

Balancing the Hybridization of Public Libraries and Private Companies

Masanori Koizumi, University of Tsukuba, Japan
Junko Teruyama, University of Tsukuba, Japan

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Abstract

This article explores how the government balances hybridization of public libraries and private companies based on a study in Japan. This research makes three important contributions to the research arena of hybridization by conducting in-depth case study and ethnography. First, through research into the management model of hybridization, we shed a light on public governance. Second, since the Japanese government fosters cooperation between private companies and public institutions by conducting social trials in hybridization, we can use the lessons learned from these trials and offer them not just to Japanese society but to the entire world. Finally, this research also contributes to creating new research methods in the area of public governance by utilizing in-depth case studies and ethnography developed by researchers in the field of anthropology. In conclusion, we describe a model of the hybridization of public libraries and private companies. It is important for public libraries and private companies that 1) public libraries should create the mission, philosophy and strategies, 2) both parties should adhere to their detailed contracts which clearly define their distinct roles, and 3) ensure that the detailed plans and descriptions for private companies can be executed successfully within the private company's limited engagement.

Keywords: Hybridization; Public Governance; Organization Structure and Design; Public Libraries; Qualitative Research; Ethnography

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Introduction

In the early 1970s, Etzioni (1973) had already displayed the existence of hybrid organizations created by governments. The hybridity is comprised of various combinations of public, private and third-party sectors. Over the last fifty years, politicians, employees of public institutions, and researchers in the public sector have steadily taken their own management techniques and the management of both public institutions and private organizations into consideration in order to pursue a more efficient style of operation and management (Hodge & Greve, 2007; Hodge, 1999; D. Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Perry & Rainey, 1988). This transformation has led to a shift from New Public Management (NPM) to New Public Governance (NPG) which implies a fundamental change all over the world (Gulbrandsen, Thune, Borlaug, & Hanson, 2015; S. P. Osborne, 2006; Wiesel & Modell, 2014).

After the 2000s, this trend has become broader and has led to various concerns with managing societies associated with wider and more complex local communities (Lindqvist, 2013). Hybridity does not imply randomly mixing features from different sectors (Karré, 2011). According to this view, there are fundamentally and distinctly different governance and operational principles in each sector, merged together in a way that allows for more effective management of an organization (Billis, 2010). According to Collins (2005), the public and social sector is divided into four quadrants, each possessing unique properties and techniques of management. Especially within the research field related to public governance, there is a wide range of research basically consisting of three methods: 1) describing theoretical frameworks, 2) policies and documents analysis, 3) interviews with employees and directors in empirical case studies. Some of the represented research in this field illustrate the general characteristics of hybrid organizations, and previous researchers in the public governance field conducted research based on these research methodologies (Conaty, 2012; Stone & Francie, 2007).

However, while this research into public governance is ongoing, some researchers in the field of public governance are specializing and moving into more narrow and specific fields of focus. This is due to the unique traits and unique types of hybridity within each quadrant as described by Collins (2005). For example, in order to reflect the differences in characteristics of hybrid organizations, Kurunmäki (2004) investigated the hybridity of medical professionals. He also expanded his research area to include more of the public sector as well as professional areas of the private sector (Kurunmäki & Miller, 2011). McDermott, Hamel, Steel, Flood, and Mckee (2015) analyzed regulations of health care governance based on four hospitals in Scotland and Ireland in order to improve the management system, and developed a goal-oriented governance framework which outlined the following four goals: (1) ensuring the adoption and implementation of best practices, (2) enabling staff, (3) empowering staff to adapt and add to national mandates, (4) embedding a culture of improvement. There has been much research done on hybridization in health care (D'Aunno, Sutton, & Price, 2015).

In the realm of universities, Mouwen (2000) described the effects of hybridization in public universities, and Jongbloed (2015) analyzed public universities which collaborated with private sectors. Reihlen, Wezlaff and Smets (2015) conducted an in-depth case study on a German university, and developed a new model of hybridity

and transformation. They successfully demonstrate the new model based on the analysis of internal documents.

In this manner, research on hybridization came to be segmentalized into research on specialized organizations, such as hospitals and universities. However, hybrid organizations which are the results of the integration between public institutions and private companies, have been struggling for over fifty years, since the purposes and motives behind the creation of public institutions and private companies differ, as do their individual cultures. For instance, Collins (2005) plotted types of organizations based on the ratio of profitability and donations in a two axis figure, and one can see the variations of their profitability in each organization. Due to the specialties of workers in organizations in each field, management characteristics are very unique to each quadrant. We modified his model and added a public library case (Figure 1). Quadrant \square represents the heavily government-funded arena, where it is difficult for directors to manage the organizations while keeping them sustainable. If we view Quadrant \square in this research, the hybridization model is very applicable. Public libraries are located in less monetized areas, even in Quadrant \square , since public libraries are generally non-profit entities who exist for the local society and have been accumulating books and documents for a very long time.

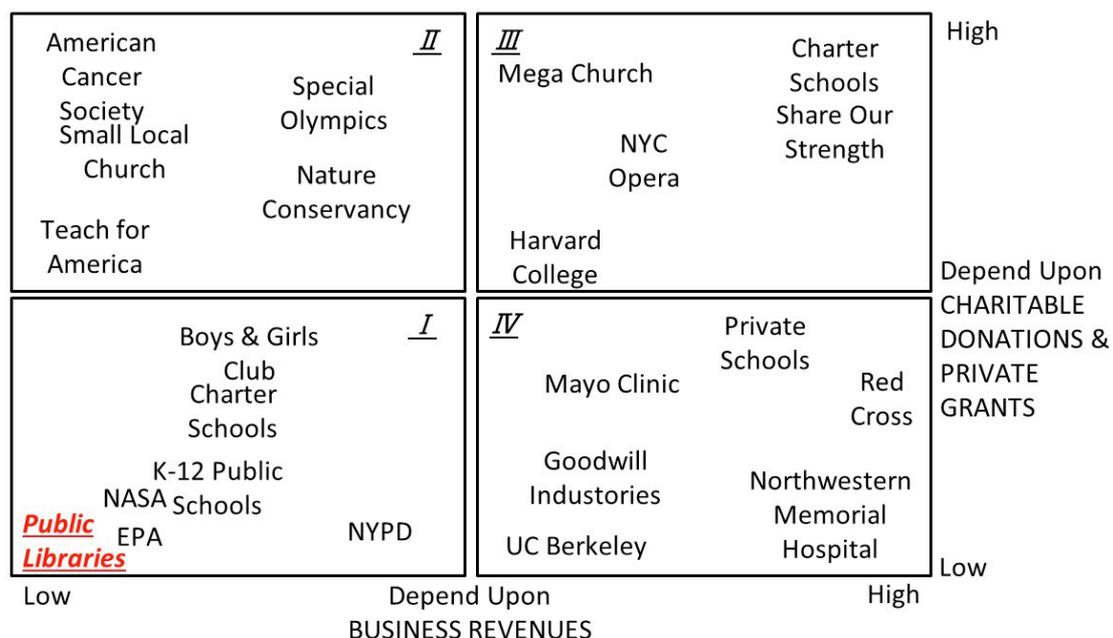


Figure 1: Economic Engine in the Social Sectors -4 Quadrants*

* We modified the Collins's Model of 2005, "Good to Great and the Social Sectors."

Hybridization for Public Libraries

Hybridization is one of the organizational solutions used when public institutions face some special difficulties and contradictions within their organization. Hybridization is defined as the process through which elements of diverse governance logics are integrated into context-specific configurations of governance practices (Haveman & Rao, 2006). However, there are other types of organizational solutions that can be used when organizations are facing challenges. Reihlen (Reihlen et al., 2015) explained four basic solutions for organizational contradictions; Marginalization,

Separation (Kraatz & Block, 2008; Pratt & Foreman, 2000, (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2009; Werner & Baxter, 1994), Hybridization (Julie Battilana & Lee, 2014; Julie; Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012; Pratt & Foreman, 2000; Reihlen et al., 2015), and Transformation (Reihlen et al., 2015) (Figure 2).

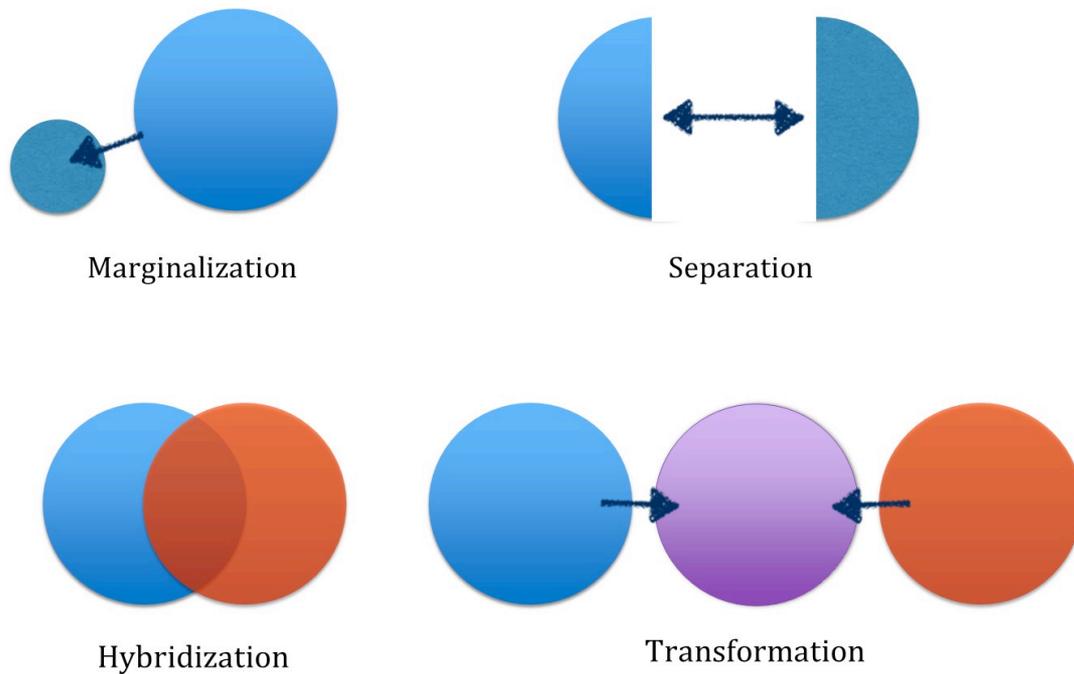


Figure 2: Solutions of Organizational Contradiction for Public Libraries

Reihlen et al (2015) explained the possibilities and conditions of the transformation approach by using a public university case in Germany. However, these do not match with cases of public libraries because transformation requires organizations to undergo a fundamental change. In fact, traits and characteristics of public libraries are 1) accumulation of knowledge, books and documents, and 2) open to the public as a whole, and due to these characteristics public librarians need to follow traditional processes in most parts of their organizations.

In addition, public librarians are also unable to handle marginalization and separation, since public libraries need to focus more on helping all citizens in the communities where they are located and as such, the needs of the government and the needs of the citizens never allow for public libraries to engage in marginalization and separation. Due to these conditions, the public library instead engaged in hybridization.

Hybridization of Public Libraries in Japan

In Japan, we have well-developed hybrid organizations especially among social institutions, such as public libraries, museums, and archives. In the U.K., the government cut budgets on public libraries and many libraries needed to be closed. On the other hand, the Japanese government found a way for public libraries to survive by using private companies' resources. This policy sometimes caused problems in public institution management and problems still remain. The organizational and cultural conflicts between government and the market are big challenges (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Glynn, 2000, 2002). However, some hybrid

library organizations found ways to manage their hybridity and have had great outcomes. Private companies did not have experience in library management and library operations, but they have been steadily gaining experience. Japanese government has been struggling to deal with public institutions, especially social service organizations, for a decade, but we can see signs that their management will have success under certain conditions. In this paper, we will explain how library directors should balance the hybridization of organizations based on Japanese cases.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to conduct an in-depth study of a hybrid public library organization in the largest city in Japan and examine their superior management practices. Our research provides three contributions to the research arena of hybridization. First, through research into the management model of hybridization, we shed a light on public governance, and tried to expand upon Collins' explanation of the uniqueness of public and social sectors, describing it in more detail and offering a more unique model of public institutions.

Second, within Japan there have been many cases where fully outsourced organizations caused failures. It is through these failures that we have to review the balance between public institutions and private companies. Japan hybrid organizations provide a perfect opportunity for this research as they are considered very advanced in the world. Since the Japanese government fosters cooperation between private companies and public institutions by conducting social trials in hybridization, we can use the lessons learned from these trials and offer them not just to Japanese society but to the entire world.

Finally, this research also contributes to creating new research methods in the area of public governance by utilizing ethnography, a research method developed by researchers in anthropology. Since this is a new trial, ethnography can describe in more detail the results provided by the research than traditional case studies. Therefore, in this research, we utilized two methodologies, an in-depth case study, and ethnography.

Research Methods – In-Depth Case Study and Ethnography

In-Depth Case Studies in Management Field

Researchers in the management research field developed the case study as a qualitative research method (Easton, 2010; Eisenhardt, 1989; Jaspers, 2007; Nazari, 2010; Ravenswood, 2011; Yin, 2009). In order to better understand management fields, researchers in business developed in-depth case study method, and described the actual activities, organizational structures, and cultures. Researchers solidified the case methods in the long research history. Reihlen (2015) successfully applied the in-depth case methods to a hybrid organization in Germany, which implies the in-depth case studies are meaningful in order to analyze hybrid organizations as well as activities. Furthermore, it is necessary to see both the management side perspective and the community side perspective, since if we fail to consider the community side where public libraries provide their services, we will not be able to determine whether or not public library services are effective. The end result is that there are still some improvements around in-depth case studies, and we believe that ethnography could be used to overcome the limitations of in-depth case studies.

The Meaning of Team Ethnography in Management Field

There is a research method that is created in the discipline of cultural anthropology known as team ethnography that is able to solve this type of situation. By having more than one researcher enter the same field at the same time, this technique enables us to analyze the field through multiple perspectives.

Ethnographic methods in cultural anthropology ushered in a large shift in the 1980's (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Up to the 1980s, investigators focused on a single truth of the field by conducting participant observation from an objective standpoint. However, during this time, post-modernism and cultural studies had a major impact on ethnographic practices, raising questions about positionality, reflexivity and the "cultural baggage" of the researcher. For instance, there are different information resources available depending on the differences of gender, and there are different results depending on the degree of the researcher's membership and personal involvement in the field (Narayan, 1993). As a result, it was indicated that there is no single truth in the field, instead there are as many stories as there are researchers. This view was coined as the Rashomon Effect (Heider, 1988). The benefit of team ethnography, based on this premise, is in that it can bring together different kinds of data collected by researchers of different expertise, training and cultural background, thereby broadening the purview of the research. Researchers will bring different interpretations and questions to the table, which would lead to fruitful discussions and exchange, providing a more comprehensive understanding of what is going on in the field.

Research Processes and Data Analysis

As we previously explained, we developed our research method based on Reihlen, Markus R Wenzlaff, & Ferdinand Smets, Michael's research (Reihlen et al., 2015). In addition to following their research methods, we also augmented our research using team ethnography since we wished to describe very precise details of qualitative data in order to determine the managerial and community activities that were actually going on in the community.

We chose the Shinjuku ward, a ward within Tokyo, which is a central commercial area equivalent to the Manhattan area in New York. Shinjuku is comprised of many ethnic minority communities within their population of roughly 330,000. Public institutions, such as public library systems in the metropolitan district, are rated by the local government and local communities. Public libraries within the ward consist of hybrid organizations of both the local government and private companies, where the main library and the children's library are managed by the local government and eight branch libraries are managed by four private companies. This system has been successfully implemented by the government for several years (Yorozuya, 2014).

First, in Phase 1, we collected strategic proposals, yearly plans, formal documents, and internal documents that the public library archived in their office rooms. Next, we analyzed them in order to understand their entire organizational structure as well as the roles of public librarians and employees of the private companies (Figure 3).

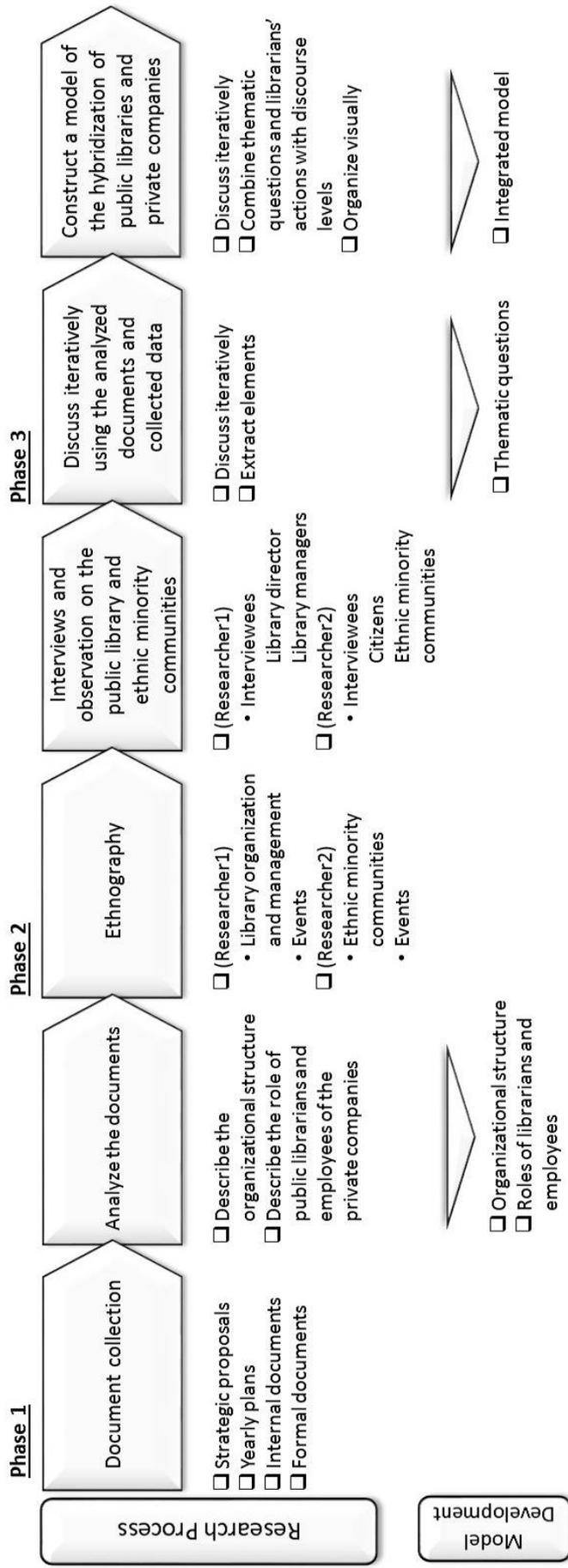


Figure 3: Planning Process of Shinjuku Government and Shinjuku Public Library

Second, in Phase 2, we applied team ethnography to this in-depth case analysis in order to better understand the challenges of the hybrid management style and how to balance the involvement of public institution and private companies. Within this research, a library management specialist along with a minority community specialist conducted interviews and participant observation. Dr. Masanori Koizumi, a public library management specialist, investigated public library management and Dr. Junko Teruyama, a minority community specialist, investigated local community members in the ward in order to understand the needs and impressions of public library services. We spent approximately 5 months starting in May 2015 doing fieldwork among public librarians, employees of private companies, and citizens in the local communities. The following is a list of interviewees (Table 1). It must be noted, however, that due to the nature of anthropological ethnography, our research involved spending long hours (up to a total of 190 hours) with our informants conducting participant observation, and the data collected is not limited to personal interviews towards these interviewees.

Table 1: Interviewees

Shinjuku Public Library	Local Community
Director, main library	Representative, commercial district association
Manager, main library	Schoolteacher
Leader of coordination group	Leader, non-profit organization
Branch library manager	K-9 students with ethnic minority background (4)
Librarians (5)	Students of Japanese language schools (5)
Employees of private companies (4)	Organizer of local festival
Library management board members (2)	Ethnic minority families (2)

In Phase 3, we extracted elements of management within the public libraries and private companies through analysis of the management plans, internal documents, as well as the data we collected through team ethnography. Finally, we engaged in numerous discussions in order to develop the hybridization model and resolved discrepancies of the model through extensive discussion. When developing a theory or a model, researchers need to engage in deep discussions (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Our research methodology emphasized illustrating the hybridization model through open-ended discussion.

Results

Managerial Processes within Their Contract and in a Fiscal Year

Regulations within the Japanese governmental system state that when a public institution selects a private company as a partner, the public institution must submit an announcement outlining their requirements to which private companies submit a proposal, which allows the private companies to compete with each other based on the demands of the public institution, indicating how they would be able to satisfy those demands. Once a private company is selected, usually based on the best possible price along with meeting the public institution's conditions, both organizations enter into a contract with terms lasting five years.

For example, in the Shinjuku public library case, in 2009 the government decided to use private companies to manage three branch libraries in each unique area in the ward, and gradually they expanded to use private companies for managing the branch libraries, with the total number of branch libraries managed by private companies reaching eight. However, the director made a decision to keep the main library under the management of the government, believing it important that public officers should create public library mission, philosophy and strategy. Upon selecting the private companies that would manage the branch libraries, he tasked them with creating yearly plans for each fiscal year. In this case, the process of choosing private companies was very well documented and regulated and clearly based on the public libraries' mission.

After the selection of private companies and the start of the new fiscal year, public librarians regularly monitor the activities of the private companies regularly, either weekly or monthly. If these companies fall behind in the schedules they have outlined, public libraries can advise them about ways they can get their schedules back on track or modify their plans to align with their current timelines.

Tasks in the hybrid management model in Japan are clearly separated by descriptions that are to be performed by private companies. Employees in private companies do not have access to the details, but employees in public libraries have detailed information on citizens as well as the contact information of local government officers. If the employees in private companies cannot determine a method to solve some particular problem in society due to the limitations of their role or unavailable information, employees in the public institutions have meetings and guide the private company employees to help solve their issues. They intentionally manage outcomes and results from private companies, and that is why the main library is managed by the public institution and the employees in public institutions pay special consideration to long range planning. After planning, public librarians in the main library task the managers of each branch library to create their own detailed plans. See below for the detailed flow of this procedure (Figure 4).

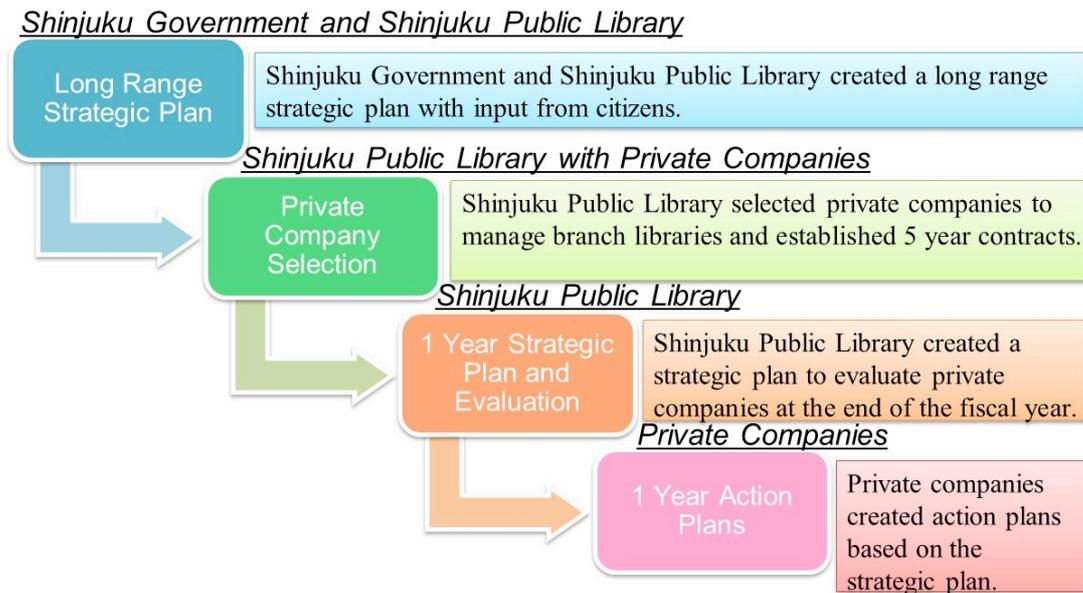


Figure 4: Managerial Process of the Shinjuku Public Library

Organizational Structure

We identified a good balance of hybrid organizations made up of public libraries and private companies, such as when the main library is managed by public officers, and branch libraries are managed by private companies' employees. Figure 5 explains this balance: the center circle is the main library and the main library has a strategic/coordination group in order to maintain tight connections with private companies. In this case, there are private companies outside of the circle such as the main library and a strategic/coordination group. The reasons why this particular balance is reached is due to the fact that librarians who work in a main library need to focus more on strategic management and the creation of innovative services based on library priority/core philosophy as well as social needs. For instance, public librarians have strong connections with public officers in other public institutions as well as citizens in their local community, since, as a public library manager explained, "we maintain precise and detailed information about citizens within our community through governmental and ward registration practices."

Thus, they can easily connect with and contact them more readily than private companies' employees can. However, private company workers would face challenges reaching out to public officers and citizens due to the numerous restrictions that are written into their contracts that were agreed upon when the private company and public institution formed their partnership. At times they struggle with problems when private companies try to reach out to their communities, but the public library and private companies continue to improve their working processes.

On the other hand, librarians and staff who belong to private companies are more skilled at executing their work efficiently. Once the main library's public librarians create the library vision and strategic plan, the private companies are able to maximize their productivity and efficiency to execute on the plan, something that is at times challenging for a public institution. Additionally, in this specific case, the

library director selected these private companies as partners based on their strength in the market in order to maximize the branch libraries' value in response to each local community. For example, a public library manager explained "It is so much easier for private companies to hire foreign people who speak foreign language in order to provide library services to ethnic minority communities in this ward." Due to this, private companies can easily augment their skill set in each local community in order to maximize their value.

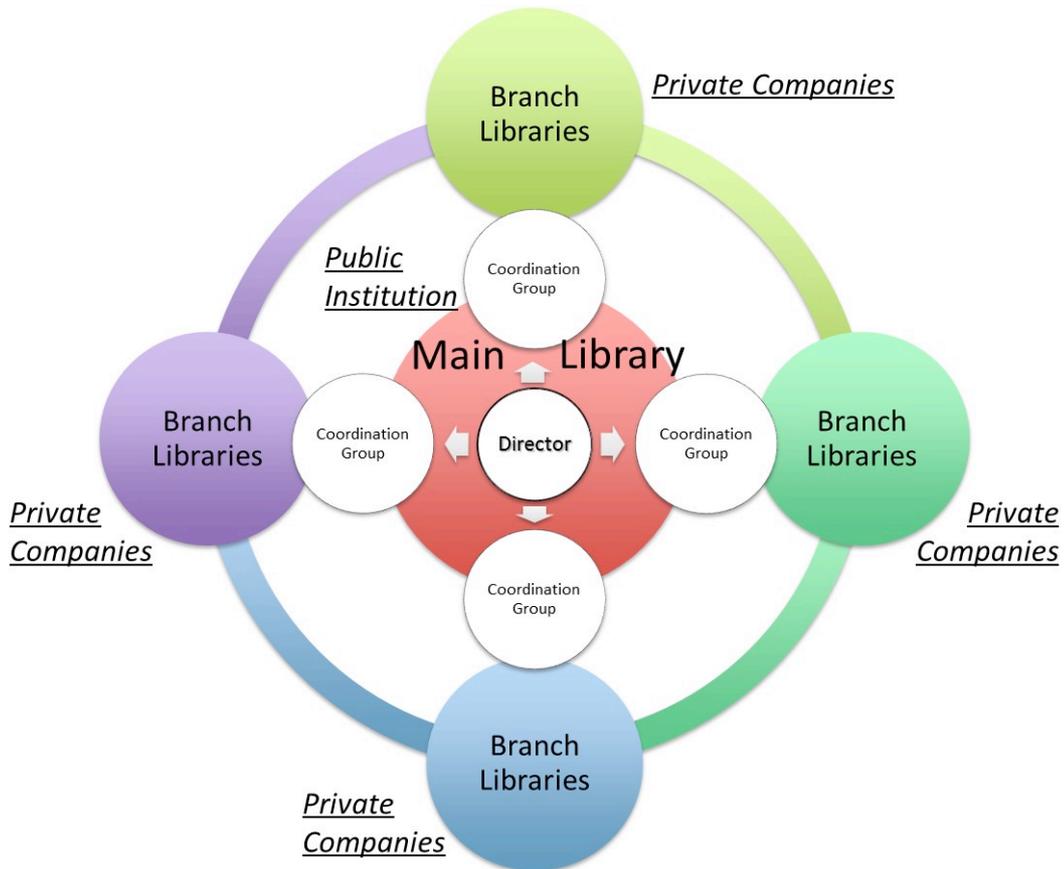


Figure 5: Organizational Structure of the Shinjuku Public Library

In addition, we uncover a solution to overcome the cultural borders between public institutions and private companies. In the Shinjuku public library case, the solution was to create strong strategic coordination groups and meetings, such as those implemented by the director between the main library and the private companies in 2009. The group consisted of public institution employees and employees of private companies, and a public library manager in the main library was named the leader of the group. The meetings were regularly held once or twice a month and all branch managers openly discussed and shared almost everything that happened in each branch every month and, at the same time, the leader conveyed important information from the director or the Shinjuku government to the branch managers.

The Hybridization of Personnel within Public Libraries

The library director did not start out with a background in library and information science, but instead was a generalist hired by the local government. However, his study of library and information science began after moving into the library division within the Shinjuku ward. The result is that he has strong connections with other public institutions in the ward, making him much better suited to communicate and negotiate with directors and managers in other public institutions instead of other librarians. Moreover, he is able to communicate effectively with public librarians since he studied library and information science. A public library manager who works at the main library said “We need a director who can negotiate with the other directors in public institutions in the Shinjuku ward and hopefully can bring more money to the library.” It is very difficult for employees of private companies to negotiate with directors in public libraries and other public institutions, since they are hired by the local government and bound by specific contractual obligations and duties that are fixed. This further illustrates the necessity of having the director of the public library be a public officer and not an employee of the private company.

However, employees of private companies are valuable assets to the library even though some of them do not have a strong background in library and information science. Relying instead on their managerial and economic efficiency, once the contract is fixed and their duties and objectives are assigned for the fiscal year, they are very effective at completing their duties. For example, in the analysis case, the number of cultural events in branch libraries increased once branch libraries came under the management of private companies. The contracts indicated specific verbiage around cultural events and as such, when they create their plans for the fiscal year they must include new events within them. The branch manager, who was previously a stage actor and studied library and information science after he was hired by the company, increased the number of events in the branch library, successfully executing several of them.

There are several other cases where people of diverse backgrounds have made an impact on the library. For example, one employee of the branch library was Korean-Chinese who was also fluent in Japanese. Her job was not limited to that of the other librarians, but also involved holding storytelling events in Korean and helping Chinese visitors. A librarian like her is an invaluable asset for a library located in a multicultural and multinational district. However, if the library were run entirely by the public sector, it would be restrained by the regulation to employ non-Japanese citizens as public servants. In other words, the flexibility in human resource management is made possible only through hybridization.

Instability within the Library Culture - “Regularizing Instability”

Branch libraries that are managed by employees of private companies contribute to a particularly unstable culture within the library. This instability arises from the competing notions of managing operational and economic efficiency, which are key tenets of private company management, as well as recognizing the importance of the role of the library for the general user within society and not alienating those users while pursuing efficiency.

Within the case analysis interviews, it became clear that while the typical pursuit of operational efficiency and economic feasibility by employees of private companies would mean the elimination of certain services that do not constitute a significant market, private companies were contractually obligated to retain all ethnic minority services. For example, in our field, Koreans are the most visible ethnic minority community, and they are known to place strong emphasis in their children’s educational opportunities, aspiring to move up the social ladder. Therefore, it is relatively easy to target the Korean community as prime users of the local public library. However, there are also other, less visible ethnic minorities living in the area, including Filipino and Burmese communities, that are less likely to make use of the library (due to various reasons, including the weaker presence of public libraries in their original countries and cultural expectations regarding social mobility), but are also lacking in various educational resources and opportunities that the library could potentially provide. Library management driven by rules of efficient marketing strategies would overlook these small and seemingly insignificant communities. However, contractually the branch library management, being run by the private company, is obligated to find a way to maintain high levels of operating and economic efficiency while maintaining all minority services. These competing goals, balancing the operation and economic efficiency of the library while at the same time providing a high level of service and support to the community is a source of much instability within the library culture. This instability is actually a key factor in the success of the management of the library.

In other words, the fact that librarians are to work under competing expectations – one focusing on efficiency and cost-effectiveness and the other focusing on understanding and fulfilling the intellectual needs of the local community, has a net result of boosting their productivity and operational skills. The director’s multi-faceted background as well as his implementation of specific management methodologies (e.g. precise contracts, strategic coordination groups, meetings) balanced and regularized the instability of competing goals between the public libraries and the private companies, leading to a successful hybridization (Figure 6).

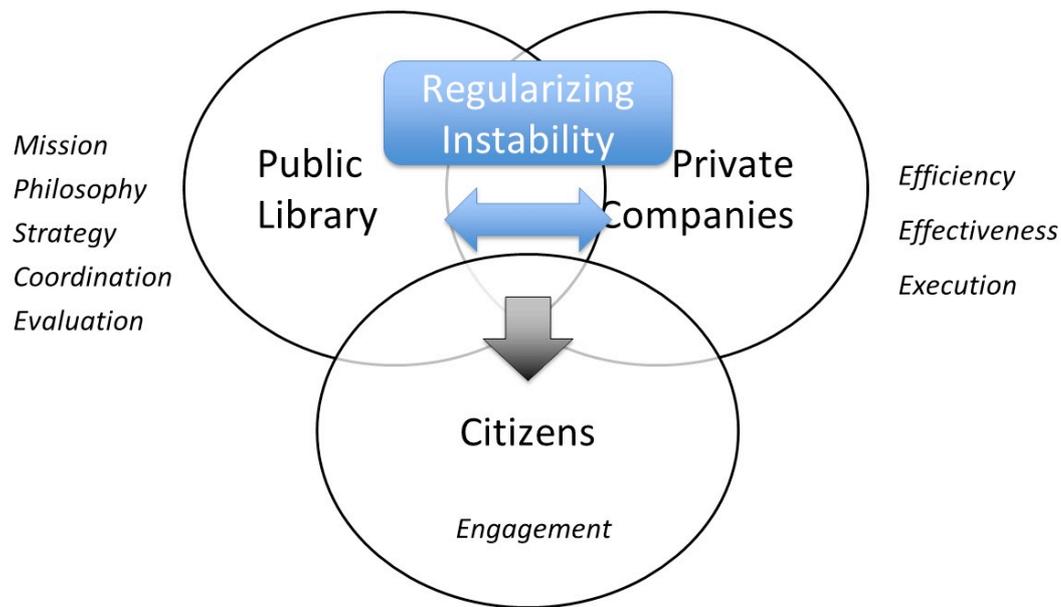


Figure 6: Regularizing Instability in the Hybridization between Public and Private Organizations*

* We modified our 2015 model (Teruyama & Koizumi, 2015).

To take an example, the branch library where we conducted research held a Japanese reading event. The event was implemented as part of the annual action plan that the branch manager drafted, highlighting the library's strength in multicultural outreach programs from a new and fresh perspective only possible with the creativity and flexibility of a private company. The branch manager strived to establish a network with various public, private and non-profit organizations involved in multicultural awareness and advocacy, and this reading event was a product of such effort, held in partnership with a non-profit organization developing reading materials for non-native Japanese speakers. The branch manager was anxious about the attendance of the event, since he was in the position to report back to the director of the main library, and the possible failure of such programs could entail the termination of the contract between the ward and the company.

Fortunately, the event was highly successful, attracting a broad range of participants including students from local Japanese language schools, non-Japanese families from the vicinity, language teachers from other wards and international doctoral students in related fields. The participants were grouped by language level and read together, discussing the materials and providing mutual support. At the end of the event, the branch manager took the stage and explained how to fill out the form to make a users' card of the library, encouraging the participants to return and make use of the multicultural/multi-linguistic resources that the library has to offer. In this way, the branch manager actively cultivated a strong user base among the non-Japanese community in the local area, marketing the library's strength in ways that public management would not have done. This example speaks for the importance of regularizing instability in a hybrid organization; the branch manager is made to work under the pressure to explore and experiment in an unprecedented field, but at the same time, there is a clear direction and mission of the public library which provides order and consistency to his challenges.

Citizens' Viewpoint

Most citizens that we interviewed were not aware that the management of this library is conducted through the hybrid model. In some instances, we pointed this out to the interviewee, and were met with a surprised response. In this sense, it could be concluded that the library is successfully meeting their expectation as a public institution and serving the local community as such. Indeed, many pointed out that the library has a strong connection with the local school, providing books for student research projects and organizing opportunities for students to learn how to use library resources. Located in a ward with a large ethnic minority population, the library also reaches out to local language schools and holds cultural and educational events geared towards non-Japanese citizens. Such projects are generally well-received, underpinning the local citizens' understanding that the library is fulfilling its role as a public institution open to all.

Conclusion

The important thing to keep in mind when achieving balance within the hybrid model is to adhere to the contract and ensure that the detailed plans and descriptions for private companies are able to be executed successfully within the private company's limited engagement. On a final note, this research proved that team ethnography is effective in uncovering the realities of hybrid organization management in ways that would not have been possible through structured interviews or quantitative research methods.

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