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CONCERTIVE RESISTANCE: HOW ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS RESIST COLLECTIVELY IN THE ABSENCE OF RESISTANCE LEADERSHIP

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To Mom and Dad, for always telling their little girl she could do anything she wanted to do and for believing in her even when she did not believe in herself.

Love you to the moon. ~Alaina Chase

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Abstract

This dissertation describes an organizational phenomenon whereby organizational members are able to resist managerial influence collectively in the absence of overt talk or leadership communication—labeled here *concertive resistance*. Concertive resistance is resistance exercised by organizational members according to a set of core group-level values which challenge, invert, or disrupt managerial control. This investigation supports and extends theory regarding control and resistance in modern organizing. Through an ethnography of two NCAA Division I collegiate sports teams (i.e., football and women's track), this study revealed how the presence or lack of multiple and overlapping identifications (e.g., masculinity, team camaraderie) allowed for, or inhibited, collective resistance. Analysis of participant sensemaking about resistance episodes revealed differences in the discursive construction, application, and understanding of organizational and extra-organizational premises, which were associated with players' overlapping identifications. Episodic analysis of two similar resistance episodes revealed that a specific managerial positioning produced in talk triggered concertive resistance—labeled here *managerial inquisition*. Both concertive resistance and the managerial inquisition support and extend current organizational communication theory including literature on unobtrusive control theory, organizational resistance, organizational identification, discourse and structuration theory. This dissertation focuses on how all organizational members have access to discursive resources for resistance.

Keywords: resistance, unobtrusive control, identification, concertive control, positioning theory, discourse

Concertive Resistance: How Organizational Members Resist Collectively in the Absence of Resistance Leadership

Control matters. Control is perhaps the central concern of organizational life because without control, members' actions are difficult to coordinate (Weber, 1947). Control is defined as communicative action that exercises authority over others (Gossett, 2009). While some form of control is necessary in all organizing, control is never absolute within organizations. Foucault (1978) explained that controlling structures within organizations (e.g., rules, policies, surveillance technology) are sufficient precursors for the rise of members' resistance to control. In other words: "where there is control, there is resistance" (pp. 95-96).

If control is fundamental to organizing, and if control and resistance are always co-present, resistance is also fundamental to organizing. This paradox of control and resistance relates to what Barker (1993) described as *the problem of control*. Barnard (1968) explained, "A key defining element of any organization was the necessity of individuals to subordinate, to an extent, their own desires to the collective will of the organization" (p. 17). In short, individuals must surrender some autonomy in any coordinated collective action (Barker; Barnard). However, while individuals in organizations surrender part of their autonomy in order to belong to a collective, they also retain agency to act in ways contrary to organizational control (Giddens, 1984). This agency allows for the possibility of individual or collective resistance within organizations. Taken together, the relationship of control and resistance is best understood as a situated, co-present struggle that must be negotiated in all organizing—a negotiation that often goes unnoticed and unrecognized.

One of the challenges in studying control and resistance is that these phenomena are defined locally and made manifest in organizations through ephemeral acts of communication (Gossett, 2009; McPhee & Zaug, 2008; Mumby, 2005; Prasad & Prasad, 1998). Organizational communication researchers have explained that power (i.e., the ability or potential to influence) becomes *control* (Taylor & van Every, 2000) through communicational dynamics apparent in specific speech acts like directives or commands (Bisel, 2009). In the same sense, *resistance* can be thought of as located and manifested in specific speech acts like rebuttals or dissent that challenge managerial discourse or social arrangements. Prasad and Prasad (2000) explained that, "the act and art of resisting is both planned and accidental, strategic and spontaneous, often retrospectively constructed, but always emerging out of the local interpretations and discourses of multiple organizational actors" (p. 402). This conceptualization of resistance speaks to the dynamic ways resistance might emerge within organizing, but also demonstrates the empirical challenge of moving beyond typologies of individuals' resistance behaviors to answer questions of how and why organizational members resist. The key to better understanding resistance in organizing might lie in interrogating how members construct their own social realities of control and resistance collectively and socially.

Furthermore, the ways in which *collective* resistance might emerge within organizations is not well understood or explained in organizational communication literature. The documentation and study of collective resistance within organizations is not new (Burowoy, 1979; Graham, 1995; Mumby, 2005; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Evidence of collective resistance movements abound (e.g., strikes, union labor

disputes); however, the communicative processes that underlie the emergence of collective resistance remain opaque within current organizational communication theory.

This lack of conceptual clarity is due, in part, to a difference in perspectives of collective resistance—a debate as to whether or not collective resistance serves as benefit or detriment to organizations and organizational members. Scholars hold different paradigmatic viewpoints on the value of resistance within organizations. In practice, the manifestations of resistance can have both negative (e.g., conflict, mistrust, reduced satisfaction, sabotage) and positive (e.g., whistleblowing, principled dissent, environmental adaptation) consequences for organizations, individuals, and society. However, while there are different perspectives on the value of resistance with respect to functional, critical, and interpretivist perspectives, scholars tend to concur that resistance is a phenomenon within organizations that is still not well understood (Fleming & Spicer, 2008; Zoller, 2013; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

Questions of the organizational value of resistance aside, the theoretical and practical value of studying resistance and the ways it might manifest remain obvious. One practical value of studying resistance is related to the necessity of resistors to oppose and defy mainstream ideology or taken-for-granted assumptions when they are immoral. Understanding how and why collective resistance emerges could yield important answers to how resistors might more readily dissent when faced with unethical behavior (Redding, 1985). A second practical application of resistance is related to organizational change and innovation. Without change, innovation, and adaptation organizations fail to thrive (Senge, 2006). Without resistant voices

organizations often fail to change (Kassing, 2011). Resistant discourse provides an alternative to mainstream organizational discourse and could help an organization adapt in order to survive.

Given our current understanding of resistance within organizations, the purpose of this study is to explain how collective resistance might emerge within organizations. The following sections (a) review foundational movements in types of control within organizations, (b) discuss the emergence of unobtrusive control in modern organizations, (c) explain the major constructs of Unobtrusive Control Theory, (d) explain the major perspectives and current understanding of resistance and organizing, and (e) explain how issues of power and resistance might manifest in daily organizational life discursively.

Literature Review

Historically, organizational scholars struggled to understand how organizations can and should influence members to act collectively to achieve organizational goals. Part of the challenge relates to the incomplete and fragmented ways control functions in organizations. In other words, scholars and managers observe that control does not necessarily beget complete compliance by subordinates. Imagine how subordinates might feign confusion, delay compliance, only partially comply, or listen selectively in response to a managerial directive (i.e., an organization's attempt at control). There are innumerous ways control and resistance function and manifest in organizations, due in part to the different forms of power afforded to all organizational members.

The constructs of control and power are closely related. Power is defined as "the ability of one party to change or control the behavior, attitudes, opinions,

objective, needs, and values of another party" (Rahim, 2009, p. 224), whereas control is defined as communicative action that exercises authority over others (Gossett, 2009). In short, control is the act, while power is the potential to act. The following section explains the relationship and progression of control and power structures within modern organizing.

Historical Shifts in Organizational Control Systems

While power has not been an explicit area of study in functional organizational research, compliance gaining through appeals to power structures (i.e., the enactment of power to gain control) has been of central concern since the beginning of the organizational studies discipline. Themes of managerial power and control underlie Weber's (1946) theories of bureaucratic organizing, Taylor's (1914) principles of scientific management studies, and McGregor's (1960) Theory X/Theory Y. From a functional perspective, the structure of organizing and power is manifest in resource exchange between management and employees. Workers are viewed as so-called human resources that should be useful to the organization and society (Conrad, 2011). Implicit within these frames is the idea that collective control of worker action is necessary to attain organizational and societal goals.

Functional scholars have defined and described power, control, and influence tactics in organizations in a variety of ways (e.g., social exchange theory, leader-member exchange theory; see Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, most, if not all, problematized worker resistance as a negative phenomenon that must be overcome through persuasive supervisor strategies for organizations to function efficiently and effectively (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000). The conceptualization of

resistance from a functional perspective can be seen in management literature on employee resistance to organizational change (i.e., organizational changes instituted by managers; Folger & Skarlicki, 1999; Thomas & Hardy, 2011). This line of literature investigated the causes of and solutions to employee resistance as a means to offer prescriptions to managers for anticipating and overcoming subordinates' resistance (Thomas & Hardy, 2011). Not surprisingly, much of this research attributed causes of resistance to individual organizational members' shortcomings or deficiencies in terms of attitudes, emotions, cognitive awareness, and misbehaviors, as well as the shortcomings of managers persuasion or influence tactics (Furst & Cable, 2008; Piderit, 2000; Thomas & Hardy, 2011; van Dam, Oreg, & Schyns, 2008). The functional literature's articulation of resistance as a theoretical puzzle for managerial persuasion to solve is in stark contrast with the critical perspective's celebration of members' resistance.

The functional perspective also relates to the progression of control systems within modern organizing. In his oft-cited review of workplace control systems within the modern era, Edwards (1979) discussed the shift in workplace control from simple to technological, and finally bureaucratic. First, *simple control* is described as direct, personal and authoritarian control of workers often exercised by owners themselves (Edwards, 1979). Tactics include coercion, reduction of benefits, and close managerial surveillance. Simple control is overt and obtrusive in organizational life and was often responded to with overt resistance from workers. This type of control was problematic given that (a) all workers could not be monitored and controlled by a single owner, (b)

control was often exercised arbitrarily and unfairly (e.g., nepotism), and (c) was viewed as irrational by workers, thereby undermining managerial credibility.

To resolve some of these problems, *technological control* emerged as another control mechanism during the industrial revolution (Edwards, 1979). Technological control managed organizational members' work through the material and mechanistic apparatus that governed their work (e.g., piecemeal assembly lines, production line quotas). Within these types of control systems, managers were relieved of their duties to manage the labor process directly—now directed by technology—and were able to focus on quality of production and worker compliance, which also made control less obtrusively located in the directives and mandates of management (Edwards; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). However, technological control also "reached a limit of efficiency" because workers soon realized that a small group of workers could shut down an entire assembly line by resisting the mechanical apparatus that governed the tempo of work processes (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985, p. 183). In this way, workers were able to adapt to and resist the emergence of technological control in modern organizing (e.g., worker strikes, workers' unionizing efforts).

In response to worker resistance, a more unobtrusive form of control emerged in modern organizations, which focused on employee incentives and rewards through promotion rather than close supervision and coercion (Clegg, 1981; Edwards, 1979). This type of *bureaucratic control* was a shift toward a more unobtrusive form of control through rational policy and written texts. This system purported to offer job security and opportunities to move up the organizational hierarchy to loyal workers and the fairness afforded by premeditated written rules, which were supposed to

govern decision making about personnel. Ideally, bureaucratic policies and written texts provide a "rational" structure for rules to be applied in a fair and democratic manner, but these texts are also open to discursive reconstruction and arbitrary enactment by organizational members—especially by power holders. Given that texts are value-laden and not necessarily rational or fair, Edwards (1979) contended that "industrial democracy" is somewhat of an illusion in the modern workplace. Scholars argue this type of control might also foster discontentment and workplace resistance (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). In sum, Edwards (1979) explained simple, technical, and bureaucratic forms of control "represent adaptations to the forms of control that preceded them, each intended to counter the disadvantages of previous forms" (Barker, 1993, p. 409), in essence these adaptations to control were in response to the adaptation of worker resistance present in all control systems. As control became more and more invisible in organizations, options for and instances of member resistance became obscured as well.

Concertive Control: A Modern Mechanism of Unobtrusive Control

A fourth shift in control systems represents a fully unobtrusive form of control in modern organizing, what Tompkins and Cheney (1985) labeled as *concertive control*. Concertive control is collective control that is exercised by workers themselves according to a set of core organizational values, which reinforce managerial control and/or hegemonic organizational discourse (Larson & Tompkins, 2005; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Concertive control describes a shift in the locus of control from traditional rational/bureaucratic models to a more egalitarian, flattened-hierarchy approach, "where control is exercised through identification with core

organizational values and is enforced by peers" (Larson & Tompkins, 2005, p. 3). In these systems individuals are encouraged to develop their own work practices, team-based rules, and decision-making practices (Barker, 1993; Tompkins & Cheney 1985). When workers collaborate to develop their own means of control, this collaboration promotes a strong feeling of shared ownership and empowerment, but also creates a system of group-level sanctioning and control. This peer-level monitoring and self-surveillance obscures the controlling mechanisms of the organization because members believe that they are *choosing* to act in organizationally relevant ways (Barker, 1993). Perhaps the only controlling structures more difficult for workers to resist than faceless bureaucratic policies are the faces of their peer groups and the values they themselves espouse. Take salary-based work arrangements as an example. In these arrangements workers are expected to set their "own" hours to "get their work done." However, these standards of time, amount of work, and meaning of "work" are often set by the normative behavior of other organizational members workers interact with on a daily basis and whether or not those workers believe they are adhering to their work-ethic standards. Another foundational example of normative control in groups is evident in Roethlisberger and Dickenson's (1939, 2003) Hawthorne studies. They found that in the bank wiring room workers formed their own cliques with rules such as "don't be a squealer" (i.e. do not relay any information to supervisors that could get others in trouble).

Within organizational communication literature, theorists have described these forms of unobtrusive control under a number of labels including: (a) concertive, (b) identity-based (Barker, 1993; Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Bullis, 1991; Bullis &

Tompkins, 1989; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), (c) normative (Barley & Kunda, 1992), (d) organizational culture (Kunda, 2009), (e) team-based (Ezzamel & Willmott, 1998; Jønsson & Jeppesen, 2013), and (f) value-based (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Each of these controlling constructs function in unobtrusive ways within modern organizing. Essentially, for control to be fully unobtrusive it must "control the cognitive premises underlying action" (Perrow, 1979, p. 151), as is the case for each of these constructs.

Additionally, concertive control is especially unobtrusive and therefore difficult to resist. Barker and Cheney (1994) explained as individuals are able to recognize controlling mechanisms they tend to be more resistant to them. Foucault (1990) argued that control is especially powerful if it is obscured or goes unrecognized. He explained, "Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its' success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism" (p. 168). Given the predominance of unobtrusive control mechanisms within modern organizations, control is much less apparent to the modern organizational member.

Unobtrusive Control Theory: Major Constructs

Offering a cohesive understanding of how concertive control manifests in organizational life, Tompkins and Cheney (1985) proposed *Unobtrusive Control Theory* (UCT). They explained unobtrusive control is a process by which organizational members are guided in making organizationally relevant decisions (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985) through the inculcation of decisional premises, ongoing feedback, and processes of organizational identification. The following sections

explain the foundational literature that relates to each construct as well as how unobtrusive theory has been refined and applied.

Inculcation of decisional premises. According to UCT, at times, organizational members draw on premises inculcated by management (Simon, 1976). These decisional premises—often in combination—constrain our decisions. For example, imagine a manager often repeats the mantras "do the right thing" and "time is money." A highly-identified, inculcated organizational member would most likely choose to pay a higher price in shipping to receive necessary supplies quickly—in keeping with the inculcated organizational values. In short, these mantras become premises that influence organizational member decision making processes. UCT explains that decisional premises should be interrogated rather than the act or decision itself in order to understand the unobtrusive control mechanisms that undergird any decision (Barker, 1993; Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Organizational members attain these premises through a process of inculcation. Upon entry into an unobtrusive control system, employees encounter organizational premises through socialization communication with other members (Bullis, 1991; Kramer, 2010). Through interactions, members are inculcated "with the decisional premises, value and factual, from which their decisions are to be drawn" (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985, p. 186). This process of inculcation is often unobtrusive and not necessarily intentional or strategic.

However, power-holders within organizations may employ strategic persuasive messages that are ambiguous enough to guide employee behavior in a wide range of situations. These messages can become organizational mantras, slogans, stories,

myths, or other dramatic language tropes that are repeated and applied over time. For example, consider how the organizational mantra from management to "do the right thing" might be applied in any number of situations to direct employee decision making. Bullis (1991) explained that leaders within organizations "construct and maintain organizational reality" not by influencing members to do a task they do not want to do, but rather by "shaping or determining what members *want* to do" (emphasis added, p. 268). Thus, once members internalize these organizationally-relevant premises there are a limited numbers of ways to act "rationally." Again, consider a member who internalized the organizational premise of "do the right thing." The only way for that member to act rationally and in line with their organizational identification is to "do the right thing," according to their own and other's definition of the "right thing." Through ongoing feedback with organizational incumbents, new members and incumbents co-construct their taken-for-granted premises and incontestable assumptions about how organizational reality ought to work.

The organizational enthymeme. Related to the process of drawing decisional conclusions from premises is the rhetorical *enthymeme*—a concept first discussed in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. While scholars do not agree on a single definition of enthymeme (see Walker, 1994), a discussion of how Tompkins and Cheney (1985) conceived of this type of rhetorical device as it relates to unobtrusive control theory is warranted. Similar to a logical syllogism of practical argumentation, the enthymeme is a type of *truncated* syllogism that moves somewhat deductively through an argument in that it proceeds from a general conclusion (e.g., a material premise and an inferential premise) to a specific conclusion (e.g., a decision; Conley, 1984). However, instead of

supplying a material premise (e.g., he is a college athlete) and an inferential premise (e.g., all college athletes are amateurs) in order for an individual to reach a conclusion (e.g., therefore, he is an amateur), the enthymeme omits the major or minor premise (e.g., He is a college athlete, therefore he is an amateur). Bitzer (1959) explained that enthymematic arguments are co-constructed between speakers and audiences. Through this process of premise omission the "speaker does not *lay down* his premises, but lets his audience supply them out of its stock of opinion and knowledge" (p. 407). Bitzer's assertion moved beyond the notion that enthymemes are incomplete syllogisms by describing them as purposeful rhetorical devices used by speakers to draw on implicit premises already held by audience members (Bitzer, 1959; Conley, 1984). At times organizational management may engage in purposeful inculcation of premises, and at other times such inculcation efforts may be absent or beneath managements' own awareness of their leadership communication goals and strategy. For example, research by Bisel, Ford, and Keyton (2007) identified an instance in which organizational leaders created instructional materials with the sole purpose of shaping organizational members' political value-laden premises, without needing to advocate for voting decisions to members overtly.

As discussed previously, individuals in organizations make decisions based on implicit premises (e.g., beliefs, values, expectations), which have been inculcated by the power-holders within the organization (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). The inculcation of these *implicit* premises makes the control of decision making in modern organizations especially unobtrusive. However, given that an enthymematic speaker leaves room for audience members to supply implicit premises to reach a specific

decisional conclusion, members are not subject to absolute organizational control—even when influenced by unobtrusive control. Similar to the historical progression of control systems in organizations, unobtrusive control and the inculcation of premises also allows discursive space for member resistance, given the presence of the cognitive and interpretive gap that necessarily exists between decisional premises and their decision conclusions.

Cognitive gaps. Cognitive gap refers to the interpretive space between organizational or extra-organizational premises and decisional conclusions. Bisel et al. (2007) explained that gaps "always exist between premises and their conclusions" (p. 138). This space occurs, in part, because members must supply or choose from a variety of implicit premises, but also because of the nature of premises. First, premises are value-laden, not power neutral, which could contribute to the selection of one premise over others (Bisel et al., 2007). Second, premises are open to individual interpretation and are often ambiguous, thus members might not always act in the way power-holders intended even if they adhere to or echo a premise in their personal value set (Conrad & Hayes, 2001). For example, Larson and Tompkins (2005) presented a case in which middle-managers in an organization were resistant to an organizational change effort that was supported by the owners of a company. They explained that this "resistance through devotion" was caused, in part, because managers were holding on to traditional organizational premises and refused to adapt to new ones (e.g., quotas over quality). Bullis (1991) also explained that the upper limit of unobtrusive control might be that there are certain situations where the organization might become alienated from itself. Specifically, if highly-identified

members perceive there is a difference between the actions of the organization and its espoused values, members will choose to identify with the values rather than the organization (Bullis, 1991).

Last, premises themselves are subject to discursive reconstruction and reinterpretation. Premises can be sites of struggles for meaning in that members can apply them in any number of decisions and then justify those decision conclusions in retrospect. By employing a sensemaking perspective, Weick (1995) explained that individuals make sense of their organizational realities after-the-fact. This sensemaking process allows individuals to apply organizational premises retrospectively in order to make sense of their actions, or defend their organizational identities and identifications. For example, Tompkins and Cheney (1987) found that when graduate students made decisions in contrast with organizational rules they later explained how their decisions were organizationally relevant depending on their target audience of identification (e.g., researcher, peer, course director). Clearly, organizational premises can often manifest in organizations in unexpected and unintended ways.

Moreover, cognitive gaps between organizational premises and decisional conclusions occur often between multiple and conflicting decisional conclusions. The ability of members to supply alternate premises allows members to "behave organizationally" (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985, p. 189). Bisel et al. (2007) explained that this gap between premises and decisional action likely provide organizational members resources for resistance. Again, imagine a manager reinforces the organizational premise "do the right thing" by repeating this mantra often through

storytelling at organizational meetings. While this premise challenges employees to act morally, it could be interpreted in a variety of ways with differing decisional conclusions some of which may not be "right" for the organization, but they could be reconstructed discursively as "right" for the individual or "right" for society. This ambiguity in premises allows members throughout the hierarchy to participate in the co-creation of organizational premises in a variety of scenarios with a variety of potential outcomes.

The Influence of Identifications

Defining identification. Identification is a process in which individuals create a shared sense of reality through communication (Burke, 1969; Gosset, 2002). Burke (1969) explained that identification occurs rhetorically. Individuals engage in identification when they claim *consubstantiality* with their words. Of course, individuals retain their unique substance or bodies, but within this process their consciousness and social reality mirrors one another in the ways they describe themselves and reality *as if they were one* with a target of identification, like an organization. Mael and Ashforth (1995) defined organizational identification as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to [a collective], where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the [collective] in which he or she is a member" (p. 104). By claiming mutuality, identification enables individuals to share emotions of the human experience and act as one synergistic unit (Gossett, 2002; Thompkins & Cheney, 1983).

While some conceptualizations of the construct suggest identification is closer to a cognitive perception and can occur in the absence of interaction (Mael &

Ashforth, 1995), most scholars agree that the enactment and maintenance of identity(s) occurs through social interaction (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Even in the absence of direct interaction with others, individuals' decisions or identity enactment may be influenced by representations or generalized others (Mead, 1934), who serve as targets of identification (Tompkins & Cheney, 1983, 1987). According to unobtrusive control theorists, *organizational identification* is a process and social performance that occurs when an organizational member "desires to choose the alternative that best promotes the perceived interests of that organization" (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985, p. 194). Therefore, organizational identification is not simply a cognitive process of attachment to an organization or group, but a social process of identity enactment as well.

Identification and control. In their description of UTC, Cheney and Tompkins (1987) explained how a process of organizational identification influences member decision making and unobtrusive control by making highly-identified workers more susceptible to the organization's value-based persuasion and adherence to its premises. Through the process of identification with a particular group, the member sees decisions and related issues through the standpoint of the group and its values. In doing so, decision making is influenced as the member projects organizationally-relevant values onto the decision-making task. Simon (1976) explained, "a person identifies with a group when, in making a decision, he evaluates the several alternatives of choice in terms of consequences for the specified group" (p. 205). Therefore, if an individual identifies with a certain group, he or she will tend to

choose, not only to enact that identity, but also to view the decision through the perceptual lens of that group.

The association between identification and decision making is structurational (Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). Identifications enable and constrain decision making, but also, in making organizationally-relevant decisions, members display for themselves and others that they are identified. Gossett (2002) explained that "the act of making organizationally appropriate decisions is a way that members establish and perform their identifications to an organizational target" (p. 387). A significant body of research focused on how identification functions as a means of organizational control (see Barker, 1993; Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). If individuals are acting in ways that are organizationally relevant in order to realize their identifications as prescribed by power holders in organizations, they are likely to make decisions that align with the interests of those power-holders. In unobtrusive control systems, where members are highly-identified, power-holders can assume that frontline workers will tend to make organizationally-relevant decisions without close supervision or oversight.

Moreover, Burke (1950) argued workers in the modern era *want* to identify with their organizations; otherwise they will become "impoverished" or "alienated" (p. 264). Burke explained that in the modern era individuals have fewer familial, tribal, and clan-based identification targets available. Organizations and employers fill this identification void and help individuals define themselves (see Whyte, 1956). Therefore, not only do highly-identified individuals choose to act in organizationally-

relevant ways (i.e., a type of organizational control), individuals also are predisposed to want to be recognized as acting in organizationally-relevant ways.

Unobtrusive control's influence, however, is not all-encompassing. Within this process of identification, organizational members align or fail to align their own identity(s) with macro organizational identities (Bisel et al., 2007). When members are highly-identified with their organization, they act in ways that reproduce the managerially-defined organizational culture and ideology (e.g., Mumby, 2005; Willmott, 1993; Witten, 1993). Such actions reveal the process of identification as their identities become consubstantiated with the others in the organization. However, multiple and overlapping targets of identification might also provide members resources for resisting unobtrusive organizational control (Bisel et al., 2007; Scott, 1990; Scott et al., 1998).

Multiple and overlapping identifications. Research demonstrated that organizational members often have a variety of concurrent, multiple, mutually exclusive, and overlapping identifications from inside (e.g., team, divisions) and outside (e.g., family, church, educational institutions) the organization (see Barker & Tompkins,1994; Bullis & Bach, 1989a, 1989b; Cox, 1983; Gossett, 2002; Russo, 1998; Scott et al., 1998; Tompkins & Cheney, 1983; Tompkins, Fisher, Infante, & Tompkins, 1975). A single individual might claim multiple salient identifications, such as identification with work groups, their employing organization, a profession, professional associations, community groups, family, and church groups, to name a few. Yet, while individuals hold multiple identifications simultaneously, they are not always able to perform each simultaneously. Collison (2003) explained: "there appears

to be an almost unlimited number of possible sources of identity … while some of these coexisting identities are mutually reinforcing, others may be in tension, mutually contradictory and even incompatible" (p. 534). Specifically, an individual's targets of professional identification might not align with his or her organizational targets (cf. Russo, 1998). For example, a physician may want to spend more time with her patients, but hospital rules dictate how long appointments should last. In this scenario, her decision may be influenced by her professional ethos of "healer" or the organizational premise "time is money." In acting on these premises, she is identifying with her profession or her organization—differing, yet overlapping, targets of identification with seemingly conflicting source premises. However, research revealed individuals in organizations do not necessarily favor one identity over another in static ways, but rather choose which identification to enact based on situational context and issues of temporality. Members' role-switching is dependent on which identification they wish to claim at a given moment (Tompkins & Cheney, 1983).

Additionally, research revealed that individuals' identities can be, but are not necessarily, nested within organizations (e.g., work groups within departments, within organization, within profession). For example, increasing identification with a work group may not increase identification with the organization and vice versa (Bullis & Bach, 1989a). Apker, Propp, and Ford (2005) found that when nurses were highly-identified with their work teams, they did not necessarily have increased identification with their profession.

However, Meisenbach and Kramer (2014) found in their study on volunteer university choir members that members tended to nest their identifications with the

choir with a higher order "family and/or music identity" (p. 204). They argued that often lower level or organizational-level identifications (e.g., choir) can often be the site of change in higher-level identity enactment (e.g., participating in organized music). Also, they argued that nested identities might help members to "build and maintain higher order identities" (p. 206) in that they can enact both nested identities at once. This conceptualization differs from Apker et al. (2005) findings that suggested occupational identifications intersect with organizational identifications. In contrast, Meisenbach and Kramer (2014) found that members' identities directly nested within one another given that their reasons for joining and identifying with the choir was to identify with the higher-order "music" identity.

The Structuration of Identification

The presence of organizational member's multiple and overlapping identifications accounts for tension that exists between compliance *and* resistance to unobtrusive control mechanisms within the modern organization (Conrad & Hayes, 2001; Larson & Tompkins, 2005). The multiplicity and complexity of identifications helps to explain the ways individuals resist and are yet controlled by the premises of social groups with which they claim oneness (Bisel et al., 2007). By applying Giddens's (1979) theory of structuration to the process of identification, Scott et al. (1998) argued that the tension between resistance and control in modern organization is best described as Giddens's *duality of structure*. The process of identification and the presence member identities have a duality of structure in that they are mutually constitutive. Specifically, this process of identification produces and is produced by organizational member identities which act as rules and resources for member

interaction. Members draw on these resources through acts of identification, but at the same time are constrained by their own identifications (Scott et al., 1998).

Scott et al. (1998) provided an example of an associate professor having his daughter as a student in his class, which created potential situations for conflict among multiple personal and professional identifications. His enactment of each identification depends on the situation in which he is engaged (e.g., class versus home, professional versus personal). At the same time, his identification influences his engagement in specific activities (e.g., attending a conference versus attending his daughter's university art show). Kuhn and Nelson (2002) noted that individuals enact identities to help them (and others) recognize the important identities to which they belong through discourse. This front stage performance of identity is influenced by the audience, and provides structure to the process of identification (Goffman, 1963). This process provides structure to action because an individual's action is governed by their identification targets. However, this process also allows for agency of individuals to act in unexpected and unintended ways given the multiplicity of identifications present in modern organizations.

Furthermore, Bisel et al. (2007) argued that the duality of identification explains how members can be resistant to and controlled by their multiple and overlapping identifications. In their study, they found a case in participant responses in which one member rejected organizational premises as a result of his adherence to political and occupational identifications. The scholars explained that from one perspective, this rejection can be viewed as *resistance* of the organization's unobtrusive control. From a different perspective, this member's premise rejection and

decisional behavior was *controlled* by his alternative and overlapping identifications (Bisel et al. 2007).

In another example, Barker (1993) described an instance within his case study of a team-based management where one employee was often late because of unreliable childcare. When confronted and reprimanded by her work team for being late, the employee began to cry, feeling "stung by the criticism of her peers" (p. 431). Barker explained that the confrontation ended with the team telling the late worker: "We really count on you to be here and we really need you here" (p. 432). In the subsequent month, the employee never arrived late. This example from the field demonstrates the late worker's team-level identification functioning as a mechanism of organizational control. In comparison to Barker's example, Graham (1995) described a collective of women who refused to work overtime without prior notice from management as stipulated by organizational policy. In this this example, their *peer* identification allowed them to resist a managerial directive collectively. Taken together these examples demonstrate the dynamic process of identification. This process can at once be a resource for resistance and a mechanism of control, dependent on organizational context and the ways members' invoke their agency to select which identifications matter in the moment.

Perspectives of Resistance, Control, and Power

Power and control within organizations remains a central concern for organizational studies. Given the interdependent relationship between power, control, and resistance, organizational member resistance to power and control has been a recent topic of scholarly interest. The purpose of the following section is to give a

brief overview of different perspectives regarding organizational power and resistance in terms of functional, critical (e.g., feminist, postcolonial, postmodern), interpretive, and discursive perspectives as well as discuss several scholarly debates regarding the study of resistance.

The study of resistance and control is well worn, especially given the theoretical precedence of the study of power within social organizing. From Marx's (1848/1976) discussion of social class to Foucault's (1977) docile bodies, scholars have struggled to define, conceptualize, and describe the relationships between power, control, and resistance within organizations and society. Moreover, with the increase of postmodern and critical critiques of formal authority and power in the 21st century, the study of worker resistance gained momentum (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). Within this movement, scholars acknowledged that resistance is best understood as a socially-constructed category emerging from multiple interpretations of both workplace actors and academic researchers (Mumby, 2005; Prasad & Prasad, 1998).

The study of organizational power and resistance is central to the epistemological assumptions that underlie the critical perspective (Deetz & Mumby, 2012; Mumby, 2001). While the critical tradition encompasses many different theoretical approaches (e.g., postmodernism, feminism, postcolonial [Ganesh, 2009a]), it is characterized by exploring "issues of power, domination, and control, with the goals of understanding, critique, emancipation, and social change" (Zoller, 2013, p. 596). Traditionally, critical perspectives are concerned with manifest, material constructs of control and resistance including obedience, acquiescence to oppression, punishments, rewards, and hegemonic coercion. More recently, given the transition

from manufacturing work to more participative and knowledge-based work, critical scholars developed concerns about ideological and identity-based sources of organizational power, including corporate colonization, manufacturing consent, and unobtrusive and concertive control (Zoller, 2013).

In the same vein, longer-standing forms of critical scholarship described power as inherent, intentional, and observable. This perspective shifted over time. Now, scholars have begun to focus on how to best emphasize the constitutive role of communication in the negotiation of power and resistance within organizational life (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009). Often critical organizational scholarship casts managers as powerful and employees as powerless, but this view has been challenged recently by a constitutive perspective of organizing. These movements in resistance scholarship are discussed more thoroughly in the next section.

As previously discussed, there is a pervasive theoretical dichotomy in the study of power and resistance. Critical scholars champion resistance in terms of overcoming worker exploitation, in contrast to functional scholars who view resistance as a "problematic obstruction" (Thomas & Hardy, 2011 p. 323) to organizational goals. Mumby (2005) argued that this implied binary within resistance research is problematic given the nuanced ways in which control, power, and resistance are negotiated in the 'd'iscourse of organizing. Recently, a discursive lens has been used to study power by focusing on the practice of talking (i.e., 'd'iscourse) and how these form ways of talking (i.e., ideology or Discourse, see Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Discourse perspectives highlight the ways in which organizational behavior and power is open to symbolic (re)interpretation. Hardy and Phillips (2004) explained that

Discourse "lays down the 'conditions of possibility' that determine what can be said, by whom, and when" (p. 30). In other words, both big and little "d" discourse creates the potential for the creation and negotiation of control through the interactions of organizational members. There is some debate on the novelty and overlap of the discursive perspective with critical and interpretive communicative approaches to the study of power (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011; Hardy & Grant, 2012); however, some scholars argue that this perspective is unique in that it allows researchers to move beyond the binary of control and resistance (Mumby, 2005; Putnam, Grant, Michelson, & Cutcher, 2005). A discursive perspective enables researchers to move beyond this binary by understanding that all members of organizations engage in acts that could be discursively constructed as control and resistance. The next section discusses how the discursive movement allowed for the progression of resistance theory as well.

Movements in the study of organizational resistance. Many contemporary critical organizational scholars have contended that traditional forms of resistance (e.g., strikes, labor disputes, union organizing) have been squelched by new ideological forms of organizational control, such as self-managed work teams and other team-based organizing. Burris (1986) argued that modern organizations are increasingly using less-visible control mechanisms in contrast to traditional modalities of coercive control, which are also still present. These less-visible forms of control allow organizations to maintain willing consent and employ workers in their own subjugation. For example, Barker's (1993) analysis of self-managed work teams revealed how concertive control of group members served as a proxy for traditional

organizational controls, such as regulating work-hours in lieu of the traditional control mechanisms like timecards. Moreover, corporate colonization, enculturation and socialization practices are related to normative control within the modern workplace (Prasad & Prasad, 2000). This critical perspective of control casts subordinates as "ideological dupes," passive, non-reflexive, apathetic or helpless to resist their own exploitation (Prasad & Prasad, 2001, p. 108).

However, given the trend toward more unobtrusive forms of control (Edwards, 1979), scholars have contended resistance might also be manifesting in unobtrusive forms as well (Mumby, 2005). In contrast to the argument that resistance is extinct in modern organizations, other scholars argue that resistance is still present within organizations (Murphy, 1998; Scott, 1985; Tracy, 2000). Similar to the emergence of covert control mechanisms, resistance has also become less visible. In his ethnography of peasant workers in Malaysia, Scott documented the "routine resistance" workers enacted through daily interactions with farm owners. Scott described the negotiation of "cautious resistance" and "calculated conformity" female rice-paddy sharecroppers engaged in through informal grumbling and afternoon "strikes," which allowed them to bargain for higher wages. Scott (1985) explained that this form of routine resistance is a "constant process of testing and renegotiation of production relations between classes" (p. 255).

Importantly, Scott's (1985) analysis cast workers as conscious and clever. From his viewpoint, workers employed their own unique agency to make decisions to engage in micro forms of routine resistance, which served their own (or other's) best interests. Some scholars have critiqued these kinds of studies as merely documenting

covert and micro acts of resistance that are not only futile, but also simply emotional, irrational responses to organizational control (Contu, 2008; Thomas & Hardy, 2011). Yet, other scholars have provided evidence to the contrary: Jermier (1988) argued that modern resistant actions are often purposive, clandestine, and, at least in part, ideological insubordination. These covert resistance acts, even if small, can be combined, and, in aggregate, can achieve the status of *collective* resistance, which may take shape as substantial organizational changes.

Additionally, other constructions of resistance move beyond the dichotomy between workers as "ideological dupes" and "cunning actors" by acknowledging the discursive process and dialectical tension between control and resistance (Prasad & Prasad, 2001). Consent and resistance can be ambiguous; any act can at once be partial consent and partial resistance (Mumby, 2005). This notion contrasts with critical organizational research where questions of who is resisting whom and with what effect are largely assumed, rather than interrogated explicitly. Moreover, Martin (1988) argued politically-unconscious adaptation to the workplace can potentially be transformed into resistance because the appearance of cooperation and compliance makes resistance unobtrusive to management. These acts may perpetuate or maintain resistance as well as control because they can later be labeled as resistance. For example, White (1987) found that factory workers engaged in systematic efforts to circumvent organizational rules in order for the production line to run more efficiently. This circumvention was an act of resistance and helped to foster worker pride and autonomy, but also was also beneficial to management, and the organization (White, 1987). In this instance, this act of resistance served to maintain relations of control by

allowing workers to construct themselves as "cunning actors," in unobtrusive ways. This example demonstrates that one act can be interpreted as control *and* resistance—this point is especially important given the recent trends in scholarship toward articulating the discursive construction of power and resistance (Prasad & Prasad, 2000).

With these paradigmatic differences in mind, the next section describes the current debate within resistance scholarship including: (a) differing definitions of resistance, (b) micro and macro levels of control and resistance, (c) material versus symbolic modalities of resistance, and (d) difference in agency, determinism and identity in relation to resistance.

Debates central to organizational resistance. Conceptualizing resistance is one of the central debates within this body of literature. Three of the challenges to defining resistance are: (a) the difference between how scholars and workers may identify their own and others' resistance, (b) the close-knit relationship between resistance and power, and (c) the fluid or shifting construction of resistance dependent on actors, levels of analysis, as well as ontological and epistemological assumptions (Fleming & Spicer, 2007). First, identifying acts of resistance is difficult for researchers, given that organizational members may be reluctant to label specific acts as resistance. Actors may be reluctant to label behavior as resistant because resistance is stigmatizing and might alienate members from certain groups or not allow them to enact certain identities (Fleming & Spicer, 2007). Resistant behavior may or may not be labeled by organizational actors as resistance, even if scholars are able to identify

aspects of subversion within a given behavior (Edwards, Collinson, & Della Rocca, 1995). This perspective coincides with Prasad and Prasad's (1998) argument that,

> Resistance is best understood as a socially constructed category emerging out of the multiple interpretations of both workplace actors and academic researchers. Therefore, it is important to avoid essentializing routine resistance and treating it as an established set of actions or behaviors. (p. 251)

Secondly, as discussed previously, there is currently a debate about the relationship between power and resistance in relation to agency versus determinism and the duality versus polarity of concepts (Zoller, 2013). Many of these conflicting perceptions about the relationship between control and resistance are related to paradigmatic differences as well as the creation of false dichotomies and oversimplification of concepts.

To move beyond these conflicts, Mumby (2005) argued that a dialectical approach is a better way to understand how control and resistance manifests in daily organizational life, given that they are mutually implicative and co-productive constructs. Mumby (2005) contended that a dialectical approach allows researchers to move beyond the false dichotomy of control and resistance. From this view, resistance's relationship with power is not as simple as differentiating heroes from the villains (i.e., resistors from the controllers, or vice versa). In contrast, the relationship of power and control should be viewed as a discursively-negotiated struggle over the meaning of organizational events, which are grounded in the durée of organizational life (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). This perspective is warranted, given the ways resistant acts and ideologies are open to retrospective interpretation by organizational

members. Moreover, domination and resistance do not function linearly. Members do not necessarily engage in resistance to challenge or invert a single dominate Discourse (i.e., multiple competing Discourses are simultaneously present in organizations) or organizational hierarchy (e.g., positional power holders could also resist hegemonic organizational discourses; see Holm & Fairhurst, 2014; Larson and Tompkins, 2005).

These discursive and constructivist perspectives of resistance relate to a third definitional challenge: The term resistance is fluid and evolving because its meaning is contingent on how it has been ascribed to certain organizational behaviors and ideology. While definitions of power and resistance vary, Fleming and Spicer (2007) argued there is a common thread across resistance definitions in that resistance must, "… block [power], challenges it, reconfigures it or subverts it in a way not intended by that power and which has 'favorable' effects for subordinates" (p. 31). The evaluation of motives and favorable benefits in attributions of member resistance is grounded in the retrospective process of member and researcher sensemaking (Weick, 1995).

Comparative conceptualizations of resistance. Fleming and Spicer (2007) offered a comprehensive discussion of the broad theoretical conceptualizations of resistance, including resistance as (a) refusal, (b) voice, (c) escape, and (d) creation. First, *resistance as refusal* relates to a classic image of resistance wherein one organizational member tries to coerce another member into acting (i.e., engaging in a resistant act) or being (i.e., identifying as a resistant actor). Employee refusal or noncompliance prohibits managerial power. Much of the empirical evidence regarding this classic workplace resistance is related to Marxist themes of overthrowing capitalistic structures, which exploited the working class (Marx, 1848/1976).

Resistance as refusal is characterized by strikes, go-slows, theft, sabotage, and eventually the formation of workers unions, which fought for higher wages and improved working conditions.

While theorizing about the adaptation of organizations to resistance as refusal, Edwards (1979) explained that this Marxist perspective situates management and workers as opponents, where managers control workers to maximize organizational productivity and workers "necessarily resist their bosses' impositions" (Edwards, 1979, p. 13). As discussed previously, organizations adapted their control mechanisms to overcome employee resistance by adopting bureaucratic mechanism (Edwards, 1979; Fleming & Spicer, 2007). Refusal or non-compliance is one way that employees resist or block power structures, but there are other, more discursively-oriented, forms of resistance as well.

Resistance as voice allows organizational members to not only block power at times, but create discursive space where they gain access to power in hopes of creating favorable organizational reforms. Interestingly, discursive space is more likely to be created where some outlet or channel for a dissenting opinion can be articulated (e.g., union bargaining, employee newsletter, informal networks, formal complaints). Still, even when such channels are available, dissenters and dissenters' concerns must be deemed legitimate by at least some other organizational members (Fleming & Spicer, 2007) in order for collective resistance or organizational change to take place. Research on whistleblowing and organizational dissent has demonstrated that resistance as voice is a complex phenomenon with several barriers (e.g., hierarchical mum effect, see Ploeger, Kelley, & Bisel, 2011; identity-defense mechanisms, see

Brown & Starkey, 2000; and, moral mum effect, see Bisel & Kramer, 2014) to the articulation of dissenting and minority opinions (Kassing, 2011). Futhermore, resistance as voice also relates to other hidden or micro forms of discursive subversion such as bitching (Trethewey, 1997), cynicism (Fleming & Spicer, 2003), and humor (Gossett & Kiker, 2006; Tracy, 2000). Many scholars argue that these types of resistance maintain or reinforce the status quo of organizational power by creating a safety valve or catharsis by allowing for hidden "acts" of member autonomy without truly changing dominate organizational discourses (Ashcraft, 2005).

However, other scholars contend that these micro acts of discursive resistance could influence the organization in unintentional and consequential ways. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) explained that "the order in organizational life comes just as much from the subtle, the small, the relational, the oral, the particular and the momentary as it does from the conspicuous, the large, the substantive… smallness does not equate with insignificance. Small structures and short moments can have large consequences…" (p. 10). Applying this assertion to micro forms of discursive resistance, a single resistant turn of talk could have significant consequences on the balance of power in the organization by challenging current unobtrusive systems of power. With this perspective power and resistance are open to all organizational actors and related in "complex and often contradictory ways" (Fleming & Spicer, 2008, p. 304). Moreover, this view allows the performance of resistance as voice to be ambiguous, unpredictable, and flexible.

A third, albeit ideological, way of conceptualizing resistance is as escape (Fleming & Spicer, 2007). As discussed previously, with the onset of cultural and

normative organizational controls employees developed ways to escape ideationally. The logic of *resistance as escape* hinges on resistors' awareness of control. To escape the constraints of hegemonic organizational discourse resisters must have what Bhaskar (1979) termed "knowledgeability" in that to resist workers must understand the material conditions they face. In other words, the only way resistors can act meaningfully is by being knowledgeable about the rules and resources that exist for their resistance, in particular situations. An example of this can be seen in Kunda's (1992) work in *Engineering Culture,* in which he described examples of employee cynicism as cognitive distancing. He explained:

> Cognitive distancing—disputing popular ideological formulations—is manifested when one suggests that one is ''wise'' to what is ''really'' going on. Being ''wise'' implies that despite behaviors and expressions indicating identification, one is fully cognizant of their underlying meaning, and thus free of control: autonomous enough to know what is going on and dignified enough to express that knowledge. (p. 178)

Collinson (1994) built on this idea of resistance as escape through ideological resistance by the creation of groups and counter-cultures within organizations (Ashcraft, 2005; Collinson, 1994; Fleming, 2005b). In another example of worker escape Tracy (2000) described the concept of psychological distance. In her time as a cruise ship worker, she and her peers found themselves creating "front-stage characters" while working with customers and only enacting their true identity or "backstage selves," within backstage interactions with co-workers. Tracy explained that this psychological distance allowed cruise ship employees to feign the company-

mandated emotion of happiness, while displaying their true emotions in backstage interactions.

One critique of conceptualizing resistance as ideological escape is that it is not true resistance because workers are not challenging organizational control actively. In other words, "Cynical distance is just one way to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, *we are still doing them"* (Zizek,1989, p. 32; emphasis original). Contu (2008) also challenged the categorization of cynicism, parody, and skepticism by defining these discursive acts as "decaf resistance." She explained that these acts are "resistance without the risk of really changing our ways of life or the subjects who live it" (p. 367). Thus, resistance as escape may be at once resistant and consensual. This critique relates to the debate between the effects of micro discursive acts of resistance and open, overt, organized acts of rebellion. In contrast to Contu's (2008) stance, Conrad and Hayes (2001) argued that all acts, compliant and resistant, have both intended and unintended consequences. The consequentiality of resistance as escape is contingent on contextual and temporal factors. While contextually situated and ephemeral, resistance also speaks to Giddens (1979) notion of the agency of organizational members. Cognitive distance or resistance as escape may be one of the limited resources employees have to enact autonomy within organizational life.

Lastly, Fleming and Spicer (2007) described *resistance as creation*. The conceptualization relates to Foucault's (1979) ideas of how power functions as a constitution of identity and also serves to maintain certain organizational structures (e.g., consent, commitment, and subordination). In contrast to Marxian perspectives,

that related all power to the interest of economic and capitalist structures, this perspective allowed for the analysis of miniscule, individualized forms of power, as well as micro strategies of resistance. Resistance as creation highlights, "alternative identities and discursive systems of representation within the context of broader flows of domination" (Fleming & Spicer, 2007 p.43). For example, Fleming and Sewell (2002) described *over*-identification with organizational practices. In these instances workers resist prescribed culture by taking directives too seriously (e.g., a salesperson fixing hundreds of company stickers to his car, a server wearing too many pieces of "flare" on her work uniform). These acts of over-identification operate to detract from the legitimacy of the directives by rendering them absurd.

Taken as a whole, these conceptualizations of resistance are deeply rooted in epistemological and ontological assumptions. Clearly, paradigmatic and theoretical differences in approaching the study of resistance spurned several debates and built theory. The future of resistance theory lies in conceptualizing resistance as a negotiated struggle over the meaning of organizational events and removed from traditional critical and functional assumptions in order to more accurately understand dynamic performance and enactment of power and resistance in the modern organization.

Communicating resistance. The study of organizational resistance has blossomed over the last two decades. Organizational resistance scholars have noted communicative resistance aids organizational members in their attempts to challenge authority and oppression (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006; Collinson, 1994). However, some scholars have voiced concern about the binary way in which organizational resistance

is conceptualized by critical scholars (Collinson, 2005; Mumby, 2005). Much of the previous literature on organizational resistance cast power-holders as *active* controllers and followers as *passive* and insignificant resisters (Fleming & Spicer, 2003). Control and resistance are simplified when researchers assume control and resistance emerge solely from hierarchy. This oversimplification of resistance is problematic for several reasons: First, this oversimplification disregards follower agency in terms of how all organizational members are enactive of the environments in which they reside (Weick, 1995). In other words, while followers may have different types of agency or control than leaders or managers, they still retain agency to act otherwise. Second, organizational control can be imposed in a variety of ways from a variety of actors, be it coercive (Edwards, 1979), hegemonic (Burris, 1986), unobtrusive (Bisel et al., 2007; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985;), or concertive (Barker, 1993). Ironically, some forms of control are often sustained by individuals on themselves (e.g., concertive) and may be resisted by different organizational members in unexpected ways. Third, while some scholars contend overt challenges to institutionalized power may be the only way to create substantive change in organizations, hidden forms of resistance can also have lasting consequences for organizations (e.g., resistant acts turn into normative behavior through socialization of new members, see Murphy, 1998). Lastly, this oversimplification assumes that researchers' conceptualizations of resistance coincide with organizational members' perspectives of resistance in context; however, the label of resistance is often placed arbitrarily based on hierarchy, status, or power within the organization. In other words, this oversimplification neglects the socially-constructed

nature of control and resistance in organizations as an ongoing struggle for meaning, which is never complete or accomplished easily (Mumby, 2005).

Constitutive theories of communication help explain how control and resistance are called into being within communication itself (Craig, 1999). Organizational communication theorists explain that hierarchy's control is located and manifested (Taylor & van Every, 2000) in the terra firma of speech acts (Bisel, 2009; Cooren, 2006) like directives (e.g., "Run another lap"). In the same sense, resistance can be thought of as located and manifested in speech acts that challenge social arrangement and encourage others to do so as well (e.g., "I think we've run enough").

Through a lens of structuration (Giddens, 1979, 1984), the concepts of resistance and control are prime examples of the ways organizational actors—regardless of positional power—have agency to enact and challenge structure through communication. A. Prasad and Prasad (2000) explained, "the act and art of resisting is both planned and accidental, strategic and spontaneous, often retrospectively constructed, but always emerging out of the local interpretations and discourses of multiple organizational actors" (p. 402). With this more nuanced understanding of control and resistance scholars shifted their focus from macro forms of resistance to the ways in which backstage interactions, hidden transcripts, and everyday forms of workplace resistance manifest in organizational life.

This dynamic and micro view of everyday resistance is exemplified in A. Prasad and Prasad's (2000) article on the implementation of a new computer system in a healthcare maintenance organization. The authors found that when employees were confronted with organizational change, some constructed their acts discursively as

being deliberately antagonistic or resistant (i.e., *owning resistance*), while others did not. Also, managers and employees constructed other's resistance discursively by labeling certain actions of others as being deliberately resistant, regardless of intent (i.e., *naming resistance*). This example illustrates how subordinates may enact their agency to resist organizational control by refusing compliance as well as giving meaning to resistance through their discursive constructions and framing (Fairhurst, 2011). In this way, resistance is both material and symbolic. Moreover, discursive constructions of power and resistance within organizations are emergent and dynamic. Power and resistance are open to local interpretations, given that local actors' have recourse to rhetoric in terms of constructing resistant acts symbolically (Fleming & Spicer, 2008). This understanding of resistance is imperative to the conceptualization of what resources (e.g., symbolic, material) organizational members might utilize for resistance.

Organizational Settings for Resistance

Foundationally, critical accounts of organizations have framed organizations as sites of struggle over power and autonomy, where oppressors (i.e., management) and the oppressed (i.e., frontline workers) negotiate compliance and resistance. This dialectic of control and resistance is inherent in organizations (Collinson, 2005; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). However, collective resistance is not necessarily inherent in organizing processes. Research has demonstrated that specific contextual factors within organizations and Discourses may incubate collective resistance.

First, inconsistent and conflicting organizational policy and practices may create a context for a resistance leader to emerge and collective resistant action to take

place. Previous studies have demonstrated that change or inconsistencies in policies, rules, and norms often create resistance in organizations. For example, in her ethnography of an American automobile factory, Graham (1995) explained how a manager's request to work overtime without notice—which was against company policy—ignited collective resistance and a subsequent standoff with management. Graham recounted the incident:

> The women held their ground. Finally, when faced with the intended departure of four team members, and the fact that this would shut down the line, management backed down… Our resistance over time was seen as a rejection of the company's philosophy of forced cooperation by team members. (1995, p. 124)

Resistance to change has been well documented in organizational literature (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Thomas & Hardy, 2011), however this example is significant because it demonstrates that change and inconsistencies may be precursors for widespread collective resistance and action (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007).

Moreover, when organizations try to dictate policy that is contradictory to already embedded employee values and identities, intra-role or inter-role conflict may occur (Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Scholars have recognized that an individual's process of identification with an organization is dynamic and tenuous because individuals maintain multiple and overlapping identifications, which change based on situational context (Barker, 1993; Bisel et al., 2007; Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014). To assuage contradictions between

conflicting identities, organizational members must make sense of a course of action they can later justify as achieving both identities or justify a specific identity to a specific identification target (cf. Sharma & Good, 2013). In the previous example offered by Graham (1995), line workers wanted to follow company policy without engaging in concertive control of their team members. In this instance, the contradiction of organizational policy (i.e., failure to give employees notice of an overtime shift) was made sense of as unfair and manipulative. Therefore, the employees worked to negotiate and resolve this inconsistency. This negotiation process could create a context in which resistance leadership may emerge.

Taken together, if micro-resistance acts in modern organizing are a response to unobtrusive control mechanisms, then how individuals construct and enact multiple and overlapping identifications discursively is important to understanding the emergence of resistance in organizations. Thus, the author posed the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways does collective resistance shape and get shaped by team-member identifications?

RQ2: How do group members make sense of resistance or compliance with a managerial directive?

RQ3: How do group members resist collectively?

Positioning Theory: Power and Speech Acts

Social relations are constituted through everyday discourse and interaction (Taylor & van Every, 2000). Through discourse individuals create and reify the social and power structures in which they reside (Weick, 1995). These discourses are

patterned, but also dynamic and speak to what Harré and van Lagenhove, (1999) described as *positioning*.

Positions differ from role enactment, in that they are discursively and dynamically constructed through conversation. Where roles tend to be prescribed by others and are often constraining, positions are dynamic and co-constructed in the moment. Specific positions demonstrate and allow individuals to construct ongoing and changing identities for themselves and others from moment to moment through discourse. In contrast to viewing identity as prescribed role enactment within a given scene, positioning allows organizational scholars to view and understand the fluid construction of identity through turns of talk.

Positioning theory posits that individuals within social interaction engage in certain speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) that position their own and others' identities within an interaction or "episode" (Harré & van Lagenhove, 1999). Episodes are interactions that contain a principle of unity, come into existence sequentially, and are often based on individuals' applying previous positioning scripts (i.e., sequences of expected turns) developed through socialization experiences. The three major tenants of positioning theory contend that to understand how social phenomena (e.g., resistance and control) is constructed researchers should investigate (a) moral positionings (i.e., the rights and duties to make moral claims, issues of power), (b) conversational history (i.e., sequence), and (c) actual sayings (i.e., speech acts, illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect; Harré & van Lagenhove, 1999).

First, moral positionings within interactions are tightly coupled with identity construction. When individuals position themselves in interactions, they are managing

their own and others' identities. Moral positioning explains the patterned behavior present within interactions by demonstrating who has the right to enact a certain position (e.g., a leader gives a command) within an interaction, and who has the duty to take up positions into which others place them (e.g., a subordinate follows a leader's command) within an interaction. Here, individuals can be thought of as performing themselves and others as characters in a drama, these presentations create "discursive positions" from which subsequent acts arise (Hollway, 1984). Within an episode, individuals may choose to take up, refuse, or create a position, as well as alter, defend or appropriate the other interactants' positions. Thus, positioning demonstrates how power relations are grounded in the discourse of organizational life.

Second, the sequence of interaction is of importance because positions and positioning evolves over time and through performance of specific speech acts. Harré and van Lagenhove (1999) explained, "the meanings of speech-acts and other forms of behavior derive from the behavior itself as it occurs within the confines of a mutually agreed upon context …which itself derives from the mutual construction of the persons in question" (p. 9). Patterns of sequence allow characters to act characteristically within a given storyline (cf. Kelley & Bisel, 2014), or change the storyline. This demonstrates not only how individuals "position oneself" or "take up positions" through the use of speech acts, but also how a speech act and the position of an actor "mutually determine one another" (p. 16-17), given that individuals also position others and attempt to get them to take up positions.

Third, positioning theory highlights Austin's (1962) distinction between the illocutionary force (i.e., speech acts are specific action) and perlocutionary effect (i.e.,

the achievement or effect of a speech act). For example, if a football coach asks a player to follow him to his office, the illocutionary force of the "act of asking" is a request. The perlocutionary effect, in this case, would be if the player followed the coach to his office. This distinction between illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect is no small point. Within organizational interaction, speech acts may not result in the intended perlocutionary effect because actors may reject another's positioning for any number of reasons (e.g., the position is offensive, unattractive, ego-threatening).

Moreover, Harré and van Lagenhove (1999) explained that while positioning often occurs naturally within conversation, some interactions may *force* individuals into positions they would not have otherwise occupied voluntarily—a point that is particularly relevant to the authority-laden communication typical of organizations. However, given the distinction between illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect, the respondent can choose to accept or challenge a given position, and generate a new sequence or storyline as well as manage their identity within the interaction. Imagine if a football player resisted a coach's request by responding with a simple "No." This utterance changes the position of the player and coach in terms of power and authority as well as modifies the subsequent storyline of the episode because the coach is forced to reassert his power and authority or lose face. In other words, when we do things with words (e.g., make a request) we do not always achieve the desired effect (i.e., perlocutionary effect) often as result of what Austin (1962) described as conventional consequences (e.g., rights, commitments, obligations).

The application of positioning theory holds potential for the study of resistance and control in organizations through a keen view of the association between sequential speech acts and subsequent identity management, while preserving the structural and agentic explanations of control and resistance. A previous turn of talk structures action, but individuals are still able to challenge another's subject positioning. Given that positioning theory provides a theoretical framework where organizational members' resistance can be viewed and analyzed sequentially through specific speech acts and discourse, the author posed a final research question:

RQ4: What positioning processes might trigger collective resistance?

Methods

Research Setting and Theoretical Sample

Following Tracy's (2013) recommendations, a research setting was chosen based on (a) compatibility (i.e., consideration of how the researcher's specific traits and identity would influence her experience in the research site), (b) suitability (i.e., consideration of how the setting would encompass the proposed theoretical issues), (c) yield (i.e., consideration of the amount and type of data the setting would allow), and (d) feasibility (i.e., how practical are the research aims based on the proposed setting).

This research was conducted within the context of a NCAA Division I athletic program in a mid-major conference in the southern United States. The specific organization was purposively selected (Yin, 1989) because US college sports (a) are subject to highly-restrictive rules and regulations, (b) have strong cultural and economic salience, (c) provide a context in which there is strong social pressure to conform and succeed, and (d) are "body work" organizations in which athletes can

draw on unique bargaining resources through the use and control of their bodies—thereby affording opportunities for especially visible (*literally*, physical) organizational-member resistance. These forces make it likely that resistance and control should be especially observable in this organization, given the Foucauldian perspective that controlling structures (e.g., rules, social and economic pressures) are a sufficient precursor for resistance. In other words, where there is control there is resistance (Foucault, 1977). Moreover, if we imagine this context through a lens of structuration, athletes' access to bodily resources affords them a source of power for resistance. Each of these points is described in more detail below.

First, NCAA Division I athletic programs are highly-monitored, highly-regulated, hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations, which are embedded within other bureaucratic organizations (i.e., universities) and associations (i.e., leagues). Athlete and coach behavior is shaped by (and shapes the application of) regulations from the NCAA handbook and specific bi-laws, university specific regulations, and national regulations for healthcare and students (e.g., Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPPA], and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]). Moreover, athletes must also adhere to specific guidelines from the NCAA in order to remain eligible, but also adhere to specific guidelines based on their university student-athlete handbook. From a structurational perspective, these regulations from different and overlapping institutions and governing bodies can be interpreted as constraining behavior significantly (Carmack, 2010b; Giddens, 1984; Olufowote, 2008). At the same time, however, these regulations are open to challenges, reinterpretation, and symbolic reconstruction (Hardy & Phillips, 2004). As

the amount of regulations increases so too does the possibility for member resistance and symbolic reinterpretation of the rules. In short, as the amount of control increases so does the opportunity for resistance.

For example, numerous rules and regulations limit the amount of money players are able to earn in college strictly. These rules both structure and are structured by (Giddens, 1979) current action and discourse within and outside of collegiate athletic programs. These restrictive rules are in juxtaposition to the millions of dollars of revenue the NCAA and larger athletic conference earn from athletic events. Those revenues ignited a resistance movement among athlete stakeholders to reform the rules and roles athletes must adhere to and fulfill.

Former Northwestern football player, Kain Colter, representing the College Athletes Players Association [CAPA] sought to be recognized as employees of Northwestern University in order to gain collective bargaining rights for student-athletes. After careful consideration of the case, Peter Sung Ohr, regional director of the NLRB, found that players receiving scholarship from an employer are ruled to be *employees* under Section 2(3) of the Act (*Northwestern University v. College Athletes Players Association*, 2014). The legal finding is currently being appealed by Northwestern University (Strauss, 2014). The recent finding from the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB], demonstrates the liminality of players' role (i.e., employment versus amateur status and academic scholarship) within a NCAA Division I athletic program. The presence and possibility of such a debate in the struggle for defining the meaning of athlete-as-employee remains highly ambiguous and contentious for many individuals inside and outside of collegiate athletics.

When organizational members perceive the organization to be infringing on their personal rights or acting unethically, they are more likely to resist and engage in organizational dissent (Kassing, 2011). Collegiate athletes' voice and choice are restricted in a number of ways (e.g., healthcare, diet, class schedule, major, extra-organizational employment) and therefore could be one such context in which resistance may emerge. Once committed to the organization, athletes often must negotiate sport-school-life balance with other organizational stakeholders, who may have competing or conflicting organizational and personal goals.

Interestingly, previous research has demonstrated that athletes are often highly-identified with their athletic organizations and teams (Adler & Adler, 1998). As discussed previously, when highly-identified organizational members happen to resist, they may be more likely to use organizational policy as a justification for their resistance, especially when organizational members see power-holders as contradicting their own rules and regulations (Conrad, 2011; Graham, 1995). In these instances members may view themselves as protecting the organization by resisting (see Graham, 1995). Second, organizational members are also likely to resist if they view organizational policy as unjust or infringing upon personal rights (e.g., diet restrictions, clearance to play, weight monitoring) or identity enactment. Third, if athletes are unable to adhere to contradictory rules or roles because of the brute facts inevitably presented by physical constraints presented by the body brute facts of their bodies and are subsequently penalized (e.g., monetarily or socially sanctioned) they may be more likely to view the organization as unjust (Michel, 2011) because the alternative would be to interpret their own identity as inadequate. Colloquially, if

players perceive themselves to be stuck between a rock and a hard place created by the organization, they are more likely to resist. Taken together, these control forces present within the collegiate athletic context imply that everyday forms of resistance (Barker, 1993) should be especially visible, and therefore, especially available for empirical investigation.

Case-based Ethnography

The author employed an ethnographic method of data collection to answer the proposed research questions. The method afforded the researcher an opportunity to collect diverse member perspectives. Divergent and multiple perspectives were needed to apply a lens of structuration (Scott et al., 1998; cf. RQ1), and to understand the culturally-bound perceptions of resistance and control within organizations (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). An emic vantage point from within two collegiate sports teams allowed the researcher to view the ways multiple athletic team members construct, manage, and negotiate control and resistance (Dollar & Merrigan, 2002). A case-based ethnographic method of inquiry allowed the researcher to view naturalistic discourse and backstage interactions (i.e., social interactions occurring beyond the view of power-holders). As demonstrated in the literature, resistance is more likely to occur during backstage interactions, given the risks associated with overt resistance behavior (e.g., face threats; Brown & Levinson, 1987, sanctions, loss of rewards; Kassing, 2001). Moreover, the author was able to build trusting relationships as an embedded member of the organization, by spending several weeks on site over the course of four months. Many participants felt comfortable sharing stories of their experiences as collegiate athletes, because the author shared her stories of being a collegiate athlete.

This process of relationship building is essential to conducting credible ethnographic research. Gerring (2007) described case studies as the intensive investigation of a highly-selected group of observations for the purpose of understanding a larger population of similar cases. The present ethnographic case study allowed the researcher to capture the creation and ongoing taken-for-granted assumptions interactants hold in an athletic organizational context (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Case-based research has been fruitful elsewhere in providing insight into the ephemeral and often hidden acts of resistance and control (Murphy, 1998; Tucker, 1993). Given that resistance and control are socially-constructed phenomena, it is imperative that the researcher understand the taken-for-granted cultural assumptions that make organizational members' resistance, or motivations for resisting, sensible for them.

Relatedly, a case study is an empirical in-depth examination of contemporary phenomenon where the investigator collects data from a single case through a variety of primary and secondary sources (McCutcheon & Meredith, 1993). The purpose of most case-based research is to describe a phenomenon, but this method of inquiry also allows researchers to understand how and why events occur (Yin, 1989), thus case studies can have explanatory power.

In case-based investigations, researchers proceed by choosing exemplar or revelatory cases on the basis of theoretical interest in order to explore new concepts about which theory can be developed. Exemplary or revelatory cases are not necessarily cases that are uncommon (e.g., outliers), rather they are cases in which the phenomenon in question can easily be observed and studied and hold strong potential for extending or challenging theory. Given the paucity of empirical studies and a priori

theory about how resistance is accomplished discursively within the context of the organization, a case-based ethnography allowed the author to extend and challenge current resistance theory. To those ends, the author chose a case in which resistance and—explained later resistance *leadership*—would be likely to occur in order that resistance leadership could be observed and theory could be built about its operation.

The Problem of Access

The author began the process of gaining access to a research site in December 2013 by sending emails to a head athletic trainer of a university in the southern United States. Over the course of four months, the author exchanged sixteen emails and held two face-to-face meetings with the head athletic trainer. During this time the athletic trainer did not reject or grant the authors' request for access, but was given vague answers (e.g., "We will take your request to conduct research into consideration"). Next, the author solicited the Director of Athletic Compliance (i.e., a position within an athletic department whose sole purpose is to prevent the university from engaging in NCAA rule violations) to gain access to the research site. One month after (i.e., April, 2014) a meeting with the director, the author responded with another email and was referred to an athletic department research review committee, chaired by the Senior Associate Athletic Director. The author was never allowed to present her research proposal to the research review committee, nor discuss her research proposal with any committee member. After an exchange of eight additional emails between the author and the Senior Associate Athletic Director, the author's request for access was formally denied via email based on two criteria: "This study overburdens athletes,"

and "the findings will not provide practical applications for the sports medicine program."

Disagreeing with these assertions of the study and dissatisfied with denial of access, the author solicited another athletic program at a Division I university in the southern United States in June, 2014. After an exchange of two emails, 10 days later both the Athletics Director and Senior Associate Athletics Director agreed to grant the researcher access contingent upon approval from the researchers' Internal Review Board (IRB). On July 9th 2014 the author received IRB approval and forwarded the letter to the athletic administration offices. On site data collection began a month later. See Appendix A for complete timeline of data collection and analysis.

The problem of access is not uncommon in organizational communication research (Tracy, 2013). The barriers and issues the author encountered in gaining access to an organizational site is indicative of the highly-regulated structure and bureaucracy present in American collegiate athletics. Even with the promise of confidentiality and IRB oversight, the primary athletic site was reluctant to give the author research access including face-to-face meetings with administrators about the research proposal. This denial of access aligns with the notion that athletic administrators engage in gatekeeping that has the result of silencing dissenting or resistant voices within and outside of the organization. This experience further supports the idea that the access achieved at the second site is a unique glimpse into backstage, closely protected organizing within collegiate athletic programs.

Data Collection

Phase 1: Three weeks on site and an unexpected research direction. After the author obtained consent from the athletic administration and appropriate Internal Review Board, she traveled to the second Division I university during the last two weeks of football training camp and first week of regular practice. Initially, the author proposed to study the topics of *body work* and *emergent resistance leadership* (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). The author was interested in how trainers, coaches, and athletes negotiate healthcare, how they enacted resistance and control communicatively, and how athletes might influence others to resist (i.e., instances of emergent resistance leadership). She solicited participants through face-to-face recruitment beginning with the training room staff. For several years, the author had a professional relationship with the head athletic trainer and he served as a key informant (Tracy, 2013) in the research site. This relationship allowed the researcher to understand the organizational context and develop relationships with other members (e.g., the head athletic trainer would "vouch" or introduce the researcher to other possible participants), which also allowed for the author collect high-quality data from a variety of organizational participant perspectives. She used a method of purposive selection to solicit injured athletes based on trainers' recommendations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

***Non-participant observation and fieldnote practices*.** During training camp the training room was open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. or until all athletes left the stadium. The training room was also closed for one hour between noon and 1 p.m. for a lunch break. This schedule was adhered to Monday through Saturday. On Sunday the training room was open for several hours in the afternoon for rehabilitation treatments and ice baths. Given the long hours the athletes, coaches, and trainers spent

in the stadium, the author was able to observe organizational members for more than 150 hours during the first three weeks of data collection. These observations took place in a variety of settings including during treatments, practices, scrimmage games, team meals, team meetings, and during player downtime between scheduled activities. While observing, the author took scratch notes by writing down verbatim words from observed participant interactions and kept headnotes (i.e., mental bracketing of events, communication and actions; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Some researchers believe that taking notes in front of participants intrudes on the scene and changes the data because note-taking makes others aware that they are being observed (cf. Cole, 1992, Kramer & Crespy, 2011). At first, participants were curious about why the researcher was observing them and would ask her what she was writing. She explained the project, its purpose, and continued writing. After a few days, the researcher became a part of the scene and was not questioned again about her presence. In fact, she was often asked by participants to perform the duties of the athletic training staff (e.g., taping of ankles before practice) and she had to remind them she was not an athletic trainer. Often, she would conduct informal interviews to understand how they were feeling during the interactions she observed (e.g., what they thought about a player being punished for arriving late) while athletes were receiving treatment. This process was essential to understanding the ongoing collaborative meaning-making of the team. After each day of observation, scratch notes were expanded into typed fieldnotes. This initial three-week phase of data collection resulted in 58 pages of notes.

***Discovering the Cream Cheese Episode*.** During the first week, the researcher focused on building relationships with participants, observing their interactions, and

conducting informal interviews. During this time, the author learned of a collective resistance episode, which occurred earlier in the summer (i.e., "The cream cheese episode") through informal conversations with athletes and the strength and conditioning coach. Using a method of abductive inquiry (Charmaz, 2006), the author examined the data iteratively, returned to theory and again back to examining data (Tracy, 2013). Reichertz (2010) explained abduction as "a cognitive logic of discovery" in which researchers assemble and discover combinations of features within their data where no current explanation within the literature exists (p. 16). Abduction is a type of inference that differs from pure induction (i.e., specific cases to general rules) and deduction (i.e., an inference drawn from general rules to specific cases; Richardson & Kramer, 2006). This process of discovery causes true surprise and then pushes researchers to search for a new explanation (Peirce, 1839, 1914). This new hypothetical explanation is then compared with data in search of disconfirming evidence. As part of an abductive process, during that point in data collection and analysis the researcher's focus shifted based on the theoretically-interesting nature of the resistance episode and surprising findings in the initial analysis. The author began to inquire about the episode during participant interviews as a means of seeking evidence of resistance *leadership*—a process Charmaz (2006) described as theoretical sampling (cf. Hood, 1983).

Phase 1: Interviews. During the first three-weeks of data collection the author solicited 35 participants and conducted 34 formal interviews with players (n = 20), trainers (n = 5) and coaches (n = 9; one participant left the organization before an interview could be completed). Interviews were conducted in a private office when

participants were available, usually at the end of each day of practice and treatments or on Sunday. The author used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B), which allowed her to adapt to participant responses, but also helped guide interviewees to answer questions of theoretical interest. Aside from background questions pertaining to their reasons for playing football, interviews focused on injury treatment and compliance, the values of coaches, athletes and trainers, and how each participant understood their relationship with one another. Participants were also asked to recount their perceptions of the "cream cheese episode," which occurred earlier in the summer. Each interview was recorded and ranged from approximately 14 minutes to 75 minutes in length (M = 28.92, SD = 12.31). Recordings were professionally transcribed and checked for accuracy by the author. The primary round of interviews yielded 556 pages of verbatim transcripts.

Organizational documents and artifacts. To supplement interview data and fieldnotes, organizational documents such as depth charts, injured lists, weight charts, student-athlete handbooks, the NCAA handbooks and bi-laws were also collected. These documents aided in understanding the constraints and resources members of the organization were afforded, but also how rules and structuring processes were open to discursive interpretation (later demonstrated through participant interviews). Specifically, the weight charts and depth charts were interesting given how they were used as control mechanisms within the team. Additionally, the author took pictures of practice and training room facilities and interactions when permitted by participants. These types of data supplemented descriptive accounts of fieldnotes. Lastly, the university's athletic website and team press releases were also included for

supplementary purposes to glean an understanding of the historical and current context of the team (e.g., previous win-loss record, how specific players have progressed or emerged as leaders over time). This background information enabled the author to understand participants' organizational context.

Reflective audio journaling. At the beginning and end of each day of ethnographic observation the author would audio record initial observations about participants and reflections on how her presence was influencing the scene. The length of recordings ranged approximately from 9 minutes to 21 minutes (M = 15.1, SD = 5.31). Tracy (2013) contends that researchers should engage in a "self-identity audit" before, during, and after they enter a research scene. This process helped the author to be reflexive about her how personal characteristics (e.g., gender, social class, fitness level, appearance) might affect participants' interaction with her and how these characteristics might shape her access to data (e.g., because she was a female she was unable to access areas like the football locker room, as a former Division I athlete, other athletes trusted and identified with her). Moreover, these recordings allowed her to bracket preconceptions and initial theorizing from the corpus of raw data (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This process also served as initial memo writing about emergent themes within the data.

Time away from the scene. After the first phase of data collection, the author spent the subsequent two months listening to the recorded interviews and reading through interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and organizational documents. The author began the process of data reduction and open coding, by focusing on questions of theoretical interest pertaining to control and resistance. The author engaged in an

iterative process of writing memos, reading literature, and re-reading data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Preliminary codes, categories and theorizing were presented at a national conference, and the subsequent peer review helped the author to think about the story the data were telling. Lucas and D'Enbeau (2013) described this process as an early intervention session and it aided the author in crafting the next steps of data collection and analysis. Specifically, these analytic processes guided the revision of the second interview protocol (See Appendix C) in order for the author to seek out areas of disconfirmation or nuance in the preliminary coding scheme, negative cases, and a relevant comparison to the phenomenon observed within the "cream cheese episode." Overlap between qualitative data collection and analysis can be an indication of high quality research because it demonstrates findings were emergent and data driven (Tracy, 2013).

Phase 2: Two additional weeks on site. In late October, the author returned to the research site to conduct a secondary phase of data collection. The author spent two weeks on site attending one home game, training room treatments, and conducting additional informal and formal interviews (n = 23). Informed by the initial analysis, the author sought out cases that might disconfirm or nuance the initial theorizing through additional interviews with football team members. The author conducted four secondary formal interviews with participants from the first phase and solicited an additional 10 participants from the football team who were present during the resistance episode in the summer. Through the second round of interviews the author also sought out and found a negative case (described in the Findings), which helped to further support the ongoing theorizing process. The second round of semi-structured

interviews focused on issues of control and resistance pertaining to the resistance episode specifically. See Appendix C for complete interview protocol. Interviews ranged approximately in length from 8 minutes to 71minutes (M = 26.46, SD = 17.11). These additional interviews yielded 372 pages of verbatim transcripts. These transcripts were professionally transcribed and checked for accuracy by the author.

Relevant comparison. One issue raised during the peer-review process was whether or not the football resistance episode was especially novel or unique. While on site in the preliminary phase the author had the opportunity to interact (while *literally* running) with some of the women's track team. In these informal conversations, she learned of a similar resistance episode that occurred within the women's track team three years earlier. The author re-told this story during a peer-review conversation and this guided her to use the track team episode as a relevant comparison to the theoretical explanation she was building from the football team's resistance episode (Bisel, Barge, Dougherty, Lucas, & Tracy, 2014). Christian and Carey (1989) explain that a "judicious" choosing of comparisons groups "improves the substance and explanatory power of our interpretations … by clarifying gross features and making conceptual categories more precise" (p. 366-367). To that end, the author sought out a relevant comparison to enhance the clarity and precision of the initial coding scheme.

During the second phase of data collection the author solicited the women's track and field head coach and several veteran track athletes (n = 10) to participate. She asked them to recount the resistance episode and employed a method of episode analysis during the interview process (cf. Tompkins and Cheney, 1983). The relevant

comparison episode was helpful for inductive theorizing because the track team's resistance episode unfolded differently from the football team's resistance episode.

Participants. All participants were coaches, athletic trainers, or athletes within the same athletic program at a NCAA Division I university (N = 54). Football coaches (n = 9) were male and ranged in age from 27 to 57 (M = 36.5, SD = 10.05). Football players (n = 31) were also male and ranged in age from 18 to 23 (M = 20.3, SD = 1.46). Most football players were raised the southeastern United States, with the majority coming from large cities such as Memphis, Tennessee, and Louisville, Kentucky. The players' positions varied from linebacker to wide receiver with proportional amounts of offensive and defensive players. Players also varied in length of involvement in the organization from two weeks to three years (M = 75.1 weeks, SD = 1.08). See Table 1 for complete demographic information.

Five athletic trainers were included based on their interaction with both the football team and women's track team. The head football trainer, two graduate assistants, and two student trainers (one student trainer was also a track athlete) participated in the study as well. Their ages ranged from 21 to 31 (M = 23.6, SD = 4.21). See Table 3 for complete trainer demographic information. Their perspective and insider knowledge was helpful to gaining another embedded vantage point to view each of the episodes.

Participants from the women's track team were included as a relevant comparison to the primary data collection and analysis. These female athletes ranged in age from 20 to 22 (M = 21.12, SD = 0.64). These athletes also varied in what event they specialized including throws, distance running, and sprint events. Compared to

participants from the football team, participants from the women's track team also varied more in hometown location (i.e., the comparative sample included some international athletes). The head track coach was also solicited for participation to gain a managerial perspective of the specific resistance episode described in the results. See Table 2 for participants from the women's track team complete demographic information.

Data Analysis

During and following data collection, a modified grounded theory approach was used to build theory from naturalistic (e.g., fieldnotes, organizational documents, artifacts) and interview data (Charmaz, 2006; Tracy, 2013). The analytic process followed an approach similar to Kramer and Crespy (2011), in that the author did not work from preconceived categories. A constant comparative method of analysis was utilized to code and analyze data. Analysis was accomplished through a multiphase, iterative, and cyclical process. After the completion of the second phase of data collection, the author first reduced the data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) by retaining those instances in which participants discussed either of the two specific resistance episodes (i.e., "the cream cheese episode" and "the spring break trip episode"). The author identified these specific episodes by allowing the actors themselves to describe the sequence of actions within each episode. During interviews, the researcher and participants negotiated the sequence and meaning of events to reach a common understanding represented by the episode through the inclusion of other perspectives and accounts (Harré & Secord, 1973; cf. Thompkins & Cheney, 1987). This type of episodic analysis and method of inquiry has been applied successfully in other studies of unobtrusive control (Thompkins & Cheney, 1987).

Next, during an open-coding process, the author read and re-read transcripts and fieldnotes. Through an iterative and descriptive process, the author identified preliminary themes regarding resistance and control within the athletic team contexts. This process involved treating the first example as a code and comparing it with a second example. If the second example did not match, a new code was created (cf.

Kramer & Crespy, 2011, Walker & Myrick, 2006), and so forth. The author read and coded each participant's description of the episode and then re-read and compared the coding excerpts from each interview. Accounts of the cream cheese episode were coded first and then compared with the track team's spring break episode separately.

Then, the author began focused coding by grouping initial codes into categories. This, again, was an iterative process as the data were re-read and grouped. During this phase of analysis categories were combined or sub-divided until the categories were comprehensive and all (reduced) data were accounted for within the theoretical explanation, including a negative case. During these later stages, codes and categories were discussed, challenged, and vetted by an outside researcher. Lastly, to answer the final two research questions posed, the author conducted a theoretical coding process (Charmaz, 2006). To accomplish this, the author compared the relationships among each of the coding categories derived in the focused coding process. As described in the preceding paragraphs, there was an open dialogue with participants throughout data collection and analysis as part of the research process of honing and understanding nascent themes (Creswell, 1998). See Figure 1 for explanation of the coding hierarchy.

Lastly, to answer RQ4 the author conducted a positioning analysis of the two resistances episodes (Harré and van Lagenhove, 1999). To begin, the author outlined each storyline action as described by participants for each episode. Next, based on participant responses to interview questions about each episode, the author analyzed each party's (i.e., athletes or coaches) perspective and perception of their own and other positions within the storyline (see Table 4 and Table 5). Then the author

compared the spring break episode and the cream cheese positioning to better understand why actors might have been positioned in such a way to collectively resist or comply with a managerial directive to tell on their teammates. This positioning analysis is discussed further in the findings section.

Qualitative Rigor

Creswell (2007) recommended using at least two of the eight strategies for enhancing the credibility of qualitative research; this research employed five. First, the author utilized a method of crystallization, which "brings together multiple methods and multiple genres simultaneously to enrich findings … each partial account complements the others, providing pieces of the meaning puzzle" (Ellingson, 2009b, p. 13). To achieve crystallization, the researcher collected and analyzed data from multiple sources (e.g., naturalistic observation, organizational documents, and interviews) and from multiple member perspectives (e.g., coaches, trainers, athletes). Second, to strengthen interpretive credibility, several peer-reviews were conducted during the later stages of analysis as the author refined and questioned the coding scheme.

Third, the author accounted for all data through the use of a negative case analysis and sought instances that disconfirmed or nuanced nascent theorizing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In the following section, the author explores the circumstances and influential forces that may have produced the negative case (Gibbs, 2007). Fourth, the author stayed in the field for a prolonged period of time (i.e., 5 weeks over the course of 4 months, generating more than 150 hours of observation). This extended time in the field allowed the author to build trust and rapport with

participants, increase the collection of pluralistic perspectives, and gain a better understanding of the context in which participant perspectives emerged (Creswell & Miller, 2000). These relational developments were also expedited because the author had previous relationships with some of the organizational members before formal data collection began. Lastly, the results and interpretations were critically evaluated through member checking during the analytic and writing stages by asking athletes, coaches, and athletic trainers to reflect on initial findings (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). All suggestions or changes were considered and implemented in the final coding scheme and in the presentation of findings.

Findings

A comparison of accounts from participants on both athletic teams revealed incongruence between their sensemaking of each resistance episodes. While the track and football resistance episodes are similar, each group's meaning-making about the episodes differ greatly. These opposing descriptions underscore the nuanced ways control and resistance structure (and are structured by) organizational actors' identifications. To answer RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 the following paragraphs (a) describe the football and track team contexts that gave rise to specific resistance episodes, (b) tell the story of the episode and provide analysis of each, (c) explain the original concept of *concertive resistance* as it relates to each episode, (d) highlight forces (i.e., *cognitive gaps, overlapping identifications*) that contributed to concertive resistance or concertive control, and (e) demonstrate how member sensemaking about specific resistance episodes invited subsequent acts of control and resistance. Then, in order to answer RQ4, the final portion of the chapter offers an in-depth analysis of actor positioning in each episode to explain the processes that triggered concertive control systems as well as concertive resistance. (In the following section, all names of persons and places are replaced with pseudonyms to protect participants' confidentiality).

Summers at Southern State University

"Football, you know, it's about life. Too many people just think we just play the game, but it's more than the game." – Derrick, junior, SSU Lineman

In the United States collegiate football is a way of life. Players and coaches at Southern State University dedicate most waking hours to football including practice,

conditioning workouts, meetings, and social activities. Randy, a sophomore running back, explains, "A lot of people have school, but we don't have a lot of time [outside of school] being an athlete, a college athlete, you're tired. All the time." Players develop strong interpersonal relationships with one another, given the amount of time they spend together. Tim, a junior nose guard, explains, "…[your teammates] kind of become your brother, like one of your brothers. Your lifetime friends are gonna be somewhere in this facility. One of your best men is gonna be from this team." Here, Tim explains the strong bond he developed with his teammates through close interaction.

In hopes of achieving a greater sport-school-life balance, NCAA DI bylaws regulate how often, how long and with whom players can practice, during the season, in the off-season, and in the summer. For example, the NCAA handbook states "A student-athlete's participation in countable athletically related activities shall be limited to a maximum of four hours per day and 20 hours per week" (p. 232, 17.1.6.1, NCAA, 2014). However, there are ways players and coaches circumvent these limitations (e.g., players can have an unlimited amount of "voluntary captain's practice" and "strength and conditioning" in the summer). At Southern State University, players are told that if they want to excel and earn playing time they need to "put in the work" during the summer months training with the SSU's strength and conditioning coach. Given financial constraints and league rules, the university is unable to provide meal and housing subsidies for student athletes in summer. This spending restriction contrasts with most Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) universities, which are able to provide subsidies for football players year-round. Thus, football

players at SSU are *expected to volunteer* to stay in the rural town where SSU is located over the summer to train, but also must work other jobs to pay their bills. That expectation to volunteer is itself a paradox. Moreover, according to coaches and players alike, many players come from homes where they are the primary bread winner or have no financial support from their parents. As evidence, 34 players on the 95 person-team qualify for the Federal Pell Grant (i.e., a grant awarded to student-athletes based on financial need). To make ends meet during the summer, many players report finding jobs through SSU's department of facilities management, stocking shelves at department stores, or working on local farms. Many of players train together, work together, and live together over the summer with the collective goal of conditioning for the upcoming season.

The Cream Cheese Episode

Over the summer, the strength and conditioning coach, Coach Smith, led a 6 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. weight workout to accommodate athletes' work schedules. He also managed a small budget to purchase "snacks" for the players to eat before or after they workout. While the NCAA does not allow FCS teams to provide full meals to athletes over the summer, the NCAA does allow teams to provide "snacks" to athletes. Specifically, the NCAA handbook states "an institution may provide fruit, nuts and bagels to a student-athlete at any time" (bylaw 16.5.2, sub-point h, p. 232). To aid athletes in covering their expenses and to ensure they ingest sufficient calories, Coach Smith told players that they can take as much food as they want after each workout. On Fridays, athletes were permitted to take leftover food after everyone had the opportunity to eat. One Friday, Coach Smith supplemented the bagel snack by

purchasing cream cheese for the team. He purchased the cream cheese with his personal money because the university is not allowed to provide this type of snack to athletes during the summer, per NCAA regulations.

As usual, before the 6 a.m. weight session Coach Smith arranged a folding table in the football locker room with bagels, fruit, jelly, peanut butter, and cream cheese. According to the coach and multiple player accounts, he then left to facilitate the workout in the weight room. When he returned to the locker room approximately 90 minutes later, the cream cheese was no longer on the folding table. Coach Smith recounts, as players showered and dressed, he asked loudly where the cream cheese was and who took it. Players recalled that a few teammates responded with laughter—unsure about the seriousness of Coach Smith's request. Coach Smith responded aloud that even if the person who took the cream cheese is no longer in the room, someone on the team knows who took the cream cheese and should come forward. Players recount that Coach Smith explained he was not upset because the cream cheese was "stolen," but was upset over the principle of the act, in that taking the cream cheese is like "stealing from the team." No player responded to Coach Smith's request for information. Coach Smith told the team that if no one comes forward and reveals who took the cream cheese then the team will have a "punishment workout" on Monday morning. The players left for the weekend.

At 6 a.m. on Monday morning players arrived for their weight workout. Coach Smith asked the team again if anyone knows who took the cream cheese. The players remained silent. Coach Smith told the players that since they were unwilling to be "accountable for their teammates" they are all going to have to do a punishment

workout. He led them outside to the stadium bleachers and explained that each of them will have to sit in every seat in the stadium, unless someone tells him who took the cream cheese. The players remained silent and began the punishment workout. (The following dialogue is an amalgamation of Derrick and Coach Smith's interviews. Several other players discussed the dialogue in their interviews, which is evidence that Derrick retold the story to his teammates).

> After thirty minutes of the punishment workout, Derrick, a junior lineman on the team raises his hand and said, "Coach, I did it, it was me."
>
> Coach Smith eyed Derrick and said, "Alright, son come with me."
>
> He led Derrick into the coaching office and retrieved a Bible from the shelf.
>
> Coach Smith turned to Derrick and said, "Put your hand on this Bible and swear to me you're the one who took the cream cheese."
>
> Derrick smiled, shook his head and said, "Aww coach I can't do that."
>
> Coach Smith shook his head and said, "Well then I can't let everybody stop doing this workout."

They returned to the stadium bleachers. Silently, each player sat in every seat in the stadium. Then Coach Smith released them to allow the players enough time to attend their work shifts. Several months later (at the time of the second phase of data collection) the coaching staff was still unaware of who took the cream cheese.

Episode Analysis

Did the players know who took it? A common question asked after retelling the cream cheese episode is whether or not players knew who took the cream cheese. Based on interview data, at the time of the punishment workout the majority of the

players knew which player took the cream cheese and at the time of the interviews *all* players interviewed knew who took the cream cheese. During their interviews some players offered to disclose the player's name to the author given the confidentiality promised during the interview. This disclosure supports the idea that players *choose* not to comply with a managerial directive not to tell on their teammates, even though at least some players could have complied.

Players' aversion to comply with a managerial directive to tell—in the words of participants "snitch"—on their teammates is especially apparent within this episode. When asked to define snitching, the participants described the act as some variation of "telling somebody's business that ain't got nothing to do with you," "telling on somebody for the benefit of yourself," and "like the 'hood word for a tattletale." Moreover, as participants recounted the resistance episode the author was able to identify specific decisional premises or rules associated with their decision not to snitch (i.e., choosing to remain silent) and normative expectations. As Simon (1976) explains decision is "the process of 'drawing conclusions' from premises.' It is therefore the premise… rather than the whole decision that serves as the smallest unit of analysis" (p. xii). Premises were apparent to the researcher through participants' accounts of the episode and sensemaking about their decisions within the episode. Their accounts of the episode also revealed the origins of these decisional premises as well as the identification targets (i.e., team identification versus organizational identification) from which premises emanated.

Remaining silent. The author's initial assumption was players had time to discuss and plan a collective resistance act in backstage interactions—a process

commonly described in resistance literature (Murphy, 1998; Tracy, 2000). In contrast to previous research literature on organizational resistance, no player reported having discussed his plan of action to remain silent *before* the team's punishment workout. Curiously, players explained they knew their teammates were not going to disclose who took the cream cheese because that would be considered snitching and snitching is morally wrong. This act of noncompliance via silence in response to a managerial directive to tell on their teammate was often constructed as normative behavior in the culture of sports. Peter, a sophomore, running back, explained, "You don't snitch on your teammates; it's already understood." Several other players explained they did not need to discuss not snitching with their teammates because "it's just understood" or "you just know" or "that's how it's always been." Members were able to call on previous schema and Discourse to resist in the moment without talk or the presence of an overt resistance leader. Furthermore, participants explained how their overlapping identifications (i.e., cultural, masculinity, team camaraderie) with teammates allowed them to act in a similar manner and trust that their teammates would do the same (i.e., remain silent). The researcher also noted cognitive gaps between participants' sensemaking of their personal premises, organizational premises, and their decision conclusion to resist the managerial directive to tell on a teammate (cf. Bisel et al. 2007). These cognitive gaps created space for collective resistance and later sensemaking about the collective resistance event, which framed the team's resistant action as morally justified.

Overlapping Identifications. The identifications players developed with each other were, in this instance, stronger than the identification players had with the

organization, which facilitated a collective resistance event. Participants described three major overlapping identifications within their team that enabled them to resist in the moment without previous discussion and without overt resistance leadership. The overlapping and mutually-reinforcing identifications included: *cultural, masculinity* and *team* identifications. Team interactions during and about the cream cheese episode were shaped by these overlapping identifications and reflexively strengthened these identifications by making them more salient to team members.

Cultural. First, participants often explained that they learned not to "snitch" from an early age because of the culture in which they were raised. Daniel, a junior defensive end, explained, "Snitching, no, it didn't go around when I was growing up." He recounts how he learned this rule by explaining how his grandfather would handle a child who told on their sibling. Daniel explained:

> I guess that Granddad was happy you snitched. But Granddad also know he don't want to raise no snitch. So I mean either way you go, you still got a whoopin. Especially if you was around when it happened. If you was around when it happened, you were accountable.

Here, Daniel describes not only learning this rule at a young age through corporal punishment (i.e., "you still got a whoopin"), he also explains why taking the punishment without snitching was preferred. He reasoned punishment was inevitable, but the social sanctioning that resulted from snitching was not. The excerpt demonstrates a key cultural value that snitching is unacceptable and also stigmatizing by peers. What is important here is not whether Daniel's grandfather actually avoided raising a snitch, but rather that Daniel attributes this intention to the patriarchal figure

in his family thereby revealing his interpretive schema (i.e., the avoidance of snitching is a value that must be transmitted to future generations). Other participants described how they came to know this cultural value through the "environment you grew up in," by the value being "grown" on them, and explaining "in my household … if you know something happened you don't say nothin' about it."

Participants also explained that their overlapping identifications and subsequent decision to remain silent was, in part, due to similar cultures in which they were raised. Johnny, a senior defensive end, explained "Cause most of [my teammates]… they're from like the inner city; there ain't no snitches." Johnny explained that in the "inner city" (e.g., Memphis, St. Louis) snitching is a cultural taboo of the highest order. This statement also implies that players or coaches who are not from an "inner city" many encounter or engage in snitching. This out-grouping stems from Johnny's assertion that snitching did not occur or was not tolerated in the inner-city as opposed to other cultures. This naming of culture (i.e., inner-city) implies his culture differs from the mainstream, where—according to Johnny— snitching is common. The important point here is not whether snitching is indeed uncommon in inner cities, but rather that Jonny uses his team's overlapping cultural upbringing to make sense of or offer an explanation of why no one told the coach who took the cream cheese. Ultimately, he is describing an extra-organizational cultural norm. To better understand this cultural norm, the researcher asked Peter to explain what might happen to a person who snitched. He stated:

Peter: Snitches get stiches.

Researcher: Right, so they would be ostracized, stigmatized, beat up?

Peter: Well, not hurt – probably not hurt – you'll get, yeah, you'll probably get eliminated [from the group]… silent treatment.

In this excerpt, Peter recites a colloquial aphorism (i.e., snitches get stiches) and demonstrates not only the cultural taboo of snitching, but also a premise that such a taboo act demands punishment. He later clarifies that this statement does not necessarily mean that a group member would be physically punished for snitching, but rather *alienated* from the group altogether. This excerpt demonstrates the culturally-bound concertive pressure that resulted in player silence in the cream cheese episode. Taken as a whole, players articulated that their decision not to snitch during the cream cheese episode was related to a culturally-learned normative rule acquired outside of the organizational context.

Masculinity. In interviews, players would often explain their team's silence as a quality of being male or masculine. A masculine identity was an easy way for players and coaches to identify with one another, given the masculine culture of the sport of football (Anderson & Kian, 2012; Foley,1990) and that all players and coaches were male. However, players often constructed snitching as non-masculine and immature. For example, Greg, a freshman running back, explained that the reason no one on the team told was because of an unspoken code or normative behavior for all men: He stated, "It's just the guy code." Daniel, a junior lineman, echoed Greg's sentiments by explaining "It's just a rule, period. Like for guys." Other players explained that snitching was not only *un*manly, snitching also demonstrated immaturity. Chris, a junior center, explained that if someone told on him for taking cream cheese he would be angry and confront the person who told. He stated, "…you

know we all grown men. There is no point to telling who did it. We ain't little boys here so. You know what I am saying?" Chris explained that telling on a teammate would be akin to regressing to childhood. In the statement he asserts a collective masculine identity (e.g., "*we* all grown *men*") to explain why no one on his team would have told the coach who took the cream cheese. Notice the "so" at the end of the sentence is a warrant for the three previous sentences (i.e., "we all grown men … no point to telling … we ain't little boys … so"). This juxtaposition of a collective masculinity claim paired with the normative rule of not snitching demonstrates how and why players were able to act collectively in the moment.

Team camaraderie. Lastly, participants explained that they were able to resist and trust that others would resist the managerial directive to tell on each other because of their team camaraderie. Players explained that this trust and camaraderie was built over the previous season and summer training session because they and their teammates were willing to go through physical discomfort for the collective benefit. Tyler, a junior linebacker, stated:

> I feel like I trust them because you know we done sweated together, we done went through countless hours of putting in hard work, weight room, field, and in the film room so I feel like I can trust them. 'Cause I know I can trust them on the field, so I feel like I can trust them off the field too.

First, Tyler states that his trust and team identification was built through the commitment and loyalty (e.g., "countless hours of putting in hard work") his teammates demonstrated to achieve collective goals. Next, he alludes to his trust on the field, which is imperative in a team sport like football where a quarterback needs a

lineman to block for him in order to make a play and avoid the pain of a blindside tackle. Last, he explains that this sense of team camaraderie extends beyond the field, which is why he trusted his teammates to remain silent during the cream cheese incident. Similarly, Aaron, a senior linebacker, stated "…all of us that were here over the summer, we were all grinding together and like hurting together so I mean if a teammate was to [remain silent] then you know you can trust that guy at any given moment." Again, Aaron explained that if a teammate is willing to sacrifice for the team physically, then he has proven his loyalty to the team. Both Tyler and Aaron used vivid imagery (e.g., "sweated together," "countless hours," "grinding," "hurting") to describe the process of team bonding and developing team identification. This use of dramatic messaging demonstrates the meaning and value they ascribe to these relationships and highlights how reluctant players might be to jeopardize peer relationships.

Furthermore, several players described their team culture with family metaphors to demonstrate the close bond they cultivated with teammates. Many players described their teammate not just as a friend, but as a brother. In fact, "brother" or "family" was referenced 84 times throughout participant interviews. Participant use of a family metaphor demonstrates the strength of team-level identification—signifying team bonds were experienced as stronger than ordinary friendship. For instance, Kyle, a senior right-tackle, explained why teammates do not tell on each other. He stateed:

> It's just all about loyalty, for real, like, I mean, we supposed to be family, we supposed to be brothers, you don't tell on your brother. I mean, don't – you

> help your brother, if anything. You know if he did something, you go talk to that, "hey, like man, come on you can't be doing that," but we ain't gonna rat you out or do none of that, you know?

In this response, Kyle uses the metaphors of family to explain the close bond and expectations for loyalty he has with teammates. He also explains the culturally-embedded rule that family members do not tell on other family members. Interestingly, he also explains how the situation should be handled if a person breaks a rule or engages in immoral behavior, in that a peer should go to the rule-breaker directly instead of involving an authority figure—a distinct reference to concertive control. This subtle allusion to the perpetuation of a concertive control system is explored later in the chapter. Taken as a whole, players articulated that their team identity was cultivated through physical sacrifice over time. This unique bond allowed them to resist a managerial directive to tell on a teammate.

Cognitive gaps. Bisel et al. (2007) explained that *cognitive gaps* "always exist between premises and their conclusions" in that all premises are value-laden and open to interpretation and discursive reconstruction (p. 138). These gaps between value-laden premises and (often multiple and conflicting) decisional conclusions are likely resources for member resistance (Bisel et al., 2007), as they were in the cream cheese episode. Interestingly, the SSU Head Football Coach, Jack Harris, explained during his interview that, "We [the team] only have one rule and that's 'do right.'" He often used "do right" as a mantra and extracted cue during team meetings as well. This strategically ambiguous (Eisenberg, 1984) premise of "do right" can be applied and interpreted in any number of ways by players and coaches in their decision

conclusions and functions as a mechanism of control (e.g., Is it "right" to miss study hall hours?). However, the ambiguity in this premise also allows for different interpretations of the "right" decision (e.g., Is it "right" to tell on a teammate?).

Coach Smith and several players described the challenge of adhering to several conflicting between premises and decisional conclusions within their interviews. These descriptions and excerpts revealed to the researcher the presence of a cognitive gap between organizational and extra-organizational premises and interviewee's decisional conclusions. For example, many players described their confusion and amusement at Coach Smith's angry reaction to the missing cream cheese. Chris, a junior center, contended:

> Yeah [Coach Smith] was pissed. He was furious, it was so funny you know. He was so mad 'cause he didn't even get none of the cream cheese. I don't think nobody really cared, but at the same time though it was real funny so.

In this excerpt, Chris explains that Coach Smith's reaction was so unexpected over "something like cream cheese" that it was humorous. Notice how Chris also makes a conjecture about how Coach Smith might have also wanted the cream cheese for himself, which contributed to his outburst (i.e., "He was so mad 'cause he didn't even get none of the cream cheese"). This retrospective framing of the resistant act downplays and minimizes the indiscretion of "stealing" to simply "taking" the cream cheese given that "nobody really cared."

Furthermore, several players explained that they neither understood his anger because "it's just cream cheese," (n = 6) nor why Coach Smith would be so concerned to know who took "something like cream cheese." Other participants explained that

the cream cheese had little monetary value and taking it was an insignificant infraction. For example, Phil, a junior receiver, explained, "we ain't make big deal about it, because it's just cream cheese it's $2 at the store, a $1.25, so you like it's just cream cheese." Connor, a sophomore defensive back, reiterated the rejected label that taking the cream cheese was stealing from the team by explaining "it was cream cheese so don't nobody just think of it like [stealing]." Similarly, Aaron, a senior linebacker, rejected the coach's interpretation that taking the cream cheese was "stealing from the team" by explaining that many of the players do not even like cream cheese. He states, "…from my knowledge I don't think that many people was like using the cream cheese so one of the teammates just took it, you know like took the whole thing or whatever, you know not thinking nothing of it." He reiterated this reinterpretation because often players are allowed to take food home on Fridays and taking the cream cheese was only later labeled as "stealing."

A cognitive gap was apparent between the organizational premises to "do right" and how players decided not to comply with a managerial directive to tell on a teammate specifically about cream cheese. For example, Peter, a sophomore running back, explained "You're not supposed to snitch on your teammate, especially over something like some cream cheese. *Cream cheese*." Here, not only does Peter frame the culturally-constructed moral premise (snitching on your teammate is not "right"), but also frames the managerial directive as absurd (i.e., "especially over something like some cream cheese"). This sensemaking highlights how team members exploited the cognitive gap between organizational premises and cultural premises within their subsequent decision making.

Also worthy of note, some players used *organizational* premises to defend their decision to resist a managerial directive within their sensemaking of the episode. For example, when the researcher asked Jack, a junior wide receiver, why he thought his teammates did not tell on each other, he explained, "…maybe coach always talking about us being a team, people thought it was a time for us to be a team." Here, Jack uses the organizational premise of "being a team" as a way to defend the team's resistant behavior. He reframes the collective act of resisting a managerial directive to tell on a teammate as an act that fulfills an organizationally relevant premise (i.e., "coach is always talking about us being a team"). Similarly, Chuck, a freshman strong safety, uses an idiom the head coach often repeated in practice and team meetings to defend his team's collective resistance. Chuck stated:

> Then, [the cream cheese episode] let us know that we can trust each other. Like us on the field, we can trust each other to do our job like coach says 'it's the little things that count.' Then that right there was a big step cause that let the person know who took it like they my brothers, they gonna, I trust them like they ain't going to rat me out over nothing that little so.

Here, Chuck links the ideas of team trust—as a result of the cream cheese episode—with the coaches' mantra and organizational premise "it's the little things that count." While these two ideas are in reality non-sequitur, Chuck rhetorically identifies and associates the two ideas to frame the team's actions positively within the episode. As a result, Chuck invokes an organizational premise ironically to defend the team's refusal to comply with a managerial directive. Lastly, Chuck echoes his teammates' perspective by framing the indiscretion of taking the cream cheese as "little" and not

an act worthy of telling on a teammate.

Other players had difficulty negotiating multiple, conflicting organizational and cultural premises. For example, Tim, a junior nose guard, described why no one on his team would have or "will ever" tell the coaches who took the cream cheese. He stated:

> We're a family; we're a team, not gonna throw somebody or each other under the bus. I mean, we hold each other accountable, but at the same time, we try to watch each other's backs. I mean, if he did it, I mean, we would – everybody just took the fall for it. …So, there's not much you can do about it. Just take your punishment and go on about it, but it's just some cream cheese. [chuckles]

Interestingly, in this excerpt, Tim links the organizational premises of "holding each other accountable" and the cultural premise of "watching each other's backs." These two premises are sometimes at odds in the cream cheese episode; however, many players explained that the ideal way to handle this situation would not be telling—especially not telling publicly—on a teammate, but rather to talk to the player directly, which is a way to hold him accountable without "throwing them under a bus." Through this linking of two oppositional premises, Tim displays the tension between conflicting premises that players must negotiate without being disloyal to a teammate. Tim demonstrates his struggle to negotiate these concurrent premises with the phrase "but at the same time." Lastly, he reiterates the insignificance of the indiscretion of taking the cream cheese (i.e., "it's just some cream cheese") and laughs about the absurdity of being punished at all. As a whole, players comments on the cream cheese

episode made a gap apparent between certain premises and specific decisional conclusions. The space between organizational premises and conclusions was a platform for their reinterpretation and resistance.

Surprisingly, even Coach Smith's interview response illustrates the cognitive gap between premises and their conclusions present within his demand to "do right," by telling on a teammate. He admitted that he himself might have had difficulty complying with his own managerial directive to tell on a teammate, given that telling on a teammate is a cultural and moral taboo. He stated:

> I grew up in upstate New York, in the country, like, I didn't grow up in like Memphis, or St. Louis, or anything like that. So, like, I don't – to be honest with you, if I was one of them, I don't know that I would have told, either. 'Cause it's like – you know, you're like snitching on your teammate. So, but I mean, they all had to go through the consequences for it, which is – not saying it's right or wrong; that's what I decided to do and I was gonna stick to my guns.

Clearly, in this response Coach Smith is aware of his own and players' different and overlapping identifications (e.g., "I grew up in upstate New York… I didn't grow up in like Memphis or St. Louis…"), which he associates with the culturally-learned moral premise (i.e., snitching is wrong). Retrospectively, Coach Smith questions how he would have behaved as a young athlete in a similar situation. Notice, he also qualifies this admission with "to be honest with you," which hints at his awareness of the contradictory nature of the statement. He confesses the moral ambiguity of the consequence he was enforcing (i.e., "not saying it's right or wrong") even though he

labeled the cream cheese episode as "stealing." Coach Smith's explanation demonstrates the cognitive gap between the organizational premises ("do right"), players' decisions not to tell, and his own decision to punish them collectively.

Concertive Resistance: An Original Concept

A key theoretical aspect of the cream cheese episode is that players resisted a managerial directive collectively in spite of the absence of leaderly talk coordinating their efforts. As discussed previously, players were able to act in the moment by drawing on their overlapping identifications and resist collectively through silence rather than complying with a managerial directive to tell on their teammate. The original concept of *concertive resistance* is demonstrated in this episode. As discussed, concertive control is collective control that is exercised by workers themselves according to a set of core organizational values, which reinforce managerial control or hegemonic organizational Discourse (Barker, 1993). Here, and in comparison, concertive *resistance* is collective resistance that is exercised by workers according to a set of core *group-level* values that challenge, invert, or disrupt managerial control or hegemonic organizational Discourse. In this episode players were able to act collectively by drawing on premises (i.e., snitching is not "right") inculcated by their overlapping and mutually-reinforcing identifications (i.e., cultural, masculinity, and team camaraderie) and trust that other players would do the same in the absence of backstage talk or interaction. These group-level identifications were *concertive*, given that they were not only unobtrusive, but they also controlled or governed player behavior collectively at the group level (e.g., the aphorism "don't nobody want to be called a snitch"). When others responded by not speaking up readily, it reinforced for

individual members that speaking up would represent exclusion from the group norm of silence. Moreover, the cream cheese episode demonstrates concertive *resistance* in that members resisted compliance with a managerial directive collectively as a result of team-level concertive-control mechanisms. Given the cultural salience and taboo of snitching (e.g., "snitches get stiches"), players were willing to go through physical pain and even lie to avoid complying with the managerial directive to tell on their teammate. Moreover, the cognitive gaps between the organizational premises (e.g., "do right") and the decision to comply with the managerial directive created discursive space for even highly-identified organizational members to resist. Members were then able to make sense of the episode retrospectively using inculcated organizational premises (e.g., "Do right," "Be a team") as well as premises they learned outside the organization from their overlapping identifications (e.g., snitching is morally wrong) to justify their noncompliance as essentially indicative of organizational loyalty.

Team Sensemaking about the Resistance Episode

After the cream cheese episode the players and Coach Smith resumed their normal practice schedule. However, since the incident was a dramatic event in the team's organizational life—humorous to players and frustrating to Coach Smith—the cream cheese story was told and retold to other players, coaches, trainers, and athletic administrators. This retelling allowed members to make sense of and interpret the incident from their own perspectives. Two salient and conflicting themes emerged within member sensemaking of the episode: most players made sense of the incident as solidifying team cohesion, whereas a few players and Coach Smith made sense of

the incident as demonstrating the team's lack of respect for each other, for him, and for the football program in general.

Concertive resistance and team cohesion. First, the majority of players described the incident as fostering team cohesion and team bonding, not only because they suffered through a physical punishment for each other, but also because they were willing to sacrifice physically to remain loyal to their teammate. For example Kyle, a senior right-tackle, interpreted the incident by comparing the team's behavior to behavior in previous seasons. He stated, "…The year before when I first got here, yeah, somebody would have told then. But nobody told this year and it was just, like, [the cream cheese episode] kind of made me feel like, 'snap, we gotta a nice little team, now.'" In his comparison to previous years, Kyle explained that the cream cheese episode was evidence that he could trust his teammates to function as a cohesive unit. Other players explained that they also saw the incident as a sign that they could trust their teammates in other more serious situations (e.g., a fight breaks out at a party). For example, Aaron, a senior linebacker, stated, "[The cream cheese episode] was something little, had it been something bigger like, I'm pretty sure like we would have all stuck together you know, so how I took it like, I saw that as a sign." Here, Aaron not only rejects the idea that taking the cream cheese was a major indiscretion (i.e., the episode "was something little"), he also ascribes a positive meaning to the episode and speculates as to how the team might behave cohesively in future situations. Here, Aaron constructs the episode retrospectively as a coalescing moment in the team's historical narrative. Similarly, Chuck, a freshman strong safety, described the team before and after the cream cheese episode. He stated:

> Yeah, before [the cream cheese incident] happened, you know, we was kind of like always at each other neck like ‘cause we was from different places. So we really didn’t know about each other, but then when that happened everybody was real close together. ‘Cause like ‘he came from the same background I came from. He ain't said, he ain't saying nothing’ and stuff like that. ‘So maybe he not like a bad guy,’ something like that, everybody closer.

In this excerpt, Chuck attributes the conflicts the team was having in the summer to being “from different places” and not really knowing “about each other.” He constructs the cream cheese episode as a moment of solidarity in which he was able to see his teammates “true” identifications (i.e., “he came from the same background I came from”) based on their behavior within the episode (i.e., “he ain’t saying nothing”). Given that Chuck was a freshman and this episode occurred early in his interactions with the team, he constructs this episode as a turning point that fostered team cohesion. Within these player interpretations of the episode it is clear that their behavior was both structured by their overlapping identifications and helped foster their co-identifications within their larger organizational identification to the SSU football program. Through a lens of structuration (Giddens, 1984), this insight demonstrates the ongoing, layered, and temporal process of identification and how one resistance episode—especially a collective resistance episode—might change organizational member relationships in unexpected and unintended ways. In this case, their overlapping identifications influenced their decision to resist a managerial directive, this collective decision-making helped to then reinforce their collective identification.

Team disrespect. In contrast to player sensemaking, Coach Smith made sense of this single episode by linking it to a variety of other instances that demonstrated for him a deficit in team accountability and responsibility. He explained that this one incident of "theft" is indicative of deep-seeded issues of disrespect and mistrust within the team culture (e.g., incidents of players taking each other's team-issued water bottles and practice clothing). In his primary interview, Coach Smith explained that he believed the incident was suggestive of major issues on the team and would result in a losing season. He stated, "I think the [the cream cheese episode] is gonna make it very hard for us to be a really, really good football team." When the author interviewed Coach Smith several weeks into the season at the second round of data collection, SSU had only won 3 of 9 games—SSU's final record was 3 and 12. When asked why he thought the team refused "to be accountable" for their teammates, he reiterated that the episode was indicative of larger issues of team accountability. He stated:

> I think everybody … genuinely wants to be successful, wants what's best for the team, but sometimes that requires… multiple people to step outside of their comfort zone and call somebody out like 'Hey that's not something that we do around here.' … But nobody on our team, um, well right now… is willing to do that. I mean that, *that day right there told me*, I told them, … something to the effect of like, "it's gonna be very hard for us to win an [name] Championship if this, if nobody is willing to step up, cause I'm sure somebody had to know something."

In this example, Coach Smith's concern about a lack of social pressure from within the group to comply is akin to explaining that concertive control appeared to absent from

the team. He explains that he feels this lack of social pressure or "accountability" is preventing the team from following—or enabling the team not to follow—organizational rules (e.g., nobody is willing to "call somebody out"). In this excerpt, spoken months after the cream cheese episode, he makes sense of the resistance episode as a sign that their team was in jeopardy of having a losing season. He argues that this lack of accountability is related to mediocrity in other areas of team life including tardiness to practice, missing rehabilitation treatments, and missing study hall hours. Taken together, Coach Smith and players differed greatly in how they made sense of the cream cheese episode and its subsequent influence on organizational life and team performance.

Negative case. All players, except one, agreed they would have refused to comply with a managerial directive to tell on their teammate regardless of whether they knew who took the cream cheese at the time of the punishment. Paul, a fifth-year senior quarterback, disagreed with the other player's sensemaking about the cream cheese episode. He explained, "Yeah, I had to do punishment workout and at that time I didn't know who it was. If I did, I would have said who it was." He goes on to explain that he understood why Coach Smith was mad and explained that this episode is indicative of major issues on this team. His sensemaking echoed Coach Smith's assertion that the cream cheese episode is symbolic of inherent problems with team accountability and culture. Paul explained:

> Just the fact that we have players that are selfish like that, … it's cream cheese, but in my opinion, I mean, if you're gonna take a cream cheese, *why would you not hurt the team in other ways,* you know, that are more important. So if you

> can have enough discipline not to take cream cheese, then you know that's gonna directly reflect, you know, on the field and then off of the field.

Here, Paul frames the taking of cream cheese not as an innocuous, harmless act, but rather as an insidious indication of systemic issues within their team discipline. He argues that if his teammates cannot demonstrate self-discipline on "cream cheese"—resembling the head coach's "do the little things" organizational premise—then they will likely be unable to demonstrate self-discipline when it comes to life "temptations" that "hurt the team." Paul's perspective differs greatly from his teammates and this difference could be attributed to a number of reasons. First, Paul is a Caucasian, fifth-year, quarterback who grew up in a rural town in the southern United States. His demographic markers are similar to SSU coaching staff's racial and geographical background, and differ from the majority of his teammates (i.e., 62 percent of the entire team is African American; 77 percent of the coaching staff is Caucasian; 89 percent of coaches were raised rural areas of the country, 57 percent of athletes hometowns are in urban areas). Second, Paul also explained that he aspires to coach collegiate football and will be a graduate coaching assistant for the SSU football team next year. He explained that he often thinks about how he would handle situations similar to the cream cheese episode as a future coach. As a result, Paul's overlapping identifications may coincide more closely with the coaching staff's rather than his teammates, leaving him more susceptible to align his decision conclusions with those premises the coaching staff inculcates. This negative case, while divergent from the rest of player responses, still supports the theoretical explanation of concertive resistance in that members drew on overlapping identifications to conform or resist a

managerial directive. This negative case analysis supports the notion that the theory presented here is analytically complete (Creswell, 2008) in that it accounts for those rare cases that do not fit within the observed pattern.

Relevant Comparison: SSU Women's Track Team

As discussed previously, during the second round of data collection the author sought out a relevant comparison resistance episode to strengthen and refine abductive theorizing based on the analysis of the cream cheese episode (Christians & Carey, 1989). During the first phase of the ethnography, the author learned of a seemingly opposite resistance episode in which athletes on the women's track team engaged in a resistant act and were subsequently identified by their teammates to the coach. In other words, these athletes did "snitch" on their teammates. This episode's features are somewhat similar, yet, its final outcome contrasts with the cream cheese episode experience by the football team. This relevant comparison provides further evidence for the concept of concertive resistance, given that in this comparative episode concertive resistance failed to emerge. The following sections tell the story of the resistance episode and provide a comparative analysis.

Spring Break Drinking Episode

In spring of 2012 the SSU track team traveled to a spring break track meet in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Friday was the final day of competition. Head Coach Jones extended the trip into the weekend to allow athletes leisure opportunities to tour the city. After the conclusion of the meet on Friday, Coach Jones made an announcement that there was to be "absolutely no drinking on the trip." She explained that if athletes were caught drinking alcohol on the trip—regardless of whether or not

they were of legal age—both she and Assistant Coach Cunningham could lose their jobs. Coach Jones warned the women that "they would be kicked-off the team" if they were caught drinking alcohol on the trip. Moreover, she cautioned the team that "if anyone knew of others drinking" and did not divulge this information to the coaching staff, they would also lose their scholarships and be removed from the team. Coach Jones explained in her interview that at the time she thought this "threat would be enough" to dissuade team members from drinking alcohol.

Friday night after dinner, several women on the team made plans to go to an 18-and-older dance club on the boardwalk. Before the team left, Sara and Shelby, senior sprinters on the team, went to a liquor store and purchased alcohol. They returned to their hotel room, poured drinks into paper cups in the bathroom, and drank them conspicuously in front of some of their teammates before leaving with the rest of the team for the dance club. On Sunday the team returned to SSU without Coach Jones discovering Sara and Shelby's violation of the "no drinking policy."

Two weeks later, Coach Jones received a conference phone call from Katie, a middle distance sophomore, Kristi, a middle distance sophomore, and Amanda, a long distance freshman. They asked to meet with the coach in a location away from campus and away from the team. In their meeting, the three athletes reported to Coach Jones that Sara and Shelby were drinking on the spring break trip. According to Coach Jones, Katie, Kristi and Amanda said they felt they needed to tell her about Sara and Shelby's drinking because they were worried that they might also get in trouble for the violation if they did not report it. Also, the women said they were worried about another athlete's safety: Sara's roommate. Her roommate, Stacie, a sophomore

sprinter, knew about the drinking on the spring break trip. Sara was threatening to harm Stacie (i.e., "beat her up") if she told Coach Jones about Sara's drinking on the spring break trip. Lastly, according to Coach Jones, Katie, Kristi, and Amanda received a punishment for underage drinking in the fall semester. Coach Jones explained "[Katie, Kristi and Amanda] were like 'it's just not fair that we've been in trouble for drinking before and they're not getting in trouble.'"

The following Monday morning, Coach Jones arranged a 6:00 a.m. team meeting. During the meeting she asked the team "to raise their hands if they drank on the spring break trip." Many of the women on the team at the time were unaware that anyone had been drinking on the trip. No one on the team confessed. Sara and Shelby were later called into a private meeting with Coach Jones and were told that they would have to complete a punishment workout instead of being removed from the team. According to athlete interviews, Sara and Shelby were outstanding athletes and highly ranked in the conference. Thus, they afforded the team a greater opportunity to score a large number of points in the upcoming conference championship track meet. Coach Jones required the team to watch Sara and Shelby complete a four-hour punishment workout to "hold each other accountable" for breaking team rules. She explained "if you're letting the team down, the team should know you're letting them down because [they should have] accountability amongst each other."

Distance runners versus sprinters. In the following weeks, according to athlete interviews, Sara and Shelby felt they had been betrayed by teammates. They accused the distance runners on the team of being "snitches." Everyone on the team denied telling Coach Jones about the drinking on the spring break trip—including

Katie, Kristi and Amanda. Still, Sara and Shelby refused to believe them. This mistrust created conflict and a rift between the distances runners and the sprinters. Sara and Shelby "unfriended" and "blocked" the distance runners on social media and pretended not to know the distance runners if they saw them on campus. According to player and coach interviews, over the next three years, the team members (both sprinters and distance runners) continued to drink in season and their teammates continued to tell Coach Jones about the violations of team policy.

Spring Break Episode Analysis

While there are some similarities between the cream cheese and spring break episodes, there are vast differences in the way each team reacted to team members' resistant behavior (i.e., resisting or complying with a managerial directive to tell on a teammate). In comparison to the cream cheese episode, the spring break episode demonstrates how the absence of strong overlapping identifications between peers and a strong inculcation of organizational premises superseded the sport culture norm of "not telling on a teammate." All of the track team members who were present at the event and interviewed (n = 10) articulated that "teammates should not tell on each other," including Amanda (i.e., one of the women who identified Sara and Shelby's violation to the coach). This articulation demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of the norm. However, the track athletes interviewed also described how each of them had been identified by teammate or knew of a teammate who had been identified for drinking. These descriptions serve as evidence of frequent violations of the normative rule within the track team. As a result of being told on, participants described how each person had been given an individualized punishment

for each separate offense (e.g., reduction of scholarship, punishment workouts, 10-page punishment essays, removal from the team). According to Coach Jones and athletes interviewed, their punishment was dependent on a variety of factors: how much they drank, whether or not they were of age, if the drinking occurred in season or during pre-season and whether or not they had supplied minors on the team with alcohol.

As a result of individualized punishments, athletes described strong feelings of injustice at the apparently idiosyncratic nature of punishments. Athletes described Coach Jones as "playing favorites," and that "people that snitched [on others who were also drinking] were like her little pets." These descriptions demonstrate not only the team's sense of injustice, but also a deficit in shared identifications at the team level. Stephanie, a senior sprinter, explained, "The track team … we don't really have a connection with Coach [Jones] at all. It's like she is the head coach, but she is not our coach." Not being a distance runner, Stephanie self-identified as an "other" or a part of the out-group. Tracy, a senior multi-event athlete, echoed Stephanie by stating, "We are all supposed to be a team together, but it's really like cross country and then track." Here Stephanie and Tracy demonstrate the view that distance runners are more highly-identified with Coach Jones than other athletes on the team.

In contrast with the football team's use of "family" metaphors to describe their relationships and overlapping identifications, athletes on the track team would not even call some of their teammates "friends." For example, when asked about the type of relationship she has with her teammates, Kinsey, a senior thrower, responded, "No, like we are teammates. We are not—all of us aren't best friends. I don't like some

people." Taken as a whole, the track team's lack of overlapping identifications structured member sensemaking about organizational premises and contributed to member perceptions of organizational injustice. Athletes' willingness to tell on each other raises the question: Why did concertive resistance fail to arise? Unlike the cream cheese episode, the spring break episode was significantly influenced by members' *conflicting* identifications (e.g., sprinters versus distance runners).

Demonstrating their perception of organizational injustice, athletes also voiced criticism of Coach Jones for not removing Sara and Shelby from the team, as she threatened initially. Athletes constructed Coach Jones's "lenient" punishment discursively as "going back on her word," by explaining that "if you have rules, you have to follow through with [the punishment]." Similar to football players in the cream cheese episode, athletes used *organizational* policies (i.e., if you drink you will be removed from the team) to make sense of the spring break episode. Courtney, a senior thrower explained, "[The coaches] said they were going to [remove them from the team] and then they didn't follow through with it. I think people lost a little bit of respect." Here, Courtney expresses discontent with the ambiguity created by Coach Jones' lack of "follow through" with her initial threat. This ambiguity not only weakens Coach Jones' authority, but also creates uncertainty about validity of future team rules and organizational premises (e.g., *drinking is prohibited* versus *drinking is okay depending on the context*).

Additionally, athletes stated that they believed Sara and Shelby were given a lenient punishment because of their athletic talent. This perception perpetuated a sense of injustice on the team. Moreover, this act of leniency was often cited by those in

trouble for drinking as evidence of organizational precedent. Jordan, a senior distance runner, explained how she handled an incident after the spring break episode where she was told on by one of her teammates for drinking on her 21st birthday. Jordan explained why she was not concerned she would be removed from the team, she stated:

> I mean, I had too many reasons to come back if she tried to kick me off the team, to like be "Well all of those girls from my freshman year should have been kicked off the team because you told them right off the bat they were going to get kicked off the team."

Here, Jordan uses an organization precedent to defend her place on the team. This argumentation demonstrates that not only have team members been inculcated to the organizational premise (i.e. drinking warrants punishment), but also all drinking violations should be punished in a similar way. This belief contrasts with the cognitive gaps discussed in the cream cheese episode, where football players did not believe taking the cream cheese was a violation of the organizational premise of "being a team" and did not warrant a punishment.

Coach Jones's choice to modify Sara and Shelby's punishment served to further undermine the inculcation of organizational premises for new and incoming members. For example, Tracy, a senior multi-event athlete, expressed how the spring break episode set a tone for future seasons. She explained that during her freshman year she thought, "'I am not going to mess up." In contrast, after the spring break episode, she explained, "We are like, 'oh they are lenient. They can say something and mean something else,' so I mean yeah it kind of set the mood for us, like terrible."

Here, Tracy explains her frustration with the ambiguity of the rules and her perception of the arbitrary manner in which rules are applied on the team (e.g., "they can say something and mean something else"). She goes on to describe how this incident fostered mistrust and a sense of injustice within her team (e.g., "that set the mood for us, like terrible"). This disparity between espoused and enacted organizational values changed their perception of the validity of the drinking premise. This disparity hindered Coach Jones' ability to inculcate members with other organizational premises.

Other athletes described their teammates' motivation for snitching as "jealousy," perceiving "unfairness" on the team, and that "[the snitch] wanted other people to be punished." According to Coach Jones, the track athletes' sense of injustice resulted in increased incidences of team members telling on each other (i.e., snitching) about drinking violations. She explained:

> They were like, "It's just not fair that we've been in trouble for drinking before and they're not getting in trouble," and I'm like, "That is not the point of this!" Like, it is not okay … that bothers me, like, when people are like… "Well this person… I got in trouble for this so this person should get in trouble"… I'm like… "Grow up a little bit you know."

Here, Coach Jones describes athlete perceptions of injustice and motivation for telling on their teammates (i.e., "it's just not fair that we've been in trouble for drinking before and they're not getting in trouble"). Interestingly, even though Coach Jones threatened to punish athletes for not disclosing a rule violation, she does not want them to tell on each other out of a sense of injustice or spite. Coach Jones, similar to

football players in the cream cheese episode, views snitching on teammates as immature (e.g., "grow up a little bit").

This single event in the team organizational history created mistrust and gave rise to the emergence of a system of concertive control within the track team. This undermining of team trust and cohesion contrasts with football players' sensemaking of a similar resistance event that resulted in increased team cohesion.

Triggering Concertive Resistance: Positioning Analysis

"If decisions were a choice between alternatives, decisions would come easy. Decision is the selection and formulation of alternatives" (Burke,1966, p. 215).

As Burke explained eloquently, actors in any social interaction select and formulate alternatives through decision making about how to interact—not only for themselves, but for others as well. Building on Burke's assertion, Harré and van Lagenhove (1999) explained that specific positioning within interactions structures the selection and formulation of subsequent acts. They explained "positioning can be understood as the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of a conversation have specific locations" (p. 16). Moreover, actors can be positioned or position themselves through speech acts within social interactions (e.g., be positioned as powerful or powerless, positioning oneself as dominant or submissive). These positionings, which occur through the use of specific speech acts, are especially apparent in the cream cheese and spring break episodes. The following analysis explains how specific managerial speech acts positioned actors in such a way that triggered concertive resistance.

***Inquisition* in the cream cheese episode positioning**. Within the cream cheese episode there are several turning points, during which actors position themselves and others through specific speech acts (Table 4 summarizes the acts within the cream cheese episode). While Coach Smith's purchasing of the cream cheese (i.e., act one) and an athlete's taking of the cream cheese (i.e., act two) set the context for the episode, Coach Smith's collective questioning of the team (i.e., act three) functions as the turning point within the episode that structures subsequent acts. His collective questioning serves as *the first speech act* of the episode. The speech act performs a kind of *inquisition* in that the coaches' questioning presumes others' guilt and implies a social norm was violated and punishment is warranted to reinstate balance. Speech acts call social realities into being (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). In this case, Coach Smith calls into being the social reality of inquisition, in which he is the investigator of the guilty. An original concept proposed here, an inquisition functions differently than a simple threat or warning in that it assumes culpability of those being questioned and implies singular or collective punishment. When Coach Smith demands to know "Who *stole* the cream cheese?" he is not only framing the severity of the act as stealing—the breaking of a moral norm—but he is also assuming the culpability of at least one athlete.

Moreover, punishment is implied in his inquisition speech act because the breaking of moral norms typically involve sanctioning (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005; Rakoczy & Schmidt, 2013; Sherif, 1936). At this point in the episode, the severity of an athlete taking the cream cheese is open for discursive interpretation by the actors within the episode. In response to Coach Smith's collective questioning, the athletes

try to minimize or reframe the severity of the episode by laughing at the coach's reaction to the missing cream cheese (i.e., act four). From the players' vantage point the inquisition speech act narrows and limits their ability to manage a positive identity position within the unfolding discourse. The coach's inquisition speech act presumes guilt. His power creates constraint on their ability to deny the presupposition that an act has broken a moral norm. Perhaps it is not surprising the accused players respond with laughter given the incongruity between their own interpretation of the taking of the cream cheese and what is implied by the coach's speech act. Laughter positions themselves as innocent and provides the coach an opportunity to take up a less-domineering position without losing face.

However, Coach Smith does not take up the softened position implied by athletes' laughter. Instead, he interprets the laughing as a rejection of his power performed within the inquisition speech act. In turn, he reiterates his collective inquisition and links it to an explicit, rather than implicit, threat (i.e., act five, "someone better tell me who took the cream cheese or you will all have to do a punishment workout on Monday"). In doing so, Coach Smith *challenges their identity challenge* by making power obtrusive and visible through a coercive power base (French & Raven, 1959; Rahim, 2009). The discourse between Coach Smith and players produces an identity position for Coach Smith in which either a (a) player(s) is labeled as breaking a moral norm (i.e., admit fault or be snitched on) or (b) Coach Smith endures damage to his public face by having his directive go unheeded.

Harré and van Lagenhove (1999) explained that forced positioning can sometimes narrow options for actors in that after certain speech acts there are a limited

number of ways for characters within an interaction to act characteristically (cf. Kelley & Bisel, 2014). In this case, Coach Smith chooses to double-down on his inquisition speech act, because the alternative would be to give up his attempt to perform a powerful, or one-up position. His inquisition speech act sets the stage for collective resistance to emerge, given that athletes are already averse to telling on peers based on their overlapping identifications. The speech act of inquisition invoked the team's collective identity because it sets Coach Smith in opposition to them. In other words, part of the illocutionary force of an inquisition is that it positions actors within an interaction as known adversaries, because the other is already deemed guilty without chance of further investigation. Moreover, when one adversarial side is a collective (e.g., a team), an inquisition enables this collective to rally or act collectively against a common adversary (e.g., Coach Smith).

Comparative Spring Break Episode Positioning

Interestingly, the inquisition speech act is *not* present within the relevant comparison spring break resistance episode. However, Coach Jones does engage in a speech act that structures subsequent acts within the episode (See Table 5 for a summary of acts within the episode). Specifically, at the beginning of the episode Coach Jones pairs a warning (i.e., "If anyone drinks or knows of drinking…") with an explicit threat (i.e., "… they will be removed from the team") *making her power obtrusive and visible from the outset of the episode*. This first act functions as a severe threat to a severe offense that has not yet taken place.

Coach Jones' warning contrasts with Coach Smith's inquisition. Coach Smith's inquisition is a less severe implicit threat over a minor offense that has already

taken place, in the near past. Coach Jones, on the other hand, explains that at the time she "thought the *threat* would be enough" to dissuade the athletes from drinking on the spring break trip in near future. Coach Jones's speech act functions as an "if, then" statement, whereas Coach Smith's inquisition functions as a "now, and" statement since an inquisition presumes guilt and predicts punishment of the party in question. In contrast, a warning is a preventive threat of punishment for a particular behavior which may or may not occur. Coach Jones's threat of removal from the team for anyone who is aware of a behavior violation contextualizes the team's subsequent actions or surveillance and "snitching" on each other because all knew the forewarning. Conversely, Coach Smith's inquisition could not have contextualized player actions in the same way, given that a threat did not precede the labeling of guilt. In this way, an athlete who wanted to speak up to Coach Jones' could reason to themselves that all had equal understanding of possible consequences. Football players, however, could not necessarily reason that all other players knew what possible consequences might arise for taking cream cheese. Moreover, the high stakes of the spring break episode (i.e., a threat of removal from the team) contrast with the low stakes of the cream cheese episode (i.e., a threat of a punishment workout). This difference in stakes clearly influenced athlete positioning and subsequent actions within each episode.

Similar to the positioning in the cream cheese episode, when a few track athletes tell Coach Jones about their teammates' drinking on spring break, she takes up the position constituted in her original warning to act characteristically. In other words, she is positioned by others to enforce a punishment for the rule violation, given

her previous warning. Moreover, her initial warning structured subsequent team interactions (e.g., threatening each other, surveillance) and obligated her to follow through with her initial threat. When Coach Jones did not follow through on her initial threat (i.e., not removing athletes who drank on spring break from the team), her subsequent speech acts often lost their perlocutionary force. For example, Jordan explained she was not concerned about being removed from the team for a similar drinking violation, even when Coach Jones told her she was removed from the team. She explained "I mean I had too many reasons to come back" and challenge Coach Jones's decision to remove her from the team, given her previous leniency provided to athletes within the spring break episode. Ultimately, the speech acts within the spring break episode resulted in the emergence of a system of surveillance among track team members. Rather than reducing the occurrences of alcohol use within the team, the warning on the spring break episode served to create a contemptive team climate rife with conflict. Overall, what appear to be similar managerial speech acts are quite different and result in different outcomes (i.e., concertive resistance or compliance).

Discussion

The objective of this dissertation was fourfold: (a) to identify the ways a collective resistance event shapes and gets shaped by team members' identifications, (b) explain how group members are able to resist collectively in the absence of overt, group-level leadership communication, (c) demonstrate how group members make sense of resistance or compliance with a managerial directive, and (d) identify positioning processes that might trigger a collective resistance event. These objectives were achieved through an ethnography of an NCAA Division I athletic program,

specifically a football team and a women's track team. Research questions were answered through the inductive development of two original theoretical concepts—*concertive resistance* and the managerial *inquisition*. These concepts contribute to current organizational communication literature in regards to unobtrusive control theory, leadership, resistance, agency, and control. The following sections explain how these two concepts contribute to these literatures.

First, this study reveals collective resistance is possible in the absence of overt resistance leadership communication. Resistance leadership occurs when individuals attempt to influence others to challenge, invert, or disrupt managerial control (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). Given the linguistic turn in leadership research, resistance leaders allow for the study of leadership apart from positional authority. However, the study of resistance leadership is challenging since resistance leaders' influence strategies may not necessarily be conscious or framed by followers as leaderly at first (cf. Fairhurst, 2011's design problem of leadership). To emerge as a resistance leader, an individual must engage in some action that allows for sensemaking on the part of the collective to make eventual attributions of leadership (e.g., Kain Colter championing Northwestern's football team unionization movement; Fairhurst, 2011). This concept is of theoretical importance because it allows investigators to observe nascent leadership to better understand how and why leaders emerge in organizations rather than assuming those already in positions of authority are leaders or act in leaderly ways. This concept is of practical importance given the implications resistance leaders may have for changing the organization in unexpected and unintended ways as well as serving as a watchdog for organizational ethics (Conrad, 2011; Redding, 1985). The

study is the first to offer an empirical example of collective resistance without the presence of overt resistance leadership, indicating that collective resistance need not be led purposively or overtly, but can emerge organically.

Within the initial proposal for this investigation the author choose an organization where resistance leadership might be likely to emerge. The author choose a Division I football team because of the strong controlling forces present within and outside of the organizational context made observable member resistance more likely. Once on site, the author learned of the cream cheese episode through informal conversations with football players. This episode demonstrated collective resistance clearly, in that it challenged managerial control; however, after the author investigated the episode further, the participants did not describe the emergence of a resistance leader or the need for one. On the contrary, players explained that they did not need to talk to each other to resist collectively. They explained "you just know" not to tell on teammates. Thus, instead of finding an instance of resistance *leadership*, the author found an instance of *concertive resistance* in that players were able to resist a managerial directive collectively by drawing on previous schema and Discourse in the moment. Group-level identifications allowed players to resist collectively in the moment without talk or the influence of an overt resistance leader because players did not want to be alienated from the team by telling on their teammates. Further, this study provides a relevant comparison of a similar episode within a women's track team in which athletes complied with a managerial directive to tell on each other. This comparison helped to strengthen the conceptualization of concertive resistance given the differences in overlapping identifications among the two teams.

Relatedly, a second contribution of this study is that it represents a rare empirical demonstration of how identification processes, as they relate to unobtrusive control theory, can also *enable* collective resistance. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) explained that specific types of control in organizations have taken on an unobtrusive form in that controlling strategies, values, or mechanisms become "commonsensical" in a way that opposition and even reflection is often constrained, if not outright suppressed. However, this study demonstrates that similarly unobtrusive mechanisms (i.e., concertive resistance) might actually enable opposition. Unobtrusive control arises in part through a process of organizational identification (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Highly-identified organizational members internalize organizational premises, which often restrict their range of organizationally-relevant choices and constrain their organizational decision making. Kuhn and Nelson (2002) explained that organizational members act in ways that help them to recognize the important identities to which they belong. Previous research demonstrated that highly- identified organizational members are more likely to act in organizationally-relevant ways (Gossett, 2002).

However, organizing and identifying processes do not occur in a vacuum. Organizational members often carry multiple and overlapping identifications arising from within the organization (e.g., group-level) or outside of the organization (e.g., occupational, cultural, gender; Barker & Tompkins, 1994). These inter-, intra-, and extra-organizational identifications do not necessarily negate organizational identification. Instead, overlapping and potentially competing identifications must be negotiated by organizational members when they come into conflict (Larson &

Pepper, 2003), as was the case within the cream cheese episode. Within the cream cheese episode, organizational members were able to draw on their overlapping identifications from within the organization (i.e., team camaraderie) and from outside of the organization (i.e., extra-organizational culture, masculinity) *to act in concert*. Their multiple—in this instance overlapping—identifications account for the group's ability to resist collectively a managerial directive to tell on a teammate (i.e., one of their identification target group members). Thus, this study draws our attention to how multiple and conflicting identifications might *enable* collective resistance not merely constrain collective resistance, even among highly-identified organizational members.

Third, this study reveals an example of collective resistance within an organization not between or among organizations and society. Collective resistance is a not a new phenomenon in organizational studies (e.g., Conquergood, 1994; Jermier, Slocum, Fry, & Gaines, 1991; Vigil, 2003); however, the resistance episode described here is theoretically unique. Within the cream cheese episode, organizational members were highly-identified with the organization and the sport of football. Previous studies on resistant group behavior (e.g., street gangs, hate groups) focused on groups purporting a counter-identity to mainstream societal Discourse (Conquergood, 1994). In other words, members choose to join these groups because they are different from the mainstream and consequently their subversion to hegemonic Discourse becomes part of their group identity. The group value of "difference" or "mainstream resistance" is a central reason for member organizing in these instances. This type of resistance differs greatly from the behavior observed in the cream cheese incident because the organizational members in this case still intended to act in

organizationally-relevant ways—but not at the cost of becoming alienated from their teammates. As a result of their identification with their team, players choose to resist a managerial directive. The organizational members functioned within the confines of the organization (i.e., they choose to remain silent, but still complied collectively with the mandated punishment—even though summer practice is voluntary). The organizational members demonstrated their high organizational identification because they did not intend to reject the entirety of the organization's controlling structure (e.g., disengage from the organization, quit the team, refuse to complete the punishment), but rather choose a path that would allow them to continue to be member—that is, they would not be stigmatized and alienated from the team for being a snitch. In other words, organizational resisters were not organizational anarchists, but rather micro-resistors negotiating the struggle of control and resistance in everyday organizational life (Fleming & Spicer, 2003: Mumby, 2005; Scott, 1998). Moreover, their micro-resistance had important consequences for the way coaches and athletes experienced their organization—a point that challenges notions that micro-resistance is unimportant or simply "decaf resistance" (Contu, 2008).

Organizational members demonstrated their strong organizational identification by using *organizational* premises to defend their resistance to a managerial directive retrospectively (e.g., "maybe coach always talking about us being a team, people thought it was a time for us to be a team"). This rhetorical strategy is similar to Graham's (1995) description of how automotive plant workers resisted a managerial directive by citing an organizational policy, which they would be violating by complying with the directive. In the cream cheese incident, organizational members

re-appropriated ambiguous organizational premises (e.g., "be a team," "do right") and used them to defend their resistant actions after the episode. This organizational member sensemaking provides another empirical example of what Bisel et al. (2007) described as the distance or cognitive gap between premises and decisional conclusions and documents how this gap can be exploited through organizational members' resistance discourse.

Fourth, this study demonstrates that resistance is as structural as it is agentic. In previous organizational communication literature, the construct of control has been associated with near-deterministic structures within the organization (e.g., information exchange, supervisor-subordinate) whereas resistance has been associated with organizational members' agency to choose in opposition to those controlling structures (see Conrad & Hayes, 2001; Giddens, 1976, 1979; Poole, Seibold, & McPhee, 1985). Both of these perspectives can be problematic because this view of control and resistance either privileges structure over action or action over structure (Bisel, 2009; Conrad & Hayes, 2001). Conrad and Hayes (2001) explained that unobtrusive control is one of the few constructs in organizational communication which attempts to integrate action and structure. Further, they argue that by focusing on tensions among multiple identifications, UCT shifts the "internalization construct away from an ideational version of determinism to become an aspect of the dynamic relationship between structure and action" (p. 60). The construct of identification allows for a more complex view of control and resistance in organizations because premises are not simply internalized, nor is action determined by any single source or premise.

The current study presents an empirical case of the structural *and* agentic nature of resistance relating to one another in a structurational and dualistic way by demonstrating how multiple overlapping member identifications "structured action" throughout a collective resistance episode. Specifically, this study provides an empirical illustration of the duality of control and resistance (Bisel et al. 2007; Giddens, 1984): In the case, organizational members resisted a managerial directive collectively, thereby demonstrating their agency. However, this collective resistance was also highly-structured by their overlapping extra and intra-organizational identifications, given that players were able to resist in tandem without overt leadership communication. Here, identifications enabled and constrained action, while, in turn, the action taken by the team solidified their identification with one another. Collective resistance in this case was structured by previous schema and Discourse, which members were able to apply in the moment. While members resisted a managerial directive, and their identification with management, their collective action was still structured by the collective's shared, multiple, and overlapping identifications that militated against "snitching."

Ethnographic observation of member sensemaking allowed the researcher to document both the structural and agentic nature of this collective resistance episode over time (Weick, 1995). Given that sensemaking is grounded in identity, within their sensemaking members demonstrated their overlapping and multiple identifications (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Their descriptions and framing of the event demonstrate how their identifications are constantly "in flux because interpretations/evaluations of our experiences affirm or disconfirm our identifications"

(Conrad & Hayes, 2001, p. 60). Through their interpretations of the cream cheese episode, organizational members laid claim to their multiple and overlapping identifications from outside of the organization, which served a precursor to their collective resistance. Players also used *organizational* premises to defend their resistant act retrospectively. Thus, this study highlights the duality of resistance and control in acting as structure and agency at once in organizational life.

The Managerial Inquisition

In addition to adding to the conceptualization of resistance in organizing, this study demonstrates how specific managerial speech acts might trigger instances of concertive control or resistance. By comparing Coach Jones's and Coach Smith's managerial mandates within each resistance episode, this study demonstrates how one speech act (e.g., a warning or an inquisition) positions subordinates to act or react in specific ways (e.g., concertive control or concertive resistance). A warning speech act (Searle, 1969) is common in organizational life, especially from those in the higher tiers of the hierarchy. Imagine, a boss warning employees of having their employment terminated if they fail to complete a task. Take for example Amazon's firing of a temporary employee for missing a shift due to the birth of a child (McClelland, 2012). Amazon contends that all temporary workers signed a contract confirming an understanding of and commitment to the company's attendance policies (McClelland, 2012). In short, the organizational justification makes recourse to the idea that a warning was issued.

However, Coach Smith's managerial speech act of *inquisition* differs from a simple warning or threat (Searle, 1969). This act positioned members as guilty and

accountable for their teammates' actions as well as implying a punishment for the guilty party. This act of inquisition laid the discursive foundation for concertive resistance to occur, especially given the high peer-to-peer identification that was present within the team. Identification of the inquisition managerial speech act is of practical and theoretical importance in organizational studies. First, the idea of "managerial inquisition" is novel within organizational communication research, yet imagining a scenario where a manger might engage in such an act is not difficult. Understanding how and with what effect specific managerial speech acts position organizational actors' identities could have significant implications for how actors negotiate and reify control and resistance discursively within organizations (Putnam et al., 2005). These findings could have practical implications for how authority figures, managers, and leaders should resolve micro-forms of everyday resistance.

Second, an *inquisition* is theoretically important because it demonstrates how speech acts can structure interactions by positioning actors with a limited range of decisional choices through which they are able to move forward within the interaction, while retaining favorable subject positions (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). The presumption of an inquisition is the party being questioned is guilty. This presumption limits the available options for a positive-identity response. In the cream cheese episode, members are limited by their coach's inquisition (i.e., implicit guilt) and even further limited by competing extra-organizational premises (e.g., snitching is wrong, it's not right to tell on your brother, your teammate). Players acted first to minimize the severity and seriousness of the inquisition by responding with laughter, when Coach Smith rejected this minimization, players choose to remain silent—the least

identity-damaging course of action in the given situation. An analysis of this turn of events within the episode demonstrates the controlling structures present within interactions, as well as the agency actors have to choose between, in order to create new options to retain favorable subject positions in the moment.

Overall, this study sought to answer questions of how and why collective resistance might emerge within an organization. Through an ethnography of a Division I athletic program, the author was able to offer theoretically and practically significant answers to those questions via the phenomena of concertive resistance and the managerial inquisition.

Limitations and Future Directions

All empirical studies are subject to limitations and the present study is no exception. First, this study provided a case-based ethnography of two Division I athletic teams during specific times and places. While data were collected over time, participants' constructions of their social reality is subject to change, thus generalized claims are not possible based on this dataset. However, the author hopes that the novel concepts of concertive resistance and the managerial inquisition might be transferable to other organizational contexts, given that instances of normative control are common within organizational life (e.g., the Hawthorne studies, Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939, 2003). Claims of transferability of the sensitizing concepts of *concertive resistance* and the *managerial inquisition* are appropriate given the theoretically-relevant findings as well as the nature of the interpretive and contextual data (Christians & Carey, 1989; Creswell, 1998, 2007).

Second, high-quality ethnographies recognize and evaluate researcher bias before, during and after data collection and analysis. Similar to Tracy (2013), the author took several steps to minimize (e.g., peer review, crystallization, member checks, seeking cases of disconfirmation) and reflect on research bias (e.g., researcher journaling) given her specific position and perspective within the scene. However, the removal of all bias is not possible.

Lastly, ethnographers must recognize their presence and influence on the scene and within the data. Given that the researcher herself was the instrument of data collection and analysis, her presence (e.g., body, perceptual lens, interaction) influences the type, amount, and level of access she was afforded. At times this can enhance the quality of data collected (e.g., the author was a Division I athlete, thus her experiences help her to understand and identify with participants), but can also inhibit data collection (e.g., she was not able to participate fully as a football player, and thus was not privy to all backstage interactions). Tracy (2013) explained that all empirical organizational scholarship captures only a piece of reality within organizational life, and as researchers we can never fully understand the entirety of the situation here and now. However, the author took several steps to ensure the authenticity and credibility of the data collection through faithful reproduction of participants' descriptions of their social reality. Therefore, she was not able to capture the entirety of their social reality, but able to provide a clear and accurate representation of several pieces of the relational puzzle of the manifestation of control and resistance in one organization.

Future research should extend and transfer the sensitizing concepts proposed in this study—concertive resistance and the managerial inquisition. These concepts may

be fruitfully applied in other similar "body work" organizations where organizational actors have to negotiate multiple targets of identification as well as use a variety of resources for resistance. Concertive resistance could be practically applied and cultivated in hopes of fostering organizational change and serving as an ethical watchdog similar to other kinds of individualized resistance and principled dissent. However, collective resistance might be more effective in creating sustained change within organizations, given the influence wielded by the collective. As demonstrated in the data, instances of collective resistance might act as a solidifying moment for team cohesion. Future inquiry as to how organizational members draw on extra-organizational identifications to increase group cohesion might be a rich future direction of research.

Additionally, managerial inquisition is an interesting speech act that could manifest within organizational life in unexpected ways, especially for those in positions of power. Further inquiry as to why individuals might position others in this way and how those others are positioned to respond is warranted given that in this case the inquisition laid the discursive context for concertive resistance to emerge. An inquisition could serve as a turning point within a group or organization's macro-narrative, but more research is needed to understand how and why leaders and managers might employ this specific speech as well as how and why members might resist such a speech act.

Conclusion

Concertive resistance is an original concept that describes a phenomenon of collective resistance and is exercised by organizational members according to a set of

core group-level values which challenge, invert, or disrupt managerial control and hegemonic organizational Discourse. Similarly, the *managerial inquisition* is a newly-identified managerial speech act in which a question serves as a demand for information, but also implies culpability of the actor in question. Both concertive resistance and the managerial inquisition supports and extends current communication theories of unobtrusive control, identification, macro and micro resistance, power and positioning by presenting a case where participants were able to resist a managerial inquisition collectively in the absence of overt talk or leadership communication. Multiple and overlapping identifications enabled members to resist collectively and then later re-appropriate organizational messages to claim and justify their behavior as acting in line with organizational values. Such sensemaking demonstrates the nuanced way unobtrusive control and micro forms of resistance manifest in organizational life. Thus, the communicative construction of a collective resistance act not only holds consequences in the moment, but also structures future organizational action.

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Appendix A: Project Timeline

Phase 1

08/03/14-08/04/14- Researcher travels to Southern State University

08/05/14-08/11/14- Solicitation of student athletes, coaches and trainers for participation. Begin observation and interviews.

08/11/14- 08/23/14- Data collection continues with observation and interviews. Several phone conversations with advisor about initial findings. Theoretical sampling begins, project focus shifts based on emergent data. End of first round of interviews. Recorded interviews sent out for transcription.

08/24/14- Researcher returns to Norman, OK

08/25/14-9/12/14 Researcher continues open coding (i.e., fieldnotes and interview transcripts), memo writing, and reading relevant literature. Initial theorizing begins. Theoretical conversations with peers continue as a review process.

9/13/14-9/14/14- Presentation of initial findings at a national conference.

9/15/14-10/10/14 Researcher implements focused coding (i.e., organizational documents, fieldnotes and interview transcripts). She continues memo writing, and reading relevant literature. A follow up interview protocol was developed during this time.

Phase 2

10/13/14 – Researcher returns to Southern State University to conduct the second phase of data collection.

10/14/14-11/4/14- Conduct follow up interviews and observations. Seek cases of disconfirmation and possible negative case. Begin focused level and theoretical coding.

11/5/14- Researcher returns to Norman, OK

11/4/14-12/14/14- Continue to develop grounded theory with the use of a peer review, seek disconfirmation of initial coding scheme. Submit second phase of interviews to transcription service.

Appendix B

Phase 1: Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Interview Question Prompts- Injured Athletes

1. Tell me a little about your involvement with the football team.
    a. How long have you played for this team?
2. How often do you participate or interact with the team?
3. Why was playing football of interest to you?
4. Please describe the circumstances of your injury.
    a. How did you know you were injured?
    b. When and how did you tell your coaches you were injured? (Trainers, Teammates, Family Members?)
5. Please describe the development and implementation of your treatment plan.
    a. How will you know you are ready to return to play?
    b. Who implements your treatment plan?
    c. In what ways can you offer your opinion or feedback of your treatment?
6. What would happen if you did not follow your treatment plan?
7. Can you think of a time in which you or someone you knew did not follow their treatment plans? What happened?
8. Can you adjust or modify your treatment plan? How so?
9. What do others (coaches, teammates, trainers) usually say when you tell them you're injured?
10. Can you describe an experience that illustrates how injuries are treated on your team?
11. Can you describe how injuries are prevented on your team?
12. Please describe, in your opinion, the strengths of your athletic training department. Weakness?
13. In your opinion what do your coaches/teammates value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
14. What do the trainers of your team value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
15. Please describe your relationships with your coaches/teammates?
16. Please describe your relationship with your trainers?
17. If you could do one thing to improve injury treatment within your team what would it be?

18. If we imagined your team five years from now, what characteristics of athletic healthcare would you like to see implemented. What do you think might have changed?
19. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as a (recovering) football player that that we have not yet discussed?

Interview Question Prompts- Athletic Trainers

1. Tell me a little about your involvement with the Athletic Department and the football team.
    a. How long have you worked for this organization and department?
2. How often do you interact with the team?
3. Why was athletic training of interest to you? Did you specifically choose to work with football? Why or why not?
4. Please describe the typical circumstances of football injuries
    a. What is the most common football injury? Why?
    b. How do you typically diagnose injuries?
    c. How do you coordinate disclosure of injuries to coaches, physicians and players?
5. Please describe the development and implementation of your treatment plan.
    a. What is your procedure for clearing players to return to play?
    b. Who implements your treatment plan?
    c. How do you assess the recovery progress of injured athletes?
6. Can you provide an example of athletes not complying with a treatment plan?
    a. How is this situation typically handled?
    b. Are their rules for treatment compliance for athletes?
7. Can you describe an experience that illustrates your role on the team?
8. Can you describe how you, as an athletic trainer, try to prevent injuries on your team?
9. Please describe, in your opinion, the strengths of your athletic training department. Weakness?
10. In your opinion what do your coaches/players value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
11. What do the trainers of your team value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
12. Please describe your relationships with your coaches/players?
13. Please describe your relationship with your co-workers?
14. If you could do one thing to improve injury treatment within your team what would it be?
15. If we imagined your training room in team five years from now, what characteristics of athletic healthcare would you like to see implemented. What do you think might have changed?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as an athletic trainer that that we have not yet discussed?

Interview Question Prompts- Coaches

1. Tell me a little about your involvement with the football team.
    a. How long have you worked for this particular team/organization?
    b. What career path led you to work at your current position?
2. How often do you interact with the team?
3. Why was coaching football of interest to you?
4. Please describe the typical circumstances of football injuries.
    a. How do you typically become aware of a football injury?
    b. How and by whom is injury treatment and recovery monitored on your team?
5. Please describe your role in an injured athlete's treatment plan.
    a. What is your procedure for clearing players to return to play?
    b. Who implements a player's treatment plan?
    c. How do you assess the recovery progress of injured athletes?
6. Can you provide an example of athletes not complying with a treatment plan?
    a. How is this situation typically handled?
    b. Are their rules for treatment compliance for athletes?
7. Did you ever suffer an injury as a football player?
    a. If so how might your experience differ or be similar to an injured athlete on your team today?
8. Can you describe an experience that illustrates your role in terms of athletic healthcare?
9. Can you describe how you, as a coach, try to prevent injuries on your team?
10. Please describe, in your opinion, the strengths of your athletic training department. Weakness?
11. In your opinion what does your coaching staff value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
12. What do the trainers on your team value or deem important?
    a. Can you provide an example?
13. What do your players value or deem important?
14. Please describe your relationships with healthy and injured players.
15. Please describe your relationship with the athletic training staff.
16. If you could do one thing to improve injury treatment within your team what would it be?
17. If we imagined your training room in team five years from now, what characteristics of athletic healthcare would you like to see implemented. What do you think might have changed?

18. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as a coach that that we have not yet discussed?

Appendix C

Phase 2: Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Phase 2 Football Player Protocol (*n*= 10)

1. Can you tell me about the "cream cheese incident"?
    a. Did you know at the time who took the cream cheese? Do you know now?
2. **[Theory to be disconfirmed]:** What I'm most interested in is why you didn't tell the coach who took the cream cheese. **I have a hunch this is because of your overlapping identifications** (e.g. socioeconomic, friendship/camaraderie, and cultural) and **because everyone would have known that you were the one who told.** Is that right?
3. Ideally, in your mind how should the team have reacted that day?
    a. Why would it be less than ideal to have told?
4. Why do you think no one told the coach who took the cream cheese?
    a. Did you have time to talk about not telling the coach?
5. How would you describe your team then? And now?
6. Has this incident affected team cohesion? If so, in what way?
7. Do you trust your teammates? Your coaches? Your trainers? Why or why not?
8. Can you define snitching in your own words?
9. When would it be appropriate to tell on your teammate? What about if you were guaranteed anonymity?
10. Can you think of a time in which one of your teammates told on you? What happened?
11. Do you think your teammates ever tell the trainers about people who are being misleading about the severity injuries? Would you?
    a. Would you consider that snitching? Why or why not?

Relevant Comparison

Phase 2 Track Athlete Protocol (n = 10)

1. Can you tell me about the "spring break trip"?
2. **[Theory to be disconfirmed]:** What I'm most interested in is why some people told the coach about the drinking and others did not. I have a hunch is it because some people are closer on the team than others, and some might be closer to the coach than others.
3. **I have a hunch that it might be because athletes were promised anonymity if they told the coach.**
4. Ideally, in your mind how should the team have reacted that day?
    a. Why would it be less than ideal to have told?
5. Why do you think some teammates told the coach who was drinking?
    a. Did you have time to talk to each other about not telling the coach?
    b. How did you learn someone told about the drinking?
6. How would you describe your team then? And now?
7. Do you think this incident influence team cohesion? Why or why not?
8. How has the meaning of that day changed for you over the season?
9. Do you trust your teammates? Your coaches? Your trainers? Why or why not?
10. Can you define [Snitching/Narking/Telling] in your own words?
11. When would it be appropriate to tell on your teammate?
12. Can you give me an example of when you wouldn't tell your coach something about your teammate?
13. Can you think of a time in which one of your teammates snitched on you? What happened?
14. Do you think your teammates ever tell the trainers about people who are being misleading about the severity injuries? Would you?
    a. Would you consider that snitching? Why or why not?
15. Is there anything else about your experience as a coach that we have not yet discussed that you would like to talk about?

Phase 2 Track Coach Interview Protocol

1. Can you tell me a little about the rules you have for your athletes?
2. Why are these rules important?
3. How do you think your team rules relate to NCAA rules?
4. Can you think of a time in which it would be acceptable for an athlete to break a team rule?
5. How do you make sure your athletes are complying with your rules?
6. How do you know they are complying with the rules?
7. Do you trust your athletes? Why or why not?
8. Can you tell me about the spring break trip last year?
9. Can you describe the team then and the team now?
10. Do you think this incident influenced team cohesion?
11. Why do you think your athletes feel comfortable coming to you about issues on the team?
12. How do you think your experience as an athlete influence how you coach?
    a. Did you have rules when you were an athlete?
    b. Can you think of a time in which you didn't follow a team rule?
13. Is there anything else about your experience as a coach that we have not yet discussed that you would like to talk about?

Table 1

Football Participant Demographics

Characteristic	**Athletes** (n = 30)	**Coaches** (n = 9)
Age		
Mean (SD)	20.26 (1.46)	36.56 (10.05)
Weeks on Team		
Mean (SD)	75.13 (56.08)	128.89 (83.85)
Ethnicity (%)		
Caucasian	20.00	77.78
Hispanic	0.0*	22.22
African American	56.66	0.0
Native American	0.0*	0.0
Asian	0.0*	0.0
Bi-racial (7)	23.33	0.0
Team Position (%)		
Offense	46.66	33.33
Defense	53.33	44.44
Special Teams	0.0	22.22
Hometown (%)		
Urban	56.66	11.11
Rural	43.33	88.89
Southern State	90.00	77.78
Other	10.00	22.22

Note. Seven athletes self-identified with more than one race including Asian, Native American and Hispanic.

Table 2

Trainer- Participant Demographics

Characteristic	**Athletic Trainers** (n = 5)
Age	
Mean (SD)	23.6 (4.21)
Length of Involvement	
Weeks Mean (SD)	119.8 (141.7)
Ethnicity (%)	
Caucasian	80.0
Hispanic	0.0
African American	0.0
Native American	0.0
Bi-racial	20.0
Gender (%)	
Male	60.0
Female	40.0
Hometown (%)	
Urban	20.0
Rural	80.0
Southern State	80.0
Other	20.0

Table 3

Women's Track Participant Demographics

Characteristic	**Athletes** (n = 8)	**Coach** (n = 1)
Age		
Mean (SD)	23.35 (4.39)	34.00 (-)
Weeks on Team		
Mean (SD)	175.00 (18.38)	234.00 (-)
Ethnicity (%)		
Caucasian	62.5	100.0
Hispanic	0.0	0.0
African American	37.5	0.0
Native American	0.0	0.0
Bi-racial	0.0	0.0
Event (%)		
Distance	37.5	100.0
Sprints	25.0	0.0
Field	37.5	0.0
Hometown (%)		
Urban	37.5	100.0
Rural	62.5	0.0
Southern State	62.5	0.0
Other	37.5	100.0

Table 4

Cream Cheese Episode Action Summary

Storyline Sequence of Action	**Players Positioning Them← →Coach**	**Strength Coach Them ← → Him**
1. SC Purchases Cream Cheese	Unaware Indebted	Going above and beyond, Care Expected
2. Stolen Cream Cheese	Entitled Ungrateful, immoral	Injured, Disrespected Apathetic
3. Collective Questioning [*Managerial Inquisition*]	Accused Guilty	Scorned, investigator Selfish
4. Laughing at Coaches Anger	Harmless [Cognitive Gap] Disrespectful	Angry, Disrespected, Disempowered Silly
5. Collective Questioning with Threat from Coach	Innocent [Cognitive Gap] Accountable	Power Assertion Over-reaction
6. Silence from Team	Position Rejection Immoral	Steadfast Immoral
7. Punishment & Team Silence [*Concertive Resistance*]	Collective Resistance Culpable	Resolute Wasting Time
8. Lying to protect teammate	Sacrificial Untrustworthy	Wise Naïve
9. Punishment Termination	Annoyed Unchanged, Inherently flawed	Frustrated Steadfast, Strict
10. Post-Action Sensemaking	Pride/Team Cohesion Immoral, Untrustworthy	Unsuccessful, ineffectual Dramatic, Hotheaded

Note. The left column expresses the sequence of acts within the episode. The middle column expresses the positions and perceptions of athletes (i.e., their own and their coach's) within each act. The far right column expresses the positions and perceptions of Coach Jones (i.e., her own and of her players). The color red denotes perceptions of the athletes. The color blue denotes the perceptions of the coach for each respective column.

Table 5

Spring Break Episode Action Summary

Storyline Sequence of Action	Track Athletes Themselves← →Coach	Head Coach Athletes ← → Herself
1. Threat & Sub-Threat Alcohol on trip **[***Managerial Warning***]**	Autonomous, Adults Scared, Mindful	Powerful, Respected Naïve
2. Athletes covertly drank alcohol	Shrewd, Covert Adhering to rules	In control Unaware
3. Athletes who drank threatened others	Adversarial, Panoptic Broken	Worried Punisher
4. Athletes told Coach about drinking [*Unobtrusive Control*]	Slighted Respected	Surprised, Lack of Control Police
5. Group Meeting & Public Confrontation	Accused, Embarrassed, Worried Accountable to the team	Investigator Emotional, demeaning
6. Don't admit to drinking	Innocent Dishonest, Stubborn	Angry, Disempowered Unreasonable
7. Public workout as punishment	Annoyed, Furious Lacking leadership/childish	Power Assertion Over/under reaction, Contradictory
8. Allowed to run at conference	Divided, Betrayers Potential, Talented	Benevolent Unfair, Biased
9. Post-action sensemaking	Surveillance, Lack of Trust Broken, Divided	Torn, Disempowered Unreasonable

Note. The left column expresses the sequence of acts within the episode. The middle column expresses the positions and perceptions of athletes (i.e., their own and their coach's) within each act. The far right column expresses the positions and perceptions of Coach Smith (i.e., his own and of his players). The color red denotes perceptions of the athletes. The color blue denotes the perceptions of the coach for each respective column.

Figure 1:

Coding Hierarchy of Concertive Resistance