

Joining the “Exclusive” Club

A Case Study on Japanese Enterprise Unions’ Organizing Strategies and the diversification of the Japanese Employment Structure.

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, Japan has witnessed a diversified labor market with the increase of non-regular workers. Today, more than one third of all workers in Japan are non-regular workers.

The dominant form of unionism in Japan is the enterprise unions who, traditionally, have only organized regular workers. The purpose of this case study was to see whether the organizing strategies among the enterprise unions has changed or not with the increase of non-regular workers. The hypothesis was that enterprise unions with a strong enterprise identity are less prone to organize non-regular workers. The opinions and arguments by six informants (three union officials and three researchers) were used together with findings from previous research and quantitative data. For the analysis, I developed a theoretical model based on Lewin's 3-step model of change. The model also included two theoretical concepts: the Logic of Appropriateness and the Logic of Consequence.

The main results of the research was that there seems to be that the enterprise unions currently adopt different organizing strategies. I argue that this is because the forces for and against change have different impact on the unions. Since the management could both be an actor supportive of change and against it, I concluded that the strong enterprise identity among the enterprise unions does have an influence on the enterprise unions but this does not necessarily lead them to not organize non-regular workers.

Keywords: Japan; Enterprise unions; Non-regular workers; Organizing Strategies, Kurt Lewins 3-step model of Change; Logic of Appropriateness; Logic of Consequence.

FOREWORD

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Research Problem

1.1.1 The Increase of Non-Regular Workers

The Japanese model of industrial and employment relations has traditionally been structured by the so-called “lifetime employment” (*shūshin koyō*), “seniority-based wages” (*nenkō jōretsu*) and “enterprise unionism” (*kigyō kumiai*) (Sako 1997:4; Keizer 2010:14). However, changes have occurred in the Japanese employment structure. Keizer (2010:1,168) points out that there have been two central employment-related developments from the 1990’s: the increased usage of wages based on performance (*seikashugi*) and the growth of non-regular workforce. For Rebeck (2005:57) the increase of non-regular workers “[...] is the single most important change that is taking place in the Japanese labour market”. Truthfully, the number of non-regular workers has increased drastically in Japan. In 1990, 20.2 % of the Japanese workers were non-regular workers. In 2012, more than one third (35.2%) of the total workforce were non-regular workers in Japan (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:48). Figure 1 demonstrates the growth of non-regular employment against the decline in regular employment. Among the non-regular employment types, the part-time workers represents the largest group, representing 68.5% of the total number of non-regular workers in 2012 (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:49).

The non-regular workforce is not new to the Japanese labor market and its expansion is said to have begun already in the 1960’s. However, in the 1990’s the number of non-regular workers increased at a higher rate (Rebeck 2005:57; Keizer 2010:51). The increase of the non-regular workforce since the 1990’s has occurred due to a series of factors but the main reason seems to be the employers attempt to lower their spending to respond to the recession in the Japanese economy (Ishiguro 2009).

Before the 1990’s, the general image of non-regular workers used to be married women who worked part-time or students who worked on the sides of their studies (Hamaguchi and Ogino 2011:1). Today, most non-regular workers are still women (Jones and Orasawa 2011:7-8). Among some types of non-regular employment the share of men has increased but male ratio is still the highest among regular employment (77.9% of the male workers were regular

workers in 2012) (Employment Status Survey 2012). The non-regular workers tend to work mostly in the service sectors and in small companies (less than 1000 employees) (Jones and Orasawa 2011:7-8). Furthermore, it seems that non-regular worker’s assignments has changed and Honda (2007:41 – 42) argues that part-time workers have made a “quantitative shift and qualitative shift”, where the last shift implies that these workers assignments has become more similar to the ones of regular workers.

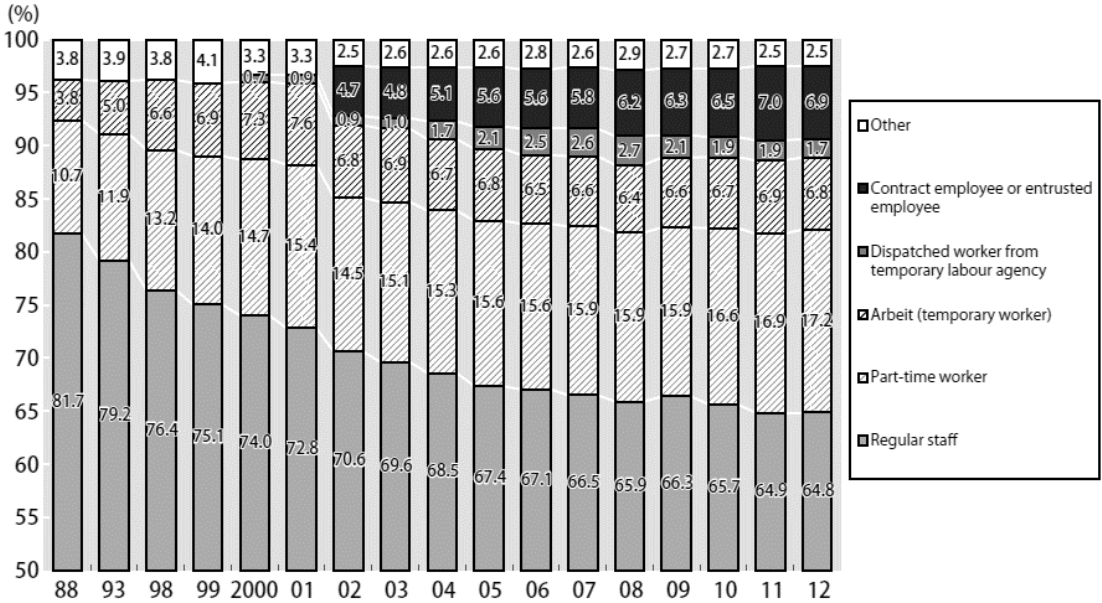


FIGURE 1. ILLUSTRATION OF THE CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE. FIGURE FROM JAPAN INSTITUTE FOR LABOUR POLICY AND TRAINING (2013:29).

From the growth of the non-regular workforce there have been a series of negative outcomes. One example is the increased financial gap between workers in Japan (Ishiguro 2009). However, a transit for non-regular workers to become regular employees is difficult. As stated by Jones and Orasawa (2011:13): “[...] a worker who accepts non-regular employment faces a high probability of never escaping this category, with its accompanying low wages, reduced training, precarious jobs and limited social insurance coverage.”

1.1.2 Japanese Trade Unionism

In the Japanese Constitution, “the right of workers to organize and to bargain and act collectively is guaranteed.” (The Constitution of Japan Article 28). In Japan, there are various forms of unionism. According to the Labor Union Act, trade unions are “[...] those organizations, or federations thereof, formed voluntarily and composed mainly of workers for

the main purpose of maintaining and improving working conditions and raising the economic status of the workers.” (Labor Union Act Article 2).

The trade union system in Japan is generally structured into three parts: the national trade union confederations, the industrial unions and enterprise unions (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:115). The purpose with the national trade union confederations, which consists of allied industrial unions, is to deal with labor issues in the Japanese politics (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:116). Today, there are three national confederations: The ITUC-RENGO (from now on Rengo), Zenroren and Zenrokyo¹. Rengo is the largest confederation with 6.75 million members (RENGO: Role and Function, 2014) while Zenroren, who is more politically leftwing, is smaller and has 1.1 million members (Rebick, 2005:77-78; Minato, Recorded Interview, February 5 2014). The industrial unions are constructed by alliances between enterprise unions from the same industry. The industrial trade unions purpose is to provide support for the enterprise unions (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:115). The largest industrial union is the UA Zensen (which belongs to Rengo) with 1.45 million members and 2450 affiliated unions (UA Zensen 2012).

Outside of this “triplicate structure” (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:115), there are other kinds of unions in Japan. For instance, the general and community unions. These unions were developed in the 1950’s and in the 1980’s and are “composed mainly of workers of small- and medium sized enterprises and organized on a regional basis, beyond the boundaries of enterprises” (Takeuchi – Okuno 2012:87). The general and community unions organize workers individually and these unions are well-known for organizing workers like non-regular workers (Takeuchi – Okuno 2012:87, 89).

Despite other kinds of Japanese unions, the enterprise unionism has since the postwar era been the central type of trade unionism in Japan (Benson 2008:24). Today, more than 90% of all unions in Japan are enterprise-based and most workers belong to an enterprise union (Jeong and Aguilera 2008:98). Enterprise unions are defined as unions that “organize workers within a single enterprise or establishment” (Whittaker 1998:281). There are no juridical constraints to have more unions in the company but usually there is only one union for each

¹ Interestingly, even if most of the literature on Japanese trade unionism describes Zenrokyo as a national center, it was stated by Minato during the interview that Zenrokyo is not considered a national center, not by themselves nor by the government (Minato, Recorded Interview, February 5 2014).

enterprise (Sakoh 1997:7). To join an enterprise union, the member must work at the company where the union resides. As soon as the employee leaves the company, the worker loses his / her union membership (Hanami and Komiya 2011:44). Both blue-collar and white-collar workers are organized in the same enterprise union while managers of “managerial position” are not allowed membership (Suzuki 2010:392).

As stated before, enterprise unions in Japan are mostly members of an industrial union which in turn is affiliated with national confederations. However, even if an enterprise union belongs to an industrial union, they are not heavily influenced by them. The power resides within the enterprise unions, who have more resources and are financially independent (Takeuchi-Okuno 2012:2; Suzuki 2010:393). Furthermore, the collective bargaining in Japan is generally decentralized, which means that the collective bargaining processes usually takes place at the individual company, between the employer and the company’s union (Tachibanaki and Noda 1996:474).

Due to the close relation between management and union it has been argued that the enterprise unionism is part of the reason why Japanese enterprises performed so well during the postwar period (Fujimura 1997:297). The structure of enterprise unionism is an important part of Japan’s development but also for “creating labor / management harmony” (Sakoh 1990:261-262). But enterprise unionism has also received criticism. For instance, it has been argued that enterprise unions, due to their close connection to management, are “company unionism” and thus are too weak “to represent workers adequately” (Benson 2008:24).

An important note is that the membership to the enterprise unions has traditionally been limited to a certain type of workers. The enterprise unions have generally only unionized regular employees (Suzuki 2004:9; Keizer 2011:2). It has been argued that a change of organizing strategies is one of many necessary step to empower or even revitalize the Japanese trade unions (Nakamura 2007:18-20). With a diversified labor market, the question is whether the enterprise unions’ organizing strategies have changed to include non-regular workers as well in their organization.

1.2 Purpose of Research

The aim of this research is to *study if and how the Japanese enterprise unions' organizing strategies has changed with the increase of non-regular workers*. More specifically, I intend to examine whether unions are organizing non-regular workers or not. Furthermore, I intend to locate and define the forces behind the development of organizing strategies. Since it has been argued by some critics that enterprise unions is not an independent organization from the directives of the enterprise (Benson, 2008:24), the hypothesis of this thesis is that enterprise unions with a strong enterprise identity are less prone to organize non-regular workers. With a strong enterprise identity, I refer to the close relationship between the enterprise and the enterprise unions.

To analyze organizing strategies and the support or reluctance to change, I have developed a theoretical model of organizing change, based on Kurt Lewin's "3-step Model of Change". Two theoretical concepts are attached to the model: the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness. The aim of the thesis is to portray and analyze the development of Japanese enterprise unions' organizing strategies based on the findings from the interviews and send-out questions conducted in the study together with national statistics and surveys as well as previous research.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions have been formed in accordance with the research purpose:

- 1) *With the increase of non-regular workers, have the Japanese enterprise unions changed their organizing strategies?*
- 2) *What factors have influenced the development of Japanese enterprise unions' organizing strategies?*
- 3) *Is the relationship between management and enterprise union a determining factor regarding the organizing approach made by the enterprise unions?*

1.4 Terminology

Since enterprise unionism is a well-defined concept in the literature, a discussion of the concept is not deemed necessary. However, the definition of the “non-regular workers” has been a challenge and a problem for many researchers, especially regarding part-time workers. In Japanese, a part-time worker can be defined as *arubaitaa*, *paato* (also called *paato – taimaa*) or *friitaa* depending on different characteristics of the worker as a person. For instance, if it is a student or married woman (Rebick 2005:61). But it can also be based on other factors. As described by Rebick (Ibid): “Young women may prefer the term ‘*friitaa*’ to ‘*paato*’, because it has a more positive connotation, suggesting a free life without too many serious commitments”. Sometimes part-timer is defined as a worker that works less hours than the regular worker but at other times it is a label made by the employer (Ibid). In this thesis, the term non-regular worker refers primarily to the three employments types in Table 1.

Part-time workers	Includes workers that: work less than a regular employee (generally less than 35 hours a week); that are defined by the employer as part-time worker (hourly paid). Include all different definitions like <i>arubaitaa</i> and <i>friitaa</i> .
Contract workers	A worker with special skills who is employed on a fixed-term. <i>Shokutaku</i> is included, which means that the worker is re-employed after having reached the age for retirement.
Agency Worker (Dispatched Workers)	An employee hired from an agency.

TABLE 1. MAIN TYPE OF NON-REGULAR WORKERS. BASED ON THE DEFINITIONS BY KEIZER (2010:52) REBICK (2005:60-63) AND HAMAGUCHI AND OGINO (2011:4-5).

1.5 Disposition.

The thesis is structured as follows. *Chapter 2* includes the methodological discussion and a presentation of the applied research method. *Chapter 3* presents previous research and the thesis contribution to the field. *Chapter 4* describes the theoretical approach of the thesis and the development of the theoretical model applied in the study. In *Chapter 5* the findings from the answers from the informants as well as previous research and quantitative data are

presented. The research findings are later analyzed in *Chapter 6*. A summary of my findings and suggestions for future research will be presented in *Chapter 7*.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Metatheoretical approach

The aim of this thesis is to analyze enterprise unions' organizing strategies as well as if and how these strategies have changed in the new context. Based on this purpose, I adhere to the philosophical field of *Social Constructionism* (also called *Interpretivism*). This paradigm follows that the researcher believes that there are a number of realities instead of one and that the reality “ [...] is not an entity in and of itself but is local, temporally and historically situated, fluid, context specific and shaped in conjunction with the researcher” (Bailey 2007:53). The aim for the researcher is to study respondents' perspectives of the world that is constantly changing and constructed by social relations (Cresswell 2013:24 – 25; Bryman 2012:33). A researcher must also “position themselves” in the study and how his or her own experiences affects their interpretation of the data (Cresswell 2013:25).

Based on this philosophical approach, I argue that the “reality” displayed in this thesis (from the selection of data) is one among many and that the descriptions and explanations of the enterprise unions' organizing strategies are based on the informants' individual experiences and understandings of the world. Another study with other methods and data can produce other results. Moreover, I am also aware that my understanding of the data is also shaped by my own experiences and background.

2.2 Research Design

Based on the definition made by Stake (1995:3), this thesis is an *intrinsic case study*. The research will only focus on the issue of enterprise unions and their organizing strategies and not on other union issues or concerns. The research has also adopted a deductive approach (Bryman 2012:24 – 26), where I will test my hypothesis against my empirical findings to see whether this hypothesis is correct or not.

The research uses a mixed type of methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative data where the quantitative material will be supplementary, contributing to the understanding of the qualitative data.

2.3 Data Collection

To conduct the study, the research has collected data from both primary and secondary sources. Interviews and send-out questions through e-mail represent the primary sources while relevant literature and national statistics as well as surveys form the secondary data.

2.3.1 Interviews and Sent-out Questions

I conducted in total four interviews for the purpose of the research. The selection of interviewees was based on the criteria that the informants would have knowledge of non-regular workers, the Japanese labor movement and the organizing strategies of labor unions. Depending on these sample criteria, I was able to make interviews with three union officials (one from the industrial union UA Zensen and two from the national union confederations Rengo and Zenroren) as well as one interview with a researcher, Hak-Soo Oh, from the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT).

The interviews made with the unions' officials were conducted by the use of interpreters. In the cases of UA Zensen and Zenroren, the interpreters worked at the union. However, during the interview with Rengo, there were two interpreters: one student from Waseda University and one colleague from the international department at Rengo. During my interview with Oh, the interview was conducted in English.

All interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the interview guide was prepared beforehand but I let "the flow of the interview" decide how and when the questions were brought up (Bailey 2007:100). As I have adopted an interpretive philosophical approach, the purpose of the interview was to have "a dialogue with the interviewee, rather than simply ask questions" (Ibid). However, some questions were not discussed or had to be clarified after the interviews and to solve this issue, a document with follow-up questions was sent out by e-mail to all informants, where both questions and the answers to me were translated by their co-workers. All interviewees except Haruna from Rengo were able to answer the follow-up questions.

I also sent out questions to two researchers: Arjan Keizer and Charles Weathers. These two have previously written about the topic and I considered their opinions to be useful for my

research. Unable to do an interview with them, I sent a document with questions through e-mail to them. In total, including the interviews and the sent-out questions, I was able to collect six informants. Their responses and arguments will be presented and analyzed against the theoretical model together with relevant secondary sources.

2.3.2 Secondary Sources

To complement the material collected from the interviews and send-out questions, the analysis also uses secondary sources. Relevant literature as well as quantitative material in the form of national statistics and surveys is used to provide an overall picture and support the qualitative data. It should be noted that all materials used are from English sources.

2.4 Critical Considerations

Even if the purpose is to study the enterprise unions, these unions have not been interviewed or contacted during this research. This is due to the concern of accessibility. I was not able to contact these unions due to my limited knowledge in the Japanese language and I did not possess any connections that could introduce me to these unions. Despite this, the interviews made by the industrial union and the two national confederations and the findings from the researchers will provide an interesting perspective on the enterprise unions' organizing strategies.

The interviews were about two hours long and all made at the interviewees' workplaces, which made the interviewees comfortable and relaxed since they were interviewed in a place that they are familiar with. However, I am also aware that the place of the interview might have impacted the responses by the interviewees to my questions. As mentioned, interpreters were used and they were generally workers from the same organization. This is especially a concern with the union officials, which might have felt pressure on how to answer my questions from their co-workers. In Japan, it is a common practice that co-workers join meetings and my interviews were no exception: in all interviews, there were either one or two persons from the same organization or research facility attending the interview. I am aware of the problematic issue of other people attending the interviews and I will consider it when using these findings.

The language barrier has been a great obstacle in this research. During my field work in Japan, I found literature which I could not access since it was only written in Japanese. This has restricted my material to only English publications. Furthermore, the interviews and the answers to the send-out questions were translated into English. I am aware that this also limits the research when some information can be lost in the translation process.

It should be noted that the surveys and statistics used in the thesis generally covers all types of unions in Japan (For example, see the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Basic Survey on Labour Unions, Outline of Survey"). This means that the quantitative data used in this research might not only have studied enterprise unions. However, as mentioned before, enterprise unions are the dominant union type in Japan. In the governmental survey "Basic Survey on Trade Unions" from 1997, 95.8% of all unions were enterprise unions (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2013:84) Therefore, I argue that we can assume that these findings are most likely applicable on enterprise unions, since they are the main union type in Japan. Hence, these surveys will still be used to provide a description of enterprise unions' organizing practices.

2.5 Trustworthiness

In Bryman's (2012) book the concept of trustworthiness is presented. Here, trustworthiness includes four concepts: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* (2012:49, 390 - 393). The first, credibility, is closely related to internal validity and refers to whether the sources are trustworthy. This study meets the credibility criteria since the collected data from union officials and researchers has been collected first-hand and the other sources (literature, statistics and surveys) have all been published. Furthermore, the model used are based on previous well-established theories and has been formed to measure what the study is supposed to be measured as stated in the research purpose. The second issue is closely related to external validity and concerns if the results can be used to other situations. The research is based mainly on few selected informants arguments which mean that to generalize the findings would be too ambitious in this case study. Bryman also argues that findings in a case study cannot be generalized (2012:69 – 70). Therefore, this research does not have transferability. The issue of dependability, which matches the concept reliability, asks "are the findings likely to apply at other times?" (Bryman 2012:49). Despite the use of fictional names for some informants in this study, I am still convinced that the research can be partly repeated

if it includes the other informants and the quantitative data that has been used in this thesis. Lastly, confirmability concerns if the researcher allowed its own values in the research (Bryman 2012:49). I have been aware of my own personal values and limit their influence so that they do not interfere with the research and my findings too much. To summarize, I argue that the thesis shows good level of trustworthiness (even if the transferability and dependability is weak).

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Before each interview and sending out questions I presented myself and informed the informants about my research topic as well as the topic of the questions. Therefore, the interviews were made with informed consent from the interviewees (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:70 – 72). When there were requests by the interviewees or their interpreters for the questions to be send beforehand, this request was granted. I argue that, to give the informants time to prepare for the meeting did not have a negative impact on the outcome of the interview because the topic of discussion was not sensitive in character.

All informants in this study gave their consent to have their real names written in the thesis. However, to protect the sources, I have used fictional names for the union officials that were interviewed. The researchers contacted for this research have their real names published since I connect their answers and comments with their previous research and hence cannot use fictional names.

Finally, a voice recorder was used during the interviews. However, I asked each informant for their approval to use the recorder before the interview.

2.7 Reflexivity

Since arguments like gender relations will be included in the analysis, I am aware that my identity and background as a woman born in a society with strong presence of trade unionism can affect my research and its results.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

As far as this writer knows, before Norma Chalmers (1990) there was basically no research on Japanese trade unions approach towards non-regular workers. Today, however, there is a growing research on Japanese trade unions and the non-regular workers. Some previous research findings will be presented in this chapter and will be used later in the analysis.

Arjan Keizer (2011:5,12) describes in his article how non-regular workers have not been accepted as members by the enterprise unions because they were not part of the so-called “enterprise community”. The enterprise unions are namely seen as “[...] a major party to the exclusive social contract between firms and their regular employees” (Keizer 2011:12). To include non-regular workers and their needs would be of a great challenge for the unions (Keizer 2011:5). This has led to the image that the unions “[...] have been considered ‘unlikely’ [...] or ‘unable’ and ‘unwilling’ [...] to organize non-regular workers.” (Ibid). However, Keizer describes how more Japanese unions have begun organizing non-regular workers, especially part-time workers (Ibid). In his study, Keizer (2011:10) finds out that it is possible for unions to change their traditional approach and unionize non-regular workers. He states that these changes are slow but that “[...] unions have achieved a unique position as their representation of part-time workers makes the dualism in the labour market visible. The inclusion of non-regular employees as union members unites groups that are otherwise separated” (Keizer 2011:12). The unionization of non-regular workers creates the possibility to defeat the inequality between the workers but there is still the issue for unions to address the needs of regular and non-regular workers which tend to not be the same (Keizer 2011:10-11,12).

Another researcher is Charles Weathers who compared American and Japanese union’s unionization of non-regular workers. He points out that both American and Japanese unions are now “[...] placing high priority on the organization of marginal workers as a core strategy in efforts to revitalize their movements, and to respond to public perceptions of rising inequality and unfairness” (Weathers 2007:1). However, in contrast to the US, the “[...] organizing efforts remain comparatively low-profile and often experimental in Japan, reflecting a lesser sense of crisis and sharper division among unionists over strategies, objectives, and status” (Weathers 2007:2), even if the two countries do share some “common dynamics” (Ibid). In his conclusion, he states that organizing processes in both countries are

“time-consuming work” and that Japanese organizers have to work in secret and cautiously to, for instance, prevent harassment from other members (Weathers 2007:25) The Japanese unions tries to keep low dues towards the non-regular employees and tries to give the workers incentives to join, for instance by providing “discounted [...] health insurance programs” (Weathers 2007:26 – 27). But Weathers (2007:27) states that the “[...] lack of solidarity is a bigger problem, with the disrespect or lack of concern for regular toward non-regular workers being a major problem”.

Kaye Broadbent completely focuses her research on the gender-power relations in the Japanese enterprise unions. In her article, she argues that women are not generally represented by the Japanese unions and connects this to the union officials who tends to be only men. According to these male union officials, the female part-time workers are not concerned with the union (Broadbent 2001:330). Broadbent finds in her study that the female part-time workers feels abandoned by the enterprise unions who are unable to address their interests. According to her the unions does not assist the female workers: instead they support the gender separation between employments. Broadbent concludes that: “Part-time workers are doubly disadvantaged - male dominance of the union leads to sexism, and the organizational structure of enterprise unions does little to facilitate consideration of their grievances” (Ibid).

Most of the research in this field has been made by “The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training” (JILPT). Briefly described, this is a government organization that supports the labor policies in Japan by producing research related to labor issues. Several researchers in the JILPT has addressed the issue of Japanese unions and the organizing of non-regular workers. One of them is Kazunari Honda (2007:108) who argues that the communication and information between unions and workers is lacking and that unions, to increase the membership, must inform and educate the workers so that they know that the unions are good for them.

Finally, the JILPT researcher Hak-Soo Oh wrote an article about the unionization of part-time workers. He argues that the most common way to organize them is adopt the union shop agreement² and to let these workers be included. But to include the part-time workers in the

² A union shop agreement is “an agreement by which the union obligates an employer to dismiss any employees who have not joined or have been expelled or resigned from the union” (Hanami and Komiya, 2011, p.159).

union shop agreement depends on the managements and unions “strategic approach” (Oh 2012:513 – 514). Oh defines two approaches: the homogeneous and the heterogeneous strategy. In the first perspective, part-time workers receives the same treatment as regulars while in the second approach the two types of employment are treated differently and union excludes part-timers from membership or at least gives them less benefits (Oh 2012:514). From his studies on a number of unions, Oh concludes that when unions have a “representative crisis” (namely, when they lack the majority representation) they will organize the part-timers (2012:521) More importantly, Oh argues that the main trigger to organize part-timers is when the unions in the company faces increased competition from other trade unions (who will organize part-time workers) (Ibid). When unions try to organize the part-time employees, they take “[...] a cooperative approach to persuade management to accept the unionization [...] on the grounds that it would enhance labour productivity and business recovery.” (Ibid). The eligibility for membership by the unions were either based on “working hours and the level of job grade” (Ibid). Finally, the strategic choice by the managers and unions (either homogeneous or heterogeneous) depended upon if they wanted “to achieve a high-performance work system” or not. However, Oh (2012:522) points out that the homogeneous strategy has had a series of positive outcome, both for the workers, the unions and the enterprises.

3.1 Thesis Contribution to the Research Field

Even if there already exists a number of research on the Japanese trade unions and their organizing strategies towards non-regular workers, the research here aims to support the research field by introducing a different theoretical approach that I have not so far witnessed among the scholars. By combining a model of organizational change with two theoretical concepts of action, a new theoretical discussion is provided on unionizing practices and which can contribute further to our attempts of understanding the Japanese enterprise unions’ organizing strategies.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Selection of Theoretical Approach

In the field of organization research, there are many theoretical approaches and concepts but there are no tailor-made organizational theories regarding organizing strategies. Since I did not have the possibilities to study a single enterprise unions' organizing strategies in detail, I cannot use a detailed analytical tool like other researchers have done to study changes in unions³. Facing these challenges, I have decided to design my own theoretical model which is based on Kurt Lewin's 3-step Model of Change and where I have attached two theoretical concepts (Logic of Consequence and Logic of Appropriateness). These two concepts will be used to create a theoretical understanding and explanation to the forces for and against change. The concepts will be described after the presentation of Lewin's change model.

4.2 Lewin's 3-step Model of Change

According to Kurt Lewin, change is constructed by the strength and weakness of forces that either favors change or is resistant to change. This means that stability is not just a product of forces that are against change but also because of a deadlock between the forces. Thus, when forces supporting change are stronger than the forces against change, the organization will begin to change (Angel-Sveda 2012:77; Hatch and Cunliffe 2007:309). Examples of forces that "determine change" are technological development and "improvement of working conditions" (Angel-Sveda 2012:77). On the other hand, "old mentalities" and "fear from something new" are examples of factors that resist change (Ibid). Finally, what generate change are factors outside and inside the organization but also factors of economic, political and cultural elements (Ibid).

Developed in the 1950's, Lewin's established a 3-step model of change that would come to have huge influence on scholars and researchers in organizational development and change. Even if Lewin's general argumentation about organizational change has received criticism, the model is still in use today (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006:309-310; Medley and Akan

³ For further reading, please read Edmund Heery (2005) article "Sources of change in trade unions" or Carola Frege and John Kelly's (2004) book "Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for union revitalization in a Globalizing Economy."

2008:494; Burnes 2004:992 – 998). Lewin’s model is a theoretical process of change that is divided into three stages: “unfreezing”, “movement” and “refreezing”⁴ (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006:309 - 310).

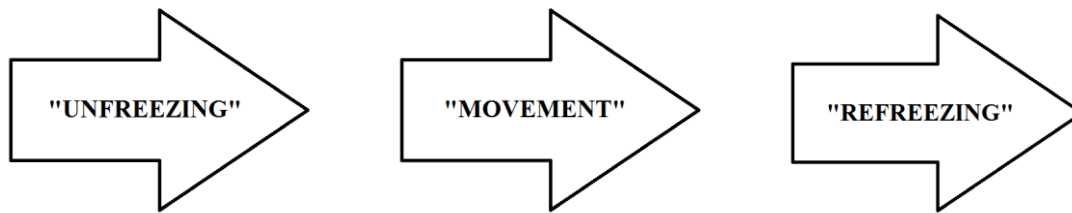


FIGURE 2. KURT LEWIN’S MODEL OF CHANGE. FIGURE MADE BY AUTHOR.

At the first stage, the balance between the forces for and against change are disturbed and becomes unstable. The members in the organization believe that there is a need to change due to the persuasion by the so-called “change agent”⁵ (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006:309 – 310; Medley and Akan 2008:487; Angel-Sveda 2012:78). As described by Medley and Akan (2008:487 – 488): “Once the need for change is indicated, organizational members can begin to unfreeze old behaviors and attitudes and become open to new ideas as they see and experience the usefulness of the ‘discovered’ new behaviors or approaches.”

The next step in the process is the movement. Here “[...] the change agent identifies, planes and implements appropriate strategies [...]” (Angel-Sveda 2012:78). This process will not end until the balance between the forces for and against change are restored (“refreezing”, the last step of the model), where “the new behavioral patterns are institutionalized” (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006:309 – 310). The aim of the last step in the process is that the organization’s members accept and incorporate the new changes in the organization (Medley and Akan 2008:488). The last step in the model is very important: if this step is not completed the change will be “ineffective” (Angel-Sveda 2012:78).

In this study, I will use Lewin’s Model of Change to explain enterprise unions’ organizing strategies. But the model will be modified because some parts of the model in its original form is difficult to apply in this study. For instance, traditionally the research field of organizational change has been divided between two approaches: “Planned Change” and

⁴ The steps of “movement” and “refreezing” have also been named “change” and “freeze”, see Angel-Sveda (2012:78).

⁵ Borrowing Angel-Svedas (2012:78) definition, this concept refers to: “[...] a person who facilitates change through group interventions”.

“Emergent Change”. The planned organizational change perspective implies that a change is planned and originated by agents in the organization (Livne-Trandach and Bartunek 2009:3 - 4). On the other hand, the followers of emergent organizational change approach describes how a change is a “[...] continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions” (Livne-Trandach and Bartunek 2009:5-6). Kurt Lewin and his model of change belongs to the planned change approach. For instance, as illustrated above, the organizational change occurs due to the initiative inside the organization with the change agents as initiator. Lewin’s model of change was actually one of the earliest contributions to the planned change approach (Angel-Sveda 2012:78; Hatch and Cunliffe 2006:309).

But this approach of organizational change is problematic to apply in this thesis. It is difficult to know if a change of organizing strategies is planned by the union officers or if the changes are a result of adaption. I argue that it is more likely that a change (if it has occurred) has been made due to a combination of the two approaches. As Livne-Trandach and Bartunek (2009:29) states: “[...] a full picture of organizational change requires appreciation of both planned change and emergent change and their interactions with each other.” Therefore, I will not use the theoretical approach behind the model (that the organizational change is planned). Instead, I will argue that the steps in the model (unfreezing, movement and refreezing) are triggered by both a planned change and emergent change. Moreover, the central focus in my model of change will be on the factors that favors or are against change. To theoretically understand the factors for and against change, I have selected two theoretical concepts: the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness.

4.3 The Logic of Consequence

Closely related to the rational choice theory, the Logic of Consequence (LoC) describes how actors select a decision among alternatives to maximize the outcomes in favor of the decision maker (March 1994:2 - 3). In this perspective, the “society is constituted by individuals for the fulfillment of individual ends” and that actions can only be understood through the consequences that can be achieved (March and Olsen 1998:950).

For the purpose of this thesis, the LoC can provide theoretical clarifications for both factors for and against change. Enterprise unions might change their organizing strategies because they might view this action with a possible profitable outcome. The same goes for the

resistance of change: to keep the old organizing strategies might be more beneficial than to change it.

But this concept of actions derived by anticipated consequences has received criticism. For instance, March and Olsen criticizes it for neglecting the role of identity, institutions and rules to influence the behavior of actors (1998:951). Therefore another logic of action has also been used which focus on the concepts of identity, rule and situation.

4.4 The Logic of Appropriateness

Being a core notion in the normative institutionalism in the New Institutionalism framework (Peters 2012:27), the Logic of Appropriateness (LoA) brings an interesting perspective on action making. LoA states that an actor's actions "[...] are matched to situations by means of rules organized into identities." (March 1994:57). In this approach, activities are based on rules and that "human actors are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations [...]. Action involves evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation." (March and Olsen 1998:951).

Hence, actions made by the actor is based upon the ascribed identity or role that the actors have in a certain situation. This means that the actor needs to know the situation, its role and "what the obligations of that role in that situation are" (March and Olsen 1989:160). When reaching a decision, actors need to consider three questions (March 1994:58). I have placed these questions in Table 2 together with the questions that an agent considers according to the LoC. This comparison will demonstrate the differences between the two logics.

LoA is applicable on organizations because an organizing unit also possess an identity and behaves in a certain way according to ascribed descriptions. But do not expect that organizational (or individual) behavior is easy to forecast because it is rule-based. Actions that are based on rules are unpredictable and "situations, identities and rules can all be ambiguous" (March 1994:61).

Logic of Appropriateness		Logic of Consequence	
<i>Recognition (of situation).</i>	“What kind of situation is this?”	<i>Alternatives.</i>	“What actions are possible?”
<i>Identity.</i>	“What kind of person am I? Or what kind of organization is this?”	<i>Expectations.</i>	“What future consequences might follow from each alternative? How likely is each possible consequence, assuming that alternative is chosen?”
<i>Rules.</i>	“What does a person such as I, or an organization such as this, do in a situation such as this?”	<i>Preferences.</i>	“How valuable (to the decision maker) are the consequences associated with each of the alternatives?”
		<i>Decision rule.</i>	“How is a choice to be made among the alternatives in terms of the values of their consequences?”

TABLE 2. QUESTIONS RELATED TO LOA AND LOC. MADE BY AUTHOR, BASED ON MARCH (1994:2-3, 58).

As demonstrated above, the approach of LoA is different from the LoC. When the LoC describes decisions as deliberate, the LoA describes actions as “intentional but not willful”, where behavior are based on obligations to an ascribed role rather than personal gains (March and Olsen 1989:160 – 161). But the two logics do share a common trait: they are both oriented towards describing the actions and decisions by an individual actor (March and Olsen 1998:952). There are those who argue that organizational change can be explained explicitly with either positions but more scholars argue that researchers should combine the two perspectives (Entwistle 2011:665). As stated by March and Olsen themselves: “Any particular action probably involves elements of each” (March and Olsen 1998:952). Thus, actor’s

decisions and actions are both formed by the goal orientation and “by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions” (Ibid).

As with LoC, I will also use the LoA in my theoretical model. I argue that, in order to act appropriately according to the rules ascribed to its role, a Japanese enterprise union might change its previously accepted practices and structure to receive recognition in the new environment. For instance, if the context around the organization has changed (like the increase of non-regular workers), this in turn might lead to changes in the organizations identity. This might then lead to a change of an organization’s actions to fit the new identity and its obligations. But the logic might as well be used to explain resistance to change. If the new situation does not necessarily lead to new rules and a redefinition of an organizational identity, then the organizations actions will probably not change because its current identity is appropriate. It all comes down to the desire to do what is most appropriate that will facilitate the organization to change or to retain previous practices. Therefore, I find the logic of appropriateness appropriate to use in my model.

4.5 The Model of Change in Enterprise Unions’ Organizing Strategies

Based on the theoretical model of change by Kurt Lewin, I have designed a model that will be applicable to analyze the Japanese enterprise unions’ organizing strategies. The generator for change is the increase of non-regular workers. The model is illustrated in Figure 3. Below I will provide a description of the model and its stages toward new organizing strategies.

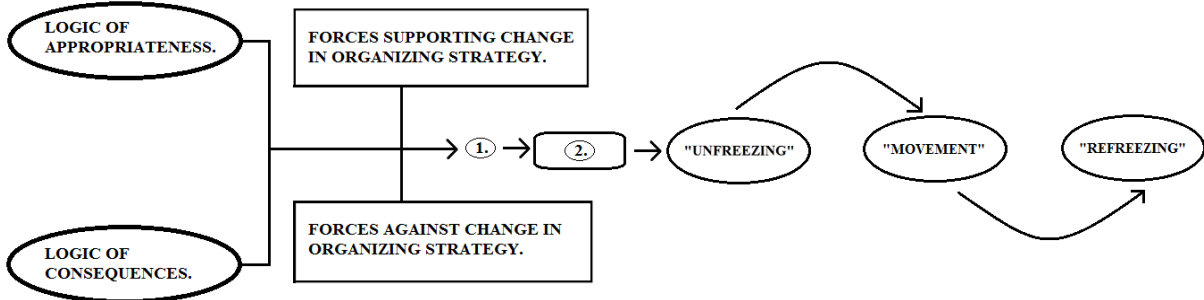


FIGURE 3. AUTHORS MODEL OF CHANGE IN UNIONS’ ORGANIZING STRATEGIES.

The model has two forces: forces supporting change and forces against change. In step (1), the forces are balanced and the organizing strategies will not change from its traditional approach. But this balance can be disturbed and a situation of “unbalance” in the forces can occur (step (2)), which will start the paths towards new organizing strategies. To theoretically understand

the development (either towards change or against it), the two concepts of LoA and LoC are applied.

Finally, to understand the process of developing and installing new organizing strategies, Lewin's "unfreezing", "movement" and "refreezing" steps will be used. In the first step ("Unfreezing"), the old practices of organizing strategies will start to be questioned and criticized. Suggestions for new organizing strategies will lead to the second step ("Movement") in the process where the new changes of organizing strategies are formed and defined. Finally, in the last phase of the model ("Refreeze") the new organizing approach is institutionalized and becomes permanent strategies for the unions. Reaching this last step of the model will fulfill the process towards new organizing strategies.

This combination of theories will introduce a different way to understand enterprise unions organizing strategies than what has previously been done. Before the use of this theoretical model in the analysis chapter, I will in the next chapter present the findings from the collected data.

5 ENTERPRISE UNIONS’ ORGANIZING STRATEGIES

In this chapter, the collected data regarding enterprise unions’ organizing strategies will be described and presented. The findings has been divided into four themes in the following order: *the traditional organizing strategies, the forces supportive of change, the forces against change* and *the current organizing strategies*. Before the presentation of my findings, a description of the data is required.

The Informants.

Table 3 presents the six informants for this research. To protect the union officials’ identities, their exact position at the labor union is not stated.

<u>UNION OFFICIALS</u>	<u>RESEARCHERS</u>
<p>Minato: works at the “Contingent Labor Bureau” at Zenroren.</p> <p>Haruna: works at the Department of Nonregular Employment at JTUC-RENGO.</p> <p>Yamato: works at the organizing and consolidation bureau at UA Zensen.</p>	<p>Arjan Keizer: a researcher at Manchester Business School.</p> <p>Hak-Soo Oh: a senior researcher at the department of Industrial Relations at the JILPT.</p> <p>Charles Weathers: a researcher at Osaka City University Graduate School of Economics.</p>

TABLE 3. THE INFORMANTS.

Due to the size of the thesis, only the central arguments and responses by the informants have been used. The arguments and opinions are summarized in the chapter and quotations are used when needed. The interview questions, follow-up questions and list of questions to Keizer and Weathers are attached in the Appendix Chapter. It should be noted that the discussions have been about non-regular workers and at times explicitly about part-time workers. Since the part-time employment is the largest group among the non-regular employments, the arguments about this employment type will be used as representation of non-regular workers

in general. Furthermore, sometimes the term “precarious workers” were used during the discussions and I argue that this term was used as synonymous to non-regular workers.

The Quantitative Data.

The selected surveys and statistics are from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and has been presented in the JILPT publication “Labor Situation in Japan and its Analysis: Detailed Exposition 2012 / 2013”. The use of the quantitative data has been limited since the focus of the research is on the informants’ opinions and arguments.

Relevant Literature.

Previous research findings will also be included in this chapter but, as with the quantitative data, the use of literature has been limited and only when deemed necessary.

5.1 The Traditional Organizing Strategies

As described in the Introduction Chapter, enterprise unions in Japan have traditionally only organized regular workers. This has been the general practice even if there are no Japanese laws that hinders the unions to organize non-regular workers like part-time workers (Araki 2005:42). During the interview, Minato admitted that the Zenroren did traditionally only organized regular workers (Recorded Interview, February 5 2014).

Hak-soo Oh explained that the non-regular workers previously were only a small part of the Japanese workforce. These workers did not organize themselves because the majority of the non-regular workers were housewives and did not make attempts to improve their working conditions (Oh, Personal Communication, May 7 2014). Furthermore, he explained that the enterprise unions have organized workers through the use of the union shop agreement and this agreement has not covered the non-regular workers (Ibid).

Charles Weathers explained the Japanese unions organizing approach: “It is well known that enterprise unions have not wanted to organize non-regular workers. Plenty of surveys show that. [...] as far as I can recall up to a few years ago surveys indicated that most enterprise

unions did not organize non-regular workers, and had no plans to do so.” (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014).

However, Weathers stated that the industrial union Zensen Domei has been the exception to the common practice of only organizing regular workers and even if he cannot provide further examples, he believes that “some left-wing unions have probably helped non-regular workers since the 1950’s, even if they were not (official) union members” (Personal Communication, May 9 2014). Furthermore, he pointed out that the non-regular workers have the possibility to create unions and that this is part of the reason why community unions were born (Ibid). Weathers stated that “sometimes it is organizationally easier to form separate unions even if a major enterprise union is willing to help” (Ibid).

To summarize, even if there might have been exceptions to the rule, the general image is that regular employees have been the focus in the traditional organizing strategies by the enterprise unions.

5.2 The Forces Supportive of Change

All informants in this research have presented different kinds of factors that can be considered supportive of change. Keizer (Personal Communication, May 4 2014) believed that the organizing strategies towards non-regular workers are based most likely on the unions desire to improve the number of members and that “given the ‘special’ relationship between firms and unions in the Japanese context, such initiatives may also be ‘sponsored’ by management” (Ibid).

Some factors that can have influenced the increase of unionized part-time workers are the increased number of part-time workers but also that their assignments and role in the corporation has changed (Haruna, Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). Haruna described how the part-time workers tasks have become more core and they are seen as important workers in the enterprise. Hence, Haruna said: “So, the recognition of part-time workers has changed” (Ibid). The changed assignments and role of the part-time workers was also expressed by Minato (Recorded Interview, February 5 2014), who stated that the part-time

workers have received more responsibilities and this has made it easier for the unions to organize them.

Another factor behind the increased unionization of part-timers is the spread of inspiration among the unions. Haruna described how, in the public sector, the non-regular workers working conditions are poor and these workers acknowledge the fact that to improve their situation, they need to organize themselves (Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). As they become organized, their working conditions improve (for instance, with higher wages) and the news about their accomplishments spread to other neighboring communities who follows their examples (Ibid). Hence, the change of organizing strategies can occur due to the inspiration by other unions. Haruna also pointed out that a changed organizing strategy might also be the changed attitude among the regular workers. The regular workers see how the unity at the workplace reduces because of the diversification of employment, which in turn might negatively affect the company's performance. Thus, the regular workers recognize that to organize non-regular workers is good for the company, their union and its members (Ibid).

Furthermore, Haruna stated that the issue of collective bargaining and the need that the unions must represent the majority of the workers can contribute to the increase of non-regular workers as union members (Haruna, Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). Haruna explained that, according to Japanese law, the unions must conclude an agreement with the management regarding certain issues such as overtime (Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). However, to make a collective agreement, the union must organize the majority of the workers. If the union has restricted their membership to regular workers at a workplace with more non-regular workers than regulars, then the union cannot be a majority union (Ibid). The argument regarding majority representation has been expressed by other scholars as well. Hiroyuki Fujimura (2012:10) discussed the issue of representation in his paper and stated that: "Unless those working in the same workplace are organized, irrespective of their employment status, it will be difficult to claim that the union 'represents the workplace' when engaging in discussions with management". This issue was also discussed by some of the informants in this study. According to Oh (Personal Communication, May 7 2014), one of the forces for change has been when the "minority unions" (which are enterprise unions that only organized a minority of the workers) see a need to organize non-regular workers to be able to accomplish the same rights as the "majority unions" (which are unions that has organized the majority of the employees at the enterprise). The minority enterprise unions then "had to

change the unionization strategies to include non-regular workers in union shop” (Ibid). The representation issue was also discussed by Yamato (Personal Communication, May 8 2014), who stated that when the part-time employment grows, the trade unions will not be able to represent the majority of the workers and thus will have a “declining union’s voice”. Hence, the representation issue can facilitate change.

Besides the majority representation, the collective agreement between management and unions seems also to influence change. Yamato explained that the union-shop agreement “provides benefits for both labor and management” and it can be used to unionize part-time workers (Personal Communication, May 8 2014). The process of negotiating with the employers to unionize part-time workers takes time but the union shop agreement is a more effective approach to organize a “greater number of part-timers” (Ibid). Inside Zenroren it is unusual with the union shop agreement but Minato stated that for those unions that use it, there are those who have established agreements that cover non-regular workers (Personal Communication, April 17 2014).

In his paper and during the interview, Oh argued that the general unions are also playing an important role to create change (Oh, Recorded Interview, February 18 2014). In my follow-up questions, he explained this further: “One of some factors unionizing non-regular workers is protecting the good relationship of the union and the enterprise. General union does collective bargaining with the enterprise if one or some of non-regular workers at the enterprise join their union to resolve the problems for example unjust dismissal. The enterprise and the enterprise union regard the general union’s collective bargaining with the enterprise as disturbing the good relations between them. The enterprise has to conclude the union shop including non-regular workers with the enterprise union to exclude the ‘disturbance’ of general unions” (Oh, Personal Communication, May 7 2014). I asked the other informants if they shared this statement. Minato perceived other individual unions positively, stating that they can stop non-regulars “[...] dismissal or improve their wage and working condition.” (Personal Communication, April 17 2014). This is beneficial for the employment safety for the non-regular employees and, as a result, profitable for the company. For the unions, it is also helpful since the quantity of unions will increase (Ibid). However, even if the “advancement of community union model helps to overcome company unionism”, Minato stated that he does not believe that it “completely contradict with company union model” and that “these models should have mutually reinvigorated” (Personal Communication, April 17

2014). Yamato stated that other kinds of unions can have some impact on organizing non-regular workers (Personal Communication, May 8 2014). When other unions are created in the company, the harmony of the Japanese industrial relations cannot continue, hence “the presence of the independent unions might be one of the triggers but it is not always the cause of organizing non-regular workers.” (Yamato, Personal Communication, May 8 2014). However, Weathers explained that, when it comes to increase the organizing rate of non-regular workers, the community unions “aren’t big enough” and the independent unions “will probably always lack scale, unless they can find a way to mobilize political support” (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014). Hence, the general unions (and community unions) can function as a pressure of change for both enterprise union and the company, even if their organizing strategies towards non-regular workers might not have any serious impact.

Finally, Weathers argued, like other informants in this study, about the institutional pressure (that unions may not represent the majority at the workplace and thus might “lose their priority bargaining privileges”) but he also stated that the public opinion, the social pressure, and the poor image of the enterprise unions supports the change (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014). He did not believe that it is the increase of non-regular workers per se that matters. Instead, he thought that “it is largely unions responding to public opinion, which is increasingly critical of discriminatory treatment, and concerned about the rising number low-paid workers. Also, the image of enterprise unions is poor right now, another reason for organizing non-regular workers.” (Ibid). The argument of public opinion is also discussed by Minato, who argued that the negative public opinion is good for the trade unions. The negative opinions from the Japanese people regarding the government deregulation policies has turned into support for the unions (Recorded Interview, February 5 2014).

5.3 The Forces Against Change

As with the supportive factors, there were various factors against change presented by the informants. For instance, Yamato argued that those trade unions that only have regular workers “do not feel necessity of organizing part-time workers” since the majority of the workers at the enterprise are regular workers (Personal Communication, May 8 2014). In my

follow-up questions, Minato presented two reasons why unions only organize regular workers: 1) there are less non-regular workers in this company or industry and 2) the non-regular workers are only performing “supplemental or simple jobs”. Minato stated that, in these circumstances, the enterprise union will not be likely to organize non-regular workers (Minato, Personal Communication, April 17 2014). The majority - minority issue and the working assignments seems to be important elements for unions in their organizing practices, since these issues were also discussed as supportive forces.

Keizer, on the other hand, believed that the unions’ reluctance to unionize non-regular workers refers to the argumentation that these workers “are not considered part of the ‘community’ in the same sense” (Personal Communication, May 4 2014). The sense of “community” at the enterprise is strong in Japan and it has even been discussed by some scholars that the workers social connection to the company should be considered the fourth pillar of Japanese industrial relations (Sako, 1997, p. 4). Hence, in Japan, the company is not viewed as “[...] a mere property of shareholders but a community in which regular workers are treated as full members” (Ibid). Other researchers have also pointed out the community argument and Hiromasa Suzuki (2004:15) stated in his article that this is why “regular employees of the enterprise exclusively form enterprise unions.” It seems, based on these findings, that the non-regular workers tend to be excluded from the enterprise community and thus not eligible for the union membership.

Among the factors against change, a common argument regards the non-regular workers own attitudes towards the trade unions. Oh explained that it has been argued that non-regular workers have “low interests” in the union activity and that it is difficult for the unions to collect union dues from these workers (Personal Communication, May 7 2014). Minato argued that the part-time workers do not perceive themselves as “main part of their work and also in the union” and not worthy of being union members and perceiving themselves as the “periphery” in the company and the union (Recorded Interview, February 5 2014). During the interview, Minato (Ibid) stated that precarious workers can face problems to become union members. Some unions just do not accept these workers as members, even if Zenroren itself has tried to change this attitude (Ibid). But he also explained that it is also the part-time workers choice, since they can try to become member of the already existing union or establish a new one since the Japanese trade union law permits the existence of two unions in

one enterprise (Ibid). During the interview Minato showed me a JILPT survey. In the survey precarious workers were asked where they go in case of problems or issue at work. Interestingly, 31% of the respondents in this survey stated that they had asked for help or consultation and among these, only 3.4% had turned to the unions for help (Ibid). After showing this survey, Minato stated that this was a “shocking number for the unions” and explains that Zenroren wants to change the current image of labor unions but this is “still in the process” (Ibid). Yamato also discussed the issue of part-time workers thoughts about unions and explains that this is “because they are not so sure of the merit or benefit of being union members. They have a contract with the company and the wage increase is not so drastic for part-time workers, so they are wondering if they have any benefit from being union members. They are mainly women and housekeepers, so they are quite difficult to travel or participate in the recreation services.” (Recorded Interview, February 18 2014). He continued: “[...] and also, another negative aspects for part-time workers is the union dues. In general, they are on the lower incomes compared to regular workers. Their income is quite low, so the expense, they have the keen attention to their expenses.” (Ibid) Hence, it seems that the problem resides with the non-regular workers and their perception of unions but also their financial situation.

As we could see above, there were explanations referred to the non-regular workers own perception of unions, but the questions remain how other actors react to the organizing of non-regular workers. Oh stated that an important actor against changing organizing strategies is the enterprise. For instance, when I asked which actor would mind a change of organizing strategies towards non-regular workers the most, Oh stated that it was the company’s management (Personal Communication, May 7 2014). Yamato (Recorded Interview, February 18 2014) explained that some employers might “reject or resist establishing trade unions because, especially conservative employers, deny [...] trade unions because they fear the power of the trade unions.” Hence, we should not forget the influence from the management. Furthermore, even if Yamato did not, however, see much resistance from the regular workers (Recorded Interview, February 18 2014), there are others who did. Oh stated that the opposition from the regular workers are one of the problems when organizing part-time workers (Recorded Interview, February 18 2014). The reader should also remember that this issue was also expressed by Weathers in his paper, where union officials had to work in secret

to not be discovered by other union members. Hence, other union members' opposition can also hinder change.

The practice of collective bargaining agreement was discussed by Yamato who said that for the union to organize workers, the "Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) clause on membership scope must be revised to extend CBA coverage to part-time workers, which usually covers regular workers only." (Personal Communication, May 8 2014). He explained that this is difficult if the management oppose this revision, which is because the management "is afraid of increasing workers' voices" (Ibid). Relevant to the discussion about collective bargaining agreement is the union shop agreement. Yamato explained that, since the union shop agreement takes time, it could be seen as a hindrance for those unions that "attempts to organize part-time workers in short-term" (Personal Communication, May 8 2014). In my question regarding the union shop agreement and whether this is a good practice for Japanese unions and workers involvement in unions, Weathers stated that this varies but that the union shop "probably in major firms it is somewhat abused" (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014). For example, it hinders other (independent) unions to establish in the firm (Ibid). Oh was unsure about the union shop agreement and stated that this agreement "can play a different role in each trade union" (Personal Communication, May 7 2014). It can both make it easier to organize workers but it also reduces the unions "active actions", which can lead to "the stagnation of its movement" (Ibid).

Minato described that the precarious workers faced discrimination and that there are examples of "labor disputes on the union members or union official discrimination" (Recorded Interview, February 5 2014). However, he argued that the non-existence of a union is more of an issue for these workers (Ibid).

Regarding the union image, Haruna stated that the part-time workers (non-union members) views the unions as something distant from them, that it is only for regular workers. She explains the situation for Rengo: "[...] In the past, Rengo was criticized being just a club for regular workers and closed circle for regular workers only. It is our big task to change such an image of Rengo as well of trade unions as a whole because many of them still has such an image towards us" (Haruna, Recorded Interview, January 31 2014).

In my question regarding what kind of arguments unions have for not unionize non-regular workers, Weathers answered that he does not think that there are any arguments among the unions to not organize these workers, merely that “they don’t want to draw attention to the issue” (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014). He thought that the close relationship the union has with the management plays an important part in this discussion. Weathers stated that he believed that almost all unions in the larger corporations have a close relationship with the management and that a majority of those unions “are not going to work too hard to organize non-regular workers and try to win good benefits for them.” (Ibid). But he also pointed out the employment law in Japan as part of the problem, because it supports the uneven treatment of workers which his difficult for the unions to beat. Hence, “even if the union is well intentioned, it is difficult to do because labor law allows differential treatment of workers, even when doing the same tasks” (Ibid). According to Weathers, for the unions to defeat the obstacles they face when organizing non-regular workers, the unions needs political support (however, currently the conservative party dominate) (Ibid).

5.4 The Current Organizing Strategies

Even if the past practices have not been in the favor of non-regular workers, there seems to be a wind of change among the Rengo’s affiliated unions. Currently, 10% of the union members in Rengo are part-time workers and Haruna described during the interview how more part-time workers are becoming union officials in the industrial federations (Haruna, Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). For the purpose of this year’s *Shunto*⁶, Rengo’s president has for the first time decided to travel around Japan to meet the non-regular workers and discuss their problems (Ibid). During the interview, Haruna explained that Rengo have adopted a series of policies towards the part-time workers and the national union confederation has tried to inspire their affiliated unions to organize non-regular workers. However, she also explained that they can only encourage the unions and that “it is not our case for our member trade unions to organize such part-time workers” (Recorded Interview, January 31 2014). For the UA Zensen, Yamato explained that the organization has a history of organizing part-time workers and that they have more non-regular workers as members than regular workers (Recorded Interview, February 18 2014).

⁶ Created in the mid1950’s, Shunto or the “Spring Bargaining Offensive” is a collective bargaining system were negotiations between labor unions and employer would take every spring with the wage increase as the main subject of discussion. Even if it has lost some influence it is still in use today (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014:118-119).

According to Minato, there are still unions that only organize regular employees but, these unions are declining (Personal Communication, April 17 2014). For Zenroren, 8% of their union members are now part-time workers but Minato explained that it differs between the affiliated unions (Minato, Recorded Interview, February 5 2014). Minato stated that to organize non-regular workers “is the main task for Japanese labor unions” but that the “Japanese company unions system does not correctly respond or is not strong enough” (Ibid). Minato argued during the interview that it is important that the unions listen to the needs of the workers and “provide a place to listen to their demands or stories” (Ibid). Often the part-time workers “doesn’t know how to solve their problems at their workplace that is why the unions is approach to them, to listen to their demand or their problems and then provide the measures on how to solve their problems” (Ibid).

As Rengo, the Zenroren has tried to influence their affiliated unions. For instance, Zenroren use “separate low dues from affiliates for non-regular workers” (Minato, Personal Communication, April 17 2014). Both Minato and Haruna argued that the government has not played any part in the increased unionization of part-time workers (Minato, Recorded Interview, February 5 2014: Haruna, Recorded Interview, January 31 2014).

However, even if organizing non-regular workers has increased it seems that this does not necessarily solve the issues related to the non-regular employment. During the interview, Yamato explained that it was still problematic to improve part-time workers working conditions and he stressed the issue of representation: “[...] the activities of trade unions in Japan is designed for the regular workers. It is an issue or challenge for us to transform those regular workers driven union activities to the part-time workers, suitable their lifestyles or their trends or their tendency” (Yamato, Recorded Interview, February 18 2014). But he argued that UA Zensen tries to convince the part-time workers to join by providing services such as education and training (Ibid). On the other hand, Weathers was critical whether the unions takes their “tasks seriously”. He explained that the unions organize and gets money from the non-regular workers (in forms of union dues) but this does not mean that the unions are “representing them well”. He stated that: “my impression is that they are responding to public opinion rather than sense of mission” (Weathers, Personal Communication, May 9 2014).

If we look at statistics, we can see that the organizing of part-time workers have increased among all Japanese unions (see Diagram 1). Even if it was pointed out by Minato during the interview that the part-time organizing rate is low (Minato, Recorded Interview, February 5 2014), the reader should be aware that the general unionization rate has decreased for many years and in 2013 was 17.7%, which means that less than one fifth of the Japanese workers belongs to a union (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2014b).

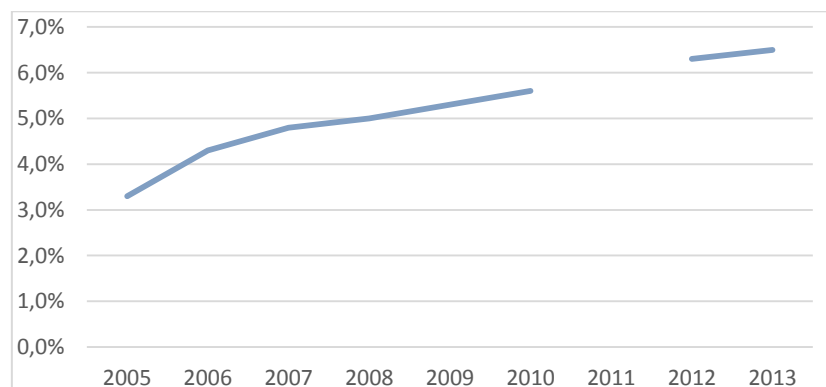


DIAGRAM 1. UNIONIZATION RATES OF PART-TIME WORKERS BETWEEN 2005 AND 2013. SOURCE: MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LABOUR AND WELFARE, "BASIC SURVEY ON LABOUR UNIONS": 2010, 2013. THE YEAR OF 2011 HAS NO RECORDS, THEREFORE THERE IS A HOLE IN THE DIAGRAM.

The MHLW “Survey on Trade Unions Activities” from 2008 shows that even if the company has part-time workers, 83% of the trade unions do not organize these workers. Even if they do provide membership to these workers (only 17% in the survey), it is merely 10% of these unions that have part-time workers as members. Less than 10% of the unions who have part-timers in the enterprise tries to organize these workers, while most unions does not make the effort to organize part-time workers (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2013:90 - 91). However, this should also be put into a bigger picture: In the MHLW “Survey on Trade Unions” from 2008, barely 30% of the unions in the survey prioritized the enlargement of the union. For those unions that had a focus to expand the organization, the targets were mostly regular workers (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2013:90 - 92). Other scholars has also argued that non-regular workers are still outside the scope of enterprise unions’ organizing strategies (Suzuki 2004:16).

To summarize, according to the findings in this chapter, there seems to be a change among unions where more enterprise unions are organizing non-regular workers. However, we should recall Weather’s statement, that it was not too long ago that many enterprise unions did not make any attempt to organize non-regular workers. Even if the union officials interviewed here argues that they try to influence their affiliated unions, we must also recall

that the national union confederations and the industrial unions have a limited influence on the enterprise unions. Additionally, it has been argued by some of the informants as well as shown in the national statistics that the unionizing of non-regular workers are low and many of these workers are still not organized (even if the unionization of part-time workers has increased). Moreover, even if the national surveys may include all Japanese unions and not just the enterprise unions, they demonstrate how the majority of the Japanese unions do not make attempts to organize the part-time workers. From the findings in this study, the image of unions current organizing strategies becomes blurry, were some findings argues that unions has begun to change while others describes how the enterprise unions continue the old organizing approach.

6 ANALYSIS

Based on the data from previous research, national surveys and statistics as well as the comments from the informants, this chapter will analyze the Japanese enterprise unions' organizing strategies. In Table 2 the main factors identified by the informants and previous research are summarized.

Factors supporting change	Factors against change
Close relationship between management and union: support from management.	Close relationship between management and union.
Representation (majority – minority union).	Resistance from management and regular workers that are union members.
Unions' goal to increase membership rates.	Not part of the enterprise community.
Pressure from other (independent) unions.	Minor interest or resistance from union officials.
Public opinion / Social pressure.	Minor interest or the perception of unworthy of being union member from non-regular workers.
Poor union image.	Non-regular workers are the minority workforce at the workplace.
Institutional pressure.	Non-regular workers do not perform core tasks or only simple tasks.
The non-regular workers work assignments and role has become more core.	Gender perspective (Broadbent 2001).
The number of non-regular workers has increased.	Lack of information and communication (Honda 2007).
Changed attitude among regular workers.	Union shop agreement (include only regular workers).
Union shop agreement (include non-regular workers).	Unions do not know how to address the different interests from regular and non-regular workers (Keizer 2011).
Inspiration from other unions.	Difficult to get union dues from non-regular workers.

	Japanese Labor Law supports unequal treatment of workers.
	Lack of political support.

TABLE 2. THE MAIN FACTORS FOR AND AGAINST CHANGE IN ORGANIZING STRATEGIES.

As visible in Table 2, there are more factors against change of organizing strategies than there are factors supporting it. This could be used as an explanation why a number of unions do not organize non-regular workers but such an argument is dangerous. This is because it does not consider the specific contexts each enterprise union is situated in. The forces against change can be stronger within some enterprise unions even if the forces for change outnumber them and vice versa. For instance, an enterprise union might have a majority of workers who are non-regular workers or feel pressure from the public opinion to change but since the factor against change (like the resistance from management or other union members) are considered more important to the union, the union may not change its organizing strategies. Hence, I argue that some factors might be considered more important to the union than others and even if the number of factors might have influence, it cannot be used to explain the selection of organizing strategies.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there seems to be different kinds of organizing strategies used by the enterprise unions. The findings in the research describes how some unions are organizing non-regular workers while most unions still do not organize the non-regular workers. Let us use the concepts of Logic of Appropriateness (LoA) and Logic of Consequence (LoC) to analyze enterprise unions' organizing strategies. Due to the size of the thesis, not all factors from Figure 2 can be addressed in the discussion and therefore, I have selected a couple of factors (both for and against change) that I consider important and which can create an interesting debate.

If we apply the LoA perspective on the research findings, it seems that some unions have changed their organizing strategies in their attempt to adapt to the new context (the rise of non-regular workers). That is, some unions have begun to question the current context of the Japanese labor market (*recognition of situation*), what kind of union it is (*identity*) and what the union should do when more workers are becoming non-regular workers (*rules*). For some unions it is deemed "appropriate" in the new labor market to change their identity by adopting a new organizational strategies to include more non-regular workers. However, as the findings

shows, there are many unions that continue to only organize and prioritize their work towards regular workers. For these unions, as Weathers also thought, the increase of non-regular workers is not an important issue and it does not change their union identity or role in the enterprise.

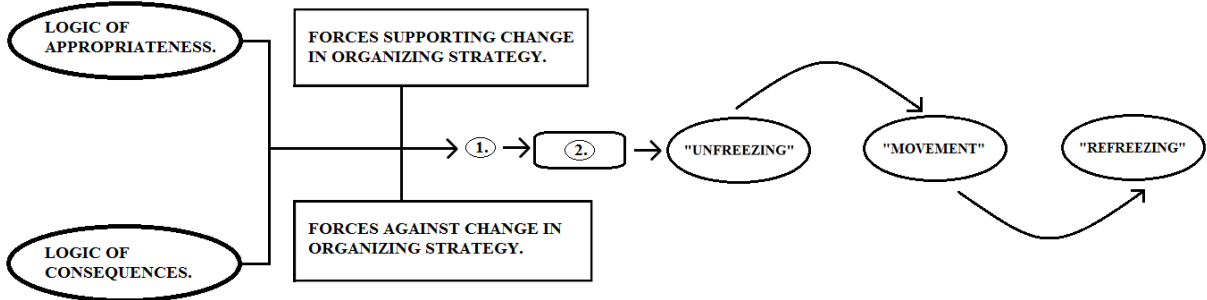
I argue that the main force that oppose the change of union identity (and thus organizing strategies) is the close relationship between management and unions. As the reader could see in the findings from the informants, a main hindrance to change the organizing strategies was the management. It seems that, due to its close connection to the management, the enterprise unions' organizing strategies becomes heavily influenced by the enterprise orientation, despite a changed labor situation. This means that even if the union recognize the new situation and a new appropriate role, this does not necessarily mean that it will change its organizing activities. However, the research findings also shows that the management can be supportive of change. Hence, the close management-labor relation can both constrain and support the unions to develop a new identity and change its organizing strategies.

Moreover, an interesting issue is the "enterprise community". The sense of enterprise community is, as stated before, strong within the Japanese society and when the enterprise union has a strong enterprise community identity, it might be difficult to change organizing strategies. It also seems, based on the findings in this research, that the access to the enterprise union community has been limited the regular workers. Interestingly, none of the informants discussed gender perspectives regarding the organizing strategies, despite the fact that most men are regular workers while non-regular workers are mostly women. However, it was expressed by some of the informants that regular workers and union officials oppose and discriminate the non-regular workers in the union. In his paper, Weathers described how some union organizers had to work in secret to unionize non-regular workers to not be discovered by the other union members. I argue that all these examples are connected to the sense of community identity. A redefinition of who has access to this community is needed in order for unions to change organizing strategies.

The theoretical position from the LoC is clearly visible in the research: the findings illustrates that the unions do calculate the outcomes of their actions. For instance, like the aim to increase the membership or to improve the public opinion. Thus, the "consequence" for unionizing non-regular is deemed profitable for the union. The same goes the other way

around: for those unions that has not changed their organizing strategies deem it more profitable to not organize non-regular workers. For instance, if they organize non-regular workers, this can harm its relationship with the management (who have shown disapproval of such activity). We should also recall Weathers argument in his paper that the unionization process is time-consuming. If the enterprise unions consider that organizing non-regular workers will be time-consuming and the outcome of organizing these workers might not be profitable (like complains from regular workers, opposition from enterprise, low financial contribution), the union might consider the old practices to be less risky and easier to predict the outcome from. Thus, I argue that the unions evaluate the expectations from each choice and chose the organizing strategies that is less harmful or has the highest profitability.

From the above discussion, we can see tendencies of both LoA and LoC in the enterprise unions' organizing strategies. This is not a surprising finding because, as stated in the theoretical chapter, actors possess both logics. By using these two concepts in the discussion, a deeper understanding of how enterprise unions might think regarding their organizing practices could be presented. The question remains though whether the enterprise unions has actually changed their organizing practices in this diversified labor market. Let us review the model. I want to remind the reader that the following discussion is based on the opinions of the informants and other data used in this case study and therefore cannot be considered the general opinion in Japan.



Based on the research findings, there seems to be different organizing strategies adopted by the Japanese enterprise unions. On the one hand, the union officials argued that more unions has changed their organizing strategies to include more non-regular workers. Of course, the union officials I interviewed may have felt the pressure to make this statement, especially with the presence of other union officials. However, this argument finds support in the national statistics, which shows that the unionization of part-time workers have increased.

Based on these findings, it seems that some enterprise unions have reached the (2) and the steps of “unfreezing”, “movement” and “refreezing” in the model.

On the other hand, however, there are still many unions that do not unionize non-regular workers. As the quantitative data shows, even if there are non-regular workers at the enterprise, most unions do not unionize them. Furthermore, only 30% of the unions were prioritizing organizational expansion and most were targeting regular workers to reach this goal. Based on the statistics and surveys as well as previous research, the organizing practices for most enterprise unions seems to follow the old strategies. If we apply the model this means that the forces for and against change has been stable in these unions and the step (2) in the model has not been reached.

The different descriptions of organizing strategies can support the argument that, as stated above, for some unions the forces for change seems to have been stronger than the forces against it. This unbalance of forces made some unions reach the last steps in the model. However, it can be questioned whether the changed organizing strategy will come to last or not (that is, if they have finished the refreezing step). According to the model, this depends on whether the changes have been institutionalized or not. I argue that it might be too soon to determine this but that we can already see some shortcomings. As stated by Weathers: even if unions are organizing non-regular workers it seems that their activities has not changed to address the interests and needs of these workers. This lies in the complicated issue that has been addressed by other scholars (see Keizer 2011): that the needs of the Japanese workers are different depending on their job status. This seems to be a complicated issue for the enterprise unions. Thus, even if enterprise unions have changed their organizing strategy to unionize non-regular workers as well, this does not necessarily imply that this has changed their activities and work. That means that the changes in the organizing strategy have become unsuccessful in one sense, since it has not institutionalized the changes and thus not finished the last step in the model.

The research findings illustrates that the relationship between management and enterprise union tends to influence the organizing strategies. The literature shows that this close relationship goes back to the end of the Second World War, when the managers “supported a more cooperative, enterprise-based union structure” rather than the “militant industrial unions” (Benson, 2008:28). Today, the close management and union relationship can be understood as both a curse and bless regarding change in organizing strategies, since the management can

both be a force for change and against it. We can see this in the use of union shop agreement. If both parties accept inclusion of non-regular workers in this agreement, then a new organizing strategy is possible. But if one (most likely the management) are against change, the current structure of the union shop agreement will remain and make it difficult to change organizing strategy. Weathers also pointed out that the close relationship between the company and union is an important factor and Oh stated that the presence of other independent unions (the general unions) negatively affects the good relationship between the company and the enterprise union, which can lead to changes in the organizing practices. The findings in this research shows that the opinions by the enterprise towards the unions organizing strategies matters. Finally, since the management can both be supportive and against change in organizing strategy, the findings in this research partly supports my hypothesis.

Minato pointed out that it is the trade unions' responsibility to listen and approach the workers but also stresses that many non-regular workers do not see themselves worthy of being part of a union. This shows a sense of miscommunication between workers and unions, which was stressed by Honda (2007) but I argue that there also seems to be some kind of blame game going on, leaving the unions out of responsibility. Like Honda (2007), I argue that the low union interest among the non-regular workers arrives from the failure from the unions to communicate and inform the non-regular workers about the purpose of the unions. Furthermore, it also arrives from the old image of enterprise unions. For instance, as Haruna described, the national union confederation Rengo and its members have been viewed as an organization for the regular workers only. The image of unions as a "club" only for regular workers can explain why only 3.4% of the non-regular workers turns to the unions for help. Hence, I argue that the low union interest among non-regular workers arrives from the unions' failure to communicate and the old perception of the union.

To summarize, the Japanese enterprise unions seems to adopt different organizing strategies. However, we must remember that the heavy increase of non-regular workers is quite a new phenomenon in Japan (even if the employment type itself is not) and to change an institutionalized organizational identity and its practices is not something that happens over a fortnight. Only time can tell which organizing approach the Japanese enterprise unions will have in the future but it is evident that the present labor context pressures the unions to reconsider their current strategies.

7 CONCLUSION

The findings from the research shows that there seems to be many unions that still follows the traditional organizing strategy while other unions have changed strategies and organize non-regular workers. The reason behind this different development is most likely because that the factors for and against change, which was identified in the research, have different impact on the unions. However, many unions in Japan still organize only regular workers, thus reinforce the old image of Japanese unions to be an organization exclusively for (male) regular workers.

Based on the informants' arguments and previous research, I state that the enterprise plays an important role regarding the unions organizing practices. The management can both oppose change and support it. This is connected to the hypothesis of the research, which was that enterprise unions with a strong enterprise identity are less prone to organize non-regular workers. Based on the findings in this research, the hypothesis seems to find support: the close relationship between the enterprise unions and the management influences the organizing strategies. However, this does not mean that the strong enterprise identity among the enterprise unions naturally is only a force against change. As the findings shows, the management can also be supportive of change and, by example, be willing to change the union shop agreement to include more non-regular workers. In that sense, my hypothesis seems to fall short. Hence, depending on the approach by the management, the close relationship between enterprise and enterprise union can both be supportive of change and against it.

Finally, since this study has focused on arguments from industrial, national union federations and researchers, for future research, it would be interesting to compare the findings in this research with the arguments from enterprise unions themselves. Moreover, even if there are unions that have moved away from the traditional approach to organize only regular workers, this does not mean that the union activities are directed towards these workers. Therefore, future research should be made on enterprise unions and whether their changed organizing strategy has made a change in their activities. Finally, an interesting issue to study would be whether the inclusion of non-regular workers in the unions has actually been beneficial for these workers.

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9 APPENDIX

9.1 Interview Questions

The following are the question guidelines I had for each interview. Not all questions were addressed.

9.1.1 Interview Questions for Haruna

Introduction

Researcher introduces herself and the research topic. The interviewee introduces herself and describes her background and position at the organization.

Questions about Rengo and Japanese Labor Market:

1. Can you describe RENGU organization and your aim? How has this changed from RENGU's establishment?
2. How do you become a member of a labor union in Japan? (Qualifications / Membership fee)
3. What are the major challenges that RENGU face today? What challenges does RENGU's affiliated unions face?
4. What will be the issues that RENGU will address during this years "Shunto"?
5. How would you describe the Japanese labor market today?
6. What has been the changes in the Japanese labor market from the 20th century up until now? What has caused these changes?
7. Is the structure of Japanese labor unions (such as Japanese Enterprise Unionism) a relevant system in the current labor market? Or will we see some institutional changes in the system?

Questions about Part-time Workers.

1. How do RENGU define part-time workers?
2. Who are part-time workers? (Gender and age)
3. Why has the part-time workers increased? What factors has facilitated these changes? (Institutions / law changes / politics / external vs. internal factors).
4. Why do people choose to become part-time workers? In general, is this a voluntary or involuntary choice?
5. Where do we find the part-time workers? (Small or big firms / Industry)
6. What problems does the part-time workers face? Are there different problems for different kinds of part-time workers?
7. How has RENGU addressed the issue of part-time workers, from its establishment until today? (Specific program / project / policy)
8. How has the industry and enterprise unions responded to the issue of part-time workers?
9. How does the Japanese government deal with non-regular workers?

10. How has the Abenomics policy affected the labor market? Labor unions? Unionization?

Questions regarding Unionization

1. How has the unionization rate looked like throughout history in Japan? Overall? For part-time workers?
2. Why has the general unionization rate in Japan decreased?
3. What are the factors behind the decrease?
4. How does the unionization of part-time workers look like in RENGO? Is it increasing?
5. Why has the unionization of part-time workers in Japan increased?
6. What are the factors behind the increased unionization among part-time workers?
7. Is the increased unionization of part-time workers a result of Japanese labor union activity or a change of image on the labor unions by the part-time workers?
8. Who among the part-time workers are unionizing? Is there any difference between: age / gender / industry?
9. Are there any special unions that the part-time workers unionize in?
10. Why do you think that this workforce choose to unionize?
11. Will the increased unionization of part-time workers have an effect on the overall unionization?
12. What are the problems that Japanese labor unions face when unionize part-time workers?
13. Are there any changes from how RENGO used to unionize part-time workers?
14. What benefits are there for the part-time workers to join the union? What are the negative and positive effects of not being part of the union / being part of the union?
15. Can the part-time workers face any negative consequences from unionizing? For instance, from the employer or the company?

Concluding Questions

1. Is a new labor market developing in Japan?
2. If so, what kind of new employment system will Japan have in the future?
3. What is the future for RENGO and labor unions in Japan?

9.1.2 Interview Questions for Minato

Introduction

Researcher introduces herself and the research topic. The interviewee introduces himself and describes his background and position at the organization.

Questions about Zenroren and the Japanese Labor Market.

1. Can you describe your organization? What are the main aims of your organization?
2. What are the major challenges that Zenroren and its affiliated labor unions face today?
3. What will be the issues that Zenroren will address during this years “Shunto”?
4. Has there been any changes in the Japanese labor market from the 20th century up until now?

5. Is the current structure of Japanese labor unions (such as Japanese Enterprise Unionism) a relevant system in the labor market today?

Questions regarding Part-time workers.

1. How do Zenroren define and address the issue of non-regular and part-time workers? (Specific program / project / policy).
2. How many part-time workers are unionized in Zenroren?
3. Who are part-time workers? (Gender and age)
4. Why has the part-time workers increased in the labor market? What factors has facilitated these changes?
5. Why do people choose to become part-time workers? Is this a voluntary or involuntary choice?
6. Where do we find the part-time workers? (Small or big firms / Industry)
7. What problems does the part-time workers face?
8. How has the industry and enterprise unions responded to the issue of part-time workers?
9. How does the Japanese government deal with non-regular workers?
10. How has the Shinzo Abe-administration affected the labor market and the work of labor unions?

Questions regarding the Unionization in Japan.

1. How do you become a member of a labor union in Japan? (Qualification, union dues).
2. How does the unionization rate look like for Zenroren? Is it decreasing or increasing?
3. Why has the general unionization rate in Japan decreased?
4. What are the factors behind the decrease?
5. Has the unionization of part-time workers in Zenroren changed?
6. Statistics shows that the unionization rate of part-time workers in Japan has increased. Why has the unionization of part-time workers in Japan increased?
7. What are the factors behind the increased unionization among part-time workers in Japan?
8. Has the unionization of part-time workers been influenced by any institutional policies and actions (such as government policies, the legal system, economic institutions)?
9. Who are the actors involved in the unionization of part-time workers?
10. Who among the part-time workers are unionizing? Is there any difference between: age / gender / industry?
11. Is this an active choice from the part-time workers or are they automatically unionized through their employment?
12. What are the costs and benefits for the part-time workers to join the union?
13. Can the increased unionization of part-time workers be a result of a change of image on the labor unions by the part-time workers? What was the image before?
14. Will the increased unionization of part-time workers have an effect on the overall unionization?
15. How does Zenroren's affiliated labor unions (industry and enterprise unions) address the issue of part-time workers and unionization?

16. What are the problems that Japanese labor unions face when unionize part-time workers?
17. Are there any changes today from how Zenroren used to unionize non-regular workers in the past?

Concluding Questions and the Future of Labor unions.

1. With the increased part-time workers and other non-regular workers, are we witnessing a new employment system in Japan? Is this the end of “life time employment” system?
2. What is the future tasks for Zenroren and its affiliated labor unions?

9.1.3 Interview Questions for Yamato

Introduction

Researcher introduces herself and the research topic. The interviewee then introduces himself and describes his background and position at the organization.

Questions about UA Zensen and the Japanese Labor Market.

1. Can you give me a brief background on UA Zensen and your department? For instance, the structure of the organization.
2. What are the main challenges that UA Zensen face today? Have these issues changed from the past?
3. What is UA Zensen organizing strategy? Is it a bottom-up or top-down approach? Who are the main targets of unionizing?
4. Are there any qualifications for membership in UA Zensen? Do you separate between regular and non-regular workers? What are the union dues?

Questions regarding part – time workers and non-regular workers.

1. In UA Zensen and Japan in general: who are part-time workers (such as gender and age) and where do we find them? In the small or big firms?
2. How do UA Zensen define and address the issue of part-time workers? For instance, do you have any specific program / project / policy for this workforce.
3. What is the image in the Japanese society of part-time workers?
4. Has the policies and activities against part-time workers changed today from the past? How?
5. How many part-time workers are members of UA Zensen?
6. Why has the part-time workers and non-regular workers increased in the labor market? What factors has facilitated these changes?
7. Is working as a part-time worker a voluntary or involuntary choice?
8. What kind of problems (such as discrimination) does the part-time workers face in their employment? Does the problems differ between private and public sector? How do UA Zensen help these workers?
9. Who benefits from this kind of employment?

10. How has the Abe-administration affected the current labor market and the work of labor unions?
11. What are your comments on the Abe-administration and their policies in terms of part-time and non-regular workers?

Questions regarding the Unionization in Japan.

1. How does the unionization rate look like for UA Zensen? Is it decreasing or increasing? What can be the causes behind this?
2. Why do you think the general unionization rate in Japan has decreased? What are the factors behind the decrease?
3. Statistics shows that the general unionization rate of part-time workers in Japan has increased. Why do you think the unionization of part-time workers in Japan increased?
4. What are the factors behind the increased unionization among part-time workers?
5. How does the unionization of part-time and non-regular workers in UA Zensen look like today?
6. In UA Zensen organization: who among the part-time workers are unionizing? Is there any difference between: Age, Gender, Industry, Public or private sector or the kind of part-time work (those that work longer hours and those that work shorter hours)?
7. Is this an active choice from the part-time workers or are they automatically unionized through their employment?
8. Is there resistance to unionize part-time workers? From regular workers? From employers? From the part-time workers themselves?
9. Are the unionized part-time and other non-regular workers active members in the union? For instance, do they participate in meetings? How many of union officials and representatives are part-time or other non-regular workers in UA Zensen?
10. Can the increased unionization of part-time workers be a result of a change of image on the labor unions by the part-time workers? What was the image before?
11. Can the increased unionization of part-time workers have an effect on the overall unionization? How?
12. What are the problems that UA Zensen face when unionize part-time workers?
13. Does the part-time workers who want to become members or already are members of UA Zensen face any problems or negative consequences due to their relation with the labor union?
14. Are there any changes today from how UA Zensen used to unionize part-time workers in the past?
15. Has the increased unionization of part-time workers been influenced by any institutional policies and actions (such as government policies, the legal system, economic institutions)?

Concluding Questions and the Future of Labor Unions.

1. With the increased part-time workers and other non-regular workers, are we witnessing a new employment system in Japan?

2. What must be done by the Japanese labour unions to turn around the decreasing unionization rates?
3. What is the future tasks for UA Zensen in terms of organizing of workers, especially non-regular workers?

9.1.4 Interview Questions for Hak-Soo Oh

Introduction

Researcher introduces herself and the research topic. The interviewee then introduces himself and describes his background, position and research field.

Questions about the Japanese Labor Market.

1. How would you describe the Japanese labor market today? What has been the changes today from the past?
2. How has the Abe-administration's policies and activities affected the Japanese labor market? For instance, in terms of non-regular workers? What are the differences from the earlier administrations, such as Koizumi?

Questions about Part-time and Non-regular Workers.

1. What do you think is the reasons why non-regular workers has increased in Japan?
2. Is it still mainly women that are the part-time workers or non-regular workers or are more men becoming part-time workers?
3. During my material collection, I have not found how many foreign workers are part-time or non-regular workers. Do you know, among the part-time or among non-regular workers in general in Japan, how many are foreign workers?
4. In what industry and sector (private or public sector) do we see increased part-time employment?
5. Scholars and labor unions refer to certain industries such as the retail industries as the industries that employs part-time workers and other non-regular workers the most. Do you think that more industries are employing non-regular workers or is it still mainly in these industries?
6. The labor unions I have talked to state that non-regular workers are doing more "core work". Do you agree on this?
7. Do you think that to work as a part-time worker is a voluntary or involuntary choice? Why?
8. In their employment, does the part-time and other non-regular workers face problems due to their status in the company? Such as discrimination at work and so on. Is there a different treatment between public and private sector?
9. What are the positive and negative aspects of employing non-regular workers? For the workers, employers and Japan in general? Who benefits from this kind of employment?
10. What is the image of part-time workers and other non-regular workers in Japan? Has this image changed over the years?

11. Do you think that this flexibility in the labor market is good for the Japanese economy?

Questions regarding the Japanese Labor Unions and the Unionization.

1. How would you describe the situation for labor unions in Japan today?
2. What are the challenges that the labor unions faces today? Do Japanese labor unions face the same issues now as in the past? What has changed?
3. In terms of part-time and other non-regular workers, has the policies and activities among labor unions changed today from the past or is it generally the same? Why is that?
4. Japan has experienced a decrease in unionization rates for many years now. Why do you think this has happened? Do you think that this trend can change in the future?
5. Since your article about the unionization of part-time workers in Japan, have you seen any changes? Such as labor union policies or part-time workers attitudes to labor unions?
6. The unionization rate among part-time workers in Japan has increased a lot in recent years, especially since 2005. Why do you think this has happened?
7. What do you think is the factors, actors and institutions behind this increased unionization? What has changed since 2005?
8. Has the increased unionization of part-time workers been influenced by any institutional policies and actions (such as government policies, the legal system, economic institutions) which has made it easier for labor unions to unionize these workers?
9. Are there obstacles for labor unions to unionize this workforce? Why and what are they?
10. Is the unionization an active choice among the part-time workers or are they organized automatically through their employment?
11. Are there cases of resistance of unionization of part-time workers from employers or regular workers?
12. What are the costs and benefits for part-time workers to join the labor unions?
13. In your article from 2012, you wrote about homogeneous and heterogeneous strategy for unionization by the labor unions. Can this increased unionization of part-time workers be a result of change of strategy?

Concluding Questions.

1. In my interview with Zenroren, they said that they wanted work closer with RENGO and maybe even become one national federation union in the future. Do you think this is possible?
2. What will be the challenges and tasks for the labor unions in the future?
3. What must be done by the Japanese labour unions to turn around the decreasing unionization rates?
4. Do you think that the “enterprise unionism” in Japan will remain even in the future or will this change?
5. What kind of labor market do you think we will witness in Japan in the future? Is this the end of “life-time employment” in Japan?

9.2 Follow-up Questions

The following are the follow-up questions sent out to the interviewees after the interview through e-mail.

9.2.1 Follow-up Questions for Yamato

1. What do you think are the factors behind an enterprise unions chosen organizing strategy? For instance, if some of the enterprise unions continue to only organize regular workers, why don't they change their organizing strategy? And why does some enterprise unions chose to unionize non-regular workers?
2. What are the obstacles to change a unions organizing strategy? Where does these obstacles come from? Is it from within the union itself or is it from the company's management or the workers (both non-regular and regular workers)? Does it differ between industries? How does UA Zensen help its members to solve these challenges?
3. There are scholars that argue that it is the presence of the independent unions such as general and community unions that pressure the companies and enterprise unions to unionize non-regular workers. Do you think that this is true? Why / Why not? Are UA Zensen collaborating with any of these general unions to unionize more non-regular workers?
4. For the enterprise unions that are affiliated with UA Zensen and that are organizing non-regular workers, what has been the consequences of their chosen organizing strategy? For instance, for those unions that are unionizing non-regular workers, has it improved the situation for non-regular workers or are the situations still the same? Has it empowered the unions? How is the situation for those enterprise unions that still do not unionize non-regular workers?
5. Union shop agreements are common for enterprise unionism in Japan. What are your comments on this system in terms of enterprise unions attempt to unionizing non-regular workers? Can this system be a hindrance or supportive to changes of an enterprise unions organizing strategy?
6. What do you think will happen to the Japanese labor movement in the future? For instance:
 - Do you think that more enterprise unions will change their organizing strategies to unionize more non-regular workers?

- Do you think that enterprise unionism will still be the main trade union system? If not, what will be the new system?
- Will the non-regular workers participate more in the trade unions?
- In general, will the UA Zensen and the Japanese labor movement general witness more changes in the future?

9.2.2 Follow-up Questions for Minato.

1. In the overall picture, what is the organizational strategy among the enterprise unions that are affiliated with Zenroren? Are the majority of the enterprise unions still organizing only regular workers or are more organizing non-regular workers? Please describe further the organizing strategy of your affiliated enterprise trade unions and how this has developed over the years.
2. What do you think are the factors behind an enterprise unions chosen organizing strategy? For instance, if some of the enterprise unions continue to only organize regular workers, why don't they change their organizing strategy?
3. What are the obstacles to change a unions organizing strategy (to also unionize non-regular workers)? Where do you think that these obstacles come from? Is it from within the union itself or is it from the company's management or the workers? How does Zenroren help its members to solve these challenges?
4. For the enterprise unions that are affiliated with Zenroren and that are also organizing non-regular workers, what has been the consequences of their chosen unionizing strategy? For instance, has it improved the situation for non-regular workers or are the situations still the same? Has this empowered the enterprise union against the corporation?
5. During our meeting, you said that Zenroren favored the system of "community individual affiliate based union style". Can you describe this further. For instance, how does this differ from enterprise unionism? What are their organizing strategy? Can these trade unions perhaps influence the enterprise unions organizing strategies to unionize more non-regular workers?
6. Some scholars argue that it is the presence of the independent unions such as general and community unions that pressure the companies and enterprise unions to unionize non-regular workers. Do you think that this is true? Why / Why not?
7. Union shop agreements are common for enterprise unionism. What are your comments on this system in terms of enterprise unions attempt to unionizing non-regular workers? Can

this system be a hindrance or supportive to changes of an enterprise unions organizing strategy?

8. In the future, do you think that enterprise unionism will still be the main trade union system or will it be replaced by the individual trade unions such as general unions?

9.2.3 Follow-up Questions to Hak-Soo Oh

1. Traditionally, the enterprise trade unions in Japan have only unionized regular workers. Were there any exceptions of this among the enterprise unions? If not, how did the non-regular workers unionize if they could not become members of the enterprise trade unions?
2. In Japan, the union-shop agreement is very common. What are your comments on this procedure? Is this a good practice for the Japanese labor movement and the workers right to organize?
3. Are non-regular workers covered by the union-shop? If not, why?
4. Since the 1990's non-regular workers has increased in Japan. How has the Japanese enterprise trade unions responded to this change? For instance, have many of the enterprise unions changed their organizing strategies to also unionize non-regular workers or are the majority still only organizing regular workers? Why do you think that the enterprise unions use the selected organizing strategy (to either change their organizing strategy to start unionizing non-regular workers or to remain the old strategy of only unionizing regular workers)?
5. According to statistics from the government, the unionization of non-regular workers has increased in Japan. Are these workers mainly organized in enterprise unions or are they organized in the independent unions such as general unions?
6. What are the arguments by unions to not unionize non-regular workers?
7. In your article and during our discussion in February, you said that it is thanks to the general unions that enterprise unions are unionizing non-regular workers. Can you please describe this further? This is really an interesting argument and explanation to the organizing of non-regular workers.
8. What are the organizing strategy adopted by the enterprise unions based on? Are the organizing strategy constructed to respond to the trade unions identity and role in the Japanese society or are they adopted to maximize the policies of the trade union? For

instance, are unions unionizing non-regular workers because this is expected of them by the workers and the society?

9. If different organizing strategies are adopted between the enterprise unions, what is it that determines a chosen strategy? Is it industry-based or are there other factors involved?
10. Enterprise unions that organize non-regular workers, have they faced any obstacles with this organizing strategy? What are these obstacles and where do they come from?
11. We also discussed during our meeting that it is hard to change the mind regarding unionize non-regular workers. What actor mindset are the toughest to change for the enterprise unions? For instance, it is the management of the company, the unionized regular workers, the non-regular workers, inside the trade union itself or society in general?
12. If enterprise unions are organizing more non-regular workers, what kind of consequences can this have for the regular and non-regular workers, the enterprise trade unions and the Japanese labor movement itself? For instance, does it always lead to positive effects for non-regular workers?
13. How do you think the future for the Japanese enterprise unionism and Japanese labor movement will be? For instance:
 - Will enterprise unions continue to unionize non-regular workers or will they return to represent only regular workers?
 - Will enterprise unionism still be the main trade union type in Japan in the future or will the general unions or community unions gain more ground?
 - Will trade unions be enterprise unionism still be the main trade unions in Japan or will the general unions and community unions take over the lead?
 - Do you think that the union-shop agreement will still be used?
14. Other comments that you find important regarding non-regular workers, the organizing strategies by enterprise unions or the Japanese labor movement in general?

9.3 Sent-out Questions.

The following are the sent-out questions to the researchers Arjan Keizer and Charles Weathers.

1. Traditionally, the enterprise trade unions in Japan have only unionized regular workers. Were there any exceptions of this among the enterprise unions? If not, how did the non-regular workers unionize if they could not become members of the enterprise trade unions?
2. In Japan, the union-shop agreement is very common. What are your comments on this procedure? Is this a good practice for the Japanese labor movement and the workers engagement in trade unions? Why / Why not?
3. Are non-regular workers covered by the union-shop? If not, why?
4. Since the 1990's non-regular workers has increased in Japan. How has the Japanese enterprise trade unions responded to this change? For instance, have many of the enterprise unions changed their organizing strategies to also unionize non-regular workers or are the majority still only organizing regular workers? Why do you think that the enterprise unions use the selected organizing strategy (to either change their organizing strategy to start unionizing non-regular workers or to remain the old strategy of only unionizing regular workers)?
5. What are the organizing strategy adopted by the enterprise unions based on? Are the organizing strategy constructed to respond to the trade unions identity and role in the Japanese society or are they adopted to maximize the policies of the trade union? For instance, are unions unionizing non-regular workers because this is expected of them by the workers and the society?
6. If different organizing strategies are adopted between the enterprise unions, what is it that determines a chosen strategy? Is it industry-based or are there other factors involved?
7. According to statistics from the government, the unionization of non-regular workers has increased in Japan. Are these workers mainly organized in enterprise unions or are they organized in the independent unions such as general unions?
8. What are the arguments by unions to not unionize non-regular workers?

9. For those enterprise unions that have adopted a new organizing strategy and are unionizing non-regular workers, why do you think that they have adopted this strategy? For instance, are these unions pressured to unionize these workers on these unions?
10. Some scholars points out that it is due to the increase of independent trade unions such as general unions and community unions in Japan that has caused the changes in enterprise unions organizing strategy (to unionize the non-regulars). Do you agree on this argument? Why / Why not?
11. For those enterprise unions that organize non-regular workers, have they faced any obstacles with this organizing strategy? What are these obstacles and where do they come from? How do you think these issues can be solved?
12. What kind of consequences can a chosen organizing strategy of enterprise unions have for the actors involved such as the regular and non-regular workers, the enterprise trade unions and the general Japanese labor movement itself? For instance, if an enterprise union decides to unionize more non-regular workers, does it always lead to positive effects for non-regular workers? And can the Japanese labor movement survive if enterprise unions shuts out non-regular workers from their membership?
13. How do you think the future for the Japanese enterprise unionism and Japanese labor movement will be? For instance:
 - Will more enterprise unions unionize non-regular workers or will they return to represent only regular workers?
 - Will enterprise unionism still be the main trade union type in Japan in the future or will other kinds of trade unions (such as general unions and community unions) increase?
 - Do you think that the union-shop agreement will still be used?
 - Any other labor movement or labor relations that you think will develop in the future?
14. Other comments that you find important regarding non-regular workers, the organizing strategies by enterprise unions or the Japanese labor movement in general?