Master's Thesis:

Community Union-Civil Society Coalition: Cases of Temporary Migrant Workers in Japan

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Abstract

This research explores the organizational and social dynamics of coalition building between Japanese initiated labour migrant support groups for foreigners and community unions. Through descriptive qualitative approach using case studies, this research documents labour migrant groups/organizations and community unions as an alternative social support network that uses coalition building as a strategy.

The cases analyse power in community unionism and coalition building using Tattersall's (2015) typology. The cases focused primarily on coalitions that show characteristics of an (1) ad hoc and (2) mutual-support type of coalition. This research used common identity, community building, voice and representation, and exploration of public social spaces for the coalitions in its descriptive analysis of the cases.

The research argues that in analysing coalitions that caters to temporary migrant workers, there is a need to consider community-based social dynamics that emphasizes on cultural differences and identities in order to see how power is manifested and distributed. The first case study is an example of an ad hoc coalition. The research argues that when unions invest in building relationships to the community, it establishes a top-to-bottom relationship structure led by the union. This reinforces and extends the power of the union in the community. Although the relationship is loose, inflexible, and unsustainable, these organizational features serves as an advantage in an inflexible and rigid institutional regime.

Whereas, the second case is an example of a mutual-support type of coalition where there is an equal distribution of power but lacks a strong and direct community connection with the labour migrants. Power is shared equally through established decision-making mechanisms and is collectively directed to exert pressure in a wider scale mainly to the Japanese government through policy recommendation and legislative pressure. However, it was observed that the more formal and systematized the coalition becomes the less migrant workers have an active voice and participation in the process.

In order for these coalitions to achieve the level of a 'deep coalition' (Tattersall, 2005), there is a need to address various challenges such as: (a) organizational structure and development for sustainability; (b) voices and representation of temporary migrant workers to create a meaningful community participation of rank-and-file members to the labour movement; and (c) maintaining the labour migrant's union relationship in their post-Japan employment. This could potentially spark a fire to the Japanese labour movement and become an inclusive multicultural network with extended influence from overseas especially from labour migrant sending countries.

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I hope that this research may reach those who believe that labels are all but aesthetics for our society's convenience: from workers, trainees, migrants, locals, volunteers, and activists. Human rights supersedes all labels. It all begins with empathy.

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List of Abbreviations

Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE)

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)

Philippine Overseas Labour Office (POLO)

Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan (SMJ)

Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The changing social landscape of Japan in terms of its demography and shrinking labour force has led its government and its citizens to recognize the need for allowing low-skilled foreign workers in maintaining various economic activities in the country. Japan has long been accused of taking-in such workers through its side-door immigration policies (Kingston, 2014). One of which is the Japan Technical Intern Training Program with China that later on expanded to other developing countries mostly from South-East Asia (Vietnam, Philippines, and Indonesia). For states that are conservative in their views for skilled and low-skilled labour migration such as Japan, immigration policies include grey areas and practices that circumvent existing laws, allowing them to absorb these workers in their labour force without explicitly amending immigration policies (Brody, 2002; Kingston, 2014; Mori, 1996). Indirect immigration policies create ambiguous working status for these types of workers. In effect of such policy loopholes, migrant workers experience insufficient welfare and labour protection, lack of integration support, and vulnerable terms of employment. The Japanese government continuously insists that they are trainees, not workers, despite the reality showing the other way around. The new immigration law implemented on April 2019 is deemed as a new expansion scheme of the existing trainee program instead of real immigration amendments to accept low-skilled and skilled workers (Okunuki, 2018; Osami, 2018).

But with this in mind, I had to also consider another important context. That civil society in general has been deemed weak in Japan and culturally had been known to be exclusive and restrictive in immigration policies (Nakane, 1976; Ogawa, 2014; Pekkanen, 2006), a major contrast to most developed societies (Brody, 2002). Therefore I developed my research in search

of support mechanisms from the Japanese civil society's engagement to this issue of temporary migrant workers, mainly those under the Japan Technical Intern Training Program.

The primary and standard approach in hearing labour cases of foreign migrants is through their respective country's embassy and overseas labor office. However accessibility to their respective embassies and authorities is an administrative constraint often experienced by foreign governments especially with their limited human resources. This results in prioritization of cases which often focuses on extreme life and death situations. Non-life threatening individual labour cases are often amongst the least prioritized. Community unions serve as an alternative in providing labour protection and services to migrant workers.

Therefore, my research contributes to both labour migration and community unionism literature that focuses on unconventional form of unions and civil society organizations in Japan that defies their mainstream counter-parts. My study focused on studying Japanese initiated (a) community unions and (b) labour migrant support organizations. Particularly their coalition building activities that enable them to engage and advocate for the rights of temporary migrant workers in Japan.

My research used qualitative approach through interviews and participant observations. I documented the coalition's activities and captured their narratives in describing how their relationship and network building initiative became an advantage for their respective organizational and situational goals.

My research analysed the coalition between: (a) Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU) and Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan (SMJ) from Tokyo; and (b) Scrum Workers Union and various grassroots support group for Filipino Technical Trainees from Hiroshima.

Both cases showed two characteristics of community unionism as defined by Black (2005). First as an organizational structure that involves partnerships and coalitions between community organizations and community unions. Second as a process to which the community engages with the union and vice versa in order to achieve a common goal. In analysing the level of engagements that occurs in the case studies, I argue that Japanese community unionism through coalitions draw strength in its flexibility as well as the individual bridge-builders and leaders involved in each organization. In a country that has rigid and highly hierarchical organizational structures and ambiguous immigration policy like Japan, the coalitions' flexibility and problem-solving approach had become a safer and more accessible option for temporary migrant workers. There were circumstances that called for coalition building as the most plausible strategy for a higher chance of success in handling labour disputes. The coalition's power exert international and political pressure through swiftly arranged publicity stunts and media releases.

Aside from that, I also used Tattersall's (2005) typology of coalitions in analysing the features of each case, particularly in identifying whether the coalition is an ad hoc, mutual-support (simple relationship), or deep coalition.

My research focused primarily on coalitions that showed characteristics of an (1) ad hoc and (2) mutual-support type of coalition. Aside from using Tattersall's (2005) identified coalition features – common interest, structure, organizational buy-in and scale; I emphasized on capturing everyday life sociological features including identity, community building, voice and representation, and exploration of public social spaces for the coalitions in the descriptive analysis of the cases.

I argue that in analysing coalitions that cater to temporary migrant workers, there is a need to consider community-based social dynamics that emphasize on cultural differences and identities in order to see how power is manifested and distributed.

The alliance between the Scrum union and their civil society partners in Hiroshima is a type of ad hoc coalition. In this coalition, power in terms of legal and labour representation is stronger within the union but community participation and connection is stronger with its civil society partners. I argue that because Scrum union invested in building relationships with the support groups this gave them direct access to local public spaces and connections with the Filipino community. The unions went to the community and only then did they discover the various labour issues that the workers were experiencing. This connection reinforced and extended the power of the union while the support groups mostly followed their lead. It created a loose and flexible yet union lead coalition. But when this collective power was used externally, their influence was directed to the immediate community including the enterprises rather than the national affairs. This collective influence was often manifested through the use of media to exert pressure in order to attain their goals.

Whereas, the second case involving SMJ and Zentoitsu is an example of a mutual-support type of coalition where there is an equal distribution of power in the coalition through already established decision-making mechanisms, committees, and annual meetings. This type of equal distribution of power in the coalition was used to collectively exert pressure vertically from local affairs to the national level. The issues were collected from the migrant workers through their participation in Zentoitsu, and these issues were elevated to the greater network of SMJ. After which, the coalition used this collective power mainly to the Japanese government through policy recommendations and legislative pressure. However, the coalition's relationship with the migrant

community is weak. It was the workers that come seeking help from the union. The union has a more direct yet transactional relationship and access with the migrant workers.

Ideally, both coalitions could transform to achieve a deep coalition as defined by Tattersall (2005). One that has equal distribution of power, active participation and exchange between rank-in-file workers and civil society members, established long-term common goals, and sustainable structures and mechanisms for mobilization.

Although at present, Japanese community unions and civil society groups remain small-scale in influence and power but in using coalition building as a strategy, they were able to successfully achieve gains through winning labour cases. This increased their reputation, financial status, and in influencing labour migrant policy reforms. In the hopes of revitalizing the Japanese labour movement, the country needs multiple and nation-wide deep coalitions to increase the impact and significance of community unions.

On the other hand in the migration perspective, the lack of political power and participation of migrant workers can be substituted through the coalitions as an alternative mechanism to advocate migrant labour reforms and policies in migrant receiving states. This is an alternative to the traditional bilateral and multilateral state centred approach in labour migration treaties. At the same time, the participation of migrant workers in the labour movement may provide a multitude of cross-cultural experiences and new niches added to the relevance of Japanese community unionism. Labour migrant's participation can further expand the nature of "inclusivity" and the concept of "community" in the labour movement. This may provide international recognition and overseas support mechanism that can potentially contribute to a reinforced and wider scale of power and influence for the Japanese labour movement.

I concluded that in order for the coalitions to achieve such level there is a need to address various challenges such as: (a) the organizational structure and development for sustainability; (b) voices and representation of labour migrants for meaningful community participation of rank-and-file members to the labour movement; and (c) maintaining labour migrants' union relationship in their post-Japan employment that could potentially manifest overseas unionism.

1.2 Research Questions

- *How do community unions and migrant support organizations use coalition building as a strategy to engage and advocate for the rights and welfare of temporary migrant workers in Japan?*
- *How do various type of coalition affect the efficacy of solving labour disputes of temporary migrant workers?*
- *How can inclusion of temporary labour migrants through community unionism revitalize the Japanese labour movement?*

1.3 Research Objectives

a. To provide cases in which a coalition mediated, engaged, or advocated for the rights of temporary migrant workers.
b. To describe how elements of coalition building lead to the success of the organizations in settling labour dispute cases of temporary migrant workers.
c. To analyse the potential impact of temporary migrant workers' inclusion within the community-labour coalitions in revitalizing Japanese community movement.

1.4 Methodology

My research used qualitative approach in documenting and narrating case studies between community union and labour migrant support organizations in Japan prior to the 2018 Immigration law amendment. In gathering my primary data, I conducted key informant interviews with academics, government researchers, union leaders, and labour migrant support employees/volunteers. I used pseudonyms for the names of the workers and some activists who expressed their need for privacy.

This research did not include perspectives from the companies and business enterprises that engage with temporary labour migrants. This is due to the difficulty of accessing information from companies with existing labour dispute cases. Also, the objectives of this research focused heavily on organizations and their coalition building activities rather than the individual migrant workers.

In one of the case studies, I used participant observation and noted the daily life and work of the organizations. My primary data was supplemented and reinforced by various secondary data from civil society groups' publications and websites, academic journals, books, and news articles. I analysed two (2) coalitions between local community unions and Japanese initiated labour migrant support organizations as case studies that feature characteristics of community unionism (Black, 2005). I also used Tattersall's (2005) framework and typology in analysing the power in coalition building. *(See Chapter 3 – Methodology)*

1.5 Findings

My research presented cases that re-emphasized the important role of the civil society and host country unions in labour migration as an alternative support for temporary labour migrants. I

presented two (2) types of coalition: (1) mutual-support type through ZWU-SMJ and (2) an ad hoc coalition through Scrum union and various Hiroshima based migrant support groups.

For the ZWU-SMJ case, I found out that common interests and common resources indeed build the power of the coalition. There is an equal sharing of power in the coalition through established decision-making mechanisms, committees, and annual organized meetings/events. The inclusion of migrant workers into the movement, labour concerns are elevates to a greater significance in the national and international scale. With the coalition championing marginalized migrant workers, it develops a niche that reinforces their reputation among migrant communities and the greater Japanese society. Since community unions and civil society groups are small and financially limited in their endeavour, coalition building and the inclusion of migrant workers enables them transform and connect labour issues into a bigger framework of human rights and international diplomatic concern.

However, migrant workers' participation and active voices within the coalition are weak. This reinforces the challenge in building common identity both culturally and as a labour sector between migrants and Japanese workers. There is also a hurdle of bridging and including migrant communities into the ZWU-SMJ coalition, and an uncertainty among the migrants as to their role in the union beyond their personal labour concerns. Despite having union orientations, it was given in an organizational perspective and did not exactly emphasize where the workers directly contribute in the overall labour movement.

The coalition would like to minimize conflict between migrant groups in cases where the sentiments or objectives are not in line with one another. I find this unusual in a democratic society, but is indeed very Japanese in perspective which gives importance to collective harmony above other things. This gave an impression that migrant support groups cooperate and come together

but does not transcend into unifying into one solid migrant sector across nationalities into the labour movement. The Japanese advocates for migrant workers come together under a single banner within this coalition. But the actual migrants are deemed as the "cause" for action rather than part of the main actors partaking in the social movement. These findings suggest that this coalition is indeed still a mutual-support type and has not yet reached a deep coalition that integrated union members into the larger labour movement. This is a lost opportunity for the labour movement.

As to the case of Scrum union and their various migrant support groups in Hiroshima, this particular coalition lacks a stable organizational network and decision-making structure. This case showed an ad hoc type of relationship and is dependent on the individual labour cases from the community. However, this case shows that despite the lack of organizational mandates in the coalition, there is a more direct, flexible, and personal connection established with the migrant worker communities. It also provides an example to which identifying migrant community matriarch/patriarch provides a connection to Japanese company middle managers. This type of access enables the coalition to further extend their connection deep into the context of labour disputes. It also showed that social-public spaces are a crucial points of access for the coalition in order for them to expand their network within the migrant communities.

But because this coalition has an unequal level of development among the organizations, the connection with migrant communities are not fully utilized and integrated into the labour movement. Interaction of the coalition remains to be event based and sporadic in nature. The Scrum union and their civil society partners' relationship remains to be union centred and may affect the sustainability and future prospects and endeavours of this coalition. This is another opportunity lost. Established relationships through community bridge-builders and migrant leaders

may provide a wider mobilization of human resource for the Japanese labour movement. The coalition's involvement with migrant workers also boosts their reputation not just within Hiroshima but to the greater Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu areas. This shows a new external manifestation of power brought about by the inclusion of migrant workers into the movement.

Also since the capability of the Scrum union is still limited, similar to the majority of community unions in terms of communicating and engaging with migrant workers, this re-emphasizes the importance of civil society groups in this process of strengthening the labour movement through the inclusion of migrant workers. The creation of civil society engagement does not simply connect labour to the communities, but also provides crucial services, experience and skills by activists, volunteers, and professionals to make that level of integration possible.

Lastly, in the labour migration context there is a lack of relationship between the coalition and governments of the migrant workers. The overseas labour attachés or embassies seemed to be disconnected. Whereas, the coalition is contributing to the diplomatic function and mission of performing Assistance to Nationals (ATN) of foreign embassies and consulates in Japan. The coalitions remain as an untapped social capital that labour sending governments can build a relationship in support of performing their respective overseas mandates and functions.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

For the purpose and consideration of the time that this research is written, temporary migrant workers are defined as those under the Technical Internship Trainee Program (Japanese Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, 2014). The cases presented in my research focused heavily on temporary migrant workers whose residence status is "Trainee". But on the same note, my research will not include those temporary workers who are contract-based highly

skilled workers/professionals. My research title will retain the use of "temporary migrant workers" to emphasize the vulnerable and fragile provisional status of these workers who mostly work in low-skilled and general labour jobs. On the same note, despite the resident status of the foreigners referred to the study as trainees, they shall also be referred to this research as "workers" in general.

The coalitions analysed in the study focuses on Japanese-led labour migrant support groups and community unions whose members come from Southeast-Asia, mainly from the Philippines and, in some instances, are from Vietnam. This is due to the actual niche of the organizations used in the research. Each labour civil society groups and community unions usually have a specific nationality to which they are experienced in assisting. Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU) for example is mostly involved with Japanese-Brazilian workers and Vietnamese workers from the manufacturing industry but recently had an increasing number of cases of Filipino workers from the hotel and service industry. But this does not mean that the unions discriminate according to nationalities. This simply means that the union is more familiar with handling cases to which they had engagements with in multiple instances and had developed strategies in coordinating with the respective foreign government or agencies depending on the case.

Also ZWU's civil society partner, Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan (SMJ), is a network building and advocacy centred organization rather than being a service and support provider. It does not cater to a specific group of migrants.

On the other hand, Scrum union and their various grassroots civil society groups are involved with Filipino trainees in the car manufacturing industry which recently became one of their most prolific case. The study therefore highlights instances involving narratives of Filipino and some Vietnamese workers.

Since the research started prior to the amendment of the immigration policy in 2018 and is expected to be completed in June 2019, only a month after the implementation of the said policy, the circumstances described and analysed excluded those that occur after this transitional phase.

1.7 Significance of the Study

In my experience working in the field of labour and migration studies, it is uncommon to encounter literatures that merges both topics in one discussion. It is also not a dominant practice to look into nationally and domestically driven organizations in migrant host countries that advocates and works for the welfare and protection of foreign workers in their country. More so that Japan is known to be an exclusive society. Having considered these contexts as well as the current temporary migrant worker's protection policies, I would like to contribute and highlight the potential role of this type of coalition to supplement migrant sending government and intergovernmental initiatives for temporary migrant workers. The research explored the under-utilized social capital of community unions-labour support group coalitions as an invaluable emerging agent in advancing the human rights and welfare of temporary migrant workers.

It provided insights to the organizational, societal, and legal challenges experienced by this type of coalition; particularly in mediating, engaging, and advocating for a relatively marginal sector in Japanese society.

I am also contributing this research to the labour migration literature that uses the framework of community unionism in analysing labour support groups in host countries like Japan. My research provided a perspective to challenging the definition of community unionism involving migrant workers in closed societies like Japan. The research therefore provided a context

in community unionism in the Japanese setting where racial exclusion exists and nuanced identities of "us" (local Japanese) and "them" (migrant workers) persists.

In presenting the case studies in Japan, the study contributed to the literature of exploring the significant role that community unions can play in relation to migration studies. It also strengthened and reaffirmed the already established important roles of civil society groups for migrant workers in host countries with similar characteristics to Japan. In exploring the formulation of coalition as a strategy between these organizations, it can provide a cross-analysis perspective of community unionism under the civil society and migration context.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Theories and models on International Labour Migration

Labour migration has been used as a solution by most developed economies experiencing mass depopulation. These theories explain the context to which such policies were introduced to augment the local labour force of migrant host societies. It is from the fact that labour migration is not something new and has always been part of history but has took various forms and had different implications across different societies. My research will only use these theories and models in setting the conceptual contexts and paradigms of labour migration.

Scholars have attempted to explain the root causes of labour migration and plot prevailing trends and patterns across history. Although no dominant theory is used, concepts and models existed to better analyse and understand this phenomena.

The Push-Pull Models of Migration for example (Todaro, 1989; Lee, 1966) explains immigration flows as the "aggregates of individual decisions to escape the negative "push" factors of the home country and benefit from the positive "pull" factors of the host country. The push and

pull factors are often attributed to various reasons such as economic, political, and social conditions between the host and origin country. International inequalities provide the basis for this model and the gap between rich and poor countries is thought to shape individual decisions to migrate as a means to achieve a better standard of living (Brody, 2002). In the case of Japan with its higher standard of living and higher salary in comparison with the rest of Asia, salaries for jobs that are categorized as low-skilled or unskilled labour still provide higher financial gain. This can be seen as the major pull factor for migrant workers whose main consideration is to earn a substantially higher income to escape poverty is considered as a rational choice. As such, Chinese, Koreans (historically for Japan), South Asians, and South-East Asians are among the pool of usual migrant workers that enter Japan. A critique however of the Push-Pull Model is that it ignores the role of the states in initiating migration flows. To which in the case of Japan, the state played a dominant role and control of active recruitment and employment of foreign workers. Also, the model does not prescribe on the phenomenon of permanent migrant settlement in host societies, a fact that made Japan reluctant to open its doors for labour migration.

The Dual Labor Market Theories (Piore, 1979) on the other hand argues that modern industrial economies tend to split into primary and secondary labour markets due to the "motivational power" of hierarchy and status. Jobs low in status and pay remain as such regardless of change in the supply of workers. A situation to which native workers reject wage increases in low status jobs due to the program of "structural inflation" (Piore, 1979). The Dual Labour Market theory argues that labour migration hold "status" as a necessary motivational factor in the labour market and that low-status and dead-end jobs present serious motivational programs and are therefore difficult to fill-in with native workers, but are however easily filled by migrants who seek income rather than status. This is mostly attributed by most scholars to a particular "migrant

mentality" where migrants are not initially threatened by the social stigma of lower tier jobs (Brody, 2012). Such is the case of Japan with the locals reaching higher levels of education expectations for wage, status, and career tend to be higher, leaving jobs considered as among the 3Ds (Dangerous, Dirty, and Difficult) unfilled. A critique however is similar to the Push-Pull model to which this theory fails to explain permanent migrant settlement and the effects to which second generation migrants, locally educated in the host country may not choose to retain and be employed in the same labour and social structure.

The Globalization Model (Sassen, 1996) attempts to address the issues of persistence of labour migration and permanent settlement, as well as provide generalizable, system-level model of labour migration based on the ideas of market globalization and human rights. Scholars using Globalization in explaining labour migration argue that flows and patterns of migration cannot be explained in terms individual rational choices, labour market characteristics, or capitalist penetration. It is rather the market factors (economic integration, structural demands for labour) combined with the political (state initiated recruitment, right-based liberal policies) and social factors (transnational networks and international marriages), that makes up this complex economic, social, and ethnic networks (Sassen, 1996). Hollified (1992) argues that globalization and the increasing integration of economies are the major factor to international labour migration. He further describes the interdependence between states in a globalized political and economic environment to which the government introduces constraints through labour migration policies.

Therefore, state-sponsored recruitment, employer recruitment, and/or individual, personal decisions to migrate are all important points to which movements of migration labour are brought about as a result of economic globalization and integration. Once started, migration flows persists, according to this model (Brody, 2002). Only the government has the ability to prevent or regulate,

thus minimizing permanent settlement. As in the case of Japan with a highly involved government planning and control over its economy, labour migration is therefore highly regulated through its immigration policies and programs.

Gaining perspective using these models and theories in the case of Japan exemplifies certain aspects and principles to which international labour migration is empirically grounded. The Push-Pull model explains why Japan is an ideal host country for migrant workers, the Dual labour Market theory explains why certain industries become secondary industries flocked by migrant workers (case of manufacturing, construction, and service industry in both countries), and the Globalization Model provides a perspective to which international labour market demands are regulated by governments through policies and programs in order to control migration networks.

I find that these grand narratives can only explain labour migration in terms of its economic, political, and individualized aspect. It does not capture coalition building which is the primary focus of my research. Therefore, these models will only remain as references in setting the context for labour migration but the primary theory used in the research is community unionism (Black, 2005) with a framework for coalition building (Tattersall, 2005).

2.2 Temporary Migrant Workers in Japan

For societies with aging and shrinking population, immigration is often seen as a counter-measure policy recommendation to address the issue. European countries and the United States implemented guest programs that later on evolved as permanent immigration, resulting in a culturally diverse society, through integration initiatives and family reunification programs. However for the case of Japan, accepting foreign workers and diversity is not just an economic labour issue but is also a matter of political, social, and cultural preservation.

Japanese immigration policy and enforcement is often contributed to the distinct dichotomy between "insiders" (locals) and the "outsiders" (foreigners) – immigrants in particular being outsiders in every sense, outside the law, outside the culture, outside of race (Brody, 2002).

Although immigration reforms have taken place in the last two decades, most of the policies were made to address returning Japanese emigrants, domestic and marital affairs with foreigners, and in terms of labour, it mainly targets foreign professionals and highly-skilled workers. The Japanese government continuously refuses to acknowledge its issue of admitting low-skilled and unskilled foreign workers indirectly, through policy loopholes and its trainee program (Kingston, 2014). Under the premise that the state refuses to acknowledge the intake of low-skilled and unskilled foreign workers in Japan, the trainees who are one of the manifestations of these types of workers in Japan have their protection and welfare against labour exploitation and integration assistance, obscured.

2.2.1 Economic Labour Issues

Temporary workers have been known to use a side-door entrance to Japan through the Technical Internship Training Program that started in 1993 that recently expanded to accept trainees from Southeast and South Asian countries. According to Japan's Ministry of Justice as of 2016, there are 228,589 foreign trainees mostly coming from China, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Despite the program being called as a "training program" that aims to promote industrial experience and technological exchange between sending countries and Japan, the reality as claimed by various cases reported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Japanese media, is that the trainees are in Japan as workers without or with minimal training component (MHLW, 2016).

In the 2016 annual report by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) that 71% of Japanese firms that participates in the training program violated the Labour standards Act from 2012 to 2016, of which 37% are related to workplace safety and health violations, 26% percent wage on violations, 21% are those practicing working hour violations. Between 2005 and 2010, 127 trainees died while participating in the program, roughly one of every 2,600 trainees (Verite Research Institute, 2018). In 2010 two (2) were classified as "Karoshi" (death from overwork), one of whom was reported to have worked 120 hours of overtime per month. On January 2018, the MHLW released an official report about work-related deaths on trainees, twenty-two (22) were reported to have died over work-related incidents from 2014 to 2016.

The Japanese media and civil society groups have released statements and reports of other manifestations of abuses experienced by trainees. Amongst of which include passport retention by employers, enforced savings, unpaid overtime work, debt bondage, and power harassment (Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan, 2014). In an article written on Nikkei Asian Review, (Shibuya, 2018) reported that a Chinese trainee was forced to work at a sewing factory for 15 hours a day but is only paid at around 400 yen an hour. In November 2018, several foreign trainees attested to their experiences at the Japanese Diet of the abuses and labour violations that they encountered with their employers (Uchiyama, 2018). In an article published at The Asahi Shimbun, another Chinese trainee reported to having been paid 300 yen an hour, as well as working from 8 am until midnight in a factory in Gifu prefecture. A Japan Times article (Osami, 2018) reported that a trainee from Myanmar was deceived by the recruitment agency and employer. She was promised to work in a sewing factory to make clothes, but was instead sent to sew car seat covers in a factory in Aichi and received only 67,800 yen a month as compensation, far lower than the legally set minimum wage level.

Aside from existing on-site labour exploitation, pre-deployment issues prior to their arrival to Japan exist. The trainees are required to undergo technical-vocational skills training as well as basic Japanese language skills prior to going to Japan. Charges for each requirement along with other travel document processing and deployment costs vary across sending countries. Majority of trainees had to borrow a large amount of money before going to Japan. They were promised to earn enough to pay their debts and send extra income to their families. In another article by Asahi Shimbun (2018), it was reported that a Filipino trainee had to borrow 300,000 yen to cover the deployment expenses. The average monthly wage in the Philippines is about 20,000 yen. But with the majority earning way beyond the minimum standard wage, they are unable to pay their debts, send money back home, and barely sustain their daily living expenses in Japan. They become more engrossed in borrowing more money that further results to debt bondage.

2.2.2 Social Welfare and Labour Protection Issues

Trainees also face other issues beyond their working labour standard. Female trainees in particular are reported to have been fired from work because of pregnancy. Another article from The Japan Times (Ibusuki, 2019) reported employers demanding female trainees who have become pregnant while working in Japan to either return home or to consider abortion. In response, the Japanese government issued a warning that such act is a violation to the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (1985). This is a social problem that just recently came to light about the extent of control employers exert even over the private lives of the trainees. In the same article, it was reported that a Vietnamese woman working as a trainee in a paper factory in western Japan had a subcontractor of her supervisory organization order her to either have an abortion or return home. Aside from that, the woman claimed to have signed a contract and underwent a pre-training

program with the recruiting company in Vietnam that required her to return home and lose her employment in an event of pregnancy, which was a clear violation of her human rights and a stipulation that is deemed illegal in Japan. Also, the article cited a Chinese trainee being arrested early in January 2019 on suspicion of abandoning her new born baby in a residential area near Tokyo due to fear that her employers will fire her and be forced to return home.

In a similar and earlier article by Asahi Shimbun on December 2, 2018, it was reported that in a pre-training facility in western Japan, trainees are required to sign a letter of consent that forbids them from, "having any romantic relationship with the opposite sex". This is to prevent female trainees to become pregnant while undertaking the program. It was unheard of for trainees to be given maternity leave. In the same article, a Vietnamese nun was quoted to have reported several women trainees suffering from mental illness because of having resorted to abortion. Shoichi Ibusuki, a lawyer known for advocating trainees' rights was also quoted in the article about his sentiments that, "workers are seen as nothing but objects" by the companies (Hirayama, 2018).

2.3 Efforts for Policy Reform

In light with the heavy criticism against the trainee program, the Japanese Lower House on November 27, 2018 passed a new immigration policy for accepting low-skilled blue collared foreign workers. This was later supported by the Upper House on December 8, 2018 with 161 votes in support for passing the bill. It is stipulated that Japan will accept 345,000 migrant workers in the next five (5) years. This is the first time that the Japanese government made an explicit policy of accepting blue-collared workers through its "front-door" for five (5) selected industries with acute labour shortages and later on was deemed to expand to include nine (9) other industries.

However, with only 17 days of deliberation in passing this bill, the new visa system stipulated has been concluded by civil society groups and immigration experts as a mere expansion of the existing trainee program.

The system proposes two (2) new official working visa categories that allows trainees to change their status as “specified skilled worker” as their residence status. It has two (2) sub-categories, tentatively labelled as No. 1 and No. 2 status. Those under the No. 1 status are allowed to work in Japan for a maximum of five (5) years and are not allowed to bring their families with them to Japan. On the other hand the No. 2 status is granted to those with advanced industrial and Japanese skills, and will be allowed to bring their families with them. If they pass certain tests and conditions, they will be allowed to live in Japan indefinitely. Trainees who have at least three (3) years of experience are allowed to convert their status to either of the two visa schemes.

Critics have stipulated that the lack of preparation and amount of time to deliberate the bill before it was passed may lead to further widespread of illegal practices in employing foreign workers. Civil society groups argued that while under the program, trainees or workers are not allowed to choose their employers which impedes and immobilizes their labour opportunity and may continually be forced to endure low wages and harsh conditions. The level of Japanese language required is also another definitive problem seen by critics. Current trainees eligible for the conversion visa scheme have little time and opportunity to further enhance their Japanese language skills. With cases of overwork, there is a question on when and how they will find the resources and time to comply with the said criteria. In their defense, the Japanese government issued a 22.4 billion yen budget for the next fiscal year allocated for supporting foreign residents along with 2 billion yen budget allocation for opening 100 multilingual consultation centres. However, no other integration measures has been included in the current proposal.

Furthermore, as a response to the increasing pressure to improve the situation for the current trainees, the Japanese government announced a new measure in line with the new immigration policy on January 25, 2019, and deemed two (2) leading Japanese companies, Mitsubishi Motors and Panasonic, ineligible to participate in hiring trainees for the next five (5) years for having violated the Labour Standards law. Mitsubishi was found to have trainees perform tasks not included in the technical training program plan while Panasonic was found to have violated the Labour Standard law involving Japanese employees (Asahi Shimbun, 2019). This is the first time that globally known companies were revoked of their eligibility to participate in the trainee program.

However, when the Japanese government strictly implements the guidelines and the companies violates, it becomes a double jeopardy for the trainees. With the suspension of permits, companies lay-off their trainees. Most trainees are unaware that this is another violation implemented by the companies. They have limited knowledge of the due process. The language barrier further estranged them on exercising their rights. They are made to choose between silencing their workplace struggles and abuses to retain their work, or to report the company's violations that may lead to losing their jobs. This vulnerability to unemployment and being sent home with little to no compensation are the dilemma that sustain other violations that may have been occurring in the program.

In response to these circumstances, I explored how the current Japanese civil society and labour unions, under a unique and interconnected manifestation of state and industrial economic control and dependence, had some organizations that defy their mainstream counter-parts, mainly the Japanese led Labour Migrant Non-Profit organizations/Support groups and Community Unions.

Because it is usually in the cases and issues I had enumerated that community unions and civil society groups enter and engage with the trainees.

2.4 Rediscovering Japanese Civil Society

Prior to understanding the engagement to which the Japanese civil society form coalitions and play a role in the welfare of low-skilled foreign workers, it is in order to define civil society in relation to the literature.

In the economic development literature, World Bank defines civil society as, "a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations" (World Economic Forum, 2019). According to an operational definition by Anheier (2004) civil society is the sphere of institutions, organizations, and individuals located between the family, state, and the markets in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests. Others define civil society similarly as the "third sector", with definitions that are culture bound with labels like: non-profit, non-governmental, independent, and voluntary (Wagner, 2002).

For my research, Habermas (1996) captures some characteristics that are attuned to the Japanese context:

> "Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distil and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-

solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres". (p.51)

Aside from the common definition that has principles of "independence" and "role as a non-state actor, I would like to highlight Habermas' definition that emphases on spontaneity, amplifying private concern as a public issue, and the problem-solving approach utilized by practitioners in this sector.

In Japan, emphasis is placed on the term civil society as mostly associated with an understanding in which non-profits play an important role and construct systematic networks with government and businesses (Yamauchi, 2003). The case of Japanese civil society primarily in the form of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) have a unique relationship and blurred distinction with the state and enterprise. The mainstream understanding that the third sector, independent sector, voluntary sector, or charitable sector, is generally defined as NPOs in Japan greatly emphasizes its "not for profit" identity rather than being a "non-governmental organization" (Nishide, 2009).

Ogawa (2014) argues that Japanese Civil society is monolithic, with little difference between the state and society. The strict legal framework, limited funding pattern, indirect regulations (e.g. postal regulations), and the profile of opportunities all affect the development of 'Japanese dual civil society' (Pekkanen, 2006). In addition, there are few large professionalized Japanese NPOs and is mostly consist of smaller, grassroots organizations.

But it is not say that there are no legal mandates to support the development of NPOs in Japan. In fact there are various legal mandates that allow the Japanese civil society to develop. However, certain cultural perspectives from the masses especially about public trust and social structural constraints greatly affect how NPOs are. The main legal basis for NPOs is in the

Japanese constitution under Article 21 that proclaims and declares the principle of Freedom of Assembly and Association. Also the Japanese Civil Code of 1896 was enacted that allowed and strictly regulated the establishment of the major "third-sector organization" under Article 34. Later on, the Non-Profit Organization law of 1998, which allowed civil society organizations to easily acquire non-profit corporation status was enacted. It was established on March 19, 1998, and came into force on December 1 of that same year as a response to the large amount of activism and volunteerism from the public in its rehabilitation effort related to the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995.

The NPO law and its reforms became a foundation for a more robust civil society actors to meet the challenges of the "lost decade of 1990s", when Japan suffered economic stagnation followed by an asset price bubble collapse. It was also a time when social issues from the '80s created various social upheaval including illegal immigration (Kingston, 2004; Shipper, 2008). However, Ogawa (2014) argues that in practice, most of the NPOs are acting as an extension and subsidized provider of welfare that is supposedly provided by the state. He calls these NPOs as GoNPOs, meaning a Government lead, top-down process of NPO-ization. It has become a cost efficient means to deliver services that the state could no longer afford to provide.

Based on the status of legal entities identified as NPOs in Japan, the categorizations are similar to the services and welfare support that are provided by the state. Japanese NPOs has been accused of being "members without advocates" (Pekkanen, 2006). It is therefore interesting to search for an organization that defies the mainstream nature of mainstream Japanese NPOs.

For example, Japanese led and initiated NPOs advocating for foreign workers, a sector that concerns non-Japanese, or outsiders who are seen as mostly threats to the strength and cultural

harmony of the Japanese society. These organizations that are uniquely trying to defy the stigma that has both Pekkanen (2006) and Ogawa (2014) describe as the failure of Japanese civil society.

Providing a counter perspective, Shipper (2008) provided narratives and alternative positive impressions on Japanese civil society and analysed how these groups are actively advocating for the rights of illegal migrants. In his book, *"Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and its Impact on Japanese Democracy"*, Shipper (2008) particularly focused on studying support groups for overstaying foreigners in Japan. In this study, he identified a typology of migrant support groups established by Japanese citizens based on their associations and primary function. He identified six (6): Faith-based groups, community workers' unions, women's support groups, lawyer's NGOs, Medical NGOs, and concerned citizens' groups. He argues that the manifestations of these types of NPOs operate through associative activism is reinforced by democracy in Japan. He defined associative activism as a way of problem solving approach used by the activists and volunteers by upholding human rights principles in trying to assist illegal migrants in their issues. A process which focuses on the individuals through societal, welfare, and human rights activities rather than a direct confrontation in terms of legality and publicity with the government. Majority of these organizations operate without the financial support of the Japanese government and are independent from state control.

Interestingly, the arguments and organizational cases provided by Shipper (2008) challenge the negative impression given by Pekkanen (2003) and Ogawa (2014), albeit definitely smaller in size and limited in their activities. These Japanese initiated foreign workers support groups and NPOs are proving to be outliers in describing the mainstream Japanese civil society.

2.5 Community Worker's Union: Activism for the Marginalized

Community unions are regionally represented structured unions with members drawn from a number of firms defying the traditional enterprise and trade based unions (Kojima, 2017; Ford, 2004; Suzuki, 2014). Their membership covers part-time and other non-regular workers in small and foreign firms including migrant workers. Community unions are bounded to the community rather than to an enterprise or sector. This allows them to challenge the conforming and cooperative nature of enterprise unions. Majority of the Japanese community unions only cater to Japanese nationals, workers engaged in temporary or part-time work. The major concern involves language as the fundamental barrier in the ability of the community union to accept cases involving foreign workers. But recently, community unions are becoming more popular as an alternative avenue for foreign workers to seek help and legal assistance, mostly in cases involving foreign trainees.

Shipper (2008) described these community unions using the sociological concept of pragmatism. These groups engage in problem-solving activities that lack a formalized theoretical or prescribe way of doing things and often require a creative approach outside the formal, accepted channels of political and social institutions. The Japanese NPO are mostly self-taught individuals that experienced labour discrimination and unjust practices. These organizations researched by Shipper (2008) focused heavily on illegal migrant workers in Japan. Mostly those who are advocating this sector act based on their experience as problem-solvers with experience in helping the underprivileged.

Likewise, these community unions mediate and provide collective bargaining negotiations for workers, seek help from lawyers if negation fail, and mobilize their members to stage a demonstration outside of employer's central office as a last resort. The last option is called, "Ichininichi Koudo" (All-day offensives). They shame the employers to comply with the union's demands (Nakakubo, 2014) using the media to publicize the case with an aim to exert social

pressure on the companies. Employers and industrial relations institutions often dismiss community unions as a media performance and nuisance instead of labour rights reformers.

On the other hand such mobilization strategies are often limited in creating real labour structural reforms. Suzuki (2014) described the limitations and possibilities of social movement unionism through community unions in the context of Japanese industrial relations institutions. He argued that although the concept of community unions are able to organize the traditionally 'unorganizable' workers in the Japanese labour, they remain small in number and 'at arm's length' in strength. Trade and enterprise unions as well as their national confederations remain to be the powerful entity for labour movement in Japan. Mainstream unions in Japan also seemed to have developed distrust and claimed to have a competition with community unions in trying to organize temporary workers (Rengo report, 2003; in citation with Suzuki, 2014). National union confederations such as Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) hold a relatively traditional and conservative view about migrant workers. Although recently their local and regional counter-parts have been slowly easing their membership to also attend to foreign workers, however, their policy and stance remain the same.

Another concern is the nature of membership for community unions and the service oriented nature of migrant support organizations to which is mostly limited through a client-provider relationship (Shipper, 2008). Interaction and participation in community unions and migrant support organizations become a transactional endeavour instead of propagating pro-active collective association or community building with the migrant workers. Therefore, the research also examines how forming coalitions are managing to elevate the "individualistic" concerns of temporary migrant workers to become a collective bargaining stance and a purposive advocacy. Suzuki (2012) argued that if community unions continue to only specialize in labour-issue

counselling and dispute resolutions without forming networks with other organizations, they will remain as a mere providers of services rather than becoming part of a broader social movement based on economic justice (Suzuki, 2012 p.8). He therefore emphasizes the need to seek broader goals amongst community unions and their civil society partners in order to potentially create a bigger impact to the revitalization of social movements in Japan.

This is where challenges to the term "community" as commonly defined in labour movement studies, are raised due to the temporary and foreign nature of labour migration. Tattersall (2007) defines community in unionism through three (3) mutually reinforcing ways: (1) common interest; (2) identity; and (3) local neighbourhood or place. However, in terms of temporary migrant workers, participation to community unions are initiated mostly due to common interest and at a local neighbourhood/place, whereas identity to the union and the labour movement itself remains underdeveloped.

But this characteristic of common working class identity is actually not just confined to issues concerning foreign workers. Kumazawa (1996) argues that Japan, in contrast to other developed states has not created a strong "worker society", a working class identity to strengthen its unions. Certain Japanese work cultural practices exist that hinders the "take off" stage of the labour movement. Kumazawa (1996) refers to this stage as a point where there is a self-generated process of separation that enables for the creation of a worker society by a portion of the working class. He further identified the existence of cultural and structural practices in Japan that contributed to the loss of a unified working class society. These are: (1) the "nenko" system, a seniority based promotion; (2) lifetime employment; (3) and the cooperative relationship of enterprise unions to the company management. However, the current changing labour structure in Japan had an increasing trend of irregular and temporary workers which poses a challenge to the

commonly known Japanese style of business and labour management. It is in these instances that community unions offer the organizational structure that enables those outside of regular employment an opportunity to mobilize, temporary migrant workers included.

Despite the lack of common and united "identity" of foreign workers in the labour movement, this does not entirely downplay their participation and significant potential of community unions. This simply means that there are areas to which in order to increase the scale or impact of these organizations, these are areas that may require a stronger policy of inclusivity amongst their members. This is where coalition building with labour civil society groups provides that opportunity and platform that may enable community unions to bridge into community building.

Similar to how Wills (2001) argue that unionism in the United Kingdom, where labour-community coalitions developed from being just a 'representational community unionism' to a 'reciprocal community unionism'. He further describe this different concept where the former refers to when unions were represented in local and national government decision-making process while they sought and act for the community whereas the latter refers to when unions seek to sustain relationships with community groups to help improve local life as well as fostering union growth (Simms, 2004).

In the case of the UK unions that also have immigrants as members, they are mostly permanent migrants residing in the said country. For contract-based and temporary migrant workers, the challenge is to really sustain their involvement and go back to Tattersall's concept of establishing a common identity with the labour movement.

2.6 Bridging Labour Migration and Community Unionism

There has been fewer engagements between organized labour movements and labour migration literature. Studies of organized labour are focused on domestic affairs involving organized workers such as factory workers, offices, and plantations (Ford, 2004; Holgate, 2011; Kumazawa, 1996; Miller & Form, 1964), whereas migration studies are focused on demographic features of labour migration flows, experiences and welfare of migrant workers, and the significant contributions of civil society groups in host and country of origin (Ford, 2004; Hollifield, 2007; DeWind & Portes, 2007).

Ford (2004) argues that this separation of research interest is rooted from the theoretical perspective and framework used in organized labour studies and migration literature. Organized labour movements are extensively studied in sociology with unions as their basic unit of analysis. Narratives are leaned on the historical development of a working class in societies in their domestic and national context.

Although there were instances in developed societies such as the case of the United States in the early 1920s and 1960s where Asian and Latin immigrants mainly plantations in Chicago, California, and Hawaii had played a vital role in the national labour movements in these era (Aguelles, 2007). The context of migration in those periods however are different. They were immigrants with permanent residencies and settlement in mind. Whereas, the current globalized and highly regulated labour migration is more of a large-scale temporary endeavour. The nature of "temporariness" seen in labour migration hints a theoretical conflict in which organized labour movement is based from which is the identity of the working class. Meaning, to establish membership and identity in an encompassing working class, one must first establish belongingness

and integration in the community and the larger society. A fundamental drawback to which temporary labour migration is in conflict with organized labour movements.

On the other hand, migration studies are mostly focusing on immigration policies, welfare and protection of human rights, migration flows, economic and human development, and individual experiences of migrant workers. Organizational studies are often seen in relation with migration studies with the emergence of migrant support and advocacy groups both in the host and country of origin. But to discuss labour migrant concerns under the context and framework integrated with the local labour movement is rarely seen. Migrant labour organizations and movements are seen as part of civil society development. But studies of labour movements are seen as a different concept or entity. Studies of unionism for example often disregard non-union labour organizations. It is because practitioners and scholars alike regard unions as the only legitimate vehicle for worker's collective action (Ford, 2004). Because there are arguments of legitimacy in labour politics, it is expected that migrant labour organizations should take the form and develop to become a union instead and that such entities shall undergo an organization reform to eventually become a union.

But in order to bridge such a gap in fundamental understanding of these disciplines, an alternative course is used as part of the modern development of each unit of analysis. This refers to the creation of community labour unions and their coalition building with civil society groups. This enables both types of organization to establish a holistic network of bridging labour migration into the organized labour narrative. That instead of changing fundamental perspectives introspect to each discipline, using organizational approach to both units of analysis and studying the relations and engagement of both community unions and migrant support organizations, we can study labour movements and migration together as one. In order to do so the research is looking

into coalition building as a strategy using the framework of community unionism to bridge this literature gap.

It is therefore important to address these gaps in the migration literature that often neglects to include labour unions from the host country in the discourse. Through analysing coalitions and their respective organizational context and process, the study descriptively captures how this exceptional type of coalition works for this marginal sector in the context of Japanese society. By presenting case studies of coalitions in action, I am able to further develop this type of organizational relationship and strategy as a process into enhancing an alternative network for migrant workers in other host societies similar to Japan.

2.7 Coalition Building: Community Union and Migrant Support Organizations

The changing globalization of labour and corporate restructuring challenged the relevance and power of labour unions (Hyman, 2007; Suzuki, 2014). Environmental, economic, and political contexts of societies greatly affected union membership and collective bargaining leverage (Ford, 2004; Kojima, 2017; Kumazawa, 1996). The changing structural power of workers in the labour market has shifted with the trend of employment triangulation, increase in temporary workers, off-shoring, and out-sourcing practices (Kojima, 2017; Levine, 2012). In order to revive the labour union movement, coalition building is seen and used as a strategy.

Kojima (2017) argues that one manifestation to counter these structural constraints, in order for Japanese unions to organize against triangulated arrangement of employment for example, they needed to strengthen their associational powers through forming coalitions between: (a) Labour unions and national labour federations; (b) Unions that belonged to multiple national labour federations; and (c) Labour unions and civil society groups. He further argues that although these

unions remain within their federation and political boundaries they were able to creatively made ways to bridge across such limitations through coalition building. Furthermore, he highlighted that civil society groups bonded unions across national federation memberships. This shows characteristics of flexibility and fluidity in order to achieve a common goal. But as initially stated in the limitation of the study, I focused on the third type of coalition and included nuances for temporary migrant workers.

Tattersall (2010) also argues that power in coalition building enables the unions to overcome the effects of globalization and unfavourable state policies. One of her models also include a discussion on unions forming coalitions with civil society organizations. The model includes three specific attributes or elements: (1) Organizational relationships and structure (bridge brokers and coalition offices); (2) Common concern (common interest operates as mutual direct interest of organizational members); and (3) Scale (where success increases as coalitions operate at multiple scales such as local, government, and/or business decision makers). Tattersall (2010) argues that successful coalition unionism is defined by these three elements. Tattersall (2006) also provides three (3) typology of coalition according to the organizations' common interest: (1) Ad hoc relationships that occur around an event; (2) mutual-support coalition relationships that occur around any issue and have formal decision-making structures in which actors participate instrumentally; and (3) deeply engaged relationships (deep coalitions) that occur around a mutual broad social vision. Tattersall (2005) argued that the unions' ability to enhance its power is affected by the extent to which the coalitions are deeply and broadly interconnected.

Tattersall (2005, pp. 99-109) describes and defines the different types of coalitions as:

(1) Ad hoc (episodic coalition) coalitions – this type of coalition occurs in response to a crisis. Similarly, Tarrow (1994) characterises that these crises are translated into a political

opportunity for the organizations with common interest to gather and support one another. This type of relationship does not involve joint-decision making functions, but are often transactional and comes through as requests for support for an already existing strategy for the crisis at hand. Although Ad hoc coalitions do not create powerful strategic relationships, it is rather creating relationships of possibilities for greater connection, sharing, and power (Tattersall, 2005 pp. 100).

(2) Mutual-support coalitions – this is a type of coalition when there is an expansion of common interest between organizations. It also often called as "common-cause" coalition. A deeper common interest is shared and not simply the direct concern of one of the organizations. The issues are usually broad in nature and are phrased under an expanded issues frame where organizations invest their interests because the coalition's success supports their individual direct and political aims. Mutual interest becomes a vehicle for sharing decision making between groups. The coalition becomes a platform for negotiating demands that ensures the organizations' issues are addressed. There exist a confident level of trust between the coalition which is usually established through individual-bridge builders who are experienced in both community organizations and unions. There is power and resources sharing between organizations upon establishing their respective decision-making mechanisms, and creating a platform for strategy discussions and recommendations. There exists a deeper bond between partners in this type of coalition. However, mutual-support coalitions tend to be exclusive, because a higher threshold of trust is required (in citation, Lipsig-Mummé, 2003). This type of coalition is more likely to develop between organizations with a long history of informal relationships or partnership. Mostly those that share similar cultural practices, where predictability and reciprocity are

more likely achieved. Instead of actively seeking new organizations to join the coalition, membership within the network is often through recommendation and by hand-picking organizations that satisfy a standard of trust, commitment to the people, or capacity to mobilize people (Tattersall, 2005 pp. 102-105).

(3) Deep-coalitions - are usually defined by the wide array of common interest and organizational diversity. There exist a deep participation between its members due to the provided spaces and outlets for interaction and engagement. Deep coalitions move beyond mutual-support coalitions by establishing decision-making structures, instead of relying on only one coalition structure. Furthermore, deep coalitions go beyond operating through decision-makers of each organization. This type of coalition resource, support, and encourage action and connection between unions and community groups at the membership level. There exist a level of decentralization to which individual union members and community organization members participate in decision-making. Deep coalitions occur when organizations no longer adhere to hierarchical decision-making and instead voluntarily and meaningfully engage their participation in coalition related activities. Also, deep coalitions provide platforms and opportunities to which there are trained or educated that increases the capacity of rank-and-file members to mobilize (pp. 106-109).

Also in addition to looking at specific elements and types of coalition according to Tattersall (2010), I also used Black's (2005) community unionism as framework. It is because I find that the coalitions in Japan exhibit both characteristics of community unionism used by Black (2005). That community unionism is a process to which the organizations form relationships in

order to achieve a common goal and also as an organizational structure that enables them to organize and become inclusive for hard to organize and irregular workers, such as temporary migrant workers. Although originally, Black (2005) argues that these characteristics are two separate attributes. But in cases where the civil society group is a labour organization, the distinction blurs because of the already established commonality of interest. That instead of unions networking to connect to civil society groups to broaden their scope, their common interest and specialty instead amplifies their strength and enhances their focus which is labour. This enables the coalition to have both characteristics of community unionism. First as a process through which their problem-solving approach bounded by their interest in labour, enhances their political power and negotiation advantage. And secondly, allows them to expand their community influence, network, and engagement to the grassroots. It reinforces the flexibility and organization membership inclusiveness of community unions.

In terms of labour migration's perspective of coalitions with unions, Michele Ford (2004) provided an example to which she argued that in circumstances of authoritarian regimes, unions are weakened by the state. However, civil society groups and labour organizations to be exact are given importance and are provided more public space to be active in the increasing relevance of social justice and human rights. So unions and workers in these type of societies use their relationship with civil society groups in their coalition to advocate labour concerns. Because after all, labour issues are considered part of human rights concern. This supports Tattersall's (2010) component of a successful coalition building, where common interest enables both types of organization to come together and increase the scale of their issue to a much wider stakeholder or audiences.

In the Japanese context, Ford's (2014) studies can be complimented by Suzuki's (2014) description of activities of community unions. He identified three major activities of Japanese community unions: (a) seeking broad goals; (b) Alliance formation with social movement & community organization; and (c) involvement of the rank and file in union activities. The first two activities clearly reflect similar approaches to Ford's (2014) and similar to Tattersall's (2006) description of how unions and civil society groups form coalitions. By advocating labour rights as human rights, community unions are able to seek broad and greater goals to include and strive to achieve social justice. And through coalition building with civil society organizations, although rare in the Japanese context is a manifestation of an alternative renewed approach in revitalizing labour movements (Kojima, 2017).

3. Methodology

My research used qualitative descriptive research methods through case study analysis. I selected two coalitions: (1) Zentoitsu Workers Union – Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan from Tokyo; and (2) Scrum Union-selected small grassroots Trainee Support Groups from Hiroshima. These coalitions were chosen due to their accessibility and English communication level as well as their known interaction with Filipino workers. Since I am from the same country, it is relatable and convenient in terms of context and communication to highlight organizations that helped these workers. I used in-depth unstructured interviews and observations to gather my data with key informants from: (1) union and civil society group leaders and employees; (2) Japanese researchers (private and government); (3) and some Filipino workers both those who are involved in providing support and network to the civil society groups – unions and those who were helped by the coalitions.

For the first case study the coalition between Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU) and Solidarity Network for Migrant Workers (SMJ), I used participant observation and went to Tokyo last August 2018 to volunteer for the coalition. I took notes and collected data through interviews, both structured and unstructured with the SMJ staffs and board members. I mostly stayed with SMJ for most of the time. But since both organizations share the same building complex and would often share common working areas as well resources, I was able to join meetings and union membership orientations with ZWU.

The ZWU-SMJ coalition in particular was chosen due to the advocacy and political nature of their relationship. SMJ in particular is not a migrant service oriented organization. But instead, it is a network NPO that works as a general secretariat amongst its members which are mostly organizations and unions instead of individuals. Although they do offer individual memberships, mostly for their M-network (migrant-network) data base and newsletter publication. But majority of their activities involve multiple issue based committee organizing among their member organizations and unions. As such, due to the closer affiliation of SMJ to ZWU compared to the other organizations in the said network, the case study will specifically highlight this particular coalition in action.

Another consideration used is due to the political lobbying and international representational role of SMJ for advocating migrants in Japan. The organization gathers information and inputs from their multiple partners including unions and were tasked to represent the voice of civil society in Japan to the United Nations concerning issues about migration and human rights in general. In process, SMJ receives information from the unions, mainly ZWU (due to proximity and resource sharing) to which some individual labour cases are used as basis for policy and reform

recommendations. SMJ acts as an advocacy and lobbying organization that elevates the individual labour case handled by ZWU if the scale of the issue is a cause for national political concern.

As to the second case study involving Hiroshima based Scrum Union and their multiple grassroots based support group partners, I did a series of key informant interviews for a week. The main reason is partly due to the limited research funds and time available. But in order to ensure the richness and quality of data, each interview was supplemented by written communication for clarifying additional points of discussion. This second coalition was chosen to portray the typical partnership between community unions as the negotiating and bargaining lead with the support and service oriented labour migrant groups. I focused on analysing the holistic community building potential of community unionism by observing and interviewing migrant workers who were involved with both the Scrum union and the support groups. I captured the grassroots perspective of the workers in relation to engaging with the coalition. I documented the motivations and origins of the support groups and individual volunteers who are engaged with the community union. This case provides an alternative narrative to the first case where the primary concern was to elevate and nationalize issues of labour migrants. The coalition in Hiroshima is perceived in localizing and enriching grassroots participation of the actual migrant workers in the community unionism process.

I defined community unionism in this research in accordance to Black (2005) that subscribes the coalition both as a structure and as a process. To be more specific, using Tattersall's (2005) framework and typology, my case studies showed two (2) specific types of coalition.

The ZWU-SMJ case is an example of a mutual-support coalition. Both organizations share a mutual and common interest which were established through individual-bridge builders who were experienced in both the union and also in community organizing. Power and resources are

shared within the coalition. Also, they function under a decision-making structure which involves and further expands to SMJ's broad network.

The Scrum Union – Hiroshima support groups on the other hand portrays characteristics of Ad hoc coalition with its unstructured and lose organizational relationship and bond. The coalition mostly responds to crisis in forms of labour disputes mainly by Filipino trainees in the area. There are no existing formal and structured join-decision mechanism within the coalition. Relationships are heavily dependent on individual-bridge builders for referral and membership awareness.

3.1 Organizational background of the case study

3.1.1 Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU)

Zentoitsu (All united*) Workers Union was established in 1970 as a Tokyo-based general workers union that has members from various companies and enterprises in the area. ZWU was created to organize the 'unorganized workers', expand and strengthen unions, and to contribute to the revitalization of the Japanese trade union movement. It accepts members regardless of employment status, job type, and position. This includes part-timers, dispatch workers, trainees, and temporary workers. Members consist of local Japanese and foreign workers. It was in 1993 when the union first accepted foreign workers mostly in the construction industry from South Asian countries and African companies. Recently, they became more active with handling labour cases of Vietnamese trainees. Also, there has been an increase in their membership for Filipino workers from the service industry in 2018. Membership fee ranges from 1,000 ~ 3,000 yen per month depending on the income of the member. A part of the membership fee will be returned to the foreign worker once he/she returns to their country of origin. They offer consultations ranging

from issues about work, creation of union (enterprise based), layoffs, wage problems, restructuring, sexual harassment, and other work related issues that may arise.

The organization boasts of its individual membership and solidarity with national labour unions and NPOs. The union's mission is to establish a "union for worker's rights, aiming to improve the living and working conditions of workers, and to further efforts for peace and democracy". They aim to achieve this through activities that contributes to the development of a bright and liveable society for workers. ZWU's slogan is, "One person for everyone, and everyone for one person (One for all, all for one)".

3.1.2 Solidarity Network for Migrants – Japan (SMJ)

The Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan (SMJ or also known as "Ijyuuren") was formed in 1991. It is a network NPO with its primary membership consisting of various NPOs and unions in the Kanto region working on issues concerning migrants' rights. It was established as a result of the "Forum on Foreign Workers Issues in Kanto", an annual forum that successfully increased the number of organization working in this issue. In 1996, the organization held its First National Forum in Fukuoka. It was from this forum that further established a nationwide networking of organizations that would cooperate on an ongoing basis related to migrants in Japan. In 1997, "Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan" was launched.

SMJ is a Tokyo based organization that has the major function of increasing awareness and policy-making as its primary concern. It brings together NPOs and labour unions in propagating advocacy for migrants. SMJ's functions and activities contribute and raise awareness of migrants in Japan especially their vulnerability to human rights violations.

The organization has three (3) major activities (source: SMJ's official website as of March 2019):

1. **Advocacy: Proposing policies, negotiating with government ministries and agencies, and lobbying.** SMJ works for reforming policies and regulations in the national level, and connecting it with the efforts of local level is a key to ensure the rights of migrants and people with foreign nationalities. It plays a role in bridging the connection between multiple stakeholders.
2. **Networking: Organizing National Forum and Workshop, and Campaigning with an Asian Regional Network.** The organization shares information and organize campaigns and events with domestic, Asian and International NGOs. They work on projects concerning migrant women's rights, foreign Technical Intern Trainees, medical and welfare issues, discrimination, and Immigration Control Act. The International Human Rights Division is also working on utilizing international human rights treaties and building networks with Asian and other international NGOs.
3. **Publicity: Disseminating information and publishing books. The organization disseminate information regarding migrants to raise awareness among public.** SMJ has a "Migrants Network" (M-Network) (written in Japanese) a monthly magazine publication taking up current issues surrounding migration and migrants in Japan and elsewhere. They also publish policy proposals, survival manuals (Japanese-English, Japanese-Chinese), booklets, and other books and articles regarding migrants in Japan. Aside from printed materials, the organization also have a home-page online resources and social networks to reach out to the wider audiences interested in migrant issues.

3.1.3 Scrum Union Hiroshima

This union is headed by a married Japanese couple, Shinzo and Midori Tsuchiya. The name of the union, “scrum” was inspired by the similar term, “scrummage’ in rugby that involves the players to come together, heads down, and plans on how to gain possession of the ball. In the case of the union, it was about coming together as one and making collective decisions in addressing labour dispute cases. It was formed in 2002 due to the personal labour injustice experience of Mr. Tsuchiya who used to work in recycling plant in Hiroshima. He had been fired for dissenting and actively speaking on behalf of other employees in the plant, mainly for the foreign Brazilian workers and Persons with Disability (PWD). But at that time, because of his dissent he was fired from the company. It was in this instance that he learned how to fight the system through their then, enterprise union in the company. He was a self-taught union activist to which later on his wife took the same line of career as him. The Scrum union used to be part of Marugame, a Shikoku based union but later on they decided to become a separate entity. The union from then on was able to handle other cases involving foreign workers from Chinese, Vietnamese, Brazilian, and most recently Filipinos. Lately, Scrum union has been making headlines due to its increasing labour cases involving trainees working in Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, and Okayama area. Trainees were mostly working in industries such as car factories, seaweed farms, and oyster farms.

Union members pay 1,000 yen monthly due and for labour dispute settlements, there is a 5% donation that goes to the union. Membership recruitment are often facilitated by word of mouth among the local community both Japanese and foreigners. It snowballs that later on enables the union to also connect with the local labour migrant support groups.

Scrum Union is also a member of SMJ. This union works closely with SMJ and shares membership in several technical working committees concerning labour migrants. They participate to

workshops, trainings, seminars, and forums organized by SMJ. In return, they admit that they were able to learn current issues, laws, and union activities through the network.

3.1.4 Various Hiroshima Based Filipino Trainees Support Group

There were two (2) Filipino trainee support groups that I interviewed in Hiroshima: (1) Filipino Trainee Support Group in Hiroshima and (2) Volunteer Japanese Teachers Language Support group. These two groups consist of small independent private individuals who found their ways to voluntarily organize and provide support to Filipino trainees in the area.

The Filipino Trainee Support Group in Hiroshima has 3-4 active members who volunteer to help several labour cases. The group consists of academicians, researchers, and is led by a retired salaryman who is a self-taught immigration consultant. The group was formed due to their personal interest and relationship with the local Filipino community. One of the volunteers is a full Japanese working as a researcher in an institute who is able to speak Filipino. She often joins the group in terms of translation and language support. The lead of the group often provide immigration and visa consultation advices and helps in the processing of the documents. Although he is unable to speak English or Filipino, he manages to communicate through the other volunteers and through some Filipino nationals who are able to act as an interpreter in the consultation. This direct interaction with the trainees enables them to capture their issues and concerns first-hand. Because of their relationship with the community, they can access information by word of mouth and through a series of personal connections. They are able to identify those who are in trouble or have some labour concerns but are afraid or clueless on how to address their problems. Other Filipinos whom the group met usually refer others to seek help from this group. However as pointed out,

this group works in a voluntary basis and does not exactly have any formal organizational structure or office. They are working mostly as pro-bono and by donations of the community or by individuals whom they successfully helped. The group does have a formal bank account which pays mostly for their transportation and accommodation expenses related to this volunteer work. But aside from that, they are a flexible non-regular group who does this line of work out of their concern and personal ties with the Filipino community. Recently, the group has been making some connections with the Philippine Overseas Labour Office (POLO). They are after all providing the support that is supposedly done by the Philippine and Japanese government. Mostly, this opportunity to connect with the Philippine authorities was due to their involvement with the Hitachi case which will be discussed in the latter part of the research. To the credit of the group, their presence and reputation within the trainees in Hiroshima has been making waves in the area.

The second group consists of Japanese teachers who voluntarily teaches Japanese language to trainees in several areas in Hiroshima and Okayama. I was able to interview a volunteer teacher who set-up her own informal Japanese language class in Iwakuni and Otake. She organizes these classes two times a month for free. Her experience as an overseas JICA volunteer exposed her to life outside of Japan and the concerns of foreign workers. She often volunteers for teaching Japanese to foreign wives of Japanese and other foreign permanent residents, but lately got in touch with a group of trainees who attended their session. She and the other teachers got to know this group of trainees and heard them out, mainly their lack of money and time to study Japanese. She indicated that the trainees are willing to make the effort to learn and study Japanese but circumstances limits that opportunity. It was then that she organized some Japanese classes voluntarily without pay to help and contribute. She later on found out about the Filipino Trainee Support Group in Hiroshima though her own random internet search. She was looking for another

support group when one of her students had some trouble with their contract. From then on, their connection was formed. She was also able to become connected with the Scrum union to which she sometimes refer her students to join or seek for consultation when they have some labour concerns.

Both of these groups are informal and voluntary in nature and have the characteristics of grassroots initiatives. They work directly with the migrant workers and have forged a personal connection with them. They later on connected these workers to the Scrum union in order to provide some legitimate representation to engage in collective bargaining agreement/negotiation.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Case 1: Zentoitsu Workers Union (ZWU) – Solidarity Network for Migrants Japan (SMJ)

This case study focuses on analysing a ZWU-SMJ coalition using the following key discussion points: (1) analysis of their common interests, common personalities, and common resources; (2) Coalition in action through a labour dispute case; (3) Representation and voices of migrant workers; and (4) Threat of a backlash. These specific thematic observations show community unionism is manifested in the coalition both as an organizational structure and as a process to which the organizations solve issues within their interests. Examples will also be given to when the coalition shows flexible characteristics in its activities and terms of engagements as identified by Tattersall (2012), mainly as a case that shows a mutual-support type of coalition.

4.1.1 *Common interests, common personalities, and common resources*

SMJ being a network organization has unions and support groups as their primary members. The relationship of SMJ and ZWU in particular is closer than the rest of the member organizations. Especially in terms of both tangible and non-tangible resources shared by the coalition. One obvious characteristic seen is the fact that both organizations share the same building complex, where SMJ is only a floor above ZWU. The organizations also share space from time to time when ZWU conducts negotiations or member orientations, it borrows the conference room located at SMJ's office. Whereas, SMJ also shares some consumable resources from ZWU. Simple mundane office materials for example, printing and photocopying committee meeting hand-outs are carried out using the machine located inside ZWU's office.

Even business cards of employees between SMJ and ZWU share the same template and paper material, with braille letters embossed on them. Business cards in Japan have a cultural implication and social importance. There are etiquettes to which people are expected to act when exchanging business cards. These cards are treated as an extension and manifestation of identity of the person. For SMJ and ZWU to share the same business card format can be interpreted as a cultural and organizational display of their common identity and resource sharing.

Employees may also easily come and go between offices. Even calls or concerns that passes through each organizations' phone lines are easily connected or transferred from one another. I experienced this first-hand when my call through ZWU was transferred to SMJ due to the lack of staff in ZWU who can proficiently use English at that time. This happened during the time of my first contact with the organizations, when I was trying to establish rapport and request for an interview with them. This means communication and information between two organizations flow easily.

On a much deeper level, the close interaction of both organizations may be attributed to one of its leader, Mr. Ippei Torii, currently the chairman of the board of SMJ and former leader of ZWU. His involvement with both organizations and the long history established with the other members of ZWU creates this connection in the coalition.

One might challenge if this case study is still an example of a coalition involving two (2) separate organizations, or if SMJ is working as an extension of ZWU? In reality, despite the commonality of their interest, personalities involved, and resources, their activities and organizational mandate still greatly differ from one another. Daily work and transactions as well as activities and their concerns differ.

SMJ does not handle labour dispute negotiations and does not have individual membership in the core of its organization. Work within SMJ mostly include creating advocacy materials (newsletters, articles, etc.), coordination and secretariat function for its member organizations, and content management of the M-network. SMJ works as the secretariat in various organized committees that cuts across various migrant issues not just those related to labour. They also exchange various information, issue several news/media release several times in a year, as well as hold symposiums. They also conduct lobbying activities and organize regular discussions with relevant Japanese ministries and agencies. In addition, SMJ's interest goes beyond labour migrant concerns. They are also actively advocating for women's rights, LGBTQ rights, integration of immigrants, refugees, and other topics in the wide spectrum of migration and human rights.

But one example on where SMJ and ZWU coalition is most active is at their Committee for Trainees in Japan or more appropriately called, "Foreign Skills Trainee Rights Network". The network consists of individuals (academe, advocates, etc.) and organizations (unions and other NPO groups) who receive consultations from their respective areas about technical trainees. They

engage in labour issues concerning the trainees on a daily basis and utilizes problem solving approach to address the problem. The said network holds a regular meeting organized by SMJ every month.

According to my interview with Maki Ando, SMJ's secretary-general, this committee is where most organization members have a higher level of pressure and intense interactions. She stated in the interview,

> "This committee for trainees is our most active group. It is also a meeting when most members will get into a heated discussion. There are too many issues concerning foreign trainees."

This shows the level of ownership and commitment of the union leaders and activists to improve the welfare of migrant workers in Japan. The status of origin and nationality are no longer being taken into account when the coalition refer to the issue of migrant workers. They are framed according to human rights standard instead.

Other committees also exist involving concerns of women and children, refugees, and even gender. Through these types of committees, they elevate individual concerns, issues, and encounters into a wider framework of policy critic and develop policy recommendations. It is important to note that ZWU as a community union is among the active member organization of SMJ that holds several membership to different committees aside from those concerning trainees.

On the other hand, ZWU's daily work consist of bargaining negotiations, member orientation, labour complaint filing, and labour consultations. Typical union functions are carried out. ZWU also handles other cases involving Japanese workers and not just migrant workers.

However, because of the previously enumerated commonalities between SMJ and ZWU, in comparison to other member organizations in the SMJ network, some migrant related ZWU cases which are politically significant and had impactful migrant policy concern are conveniently elevated through SMJ's channels. That although ZWU is just one amongst the other organizations involved with SMJ, their close relationship enables their practical functions and daily transactions to be closely inter-related. But on other smaller labour cases, ZWU works independently from SMJ, and vice versa.

Therefore, they are still considered as two different organizational entities but are working on a mutual-support coalition. This organizational cooperation and situational efficiency is an advantage that foreign governments where the workers come from does not have. This type of relationship is similar to what Tattersall (2010) claims as a mutual-support coalition that occurs around an issue and have formal decision-making structures in which actors participate instrumentally. In this case, it refers to the decision-making procedures that takes place were between the leaders of ZWU and SMJ Secretariat. But later on, if the case calls for a stronger and more united front, the decision will be opened to the committee on technical trainees as mentioned in the earlier part of this section.

Particularly, these mutual-support instances occur when ZWU encounters a migrant workers' case that needs political influence and pressure. SMJ enters and engages as the amplifying entity that elevates the concern and provide a platform to nationalize the issue. This is usually done through press-conference or a press-release statement. On a larger scale, SMJ also provides information and reports to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the U.S.A State Department in internationalizing migrants concern in Japan. But the information and details

are of course taken from the organizations within their network, including their engagement with ZWU.

4.1.2 Expanding Members and Community Engagement

Suzuki (2012) emphasized the importance of involving rank-in-file participation of members to the labour movement. In the recent years, ZWU's foreign membership increased to over 134 as of 2018. Majority are Vietnamese trainees. But recently, there was an increase of new members from the Philippines in the hotel and service industry. Many of them are holding dependent visa status with special working permits. I was able to attend the orientation and membership recruitment session of ZWU. The said event was held at SMJ's conference room. According to SMJ, there are times when they will participate in the orientation to assist in communicating with the workers. There is a limited number of staffs from ZWU who are able to proficiently communicate in English. Whereas, SMJ's staffs are all able to communicate in English.

There were five (5) Filipino workers who were seeking help from ZWU about their unpaid overtime work. For this case, since two (2) of the workers are able to speak some Japanese SMJ's assistance was not called for. They were workers doing housekeeping and maintenance from a hotel in Shinjuku. There were three (3) females and (2) males. Their average age is 32. I interviewed them after ZWU had their orientation. It was a group interview and they were answering together simultaneously. In presenting the narratives, I used pseudonym for their names.

I asked how they have come to know ZWU. Because in comparison with other foreign workers in Japan, the Philippines can be considered as among the forerunners in establishing overseas welfare support and policies for their nationals abroad. Even SMJ admits that the Philippine government is far advanced in terms of policies and mandates for protecting their

nationals abroad, especially those who engage in labour migration. I was curious as to how the workers got the idea and information to seek the help of a local union. According to them,

> "We got to know of the union from our other friends who were helped by them. Our friends work in the same hotel. But they also found out about the union from their other friends. It was through the word of mouth that we go to know about the union and the issue. I heard that one of our friends got some problem with the manager. He searched online and found out about ZWU. We didn't even know that we were supposed to be paid for our overtime and that there is a time differential for the hourly rate. We were content with our salary. But after hearing the success of our friends, we got interested and wanted to also learn these things [labour standards]."

It seems that ZWU did not purposely try to access the Filipino community of workers in the service industry. It was by chance and through the worker's access to internet that lead them to join the union. The news of the success of one of their co-worker encouraged them to join as well.

I asked the workers if they knew about the Philippine Overseas Labour Office (POLO), the overseas branches for the Philippine Department of Labour and Employment. This agency handles all affairs regarding Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Arman, one of the workers said,

> "What is that? POLO? We don't know what that is. We know the embassy but we are not familiar with that POLO. We went here today because we heard of the news from our friends that they were helped by the union. If we didn't hear the news from our friends, we would not even know that there is a problem. That we are not getting the proper pay that

we are supposed to have. How can that POLO help us, we don't even know they exist. Can they even speak Japanese?"

Everyone in the group agreed with Arman's sentiment. Another worker, Emma, one of those who can speak some Japanese added,

> "It's actually better to go to them [union]. They are Japanese, so it is easier. They know what they are doing and there is no language barrier for them to talk with our employers. That POLO will not be able to deal with our case. I doubt they can speak Japanese there [at the office]."

It seems that despite ZWU, despite advertising and promoting itself to communities had their reputation precede them and gained the trust of the Filipino community. Although according to SMJ and ZWU, the Philippine government is one of the "better ones" in terms of taking care of their labour migrant nationals. But it seems that small labour cases it do not reach the POLO's network. I asked the POLO through an e-mail to know whether they have established any relationship or network with community unions or with Japanese initiated migrant support groups. They told me that they have no knowledge or relation with these types of organizations in Japan. But instead they have some relationship with Filipino initiated migrant groups in Japan.

The language issue was continuously brought up to be the primary consideration that the workers had that made them feel confident with the union. But because the coalition has SMJ, this problem does not really pose as an impasse. The workers also informed me that there had been instances when they went to the Philippine embassy (POLO is also working under the embassy), had to personally hire an interpreter or a translator for their documents. But because they opted to go with the union, filing and documentation was easier.

Carmen, another worker who informed me that she was new in Japan said,

"We also don't know if the POLO will take our case seriously. It is not a life and death situation. I know they will most likely respond to those that are in most need of help."

There exist assumptions for their government that was taken from context as to the level of corruption and red tape involved in processing documents in the Philippines. This attitude is carried over even when they are already in Japan. Whereas, despite their companies being Japanese owned and managed, their trust for other Japanese institutions such as ZWU and SMJ did not change.

ZWU educated the workers about their labour rights and also taught them how the union works. This is among the prescribed solutions of Suzuki (2012) and Tattersall (2005) in order to strengthen the labour movement by educating the workers. In response, the workers truly appreciated this. Although there were some minor difficulty in their conversation with some difficult jargons, they managed to solidify the confidence of the workers to join them.

The workers added in their reason on why they chose to go the union instead that,

> "If we go to the labour office. It will be no use doing the explanation and the pleading with the officers there. But here at the union, they are the ones explaining things to us. Teaching us about the union, about our possible actions, and also in teaching us about labour laws and regulations here in Japan. With the labour office, we do the talking. In here, the union is the one doing the talking and the explanation."

This type of education initiative shows the potential of this coalition to achieve a deep level as described by Tattersall (2005). The problem however was that this type of orientation mostly occurred once and were focused on the organizational and operational membership of the workers.

The unions listen to the labour concern of the migrant worker, but their narrative are limited to their personal and individual concerns. It was not framed to capture a wider scale of migration issues as a migration sector or stakeholder and their potential contribution or participation to the labour movement.

Perhaps because SMJ is not a service oriented migrant support organization, they have limited participation in the recruitment of union members. Language support remains to be the usual assignation of SMJ in this particular union activity. But since SMJ is not solely a language oriented support group, this task in union membership is an additional task beyond their usual activity. It is also not something that is constant. Just like the case of the Filipino workers, when there is someone who can support their co-workers in Japanese, SMJ is no longer called to join the orientation and membership application session. But in terms of awareness of union recruitment and membership, SMJ is the one that informed me of the increasing membership of Filipinos workers taking membership with ZWU. Communication and information sharing flows easily between SMJ and ZWU.

I asked the workers on how they see their level of participation with the union after their case is settled. Arman responded,

> "I am not sure. I understand now how they work now thanks to the orientation, but I don't think there will be much to do after we get the money. We will still pay the monthly union dues. But only because we found out today that part of it will be returned to us when we want to go back to the Philippines. I am not sure what you mean by participating to the activities of the union after [the case is over]."

This reflects uncertainty as to their role in the union beyond their personal labour concerns. The orientation covered the mechanics on how the unions exert pressure to the companies so that they can comply or negotiate for labour cases. But it was given in an organizational perspective and did not exactly emphasize where the individual workers will particularly contribute in the movement.

Thus, the fact that there is limited participation for the migrant workers after their labour complaints and SMJ's minimal involvement in increasing the rank-and-file members of the union supports the assumption that this coalition is still at the mutual-support type and has not fully reached the Deep coalition type.

At the same time, it seems that there is a lack of relationship building between the coalition with the governments of the migrant workers. The overseas labour attachés or embassies seemed to be disconnected in the loop, whereas, the coalition is contributes to the diplomatic function of performing Assistance to Nationals (ATN) [mission] of foreign embassies and consulates in Japan.

4.1.3 *Coalition in Action: Elevating Labour Concern – case of Vietnamese trainees involved in Fukushima Clean-up Issue*

On March 2018, ZWU with the support of SMJ went public about an issue of a Vietnamese man under the technical trainee program who was misled to partake in the clean-up decontamination work in Fukushima. The Vietnamese worker went to ZWU for help for fear of his health and safety, after realizing the dangerous effect and insufficient compensation provided by his company. The 24-year-old man worked for an Iwate Prefecture based construction firm since September 2015. The man came to know of ZWU through another Vietnamese trainee that

recommended the union to him. Prior to this case, ZWU had been representing an increasing number of Vietnamese trainees mainly those experiencing illegal termination of contract, unpaid overtime work, and inappropriate amount of salary.

According to Initial reports of the case, (Nikkei Daily, 2018) the company denied the allegations of having violated labour laws and the technical trainee program's guidelines. It was also reported that the Vietnamese man was provided the same work as his Japanese co-workers, which were safe and did not pose any threat to the workers' health. At the early stages of the issue, the company continuously denied the allegations.

But according to ZWU, what the promised and initially presented training plan for the trainee only involved work related to dismantling and public engineering work. Instead, he was deployed with clean-up work in contaminated areas in Fukushima Prefecture. Unknowing of the danger and without properly informing the hazard of the work, the man was deployed in the area having left with no choice but to obey the company's orders. While working, he was exposed to radiation from the areas he was deployed in. He was sent to Koriyama, Fukushima more than a dozen times to decontaminate the city's residential areas between October 2015 and March 16. Moreover, he was reportedly assigned to dismantling buildings within the exclusion zone in Kawamata, Fukushima even before the authorities lifted the restrictions on the area due to the high levels of radiation.

ZWU, with the help of SMJ was swift in releasing a statement. The facts provided by the Vietnamese man suggests that he was deceived and brought to Japan to conduct clean-up work. The union claims that the company abused the Labour Contract Act, Labour Standard Act, and Industrial Safety and Health Act. ZWU at that time was negotiating with the construction firm and was seeking compensation to the remaining year in the contract of the trainee. The said trainee quit

last November 2017 out of concern for his health after the company ignored his requests to have the situation explained. The union also noted that the trainee did not receive allowances provided to workers that engage in such hazardous work. The trainee received a monthly average wage of ¥140,000 while Japanese workers doing similar work received three the times as much.

In a report released by The Japan Times (Ogata, 2018), they were able to access health records which showed the trainee had been exposed to high levels of radiation while working in Kawamata. According to ZWU, the employer hid this information from the trainee.

ZWU took a stand and amongst its pioneer lawyers, Shoichi Ibusuki, “Decontamination work is very dangerous and requires the trainee’s consent. It is not the type of work you engage someone who is not aware of the accompanying risks. It is more of a humanitarian rather than legal issues” (The Japan Times, 2018).

This case shows the flaws and vulnerability of the workers in the trainee system. Despite having been required to submit a detailed plan for the trainees, there are companies that do not follow the approved plan. Trainees who mostly incurred a large amount of debt for their deployment to Japan are left with no option but to follow the company’s orders. It was a matter of choosing to obey or to return home full of unpaid debts.

The Japanese government claimed in an interview by The Japan Times (2018) that no labour laws exist that forbids employment of foreign nationals at decontamination work sites. However, it was also pointed out that the Japan Trainee program should align the objective of the work deployment to fit the training system and fulfil the transfer of knowledge component. Thus, decontamination work by the trainees is highly unlikely to be used in their respective home countries.

The ZWU – SMJ coalition in this case worked in various stages. Initial engagement with the worker was through ZWU. The union later sought the help of SMJ for choosing their strategy in dealing with the case. They opted for a fast and quick response through a press conference detailing the issue of the case. SMJ claims that in doing so, the Vietnamese government who also just heard of the case through the media, negotiated with the coalition to give the identity of the trainee, who at that time wanted to remain anonymous. The coalition refused and stood its ground of maintaining privacy and protecting the trainee. SMJ informed me that this caused a strain in the relationship of the coalition and the Vietnamese embassy.

Political and diplomatic factors were also an issue in the case. According to some civil society groups handling Vietnamese migrant concerns, the Vietnamese government is not exactly known as a migrant worker responsive and welfare protection efficient entity. The Vietnamese trainee also expressed fear and distrust to be handed over to his embassy for his labour case. This highlights an important aspect of the existence of the coalition for migrant workers as an alternative support network to those who come from countries with insufficient government support.

Aside from that, the coalition worked by having SMJ assist in finding a shelter for the man while the case is being negotiated and also continuously looked for a venue to elevate the issue through its media network and publication. SMJ also arranged several meetings with its other union and organizational members in order to provide assistance and allowed recommendations for strategizing. They were also the ones that organized the press conference that announced the case and the perilous situation of the trainees. SMJ and its network of other unions and labour migrant support organizations effectively arranged a collective stand against the issue. ZWU at that time is overseeing the labour negotiation and filing of case for the trainee. This division of tasks allowed the coalition to simultaneously work fast. Because of their swift response, the media

and the governments was taken by surprise. This element of surprise added to the advantage of the coalition since they handled the initial narrative.

In Japan where civil society groups have weaker power and influence over state affairs, the unions who are legally allowed to conduct collective bargaining negotiations enable them to branch out their influence. The unions provide the legitimacy, representation, and legal bargaining roles that civil society groups do not have. On the other hand, ZWU alone may not have had the network to reach a wider audience required to exert political and international pressure to the Japanese government and local companies. ZWU and SMJ delegated task which enabled the coalition to swiftly and effectively respond to the issue.

Should the workers seek the help of their respective government, the outcome may have been different. It is most likely that the issue will be negotiated through official diplomatic bilateral arrangements and may not be brought out to the public. But because the coalition bridged the gap to which the migrant workers' issues became a human rights concern by claiming the case as their own, implying that the Japanese society has to be held responsible. The individual narrative of migrant workers became a cause for national concern. Likewise, this has created a new spark in the relevance of labour movements in Japan. In this instance, the coalition did not only bridge labour and civil society, but also the migrant workers and the Japanese society. It enabled widening of scope and called for a renewed relevance and power for the coalition.

This specific case provided insights to which common interest amongst the organization paved the way for a fast and swift response in handling the issue. The common interest of both organizations, mainly their invested interest and active participation in the concerns of foreign trainees in Japan, enabled to successfully create waves of significant policy reform. The impact of the issue resonated and had other Vietnamese trainees come out and seek for help. The political

significance along with the increasing international pressure had the Japanese government declare that foreign trainees are no longer allowed to be deployed or participate in work that involves clean-up work at contaminated areas of Fukushima. The scale of common interest and concern was amplified due to the combined efforts of ZWU and SMJ. Also, having been situated at Tokyo, the coalition had access to various central government offices and ministries that enables them to lobby and consult regarding the issue.

4.1.4 *Community Unionism to Community Building? : Voices and Representation*

In this section, I discussed an expanded perspective on how the coalition works in an activity organized by SMJ that involves its whole network of unions and NPO organizations. ZWU is still actively involved in this activity but my observations focused heavily on SMJ. This is a perspective to which the coalition works with a wider range of network. Thus, exemplifying a coalition between two organizations working within a bigger coalition composed of multiple-organizations and individuals for a specific event. A way to which the coalition is now entering and taking part of a bigger ad hoc coalition with specific goals and interest at hand. I am referring to one of the major annual event organized by SMJ, the “Tokyo Forum for Migrants” also commonly referred to as the “National workshop for Migration”.

This forum paved way to the establishment of SMJ. It is a workshop that is represented by most of the organizations within the SMJ network and individuals such as academics, lawyers, activists, etc. A major theme will be decided for the forum and several subcommittees will be organized. The program usually consists of keynote speeches, skills training, orientation on topics or laws, as well as sharing of on-site reports and information. The venue hosting this event changes

every year. Last 2018, the forum was hosted in Sapporo city. For this year, it will be held on the first week of June 2019 in Tokyo[1].

However, it is surprising that in terms of representation of participants to the forum, there are only a selected handful of actual migrants who can attend through invitation. The language used in the forum is Japanese. The forum functions as a culminating activity for Japanese practitioners in the field of migration rather than a forum for migrants.

I interviewed Maki Ando, SMJ's Secretary-General about this. According to her,

> "We don't really have the forum open for just any migrants to participate. It is by invitation only. I think there are many interests among migrants of different nationalities. Migrant groups also have their own factions. It might be too difficult to handle such diverse opinions."

. Actual first hand voices of migrants delivered by actual migrants is missing in the process. They would like to minimize conflict between groups in cases when the sentiments or objectives are not in line with one another. I find this unusual in a democratic society, but is indeed very Japanese in perspective, harmony above other things.

This gives an impression of organizations support migrants cooperating and coming together but it does not transcend into unifying one solid migrant sector across nationalities. The Japanese who advocate and support migrants are coming together under a single banner within this network. But the actual migrants are left as the "cause" for action rather than part of the main

[1] By the time when this research is written, the 2019 forum hasn't occurred yet (May 2019).

actors partaking in the social movement. I would like to highlight on this observation is the lack of integration between the coalition to several migrant lead and organized groups in Japan.

This reasoning might be related to Luce (2012) argument about community unions being trapped of the ‘least common denominator’ practice. She described this preference within coalitions to which they often work and operate on issues to which everyone agrees on and avoids discussing or solving controversial demands. That internally, there also exists politics within the coalition. Should the forum be opened to several migrant groups of different nationalities, interests may not necessarily converge as one. It is with this concern I find that voices of migrants are represented and elevated indeed to a bigger public formal forum, but it also raises the question of the depth of involvement and integration of the migrants in the actual coalition.

This led me to challenge the full integration of sentiments and voices of migrants. The term “migrants” in itself has a wide range of topics and issues attached, mostly depending on what type of migrant they are. The issues they faced may be as diverse as the number of migrants currently in Japan. Perhaps for example, despite having a similar concern about trainees working conditions, a sub-level of contextualization per nationalities may present a different type of issues underneath that overarching concern.

Although, this does not mean the event is insignificant. The information shared in the forum still comes from the grassroots level through the engagements of each organizations with migrants in their respective field (union or NPO service provider/support group). But it is in a representational platform rather than empowerment and inclusion. This is despite SMJ’s campaign called, “koko ni iru” (I am here) emphasizing that migrants of all kinds are already in Japan and should not be marginalized or exploited. Yet, the first-hand experience of narrating their stories is not a process that is being undertaken by the coalition and SMJ’s wider network.

The said event exemplifies the current practice to which existing coalitions between community unions and NPOs for migrants remain as a client-service relationship rather than a collective solidarity to enable community building. Migrants only engage with these coalitions when they are already in need of help or support. It is rare that migrants participate actively and pre-emptively to these organizations. Also, at the end of each cases, most migrant workers eventually returns home to their countries. This will usually mean the end of union membership or engagement with the NPO. But because connections to the community are mainly through individual migrant network bridge-builders, the relationship of the coalition is highly dependent on these individuals. The lack of structural and integrative association of migrants to both the union and the labour migrant organization decision-making and policy stance formulation deems the relationship with the community as unstable and selectively exclusive.

Diversity amongst migrants has to be acknowledged for the social movement to be truly inclusive. The industrial structure of Japanese enterprises made it a difficult for Japan to have a unified working class identity. But with the increasing trend of labour migrants who mostly work as contract based temporary workers share similar attributes and labour struggle with the increasing number of temporary and contract based Japanese workers. Community unions who mostly thrived in representing these types of Japanese workers can get additional strength and international impact through structural and social inclusion of labour migrants in the movement.

This also raises the question of cultural sensitivity and global perspectives of Japanese unions and the migrant support groups. A wide array of nationalities are tied with various socio-cultural contexts and sensitivities to which experiences of a Vietnamese trainee may greatly differ to a Filipino trainee. Similar to how a Muslim Indonesian trainee may also have a different context in their labour experience in Japan. International relations, politics from the country of origins,

religions, identities, and other contexts exist that has multiple facets to the labour experiences and conditions of migrants. These are nuances that may not captured and can be are overly generalized through representational delivery of narratives. The Tokyo forum is one of the few opportunities to which migrants can be given a platform to connect with the intellectuals, activists, and union leaders that have access to the rigid and exclusive structural reform in Japan. Ideally, a forum to which consultations from the nationwide network coalition with a wide array of migrants in Japan may potentially spark a fire in the Japanese labour movement.

This is a challenge to which sustainability for community building through inclusiveness to these networks and coalition may be developed. On the other hand, this does not belittle the contribution and dynamics of the SMJ-ZWU coalition to the Japanese labour policy reform. It has been making its mark in history by strategically exerting social and political pressure that with the rise of their prolific individual labour disputes, such as the Fukushima clean-up incident. I argue that there are possibilities and social capitals that may be explored. It could lead the coalition to evolve from a mutual-support coalition to a deep coalition as described by Tattersall (2005).

4.1.5 *Local Japanese Community: Threat of a Backlash*

In this spectrum of networks and coalitions, I also took into consideration the local Japanese sentiments. Although in my methodology, it is not amongst my primary objective. But in one my observations during my stay at SMJ, there was an incident of a backlash from a random Japanese individual about one of the policy stance of the coalition. This refers to a particular article released by coalition to stop the investigation of the government about the misuse and bogus claims of foreigners to the Japanese medical health insurance. The Japanese government had been investigating and singling out claims of migrants in their use of the medical health insurance. It

was found out that out of 14,000 reported cases, only 2 are suspicious. The coalition claims that is unfair to racially profile migrants for their access to health insurance.

On September 13, 2018, SMJ received a random call from an old Japanese woman complaining about the stance of the coalition. The said caller rant over the phone and repeatedly cursed as well as spew claims against foreigners taking the money from the Japanese society through the National Health Insurance system. The woman called SMJ several times as well as ZWU. I did hear the phone call because of the intensity of the caller who was shouting on the other end of the line. The SMJ staff translated the call and the rant,

"Those bastard (bakero) foreigners (gaijins)! I am paying my taxes and social insurance. Why should they take our money away from us? Does Torii Ippei (SMJ's board of director and was quoted in the article) know about that? Is he really Japanese? How dare he side with the foreigners! They are taking our money they should let the government continue the investigation. I have a right to know what happens to my money in my country. Bastards (bakero!) I have the right and I am entitled to know! You should die! You should stop, not the government!"

At a certain point, the woman was rambling on and on over the line and her expression against the coalition for working for migrants escalated. The SMJ secretary-general had no choice but to interrupt the call and cut it off. More attempts to reconnect the line were made by the caller.

I also observed that both SMJ and ZWU also have a tight access and security to their office. It seems that calls and instances of backlash from the Japanese society has been directed to the coalition. The more the coalition handles prolific cases, the bigger their lobbying efforts contribute to improving the Japanese immigration policy. This also means higher a profile of trust and recognition amongst the migrant communities. But at the same time, this could mean increased

instances of local Japanese public sentiment backlash, mostly from those who opposed immigration. This is among the additional challenges to which this type of advocacy and policy driven coalition faces.

4.1.6 Analysing the Zentoitsu-SMJ coalition and its implications to the Japanese labour movement

The Zentoitsu-SMJ coalition can be considered as a mutual-support type because of their established deep common interest on migration with equal distribution of concerns and issues to which they collectively aim to address. The coalition has an established decision-making mechanisms, committees, and annual events to which organizational relationship and connection is sustained. Zentoitsu receives language support and logistic assistance from SMJ as well as in establishing relationships with other SMJ affiliated unions and civil society groups. While SMJ receives advocacy inputs, technical support, and substantive content for their policy recommendations from Zentoitsu. There also exist a confident level of trust between organizations because of common individual-bridge builders like Mr. Torii Ippei who used to work with Zentoitsu before joining SMJ. An individual who is experienced in both community unionism and in civil society advocacy.

Resources are shared between organizations, both tangible and non-tangible resources. The coalition shared one office building for their operation. Phone lines are interconnected. Administrative work are done using shared office equipment. Therefore, there is an established interconnectedness in terms of their interests, aspirations, and operations. In terms of sustainable and stable coalition, ZWU-SMJ has satisfied the network and organizational structure described as a mutual-support coalition.

My research used the Fukushima case of Vietnamese workers as among the major success of the coalition. The coalition was able to bridge the migrant workers' issues to become a human rights concern rather than a concern of an outsider (foreigner), by claiming the case as their own which implied that the Japanese society as a whole has to be held responsible. The individual narrative of migrant workers became a cause for national concern. Also because issues concerning foreign nationals are also a cause for international relations and has diplomatic implications, the inclusion of migrant workers to the movement increases the scale to which the coalition gets significantly involve.

Likewise, this has created a new spark in the social relevance of labour movements in Japan. In this instance, the coalition did not only bridge labour and civil society, but also the migrant workers to the general Japanese public. It enabled a widening of scope and establishment of a new niche for Japanese community unionism. These instances contributed for a renewed relevance and power of the coalition in influencing migrant related legislatures and policies. Their added "track record" of handling socially sensitive issues and nationally scaled concerns enhanced and validated their reputation as an active social actor capable of representing migrant workers.

On the down-side however, similar to the observations of Lipsig- Mummé (2003), mutual-support coalitions tend to be exclusive because of the higher threshold of trust required. The coalition between ZWU-SMJ and their extended network developed their current organizational structure due to their shared long history of informal relationships. Likewise, as Tattersall (2005) described, instead of actively seeking new organizations to join the coalition, membership within the network is often through recommendation and by hand-picking organizations that satisfy a standard of trust, commitment to the people, or capacity to mobilize people. This characteristic was also observed in this case study.

4. 2 Case 2: Scrum Union – Various selected grassroots support group for Trainees

Since I already discussed the personal background and driving initiatives of the union and groups involved in this coalition, I therefore focused on providing more concrete examples to which they had community engagements. I used the case of the Filipino trainees laid off from the Hitachi case in 2018 to describe how and where community unionism from the grassroots level occurs, mainly from the initial phase of engagement until the end of the case. This particular coalition lacks a stable organizational network and decision-making structure and this case shows an ad hoc type (Tattersall, 2005) of coalition which is dependent on the individual labour cases from the community. However, this case shows that despite the lack of organizational mandates in the coalition, this case shows that there is a more direct and personal connection established with the migrant workers.

I also provided a perspective on how the local Filipino community sees the coalition from their side. This includes ways on how the coalition engages with various communities and on how each community also perceive the coalition.

4.2.1 The Church and a Local Filipino Restaurant as social spaces for community building

Each Filipino community will normally have someone that will act as the primary link or contact person. These are usually the so called, "ates (big sister) or "titas (aunties) of the community. In some cases, it's a "kuyas" (big brother) or "titos" (uncles). These informal leaders of the community are most of the time individuals who are married to a Japanese national and are helping out fellow Filipinos voluntarily. In some cases, they may be trainees too who exhibit leadership and maternal/paternal characteristics to which the younger workers respect. It is usually

driven through self-initiated initiative to which these community leaders get to know of the union or support group volunteers. All it takes is an initial link or personal connection from these individuals and the Japanese volunteers or union members/leaders to engage the coalition directly to a wider local labour migrant community.

At first, the support group was able to meet most of the workers through personal connections in the Catholic Church. The head of the Filipino Trainee Support Group, commonly known as Komatsu-sensei, developed his interest in providing immigration consultation because he saw many of those whom he became friends with refer to other workers who were having a difficult time in their visa processing or in their labour conditions. He became accustomed to the Filipino culture of having the church as an important social space to which a community can be made. This affiliation to the community is most of the time extended to include other nationals who were actively getting involved in the church activities, mainly Vietnamese and some Chinese nationals as well.

The lack of migrant social spaces in Japan in comparison to other Asian countries with large Filipino communities such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore reflects the lack of opportunity for migrants to organize publicly. Public expression of foreign self-identity and regularly propagating their foreign culture is unusual for Filipinos in Japan. Although there are occasional events in some areas like Tokyo, Gifu, Nagoya, and Shizuoka, it is generally an annual one (1) day event rather than a regular scheduled gathering in social and public spaces. One recent example is the Filipino market in Daehangno, located in Seoul, South Korea. It had become a regular Sunday Filipino market with make-shift restaurants near the church in that area. Or when Taiwan's government built multi-purpose halls and churches to cities with high volume of foreign workers such as Taichung, Kaohsiung, and Taipei.

Although for the Hiroshima case, it was through a fairly neutral social space such as the church where local Japanese and other foreign nationals attend that the union had their initial engagement. It should also be noted that there are smaller groups and circles within the Filipino church-going community. Professionals such as teachers, engineers, IT workers, and nurses tend to go along with the Filipino students, whereas former entertainers and current pub owners married to Japanese nationals go along with hotel housekeepers. Trainees tend to stick together. This labour and social divide is apparent once you observe the active leaders of the church and those that leave immediately after the mass.

Interestingly, the social circles are not totally divided nor apathetic with each other. The Assumption of Mary Cathedral in Hiroshima city in particular has an active Filipino community. The leading group of Filipino volunteers are mostly working as professionals. This group organizes events and provides assistance to the other social circles of Filipino trainees and entertainers. It was through the church acting as a common ground that allowed the coalition to touch-base with these varying smaller unit of Filipino communities. The Filipino professionals got to know of the support group lead by Komatsu-sensei because he also attends the mass in the same church, and recommended and connected his support group to the social circles of the trainees. Only then did the support groups introduce the Scrum union to the trainees. By allowing migrant public social spaces to exist, the coalition's scope of network was given the opportunity to expand its reach and connect to the grassroots level.

In such places, the information sharing and event participation between the local community, the support groups, and the union informally yet actively flow. The church has become its host to which social interaction amongst these organizations mostly occur. However, it was also duly noted that each of the organizations still work separately from one another in terms of their

decision-making functions and activity organizing initiatives and have not fully established formal relationships with one another. Most of their engagements are only for referrals and consultation with Filipino workers who have labour concerns. The current level of relationship between the organizations and the community has not been fully integrated in its structure and functions. Even the coalition itself, between Scrum union and the support group, there is no formal arrangement of partnership. They mostly engage with one another through labour dispute cases and have not reached a point for a national or prefectural community organizing or advocacy campaigns.

Another cultural aspect that helped the coalition access the community is through understanding daily life practices of migrant workers carried over from their heritage. After the mass, it is common practice for Filipinos to eat with friends or family. The social circle of Filipino trainees in particular goes to a Filipino restaurant called, “Bahay Kubo” (small traditional house made of Nipa), which is also the title of a famous traditional Filipino folksong that literally enumerates local vegetables commonly planted in the Philippines. This pub/restaurant is owned by one a Filipino “mama-san” who used to work as an entertainer and eventually married a Japanese man. The restaurant has a mini grocery of overpriced Filipino goods along with the occasional traditional desserts sold at the cashier. The menu offers a mix of Filipino cuisine with some Japanese dishes offered. I conducted an informal interview in this restaurant to look into how the coalition operates with the local community.

Mar, is one of the Filipinos working at the restaurant. He said he was one of the ‘adopted’ sons of the owner. It was implied that the owner takes care of the other Filipinos in the community, thus they call her “mama”, which is a common endearment for mothers and older ladies in the Philippines, similar to the implied meaning of the veteran female host who manages the establishment and take care of the women in Japanese host clubs. This recognition of title and

identity within the community is important and provides a perspective that in these small communities there are matriarchs/patriarchs that can play as crucial bridge-builders should the coalition establish relationships with these key personalities in the local community. The notation and social stigma attached to the endearment, “mama-san” is blurred and has a deeper, more personal meaning, and interpretation. What is emphasized is the motherly respect and care attributed to the matriarch of the community, rather than the common Filipino negative stigma of being “mama-sans” as entertainers or “pimps”. This showed that for the coalition to gain access and mobilize the migrant communities into the labour movement, there is a need to understand these cultural nuances to migrant identities within the community for the coalition to take part in community building.

Mar, having been associated as an adopted son of the owner of the restaurant is also one of the community bridge-builders. He is called as, “kuya” which means older brother in Filipino by the community. He is not fluent in Japanese but he is able to communicate better than the rest. Their community would normally ask for his help when someone is in trouble, which mostly entails directly talking with the company managers or the chief. Some company managers actually know him and will contact him when they have some problem with one of their Filipino trainees. This means that there is a certain individual influence and power associated to Mar. When the coalition engages with him, they do not only gain access to the community, but also potentially gain connection with company middle managers. This is a crucial expansion of network to which the ad hoc characteristics of the coalition enables flexibility, informal, and personality based strategies to negotiate or access information.

However, because patriarchs or matriarchs in the community especially among low-skilled or skilled workers do not have sufficient educational background or formal language training, the

civil society support group acts as a complimentary agent in this process. For example, the volunteer I was with whispered to me that they really opt to take intervention sometimes. It is because there are some mistranslation and miscommunication when Mar would act as the interpreter. That although commendable in terms of his voluntarism and leadership, poses a risk when solving some serious labour disputes. It was then that I asked Mar, if he was aware of the POLO and on how he came to know of Komatsu-san's support group. He said,

> "I don't know what you are talking about. I am not familiar with that POLO. People from the government never went here. We don't know them. As to Komatsu-san, he was the one that approached us. We met at the church and then he went with Mai-san (one of the volunteers). He was the one who went to us and asked us if we need any help. So I referred one of my trainee friends who was being sent home because the company said they don't like his attitude. Of course we don't know what to do. So we are thankful that a Japanese national is willing to help us. My friend has a daughter and can't afford to just go back empty handed. So through Komatsu-san we filed a labour case against the company. I think they are asking for the help of Scrum union. The union on the news that handled that case with the Hitachi trainees. I know some of them, they went here before."

It seems that similar to the other case, there is a low level of awareness for the Filipinos in this area about the Philippine labour office. Surprisingly, there also exists a level of trust to Komatsu-sensei, when they entrust their situation and listen to his advice. He, in turn, refers the cases to the Scrum union for formal representation.

Aside from that, Mel, the real daughter of the restaurant owner was there during my visit, told me that the local initiative of the community to help one another is something normal in the Filipino culture, especially since working abroad is not a foreign concept to our society. But they

were relieved to have the support of the Japanese volunteers and Komatsu-sensei. According to her,

> "We actually started to make a Facegroup page just for us and the trainees here. Honestly, we are very new to these cases of having a lot of Filipino trainees. Before, we already help each other and this restaurant becomes a place to socialize and get to know everyone's problem. But the issues before are so different from now. Before it's about domestic affairs from women getting pregnant by their Japanese customers or their Filipino boyfriends; wives getting beaten by their husbands, and children being abandoned. This restaurant becomes a place for accommodation in some nights, you know. People who don't have a place to stay would often beg us to help them. That area [points to the tatami section of the restaurant], we convert that with futons during emergency situations, mainly for those who were running away from domestic violence. But now it has changed. It is more formal and it's against big Japanese companies. We were not able to properly go to school, and even though we've lived here for a long time, we do not know the labour laws. So we are really thankful that through Komatsu-san, our friends can get the proper help they deserve."

This was a testament that the communities themselves are not oblivious to the changing immigration trend in Japan. That along with the changing policies, the communities are also changing. The issues surrounding them also evolves. It is fortunate that in Hiroshima city, there exist this coalition between individual volunteer support groups and the Scrum union. Although the coalition is new and has been independently riding the waves of change in the community.

This trust for NPOs is an interesting contrast against the local Japanese civil society. In a survey conducted by Edelman Japan in 2018 (Rowbury, 2018), the trust barometer of Japanese citizens to NPOs was rated only at 46%. Although the narratives I captured cannot figuratively be

compared with the survey, it is a glimpse of the migrant perspective that NPOs or civil society groups in particular are highly regarded in Japan. Narratives from the Filipino trainee community in Hiroshima descriptively shows a rather more positive regard to these organizations rather than their respective governments and the Japanese government.

4.2.2 Grassroots Community Initiatives and Engagements: Case of Hitachi Trainees

The case of the trainees from Hitachi Ltd. Kasado factory in Kudamatsu, Yamaguchi Prefecture had their first engagement with the coalition on September 23, 2018. Scrum union was given the chance to introduce themselves and explain about unions after a Catholic church service and before the Christmas party celebration of the community. They were accompanied and introduced to the group by the lead of the Filipino Trainee Support Group, Komatsu-sensei. The union leaders said that all they knew of at that time was that there was a request to introduce the union and to potentially recruit new members. Little did they know that there was already a case of mass lay-offs among trainees from Hitachi Ltd.

In my interview with Tsuchiya Midori, wife and co-leader of Scrum union she narrated her first meeting with the Filipino community,

> "I was very surprised at first. We were invited to introduce the union and to also provide initial labour consultations before the local community's Christmas party. It seems that the Filipino community takes this holiday seriously and the majority actively attended. We were invited to the event but we did not know anything before coming there. My second surprise for that day was that the event was not a simple self-introduction and consultation at all! There are real and time sensitive cases already existing within the community. We

> were shocked to hear of the news about the trainees being sent home with no valid reason, a clear violation of their contract and labour rights. My third surprise was that then and there, we had forty (40) new members who joined right away. We explained that they need to be part of the union first and only then that we can talk to their employers. But we did not expect them to do [join] so on the same day. Out of ninety-nine (99) trainees who were scheduled to be cut, 40 of them joined that day. The others joined the following days. Only one (1) of them did not join and opted to just go home to the Philippines."

It was only then that the union got to know about the 99 trainees that were let-go for that year. The trainees were not given any explanation by the company and are all clueless on what to do. All they knew was that their contract is still not finished for another two (2) years and they should not be abruptly let-go without any due process or justifiable reason. Out of those who joined, 20 people whose cut-off date was sooner were prioritized in terms of case filing.

When the issue was picked by the media, several newspapers ran the story. In one instance, Hitachi's president was quoted by the union as having said, "he [company president] insisted that their company did nothing wrong". This solidified the motivation and drive of the coalition to file the case against the company and to further advocate the trainees' human rights. The Scrum union leader, Tsuchiya Shinzo said,

> "The trainees are workers, not slaves. They should not be treated as disposable workers whom the Japanese companies can just take advantage of and discard when they are no longer needed. This is what is happening now with the sudden and mass laying-off of trainees in the area".

The union took the lead of the case and handled the bargaining agreement negotiation. The support group helped in gathering the evidences and assisting in documenting statements from the trainees. The support group mostly did translation and communication services between the union and the trainees. The support group was also the one trying to establish a relationship with the Philippine Overseas Labour Office (POLO) in Tokyo. This is because the union leaders and staffs were also not that eloquent in using English as a means of communication. Also, one Japanese member of the support group, Mai-san is a known 'Filipinist' scholar who is familiar with the Philippine government and had experienced living in the Philippines. But together, the coalition both worked in helping the first 20 trainees find temporary shelter and accommodation during the negotiation process.

Among the demands of the coalition was to have the remaining number of years' worth of salary within the contract paid by lump sum to the trainees. At the same time, since the case complicates the relationship of the company and the trainees, they did not go to work during the negotiation process. The coalition demanded an allowance to be given to the trainees while the case is being negotiated. For trainees who decided to wait for the final decision, they were granted a short-stay allowance of 60% of their regular salary, thanks to the coalition. Those who went beyond the allowed stay extension had to go back home to the Philippines after 60 days. But the coalition was able to negotiate to have 25% of the salary paid to the trainees who had to go home to the Philippines as part of the allowance.

The workers were given the chance to be heard through the coalition. But for others who already went home or for workers who were unaware of the labour laws as well as the existence of the community union to represent their case, most of them were left with no option but to go home or become illegal migrants.

During the time when the negotiation was being heard, the Japanese government also suspended the technical training program at Kasado plant. All trainees in the said area were introduced to the company through Friend Nippon, an agency in Hiroshima. Several other cases concerning trainees deployed by the said agency were being handled by the coalition.

On November 7, 2018, Hitachi Ltd. and the coalition arrived to an agreement to pay the remaining salary of the trainees according to the number of months left in their contract. In exchange, the trainees will not file a lawsuit against Hitachi. However, what was unexpected was that the allowance received by the trainees during the months when the case was being heard was deducted to the said total amount.

The volunteer, Mai-san, despite being a full Japanese knows how to speak Filipino. She told me of her frustration with the company,

"They are so "madaya" [unfair]. The amount should not have been deducted because these people are willing to work and they can work. It is not their fault that they are being laid-off and would have to stop working while waiting for the case to finish. The allowance should not have been deducted to the compensation money. But this is the best that we can negotiate and it is frustrating".

On November 18, 2018, the first batch of trainees, 19 in total, went home to the Philippines. They were followed by several other batches on December 10 (20 trainees) and 20 (16 trainees). The last batch was last February 5, 2019, when 2 remaining trainees went back home to the Philippines.

This case placed the Scrum union in the mainstream radar of migrant communities within the Chugoku area and even to Shikoku and Kyushu area. Workers from Okayama, Yamaguchi,

Kochi, Ehime, and even Tottori were asking for their help. But they were also aware that they have a difficulty in terms of engaging with their foreign members in the union, with language as the major challenge. But because they have established a relationship with Komatsu-sensei's group as well as some Japanese teacher volunteers this issue can be overcome. They also admit that because of their sudden rise to popularity and established reputation, some incoming requests for cases were too far and were becoming too many to handle. Since the volunteers work their day jobs as well, it cannot be demanded to have their time solely for the union.

I asked Komatsu-sensei about this arrangement and if he thinks this coalition will evolve into something else. He said,

> "Honestly, I cannot tell. You see, I work as volunteer because I like it. I enjoy meeting new people and I am glad I can help them. I used to be a salaryman, but now after I retire I find meaning again by being with the community. But it is hard. There is no money. Even if I want to help more, I can't. I use my own pension to fund my travel. From my own pension. Some people give us donations so I opened a bank account for the group. But we only use it for traveling to attend to cases. The unions, they get some 5% of the reward. But we don't. I can even say that the union is a form of business. They earn from it. But we only volunteer. If they [workers] give us something, we accept so we can continue helping others. It is not for our own gain."

He then showed me a bank account with the group's remaining money. At that time, it was less than 200,000 yen. I caught a difference between the driving interest of the support group and the union. The union is a formal entity with structure and organizational arrangement. They have legal support from the state to the represent workers. Of course, protecting the workers' rights is also included in their interest. But because there is a level of legality and formality in the union,

they were also able to financially gain in return for helping the community. However, the volunteer support group does not receive a constant financial return. It was also not yet registered as an NPO to provide legal mandates and seek potential funding sources, but these are real selfless individuals committing their time, effort, expertise, and money for a community of labour migrants.

This shows that the level of development of both organizations are different. The union in particular was able to already establish itself as a formal entity. Whereas the support group was still a loose organization of volunteers. This coalition showed that there are difficulties and nuanced interests when organizations are not at the same stage of their development. But it also showed that the level of connectedness to the community is not dependent on how formal or legal the organization is. It is in building the trust, cultural practices, identifying network bridge-builders, and getting into their social public spaces that reaps the deepest connection to the community. This ad hoc coalition was able to expand its community network at the grassroots level regardless of these differences. They were able to find sufficient common interests to continue working with each other.

I asked Komatsu-san on how he sustains himself and if he ever think of stopping. He smiled cheekily and said,

> "Every day. I think about quitting, every day. But I can't. When I think about these people being deceived or exploited for Japan, I cannot stop. I should not stop."

It was here that I smiled wearily as I saw his frail body but his eyes remain enthusiastic, truly believing in his personal crusade. There seemed to be a lack of awareness from the labour migrant community about the circumstances of the coalition. Unfortunately, not all workers were

as emphatic as the volunteers. It seemed that some of them assumed that the support group gets a part of the 5% donation [commission] for the union. In reality, they do not.

That although the support group was, indeed, commendable for their volunteerism, it may not be sustainable. Should the Scrum union in Chugoku area intend to become as prolific as ZWU in Tokyo-Kanto area in including migrant workers in their roaster of union members, there should be a common support mechanisms provided to their partner in the coalition. If this coalition can overcome differences in their interests, develop a formal partnership, and engage in common resource sharing, it may potentially evolve into a mutual-support type of coalition and perhaps eventually as a deep coalition. They have already established engagement and relationship deep into the community, the part where some mutual-support type of coalition lacks

This is an advantage and can be taken as one of the greatest strength of this coalition. But should it stay the same, there is a higher risk of the coalition breaking apart with the unequal stage of organizational development and resources.

4.2.3 Community unionism to Community building?

From the end of the bargaining agreement, almost all of the workers chose to go back to the Philippines. The compensation money they received will go a long way in the Philippines. There were mixed sentiments about their experiences. Although some of them expressed their intent to continue working in Japan despite their experience. Unfortunately, since the actual connection between the coalition and the community mostly revolve around those who have filed a labour case, most of their relationships end after the negotiating agreement and receiving the compensation money. Technically, upon going back to the Philippines most workers are no longer

part of the union. Communication and their contact information from the Philippines are rarely kept among the support groups. Although individually, if there had been a closer personal relationship established between the workers and the coalition members, they may have some form of contact mostly through social media such as Facebook. But this kind of connection is an informal and personal. It has not crossed the mind and aspiration of the coalition to create a global network in terms of their membership.

There was an instance when this said connection was proven to be influential and was put into action. One of the Japanese volunteer teachers took a personal vacation to Indonesia. The union asked her to look for a former trainee who was sent home illegally since she was also going to Indonesia anyway. The union wanted to file the case to help this worker but lost contact after he was sent home. They had no real contact aside from the name of the worker and the hometown to which he used to live.

I interviewed the teacher, Ms. Iwashita Yasuko, a volunteer Japanese teacher giving free lessons to trainees in Iwakuni at her own expense. She used to be an overseas JICA volunteer. It was from this experience that motivated her to continue volunteering in Japan. I interviewed her and asked what made her transform her personal vacation into a volunteer work for the union. She said,

> "When I think about these people who went home illegally [laid-off illegally], I cannot help but think that these people will leave Japan with a bad impression of my country. I do not want them to think that Japan is a bad place, that we exploited them for our own gains. I feel very concerned on how they will tell their stories back in their home countries. I do not want to leave such bad impression with them."

She expressed a strong sense of Japanese nationalism that enabled her to be emphatic toward other nationals. This motivation to preserve the Japanese image and reputation for volunteerism is a concept that is new to my culture.

Eventually, she was able to find this worker through personal connections of the teachers especially amongst her former students in Japan. Perhaps through sheer luck and through persistence, she succeeded using only her personal connections and no real resources to look for a person in a country as big as Indonesia. The motivation of the union to help the trainee was manifested thanks to informal personal connections. It is because through formal channels such as the embassy or the labour office, the information cannot be easily obtained nor can it be released. This form of an extended reach of the coalition is indeed a commendable form of volunteerism. However, the teacher had no financial gain in return for her efforts to locate this worker. Although according to her, the experience in looking for an unreachable person to help is a once in a lifetime personal achievement. Should the union succeed in filing and winning the case they will gain part of the compensation. Ms. Iwashita went to Indonesia for a personal vacation, but made it a business trip along the way, in support of the coalition's objective to reach out to these workers. Therefore, despite not having a structured mechanism within the coalition the civil society group's personal experiences with migrant workers became an asset to initiate demands for labour justice from overseas.

But aside from the internal dynamics of the coalition, I also argue that it is an opportunity wasted to let former workers helped by the coalition to end their connection upon their return to their home countries. Keeping track of their members abroad could potentially become a global network into exerting international pressures to governments to seriously address the loopholes in the Japan technical internship program. Such network may become a transnational labour

movement and eventually become a spatial and borderless form of unionism to which this collective mobilization and coalition-building can connect local issues into transnational issues. Labour migration to be precise is already a transnational issue, but to mobilize workers across Asia through the labour movement is indeed a long way to go.

4.3 Starting right: Ad hoc coalition and its potential contribution to the labour movement

The Scrum union and its migrant worker support group partners exhibit ad hoc coalition traits according to Tattersall (2005)'s typology. This coalition mostly convenes and mobilizes in response to a crisis. In this case, this type of coalition occurs in response to distressed migrant worker. The case provided insights from the labour dispute with Hitachi and the coalition. Whereas, the incident enabled the union to use media as a platform for exerting pressure to the company. This further resulted into a greater political opportunity that elevated their influence in Chugoku and surrounding areas.

However, this type of relationship does not involve any joint-decision making functions, but are often transactional and comes through as requests for support for an already existing strategy for the crisis at hand. The Scrum union takes the lead in handling the cases upon membership of the migrant worker. Power therefore is union centred and most of the time the civil society partners only support existing policy and strategy.

Although Ad hoc coalitions do not create powerful strategic relationships, it is rather creating relationships of possibilities for greater connection, sharing, and power (Tattersall, 2005 pp. 100). Because the union was able to establish direct relationship with the civil society members and the migrant communities, they were able to gain access to public social spaces and cultural understanding of their new members. Their reputation was built and believed by the migrant

communities that enabled continued interaction and relationship after the Hitachi case. Instead of being an alternative option for labour cases, they have become the preferred organization. This supports the claim of Suzuki (2012) that to enable a wider inclusion and renewed membership in the labour movement, rank-and-file members must be further integrated into the union. This has been a crucial in building momentum and mobilization efforts. With direct access and personal connection with bridge-builders in the community, the union was able to increase its members and continues to be recommended by its members to their greater community.

Also, the personal involvement and relationship of the union leaders and activists were further tested when Ms. Iwashita went to Indonesia in search of a former trainee. Because the coalition is loose, the decision-making process was personal. Although decisions are mostly led by the union, civil society partners voluntarily dedicate themselves to helping the foreign workers thus contributing to a new migrant inclusive labour movement. The former students and those helped by the union who went home to their respective countries also actively assisted. Their gratitude and hospitality were given to the Ms. Yasuko because she and the coalition who gave the task were those who had helped them in the past. This hinted a potential expansion of network overseas from returned migrant workers who were also former union members. If the union can further develop maintaining close relationship with their former (returned) foreign members, small chapters or individuals across labour sending states may be developed by the coalition.

This relationship and community building component is a good start for this ad hoc coalition. If the civil society partners can develop into full blown legal and organized groups this will balance the power within the coalition. There is a potential to achieve a mutual-support level. Since community engagement with the migrant communities already took place and they were able to maintain such network, this may lead to potentially achieve a deep level coalition. Ideally,

it may create a community rooted labour movement that is inclusive and multicultural with expanded networks overseas to provide additional international pressure to labour issues in Japan, particularly concerning migrants.

5. Conclusion

Community unionism (Black, 2015) through the coalitions has characteristics of being an organizational structure and as a process to which common interest can be attained. The Japanese labour movement and its migrant support organizations has both have the characteristics as defined by Black (2015). Structurally, the organizations are working on a flexible relationship under an inclusive membership scheme that enables temporary migrant workers to participate.

Also, the coalition formed between these organizations show a typology based on their level of engagements according to Tattersall (2015). It showed for example that the coalition between ZWU and SMJ, is a mutual-support coalition, whereas the Scrum Union and their volunteer migrant support group partners are in an ad hoc coalition. Theoretically, the typology suggests a linear development from ad hoc coalition to mutual-support, and eventually into a deep coalition. I used the same perspective in exploring the potential and possibilities of the coalitions.

Also similar to Suzuki's (2015) argument of the difference in community unionism in Asia, I found out that it goes beyond common interest, scale, and identity that enables a coalition to effectively work. There were also certain cultural nuances of international identity, membership sustainability, and trust that also affects the coalitions on their development into the larger labour movement.

Social spaces for community engagement and community building for one is an integral aspect that are often taken for granted in other societies. But in Japan where there is a strict and conservative stand for migration, autonomous public-social spaces for the new comers [migrants] are not common and are limited.

I also found out that the level of organizational development in the coalition is a crucial and important matter in order to establish a stable and a more powerful coalition. The more equal their internal development is, the higher the chance that the coalition will become stronger. Also, volunteerism and aspects of nationalist tendencies are manifested in some Japanese volunteers to continue their work with the migrant workers. Regardless of whether there is a financial gain in return or without.

Lastly, in the hopes of providing cases to show the potential of community unionism, there is hope that should the coalition transform themselves and address the temperamental attribute of having labour migrants into the labour movement, there is a potential to have transnational unionism in Japan.

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