

Organizational Structure in an International Setting: A Reflection of Organization-Environment Communication

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INTRODUCTION

Research in communication often focuses on the interpersonal communication that takes place between individuals. The same can be said of research in intercultural and international communication as well. The validity and reliability of generalizing the results of such research to the corresponding target population or cultural group depends to some extent upon the size of the sample studied. In addition, much research in communication behavior focuses on “snapshots” of relationships and not on how they develop. “Thus we are in the interesting position of being able to identify and describe various communicative ‘states’ that exist in task/organizational relationships, while knowing little of what causes them to develop in these ways” (Jablin, 1985, p. 640).

Organizations as structures, present an interesting option. They are usually developed by a number of different people, have developed over a period of time, and have identifiable characteristics that reflect those individual efforts. As Knapp and Vangelisti (1992) point out, “the patterns of work that you and others practice in this society will affect the way your relationships develop” (p. 99). As organizations are a reflection of the people that create them, they also reflect the nature of the relationships that exist within them. Organizations communicate with other organizations and their host communities and societies, and structure themselves in ways that reflect the nature of that communication.

The present study looks at the communicative nature of three different human service organizations to their host community, by studying key aspects of their organizational structure. The three organizations—all in the same large metropolitan area—have one important point in common; a large degree of their work involves working with foreigners in Japan. Two of the organizations were founded by, and continue to be run by foreigners living in Japan. This allows for both an international and intercultural perspective of organizational structure, as both were modeled along the lines of similar organizations that exist in the home countries, yet have had to adapt to the Japanese environment. Three different aspects of the organizations will be examined—each organization’s structure, relationship with both the general

environment and the task environment, and the budgeting process it employs. These different aspects will be viewed from the point of view of how they affect each organization's ability to carry out its stated mission. The organizations will be compared and contrasted in order to highlight the different ways they have structured themselves to communicate with their host communities.

All three organizations were approached to obtain information through interviews and were given assurances that neither the names of the organizations nor individuals interviewed would be named in any subsequent publication that might result from the interviews. The three organizations will simply be identified here as Organizations A, B, and C. A fourth organization, Organization D is mentioned in relation to its extensive ties to Organization C.

Although the three organizations have a certain amount in common in terms of client population—serving the needs of foreigners in Japan—they are actually quite different in character and in their operations. This became obvious through the process of contacting them. All three took quite different approaches to deciding how or whether they would be able to offer any assistance in being interviewed to obtain the information requested.

In one case, an interview was conducted over the phone at the time of initial contact with the organization. In another, the list of questions was faxed to the organization to be put to a committee to decide on a suitable response, which subsequently came just over a week later in the form of a long e-mail response that must have taken several hours to complete. With the third, a telephone appointment was made for later in the day, and this proceeded much the same as in the first situation. In all three cases subsequent contact was made to clarify or amplify certain points.

BACKGROUND

All three organizations were founded largely around the purpose of meeting the special needs of foreigners living in a large city in Japan. However, they all started in quite different ways by very different people and organizations, continue to be run in quite different ways and actually target quite different, although complementary needs. All three have become established to serve what is really a niche section of the public in the city and have steadily grown and consolidated. While there is a certain amount of overlap and inter-group liaison, this is actually surprisingly small. In effect each organization continues on its way in a largely independent way.

Organizations A and B offer some quite distinctly different services, in addition to the immediate information-source and Japanese culture classes that are staple services of both organizations. Organization A for example, offers professional counseling on visa and immigration issues, various language classes, routine seminars on international living, library, and meeting room facilities. On the other hand, Organization B is much more aimed at trying to help foreigners and their families to adjust to living in Japan and to try and help them meet more day to day needs that can be quite a challenge for newcomers with little proficiency in

the local language, customs or cultures—as well as organizing excursions to local and distant points of interest, and promoting special—usually one-off—events, such as art and hand-craft shows. The counseling services offered by Organization C are of quite a different nature altogether. According to an advertisement placed in a local English language monthly magazine they have professional counselors and psychotherapists available to assist individuals, couples and families experiencing problems such as cultural adjustment, depression, anxiety, life style and career transitions, relationship or marriage problems, child adolescent development, physical and sexual abuse, and eating disorders.

Organization A was started by the city 6 years ago for the benefit of both foreigners and Japanese living in the region. According to its main undated brochure it has a dual purpose: It is an advisory organization to which foreign residents and visitors can look to for advice and information on daily life and at the same time it offers people of all nationalities opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. Since it was founded, it has grown slowly to its present size.

Organization B was founded in 1977 out of a gathering of foreigners in the basement of a local church, which offered space in the basement for the organization to operate from, though it was not connected with the church in any formal sense. It was started by a group of foreigners, and ever since has been run almost exclusively by foreigners. At first they were all volunteers, until the organization grew to the point where a full-time, paid director was needed, and later a full-time, paid assistant as well. In August 1991, Organization B moved into its present location in a newly developed area where it enjoys subsidized rent in a modern new building. It has developed a rather sophisticated mission statement as stated in an organizational document, Mission Statement outlined below:

The *mission* of (Organization B) is to enhance foreigners' lives in their adopted country—help them better understand, enjoy and participate in Japan. Further, as Organization B is open for membership among foreign and Japanese communities, Organization B provides interaction opportunities between foreign residents and Japanese citizens in order to foster lasting and positive relationships.

This statement is followed by a list of six activities that the organization promotes in order to carry out its mission. The mission statement concludes by pointing out that Organization B wishes to make a positive contribution not only to its members, but also to the immediate community through working in cooperation with other organizations, and Japan as a whole.

Organization C was founded in 1981 by a British psychotherapist who felt there was a need among the international community in the city for such an organization. The current administrator describes its mission as, “to help and assist any foreigner in need of counselling or psychiatric help in the . . . area.” (private communication, October 8, 1997) Since it was founded, it has not followed any particular trend in terms of growth and expansion. Its size is determined by the availability of qualified people living in the vicinity who wish to work there. Thus, it shrinks or expands depending on who is available to work, rather than the demand of clients. There is a reasonable amount of turnover of counselors as the Western counselors generally do not work at Organization C as a primary source of income, and often are in Japan

primarily for other reasons such as teaching English or as the spouse of someone who has been transferred here for a certain finite period of time. At present Organization C has one administrator, and two counselors—one Japanese and one American—although at the time of the interview, another American counselor was being interviewed for a position there, who was subsequently recruited and an additional counselor was also being interviewed.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organization A was founded in 1991 as one of three departments of an International Division of an International Association run by the city government. The Association was founded in 1980 and the International Division was added in 1984. The Association was started to develop three areas—facilities for hosting international conferences and conventions, trade promotion, and international exchange. Today, it is heavily dominated by the large and modern facilities it operates, and the making of plans to utilize these facilities and others in the promotion of trade for the area. The International Division was added to complement these other two main functions, but in practice appears to have very little to do with them.

Within the International Division, there is a great deal of overlap and repetition among the three departments which essentially offer a base for international exchange between citizens, local students and students from abroad. Organization A has four fulltime Japanese women staff members who all speak English, but deferred to the American staff member in another department to answer my questions about it.

Organization A does not have its own director. That role is taken by one of two managing directors of International Association. This is a position that is rotated among many other posts within the city's government and thus the person in this role at any given time may not necessarily have any special expertise in the area of international relations, and is unlikely to stay long enough to develop any either. Many organizations in Japan share this kind of structural arrangement (Hall & Hall, 1987).

There are no clear sections within Organization A, but among the four staff members, they have divided up their work into four areas. One person takes care of organizing the volunteer Japanese language and culture teachers, including reimbursing them for travel expenses, and the organization of volunteer club activities. Another person is responsible for being available for being consulted by foreigners. The third person is in charge of all the events the organization runs, such as the culture seminars and language classes. The fourth person takes care of general affairs, such as ordering office supplies, accounting, and helping with the many novel situations that crop up at such places. Meetings are held once a week by the four women to plan their activities for the week and most decisions are made consensually amongst themselves. Occasionally the International Division needs to be consulted on decisions, but these are usually of a more practical and administrative nature. The specific details of Organization A's activities are largely left up to the four women themselves and it is very rare for any of these plans to be interfered with by those in the formal managerial role in the International Division.

The exact nature of Organization A's identity is somewhat unclear. It has its own name, brochures, programs and services, advertising, funds, physical location and equipment, giving it the appearance of being an organization that is affiliated with the local city government. However, the International Association's literature describes it as a "department." The meaning and use of the word "department" by Japanese organizations is not quite the same as it is usually used in English, or in the west (Hall & Hall, 1987). Without its own leadership in the form of a director or manager or supervisor, however, it begins to look even less of an entity than even the word "department" would suggest. Thus, although it presents itself as an organization and in many ways functions like an organization, below the surface, it does not really have the internal hierarchical structure usually associated with the term "department". Yet, it does have a director. The director just happens to be wearing the hats of directorship of other larger areas as well. The position of director of Organization A is a very small part of a much larger portfolio, which would not have been very important at all in determining a match between likely candidates and the position.

Organization B stands alone without any organizational affiliations. It describes itself as a not-for-profit organization, but is as yet unregistered as such. (The city government has so far not required Organization B, to register itself, although there is annual confusion over how the director should pay taxes since it was decided to have a paid director six years ago, and the current director believes it is only a matter of time before the city government will want to have the situation clarified.) When it first started, it began establishing membership and the membership would elect a board of directors at the annual general meeting to oversee the operations of the organization. Currently there are 13 members on the board—all volunteers—who meet once a month with the director and his assistant to discuss current and future plans and budget issues as they arise. The current director was a previous board member and describes these meetings as very casual and friendly. Decisions are usually made by consensus, though they have gone to a vote occasionally, and often the board operates more as advisors offering suggestions that might help the director better carry out his plans.

Apart from the current director and assistant, who are paid full-time workers, Organization B has a stable group of 20 "full-time" volunteers each of whom works one three-hour shift, once a week. In addition, there is another group of 20 "substitute" volunteers who are able to fill in for the regular volunteers when the need arises.

While Organization B has steadily grown over the last 20 years, the current director does not believe that it will continue to grow at the same rate any more and suggested that it has probably reached its optimum size in terms of numbers of full-time paid administrators and volunteer staff. The only other changes in terms of growth that are foreseen are the holding of new and larger events, although this idea has currently been placed on hold.

Organization C has a clear structure, but because of limited personnel, there is some doubling up of roles and positions. The administrator is in charge of the organization and the director of clinical services is in charge of supervision of the counselors. The position of director of clinical services requires a trained counselor/psychotherapist. At present, how-

ever, the two counselors—one Japanese and one American—share this responsibility between them. This works quite effectively because the American counselor is familiar with the role of supervision, while the Japanese counselor has a long background in the area and has many contacts and connections with other Japanese organizations and medical facilities that serves as an effective back-up for the services provided by Organization C.

Meetings among the counselors are held weekly. This is where cases are presented and supervision takes place. Counselors are able to use these meetings to help them with any difficulties they may be experiencing with their clients and the clinical director can make professional counseling decisions regarding clients where this is appropriate. The administrator meets separately with the counselors at the end of each month to collect their statistics and pay them.

The organization is modeled along the lines of similar counseling agencies in the United States. Despite Organization C's British origins, most of the western counselors now are from the United States and also this organizational structure will be most familiar to the clients—who are mostly from the United States as well. Forms and procedures have been worked out to fit Organization C's unique situation, but are largely modeled along the lines of private centers that counselors had previously worked at in the United States. The main difference has to do with payment as none of the counselors are working full-time and thus a unique system was developed to try and make it fair to everyone involved (described below). Since Organization C started in 1981, there have been only superficial changes made to the way it is organized and run. The administrator describes most of these changes as "updates." That is, changes are made to reflect changes that have taken place in counseling practice in the United States. An example of this was the introduction of a Statement of Client's Rights and Responsibilities handout after a newly arrived counselor pointed out that this was now standard practice in the United States.

With new clinical directors, comes a few additional structural changes as well. Usually this has to do with the supervision process and the scheduling of meetings with new recruits. This is not so much a training period as an orientation period. Although Organization C has the kind of dual centers of authority—administrative and professional—common among human service organizations, so far this has not caused any conflict of interest among the counselors and the staff (Lewis, Lewis & Souflée, 1991; Hasenfeld, 1983). It seems that both the administrator and director(s) of clinical services are flexible to the kinds of situations that might create conflict, perhaps by virtue of the unusualness of the situation they are in—foreigners counseling other foreigners in a foreign land.

The way human service organizations are organized is often not as clear as the way profit-making organizations are organized, because objectives are often not as clear, clients usually have less power than customers, and control over funding does not always reside with the organization's management (Lewis, Lewis & Souflée, 1991). This lack of clarity manifests itself in each of these organizations in different ways.

Organization A does not even have its own director. This role is rotated among city officials

who have no particular interest or expertise in dealing with international issues, much less foreigners. Gordon (1980) points out how important it is to gain representation of those who will be affected by decisions during the decision-making process. Similarly, Hasenfeld (1983) stresses the need to consider very carefully who should be involved in decision making, and the dangers of having too many or too few involved. It would appear that the International Association is content to make decisions on Organization A's future with limited information on the net result of Organization A's activities. Statistics are passed on from Organization A to the International Association in terms of numbers, but no effort is made to determine the effect Organization A has on the lives of its clients. Thus, those making such decisions have no direct experience with the organization, or its services, or its clients. On the one hand this can mean having lavish resources, and on the other hand, this could mean Organization A being consolidated or even terminated for reasons that could have little to do with the functioning of Organization A itself. Recently a related department was closed down for reasons that were not clear to anyone currently in Organization A.

In many ways Organization A could be better described as a service outlet. Its activities are based on policies and precedents that were put into effect on the basis of what some government officials thought might be useful, both for foreigners and for itself in terms of providing an image that is conducive to its trade promotion goals. They were not wrong. The services provided are the obvious ones that most people would imagine to be useful. They are useful and are made use of. However, the organization's management receives only the barest feedback on the results of these services. Perhaps such results are superfluous: the existence of the organization could indeed justify itself.

Thus, the organization also has limited ability to adapt or change or respond to any new or perceived needs that its clients might voice. Lewis, Lewis & Souflée (1991) point out the difference between managers and leaders in terms of efficiency and effectiveness where managers are able to do things right, while leadership requires doing the right thing, and strongly suggest that human service managers "need to be not only proficient managers, but astute leaders as well" (p. 281). Unfortunately, Organization A has neither the management nor the leadership that such an organization really needs. No doubt it does some things right and does some of the right things, but without a management that is able to respond to newly discovered or newly perceived needs or problems, it is unable to become either more effective or more efficient, and runs the risk of becoming less relevant in the lives of those it seeks to serve. Nor is it helped by a managerial approach that may tend to favor the status quo. As Condon (1984) notes, one manager has remarked:

Americans have a "seize the moment for this chance may never come again" mentality.

We Japanese would rather take enough time to be sure before acting. If we miss some opportunities along the way, we know there will be others. (p. 62)

This raises the very real possibility that Organization A is quite capable of continuing to exist without really even noticing that it might be becoming less relevant to the clients—it seeks to serve.

Organization B has a very simple and clear structure. As an independent organization, it has a membership which elects a board of directors, which in turn appoints a director and assistant. All decision making takes place within this context. All funding is controlled by this structure, and the flexibility to respond to newly perceived goals and objectives is evident in the way it has developed and transformed over the years in response to the new challenges it faced. In terms of organizational achievement, it is well placed with regard to the key variables Lewis, Lewis & Souflée (1991) outline—quality of management, the sophistication of the organization, and its present relationship with its environment. In fact it is difficult to imagine how it could be better organized. The stability of the organization is a clear reflection of the efficiency and effectiveness of its organizational structure and how it operates from this structure. Unfortunately such stability is tempered by its relationship with officialdom, which will be discussed below.

Organization C, is also clearly organized, modeled as it is on similar kinds of agencies in the United States. However, by virtue of the nature of this kind of organization which employs professionals to dispense its services, the dual hierarchy both Lewis, Lewis & Souflée (1991) and Hasenfeld (1983) discuss is an inevitable source of uncertainty. At around the time of my interview, Organization C interviewed and recruited one new counselor and was in the process of interviewing another. However, it was not clear just how the decision making process over recruitment took place. It seems reasonable to assume that both the administrator and director (s) were involved, but that is not completely clear. The administrator mentioned that different directors have different approaches to their role in terms of style, and thus it seems likely that the current administrator has worked with at least a one or two directors apart from the current one(s). This raises the question of who decides on the replacement of directors—in terms of both hiring a replacement and the potential dismissal of a current holder of the position. Also, given that Organization C was started by someone who is no longer there, how is—or was—the administrator hired or replaced?

So far in its history, the current administrator reported no serious conflicts of interest, and pointed out that the director clearly has the mandate to have the final word in clinical matters. Most probably directors and administrators have left in the past on their own free will, and have been replaced by counselors already working with the agency. However, given the way the organization depends so heavily on the availability of any qualified counselors, it appears unlikely that there is any serious attempt to determine a high degree of appropriateness of the match between the organization and the counselors it takes on. In other words, it seems unlikely that any qualified person is not seen as suitable and not taken on as part of the team.

The administrator plays a very important and powerful role in matching clients to available counselors and this in itself could be a cause for dissatisfaction or even resentment on the part of counselors, depending on how it is handled. Given this situation, it is not too difficult to imagine in such a small organization where individual personalities have a huge influence on the organization, that a difference of opinion could escalate into a power struggle. Such a situation might be effectively resolved with the help of outside, but related, intervention, if only such

a reliable source of intervention existed for Organization C. Its lack of professional affiliation in Japan, apart from its funding body, does leave such a small and isolated organization vulnerable to any powerful forces of personality that may simply have chanced upon the scene. In addition, frequent changes in leadership may be very stimulating, but is unlikely to be a source of stability. Hasenfeld (1983) argues for organizational change by pointing out how this is "stimulated by the rise of new executive leadership that does not represent the old guard" (p. 225). However, this is unlikely to be the problem facing Organization C. In fact, it is more likely to be the other way round where the lack of continuity in leadership may lead to unnecessary and counterproductive instability.

ORGANIZATION—ENVIRONMENT RELATIONS

Neither Organization A nor Organization B have very extensive relations with other, outside organizations or agencies. Organization A is essentially only connected to the other departments within the International Division, and has only the most superficial relations with other organizations. This may involve carrying advertisements for other agencies in their publications and having brochures available in their offices. And this is much the same for Organization B too. There are mutual introductions, but not much else. Because of the limited overlap between the organizations there is not really any competition for clients among them, but rather the contrary. As one of the important functions of each agency is to have information on the services available for foreigners in the area, then each organization and its respective services, serves to bolster the other organization's domain of referral. Thus, there is a friendly cooperation among the different organizations.

One point of interest that does show how the organizations are fundamentally different is the degree to which their services are made use of by the local Japanese community. Organization A as a city government project enjoys the support of widespread publicity which is mostly in Japanese and thus it is well known in the city in general. Organization B on the other hand is really only well known in the foreign community. Its entire purpose is to support this group and thus all its publications are in English, it advertises in local English language publications and its operating language is English. In fact, so much so, that only Japanese with a good command of English and often with some overseas experience become members. Thus the Japanese who do become members—often actually attracted by the use of English—are highly welcomed, but the use of English as the language of operation in effect creates a barrier that makes it very difficult for the average Japanese to take part in its activities.

Thus, although many of the classes offered by Organization A are filled by Japanese who are interested in a more international perspective, it is mostly foreigners who make use of the projects that Organization B offers. However, among the foreigners coming into the region, there are actually two different groups, which again is reflected in their patronage of these two organizations. Those who come to work in the Japanese branches of multinational corporations are routinely introduced to Organization B by these companies, presumably as a way of

helping them to find the kind of day to day support that they and their families are likely to need. Language teachers (usually English speaking) and construction workers (usually south-east Asian) often enter Japan without any affiliations and usually discover Organization A first as their initial contacts are usually with Japanese, or city government agencies that put them in touch with Organization A, or they simply hear about it first through its more extensive advertising. Indeed, many of them never do find out about Organization B or become involved—something that the director of that organization would like to see change. In fact, Organization A is often visited by people from these groups in their initial efforts to find employment, and has become an informal gathering place for people to try and make contacts and find jobs. Organization B members are usually already in some sort of full-time employment before they arrive in Japan.

Thus, although Organization B is a grassroots organization that grew out of a grassroots need by those experiencing the need, it tends to be more middle to upper middle-class, while Organization A attracts the more working to lower middle-class foreigners. This is certainly not deliberate on either organization's part. Perhaps Organization A is more public, while Organization B is more private. Organization A is more bureaucratic and better funded, and aiming to take care of the more basic and administrative needs of foreigners, while Organization B is more like a private club to help foreigners get together with each other and feel more at home while undergoing their sojourn in Japan. This does overstate the difference—though more in degree than in kind.

Organization C has a rather unusual relationship with its environment. First of all, it is directly answerable to an international medical services association (Organization D) which was established in the 1800s to help foreigners in distress in this area. The administrator of this organization is an advisor to Organization C which depends on Organization D for part of its funding. A local hospital has donated the use of two rooms that serve as Organization C's central office and counseling room.

Sometimes, the international schools in the area refer clients to Organization C when the school counselors think that a problem is too large for them to handle. Organization C has run workshops at these schools too, on ways for foreigners—parents and children alike—to adjust to living in Japan.

A natural disaster in the area a few years ago had a significant impact on Organization C's relationship with the Japanese environment. Immediately after the disaster, physical needs of food and shelter, and the difficulty with traveling any distance meant that the center was suddenly very quiet. At that time counselors underwent specific training in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Relief (PTSD), knowing that this would soon be in demand. Indeed this is what happened and counselors were soon busy visiting foreigners to offer help. The one Japanese counselor who also went through the training was not only in great demand offering counseling to individuals in need, but also was in demand teaching the techniques to Japanese health personnel as well.

This is actually quite ironic, given the fact that because Organization C counselors are all

trained overseas and obtain overseas credentials, they are not recognized by the Japanese Ministry of Health. This means that actually Organization C has no legal basis to operate in Japan, which in turn limits their fund-raising ability. It is not licensed or registered. Thus, its connection with legitimation in Japan rests on the fact that Organization D is registered here as a charitable organization, and that a local hospital offers space. This carries no legal weight, but gives Organization C the necessary status for officials to accept its existence without demanding it comply to existing Japanese regulations. It also appears that there are no plans by either party to change this situation in the near future.

Apart from one or two counselors who work on their own in the vicinity, Organization C is the only organization of its type in the immediate vicinity. It does not make any special effort to advertise itself apart from making its existence known through modest notices in local publications for foreigners and having brochures available at Organizations A and B and other such organizations that are likely to be frequented by foreigners living in the area.

Organization C is in a reasonably precarious position in that it remains heavily dependent on the almost chance occurrence of foreigners moving into the area who are qualified professionals willingly to undertake counseling work for a certain period of time. Recently, it grew from one administrator and two counselors, to one administrator and four counselors in a matter of days. It has never had less than three people working there and never had more than six, but frequently fluctuates in between. One potentially, though limited, stabilizing influence could come from a consultant at a local university who is a psychiatrist and assists with hospitalizations and medications where these become necessary.

All three organizations were formed primarily because of the influx of foreign residents into the area. This is noteworthy primarily because it is related to the existence of each organization, and for each organization, continued existence is by no means guaranteed. Currently each organization is quite stable and there is no indication whatsoever that the existence of any of these organizations is under threat from any known source. On the contrary, the different representatives of each organization gave assurances that although there is not likely to be considerable growth for any of the organizations, the future looks quite assured. However, it should be noted that each organization may in fact, not be as securely positioned as they imagine. When one considers each organization's relationships with its environment, this should not be entirely unexpected. As Hasenfeld (1983) so clearly points out, "Strong dependence on external units with no countervailing powers generates much uncertainty for an organization, makes it vulnerable to external pressures, and jeopardizes its internal integrity and survival" (p. 69).

Organization A enjoys the considerable backing of the local city and its huge resources. This gives rise to considerable stability, but ironically this also gives rise to a small, but real weakness. That backing comes basically from taxpayers in the city, of whom only a tiny fraction are foreigners. This point is certainly not lost on those who were responsible for the founding of Organization A, for while brochures do explain the benefits it offers foreigners, they also make it very clear that Organization A was founded for all the citizens of the city and

the surrounding area, pointing out specifically the opportunities it offers Japanese for international interaction by virtue of the presence of the foreigners it hopes to attract as well. Its future may come to depend on the ability of the city to maintain this image of the asset the organization offers to those Japanese taxpayers who continue to fund its existence.

Organization B and Organization C have different areas of vulnerability. Neither has any protection under the domestic laws of Japan. So far this has not been the cause of any concern, and perhaps has helped them to develop themselves freely without restriction or regulation. Organization C, especially, however, as a quasi-medical organization is vulnerable to the possibility of becoming a victim of a malpractice suit. Perhaps the possibility of this happening is too remote to justify the effort to try and gain some kind of legal recognition that may serve as additional protection. However, Organization C can take little comfort from the fact that “The Japanese are among the least litigious of cultures” (Victor, 1992, p. 125), as most of its clients are from the United States—arguably one of the most litigious cultures.

Japanese authorities at present do not seem to be concerned with the existence of either Organization C or Organization B, apart from trying to effectively categorize how the director of Organization B should pay taxes. The necessity of laws to regulate activities is not as entrenched in Japanese society as it is in the west (Victor, 1992).

For Organization B, this is not so complicated, and indeed it appears likely that in the future it will become registered as an official non-profit organization—a move that is expected to proceed quite smoothly. For Organization C, however, the situation is a bit more complicated and could require changes at the national level regarding the recognition of overseas qualifications—an issue that is unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future.

Although they aim to meet different needs, and are organizationally quite different from each other, each organization shares significant similarities with each of the other organizations. Organization A and Organization B offer information and courses for foreigners in the area. Organization C and Organization B are both grassroots organizations that were started by foreigners in response to the lack of services that existed in the area, that they experienced a need for. Organization B however is quite independent of any other organization, and in some respects resembles a private club more than a human service organization as their membership system exemplifies. Both Organization C and Organization B have important roots in, or connections with the local Japanese community—Organization A as part of the city government, and Organization C with its links to the Japanese medical community through Organization D, the local hospital, and the local university.

BUDGETING

Organization A describes itself as a non-profit quasi-governmental organization. Its funds come from two sources—directly from the city itself and from funds that are managed by the International Association, which it earns through hosting conferences. Any revenue collected for the courses run by Organization A is returned to the association, and presumably enters the

fund that its own revenue is partly drawn from. In general, course fees are set to simply cover costs and Organization A is not seen primarily as a source of revenue for the city. An annual budget request is made for the start of each fiscal year on April 1. Precedent is the guiding principle in drawing up the budget and the purpose is basically to maintain services at their current level. The budget is generally accepted, as it is requested, by the International Division.

Organization B on the other hand has many and various sources of funds. These come from membership fees, tuition from classes, fees from excursions, donations from the multinational corporations mentioned above, revenues from two books about the region published by Organization B, profits from selling other publications at their offices, holding art shows, and the commissioning and selling of Japanese and Chinese antique furniture replicas. In addition, several companies in the area have established a fund that has made a large contribution, and the premises themselves are offered at very low rent by a housing corporation as a way of supporting the organization as well. The accounting is done largely by the director himself with the aid of an accounting computer software program, although the board of governors also has a treasurer to oversee the accounting. Generally the income is not totally predictable and there is no annual budget created. Rather, income and expenses are monitored in an ongoing way in much the same way that household spending takes place. Availability of funds can affect decision making in both deciding on whether to undertake certain projects or not, and deciding on the need to undertake other activities that might generate more income.

Organization C is also a non-profit-making organization. It receives three equal, modest stipends every year from Organization D—one for the administrator, one for the director of clinical services, and one for office supplies and the telephone bill. (Telephone calls to the center are always recorded with the administrator returning calls in the evenings. She also works as a teacher and thus is often absent from the office.) Clients pay for counseling services according to a set scale, but when there are extenuating circumstances, this can be reduced or even waived all together. Counselors are not paid any set monthly salary or stipend, but rather they are paid for every counseling session they conduct. Counselors are paid a set amount from this fee, with the rest going into a kitty that counselors can draw on when their clients are unable to pay a full fee, or to pay at all. This system was set up to avoid having counselors having to depend entirely on whether the client is fee paying or not. Essentially, however, all the money that clients pay, goes to the counselors. None is paid to Organization C. Thus, Organization C depends entirely on the grant from Organization D for its survival.

Under these circumstances, there is very little budgeting or planning needed. The only decisions that need to be made deal with fairly trivial issues such as office supplies. Only rarely is there any need for large purchases, and requests to Organization D are usually made independent of the annual grant. For example, shortly after Organization C started, and the rooms at the hospital were made available, a one-time donation was requested and granted to furnish the rooms appropriately.

Sometimes it is possible to use some of the grant targeted for office supplies and the

telephone bill, to also buy books and educational materials that can be loaned to clients. Organization C has been able to build up a small library of such materials from this grant, with suggestions often coming from newly arriving recruits. On occasion it has even been possible to subsidize counselors who wish to attend conferences and training sessions from this budget.

Organization C does not make its financial records public. The only records that are kept, are of the three grants made by Organization D, and the state of the kitty for the counselors. Twice a year, Organization C supplies Organization D with a report on counseling activities, numbers of clients and budget figures. This financial statement is audited by the same auditor who audits Organization D's accounts.

It was actually quite surprising to see that budgeting does not seem to play a very significant role in any of the three organizations—albeit for quite different reasons. Organization A consumes a significant amount of money from the city, although only in comparison to Organizations B and C. Within the city government, it plays a very small part indeed, and its budgeting is handled in the routine way city governments usually allocate funds, the details of which were not available in this case.

Organization C is structured in such a way that there is very little money to actually plan or spending each year. Whether its counselors are very busy or not with clients has virtually no bearing on it financially. Proceeds from clients go to the counselors. Only if the numbers of clients dropped off considerably would Organization D perhaps reconsider its funding of the administrator, director, and running costs. Thus, the administrator explains that Organization C simply focuses on trying to offer the highest quality of service to clients. Not only is this a fulfillment of its mission, but it is also perhaps the best way to guarantee its continued existence, as without the Organization D funding, the administrator concedes that Organization C would have to close down. Clients simply cannot be expected to support the entire operation.

Organization B, which operates more of an accounting operation than actually budgeting, is perhaps most vulnerable to its financial situation. In this way it actually resembles a for-profit organization more than the other two. If any of its programs or projects turn into liabilities, then it must bear the full brunt of that. As most of these are planned to simply cover costs, then other activities of a more profit-making nature need to be planned to compensate for that loss. The budgeting process, then is more of trying to ensure a break-even situation, rather than trying to set up a year long plan of projects and expenses to submit to a funding agency—as with Organization A, or to fit an anticipated income—as with Organization C. Although there is more incentive for Organization B to earn more money, in order to be able to plan and carry out more ambitious projects and programs for the membership and public at large, this appears to be fairly limited. Fulfilling its basic role and purpose well is clearly of greatest importance to the organization.

None of these organizations are looking to expand or increase their funding at present. They seem to have reached a certain equilibrium in their role and environment. In fact there is quite a distinct—probably healthy—absence of ambition in that respect. It could hardly be said that

any of them have had difficulty in maintaining “the integrity of their missions and goals” (Lewis, Lewis & Souflée, 1991, p. 172), as a result of the lure of grants to do so. However, on reflection, this is actually hardly surprising. The workers at Organization A have no particular vested interest in trying to expand it, as that holds no intrinsic advantages for them. If those working at Organization C were interested in trying to develop an expanding counseling organization, they would hardly choose a city in Japan as the place to do it. It is actually quite clear that the remuneration that the administrator receives for her role and low ceiling of her position would hardly attract someone ambitious. Organization C depends heavily on the director’s quasi-volunteerism. And the same applies to Organization B. It was sustained for many years on volunteerism before it was finally decided to have a full-time director to supply some continuity to what is largely a volunteer organization. Again the low remuneration and low ceiling is not likely to appeal to the kind of person who is strongly growth conscious. The rewards must be largely intrinsic. Thus, although budgeting is not a major factor in planning for Organizations A, B, or C, it is clearly “the servant rather than the master” (Lewis, Lewis & Souflée, 1991, p. 155), in the planning process—albeit a very important servant at that.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have described the organizational structure, organization-environment relations, and budgeting practices of three relatively small human service organizations that all aim at serving the foreign community in a large metropolitan center in Japan. Along with these analyses, I have also made comparisons among the organizations in terms of these three features, and have made some suggestions on how they might better meet their objectives. The very different organizational structures, affiliations, origins and practices demonstrate how each organization sees itself in relation to its environment and has organized itself in terms of that perception—with more or less degrees of success. In particular this can be seen in the way they have chosen to deal with—or not deal with—possible areas of vulnerability.

By most indications, they are all soundly based and solidly supported. However, all of them are vulnerable to some extent, to changes in their environments—some more so than others. Yet, realistically, the chances of any of these organizations falling victim to the kinds of adverse situations foreseen in this article, are probably quite low. There are two reasons for this—both tinged with paradox.

First of all, although it is quite unimaginable for the equivalents to Organizations B and C to operate in a western country without any legal basis, this is not quite the threat it appears here in Japan. The willingness on the part of authorities to allow these organizations to continue on this basis reflects a willingness to overlook the ambiguities that often arise when dealing with foreigners. It should be noted that such a willingness is not necessarily the norm for Japanese society. It is usually more rigid in requiring conformity by the local populace to official protocol (Barnlund, 1975). The lack of rigidity when it comes to foreigners may be the result of simply not knowing what to do, as no precedent has yet been set, and doing so

requires a decisiveness that is also often lacking. Doing nothing is preferable to doing something wrong (Condon, 1984). Thus, although technically they are in a precarious situation, as long as their existence does not directly conflict with the interests of the authorities—and this appears to be the case here—there is no reason to expect them to ever need the protection that comes with recognition and legal standing.

Secondly, as Hasenfeld (1983) explains, “Paradoxically, human service organizations by their very nature possess characteristics that potentially enhance their capacity to change” (p. 247). The kinds of people who are involved in counseling and human relationships are generally more disposed to the kinds of communication that build trusting relationships. As Haney (1992) explains, good communication is important not only for building trust, but also for maintaining it. Thus, the internal vulnerabilities—pointed out above—in Organization C by virtue of its size and power structure, are much less likely to manifest themselves as serious problems than if this were a political organization, for example. Thus—again, paradoxically—the situation is the opposite of the observation Hasenfeld (1983) makes above. In this city, these three human service organizations by their very nature possess much of what is needed to ensure their continued stability, rather than the kind of debilitating change their situation makes them vulnerable to. And it would appear from the observations made in this study, that all three are more interested in maintaining their ability to continue offering the services they are offering at present—with innovations, perhaps—but without a great deal of reorganization. The most serious—albeit potential—dangers they face are both outside the organizations and beyond their control. Some changes should be made to limit the possible negative consequences they face, but these are limited in nature. Thus, it would appear they are more interested in internal stability than in change. While this is not unusual and they share this tendency with many human service organizations, given the situation and context in which they exist, this does not seem to be an unreasonable or unhealthy response to their circumstances.

Each of these organizations is structured in a way that communicates its origins, affiliations and internal workings. At first, Organizations A and B appear similar in the services they offer. However, they have vastly different origins and have adapted themselves to their respective environments in different ways that reflect these origins. Organization A has grown directly out of established Japanese society. Organization B has grown out of that society too, although it is clearly of exotic origins.

Organization C, by far the most interesting of the three in terms of international communication, resembles an organization that has been transported here somewhat like a potted plant with its own separate source of nourishment. It is not really part of the society at all, and only interacts where is no other alternative. There is little likelihood that it will ever become part of the local society and there is little reason to believe that that would serve the interests of anyone at all. However, its existence is accepted and seems to be even welcomed as a beneficial aspect of the community in that it is of service to the foreign community in Japan. And this is made possible by virtue of the adaptability of Organization C and the flexibility of the host community—a symbiotic relationship that hopefully will be able to continue in the best

interests of the clients this organization was formed to serve, and thus the host community in which they live as well.

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