

# **Abstract**

Macau is described by many as an international city with a good mix of the cultures from both the East and the West. In this interesting scenario, a fascinating question that is often asked, but seldom answered, is: “how do people frame their organization?”. Or, to put it more precisely – what do the people in this city perceive their organizations.

‘Framing’ refers to the process people intuitively see and understand an organization, subsequently ‘frame’ is the particular way that the organization is being seen. The objective of this thesis is to explore and describe the organization frames in the selected organizations, which comprise a government, a semi-government and a private organization in Macau. During the research process, ‘Metaphors’, which refer to the ways people frame an organization, have been used as tools.

This thesis provides detailed descriptions of the inductive research process carried out by the author. Through qualitative methodology, the author have used interview as a tool to collect information from interviewees of the target organizations, then analyzed them with metaphors defined by previous studies of other theorists.

This thesis demonstrates the value of using metaphor concept in organizations, particularly in small size organizations of Macau. The author has used metaphors to generate a range of complementary and compelling insights, and also demonstrated how to learn from the strengths of different points of views.

From the conclusion section of this thesis, we can see that ‘machine’ is the dominant frame in the three cases. It is interesting to note as well that ‘culture’ frame is the partner of ‘machine’ as a frame to see and structure organizations in the government and private sector, whereas ‘organism’ is another dominant frame in the semi-government case.

For an organization to be effective and efficient, it seems that machine metaphor is a natural way to see thing, and to make it work like a machine is a natural way to go. It serves as a safe baseline for the managers to ensure that the organization will not perform worse than that. However, in order to go beyond that, managers are intuitively making use of other frames or looking for other frames in order to secure a break-through. In the government case, the head of division has been making use of 'culture' frame to maintain a harmonious atmosphere. In the private organization case, the director has been making use of 'culture' frame to stay well with and assist her team members, whereas in the semi-government case, the executive director has been trying to make use of 'machine' and a mixture of several other frames to make the organization work better.

By framing an organization, it makes understanding of organizational situation possible. Also, by adjusting organization frames, we may be able to change an organization to the way we wish to, to prevent and solve organization problems.