

Spring 2013

# We are all in it Together: Managers' Differing Views of Competing Hierarchical Structures in a College Radio Station

Joseph Oria

*University of Colorado Boulder*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.colorado.edu/honr\\_theses](https://scholar.colorado.edu/honr_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Oria, Joseph, "We are all in it Together: Managers' Differing Views of Competing Hierarchical Structures in a College Radio Station" (2013). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. 461.

[https://scholar.colorado.edu/honr\\_theses/461](https://scholar.colorado.edu/honr_theses/461)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Honors Program at CU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of CU Scholar. For more information, please contact [cuscholaradmin@colorado.edu](mailto:cuscholaradmin@colorado.edu).

“We are all in it Together”: Managers’ Differing Views of  
Competing Hierarchical Structures in a College Radio Station

By: Joseph Oria  
Department of Sociology, University of Colorado at Boulder

Defended April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Thesis Advisor:  
Dr. Michael Haffey, Department of Sociology

Defense Committee:  
Dr. Tina Pittman-Wagers, Department of Psychology and  
Neuroscience  
Dr. Liam Downey, Department of Sociology

## Abstract:

*In this study, I described and analyzed the competing hierarchical structures within a college radio station. The station has two formalized, vertical positions and a horizontal hierarchy of managers, making the structure similar to an “upside-down T.” I interviewed and observed all but three of the managers in the radio station over a three-month period. Despite the upper managers’ desire to formalize the radio station hierarchy, the station maintains a mix of a formal and informal hierarchy where all the managers feel like they are equal to one another except for the General Manager and Operations Manager. I argue that the main reasons for the arrangement include proximity and size, which leads to friendships, and a lack of prior enforcement of a formalized structure.*

## Table of Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Introduction.....                                  | 1     |
| Literature Review.....                             | 2-4   |
| Methods.....                                       | 4-8   |
| Gaining Entrée and Establishing Rapport.....       | 4-5   |
| Data Collection Techniques.....                    | 5-6   |
| Data Analysis.....                                 | 6-7   |
| Exiting the Field.....                             | 7     |
| Managerial Introduction.....                       | 7-8   |
| Findings.....                                      | 8-16  |
| The “Upside-Down T” Managerial Hierarchy.....      | 8-12  |
| The Desired Formal Hierarchical Structure.....     | 12-14 |
| Why is There No Formal, Layered Organization?..... | 14-16 |
| Discussion.....                                    | 16-18 |

## Key Concepts

Here is a short list of key concepts to help focus on the overarching themes of this research article. These concepts will be elaborated upon within the paper.

- **Informal Hierarchy:** A hierarchical arrangement that is not formalized within an organization or a peer group. These hierarchies change over different times and spaces.
- **Formal Hierarchy:** A rigid hierarchy that is codified and enforced. Similar to traditional conceptions of a bureaucracy.
- **“Upside-Down T” Hierarchical Structure:** A hierarchical structure that has a top decision-maker, their immediate subordinate, and a “flat” group of subordinates that compose the hierarchy. The people composing the “flat” group have the same level of perceived importance to the organization.
- **Flat Hierarchy:** A post-modern structure where every manager has autonomy and decision-making power. People gain a similar amount of benefits in the organization, and the decision-making requires more Democratic consensus.
- **Layered Hierarchy:** A hierarchy where the top decision-maker is followed by a group of subordinates, which in turn have subordinates of their own. All decision-making power is in the hands of an employee’s superior.
- **Pyramid Hierarchical Structure:** A conceptualized version of a layered hierarchy where there are fewer superiors than subordinates within each subsequent “level.”
- **Legitimation of the Hierarchical Structure:** How people within an organization or peer group give the structure legitimacy. They use different reasons to cite why the structure is necessary.

## INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted at a college radio station, which is a student-run radio station with a specific University affiliation. This radio station brands itself as independent and commercial-free music, news, and sports serving the local community. The station is primarily music-focused with occasional news and sports programming.

I chose the setting for my study because I am already involved with the radio station, and I have established a relationship with the other managers. I observed a commitment to the success of the organization, evidenced by enthusiasm and engagement in the meeting. Their hierarchical dynamic seemed different from traditional bureaucracies because the two upper managers were not observed to have a formalized type of control over the rest of the managers. For example, it contradicted Nelson's (2001) findings that there was an interaction of a formalized, pyramid-like structure with more of an informal verbal network. In this case, the informal hierarchy has actually created the formation of what I will refer to later as an "upside-down T" hierarchical structure. Therefore, I wanted to figure out why a traditional, layered pyramid-like structure was not maintained.

As adults navigate the workplace, they experience informal hierarchies among their peer groups (Adler and Adler 1995) along with the formalized workplace hierarchies. These boundaries are communicated either formally or informally (Breton 1995). In this paper, I examine the competing hierarchical structures of a college radio station. I will describe and analyze the current structure in the radio station, and I will also elucidate how the upper managers and the pool of subordinate managers perceive the structure differently.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations are not physical objects. In fact, they are social constructs that are constantly negotiated and reinforced (McPhee and Poole 2000). The most commonly described hierarchy in the literature involves a formalized hierarchy (Weber 1946; McPhee and Poole 2000). Formal networks can either lead to a centralized (Mintzberg 1979; Hoffman et al. 2000) structure, where there is a primary decision-maker, or it can lead to a decentralization of power (Schrader et al. 1989), where decision-making tends to be dispersed among many different employees, including middle managers and assistant managers. Many organizations tend to have a layered, pyramid-like formal structure, which are unlikely to influence informal verbal networks. In fact, most verbal networks observed by Nelson (2001) involved people from many different levels on the formalized workplace hierarchy. Different organizations use the formalized, layered hierarchy to accomplish different goals. For example, political organizations rely on hierarchy to help diffuse uncertainties within the political climate, such as goal uncertainty and perception of political unpopularity (Stazyk and Goerderly 2011).

Although there have not been any studies that have discussed the concept of an upside-down “T” hierarchical structure, there have been many attempts to describe a rising “post-modern” hierarchical arrangement (Dean 2007 has an in-depth literature review on the subject). In this arrangement, there is a rising level of employee autonomy and a “delaying” of traditional workplace hierarchy. “Delaying” is occurring in many different fields, including the retail and knowledge sectors (Applebaum et al. 2000; Dean 2007). For example, some workers, such as those in the medical profession, have a

sophisticated two-way relationship with their supervisors, balancing professional autonomy with the demands of clinical governance (Thomas and Hewitt, 2011). There is presently a rising belief among workers that the workplace is changing to a post-modern structure of “flatter” democratic or informal hierarchical organizations. Most organizations, however, still have a clearly communicated structure (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011). This could lead to a reinforcement of a structure that affects the perception of power and status difference among workers (Pace 2013). Researchers such as Felts (1992) have argued that a flatter hierarchy with a more reciprocal relationship is better for the organization, but that debate is ongoing.

Change can lead to a complicated relationship between the individual and the organization. One example involves what Litrico et al. (2011) termed *synergy*, where both the individual and the organization improve the work experience to help benefit each other. They also found that there could be a *tug of war*, or conflict, between individuals and their employers when organizations enter a significant change. Organizational change and diversification can be triggered by the informal and formal power of upper managers of a company, such as a CEO (Greve 2007).

Thus, contemporary organizations tend to have a combination of bureaucracies and informal networks (Breton 1995). The bureaucracies are organized by means of “horizontal differentiation,” where distinctions among members within the organization are clearly communicated, even when there is an absence of a formal hierarchical structure (McPhee and Poole 2000). Shutte and Light (1978) found that workers choose their friendships based on proximity, while managers consider social status. Hopkins (2011) found that in factory workers, people who are directly hired by the company are

positioned higher on the informal hierarchy compared to agency workers. The employees within the workplace organizations find ways to negotiate informal hierarchical structures even within more formalized organizations. The lack of formal hierarchical structure can lead to either a horizontal, more cooperative (Smith et al. 1991) or a vertical, more top-down approach to maintain the formal structure (Smeltzer and Fann 1989) with decision-making.

## METHODS

### *Gaining Entrée and Establishing Rapport*

The process of gaining access to the managers of the radio station was not difficult. Because I am a volunteer, I was able to form my connections with almost all of the managers for close to a year. I did not have much anxiety regarding asking people if they wanted to take part in the project. It was easy to explain the purpose of my study without seeming burdensome to the managers; some of them were observed to be enthusiastic about taking part in my study.

However, there was a new manager who was hired about a week before the beginning of the fall semester. I wanted to interview as many managers as possible, making him important to the validity of my study. I only had two months to build rapport with him before commencing my project. I was able to contact him more often when we started to have weekly manager meetings. Despite my relative lack of a personal relationship with him compared with the rest of the managers, he agreed to take part in the study.

Even though gaining consent from the managers was important to my research, the person who ultimately decided this project's fate was the General Manager. (From

now on, his job title will be shortened to GM.) He was at the top of the managerial hierarchy, making it crucial that I consult him about the project. Gaining entrée with the GM was more anxiety inducing due to one main factor: I was unsure about his willingness to have somebody within his station conduct a research project on the radio station. He might have interpreted the study as a journalistic investigation that would result in a negative expose. In order to alleviate his fear, I reminded myself to inform him that the University makes sure that undergraduates do not take part in research that will intentionally damage the reputation of an entity, especially a student-run organization.

I decided to ask the GM for permission to begin my research project after he gave me positive feedback on my job performance. When I sat down in his office, I also made sure to mention my progress on a project that revolved around our partnership with our local sports bar. That way, he thought of my work in a positive light, helping me gain entrée. When I asked him, he wanted to see some type of a project outline. I gave him my handily ready University Human Research consent form, and I offered to show my final project once it was completed. After a brief exchange, he gave me official permission to start my research.

#### *Data Collection Techniques*

For the project, I observed manager meetings for a roughly three-month period beginning in the middle of September and finishing in the middle of December. These meetings, which all managers are required to attend, usually occurred once a week on Monday afternoons. During the meetings, I would take notes on how responsibilities are negotiated. I framed my observations within the context of the managerial hierarchical arrangement. The observation periods would sometimes occur after the meetings, which

depended on whether or not there was conflict among the managers. There were occasions when there was a meeting more than once a week called “Pledge Drive strategy meetings,” which occurred in the observation period leading to the beginning of pledge drive on the first week of November.

Along with observations of manager meetings, I also interviewed seven of the nine managers (excluding myself) for about 15-20 minutes. I did not interview the Volunteer Coordinator because he was hired in the middle of my study. The General Manager and the News/Sports Director were not comfortable with being interviewed. During the interviews, which were recorded on an iPhone, I asked each manager about the hierarchical structure of the radio station and the processes that lead to the maintenance of the station hierarchy.

### *Data Analysis*

After conducting the interviews and observations, I translated my field notes onto a computer document. After transferring the field notes, I transcribed all of my interviews.

I coded the data using three main sociological concepts applied to interviews and observational data. I conceived of this as the upside-down “T” hierarchy. To help guide my research, I used the post-modern, flatter hierarchical structure (see Literature Review section). I investigated the managers’ perception of the hierarchical structure. After that, I examined the processes behind the maintenance of the present hierarchical structure. Then, I examined the more layered, pyramid-like formal hierarchy desired by the upper managers. I inquired about how the managerial hierarchy should be structured according to the GM and Operations Director. After compiling the data about the upper managers’

preferred structure, I looked at why the upside-down “T,” instead of the pyramid-like layered hierarchical structure, is present within the organization. I considered organizational efficiency, the lack of prior leadership, and the formation of friendships when conducting my research.

### *Exiting the Field*

At the conclusion of my two-month research project, I informed the managers that I had finished my data collection. When I informed them of my status, they requested that I show them either my entire paper or the brief abstract. They appeared to be curious about my findings. Even though my research came to an end, I kept performing my duties within the radio station. I thought that conducting the research might negatively impact my relationship with the other managers due to the fact that I was studying them. However, it turns out that I have built a closer relationship with the other managers after completing my research study as evidenced by our frequent managerial communication and overall trust in my ability to not reveal our private confessions to others. The personal connection allowed me to become a more effective communicator, which helped improve our relationship.

### MANAGERIAL INTRODUCTION

Although there are dozens of volunteer organizers and disk jockeys present at the station, the study is focusing on the managerial dynamic. These managers are at the station at least 15 hours a week, and they have an impact on the organizational structure of the radio station.

Before introducing the managers, it is important to note that pseudonyms have been used to protect their identity. I have also made my exact role in the radio station

ambiguous to help ensure their confidentiality, and I will not reveal the station location or discuss the period of time in which the study occurred. There are two upper managers—Todd, the General Manager, and the John, the Operations Director. Both of them have operational control over the radio station.

There are seven other managers within the radio station. Peter is the News/Sports Director, Jack is the Volunteer Coordinator, Erin is the Promotions Director, and Grant is the Membership Coordinator. Dave, the Productions Director, Max, the Music Director, and Paige, the Program Director round off the managerial list. All of the managers control various aspects of the radio station pertaining to their job description. For example, the Music Director is solely responsible for choosing the music that will be played on-air. Even if he asks for input, he makes the final decision.

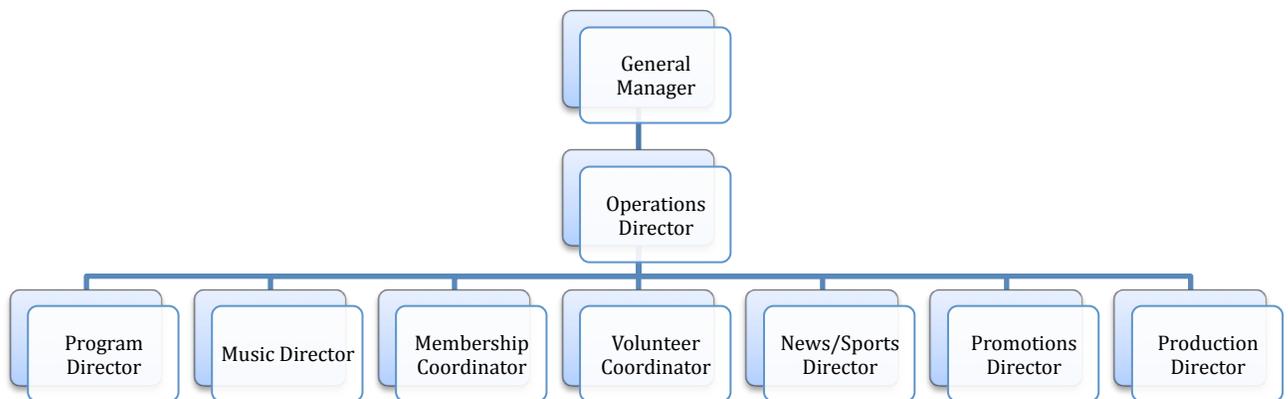
## FINDINGS

### *The “Upside-Down T” Managerial Hierarchy*

The hierarchical structure of the station can be conceptualized similarly to what I have termed an “upside-down T.” The GM occupied the top of the hierarchy, followed by the Operations Manager. The top two positions are part of a formalized hierarchy, and the rest of the managers compose the horizontal dimension of the “T”, which are the News/Sports Director, Program Director, Promotions Director, Production Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, and the Music Director. There was not any informal hierarchical networks observed during the study period. (See Figure 1.1 on the next page for a visual diagram of the “upside-down T” hierarchical structure.)

Even though Todd, the GM, had supervisors at the University, he ultimately had control over the day-to-day operations of the radio station. He delegated tasks to the

other managers based on their job descriptions. For example, when he wanted to promote a station-related giveaway on the website, he delegated the task to the Promotions Director. Even though he gave Erin the ability to write up the “copy,” or script, he asked that she show it to him for final approval. When he delegated a task to a manager, his desires took precedence even when there was creative pushback from the managers.



(Figure 1.1: The “Upside-Down T” hierarchical structure)

John, the Operations Director, ensured that the radio station was running properly. If there were a technical problem, such as a lack of an on-air signal, he would make sure that it was fixed. For example, when Disk Jockeys would consult him about a problem with the audio board, the microphones, or other technical equipment, he had the resources and expertise to repair those problems.

When it comes to the managerial hierarchy, John serves as the middleman between Todd, the GM, and the rest of the managers. He did not conflict much with

Todd's ideas, and when there was miscommunication between Todd and the rest of the managers, John helped communicate the point to both sides.

Music Director Max summed up John's role in the organization:

*M: I think that John is generally on board with what Todd says, and I think that John tries to communicate it to the station. And he understands what we are trying to do, so he presents it through the veil of, "This is what is good for the station," where I think Todd isn't the best at communicating that.*

Erin was an example of another manager who agreed with the idea that John served as a middleman between Todd and the rest of the managers. She described instances where she needed to give some pushback to Todd. According to her – and all of the managers -- since Todd did not take pushback well, the managers believed that John could help communicate their point constructively.

*E: I knew that if it came from me, it would come across poorly. [Todd] likes John, and you filter things through John because it will make things better.*

When there was confusion and Todd was not present, John became the person who helped clarify any issues. For example, there were two pledge drive meetings that served as an information session for the station volunteers. The new Volunteer Coordinator, Jack, conducted the meeting for a brief period of time, mostly to regurgitate the policies that were outlined to him. Once people asked him questions, John took over, answered the questions and then finished conducting the rest of the meeting.

There was an example of an incident where the "upside-down T" managerial hierarchy was evident. During a pledge drive meeting, Todd introduced the idea of having a band pay to play a live two-song "set" during the Pledge Drive. All proceeds would go directly to the radio station. However, Paige was not receptive of the idea. She directly conflicted Todd, indicating that bands that the station would normally have

perform a live set would not have any money to give to the station. Paige also did not want to have a “dad band” perform, which is a demeaning term used for non-professional bands that are characterized as only containing older men. John used his role as a mediator, defended Todd and tried to convince Paige that the idea was meant to help raise the station some money. Todd did not appreciate the pushback, and he insisted that his idea was “no longer an idea.” In fact, he was going to make sure that the band played happened if there was interest. He offered to either have himself or another employee conduct the interview if Paige was not willing to take the role. The plans eventually fell through, but Todd was able to make the point that his decisions take precedence in the radio station.

Almost all of the managers believed in the “upside-down T” hierarchical structure with a combination of formal and informal networks. Although the upper managers have formalized positions, they believe that the managers within the horizontal part of the “T” are valued equally to the radio station. Grant, the Membership Coordinator, expressed the sentiment among the managers:

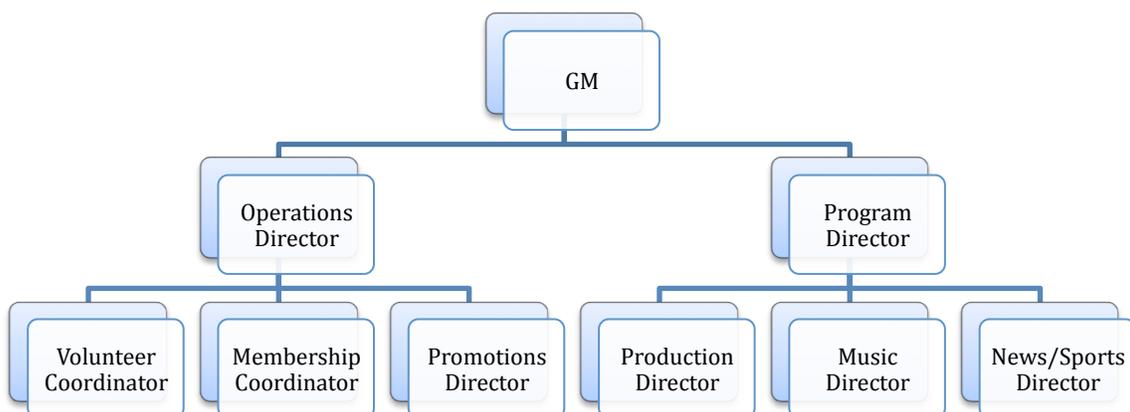
*G: All of the managers are kind of on the same plateau, and then it goes John, then Todd. That's the hierarchy. It's kind of like an upside-down umbrella, where it goes Todd, then John, then everyone else is on the same level. That's why there is not too much of a hierarchy.*

Erin, the Promotions Director, was the one manager who expressed that she thought the station was organized in a formal “three-tiered” hierarchy. She quickly backtracked, stating that she may be biased because, according to her, “I only based it on the number of hours that everybody works.” Even if her conceptualization of the hierarchy did not mirror the rest of the managers’, she hinted during the interview that the upper managers want the station to become a formal hierarchy. Although the structure

was not specifically mentioned, Erin cited incidents such as the “dad band” incident to support her idea that there may be a formal structure within the radio station.

### *The Desired Formal Hierarchical Structure*

The upper managers – the General Manager and the Operations Manager – wanted the station to be more of a formalized hierarchical structure. In their desired structure, the hierarchy would be a formalized, layered structured much like the pyramid model described by Nelson (2001). The General Manager would be at the top, followed by the Operations Manager and the Program Director. Both of the managers would make sure that the radio station operates smoothly on a daily basis. The Operations Manager would focus on the behind-the-scenes technical aspect, while the Program Director would direct her attention to the on-air competency of the Disk Jockeys. The other managers will fall into other associated positions based on their importance to the radio station. For example, the Music Director and News/Sports Director would fall below the Operations Manager and the Program Director.



(Figure 1.2: The Pyramid-like, layered hierarchical structure)

When asked about the current hierarchical structure, John articulated the belief among the upper managers that although having people that value each other equally is good for the morale of the workers, the current hierarchical structure will not help the radio station in the future:

*J: Unfortunately, that is the way it is now for [the station], which it shouldn't be. Everyone is just too good of friends. It's not a bad thing—it's great to work with friends, but it—having everyone being equal is good, but it is not good for business.*

He then indicated that once employees start leaving and there are new hires, the structure would change. Todd contradicted Felts' (1992) assertion that a flatter, more reciprocal would benefit the organization. John and Todd will look to create a formalized hierarchy that he believes will help the station become more efficient.

As mentioned earlier, Erin noticed that the upper managers wanted to formalize and layer the hierarchy. She recalls her declined role when Paige was brought in as the Program Director:

*E: Sometimes I feel like I do less now than when Paige came on because—I don't know—She somehow just picks up everything from Todd, and I feel like Todd doesn't ask me to do a whole lot anymore. I still do a lot, but it is not as much.*

Erin refers to an increasing centralization of power, a consequence of increased formalization (Mintzberg 1979; Hoffman et al. 2000). Paige and John took on most of the responsibilities that involved day-to-day decision-making of running the radio station. For example, John was delegated to create the new pledge drive format, which included the main messages of the fundraiser and the monetary goals. His hours have increased to about 25-30 hours per week. Paige is responsible for organizing the schedule along with booking interviews and live performances. Most of their tasks have to be approved by

Todd, the GM, but he was attempting to give those two managers more decision-making power.

Even though there is value in learning about the organizational structure, one main question remains: What is stopping the station from becoming a layered bureaucratic hierarchy?

*Why is There No Formal, Layered Organization?*

There are a couple of discoveries that will help answer the glooming question. First of all, there are not enough workers in the radio station to create a true bureaucracy among the managers. The pool of managers are part of an informal hierarchy because they are important to the survival of the radio station. Another manager can fill the role temporarily if one of the managers was either fired or if a manager left. However, the workload would be too much for one manager to hold for a long period of time. There would be much miscommunication, and the job would not be done efficiently.

All of the managers encouraged each other to provide input into another manager's job responsibility, leading to a perception of a flatter hierarchy. Dave, the Production Director, articulates the managerial dynamic in an interview:

*Me: What about if you are interacting with people? Do you feel like you have that same sense of equality?*

*D: (Emphatically) Yeah. I don't feel any less. I can tell one manager to do something the same way a manager can tell me to do something.*

For example, when Max was unsure about whether or not to put a band in the normal afternoon playlist, he asked Paige, the Program Director for input. In a typical formal hierarchy, her ideas would take precedent. However, Max ended up making the final decision to add the band to the station's regular playlist.

The relative size of the station also ensures that all of the managers will have consistent contact with each other, leading to the formation of equal friendships. There is no person in the friendship that is considered subordinate or superordinate to the other.

Paige acknowledged the reason for the difference in hierarchy:

*P: In other radio stations, it would be John and me as the top people. And then everyone else. I say between all of us, I don't see any tension. We all listen to each other, we all respect each other's opinions. We also value each other's belief systems and we go to each other.*

Like Diefenbach and Sillince (2011), the managers believe that there is a flatter hierarchy present in the radio station. As expressed in the meetings, when a new idea is presented by Todd, which could change the radio station, the pool of managers expressed their desire for input. On some occasions, Todd emphasized a top-down decision-making process. He vocalized during the meetings when he desired managerial input.

The main reason for the lack of hierarchical structure can also be attributed to the lack of leadership under the previous General Manager. He did not enforce the formal hierarchical structure, which led to a “flatter” hierarchy.

John worked for both the old General Manager and Todd. He noticed the change in hierarchy:

*J: It stops becoming a hierarchical structure when you stop being a boss. If you stop being charge of the people under you, then it starts to fade away, you become equals, and then everyone is on the same plane.*

The lack of leadership potentially enables the other managers to rely on each other for guidance instead of one central figure. There is usually a high rate of turnover from the student managers due to graduation. Managers who were present during the transitional period supported the newly hired managers get “the hang of” their job. The managers were able to negotiate a system of mutual feedback, which affected

productivity (Clampitt and Downs 1993), arguably in a positive way. The adjustment enables a socialization period, which helped create the egalitarian belief system observed during my three-month study period. This close connection enables all of the managers to use each other as a source of stability and de-emphasize the importance of a formalized hierarchy.

## DISCUSSION

The upper managers want to move the organization from the current upside-down T mix of informal and formal hierarchies to a more formalized hierarchical structure. The friendships that have developed between the student managers have created a unified resistance to change, which Litrico et al. (2011) termed a *tug of war*. Although his study mentioned the dynamic between individuals and the employers within organizational change, his findings apply when more than one individual is present. Adler and Adler's (1995) informal hierarchical negotiation does not generalize to include the managers of the radio station. The lack of connection can be related to the age of the managers and the fact that there is some sort of hierarchical organization.

The previous lack of leadership experienced within the managerial change also contributed to the lack of a pyramid-like hierarchical structure. It forced the managers to figure out how to run the station as a collective, de-emphasizing the importance of the General Manager to the overall success of the station. When the GM was hired, he had to establish himself as the "boss" of the new hierarchy. He emphasized the importance of top-down decision-making, and John functioned as the communicator between the GM and the pool of managers.

Although the structure can be conceptualized as an “upside-down T,” it can most likely be renegotiated, given that the previous managers will end up graduating from the affiliated University and subsequently leave the radio station. This phenomenon occurs at college radio stations where managers are required to be students at the University. Todd and John will look to hire managers that have a less attached relationship, which can help create a more formalized pyramid-like structure. This is a reality that I call “natural turnover.”

Although the hierarchical structure will most likely change due to managerial turnover in this instance, professional companies will probably not have the same luxury. There should not be a long period of time between the hiring of managers, or else the subordinates may pose a unified resistance against hierarchical change. The resistance can be argued as either good or bad, depending on the employees’ point of view and company productivity levels. In order to solve this dilemma, a newly hired manager could either fire his or her subordinates. However, I propose that a more productive solution could involve a period of time where the manager could become more personally acquainted with his or her employees. The manager would then explicitly state and reinforce the desired formal hierarchical structure. These proposals could be best examined within future research.

Future research should also continue to investigate the interaction between informal and formal hierarchies within other large and small businesses and how managers and employees legitimate the hierarchical structure. The legitimation of the structure will arguably contribute to maintenance of the existing hierarchical structure instead of leading to change. If there are other organizations that have managers who feel

like they have the same level of importance, similar to the one that was studied here, researchers should figure out why that is the case. For example, an employee's relative informal status will depend on their relationship to the owner or the store manager. In large organizations with formal hierarchies, the relationship may lead to a promotion to a higher status position. In an informal and formal hierarchical structure, employees should be able to articulate processes that maintain the hierarchy. Although these processes are not generalizable to every organization -- including college radio -- sociological and communication scholars should continue to examine hierarchical structure in the workplace. An increased understanding could ensure more productive relationships between managers and their subordinates.

## References

- Adler, Patricia A. and Peter Adler. 1995. "Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Preadolescent Cliques." *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 58(3): 145-162
- Allan, Kenneth. 2009. *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*. SAGE Publications.
- Breton, Albert. 1995. "Organizational Hierarchies and Bureaucracies: An Integrative Essay." *European Journal of Political Economy* 11(3): 411-440  
(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/61383229?accountid=14503>).
- Ciampitt, P. G., & Downs, C. W. 1993. "Employee perceptions of the relationship between communication and productivity: A field study. *Journal of Business Communication*, 30, 5-28
- Diefenbach, Thomas and John A. A. Sillince. 2011. "Formal and Informal Hierarchy in Different Types of Organization." *Organization Studies*, 32(11): 1515-1537  
(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/910027109?accountid=14503>).
- Dean, Paul. 2007. "Flat and Egalitarian? Evaluating Worker Hierarchies in Software Companies." University of Maryland, College Park, United States -- Maryland  
(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/304838028?accountid=14503>).
- Greve, Henrich R. and Hitoshi Mitsuhashi. 2007. "Power and Glory: Concentrated Power in Top Management Teams." *Organization Studies*, 28(8): 1197-1221
- Hopkins, Benjamin. 2011. "Informal Hierarchies among Workers in Low-Skill Food Manufacturing Jobs." *Industrial Relations Journal*, 42(5): 486-499  
(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1037877388?accountid=14503>).

- Hoffman, A. N., Stearns, T. M., & Shrader, C. B. (1990). "Structure, Context, and Centrality in Interorganizational Networks." *Journal of Business Research*, 20, 333-347.
- Litrico, Jean-Baptiste; Lee, Mary D.; and Kossek, Ellen E. 2011. "Cross-Level Dynamics between Changing Organizations and Career Patterns of Reduced-Load Professionals." *Organization Studies*. 32(11): 1681-1700
- McPhee, Robert D, Poole, Marshall S. 2000. "Organizational Structure, Configurations, and Communication." *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*. Sage Publications.
- Nelson, Reed E. 2001. "On the Shape of Verbal Networks in Organizations." *Organization Studies* 22(5): 797-823.  
(<http://oss.sagepub.com/content/22/5/797>)
- Pace, R. Wayne. 2013 "Communication, Work Systems and HRD", *European Journal of Training and Development*, 37(2): 201 – 219.
- Schutte, Jerald G. and John M. Light. 1978. "The Relative Importance of Proximity and Status for Friendship Choices in Social Hierarchies." *Social Psychology* 41(3): 260-264  
(<http://search.proquest.com/docview/60874001?accountid=14503>).
- Shrader, C. B , Lincoln, J. R., & Hoffman, A. N. 1989. "The network structures of organizations: Effects of task contingencies and distributional form." *Human Relations*, 42, 43-66.
- Smeltzer, Larry R., & Gail L. Fann. 1989. "Comparison of Manager Communication Patterns in Small Entrepreneurial Organizations and Large, Mature

- Organizations.” *Group and Organization Studies*, 14, 198-215.
- Smith, K., Grimm, C., Gannon, M., & Chen, M.-J. 1991. “Organizational Information Processing, Competitive Responses, and Performance in the U.S. Domestic Airline Industry.” *Academy of Management Journal*, 34, 60-85.
- Stazyk, Edmund C. and Holly Goerderly. 2011. Understanding Affective Organizational Commitment: The Importance of Institutional Context. *American Review of Public Administration*, 21(4), 645-672.
- Thomas, Pete and Jan Hewitt. 2011. “Managerial Organization and Professional Autonomy: A Discourse-Based Conceptualization.” *Organization Studies* 32(10): 1373-1393.
- Weber, Max; Hans Hienrich Gerth; and Charles Wright Mills. 1991. “From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.” New York: Oxford University Press.