I Was and Still Am Not A Subordinate Racial Ambiguities, Politicized Invisibilities, and Locating Filipina American Identity in Chicago

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Abstract: Drawing from the oral histories and personal archives of Estrella Alamar (a former leading actor in the preservation and promotion of Filipino American history in Chicago), I showcase how she subverted assumptions about Asian American women's (a)politi- cal and subservient identities to navigate white supremacist spaces and gain a deeper understanding of her own political identity as a Filipina American woman. Reframing Estrella's self-described invis- ibility during the 1960s Civil Rights Era and integration movement as a politicized invisibility makes way for new representations of: (1) How Filipino/Filipino Americans navigated ambiguous racial positioning in twentieth-century Chicago in ways that both upheld and challenged racial hierarchies; (2) the quotidian yet deeply transformative ways that Asian American women engage in anti-racist political movement; and (3) the legacy of Chicago's Filipino American community leaders who worked across and against racial lines. In doing so, I argue that Estrella's memories of quietly combatting anti-Blackness in her class- rooms, Catholic encounter groups, and interpersonal relationships during the 1960s and 1970s unveils the 'smaller' yet impactful ways one can assert a political identity and combat social injustice outside of mainstream activist communities, even if such efforts are rendered invisible by those very same groups.

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INTRODUCTION

I met Estrella Alamar in the fall of 2019 as I began field work for my dissertation. This small woman with wispy white hair cut just above her ears, an eclectic (and quite large) collection of pins and T-shirts, and a penchant for making friends wherever she went was also a ground-breaking, historical figure in Chicago's Filipino American community. She was the founding president of the Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago (FAHSC), the co-founding president of the Filipino American National Historical Society Chicago Chap- ter (FANHS Chicago), and one of the primary memory keepers of Chicago's twentieth century Filipino American diaspora. Although she passed away in October 2022, just weeks after her 86th birthday, her legacy lives on as Filipino Americans in Chicago work together to uphold her life's work in preserving community histories. Although Estrella was not a formally trained historian (and would often laugh about failing her history courses at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), her efforts as a self-made archivist and community educator resulted in the most robust, physical collection documenting nearly a century of Filipino Americans in Chicago—a significantly understudied region in Asian American studies—and the often-obscured histories of Filipino Americans who worked across and against racial lines in the twentieth century.

Born on the West Side on October 9, 1936, Estrella grew up in Hyde Park and lived on the exact same lot her parents purchased in 1950 until her passing. While unknown to many, Hyde Park holds more historical significance than its association with the University of Chicago and the Obama family's residence (although this was a major point of pride for Estrella)—it has a distinct history of Filipino and Black settlement that illustrates two intertwining diasporas produced out of the legacies of colonialism and slavery. Even as a Filipina American and Illinois-native, I was ignorant of this history until meeting Estrella and listen-ing to her life stories. Visits to her house and our phone calls throughout the years became unique history lessons that were at once personal to Estrella and representative of a larger story concerning the Filipino American diaspora of Chicago, their positioning in a racial hierarchy that pit Blacks against whites, and the unique (yet often unseen) ways that Filipina American women like Estrella used their invisibility to challenge these hierarchies in small yet subversive ways. In the fall of 2021, I visited Estrella in her Hyde Park home where we rou- tinely went through archival materials and talked about her adolescence and young adulthood as a Filipina American on the South Side of Chicago. Estrella and I sat across from each other in her living room as I sorted through the short stack of newspapers, article clippings, and photographs from her archival collection.

I situated myself on the carpet, using a piano bench as a desk, while Estrella sat on a plastic shower chair moved from the upstairs bathroom in an attempt to create more seating in the cluttered room. Over the decades, Estrella's home had turned into the unofficial archive of The Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago (founded by her in 1986) after her museum closed in the early 2000s.

As a result, hundreds of materials (both personal and organizational) overtook what used to be a dining room, living room, and kitchen, where I could hear Rita, her Medicare-assigned home-helper, putting away pots and pans. Estrella gingerly flipped through newspaper clippings on her lap and called out, "Rita, have you heard of that police officer who is running for mayor of Chicago?" Turning to me, Estrella said, "Oh, he's a real racist. You can just tell." Rita walked out of the kitchen and leaned against the wall. "Oh yeah," she nodded, "I've heard of him. Catanzara—he's running for mayor, but he definitely is a racist. You can just tell by the way he talks about Black people. He goes, 'those people,' you know what I mean?" Rita, who is Afro-Caribbean, immigrated to Chicago from Belize where her children and grandchildren were born and raised in a neighboring South Side neighborhood. I learned that John Catanzara was the Fraternal Order of Police president who retired after he was terminated for several department violations. His plans to run for mayor against the first Black and LGBT mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot, created major divisions in the city as one columnist described him as the "kindred spirit of former President Donald J. Trump" whose campaign would "fan the flames of racism, bigotry, and fear".1 In the midst of national protests for police reform after the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer, Catanzara was just another example for Chicagoans like Estrella and Rita of the hatred and bigotry that posed a threat to the city they called home. However, as one of the few remaining Filipino Americans who was born and raised in mid-century Chicago, Estrella was no stranger to the city's racial hierarchies and anti-Black sentiments—afterall, her upbringing on the West and South Sides between 1940 and 1960 coincided with the Second Great Migration of African Americans from the South to Chicago's predominantly southside neighborhoods. Being geographically and racially located in between white and Black Americans informed Estrella's conceptualization of her Filipina American identity as a spatialized, interracial, and temporal process. Following this process, I argue, can unsettle assumptions of fixed, mutually exclusive racial positionings and Filipino Americans' dislocation from Chicago's Civil Rights history.

Estrella's comments throughout our conversations on present-day racism, her support for the Black Lives Matter Movement in 2020, and her stories of how she identified with the plights of her Black and Latino students, friends, or colleagues as a young adult made her out to be a socially and politically engaged person throughout her life. However, she always viewed herself as someone who could only support anti-racist movements from the periphery, stating, "I was always interested, but I wasn't an activist. You know, I was quiet." When I asked Estrella why she never viewed herself as political, even when her stories revealed otherwise, she explained, "There are just some things Filipinos don't talk about . . . [talking about politics] isn't very proper." She continued, "I guess in my own ways I broke some racial barriers, but I wasn't an activist like they were in the sixties."

Estrella's perception of "real" activism was informed by popularized images of 1960s activists marching, protesting, and otherwise making their political

stance visible in the public sphere. Around the United States, the rise of social justice and Third World Liberation movements encouraged the development of a pan-ethnic Asian American racial consciousness rooted in radical political theory that would put an end to the "uneasy alliance with white Americans to keep the Blacks down," and open Asian Americans' "eyes to the latent white racism towards them which has never changed".2 Asian/Asian American radical feminists of the 1960s viewed socialism and public demonstrations combatting western colonialism and anti-Blackness essential to subverting their own political invisibility.3 This form of Asian American political activism became the "real" way to subvert invisibilities, while liberal politics believing the United States could be reformed were criticized for upholding the model minority stereotype and relying on white-dominated institutions to achieve equality and justice.4

In contrast, Estrella felt that Filipino culture encouraged the invisibilization of one's political opinions to avoid appearing controversial or confrontational. Therefore, for Estrella to see herself as politically active would require her rebelling against Filipino cultural values; conversely, adhering to those cultural values would necessitate hiding how she truly felt about race and racism. Additionally, as gendered US colonial subjects between 1898 and 1936, the first Filipina women to settle in Chicago (such as Estrella's mother) were especially accustomed to American perceptions of their hypersexuality and subservi- ence, leading them to raise their American-born daughters to uphold images of respectability, domesticity, and intellect through an American education in order to refute assumptions of savagery. Based in this logic, engaging in politi- cal movements associated with an "inferior" race or class could render Filipina American women in particular hyper-visible and vulnerable to multiple forms of oppression. Therefore, Estrella was caught in a net sewn by three discourses of invisibility—cultural, colonial, and gendered.

However, this article argues that reframing Estrella's self-described invisibility during the 1960s Civil Rights Era and integration movement as a politicized invisibility makes way for new representations of: (1) How Filipino/Filipino Americans navigated ambiguous racial positioning in twentieth-century Chicago in ways that both upheld and challenged racial hierarchies; (2) the quotidian yet deeply transformative ways that Asian American women engage in anti-racist political movement; and (3) the legacy of Chicago's Filipino American community leaders who worked across and against racial lines. In doing so, I argue that Estrella's memories of quietly combatting anti-Blackness in her classrooms, Catholic encounter groups, and interpersonal relationships during the 1960s and 1970s unveils the 'smaller' yet impactful ways one can assert a political identity and combat social injustice outside of mainstream activist communities, even if such efforts are rendered invisible by those very same groups.

Figure 1. Photo of Estrella standing in front of a "positively no Filipinos allowed" photo in her home in Hyde Park, Chicago, November 2023. [Photo taken by author].

Honing in on the ways that Estrella and the Filipino immigrants before her very much "broke some racial barriers" outside of mainstream activist movement engages with what Vivian Huang refers to as "the rhetoric of invisibility" that serves to "address the diminishment of Asian and Asian American existence since something invisible still exists whether or not it is seen" and disrupts the "discursive framework of invisibility [that] obscures political legacies and quotidian practices of coalitional, intersectional, and transnational activisms" that may always go unseen by public discourses.5 In this article, the history of pre-1945 Filipino immigrants navigating through Chicago's racial hierarchies, Filipino Americans' ascension into a middle class positioning during the 1950s, and Estrella's stories of working as the first teacher of color at McKay Elementary and working towards integration in Catholic encounter groups during the Civil Rights Era make visible the once obscured, interconnected histories of Black and Filipino Americans in twentieth century Chicago. As Judy Wu argues, while every day, smaller acts of challenging systems of power may go unnoticed or undervalued by Asian American radical politics, they can still be deeply transformative and essential to understanding the politicized identities of Asian American women in particular, whose racialization in the United States came hand-in-hand with the

misogynist, colonialist perceptions of their hypersexuality and subservience to men. These gendered forms of racism led to the perception of Asian American women as the "antithesis of political action" throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries (Wu 2018, 47).6

Furthermore, while Asian American activists and scholars emerging from the 1960s Civil Rights Era have critiqued Asians in America as being a part of an anti-Black "racial bourgeoisie",7 with scholar-activist Amy Uyematsu referring to the "yellow people in America" as "passive, accommodating, and unemotional […] silent citizens",8 I suggest that ambiguity, silence, and invisibility were not always indicative of depoliticized identities, but could be used as tools to trouble the United States' colonialist race-making project. According to Michael Menor Salgarolo, such a project bound the diasporas of Black Americans and Filipino Americans together as it aimed to re-establish white supremacy "across empires" after the abolishment of slavery and US colonialist expansion into the Philippines. Therefore, Filipino American histories in twentieth century Chicago and Estrella's life stories also nuance the oft-cited theory of racial triangulation that Claire J. Kim used to explain (East) Asian Americans' social and political positionings emerging from the 1960s as stuck between those of Black and white Americans. Historically, Filipinos in the United States "inhabited, challenged, or were placed into a variety of different racial and ethnic categories, including Black, white, Chinese and Spanish," occupying an "interstitial" racial positioning, which at times allowed them to evade the same racial categorization as East Asian Americans and move between Black and white spaces to disrupt racial hierarchies without being detected.9 Although historical scholarship documenting the wave of pre-1945 Filipino immigrants (of which Estrella's parents were a part) indicate that they always aligned themselves with white Americans by distancing themselves from Black Americans in the workplace and social settings, Chicago's unique and overlapping Black and Filipino (im)migration histories coupled with Estrella's stories demonstrate that proximity to whiteness was not always an affinity to whiteness.

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF THE ARCHIVE AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY-MAKING

The oral histories and archival materials shaping this article were collected between September 2019 and May 2022 during my doctoral program. My upbringing as a Filipina American in the Chicago area who yearned for a deeper understanding of my racial and gendered experiences brought me back home and lead me to Estrella. While I originally envisioned the project as an ethnography of second-generation Filipina American women's roles in shaping community organizations, meeting Estrella, listening to her stories, and becoming engrossed in the complex historical webs of her archival collection created a new kind of ethnographic field. Estrella was more than a research "informant," and the ethnographic field extended beyond the physical boundaries of her house and Hyde

Park. Rather, the archive, its components, and Estrella's personal stories and connections to them compelled me to explore the invisible field of her memory and emotions. Estrella became the living archive—history in the flesh—and I was privileged enough to be granted access to it.

Drawing from Ann Stoler's feminist methods of conducting an "ethnogra-phy of the archive,"10 I apply an ethnographic mode of analysis when analyzing Estrella's oral histories and archival materials to consider the ways in which history, memory, and emotions are vital to understanding the origins of a community-turned-institutional archive. Although the archive is named after the Filipino American Historical Society and is currently being relocated across major historical and cultural institutions in the Chicago area, a large portion of the materials (whose belonging in a collection documenting Filipino American Chicago history are currently being contested) are specific to Estrella's life experiences as a daughter, sister, wife, teacher, and community member. There are containers containing memories from the decades she spent as an elementary school teacher working with predominantly Black students; binders of pamphlets and essays related to navigating race and politics in Catholic Encounter groups; an original copy of a 1950 house appraisal that forbade the selling of her family house to Black Americans; clippings from Chicago news publications during the 1960s and 1970s detailing events and debates over feminist and anti-racist movements. My decision to focus on these stories mirrors what I speculate were Estrella's reasons for including them in her collection: the building of Chicago's twentieth century Filipino American diaspora and Estrella's experiences as a Filipina American woman were intimately connected to the histories of Black Americans in Chicago and the racial hierarchies both groups navigated through. Lastly, I assert that Estrella's decision to build an archive containing a wide variety of materials should be regarded as a political act in itself. If politics are "the maneuvers, mobilizations, movements, tactics, and strategies used to actively negotiate and resist the ongoing legacies of power and domination in their myriad manifestations across time and space" en Estrella bringing together the personal, political, cultural, and cross-racial histories achieves just that. Her archival collection and oral histories therefore push us to understand the multiple ways that political work happens in less readily identifiable spaces—in spaces that have been rendered invisible.11

ARTICLE BREAKDOWN

In the following sections, I map out the ways in which Estrella's efforts to fight racism as a teacher and community member during the 1960s and 1970s, and her inability to see herself as "political" during these times, emerged out of longer histories of Filipino/Filipino Americans' ambiguous racial positioning in a Black/white binary and the discourses surrounding assumptions of Asian American women's political invisibility, therefore rendering their political efforts as nonexistent or ineffective, even to themselves.

While Estrella's stories from the 1960s and 1970s show that her decisions to align herself more with the struggles of Black Americans (therefore diverging from the political and cultural decisions of many Filipino immigrants before her) beginning with the histories of Chicago's 1920s and 1930s Filipino immigrants shows that the "personal" never truly stands alone. Meaning, Estrella's experiences when navigating racial hierarchies, challenging white supremacy in private, and understanding her racial identity as at times invisible but strategically mal- leable did not exist in isolation, but emerged from a broader history of Filipinos' journeys towards understanding race and belonging in Chicago.

The first section, "Retriangulating Racial Triangulation in the Case of Chicago's Filipino Americans, 1920–1950," sets the historical backdrop of Chicago's Filipino immigrant community to understand why Chicago's Filipino American diaspora diverges from the more prevalent representations of those on the West Coast due to differences in their education-fueled ambitions leading them to Chicago, physical and interpersonal proximity to white and Black Americans, and their ascension into white middle-class neighborhoods in the midst of the Second Great Migration of Black Southerners to Chicago. In beginning with these histories, I argue that scholarship dominating Asian Americans' racial triangulation do not fully account for the experiences of Filipino Americans in Chicago who have historically occupied an ambiguous racial positioning further complicated by their socio-economic status, gender, and time of (im)migration. The final sections of the article bridges the experiences of the first and second generation by centering Estrella's stories as the first teacher of color at McKay Elementary, resident of Hyde Park, and pro-integration advocate in Catholic Encounter groups as racial tensions grew during the 1960s and 1970s. Centering in on these specific stories highlights the ways that Estrella grappled with how she was perceived as a "safe" minority by whites because of the ways that Filipina American women were perceived as docile and the antithesis of political action. Although Estrella would describe herself as non-political and "invisible" in mainstream activist movements and white-dominated spaces, her stories demonstrate that these invisibilities were used to carry out not easily identifiable methods of challenging white supremacy.

RETRIANGULATING RACIAL TRIANGULATION IN THE CASE OF CHICAGO'S FILIPINO AMERICANS, 1920–1950

Making visible the unique history of Chicago's Filipina American women plays an important role in expanding Filipino and Asian American history at large, particularly when most of the scholarship focuses on Filipino Americans on the West Coast, is based on immigrant perspectives, and/or approaches the ethnic formation of Filipinos Americans in gender-neutral terms. Bringing together Rick Bonus' theories of positions in process, or understanding identities as always "contingent upon fluid movements between locations," and Sandoval's feminist

theory of a differential consciousness that emphasizes Asian American women's identities and political action as invisibilized yet very much existing on multiple, interconnected scales,12 demonstrates the ways in which political, gendered, and ethnic identities are always "historically specific, contextual, and multilayered".13 Filipinos and Filipino Americans in pre-1965 Chicago occupied an ambiguous racial positioning that either encouraged silence and subservience in order to avoid the same degree of racism Black Americans faced, or identification with Black Americans as they dealt with separate yet related oppressions at the hands of white supremacy. Furthermore, depending on their physical location in Chicago, Filipinos/Filipino Americans could either see white Americans as allies and friends, or, as oppressive and hostile.

To understand Filipino Americans' racial ambiguity and political invisibility in the context of Chicago, however, we must first establish how and why their entrance into Chicago was unique from those on the West Coast, and how their racialization "emerged out of Chicago's peculiar racial context—one which pitted whites against Blacks in a polarizing quest for space".14 While those who immigrated to California arrived as agricultural laborers and endured white hostilities in the form of segregation and violence15 the Filipinos who settled in Chicago arrived as students who had been "members of a small, would-be elite" in the Philippines that set them on the path towards professional employment and American college degrees like the pensionados before them.16 The early Filipinos in Chicago often pursued degrees in law, engineering, or medicine in addition to the degrees they earned in the Philippines.17 Estrella's father, Florentino Ravelo, for example, came from an economically modest and a well-educated background in Nueva Vizcaya and enrolled in DePaul University's law school along with other Filipino men shortly after arriving to Chicago. Furthermore, while the nearly 1,800 Filipinos who settled on the West Side of Chicago by 193018 were initially segregated into tenement housing before Chicago's race-restrictive covenants were lifted in 1949, their proximity to working-class white ethnic groups in the 1920s and 1930s through interracial marriages, low-income housing, jobs, and certain social spaces made their positioning to whiteness unique from those in California, who lived in separate neighborhoods from whites and regularly feared violent clashes with white laborers, townspeople, and law enforcement. Interracial marriages between Filipino men and white women in Chicago were also common before more Filipina women immigrated in the 1940s, and Estrella recalls her mother, Ambrosia Ravelo, (who immigrated in 1936) creat- ing kinship networks with both white and Filipina women in the United Ladies Club—an interracial women's club established in tenement housing by the white women married to Filipino men. While many Filipina women immigrating in the later 1930s and early 1940s "snubbed" the white women who they perceived as uneducated and socially inferior, Estrella shared stories of her mother relying on the comfort of her white friends to get through the loneliness and depression of leaving the Philippines and enduring miscarriages and a stillbirth during her first years in Chicago. These stories illustrate white women's roles in providing emotional and social support for Filipinas in Chicago that would have otherwise

been provided by family members in the Philippines. In return, white women relied on Filipina women to supplement a loss in family after being disowned for marrying Filipino men and moving to the city. Theses exchanges in tenement housing indicated a lateral, mutually beneficial relationship between white and Filipinos that (at least momentarily) flattened early twentieth century racial hierarchies that painted Filipinos as dependent and inferior colonial subjects.

Outside of tenement housing and their social circles, however, Filipinos were confronted with racism on an everyday basis. Due to the ways in which the racialization of Filipina women as hypersexual, passive, and subservient were tools to further justify the colonial domination of the Philippines, Filipinas in Chicago had to navigate racist and misogynist perceptions of their identities. Estrella's mother, for example, dealt with ostracism from her white coworkers when working as a seamstress for high-end department stores on Michigan Avenue. Ambrosia's education, former status as a teacher in the Philippines, and proficiency in English allowed her to take on a more desirable role that granted better pay, hours, and working conditions than engaging in domestic work. While both jobs were highly feminized, the latter was oftentimes reserved for Black women or working class European white women of other ethnicities. However, the white seamstresses reinforced racial hierarchies by making racist comments and ostracizing Ambrosia, demonstrating acts of civic ostracism, or the process of the dominant group (white Americans) defining the valorized minority group (Filipina women) as a perpetual foreigner in order to "provide justification for marginalizing them in the privileges of citizenship and political participation".19 Therefore, while Ambrosia represented the access that well-educated Filipinos of higher socio-economic standing had into white-dominated spaces (while other racial minorities did not), their positioning as US colonial subjects from the Philippines marked them as always-already outsiders to "real" American femininity. Estrella remembers her mother expressing her frustration and sadness with her husband when at home, but at work she would continue to "keep her head down" and avoid drawing too much attention to herself. This seemed to be Ambrosia's way of navigating through the racism, even when it caused her to feel immense isolation and insecurity. Estrella wasn't sure if her mother ever talked about her struggles at work with her white friends in tenement housing, but it's likely that conversations about racism remained within the family or in the Philippine Women's Club of Chicago, which was established in the late 1930s as an exclusively Filipina social club after several Filipina women thought that the white women who married Filipino men before their arrival were "low class," uneducated, and socially or morally inferior. Therefore, Filipinos' relationship to whiteness—and the degrees to which they felt safe or unsafe around whites—was highly dependent on location.

The pre-1945 immigrants' ambivalent feelings towards whites were further complicated by a racial hierarchy separating white and Black Americans and the growing racial tensions as the Black population in Chicago swelled from 44,000 to 109,000 between 1910 and 1920 (primarily concentrated on the South Side) because of the Great Migration, an era of Black southerners leaving the Jim Crow

South for urban cities in the North. Filipinos' educational and profes- sional backgrounds, as well as their geographical positioning on the West Side rather than the South Side, made it easier for them to access white-dominated spaces in ways that Filipinos on the West Coast and Black Americans could not. Additionally, white supremacist institutions found ways to reinforce racial hierarchies by pitting Filipinos and Black people against each other as a fight for space and the need for work grew. Still, opportunities for joint political action across racial lines emerged, therefore temporarily destabilizing white-dominated racial hierarchies that attempted to thwart joint political action between Black Americans and Filipinos.

The Pullman Car Company, for example, was a space in which a racial hierarchy between Whites, Blacks, and Filipinos was "enmeshed and refined". Around 400 Filipino workers were employed at Pullman by 1934 to destroy Black work- ers' growing unionizing efforts. The luxurious experiences of white passengers traveling in what was referred to as "hotels on wheels" were almost exclusively provided by Black men and women for nearly fifty years before Filipinos' arrival, with around 20,224 Black Americans working as domestic workers and serving travelers in sleepers and first-class cars with lounges, food, and beverage ser- vice.20 According to historians, their high rates of employment had much to do with the company exploiting their willingness to work long hours for little pay, while also becoming a vehicle (both literally and metaphorically) for the Great Migration that brought thousands of Black Southerners to Chicago for better economic opportunities and housing.21 Therefore, the simultaneously occurring (im)migration of Filipinos and Black Americans to Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s were inspired by similar hopes of better economic or professional oppor- tunities, but still emerged as part of a white supremacist race-making project. Filipino workers replaced Black workers as servers in private cars in the summer of 1925, just two months after the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Por- ters was established by A. Philip Randolph, who declared "Flight or Be Slaves".22 Filipinos' employment at Pullman resulted in Black workers' demotion to the sleeping cars, where they made a minimum of $75.50 a month, while Filipinos working in the private cars earned a minimum of $85 and had more opportunities for making tips and commission on sales.23 Historians conclude that while white Pullman employers perceived Black unionizers as "troublemakers,"24 the Filipinos' status as educated colonial subjects were seen as more "skilled" and "subservient," and therefore less likely to rebel against the existing racial hierarchy. In the beginning, this proved to be effective as Filipino workers saw their positions at the Pullman Company as unstable and tried to secure their jobs by distancing themselves from Black workers, building alliances with their employers, and remaining in their good favor by providing "tractable, faithful service". In return, Black workers referred to Filipinos as "scabs" whose interests could not serve their own.25

At the same time, however, Filipinos' subordination to white employers were maintained by the Pullman company only allowing Filipinos four hours of sleep at a time, closely watching them, keeping files on their actions, conduct- ing

anonymous inspections in the cars, and enforcing disciplinary measures for even the smallest of transgressions. Although Filipinos appeared to be obedient and subservient workers who avoided associating with labor unions, historical documents show that they found small ways to "quietly rebel" against their working conditions and low wages. The Filipinos kept watch for each other as their friends snuck in opportunities to sleep in-between their allotted four-hour windows and they learned how to pocket more cash on top of their wages by cutting corners when serving alcohol, submitting fewer guest checks, and serving smaller portions of food to diners.26

Additionally, while the Filipinos initially avoided associating themselves with the Black members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the members of the Brotherhood were reluctant to include Filipinos in their union, the two groups eventually joined together after a politically active Filipino car worker, Cypriano Samonte, and union leader A. Philip Randolph declared the need for Blacks and Filipinos to band together. Samonte was also notably one of the few Filipino workers who married a Black woman and was described by other Filipinos as an "activist" and a "rebel".27 After attending Brotherhood meetings, Samonte would return to the other Filipinos and relay their messages. In a correspondence published by the Brotherhood, the writers declared, "There can be no such thing as a colored labor union or a Filipino labor union. All unions are workers' unions, or should be . . . the Brotherhood puts all of its forces behind a Filipino member to give him protection, just as it will put them behind a Negro member".28This history of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters demonstrates that while the racialization of Filipino laborers emerged out of a racial hierarchy that pitted them against Blacks, their political identities developed as they began to identify commonalities between their racial subordination and chose to step out of line and work together for better pay, increased hours of rest, and protection from wrongful termination. Although this is just one example of Black-Filipino alliances in the 1920s and 1930s, it stands as a powerful example of how racial hierarchies were destabilized as Filipinos challenged notions of their subservience by teaming up with Black workers.

However, Black-Filipino Chicago histories such as this became less fre- quent (and perhaps why they are mostly invisible today) when Filipinos found increased opportunities to obtain a middle class standing outside of tenement housing during the late 1940s and 1950s, therefore creating a new urgency to secure higher—yet unstable—social positionings. Estrella remembered Filipinos once again distancing themselves from Black Americans, whose numbers grew on the South Side from 277,731 and 492,625 between 1940 and 1950 because of the Second Great Migration.29 As Estrella grew up during these decades, the growing fissures between white and Black Americans were deeply informative to how Estrella understood race and Filipinos' positioning between the two and histories of joint political action were obscured. It was during these years of adolescence that Estrella began to question her family's racial positioning and belongingness in the United States, learning that "[in comparison] to Blacks, we were in between." Although Estrella's family obtained a middle-class standing that

mirrored mainstream American ideals of the nuclear family, homeownership, and the financial ability to keep up with the latest commercial trends, Estrella viewed their "in between" racial positioning as a major barrier to fully assimi- lating, and one of the main sources of her feelings of isolation and invisibility, often describing her adolescent self as a "loner" who experienced high levels of social anxiety and racial insecurity.

As racially restrictive covenants were lifted in the late 1940s, Estrella's family left apartment-living and bought a house at 5472 Dorchester Avenue in Hyde Park, making them one of the first Filipino families to own a home in the historically all-white neighborhood. Unlike Bronzeville and the surrounding South Side neighborhoods that ran along both sides of State Street for forty blocks (also known as the Black Belt or Black Metropolis as the First Great Migration lead to the development of a Black middle class neighborhood and cultural hub during the 1930s), Hyde Park had remained almost exclusively white and afflu- ent after the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition attracted new residents and an influx of resources to develop the area.30 Estrella recalls many of their friends living in tenement housing either dispersing across the West Side or settling in similar neighborhoods surrounding Hyde Park. However, Estrella proudly talked about how her family stood out from the other Filipinos' as they were the only Filipinos in their neighborhood, as for instance, they had a large living room to host parties and club meetings with their friends, and a brand-new family car to get around the city and take family trips.

Although Filipino Americans' geographic mobility posed "unwanted change" for historically all-white neighborhoods in Chicago, the established perception that they were subservient, educated, and hard working still rendered Filipinos more desirable than Black Americans, whose growing population threatened to

Figure 2. Ravelo family portrait taken in their living room, Hyde Park, 1952. Estrella (third to right) sitting next to her sisters, mother, and father. Photo Courtesy of Estrella Alamar and the FAHSC.

break the boundaries of the Black Belt and into all-White neighborhoods by the 1950s.31 While racial covenants were outlawed, de facto segregation ensured that the selling and purchasing power remained in the hands of white loaners and homeowners who opposed integration, and as post-war White Flight and suburbanization grew, urgencies to sell their homes presented an opportunity for the Ravelos to make their entrance. However, according to the original appraisal documents, the house's evaluated worth was $3,400 even though the title papers reveal that Estrella's parents bought it for $6,000.32 Furthermore, under the 'Special Expectations' section of the original document written by the Chicago Title and Trust Company was a condition implemented by the Swedish Home Savings and Loan Association—"Restrictions prohibiting the use of or sale of premises in question to negroes." By signing the deed and agreeing to its contingencies, Estrella's parents were placed in a racially triangulated posi- tion and secured their belongingness as a middle-class family on the premise of anti-Blackness. Therefore, their acceptance into Hyde Park was not because they achieved social equality to white people, but it was a seen as a necessary decision made to prevent whites' economic loss and slow down the encroach- ment of Black residents.

This form of relative valorization, or the process of exalting one subordinated group (Asian Americans) over a less desirable subordinated group (Black Americans) to ensure the domination of the latter troubled Estrella, although she never vocalized it to her family.33 She recalled with embarrassment how her mother often complained about the "deterioration" of surrounding neighborhoods—and eventually Hyde Park—as Black residents moved in and low-income housing structures to accommodate their numbers were built. However, when the Ravelos and other Filipino families attempted to further elevate their socio-geographical positioning and follow white Chicagoan's trending out-migration to the Northshore suburbs, the Ravelos were confronted by unwelcoming white suburbanites who discouraged them from pursuing homeownership outside of the city. Estrella believed this caused her family and other Filipinos to be "stuck" in the city, therefore complicating her memories of Hyde Park as a success story. While settling in Hyde Park during the 1950s signified an important moment for Estrella's family as they found increased security outside of apartment hous- ing,

their exclusion from the suburbs was a sobering reminder that racial lines weren't dissolved—they simply relocated outside of the city.

Figure 3. Photo of a 12-year-old Estrella (center) and younger sister (center-right) standing with neighborhood kids in Chicago, 1948. Photo Courtesy of Estrella Alamar and the FAHSC

Furthermore, while Estrella referred to silence and obedience as traits of being a "good Filipino daughter" and influential to her personality outside of the home, Estrella's racial in betweenness coupled with older Filipinos' anti-Black sentiments and minority status in her white-dominated schools also contributed to her feelings of insecurity and an inability to vocalize her opinions. Although Estrella remembered her relationship with her parents very fondly (oftentimes emphasizing the sacrifices they made to give Estrella and her sisters access into middle-class white America), she was keenly aware of their gendered expectations for her to behave in way that upheld Filipino culture and respectability, which meant distancing themselves from what was perceived as "inferior" and "immoral." Since gender has been long understood as a key to immigrant identity and a vehicle for immigrant families to assert cultural superiority and belongingness, Asian American girls are often burdened with the responsibility of proving their racial belongingness by presenting themselves as non-threatening, pious, and docile. 34 Estrella learned from a young age to never "give [her parents or outsiders] a reason to mistrust" her by remaining obedient and amicable—traits she identified with the image of a Good Filipino Daughter. The need to remain trustworthy was not only specific to her role as a daughter, but a necessary aspect of securing their socio-racial standing as a non-white family in Hyde Park. Estrella's upbringing in mid-twentieth century Chicago, thrust into its racial hierarchies and gendered as a Filipina American girl, informed how she viewed Filipino Americans as racially in-between and unidentifiable. Invisibility and silence were placed onto Filipinos and Filipino Americans by white supremacist discourses from the 1920s to 1950s, while also becoming a strategic tool for them to gain access into middle-class, white-dominated spaces, even when that capitalized on the subordination of Black Americans. At the same time, however, the history of the Filipino Chicago Pullman workers and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, as well as Estrella's feelings of being caught in between needing to blend in with white Americans and disapproving the anti-Black racism in Hyde Park and her own family, demonstrates how Filipinos/Filipino Americans were not always subservient to a racial hierarchy positioning them below white Americans and against Black Americans.

"I KNEW WHAT IT FELT LIKE": TEACHING AT MCKAY ELEMENTARY

Although unbeknownst to her at the time, the legacy of Filipino immigrants' ambiguous racial positioning and her early exposure to conversations pertaining

to race, gender, and class would shape how she presented herself as trustworthy, subservient, and apolitical as an adult in the 1960s when Chicago became a major site of racial unrest. Her memories of growing up in mid-century Hyde Park as the daughter immigrants would also inspire her work as a teacher and community member who used her status as a "safe" minority to advocate for integration in white-dominated spaces.

After graduating from Hyde Park High School in 1954, Estrella left for college at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, but returned to Chicago during her second year. In 1963, Estrella graduated with a teaching degree from DePaul University and began working as a teacher's assistant at Schiller Elementary in Cabrini-Green, a public housing development built in 1942 that was originally imagined as a solution to an urban housing crisis that simultaneously tackled the unwanted growing population of Black Americans in Chicago and bolstered city planners' economic and political gain. Although it was originally imagined as a temporary residence for soldiers stationed in Chicago during World Ware II and 'replacement housing' for residents displaced after the demolition of former 'slums,' the rapid increase of Black Americans between 1940 and 1950 turned Cabrini-Green into a solution for slowing down racial integration in historically all-white neighborhoods. By1959, Black Americans occupied 75% of Cabrini Green apartments (Pfeiffer 2006, 43).35

The racialization of Cabrini was made almost completely synonymous with the dangers of inner-city housing and poor non-whites, and its legacy continued into the twenty-first century. After the last housing structure was demolished in 2011, Cabrini-Green was described by one columnist as: 23 punishingly austere red and white brick high-rises [that once] gathered up 15,000 of Chicago's poorest residents, one of the most infamous public housing developments in the country that rapidly deteriorated under government neglect and the privatization of public housing. While more contemporary historical and sociological studies on Cabrini-Green correct the assumed inherent criminality of the residents, who bestowed each high-rise with nicknames that signaled just how much they'd become unmanageable zones for underground economies: "The Bankroll," "Scamplife," "The Rock," "The Castle," "Goldmine".36

While much larger in scale and public attention in the media, the history of Cabrini-Green resembled patterns in the tenement housing Filipinos/Filipino Americans were restricted to throughout the 1920s--1940s. Similar to how working class white ethnic groups and Filipino immigrants were segregated into tenements, the Chicago Housing Association implemented more public housing in Cabrini-Green where newly-arriving Black Southerners could live alongside poor Italians, Irish, and Puerto Ricans until they became the majority racial group.37 Estrella talked about not realizing that the apartments she grew up in were considered "low income" housing until hearing this term during col- lege, and she described feeling a sense of connection to the children and Puerto Rican teacher she worked with, whose background of being the daughter of one of the first Puerto Rican families to live in Oak Park resonated with Estrella's memories

of her childhood as an ethnic and racial minority on the South Side. Estrella found comfort in moments of familiarity with her students at Schil-ler, sharing memories of using her mother's inventive strategies for making her and her sisters' school supplies when money was tight. When the classrooms at Schiller didn't have glue for the students to do art projects, Estrella taught them how to mix rice and water until it was sticky enough to hold paper together. When students came to school without lunch boxes for their food, she showed them how to use leftover Wonder Bread bags to carry their sandwiches instead. "I learned a whole lot from my mother," she said, "and I was able to teach it to the kids as well." In retrospect, Estrella saw her time at Schiller as a catalyst for thinking more critically about race and her own ethnic identity. This was a big deal for Estrella as she spent most of her life "hiding my Filipino identity" and shying away from conversations about the negative impacts of racial divisions in attempt to cope with the racism around her.

After a year at Schiller, Estrella was hired as a first-grade teacher and became the first person of color to teach at McKay Elementary in Marquette Park. Estrella would continue to teach at McKay until she retired in the 1990s, therefore making her a first-hand witness to the school's and neighborhood's (often tumultuous) shifts in its racial landscape throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Her previous experiences at Schiller and Cabrini-Green taught her to adopt a new sense of skepticism towards whites, even when they claimed "progressive" politics. Although Estrella felt that the other teachers had "welcoming mannerisms" overall she kept her distance and remained wary of their intentions. According to Estrella, "[White people] liked [Asian Americans] because we weren't political," and wondered if the other teachers actually liked her for herself, or if it was just part of an initiative to diversify in a time of political and racial unrest without making the "extreme" decision to hire a Black teacher. Similar to the ways in which Filipinos during the 1920s through 1950s became increasingly accepted into middle class, white-dominated spaces, Estrella saw her acceptance predicated on being a non-Black person of color—not because Asian Americans were equal to whites.

Estrella's uncertainty and suspicions about her positioning at McKay impacted her ability to directly speak up as tensions surrounding racial integration stirred—"I couldn't be vocal about [racism] when other teachers were prejudice against students. I didn't agree with them, but I didn't want to stand out. I felt so sorry for the students because they were so innocent, and yet, they were labeled." The racism towards integrating Black students was not unique to McKay but were becoming increasingly prevalent by the mid-1960-s. In a highly racist and classist 1964 handbook for a "reformed" approach to teaching Roger Puggart detailed an urgent need for schools to adopt a tough-love approach to reform as "brats" began to takeover classrooms. Puggart stated, "Ask not if your school is good enough for your children . . . ask if your children are good enough for their school". The manifesto wrote disparagingly of Black students, referring to their "animal conduct, jealous catfights, hatred, self-destruction, turmoil, disrespect for authority, and for learning", and warned teachers that without stern

discipline—or establishing "homogenous classrooms"—bad behavior will be "contagious," with "even the best of children [becoming] infected". Estrella was only in her first year of teaching at McKay when Puggart's commentary was published and she saw first-hand how the handbook's racial sentiments were already reflected in her colleagues' attitudes. .38

While Estrella's reluctance to speak out could have reinforced the invisibility of Asian Americans' political voices and assumptions of Asian American women's docility, Estrella felt this was a strategic decision to enact change where and when she could. While Estrella didn't believe that the adults' racist attitudes could be changed, she felt that she could make a difference with her young students. On one of her first days when McKay was still predominantly white and just on the cusp of integration, Estrella wrote on the chalkboard with her back to the students. She turned around and caught a few of them pulling at the outer corner of their eyes as they mimicked her "Chinita" eye shape. Rather than getting angry or hurt by the students' racialized impressions of her facial features, she decided to teach them about Filipino culture—she even invited her mother to class as a guest speaker for a day. This was the first time Estrella got the chance to talk about her Filipino culture to such a large group of white people, even if they were children. "You know, these kids weren't used to see- ing someone like me and I'm sure their parents would tell them this and that about minorities. This is why I made everything a teaching moment." Estrella's strategic use of "teaching moments" extended outside of the classroom as she volunteered to work with students labeled as "problem children" in their homes.

In the summers I would tutor kids that I was supposed to have in the next school year, and if there were problems [with them] then I'd want to, you know, work with them before they came into my class. Because they also don't know how to be around Asians, or anybody of color. There was this one whose kindergarten teacher told me to be careful with that one since he was moving up to the first grade—she said he was slow and hyper. So, I thought, "Oh I better tutor this kid," but I never asked for money. It was just a way for me to create that bridge between me and these kids because I was Asian.

Estrella treated her students with empathy and patience, which Estrella remem- bered her and her sisters longing for as minorities in their schools as children. Building relationships with her students that allowed her to create teachable moments were made easier because their parents often assumed that Estrella had similar anti-Black sentiments as an Asian American woman.

The parent of this kid was taking to me one day and said, "Oh, [Black people] are really moving in here fast. We're going to move out to the Northwest Suburbs where it's still white." And I thought to myself, "Good luck. Because this kid is going to have issues either way, whether his school is white or Black or what. So good luck to you and the suburbs!"

In many ways, Estrella found herself occupying an outsider-insider position as white parents confided in her about their growing frustrations underscored by anti-Black racism; in comparison to Black people, Estrella was perceived to be

more trustworthy, and perhaps even deracialized as negative connotations surrounding race became synonymous with Blackness. This racial ambiguity and the access it gave Estrella into the homes of white families resembled earlier histories of Filipinos in Chicago who were perceived as subservient, docile, and eager to please white Americans. As she teetered the line between a 'good' and 'bad' minority in the homes of white families, Estrella found silence in the presence of her students' parents as the safer alternative to voicing her real opinions. If she had challenged their way of thinking, Estrella knew she would lose opportunities to work one-on-one with their children.

Similarly, when more Black students started to integrate into McKay, Estrella remembered sitting in the teacher's lounge and listening to the white teachers complain about the racial deterioration of the school and neighborhood. These sentiments mirrored the comments she heard as a girl in Hyde Park, when her mother and neighbors talked about the "deterioration" of the South Side during the second mass wave of Black migration in the 1940s and 1950s. Much like when she was a girl, Estrella remained quiet in the teacher's lounge, but she always "listened and observed." "Being a listener, I'd sit in a room and hear the other teachers talk about the different students and situations starting to happen in the school; from those conversations I found out who was prejudice . . . who had racist attitudes." Obtaining this information helped Estrella identify who she couldn't trust and from whom she should protect her students.

While her colleagues and the parents of her white students may have seen her as a 'safe' minority who they could disclose anti-Black sentiments to, Estrella really identified more with the experiences with the Black students.

I felt very close to them. I felt sorry for them when they first started coming into school because they were not socially accepted by the other kids, and I think that's because the other kids didn't know how to be around Black or different children. My sisters and I felt those same prejudices going up and was something that was still very pronounced. We knew what it was like to have to win people over. I remember the first black student we had at McKay; I felt so sad for him. He was in the seventh or eighth grade, and he was so isolated. When I'd be on recess duty, I felt so sorry because he was just by himself. He was never invited to play by the other kids. Those first Black kids to move into the neighborhood really went through a traumatic experience, and my sisters and I did, too.

Taking special care of her Black students and bringing white students into conversations about race became an especially crucial task for Estrella after August 5th, 1966 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. organized a march in Marquette Park to demand fair housing for Black Chicagoans. The boiling animosity of white residents who opposed integration erupted that day as they hurled bricks and bottles at 550 Black marchers while yelling, "White power!" in close proximity to the school.39 "This was his worst protest," Estrella recounted, "and he marched right in the neighborhood I was teaching in. He marched right by the school in this all-white neighborhood; the whites stoned the Black people as they marched outside in the streets." An interview with Dr. King following the protest in Marquette Park coroborted Estrella's memory of the event as he stated, "I've

been in many demonstrations all across the South, but I can say that I've never seen—even in Mississippi and Alabama—mobs as hostile and as hate- filled as I've seen here in Chicago".40 As Civil Rights protestors were attacked by 700 angry whites, the children and teachers of McKay barricaded themselves inside their classrooms and fearfully waited for the chaos to come to an end.

Estrella recalled the years following the riots as Marquette park continued to be a site of social unrest, protests, and riots— in 1968 after the assassination of MLK; twice in 1976 after Black protesters opposing housing discrimination were blocked by White counter protestors; in 1977 when a mob of angry whites attacked Black motorists on their way to a protest; in 1978 when the neo-Nazi group headquartered down the street from school were met by counter protesters; and in 1986 when the Ku Klux Klan attempted to stage rallies.

I talked to the students about [the protests] and how they were feeling about it; I would talk to them about what was happening whenever I could. Whenever there was a situation that arises, I would at least touch on it. I would ask them 'What do you think? What's happening with your parents?' I would ask these questions to find out what they didn't know. Even with my first and second graders, I would touch on the subject to see what their reactions were because kids are very honest when you ask them questions. I could get good insight from them.

Figure 4. Estrella with her students at McKay Elementary, 1977. Photo Courtesy of Estrella Alamar and the FAHSC.

By the mid to late 1970s, Estrella had established herself as an effective and well- liked teacher; she built friendships with some of her coworkers while keeping a safe distance from others. However, while her approach of maintaining the perception that she was non-political amongst her all-white colleagues

allowed her to move freely in her own spaces, it was not well-received by the first Black teacher.

The very first black teacher we had came in and she was very (sticks nose and chin up in the air) like that you know, but she had to be like that as the first Black teacher in order to be accepted. She was a very classy woman—classier than me! And she was accepted by the teachers when she was there, but when she wasn't around that was a different story.

As Estrella talked about the new teacher, Fran Morrow, she pointed to her photo in a faculty portrait taken in 1973. Estrella admired Fran's well-composed appearance when she arrived to work every day, remembering her stylish blonde wig, dress suits, and heels that reflected the latest fashion trends. Estrella also recalled thinking Fran was professional, pleasant, cordial, but distant from all the other teachers, including herself. Unlike Estrella, Fran was more open about advocating for racial equality and Civil Rights, and at one point accused Estrella of being unsupportive. "She got very upset with me when I told her I could no longer donate to the Chicago Negro Foundation, but it was because [my husband and I] were really tight on money. I always used to donate, I always did. But I just couldn't anymore." Out of embarrassment, Estrella didn't say her financial struggles prevented her from donating, but she worried about what this meant. Did Fran think Estrella didn't care about the struggles of Black Americans? Were Estrella's efforts to educate her students on racial diversity not the same as working directly with a foundation like her colleague? Even as Estrella continued to use her positioning as a teacher to create a safe and welcoming environment for her students, her racial ambiguity and tendency to rely on silence as protective mechanism against racism distanced her from someone she admired and viewed as more politically engaged.

Figure 5. Photo of McKay Faculty Members, 1973. Estrella (second row, far left) and Fran Morrow (first row, third from the left). Photo Courtesy of Estrella Alamar and the FAHSC.

"I WAS AND STILL AM NOT A SUBORDINATE": RECLAIMING HYDE PARK AS HOME

Also, during the late 1960's, Estrella and her first husband, Winston Yates, decided to move back to her home neighborhood of Hyde Park. Estrella's adolescent memories of a nearly exclusively white, middle class neighborhood was now predominantly occupied by Black residents and depicted as overridden with poverty, crime, and social unrest by the mainstream news media. Sponsored by the University of Chicago, Hyde Park was one of the first neighborhoods to undergo urban renewal in Chicago. The University chancellor, Lawrence A. Kimpton, testified before a city council in favor of the 1958 Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal plan, stating, "It is not possible to operate and maintain a great university in a deteriorating or slum neighborhood".41 Accepted that same year, the plan included the complete alteration of 856 acres in Hyde Park alone, resulting in the demolition of 638 buildings and the displacement of 4,000 families. While University officials attempted to avoid direct references to race in the written plan, the Urban Renewal plan was undoubtedly a socio-racial cleansing of urban poverty masked as a renovation project. Famously stated by James Baldwin, "Urban Renewal, which means moving negroes out—it means negro removal. That is what it means".42

As poor Black Chicagoans were forcibly displaced throughout the city, Estrella and Winston fought to maintain racial diversity and encourage integration in their Catholic encounter group. The young, progressive couple saw the irony in encounter groups resisting the integration of Black members, since its emergence as a psycho-social fad in the 1960s as they emphasized healing interpersonal relations based in Catholic values and teachings.43

We were the first encounter group to integrate. We wanted to focus on how to bridge between the past and present; we were working towards Civil Justice. We would have dinners with other Catholic marriage encounter groups that were all White and talk about [integration]. These Whites were from the Southwest side. It's not that they were all racist, but these topics were never addressed where they were. This was the sixties, so things were just starting to come into awareness.

When looking through archival items in her house, I found further evidence of Estrella's efforts to persuade the other group members to welcome integration. A stack of documents titled "The Church and the Making of a Counter Culture" made references to pseudo-psychology, anti-racism, and the women's liberation movement. One such document was a response to "the question of the task and role of the church in the public sphere," and offered a general rumination about what it meant to live a fulfilled, communal life in alignment with Catholic/Christian teachings in "the midst of a cultural breakdown."44 Blue and black pens were primarily used to identify passages that Estrella found

intriguing. However, red ink drew my attention to a section focusing on race, power, and privilege:

The moment we focus our attention on the creation of new forms of primary community, we become aware of the fact that almost all of our relationships, even the most intimate, are oppressive for one of the two parties involved. For anyone in our society today who is black, or economically or politically disinherited, this awareness is the at the center of his daily experience […] More than this, it can open our eyes to the fact that our institutional life is permeated with this same oppressor-oppressed pattern; a bureaucratic society is composed of the managers and the managed.45

This archival material sheds light on Estrella's internal thoughts about her own racial positioning to Black and white Americans, and it provides more context for what motivated Estrella and Winston to bring up conversations about race and inclusion in their encounter groups. What I found particularly interesting, however, is Estrella's emphasis on terms such as "oppressor-oppressed" and "the managers and the managed." She also circled, "It is more difficult for us to realize that all of us are, in one way or another, victims." These binaries of identity had always shaped Filipinos' and Filipino Americans' racialization in Chicago, particularly in the ways that they were never able to fully access the privileges of whiteness or identify with the marginalization of Black Americans, therefore relying on invisibility to cope with racism. However, Estrella's annota- tions and reflections on her time in encounter groups indicate the social and political stakes she placed in forging that community, and how she viewed her in-between racial positioning as a vehicle to bridge gaps.

Estrella was relieved as the integration of interracial and non-white couples was received positively by most group members. Outside of their small church groups, however, Black members were still vulnerable to frequent racial profil- ing. Estrella recalled a memory of her and Winston having their good friends Al and Deb (a Black couple from the encounter group) over for dinner at their condo in Hyde Park. That night, Al walked home carrying a TV given to him by Winston but was stopped by a police officer who accused Al of stealing the TV. Al managed to convince the officer to get Winston and confirm his innocence as Estrella watched her husband while feeling like they were "lucky" that Winston was a white man, for Estrella's identity as an Asian American woman wouldn't have helped Al in the same way. Using Winston's privilege as a white man was also beneficial as the group set out to advocate for racial integration in other Catholic churches on the Southwest Side. "[Winston and Al] wanted to start creating bridges between all the people there, because Black people would eventually move there more and more. But those nuns were really prejudice, so because our encounter group was already integrated, we made that Church one of our projects."

While as a girl, Estrella felt voiceless and powerless within a hierarchy representing Filipino Americans as racially and politically invisible, she found new ways of challenging white supremacy through interpersonal, cross racial relationships and community engagement. Although the early histories detailing

the racial ambiguity of Filipinos/Filipino Americans illustrated how their ability to build alliances across racial lines—particularly with Black Americans—was complicated by the racial and spatial politics of placemaking in Chicago's racial hierarchy, Estrella's stories reveal just one example of how Filipino Americans responded to and against such politics in their everyday lives. Her stories of moving into Hyde Park with her family during the 1950s was brought full circle when she described a pivotal moment in claiming her belongingness and voice as an adult. During the 1970s, Estrella and Winston had the opportunity to move to Elk Grove, an upper-class white suburb very similar to the ones Estrella's parents had been barred from as non-whites in the 1950s. Going against her parents' past tendency to align themselves with whiteness, however, Estrella refused to leave. In her old age, Estrella's pride in her decision only became stronger—"I grew up in Hyde Park, I've been here most of my life. What would I do in the suburbs? I was and still am not a subordinate. So, we stayed in Hyde Park. And look—it's still the area that is so diverse. I bet it's the most diverse city in the United States!"

Figure 6. Photo of Estrella standing on the steps to her house in June 2020. [Photo taken by author].

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47. While the exact citation for this essay wasn’t identified, the small amount of avail- able information indicates that its possible relation to The Chicago Theological. Additionally, an influential monograph, The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition, written by Theodore Roszak and published through Anchor Books in 1969 sheds an alternative light on how counterculture and major cultural institutions were grappling with social issues and a younger generation’s attempts to combine new modes of community-building, psychology, and culture.
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