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Publication Date
2015

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“We Still Have a Long Ways To Go”: The Pilipino Workers Center’s Past and Ongoing Work on the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and Temporary Protected Status Campaigns

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Masters of Arts in Asian American Studies

by

Catherine Suzanne Wang

2015
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“We Still Have a Long Ways To Go”: The Pilipino Workers Center’s Past and Ongoing Work on the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and Temporary Protected Status Campaigns

By

Catherine Suzanne Wang

Master of Arts in Asian American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Victor Bascara, Chair

As Filipino workers became desirable to other countries, the Philippines became a “labor brokerage state” which relied on Filipino workers’ remittances. Undocumented immigrants face threats of deportation in the workplace and decreases in protections of workers’ rights. The Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), a Los Angeles-based organization serves Filipino workers. PWC organizes workers around workers’ and immigrant rights with campaigns for the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and for Temporary Protected Status. During the course of the campaigns, PWC addressed invisibility of Filipino caregivers and undocumented Filipinos, individualist mentalities of Filipino caregivers, and the transnational family’s role in the relief and recovery for the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan. An analysis of the A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns demonstrates how PWC serves as a unique blend of social service, legal advocate, and lobbyist organizations in the context of the decline of unions and uneven global flows of migration, power, and capital.
The thesis of Catherine Suzanne Wang is approved.

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2015
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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my committee chair, Professor Victor Bascara, for his support, encouragement, and commitment to my project. I also would like to thank my committee members: Professor David Yoo, Professor Shadduck-Hernandez, and Professor Lucy Burns for being integral parts of this process. I am extremely grateful for all of your time and energy to my project.

Second, I would like to thank my interviewees: Aquilina Soriano-Versoza, Emi Vallega, and Dondino Manzon. I greatly appreciate taking the time to talk to me about your work with the Pilipino Workers Center. I cannot express enough how much I appreciate your time and how much I enjoyed learning more about the amazing work that PWC does.

Third, I would like to thank my Occupational Health Internship Team: Professor Jennifer Nazareno, Professor Rhacel Parrenas, Dr. Kevin Riley, Regem Corpuz, and Emilie Tumale for your leadership and support that led me to my focus on the Pilipino Workers Center. Your guidance and perspectives have all shaped my thesis project.

Lastly, I would like to thank my Masters in Asian American Studies cohort, my family, and my friends. Without your encouragement and support, I would not have been able to complete my project.
Chapter 1: Background Literature

In this thesis, I argue that not only do Filipino caregivers hold a complex global position within US and Philippine institutions that monitor and facilitate Filipino careworker migration but also the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) plays a significant role in helping workers navigate bureaucracy and laws of US institutions and Philippine institutions. PWC has developed a relationship with the Philippine consulate which has increased PWC’s influence nationally and globally. As unions have shifted into an era of business unionism and have had a history of mixed perspectives toward immigrants and immigration reform, PWC has filled multiple roles as an advocate, lobbyist organization, legal assistant, and facilitator between US and Philippine institutions.

Throughout the Pilipino Workers Center’s Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and Temporary Protected Status, PWC’s messaging supports a transnational family structure and recognizes the economic impact of undocumented family members to their family members abroad. PWC also pushes for a cultural shift among mainstream and Filipino communities’ perceptions of Filipinos as undocumented and as caregivers. In its goal of building progressive leaders and progressive agendas for immigration reform and pathways to citizenship, PWC is one of few Filipino organizations that utilize statewide and national campaigns to develop leaders, make policy changes, and impact mainstream and community-wide perceptions of low-wage, undocumented workers. As many of its workers are unprotected by unions, work in isolated situations, and have unpredictable schedules, PWC developed radical methods for its members to be involved in its campaign work.

Ideologically, the Pilipino Workers Center challenges middle-class individualist beliefs that some of their workers carry with them from the Philippines to build collective power and
encourage community organizing. PWC established collective methods for its members to create methods to avoid agencies and employers that practice wage theft. As it pushes for a cultural shift, PWC resists dominant notions of the Model Minority Myth1 and assumptions that all Filipinos are health professionals. Using a multi-pronged approach, the Pilipino Workers Center serves an essential role for low-wage and undocumented Filipino workers. The gap that PWC fills reflects the changing landscape of organizations that support workers, worker’s rights movement, and immigrant rights movement. The gap also sheds light on the increased reliance on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the lack of institutional support for immigrant workers.

In this section, I provide multiple contexts for my argument and the evidence collected and gathered. The historical and political relationship between the Philippines and the US and the intentional export of Filipino nurses and care workers provide a context for Pilipino Workers Center’s goals, mission, and their members’ lives and day-to-day vulnerabilities they face. The history of labor unions’ anti-immigrant sentiment established an increased need for workers centers, which offer support around social services, workplace issues, lobbying, advocacy, and many other types of services. The Pilipino Workers Center, a Los Angeles-based and Filipino worker focused worker center, serves transnational workers, advocates for them within their workplaces, mobilizes communities for immigrant and workers’ rights and visibility as caregivers and undocumented Filipinos in Filipino communities. I establish a shift in labor and community organizing toward a primarily worker center model for immigrant workers, in which PWC plays a new role as combination of lobbyist, legal advocate, and service organizations.

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1 Model Minority Myth is the mainstream assumption that Asian Americans as a whole are successful, upper middle-class, passive, quiet, and obedient. The ideology has a long history but formed during and after the Civil Rights Movement in opposition to other people of color who were more visibly politically active during that period.
Post 1965 Filipino Migration to the US

In this section, I describe the factors that impact the migration of Filipinos to the US. The specific context of US colonialism in the Philippines had a large part in creating specific kinds of communities that formed in the US and the types of industries that make up the majority of Filipinos in the Los Angeles area in the present. Not only is the Pilipino Workers Center situated within a historical context of US colonialism in the Philippines through the formation of its members’ work industries, but also PWC’s campaigns focus on immigrant rights and workers’ rights. PWC’s emphasis on immigrant rights requires PWC to facilitate a relationship with the Philippine consulate; thus the relationship between the US and the Philippines directly affects PWC’s ability to effectively organize campaigns. Additionally, the immigration policies that affect undocumented Filipinos and the positionalities of Filipino documented and undocumented workers are both constructed in part by the historical and political contexts between the US and the Philippines. This section briefly elaborates on the history of the complex relationship between the US and the Philippines after that directly impacts the work of PWC as a unique blend of lobbyist, community based, and advocacy organizations.

After the Spanish-American War that ended in 1898 and the Philippine American War that ended in 1902, the US passed the Philippine Organic Act (POA) that annexed Philippines. The POA categorized Filipinos as American nationals and allowed Filipinos to migrate freely but excluded Filipinos from citizenship. After the US’ 1923 Immigration Act that placed national quotas on immigration from Asian countries into the US, Filipino migrants were permitted to enter outside of the quota restrictions. Filipino migrants were useful laborers to build the US economy, particularly on Hawaiian sugar plantations. Filipino plantation workers in the US were at the bottom of the plantation hierarchy and experienced orientalist racialization (Baldoz, 2004).
While in the US, Filipinos were unable to vote, bear arms, and did not have protection from a separate Philippine state. While Filipino communities, the majority of whom were men, grew, community spaces like taxi-dance halls and carnivals were spaces where white women and Filipino men socialized. A series of anti-miscegenation laws and Alien Land Acts posed barriers to Filipino assimilation and treatment as Americans (Baldoz, 2004). European Americans’ nativist sentiments ultimately resulted in the reduction of Filipino migration in 1930, which was followed, by further reduction in migration when the Philippines gained independence from the US in 1934. The 1965 immigration act allowed not only Filipinos living in the US to sponsor relatives into the US but also Filipinos to come to the US for work. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 addressed a lack of professionals in the US. After 1965, there were an increase in migrants with higher education and health backgrounds (Mateo, 2001). The year 1965 signifies a beginning of the “brain drain” and less restrictive immigration quotas that produced new and larger Asian communities in the US.

The history of US colonialism and imperialism of the Philippines provides a significant context for the influx of Filipino migrant workers into the US after 1965, the majority of whom have been health and care workers (Choy, 2003). The US brought nursing as an industry to the Philippines as a part of its imperialist project to “civilize” and rationalize its occupation of the Philippines (Anderson, 1995). During its imperialist efforts, the US deemed Filipinos as ill, unhygienic, dangerous, and threatening, to which the US posed the solution of American medicine and technology. The US empire Orientalized and otherized the Filipino body as a platform for its national project. American-founded nursing schools prepared Filipinos to become nurses in the US. The idea of living in the US appealed to Filipinos and American-track nursing became highly desirable for Filipinos. The US government also selected several hundred
Filipinos to go to college in the US, serving as Filipino ambassadors in the US. In addition, the US established the Exchange Visitors Program (EVP) to allow all immigrants to train or work in the US for 2 years and then return to their home countries. However, over 80% of EVP migrants were from the Philippines, mostly nurses (Asperilla, 1976). Both the American nursing system in the Philippines and EVP produced a large body of Filipino nurses in the US. Due to racialized regimes of labor and uneven levels of development globally (Parreñas, 2001), Filipino nurses were able to make more money in the US compared to how much they made in Philippines even working in entry level positions in poor conditions (Ong & Azores, 1994). However, US imperialist projects intentionally produced a large body of Filipino nurses (Chang, 2000; Ong & Azores, 1994). Additionally, the success or popularity of Filipino nurses is linked with gendered and racist stereotypes about the Philippines that were established during US colonialism of the Philippines. The US state perceived Filipino men and women as feminized and requiring US influences to restructure and redefine gender lines in the Philippines (Espiritu, 2003). US military established the image of Filipina women as sex objects and exotic through their demand for brothels and sex workers while in the Philippines (Coronel & Rosca, 1993; Warren, 1993). Due to the creation of a feminized Filipino body, people around the world assume Filipino nurses are to be gentle, caring, and more desirable as nurses and care workers than other races of people (Espiritu, 2005).

The US dictated the criteria for Filipino nurses in the Philippines, the US, and abroad based on its assumptions about who can be a better worker and nurse. The US government selected women from “good” families in the Philippines; thus shaping and producing a classed, racialized, and gendered standard for good workers. Also, the gendering of nursing as an occupation that women do best was carried from US ideologies to instructors that taught Filipino
nurses in the Philippines. The poor treatment of nurses in the US within the industry combined with the active recruitment of Filipino nurses produced an overrepresentation of Filipino nurses (Espiritu, 2005). The flow of Filipino nurses into the US and other kinds of Filipino care workers into the US are direct results of US colonialism in the Philippines.

Role of Philippine State and Export of Labor

In this section, I build upon the historical context of Filipino migration to the US and discuss the role of the Philippine state in the flow of Filipino migrant workers into the US. I discuss the intentional exportation of Filipino workers in addition to the creation of transnational families. The specific context of exportation and transnational relationships are ones that impact Filipino community formation. Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) offers its workers a unique blend of services, advocacy, and guidance to address their specific and complex context of the Philippine state and transnational labor flows.

In addition to the work of the US empire, the Philippine state played an essential role in the continued influx of nurses and care workers from the Philippines to the US (Espiritu, 2005). Robyn Rodriguez (2010) calls the Philippine state a “labor brokerage state” or “export-processing zone” in the context of the large numbers of Filipinos working abroad. The Philippine state produced a narrative of heroism for post-1965 Filipino workers working abroad (Espiritu, 2005; Parrenas, 2001). The Philippine Secretary of Health publicly declared that Filipino workers working abroad are making profits that are directly impacting the Philippine economy (Espiritu, 2005). The state boasts Filipino workers’ American training, English language, natural ability to be caring as women, and naturally resilient to poor conditions. Not only is the Philippine government creating a narrative of heroism but it is also expressing its pride in the
effects of American imperialism and the qualities of their women. Former Philippine Vice President and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.’s possession of Filipino women as naturally skilled at being nurses and working in difficult conditions further objectifies Filipino women workers and reifies sexist assumptions of American imperialism (Espiritu, 2005). Former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo described Filipino workers as flexible workers willing to work in any conditions and that they “play a role in rebuilding the land for the people of Iraq” (Rodriguez, 2010). Not only do Filipino workers have a relationship to American imperialism in the Philippines but also have a part in American imperialism in the Middle East (Rodriguez, 2010). The Philippine state’s narrative around its overseas workers presents its workers as readily available to be parts of US Empire with the goal of ascending the global hierarchy. (Parrenas, 2001; Rodriguez, 2010).

Filipina nurses’ desirability and necessity in the context of the lack of nurses in the US has material impacts on immigration. Filipina nurses are able to enter the US without having a sponsoring party and can bring their family as dependents. Because the majority of Filipina nurses entering the US are women, often they will become the breadwinner of their family for the first time upon working as a nurse in the US. Though they are coming to the US for a better life and economic benefits, Filipina nurses also seek freedom from gender roles, control over their income, and new experiences in new places (Espiritu, 2005). The context of Filipino nurses and caregivers migrating to the Global North has allowed for new roles of women on a family level.

Though some Filipina nurses bring their families into the US, there are many cases in which Filipina nurses or care workers travel to work in the US alone, without their families. While separated from their families, they can afford to pay for a caregiver for their children or
their family takes care of their children. Intentionally, Filipino caregivers keep their children and spouses in the Philippines to maintain and can support a middle class lifestyle for their families in the Philippines. Knowing that bringing their family to the US or other countries in the Global North would make living conditions and finances physically and economically tight, caregivers can send their family their income from their care work to support their families and pay for a babysitter for their own children. The prolonged family separation is traumatic and painful for women and families and often last 15 to 20 years. Filipino caregivers rationalize their sadness and separation by commodifying their love with their ability to provide materially for their children with education, luxury items, etc. Using email, phone calls, letters, and web video calls, Filipino caregivers and other types of care workers “manage” the physical distance that is between them and their families (Parreñas, 2001). The emotional burden for care workers is a direct result of unequal levels of economic development of the Philippines and the US. The daily emotional battles that Filipino caregivers and workers are ripple effects of global inequality.

Filipino caregivers play crucial roles for middle class professional women in the US. As the rates of women working demanding jobs increase, working middle and upper middle class women in the US and other countries in the Global North rely caregivers to care for children and elderly. Filipino caregivers perform both reproductive and emotional labor while caring for another family’s children and elders while they are separated from their own families (Parreñas, 2001; Parrenas, 2001). Filipino caregivers’ work allows for upper middle class women in the US and other countries in the Global North to produce an income and to produce children.

The desire for Filipino workers in the Global North combined with the work of the Philippines as a “labor brokerage state” has produced families living across borders. Its workers in the US experience poor working conditions and vulnerabilities as undocumented or
documented workers. Moreover, the Philippine state as an institution has claimed attempted to responsibility and care for its migrant workers in ways that benefit the Philippines more than its workers.

The Philippine State and its Overseas Workers

The Philippine state has a central role in the exportation of Filipino migrant workers and uses the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to carry out the state and global market’s desire for Filipino workers. However, POEA makes false claims of care for its workers. The Philippine state passively accepts the poor conditions for workers and workers’ remittances. In this section, I discuss the role of POEA in the unprotected status of Filipino migrant workers in the Philippines. The Philippine state’s lack of accountability for its workers creates the conditions for the mixture of services and organizing offered by the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC).

Prior to the Migrant Worker and Overseas Filipino Act (RA 8042) of 1995, the Philippines had not only sent large numbers of workers to work abroad but also took some responsibility for their wellbeing and working conditions. However, the 1995 act allowed the Philippine state to “individualize workers’ contracts” (Ball & Piper, 2002). The Philippines as an individual country in the Global South lacks power in the context of large powerful entities like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) who have more influential voices in global policy. The flow of workers to countries where they do not hold citizenship weakens workers’ rights in their country of relocation. As a result, the act of supporting and protecting workers falls onto Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) instead of government agencies, the burden of which they cannot bear fully (Ball & Piper, 2002). With the increase of neoliberal
policies of many countries in the Global North, the state has retracted its responsibility over the rights of low-wage workers particularly.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) of the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines government makes all decisions around the export of Filipino workers from the Philippines. The POEA has had not only a large impact on the overseas Filipino workers but also other countries like Indonesia and Sri Lanka whose government administrators have had official trainings from POEA on how to build a similar program and operation for exporting overseas workers. As a model in the overseas worker management, POEA aims to mediate multiple players in the business of worker exportation including workers, their families, recruiters, foreign employers, and the state. POEA facilitates the sale of Filipino labor to other countries through recruiting, marketing, and promoting the care industry. It also seeks to protect workers by conducting orientation workshops before workers leave the Philippines and upholding worker welfare through policies like the Full Disclosure Policy. Though The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995 claims to protect workers, POEA also claims the inevitability of the Philippine state’s role in the labor market (Ball & Piper, 2002). Their acceptance of migrant workers being essential to the Philippines’ economy decreases their accountability for their overseas workers. As worker protection and accountability does not increase their economic gain from overseas workers, the Philippine state does not fully engage in methods to ensure worker safety. Thus the POEA views deregulation as a part of the current state of globalization and the Philippines’ role in the global economy. RA 8042, the Full Disclosure Policy produced by the Philippines government, indicates that wages, conditions, and length of contract among other details are made available for potential overseas workers. The policy also specifies that because all of the facts are available, workers can make
their own decisions if they want to work in conditions. Thus when worker abuse is in question, the state claims that abuse is a worker’s responsibility rather than state responsibility (Tyner, 2000). POEA and the Philippine state places all agency into the workers’ hands without considering the workers’ positionalities in the Philippines as motivations to work abroad. This manifestation of neoliberal attitudes ignores the presence of racialized regimes of labor and unequal levels of development globally.

The Philippine state constructed POEA policies that regulate the industry of care workers and nurses to eliminate the Philippine state’s responsibility for the workers. While POEA does not advocate for Filipino worker safety, workers’ destination countries do not advocate for worker safety sufficiently either. As a result the responsibility to avoid abuse and poor working conditions lies on Filipino workers in the US in addition to NGOs like the Pilipino Workers Center. Not only did Filipino workers face the obligations shirked by the Philippine state, but also the barriers to worker support that non-immigrant workers gained. The anti-immigrant sentiment among labor unions posed a new role for worker centers, NGOs and workers themselves.

**History of Immigrants and Labor Unions in the US**

In this section, I discuss the historical linkage between anti-immigration legislation and the role of racist and anti-immigrant sentiments held by labor unions. This particular historical context situates Pilipino Workers Center’s new role for immigrant workers for a blend of different immigrant worker services and to organize immigrants around workplace and immigration issues.
Due to settler colonialism, genocide of the natives, and African slavery in the history of the United States prior from the 18th century to the US Civil War, the majority of its working class in the 19th century was European descendants. As new immigrants entered the US, workers began to foster nativist fear and animosity toward immigrants. Anti-foreign born worker sentiment was rampant in the 1800s but did not result in race-based immigration restrictions or exclusion laws until the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (Milkman, 2014). The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was supported by unions but other worker organizations were recruiting immigrant workers during the same time period (Fine & Tichenor, 2009; Mink, 1986). The influx of Eastern and Southern European immigrant workers entering the US in the late 19th and 20th centuries was greeted with hostility from unions (Milkman, 2014). Unions had attempted to increase immigration restrictions and succeeded with an unprecedented legislation that decreased numbers of European immigrants, 1924 Johnson-Reed Act (Greene, 1998). Until the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act, no immigrants were considered undocumented or illegal. After 1965, increased numbers of immigrants both documented and undocumented entered the US from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Though the Hart-Cellar Act included a union-initiated provision that protected US born workers’ jobs from immigrant workers, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) pursued a campaign for employer sanctions that would penalize employers who hired undocumented workers. Ultimately, the AFL-CIO and other labor groups succeeded in passing the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) which granted employer sanctions and increased border security (Milkman, 2014). IRCA criminalizes employers who intentionally and knowingly hire undocumented workers and employers who do not collect immigration information on each employee (Wishnie, 2004). However, unexpectedly, after the passing of IRCA, more undocumented immigrants entered the
US. IRCA’s employer sanctions were ineffective and often led to exploitation of undocumented workers by employers who threatened deportation (Brownell, 2009). In 1996, ten years after the passage of IRCA, a tenth of workers in the private sector were in unions. Private sector companies strengthened their “union avoidance” while also offering lower quality positions and outsourcing more work. During this time, US-born workers and unions associated the decrease in union membership with immigrants. Furthermore, many unions held the belief that immigrants were “unorganizable” (Milkman, 2014).

Immigrant workers’ transience, resilience, fear of deportation deterred unions from considering them as “organizable.” Unions and US-born workers perceived immigrants as moving between their homeland and the US. Because they would likely return to their country of origin, unions did not see immigrants as worth organizing. Additionally, immigrant workers were thought to have lower standards of work and were willing to persevere in poor working conditions because of the status of their countries of origin. Unions assumed that immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa had worked in poorer conditions in the Global South and would not care to unionize and organize for better conditions. As union organizing can be visible and public, unions presumed that undocumented immigrants would be uninterested in being in a union for fear of deportation (Milkman, 2014). Employers assumed that undocumented workers will be less likely to unionize (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003). Despite all of these assumptions, undocumented workers are often more inclined to organize within their workplace and be members of unions than documented workers, as immigrant workers are more likely to be in a union than US-born workers (Delgado, 1993). In recent years, undocumented workers who have been active in immigrant rights and workers’ rights campaigns have proved assumptions of
“unorganizability” wrong. Few organizers now see immigrants as “unorganizable” (Milkman, 2014).

Immigrants’ relationships to their home government and personal histories impact how they perceive unions in the US. Because many Latin American immigrants had contentious relationships with their governments in their countries of origin, upon coming to the US they understand unions as necessities for survival (Fink, 2003). They see union-based collective bargaining as necessary for economic mobility and achieving their version of the American Dream (Fink, 2003). In addition to the political and economic climate of immigrants’ countries of origin, immigrants’ previous industries or occupations lead to specific attitudes toward labor organizing and collective action. For example, Filipino domestic workers in Los Angeles who are a part of the Pilipino Workers Center were formerly middle class professional workers in the Philippines and now work low-wage jobs in the US. Their attitudes toward labor organizing are less positive than those of immigrants who come from low-wage and agricultural backgrounds (Soriano- Versoza, 2015).

Strong ethnic communities of undocumented workers are essential for survival, employment, and support. Unlike US-born workers, communities of undocumented immigrants often depend on their community for joint survival and success. The strength of their communities relies on family relationships that serve as pipelines for family based immigration. Particularly in the service sector, workers will find jobs through their friends and family members. Ethnic communities facilitate child services and housing that support workers. Feelings of marginalization and fear around immigration status often bring community members together (Guitierrez, 1998). For example, undocumented Filipino workers who feel like they are
constantly hiding from US authorities utilize their shared experience to organize around immigrant rights (Soriano-Versoza, 2015).

In the early 2000s, different unions varied on their stance on immigrant workers, immigration reform, and pathways to citizenship. In the post-IRCA era of the 1990s, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees union (HERE), the Laborers and Carpenters union, and the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), and United Steel Workers initiated immigrant organizing drives for undocumented and documented immigrants who were predominantly Mexican and Central American. Most of the immigrant focused labor union organizing occurred in Southern California. At the time, the largest population of undocumented people in the US was in Southern California (Milkman, 2014). In the early 2000s, the AFL-CIO shifted its agenda to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers. However, multiple organizing efforts for citizenship and immigration reform were stunted by the 9/11 attacks. In 2003, HERE initiated an “Immigrant Worker Freedom Ride” which consisted of a caravan of immigrant workers who traveled across the US to tell their stories as undocumented workers. In this caravan, they honored and recalled the historical Freedom Rides of the 1960s Civil Rights movement (Jamison, 2005). Though AFL-CIO had changed its agenda to support undocumented immigrants publicly, some of its organizations UNITE HERE, which was the union HERE joined with garment workers’ unions, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Laborers and Carpenters, Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and United Farm Workers (UFW) all left AFL-CIO to form a rival group, Change to Win (CTW). CTW’s supported the 2005 bipartisan McCain-Kennedy immigration reform bill that AFL-CIO vocally disputed. The bill included a guest worker program and a pathway to citizenship. Though the immigration reform bill did not pass, CTW remained an active advocate
for immigrant rights (Milkman, 2014). After an anti-immigration bill passed that would declare undocumented people felons, large protests occurred and publicized undocumented workers’ struggles (Voss & Bloemraad, 2011). CTW was a major player in the movement that planned these protests in addition to organizations in the worker center movement. Historically, unions and worker centers had poor relationships with each other but through the immigrant rights movement, they were able to work side by side.

The United Farm Workers (UFW) and The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) began to recruit immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s and 1990s, UFW had faced barriers to organizing immigrants, ILGWU along with SEIU, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees (HERE), and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) were recruiting both undocumented and documented immigrants. Organizers found that immigrants were enthusiastic about unionization, even though many had assumed that immigrants and undocumented immigrants would be hesitant to support unionization. Upon unionizing successes, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) recognized immigrants as key players in the US labor movement and openly shifted their views to opposing to immigration restrictions. AFL-CIO had been in favor of immigration restrictions, possibly due to nativist fears held by US born workers. As the AFL-CIO familiarized itself with the centrality of immigrant workers in the landscape of US workers, they began to speak and act on the frontlines of immigration reform and immigration workers' rights activism. Historically many unions, including the United Farm Workers, who supported immigrant exclusion and restrictions and were anti-undocumented workers, were the most vocal on the issue of immigration. Prior to this shift toward the support of immigration reform, the labor movement had been largely anti-immigrant in sentiment. As the labor movement faces a
decline in unionized workers with the casualization of labor across industries, it turns to immigrant workers to lead and fuel the labor movement. To maintain and support its relationship to immigrant organizing and immigrant workers, the labor movement relies on worker centers to provide immigrant and undocumented immigrant workers with services and to uniquely advocate for their interests (Milkman, 2014).

Unions have undergone a process of business unionism. After the obstacles posed by the McCarthy era, unions have shifted toward economic gains rather than building worker power through grassroots organizing. Simultaneously, unions have bureaucratized which has resulted in union members increasing their reliance on paid agents. Rather than working toward a working class worker movement, Jennifer Gordon (1995) argues that unions merely buy and sell workers. As the effectiveness and popularity of unions has declined, worker centers have become even more important. Unions have historically facilitated cultural assimilation and upward mobility for immigrant workers in the 1930s (Cohen, 1990; Sanchez, 1993). For white workers, assimilation and erasure of ethnic traditions were necessary to gain privileges as a White person also necessary for upward mobility (Harris, 1993). For immigrant workers of color, worker centers facilitate preservation of cultural traditions and relationships to home countries rather than assimilation. In addition, workers centers are advocates, legal aid organizations, and social service organizations, among other roles.

The complicated history of unions supporting and rejecting immigrants and immigrant rights organizing produced a need for worker centers’ specific offerings for immigrants and on both workers’ and immigrant rights organizing. Worker centers serve as a combination between NGO, community based organization, union, lobbyist group, and advocacy group.
Worker Centers

In this section, I discuss the history of worker centers, role of worker centers in the US, and the significance of immigrant worker centers. The context of worker centers and the unique way they have been able to support workers, specifically workers of color establishes the precedence for worker centers like Pilipino Workers Center. Worker centers act as a combination of many different types of organizations; moreover, PWC has been able to provide services, organize workers, and lobby with workers or on their behalf while addressing invisibility and misinformation on caregivers and undocumented people in the Filipino community.

Worker centers are defined as "community-based mediating institutions that provide support to low wage workers" (Fine, 2006). They are able to combine their service and advocacy work that distinguishes worker centers from other types of organizations (unions, mutual aid, fraternal orgs, political parties, settlement houses, urban churches). The majority of worker centers are immigrant worker centers (Fine, 2006). Of these organizations, there were nonimmigrant worker centers, unions, and ones that do not call themselves worker centers. Worker centers were able to facilitate organizing, economic representation, and political action for low-wage immigrants. Workers centers have become essential for immigrant communities and are hold a unique position as navigators of labor and legal rights for immigrants in the US. Workers centers effectively record and make visible the exploitation of low-wage workers within the context of informal and unregulated work spheres. They are able to establish a worker specific political agenda and harness the voices of workers to make workers more visible. The work of worker centers greatly impacts the future of the labor movement and left politics in the US (Fine, 2006).

Workers centers began to develop in the South in the late 1970s and early 1980s during the
rise of manufacturing changes and big box retail stores. As these changes occurred, working conditions deteriorated. More workers were employed in low-wage service jobs than they had previously. Activists founded the first worker centers in response to poor working conditions and racialized labor inequality. African American workers were treated and paid more poorly than white workers. Ethnic economic enclaves were utilized as centers for work and exploitation. The activists that began the first wave of worker centers had grown from peace, student, civil rights, and labor movements of the 60s and 70s. Of the first worker centers in the US were CAFÉ and Black Workers for Justice, which were started by labor movement activists who had been opposed by anti-labor union initiatives during the Red Scare. Some of the early worker centers supported unions' work like the Chinese Staff and Workers Association in New York City, which supported the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union to organize and unionize Chinese restaurant workers in New York City. The second wave of worker centers were initiated by faith based organizations, social service organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and unions. The most recent wave of worker centers which developed after 2000 have been located in suburban and rural areas of the southern states corresponding to growth in service, meatpacking, poultry, and agricultural sectors. Additionally, more recent worker centers have been Filipino, Korean, African, and South Asian immigrant focused. Also more worker centers that are connected to faith-based organizations and unions have been founded (Fine, 2006).

Unlike non-immigrant worker centers, immigrant worker centers are not limited to addressing their members' work issues; they strive to address all aspects of immigrant life. Worker centers serve a necessary purpose for immigrants through providing services, advocating, and organizing members. Through their organizing and advocacy, worker centers prioritize their
goal of allowing their members "collective voice" to be heard. Worker centers are modeled and function differently independently and in relation to unions and other organizations. However, all worker centers are hybrid organizations that perform different aspects of many different types of organizations such as social service agencies, fraternal organizations, community organizing groups, unions, and social movement organizations (Fine, 2006). The Pilipino Workers Center serves as a social service agency, community-organizing group, legal aid group, and hometown association. Worker Centers provide services such as legal assistance, ESL classes, and are able to refer their members to other agencies and organizations to receive services. Specific to its membership base, PWC provides a food bank weekly, tax services, assistance with phone bills, and many other services. All worker centers are also advocates by producing literature about work conditions, lobby for legislation, initiate legal action in unfair work situations, and collaborate with government agencies to support workers. As a part of their advocacy, worker centers build campaigns, coalitions, and worker leaders to take steps toward tangible action and change (Goodwyn, 1976). The majority of worker centers are geographically based instead of work-site or industry based. Workers seek worker centers due to proximity and convenience. As more workers are low-income women of color, race and ethnicity are often methods by which workers connect with immigrant worker centers (Fine, 2006). Other commonalities among worker centers include a focus on empowerment and development of workers to be leaders, democratic decision-making, and an education emphasis. Many worker centers maintain relationships with workers and worker organizations in other countries that inspire their own work. Worker centers make connections between their advocacy, organizing, and service work in the US and worker centers' work in other countries. Establishing global parallels facilitates a consciousness among workers to situate themselves within a greater movement of workers. Not
only is the worker center empowering its members but it is also acknowledging the transnational landscape of labor. Immigrant worker centers often do not focus solely on work and workplace issues but rather focus on immigration related concerns as they intersect with workplace concerns. As multifaceted organizations with often many simultaneous and ongoing projects, worker centers rely on coalitions and other like-minded organizations for support and partnership. Only 40 percent of centers require membership dues, the rest of the work centers have a core group of invested and engaged members who have earned their membership through commitment and passion. Worker centers compared to other similar types of organizations are unique in their hybridity of functions and their worker centered approach which addresses all parts of workers' lives (Fine, 2006).

As do many non-profit organizations, worker centers have formed out a lack of services or type of institution to facilitate worker directed collective action. In the majority of cases, worker centers develop as a response to an act or event of injustice which points to a larger structural problem. Many worker centers find a service-only approach as insufficient. With few other options, worker centers begin to advocate and organize for change (Fine, 2006).

After IRCA, a worker center movement developed. In recognition of US labor laws that protect undocumented and documented workers, worker centers have focused on organizing around wage theft. The number of worker centers and worker centers’ capacities have both grown as union membership has decreased. Previously isolated workers and workers that have been difficult to organize, such as caregivers, have built networks and built relationships with worker centers.

Immigrant worker centers fill a gap for worker specific services and organizing. While immigrant workers have faced discrimination from labor unions as well as employers,
undocumented immigrants are additionally vulnerable to exploitation and threats of deportation.

**Undocumented Workers and the Law**

In this section, I discuss the protections that undocumented workers have under labor laws and the types of obstacles they face in the workplace. The vague protections for undocumented workers presents a space for worker centers like the Pilipino Workers Center to assist workers when navigating complex situations. Many of PWC’s members are undocumented and benefit from PWC’s multifaceted model of lobbying, advocacy, and service.

Documentation status is a part of one’s identity that is shaped by the law also shapes how one sees themselves in relation to the law, how they interpret the law, and their likelihood to report abuse. Undocumented status affects a person’s sense of what they have rights to, even when the law says otherwise (Gleeson, 2010).

Employers perceive undocumented immigrants as interested in low-wage jobs as temporary positions and thus are not interested in career advancement opportunities. Additionally, employers make assumptions that undocumented immigrants will be more likely to work in poor working conditions. Undocumented immigrants who are not proficient in English verbally or written are seen as unassimilable and unable to access higher paid positions.

In the US, over 8.3 million people are undocumented workers (Passel & Cohn, 2009; Silbey, 2001). Wal-Mart’s legal case with hundreds of undocumented workers working as janitors arrested in 21 states and with $11 million civil immigration settlement emphasizes the ubiquity of undocumented workers (Greenhouse, 2005). Many of the low-wage industries have high rates of labor violations that highlight the necessity for well-functioning processes under the Department of Labor. However, many of the processes are too slow for the industries and
workers often do not see the benefits of speaking out against violations (Williams, 2006). However, undocumented workers cite labor, employment, enforcement issues within labor, labor standards, health and safety regulations, labor protections for temporary and sub-contracted workers, and union organizing as main issues for them (Wishnie, 2004).

After Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, all undocumented people and undocumented workers working without authorization were subject to arrest. In a Supreme Court decision in 1984’s Sure-Tan v. National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the Supreme Court declared undocumented workers as definitive employees under the National Labor Relations Act. Before this decision, undocumented workers were often not considered statutory employees (Wishnie, 2004).

*Hoffman Plastic Compounds, Inc. v. NLRB* declared that undocumented workers who used fraudulent documentation to apply to a job are not allowed to receive back pay (Gleeson, 2010; Wishnie, 2004). This decision rests on the idea that the worker deceived his or her employer. In cases where it can be proven that the employer intentionally hired undocumented workers while knowing their status, they still have to award workers back pay. The *Hoffman Plastic* decision contradicts the IRCA and immigration policies and will ultimately encourage employers to hire undocumented workers which encourages undocumented migration (Wishnie, 2004).

The *Hoffman Plastic* decision addressed only back pay, specifically, “for years of work not performed, for wages that could not lawfully been earned”. It did not address the ways that undocumented laborers can be compensated for wages for time they did work, attorneys fees, and other damages. Hoffman Plastic does not state that undocumented workers do not have the right to all labor protections (Fisk, Cooper, & Wishnie, 2005; Wishnie, 2004). In short, the
Hoffman Plastic decision left many gray areas for undocumented workers in terms of what protections they are allowed.

Though it is illegal under IRCA for undocumented immigrants to be knowingly hired, employers still threaten undocumented employees with the possibility of contacting Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). Additionally, in United States v. Kozinski, Supreme Court Justice O’Connor declared that threatening INS communication could be “legal coercion that induces involuntary servitude.” For employers who are holding employees involuntarily, they may be criminalized through the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) if there are international laws against involuntary servitude (Wishnie, 2004). For workers, using fraudulent documentation also puts them at risk for arrest and deportation. Not only do employers illegally threaten their employees with INS, but the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Immigration Enforcement (“ICE”) have entered workplaces to conduct raids based on employer tips. Immigration and labor agencies and departments of the US government aim to keep employers accountable of the way they treat their workers and do not have the intention of helping employers exploit their workers more. Labor agencies rely on workers to report poor conditions before they are able to intervene and take action. However, workers fear illegal retaliation from employers. Making reporting and enforcement more difficult, the Department of Labor has decreased its enforcement investigators by 50% since 1941, when the work force population has increased 900% (Bobo, 2008). In short, the laws around undocumented worker protections are not only unclear and the enforcement of the protections is insufficient. The laws around undocumented worker protects also make it difficult for undocumented workers to gain benefits without risking their status and job (Wishnie, 2004).
Undocumented workers face irregular paychecks, working hours off book, and lack of safety equipment in the workplace (Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York & New York City Restaurant Industry Coalition, 2005; Valenzuela, Theodore, Melendez, & Gonzalez, 2006). Many undocumented workers are constantly in fear of deportation and are not willing to risk being exposed as undocumented which in turn can decrease the likelihood of reporting any abuse in the workplace (Gleeson, 2010). Undocumented workers are vulnerable not only because of threats from their employers but also because of the fear that can be immobilizing.

The law does not clearly state how undocumented workers are protected and is often difficult to enforce. Employers in informal industries experience less surveillance and enforcement. Subject to threats and exploitation, undocumented workers who are contractors in informal industries are often not under the responsibility of their employer. Work in the informal economy is often appealing to transient workers or workers with multiple responsibilities.

**Undocumented Workers in the Informal Economy**

Pilipino Workers Center conducts campaigns around domestic workers in the informal economy. While the majority of its workers are caregivers, PWC works with its members to navigate their workplace concerns and situations. Pilipino Workers Center has developed methods to organize and mobilize workers who are isolated in their workplace or lack protection from exploitation and abuse. PWC holds a specific role as an advocacy, service, and lobbying organization but also finds industry-specific methods to carry out its goals. The shifts in global economies that have occurred in the last 50 years have increased demand for workers in the informal economy. The shift of manufacturing jobs to countries in the Global South has created demands for workers in growing industries in the US such as service and other temporary jobs.
Because of their status, undocumented workers are more legally vulnerable to employer exploitation than documented workers. Work in the informal economy requires lower overhead costs and produces more profit thus it is attractive to immigrants. The informal economy consists of a diversity of types of workers. Some workers are skilled, unskilled (Sassen, 1988), supplement their formal work, or do informal work while being self employed. Undocumented workers often work in informal work due to their lack of language skills, low skill, flexibility, and familiarity with informal sector work. However, informal workers pay taxes as independent contractors or by using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Workers who file using an ITIN, their taxes do not contribute to their Social Security or Medicare. Paying taxes for undocumented workers is often out of fear or preemptive in the case that they attain citizenship later in life (Almendral, 2013; Associated Press, 2008). A rise of casualization of labor means that an increasing number of formal sector employers hire workers as independent contractors to decrease their accountability to their workers in terms of benefits, Social Security, and fair wages.

As a function of capitalism, corporations and companies strive to cut costs and increase profit, which is allowed through hiring independent contractors, subcontractors, or even off-the-books workers. Though the US government does have some restrictions on illegal activity in the informal economy but generally leaves the informal sector unregulated. The informal sector poses a “market-based solution” to low-income workers who rely on welfare and government aid (Gold, 2014).

Filipino caregivers occupy complex positions within the Philippine state project for global power and economic growth and the history of US colonialism in the Philippines. As documented and undocumented immigrants in the US, they face obstacles to economic
sustainability and turn to the informal and service sectors to find work. Undocumented workers often live in fear of being exposed and deportation both in their workplaces and experience gray areas in terms of labor protections. As vulnerable workers, either undocumented or working in isolated settings, often are exploited and benefit from unions’ and worker centers’ service and advocacy. With a history of tensions between unions and immigrant rights and the decline in unions with business unionism, workers centers are increasing in popularity among immigrant workers. Pilipino Workers Center is able to offer many services as well as organize workers for workers’ rights and immigrant rights in the Los Angeles area. Its approach to worker organizing has set a precedent and used effective models for organizing workers in isolated settings, building community power, and undocumented worker organizing.

Undocumented and documented worker support and advocacy provides methods for workers to gain protection when they are in a legal gray area. The Pilipino Workers Center and its workers address workplace concerns as well as policy-based action to increase protection for its workers.
Chapter 2: Pilipino Workers Center and Interview Process

Older Filipino women and men gather inside the Pilipino Workers Center office in an empty meeting room. They chat dynamically among themselves. Lolit Lledo, PWC’s Associate Director and Lead Organizer, greets each worker by name and a hug. Three other PWC staff members come out of their offices to chat with the members, laughing and joking amicably.

The preceding brief description is an observation from one of my visits to the Pilipino Workers Center. Though my thesis focuses on the work of PWC as an organization, the workers are present and play key roles in the two campaigns that I analyze during this thesis.

In this section, I discuss the process of conducting fieldwork for this thesis project, the work of the Pilipino Workers Center, and my approach for my analyses. Through an analysis of two of PWC’s campaigns, I claim that the Pilipino Workers Center serves as a unique blend of multiple types of organizations to best serve its Filipino workers.

Filipinos are one of the largest Asian populations in Los Angeles city and also one of the largest Asian populations in US. Though the large numbers of Filipino professionals are visible, the large numbers of domestic workers, and smaller numbers of farm workers, workers on fishing boats in Alaska, hotel workers in Hawaii are invisible (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). The presence of Filipino workers in low-wage industries makes the advocacy and service work of Pilipino Workers Center significant.

Aquilina Soriano-Versoza and her colleagues founded the Pilipino Workers Center of Southern California (PWC) in 1997. PWC uses the term “Pilipino” which came out of the Asian American movement of the 1960s to indicate a decolonized mentality and recognition of Spain’s colonization of the Philippines. PWC is composed of two organizations: Association of Filipino
workers and Los Angeles Workers in Action. Some immigrants from the Philippines do not identify with the term “Pilipino” and identify themselves as Filipino (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). PWC strives to fulfill its workers immediate needs and build leaders for collective action and change. Its goals are to increase visibility, develop effective services and programs, involve workers in advocacy campaigns, build leaders, and maintain a sustainable organization (Pilipino Workers Center, 2015). PWC is located in the Larry Itliong Village affordable housing building in Historic Filipinotown in Los Angeles.

PWC educates workers through trainings, helps workers fight for back-wages, and “develops collective programs to bring [workers] together to address their own needs” (Ochoa, 2014). It uses a grassroots, workers-first model in which staff members work with workers to build programs in which workers can gain the tools toward empowerment and justice. As Soriano-Versoza states, “PWC’s model is not charity, but changed [sic] created by the community itself” (Ochoa, 2014). PWC provides individual case management for immigration, labor standards enforcement, and human trafficking issues. They also offer advice around health and occupational health safety, tax services, and a Food Distribution Program. Its Food Distribution Program partners with Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and the US Department of Agriculture. One of PWC’s biggest challenges has been the isolation of caregivers, most of who work in one-on-one settings in private homes. PWC works to build communal power and community power through mutual aid projects. It began to distribute food to apartment buildings in the Los Angeles area that have large numbers of low wage Filipino workers. PWC has also worked with workers to establish HiFi Paluwagan (Pilipino Workers Center, 2015), or peer lending circles, for workers to rely on each other to save for things, give each other zero interest
loans, and build community power (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). One of PWC’s successes was the establishment of the Larry Itliong village using grants and other funding sources. The affordable housing building houses 48 units for low to middle income families. PWC offers Telecommunications Educations and Assistance in Multiple Languages (TEAM) while partnering with the California Public Utilities Commission to assist members with their phone bills. A recent project for PWC has been worker-owned homecare agencies as an alternative to other agencies that are often violating workers’ rights (Pilipino Workers Center, 2015).

PWC has approximately 600 members (Ochoa, 2014), the majority of whom are live-in caregivers who work 4-7 days for 24 hours per day in private homes or in larger facilities. Though the majority of its members are Filipino workers from the Philippines, PWC has organized Central American, South American, and Mexican workers who live or work in the area around PWC, Historic Filipinotown (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). Per year, PWC serves an approximate 2000 clients, not including the 500 people per month benefitting from the Food Distribution Program.

Pilipino Workers Center is a part of the California Domestic Workers Alliance (CDWA), a branch within the National Domestic Worker Alliance (NDWA). The CDWA organizations were the major players in the campaign for a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (A.B. 241). National Domestic Worker Alliance facilitates conversation around power of domestic workers, learning from Kenya to build small committees to build power (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). PWC also is a member of the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network (MIWON) which
was founded in 1999 as the first coalition of multi-ethnic immigrant worker centers (MIWON, n.d.). PWC serves as a member of the Women’s Policy Institute of the Women’s Foundation. With other organizations in MIWON and CDWA, PWC is an active member of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Wage Theft as well. PWC also serves as a community meeting place with the capacity to host events and house large gatherings of people.

Executive Director of PWC, Aquilina Soriano-Versoza, attended UCLA and worked with the UCLA Transfer Student Program that is now housed in the Bruin Resource Center. Before college, she had lived in Omaha, Nebraska and Orange County in Southern California. Her father worked low-wage jobs. She became involved in many progressive projects throughout her college experiences in UCLA. She lived in the Justice and Peace Youth Center in downtown LA, as one of the only students living there. She used her experiences to learn about larger issues and to be able to see for herself. During a yearlong experience in the Philippines, she lived with tribal minorities, peasants, factory workers, and women and saw a complex movement that had a clear vision of change. With her colleagues, she launched PWC and was able to share and build upon the knowledge she learned in the Philippines (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013).

Dondino Manzon, Workforce and Social Innovations Programs Coordinator at PWC and also a leader in the Association of Filipino Workers within PWC, has been working with PWC through both its A.B. 241 (Domestic Worker Bill of Rights) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) campaigns (Manzon, 2015; “Pilipino Workers Center’s fundraising gala slated for May 4th,” 2014; Pilipino Workers Center, 2015). Manzon gained extensive experience through his work with A.B. 241 and TPS about the formation of the campaigns and the successes. Emi Vallega is the Communications and Resource Development Staff at PWC and recently graduated
California State Northridge with a Bachelors of Arts in Asian American Studies. Vallega joined PWC staff at the end of A.B. 241 campaign and the beginning of the conceptualization of the TPS campaign.

For this thesis, I sought to use a comparative analysis of Pilipino Workers Center’s most recent campaigns, A.B. 241 and TPS, to explore Filipino communities in the Los Angeles area and PWC’s role within Filipino communities in Los Angeles. I selected Emi, Dondino and Aquilina to be interviewed as staff members of Pilipino Workers Center who possess experiential knowledge about workers’ and immigrants’ rights organizing in Los Angeles and nationally, knowledge about the structure and organization of Pilipino Workers Center, and characteristics of and dynamics within the Filipino and Filipino American community in Los Angeles. Additionally, I chose Emi and Dondino to gain perspective as employees who have contributed to the A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns beginning at different points in the processes. As the executive director, Aquilina was the key player who served as a representative for Pilipino Workers Center in various planning meetings and coalition gatherings. Because of her role as a representative and a founding member of the organization, Aquilina was able to provide a context of Filipino communities in Los Angeles and nationally, role of Filipino workers globally, labor movement, and immigrant rights movement. She shed light on Pilipino Workers Center’s actions and rallies, its campaign strategies, the role of PWC within a global and national fight for workers’ rights and immigrant rights, and the dynamic between PWC’s workers’ issues and mainstream issues for Filipino communities. Emi and Dondino were a part of the execution of actions, rallies, and efforts to engage workers who were isolated and not able to come to the PWC office regularly. They were both able to portray the impact of the campaign’s actions and its methods for not only engaging members but also other community members and politicians.
I interviewed the three interviewees in the Pilipino Workers Center office. I audio-recorded the interviews, took notes, and received informed consent from the participants. I transcribed the interviews from the audio files and using my notes from the interviews. I analyzed the transcripts looking for indications of the work that Pilipino Workers Center accomplishes and the work accomplished by the two campaigns. I used the following frameworks to further analyze the issues addressed in the interviewees’ accounts.

In addition, I consulted documents, photos, videos, and website information produced by the Pilipino Workers Center to gain insight on their campaign tactics, the way PWC perceives itself, and its work as an organization. Some of the materials, like letters sent by PWC’s partners to US Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, were internal and accessed through Emi, one of the staff interviewees. The other materials, like videos of the PWC town halls and videoconferences with campaign partners, were public and available online.

In this paper I will be using globalization as a framework. Parreñas asserts that “globalization shapes the subject formation of migrant Filipina domestic workers and the position of these subjects in institutions” (Parreñas, 2001, p. 24). I am arguing that globalization also shapes immigrant worker centers that serve and advocate for workers. PWC receives migrants who are exported by the Philippine “labor brokerage state.” PWC’s biggest challenges to organizing are constructed by multiple state agendas. Uneven global flows of people and capital create transnational families, which are key parts of Filipino caregivers’ lives and PWC’s constituents. The families that are separated across borders establish networks for workers and for PWC to build community power. Transnational families are significant and valid units within Filipino communities in Los Angeles. Uneven levels of development produce the context for

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2 Interviews were conducted according to IRB protocol and IRB approval. The informed consent protocol followed standard UCLA procedure.
Filipino caregivers who are working as low-wage workers when they worked as middle class professionals in the Philippines.
Chapter 3: Comparative Analysis of Campaigns: A.B. 241 and TPS

Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) was key member of the 2006 and 2011 campaigns for a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights for domestic workers in California and the founding member of the 2013 Relief to Recovery, also known as Relief 2 Recovery, campaign for Temporary Protected Status for Filipinos in the US after Typhoon Haiyan. Through their pioneering work, PWC staff and its workers were able to overcome unique barriers to organizing. PWC’s two most recent campaigns focus on specific legislation and administrative action but ultimately PWC was able to make headway on larger issues in US Filipino communities: invisibility of domestic workers, invisibility of undocumented Filipinos, and the disconnect between mainstream Filipino professional organizations and progressive organizations like PWC that advocate for human rights. PWC works within globalization’s impact on labor, migration, and capital. Its work mobilizing caregivers who were formerly middle class professionals challenges their neoliberal and individualist views of themselves by empowering them to see power in organizing and sharing their stories. The Pilipino Workers Center supports and validates transnational family relationships for caregivers and undocumented Filipinos. In their Relief to Recovery campaign, PWC publicly recognized workers’ transnational relationships at essential to the recovery of the Philippines. In this thesis, I argue that within a context of global inequality and globalization between the US and the Philippines, PWC utilized A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns to address invisibility of domestic workers and undocumented, to support transnational familial relationships, and challenge neoliberal perspectives carried from the Philippines to the US. Through these two campaigns, PWC demonstrates its success and skill in serving its members through services, advocacy, lobbying, and legal support. Additionally, PWC
plays a leading role in the landscape of immigrant rights and workers’ rights organizing in the context of the decline of unions and casualization of labor.

**Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (A.B. 241)**

A.B. 241, also known as the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, is a California state bill proposed and passed to create unprecedented protections for domestic workers, which include nannies, home care workers, and house keepers. Many of the organizations that worked on the A.B. 241 campaign began organizing in the 1990s. In 2006, the California Household Worker Coalition formed and organized a campaign around the bill A.B. 2536, the first California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, which included overtime for personal attendants and allow for domestic workers to be able to receive liquidated damages in administrative cases. The bill eventually limited overtime to child caregivers only. In 2006, A.B. 2536 was passed by the legislature but vetoed by Arnold Schwarzenegger. The work of immigrant rights and workers’ rights organizations around A.B. 2536 successfully mobilized domestic workers for the first time (Shah, 2014).

After the formation of the National Domestic Workers Alliance in 2007 (National Domestic Workers Alliance, n.d.) and passage of the New York Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in 2010, the California Household Worker Coalition renamed itself the California Domestic Workers Coalition (CDWC) which included Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Women’s Collective of the San Francisco Day Labor Center Program, Pilipino Workers Center, Coalition for Humane

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3 Personal attendants are defined as workers who spend the majority of their working hours caring for patients or clients
4 Mujeres Unidas y Activas (MUA) of Oakland and San Francisco, CA is a grassroots community organizing organization of Latina immigrant women focused on growth and community power. It conducts leadership development trainings, Know Your Rights workshops, and houses the Caring Hands Workers Association which trains and places workers (“Our Work,” n.d.).
Immigrant Rights Los Angeles\textsuperscript{5}, People Organized to Win Employment Rights, Filipino Advocates for Justice\textsuperscript{6}, Centro Laboral de Graton, and Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California\textsuperscript{7} (Shah, 2014). In 2010, the coalition aimed to publically and legislatively establish the importance of domestic workers through supporting the Assembly Concurrent Resolution 163. With this push for awareness of domestic workers’ stories and significance, the CDWC published and distributed a multi-issue one-page handout called, “Voices from Behind Closed Doors” (Shah, 2014).

In 2011, the CDWC wrote and advocated for A.B. 889, the second California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights that included personal attendant rights to workers’ compensation and health and safety protection. It also included uninterrupted sleep and access to kitchen facilities. A.B. 889 had adamant opponents and Governor Jerry Brown vetoed the bill in 2011 (Shah, 2014; Soriano-Versoza, 2015). In 2013, the CDWC used many of the same provisions when writing A.B. 241. However, CDWC emphasized overtime for personal attendants during their campaign. Because the Democratic supermajority Legislature supported the bill, the campaign revolved around moving Governor Jerry Brown. The California Domestic Worker Coalition was able to get the support of the Los Angeles Time editorial board and the AFL-CIO 2013 Convention in Los Angeles (Shah, 2014). On September 26, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed A.B. 241 into law in front of 70 domestic workers and their allies. A.B. 241 went into effect in January 2017 and will sunset on January 1, 2017 (Shah, 2014; Soriano-Versoza, 2015).

\textsuperscript{5} Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles (CHIRLA) is a multiethnic collective of groups dedicated to immigrant and refugee rights. They led the California Dream Act Campaign to pass AB 130 and AB 131. In addition, they educate Latino and immigrant voters (“Our Story,” 2006).

\textsuperscript{6} Filipino Advocates for Justice of Oakland, CA aims to create and nurture Filipino community with strong leaders to work toward social and economic justice. They conduct youth development programs, new immigrant assistance, worker organizing, and voter mobilization. (“About Filipino Advocates for Justice,” n.d.)

\textsuperscript{7} Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA) of Southern California focuses their work on popular education and community organizing among low-income community members. They operate four Day Laborers Community Job Centers, conduct literacy programs, facilitate training of Latina women workers who have started a co-owned cleaning company, and manage a worker health program. (“Programs,” 2011)
The campaign to get A.B. 241 passed in California was spearheaded by organizational members of the California Domestic Workers Coalition. The Pilipino Workers Center joined the campaign for A.B. 241 after a realization that their workers fell under the category of Domestic Workers.

We thought more nannies and housekeepers as domestic workers but we ended up coming to some different convenings of different workers centers then started interfacing with more of other domestic worker organizations and we saw how similar a lot of our issues were and then seeing actually in the law that most of our workers, and we did have some workers working in board in care facilities, but the majority of them were working one-on-one, in individual homes, live-in primarily and also live-out. By definition of law, they are domestic workers. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015)

These organizations collaborated and learned from the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights passed in New York. These organizations met with California Assemblymember Cindy Montañez to talk about developing a bill and then formed the California Domestic Workers Coalition as a branch of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. In the 2006 campaign for the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, the Coalition was fighting for overtime and liquidated damages. When Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill, Pilipino Workers Center, one of the main players of the California Domestic Workers Coalition, reassessed and formed its strategy for its next Domestic Worker Bill of Rights campaign. PWC spent the next year building their capacity, resources, and relationships with “champions” or politicians who would advocate for their campaign, and relationships within larger coalitions of non-worker based organizations. PWC joined the Women’s Policy Institute of the Women’s Foundation (WPIWF), which set up meetings for members of the WPIWF to meet with influential politicians in Sacramento to gain information to strengthen their campaign strategy (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC worked with coalitions to build an effective campaign to advocate for increased protections for domestic workers. Over the
course of the campaign, PWC was able to demonstrate its ability to follow through on its multifaceted mission to provide services, lobby, and advocate for its workers.

As PWC began to re-strategize and strengthen their assets to succeed in 2011, they collaborated and learned from their worker base to compile a list of what provisions that workers wanted to see in a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (A.B. 889). Using a grassroots model, PWC highlighted their workers’ experiences to build a list of necessary protections for all caregivers. As a part of its mission as an immigrant worker center, PWC focuses on workers’ voices through its empowerment, education, and advocacy work while also providing legal and language services. From this list, PWC and its workers prioritized a list of 11 provisions that became the initial bill of rights introduced in 2011. In this initial bill of rights were overtime, meals and rest breaks, access to kitchen and facilities, and 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep. Before the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights was introduced in California in 2011, in 2010 New York became the first state to pass a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights which included three days of paid time off which was unprecedented. However, New York’s Domestic Worker Bill of Rights protected workers hired directly by families, excluding workers hired by agencies. This exclusion was a result of the lobbying power of agencies that are motivated by profit more than families are. Executive Director of the Pilipino Workers Center illustrates the profit-motivated aspect of the care work industry,

But it’s also because the agencies are the ones that have more lobbying power, like here in California, definitely it was the caregiving agencies that have been the number one opponent to all of the bills that we have put out. They have paid lobbyists, they have different infrastructure for doing different things, because it’s a billion dollar business. So we wanted to really fight to not exclude caregivers and we wanted to include third party agencies because especially we saw abuse from agencies. A lot of times [this happens] because they’re profit motivated, families are not necessarily profit motivated. But agencies are [profit motivated]. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015)
PWC’s recognition of the significance of domestic work as a profit-motivated industry permits it to find targeted strategies to pass legislation. The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in New York served as a model for how PWC and its partners and supporters could successfully pass a California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. New York’s success was a part of the A.B. 241 campaign’s legitimacy as well as the fuel behind its work to include agency and non-agency hired domestic workers in the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC was able to learn and build upon immigrant rights and workers’ rights organizations’ successes. PWC worked with its workers to develop provisions for A.B. 889 which became A.B. 241 in a grassroots and community-based process, centering its workers voices and experiences. As an immigrant worker center, PWC not only empowers its workers through its advocacy work, but also simultaneously provides legal services.

While in Sacramento, PWC staff and workers were a part of deciding what was in the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights bill in a process from the ground up. With the California Domestic Worker Coalition, PWC developed a decision-making structure that included committed, engaged staff and workers to include many peoples’ voices. In the Coalition, organizations prioritized collective leadership and put the workers at the head of the campaign. Pilipino Workers Center Executive Director, Aquilina Soriano said about the California Domestic Worker Coalition, “I think even more than other coalitions, we function very well together and we’re very mindful about how we create that collective leadership and how the workers themselves are a part of that leadership or at the head of our campaign” (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Workers were the face of the campaign and shared testimonies about their situations and what they faced every day. PWC’s consistent inclusion of workers in the A.B. 241 campaign strengthened the campaign’s legitimacy and voice. Though many of PWC’s members
initially connected with PWC through PWC’s services, its organizing model brought its members to a decision-making level. PWC mobilized workers to Sacramento from Los Angeles and conducted visible actions in the capital focused on moving Governor Brown to pass the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). To impact Governor Brown, PWC utilized many points of influence on the Governor. PWC build alliances with his priest, staff, and even had social media actions around his dog (Pilipino Workers Center, 2013; Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC effectively mobilized its workers, staff, partners and allies to reach Governor Brown. In an inclusive model, PWC listened to its workers and incorporated them and their stories into the campaign. They successfully blended their work as a member based, service organization with advocacy, lobbying, and legislative work.

As PWC worked with its coalition partners, it also encouraged more and more of its workers to participate. At the beginning of their campaign efforts, there were few caregivers who were willing and able to speak up for a variety of reasons. The first barrier to worker participation and engagement was industry related. Many of PWC’s members work in one-on-one settings as caregivers for patients and in larger facilities. They work 24-hour shifts consecutive days in the week and were not able to attend PWC events and meetings. To include the maximum number of members in its work on A.B. 241, PWC developed strategies that would allow for member involvement from their homes or workplaces. Much of the outreach for A.B. 241 could be accomplished through phone banking, pledge forms, and petitions. These were ways for caregivers with full schedules to be involved and contribute their efforts to the A.B. 241 campaign. As an organization with a large caregiver member base, PWC expertly utilized these strategies over the course of its A.B. 241 campaigns and their projects to follow. Due to its workers’ limitations to physically be involved with PWC, PWC created ways for
caregivers to contribute. PWC’s use of industry-specific strategies allows it to be a powerful force within Filipino communities and immigrant rights and workers’ rights movements. Its multitude of services, projects, and campaigns benefit its workers in ways that other types of organizations cannot accommodate.

However, at the beginning of the initial campaign in 2006, PWC found few workers who were willing to speak up about their experiences as caregivers. Many of its members were ashamed and afraid to “come out” as caregivers due to stigma around being a caregiver as well as being undocumented (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Unwillingness to “come out” as an undocumented person in the US comes from the perceived lack of rights and fear of deportation (Gleeson, 2010). As the A.B. 241 campaign progressed, PWC joined other coalitions and found politician support. The momentum and early successes achieved by the California Domestic Worker Alliance and other partners in the A.B. 241 campaign legitimated domestic workers’ experiences, which encouraged workers to join their campaign. After the campaign’s initial press and conversations with politicians, more PWC caregiver members began to share their experiences as caregivers and “come out” as caregivers and undocumented. PWC was able to bring workers to speak to legislators, and provided targeted services for its members. They were able to develop a large base of vocal Filipino workers who were speaking out about their immigration status and occupation in front of press, which was unprecedented. Soriano described the progress PWC made,

So that’s been a whole process over this last fifteen years. There’s just—there’s still a lot of shame and stuff in the general community and stuff like that. But it’s changing more because we’ve also been able to do a lot of press work, workers are talking about their rights and coming about their situation and about their victories as well, in individual cases. So that’s all helped to bring more people out of the woodwork and as they you know find more camaraderie and dignity, that’s just been a process. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015).
PWC plays a significant role as an immigrant worker center by providing resources and serving as advocates. In addition, its work creates a ripple effect of empowerment and dignity for caregivers and undocumented workers. The ripple effect created visibility for its members within their own Filipino communities, which was unprecedented. Caregivers’ and undocumented Filipinos’ participation benefitted the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights campaign while also importantly empowering workers and decreasing workers’ perceptions of stigma around care work and being undocumented.

Though the majority of PWC’s members are caregivers, some of its members are EMTs, parking attendants, security guards, and workers in other industries. Many of PWC’s non-caregiver members are undocumented like the caregivers involved in the A.B. 241 campaign. The non-caregivers connected with caregivers’ experiences as undocumented workers and joined PWC’s efforts for a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. Though the bill focused on workers’ rights for domestic workers, the A.B. 241 campaign addressed the vulnerability of many Filipino caregivers with undocumented status to worker exploitation. The campaign’s undocumented Filipino workers said they were “TNT,” or “tago ng tago,” meaning “hiding and hiding.” The slogan, “TNT” encapsulated their collective struggle as undocumented Filipinos (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). The Filipinos that are most visible to mainstream of America and mainstream Filipino communities are nurses and professionals (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013; Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Soriano-Versoza provides a historical and global context for the invisibility of Filipino domestic workers and low-wage workers,

We have a whole, we’re known also as nurses, professionals, that’s kind of been the more known identity of the Filipino community in the US, you know with the brain drain and 1965 and all professionals coming here, so accountants, engineers, nurses, those are some
of the professions, doctors, that we’re really known for. And if you think of low wage Filipino workers it was more kind of past tense, in terms of farm workers here in the United States or more abroad, you know the OFWs [Overseas Filipino Workers] in the Middle East, Hong Kong, Italy, working as low wage workers, not here in the US. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015)

As an unexpected consequence of the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights campaign, Pilipino Workers Center was able to gain greater visibility for Filipino caregivers and undocumented Filipinos not only nationally and importantly within Filipino communities in the US. Like immigration rights organizing conducted by many unions within the AFL-CIO (Milkman, 2014), PWC successfully brought together caregivers and non-caregivers around immigration status to fight for workers’ rights in California. PWC’s success and efforts in increasing visibility for undocumented Filipinos and Filipino caregivers parallel the effectiveness of unions who have publicly pushed for immigrant rights and dignity in the workplace (Milkman, 2014). Worker centers like the Restaurant Opportunities Center has relied on visibility of restaurant workers in their campaigns for wage increases. In a campaign to close a corrupt union, the Chicago Area Worker Center founders were able to increase visibility around immigrant rights to win their campaign (Benner, LoPresti, Matsuoka, Pastor, & Rosner, 2005). PWC built support for A.B 241 through its members’ common undocumented identity. PWC demonstrated the significance of caregivers’ work and the struggle associated with being undocumented through its campaign.

By establishing a sense of dignity and pride with both being a caregiver and undocumented, PWC’s workers mobilized around A.B. 241. The Pilipino Workers Center utilized a mixture of different types of organizations to best support its workers and garner support for the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights.

Because of racialized regimes of labor, many Filipino low-wage workers in the US were college educated in the Philippines and worked middle class professional jobs (Parreñas, 2001;
Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Unlike other organizations in the California Domestic Workers Alliance, PWC tackled the unique stigma associated with being a Filipino caregiver, a worker in the service sector, and a low-wage worker. Among its challenges, organizing formerly middle class professionals was one of the biggest challenges that PWC faced throughout its work (“Interview Aquilina Soriano-Versoza on the Pilipino Workers Center and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights,” 2013). Racialized regimes of labor are produced by a need for low-wage work for immigrants of color from the Global South and the gap in socioeconomic status for someone who worked as a middle class professional in the Philippines and a caregiver in the US (Parreñas, 2001). This global context poses a unique obstacle for PWC for organizing and mobilizing their members. While middle class professionals in the Philippines, they sustain a neoliberal, individualistic mindset. Filipino caregivers’ individualist values encourages them to rely on their own skills without the help of others. Scholars like Michael Piore (1979) claim that migrants do not see themselves as a part of the socioeconomic status associated with their low-wage work in the US but see themselves in terms of their status in their home country. In contrast, PWC’s Filipino caregivers saw themselves in their new status in the US, not in their previous status. PWC viewed Filipino caregivers’ backgrounds as part of the fear and shame associated with speaking out and feeling proud of their current work (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). As a part of one of the areas of worker centers’ missions (Fine, 2006), PWC organized members through workshops and education. PWC’s visibility through the campaign’s early successes and establishment of the campaign’s legitimacy also helped to engage and recruit members. PWC was able to provide space for Filipino caregivers to be proud of their work and show their members that other caregivers face the same poor conditions as them. PWC recognized Filipino caregivers’ work and socioeconomic status in the Philippines as a part of the stigma workers
faced. By acknowledging and addressing caregivers’ transnational identities, PWC validates workers’ complex relationship to their work as a result of global economies and global flows of capital. PWC challenged the caregivers’ neoliberal and individualist beliefs carried between the Philippines and the US that isolated caregivers. Centering caregivers’ transnational identities and transnational process that affected their relationships with their work, PWC significantly impacted the landscape of Filipino worker organizing. Many worker centers maintain strong ties to other countries, publicly stand in solidarity with transnational struggles, and support each others’ work (Fine, 2007). PWC utilizes a context of uneven levels of development globally in its organizing. PWC staff’s grasp of the global forces acting upon its workers allowed them to better organize a campaign and mobilize its workers. PWC built community power through its services and educational workshops to bring workers, many of whom had been averse to organizing, into the campaign.

While Filipinos in the US work in a range of industries, Filipino professional organizations are the most visible in the landscape of Filipino community organizations and Filipino community. Filipino professionals are most visible as a result of the brain drain that occurred in the 1960s, which brought waves of Filipino nurses to the US. Prior to the brain drain, Filipino low-wage workers were associated with a history of Filipino farmers in the early 20th century in the US. The invisibility of Filipino caregivers in mainstream Filipino community spaces indicated a disconnect between Filipino professionals and domestic workers. This segregation between professionals and low-wage workers is one that PWC associates with a larger trend of marginalization and invisibilization of the low-income sector of an ethnic or racial group. Similar to the invisibilization of low-wage Filipino workers, other Asian immigrants lack support and resources as a result of a visibility of successful professionals in their ethnic group.
Though other worker centers increase visibility of immigration issues in workers’ rights campaigns to highlight the intersection of the two identities (Benner et al., 2005), PWC’s efforts within mainstream Filipino communities are unique to assumptions made about successful Filipinos and Asian Americans as a whole. PWC situates the dynamics of Filipino workers within Filipino communities within a larger context of marginalization, as a part of the Model Minority Myth (MMM). The context of marginalization within the MMM is significant as PWC is one of the few Asian ethnicity or Asian nation based workers centers in Los Angeles. PWC recognizes dynamics within Filipino communities and the impact of perceptions of its workers. Through an understanding of a wider context, PWC addresses community-wide change in addition to its work on a state and national level. PWC’s combination structure allows it to address workers’ issues on multiple levels.

Another disconnect, found through the course of the A.B. 241 campaign, lies between Filipino community leaders and advocates’ knowledge and perceptions versus the truth about the US immigration system and how it affects Filipinos in the US. Many community leaders and advocates within Filipino communities hold beliefs that being vocal about immigration issues and being undocumented in Filipino communities will be detrimental and bring more attention and enforcement to undocumented Filipinos. Some community leaders believe that being vocal about immigrant rights for undocumented Filipinos will encourage negative perceptions of Filipinos as “cheating the system.” However, these Filipino community leaders and advocates do not recognize the current enforcement against undocumented Filipinos and the long waiting lines to enter the US from the Philippines. Aquilina Soriano, Executive Director of PWC, said, “Even though [some Filipino community leaders and advocates] don't necessarily understand the immigration system and the extent of its brokenness and really understanding the limited
opportunities that folks have in the Philippines and the choices they're making to try and make their lives better, because no one would really choose to be here illegally or undocumented.” (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Filipino professionals, community leaders, and advocates do not recognize that immigration status and immigration issues are already large issues for Filipinos. Mainstream Filipino community members do not recognize that Filipinos and Mexicans have the longest waiting times which might require 20 to 25 years before being able to be reunited with family members (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC’s identification of a gap between community knowledge and truth establishes a need for education and visibility of PWC undocumented caregivers’ experiences. As an organization focused on Filipino workers, PWC addresses and navigates disconnects within the Filipino community. Its large member base, achieved through its structure of grassroots community based education, organizing, advocacy, and lobbying, allows PWC to serve as a bridge between invisible workers and undocumented workers and the larger community.

The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights passed in 2013 and went into effect in 2014. The Bill will sunset in 2017 which means that PWC will need to pass another bill before it sunsets in order for the rights to continue to be protected for workers. PWC’s members were surprised at PWC’s ability to pass a bill (Manzon, 2015). They were surprised that voices of marginalized workers could be heard and succeed in passing legislation. The passing of A.B. 241 was monumental in the labor movement. PWC gained legitimacy among Filipino community members, allowed PWC to recruit workers from outside of Los Angeles County, and increased PWC membership (Manzon, 2015). PWC Staff member, Dondino Manzon described the workers’ reactions,

There were only a few people that believed that the law would pass, some people were just waiting to see what was going on, when it passed, they were surprised too. They
were surprised, especially that the marginalized and vulnerable groups could get a law to pass. And then they started to learn that if you really push for it then the politicians and the lawmakers will listen (Manzon, 2015).

The campaign educated and empowered PWC members, who are able to share their knowledge about the provisions of A.B. 241 with their friends (Manzon, 2015). Pilipino Workers Center continues to mobilize workers to Sacramento as recently as March 19, 2015 for a Human Rights Tribunal with the United Domestic Workers and the International Domestic Worker Network (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC’s efforts were efficacious in empowering its workers and exhibiting the power of workers and coalitions. Its workers involvement in multiple aspects of PWC’s mission led to the passage of A.B. 241 and their own empowerment.

Through PWC’s A.B. 241 campaign, PWC successfully brought media and community attention and visibility to Filipino domestic workers. During the campaign, PWC facilitated a shift in perception of the Filipino caregiver workers movement as something that is now respected and valid in Filipino communities. Filipino and non-Filipino communities learned about Filipino caregivers, their experiences, their vulnerabilities, and Filipino undocumented as well. The education begun by the A.B. 241 campaign led into PWC’s Temporary Protected Status campaign. The relationship built between PWC and Philippines consulate that led to Philippines consulate’s recognition of caregivers and their lack of protection was groundbreaking. The state’s role in worker export and its decrease in accountability for workers has impacted Filipino caregivers negatively (Rodriguez, 2010). However, the new advocacy role of the Philippines consulate during the TPS campaign has been helpful in establishing open communication between workers, PWC, and the Philippine state. The support of the Philippines consulate of PWC’s work signifies PWC’s important role between the Philippines and the US as a facilitator of transnational work, transnational relationships, and grassroots and non-grassroots advocacy.
After the passage of A.B. 241 and during its continued work on the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, PWC continued to search for ways to organize undocumented immigrants, provide immigration services, and build awareness for undocumented Filipinos. After Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, PWC saw an opportunity to mobilize undocumented Filipino workers around the administrative action, Temporary Protected Status.

**Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Relief to Recovery Campaign**

In this section, I discuss a timeline of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) campaign and the ways that PWC was able to build upon its work from the A.B. 241 campaign. Additionally, PWC played a leading role in the inception and execution of the TPS campaign. It structured its campaign to highlight the role of Filipino nationals in the US as the first line of response after the tragedy hit the Philippines. Though PWC was able to continue its connection with its partners during the A.B. 241 campaign, the TPS campaign differed from the A.B. 241 campaign in scope, strategy, and worker involvement.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan hit Tacloban city, decimated 90% of the city, and gravely impacted 14.5 million people living in six regions and 44 provinces (Hester & Cendana, 2015; Klein, 2015). Four million people have been displaced and 1.1 million homes have been destroyed (Pilipino Workers Center, 2014). Tacloban residents impacted by the Typhoon, 400 miles from Manila, tried to relocate to Manila but there were not enough resources for them there to relocate (Hester & Cendana, 2015; Klein, 2015; Soriano-Versoza, 2015). The National Economic and Development authority reported that there were 571.1 billion Pesos ($12.9 billion USD) in damages of physical assets, reduction in production and sales, and other costs. Ninety percent of the damage is in private sector losses and ten percent on public sector. Estimated
360.8 billion Pesos ($8.2 billion USD) is needed for recovery of the private sector in the areas of housing, temporary shelter, social services, water, sanitation, transportation, infrastructure, fishing, and agriculture. During the Philippines’ recovery, the Philippines consulate asked hometown associations to support the recovery by helping install potable water systems and temporary shelters (Pilipino Workers Center, 2014).

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, which is referred to Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines, brought widespread damage to central Philippines (US AID, 2014). On November 9th and 10th, the DART deputy team leader reported that in Ormoc city, the typhoon had eliminated 80-90% of visible housing. By November 11, 2013, there were approximately 10,000 deaths, with 9.7 million people affected, and 23,200 houses destroyed across 41 provinces (US AID, 2014). Immediately after the Typhoon landed in the Philippines, PWC held a conference with many different stakeholders (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). Over 200 Filipino-American organizations, members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, the Catholic Church, and other groups stood behind Temporary Protected Status (Embassy of the Philippines, 2013). As the US government provided monetary aid to the Philippines for recovery from the Typhoon, on November 21, 2013, Democratic Representative Al Green of Texas introduced H.R. 3602 to the House of Representatives. This bill, the Filipino Temporary Protected Status Act of 2013, included an 18-month period of temporary protected status for eligible Filipino nationals (Congressional Research Service, 2013). The Philippine government made a formal request for Temporary Protected Status on December 13, 2013. The request was made by Ambassador Jose L. Cuisa Jr. to the Department of Homeland Security via the Department of State (Embassy of the Philippines, 2013).
The initial press conference for TPS was held on December 4th, 2013 in Downtown Los Angeles in front of the US Federal Building. Beginning December 8th, 2013, PWC and its workers began calling the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. to encourage the support of TPS. Remembering the lives lost and people displaced as a result of Typhoon Haiyan, PWC and its supporters conducted simultaneous vigils as a part of its “Relief to Recovery” campaign in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles on December 11, 2013. In front of the US Federal Building in Downtown Los Angeles, on December 19th, 2013, PWC and many other TPS supporters participated in a press conference. PWC offered an informational workshop on December 28, 2013 about TPS and its other programs. On January 3rd, 2014, PWC held an open forum to answer their members’ questions about what Temporary Protected Status would do. PWC called for its members to call the State Department on January 17th, 2014 to push Secretary Kerry to grant TPS in a group call-in day. PWC explained to its members that the Department of Homeland Security required the State Department’s recommendation in order to grant TPS for Filipinos. On February 7th, PWC held a national teleconference with organizations and community members to continue enthusiasm for the Relief to Recovery campaign. PWC held a Google hangout videoconference on February 28, 2014 with PWC members and community stakeholders. PWC and its partnering organizations successfully pushed Secretary John Kerry to make a positive recommendation to grant TPS to the Department of Homeland Security on March 20, 2014 (“US gov confirms PH’s TPS request forwarded to DHS,” 2014). Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced his support for TPS for the Philippines on March 26, 2014. In a meeting at Los Angeles City Hall, the Los Angeles City Council also announced its support for TPS for the Philippines on April 2, 2014. During Holy Week on April 16, 2014, PWC held a 24-hour vigil for TPS as a religious and political ceremony for its members. In front of the White
House, PWC in partnership with the National Domestic Worker Alliance held a rally to push the Department of Homeland Security to grant TPS on April 25, 2014. The Pilipino Workers Center held an online town hall meeting on August 1, 2014. Stakeholders in the Philippines shared stories of the destruction and the need for TPS (Pilipino Workers Center, 2014). PWC connected with the Executive Director of the Leyte Center for Development which works in the Leyte Province in the Philippines which was largely impacted by Typhoon Haiyan (PWC, 2014, 2014).

Also present at the online town hall were Citizens’ Disaster Response Center in Tokyo, Japan, Typhoon Haiyan Survivors in Ormoc, Leyte, Philippines, Damayan Migrant Workers Association in New York, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance in Washington D.C., and the Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti (PWC & Relief 2 Recovery; TPS for Filipinos, 2014). Towards the end of 2014, PWC, its members, and its supporters decreased the frequency of their rallies, vigils, and town hall meetings. PWC continued to contact the Department of Homeland Security to urge them to grant TPS.

PWC founded the Relief to Recovery campaign, the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) campaign for Filipinos in the US after Typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013. In response to the natural disaster and as an organizing opportunity, PWC sought TPS for Filipinos and to organize undocumented Filipinos nationally around a progressive agenda. Temporary Protected Status for the Philippines would protect undocumented immigrants from the Philippines from deportation temporarily until the Philippines recovers from the typhoon. Nationals of the Philippines who have been in the US from the TPS designation date to the date of the passing of TPS and who apply within a filing period are eligible for TPS (Ishkaster Media, 2014). TPS is an administrative action that has been granted for similar disasters such as in Haiti and El Salvador.

PWC seeks to protect Filipino workers and address worker related issues; thus, its work
encompasses immigrant issues. Through its work on the TPS campaign, PWC demonstrates its multi-pronged approach to address worker issues.

The TPS campaign directly followed the A.B. 241 campaign. PWC was able to use its relationships with organizations, politicians, and the Philippines consulate, coalitional partners, and the organizational infrastructure that it had built during the A.B. 241 campaign to bolster its efforts in the TPS campaign. PWC founded the TPS campaign by initiating a conversation between stakeholders to discuss the potential TPS request of the US government. The Pilipino Workers Center called together many stakeholders from legal, student, and domestic worker groups. Prior to the TPS campaign, PWC had been seeking a major organizing moment to provide services and engage people around immigration with a larger goal of creating a larger progressive voice within the Filipino community. PWC saw the TPS campaign as a way to engage all undocumented Filipinos and build a platform for advocacy for pathways to citizenship and for immigrant rights. Soriano-Versoza described PWC’s hope for the TPS campaign, “And so that would be a possibility to really, help bring them out of the shadows and then have a much stronger voice to advocate for long term pathways to citizenship and human rights, immigrant rights” (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). During the TPS campaign, PWC organized undocumented Filipinos as a part of louder progressive voice among Filipinos while simultaneously maintaining and building relationships with organizations and groups nationally. Throughout its fight for TPS, PWC increases visibility for undocumented Filipino workers and strengthened and facilitated conversation within a network of TPS supporters and progressive immigrant rights organizers.

In the Los Angeles area, PWC is the sole organization organizing Filipinos for immigrant rights and for advocacy for pathways to citizenship. As one of the few of its kind in the Los
Angeles area focusing on Filipino workers, PWC fills a niche as an advocacy-service-lobbyist hybrid organization. The TPS campaign revolved around an administrative action to grant Temporary Protected Status for Filipinos in the US, which would protect them from deportation. Unlike the A.B. 241 campaign, the TPS campaign was not aiming to pass a law, but grant TPS through an existing administrative action that had been received in other circumstances, such as TPS for El Salvador in response to earthquakes in 2001. Because of the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan, the Philippines was incapable of absorbing any Filipino deportees from the US (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC viewed the fight for TPS as an effective and viable organizing moment because TPS had precedent in natural disasters similar to Typhoon Haiyan.

During the TPS campaign, PWC highlighted family remittances as valid sources of financial support and effective entities to protect. Additionally, the campaign argued that Filipino workers in the US were making a significant and valuable financial impact on the devastation from the typhoon. Many Filipino family members sent remittances to their families in the Philippines immediately after the disaster and served as the first response to families. The narrative of the TPS campaign was around relief, how transnational families are essential to relief, and the necessity to keep Filipino workers in the US to continue to financially support their families in the Philippines (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). PWC’s prioritization of families within the narrative of the TPS campaign validated and supported transnational families. Perceiving transnational families as key players in both the recovery of the Philippines and the TPS campaign itself, PWC empowers transnational family members in the US and locates Filipino nationals within an impactful chain of capital. Integrating their campaign work with their goals of worker empowerment, PWC encourages workers to “come out” as undocumented and have
dignity and pride in their status. The TPS campaign sought to facilitate long-term recovery for the Philippines, which is still far from fully recovered.

During the Relief to Recovery campaign, PWC built upon the organizational infrastructure and coalitional relationships that it built through the A.B. 241 campaign. Its first step was to approach the Philippines Consulate to make the request for TPS to the US government. To PWC’s surprise, Philippines Consulate immediately agreed to make the request for TPS. As a branch of the Philippines government, the Philippines Consulate tends to avoid appearing sympathetic to undocumented immigrants. PWC had expected that the Philippines Consulate to remain silent on the issue of Temporary Protected Status. Though the Philippines Consulate acted in favor of Filipino undocumented workers in the US, they acted within their own goals, simultaneously. Not only did the Philippines need financial support from undocumented and documented Filipino workers in the US, but also the Philippines especially needed financial support through remittances after the typhoon. The Philippines Consulate supported Filipino undocumented workers in the US because of the chain reaction that their remittances produce in the Philippines. Additionally, supporting TPS benefits the Philippines consulate in terms of how Filipinos perceive them as advocates. The Philippine consulate continued to support PWC’s push for TPS throughout the campaign. A representative from the Philippine consulate spoke at a TPS town hall organized by PWC and shared updated information about possible next steps for PWC (Pilipino Workers Center, 2014). The relationship between PWC and the Philippine consulate defied PWC’s assumption that the Philippine consulate would hold conservative and anti-undocumented immigration views. The Philippine consulate’s interest in Filipino nationals’ support both financially and ideologically permitted an unexpected outcome. PWC serves as a bridge between the Philippine state and Filipino nationals.
in the US, similar to how hometown associations facilitate relationships across national borders. While negotiating between the Philippine state and Filipino nationals, PWC also provides services, advocates for workers, and organizes campaigns.

PWC found that TPS gained bipartisan support and support from Filipino communities that had not supported PWC’s campaigns in the past. The Pilipino Workers Center strategically focused their campaign around humanitarian aid, supporting relief efforts in the Philippines, and around Filipino Americans’ connections to their homeland. By highlighting undocumented workers as the first response that people affected by the Typhoon, PWC emphasized the impact of Filipino American workers on the Philippines. PWC asserted the necessity of family relationships that Filipinos in the US maintained with their families in the Philippines (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). During the TPS campaign, PWC established the significance of Filipino workers’ transnational family relationships to the Philippines’ economy and people’s lives.

Soriano-Versoza explained the role of families in the Philippines’ recovery:

> Because it’s not just one time humanitarian aid that comes in but those who are committed to real long-term recovery who are going to be contributing and helping with that effort. So in El Salvador, we saw that there was the amount of humanitarian, the amount of remittances that came in that helped was more than all of the humanitarian [aid] that came in. And a lot of that was real direct assistance that didn’t have to go through bureaucratic humanitarian aid, different direct to the families, aid and assistance to be able to recover. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015)

In this way, PWC supported, protected, and normalized transnational families. Though it strategically focused on humanitarian aid rather than immigration reform, PWC utilized TPS as an organizing moment to mobilize its workers. It created a comprehensible narrative for potential supporters to appreciate the significance of transnational workers and immigration beyond a unidirectional flow of people and capital. In addition to serving its workers using a multi-
pronged approach, PWC made influential steps toward a transnational understanding of immigration for mainstream Filipino and non-Filipino communities.

PWC worked with domestic worker organizations, lawyer associations, legal groups, and other immigrant rights associations during the TPS campaign. PWC worked closely with Filipino organizations as well as domestic worker organizations that they had worked with during the A.B. 241 campaign. Of their partners were Damayan in New York, Filipino Domestic Worker Organizing Committee out of Latino Union in Chicago, Filipino Community Center in San Francisco, National Filipino American Lawyer Association, Asian Americans Advancing Justice in DC and Los Angeles. PWC and its partnering organizations were able to get endorsements for TPS from religious organizations and larger national Asian American organizations including Clergy and Laity Uniting for Economic Justice, the Episcopal Church in DC, the US Bishops, Catholic Bishops, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Kaya Collective in DC, and National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans. As a non-controversial issue, PWC separated TPS from other fights for immigration reform and immigrant rights. They were able to gain support from a wide variety of organizations. Due to its focus around humanitarian aid and disaster relief, the campaign had a diverse body of supporters. Though its supporters were key to the progression and success of the campaign, at the center of the TPS campaign were undocumented workers speaking out about their family members affected by the Typhoon that rely on their remittances. Utilizing non-controversial messaging and strategies during the TPS campaign, PWC expanded its already strong and wide-reaching network. The scope and reach of the TPS campaign that was spearheaded by an organization like PWC with few full-time staff members are remarkable.
Unlike the A.B. 241 campaign, the TPS campaign was national in scope. PWC was able to build coalitions with organizations across the country and learn from other organizations and their work. PWC staff mobilized to Washington, D.C. to meet with the State Department, US Citizenship and Immigration Service, and Homeland Security. PWC members and staff along with collaborating organizations staged a die-in rally in front of the White House to educate people about the devastation as a result of the Typhoon. The bulk of PWC’s organizing and lobbying occurred in Washington, D.C. Organizing in D.C. posed difficulties for as many workers to be on the front lines of the work as there were in A.B. 241. To engage their members from a distance, PWC found other strategies to involved its members who often could not travel because of work and cost. Members mobilized their friends and colleagues to sign petitions for TPS, participate in call-in days, and fill out pledge forms. PWC found ways for workers to be involved in their campaigns even if they are in isolated situations. PWC’s success in mobilizing informal workers and isolated workers poses a contrast to a historical assumption that organizing informal workers is not doable nor worthwhile (Gold, 2014). Pilipino Workers Center held open forums for its members to ask questions about Temporary Protected Status and to share stories of the impact of the Typhoon (PWC & Relief 2 Recovery; TPS for Filipinos, 2014). During these forums, PWC successfully mobilized members to learn about TPS and utilized these spaces to engage workers who could not be campaigning in Washington D.C. Members’ dependence on PWC for information about TPS and the campaign signifies the key role PWC plays in Filipino low-wage worker communities in Los Angeles. Additionally, PWC maintained its services that it offered in Los Angeles while mobilizing staff and workers to DC for actions and meetings. PWC, a unique workers center, was able to spearhead a national campaign while continuing to serve their members that could not be on the front lines in D.C. Though its many obligations are
remarkable and impactful to its members and others, its multiple projects and services proved difficult to maintain while key staff members and workers were in Washington D.C.

Through the TPS campaign, PWC was able to build new relationships and to nurture established relationships with community organizations and community members in Filipino communities. The campaign also allowed PWC to create organizational infrastructure to run a national campaign, think about long-term goals, and strengthen its capacity for campaigns. PWC gained supporters and members through the TPS campaign as well as strengthened their core leadership among members. Many of the people who were active in the A.B. 241 were also active in the TPS campaign because they were both caregivers and undocumented. PWC used the TPS campaign to create an ideological shift in the way that Filipino people think about immigration issues and undocumented people. Its messaging focused on the significance of families and keeping families together. By focusing on families, PWC was able to change how people think about immigration. Using an administrative relief action rather than larger efforts toward immigration reform, PWC gained support from Filipino community members not only for TPS but also for PWC’s future work on immigration rights and reform. They aimed to address a lack of truthful messaging about the problems with the current immigration system and what kind of change would be beneficial. PWC was able to see workers change how they saw themselves, their work, their status, and their rights. PWC prioritized dignity and a larger understanding of unfair and discriminatory systems. Its work throughout the TPS campaign had long-term positive consequences. PWC gained members, allies, supporters, and visibility. While PWC continued to offer services during the Temporary Protected Status campaign, it established commitment to its members and equal emphasis on each part of its mission. Over the course of the TPS campaign, PWC not only demonstrates the types of services, resources, and organizing
opportunities that it provides but also the method by which it carries out all of its duties concurrently.

Temporary Protected Status has not been passed as of the present date. PWC continues to write to US Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, and push for the passage of TPS. Due to the concentrated push for TPS among its members, PWC staff speculate that members lost interest over time (Vallega, 2015). The delay or refusal to grant TPS for Filipinos within the context of long waiting lines for Filipinos from the Philippines to enter the US creates cause for concern.

**Comparative Analysis of A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns**

The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and the Temporary Protected Status campaigns represent multiple ways that PWC actively seeks protection for and with workers. The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights aimed to provide legal protections to increase the rights of caregivers to include overtime, liquidated damages, uninterrupted sleep, access to kitchen facilities, and other provisions. The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights allows workers to have protections from employers while in vulnerable and isolated situations. However, the Temporary Protected Status administrative action seeks to protect workers from deportation. It also protects workers’ families and the role that Filipino nationals play in their families. As seen in the complex history of unions and anti-immigrant sentiment, some labor-focused groups have not recognized a need for immigration reform, support for immigration, and impact of immigration legislation on workers. Other labor groups historically have struggled to acknowledge immigrant workers as organizers and labor movement participants. The two campaigns highlight different ways that PWC aims to protect workers while also serving and advocating for workers.
The Relief to Recovery campaign involved nationwide coalitions and relationships with organizations across the country and in the Philippines. The campaign hinged upon the willingness of the Philippine consulate to make the request for Temporary Protected Status and the currently hinges upon the US Department of Homeland Security’s decision. Ultimately, the TPS campaign involves the political relationship between the Philippines and the US. Whereas, the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights rested on Governor Brown’s approval after its passage through the house. PWC’s leading role in two campaigns with different types of stakeholders illustrates PWC’s diversity and versatility in capabilities. PWC built the capacity to organize a statewide campaign during the A.B. 241 campaign and quickly increased their capacity to organize a national campaign.

The campaign for the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights was more controversial in content than the Temporary Protected Status campaign. People in opposition to A.B. 241 were concerned that the bill would cause a decrease in profits and put too large of a strain on families who are supporting elderly people or people with disabilities. PWC established an emphasis on the workers’ voices and right to protections that other workers receive. However, it is unclear why the Department of Homeland Security is opposed to granting TPS for the Philippines. Because of current restrictions on immigration from the Philippines, the delay in granting TPS may be relating to anti-immigrant sentiment.

Though the A.B. 241 campaign is explicitly for workers’ rights, it included a clear narrative of “coming out” as not only a caregiver but also undocumented. The campaign revealed the relationship between workers’ rights and immigration status. Workers who were not domestic workers stood with domestic workers, with the shared identity of being undocumented. The connection between domestic workers’ experience and undocumented experience is a
feeling of isolation and shame. PWC mobilized workers around an emotional connection with the vulnerabilities of domestic workers. Similarly, the TPS campaign established a connection between workers’ and immigrant rights. The campaigns’ messaging established the importance of Filipino workers in the US who are sending financial aid to their families in the Philippines. PWC subtly built a connection between workers’ ability to work and make money and their impact on families in the Philippines. Like the A.B. 241 campaign, the campaign for TPS mobilized many different types of stakeholders through an emotional connection to charitable disaster relief and supporting one’s family.

Both campaigns addressed invisibility of low-wage and undocumented Filipino workers. The A.B. 241 campaign emphasized a “coming out” for Filipino caregivers and undocumented Filipinos. Through the A.B. 241 campaign, PWC established the domestic worker movement “as something that’s good and valid in our community” (Soriano-Versoza, 2015). The TPS campaign challenged the invisibility of Filipinos who already face fear of deportation and Filipinos who are waiting to be reunited with family members in the US. As PWC gained recognition by the Philippine consulate through the TPS campaign, it saw a shift in LA Filipino communities.

Executive Director Aquilina Soriano-Versoza describes the shift,

> We’ve gotten even more recognition from the [Philippines] consulate, all of those things have helped to raise the view, to start to shift some of the culture and view around caregivers and domestic workers in general in our community, we still have a long ways to go, there’s a lot that we haven’t reached yet also but there’s definitely been an improvement over the last decade. And I think that kind of cultural shift is also in some ways is what makes some of the members more comfortable also, joining and being more visible as well. (Soriano-Versoza, 2015)

The cultural shift that PWC facilitated is momentous. Though both campaigns were focused on legislative and administrative action, the impact was cultural.
The A.B. 241 campaign and the TPS campaign demonstrated PWC’s ability to build effective and strategic campaigns and the multiple ways it serves its members. PWC supports its workers through providing services like translation and help with phone bills, organizing around policies to increase protection for workers, and conducting advocacy and lobbying work. As an immigrant worker center, PWC serves a new role for workers who are not able to gain effective support from other types of organizations like unions, religious organizations, or hometown associations. Additionally, PWC has been able to address and decrease the invisibility of caregivers and undocumented Filipinos within Filipino communities and mainstream communities. Within the context of globalization and casualization of labor, PWC recognizes its workers’ relationships to the Philippines, the Philippine state, and their lives in the Philippines. For Filipino undocumented and documented workers in Los Angeles, PWC advocates for progressive workers’ and immigrant rights reform.
Conclusion

The Pilipino Workers Center serves a unique population of workers whose global context is key to understanding their position in Los Angeles. PWC also builds community power among Filipino workers, the majority of whom are caregivers. As caregivers, PWC members work in isolated and exploitative work environments. To organize isolated workers and build community power among them, PWC developed unique strategies. In addition to its many services that PWC offers, PWC organizes workers around workers’ rights and immigrant rights for legislative action. Through education, empowerment, and community building, PWC has succeeded in building worker leaders.

The A.B. 241 campaign successfully passed the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. The TPS campaign is an ongoing campaign for Temporary Protected status for Filipinos living in the US. Though PWC mobilized its workers for the passage of these legislative and administrative actions, its work had other effects on the Filipino community, perceptions of Filipinos in the US, and its members. During the A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns, PWC increased visibility for Filipino caregivers and undocumented Filipinos within Filipino communities and US mainstream awareness. Through its organizing of Filipino caregivers, PWC challenged caregivers’ neoliberal perspectives to build community reliance. While PWC centered its TPS campaign around transnational families as the first response to the Typhoon, it centered transnational families and validated their significant roles.

The Pilipino Workers Center serves multiple roles for workers. Some of its services are ones offered by labor unions, religious groups, hometown associations, community based organizations, and other organizations as well. Though it is a small organization in terms of staff members, it has an expansive member base and organizational partners and allies. PWC has
garnered large amounts of media attention as well as scholarly, worker, and community attention. Its capacity and skills to organize and plan a nationwide campaign have grown over the course of the A.B. 241 and TPS campaigns. PWC is rooted in Asian American studies and the Asian American movement not only in name but also in its founders’ and staff’s backgrounds. It has developed and utilized radical strategies to organize isolated and vulnerable domestic worker and radical strategies to build community power through worker-owned home care agencies and peer-lending circles. While working with Filipino workers who are a part of chains of transnational flows of capital and care, PWC recognizes the importance of its workers’ relationships with family and the Philippines. With its acknowledgement of the global context in which its workers live, PWC established a supportive relationship with the Philippine consulate. Though PWC has a progressive agenda that advocates for workers’ rights and immigrant rights, it has developed rapport with mainstream Filipino organizations. Through its recent campaigns, PWC has increased visibility for its workers around being caregivers and being undocumented. Pilipino Workers Center is significant in its role as a leader in the labor and immigrant rights movements. In convenings around wage theft in Los Angeles and coalitions of domestic workers, PWC represents the only Asian American or Pacific Islander focused group. Through the organization’s visibility, PWC faces barriers posed by the Model Minority Myth (MMM) and strongly refutes the Myth. Its campaign work has not only challenged the MMM but also challenged conceptions of unidirectional labor flows, Asian immigrant success, and immigrant families. PWC’s campaign work not only seeks legislative protections and administrative action, also presents new images of Asian immigrant worker organizing, domestic workers, and undocumented immigrant organizing. The Pilipino Workers Center has initiated a cultural shift in the way Filipino caregivers and undocumented Filipinos are imagined and seen.
Appendix

Image 1: Association of Filipino Workers Male Workers Pledging Support for A.B. 241

(PWC, 2013)
Image 2: A long-time caregiver pledges her support for A.B. 241 (PWC, 2013)

Image 3: PWC’s CPR Training (PWC, 2013)
Image 4: PWC’s Tax Preparation (PWC, 2013)

Image 5: PWC’s Relief 2 Recovery: Temporary Protected Status for Filipinos (PWC, 2013)
Image 6: PWC’s TPS Workshops (PWC, 2014)
Possibility of Temporary Protected Status for Filipinos

WORKSHOP SCHEDULES

Panorama City
Date: Saturday, January 11, 2014
Time: 2:00PM - 4:00PM
Place: TFC Tambayan
8340 Van Nuys Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 91402

Los Angeles
Date: Friday, January 17, 2014
Time: 6:30PM - 8:00PM
Place: Pilipino Workers Centers
153 Glendale Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Carson City
Date: Saturday, January 18, 2014
Time: to be determined
Place: to be determined

WE STILL NEED TO TAKE ACTION:
1. Call DHS Comment Line at (202) 282-8495
2. Call the White House Comment Line at (202) 456-1111
3. Sign the Petition Now by visiting our website www.tps4filipinos.com

Find Out About:
- TPS benefits if granted
- Who could be eligible
- How to help the effort to get TPS granted
- Where to receive reliable info & assistance for TPS (if granted)

TO REGISTER:
Call Lolit Lledo (213) 344-8370
lolitalledo@gmail.com
www.tps4filipinos.org

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