. The mess halls, where workers ate, were segregated by race and vastly varying degrees of food quality. The Filipino mess hall served terrible food with little nutritional value, mostly boiled rice, dried seaweed, dried cabbage and fish head soup. This diet was imposed based on its minimum cost to employers. The contractors enticed workers to purchase food from them by exhibiting the canned goods and fruits that they sold in their stores on the tables of the workers' dining halls.

Formed on June 19, 1933 in opposition to the contract labor system, the Alaska Cannery Workers Union was officially recognized by the U.S. government as the legal representative of cannery workers in March of 1935.<sup>24</sup> By 1937 the contract labor system was over and the union had secured bargaining rights and wage increases for the Alaska salmon cannery workers. The eight years that followed this were the strongest years for the union. With more than 3,000 members by 1939, the union won important rights for the workers including a "season guarantee" (guaranteed minimum of two months of work), a normal eight-hour day, a closed union shop enforcing union membership for all workers, and wage increases (Stamets 1982). However, corruption within the union quickly rose during World War II when many of the experienced workforce went to help the war effort. A reputed gangster from Chicago, Max Gonzales, slowly gained influence in the union hall. In 1946, with the support of and lower officers of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*<sup>25</sup>, Gonzales won the vice presidency when Prudencio Mori was elected as the president.

As the vice president, Gonzales demanded that his friends in the *Caballeros de Dimas Alang* should receive all of the foremen's jobs, however Mori refused. The *Dimas Alang* was a powerful force in the canneries, having started their rise to power back in the days of the contract labor system. They made their first attempt to take over the union through Gonzales. A power struggle began within the union, however a third force weighed in after the war through a Rank-and-File movement among the workers (Stamets 1982). The first Rank-and-File Movement of cannery workers quickly started as they returned from the war and found that the state of their union and the working conditions in the canneries had deteriorated.

A key leader of the Rank and File Committee was Chris Mensalvas, who migrated to the U.S. in 1927 seeking education and work (Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office n.d.). Prior to World War II Mensalvas migrated to and from California to work in agriculture and up to Alaska to work in the canneries. According to Stamets (1982) Mensalvas started the Rank and File committee in 1946 returning from the war on board a steamer called the *Santa Cruz*. Upon return the workers went to the union to demand better working conditions in the canneries. Mensalvas became the president of the union in 1949, just as anti-communism and anti-unionism movements were sweeping across the country. Mensalvas made great strides in the union, he "organized cannery and agricultural workers in California in areas such as, San Pedro, Monterey, San Francisco, and the Salinas Valley. It was through his prolific traveling and labor organizing activities that Chris [Mensalvas] met Carlos Bulosan as well as becoming an inspirational figure

---

<sup>24</sup> Brief History of Local 7 FTA CIO. [n.d.], Box 26 folder 16, Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union Local 7 at the University of Washington Special Collections. Hereafter referred to as CWFLU-UW. Originally founded under the American Federation of Labor (AFL) as the Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union (CWFLU) Local 18257 (Ellison, 2005).<sup>24</sup> CWFLU went through many twists and turns until 1948 when the cannery workers union became Local 37 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). The union was originally formed to represent both cannery and agricultural workers, but the cannery workers broke off from the agricultural workers when they affiliated with the ILWU.

<sup>25</sup> The Caballeros de Dimas Alang is a Filipino fraternal lodge, which many first generation Filipino immigrants were members of.



for Filipino farmworker, Philip Vera Cruz” (Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office. n.d.). However, Mensalvas’ administration was challenged by the weakened state of the union as a result of the Gonzales-Mori administration and the era of Cold War harassment of the 1950s. This was a difficult time period for the union.

1952 is characterized in the union’s archives as “the most crucial year in the history of our union” and a “year of great decision”.<sup>26</sup> In my analysis I found that labor and immigration laws heavily impacted the Cannery Worker’s Union by putting the organization on the defensive, rather than on the offensive. Unlike many other unions, the union was strongly impacted by immigration laws because of the immigration status of its members who were mostly Filipino. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, otherwise known as the McCarran-Walter Act, particularly had a large impact on the union. I argue that this Act put the union on the defensive and opened up the union to corruption. Specifically, the Act allowed “the Department of Justice to deport immigrants or naturalized citizens engaging in subversive activities”.<sup>27</sup> According to the union, this law was used as a way to screen their members and they were under attack by two connected external forces working together: the U.S. government specifically in the form of the Immigration Department and the Alaskan Salmon Canning Industry. The Immigration Department threatened to deport two of their major officers and nine militant members of their union. Leaders of the union thought that the move to deport their most militant officers and members was planned and calculated to intimidate their progressive policies, and to isolate the leadership of their union from the rank and file.<sup>28</sup> Many argued that this targeting was a deeper issue, part of the Cold War targeting of “communists”.

Fights such as these had two consequences: it took great resources from within the union to fight these attacks and it also caused deep divisions between those who wanted to fight back and those who did not, which was mostly reflective of those who were pro- and anti-communist.<sup>29</sup> The union’s attorneys “C.T. Hatten and John Caughlan successfully fought the deportation in a landmark case that established the “non-deportability” of Filipinos, at least those who had immigrated before 1934 when the Philippines was still a possession of the United States” (Stamets 1982, 21). De Vera (1994, 16) argues

The Immigration Service’s deportation campaign had an impact greater than the union’s legal victories alone would indicate. Its use of intimidating letters, phone calls, and visits to pressure members into naming union leaders as communists; arrests, immigration hearings in which officials could act with impunity; and the screening program took their toll. The union’s base of support eroded under such pressures, and splits formed within the union’s ranks over the future direction of the local, and specifically, whether to challenge the deportation orders and to continue with its “political” cause of repealing the Walter-McCarran Act. The legal costs incurred as a result of the deportation campaign also led to severe financial losses....fees for the deportees caused such a drain on resources that union officials postponed, then abandoned, a plan to recruit California agricultural workers and expand Local 7’s base. Ironically, after its legal victories, union leaders returned to the basics of survival: recruiting members and paying off debts.

<sup>26</sup> An Open Letter to Local 37, ILWU Members. [1952], Box 26 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>27</sup> Dictionary.com, 2009, McCarran Walter Act

<sup>28</sup> An Open Letter to Local 37, ILWU Members. [1952], Box 26 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>29</sup> These same kinds of divisions resurfaced again in the 1970s and 1980s within the union rooted in differences in opinion about the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines and the ways that members felt that the union should be run.

These external factors were internalized within the organization, created divisions among people, and led to corruption in the union.

Mensalvas was president of the union until 1959, when he resigned. It is unclear why he resigned, but throughout his ten years of leadership there were numerous individuals who challenged his authority. For example, in 1953 Trinidad Rojo ran a campaign claiming that Mensalvas' union membership was not in good standing because his administration loaned money to Carlos Bulosan that had not been repaid. Both the loan and lack of repayment were the issues under scrutiny. Rojo used the issue to claim that Mensalvas was "unbusiness-like", "illegal", and "lacks right principles".<sup>30</sup> In 1954 additional members created an expanded laundry list of "illegal expenditures" justified by the Mensalvas administration and called for a fact-finding committee to investigate the transactions.<sup>31</sup> A fact-finding committee was formed and found Ernesto Mangoang, the union's Business Agent, guilty of violations against the membership of the union.<sup>32</sup> My deduction from the union's archive is that the attention was taken off of Mensalvas and refocused on Mangoang who was defeated in the subsequent election. I also come to the conclusion that Mensalvas resigned due to health reasons. In a letter written in 1959 Mensalvas wrote, "Now, for reasons of health, and upon the advice of my doctor, I will need at least a year away from a rigorous schedule to regain my health".<sup>33</sup> After Mensalvas' resignation he continued to be a trustee of the union until 1969.

Gene Navarro, who had been the union dispatcher since 1947, became the president of the union after Mensalvas. Corruption took hold of the union again under Navarro's administration.

Until his death in 1975, Navarro administered Local 37 through an 'old-boy' coziness with the companies and tolerance of petty corruption at the union hall. Cannery wages did not keep pace with the gains made by other segments of organized labor, and in the union bribing the dispatcher or a foreman came to be expected from first-time workers or others with low seniority. Influence in the union was based on a tradition of 'compadre' loyalties among friends and families. (Stamets 1982, 21)

From the 1950s onward, the union lost a large percentage of its membership, failed to take action against discriminatory acts, and there were virtually no gains of any kind in the union contracts, and the union failed to take action against discriminatory acts.<sup>34</sup> The union was 5000 members strong in the 1950s but by the mid-1970s there were only 1000 members and very low participation rates.<sup>35</sup> The leadership became unresponsive to the everyday needs of the members as a consequence of the lack of participation in the union, red-baiting of the members who were labeled as communist or radical, and corruption. Filipino and other non-white cannery workers were increasingly subjected to discriminatory working conditions including poor housing conditions, excessively long work hours, speed-ups, terminations, and poor food.<sup>36</sup> As described in the *Alaskero News*, "Discrimination was clearly evident in the treatment of the cannery

<sup>30</sup> President Mensalvas' Eligibility Under Serious Question. [August 1953], Box 27 folder 15, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>31</sup> Dear Sirs and Brothers. [March 1954], Box 26 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>32</sup> Resolution Condemning The Business Agent's Move To Disrupt The Union. [1954]. Box 26 folder 26. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>33</sup> Mabuhay! And Aloha! [1959?]. Box 26 folder 26. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>34</sup> *Alaskero News*. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>35</sup> 1978 Rank and File Election Slate. [1978]. Box 33 folder 28. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>36</sup> *Alaskero News*. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.

workers. Whether it be in housing or job placement, or food supplies, cannery workers were on the bottom of the ladder.”<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately the union leadership condoned these conditions: Gene Navarro, president of the Union from 1960-1977 and Tony Baruso, the vice-president, who took over Navarro’s position upon his death. Their leadership was characterized by a corrupt dispatch system based on bribery, gambling in the canneries, a lack of accountability to the membership, and maintaining the status quo. This created an atmosphere in which many workers did not see the need for the union.

By the late 1960s there were a number of problems simultaneously occurring within the FCS and Cannery Worker’s Union. However, those problems alone did not catapult changes within the organizations. The question of why and how activists took up the cause of changing these organizations is what this dissertation focuses on.

## Methodology

In order to understand the history of Filipino American activism in Seattle, I used three methodological approaches to collect data: archival research, direct interviews, and observational ethnographic research. Each methodological approach informed the others. First, I conducted archival research at the University of Washington Special Collections Library where I used four collections: the Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union Local 7, the John Caughlan Papers, the Tyree Scott Papers, and the Victor Velasco Papers. The Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union Local 7 provided information about the Cannery Worker’s Union from its formation through the early 1980s, particularly the relationship of the union with the FCS and broader Filipino community and the Rank-and-File Movement. The John Caughlan Papers contained details about the *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* (KDP)<sup>38</sup> and its relationship to the broader Filipino community, the reform movements in the union, and FCS. The Tyree Scott Papers offered information about the ACWA generally as well as its relationship to the UCWA and LELO. The Victor Velasco Papers provided insight into the early Filipino American community in Seattle. I also used several archival and oral history collections from the Filipino American National Historical Society about the FCS, union, and reform efforts. I gathered documents that illuminated answers to the research questions and specifically highlighted the history of the Filipino American community in Seattle, the FCS, the union, activism in Seattle in the 1970s and the activists involved, the ACWA, and the reform movements in the FCS and union. There is not a specific archive for the FCS, so I drew on papers within the aforementioned collections, within the Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union Local 7 Collection and within the collections at the Filipino American National Historical Society. I also relied heavily on a two-volume historical account of the FCS, published by the FCS, *Pamana* (Rigor and Rigor 1986) and *Pamana Two* (Rigor and Quijance 2000). These books provided critical insight into the history of the FCS because the organization has not kept detailed records. Within these books I found documentation of all of the past officers of the organization, biographies of the past-presidents, and information regarding the types of events sponsored by the organization.

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> The KDP was an anti-martial law organized in the United States on July 27, 1973. This organization will be explored in depth in the body of this dissertation.

Second, I conducted interviews and oral histories of participants. I used these interviews to understand their role and understandings of Filipino American activism in Seattle in the 1970s and with the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union. Specifically I sought to understand how they got involved, how organizing emerged, the strategies they used and what inspired the use of those strategies, the outcomes of their activism, their views of themselves as activists, their views of activism in Seattle, and their views of the Filipino community in Seattle (See Appendix A for interview protocol). These interviews were informed by the archival research I conducted. Specifically, I used the information I learned from the archives to shape the interview questions that I asked. I was able to ask questions about information I found in the archives, which aided my understanding of the archival materials. All participants signed release forms, interviews were transcribed verbatim, and participants had the opportunity to review and give input on their interview transcripts. 17 interviews were conducted in the preliminary research project in 2004-2005 and 8 new interviews in 2007 and 2009, including a group interview with six activists who were involved in the reform movement in the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union (see Appendix B for participant descriptions). I also drew upon phone conversations and emails with activists.

Third, I used ethnographical participant observation methods.<sup>39</sup> I observed individuals in their day-to-day work and interactions within the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union multiple times. Living in Seattle while I collected and analyzed data and wrote the dissertation further enhanced the depth of my research. I was able to leverage my history of engagement in the Filipino American community and activist circles within the city by informally observing individuals in their homes and in other activities, both activism and leisure. I focused on observational opportunities that shed light on ways that individuals and organizations work towards organizing and building economic, political, and social power for Filipino Americans in Seattle. I paid particular attention to interactions between individuals and organizations that illuminated the strategies used for organizing in the 1970s and the outcomes, the history of the Filipino American community in Seattle, and divisions and alliances within the community and outside of the Filipino community in coalitions with individuals and organizations.

I also planned to choose an issue that arose from the research to follow and focus on that revealed strategies for organizing on issues of importance to the Filipino American community in Seattle. I collected some ethnographic data on the 2008 presidential and Washington state elections, however this data pulled the project in a more contemporary direction. This data informs my analysis of the legacy of the organizing that occurred in the 1970s. In May of 2006 I also observed and collected written documents at the International Longshore Warehousemen's Union Convention in Vancouver Canada, which gave me an understanding of how their conventions operate. This observation informed my discussion in Chapter Four of the resolution passed at the 1981 convention. In July 2006 I went to Alaska and stayed at an operational Alaska salmon cannery in Dillingham. There I observed the operations of the cannery including workers daily activities: running the salmon canning line, at their coffee breaks called "mug-ups", meals, and on the docks. I went to the former Wards Cove Cannery in Kenai, which has now been

---

<sup>39</sup> When I originally conceived of this project I planned on conducting intensive participant observation to observe individuals within the FCS and Alaska Cannery Worker's Union as a way to understand the relationship of the individuals to the larger work of the organizations, however as I started the archival portion of the project, I realized that doing both an in depth historical and contemporary project was going to be too much for a dissertation. I chose to focus on the historical part of the project because the initial research that I did in the contemporary FCS showed that in order to understand what was currently happening within the organization I would need to achieve a deeper understanding of the history of the organization and its struggles in a deeper way. However, in order to understand the outcomes of the activism in the 1970s, some ethnographic observation was still a useful tool and these ethnographic observations were informed by the archival research I conducted.

transformed into a shopping mall, as well as Homer, where the Cannery Worker's Union engaged in an intensive campaign to organize cannery workers into the union in the 1980s. These observations informed my understanding of cannery worker life.

### Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Ethnographic data collection took place beginning May 2007-November 2008, with the exception of the observations discussed above in 2006, and the preliminary observations in 2004-2005. Interviews were collected in 2009, with the exception of one interview that took place in 2007 and interviews collected in 2004-2005. Archival research took place January 2007-June 2008. Data analysis was ongoing, but intensive data analysis began June 2008. Data analysis included intensive coding of common themes that illuminated answers to the research questions. I was in contact with my dissertation committee-members via email and phone and I met with individual committee members at least once per year.

### My Role as a Researcher

This research project is rooted in an exploratory research project that I embarked on in my second year of graduate school. The original project focused on differences within the Filipino American community in Seattle and how they resulted in divisions between people. While I realize that every community, whether it is based in shared ethnic or cultural background, religion, geography or political affiliation, has divisions within it, I did not know what the origins of those differences were within the Filipino American community. My family has always been politically active and participated in the Filipino American community in Seattle. However, when I was growing up we did not participate in two main institutions, the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS) or Filipino Youth Activities (FYA).<sup>40</sup> I never fully understood why this was, but had a vague sense that it was because of some unspoken differences between the people who were active in those organizations and my family. I knew that there were different "camps" within the broad Filipino community in Seattle, but I did not know why they existed or what their origins were. I engaged in the initial exploratory project because I realized that understanding those differences would provide important insight into how and why the Filipino American community in Seattle has such divisive boundaries. My initial project revealed that the broader divisions within the Filipino American community in Seattle were based in three differences: generational divides, immigration waves, and social class. The first difference, generational, refers to whether someone was an immigrant, American-born, or first- or second-generation of a Filipino family in the United States. Time of immigration means when someone's family migrated to the United States from the Philippines and of particular importance to the findings of this study, whether someone migrated before or after 1965. The last important difference was social class, specifically differences between working class and middle class. Middle class usually meant that the individual or their family migrated after 1965 and had professional type jobs. Typical working class families worked in the agricultural fields, the Alaska salmon canneries, or as houseboys.<sup>41</sup> Working class also typified a certain kind of lifestyle for pre-1965 immigrants. For instance, individuals probably lived at some point in hotel

---

<sup>40</sup> FYA was an organization that provided services and recreational opportunities to youth in Seattle.

<sup>41</sup> Referred to as house-boys, Filipino men often worked in the houses of upper class white families as cooks, servants, and housecleaners.

rooms in the International District of Seattle. This initial research also showed that these differences were complicated by political orientation, specifically with regard to whether someone was in support of or against the Marcos regime in the Philippines. The findings from this initial study have historical and contemporary significance within and beyond the Filipino community and ultimately illuminated how conflicts within communities are much more complex than they seem and hinder the possibilities of what community organizations and the individuals within them are able to do.

This dissertation project builds upon and extends that preliminary research, through which I identified a specific rupture point within the Filipino American community in Seattle in the early 1970s in which divisions manifested over political questions regarding the mission, goals, and use of both the Filipino Community of Seattle and the Cannery Worker's Union. I realized that the younger generation of activists were doing more than just reforming these organizations and had a broader ideological and political agenda. This observation resonated with reading I had done within the Marxist lineage and specifically the work of Antonio Gramsci. With that insight I formulated questions about these civil society institutions and their use in broader social movements, which are reflected in this dissertation.

I contribute a distinct perspective as an insider into the Filipino American community in Seattle because I was born and raised in Seattle and have deep involvement with the community. Of the 21 participants and four informants to this study, I had pre-existing relationships with all but four. The pre-existing relationships held before I conducted this research provided a comfortable and familiar foundation for our interactions during the course of the research. My family has played a key role in the Filipino American community in Seattle for three generations, beginning with my grandparents who participated in many organizations within the Filipino community in Seattle including the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union. My father, Silme Domingo, and his siblings have also participated in organizations within the Filipino Community in Seattle, beginning with their involvement in ILWU Local 37 when they worked in the Alaskan canneries during college. My father was assassinated in 1981 because of his work in the KDP working against the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. He is known for his work with the KDP, in the reform efforts of the cannery workers union, and his relationships and work with the manongs in the International District<sup>42</sup> in Seattle. My mother, Terri Mast, is also known in the Filipino community because of her work in the rank-and-file reform movement in the cannery workers union, particularly as the president of the union in the mid-1980s. Therefore, even the four participants that I did not know before this project knew my family and knew of me. This knowledge helped me to gain access to these individuals, however it may have also impeded the depth of information revealed in interviews with these individuals. I did not rely purely upon my personal connections while conducting this research; I relied on a wide range of sources including archival documents, observations, and interviews. This approach is similar to Habal (2007), whose book focuses upon the International Hotel struggle and reflects her participation. She writes, "I draw on many resources in addition to my firsthand experience to tell this story" (Habal 2007, 2). However, unlike Habal who tells her story as someone who was intimately involved, I was not present for the events that I describe. For that reason, I treat all individuals in this project as historical subjects, not as individuals with whom I had pre-existing relationships. One way that I dealt with this in my interview protocol was that I asked questions and started

---

<sup>42</sup> The International District in Seattle is the neighborhood in Seattle where the Asian Americans originally settled. It is composed of what once were a vibrant Manila Town, China Town, and Japan Town. It is still the hub of the Asian American community in Seattle. The businesses in the International District are now predominately Japanese and Chinese.

interviews with people in the same way that I would have if we did not have a pre-existing relationship. By doing this I worked around possible assumptions that I could have made.

I feel that that my relationships and experience in the Filipino American community in Seattle strengthen my study because they bring a historical understanding of both the information encountered through my research and the relationships that make up the community that someone who was studying this community and its history from the outside would not have. Meyerhoff, for example, writes that:

Working with one's own ethnic and familial heritage, is perilous, and much more difficult. Yet it has certain validity and value not available in other circumstances. Identifying with the "Other"-Indians, Chicanos, if one is Anglo, blacks if one is white, males if one is female-is an act of imagination, a means for discovering what one is not and will never be. Identifying with what one is now and will be someday is quite a different process. (Meyerhoff 1978, 18)

The process of researching a community with which I identify has been a tremendous challenge and privilege. I feel that my research project has more depth because of my awareness of my own positionality and subjectivity while I conducted and analyzed the data. I frequently gave my findings to academic peers, dissertation committee members, and participants for review to ensure my objectivity and subjectivity. I also included questions in the interview protocol that pushed the participants to explain everything that they told me, even if they thought I would already know what they meant. For example, participants often would say, "you know". I asked them to clarify their point even if I thought I understood what they were referring to. Additionally, as a researcher I think it is important to be aware of the behavioral norms and expectations of the community being studied. My prior knowledge about the Filipino community in Seattle brought an awareness of the ways that those within the community followed and violated norms. With that knowledge, I was careful not to violate those expectations and to therefore act in the most respectful manner possible. For example, I approached the people who I did not know through a formal letter instead of a phone call because I knew that the formality of the letter would be perceived as being more respectful than a phone call.

I am a third-generation Filipino American, born and raised in Seattle. My father was born in the United States; he is second generation because his parents were the first generation to come to the United States. My mother is a Caucasian woman also born and raised in Seattle. My relationship to this study as a third-generation Filipino American Seattle native may have been seen in certain respects as a limitation to the findings in this study. Participants may not have felt that they could tell me all of their feelings and thoughts for fear of my reaction, which may have been because of my personal history in the community. One limitation to this study is that I do not speak a Filipino dialect and could not understand conversations in which Tagalog or another dialect was used. The fact that I am third generation and only half Filipina may have also been a hindrance with Filipinos who are post-1965 immigrants because they may have felt that I did not understand their experience. To surpass this limitation I posed questions in a way that drew out the depth of their experiences and showed them that I was listening and learning from the stories they were sharing. See Appendix A for sample interview protocol. Despite these possible limitations I feel that the strength of my relationships with these participants outweigh the limitations.

Most academic research is in many ways a personal story. We all come to our research for personal reasons and my personal connection to this story was a diving board from which to jump off and a battery to keep me energized and connected to the research project. The work I have done in my life, union organizing, teaching, and academic pursuits have all been inspired by the work of activists before me, particularly the ones I discuss in this dissertation. I hope that the choice of this dissertation topic by someone so intimately connected to the project is not interpreted as a weakness, but rather as a strength in that I was personally inspired both to understand and share with others what is a “monument of the past”. “We must be grateful to the monuments of the past, especially for those who have paved the way for us, but true gratitude is expressed when we transform the monuments of the past into movements of today- movements of transformation and movements that weave together our scattered voices and visions” (Fernandez 2004, 134). I hope that the contributions that I make through this dissertation will inform the movements of today and the future.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

In the following section, Chapter Two I demonstrate that activists were first inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and then the larger Asian American Movement, which gave them a framework for understanding their grievances. This chapter will show that these large cultural movements also inspired specific strategies used for organizing and goals focused on rebuilding community infrastructure and equity in society. Chapter Two also specifically focuses upon the emergence of the Asian American movement and related activism in Seattle and highlights the role of ideology. Chapter Three explores the strategic and ideological division that occurred between activists and with the greater Filipino community after the declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972. Within the FCS, this played out and resulted in red-baiting of radical activists who were subsequently pushed out of the organization. Chapter Four focuses upon the strategy to go back into the Cannery Worker’s Union to reform it and how the tactics used for organizing led to success. Chapter Five addresses the outcomes of these organizing efforts and their application for future organizing within civil society organizations. This chapter argues that the strategic capacity of the union was enhanced and succeeded where the campaign to reform the FCS failed due to two elements: 1) the use of grassroots organizing and coalitions and 2) a narrower campaign focused on goals directly relevant to the union and its constituents rather than a larger political agenda with an ideological bent.



## Chapter Two

### **We Fight For Civil Rights: Historicizing the Emergence of Filipino American Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s**

About half an hour before they marched and took over King County Executive John Spellman's office yesterday, about 150 demonstrators gathered at Hing Hay Park in the International District. The protestors, most of them young Asian-Americans, heard one of their leaders explain why the march was taking place...This was the second time in less than a month that young activists concerned about the King County stadium's impact on the International District would present a list of demands to Spellman...Among the chants were, 'We demand action, save our community!' 'Housing, not football!' 'Fight for low-income housing...right now!' Among the demands were: That the stadium-concession contract be awarded to a non-profit organization to deal with 'adverse effects' of the stadium on the International District. That 40 apprenticeship and 40 journeymen jobs be created for Asian-Americans at the stadium. That 1,000 low-income housing units be built in the International District by June 30, 1976. That a use tax be imposed on stadium events to fund community projects. That a center for senior citizens be established. That elderly residents of the district be admitted free to stadium events.<sup>43</sup>

The march described above by the University of Washington Daily newspaper illustrates activism in Seattle in the 1970s on behalf of Filipino American elderly, youth, and workers. But how did this activism emerge? One could argue that the existence of the grievances held by activists regarding the discrimination and deplorable living conditions that Filipinos were experiencing in their daily lives and at work in the Alaska salmon canneries alone could have stimulated the organizing and activism that occurred amongst Filipino Americans in Seattle in the 1970s. However, the grievances had been prevalent for many years before activists took up the cause. This is a reflection of the resource mobilization and political process approach within the Sociological Social Movements literature, which has shown that grievances alone are not enough to stimulate a social movement. If it was more than grievances alone that led to the emergence of organizing on behalf of Filipino American elderly, youth, and workers in Seattle in the 1970s, what was it? This question, how social movements emerge, is tackled by social movement theorists.

Traditional social movement theorists assumed pluralist notions and argued that: "political power is widely distributed between a host of competing groups rather than concentrated in the hands of any particular segment of society" (McAdam 1998: 5). Early theories such as Le Bon's (1968) crowd theory, Mancur Olsen's (1971) theory of collective behavior, and rational choice theorists such as Gamson (1975) argued that social movements and protest were irrational behavior that was based on individual needs and individual discontent and "social movements arise only when a certain level of psychological strain or discontent is present" (McAdam 1998, 14). The conclusion from these early theories was that social movements and organizing were simply individual acts motivated by grievances or the psychology of individuals drawn to these kinds of ideas (Snow 2004).

---

<sup>43</sup> Spellman's Office Occupied, University of Washington Daily Newspaper [October 10, 1975], Box 37 folder 12, CWFLU-UW.

The resource mobilization and political process literatures turned this “old” traditional social movement literature on its head and refocused the question upon the emergence of social movements. One of the most influential theorists in this vein is Doug McAdam (1998), known for his work on the political process model for understanding social movements. The political process model highlights three factors that contribute to the emergence of social movements and work in conjunction with one another: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). McAdam’s work on the Civil Rights Movement underscores these three important factors that lead to the emergence of social movements. The concept of framing, started as what McAdam called cognitive liberation, has been expanded by Snow and Benford who have redefined this process as framing (Snow et. Al. 1986). I use the concepts of political opportunities and mobilizing structures later in the dissertation, however in this chapter I draw upon the conceptualization of framing to understand the ideological processes that propelled activists into action.

As Snow (2004) argued, the question of ideology or mobilizing ideas was not born out of the social movements literature, but rather has its grounding within a debate in the Marxist lineage about whether mobilizing ideas were always in existence and people only needed to remove a metaphorical blindfold for them to realize their class position versus an ideological framework that needed to be nurtured and taught.

One group argued in a historicist fashion that the mobilizing ideas signaling the development of revolutionary class consciousness would arise spontaneously when the material conditions were right; another group contended that such consciousness and its associated ideas and beliefs had to be stimulated, nurtured, and even molded because the hegemony of capitalist ideology rendered the working class falsely conscious, or at least masked the link between their interests and class situation (Snow 2004, 381).

Within the Sociological Social Movements literature the political process approach (McAdam 1982) and resource mobilization approach (McCarty and Zald 1977), are predicated on an assumption in which grievances are taken as a given.

...grievances are ever present features of everyday life, and therefore are relatively inconsequential in relation to the dynamics of social movements. Grievances, much like weeds were thought to flourish naturally and abundantly, thus making the mobilizing beliefs and ideas some scholars associated with their interpretation relatively insignificant (Snow 2004).

Snow (2004) points out, however, that the resource mobilization and political process literatures are not making an argument that grievances result in action or that grievances result in social movements. This highlights a major question, which is, how do grievances become highlighted and a framework applied that makes individuals understand those grievances in a way that then pushes them into action. This is the role that the framing literature has taken up and is focused on through the case studies in this chapter as I describe the ways in which activism in Seattle emerged, with specific regard to how activists came to understand their grievances and were moved into action.

The activism described in this dissertation could simply be attributed to the larger social movements of the time, namely the Civil Rights Movement and Asian American Movement.

However, I argue that neither this explanation nor the argument regarding grievances stimulating action, alone sufficiently account for the emergence of Filipino American activism in the 1970s in Seattle. However, by taking into account both of these explanations, I argue that the roots of activism in the Filipino American community in Seattle are grounded in both local grievances that stem from a specific history of migration, generation, and class and the larger cultural landscape. Specifically, I argue that activists needed a framework from which to understand their grievances, as well as a strategy to do that organizing. The organizing that occurred was not sporadic and out of nowhere, it was strategic and coordinated. But how did that happen?

Through my research I came to understand that Filipino American activists in the 1970s became educated and politicized in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most of these activists were second-generation Filipino Americans for whom the ideas set out by the Asian American Movement and Civil Rights Movement gave them a new framework from which to understand their experiences and grievances. It was the concern for the people in their community that drove them to do something about the exploitation and discrimination that was going on in the canneries and outside, as well as the inspiration from successes in the Civil Rights Movement that propelled activists into action.

In this dissertation I argue that there were two phases of activism in Seattle in the 1970s. This chapter focuses on the first phase of activism, how it emerged, the institutional forms that this organizing took on, and the strategies that were used. In this chapter I argue that this organizing began with a set of grievances regarding the lives of Filipino Americans in Seattle. Activists were then pushed into action by an ideological and strategic framework inspired by the Asian American and Civil Rights Movements. This chapter starts with an overview of who the activists were, the grievances held by activists, and the origins of those grievances. Second, I show how the grievances converged with an ideological framework that pushed activists into action. I also show the strategies that were used in this first moment of activism. While the Asian American Movement occurred across the country, the emergence and strategies used for organizing varied city-by-city, community-by-community. In the introduction to this dissertation I outlined the divergences within the Asian American Movement, however there were also a set of issues and goals that united the broad Asian American Movement and inspired activists in Seattle. The chapter following this shows the ways in which the revolutionary perspective became a divisive issue amongst activists. In this chapter I focus upon how the Asian American Movement emerged in a local example, how organizing in Seattle on behalf of Filipino Americans emerged and the strategies that were used to organize, the common ground that was shared within the movement, and how the ideas of the Asian American Movement and Civil Rights Movement shaped organizing in Seattle.

### **The Activists**

My analysis of the activists who were involved in organizing and activism on behalf of Filipino Americans in Seattle in the 1970s revealed that they were predominately second-generation Filipino Americans, the children of first generation Filipinos who immigrated to the U.S. before 1965, and had working-class backgrounds as agricultural and cannery workers. There were two groups of Filipino American activists who made up what I refer to as the “reformer” group. While these individuals were all second-generation Filipino Americans, there was an age gap between them. First, there were those who were referred to as the “bridge generation”(Jamero 2006), the children born before 1946 who had at least one Filipino immigrant parent. They

bridged the gap between the elders in the community and the younger second-generation Filipino Americans. The second group was made up of the other second-generation Filipino Americans who were born after 1946, went to college and became politicized in the 1960s and 1970s, and were part of the “hippie” generation. There was an age gap between these groups; the bridge generation activists were older with children of their own.

All of the activists shared a common story of growing up as the children of first-generation Filipino immigrants. As children they grew up in a society that held skepticism for the brown faces of their families and the single *manongs*<sup>44</sup> who worked hard in the agricultural fields of Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, and California and in the Alaska salmon canneries. Many of these second-generation Filipino Americans worked in the Alaskan salmon canneries like their fathers and family friends before them who started working in the Alaska salmon canneries when they got to the United States. Their parents participated in the broad Filipino community characterized by informal relationships, as well as in the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS) where as children the second generation participated in events sponsored by the FCS. Many of these activities were in rented facilities (mostly in the International District) because the Filipino Community Center (FCC) was not purchased until 1965. Although the group of activists changed over time, there were several important activists who were involved from the beginning.

The central activists born after 1946 were Nemesio Domingo Jr., Silme Domingo, and David Della. Nemesio and Silme were brothers, born to Nemesio Domingo Sr. and Adelina (Ade) Garciano Domingo. Nemesio Sr. came to the United States in 1927 to receive an education, however he attended school minimally and worked as a houseboy, in the fields of Washington, and in the salmon canneries to survive. He joined the Navy and was stationed in the Philippines during World War II, which is where he met and married Ade. He brought Ade to the United States as a war bride. After living in Texas and Germany they settled in Seattle.<sup>45</sup> Nemesio Sr. and Ade quickly became involved in the broader Filipino American community through numerous organizations including the Filipino Community of Seattle, the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Union, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*, and the Visayan Circle. The older one of the two brothers, Nemesio Jr. could actually be categorized as being 1.5 generation because he was born in the Philippines in 1947 and came to the United States as a toddler. Silme was born in 1952 in Texas, but spent the majority of his youth and adult life in Seattle. The two brothers starting working in the Alaska canneries as teenagers, which most young Filipino boys did, almost as a rite of passage.

David Della was born and raised in Seattle. He grew up in a working-class household with eight siblings.<sup>46</sup> His father came to the United States from the Philippines “on scholarship, he attended what used to be Broadway High School here [in Seattle] and then went to the University of Washington and got a degree in accounting. And because of his accent and race [was] never able to get a job in accounting and instead worked in the fish canneries for over forty years.”<sup>47</sup> His mother was born in Hawaii to a Filipino family that lived on a sugar cane plantation. Her father was active in union organizing efforts in Hawaii and California, where they were also involved in Filipino community activities. Della’s parents were active in the Filipino community in Seattle. His father was an active member of the Cannery Worker’s Union

---

<sup>44</sup> *Manong* is a Filipino term of respect for an older male, often the first male in a family. This term has been used for the first generation of Filipino immigrants, particularly those who worked as laborers in agriculture or the Alaska salmon canneries. This term is often translated as “uncle”.

<sup>45</sup> Domingo, Adelina. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>46</sup> David Della, email message to author, March 7, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

and bribed the union dispatcher \$50 in 1972 so that Della could go work in the canneries for the first time.<sup>48</sup>

The key bridge-generation activists were Dorothy and Fred Cordova and Bob Santos. Dorothy Laigo Cordova, the daughter of Valeriano Laigo and Bibibian Montante Laigo Castellano<sup>49</sup> was born in Seattle, Washington in 1936 (Barkan 2001). Val Laigo was an artist, but also worked in the service sector. He began working as a dishwasher in grammar school and also worked as a busboy and pantry man. During the Korean War he served as a Merchant Marine and during the summers of 1951 to 1953 worked as an Alaska cannery worker.<sup>50</sup>

Fred Cordova was born and raised in the Central Valley of California. He came to Seattle to go to school. As he told me, “Mama said change of luck go Seattle go school there. Summer time Alaska.”<sup>51</sup> So, Cordova took his mother’s advice and went to Seattle to go to school and worked in the salmon canneries in Alaska in the summer.

Like Dorothy Cordova, Bob Santos was born and raised in Seattle in the 1930s. Santos lived a good portion of his life in an apartment in the International District with his cannery worker father. As he explains below, the Filipino community was the informal gathering spots in the International District and the dances in the old dance halls.

The Filipino community to me could have been Washington Hall when I was young. I only lived half a block from Washington Hall so I’d look at the window and hear the music from my apartment when I lived there. I lived down here [International District] but lived with my aunt and uncle on 14<sup>th</sup> as I was going to school. So we always hung out at Washington Hall where the Filipinos had their dances. That was, growing up that was community to me too.<sup>52</sup>

As Santos explained to me, these informal spaces were sites of gathering because most Filipinos lived in single occupancy hotel rooms in the International District and it was not possible to entertain in one’s own home.

Dorothy Cordova’s explanation of the Filipino community of her childhood reflects the same memories that Santos shared. She reminisced about gathering in the International District for meals and the dances held at Washington Hall. “We were having dances at least two or three dances a week, that we would go to. And there was always a mixed bag, different races.”<sup>53</sup> The “mixed bag” that Cordova spoke of was the racially inclusive nature of the events that were held within the early Filipino community. As Cordova explains below, the Filipinos who were in the United States were predominately men, the women who were incorporated into the community were White, Native American, and African American; their children were therefore mixed race or as Cordova referred to them, mestizo.

When I was growing up in Seattle the kids I grew up with, the majority were mestizo. There was a difference. We looked at the pictures that we have and we have thousands of

---

<sup>48</sup> Della, David. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>49</sup> Cordova, Fred. 2009. Email correspondence. Retrieved on March 2, 2010 from, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fanhs-nyc/message/788>.

<sup>50</sup> Enriquez, Nestor. 2009. Email correspondence. Retrieved on March 2, 2010 from, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fanhs-nyc/message/788>.

<sup>51</sup> Cordova, Fred. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>52</sup> Santos, Bob. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>53</sup> Cordova, Dorothy. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

them. And as you go through them most of the early pictures of the families' photographs that we have, there were always a lot of white mothers and Native American mothers and some African American mothers. But now, if you look at the Filipino community now per se Filipino Filipino. You know our family, and then there is just so much where you are where you chose to live, where you chose to go to school, all of these things makes things a little bit different. You know I used to say, there is this old song If You Aren't Near the One You Love, Love the One You're Near.<sup>54</sup> So in the 60s and 70s we saw interracial marriages, which always were there.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the inclusion with which the Filipino community initially formed, Cordova explained that the gatherings that made up the early Filipino American community in Seattle were driven by exclusion from White society.

We pretty much lived in ghettos. We lived in this area, you know, down in Chinatown, families lived in First Hill, what became the Central Area. A few families moved out, because our community wasn't accepted anywhere they looked for each other. Weekends were really the events that happened because they weren't welcomed everywhere. You couldn't go to all of these restaurants. You couldn't go to hotels, you couldn't do all of this stuff or you didn't feel welcome.<sup>56</sup>

For the second generation, the Filipino community was more like a family and not just an organization.

I was born here and I remember the community the way it was...it was cohesive...our parents they all knew each other. Well we may not have known each other by name, but by sight...Before a lot of us were in an extended family mode because we didn't have families here. So it was whoever the blood lines were there and we didn't have our grandparents. We created a different kind of family: godparents, friends or relatives. They all became family they were they called the old men uncle.<sup>57</sup>

The second generation saw change happen within their community in terms of demographic shifts and a subsequent redefinition of the meaning of community.

## Grievances

In an article entitled *Filipino Life Begins, Flows From King Street*, which was published in the Fifth Annual Philippine National Day<sup>58</sup> program, Silme Domingo described the Filipino community in a way that harkened back to the way in which it was defined for those of his generation.

---

<sup>54</sup> The song being referenced here is 'Love the One You're With' by Crosby, Stills, and Nash. The chorus on the song states that if you can't be with the one you love, to love the one you're with. Stills, Stephen. 1969. Love the One You're With. In His Own Words Stephen Stills Song Lyrics. Retrieved on March 4, 2010 from <http://www.suitelorraine.com/suitelorraine/Pages/ltoyw.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Cordova, Dorothy. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Philippine National Day, June 12, was celebrated is the date in which the Philippines became independent from the United States. Activists organized a yearly celebration to commemorate this day.

In Seattle, history for Filipinos begins at King Street in Chinatown (now referred to as International District). For others, it may be just another street. But for the thousands of Filipino males who came to the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s, King Street was where life began...King Street was not only home, but the traditional gathering place for the “Alaskeros”, the migratory work force for Alaskan salmon canning industry. Like clock work every spring, thousands of Filipinos would gather at King Street to await employment in the booming salmon industry. However, with that employment came exploitation at the hands of the cannery owners and their merciless labor contractors.<sup>59</sup>

Domingo’s portrayal of the Filipino community of the early years shows the importance of the International District. For the second-generation activists of the 1970s, the Filipino community was comprised of the informal interactions with other Filipinos facilitated through the restaurants they ate in, the barbershops their fathers went to, and the gambling halls and bars they socialized in. In interviews with the second generation, they recalled the sites where the banquets, balls, parties and meetings were held, such as Washington Hall. Santos recalled, “The Filipino community was sort of you know where they met, they met at the dance halls. That’s where they had the banquets and parties. Washington Hall, Finnish Hall, and the Chamber of Commerce.”<sup>60</sup> These interactions were mediated through geography because in the early years Filipinos mostly lived in what has become known as the International District, and these locations were invoked when second-generation Filipino Americans thought about growing up in Seattle.

a lot of the residents, you know when you live in your apartment or your single room occupancy building like upstairs here there’s just one people live in one room, they share the bath and all of that. That’s SRO [single room occupancy] single room well the drop In Center or the barbershop or the gambling hall that was their living room. That’s where my uncle, my dad and my uncle would meet their ‘*cababayan*’. You didn’t have much company. You didn’t have people come over to your house because you had no house, you had one room. So the gathering, to me growing up in this community, this neighborhood, the Filipino community was the barbershop. And the Filipino Improvement Club...Or the Bataan club, which was on Fifth Avenue and Washington. They were big gambling halls. So that’s how I remember the Filipino community...But that’s how I felt community. It wasn’t until later that Filipino community probably meant the community center and the activities out of there.<sup>61</sup>

As exhibited in the quote above, the second generation experienced the cultural change of the community, as it shifted from the informal to the formal notion of community through organizations. Domingo references both this shift and the continued importance of the International District in the Fifth Annual Philippine National Day program,

World War II brought a profound change to the Filipino community in Seattle...The character of the community changed to a family oriented community with its inevitable

---

<sup>59</sup> Filipino Life Begins, Flows From King Street in Fifth Annual Philippine National Day Program [June 12, 1980], Box 32 folder 38, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>60</sup> Santos, Bob. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

growing pains. The community began to expand population wise and geographically. King Street was diminishing as a focal point, yet was still a significant spot. This spring just as they have for decades, Alaskeros will gather along King Street. But things will have changed. A history has been created. The Alaskeros will be of the first, second and third waves. The community has expanded beyond the confines of Chinatown and grown in numbers. King Street is no longer the focal point of the community. Institutions such as the Union and the Filipino Community Center have been established and identified as focal points in the community. Yet, one thing has not changed: History begins at King Street.<sup>62</sup>

As community for Filipinos in Seattle became synonymous with institutions such as the FCS and union, activists said that the focus was taken off of the International District and the old-timers who lived there. The FCS disregarded previous forms of community. Maram (2008) points to a similar dismissal in the literature through what she calls “a portable community”. She argues that it was the very mobility, that other scholars have disregarded, which accounts for the kind of community formation that was created amongst Filipinos. “Filipino workers, precisely because their livelihoods depended on mobility, created networks of portable communities (Maram 2008, 37).” It is this notion of community that activists were invoking. The second generation came to realize that the elders who lived predominately in and around King Street, in the International District, were in desperate need of better housing and social services.

The other major point of concern was discrimination in terms of housing, food, and working conditions that cannery workers in Alaska were experiencing, and the corrupt system based on bribery that was being used to hire and dispatch workers to go to Alaska. Through their work in the canneries, the second generation experienced the same conditions that their fathers, uncles, and old-timers before them experienced. This point of concern is best illustrated through the story of Gene Viernes, who became a key player in the effort to fight the discrimination in the canneries. Viernes was born in 1951 to a Filipino father and a white mother. He grew up as one of 10 children in a very poor family (Stamets 1982) in the farming community of Wapato in Eastern Washington. His father Felix Viernes was a cannery worker and at the age of fifteen he brought Gene to work with him in the Alaska canneries by bribing his ‘*compadre*’<sup>63</sup> union officials with \$50 (Stamets 1982). Stamets (1982) describes Andy Pascua’s recollection of the first summer working in Alaska with his childhood friend Gene Viernes:

In his first years at the canneries, Gene was known as a very hard worker and conservative jock, certainly not a rebel. But sometime around the 1971 season Andy remembers they started getting concerned about conditions in the canneries. ‘We first got upset over the treatment of the old men there, the way (management) treated our fathers. The old men couldn’t even talk back to the foremen. We weren’t used to that. We were used to farm life where everyone works together, not this very structured work with all of the power in the foreman. It really hurt us to see the old men treated this way (Stamets 1982, 22, 46).

---

<sup>62</sup> Filipino Life Begins, Flows From King Street in Fifth Annual Philippine National Day Program [June 12, 1980], Box 32 folder 38, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>63</sup> The word *compadre* means the male godfather of a child in baptism. This word was invoked by activists to refer to the system used for control and dispatch within the Cannery Worker’s Union to invoke the depth of the relationships between the union officials and cannery workers. These were more than mere friendships, there was a paternalistic relationship in which workers felt a debt to the union officials.



As young workers like Viernes and Pascua went to work in the canneries with their fathers in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they came to realize the discrimination that Filipinos and other minority workers were dealing with. For example, “the white workers slept in the best bunkhouses, ate the best food, and held the better-paying jobs. After 10 years in canneries, the Filipinos still held few jobs outside the cold, sloppy fishhouse, except during slack periods, when they were asked to mow the company grass, clean garbage off the hillsides, or do other menial tasks the white workers never did” (Stamets 1982 22, 46). Work in the Alaska salmon canneries was riddled with both corruption and terrible working conditions.

The grievances included a change in definition of community, who constituted the Filipino American community in Seattle and how the needs of the community weren't being met by the institutions that were supposed to be representing their needs, namely the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union, and poor living and working conditions. All of these grievances stemmed from the changes (outlined in Chapter One)<sup>64</sup> that occurred as a result of the influx of migration and the institutionalization of Filipino community and a lack of concern of the leadership of these organizations.

### **Politicization**

William Wei (1993), the first academic to write about the Asian American Movement in a book length volume, identifies three external factors that led to the emergence of the Asian American Movement: the civil rights movement, the emergence of a new generation of college-age Asian Americans, and the protests against the Vietnam War. Wei locates the beginnings of the Asian American Movement in Asian American activism and argues that that activism coalesced into a movement. He argues that the common assumption that the Asian American Movement started with the strikes for Third World Studies at San Francisco State University in 1968 and moved throughout the nation are incorrect. Wei acknowledges that the San Francisco State University Strike was a defining moment in Asian American history, however he argues that the movement did not begin there. In other words, he argues that the beginning of the movement started before that time because “each group of Asians in American has had a long history of fighting for equality and justice, using its members' common cultural heritage and ethnic identity as the basis for collective action” (Wei 1993, 1). Wei contends that the Asian American Movement was born when “...the civil rights movement of the 1960s exposed the pervasive problem of racism in U.S. society and raised questions about exactly how democratic the nations' political system...was” (1). This spurred “members of the various Asian ethnic groups [to] begin to think of themselves, and to act politically together, as Asian Americans” (Wei 1993, 1). Prior to analyzing the data for this project, I would have argued that Wei (1993) was incorrect in his assessment, that in fact it was the Third World strikes at San Francisco State University that started the Asian American Movement. However, I think that the impetus for Asian American

---

<sup>64</sup> As I showed in Chapter One, the Filipino Community in Seattle formed in the early 1900s and changed in the mid-1960s. These changes were a consequence of the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, otherwise known as the Hart-Cellar Act, which changed the composition of the Filipino community in Seattle in terms of class and increasing the number of families. The needs of the community as a whole changed from a population that was mostly composed of working class single men to middle class families, and the agenda of the leadership of the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. (FCS) reflected this. One consequence of this and the FCS purchase of a community center in South Seattle was a shift away from the International District.

activist engagement in the movement differed to some degree based on where activists lived. In this case study of activism in Seattle, I found that while the San Francisco State University strikes and Third World struggles were important events in the lives of activists in Seattle, of greater importance were the ideas that began to permeate through their generation that were inspired by the Civil Rights Movement. These ideas helped Asian Americans realize that they were victims of racism, discrimination, and prejudice.<sup>65</sup>

The ideas held by activists in Seattle began with a focus on equality and civil rights. As I stated in the introduction to this dissertation, the literature on the Asian American Movement, specifically, Wei (1993) and Louie and Omatsu (2001) each make claims about the ideological basis of the movement. Wei argues that it was a reform-based movement and Louie and Omatsu claim that it was a radical and revolutionary movement. I offer to this discourse, that in the case of activists in Seattle it was not one or the other, it was both. I argue that specifically in the case of activists in Seattle who were concerned with issues affecting Filipino Americans, there were two phases of their organizing efforts, which were reflective of the two strands of activism within the Asian American Movement: A) civil rights and a focus on institutions within communities and B) radicalism with a focus on changing larger institutions of power, particularly capitalism. Filipino American activism in Seattle reflects both of these strands. The movement started as a reform-based movement that focused on equity and civil rights. A change ensued after the declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972, and Filipino Americans changed the ideological framework from which their strategies grew to be more radical and revolutionary.

When I asked activists about how they got involved in organizing efforts most described it as an accidental experience or as though they just got swept up in the ideas of the time. I tried to identify a tipping point or a culminating moment, but for most of them there was no such thing. The key activists were mostly Filipino Americans who grew up in the Seattle area, whose families had experienced discrimination from the time they immigrated to the United States. In the first moment of activism the participants were second-generation individuals who were either students at the University of Washington or other local colleges in Seattle or were slightly older (part of the bridge generation) residents of Seattle, however the second moment of activism included second generation students from universities in California and Philippine immigrants, as well as individuals of other ethnicities. In interviews with activists, they discussed how inspired they were by the activities and framings of identity and equality that they encountered in many different contexts including institutions of higher education.

Nemesio Domingo, who was one of the key organizers of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association (ACWA), characterized his political awareness as being a product of the 1960s. As he reflected upon his experience he explained that it seemed that the whole world was in a state of upheaval and as he and other Asian Americans and Filipino Americans were questioning the world around them, it seemed that virtually every ethnic group was going through that same awareness project. He spoke of what he called a counter culture movement in this country, with the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war movement, and across the world "within third world countries and the fight against imperialism."<sup>66</sup> Domingo saw these movements converge while he was a student at the University of Washington.

---

<sup>65</sup> It is possible that the Third World strikes at San Francisco State had a bearing on the second stage of Filipino activism in Seattle, however this question is outside of the purview of this dissertation.

<sup>66</sup> Domingo, N. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

The University of Washington was certainly a focus in this area for everything. It was like everything came was kind of drawn onto the campus. Being on campus was like being in one of those whirlpools because it just seems to draw in every movement every concern in this area. It was certainly a reflection of what was going on. Other movements that were very influential at the time were also the movements of third world countries and their fight against imperialism. So in short, you could not really be on campus or even be in that time without being pulled into some kind of participation, non-participation was a very difficult alternative. Things were really polarized. No one was neutral. You were either part of what was going on or you were essentially against what was going on... I think the campus has always been a...focal point and a reflection of what is going on in any society. And most certainly it is not an accident that the campus always been a place where important movements, important issues sparked some kind of action. So it is just [that] the campus has always played a particular role in any kind of social movement.<sup>67</sup>

The movement that started at the University of Washington was cross-racial and pan-Asian. Political awareness was not solely based on Filipino American identity, but creating a link between the struggles of all Asian Americans and people of color. An important ally in the Asian American identity movement was Elaine Ko, a Japanese American who became a key activist in the struggles to provide and protect low-income housing in the International District, an ally to Filipino American activism, and an original founder of the Seattle KDP chapter. Like many of the second-generation Filipino American activists, Ko started as a student activist and reinforced the experience described by Nemesio Domingo. Ko illustrates the role that social networks of friends played.

Well I think that when you first get exposed as a young student you know they always say young students are the most open minded, they're the most the ones that can be molded in terms of their worldview and their outlook. And that is true because I walked onto campus fairly apolitical. In high school I really wasn't that political. I mean there was a few tangential things I would do, but I wasn't a political activist in high school. So on the college campus that was all of my friends. You know all of the new friends that I made from you know. A whole new circle from high school to college. Totally different right. And they're all Asian and gigantic Asian population on campus at the time at the UW. Cause we all got on through EOP<sup>68</sup> and there's all kinds of scholarships and all kinds of money out there at that time to get onto campus. So there were all kinds of Asians and they were all different class and it wasn't just the you know students that had a lot of money or straight A's smart. I mean there was all of us. We were all mixed in there and all working class all I mean every different you know kind of person on campus. So there were tons of Asians and I would say it started with just friends first.<sup>69</sup>

David Della echoed the descriptions given by Domingo and Ko and adds how identity played a role in how students became activists.

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> The Educational Opportunity Program was designed to promote academic success and graduation for underrepresented ethnic minority, economically disadvantaged, and first generation college students.

<sup>69</sup> Ko, E. (2007). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

Well you know just to start I guess the overall context is we were involved...at the tail end of the civil rights movement and really the anti-war movement was kind of waning, but it was still there. Because there was still a war going on in Indochina and Vietnam I mean Vietnam didn't really end until 1975 and we were in the full throes of the reform movement in 1975 right. But I think the convergence of the civil rights and the anti war movement really led into people getting involved on campuses not only in protesting the war and looking at different identity movements. Ours was really more around the Asian identity movement...we were all active in the Asian identity movement. That really was strong on the West Coast.<sup>70</sup>

Della's interview shows that these activists were moved into action by the ideological framework set out by the Asian American Movement. Asian American activists in Seattle started forming Asian Student Coalitions on college campuses in Seattle. In 1969 students at the University of Washington started the Asian Coalition for Equality (ACE) and the Asian American Student Coalition (ASC).<sup>71</sup> ACE "was the first civil rights organization in Seattle whose mission was to mobilize Asian Americans in multi-racial solidarity campaigns and promote Asian American consciousness."<sup>72</sup> At Seattle Community College activists started the Oriental Student Union (OSU) in 1970.

The primary goals and framework that united the Asian American Movement was the development of a unique and cohesive ethnic identity or a pan-Asian identity, focused on obtaining civil rights and equity for Asian Americans, taking care of the community (specifically the elderly), and obtaining social services such as healthcare and housing (Wei 1993). The strategies that activists in Seattle used to implement this framework were similar and used across the country and included creating counter-institutions, Asian American studies courses and departments within higher education institutions. They wanted curricula to discuss the experiences and contributions of Asians in America; to determine the various economic and political forces that brought them to these shores but moved them to the margins of mainstream society; and to examine their race, class, and gender relationships to European Americans. Activists wanted the revised curricula to benefit the Asian American community. Within Asian ethnic enclaves and communities they also set up counter-institutions and founded agencies that provided human and social services such as health care and housing for the elderly as well as addressed significant issues and concerns in the community. Two of the most important goals of the Asian American Movement, that were a part of the goals of activists in Seattle, were to develop a Pan-Asian identity and to build community infrastructure.

The goal of developing a Pan-Asian identity involved creating a unique and cohesive ethnic identity, which Asian Americans felt was necessary for gaining power (Wei 1993). Wei (1993) argues that the strategies that were used to do this were to work within the existing framework to

---

<sup>70</sup> Della, D. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington

<sup>71</sup> Asian Coalition For Equality. (2009). Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_ace.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_ace.htm), Seattle's Asian American Movement (2009). Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_intro.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_intro.htm)

<sup>72</sup> Asian Coalition For Equality. (2009). Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_ace.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_ace.htm)

institutionalize itself by founding counter institutions on campuses and in communities. Activists set up Asian American Studies courses and programs in colleges and universities, as well as community-based organizations in Asian ethnic enclaves. They wanted curricula to discuss the experiences and contributions of Asians in America; to determine the various economic and political forces that brought them to these shores but moved them to the margins of mainstream society, and to examine their race, class, and gender relationships to European Americans. They wanted the revised curricula to benefit the Asian American community (10).

As Asian Americans worked both on-campus and off-campus to create a new identity, they also created alternative media sources, specifically newspapers, to help build this new identity and disseminate information about Asian Americans (Wei 1993). In Seattle a newspaper called the Asian Family Affair was created, which was the predecessor to what is now the International Examiner newspaper.

Wei (1993) argues that the reformers' goal was to build influence and advance their interests, which they did by focusing on building community-based organizations. They saw these organizations as a means to build power in the Asian American community. "...activists founded agencies that provided human services and scarce resources as well as addressed significant issues and concerns in the community" (Wei 1993, 10). In the introduction to *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, Louie (2001) argues:

Serve the people became a rallying cry. We fought for, and forged, ethnic studies. To meet pressing community needs, we set up medical clinics, free breakfast programs, draft counseling, community advocacy groups, nutrition, children and youth programs, childcare, food giveaways, regular movie showings, senior drop-in centers, language and tutoring classes, and arts programs because those services were scarce in those days (XIX).

These shared goals of the Asian American Movement were taken up by activists in Seattle and implemented in their own way.

Activism had a multi-ethnic flavor to it in Seattle that extended off college campuses, although these alliances started on college campuses where activists got to know each other as students and supported one another on their campaigns. They shared many core values including fighting for equality both on college campuses, in their work places, and in the broader society. Evidence of this solidarity is exhibited in the following quote from a Filipino ethnic newspaper, the Filipino Forum, which discusses an action at the University of Washington organized by ACE. "Supported by the brothers and sisters of all hues who stood for one another, Ogilvie pressed for a definite answer on the last two demands: hiring of a Filipino or Oriental counselor and S.E.P. [Special Education Program]<sup>73</sup> Admissions Committee membership for a Filipino or Oriental student."<sup>74</sup> The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project website also characterizes the Asian American Movement by describing the collaboration, which had historical

---

<sup>73</sup> ACE pressured the University of Washington's Special Education Program to include Asians in the University of Washington's affirmative action recruitment.

<sup>74</sup> Sibonga, D. (1969). *Confrontation!* Filipino Forum Newspaper: Spokesman For United Minority Action. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/images/asianamerican/FF8-15-69.jpg>.

significance.

In Seattle, the Asian American Movement emerged from an unusually deep legacy of multi-racial coalition building. During the 1930s, successful campaigns against bills that would have made interracial marriage illegal in Washington State brought Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino activists together, though Filipino activists took the lead. After World War II, the Jackson Street Community Council brought community leaders from Seattle's Asian and African American communities together to advocate for neighborhood improvement issues, which frequently included important civil rights advocacy. And in the early 1960s, City Council member Wing Luke and Human Rights Commission Chairman Phil Hayasaka helped connect Asian American communities to the struggle for open housing in Seattle. But it wasn't until Rev. Mineo Katigiri formed the Asian Coalition for Equality (ACE) in 1969, and student activists (some members of ACE) formed the Oriental Student Union (OSU) at Seattle Central Community College and the UW Asian American Student Coalition (ASC) soon after, that organizations promoting a pan-Asian identity sparked a specifically Asian American Movement in Seattle.<sup>75</sup>

Filipino Americans were engaged in the Pan-Asian Movement that was unfolding in Seattle, but also spread their awareness and energy into struggles that were specifically affecting Filipinos in Seattle. These examples show the ideas and framings which individuals were being exposed to in the college setting, which spurred the first moment of activism.

### **The First Moment of Activism**

I argue that there were two moments of Filipino American activism in Seattle in the 1970s. Conditions such as those described above set the stage for the organizing that started in Seattle on behalf of Filipinos. The first phase, which I describe in the rest of this chapter, shared ideological and strategic goals with the Asian American Movement as described above. In addition, the Civil Rights Movement heavily influenced the activists, as is reflected in the ways that activists framed their work and the strategies they used. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act inspired a civil rights framework for organizing that focused on questions of equality and fairness. This framework was initially applied in the context of the Filipino American community in four different ways: 1) by founding institutions to provide social services within the International District of Seattle, 2) by focusing on questions of Filipino American identity and culture through the Filipino American Youth Activities (FYA), 3) reform of the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS), and 4) the formation of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association. For the purposes of this dissertation and more specifically for the purposes of this chapter, I focus on the third and fourth pillars, the reform of the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS), and the formation of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association. These two case studies are distinct in that both were institutionally based. First, activists tried to transform the FCS to be an organization that was in alignment with the larger goals of the Asian American Movement and second, activists started a nonprofit organization, the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association, to

---

<sup>75</sup> Seattle's Asian American Movement (2009). Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_intro.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_intro.htm)

deal with the discrimination that Filipino American cannery workers were experiencing working in the Alaska salmon canneries.

Strategies are defined as the targeting, timing, and tactics of an organization (Ganz, 2000). I expand on this definition to add that strategies are the targeting, timing, and tactics used by an organization to meet its goals. Building community infrastructure was the first strategy. The second-generation Filipino American activists saw two community institutions, ILWU local 37 the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union and the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS), as part of the community infrastructure that needed to be rebuilt. They saw these institutions as places that could provide services for the elderly Filipino American community members who needed housing and social services, youth who needed support, and a forum to address the discrimination that Filipinos faced in the canneries and outside.

The FCS was formed to serve the needs of youth who were students at the University of Washington. As their needs changed, so did the organization. However, as newer immigrants came to the United States after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the organization changed to meet their needs. The old-timer Filipinos, single men who spent their lives working seasonally in agriculture and the Alaska canneries, and lived in single occupancy hotel rooms without families, were overlooked. As they became the minority within the community, there was no one to advocate for them.

The Alaska Cannery Worker's Union had become corrupt. The canneries became a borderline inhumane place to work- the dispatch system was based on corruption and bribery and once at work in the canneries workers were surrounded by gangsters and gambling. Despite the presence of the union, there was no real grievance system because of the corruption at the level of the officers. The union had very little power to make changes in the workplace. Workers in the canneries also faced discrimination, specifically in terms of their living conditions. Once back in Seattle, these same individuals had very little resources to support them, and their community organization (FCS) and their union did not advocate for them in terms of their housing and social service needs.

Filipino American activists in Seattle asked why their communities were not receiving the services that they sorely needed. Their new politicization gave them the impetus to try to make change. Their first strategy was to try to reform the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS).

### **Transformation of the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS)**

The first strategy used by the activists, who I refer to as reformers, was to rebuild community infrastructure by transforming the FCS. Their agenda was fueled by sentiments that the group in power within the FCS, who I refer to as "the old guard", was not representing the interests of their families and the *manongs* who founded the Filipino community. The reformers thought that this was because the individuals who were in control of the FCS were post-1965 immigrants who had not experienced the same level of exclusion that the *manongs* and their families experienced. The activists felt that the newer immigrants did not have an appreciation for the experiences of their families or have the same priorities or ideas about the direction of the Filipino community in Seattle. The perception held by the reformers was that the FCS had become a closed club that they were not a welcome part of.

The reformers saw the organization as following the desires and needs of newer Filipino immigrants, who needed a social organization rather than an organization that provided social services such as housing. The needs of the cannery workers and other old-timers who financially

supported the FCS for many years were not central to the mission or goals of the old guard of the FCS who spent their time and resources on upholding the status quo, which included fundraising for their community center which took the form of holding queen contests, banquets, and holding elections that funneled money back into the organization. In many ways this focus was not new. The FCS was founded as a social club and David Della characterized it as the social arm of the Cannery Worker's Union.<sup>76</sup> If the union was the economic institutional base of the community, then the FCS was where socializing became institutionalized. There was a deep connection between the two organizations. From the very beginning many of the officers of the FCS were also officers of the union.

I remember my dad used to always...go to events in the Filipino community. He was tied in with the officials of the union, Local 37 at the time and if you look at the books *Panama* and *Panama Two* you see an interconnection between Local 37 ILWU which is the cannery workers union and the Filipino community. In fact the Gene Navarro who was president of the union at the time that the Filipino community hall was being bought. He was president of the fund raising committee for the Filipino community. So what they did is they raised money lots of money for the Filipino community building out of Alaska. And my father worked up there he was a foreman in the canneries and I remember him telling us that they used to raise money.<sup>77</sup>

As a social club, the FCS focused on fundraising to buy a physical location to house their organization, as stated previously, this physical location was purchased in 1965 and subsequent fundraising was still focused on the building, but changed to money for renovations. From the inception of the FCS much of this fundraising came out of the pockets of cannery workers. Officers who straddled positions both within the FCS and union used their arrangement to raise money from cannery workers. For example, Pio De Cano, the first president of the FCS, who was also a cannery labor contractor, is celebrated in *Pamana*, the first book written by the FCS chronicling its history<sup>78</sup>, for raising funds from cannery workers. "President De Cano's administration was popularly supported by funds that were mostly contributed by cannery workers during each canning season" (Rigor and Rigor 1986, 70).

Another illustration of this is a letter written from Gene Navarro who was simultaneously President of the union and the FCS (from 1967-1969).

In addition of the early Filipino pioneers, they did worked in the Alaska Salmon Industry, (sic.) Rail Road, Saw Mills, and Farms. Before the Cannery workers was organized the Alaskeros, were very militant in contributing to the Filipino Community of Seattle Inc... To the Filipino Community of Seattle Inc., Local #37, did give \$5000.00 in the year 1945. The cannery Workers known as the Alaskeros did their part by donating every season to the Filipino Community of Seattle Inc. To this point let it be known that Local #37, ILWU, members were the most militant supporter of the Community, morally and financially.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> There is not an archive that holds the documents of FCS, this book is the closest thing.

<sup>79</sup> Letter written by Gene Navarro. [n.d.]. Box 27, Folder 48, CWFLU-UW.



Another example of this is Frank Ortega who was president of the FCS from 1952-1953 who wrote a letter to cannery workers for voluntary contributions, which shows that even those FCS leaders who were not also union leaders appealed to the union and its membership to support the FCS.

Dear brothers and friends:

The Executive Council of the Filipino Community of Seattle, with the unanimous endorsement of the Executive Board of Local 37, ILWU, appeals to you for your unqualified financial support toward the building of a Filipino Community Club House in the city of Seattle...Please answer our urgent call with your greatest generosity. Very truly yours, Frank Ortega President<sup>80</sup>

The perception held by the second-generation activists was that since cannery workers gave so much to the community, the community should support them through the programs offered by the FCS.

In the 1970s a certain kind of “politics” began to play out within FCS. Politics can be understood as “a diverse range of social practices in which people negotiate power relations. The practice of politics involves both the production and exercise of social relationships and the cultural constructions of social meanings that support or undermine those relationships” (Gregory 1998, 13). Internally, the FCS became a deeply political space as the reformers tried to push the FCS to do more about issues that occurred outside of the organization, but that affected the Filipino American community as a whole.

The reformers started with an equity-based agenda that was focused on the needs of Filipino Americans. The reformers had two over-arching goals to their efforts: for the FCS to take part in larger political questions, and to broaden the notion of community that drove the policies and programs implemented by the FCS. These goals manifested into two programmatic objectives: to provide housing and protect the housing of the old-timers who lived predominately in Single Occupancy hotel rooms in the International District of Seattle and to provide social services to both these elderly people and youth. The second-generation Filipino American reformers argued that their community organization, the FCS, should be a place through which one could do these things. Specifically, the reformers thought that the FCS should be used to meet these programmatic objectives.

During the 1970s the second-generation groups tried to push their agenda within the FCS, which included programs for seniors, many of who were retired Alaskeros.<sup>81</sup> In an interview Santos described the reformer’s agenda:

We always had these crazy ideas of say building housing for the seniors, you know we wanted the Filipino community to open up to the community, especially the young people. Have youth programs at the community center. ...Nemesio always felt that we should either sell the Filipino community building and use the money from that building to buy another piece of property so that we could build housing and include...the community center...in the facility. They didn’t go for that.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Appeal To Cannery Workers For Voluntary Contributions. [n.d.]. Box 27, Folder 48, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>81</sup> Alaskero is a term that has been used for the Filipino men who were seasonal workers and worked in the Alaska salmon canneries in the summer in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of these men also worked in the agricultural fields in California, Washington, and Oregon the rest of the year.

<sup>82</sup> Santos, Bob. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

As demonstrated above, the reformers viewpoint was that the footprint of land and the size of the building hindered the potential of what the FCS could do with the FCC (Filipino Community Center) as a building. The reformers wanted to see the FCS provide services out of the building rather than just use it for social events. The reformers wanted the FCS to be an organization that took part in political questions and a place where people could go for services. The reformers wanted their community to become more involved in political issues that affected Filipinos in the U.S., whereas the old guard wanted the FCS to remain a social organization that did not disrupt the status quo or become political.

### **Strategies Used to Transform the FCS**

The activists organized by working within the FCS to reform it to become an organization that was concerned with more political issues. The reformers worked within the organization in two ways. First, they became involved in the organization by participating in events and socializing with members of FCS. Second, and most importantly, they ran for office within the FCS. At that time there were many elected officer positions: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Records Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Auditor, Sergeants-at-arms, Trustees, Clubhouse Directors, Youth Cultural Directors, Council Members, and Advisers (Rigor and Rigor 1986). Beginning in 1971 many of the reformers won elected positions in FCS (Rigor, C.1986).

In the early 1970s the activists named their group *Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970s* (FAR). Their platform as stated in 1970 had seven points.

1. We are concerned about the financial situation of the Filipino Community Center and pledge ourselves to take an immediate and exhaustive look at the ways and means of reducing our property debt.
  2. We intend to reaffirm the dedication of the Filipino Community Center to the youth by opening up its doors to those youth and youth-oriented organizations at little or no costs and offering other incentives to promote their greater utilization of the Center and its facilities.
  3. We are concerned about the plight of the older members of our Filipino Community and dedicate ourselves to placing a high priority on the necessary activities and programs which would make their lives more meaningful.
  4. We would like to see the Filipino Community Center a more functional facility for the total Filipino Community.
  5. We will strive to involve the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. in those social and political issues which affect the lives of the members of our community.
  6. We would like to see the Filipino Community Center serve as a facility to house those human services needed by our community members- such as a day-care center, an information and referral office, American citizenship and legal services, etc.
  7. We believe that the primary function of the Community's Cultural and Education Commission should be to develop a scholarship and loan fund for deserving Filipinos
-

who desire to go onto higher education; but there should also be renewed emphasis on culture identification programs to maintain and strengthen our Filipino identity.<sup>83</sup>

The seven-point platform is reflective of the larger Asian American Movement goals of building community infrastructure, identity awareness, and equity. Reformers Silme and Nemesio Domingo both won positions from 1969 to 1981 (Rigor and Rigor 1986). This was their opportunity to work within FCS to do some of the things that they felt that FCS was not doing.

Normally people who were on the council leadership were mainly people had traditionally been involved in the social events. So we had a reform group called FAR...to reform the Filipino community and we you know we did fundraisers and we raised issues and we got involved in youth and you know had Philippine national days.<sup>84</sup>

Through participation on the Filipino Community Council, activists became vocal about their critiques of FCS, what they wanted FCS to do, and how they wanted the FCS run. Santos explains the strategies that the reformers used, as well as how they were received by the old guard of the organization:

Growing up we were always the kids right and there was a time when your uncle Nemesio Junior and your father (Silme Domingo) and some of us, Sonny Tangalade, and Tony Ogilivie. We decided to run for office in the Filipino community right. And we were the young punks, the young turks they would call us.<sup>85</sup>

Though the old guard saw the reformers as kids who were stirring up trouble, the reformers also collaborated with some of the old-timers of the community, many of whom were friends or relatives of the activists, who were sympathetic to the FAR agenda. This multi-generational approach manifested in council elections and issues that activists tried to get FCS to focus on, one example of this was the fight against the Kingdome.

### **The Kingdome Fight**

Activists tried to push the FCS to do something about issues that were affecting Filipinos in the United States, particularly housing for the elderly. One example of this was the Kingdome fight, a struggle, which has become famous in the history of the Seattle Asian American community amongst Asian American activists in Seattle by “Uncle” Bob Santos. Santos has become a well-known housing rights activist in Seattle and his charismatic leadership has inspired many activists in the Seattle area. Two important books have also shown the importance of the International District and the Kingdome Fight: Doug Chin’s (2001) *Seattle's International District: The Making of a Pan-Asian American Community* and Bob Santos’ (2002) *Humbows, Not Hot Dogs!: Memoirs of a Savvy Asian American Activist*. The struggle over the Kingdome epitomizes the struggle that the reformers had with the old guard. As mentioned previously, the International District of Seattle was the area of town that Asian Americans first moved to.

---

<sup>83</sup> Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970s. [1970]. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. Filipino American National Historical Society.

<sup>84</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>85</sup> Santos, Bob. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

There once was a China Town, Japan Town, and a Manila Town within the same area. According to Santos, the Manila Town was one square city block from Maynard Avenue and Sixth Avenue between King Street and Weller Street.<sup>86</sup> The boundaries of the International District were established in 1968 as part of the Model Cities Program,<sup>87</sup> it spanned seven blocks north to south and seven blocks East to West, from Fifth to Twelfth Avenues and Yesler Way to Dearborn Street (Chin 2001). The International District included many businesses that catered to the predominately single men who lived in the area, restaurants, gambling houses, pool halls, barbershops, and stores.

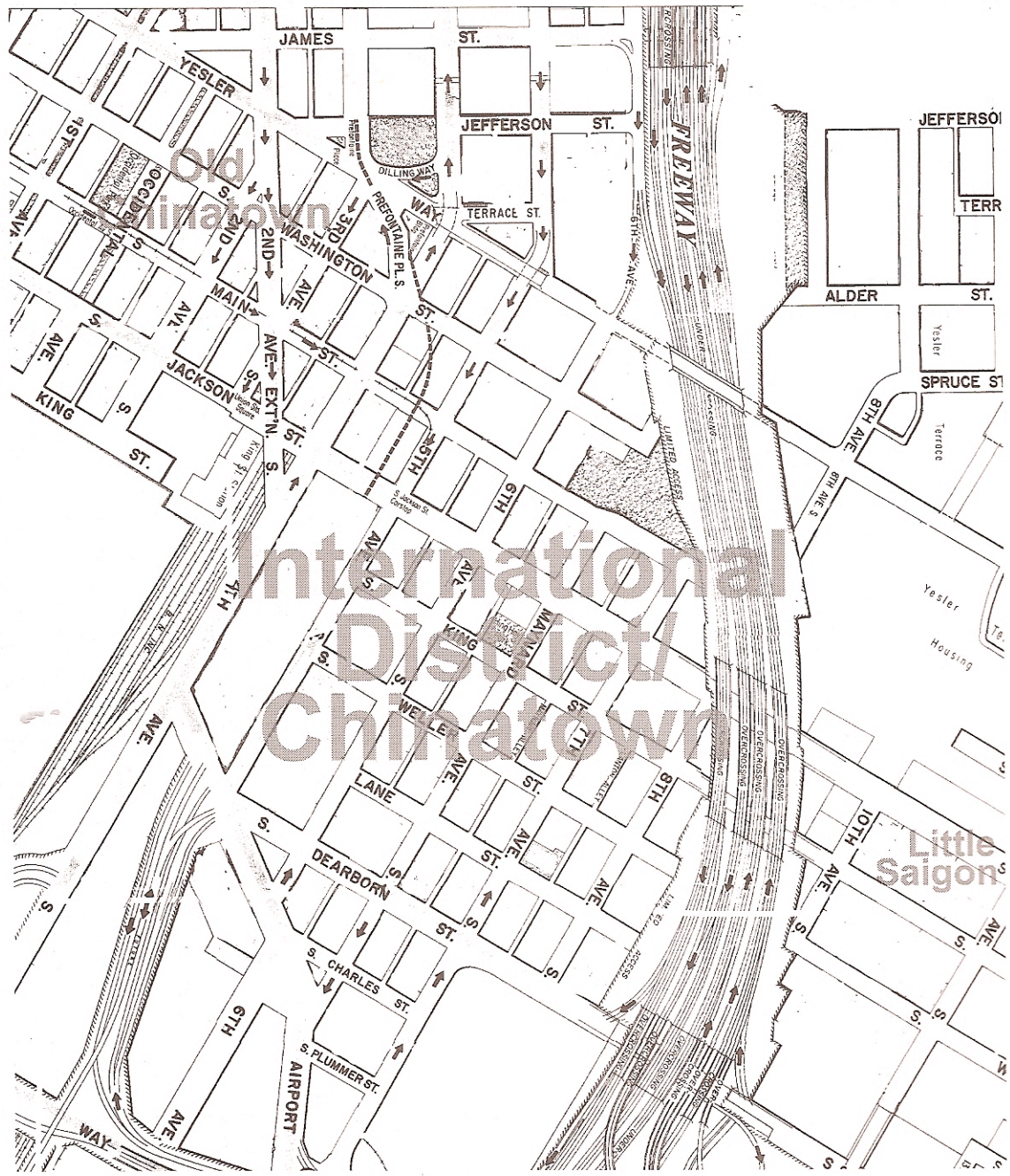
As described by Chin (2001), the population in the 1970s in the International District was the lowest that it had been and had dropped forty percent from what it had been two decades before. Most of the 1,600 who continued to live in the area were elderly, poor, single and predominately Filipino. “Slightly more than half of the District’s residents were Asians; Filipinos were the largest Asian group with 400, followed by Chinese at around 375 and Japanese dwindling to about 100. Whites comprised the bulk of the balance along with about 100 African Americans” (Chin 2001, 77).

Several problems threatened the International District in the early 1970s. First, the I-5 freeway was built through the International District, which displaced many single-family homes in the area. Second, the Ozark fire code, which called for stricter fire and building codes in hotels, forced many International District hotels to close, and drove residents out. “The Ozark Ordinance required the installation of sprinkler systems in every commercial building and hotel, which was too expensive for many District property owners” (Chin 2001, 80). As a result, over half of the 45 hotels and apartments in the area were forced to close. Second, there were ongoing problems with crime in the area. (Inter\*im 2002). The third factor was the development of the Kingdome.

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> The Model Cities Program was an element of United States President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and War on Poverty.



**International District, Seattle**

The Kingdome was a sporting events stadium that voters approved as part of a bond measure in 1968, which King County officials hoped would attract major league football and baseball. In 1971, after much haggling back and forth, “the stadium commission recommended a site owned by Burlington Northern Railroad, next to the King Street Railway Station and adjacent to the International District” (Chin 2001, 80). The County purchased the site for the

<sup>88</sup> International District map from Chin 2001, 9.

purpose of building a stadium. However, International District residents and their advocates became concerned in early 1972 when five hotels that were close to the stadium site were closed because they failed to meet the Ozark fire and building codes. “Asian American community activists associated the closures with the new stadium and charged that the closures were part of a scheme to clear land in the area for parking lots” (Chin 2001, 80). Community activists, including many of the second-generation activists who were working to transform the FCS, started protesting the stadium.

The activists brought this issue to the FCS. They argued that this was an issue that the FCS should take a stand on because the residents in the International District were predominately Filipino and were the old-timers and cannery workers who supported the FCS from its inception. The activists argued that the FCS should help to protect the old timer’s housing. However, the FCS leadership would not concern itself with this issue and would not take an official position. In fact, the Chinese and Japanese community associations also would not take official positions on this issue.<sup>89</sup> David Della argues that the FCS was removed from issues that really affected the Filipino community, and the Kingdome was an example of this.

...the only way that they even knew about it [the Kingdome] was the fact that we were involved in the organization then and we brought those issues to the community. So I think the Filipino community as an organization did not get involved in a lot of the more activist work that we did or housing or economic you know fighting for service in the ID [International District] they were a step removed but we brought those issues into the community. And I think some of the more enlightened more third wave Filipinos more the younger immigrants seemed to be interested but the traditional leadership of the community really was not really that involved.<sup>90</sup>

Activists grew frustrated by the FCS and instead drew on a larger activist base in the Seattle area, namely pre-existing relationships with Asian American and African American activists from their student days at the University of Washington. Particularly involved were African Americans who were engaged in the United Construction Worker’s Association (UCWA) to protest discrimination in the construction industry after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>91</sup> I return to the efforts to transform the FCS in the next chapter, however the strategy of coalition building that was developed in the Kingdome fight was the beginning of what would become a more radical approach to organizing in the second moment of organizing within the Filipino American community in Seattle. The second strategy used in the first moment of organizing with the Filipino American community in Seattle stems from the coalition built with the UCWA activists and led to a larger strategy that focused on the plight of Filipino American cannery workers.

### **The Alaska Cannery Worker’s Association (ACWA)**

The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed racial segregation in schools, public spaces, and most important to this project, places of employment. However, at the local level there were still unanswered questions regarding how to implement and force employers to adhere to this

---

<sup>89</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

stipulation. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act inspired a civil rights framework for organizing amongst activists across the United States, which extended to efforts to make improvements for cannery workers. Though these efforts eventually evolved into a movement to transform the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union, activists started outside of the union.

As described below from the notes from an Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting in 1975, the organizing started as individual incidents fueled by frustration in the canneries.

Spontaneous and sporadic hotspots flared up during the salmon seasons of 1970 – 73. These isolated incidents were spurred on by harsh and deplorable conditions in the canneries.... In 1971, workers from the NEFCO [New England Fish Company] Uganik Bay facility were terminated for complaining of discrimination. They filed Federal discrimination charges against their employers. In 1972, a one-day work stoppage occurred in Bumble Bee.... The same year across the river at the Red Salmon canning facility a hunger strike was thrown. The companies' response to all of these workers' actions was blacklisting.... The lack of support by the Navarro leadership for the workers resulted in some members turning to a formation outside of the Union – the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA).<sup>92</sup>

In 1971 workers started complaining about discrimination in the canneries and were fired. The union would not take up their issues. Navarro, the president of the union at the time, “understood only the ‘old way’ of running the union”(Stamets 1982, 21). Navarro did not understand the grievances voiced by the second-generation Filipino Americans working in the canneries, unlike “their immigrant fathers before them, they refused to accept racial discrimination in the canneries” (Stamets 1982, 21).

Workers who complained about the working conditions in the canneries did not get a response from the union or canneries that they wanted. Although they first tried hunger strikes and work stoppages as strategies to get the company or union to listen to their concerns, these were individualized incidents. The first collective concerted strategy employed by the activists who formed the ACWA included traveling to Alaska to document working conditions and to build alliances and committees with cannery workers. Silme Domingo and Michael Woo, both who had been cannery workers, posed as University of Washington students who were investigating the canneries. Michael Woo was a worker who became an activist. When I interviewed Woo, I was struck by the humanity with which he spoke, his honesty, and the place of authenticity and life experience from which he became an activist. Unlike some of the other activists involved in the reform movements, there were no overtly philosophical or theoretical overtones as part of his vernacular. From a young age he became a worker who stumbled upon activism, not the other way around, activism became a part of the work he did. As explained by Woo,

I was kind of a black sheep I wasn't smart enough got married and had a baby had other kids on the way. I was kind of forced into the workforce back in the late 60s...I was working in the airline industry. There was a saying in the late 60s the last person in Seattle turn off the lights. When Boeing went down [the] airline industry [had] a lot of

---

<sup>92</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting minutes. [June 11, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.



layoffs back then. It was ok to have a single income family. My wife was also young [and] we had two kids by 1970.<sup>93</sup>

With two kids and unemployed, Woo was assigned by the state unemployment agency to go work for the United Construction Worker's Association (UCWA), which was fighting discrimination in the construction industry. It was through his work with UCWA that Woo became politicized. As a younger man, Woo also worked in the Alaska salmon canneries, just as his family members before him had. As a UCWA staff member Woo was assigned by UCWA to help the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association (ACWA) form.<sup>94</sup> The trip that Woo and Silme Domingo took the summer of 1973 provided the basis for the formation of the ACWA, as well as important information and evidence for the ACWA's court cases. They "personally visited numerous canneries to document the intensely discriminatory working and living conditions of Asian and Native Alaskan cannery workers. An active committee of Asians was formed of those workers willing to risk the inevitable employment repercussions of legal action against employing companies."<sup>95</sup> According to Woo,

UCWA paid for Silme and I to go to Alaska. We went up during the canning season. Silme got through some connection at school some letterhead from the University of Washington fisheries department. We wrote a letter that we carried around with us. We posed as fisheries students...It was working we went cannery to cannery. We'd go to the superintendent, introduce ourselves, show him the letter and then they'd never see us again. We were in the bunk houses, talking and organizing and getting stories and firing people up.<sup>96</sup>

It was on this formative trip that Silme Domingo met Gene Viernes, at the Wards Cove cannery near Ketchikan. Viernes was already at the center of organizing efforts including a successful hunger strike in the summer of 1972, to fight the working conditions in the cannery. Viernes had continually complained about the fact that the white workers were getting better food than the Filipino workers and staged a one-man hunger strike. According to Stamets,

On the second day 10 others joined him, and on the fourth and final day, over half the crew boycotted the Filipino mess hall. 'One of the few ways you could make a foreman responsible to anything was to protest the food, or walk out on strike,' Gene said in his deposition against Wards Cove. 'To walk out on strike needed a union sanction. A food strike would be the only other way you wouldn't stop production.' That strike was a modest success, and for the rest of the summer the Filipino crew got a better supply of fresh juices and vegetables (Stamets 1982, 46).

The relationship between Domingo and Viernes that was forged on this trip strengthened the work of the ACWA. Viernes was an avid writer and had documented the working conditions in the canneries. In 1975 he became more active in ACWA and later became the director of the organization (Stamets 1982).

<sup>93</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>94</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Report and Proposal. [n.d.]. Box 37, Folder 8, CWFLU-UW. Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>95</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Report and Proposal. [n.d.]. Box 37, Folder 8, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>96</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.



Based on the evidence gathered in the previous summer, in the fall of 1973 cannery worker activists Silme and Nemesio Domingo formed the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA) as a vehicle through which to file a series of anti-discrimination lawsuits. The organizing strategies activists used were inspired by construction workers' efforts through the United Construction Worker's Association (UCWA), in the Seattle area, to protest discrimination in the construction industry after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>97</sup> Led by Tyree Scott and Milton Jefferson, UCWA construction workers had successfully filed and won lawsuits against the construction industry in Seattle.<sup>98</sup> The UCWA even provided the initial financial support for the ACWA to get started.<sup>99</sup> The ACWA, UCWA, and Northwest Chapter of the United Farm Workers Union also came together to form the Labor Employment Law Office (LELO), through which "activists used class action lawsuits combined with direct action as a means to empower workers of color and further support the grassroots organizing of the three founding groups" (LELO 2010).

In early 1974, five Filipinos and a Native Alaskan filed the first lawsuits organized by the ACWA (Stamets 1982). They filed a class action civil rights lawsuit in federal court against Nefco-Fidalgo Canning Company and the New England Fish Company. Both canneries were charged with racial segregation and discrimination in their operations. The discriminatory employment practices included "the channeling of minorities (Asians) into the lowest hanging least skilled job categories; inferior and unequal housing, washing, laundering, dining and recreational facilities, as compared to those of their white counterparts; the absence of adequate medical facilities; the companies arbitrary use of their termination power; as well as their hiring procedures."<sup>100</sup> The suit asked the court to award both compensatory and punitive damages of more than five million dollars to more than two thousand Filipino and Alaskan Native workers who worked for the company from the time that the cannery first opened. The case was not decided until 1977, but the cannery was found guilty of racial discrimination in housing and employment (Zia 2001). In 1974 members of the ACWA ran for election in the Cannery Workers' Union, however they were unsuccessful and the leadership of the Union expelled and blacklisted ACWA members from the Union.<sup>101</sup> As a result, ACWA members focused on their legal strategy and community building, efforts based on a civil rights and equity-based framework.

The ACWA's strategy involved reaching out to cannery workers who worked in the canneries targeted for lawsuits. Organizers traveled to the Yakima Valley in Eastern Washington, to the San Francisco Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley in California to recruit plaintiffs, build support for their cause through the communities of potential plaintiffs, and fundraising.<sup>102</sup>

The ACWA strategy also included building an organization that was as inclusive and diverse as possible. The ACWA strived to not be considered just a Filipino group "...ACWA must be very careful in its organizing not to be labeled as a Filipino-only group. We must emphasize our "Asian" focus and in a broader sense our support of all Third World people."<sup>103</sup> The ACWA also worked to involve all generations of cannery workers, which they did by

<sup>97</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Association letter to Barry Mar, Employment Opportunity Center. [August 16, 1974]. Box 37, Folder 5, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>101</sup> Alaskero News. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>102</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting minutes. [October 21, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>103</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Report and Proposal. [n.d.]. Box 37, Folder 8, CWFLU-UW.

becoming involved in projects such as the Kingdome fight, to support the old timers in the International District of Seattle where many of them lived. Specifically they worked on issues connected to nutrition, a farmer's market and what they called 'a food conspiracy'.<sup>104</sup> The ACWA fundraising efforts included holding events and innovative strategies such as a fee-based parking lot in the International District and solicitation of funds from a variety of agencies and organizations, particularly religious-based organizations in the community.

These strategies were effective in building a grass roots movement that shared a set of goals regarding civil rights and equity, however these strategies did very little to change the actual working conditions of cannery workers. As I show in Chapter Four, activists realized this critique and changed their strategy to refocus on the union and reform it in order to amass the power necessary to negotiate changes in working conditions for cannery workers.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I showed how Filipino American activism in the 1970s emerged. The Asian American and Civil Rights Movements ideologically inspired activists in the first moment of their organizing; the ideas and framings that came from these movements resonated with the experiences that activists were having in Seattle. They saw injustice within their community that was particularly affecting the old timers and saw an opportunity for action. Strategically, activists focused on building community infrastructure in this first moment of organizing and worked to transform the FCS to take on issues that benefited all of the members of the Filipino American community in Seattle and formed a nonprofit organization, the ACWA, to fight the discrimination that cannery workers faced in the Alaska salmon canneries. However, as I show in the next two chapters, this organizing changed both ideologically and strategically after 1973 with the formation of the KDP, the *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino*. This second moment of organizing created a significant division within the larger Filipino American community that I will explore in greater detail in Chapter Three.

---

<sup>104</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting minutes. [June 11, 1975]. Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

## Chapter Three

### The Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS): A Contested Terrain

Tony Baruso, boasted of his close relationship with Marcos and decorated his union hall office with a photograph of himself shaking hands with the dictator. Baruso had also once barred a worker from joining Local 37 as a favor to the consulate. The man had married a Filipina maid who had fled the consulate in Seattle and filed for political asylum. The case became a public embarrassment to the increasingly vulnerable Marcos government because the maid protested that she would be persecuted upon her return to the Philippines.<sup>105</sup>

Tony Baruso was a respected leader of the Filipino Community in Seattle. He became president of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union upon the death of union President Gene Navarro in 1975 (Hoddersen 1981). Baruso was also the president of the FCS from 1963-1965 (Rigor and Rigor 1986). He maintained the level of corruption within the union by enforcing a bribery-based dispatch system and discrimination in the canneries. Baruso was revered within FCS for being a leader in the community. In fact, even though Baruso served<sup>106</sup> a life sentence in prison for his involvement in the murders of Domingo and Viernes in 1981, many in FCS remained in communication with him up until his death in 2008, and he is still upheld as a hero of FCS. For example, in *Pamana Two*, Baruso was acknowledged as a living hero:

Baruso will be remembered as a compassionate man who took care of the old Pinoys<sup>107</sup> living alone in the International District even to their dying days. With the help of King County, he went out of his way to bury those found dead in their rooms. Sometimes buried them himself with the help of friends (Ancheta-Mendoza 2000, 24).

Activists who were involved in the reform of the Cannery Worker's Union and who worked with the old-timers in the International District contest this statement, since they never saw him advocate for services for these old-timers as the union president or within FCS.<sup>108</sup> This very contestation is symbolic of the greater tensions during the 1970s and early 1980s within the FCS. These strains were reflective of political conflicts that occurred between Filipinos both in the U.S. and Philippines, which were taking place both inside and outside of the FCS. A deeper look at the tensions that occurred during this time within FCS will offer greater clarity into political conflicts within the organization, outside in the Filipino Community in general, and how changing patterns of immigration, institutional community formation, and international movement ideology shaped the strategies used by activists organizing on behalf of the Filipino American community in Seattle in the second moment of organizing.

The Filipino Community of Seattle has become an institution in Seattle, meaning that it is not just a building or organization; it is an institution in the way that family or church is an institution. Sociologists use the term social institution, defined as "...all the structural

---

<sup>105</sup> Taylor, K. 2007. Laborers in a Smaller Valley. Chapter Five of Dissertation dated July 2007. PhD diss., University of North Carolina.

<sup>106</sup> Baruso died in prison in 2008 (Associated Press 2008).

<sup>107</sup> Filipino males.

<sup>108</sup> Mast, Terri. 2008. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

components of a society through which the main concerns and activities are organized, and social needs (such as those for order, belief, and reproduction) are met” (Marshall 1998, 317-318). To this day, when someone says “Filipino community” in a casual setting in Seattle, it is assumed that one is referring to the FCS. In this way, it is an imagined form of community, but it has also become a physical, geographical gathering place located in the Filipino Community Center building, a former bowling alley.

As described in Chapter Two, activists used two initial strategies to change the condition of Filipino Americans in their community. The first moment of activism focused on questions of fairness and equality for Filipino Americans in the United States. Part of that strategy included reforming the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. (FCS) to become an organization that focused more on social services and housing. As the movement to reform the FCS unfolded, another dynamic developed related to the condition of Filipinos in the Philippines. While Filipino Americans were engaged in a movement with a focus on the social conditions of Filipinos in the U.S., some of the activists also became involved in organizing to support Filipinos in the Philippines. Tensions arose between the Filipino American activists as some of their attention became diverted to the “homeland”.

This chapter focuses on how the movement to reform the FCS unfolded, but more importantly explores the differences within the Filipino community in Seattle. These differences became illuminated through the movement to reform the FCS. While individuals in Seattle explained these differences as ideological, I argue that the divisions that occurred within the FCS are deeper and symbolic of a much larger question of the purpose of a Filipino community; reflective of long-standing historic divisions based in time of immigration, generation, class, and are further complicated by political orientation. These differences in time of immigration, generation, class, and ideology caused divisions between the old guard of the FCS and the activists. However, these differences also caused a split among the activists engaged in the movement to reform the FCS. This chapter shows how the strategy to change civil society institutions becomes complicated by differences within communities and between individuals. This chapter also shows how these differences led to the eventual downfall of the reform movement within the FCS. I begin this chapter by showing how three groups: the radicals, the nation-based activists, and the old-guard, arose during the movement to reform the FCS. The heart of this chapter shows the battle over control of the FCS and closes with how and why the reformers were pushed out of the FCS.

### **The Formation of the KDP**

Ferdinand Marcos became the president of the Philippines in 1965 and ruled until the Filipino people forced him out of office in 1986. He is known for using tactics of political repression, nepotism, and human rights violations to lead the country. “Marcos pursued not ideological goals but personal gain, and his regime was organized around family and friends, not strong state institutions. The regime made little effort to implement the social and economic policies it promised” (Thompson 1996, 5). In addition, Marcos was doing nothing to help the poverty within which most people in the Philippines were living. On September 22, 1972, Marcos declared martial law. He resorted to police suppression in response to a movement galvanized by the political and economic crisis that he had forced the Philippines into. However his actions and policies only provided fuel for the political movement of the masses.<sup>109</sup> Marcos used the threat of

<sup>109</sup> Kalayaan International Newspaper, “Oppose Martial Law,” September October 1972.

Communism to defend the declaration of martial law; an excuse that resonated with the American government and gained support from them for his cause.

Marcos said the Communists were again threatening the Philippines, that he needed martial law to defeat them. He knew this cry would appeal to Washington, even though it had little, if any, foundation in reality. But if Marcos trumped up the threat of communism to justify his actions, and he did, American officials exaggerated the breakdown of law and order in Philippine society and distorted Filipino reaction to martial law as rationalizations for their support of Marcos's seizure of power. (Bonner 1987, 112)

Marcos used martial law to squelch dissent brewing against him.

Anyone who was thought to oppose martial law or Marcos was jailed...In fact, it wasn't just the violent opposition. It was all opposition that was silenced. Some 30,000 people were arrested in the hours, days, and weeks following September 22; very few were Communists advocating the violent overthrow of the government. The overwhelming majority of those in prison were Filipinos who expressed their opposition to Marcos in democratic ways. To have protested martial law would have been to meet the same fate. In addition, Marcos had closed down the country's newspapers along with radio and television stations. (Bonner 1987, 122)

This suppression extended into academic institutions as well, as is described in the following quote by Carol Ojeda-Kimbrough who was a student at the University of the Philippines in 1972: "All of a sudden my world at UP quickly transformed from an environment of academic freedom to a virtual prison, with all buildings fenced by barbed wire fences and military personnel posted at all entrances. Increasing repression within school and outside in the society around me..." (Ojeda-Kimbrough 2001, 65). This repression resulted in the loss of democratic rights for many people in the Philippines.

Filipinos in the United States became increasingly aware of the conditions that Filipinos in the Philippines were living under and as a result, on July 27, 1973, a group of activists in the U.S. formed the KDP or the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino or Union of Democratic Filipinos. "The KDP organized Filipino Americans around anti-imperialist and anti-racist issues, challenging the community's conservative leadership with militant politics that openly supported socialism" (Toribio 1998, 155). The KDP was organized with a National office and local chapters focused on specific issues and work areas. Many young Filipino Americans, who were both new to and already involved in "politics" joined the KDP. The KDP saw organizations that had constituencies of Filipino Americans as potential vehicles to organize through to build support for their programmatic objectives, which were dual in nature with a focus on the Philippines and the United States. As Espiritu (2009) has argued, "The KDP was founded on the 'dual line' of supporting the struggle for socialism in the United States and national democracy in the Philippines" (41). While their agenda had a focus on socialism, their goals within the United States had a specific focus on issues affecting Filipinos in the United States. Choy (2005) explains that the work done during the anti-martial law movement and by the KDP is important because of their advocacy for both Filipinos in the U.S. and Philippines. The work of the KDP

---

shows the role that Filipino Americans played in transforming the Asian American movement in the United States into a transnational political movement.

This internationalist strategy is reflective of the argument that Louie and Omatsu (2001) have made, that the goals of the Asian American movement was not one solely focused on racial identity or pride, but on reclaiming a tradition of militant struggle led by earlier generations who were engaged in questions of oppression, power, and liberation. The revolutionary arm of the Asian American movement engaged in reading, studying, and debating revolutionaries such as Franz Fanon, Marx, Lenin, and Mao. As Louie (2001) reminisced “We had an international perspective, drawing inspiration from and supporting independence and freedom movements of people in Africa, Asian and Latin American, whether we wanted to help raise their standard of living, opposed colonialism, or saw imperialism as the enemy of people around the world” (XIX).

The Seattle chapter founded in 1974 was the largest chapter in the U.S., however its pan-Asian racial composition was unique among the chapters (Domingo 2004). Some of the young Filipino Americans in Seattle who were already involved in the efforts to reform the FCS or involved in the ACWA (Alaska Cannery Worker’s Association) joined the KDP.<sup>110</sup> Throughout the KDP teams were assigned by local chapters to work on different issues. In Seattle there were four work areas: students (University of Washington Asian Student Alliance), labor (ILWU and ACWA), International District housing, and the Philippines.<sup>111</sup> Teams were assigned various tasks within these work areas. The Local 37 team focused on reforming the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Union, which I discuss in more depth in the following chapter. The Filipino Community team was a special work team led by Silme Domingo and created to reform the FCS and run the KDP program through the organization.<sup>112</sup> Within the KDP structure activists were also assigned to be members of the Chapter Executive Board and National Executive Board. The alignment of activists with the KDP is reflective of a shift in both ideology and strategy.

### **Ideology and Strategy**

Filipino American activists who joined the KDP moved from the reformist ideology and strategies characterized by the first moment of activism as described in Chapter Two and moved to a revolutionary ideology. This ideology involved a change from the sole focus on Filipinos in the U.S. to a multi-faceted agenda that included the condition of Filipinos in the Philippines, socialist revolution in the Philippines, and changing the social condition of Filipinos in the U.S. One of their strategies was to use the existing structure of the FCS as a vehicle to meet these goals. I argue that this is a specific example of the use of War of Position and that the activists who led this charge are examples of organic intellectuals. The activists were attempting to work within the FCS to meet their goal of changing the social condition of Filipinos in the U.S., as well as to educate Filipinos in the U.S about the condition of Filipinos in the Philippines and win their support for a socialist revolution in the Philippines. This strategy was a shift.

Activists started out in the reformist tradition, both ideologically and strategically, and some moved into the revolutionary tradition ideologically, using what looked like reformist strategies to those who did not know that there was a revolutionary end goal to those strategies.

---

<sup>110</sup> Silme Domingo is the only example of someone who was involved in both previous efforts to reform the FCS, involved in the ACWA, and became a member of the KDP. Gene Viernes was a participant in the latter two.

<sup>111</sup> Dale Borgeson, email correspondence with author, March 5, 2010.

<sup>112</sup> Dale Borgeson, email correspondence with author, March 26, 2010.

As David Della who was deeply involved in both the reform movement of the FCS and the cannery worker's union, ILWU local 37 explained,

I became active in the Filipino community when I was part of the KDP...part of the strategy was really to begin changing the way that we do work in the Filipino community to really highlight more issues. And so we got involved in the Filipino Community Inc, in the mid-1970s as a way to start to transform that organization not only as a social organization but to begin looking at things in terms of issues and politically. And around two issues one was the whole Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines then the other was around issues of discrimination here in America. And...all of the programmatic needs around that. So you know we developed a strategy in the KDP where we needed to get involved in the Filipino community so Silme Domingo, myself, his family, and those of us involved in the KDP, Filipinos, started to get much more engaged in the Filipino community.<sup>113</sup>

Individuals affiliated with the KDP became involved with the reform movement of the FCS. The KDP did a strategic power analysis of Filipino communities in target cities where there were chapters. The FCS was pin pointed as an organization that organizers should become involved in because of the large numbers of Filipino members who KDP organizers could educate about their cause. The FCS was chosen for the possibility of its use in the War of Position, to use the FCS as a vehicle from which to make larger political and social changes within the US and as part of their larger agenda to support revolution in the Philippines.

The KDP drew on the strength of local activists who knew the local community and political terrain, many who were already involved in transforming the FCS. These activists are examples of organic intellectuals, individuals from the working class who could educate those within the Filipino community about the power relationships connected to their grievances and move individuals into action.<sup>114</sup>

For Gramsci, organic intellectuals were a fundamentally important expression of working-class life, an interrogation of emergent patterns of thought and action, the radicalization of the subaltern state, the translation of theory into strategy, and the creation of revolutionary subjectivity through the formation of continuous and multifaceted counterhegemonic activity and the development of a revolutionary historical bloc where divergent interests converge and coalesce around shared visions and objectives (McLaren, Fischman, Serra, and Antelo 2002, 165).

However, the activists' encountered a particular power dynamic situated within the broad Filipino community that was based in a spectrum of political orientation. Three distinct groups arose within the larger Filipino community in the United States, and specifically in Seattle.

---

<sup>113</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>114</sup> Espiritu (2006b) argued in his paper "The Anti-Marcos Movement and the Question of 'Orientation'" that Seattle-based activists Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were examples of organic intellectuals and I am elaborating upon his claim by arguing that all of the radical activists in the second moment of organizing were organic intellectuals.

### Divisions with the Filipino Community in Seattle: Three Groups Arise

The groups that arose within the Filipino community in Seattle were reflective of the divisions within the community based in generation, family immigration history, class, and political orientation. Each group had a different goal for the FCS. My analysis of the reform efforts within the FCS revealed major divisions within the community as a whole. In other words, while these differences manifested through the reform efforts, these differences were only magnified within the FCS and were occurring between Filipinos throughout Seattle. Through interviews and archival data I found that the strongest division within the Filipino community in Seattle was between: a) those whose families immigrated to the U.S. before 1965 who were predominately second-generation Filipino Americans from working class families<sup>115</sup> and b) first-generation Filipino Americans who were either middle class or immigrated to the U.S. after 1965 with a college education and were middle class professionals in the Philippines.<sup>116</sup> Political orientation was another factor dividing these groups, however group A was also divided in their political leanings. To understand this phenomenon it is not possible to simply separate these people into two groups without understanding that there were four intertwined characteristics that defined the groups and resulted in different perspectives on the purpose and goals of the FCS. Relationships were built through commonalities with others within their group based upon four characteristics: family immigration history, generation, class, and political orientation.

The first characteristic is *family immigration history*. Family is a building block or formative relationship through which the other characteristics are connected. Connections with other families and individuals are made through one's family. The divisions between pre- and post-1965 immigrants can also be understood as the division between the pre- and post-1965 families in Seattle. Time of immigration and place of origin within the Philippines fall within the umbrella of family immigration history. Time of immigration is an important factor because it describes two different experiences: overall family history and experience both in the Philippines and in the United States. Like other migrant-receiving cities and immigrant communities in the United States, the composition of Seattle's Filipino community shifted as a result of the change in immigration laws in 1965. Prior to 1965, the Filipino American community was predominately a working class bachelor society composed of seasonal agricultural and cannery workers. At that time immigration policy was guided by the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which limited immigration and established a quota of fifty people a year. The 1965 Immigration Act permitted immigration based on family reunification or occupation<sup>117</sup>.

Place of origin within the Philippines refers to where one's family is from in the Philippines. Origin in the Philippines is important because it invokes certain stereotypes, different cultural experiences and customs, different dialects or languages, and complex hierarchies. There are also regional organizations in the U.S. whose membership is based upon a person's region of origin in the Philippines. Within the Philippines there are three regions: the island of Luzon, the island of Mindanao, and the Visayan Islands. Each region is divided into

---

<sup>115</sup> I am not claiming that all immigrants before 1965 were working class nor do I claim that all immigrants after 1965 were middle class professionals. I acknowledge that there were many Filipinos who were in the U.S. before 1965 who were not working class, which can be seen in work such as Espiritu, 2005. The claim I am making here is that this is true of the segment of population interviewed for this dissertation. Working class origins by manual work in factories or agricultural fields.

<sup>116</sup> I do not want to draw conclusions about all post 1965 Filipino immigrants. However, there is a specific dynamic I have observed: the only exceptions to this rule were people who did not hold positions of power in FCS and had ideological reasons for their beliefs about the purpose of FCS that were not grounded in their class positionality.

<sup>117</sup> There was also emigration of people from the Philippines who were fleeing the Marcos Dictatorship, 1965-1986.



provinces, which are smaller areas that are removed from the cities. Each region or province has different dialects spoken, cultural practices, and often different foods that are based on the local geography. The social hierarchy of provinces and regions is based on language, economic wealth and production, and skin color. Those from the Tagalog speaking regions are at the top of the hierarchy both within the Philippines and carried over to the U.S. Those from more agriculturally based regions, like Ilocos, have historically been looked down upon both in the Philippines and in the United States amongst Filipinos. This social hierarchy was perpetuated in the Filipino community in the U.S. However, some of this changed when Ferdinand Marcos was in power in the Philippines since he invested more resources into his home Province of Ilocos Norte. The first wave of Filipino immigrants included many from the agricultural Ilocos region because it is an agriculturally based region. The Filipino population in the U.S. in the 1970's consisted of a sizeable portion of people from Ilocos. Illocanos felt a certain loyalty towards Marcos because he was from the same region. This loyalty was a key backdrop for developments within Filipino communities during the 1970s.

The second characteristic is *generation*, which encompasses someone's country of birth. Whether a person was born in the United States or in the Philippines is an important differentiation made by Filipinos. Generation refers to which generation a person is in their family lineage in the United States. "The official definition of generation centers around birthplace, such as U.S.-born or foreign born. Immigrants become the first generation and their children the second-generation (Park 1999, 139-140)."

The third characteristic is *class*, which is important because the pre- and post-1965 groups in Seattle each came to the U.S. with a different class standing, background, and experience in the Philippines. This is a defining transnational factor within the Filipino community predominately because of the preexisting class-based hierarchy within the Philippines. Class standing transfers from the Philippines to the U.S., may not count for anything within white dominant society, however it continues to have meaning amongst other Filipinos. Immigrants prior to 1965 were predominately working-class who came to the United States for economic reasons, came from families who were also working class, and from small rural provinces. Many in this group came from the agricultural Ilocos region of the Philippines. Immigrants after 1965 were predominately middle class professionals, many of whom came from urban centers. Their reasons for coming to the United States varied from social, political, and economic reasons. After 1965, the class nature of Filipino communities throughout the United States was transformed by the influx of the migration of middle class families and divisions arose because of the different needs of the two groups. These divisions were particularly evident in the Filipino community in Seattle because of its history as an established Filipino community with working class roots.

The fourth characteristic is *political orientation*, which refers specifically to an individual's viewpoint on the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. Some individuals supported the Marcos government. Others did not want to become involved in the issue. And those involved with the KDP were adamantly opposed to the Marcos government. However, political orientation also refers to ideology, particularly in regard to the activists and whether they held ideologies that were reformist or revolutionary.

These four characteristics form the basis for the three groups that arose within the FCS. The first group, who I refer to as the "old guard", was predominately middle class first-generation immigrants involved with and in the leadership of the FCS. They wanted to maintain the status quo within the organization. A distinction should be made between the "old-timers" of

the community and the “old guard” who had different viewpoints on the future of the FCS. They were both first-generation immigrants, however the old-timers were predominately from the working class and the old guard was mostly middle class. The old guard championed the cause of the newcomer, post-1965 immigrants, over the elderly working class old-timers of the Seattle Filipino community. Many of the old guard immigrated after 1965, which easily explains why this may have been the case. However, there were some who were middle class immigrants who migrated prior to 1965 and fell into the old guard camp. The old guard members tended to be Marcos sympathizers based on common origins in the Illocos region, or they claimed to remain neutral when it came to Marcos and Philippine politics. However, many of those who said that they were “neutral” were implicitly supporters. They had a reluctance to state their affiliations, particularly on matters related to human rights abuses in the Philippines, the Marcos regime, or issues affecting Filipinos in the U.S. This was further complicated by the fact that many members of the old guard and leaders of the FCS were retired military soldiers from World War II or the “war brides”, wives of these men, and support of the Marcos regime was considered to be an exercise of Filipino patriotism. Their patriotism and allegiance to Marcos was also framed in terms of whether an individual was pro- or anti-Philippine consulate. Many of the members and leaders of the FCS were also members of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*.

The other two groups were predominately made up of the second-generation Filipinos discussed in Chapter Two. I refer to them as one group, the “reformers” because they shared reform-based interests. However, two groups emerged within the reform movement. A split that is attributed to differences over focusing solely on Filipinos in the U.S. and both Filipinos in the Philippines and U.S., opinions about Marcos, alignment with the KDP, and ideology. In some ways these differences were similar to the divergence between the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement. “Black power came to be defined as the cutting edge of black activism, a movement whose militancy contrasted with the more measured tone of the civil rights movement and seemed to signal a break from past modes of black activism” (Peniel 2009). The first group, referred to here as the “radicals”, chose to affiliate with the KDP. The radicals were interested in using the FCS as a political space. They were viewed by the old guard as radical due to their concerns and opposition to what was going on in the Philippines under the Marcos dictatorship. They were also concerned with issues affecting Filipinos in the United States, specifically in the Alaskan canneries. They used the strategy of building coalitions based on Asian American and Third-World identities. Though the radicals were predominately second-generation Filipino Americans, this group also included immigrants who came to the U.S. fleeing the Marcos dictatorship or to help build the movement in the U.S. against the Marcos dictatorship, as well as old-timers who were sympathetic to their cause.

The second group, who I refer to as “nation-based activists” consisted of second-generation Filipino Americans who were allied with Dorothy and Fred Cordova and were exclusively interested in issues that affected Filipinos in the United States, unlike the radicals who were also interested in issues affecting Filipinos in the Philippines. Like the radicals, this group was also interested in social service issues such as housing. They were also specifically interested in services for youth. Both groups were reform-oriented, however the radicals had a revolutionary political orientation. The two groups had major differences in their viewpoints on the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. There was an age gap between these groups as well: the radicals attended college, became politicized in the 1960s and 1970s, and were part of the “hippie” generation, whereas the nation-based activists were older, often had children and

families of their own, the “bridge” generation, so named because they bridged between the first generation and the younger second generation.

### **Divisions Between the Reformers**

The radical group’s strategy differed from that of the nation-based activists when it came to issues that fell outside of the purview of ‘Filipino American issues’. The nation-based activists defined ‘Filipino American issues’ as only those issues occurring on American soil affecting Filipinos. The radicals were blatantly open about their affiliation with the KDP and their desire for the FCS to become involved with what was happening in the Philippines and to advocate against the Marcos regime. They also used the KDP’s newspaper *Ang Katipunan* to educate people about what was going on in FCS and to move individuals into action to support their cause.

Within the reformer’s group, tensions developed between the radicals and the nation-based activists who felt that Filipino American issues were more important than issues that affected Filipinos in the Philippines. Those affiliated with the KDP felt that both issues were important, and that especially given the institution of martial law in the Philippines, work to support Filipinos in the Philippines was increasingly important. The battleground through which these conflicts played out was the Young Filipino People’s Far West Convention.

### **The Far West Convention**

The first Young Filipino People’s Far West Convention was held in 1971, sponsored by Filipino Youth Activities (FYA) and lead by Fred Cordova and FYA youth director<sup>118</sup> Dorothy Cordova. The Cordovas became influential in Seattle by forming FYA in 1957, an organization that provided “wholesome leisure-time activities and human services that meet the unique need of Filipino American youth, their family and their neighbors of color” (Filipino Youth Activities of Seattle, Inc. 2010). FYA started the Far West Convention as a way of discussing Filipino American identity issues among Filipino American youth. A different city hosted the Far West Convention each year. The first Far West Convention was summarized as follows:

The Filipino Youth Activities of Seattle (FYA) is sponsoring a youth convention on August 18-21 at Seattle University, to service the community organizers and youth groups in the Pacific Northwest states. This conference, called Young Filipino People’s Far West Convention aims to focus on the ‘lack of motivation in many Filipino communities and in the youth...to be an achieving and articulate minority group.’ According to conference organizers, an appraisal and understanding of this dilemma may help our communities understand and overcome such obstacles. The preliminary work sheet of the conference decried the state of Filipino-Americans in the white society. It said: ‘It is obvious that we Filipino Americans have not really ‘made it’ in this society. Nowhere at decision making levels or in economically and politically influential positions is the Filipino to be found. He is hidden in the backroom of restaurants washing dishes. He is hidden in the service rooms among those who have poor grades in school and have dropped out of the competitive mainstream. We have been sterilized of the motivation to achieve and better ourselves. Obviously, we have learned to be happy with

<sup>118</sup> Cordova, Dorothy. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington

that we are, discipline in the service of those who have imposed this mind-trap on us.’ The convention called for a mini revolution: ‘This must be changed, We must emerge from this repressed state. This convention is a step in our QUEST FOR EMERGENCE.’<sup>119</sup>

This description illustrates the focus on Filipino American identity that was symbolic of the first stage of Filipino American activism in Seattle. This focal point is also demonstrated in the following description of The Far West Convention by Florante Ibanez (2003), a former KDP member and Far West Convention attendee from Los Angeles:

It was viewed politically by many as an “Identity / Youth” conference with an opportunity to network and socialize with other West Coast Filipino students and community leaders involved with the emerging social service agencies... The Convention gave the delegates the opportunity to meet, share and ponder our collective Filipino American experience. Since the FWC was not a formal organization, resolutions passed during the closing session were offered in spirit for local organizers to try to implement (where and when applicable) and to express the collective deliberations of the various workshops attended by the delegates.

Relationships were developed amongst Filipino Americans and an agenda based on questions of a Filipino American nation-based identity was established.

For those who attended the 1971 Far West Convention it was a transformational event. From being strangers who were suspect of each other...from not being fully aware of the discrimination Filipino Americans experienced and its consequences...from being unsure as to what to do next...from feeling divided and incapable of working together...we fulfilled the theme of ‘A Quest for Emergence’ and came together as a purposeful, unified and determined group to stake the place in the Civil Rights Movement for Filipino Americans and to ensure that every member of our community would be free from discrimination and provided the full opportunities that America had to offer.<sup>120</sup>

The second annual Far West Convention was held in Stockton, California. Midway through the year there had been a planning meeting in San Diego, the goal of which was to address the questions being raised and solidify an understanding of the goals of the Far West Convention.

At the Seattle First Annual Young Filipino People’s Far West Convention held in August of 1971 there was a strong emphasis on the Pilipino identity, ‘What does it mean to be a Pilipino?’, ‘What are our major problems?’, ‘Why do we have these problems?’ At the San Diego Pilipino People’s Samahan Conference it was decided at a preparatory meeting attended by representatives from San Diego, the Bay Area and Stockton that it would be necessary to define areas and to come up with concrete ideas and actions. San Diego was to be the first half of this process and Stockton the second half. Thus at the San Diego Convention this exchange of ideas and experiences led to a higher understanding of the

<sup>119</sup> Kalayaan International Newspaper, “Seattle Filipino Youth Convention,” June 1971, Volume One Number One.

<sup>120</sup> Farwest Reunion, “Farwest Convention Reunion 1971”. 2009. Retrieved on January 7, 2010 from, <http://farwestreunion.org/Information.html>.

movement. This marked a major step forward. An attempt was made to work out concrete ways in which we could deal with some of these problems. But the San Diego Conference proved to be too short.<sup>121</sup>

The agenda articulated in this passage focusing upon understanding the roots of Filipino identity was built upon at the Stockton convention, where it was emphasized that the focus of the conference was “to deal concretely with methods of alleviating our community problems.”<sup>122</sup> However, tensions arose between the activists as the more radical activists took the questions further to ask questions about the Marcos government. The nation-based activists wanted to focus on identity questions and did not want to connect this to what was happening in the Philippines. The following quote by nation-based activist Peter Jamero, a transplant from California in 1970, shows the opinion held by the nation-based activists regarding the Marcos regime and an incident at the first convention.

Only an unscheduled demonstration by a group of young anti-Marcos delegates marred the convention’s success. We had considered providing a forum for discussing the Marcos issue but rejected the idea because the topic was not consistent with the theme of the conference, which focused on the concerns of Filipinos in America. The anti-Marcos delegates demanded that their issue be given a place on an already crowded agenda. We stood our ground and ultimately prevailed (Jamero 2006, 187).

As Jamero’s quote shows, the nation-based activists viewed the discussion of the Marcos regime and conditions in the Philippines as separate from the question of Filipino identity and the quest for equity for Filipinos.

The 1975 Far West Convention was the site through which the conflicts manifested between the nation-based activists and the radicals who since the first few conferences had become members of the KDP. Differences occurred after the formation of the KDP and the desire of attendees to discuss issues pertinent to both Filipinos in the United States and Philippines.

However, also reported in the Documentation Report, the FWC witnessed a confusing and political setback during the closing session which frustrated some delegates to the point of their walking out during the lengthy deliberations over resolutions from the Immigration and New Society Workshops. The new KDP was clearly present as an organization involved in both the planning and in the program and as workshops facilitators. It appeared that the KDP was responsible for the debate on the resolutions. On the other hand many delegates agreed with what the KDP members had to say about society’s problems both here and in the Philippines. Melinda Paras was selected by the FWC Coordination Committee to deliver the keynote address which was very well received according to FWC evaluation surveys collected after the Convention. Many were unaware until she was introduced and later, that Melinda was not only a young dynamic speaker but also a National Leader of the KDP (Ibanez 2003, 7-8).

<sup>121</sup> Kalayaan International Newspaper, “The Role of Pilipino Conferences,” September October 1972. Volume Two Number Three.

<sup>122</sup> Kalayaan International Newspaper, “Second Annual Far West Pilipino Peoples’ Convention,” September October 1972, Volume Two Number Three.

These conflicts had reverberations across the country between those affiliated with the KDP and those whose sympathies lay with the nation-based activists. By the 1981 elections in the FCS, the two second-generation reformist groups split and the nation-based activists removed themselves from the FCS. The groups could no longer work together.

In retrospect, Dorothy Cordova said in an interview that she cried the whole way home from the Los Angeles Farwest Convention.<sup>123</sup> Emotions ran high during this period for all involved because of the level of commitment that activists had for the beliefs that they were working to defend. However, years later, Dorothy and Fred Cordova explained that they really had more in common than that from which they diverged. During this period emotions and interactions were intense and it was hard for everyone involved to see their commonalities.<sup>124</sup>

After the disagreements over the Farwest Convention in 1975, the nation-based activists removed themselves from the movement to reform the FCS. They redirected their work to focus on the Filipino Youth Activities (FYA) program that they continued to run, which focused on Filipino American cultural preservation through Filipino dance, a drill team, as well as other youth activities.<sup>125</sup> Dorothy and Fred Cordova, key players amongst the nation-based activists, founded the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) in 1982. FANHS is a community-based organization whose mission is "...to preserve, document, and present Filipino American history" (FAHNS 2008) and support scholarly research and artistic work. FAHNS has a national office and archives in Seattle, as well as twenty-seven chapters throughout the United States. Dorothy Cordova was also the Director of the Demonstration Project on Asian Americans.<sup>126</sup> The nation-based activists continued their equity and identity-based framework in these projects. However, despite the split between the second-generation reformers, the radicals continued the reform movement within the FCS.

### **The Radicals Agenda and Strategies**

Between the 1950s and 1960s the leadership of the FCS became entrenched by leaders of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* and former military officers, which was reflected in positions held from president down to the Council Members. Dan Sarusal who was the president of the FCS for two terms, 1950-1951 and 1951-1952, "was popularly known in the community as an active leader of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* attaining various esteemed positions. He was Supreme Consistory Commander for some eight years" (Rigor and Rigor 1986, 87). Lescum Dela Cruz was president of the FCS from 1959-1961, "a retired and highly-decorated U.S. Army officer" (Rigor and Rigor 1986, 95). According to (Rigor and Rigor 1986) Dela Cruz was extremely popular within the Filipino community because he won the presidency by a landslide. He was acclaimed because government officials visited the FCS under his administration including Ambassador Carlos P. Romulo, senators Ferdinand Marcos and Ambrosio Padilla and their

---

<sup>123</sup> Cordova, Dorothy. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>124</sup> Cordova, Dorothy. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

Cordova, Fred. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> The Demonstration Project on Asian Americans "Began 1973 as a 6 month research planning grant funded by HEW Social and Rehabilitation Service to study Asian American communities along the West Coast and identify the barriers and service gaps which prevent eligible Asian Americans from receiving social services, and to develop methods for overcoming these barriers; demonstration sites also in San Francisco and Los Angeles, California." Demonstration Project on Asian Americans Finding Aid. [2004]. University of Washington Special Collections.

wives, and many provincial governors and local officials. Tony Baruso a member of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* was the president from 1963-1965. Urbano Quijance a retired U.S. Army officer and leader in the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* held the presidency for two terms from 1965-1967 and 1969-1971. In between Quijance's terms Gene Navarro was the president from 1967-1969 and simultaneously held the presidency of the Cannery Worker's Union. Silvestre Tangalan held the presidency during most of the period focused on in this dissertation, from 1971-1979 as well as from 1981-1984. As is reflected in the old ways in which the old guard led the FCS, Rigor and Rigor (1986) describe Tangalan as placing social obligations in high esteem.

The radicals used a variety of strategies to combat the stronghold that the old guard held on the FCS. The strategies used to organize within the FCS included education of the membership about their dual agenda, the conditions of Filipinos in the U.S. and in the Philippines. Their primary tactics included conversations, submitting policy suggestions to the FCS council, distributing the KDP's *Ang Katipunan* newspaper, and running for election. They were very transparent about their affiliation with the KDP and activities on behalf of the KDP, including demonstrations at the Federal building in downtown Seattle.

The most important strategy that the radicals employed included multi-generational coalition building. Though the old guard viewed the reformers as "kids" who were stirring up trouble, the reformers collaborated with certain old-timers in the community who were sympathetic to the reformer agenda. These old-timers tended to have personal connections to the reformers, such as being friends or relatives. Nemesio Domingo Sr., who was involved in the FCS prior to the reform efforts ran in each election from 1969 onwards and served in various positions including council member for 13 years until 1981. Nemesio Domingo Sr. was an important ally who was well respected within the FCS as a veteran of World War II and member of the *Dimas-Alang* and as will be explained in the following chapter, played a key role in the reform of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union. Adelina (Ade) Domingo, his wife and the mother of Silme and Nemesio Domingo Jr., also held positions within FCS during this time.

The strategies used by activists are reflective of a Gramscian War of Position, specifically characterized by education of the masses and building a system of alliances. Anderson (1976) argues that Gramsci equated the War of Position with building a united front, which was a term used by Lenin. Anderson (1976) claims, "the strategic objective of the United Front was to win over the masses in the West to revolutionary Marxism, by patient organization and skillful agitation for working-class unity in action" (47). An analysis of the organizing within the FCS reveals that activists were in fact using organization and agitation to build support for their agenda both within the FCS and more broadly to build support for Filipinos in the Philippines through revolution. For Gramsci, the building of a united front "signified the necessity for deep and serious ideological-political work among the masses, untainted by sectarianism, before the seizure of power could be on the agenda" (Anderson 1976, 60). Thus the activists in Seattle built necessary alliances prior to their attempt to seize power in the FCS, which was a starting point for their larger social change agenda.

The KDP ramped up its efforts through FAR, *Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community*, for the 1979 election to support Vincent Lawsin as president.<sup>127</sup> Lawsin was a guerilla fighter in World War II, a merchant marine, and a Grandmaster of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* (Seattle Times 2010). Although Lawsin represented a different party, they worked in collaboration to defeat Tangalan who had already been in power for eight years.

---

<sup>127</sup> Dale Borgeson, email correspondence with author, March 26, 2010.

According to Dale Borgeson, a national KDP leader, “Lawsin was a moderate who was not pro-consulate and who was open to working with the KDP and to recognizing the legitimacy of opposition to martial law within community politics...Prior to this Tangalan/Baruso set the pro-consulate pole with their domination of FCC.”<sup>128</sup> Ade Domingo ran for the First Vice President position on behalf of FAR. The KDP built a coalition to support Domingo and Lawsin, which is reflected in the quote below.

We wanted a coalition that would uphold the legitimacy of caring about the Philippine issue within the community and that would also support assertion of minority rights against discrimination. The Cordovas supported Tangalan, but he lost because we mobilized third wave immigrants, students, and others who wanted to open up the FCC and break control of the small pro-Consulate clique that ran it. It was a true coalition and the KDP as the left forces did not 'control' it per se, although we provided much of the energy and strategy within a broad unity framework. It was really like trying to open up democratic space within the community, similar to what anti-martial law forces were trying to do in the Philippines. The victory was quite significant in achieving this opening and in activating many 3rd wave professionals within community politics.<sup>129</sup>

Although the nation-based activists did not support their slate, Lawsin and Domingo were elected President and First Vice President. Their election success is representative of the multi-generation coalitions that were built within the FCS. These multi-generational coalitions also extended out of the FCS into the larger community where coalitions were built with Alaskeros and other old-timers in the International District with whom the activists worked with on housing and social service issues. The only archival evidence of their election and administration is captured in *Pamana* (Rigor and Rigor 1986).

Vincent Lawsin won a tightly-contested election for president of the Community. His administration is said to have faced a tough line-up of Councilmembers even as the organization enjoyed long seasons of prosperity. Lawsin and his hardworking lady vice-president Ade Domingo initiated the leasing of the Community Center for Bingo socials which generated for the community at least \$2,300 monthly income (119).

Although Lawsin and Domingo’s election was a huge victory for the activists, the two years of their administration proved to be highly contested.

### **1980: Political Differences Within the FCS**

The few years that Lawsin and Domingo were in power and leading up to the 1980 election were riddled with in fighting. The fact that Lawsin and Domingo were from different parties was a contentious issue, as well as a reproduction of “Filipino-style” politics. As FCS past-President Bert Caolile stated in an interview,

At one time we had the president and the vice president running as two different parties. That’s the Philippine style politics. Meaning you can have a unlike the US system where

---

<sup>128</sup> Dale Borgeson, email correspondence with author, March 27, 2010.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.



in the president and vice president are belong to one party. In the Philippines you may have a vice president who belongs to another party so you could imagine if the president is a republican and the and the vice president is a democrat things will not work well so that is what we did here so that has been changed so we have the president and the vice president running as a team. In other words you know before the vice president and the president they were running individually.<sup>130</sup>

By 1980 the old guard leadership of FCS launched a counter-offensive against the reform efforts. The strain between the old guard leadership of FCS and the second-generation reformers became explicit. Lawsin and Domingo were not members of the KDP, however they were regarded as a threat to the old guard for two reasons: their affiliation with the second generation and their administration's support of the policies that were designed by the second generation. Regardless of how many reformers were elected as officers of the FCS, they were not able to truly lead the FCS. As Bob Santos described it,

I was elected into the Filipino council...but we never emerged as leaders. They were always the president, the vice president. They were the leaders. They were the spokespeople for the Filipino community. Filipino politics is more internal than it is external. The president of the Filipino community wielded a lot of power running the ...Filipino council meetings. The president you know always does his oratory.... It isn't what you can do for the community, it's who you know and who can speak the dialect.<sup>131</sup>

Santos' quote reflects the divisions between the radical activists and the old guard. His reference to speaking the dialect shows the differences beyond those that were ideological and strategic. There were language, generation, and cultural differences as well. The younger generation felt like outsiders because they could not speak the language that the Filipino immigrants spoke to one another. The radical FCS activists were unable to make change within the organization because of their differences. However, in some ways the reformers were ready to leave the organization because they were not able to push their agenda forward.

All the candidates campaigned for better Filipino youth programs, housing for the elderly, and raising funds for the renovation of the community center. The Young Turks were sincere in wanting to see these campaign promises fulfilled, but more time and energy were usually spent by the council on arguments over the operation of the annual queen contest (the council's biggest fund raiser) and other frivolous issues. After two terms on the Filipino Community council, the Young Turks decided to serve out their term and not run for re-election (Santos 2002, 69).

As Santos explained above, the old guard leadership made the experience of participating on the council frustrating for the reformers who were referred to as "The Young Turks" by Sylestre Tangalan (Jamero 2006).<sup>132</sup> The old guard made it clear that the reformers were not going to make changes in the organization and if that was not clear enough, they found a way to get rid of

---

<sup>130</sup> Caoilie, Bert. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>131</sup> Santos, Bob. 2004. Interview.

<sup>132</sup> Bob Santos does not distinguish between the radicals and Young Turks, however Jamero (2006) only refers to the bridge generation activists as the Young Turks.

them by red-baiting them, in other words accusing them of being communists and persecuting them within the organization. The old guard was comfortable in their position of power and in order to maintain the status quo, they had to get rid of the reformers.

There were many reasons that the old guard did not want the reformers to be a part of the organization. Interviews reveal that the old guard saw the organization as an organization predominately for immigrants and that it should not shift its priorities to also serve second-generation Filipino Americans who wanted to be a part of the organization. There was a generational divide between the groups and a difference in family immigration history. However, the major reason that the old guard pushed the reformers out of the FCS was related to political ideologies. The old guard became aware of the radical's affiliation with the KDP, as well as their concerns about the Marcos dictatorship and conditions in the Philippines. The old guard wanted to keep these types of ideas out of the larger Filipino American community and particularly out of the FCS. David Della explained that once the old guard were aware of these affiliations and ideologies, they were ushered out of the FCS because they

started pushing an agenda that really was overwhelming for a lot of the traditional leadership of the community...the more conservative element of the community, some... pro Marcos elements reacted very strongly against our strategy. And I think it was 1980, 1980 elections in the community we were ousted out of office...resulting from a red scare that more conservative forces in the community launched against us. And their campaign was "beware of the red hand".<sup>133</sup>

Della's reference above to the slogan 'beware of the red hand' is just one illustration of how the established FCS leadership drew connections between the KDP-affiliated reformers and the specter of communism. Even during the 1980s, the red taint of communism would prove to be overwhelming for the reform platform in the 1981 elections. As Della said, the second-generation groups were red-baited and labeled as being Communist. Santos explained that there always was a tension between the reformers and the old guard that particularly had to do with political orientation and alignment for or against Marcos:

During the anti Marcos stuff where all of the leadership at that time came from the province Marcos came from. So they were all cousins and lovey, lovey, dovey, not even considering the politics that and you know the problems associated with the repression in the Philippines. Filipinos here didn't think about that. You know it was just their buddies cousin was the president and so that really divided the community up quite a bit during those years in the seventies and the eighties. We would still attempt some of the meetings and stuff, but there was always this tension that always occurred with them and us kind of thing.

As activists explained to me, the Marcos debate was a highly emotive issue. During this time period interactions were extremely tense between those who fell on either side of the issue. This was also not the first time that a group was labeled as communist and ostracized by the FCS. During the McCarthy era of the 1950's, previous labor organizers like Chris Mensalvas<sup>134</sup> was also red-baited and pushed out of the FCS.

---

<sup>133</sup> Della, David. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>134</sup> Chris Mensalvas was a leader and past president of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union.

Polarization between pro and anti-Marcos factions and red-baiting was also occurring at both a national and international<sup>135</sup> level in the late 1970's and early 1980's. As legal documents<sup>136</sup> including a selection of Philippine and KDP materials state,

This section is intended to give...a vivid sense of the growing threat posed by the Community-led movement in the Philippines...and to this extent, an equally serious threat was posed by the movement's overseas counterpart, the KDP. This response is best illustrated by the vicious anti-community attack, launched by an Anti-Marcos, pro-imperialist newspaper, Philippine News, led by Editor Alex Esclamade, upon the KDP in 1979.<sup>137</sup>

As this quote exemplifies, anti-communist hysteria started to take place as Filipinos both within the FCS and externally were feeling threatened by the radicals. The threat was on both shores and contestation occurred over control of: the FCS, institutions within the broad Filipino community in the United States, and the Philippines. As an article in the *Southeast Asia Chronicle* reported, "The polarization evident in 1981 has been a long time coming. Since the 1930s, factions of the elite have competed among themselves for control of the Philippines political power, using national elections as their primary vehicle."<sup>138</sup> Individuals within the FCS had strong ties to the upper class in the Philippines, as well as to the Marcos administration.

The radicals strongly believed in their efforts and made it clear to the public that the old guard of the FCS was red-baiting them.

Perhaps the most shameful ploy that the conservative "Progressives" are using is to play upon people's fears by spreading anti-communist intrigues and rumors, McCarthy style. It is the same tune that Tangalan, Tangalan, Beltran and Mendoza used during the last election. It is not surprising to see that even self-proclaimed liberals...have been at the center of the effort to spread anti-communist intrigues. Instead of speaking to the concrete issues at hand, the conservatives cry out: "Beware of the communists!" Anti-communist hysteria is one of the oldest and dangerous tricks to intimidate and mislead people thereby jeopardizing their democratic participation. In this case, anti-communism is being used by the "Progressives" because members of the FAR and its supporters disagree with the conservative ideas and practices of the "Progressives". We are confident that the members of the community are able to see through this deceitful smokescreen and discern the real issues at hand.<sup>139</sup>

Despite the attack by the old guard, the radicals persisted in their efforts.

---

<sup>135</sup> Rocamora, Joel. April, 1982. *Turning Point: The NDF Takes The Lead*. In *Southeast Asia Chronicle*. Issue No. 83. Box 5 Folder 5, JCP-UW.

<sup>136</sup> Legal documents from the Domingo and Viernes lawsuits.

<sup>137</sup> Selection of Philippine/KDP Materials. [n.d.]. Box 5 Folder 5, JCP-UW.

<sup>138</sup> Rocamora, *Turning Point: The NDF Takes The Lead*.

<sup>139</sup> KDP. (n.d.). "Unity-Conservative/"Progressive" Style Tangalan's Impossible Dream: 'Ako ang Hari'." In *ang Katipunan* newspaper. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.

## Reforming the FCS: The 1981 Election

The radicals persisted in the 1981 election despite the battles with the old guard. They had faith that the Filipinos who were a part of the community would see through the old guard's efforts.

We hold no illusion that changing a conservative community into a progressive community is an easy task. It takes time and patience. However, we are confident that the broad Filipino Community will reject the ploys of anti-communist hysteria, anomalies, deceit and lies, and join us in building a strong and progressive Filipino community.<sup>140</sup>

The radicals saw the 1981 election as a major turning point and opportunity for change within the FCS, as indicated in the quote below from the KDP's newspaper *Ang Katipunan*:

We, in the KDP, strongly believe that what is at stake is the continued growth and strength of reform and progress in the community that is being rabidly blocked by the conservative 'Progressive' slate. This year's election marks the most organized campaign to challenge the longstanding conservative ideas and practices perpetrated by Tangalan and his supporters. The most backward practices in the community such as vote buying, [and] abuses of the compadre system are being challenged by FAR and hundreds of progressive-minded Filipinos.<sup>141</sup>

The 1981 elections were the most contentious that the FCS membership experienced. The radicals ran their own slate under the campaign name, "*the Filipinos for Action and Reform*" (*FAR*). FAR continued their agenda and ran candidates for election: Ade Domingo ran for president and Jacque Agtuca, David Della, Silme Domingo, Leni Marin, and Gene Viernes for council seats.<sup>142</sup> The old guard ran their slate under the campaign name, "*the Progressives*" and their presidential candidate was Silvestre Tangalan.

The Progressives argued that voting for their entire slate would "dissolve disruptive elements and foster solidarity."<sup>143</sup> The Progressives program included eleven points.

1. Full scholarship
2. Orientation/Workshop for new residents
3. Establish closer relations with (Filipino) Community leaders
4. Establish a Skills Bank
5. Continue stabilized finances
6. Mutual Aid Fund
7. Continue sports program development
8. Coordinate with the IDIC (International District Drop-In Center) regarding services to the elderly
9. Establish congenial relations with other Communities
10. Revise the present Constitution
11. Continue to hold a Job Fair in the Community Center at least once a year<sup>144</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> The Progressives. [n.d.]. Our Program of Administration. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

The Progressives' platform outlined above did not offer new programs; rather, it merely reinforced programs that the FCS already had. Since the reformers started pushing their agenda in 1970, which included programs for the youth and elderly, the Progressives were compelled to include ways that they could support these groups into their platform. However, unlike the reformers who wanted to provide services to youth "by opening up its doors to those youth and youth-oriented organizations at little or no costs and offering other incentives to promote their greater utilization of the Center and its facilities", the Progressives' solution to the needs of youth was the half-hearted response of continued sports programs.<sup>145</sup> While the reformers suggested ways of saving and constructing housing for the elderly, the Progressives wanted to help the elderly by coordinating with an outside agency, the IDIC. My analysis of this shows that the Progressives wanted to maintain the status quo, but wanted to portray support by addressing some of the needs of the youth and elderly in their platform in a half-hearted way.

Tangalan, who had already served as president for the eight years prior, wrote a letter to Filipinos in the community as part of his candidacy to promote himself and to sway the community away from supporting the FAR slate in the election.

I need not mention in detail what transpired this last year in our Community. But briefly, there was turmoil, verbal infighting, and at one of our meetings our President was threatened with physical assault. Such unruly behavior goes beyond the realm of decency and should never be condoned. Can we allow two more years of infighting and disruptive meetings? Can we allow to let [sic] the business of our Community to lay unattended while others pursue their own ends? Can we sit idly by and watch the dream of a strong, united Community be destroyed in our lifetime? If you feel as I do then your answer to these questions is obvious. No! No, we cannot and will not allow these disruptive elements to hinder us. We will not abandon our natural instinct which is to go forward and progress with each step we take...It will be said that I am seeking office again merely because I am power hungry. That is not so. The truth is that all I desire is to be as useful as possible to the service of our Community, to do anything, go anywhere and hold any office, or no office as may be thought most desirable. I want my candidacy to renew our creative spirit and sense of purpose and to carry our message to all of you in the Community regardless of what your beliefs may be.<sup>146</sup>

Although Tangalan argued for unity, he also described the reformers as disrupting the organization, therefore it seems that the unity he was calling for was a unity between those who were willing to accept the organization the way it was. In other words, his party defined progress as maintenance of the status quo by pushing for the FCS to go back to the way it was before the reformers launched a movement to co-opt the organization as a part of their mission to build a social movement and for change in the Filipino community.

Despite the hope held by the radicals, they were proven wrong. The radicals did not win one single officer position in 1981.<sup>147</sup> The support of the community went fully behind the old guard platform, despite the status of both Ade and Nemesio Domingo as longstanding members

---

<sup>145</sup> Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970's. (1970). Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.

<sup>146</sup> Tanglan, Sylvestre. [n.d]. Letter to Friends and Voters. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.

<sup>147</sup> Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. January 11 1981. "Election Results." Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.

of the FCS. The 1981 elections were riddled with infighting and the old guard of the FCS won the elections. As Bob Santos explained, the activists seeking reform in the FCS were never fully accepted within the organization. They were stigmatized as being “youngsters” whose ideas were not considered valid because they were seen as being immature. “We didn’t last very long... We were elected to office as council members but they never heard our ideas or did they care for our ideas or did they trust us.”<sup>148</sup> The reformers were pushed out of the FCS before they were able to make many improvements in the organization. The power to make real decisions within the FCS stayed with the old guard, which is illuminated by the election records.<sup>149</sup>

The old guard did whatever they had to do to run the radicals out of the FCS. Not only did they run a smear campaign, but according to the radicals, they also tampered with the 1981 election.

Another indication of the desperate efforts of the conservatives to maintain their backward stranglehold on the community is the widespread anomalies that have plagued the election. In ruling against the countless ineligible voters, members of the Election Committee cited documented examples of fraudulent signatures on membership application, applications lacking signatures and addresses, registration by proxy and many other abuses. It is noteworthy to point out that the abuses were most obvious among registration solicitors identified with Silvestre Tangalan and the “Progressive” slate. In their desperate effort to maintain their influence and position, the “Progressive” slate has trampled on the democratic process necessary for a clean election. Unfortunately this desperation has denied the voting opportunity for numerous members of the community.<sup>150</sup>

The allegation of tampering with the election is further exemplified by the fact that Tony Baruso was the election chairman. He collected ballots from both the Cannery Worker’s Union and the Burgos Lodge #10. The reformers did not trust Baruso. In fact, it was later proved that he forged ballots and tampered with an election of the International Longshore Warehouse Union.<sup>151</sup>

Conservative people within FCS were further threatened by the questions the second-generation was raising about Marcos’ form of rule in the Philippines. At that time there were also political differences between FCS, the reform movement of the cannery worker’s union, and the KDP in regards to the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. In 1981, this conflict resulted in the murders of Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo in the cannery worker’s union hall in downtown Seattle. As young leaders in the KDP and the union, the two were vocal in their opposition to the Marcos regime and involvement in the anti-martial law movement in the United States. Information related to their murders further illuminates the reasons why some in the FCS at the time resisted the political agenda that the second-generation groups were promoting within the organization. Some members of the old guard received direct benefits from the web of corruption in the union, the canneries, and from connections to the Marcos regime. One example is Tony Baruso, who ultimately supplied the weapon and hired the hit men for the murders of Domingo and Viernes. Baruso’s role in FCS leadership highlights the ways in which political affiliations

<sup>148</sup> Santos, Bob. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>149</sup> Rigor, C.N. & Rigor, R (Eds.). 1986. *Pamana: Half a Century of Filipino Community Life in the Emerald City*. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community Center.

<sup>150</sup> KDP. (n.d.). Unity-Conservative/“Progressive” Style Tangalan’s Impossible Dream: ‘Ako ang Hari?’.

<sup>151</sup> Mast, Terri. 2008. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

directed by family immigration history, class, generation and political orientation, were structured within the FCS.

These political differences, which stemmed from alliances based in class, generation, time of immigration, and political orientation in regards to the Marcos dictatorship, and confounded by personal greed, fueled the divisions within the FCS and led to the removal of the radicals from the FCS. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the differences between those involved in the FCS in the 1970s was more complex than just two political parties or two differing ideologies. The failure of the reformers and radicals alone to change the FCS was not as simple as not winning an election or the old pushing out the new: the reasons for the inability to make change must also include an analysis of the organizing strategies used.

## Conclusion

The concluding question that this chapter answers is why the reform movement within the FCS eventually failed. The reform movement in the FCS failed for two reasons. First, the movement was not effective because of the specific strategies that the radicals used to organize. And second, it failed because of the divisions within the organizations based in time of immigration, class, generation, and political orientation.

The strategy of building cross-generational coalitions with well-respected individuals such as Vincent Lawsin and Nemesio and Ade Domingo proved to be effective. However, the overtly political tone of the ways that they framed their organizing efforts created a countermovement within the FCS. The old guard reacted to their affiliation with the KDP and the possibility that those in the group were communists. As Bruce Occena, a former national KDP leader and strategist, explained to me, the radicals went into the FCS with their *Ang Katipunan* newspapers and were too open about their opposition to the Marcos regime in the Philippines.<sup>152</sup> This will be further discussed in the next chapter in comparison to the strategies used by the reformers of Alaska Cannery Worker's Union. However, it is clear that the strategy of the War of Position did not work in the case of the FCS because of the countermovement within FCS, which made it clear that the power structure within the organization was too firmly entrenched. The activists' strategy did not break through that power structure for longer than winning a majority of council positions in 1979.

The divisions within the FCS led to the eventual downfall of the reform movements. However, even if the radicals had not had their overtly political approach to their reform efforts, the old guard still would not have accepted the reformers efforts based on their differences in ideology and goals for the organizations. These differences stemmed from the divisions based in time of immigration, class, and generation. The old guard wanted the FCS to remain an organization that focused on social activities and the reformers wanted an organization to take up the cause of Filipinos who were being discriminated against in the U.S. As demonstrated in the last chapter of this dissertation, the FCS eventually addressed more of the social service concerns pushed by the reformers.

After the 1981 elections the reformers removed themselves from the FCS. David summed up the consequences of the work of second-generation Filipino Americans and political strategies by saying "Since then we've been really outside the Filipino community."<sup>153</sup> Though the second-generation groups have worked outside of the institutionalized form of Filipino community, they

---

<sup>152</sup> Occena, Bruce. 2008. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>153</sup> Della, David. 2004. Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

continued to build an activist-based Filipino community that was centered on the issues that they considered to be important. And today, these divisions still exist. Interviews with Filipino Americans who had been activists during this time revealed that there is still tension within the FCS between the American born Filipinos and those who have immigrated since 1965 to the U.S. The positions of power in the FCS continued to be concentrated in the hands of first-generation Filipinos.

David Della explained that after the murders of Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes in 1981, the reformers removed themselves from participating in the FCS. Baruso's involvement in both organizations was part of the reason for this retreat.

Tony Baruso who was the president of the union also active on the community council was ousted out of the union and then subsequently convicted of having a role in the murders of Domingo and Viernes and in prison for life we essentially cut off that link to the community...<sup>154</sup>

Another reason was that efforts needed to be refocused on solving the mystery of the murders and rebuilding the union. As David Della explained,

At that point I think it was changed cause our focus was really to rebuild a strong trade union for cannery workers which is a different mission than the Filipino community...When Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were murdered in 1981 in the union hall really our focus shifted away from being internal to the Filipino Community of Seattle Inc. to building a broader coalition of people you know one for justice in the murders but the other is that we returned to the focus of the union again and then broader issues.<sup>155</sup>

The reformers and the FCS went in separate directions. Della explained that the reformers "focused in on rebuilding the union as a workers organization and then the community continued to function in the same way that they have which is a social organization."<sup>156</sup> It was not until after the year 2000 that relations between the radical activists and FCS began to be rebuilt.

After the 1981 elections and the murders of Gene and Silme, the second-generation groups continued to work outside of FCS. Della explained that

We pretty much were outside but we continued to work with the Filipino community on different issues that the KDP took up. And so Philippine national days which was more of a broader community celebration but it did center around issues of discrimination and what was going on in the Philippines. You know asking for democracy in the Philippines.<sup>157</sup>

This political moment forced the radical segment of the reform movement, the second-generation working class and politically radical first generation Filipino Americans away from FCS. Instead they built relationships with broader communities, such as those who shared the same political or

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.



ideological commitments. While the old guard hoped to stop the radicals, they actually pushed the radicals to use alternative strategies. The radicals found strength in their ability to build coalitions with other communities and those involved with the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union refocused their efforts. In the next chapter the strategies used to reform the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 37 are shown as a contrast to the FCS reform. This chapter illustrates the ways in which the strategies used to reform the union were more effective, particularly because the relationship with the KDP enhanced the campaign's strategic capacity rather than hindered it. The reform movement of the FCS is revisited in the last section of this dissertation, where the long-term outcomes and impact of these reform efforts are analyzed.

## Chapter Four

### Ebb and Flow: The Rank and File Movement in The Alaska Cannery Workers Union

“...war of movement increasingly becomes war of position, and it can be said that a State will win a war in so far as it prepares for it minutely and technically in peacetime” (Gramsci 2008, 243).

“So this is a story about Silme...during the Cannery Workers period and if you go back to the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Association letterhead, there were these waves...he talked about that the movement has these ebbs and flows. And the waves of the cannery workers signified or acknowledged that there was this movement afoot. Right? But the movement had really aggressive times you know really productive times and then there were times when the movement was in retreat. Silme’s thing was that the left or people in the movement really needed to understand it wasn’t a linear movement, right? It was during those times of retreat or the ebb where the hardest work needs to happen. It was where you were building capacity...When you were down. You were building for the opportunity for the flow. It was when you built your cadre of leaders, right, because when you strengthened your arguments was when you built your strongest research you know because really when you did the slow work that needs to happen in communities. You know bring them and make them active right. Boom! When the flow hits you have some capacity to move that work...The flow is you know, when the movement actually has got traction. When a particular, not just issue. But when there is actually an opportunity to move across agendas and move a critical mass of people.”<sup>158</sup>

The two quotes above are examples of the viewpoint held by activists in the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Association and the KDP: that they must build an agenda and strategy in order to be in the best position once a political opportunity came along. In this chapter I focus on this viewpoint, or the “ebb and flow” discussed above. I argue that activists, using grass roots organizing tactics, were ready to take advantage of political opportunities because they developed a clear agenda and strategy.

The Alaska Cannery Worker’s Association (ACWA), as I explained in Chapter Two, was founded in 1971 to combat the discrimination that cannery workers were suffering from in the Alaska salmon canneries. They framed their grievances around equity, fairness, and civil rights. However, their strategy focused on lawsuits charging canneries with discrimination and they were working outside of the Cannery Worker’s Union. Although the ACWA used innovative strategies<sup>159</sup> to do this work, activists were not tackling the majority of problems that cannery workers were facing. These issues included a hiring system that was based on bribery, intimidation by gangsters involved in the Tulisan gang, and gambling in the canneries, as well as poor living and working conditions. Cannery worker activists shifted to a more radical strategy, to the use of the War of Position, which was similar to the strategy used in the FCS. This chapter focuses on the second moment of activism in which activists shifted their ideological framework from a focus on civil rights and equity to a focus on changing institutions to gain power. The activists were not abandoning the goals set out through the first moment of their organizing, but instead thought that if they gained power within organizations and or at the state level, they

---

<sup>158</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>159</sup> While these strategies may not seem innovative now, at the time they were new.

could use the organizations and the state to ensure civil rights and equity through the programs and policies that they developed. The strategies used by activists also shifted to reflect this change. Activists who were involved in the ACWA decided to go back into the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union, International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU), Local 37, to transform it and to use the union as a vehicle for the War of Position. Activists saw the union as a potential vehicle to take on larger issues, specifically the state both in the United States and Philippines.

In this chapter I tell the story of the movement to reform this organization, specifically focusing on how reformers fought the discrimination that many faced in the Alaskan canneries and their efforts to democratize the union. I also show how these reform efforts were a part of a larger agenda fueled by the KDP and how the KDP added to the strategic capacity of the reform movement. I argue that ultimately it was: a) their strategy, b) how they framed the issues that they were organizing, c) the opening of political opportunities and having a strategy to use those political opportunities, and d) having the correct timing that led to the success of the movement to reform the union. The "popular" story of this reform movement does not include the role of the KDP. However, the KDP's involvement is a key element of this story. The KDP not only enhances our understanding of the strength of this reform movement, but also illuminates an understanding of the possibilities for using civil society institutions in capacities that are larger than their stated purposes.

This chapter begins with the activists' decision to go back into the union and start a Rank-and-File Movement within the union. I show who the activists were, their strategies for organizing, and the ideas that activists formed those strategies from. I conclude by explaining how and why the reform movement activists were successful in their attempt to take over the union and I will show how this case study illuminates a three-step framework for understanding the possibility of transforming an organization into a social movement organization.

### **A Change in Strategy**

As Stamets (1982) writes about the strategy used by the ACWA,

When Gene Viernes, Silme Domingo, and scores of other second-generation Filipino Americans first went north to the canneries in the 1960s and 1970s, they were angry at the racial discrimination and segregation enforced at the canneries. After 50 years in the salmon canning industry, the Filipino workforce was still relegated to the least desirable labor and often treated with open prejudice. When the young men of this new generation of cannery workers complained to their union and the union refused to help, they struck out on their own. Charging racial discrimination in hiring and housing practices, they launched several class-action lawsuits against the major Alaskan canneries. But Gene and Silme recognized that the real power to enforce changes in the industry lay within the union itself, which had long ago become mired in corruption. In a bold challenge to the traditional power structure of the union, the two reformers started the Rank and File Committee of Local 37... (20).

The ACWA had some success with its lawsuits against the canneries. However, even with these successes, there was still a question of how to implement changes. Activists had been working outside of the framework of the union for some time because the conservative leadership of the union would not tolerate the issues that they were organizing around and were somewhat

complicit in sanctioning the discrimination that was occurring in the canneries. In a review of the history of the union, cannery worker activists wrote that despite how bad it was in the canneries or in the union, there was always hope: “For every dark moment though there was always a glimmer of hope.”<sup>160</sup> It was this optimism that inspired cannery workers to do something about the racism and discrimination that they experienced and observed in the Alaska salmon canneries.

The strategy used by cannery worker activists changed with the formation of the KDP in Seattle. Just as the KDP influenced the reform movement within the FCS, the KDP also influenced the strategy used by cannery worker activists who had become involved with the KDP. Bruce Occena informed much of the strategy in the second moment of activism. Occena, a leader in the KDP and key strategist, was a mestizo who had been politicized as a student at UC Berkeley involved in the Third World Strikes (Habal 2003). In 1975 Occena encouraged union activists to get back into the union:<sup>161</sup>

They were trying to run reforms through the union with no real success. And then they realized that they kind of had to use the institution and bylaws and the structure of the union to advance their agenda. Because there was plenty of dissatisfaction, widespread knowledge of the corruption and favoritism in the union. And so when they put together that slate pretty much the core of ACWA and the KDP put together a strategy around how to lead that.<sup>162</sup>

Occena calls the ACWA a “leftist mistake”, creating an alternative organization to the union where the activists felt at home<sup>163</sup>. Although they felt more comfortable in their own organizations, the activists were removed from the membership base of the union. If their goal was really to make an impact on the lives of cannery workers, activists actually needed to be in contact with the membership through the union. As union reformers stated in the *Alaskero News*:

We had grown sick and tired of seeing our fellow workers paying to go to Alaska and then being subjected to harsh and sub-standard working and living conditions. It was obvious that the few places with improving conditions were the result of the hard-won anti-discrimination lawsuits pressed by the Alaska Cannery Workers Association Lawsuits that had been opposed by the union leadership. However by the amount of time it took to win those lawsuits it was obvious that the simple filing of lawsuits or pressure on the government was not going to be the key thing that would force the company to improve conditions and pay decent wages. And as long as our union leadership was corrupt or allowed to be lazy, we would have no real tools to fight our struggle. A struggle that should not be between leadership and members but a struggle against the company for decent wages, better health and safety, and improved living conditions.<sup>164</sup>

The Rank and File Committee (RFC) started as a caucus of the ACWA through which its members devised a plan in collaboration with the KDP to rejoin the union. Activists wanted to return to the union so that they could participate in union activities, focus on organizing workers

<sup>160</sup> Alaskero News. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>161</sup> Occena, Bob. (2008). Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>162</sup> Woo, Michael. (2009). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>163</sup> Occena, Bob. (2008). Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>164</sup> Alaskero News. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

around the issue of union reform, get on the negotiating committee that bargained union contracts, push for the election of new union officers, and through these efforts revive the fighting spirit in the union.<sup>165</sup> Silme, Gene, and Nemesio had all been blacklisted from the companies and the union for agitating the crews at the canneries that they worked in (Stamets 1982). The ACWA members saw an opportunity to rejoin the union after union president Gene Navarro died in 1975 and Tony Baruso took office. However, getting back into the union proved to be harder than the activists anticipated. The activists who signed onto the discrimination lawsuits had a difficult time getting rehired and back into the union. The Domingo brothers tried to get back into the union, but Baruso told them that the company would not take them. Nemesio Domingo Sr., father of Silme and Nemesio, a highly respected union and community member, was concerned that the union had blacklisted his sons. In an effort to help, he rejoined the union at the age of 66 and, for the first time since 1942, returned to work in the canneries. He then requested Baruso allow his sons to go to work with him in the Bristol Bay canneries. Baruso told him that would be over his dead body and insisted that the canneries would not hire Domingo's sons (Stamets 1982). The ACWA got a court order prohibiting the employers from retaliating against the activists because of the lawsuits; they had to hire them back.<sup>166</sup> After many hours of fighting, negotiations, and hearings, by the summer of 1977, all of the ACWA members were working again in the canneries as members of the union (Stamets 1982, 46).

Activists decided to reintegrate into the union by not only going back to work in Alaska, but also volunteering to help at the union hall. They found there was a lot they could do to help the union because of their organizing skills. Their program was designed to meet the needs of the workers. Caucuses were formed in the canneries during the season and in Seattle, Stockton, and San Francisco during the off-season.<sup>167</sup> Baruso and his allies in the union were skeptical of the activists, but seemed to think that whatever the activists were up to they would not be able to get away with it.<sup>168</sup>

Reintegration into the union had two goals that reflected the dual strategy of the KDP. One goal was nation-based and public: a focus on changing the working conditions of cannery workers. The second goal was based on the KDP's internationalist strategy, which I argue was reflective of the Gramscian War of Position--to use a civil society institution to wage an attack on the state. The following quote by Michael Woo illustrates this dual strategy:

So, what's the influence that the KDP had? I think that they brought the whole internationalist perspective and certainly the national Filipino immigrant perspective to the local work and so while the union reform stuff was important I mean, Gene and Silme lost their lives because of the way they challenged the corruption of the Marcos regime. And so it happened under my eyes. I wasn't as conscious of it as the folks in the ACWA leadership were. You know it was very intentional and deliberate. They were trying to use the institution of local 37 to both bring about job equity in that industry, but it was the vehicle by where the community as a whole took notice. It was largely run by historical institutions in the Filipino community.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Alaskero News. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>166</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 19, 2010.

<sup>167</sup> Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors Special meeting minutes. [August 25, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>168</sup> Mast, T. (2009). Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>169</sup> Woo, M. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

This second goal was not a public goal, in fact many of the union reformers did not even know about the relationship between the reform movement and the KDP.<sup>170</sup> This second goal is characterized in notes of the Rank and File Committee as the difference between reform and revolution and the shift is characterized as a “line change from dual unionism to local 37 infiltration and takeover.”<sup>171</sup> In order to understand this second moment of activism it is important to know who the players were, who enacted this change to infiltrate and take over the union, and who constituted the Rank and File Committee.

### **Who was the Rank and File Committee?**

As I have indicated previously, the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, otherwise known as the Hart-Cellar Act, changed the composition of Filipino communities in the United States. While these changes affected the dynamics within community institutions such as the FCS, they also changed the demographics of workplaces, particularly those, like the Alaska salmon canneries, that were predominately Filipino. The influx of newly immigrated Filipinos was only one part of a whole new wave of laborers in the canneries, as young American-born Filipinos and white women and men altogether changed the composition of the workforce.<sup>172</sup>

The activists involved in the reform of the Union held similar views to those involved in the reform of the FCS. In fact, some of the people were the same. The reformers were predominately children of first-generation Filipinos who immigrated to the U.S. before 1965, and who had working class backgrounds as agricultural and cannery workers. These second-generation Filipino Americans worked in the canneries like their fathers before them. As I explained in previous chapters, the reformers were inspired by the movements they saw going on around them, such as the Civil Rights Movement in the American South, the women’s movement, and the anti-war movement, that were fighting oppression and pushing the powers that be to make life more equitable for all. These movements had changed their way of thinking and empowered them to make change. These external factors coupled with the conditions in the canneries and the lack of democracy in the union, all motivated the reform movement.

Unlike the strategy used within the FCS, which was to integrate mostly Filipinos into the organization, the reformers of the union were not just Filipinos. Demographic changes in the industry and the workforce in the canneries were reflected in the diversity of the union reformers, who were comprised of a mixture of Native Americans, Asians, white women, and sympathetic white men. Japanese firms bought into the Alaskan salmon-canning industry in the 1970s, which was a significant force in shaping the ethnic composition of the union and workforce in the canneries.

The Japanese were surprised to see the Americans throwing out valuable salmon roe, a delicacy in Japan; soon ‘egg houses’ cropped up at the canneries for processing roe for this new market. The Japanese preferred women workers for this tedious task, so the egg houses were soon staffed by white college-aged women seeking adventuresome summer work in Alaska...Today [1982], about 30 percent of the union is white, and most of the whites are women (Stamets 1982, 21).

<sup>170</sup> Former Rank and File Activists. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>171</sup> Rank and File Plan notes written by Emily Van Bronkhorst. [May 4, 1980]. Personal files of Emily Van Bronkhorst, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>172</sup> Alaskero News. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.

The reformers' strategy was to reflect the new composition of the workforce in the canneries. Workers were no longer just Filipino. In fact, both Filipina and Caucasian women played a key role in the movement to reform the union. This strategy reveals a history of cross-racial alliance building and interracial relationships, especially among the activists. There were four key activists within the reform movement of the union: Silme Domingo, Gene Viernes, Terri Mast, and David Della.<sup>173</sup>

Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were a city-boy, country-boy duo who shared an ideological viewpoint. Domingo was a Seattle native, who with his brother had formed the ACWA, and was active in the reform of the FCS and *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*. Viernes was a native of Eastern Washington and his organizing efforts solely focused on cannery worker issues. David Della, a working class man from Seattle was a cannery worker and student activist with Silme at the University of Washington. Terri Mast, a white woman, was born and raised in Seattle by a working class family. She and Silme Domingo were partners. She worked in a number of both non-union and unionized canneries. Of the four key activists, she was the only one without a college education. She became politicized through the anti-war and women's movements and spent a number of months in the Philippines and Hawaii prior to her involvement with the cannery-union reform movement.<sup>174</sup> First becoming involved with the ACWA, she was "then as part of KDP... integrated to go to Egegik to organize the white women."<sup>175</sup> As a member of the KDP, Terri was instructed to carry out a strategy of winning over the white women workers who had become an important part of the workforce in the Alaska canneries because of their numbers and the grievances such as segregated bunking and work hours in which they were often working 22 hours a day.<sup>176</sup>

### **The Rank and File Committee**

The movement to reform the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union, Local 37 officially started in the fall of 1976, calling itself the Rank and File Committee (RFC) of ILWU (International Longshore Warehouse Union) Local 37. This name came from the original Rank-and-File Movement within the union started in 1946 by Chris Mensalvas.<sup>177</sup> Led by cannery worker organic intellectuals Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, the RFC took on issues that the union leadership did not want to deal with such as discrimination and other grievances in the canneries. These activists formed an incorporated business organization, the Committee to Educate the Rank and File, which was also a 501c3 nonprofit organization.<sup>178</sup> The reform movement's strategy was to challenge the corrupt practices of the union leadership and provide services to the membership. Their stated goals were: "Working to make the Union...a fighting organization of the rank and file membership, serve the rank and file membership, a fair, honest, and above-board organization. Working to make the elected union leadership accountable to the rank and file."<sup>179</sup> They had specific goals for the implementation of their platform.

<sup>173</sup> Terri Mast, email message to author, October 15, 2009.

<sup>174</sup> Mast, Terri. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>175</sup> Former Rank and File Activists. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Rank and File Committee notes. [n.d.]. Box 33 folder 22, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>178</sup> Articles of Incorporation Committee to Educate The Rank and File. [n.d.]. Box 33 folder 21, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>179</sup> Alaskero News. [April 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

1. Fighting to insure the Union is run fairly, honestly, and above-board in union affairs such as dispatching, finances, etc.
2. Fighting for union democracy, especially in holding all leadership positions accountable.
3. Fighting for implementation of stronger employment security.
4. Fighting for the 40-hour week, with no decrease in seasonal guarantee.
5. Fighting for stronger contract enforcement, especially on the job enforcement by Union delegates (stewards).
6. Enforcement of the no transfer clause.
7. Implementing an organizing drive.
8. Fighting for women's rights.
9. Elimination of the miscellaneous work clause.
10. Fighting for implementation of stronger safety regulations.<sup>180</sup>

The activists leading the RFC strove to make the movement to reform the union as inclusive of the membership of the union as possible. This was in direct contrast to the existing leadership of the union who were excluding the membership base of the union from involvement. Evidence of this is reflected in the Rank and File Committee notes below.

The main force in reforming a union is a strong and active rank and file membership. It is the rank and file that is the decisive factor in the determining the policies of the union. For the rank and file we have to continually remind ourselves that 'If we want a reformed and strong union, we will have to fight for it.' To reform the union, we also need strong and responsive leadership. It is the leadership that is ultimately responsible for the...workers...The inability of the leadership to champion the needs and concerns of the workers and organize them to fight is the main reason for continuing problems.<sup>181</sup>

As exemplified in the quote above, the RFC saw the importance of both building a strong base of support and bringing in leadership to the union that was connected to that base of support.

### **Building a Base of Support and the 1978 Election**

Running for union office was the primary strategy the RFC members utilized to achieve their goals. To win, they first tried to build a base of support within the union, both a committee and an outlying network of support amongst the membership of the union. The March 1979 *Alaskero News* outlined this strategy:

We formed our committee in the fall of 1976. Patiently we built our network, all the while setting out to learn the ins and outs of trade unionism. It wasn't that difficult to build a beginning network, people were fed up with the way things were being run. First off, we feel we successfully built a movement that is opening up our Union to the rank and file. We pushed for a published budget, contract negotiations reports, forced the leadership to form a committee to publish Local 37's contract and constitution. Yes, we were growing confident that we could make a strong showing in the 1978 election. Inside

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Rank and File Committee notes. [n.d.]. Box 33 folder 33-22, CWFLU-UW.



the committee we began the actual plans for the election. We drafted a platform and decided upon 9 members of the committee who we felt united with and had proved this through their actual practice in implementing our program and platform. We began an attempt to carry out an election campaign- the first such attempt based upon principles and issues not personalities in our Union in over 25 years...<sup>182</sup>

The union's reform movement had four spheres of participation. The first sphere included activists who were either members of the KDP or who believed in the political line of the KDP and were fully committed to the reform movement of the union. This first sphere also included the "Internal Team;" the KDP assigned these activists to work on the union reform and this team met separately with the KDP to strategize about the union reform efforts. In the second sphere were people who were committed to the reform of the union, but who could not commit one hundred percent.<sup>183</sup> These second sphere supporters were "willing to do some tasks: one-on-one discussions, pass out campaign material, informing the 1<sup>st</sup> sphere on the 'balance of forces' (pro-anti-neutrals RFC)."<sup>184</sup> The Rank and File Committee itself included both sphere one and two people, but was led by those in sphere one. The third sphere included RFC supporters who would not openly campaign for the RFC, but would vote for the RFC slate and platform in the union elections.<sup>185</sup> The fourth sphere included rank and file union members who received RFC campaign materials. The reform leaders used the "spheres" as an assessment tool. The activists in the canneries continually assessed their work crews as pro-RFC, anti-RFC, or neutral and worth trying to win over.<sup>186</sup> This kind of assessment tool was also used in many of the KDP's local campaigns, as is referenced in Habal (2007) in regard to the International Hotel Struggle in San Francisco, another local campaign the KDP was involved in. Another example of this kind of KDP campaign is the Narciso and Perez case in which KDP activists worked in coalition to defend two Filipina nurses who were accused and tried for the murder of ten patients in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Choy 2003). The RFC and other campaigns used assessment tools such as this sphere-of-influence concept to gauge support for their campaigns, as well as to assess the commitment of the activists involved. Based on the RFC activists' evaluation of their support, they moved forward to participate in the 1978 election.

The 1978 election was the first that the Rank and File Committee officially participated in. The union had four individual elected positions: president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and dispatcher. Three trustees and nine executive board members were also elected and governed the union. The Rank and File Committee chose Nemesio Domingo, Sr. to run for vice-president because he was from the older generation of Filipinos, and this inter-generational approach was an important part of the reformers' strategy. Nemesio Sr. had been a cannery worker since 1927, was retired from the U.S. Army, and active in many Filipino organizations including the FCS and the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*. He was influential and popular in the Filipino community in Seattle (Stamets 1982).

Gene Viernes ran for secretary-treasurer, a position seen as key to potentially transforming the union because its oversight of reports, documentation and meeting minutes

---

<sup>182</sup> Alaskero News. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>183</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 22, 2010.

<sup>184</sup> Memo to Rank and File Committee Members and Supporters. [July 20, 1982]. Box 33 folder 22, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

could be used to communicate union news to members on a daily basis and extend the union's democratic functions.<sup>187</sup>

Silme Domingo ran for another key position – dispatcher. The dispatch system, based not on seniority but on bribery and favoritism, was at the core of much of the corruption within the union and allowed bias and arbitrary decisions to determine who got dispatched. The Rank and File Committee promised to change that, to “run the dispatching system fairly, honestly and above board, without any regard to ‘*comrades* or *kababayans*.’”<sup>188</sup> The reformers also ran a candidate for vice-president, a trustee post and endorsed seven candidates, including two women, for the nine slots on the executive board.

When the votes were counted, the Rank and File Committee had won the vice presidency and some seats on the executive board, but Domingo and Viernes had failed to win the secretary-treasurer and dispatcher positions, the posts the reformers had hoped would give them the “strongest possible say in the day-to-day functioning of the union.”<sup>189</sup> This was a sobering loss, according to Bruce Occena.<sup>190</sup> However, the reformers believed the reason for their defeat did not lie in how they framed their issues and platform, but rather on their campaign strategies. Nevertheless, “for the first time in many years, the problems of the Union were laid out for all to see – the problems in the dispatch procedure, the grievance procedure, the influx of women workers, the corruption and the dereliction of duty by the leadership”.<sup>191</sup>

In collaboration with the KDP, the reformers analyzed their defeat and identified major themes that led to their defeat. As the March 1979 *Alaskero News* shows, the reformers first miscalculated the corruption within the union:

We feel in hindsight that we underestimated the efforts it would take to reverse a negative trend against democracy that had been built upon 25 years of corrupt leadership. We had miscalculated the effects of 25 years of “*compadre*” and “*kababayan*” systems and allowing the companies to bypass the hiring hall and the effect this has on our members ability to recognize where the gains we make in our union come from.<sup>192</sup>

The “*compadre*” (friend) and “*kababayan*” (neighbor) system within the union meant that dispatch revolved around who one knew within the union, and many of these relationships were based on familial, provincial, or associations with one of the fraternal lodges, such as the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*. This system was mediated through the Filipino reciprocity system *utang na loob*, which was discussed in the introduction of this dissertation. Often, bribery was also employed, although someone hoping to get dispatched to Alaska had to know an official within the union to bribe. The union officers were so entrenched in this system that they did what they had to, so they could get re-elected. Those individuals who had previously benefitted from either personally or their family members being dispatched to Alaska owed the incumbents favors, so in the 1978 elections, the union officials demanded that those favors be repaid in the form of votes.

Second, the Rank and File Committee's assessment was that they had not taken into account how much the union membership had changed and how the newcomers might lack

<sup>187</sup> 1978 Rank and File Election Slate. [1978]. Box 33 folder 28. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. The English translation of *kababayan* is townmate.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Occena, Bruce. (2008). Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> *Alaskero News*. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

knowledge of unions in general and their stake in union representation. The *Alaskero News* explained these mistakes:

We failed to see clearly that the composition of the union had changed and we should not rely on the traditions of 30 years ago to carry us through. Only our older brothers actually experienced the positive gains made possible by a strong, rank and file controlled and democratic union. We failed to take into account how much the composition of the union had changed and how that affects members knowledge of trade unionism. We are no longer a union of young Filipino immigrants from peasant backgrounds, involved in an overwhelming mass movements in the U.S. that was engaged in building strong, militant democratic trade unions. We presently enjoy a membership of over 1200, young white males and females, young 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Filipino Americans, and young 3<sup>rd</sup> wave Filipino immigrants- all joining into a union formed on a base built by our older brothers still with us.<sup>193</sup>

Third, as the *Alaskero News* further outlined, the reformers had not understood the impact of what I call the capitalist machine, that is, the concerted efforts by businesses or employers to convince workers that they can better look out for the workers' interests than any union.

A further complication was our inability to understand the effects of a national trend by big business to bust unions. Our rank and file members have been misled to believe that all unions are inherently bad. This false impression is being perpetuated across the nation. Since our membership usually works in other jobs that are either ununionized or run by corrupt unions, or go to school and so are only concerned about their conditions for 2 months out of the year, this falsehood is easily perpetuated. Just look at our union. But it is a falsehood easily disproved- since we miscalculated the effect this has on the membership, we failed to expose this. These conditions were not adequately dealt with in our election campaign.<sup>194</sup>

In a pamphlet published about the 1978 election, the Rank and File Committee's disappointing showing was said to be because "spontaneous sympathy of the workers in a few canneries was not sufficient to overturn the entrenched leadership and their 'loyalty networks' and the legacy of cynicism which had developed over 20 years."<sup>195</sup> The reformers realized there was a disconnect between the members' understanding of unions, the potential of the Union, and the potential benefits to the members. Upon reflection, the activists realized they had a lot more work to do. The reformers recognized that they needed to change their strategy, beginning with basic education of the membership on the need for a union.<sup>196</sup> "It became clear that much more attention had to be given to getting Rank and File activists up to all the key canneries to do *detailed organizing work* with the workers in order to be able to translate their "sympathies" into actual political support" (Frontline 1982, 22). The RFC activists became conscious that they had to build support over time, as members needed to be able to trust that the activists who promised

---

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Line of March, Frontline, 22. This pamphlet was published by the Line of March, a Marxist Leninist Organization that the KDP was affiliated with.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

change would be back year after year and that they could be relied upon. As noted in the *Alaskero News*,

It was only at a few canneries that we did conscious organizing, gaining the delegate position and positions on the grievance committees, holding educational union meetings and strongly standing up for our member's rights. At those canneries, particularly Egegik and Uganik we got a strong showing. We made mistakes, but we did more things for the people instead of fooling the people. It was only through patient and hard work by Rank and File members, inexperienced all, that we were able to show the futility of getting change through the "compadre" or "kababayan" systems. It was probably due to our inability to do organizing work at the other canneries that led to our defeat for the key positions.... But we failed to link up the leaflets, the positions and platform to organizing at every cannery and the union hall, and wherever the membership meets. This led to our being recognized as just another group of politicians that were going to promise of this and that and would, in the end, be just like all the other union leaders.<sup>197</sup>

Although the reformers had fallen short of their goal to secure the secretary-treasurer and dispatcher positions, they discovered that holding the vice presidency and a trustee position, as well as several seats on the executive board, gave them the ability to make significant inroads. They initiated a committee to draft a new union constitution and bylaws and were able to keep the union leadership accountable in holding and conducting meetings, plus they followed through on grievances that the president, Baruso, would otherwise have ignored. "They seem like such small changes – but they are in fact two giant first steps. They are the expression of renewed interest in the Union – a renewed interest in democracy."<sup>198</sup>

### **1979-1980: The Turning Point**

The period between 1979 and 1980 was a turning point for the Rank-and-File Movement.<sup>199</sup> The RFC reframed its strategy, generally and specifically for the 1980 election, and focused on eliminating bribery from the dispatch system, the union finances, holding the companies and foremen accountable to the union contract, and planning an organizing drive for the non-union canneries (Stamets 1982). In 1979, while the RFC was preparing for the 1980 election, it launched a successful recall campaign against Ponce Torres, the union's secretary-treasurer. This strategy tied into the RFC framework of accountability to the union's membership. To become a democratically run institution, the union would need to become transparent and accountable to the membership in all ways. Finances were a particularly important component of this since the money held in the union treasury was the dues money of the membership. This money was meant to be used on behalf of the members and should have been used to directly support the membership. Without proper reports from the secretary-treasurer of the union, there was no accountability system. Torres was recalled because he "failed to consistently and accurately file union finance reports, failed to maintain systematic records of the Union, failed to maintain written records of the union meetings and proceedings, refuse(d) to cooperate with members of the executive Council and membership who have been duly appointed to perform or transact

---

<sup>197</sup> *Alaskero News*. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> John Foz, Former Rank and File Committee interview with author.

union business.”<sup>200</sup> Torres’ replacement died unexpectedly in 1980 (Stamets 1982) and Silme Domingo was appointed by the union’s executive board to take over the vacated role of secretary-treasurer.<sup>201</sup>

The reformers were not waiting to be elected to do work within the union. The earlier problems voiced by the cannery worker activists were not being resolved: the union remained unresponsive to workers’ grievances and did not have a process for dealing with grievances. So the RFC facilitated education of union delegates or shop stewards, starting with written communications regarding the role of a delegate, with an emphasis on grievances and contract violations.<sup>202</sup>

In 1970 Gene Viernes implemented an official shop-steward training program “to help workers understand their rights and to press their grievances” (Stamets 1982, 47) and Silme Domingo was nominated to the union’s negotiating committee. The reformers’ analysis was that it was important to take over any position within the union that had to do with the day-to-day work in Alaska and business of the union.<sup>203</sup> It was through that kind of work in the union and winning the union elections that the reformers thought they could bring “a total restoration of the ILWU principles of democratic trade unionism and rank and file power, versus what Local 37 had devolved into -- top-down, patriarchal [sic.], gangster-propped leadership who thrived on paid job favors, seasonal gambling profits, etc.”<sup>204</sup> With Silme in the secretary-treasurer position and RFC activists extremely involved in the day-to-day affairs of the union, the reformers were in a good position to both ensure that the 1980 election would be run fairly and that they would win more positions in the leadership of the union (Stamets 1982). The RFC educated and included the membership of the union in their efforts by having one on one conversations, distributing their newspaper *The Alaskero News*, leading trainings, and holding meetings both house meetings composed of 5 to 100 people and Rank and File Committee mass meetings.<sup>205</sup>

## 1980 Election

In the election of 1980, Silme Domingo ran for secretary-treasurer and Gene Viernes was the reformers’ candidate for dispatcher. This time they campaigned directly against the “*compadre*” or “*kababayan*” system of elections and dispatch that Baruso supported, the system entrenched in gambling, payoffs, gangsterism, and an old-boy network of alliances. The RFC’s platform threatened to disrupt that system, to transform the dispatching procedures to a fair system not based on bribery. The most controversial aspect of the RFC’s platform was its promise to expel the union foremen, many of who were members of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*, the old-boy network. The reformers’ other major threat was a street gang called the Tulisan, which had gained power in the union hall (Stamets 1982). The translation of the word Tulisan from Tagalog to English is bandit.<sup>206</sup> The Tulisan gang members were newer Filipino immigrants. These youngsters had started staking out their turf in Seattle’s International District and soon became

<sup>200</sup> Alaskero News. [June 1979]. Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>201</sup> David Della, email message to author, March 22, 2010.

<sup>202</sup> Letter to Cannery Delegates. [April 9, 1979]. Box 33 folder 23, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>203</sup> John Foz, Former Rank and File Committee interview with author.

<sup>204</sup> John Foz, email message to author, January 21, 2010.

<sup>205</sup> Letter from Rank and File Committee. [March-April 1980]. Box 33 Folder 22. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>206</sup> Translation of Tulisan. 2010. Filipino to English Translator. Retrieved on March 7, 2010 from: [http://www.stars21.com/translator/filipino\\_to\\_english.html](http://www.stars21.com/translator/filipino_to_english.html).

the most powerful gang in the area. They provided ‘protection’ and dealt the games in two gambling houses on King Street in the International District. One gambling house was run by a cannery foreman who, along with union officers, provided the Tulisan with access and the job of ‘policing’ the high-stakes games being run at some of the Alaskan canneries. In return, the foreman and union president took 10 percent of the winnings (Stamets 1982).

The Tulisan gang’s primary access into the union had been through Rudy Nazario (Stamets 1982), whose nickname was “Tamboc”.<sup>207</sup> Nazario defeated Silme Domingo for the position of dispatcher in the 1978 elections and became the leader of the Tulisan gang. As the union dispatcher, he held the power to ensure that fellow gang members were dispatched to Alaska where the high stakes games were played (Stamets 1982). Nazario was murdered in March of 1981, and his slaying has never been solved. Tony Dictado soon emerged as the new leader in the gang, and “as had been the case in the recent past. He expected that his boys would be dispatched to Alaska, as testimony at the trial [Domingo-Viernes murder trial] showed” (Stamets 1982, 47).

Despite the extraordinarily rough politics symbolized by the Tulisan gang and the “*compadre*” or “*kababayan*” system of elections, the RFC was determined to create a fair election and dispatch system, as is referred to below in a campaign statement written by Gene Viernes.

If you vote for us...we want you to vote because you’re confident we will do our jobs. To vote “*compadre*” or “*kababayan*”, you would only perpetuate the backward procedures within our union. Such practices have been responsible for developing a very unfair dispatch procedure. It is a dispatch procedure we can do without. If elected I will work hard to create a fair dispatch procedure. The Rank and File Committee will hold me accountable, as well as work closely with me, in developing a fair and honest system. Only by an open registration system where each applicant can compare their qualification with everyone else, and with daily updates on who and how many people will be dispatched, will we eliminate the corruption. It is this competition that opens the way for fighting, arguing, shootings, and bribery that plague our union dispatches.<sup>208</sup>

The reformers, however, did not run a candidate against union president Tony Baruso. Their assessment was that while they had the support of the older Alaskeros, residents of the International District, they still lacked enough support in the broader Seattle Filipino community. The RFC thought that Baruso held more support than they did in the larger Filipino community. Like the previous union president Gene Navarro, Baruso was influential in the FCS and was a past president of the organization. The reformers and Baruso were at opposite political poles. Like many Filipinos from the Ilocos Norte province of the Philippines, Baruso was a supporter of Philippine president Marcos (Stamets 1982). Baruso also had ties with the Tulisan gang who he allowed to be dispatched to Alaska because he was profiting financially from their gambling operations in the canneries. The RFC thought it was wise to take the changes in the union one step at a time. If they were able to make the changes that needed to be made, they could win in an election against Baruso the next time around. The strategies used by the reformers in the 1980 elections finally lead to victory: Domingo and Viernes won the positions of Secretary Treasurer

---

<sup>207</sup> Former Rank and File Activists: David Della, Lynn Domingo, Emma Catague, John Foz, Rich Gurtiza, Terri Mast, Emily Van Bronkhorst. 2009. Group Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>208</sup> Alaskero News. [n.d.]. Box 33 Folder 28. CWFLU-UW.

and Dispatcher, and RFC candidates won 11 out of 17 of the union's executive board positions (Stamets 1982). This was their launch pad to real change.

### **The ILWU Resolution**

Creating a fair election procedure, however, was just one of the reformers' strategies. In April of 1981 the RFC, in concert with the KDP, proposed a resolution at the International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) International convention in Hawaii to investigate human rights abuses in the Philippines. Just prior to the convention, in March, Gene Viernes visited the Philippines for the first time.

While there he met with leaders of the May First Movement (KMU), an independent free trade union movement that had recently been granted limited freedoms but was closely watched by Marcos...In April, Gene flew straight from the Philippines to Hawaii for the biannual convention of the ILWU. With him he carried a letter from the KMU appealing for the support of American labor. Gene and Silme then drafted a proposal that the ILWU send an investigating team to the Philippines. The ILWU, with its ability to boycott ships in port, has long been politically outspoken in international affairs, and such a proposal was not unusual. But among the Filipino unions of the ILWU, especially the Hawaii Local 142, the proposal to investigate Philippine labor conditions at the invitation of the KMU was seen as a slap in the face to Marcos...In the committee meetings at the convention there were bitter arguments over the issue, but when the proposal was taken to the floor of the convention, it passed....[However] The investigation never happened (Stamets 1982, 47-48).

The resolution read as follows:

WHEREAS: On September 22, 1972 President Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines; and WHEREAS: Under martial law the condition of trade unionists and all workers were seriously affected in the following ways: (1) Strikes in all vital industries (which has objectively been expanded to include all industries) have been banned through the declaration of Presidential Decree 823; (2) Wages and benefits continue to be depressed so that workers and their families can barely subsist. In March 1981 the minimum daily wage was set at P30.85 (\$4.08) for workers in Metro-Manila, P30.76 (\$3.94) for non-agricultural workers outside Manila and P25.20 (\$3.36) for plantation workers (Bulletin Today, March 27, 1981). Yet in January 1981 the government estimated the average cost of daily food and other basic necessities for a family of six to be P49.96 (\$6.41) for non-agricultural workers and P47.08 (\$6.04) for agricultural workers (National Census and Statistics Office, Food and Nutrition Research institute, Bureau of Agricultural Economics); (3) Due to the inflation rate in the Philippines, second highest in Asia and one of the highest in the world, the real wages of the workers decreased by 39% from 1972 to 1979 (Central Bank); (4) Even the government-influenced Trade Union Congress of the Philippines admitted that 65.5% of the firms were found to be in violation of labor standards (mostly for non-payment of wages,

summary dismissal, or preventative suspension of workers) while 36.4% of the firms violated health and safety standards...<sup>209</sup>

The resolution continued with a discussion of the government's arrest of 17 labor leaders, as well as the disappearing of 37 labor organizers, and hundreds more detained in prison. It also discussed the fact that president Marcos lifted martial law on January 19, 1981, but left all presidential decreed and restrictive labor codes in effect. The passage of the resolution at the ILWU convention was a direct example of the usage of the strategy of war of position, using the union as a vehicle to investigate the state in the Philippines.

As the resolution pointed out, "The ILWU has traditionally supported the efforts of trade unionists and workers throughout the world in their struggles to improve wages, working and living conditions and their lives through industrial unionism and free expression".<sup>210</sup> The resolution continued by pointing out the ILWU's interest over the 40 years preceding in the general working conditions and welfare of trade unions and working people in the Philippines. The sections at the end of the resolution called for three recommendations. First, it called for the ILWU's objection to the restricted decrees and policies exercised by the Marcos government. Second, the resolution proclaimed that the ILWU would continue the promotion of interest in developments in the Philippines and the effect on working people there. This was to be done through coverage in the union's newspaper *The Dispatcher*, conducting educational programs, and fostering relationships with groups whose goals were to work towards democracy and freedom for the people of the Philippines. The most important part of the resolution was the call fro the ILWU officers to consider the Philippines as the next destination for the union's foreign delegation program which was to be done to obtain updated information on the state of unions, working conditions, and civil liberties of Filipino workers.<sup>211</sup>

Baruso spoke on behalf of the resolution,<sup>212</sup> but only because RFC activists put pressure on him to do so.<sup>213</sup> In retrospect, Terri Mast concluded that he spoke in support of the resolution because as a member of the delegation team that would go to the Philippines he thought he could steer the delegation to visit non-KMU<sup>214</sup> unions that were supported by the CIA and show that there were no problems in the Philippines.<sup>215</sup> Many other individuals also spoke about the resolution on the convention floor, which reflected the heavy deliberation that occurred in the resolution committee. The resolution was watered down in the resolution committee before it was brought to the convention body; the result was the elimination of a clause condemning the Marcos regime. The major point of contention was with the union's largest contingency of Filipino workers in local 142 of Hawaii, whose membership's attitudes reflected the differences in opinion regarding the Marcos regime. This resolution was the first time that local 142 split

---

<sup>209</sup> International Longshoremen's Warehousemen's Union. 1981. *Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Biennial Convention*. April 27. Personal Collection of Inland Boatmen's Union Region 37.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Former Rank and File Activists: David Della, Lynn Domingo, Emma Catague, John Foz, Rich Gurtiza, Terri Mast, Emily Van Bronkhorst. 2009. Group Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>214</sup> The KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno) or May First Movement is a national trade union center in the Philippines. It is an alliance with hundreds of progressive labour organizations under its umbrella. It was created on May 1, 1980 during the Marcos dictatorship to represent the progressive worker's organizations in the Philippines advocating for the National Democratic struggle.

<sup>215</sup> Mast, Terri. 2010. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.



their votes at an ILWU convention.<sup>216</sup> The most important speaker was Gene Viernes, who spoke to the concerns voiced in the resolutions committee.

Speaking on the perspective and intent of resolution, we would like to make it clear that we are not calling for a condemnation of the Marcos government not U.S. involvement in the Philippines. Local 37 does not profess to speak on behalf of the Filipino community located in the United States. Anyone or any group who attempts to do so denies the existence of the tremendous controversies surrounding this issue. We only advocate that this issue be aired. Presently the main source of information in the United States carries a distinct bias towards the Marcos government and it carries the distinct bias presented by the United States State Department. On the other hand, there are people like myself who would like to see other views expressed. This resolution gives us a concrete way we can educate our members, our community and, hopefully, other trade unions. This resolution also has an immediate concrete application and solution to the problems we face in organizing Filipinos in the United States.<sup>217</sup>

Despite the debates about the resolution, it was passed. The debates themselves were important opportunities for activists to organize by talking about the issues in the Philippines and the connection to the American labor movement. Despite the fact that the delegation never happened, this was a major victory in the RFC's use of the War of Position.

### **The Rank and File Committee's Role within the Union**

Once the RFC won majority control of the union in 1980, the new RFC candidates continued to change the union back to a progressive body that protected the rights of workers. However, there was a major debate within the RFC about what the purpose and role of the RFC would continue to be. As described in the Rank and File Committee minutes on January 29, 1981, they saw themselves as having a twofold purpose:

One, over the past two years the RFC has been the backbone of the Union, holding the union officers accountable for dealing with the basic fighting capacity of the Union around our memberships' working and living conditions and benefits. This first purpose has been established with our being and the union leadership, although now the fight is to build the unions strong from the inside (officers and board) and educate and organize the membership...<sup>218</sup>

This first purpose represents the RFC activists' internal work. Once they held elected office positions within the union, the activists had to split their attention between day-to-day union business and the theoretical, philosophical work of the movements. It was this philosophical work that activists were connected to, that the RFC represented, and that the activists wanted to use their positions within the union to achieve. This tension is represented in the quote below from the Rank and File Committee minutes on January 29, 1981.

---

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> International Longshoremen's Warehousemen's Union. 1981. *Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Biennial Convention*. April 27. Personal Collection of Inland Boatmen's Union Region 37.

<sup>218</sup> Rank and File Committee Minutes of Meeting. [January 29, 1981]. CWFLU-UW.

...the rank-and-file committee encompasses the more progressive minded union members, in what we feel is training in the best of trade union tradition. The RFC has the role to make the union membership make progressive political stands. The union doesn't operate in a vacuum. Such things as discrimination and racism are very real issues in society that impact our union, predominantly minority, in a big way so, such issues around racism, etc. we will try to understand and get our union membership to also, including the ILWU International's Resolutions, such as the embargo of military shipments to the El Salvadorian junta. So, the RFC is organizationally autonomous, a "watchdog" in the Union; is committed to the education and organizing of the union membership, and politically defined by being progressive -- -- the most committed and hard-working trade union activists, but also with and opinions about the "bigger issues and questions" in society.<sup>219</sup>

As reflected in this quote, once the RFC candidates held positions of power within the union, the RFC continued to operate outside of the union and provide direction to the RFC officers in the union.

The Rank and File Committee members did not stop their efforts once they won the 1980 election: the activists' knew that winning the elections was only the beginning of the battle, as they sought to implement a fair dispatch system and change how the union was run. However, there was much resistance to these efforts because of how firmly gambling, payoffs, and gangsterism had become entrenched in the union. The threat of democratization within the union, as well as the risk of the impending labor investigation to the Philippines was strong enough that both Baruso and Philippine president Marcos felt the need to squelch the reform movement by ordering the murders of Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo.

Days before June 1, 1981, a union dispatch was scheduled. This was the first dispatch since the newly elected leaders had taken office and the first dispatch to take place in a fair and equitable manner. Terri Mast and Emily Van Bronkhorst, two female members of the internal team, debated with Viernes and Domingo about how the dispatch would play out.<sup>220</sup> The women were concerned that there had not been a full buy-in from the Rank and File Committee as a whole, the potential for problems at the dispatch itself was likely, and there was a need for physical protection.<sup>221</sup> Unfortunately Domingo and Viernes disregarded these concerns.

On June 1, 1981 two members of the Tulisan gang entered the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union office in downtown Seattle and shot Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes. A fireman found Domingo on the sidewalk outside of the union hall, and he lived long enough to mutter the words "Ramil" and "Guloy", the two assailants. The murder weapon, which had been tossed in a nearby dumpster, was registered to union President Tony Baruso. Eventually, the Domingo and Viernes families and supporters uncovered a conspiracy that showed that the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, paid for the murders through Baruso. While Baruso's motive hinged on upholding gangsterism and corruption in union affairs, Marcos wanted to stop the KDP and the efforts that Gene and Silme were doing on the organization's behalf. The RFC posed a powerful threat not only to the corrupt leadership of the union and the salmon canning industry, but also to the Philippine state through its work with the KDP. The threat to the union and canning industry

<sup>219</sup> Rank and File Committee Minutes of Meeting. [January 29, 1981]. CWFLU-UW.

<sup>220</sup> Terri Mast, Emily Van Bronkhorst. 2009. Former Rank and File Activists Group Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>221</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 22, 2010.

of a democratically run union would do away with a system in which both were receiving financial kickbacks and the canning industry did not want to see the union gain power within the canneries.

As the Stamets (1982) quote below shows, the murders and loss of two prominent leaders was a setback for both the reform movement and KDP, but it also became a political opportunity.

The victims, Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo, both 29 were determined to reverse two decades of union corruption and almost a century of racial discrimination in this seafood industry when they were met with a hail of bullets on the afternoon of June 1, 1981. Far from stopping the reform movement, the crime backfired: outrage over the murders catapulted [sic.] the surviving members of the union's reform Rank and File Committee into the union leadership (Stamets 1982, 20).

The reformers launched a recall effort against Baruso in the months after the murders. By December 1981 he was removed from office. Nemesio Domingo Sr., Silme's father and the union's Vice President automatically succeeded him. The RFC activists became subsumed by what they referred to as their "internal union work", the day-to-day work in the union, and the RFC work took a back burner.<sup>222</sup>

At a memorial march led by the KDP for the slain union activists on June 1, 1982, a banner was printed with the slogan "Turn Anguish to Anger" (Cordova 2009), which served as a sort of mantra to keep the activists focused on the work ahead of them. By 1982 it was time for another union election. Nemesio Sr., the current President was an ally, but he was 72 years old and not really a part of the reform movement. Although he took direction from the reformers and allowed them to do what they saw fit, they wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to run their own candidate for the presidency: Silme's partner Terri Mast. She was one of the founding members of the Rank and File Committee and had worked in the cannery from 1978-1979. Mast was chosen because she had strong leadership skills. The KDP and reform movement activists wanted to make sure that she was taken care of financially since she was left with two daughters to raise.<sup>223</sup>

As a white female candidate, she represented the union's changing character and the change that the RFC represented. A printed flyer outlining the Rank and File Election Slate of 1982 shows how the RFC election slate reflected these changes:

As we enter into the union elections this year, it is important that we re-evaluate what type of leadership we need to keep our union strong. First and foremost, we must remember that ILWU Local 37 is a workers' organization. Therefore, it is necessary that the union leadership take up the rights and needs of all cannery workers regardless of race, sex or opinions. Despite the fact that Local 37 and has traditionally been considered a "Filipino union", the last seven years has brought into the Union members of all races, sexes and walks of life. As an example, the number of women in our union has increased to almost one – third of the members. With this changing character of our membership, the union leadership must broaden its sense of who the union represents.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Memo to Rank and File Committee Members and Supporters. [July 20, 1982]. Box 33 folder 22, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>223</sup> Mast, T. 2009. Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>224</sup> Rank and File Committee Election Slate 1982. [Summer 1982]. Box 33 Folder 28, CWFLU-UW.

The RFC swept the 1982 elections, securing all of the union's elected positions, in a powerful demonstration of how the RFC's strategy had been effective in winning over the membership.

The RFC was able to reform its union and implement the changes that it saw fit. However, the new union leaders were soon tested. From that point forward, the defense of jobs for cannery workers became a central aspect of their work. The canning industry remained anti-union, with only a fifth of the canneries unionized, and salmon-processing technologies changed the industry and canneries began closing. In addition, many of the Alaskeros were aging and retiring, and second-generation Filipino Americans were taking jobs in industries where the work was not so physically taxing (Stamets 1982). Stamets (1982) notes the challenge that the RFC run union would struggle with:

Still the union as a Filipino institution remains strong as a new third wave of immigrants is coming to America. In the 1970s Seattle's Filipino community doubled from 7,000 to 14,000, and in the Filipino barrios of California, friends and families of the new immigrants suggest that they go north to Seattle in May to see if they can get dispatched to Alaska. But if Local 37 is to survive as a viable trade union in the canneries, and not just as a Filipino institution, then it will have to extend its jurisdiction to other canneries. In some ways its reputation as an almost exclusively Filipino institution has hurt its reputation among non-Filipino workers. And in an industry where racism has been an issue from the very beginning, the union's heritage may not be the best guide to its future. Whatever the future may hold, it is clear that Gene and Silme did not die in vain. They paid their lives to reform the salmon canning industry, and their friends and family are more determined than ever to see their will carried out. At the final memorial service for these victims of violence David Della of the Rank and File Committee proclaimed: 'The Rank and File Committee was founded to re-establish the principles of the union in the early years. In their deaths Silme and Gene have become heroes of the working movement. We are certain that from these deaths the reform of Local 37 will only gain strength and momentum (Stamets 1982, 49).

While the reform movement within the union was successful in their effort to change the union, there were also many obstacles in their way. However, the reform movement did gain strength and momentum after the deaths of Domingo and Viernes and to this day the union is still run democratically.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter answers three questions: a) What strategies were used by the reform movement?; b) Why was the reform movement within the union successful?; c) What are the conditions under which activists are successful and unsuccessful in efforts to transform civil society, community-based organizations, to become social movement organizations?

I argue that the reform movement within the union was able to eventually take over the union because of their organizing strategies and how they framed their message. Four factors contributed to this. First, reformers kept their work within the union focused on the needs of the union membership, specifically fighting the discrimination faced in the Alaskan canneries and democratization of the union. The framing of their message and strategies reflected this focus. Second, the reformers affiliation with the KDP enriched their strategic capacity because the KDP

provided guidance on the strategies that were effective for the reform of the union and particularly encouraged coalition building as a strategy. Third, the Rank and File Committee built coalitions through its work in the KDP, in the International District, and through the initial work on the lawsuits with other Asian Americans, particularly to support the older, long-time members in the union in regards to housing and social services, and eventually to build a committee to investigate the murders of Domingo and Viernes. Fourth, while many of the reformers were affiliated with the KDP, and the KDP was providing direction about the strategies and framings used, the reformers did not emphasize this relationship. The reformers within the union were strategic about not exposing their political affiliations and their strategies and tactics for organizing. After the 1978 election they were able to secure a base of supporters and because of Baruso's involvement in the murders of Domingo and Viernes. They were able to obtain the presidency because Nemesio Domingo Sr., the vice president of the union, was next in line to be president. They had an ally in the right position at the right time. Their strategy led to their success because the activists focused on grass roots organizing which reflected: ideas that resonated with the membership base of the union, mobilization of the union's membership to support their program, and drew on an analysis of the power dynamics within the union.

Another question that this chapter addresses is the larger question of the conditions under which activists are successful and unsuccessful in efforts to transform civil society organizations, specifically community-based organizations and unions, to become social movement organizations. In the case of the Alaska Cannery Worker's Union, reformers were successful in taking over the union as part of a larger social movement vision that was articulated via the KDP. The strategy used by the KDP was basically cooptation by the left. Despite the fact that activists were successful in their effort to reform the organization and implement the changes that they saw fit, the KDP was only able to co-opt the organization to a certain extent.

The KDP was very clearly a social movement organization, however the union did not become a social movement organization. Activists were not able to make the union into a social movement organization because from 1981 forward the defense of jobs for cannery workers became a central aspect of their work as the industry shifted with canneries in Alaska closing. While the union was able to address many of the social movement oriented goals that the reform movement laid out, activists efforts became squelched due to their resources being split between uncovering the truth about the murders of Domingo and Viernes, the day to day duties of running the union including fighting the cannery closures that happened in the 1980's and 1990's and trying to organize new members and canneries into the union. The downfall of the KDP in 1987 also impacted their efforts. In this sense, activists were not successful in their effort to make the union into a social movement organization, despite the fact that they were successful in their effort to reform the organization. This case study illuminates a three-step framework for understanding the possibility of transforming an organization into a social movement organization. The first step is taking over the organization. The second step is implementing the vision set forth. And the third step is connecting that vision to the larger social movement goals and moving that organization into action to serve those goals. In this case study, activists were stopped somewhere between steps two and three.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

### Outcomes: The more that changes the more that stays the same

Before the brave, before the proud builders and workers,  
 I say I want the wide American earth,  
 Its beautiful rivers and long valleys and fertile plains,  
 Its numberless hamlets and expanding towns and towering cities,  
 Its limitless frontiers, its probing intelligence,  
 For all the free.  
 Free men everywhere in my land—  
 This wide American earth---do not wander homeless, And are not alone; friendship is our  
 bread, love our air;  
 And we call each other comrade, each growing with the other,  
 Each a neighbor to the other, boundless in freedom.  
 I say I want the wide American earth...  
 I say to you defenders of freedom, builders of peace.  
 I say to you democratic brothers, comrades of love:  
 Their judges lynch us, their police hunt us;  
 Their armies and navies and airmen terrorize us....  
 Before the brave, before the proud builders and workers,  
 I say I want the wide American earth  
 For all the free.  
 I want the wide American earth for my people.  
 I want my beautiful land.  
 I want it with my rippling strength and tenderness  
 Of love and light and truth  
 For all the free—

-Carlos Bulosan, *I Want the Wide American Earth*<sup>225</sup>

Well-known Filipino American novelist and poet Carlos Bulosan wrote *I Want the Wide American Earth* for the deportation defense fund of his cannery worker friends Chris Mensalvas and Ernesto Mangoang. As the secretary of the cannery worker's union wrote at the time, "...this stirring poem...embodies in memorable symbols the spirit of the great American democratic spirit..."<sup>226</sup> It was this image of America as the land of opportunity, democracy, and hope that the activists in Seattle in the 1970s struggled for, and that resonated in the imaginations of the community's old-timers. While total equality and revolution were not achieved, the organizing described in this dissertation indisputably made an impact on the lives of those within the Filipino American community. However, I do not subscribe to an analysis of the successes and failures, which has become a prevalent tool in examining the legacy of social movements and organizing. Instead I draw upon Andrews' (2004) concept of outcomes, which provides an alternate way of analyzing social movements that illuminates both intended and unintended impacts of movements to understand the local organizing in Seattle that was part of the Asian American Movement. Andrews (2004) argues "the concept of 'outcomes' or equivalent terms

<sup>225</sup> I want the Wide American Earth. [n.d.], Box 33 folder 2, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>226</sup> To All Friends of Democracy. [n.d.], Box 33 folder 2, CWFLU-UW.

such as ‘consequences’ or ‘impact’ provides greater flexibility because scholars can assess the influence of the movement in many different domains of activity and examine intended or unintended impacts of the movement (17).” Andrews (2004) provides a framework for understanding the role of movements in transforming institutions and social relations, which pushes the emphasis of investigations on social movements past the norm of focusing upon emergence and origins. In this chapter I draw upon Andrews’ (2004) concept of outcomes to understand what happened as a result of the strategies used to organize within the Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS) and to reform the Alaska Cannery Worker’s Union without getting stuck in a success or failure dichotomy.

Within the literature about the broader Asian American Movement, the most visible outcomes discussed are the ways in which Asian American identity has become institutionalized through the formation of American Studies courses and programs in colleges and universities, as well as through the formation of community organizations. However, Wei (1993) has argued that “success” has depended upon whether one has a reformist or revolutionary perspective. For example, from the reformist perspective, the movement was successful because of its ability to meet its established goals, particularly “to institutionalize itself by founding counter-institutions on campuses and in communities” (Wei 1993, 10). Wei insinuates that those who took on a radical approach to the movement were not “successful” because a socialist revolution did not happen and “...they lapsed into sectarianism, vying for power in the radical community and fighting each other over the ‘correct political line’, while their rivals, the reformers, were learning to function effectively within the American political system” (Wei 1993, 10). Andrews’ concept of outcomes provides a path through this dichotomy between reformism and radicalism in the Asian American Movement. I have shown in this dissertation that prior claims that activists were either reformist or radical did not hold true for activists in Seattle, who moved from reformism into radicalism. This dissertation also contrasts Wei’s work by showing that the radical activists in Seattle, across the country, and even further have made an impact and were able to bring about change.

This chapter focuses on the long-term and short-term impacts of the movements to reform the FCS and Cannery Worker’s Union, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of those efforts. I start by re-examining the questions posed in the introduction of this dissertation. The bulk of this chapter examines the outcomes of the movements described in this dissertation. This conclusion also addresses the larger question of how effective activists were in using civil society institutions as social movement organizations with broader goals. This dissertation closes with a focus on areas of future study and the legacy of these movements.

### **Returning to the Questions Posed in this Dissertation**

The overall research questions this dissertation focused on are: How do processes of community, identity, and ideological formation shape social movement organizing strategies? How have changing patterns of immigration, institutional community formation, and international movement ideology shaped the strategies used by activists organizing on behalf of the Filipino American community in Seattle, Washington? Specifically, I examined questions grouped around two themes. Below I will show the findings to these questions.

The first theme I explored was “Social Movement Connections”, through which I asked the following questions: What were the origins of the strategies and tactics used? Specifically, how did notions of civil rights, (Asian American) identity, and radicalism shape these strategies?

What is the relationship between strategy, tactics, and ideology? The findings of this study show that Filipino American activism in the 1970s emerged as a result of ideological inspirations from the Asian American and Civil Rights Movements. The framings of these movements resonated with activists' lived experiences in Seattle where they witnessed injustice within their community, specifically with regards to the old-timers' housing and services and employment discrimination in the Alaska canneries. In their first moment of organizing, the activists focused on building community infrastructure through two strategies. The first strategy was to transform the FCS and compel it to take on these issues. And second, forming a nonprofit organization, the ACWA, to fight the discrimination that cannery workers faced in the Alaska salmon canneries. After 1973 this organizing changed both ideologically and strategically with the formation of the KDP, the *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino*. Activists involved in broader Asian American Movement activities were motivated to focus on issues that involved the Filipino American community and Philippines. In this second phase of organizing, activists employed more radical strategies, which illuminated divisions within the larger Filipino American community based on family immigration history, class, generation, and political orientation. To this day, these differences are generally not discussed and are ignored or unacknowledged within the broad Filipino community. For instance, the leadership of the FCS is well aware that some second-generation Filipino Americans have been excluded from the organization, but do nothing to change the situation. This will be further elaborated below in the "generational differences" section.

In the 1970s, differences within the FCS led second-generation Filipino American radicals away from attempting to work within the FCS and to instead focus their efforts on reforming the Alaska Cannery Workers' Union Local 37, organizing around issues they felt were important, such as providing and protecting housing for the old-timers in the community. These elders lived primarily in Single Occupancy hotel rooms in Seattle's International District. Activists focused on providing social services to both these elderly people and youth, exposing and ending the discrimination that many faced in the Alaskan canneries, and fighting for the democratization of the union. Activists abandoned their efforts within the FCS because of the resistance from the old guard within the organization. Despite continued, significant resistance within the Cannery Worker's Union, the activists eventually achieved their goals.

The findings of this study show that strategy, tactics, and ideology were inextricably linked and that the two phases of organizing efforts reflect this connection. In the beginning, activists were inspired by the Civil Rights Movement's demands for equality and they also drew inspiration from the identity awareness and community-rebuilding ideals of the Asian American Movement. These ideas merged with long-held grievances within Seattle's Filipino American community, particularly over the lack of services available to the elderly and youth, and pushed activists into action. Their first-phase strategies reflected a reformist agenda and as they ran for election within the FCS, they were vocal about seeking local change. Initially, they did not have a broader agenda nor did they connect their work to an explicit social movement. Although their goals of rebuilding community infrastructure never changed, there was a shift in both strategy and ideology to include revolutionary goals after the declaration of martial law in the Philippines. When the activists formed a KDP chapter in Seattle, their overriding strategy became a war of position aimed at taking over the FCS and the union to connect with the KDP and its larger social movement objectives.

The second thematic area I explored concerned "Identity, Affiliation, Alliance, Space and Difference" through which I asked the following questions: How do diverse identities and



affiliations across civil society organizations shape organizing strategies, specifically generation, immigration histories, work histories, political affiliations, spatial relationships, and transnational ties? I found that the strategies used by activists were shaped by their affiliations and alliances, first formed as students at the University of Washington where they created identity and equity-based student organizations and alliances. These relationships later extended off campus, where organizations continued to work together and informed the strategy of those working on behalf of the Filipino American community. Examples of this include the relationship between the ACWA (Alaska Cannery Worker's Association) and UCWA (United Construction Worker's Association), as well as the KDP and activists involved in the FCS and cannery worker issues.

The activists' strategies were also shaped by their grievances regarding the state of the Filipino American community in Seattle. These grievances were shaped by the spatial relationship and history of the Filipino American community in Seattle. The history of Seattle as a colonial metropole attracted Filipino students to attend the University of Washington and other schools, and Filipino workers came to work in the service sector and canneries, many passing through Seattle from agriculture fields in California, Oregon and Washington to the salmon canneries in Alaska.

As these workers made Seattle their home, they were relegated to single occupancy hotel rooms in Seattle's International District. As the newcomers sought to fit in the larger community, they created organizations of their own. In the 1970s, the activists' strategy was to take over leadership of some of these organizations to meet the unfulfilled needs of those who had originally formed them. The social stratification present in the broad Filipino American community were also manifested within the FCS and Cannery Worker's Union, so as an organizing strategy, the activists incorporated members and ideas that activists thought would be respected, based on those customary hierarchies.

### **The Bigger Question**

The bigger question this dissertation is concerned with is the possibility for using pre-existing civil society institutions as part of social movements and more specifically using them as vehicles from which to wage an attack on the state. While it is obvious that Seattle activists were not successful in bringing down the state in either the United States or the Philippines, there is another way of looking at the question of how activists were able to wage an attack on the state through the strategy of the War of Position and the outcomes of this attempt. This alternative analysis involves looking at countermobilization. Andrews (2004) explains:

The trajectories and consequences of social movements can only be understood by examining the structure that the movement is attempting to change and the opposition or resistance that it faces. Movements and their opponents attempt to mobilize support and face a set of constraints and opportunities. Within that context, the presence of a movement challenges other groups directly and indirectly, and if the movement is successful, even greater alterations to existing power relations can result. Because of these threats, insurgent movements are accompanied by countermobilization that must be analyzed to assess the movement's impact (or lack of impact) (Andrews 2004, 30).

An analysis of the countermovement that built opposition against the movement within the FCS and union reveals that the reformers were considered a major threat. Within the FCS this

countermovement response was repression, primarily through intimidation and red-baiting -- attempting to malign the reformers as politically dangerous or suspect. Within the context of the union, repression extended beyond intimidation to the use of violence. The countermovement was a reaction not only to the changes the reformers were trying to make at an institutional level, but also to the KDP's attempt to take over civil society institutions to achieve social movement and revolutionary goals. The ferocity of the countermovement's reaction was indicative of the effectiveness of this strategy. Not only the institutions but the political systems in the U.S. and Philippines, that supported them felt that the reformers posed a clear threat. The Philippine state, under the control of the U.S.-backed Marcos regime, ordered the murders of Domingo and Viernes. There was also evidence that there was United States involvement

However, the countermovement's use of repression and violence demonstrates that there was a limit to the reformers' revolutionary strategies. The countermovements themselves were effective in diluting or redirecting the energies of these movements. After the murders of their leaders, the activists formed an organization called the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV), and its efforts to hold those who had ordered the slayings accountable redirected the movement's attention and energy, thus effectively undermining the group's larger social movement goals of using the organizations to wage an attack on the state. At the same time, the countermovement's use of violence backfired because the murders so shocked the community that the local efforts to reform the union intensified. If the countermovement's larger goal was to quash support for a revolution in the Philippines, then its tactic succeeded. But after Marcos was ousted from office and fled to the United States, the CJDV was able to pursue a civil lawsuit against him in federal court. In 1989, a jury found that the Marcos family, having plotted and paid for the murders of Domingo and Viernes, was liable for damages.

By this time the activists had disbanded the KDP, joined a new group, and eventually disengaged from a revolutionary viewpoint. The KDP split its ties with the communist movement in the Philippines in 1982. As Espiritu (2009) explains, the reasons are complex:

The divergence between the Philippine and Filipino American left in the 1970s and early 1980s, especially from standpoint of Filipino American revolutionaries...was well under way before 1982...They involve disagreements over the essence of Filipino identity in the diaspora, the responsibilities of overseas revolutionaries to the 'homeland', the priority to be accorded to 'pre-party' organizing and international solidarity, and the validity of China's leadership for the Philippine revolution and international communism. (53)

The KDP continued its anti-Marcos work in coalition and collaboration with the Line of March, a Marxist-Leninist group in the United States and changed its political target to bringing down capitalism throughout the world by focusing on the United States (Elbaum 2002, Espiritu 2009). Although Marcos was removed from office, there was no socialist revolution in the Philippines. The activists' revolutionary goals were not met, but an unintended outcome of their movement was that, through their successful lawsuit against Marcos for the murders of Domingo and Viernes, they were able to reveal to the world the extent of the dictator's depravity and corruption.

This dissertation shows that the strategy to co-opt organizations or transform pre-existing organizations into social movement organizations can be both effective and ineffective, depending how issues are framed, the specific strategies used, the resistance that such

movements encounter and how the movement handles that resistance. These case studies also show that the larger social movement goals should be interwoven within the organizational work in a way that is somewhat hidden, but effective for meeting both goals. The strategies that proved most effective to the Seattle activists were base-building or building a historical bloc through grass roots organizing and forming coalitions and alliances with other organizations and individuals. Keeping the work within the institutions focused on the organization's specific goals and tasks was an important factor to the effectiveness of their strategies. The story of the outcomes of the organizing efforts within each of the organizations, which is told in the following sections, also reveals answers to the questions framed in this dissertation.

### **The Alaska Cannery Worker's Union: Outcomes of the Union Reforms**

Today the Alaska Cannery Workers Union lives on as the Inland Boatmen's Union Region 37, part of the marine division of the ILWU, and is still run by those who were involved in the reform movement. The movement to reform the union, the Rank and File Committee, had a set of goals that focused on membership involvement, leadership accountability to the membership, and union democracy.<sup>227</sup> They sought to implement these goals by putting into effect a fair dispatch system, finances that were transparent to the membership, stronger employment security, a guaranteed 40-hour week with no decrease in seasonal guarantee, contract enforcement through union delegates, enforcement of the no transfer clause, implementation of an organizing drive, equal treatment of women, elimination of the miscellaneous work clause, and stronger safety regulations.<sup>228</sup> Initially they were aggressive with membership education and involvement, as well as with the employers in terms of contract negotiations and grievances. The dispatch system was completely overhauled and to this day is done by seniority. One major difference in how the Rank and File Committee ran the union was its creation of campaigns to organize canneries that were not represented by the union. The former leadership of the union had never attempted to organize any of the non-union canneries.

The RFC met its goals with three exceptions. First, the attempt to guarantee a 40-hour week with no decrease in the guaranteed minimal seasonal salary was lost in the 1980's in conjunction with the Reagan administration's attacks on labor.<sup>229</sup> Second, they were unable to win a no-transfer clause, preventing the unilateral transfer of workers between canneries, although they did negotiate transfers based on a 'preference' seniority system.<sup>230</sup> And finally, despite a valiant attempt, the union was unable to organize new canneries and members into the union.

In the 1980's the energies of both those involved in the union and the wider activist circles, specifically the KDP, became subsumed with the work of solving and bringing justice to the Domingo Viernes murder case. As the Committee For justice Domingo and Viernes (CJDV) explained, the gunmen and Baruso were found guilty in the beginning:

Domingo and Viernes were gunned down on June 1, 1981 in the Seattle office of Local 37. Although Ben Guloy, Jimmy Ramil and Tony Dictado were convicted and sentenced in 1981 and 1982 for their roles in the murders, the families and friends of Domingo and Viernes have long believed that the fight for justice could not end until the higher level

<sup>227</sup> Alaskero News. [April 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU-UW.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> The primary concern for this was in canneries that had short seasons of only six weeks or shorter, the RFC wanted to be sure that workers would earn a minimum amount of money.

<sup>230</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 29, 2010.

individuals who ordered and paid for the murders were made to answer for their crimes.<sup>231</sup>

The activists knew these individuals had not acted on their own and set their sights on uncovering the larger conspiracy. As the Carlos Bulosan exhibit organized by the Northwest Labor Employment Law Office explains, their efforts continued over the course of eight years and eventually led to victory:

Through eight years of organizing and legal work led by the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV), three members of a local gang were found guilty in their roles in the murders and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. As a result of a civil suit filed in Federal Court, Philippine dictators Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were found liable in the murders of Gene and Silme...Former President of Local 37, Tony Baruso, was put on trial in 1990 and also sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for his role in the murders. What was uncovered by the CJDV was a murder plot hatched and paid for in Manila and carried out by local gang members.<sup>232</sup>

The union reformers were able to use the union as an institution through which bigger issues were supported, specifically housing social services in the International District and the murders of Domingo and Viernes through the CJDV. To do this the activists worked in coalition with other groups and particularly built alliances across race lines to meet their goals.

The union has become much more involved in the labor movement, and as I show in the following section about the FCS, the current leader of the union, Rich Gurtiza, has reconnected the union to the FCS, and workers in the canneries work in an environment free of bribery, gangs, and segregation. However, the current state of the union is somewhat moribund. The union has lost ground in terms of how many workers and the number of canneries that it represents. The union only has 600 members now, working in 3 canneries.<sup>233</sup> 60 percent of the union membership is still Filipino.<sup>234</sup> There are only 4 shop stewards and an active shop steward program is no longer in existence. Despite the great efforts and resources the reformers put into organizing, the union was unable to organize new canneries.

Many of the canneries the union did represent have closed as a result of two major changes within the industry: the expansion of product lines and the emergence of floating seafood processors. First, the product line for salmon has expanded to include fresh frozen fish and surimi, which is cheaper to process on floating seafood processors.<sup>235</sup> Quotas now dictate when and how much fish can be caught and there is only so much fish to go around.<sup>236</sup> Also, the rise in farm-raised salmon has decreased the demand for canned salmon. The U.S. government<sup>237</sup> and European countries used to be the largest markets for canned salmon, but the availability of

---

<sup>231</sup> Committee for Justice Domingo and Viernes. December 1989. "The Trial Begins." Seattle, Washington: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. Retrieved on March 24, 2010 from [http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/d/6095-1/CJDV\\_Dec\\_89\\_ocr.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/d/6095-1/CJDV_Dec_89_ocr.pdf)

<sup>232</sup> Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office. n.d. Carlos Bulosan Exhibit: The Reform Movement of Local 37 The Work of Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes. Seattle, Washington. Retrieved on January 23, 2010 from, [http://www.bulosan.org/html/local\\_37.html](http://www.bulosan.org/html/local_37.html)

<sup>233</sup> Rich Gurtiza, telephone conversation with author, January 26, 2010.

<sup>234</sup> Rich Gurtiza, email message to author, March 25, 2010.

<sup>235</sup> Rich Gurtiza, telephone conversation with author, January 26, 2010. Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 29, 2010.

<sup>236</sup> Rich Gurtiza, telephone conversation with author, January 26, 2010.

<sup>237</sup> In the past, the U.S. government purchased large quantities of canned salmon for the military.

farm raised salmon in places across the world has changed the market, as has the cheaper cost of farm raised salmon versus wild salmon from Alaska. Farm raised salmon is also more palatable for Americans than canned salmon.<sup>238</sup>

Second, floating seafood processors, which are extremely difficult to organize, have taken over the industry. “Floating processors (also called offshore processors) usually are ships or barges that have been converted into floating fish-processing factories. They rarely do any actual fishing. Instead, they buy and process the fish and shellfish caught by other boats” (Jobmonkey 2010). Shore-based operations are more costly than the floating processors because they are unionized and require certain guarantees including health benefits, but the floating processors also require less of a workforce because they are only handling fresh frozen fish and are able to process that fish more quickly than the canneries.<sup>239</sup>

By 1985, the union did not have enough money to keep going in the way that it had envisioned. The two officers, Terri Mast and David Della, were basically being paid minimum wage. Everyone else was working on a volunteer basis or receiving very little reimbursement. In 1985 Local 37 merged with the Inland Boatmen’s Union. By merging with the IBU, the union no longer had to worry about the expenses, such as rent, it was paying out to be autonomous.<sup>240</sup> The hope was that the merger would bring about financial and organizational stability,<sup>241</sup> but afterward the union was not able to keep as many people employed. The organizing program was suspended in 1987, according to former union organizer and KDP member Alonzo Suson,

The last organizing we have done was in 81-84. Then we were in an NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] and for sure its a loser and we lost 3-4 elections that way. To win or organize canneries, I am and had been advocating that it has to be done in a strike mode and demand for recognition... By then Local 37 just run out of money and the will was zap...Politically too, our main support the LOM [Line of March] was in disarray. Remember during this period, organizing was not the "in thing" in the labor movement. In fact it was more debate to organize and lip service.<sup>242</sup>

According to this assessment, the union was unable to organize because of the larger political field in which the National Labor Relations Board elections process worked against them. Also the strategic support that they once received from the KDP was not being directed by the Line of March (LOM), which was falling apart.

In 1980, the union represented 1600 cannery workers at 12 canneries. In 1999 the union gained two canneries, which had been grandfathered in.<sup>243</sup> By 2003 the union lost three quarters of its members, approximately 1020 workers, including those who worked for the biggest employer, Wards Cove, which had seven canneries.<sup>244</sup> Despite these losses, the union carries with it an enduring legacy as an institution within the Filipino American community that many working class Filipinos, who still go to work in Alaska, can rely on to secure and safeguard jobs in the canneries.

---

<sup>238</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 29, 2010.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Rich Gurtiza, telephone conversation with author, January 26, 2010.

<sup>241</sup> Terri Mast, telephone conversation with author, January 29, 2010.

<sup>242</sup> Alonzo Suson, email correspondence with author, March 24, 2010.

<sup>243</sup> This grandfathering happened as a result of a split in the formation of the union.

<sup>244</sup> Rich Gurtiza, telephone conversation with author, January 26, 2010.

A personal story illustrates this important connection. In November 2009, I was in Washington D.C. for the annual American Studies Association conference and in the elevator I met a man, who worked in maintenance for the hotel. He asked if I was Filipina and where I was from. When I replied that I was from Seattle, he told me he had been to Seattle and that he knew people there. He said years ago he had come to Seattle to work as a merchant marine, but when he found he could not get hired, friends told him to go to the union hall. There he met Terri Mast, who helped him get a job in the canneries in Alaska. For many years he has worked in Washington D.C. hotels in the fall, winter, and spring, but every summer he continues to go to Seattle to get dispatched to work in the Alaska canneries. Despite the fact that the union membership is small compared to what it once was, many Filipinos<sup>245</sup> like the one I met in Washington D.C., still travel from afar to work in Alaska in the salmon canneries.

### **The Filipino Community of Seattle Now: Hope or More of the same?**

The movement to reform the FCS, *Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970s*, had a set of goals that focused on financial stability, programs for youth and elderly, to become involved with social and political issues, and to foster identity awareness amongst Filipinos in Seattle.<sup>246</sup> While the nation-based activists chose to leave the organization and the radicals were pushed out of the organization, the FCS has taken on at least three of these issues on a very low level: financial stability and programs for the elderly and youth. FCS currently provides services in the FCC including classes in computers, Tagalog, and dancing, as well as classes for youth such as chess and tutoring. They also offer a lunch program for the elderly. However, the FCS has always been focused on socializing, and the current services provided by the FCS reflect that emphasis.

Just as FCS has continued to have a focus on socializing, the FCS has also continued to focus their efforts on fundraising for their physical space for congregating in. When I entered the FCS as part of my research in 2004, I found that the organization and the broader Filipino American community were embroiled in a debate regarding whether the FCS should remodel their current Filipino Community Center or search for a new location. Distilled to its core, this debate --like the debates that occurred in the 1970s-- was really about the purpose of a Filipino community organization. The debate reemerged in the late 1990s when Sound Transit announced that its Light Rail would go through the piece of land that the FCC was on. This current debate sheds new light on the outcomes of the organizing efforts that took place in the 1970s, shows how those outcomes played out within the organization and continues to reflect the opinions and lives of individual activists.

In 1999 Sound Transit announced its' Light Rail Link Project, which included a plan to demolish the Filipino Community Center (FCC) to make way for the South Seattle route. This announcement spurred debate within FCS about where to relocate the FCC. According to the FCS website the response was that:

The FCS president, Bert Caoili, immediately created the New Building Committee to plan and build a new multipurpose Filipino Center. On February 7, 2000, the FCS was

---

<sup>245</sup> In my observations of dispatches of cannery workers the very large majority were Filipinos. And according to Rich Gurtiza the membership of the union is 60% Filipino.

<sup>246</sup> *Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970's*. [1970]. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. Filipino American National Historical Society.

registered in Olympia, under the Charitable Solicitations Act. This enabled the FCS to solicit donations and raise funds from both private and public entities. In April 2002, the New Building Committee under President Camilo de Guzman, evolved into a separate and independent 501(C)(3) development corporation called the Filipino Community of Seattle Community Development Corporation (FCSCD). This group, headed by former Seattle City Councilmember Dolores Sibonga, is charged with raising funds and construction of the new facility. (Filipino Community of Seattle, 2005)

Sound Transit eventually relocated the path of the Link Light Rail and the existing FCC was no longer threatened. However, the Sound Transit proposal had already spurred a debate about how to make the FCC a more appealing place that would draw in more diverse participation beyond the predominately first-generation membership, most of whom were in their 60s, 70s or 80s. Some felt the FCC should be remodeled and some argued it should be moved to another location or completely redesigned. In the FCS election that followed, the candidates represented both factions. The group led by Camilo DeGuzman wanted to relocate the FCC to a place that could provide low-income housing as well as other resources. Many American born Filipinos were affiliated with DeGuzman's group. Some had not been involved with the FCS in decades and were excited about the possibility of finally being able to offer the services they had fought for unsuccessfully in the 1970s.

Alma Kern and Bert Caoilie, representatives of the other party, were elected president and vice president. Members of this group were predominately Philippine immigrants who had immigrated to the U.S. after 1965. It was not entirely clear until Kern and Caoilie were in office, but their position was to renovate the current community center structure rather than to build a new structure in a new location. The renovation was completed in 2008, nearly ten years later.

This debate might seem like a new problem. However, this debate is not new nor is the physical building called the FCC the real issue contested. Although the debate was ostensibly about the fate and purpose of the organization's community center, it was symbolic of the larger divisions within the Filipino community based on class, family immigration history and generation and was similar to the debates that had ensued within the organization in the 1970s.

Since Caoilie and Kern's election as president and vice president of FCS they have made strides to have the FCS and FCC provide more services. Some second-generation Filipino Americans have seen this as a moment of possibility and have begun to participate once again in FCS. David Della was one of those who saw this as a point of transformation in the Filipino community in Seattle.

In 2005, Della was elected to the Seattle City Council, a position that is not determined by specific districts, but is elected through a citywide vote. Della explained that the FCS played a critical role in his election:

I ran for this seat city wide, the Filipino community organization took up my campaign as one of their key issues last year. So during my campaign last year FAPAGOW which is the...Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington which is the political arm of the Filipino Community of Seattle Inc. took up my campaign as the single campaign they were going to support...They went out and they raised money...they mobilized people to vote, they had events for me at the community center. And so for me that was

really my homecoming back to the Filipino community was my campaign and election to city council.<sup>247</sup>

Della was deeply moved by the FCS support for his campaign. Though he represented the city as whole, he wanted to help transform the FCS, particularly to help update the FCC and to make more people feel welcome there.

Ironically the FCS endorsed and participated in Della's campaign because Rich Gurtiza, the current leader of the union, the regional director<sup>248</sup> of Region 37 of the Inland Boatmen's Union (the Cannery Worker's Union), helped persuade FAPAGOW, the Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington, to do so. The union and FCS have a renewed relationship because Gurtiza decided it was important to reestablish the connection. Gurtiza was elected President of FAPAGOW, the political organization within FCS, in early 2005. As he saw other Filipino Americans such as former State Representative Velma Veloria and former City Councilman David Della, becoming politically involved, Gurtiza felt that it was important to forge a relationship between the FCS, FAPAGOW, and the union. He thought that he was in a unique position to lead this effort. As Gurtiza explained,

My plan was to be able to do what you needed to have people buy into a plan. I thought the way to do that political discussion, the means to do that was through my position in labor, [bring] issues to the table and those issues would allow people to have that discussion. Working peoples issues are the same as community issues, forge together those issues would be relevant to the community. At least the folks in labor and vice versa and I stepped back from that more involved in FAPAGOW. And now president as FAPAGOW we engage labor and community forge and leverage. But it all started with labor that was how I saw it happening.<sup>249</sup>

Through his unique position in FAPAGOW and the union, Gurtiza sees possibilities for bringing up labor issues within the larger Filipino Community in Seattle. The union's renewed relationship and the support of Della's campaign shows that the FCS is beginning to change and some of the old divisions have healed.

The FCS has been at a crossroads for many years, slowly evolving from being a social club to a social service agency for nearly six years.<sup>250</sup> Although the leadership of the organization has seen the need for some changes, it has been mindful of the composition of the membership of the organization and has found it difficult to make too many changes at once. Divisions between the elected council members of the FCS have impeded this transition. In the fall of 2005 Caoilie and Kern were reelected to the positions of president and vice president and in the fall of 2008 Kern was elected as president. During their term they continued to fundraise for their FCC building fund, renovated the existing structure, and currently the FCS is providing more services and organizing more cross-generational events than ever before. According to Della,

---

<sup>247</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>248</sup> Regional Director is what used to be the President position, however when the union merged with the IBU, the local became a region of the larger IBU, hence the term regional director.

<sup>249</sup> Gurtiza, Rich. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>250</sup> Polintan, Odette. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington. Odette is a former KDP member who worked as a legal consultant to the FCS on some of their projects.



there is a new element in the community now...under the administration of Bert Caoilie. Who still has elements of some of the old leadership but has some new energy and some new blood on the council that are you know are looking at ways in which they get more involved in social issues not to the same degree that we pushed for when were in the KDP but you know more towards being concerned about our elderly through a program called Tahanan being concerned about our youth with a program called Filipino... Youth...Empowerment Program and then other programs you know social services computer training and renovation of the hall so it is more updated so it can provide services.<sup>251</sup>

These changes made Della feel “very encouraged with the new leadership” and that “they’re much more tied to issues facing the current community right now which you know is different from before.”<sup>252</sup> During Della’s tenure as a City Council member, he was involved in helping raise money for the renovation of the FCC and was instrumental in getting the city to contribute \$175,000 towards the renovation. Della’s understanding of the reason to move towards renovation was:

They’re renovating because you know at first we are putting in a new light rail line through Rainier Valley and at first it was going to slice through the corner of the community center and so they were looking at one point for a new center so we were trying to raise money for a new center well ah since then Sound Transit which is the Transit Authority which is building the light rail has changed their route so it is not gonna go through the corner of the community. So the community rather than buying a new building they are going to renovate the old building and so that’s what they’re doing and they’re raising money...I am trying to raise 1.8 million dollars... city has given some commitment to that and I’ve given some personal commitment to raise money for that.<sup>253</sup>

Despite such possibilities, many feel there are still historic divisions within the organization. Many also feel the organization is still not taking up the issues, such as housing, that the second generation thought were important.

Like Della and Gurtiza, Bob Santos found himself involved with FCS again. After the “young turks” were kicked out of FCS in 1981, Santos began working in the International District full time. He “started developing housing for the broad Asian community and that included Filipinos... Being in the International District we went after more of the public funds, HUD, block, city and state block grants. And those kinds of funds were available then.”<sup>254</sup> He was also involved in building health clinics. He devoted all of his time and energy to the International District. Like many of the other radicals, Santos relied upon coalition building to achieve his goals. As was written in an article about Santos:

before there was a Rainbow Coalition, he was part of a loose group of multicultural rabblers. ‘Whenever any one of us needed bodies, we could call on each other.’ They all pitched in...I think what I enjoyed most was creating that frame of mind that

---

<sup>251</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Santos, Bob. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

low-income housing was a good thing. And they felt, especially sons and daughters of pioneers felt, that our parents deserved better housing...We were able to preserve the community for the people who built it. The community came together, the activists, the property owners, the businesses, and the tenants, and we were able to generate millions and millions of dollars in resources to [sustain] continuous production and preservation of housing stock (Quintance 2004).

It should be noted that Santos' use of the word "community" in this statement, was not a reference to FCS. Since the 1970s and 1980s FCS has not been involved in housing issues.

Interestingly, housing was the issue that led Santos to become involved with FCS again. When the plans for the Light Rail and possibilities of change in the FCC arose, Santos participated in those discussions. He helped raise funds and donated his own money to the cause like many others, with the understanding that a new community center would be built at a different site, which could facilitate new social-service programs. After the Kern-Caoilie administration decided to remodel and expand the FCC rather than relocate it, Santos asked for his money back. His letter requesting reimbursement was read aloud, without comment, at an FCS council meeting that I attended. This lack of response, along with Santos' misimpression that the organization was embracing a new direction, shows how an organization can appear to be changing when it actually remains the same.

### **Generational Differences**

Another way in which the organization has not changed is that second-generation Filipino Americans, such as Santos, feel that FCS continues to not be inclusive of the majority of Filipinos in Seattle.<sup>255</sup> As Santos stated "of the 60,000 people in the Filipino community there is about maybe 2,000 that go to the community center regularly."<sup>256</sup> According to Santos, a new community center would be more impressive to Filipinos who have not participated in FCS before. He also thought it would be very important to provide housing to the community through the FCC.

Although Rich Gurtiza is an elected officer of an organization within the FCS and has helped to heal some of the old divisions, he continues to feel that he is not fully accepted within FCS as a whole because he is American born and does not speak a Filipino dialect.<sup>257</sup> Former state legislator Velma Veloria described the contention between Seattle's American born Filipinos and Philippine born Filipinos in this way:

Internal to that Filipino Community of Seattle they have their officers and then they also have their what do you call it social issues that they bring forward, they also are trying to struggle to provide services for the ever-growing number of Filipinos that moved into Seattle as immigrants and it doesn't necessarily address the American born, although some of them maybe members but most traditional that I know of are immigrants.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> Santos, Bob. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>256</sup> Santos, Bob. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>257</sup> Gurtiza, Rich. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>258</sup> Veloria, Velma. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

Though Veloria was born in the Philippines, she identifies how the FCS does not address issues that concern American-born members of the community. The FCS, in her view, has been based upon the experience of immigration and many of those who have been participants and leaders in the group have been newer immigrants. Veloria and Gurtiza's statements exemplify the ways in which generational differences continue to play out within the FCS. The leadership of the FCS also acknowledges these differences.

In an interview with the current president of the FCS, Alma Kern revealed that she feels American-born Filipinos look down upon Filipino immigrants because of their accents. She also shared with me that some Filipino immigrants are not comfortable around American-born Filipinos and prefer to association with other Filipino immigrants. However, she explained that they will "tolerate" the American-born. The leadership of the FCS is aware of the issues that American-born Filipinos have with the FCS, however Kern characterized these criticisms as "complaining...not really trying." She knows they sometimes feel ignored, but does not know how to resolve the situation other than keeping the door open. She would like to see the first, second and third generations interacting.<sup>259</sup>

These differences in opinion about the future of the FCC are reflective of larger disagreements about the purpose of the FCS that began in the 1970s. These differences are not just based in generation and family immigration history, but continue to be reflective of a power struggle within the FCS between those who are the elected leadership of the organization, predominately Filipinos who are first-generation immigrants who came to the United States after 1965 and Filipino Americans whose families immigrated to the United States before 1965 and are second generation. Santos explained "the folks who came after the 60s are probably...the Filipinos that were educated and the professionals. Those seem to be the folks leading the community right now, that era of Filipinos."<sup>260</sup> All of the Filipino Americans whose families immigrated to the United States before 1965 that I interviewed said that they do not feel that the FCS is a place where they are welcome to participate in making decisions. It was not until the possibility of a new center being built that second-generation Filipino Americans, like Bob Santos, "had a renewed interest to come back to work in the Filipino community. To help build that new center."<sup>261</sup> However, as I have already explained, despite this interest and efforts to work in the FCS again the second generation has come up against the same problems of difference that were experienced in the 1970's.

The leadership of FCS actively reproduces these divisions. According to Della, the elections themselves present many problems.

How you become elected leadership is...how much you raise money and...there is quite a bit of fan fare around Filipino community elections. It is likened to how they have elections in the Philippines, lots of fan fare and balloons and music and lots of social ties really tied into it...really it is mainly about social ties. And so it's about you know whom you know...who has the most social connections. You know and how broad does it go. It's almost likened to a beauty contest but in more of a political sense. And so you know you could be elected to office if you were well known...and you know come from many different regions, but I think it really is about...how much are you known socially and

---

<sup>259</sup> Kern, Alma. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>260</sup> Santos, Bob. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

how you...get around to the different social circles you know that really make up the bulk of the people who come out and vote for leadership in the community.<sup>262</sup>

Unfortunately this process makes it difficult for second-generation Filipino Americans to be elected if they do not have preexisting relationships with the post-1965 immigrants who are most predominate within the FCS. Cindy Domingo, sister of Nemesio and Silme Domingo, characterizes the lack of broad participation within FCS by explaining that participation in elections is not 'real' involvement in the organization:

The majority of Filipinos are not engaged in Seattle or probably in most cities are not engaged in the more organized events at the Filipino community...It would be interesting to see how many people they registered in the last election. For you know running of the officers of the Filipino community and look at it from a standpoint of comparing it to even twenty years ago when we were doing work in the Filipino community if numbers of voters have decreased. But is that the only way that really a more mass number of Filipinos interact with the organized Filipino community of Seattle? I don't think that there are enough programs or even you know how would you gauge if people. How would you get people involved in the Filipino community center? It would either have to be because it is mainly a social center if it is just utilizing the center for their social events or I mean social events at the community.<sup>263</sup>

Domingo's critique that the FCS is an organization that continues to focus on social events is shared by all of the second-generation Filipino Americans I interviewed, which includes both of the second-generation groups that were active in FCS in the 1970s.

It is ironic that the two second-generation groups now share the same critique of the FCS. Both groups feel that the FCS continues to be based on socializing and is not inclusive of all Filipino Americans. On the other hand, these two groups share a commonality in terms of family immigration history, class, and generation. Their previous split was based on politics or ideology more than it was on anything else. Domingo explained that,

If you did a class analysis of the Filipino community you'd probably find the overwhelming majority still working class, but because the Filipino community center or probably most...Filipino community centers across the nation don't really take up the issues of working class Filipinos whether it is like unionization issues, class discrimination kind of things... Filipinos don't look towards their community centers to resolve their issues that they face as working class Filipinos right. I mean you may be able to find once in a while...Filipino communities...take up certain issues...I think that's why the KDP was so radical in its time because they would actually take up in an organized fashion they became the center of who was going to take the issues of the Filipino working class right. Kind of more outside.<sup>264</sup>

Most of the second-generation Filipino Americans that I interviewed have chosen not to participate in FCS in a formal way, although all do work that benefits Filipino Americans in

---

<sup>262</sup> Della, David. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>263</sup> Domingo, Cindy. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

<sup>264</sup> Domingo, Cindy. (2004). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

indirect ways and are involved in social change work as activists. They have chosen to create alliances with other groups, particularly other Asian Americans and other ethnically based groups and individuals to do their work. Santos explained that “throughout the 70s and into the 80s... some of the activists, the young Filipino American activists that really wanted to work in the Filipino community, we were sort of shunned or put aside and our ideas were never taken to heart and so we did other things. We got involved in politics.”

The differences between Filipino Americans in Seattle limits who participates in FCS and who has access to the resources that FCS offers. The differences also limit the resources that the FCS has access to and the potential of what the FCS can do. A tangible outcome of this is that one of the biggest goals and challenges that FCS is facing is that they would like to include more youth in the organization. However, most of the youth are American born Filipinos and the leadership of FCS is not sure how to get the youth involved. Older American born Filipinos do not participate in the FCS except for attending banquets and some events. The youth might feel more connected to FCS if they saw second-generation Filipino Americans like themselves as part of the community’s leadership and if they felt that FCS was implementing programs they felt were important.

Studies like Meyerhoff’s *Number Our Days* (1978) and Gregory’s *Black Corona* (1998) help us to understand the ways in which debates are reflective of broader power dynamics that are based in class. By illuminating the divisions and debates within the Filipino Community in Seattle this study aims to deepen our understanding of the ways in which divisions within communities impact the potential for community institutions to act as change agents.

If the construction of identity is a political process, implicating a range of social, economic, and cultural practices and locations, it is a deeply historical one as well. For not only are social identities transformed over time, but they are also grounded in social relations, experiences, and commitments that endure through time. People recollect and rework the past through social practices of memory that bring the meanings of the past to bear on conditions in the present. The practices of memory shape the formation of collective identities (Gregory 1998, 13).

The FCS continues to fail as a unifying place, however it is a space that has the potential to be a place of fusion for Filipino Americans in Seattle. Through that unification it could serve as an umbrella organization that both currently has access to resources and could provide access to more resources. There is still potential within FCS, despite the fact that the question of the purpose of a Filipino community in Seattle remains to be addressed and broadened within FCS and differences need to be acknowledged, worked through, and dealt with within FCS and bridged with the broad community. FCS would be a less contested space if the organization worked with second-generation Filipino Americans to develop a clear vision for the purpose of FCS that goes beyond having a building or an organization just for the sake of having one. Bert Caoilie and Alma Kern voiced a concern about cultural preservation and making sure that there will always be a Filipino community in Seattle.<sup>265</sup> Though these concerns are valid, I do not think that they need to worry. Despite the fact that they do not participate in the institutionalized form of Filipino community that FCS has become, the second-generation Filipino Americans in Seattle that I interviewed show that this has not had an impact on their identity as Filipino

---

<sup>265</sup> Caoilie, Bert. (March 2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.  
Kern, Alma. (2005). Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.

Americans. Nor will it impede their ability to pass on to future generations what it means to be Filipino Americans. Based on these findings, I believe that there will always be a Filipino community even if there is not a physical location or organization that encompasses it. The community exists in the relationships and families of those who identify as being Filipino in America.

### **Areas of Future Research**

This research project has spurred three related, future areas of research: alliance building and the history of co-optation from the left. There are two areas of alliances that I uncovered in the process of doing the research for this dissertation that I was unable to explore in-depth. The first area, *Cross-Racial and Movement-Based Alliances*, would explore the multi-ethnic and movement-based alliances that were built through student networks in the late 1960s and early 1970s to understand how the development of “youth consciousness” at the University of Washington was connected to broader social movements. I am interested in exploring the connections built between students who became the reformers of the FCS and union and other activist groups across the University of Washington campus, in Seattle, and across state lines with specific attention to connections to the movements for Third World Liberation in California at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley.

The second area of alliance building that I am interested in focusing on is *Housing and Social Service Alliances*. This new area of research would focus on pan-Asian alliances built to protect and promote housing and social services for low-income Asian Americans in the International District of Seattle through the *Inter\*Im Community Development Agency*. As I showed in this dissertation, many elderly Filipino immigrants lived in low-income single occupancy hotel rooms on the West coast of the United States, however many residents were displaced and left without homes as financial districts expanded into these areas and stricter fire codes forced closures. This research will also highlight alliances with activists in San Francisco who were engaged in a similar struggle to save the International Hotel<sup>266</sup>.

The third area of future research, *the history of co-optation from the left*, stems from a question that developed over the course of this dissertation research: Were the cannery worker’s union activists in the 1950’s members of the communist party? My interest in this question was sparked by the similarity of what happened in the 1970s to what happened in the 1950s in the union. The first Rank and File Committee activists, Chris Mensalvas, Ernesto Mangaoang, etc. were brought up on charges during the McCarthy era and accused of being communists. At the time these individuals had to deny their connections, but I would like to do further research to understand whether or not they were affiliated with the Communist Party of the United States and if so, what their relationship was. In the archives of the union, I found that there was a major internal split within the union between Mensalvas and Mangaoang. Individuals who I have spoke to who knew both men have contended that this split was reflective of a larger split within the communist party. Another similarity is that both Rank-and-File Movements may have been connected to larger radical movements. This potential area of future research will build upon the questions I asked in this dissertation regarding the use of civil society in larger radical social movements.

---

<sup>266</sup> Habal, E. (2003). “We Won’t Move”: The International Hotel anti-Eviction Movement, 1968-1979, and the Filipino American Community. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Davis.

Additionally, I am interested in exploring the history of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang*. As this dissertation implies, the *Dimas-Alang* had a high level of power within the Filipino community in Seattle broadly and over both the Cannery Worker's Union and FCS. However, it is unclear what the transnational ties were to the Philippines and whether the government in the Philippines was indirectly providing guidance to this organization and therefore the individual actors within the Filipino community in the United States.

## Conclusion

What is the true legacy of these movements? First, the history of these movements highlights important lessons about the ways in which "differences" and the battles within communities are actually laden with power relationships reflective of larger forces at play. These differences, which are often taken for granted, have tangible consequences and should be questioned and addressed, not dismissed with "why can't we all just get along" sentiments. Those who hold power within a community context should try to figure out how to incorporate the ideas of everyone they claim to represent. As I have shown, the differences highlighted throughout this dissertation have not gone away. The generational differences continue to play out within Filipino community organizations, as the second and subsequent generations get further away from the language and customs of the "homeland". The question of "Filipino American" versus "Filipino" identity resurfaces with each generation, as does the tension between cultural preservation and socializing versus politics and radicalism.

Second, the legacy of these movements is a history and culture of activism in Seattle amongst Filipino Americans of the next generation and within the labor movement. It is also a history of a generation of activists who never stopped fighting for the issues they highlighted in the 1970s. Most of these activists have gone into different domains, including politics, union leadership and organizing, or working in community-based organizations, but still pursue their goal of making a difference in this world. This is an example of an unexpected outcome of the movements of the 1970s: activists continue to feel passionate about the issues they were organizing around and continue to advocate for them.

Third, the organizing described in this dissertation shows the importance of cross-racial and cross-issue alliance building using grass roots organizing strategies.

Fourth, this study shows that Gramsci's theorization about change in the West through the strategy of the War of Position can be an effective strategy. As civil society within the United States has become even more built up, the exploration of how to use the War of Position increasingly becomes an important strategy.

And last, as a scholar and an activist, one of the most important things to me is figuring out a way to fuse theory and practice. The radical activists described in this dissertation were able to do this through their organizing efforts, melding their strategies, ideologies, and outlook for the future. As I reflect back upon my project and the outcomes of these efforts, I think about all the individuals who benefited from the small changes these activists brought about. I also think about the ways in which I am and this research project are outcomes of their movement, something that became quite clear to me on January 23, 2009 when I interviewed six of the former Rank and File Committee members of the Cannery Worker's Union together. I think about all of their faces looking at me as I asked them questions about their efforts to reform the union. Though they do not understand fully all of the theoretical questions that I ask, what they did understand is how I am an outcome of their efforts. They understand that they influenced and

shaped my thinking, both as I grew up and as I embarked on this project. They wanted to change the future and although they may not see all of those desired changes in their lifetimes, the spark they ignited will continue to burn in the hearts of those whose judgment, character, and viewpoints they shaped through their catalytic organizing efforts. And this is evidence of what the outcomes of social movements really are, both the intended and unintended consequences of activists' actions.

What I take away from the stories told within this dissertation is that despite how much has changed since the 1970s, the struggles we encounter today are not that much different. Tensions between reformist and revolutionary ideologies and strategies continue within the Filipino American community and social movements generally. Divisions within the Filipino American community still reflect this. Despite the barriers that still exist and the reproduction of history, I continue to be inspired by how dedicated activists still invest in current movements and efforts towards social change and I will continue to believe that the future holds hope for social transformation.



## References

### Secondary Sources Cited

- Aguilar-San Juan, Karen. 1993. *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*. New York: South End Press.
- Ancheta-Mendoza, Vilma. 2000. "Filipino Community of Seattle." In *Pamana II*, eds., Urbano Quijance and Conrado (Sluggo) Rigor, 22-27. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community of Seattle.
- Anderson, Perry. 1976. The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci. *New Left Review* November-December I(100).
- Andrews, Kenneth. 2004. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Asian Coalition For Equality. 2009. Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_ace.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_ace.htm)
- Bacho, E.V. 1986a. *History of the Filipino Community of Seattle*. In *Pamana: Half a Century of Filipino Community Life in the Emerald City*, eds. C. Rigor and R. Rigor 13-41. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community Center.
- Barkan, Elliott. 2001. *Making it in America: a sourcebook on eminent ethnic Americans*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Bonner, Raymond. 1987. *Waltzing With A Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy*. New York: Times Books, Random House.
- Bulosan, Carlos. 1996. *America Is In The Heart (13th ed.)*. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press. (original work published in 1946)
- Burawoy, Michael. 2003. Foundations of a Sociological Marxism: The Complementary Convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi. *Politics and Society* 31:193- 261.
- Chin, Doug. 2001. *Seattle's International District: The Making of a Pan-Asian American Community*. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.
- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. 2003. *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- 2005. "Towards Trans-Pacific Social Justice." *Journal of Asian American Studies*. Volume 8, Number 3, October 2005: 293-307.
- Cordova, Dorothy and Filipino American National Historical Society. 2009. *Filipino Americans in Puget Sound*. San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing.
- Cordova, Fred. 1983. *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans, A Pictorial Essay, 1763-1963*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
- De Vera, Arleen. 1994. Without Parallel: Local 7 Deportation Cases, 1949-1955. *Amerasia Journal*. 20 (4): 1-25.
- Dictionary.com. 2009. *McCarran-Walter Act*. Retrieved on April 12, 2009 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mccarran-walter+act>
- Domingo, Cindy. 2004. Lecture at KDP conference at the University of Washington, October 29, Seattle, Washington.
- Elbaum, Max. 2002. *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che*. New York and London: Verso, New Left Books.
- Ellison, Micah. 2005. *The Local 7/ Local 37 Story: Filipino American Cannery Unionism in Seattle 1940-1959*. Seattle, Washington: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. Retrieved on July 15, 2008 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/local\\_7.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/local_7.htm).

- Espiritu, Augusto. 2009. "Journeys of Discovery and Difference: Transnational Politics and the Union of Democratic Filipinos." In *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans*, eds., Christian Collett and Pei-te Lien, 28-55. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- . 2006a. Reflections on the "Roots" and "Routes" of Filipino Protest in the USA. Paper presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Association for Asian American Studies Conference, March 22-26, Atlanta, GA.
- . 2006b. The Anti-Marcos Movement and the Question of 'Orientation'. Paper presented at the University of Washington Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies Colloquium Series. April 20, Seattle, WA.
- . 2005. *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation And Filipino American Intellectuals*. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2003. *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Farwest Reunion. Farwest Convention Reunion 1971. Retrieved on January 7, 2010 from, <http://farwestreunion.org/Information.html>.
- Fernandez, Eleazar. 2004. *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press.
- Filipino American National Historical Society. Inside every memory is a story waiting to be told. Retrieved on January 28, 2010 from, <http://home.earthlink.net/~jmtc29/home.html>.
- Filipino Youth Activities, Inc. Who We Are. Retrieved on March 25, 2010 from: <http://www.guidestar.org/pqShowGsReport.do?partner=justgive&npId=232199>
- Fontana, Benedetto. 2002. Hegemony and Rhetoric: Political Education in Gramsci. In *Gramsci and Education*, eds. Carmen Borg, Joseph Buttigieg, and Peter Mayo 25-40. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Friday, Chris. 1994. *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Canned Salmon Industry, 1870-1942*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fujino, Diane. 2008. "Who Studies the Asian American Movement? A Historiographical Analysis." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 11: 127-169.
- Fujita-Rony, Dorothy. 2003. *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ganz, Marshall. 2009. *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- . 2000. "Resources and Resourcefulness: Strategic Capacity in the Unionization of California Agriculture, 1959-1966." *American Journal of Sociology* 105: 1003-1062.
- Gamson, William. 1975. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 2008. *Prison Notebooks*. In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith. New York: International Publishers Co
- . 2000. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. Ed. David Forgacs. New York: University Press.
- Gregory, Steven. 1998. *Black Corona*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Habal, Estella. 2007. *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 1996. The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without guarantees. In (*Stuart Hall Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen 25-46.

- New York: Routledge.
- . 2002. Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance. In *Race Critical Theories: Text and Context*, eds. Philomena Essed and David Goldberg 38-68. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers
- Ho, Fred, Antonio, Carolyn, Fujino, Diane, and Yip, Steve. 2000. *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America*. San Francisco: Big Red Media and AK Press.
- Ibanez, Florante. 2003. "The Phenomena and the Politics of the Filipino People's Far West Convention: 1970's - 1980's." Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved on December 9, 2008 from, <http://www.filipinoamericanlibrary.org/Images/FWC.pdf>.
- Inter\*im Community Development Association. Inter\*im History. Retrieved on May 6, 2005 from, <http://www.interimicda.org/history.html>.
- Jamero, Peter. 2006. *Growing Up Brown: Memoirs of a Filipino American*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Jobmonkey. 2010. Alaska Fisheries Jobs: Floating Fish Processing Factories. Retrieved on January 29, 2010 from [http://www.jobmonkey.com/alaska/html/floating\\_processors.html](http://www.jobmonkey.com/alaska/html/floating_processors.html).
- Kaplan, Amy. 1993 "Left Alone with America": *The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture*. In *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease. North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Kerkvliet, Melinda. 2002. *Unbending Cane: Pablo Malapit, a Filipino Labor Leader in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Manoa Office of Multicultural Student Services.
- Le Bon, Gustave. 1968. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (2nd ed). Dunwoody, GA: Norman S. Berg. (Originally published in 1895)
- LELO. History. Legacy of Equality, Leadership, and Organizing. Retrieved on March 11, 2010 from, <http://www.lelo.org/history.htm>.
- Leonardo, Zeus. 2003. *Ideology, Discourse, and School Reform*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.
- Louie, Steve. 2001. Introduction. In *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, eds. Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu. Los Angeles: UCLA.
- Louie, Steve and Glenn Omatsu, eds. 2001. *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*. Los Angeles: UCLA.
- Lui, Michael, Kim Geron, and Tracy Lai. 2008. *The Snakedance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Lukes, Steven. 1986. Introduction. In *Power*, eds. Steven Lukes, 1-17. Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Maram, Linda. 2008. *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920's-1950's*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Marshall, Gordon, ed. 1998. *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McAdam, Doug. 1998. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- McAdam, Doug, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald. 1996. Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes- toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on Social Movements. In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, eds. Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, Mayer Zald, 1-20. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

- McCarran Walter Act. Dictionary-infoplease McCarran Walter Act. Dictionary-infoplease. Retrieved on September 8, 2008 from <http://dictionary.infoplease.com/mccarran-walter+act>.
- McCarthy, John and Meyer Zald. 1977. Resource mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory. *American Journal of Sociology* 82: 1212-1241.
- McLaren, Peter, Gustavo Fischman, Silvia Serra, and Estanislao Antelo. 2002. In *Gramsci and Education*, eds. Carmen Borg, Joseph Buttigieg, and Peter Mayo 147-178. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Mejia-Giudici, Cynthia. 1998. *Filipino Americans in Seattle*. Historylink. Retrieved on October 28, 2008 from [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File\\_Id=409](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=409).
- Meyerhoff, Barbara. 1978. *Number Our Days*. Carmichael, California: Touchstone Books.
- Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office. The Reform Movement of Local 37 The Work of Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes. Carlos Bulosan Exhibit. Seattle, Washington. Retrieved on January 23, 2010 from, [http://www.bulosan.org/html/local\\_37.html](http://www.bulosan.org/html/local_37.html)
- \_\_\_\_\_. Chris Mensalvas. Carlos Bulosan Exhibit. Retrieved on March 19, 2010 from, <http://www.bulosan.org/html/organizers.html>
- Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ojeda-Kimbrough, Carol. 2001. "The Chosen Road." In *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, eds. Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu, 65-73. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press.
- Park, Kyeyoung. 1999 "I Really Do Feel Like I'm 1.5!": The Construction of Self and Community by Young Korean Americans," *Amerasia Journal* 25: 139-163.
- Peniel, Joseph. 2009. "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field." *The Journal of American History* 96 (3): 751-776.
- Poletta, Francesca. (2004). *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Posadas, Barbara. 1999. *The Filipino Americans*. Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, CT.
- Rafael, Vincente. 1993. *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*. Duke University Press: North Carolina.
- Reinecke, John. 1996. *The Filipino Piecemeal Sugar Strike of 1924-1925*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Rigor, C. 1986. Presidents Past: The Marks That They Leave. In *Pamana: Half a Century of Filipino Community Life in the Emerald City*, eds. C. Rigor and R. Rigor 69-123. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community Center.
- Rigor, C and R. Rigor, eds. 1986. *Pamana: Half a Century of Filipino Community Life in the Emerald City*. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community Center.
- Rigor, Sluggo and Urbano Quijance, eds. 2000. *Pamana II*. Seattle, Washington: Filipino Community of Seattle.
- Seattle's Asian American Movement. 2009. Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Seattle, WA. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa\\_intro.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aa_intro.htm)
- Santos, Bob. 2002. *Humbows, Not Hot Dogs!: Memoirs of a Savvy Asian American Activist*. Seattle, WA: International Examiner Press.

- Scharlin, Craig. and Lilia Villanueva. 2000. *Philip Vera Cruz: A Personal History of Filipino Immigrants and the Farmworkers Movement* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press. (Original work published in 1992).
- Snow, David. 2004. Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields. In *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, eds. David Snow, Sarah Soule, Henspeter Kriesi, H. 380-412. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Snow, David, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven Worden, and Robert Benford. 1986. Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization and Movement Participation. In *American Sociological Review* 51 (4): 464-481.
- Stills, Stephen. 1969. Love the One You're With. In *His Own Words Stephen Stills Song Lyrics*. Retrieved on March 4, 2010 from <http://www.suitelorraine.com/suitelorraine/Pages/ltoyw.html>.
- Thompson, Mark R. 1995. *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*. Connecticut: Yale University.
- Toribio, Helen. 1998. "We Are Revolution: A Reflective History of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)." In *Amerasia Journal*, ed. Enrique dela Cruz, 155-177.
- Translation of Tulisan. 2010. Filipino to English Translator. Retrieved on March 7, 2010 from: [http://www.stars21.com/translator/filipino\\_to\\_english.html](http://www.stars21.com/translator/filipino_to_english.html).
- Wei, W. 1993. *The Asian American Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Zia, Helen. 2001. *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of An Asian American People*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

### Dissertations Cited

- Habal, Estella. 2003. "We Won't Move": The International Hotel anti-Eviction Movement, 1968-1979, and the Filipino American Community." PhD diss., University of California, Davis.
- Taylor, Kiernan. 2007. Laborers in a Smaller Valley. Chapter Five of Dissertation dated July 2007. PhD diss, University of North Carolina.

### Newspapers Cited

- Associated Press. 2008. "Tony" Baruso, former union president convicted of murder, dies in prison. *Seattle Times*. November 14. Retrieved on March 25, 2010 from [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2008391281\\_webbaruso14m.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2008391281_webbaruso14m.html).
- Hoddersen, Eric. 1981. Cannery Workers Reform Leaders Murdered in Union Hall. *Labor Notes*. June 25. Retrieved on January 13, 2010 from [http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/labor\\_notes/files/02901.pdf](http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/labor_notes/files/02901.pdf).
- Koslosky, Nancy and Laranang, Julia. 1976. Filipino migrant labor: To The Farms, and To The Canneries. *The International Examiner*. November. Retrieved on March 19, 2010 from [http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/v/Filipino/IE/IE\\_Nov\\_76\\_Vol3\\_Num11\\_p4\\_crop.jpg.html?g2\\_imageViewsIndex=1](http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/v/Filipino/IE/IE_Nov_76_Vol3_Num11_p4_crop.jpg.html?g2_imageViewsIndex=1).
- Seattle Times. 2010. Vincent Lawsins Obituary. *The Seattle Times*. March 11. Seattle, Washington.
- Stamets, John. 1982. The Cannery Murders: The Slayings of two Filipino union reformers in Seattle sheds light on decades of tormented labor history in the Alaska salmon-packing industry. *The Seattle Weekly*, August 4. Personal files of Emily Van Bronkhorst, Seattle, Washington.

Viernes, Gene. 1977. Sliming and Butchering Fish in the Alaska Canneries. *International Examiner*. Seattle, Washington.

### Archival Sources Cited

- 1978 Rank and File Election Slate. [1978]. Box 33 folder 28. Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union Local 7 at the University of Washington Special Collections. Hereafter referred to as CWFLU-UW.
- Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting minutes. [June 11, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union Local 7 at the University of Washington Special Collections. Hereafter referred to as CWFLU-UW.
- Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors Special meeting minutes. [August 25, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections.
- Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board of Directors meeting minutes. [October 21, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.
- Alaska Cannery Workers Association letter to Barry Mar, Employment Opportunity Center. [August 16, 1974]. Box 37, Folder 5, CWFLU-UW.
- Alaska Cannery Workers Association Meeting Notice [September 12, 1975], Box 33 folder 26, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [n.d.]. Box 33 Folder 28. CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [March 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [April 1979], Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [June 1979]. Box 33 folder 43, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union Local 7 at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Alaskero News. [February, 1980], Box 33 folder 45, CWFLU-UW.
- An Open Letter to Local 37, ILWU Members. [1952], Box 26 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.
- Appeal To Cannery Workers For Voluntary Contributions. [n.d.]. Box 27, Folder 48, CWFLU-UW.
- Articles of Incorporation Committee to Educate The Rank and File. [n.d.]. Box 33 folder 21, CWFLU at the University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Brief History of Local 7 FTA CIO. [n.d.], Box 26 folder 16, CWFLU-UW.
- Carlito delos Santos Interview. (August 25, 1975). Accession No. FIL-KNG-27ck Tape No. A at the Filipino American National Historical Society Archives. Hereafter referred to as FANHS.)
- Committee for Justice Domingo and Viernes. December 1989. "The Trial Begins." Seattle, Washington: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. Retrieved on March 24, 2010 from [http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/d/6095-1/CJDV\\_Dec\\_89\\_ocr.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/repository/d/6095-1/CJDV_Dec_89_ocr.pdf)
- Dear Sirs and Brothers. [March 1954], Box 26 folder 26, CWFLU-UW.
- Demonstration Project on Asian Americans Finding Aid. [2004]. University of Washington Special Collections.

- Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. January 11 1981. "Election Results." Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. Filipino American National Historical Society. (Hereafter referred to as FANHS).
- Filipino Life Begins, Flows From King Street in Fifth Annual Philippine National Day Program [June 12, 1980], Box 32 folder 38, CWFLU-UW.
- Filipinos For a Unified And Involved Filipino Community in the 1970's. [1970]. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.
- I want the Wide American Earth. [n.d.], Box 33 folder 2, CWFLU-UW.
- International Longshoremen's Warehousemen's Union. 1981. *Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Biennial Convention*. April 27. Personal Collection of Inland Boatmen's Union Region 37.
- KDP. [n.d.]. "Unity-Conservative/"Progressive" Style Tangalan's Impossible Dream: 'Ako ang Hari'." In *ang Katipunan* newspaper. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.
- Kalayaan International Newspaper, "Seattle Filipino Youth Convention," June 1971, Volume One Number One. Personal files of Geline Avila, Oakland, California.
- Kalayaan International Newspaper, "Second Annual Far West Pilipino Peoples' Convention," September October 1972, Volume Two Number Three. Personal files of Geline Avila, Oakland, California.
- Kalayaan International Newspaper, "The Role of Pilipino Conferences," September October 1972. Volume Two Number Three. Personal files of Geline Avila, Oakland, California.
- Kalayaan International Newspaper, "Oppose Martial Law," September October 1972, Volume Two Number Three. Personal files of Geline Avila, Oakland, California.
- Letter from Rank and File Committee. [March-April 1980]. Box 33 Folder 22]. CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Letter to Cannery Delegates. [April 9, 1979]. Box 33 folder 23, CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Letter written by Gene Navarro. [n.d.]. Box 27, Folder 48, CWFLU-UW.
- Mabuhay! And Aloha! [1959?]. Box 26 folder 26. CWFLU-UW.
- Memo to Rank and File Committee Members and Supporters. [July 20, 1982]. Box 33 folder 22, CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- President Mensalvas' Eligibility Under Serious Question. [August 1953], Box 27 folder 15, CWFLU-UW.
- Rank and File Committee Election Slate 1982. [Summer 1982]. Box 33 Folder 28, CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Rank and File Committee Minutes of Meeting. [January 29, 1981]. CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Rank and File Committee notes. [n.d.]. Box 33 folder 22, CWFLU at University of Washington Special Collections Library.
- Rank and File Plan notes written by Emily Van Bronkhorst. [May 4, 1980]. Personal files of Emily Van Bronkhorst, Seattle, Washington.
- Resolution Condemning The Business Agent's Move To Disrupt The Union. [1954]. Box 26 folder 26. CWFLU-UW.
- Rocamora, Joel. April, 1982. *Turning Point: The NDF Takes The Lead*. In Southeast Asia Chronicle. Issue No. 83. Box 5 Folder 5, John Caughlan Papers, at the University of Washington Special Collections. Hereafter referred to as JCP-UW.

- Selection of Philippine/KDP Materials. [n.d.]. Box 5 Folder 5, JCP-UW.
- Sibonga, D. (1969). *Confrontation!* Filipino Forum Newspaper: Spokesman For United Minority Action. Retrieved on December 21, 2009 from <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/images/asianamerican/FF8-15-69.jpg>.
- Spellman's Office Occupied, University of Washington Daily Newspaper [October 10, 1975], Box 37 folder 12, CWFLU-UW.
- Tanglan, Sylvestre. [n.d]. Letter to Friends and Voters. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.
- The Anti-Filipino Movement. [n.d.] Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FANHS.
- The Progressives. [n.d.]. Our Program of Administration. Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc. folder. FAHNS.
- To All Friends of Democracy. n.d.], Box 33 folder 2, CWFLU-UW.

### **Interviews Conducted by Author Cited**

- Caoilie, Bert. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Cordova, Dorothy. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Cordova, Fred. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Della, David. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Della, David. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Della, David. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Domingo, Adelina. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Domingo, Cindy. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Domingo, Nemesio. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Former Rank and File Activists: David Della, Lynn Domingo, Emma Catague, John Foz, Rich Gurtiza, Terri Mast, Emily Van Bronkhorst. 2009. Group Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Gurtiza, Rich. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Gurtiza, Rich. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Kern, Alma. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Mast, Terri. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Mast, Terri. 2008. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Mast, Terri. 2010. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Ocena, Bruce. 2008. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Polintan, Odette. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Ko, Elaine. 2007. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Mast, Terri. 2009. Personal interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Santos, Bob. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Santos, Bob. 2005. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Veloria, Velma. 2004. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.
- Woo, Michael. 2009. Personal Interview with author. Seattle, Washington.



## Appendix A

### Sample Interview Protocol

#### General Interview #1

1. Where were you born?
2. If they were born in Seattle or in the U.S. somewhere other than Seattle I will follow up by asking where their parents were from and how they came to the United States and eventually to Seattle. If they were not born in the U.S. I will ask how they came to the U.S. and eventually to Seattle.
3. How did you come to Seattle (for those who were not born in Seattle)?
4. What is community?
5. What do you think of (what kinds of places) when I say Filipino community?
6. What is the purpose of a Filipino community?
7. How would you describe the Filipino community in Seattle?
8. What is the difference between the Filipino Community Center and other aspects of the Filipino community?
9. Did you have an experience with the Filipino community when you were growing up?
10. What has your involvement in the Filipino community been?
11. Why were you or have you been involved?
12. How has your position or roles within the community changed over time?
13. How has your job influenced your relationship to the Filipino community?
14. Who are the people involved in the Filipino community?
15. What does it mean to be a leader within the Filipino community?
16. Who are the leaders in the Filipino community and what characteristics make them leaders?
17. What do you think are some of the barriers in terms of involvement with the Filipino community?
18. How does the Filipino community decide which issues to fight for?
19. Geographically where does the Filipino community live?
20. How did you choose which neighborhood you were going to live in?
21. What was the relationship with the International District in the past?
22. What was considered Manila Town?
23. What is the current relationship of Filipinos to the International District?
24. What are the divisions within the Filipino community?
25. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

#### General Interview #2

1. Do you consider yourself to be an activist? If so, in what ways?
2. How did you become an activist?
3. What issues are most important to you to support or organize around?
4. What kinds of organizing have you done to support Filipino Americans?
5. How do you define power?
6. How would you conceptualize building power for Filipino Americans?

7. What kinds of work have you done to work towards building power for Filipino Americans?
8. How do others in Seattle think about and go about building power for Filipino Americans?
9. What goals do Filipino Americans have for their community and through their activism?
10. What tactics do Filipino Americans use to organize and build power for their community?
11. How have Filipino Americans used the FCS, as a vehicle to build social, economic, and political power?
12. How have Filipino Americans used the IBU region 37 as a vehicle to build social, economic, and political power?
13. How have Filipino Americans used Inter\*im as a vehicle to build social, economic, and political power?
14. Are there ways that you think that people could work towards building power for Filipino Americans?
15. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Interview for participants from Inter\*im/ housing activists

1. Do you consider yourself to be an activist? If so, in what ways?
2. How did you become an activist?
3. What issues are most important to you to support or organize around?
4. Do you see a connection between your activism and the concept of community?
5. What do you think of (what kinds of places) when I say community?
6. What do you think of (what kinds of places) when I say Filipino community?
7. How would you describe the Filipino community in Seattle?
8. What has your involvement in the Filipino community in Seattle been?
9. Why were you or have you been involved?
10. What kinds of organizing have you done to support Filipino Americans?
11. How has your work to support Filipinos changed over time?
12. How has your job influenced your relationship to Filipinos in Seattle?
13. How do you define power?
14. How would you conceptualize building power for Filipino Americans?
15. What kinds of organizing work have you done that you feel has helped to build power for Filipino Americans in Seattle?
16. What kinds of organizing work have you seen in Seattle to support the needs of Filipinos in Seattle?
17. Can you tell me what Inter\*im is, its goals, and how it was founded?
18. Who was it founded by?
19. When was it founded?
20. How did you become involved in Inter\*im?
21. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Interview for participants from the Alaska Cannery Workers Union

1. Do you consider yourself to be an activist? If so, in what ways?

2. How did you become an activist?
3. What issues are most important to you to support or organize around?
4. Do you see a connection between your activism and the concept of community?
5. What do you think of (what kinds of places) when I say community?
6. What do you think of (what kinds of places) when I say Filipino community?
7. How would you describe the Filipino community in Seattle?
8. What has your involvement in the Filipino community been?
9. Why were you or have you been involved?
10. What kinds of organizing have you done to support Filipino Americans?
11. How has your work to support Filipinos changed over time?
12. How has your job influenced your relationship to Filipinos in Seattle?
13. How do you define power?
14. How would you conceptualize building power for Filipino Americans?
15. What kinds of organizing work have you done that you feel has helped to build power for Filipino Americans in Seattle?
16. What kinds of organizing work have you seen in Seattle to support the needs of Filipinos in Seattle?
17. How would you describe the work that FCS has done both historically and contemporarily?
18. Can you tell me what the ACWA was, its goals, and how it was founded?
19. Who was it founded by?
20. When was it founded?
21. What was its relationship to the reform movement of local 37?
22. Looking at the notes from the ACWA it is difficult to decipher who took the notes and what made it into the notes or did not make it into the notes.
23. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Interview for participants involved in the reform movement of Alaska Cannery Workers Union

1. Please tell me when you started working in the Alaska Canneries and describe the work you did and the working conditions.
2. When did you become involved in the movement to change the working conditions and the union?
3. Why did you become involved in this movement?
4. How and why did the ACWA form?
5. How and why did the rank and file committee form?
6. What was your role in the rank and file committee?
7. Tell me a chronological story of the reform movement?
8. Who were the key players in the reform movement and what were their roles?
9. What were the strategies used to reform the union?
10. Where did those strategies come from?
11. What was the role of the KDP in the reform movement?
12. What were the biggest road blocks that the reform movement came across?
13. Why was the reform movement eventually successful in its attempt to reform the union?
14. What are the long terms outcomes of the reform movement? What did the reform movement mean to you and what did you learn from it?

## Appendix B

### Participant Descriptions

#### Emma Catague

Emma Catague is a Filipino immigrant who was a cannery worker and was a member of the Rank and File Committee. She was recruited into the Rank and File Committee by Silme Domingo. She is currently involved in the FCS.

#### Bert Caoilie

Bert Caoilie was hired by Boeing in 1968, which is when he came to Seattle. He is currently the president of FCS. I did not know Bert before this project. Many of my participants said that Bert would be a good person to talk to. I contacted him through email and he agreed to be a part of my study.

#### Dorothy and Fred Cordova

Dorothy and Fred Cordova are founders of the Filipino American National Historic Society (FANHS) and Filipino Youth Activities (FYA). Dorothy is a sociologist and Fred is a historian. Together they have worked to archive the Filipino American history in the United States. The work that they have done has been focused on issues of importance to Filipinos in the United States, particularly second-generation Filipino Americans. They are leaders of a certain segment of the Filipino community, specifically nation-based activists. Dorothy and Fred are both second-generation Filipino Americans and part of the bridge generation. Dorothy grew up in Seattle and Fred grew up in Stockton California. I knew of them before this project, but had not met them personally. I knew that they would be important people to interview. I sent them a letter asking them to participate in my study. They called me and we set up a meeting. They attend FCS functions, but try to keep the organization at arms length because of their self-identification as a historian and sociologist.

#### David Della

David Della was born and raised in Seattle and graduated from the University of Washington. He is a former Seattle city councilmember and former member and officer of the Cannery Worker's Union. He was active in organizing within FCS in the past, but made a decision not to participate in it after 1981. He reestablished a relationship with FCS through his electoral campaign. He is second/third generation Filipino American. He is also a former KDP member.

#### Adelina Domingo

Adelina or Ade , which is the name her friends call her, is eighty years old. Ade was brought to the United States as a war bride. After living in Texas and Germany she settled with her family in Seattle. Her husband Nemesio was an Alaskero. He came to the United States in 1927 to

receive an education, however he hardly attended school and worked as a houseboy, in the fields of Washington, and in the salmon canneries to survive. He joined the navy and was stationed in the Philippines during World War II, which is how he met Ade. Ade is retired, but provides care for her grandchildren on a regular basis. Ade became involved with the FCS when she moved to Seattle. However, since 1981 she has had a marginal relationship with the organization. She still attends events there, however she says she would never be a part of the elected leadership again. She is the president of the Visayan Circle, which is an organization of people who are from the Visayan region of the Philippines.

#### Cindy Domingo

Cindy Domingo is second-generation Filipino American and grew up in Seattle. She has been an activist since college at the University of Washington. She. Her mother is Ade Domingo and father was Nemesio Domingo, Sr.. She was a leader of the KDP. She works as aide to King County Council member Larry Gossett.

#### Lynn Domingo

Lynn Domingo is the youngest of the five Domingo siblings. She was recruited into organizing efforts by her brother Silme, went to work in the canneries organizing women, and became a member of the Rank and File Committee. Upon Silme's death she took over his secretary treasurer position until an election was held. She currently works for LELO as an organizer.

#### Nemesio Domingo

Nemesio Domingo, the eldest of the Domingo siblings, started his activism as a University of Washington student and cannery worker. Together with his brother Silme, he formed the Alaska Cannery Worker's Association (ACWA). His efforts remained focused on the work of ACWA and LELO and to this day is the chair of LELO's board.

#### John Foz

John Foz is a second-generation Filipino American who was a member of the KDP in the Bay Area of California where we started his activism as a high school student. He was assigned by the KDP to move to Seattle where he got involved in housing issues and the Rank-and-File Movement in the Cannery Worker's Union.

#### Rich Gurtiza

Rich Gurtiza is originally from Wapato in Eastern Washington. He is currently the regional director of region 37, the Cannery Worker's union. Like his father, he worked for many years in the Alaska salmon canneries. He is also the president of FAPAGOW, the Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington, which is a part of FCS. He is second generation Filipino American and does not speak Tagalog or any other dialect. His mother and father immigrated to the United States before 1965. His father and his mother came from the Visayan region of the Philippines. He is a little younger than most of the second-generation activists.

### Alma Kern

Alma Kern immigrated to the United States to join her husband in Philadelphia in 1974. After a short stint in Indonesia in 1979 they moved to Seattle. She became involved with the Filipino community in Seattle in 1992 and has served as the vice president and currently president of FCS. I did not know Alma before this project. Many of my participants said that Alma would be a good person to talk to. I met her at a FCS Council meeting and she agreed to take part in my study.

### Elaine Ko

Elaine Ko, a Chinese and Japanese American, was raised in Seattle. As a student at the University of Washington she became involved in Asian Student organizations and housing issues in the International District of Seattle. She was the founding director of the International District Housing Alliance. She has also worked in many positions including Executive Director of Inter\*im and most recently leading social responsibility efforts at the Port of Seattle.

### Terri Mast

Terri Mast is a Caucasian woman who was born and raised in Seattle. She is a former cannery worker and former member of the KDP. She was partners with Silme Domingo. She has maintained a leadership role in the Cannery Worker's Union since the reform movement. She is currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the Inland Boatmen's Union, which is the larger union that the Cannery Worker's Union merged with.

### Bruce Occena

Bruce Occena, a second-generation Filipino American, was originally a student activist at UC Berkeley. He became a key leader of the KDP and provided strategic guidance to activists organizing on behalf of the KDP in Seattle.

### Odette Polintan

Odette Polintan came to the United States in the 1970s. She was an activist with the KDP and is now a lawyer. She has had a relationship with the FCS, which was originally facilitated through the KDP and through the electoral campaign of her husband David Della.

### Bob Santos

Bob Santos is in his 80s. For many years he was the executive director of the International District Community Development agency-Inter\*Im, a nonprofit housing organization in the International District. Bob is second generation Filipino American and part of the bridge generation. His father was a boxing champion and Alaskero. Bob has had an antagonistic relationship with FCS since the late 1970's. He has had a commitment to low-income housing

for the Filipino American community and he has felt that FCS has never been supportive of housing issues.

#### Emily Van Bronkhorst

Emily Van Bronkhorst is a Caucasian woman born and raised in Seattle. She was a member of the Rank and File Committee, she became involved in organizing efforts working as a legal secretary for LELO during the cannery worker lawsuits. She was recruited to work in the canneries to help with organizing the other White women and became one of two union organizers who went to Alaska in the 1980s to organize new canneries. Van Bronkhorst continues to be involved in the labor movement as the Vice President of Service Employees International Union Healthcare 1199NW.

#### Velma Veloria

Velma Veloria is a Former Washington State Legislator. She worked in the canneries and as a union organizer. She was born and grew up in the Philippines. She speaks Tagalog. Her relationship with FCS was through her role as a legislator.

#### Michael Woo

Michael Woo, a Chinese American, was born and raised in Seattle. He became an activist through his work with the UCWA. He was assigned by the UCWA to help Silme and Nemesio form LELO. Throughout the years Woo has been active with LELO and has recently formed a non-profit green jobs organization called Got Green.

The following individuals were informants that were either interviewed or provided information via email.

Geline Avila is a former KDP leader.

Dale Borgeson is a former KDP leader.

Johnny Crisostomo is a former dispatcher of the Cannery Worker's Union.

Alonzo Suson is a former Rank and File Committee member, former organizer for the Cannery Worker's Union, and former KDP member.