

## **CAUSAL FACTORS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMAL STRUCTURES' CONFIGURATION**

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*The existence of informal-type structures is in wide sense improper to the place where lucrative activities are undergone. This is inexplicable because the support of formal-type structures is constituted by the presence of structures based on emotional alliances and not only conditioned by the pragmatism of the regulations settled by the coordinating manager.*

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The informal structure is a natural, spontaneous structure. It is composed on the basis of some relations settled between the members of a group or between persons situated from different reasons in the same professional location and who by communicating, settle particular communicational relations. The presence of a structure defined on these considerations is possible into the military organization – organization of integrated type, very well constituted and trained for actions in conditions of extreme risk.

Such structure is not complementary to the formal structure but distinctive by it, in the most diverse situations being able to become even antagonistic.

The informal structure into an organization has a flexible and unobvious, limited and even unexploited existence. In the organizations which are strongly hierarchal, bureaucratic and rigid as contextual aspect, the presence of an informal structure would not be justified because the formal structures are very well integrated, dense and do not leave much liberty of action and option for its members.

The composition of the informal structures is mainly settled on basis of affinities by different means of communication, by collaboration and cooperation in accomplishing different missions. The peoples acting together by the activities' nature for a long time become good comrades, get friends,

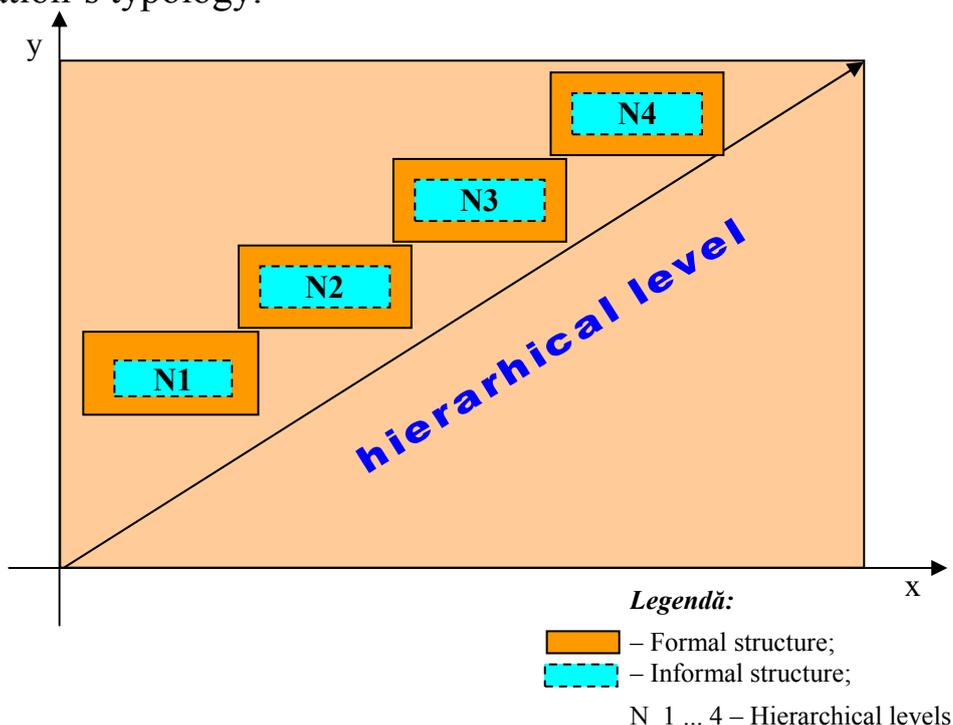
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“share” and play certain roles. Sometimes, they group when time allows them or even along their accomplishing different tasks, around an informal leader, a comrade or a charismatic, intelligent and tenacious person.

Although the informal structures are not always recognized and encouraged, they are very strong being characterized as emotionally durable and consistent. For example, the military acting for a long time in the operation theatres under conditions of risk and even of extreme risk are very good comrades, prefer to act together in patrols and teams especially when the risk is higher. Such actions and structures as teams or cell types present importance for the stability and cohesion of formal structures – groups, equipages, platoons, companies, offices – but also for missions’ quality.

We can identify the existence of some informal structures built on the support of some musical preferences, some sportive activities or of some cultural values. An archaic proverb mentions “birds of a feather flock together” being the engine of the constitution of such structure no matter the organization’s typology.



**Fig. 1** *The parallelism of the informal structure*

A classification of the informal structures could be synthesized as follows:

*1. From the motivation’s perspective:*

- based on common values, cultural, sportive, social etc. affinities;
- based on common interest;
- random or conjectural.

2. *From the perspective of their utility:*

- useful to the formal organization, activities and missions;
- antagonist to the ethical and conduit norms and rules;
- conjectural.

3. *Regarding the location:*

- in the same entity (group, team, platoon, company, office, etc.);
- individuals that are part of the same sub-units or different units being in the same location;
- conjectural (along some common exercises, to the sportive or other nature activities etc.)

4. *Regarding their constitution and organization:*

- linear or networked (wherein all its members are equal);
- constituted around a single formal or informal leader;
- without a specific configuration.

5. *As regards their architecture or intern cohesion:*

- with role and functions précised by a statute or by a functioning regulation (a literary cenacle, a musical band, a group of stamps collectors, a group of elite shooters, a group of fans of a football team etc.);
- without a precise statute, without rules, only supported on some common, non-formal affinities or ideas.

The informal structures or entities from the organization can be in different relations one from the other. The main relations defined by the presence of connections are the following:

- cooperation and collaboration in the favor of formal organization;
- cooperation and collaboration disfavoring the formal organization;
- emulation, some acting in the favor of formal organization, another against it;
- competition between them, all acting against the formal organization;
- insignificant or partial insignificant.

Members that compose or determine the construction of informal entities present the following features:

- one or many leaders;
- a series of direct participants;
- a series of occasional participants;
- a series of fans or denigrators.

The centre of an informal structure is the informal leader. This is virtually a deliverer of opinion, a charismatic, intelligent person that has the

quality to be listened and followed. Many times the leader is a strong character person, very well trained, with authority, which exercises a positive influence over a group of comrades.

Therefore, when a commandant or chief is assigned, especially into smaller organizations (subunits, units, offices, sections etc.) he can be regarded as much possible as the respective person to be formal leader but also informal leader with immediate impact over the collective.

The informal structures, in regard to their form of constitution and manifestation of the interpersonal relations can present different configurations as follows:

- linear (communication and relations are linear, from the leader to the last person or from the first to the last person, when the informal structure isn't constituted around a leader but around an idea or for the ongoing of certain common activities);
- circular (communication is undergone circularly, all the members of the group benefiting of the information transmitted by his mate therefore to reach in circle, even in distorted form to the first people transmitting it);
- radial (the leader communicates with each member of the collective and receives from each communications, reports, ideas, information etc.);
- in cluster (the leader communicates with different groups which can or can't communicate between them).

There are informal structures constituted after the model of conspiratorial structure, with strict rules and well defined goals. These informal structures are as dangerous as possible because their goal is often very dangerous (consume of alcoholic drinks, drugs, hidden affairs, traffic of influence, etc.). The constitution of such dangerous informal structures is possible in those organizations where quality management does not exist, but also where there are charismatic leaders who are oriented to non-conformism, indiscipline or even to criminality.

*Usually* "in the process of interpersonal interactions, peoples which perceive, communicate, act and react each over are getting closer, know each over and in result make acquaintances, associate, like, help, become friends, or on the contrary, suspect, become jealous, reject, hate each over."<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion we can argue that the informal structures appear as result of common, long lasting and difficult activities constituting in means of amplification of organization's performance, of stimulation of individual qualities, of communication's improvement and on this ground of

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<sup>1</sup> Pantelimon Golu, *Psihologia socială*, Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1971, p. 131.

amelioration of the individual condition. On this occasion, unwritten rules of respect and treasuring of the other are created together with legends, myths, and habits. The impact is determinant and significantly amplifies the organizational culture, the effort and action motivation, the individuals and groups performances. The good organization creates chain informal structures that support and amplify its creator force.

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