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ADOPTING AND RESISTING EVIDENCE-BASED CALLS FOR CHANGE: DISCURSIVE
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ADOPTING AND RESISTING EVIDENCE-BASED CALLS FOR CHANGE: DISCURSIVE
RESOURCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES

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Abstract

Institutional forces often pressure organizations to conform and behave in similar manners even when those actions go against an organization's best interests. One particular U.S. football organization, known as the team that never punts, provided an excellent case study of the organizational communication practices of an outlier that rejects institutional forces. The organization adopted evidence-based management built on statistics in place of institutional traditions for calling plays. This case study identified organizational communication practices used to both resist and acquiesce to institutional pressures. The discursive resources used by the coach, who was an institutional resistance leader, and the members included legitimacy communication, aspects of appreciative inquiry and dialogic public relations, public relations framing, and leadership framing. The power of legitimation communication and framing can help leaders and members co-construct reality, preferred organizational identities, and hopeful anticipations of the future. Though some evidence (such as concussion data) may present such a threat to organizational identity that it will be rejected, confidence built on statistical certainty can persuade members to achieve organizational outcomes that outsiders consider impossible.

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Adopting and Resisting Evidence-Based Calls for Change: Discursive Resources In Organizational Responses to Institutional Pressures

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1905) essay "On Self Reliance" includes the well-known line "Every institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." The statement is ironic since he also wrote in the essay "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist." More than a century later, Emerson's dialectic tensions still resonate with researchers of institutionalism and organizational communication. A context in which those tensions are present is the United States sport of football, which is incredibly popular. The sport serves as an excellent context in which the study of an outlier organization (including leaders and members) might shed more light on resisting institutional pressures. A study of one particular football organization that relies on statistical data for making decisions provided an opportunity to better understand the nuances of using evidence-based strategies and organizational communication to resist institutional pressures.

For more than three decades, U.S. residents have cited professional football as their favorite sport (Norman, 2018), with college football their third favorite sport. In addition, the National Football League and the top 123 college football programs earned more than \$13 billion in 2014 (McDuling, 2014). More than 103 million people watched the NFL's Super Bowl on TV (Otterson, 2018), and the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research counts four million people who played football at all levels combined in 2018 (Willingham, 2018). Of that number, more than one million are high school students, making it by far the most popular sport at that level, according to the National Federation of State High School Sports Associations (NFHS, 2018). More than three million children not yet in high school, some as young as 5 years

old, play football every year; another 100,000 play in the college and professional levels (Willingham, 2018).

Given football's popularity and economic clout in the U.S. at multiple levels, the sport can be called an institution as much as an industry. Football organizations exist in conjunction with and compared to other football organizations, influenced heavily by socially accepted rules, authority, and expectations (Selznick, 1957; Parson, 1956; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Regardless of the level of the sport, the majority of the rules and expectations for a football game are the same (for an explanation of the rules of football, see Romer's (2005) summary in Appendix 1). These institutional pressures then contribute to cultural and cognitive influences on organizational actors (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). In American football, those expectations, or pressures to conform (Oliver, 1991), comprise "scripts for behavior"...which become "taken-for-granted through repeated use" (Clemens & Cook, 1999, p. 445). These socially constructed beliefs and norms are often viewed and experienced by organizational actors as widely accepted rules of action (Jepperson, 1991). Once established, institutional pressures are difficult to resist or change (Oliver, 1991), sometimes resulting in organizations mimicking each other to maintain legitimacy. This mimicry acts as a kind of self-imposed iron cage against innovation among assumed homogeneous actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

American football is no exception to the conformity pressures of institutionalism when organizational actors are presented with innovations. The sport's most well-known tactical change, the forward pass, was first instituted in 1906, but it did not become widespread until 1913 (Morrison, 2010). Similarly, influenced by a 1933 NFL rule change about where a football could be thrown by an offensive player, the now ubiquitous T formation was not fully adopted

until 1952 (Johnson, 2006). Additionally, while helmets for football existed since the 1890s, the NCAA and NFL did not require them until the 1940s (Stamp, 2012).

Past resistance to one type of call for change in football has been particularly puzzling. One might assume calls for change to decision-making rooted in evidence, such as statistical studies or medical research – what Rousseau (2006) refers to as evidence-based management – would be particularly persuasive to organizational actors when conformity to institutional pressures is challenged. However, that has not been true for some safety and tactical aspects of football. For example, the American Medical Association’s 1962 Committee on Medical Aspects of Sports, citing injury data, condemned the practice of spearing (a player using their body as a spear to tackle another player), but it was not outlawed in college and high school football until 1976, dramatically reducing the number of players diagnosed with quadriplegia in one year (Heck, et al., 2004; Rakel & Rakel, 2007). Similarly, some types of tactical decision-making by coaches, such as when to punt or on-side kick, have not changed over the last 60 years. This stability persists even with the increase in the analysis of statistical data in the last few decades, which has revealed football coaches at all levels almost always make decisions about punting and on-side kicks that decrease their team’s chances to win (Romer, 2005; Burke, 2009; Carroll, Palmer, & Thorn, 1989; 1998).

Unfortunately, resistance to evidence-based calls for change in football extends beyond play-calling. According to the American Academy of Neurology, more than 40% of retired pro football players have shown signs of traumatic brain injury (Andrews, 2016). The NCAA estimated more than 3,400 football concussions occurred from 2009-2014 (Burnsed, 2015), while the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention has found high school football players suffer more symptoms after a concussion than do college players (Reinberg,

2016). The number of concussions in high school is about twice the rate of college players (Breslow, 2013). In the last 40 years, there has been an average of one football fatality per year in college and professional football. However, nearly one high school player a week died during the season for each of the last 10 years (Willingham, 2018).

Consequently, the prevalence of injuries and deaths in high school football has resulted in calls for changes, especially in regard to preventing head trauma (McCrae, et al., 2003; Guskiewikz, et al., 2007; Rowson & Duma, 2013). Perhaps the loudest call for changes in football due to evidence about safety came from Dr. Bennett Omalu, who first diagnosed the concussion-caused brain disease Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy in 2002 while working for the NFL. He has recommended that no child play football before the age of 18 because the brain is still developing (Omalu, 2015). However, calls for change have been largely ignored. Only 37% of high schools include a full-time athletic trainer on football teams (Pryor, et al., 2015), and no state meets minimum best practices for concussion management, defibrillators, and emergency action plans (Waldron & Fernandez, 2015). USA Football, the official youth football development partner of the NFL, responded to Dr. Omalu with an article titled “3 Reasons Why Your Child Should Play Football” (Schwartz, 2015). According to the director of the Korey Stringer Institute, which is dedicated to the study and prevention of sudden death in sports, “people are just not implementing evidence-based medicine and policies at the high school level” (Waldron & Fernandez, 2015).

Given the ubiquity of football organizations conforming to existing institutional pressures rather than adopting evidence-based calls for change, outlier organizations might offer insights into resistance to those pressures. While no state has required minimum best practices for safety based on evidence, there is one school that is nationally known for using evidence-based

strategies for field play. The school, referred to as Private Academy, is a true outlier in that its leaders claim all football decisions are based on statistical evidence. The football team has been featured in multiple national news stories for the coach's refusal to punt on fourth down and to always on-side kick after a score (Moskowitz & Werthiem, 2011). Private Academy is wildly successful in regard to wins, and an analysis of the communication of the school's successfully adopted evidence-based practices (which are counter to institutional pressures) may offer potential application for calls to change for both inefficient play-calling or unsafe practices in football. Only a few other organizations have attempted to copy Private Academy to some degree (Jacobs, 2015).

Interestingly, Private Academy's practices in regard to safety have never received news coverage about the team's evidence-based tactics. This continued acquiescence to institutional pressures regarding safety offered an interesting paradox for organizational communication scholars interested in both the enabling and constraining power of institutional pressures. A study of the organization offered researchers boundary insight on both resistance and adoption of evidence-based calls for change that go against institutional pressure to conform.

To better understand the theoretical value of studying this organization, it was important to identify opportunities for further study from previous research. For example, one critique of studies that have examined institutional conformity is the embedded agency paradox in which organizational heterogeneity has been dismissed or not explained well (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). In response, the notion of an institutional entrepreneur was proposed, which focused on an individual who heroically changed an institution (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007).

Similarly, in an effort to better understand resistance and adoption, and in response to calls for more discussion of how institutionalism can affect heterogeneity in organizations, Oliver (1991) proposed a model of five organizational responses (in a range from passive to active) to institutional pressures. The responses have been tested in multiple studies that have largely supported Oliver's propositions (Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Etherington & Richardson, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; O'Brien & Slack, 2004). However, the assumptions of Oliver's propositions and the subsequent research using her model did not consider a few unique contextual factors that may offer more nuance regarding organizational responses to institutional pressures. For example, in previous research, the organizational responses were not to evidence-based calls for change.

In addition, another weakness of existing research regarding responses to institutional pressures, whether the calls for change were evidence-based or not, is that many studies have centered on institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Levy & Scully, 2007; Mutch, 2007; Munir & Phillips, 2007). Institutional entrepreneur research has assumed entrepreneurs seek to convince other organizations to resist institutional pressures and collectively change an institution (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009). However, institutional entrepreneurship research has overlooked a basic exploitive principle of entrepreneurship theory: the entrepreneur who develops an innovation, at least initially, often does not want other organizations in a field to adopt that change (Schumpeter, 1942). Being the only adopter of the innovation confers competitive performance advantages. Therefore, previous research has not considered a situation in which organizational actors would resist institutional pressures while simultaneously hoping that competing organizations would continue to acquiesce to those same pressures.

Yet another weakness of existing research regarding responses to institutional pressures is that studies of resistance have not truly included organizational communication and public relations perspectives regarding discursive resources available to actors. This is curious considering public relations encompasses much of what Oliver (1991) terms as “influence tactics” by resisters. Relevant concepts from organizational communication and public relations perspectives include organizational (Conrad, 2011) and legitimation rhetoric (Lammers & Garcia, 2014; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), innovation champion literature (Rogers, 2003), framing in public relations (Hallahan, 1999), leadership framing (Fairhurst, 2011, 2009), and co-creational theories of public relations and strategic planning (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2003). Applying co-creational perspectives of public relations to more recent institutional research is especially warranted because both share similar interpretive underpinnings (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Frandsen & Johansen, 2013).

In summary, three gaps exist in research regarding organizational responses to institutional pressures. This proposed study attempted to fill in those gaps by addressing unique paradoxes that spoke to the enabling and constraining power of organizational communication concerning evidence-based calls for change that are counter to institutional pressures. First, previous research has not examined responses to evidence-based calls for changes to existing institutional pressures. Second, previous researchers have assumed organizational actors who resist institutional pressures also desire to change institutions. Finally, existing literature has not used the lens of organizational communication and public relations theory, especially the co-creational perspective, to study the discursive influence tactics used by organizational actors who resist or adopt institutional pressures. These oversights may have obscured significant insights

into the communication of organizational actors who must manage paradoxical tensions. In these situations, communication may simultaneously be used to clarify and obfuscate (Bisel, 2009).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to take a communication-centered approach to better understand the adoption and resistance of evidence-based calls for change to institutional pressures. Specifically, this study examined the discursive resources used by outlier organizational members that adopt and resist evidence-based calls for change.

Literature Review

To better understand how to approach the study of an outlier organization that uses communication of evidence-based practices to create organizational resistance to institutional pressures, a review of relevant organizational communication research is warranted.

An Interpretive Organizational Communication Perspective

This project was situated in an organizational communication context. Scholars have approached organizational communication from a number of diverse perspectives, such as the systems and container approaches that dominated the field from the 1920s to 1960s. However, Weick (1979), among others (Putnam, 1982; Putnam, 1983; Paconowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983), helped reconceptualize organizational communication when he emphasized how social interaction enabled organizational members to construct their organizations through communicative processes. With communication viewed as the core process of organizing, additional scholars have agreed with Weick. For example, Flanagin, Chaney, and Siebold (2000) argue that through communication, organizational members “continually construct the reality of which we are a part and engage in ‘retrospective sensemaking’ in order to rationalize the meanings of our actions” (p. 100). This epistemological view requires that researchers examine the actual communication of organizational leaders and members, such as coaches and players in

sports organizations, to better understand the co-constructed reality and rationalizations for organizational action. In fact, the messages of coaches, players are communication that is essential to understanding the co-construction of reality and rationalizations for actions.

The resulting research perspective, labeled interpretivism, grew to be embraced by more scholars who agreed with the need for a more communication-centered approach in organizational communication (Putnam, 1982; Paconowski & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983; Flanagin et al., 2000). Influenced by Husserl (1964, 1976) and Heidegger (1962), researchers began to explore communication's role in how organizational members constructed and conceptualized knowledge in regard to organizational experiences (Flanagin et al., 2000). This attention to cognitive processes, first influenced by Husserl, was a call to view knowledge as "not a recording of experience, but an active construction of it in which the categories we begin with delimit what we can subsequently know," while scholars also embraced Heidegger's emphasis on the knowledge-limiting "situatedness of all experience" (Flanagin, et al., 2000, p. 109). In the context of sports organizations, members' use of communication to co-create reality and rationalize collective reflects how communication enables and constrains team performance. The consistencies, inconsistencies, and unspoken words of organizational members' messages work together to represent a fluid and ever-changing snapshot of reality as observed by members and researchers.

A key contribution of the interpretive turn in organizational communication was a renewed emphasis on the verbal accounts of members in organizations (Flanagin et al., 2000). This narrative focus encouraged the "recording of both how members create meaning out of ambiguous circumstances (Boje, 1991) and how the organization itself can be thought of as a tissue of narrativity" (Flanagin et al., 2000, p. 112). The notion of a tissue of narrativity, similar

to how tissues are the connections between the cellular and organic levels in a living organism, implies that communication underpins and connects all aspects of organizational life, the lived reality of members' lives. In fact, communication as the co-creation of reality demands that there is no knowledge of an organization without the study of members' communication. Referencing Burke's (1966) dramaturgical view, some scholars began to argue that "narrative is not just about storytelling; it is the basis on which events are structured in the first place" (Flanagin et al., 2000, p. 112). The communication choices, forms, and messages actually call organizations into being; what members do or do not talk about reflects what is and is not acceptable in the organization (Weick, 1979; McPhee & Zuag, 2009). In a sports organization in which a coach seeks to persuade players to resist institutional pressures, the topics that are or are not allowed to be discussed and the manners in which topics are addressed give shape to the organization's existence and identity. That identity is important because it is tied to the organization's current existence, and a coach seeking buy-in from others to resist institutional pressures is in effect asking members to change. The details and implications of that organizational change will be realized and negotiated through communication.

In a sports organization, the communication of change, especially from a coach to players, rarely consists of simple one-way persuasion. As players and coaches discuss and enact organizational change, ideas are likely accepted, contested, negotiated, and renegotiated. The intricate nature of this complex communication is worthy of attention due to communication's ability to both clarify and obfuscate (Bisel, 2009). In fact, scholars have argued that organizational communication researchers should study more of the persuasive communication of organizational change (Flanagin et al., 2000), and organizational change communication that goes beyond persuasion (Jones, Watson, Gardner, & Gallois, 2004).

In addition, contemporary sport provides an organizational and institutional context that can help provide research about different types of organizations than the mostly for-profit businesses that have dominated organizational communication research (Flanagin et al., 2000). As a relatively understudied organizational context, contemporary sport features numerous similar organizations that exist for the purpose of competing against one another. Sport is divided into many fields or individual sports, and yet, individual teams often behave in incredibly similar ways despite being engaged in direct competition.

In sum, this study takes an interpretive perspective to examine how organizational members communicatively resist institutional pressures for conformity. This perspective views communication as the core process of organizing. With a view of communication as the co-creation of reality, understanding an organization requires studying members' communication.

Institutionalism

One aspect of interpretive narratives in organizations that has been under-examined is institutional influences on those narratives. Institutional in this context refers to patterns of beliefs and practices that have become so widely accepted that they now go uncontested in individual organizational fields or industries (Lammers, 2011). In their discussion of challenges for the study of organizational communication, Flanagin et al. (2000) argued scholars have “offered relatively little insight into broader institutional concerns” such as “organizational mimicry” (p. 119). In addition, little research attention has been given to the communication and actions of organizational members who sought to resist institutional pressures (Leca et al., 2009; Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). The interpretive perspective is well-suited to address these institutional influences and nuances. A communicative-centered approach has the potential to “help explain the ironies, twists, and turns in the transformation of symbols and organizations

that have been missing in accounts of organizations that have often taken social structures for granted” (Flanagin et al., 2000, p. 119).

In fact, an interpretive perspective acknowledges and considers one of the more debated organizational communication contradictions of the last 30 years, the embedded agency paradox. One critique of studies that have examined institutional conformity is that organizational heterogeneity has been dismissed or not explained well (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). The paradox is that organizational members feel or are limited in their ability to act because of the structures of the organization in which they are embedded (Seo & Creed, 2002). If certain practices and expectations are accepted or discouraged in an organizational field or industry, then contesting those practices or expectations would risk losing legitimacy in that field, thus inhibiting the actions of an organization’s members (Vaara et al., 2006). What is taken for granted in an organization is often difficult to even identify because it is the fabric of members’ lived realities. Individuals often need exposure to significantly different alternatives that seem almost shocking, or organizational members may experience an expectation violation that forces them to confront taken-for-grantedness (Bisel, 2009; Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). An example of the embedded agency paradox in a football organization is how a coach is expected to punt on fourth down almost all the time. If a coach learns that punting is statistically inferior, the has been forced to confront taken-for-grantedness. If that coach refuses to punt and fails, then the coach would likely have to defend the legitimacy of the decision. In the case of a failure, the coach would likely admit that though it limited action, following the sport’s institutionally accepted practice of punting in that situation would have granted more legitimacy.

Institutionalism itself is important to the concept of the embedded agency paradox, especially when considering why organizational members in an industry or field continue to engage in taken-for-granted actions that appear to be incontestable (Vaara et al., 2006; Lammers, 2011). As a reminder, institutionalism is the homogeneity in structures and processes of organizations in specific fields or industries (Oliver, 1991). Since at least the 1970s, institutional researchers have questioned why organizations that compete with each other in an industry behave in similar ways that seem to limit competition (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). When football coaches choose to make decisions based on tradition and “going with their gut” rather than statistical evidence, institutionalism may be to blame.

Reflecting the manner in which organizations choose to act similarly, institutionalism is often discussed with the adjective of isomorphic, reflecting the mathematical concept of two equal forms (Melnik, et al., 2012; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). These isomorphic forces have been viewed as a kind of self-imposed iron cage, as discussed in DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) foundational writing. In the three decades since that article, organizational scholars have struggled to answer why “rational actors make their organizations increasingly similar as they try to change them” (1983, p. 147).

Institutional isomorphism examines forces that pressure organizations to become more similar for reasons that are “inherently communicative,” such as the need for legitimacy (Stohl, 2000, p. 331). Legitimate in this institutional context means that a course of action is “desirable, proper, or appropriate,” especially compared to alternatives (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Two types of institutional isomorphism have been identified that are relevant to this research project. Normative isomorphism is when organizations engage in similar behavior due to industry or professional standards and educational practices; it highlights how rational actors may actually

act in irrational ways (Stohl, 2000). An example from football's past is how helmets were not used in the sport's first few decades simply because it was not required as a rule yet. Mimetic isomorphism is when one organization facing a challenging and uncertain path to goal attainment mimics the practices of successful or accepted comparable organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). An example in football is how teams almost always return punts even though there is no rule requiring this, and regardless of how often attempting to return a punt results in a turnover (which occurs more often in high school). As the aforementioned examples indicate, normative and mimetic forces may pressure organizations to enact practices that are not actually efficient (Cheney et al., 2010).

A central concept in institutional isomorphism, especially mimetic isomorphism, is institutional logics. As institutional researchers such as DiMaggio and Powell (1991) assert, in many organizational fields, unwritten rules, or institutional logics, exist that leaders are expected to follow. These expectations affect and guide organizational communication since, guided by an interpretive perspective, it is through communication that industries and fields are structured (Lammers & Garcia, 2014). In addition, professional expectations in industries and fields enable and constrain how organizations act as well as the cognitions and perceptions of members (Lammers & Garcia, 2014). Those cognitions and perceptions are understood as institutional logics, "material practices and symbolic constructions – which constitute organizing principles" (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 248). For example, in high school football, the practice of punting on almost every fourth down might be joined with the message that "Every smart coach would agree that it's too risky to go for it when not 10 yards or less from the goal line." According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), embedded in institutional logics are "the interests, identities, values, and assumptions of individuals and organizations" (p. 103). In the example above, the

desire to be consistent and legitimate according to the accepted assumptions of the sport provides “vocabularies of motive” to organizational members in their communication about actions taken (Mills, 1940; Friedland & Alford, 1991). The power of institutional logics is that they guide members’ views of what thought and communication processes are available or not permitted (Lammers & Garcia, 2014). In a football context, questioning a coach’s decision to punt is rarely viewed as justified; the coach made the safest choice for the organization.

Interestingly, few studies have explored how mimetic isomorphism, more generally identified as one type of institutional pressure, is adapted, or resisted; those processes remain under-examined in organizational communication research (Lammers & Garcia, 2014). The foundational work in this area is Oliver’s (1991) typology of five strategic responses to institutional pressures and 10 predictive hypotheses about the likelihood that organizations conform or resist. The five responses, which each have three tactics, are acquiesce, compromise, avoid, manipulate, and defy. Acquiescence is defined as consenting and complying with institutional pressures, while a compromise response involves attempting to “balance, pacify, or bargain with external constituents” (Oliver, 1991, p. 153). An avoid response involves organizational members “concealing their nonconformity...,” seeking to reduce external evaluations, or escape the “necessity of conformity altogether” (Oliver, 1991, p. 155). The defiance response involves dismissing or ignoring explicit norms and values, contesting rules and requirements, or communicatively attacking the sources of institutional pressures (Oliver, 1991, p. 152). Finally, the manipulate response is an “attempt to co-opt, influence, or control institutional pressures and evaluations” (Oliver, 1991, p. 157).

In regard to Oliver’s five responses, acquiescence does not apply to resisting mimetic isomorphism, but the other four responses do have relevance to resistance. However, the

compromise and avoid responses seem to fit an organizational member or leader who is not overtly resisting institutional pressures, and these two responses involve interacting with institutional stakeholders and audiences, not primarily organizational members and audiences (Oliver, 1991). Similarly, the manipulate response involves an organizational member or leader importing outside institutional constituents into the organization, or attempting to influence and control institutional constituents (though not necessarily organizational members). This response seems to have less relevance at the local, organizational level.

However, the defy strategic response seems to be directly situated in the local, organizational level. These types of communication tactics and actions represent what would be expected of an organizational leader or member who sought to convince other members of his or her organization to resist institutional pressures that are inefficient. A football coach who refused to punt due to statistical evidence might engage in dismissal of the traditional approach, or the coach might attack those who refuse to accept evidence to the contrary.

Based on the five strategies and 15 tactics, Oliver (1991) proposed 10 hypotheses about the likelihood that an organization would conform to or resist pressures created by institutional processes. Many of the hypotheses are straightforward and likely true, such as “the lower the degree of social legitimacy perceived to be attainable from conformity...the greater the likelihood of organizational resistance” (Oliver, 1991, p. 160). Individuals should be more likely to resist conformity if that conformity offers less legitimacy. Yet, some of the hypotheses may reveal interesting insights in cases where they are not true. For example, Oliver (1991) predicts that the “lower the degree of voluntary diffusion of institutional norms, values, or practices, the greater the likelihood of organizational resistance to institutional pressures” (p. 168). What if an organization’s leader and members, situated in an isomorphic industry, chose to reject the

legitimacy that conformity offered? A true outlier, though rare in an institutionalized field, might resist while asserting little concern for the legitimacy that conformity confers if that conformity results in inefficient performance.

Oliver's (1991) responses have been tested in multiple studies that have largely supported her propositions (Clemens & Douglas, 2005; Etherington & Richardson, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; O'Brien & Slack, 2004). However, the assumptions of Oliver's propositions and the subsequent research using her model did not consider a few unique contextual factors that may offer more nuance regarding organizational responses to institutional pressures. For example, in previous research, the organizational responses were not to evidence-based calls for change. In addition, Oliver's article did not give much attention to specific applications of the tactics listed for each strategic response. This gap in the article invited an exploration of how communication strategies from previous organizational communication and public relations research could be applied to the practice of resisting institutional pressures.

An exploration of communication strategies might start with scholars' studies of language use in organizational discourse. Referencing previous research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Deetz, 1992; Taylor & Cooren, 1997), Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) argue "scholars increasingly assert that organizations are discursive constructions because discourse is the very foundation upon which organizational life is built" (p. 5). This emphasis on language situates discourse as "the study of talk and text in social practices" rather than the Foucauldian (1976; 1980) big "D" Discourses as "general and enduring systems of thought" (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 7).

Organizational communication strategies can also be thought of as discursive resources, or linguistic devices like phrases, expressions, or tropes "that guide interpretations of experience

and shape the construction of preferred conceptions of persons and groups” (Kuhn et al., 2008, p. 163). Discursive resources are called on to help explain action in the past, present, or to create a vision for future action (Kuhn, et al., 2008; Fairclough, 1992; Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). For example, discursive resources could include rhetorical strategies or framing devices (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016, p. 6).

One recent research project did directly address the communication of resistance to institutional pressures such as mimetic isomorphism, and the study was situated in a sports context. Bisel, Kramer, and Banas (2016) studied the founder of an elite gymnastics training organization who led her members to resist unethical institutional pressures. The researchers found this institutional resistance leader (IRL) successfully resisted pressures at the organizational level, but she did not move that work to the institutional level. The IRL experienced an identity violation regarding the ethics of continuing to conform to institutional pressures; the researchers called for scholars to further investigate violations that lead IRLs to resist institutional pressures. When the IRL in Bisel, Kramer and Banas’ (2016) study made sense of what institutional pressures she wanted her organization to resist, she used sensebreaking messages to disparage institutional norms and raise up her alternative methods as superior.

In the study, the leader’s sensemaking of institutional pressures as unethical moved her to create “sensebreaking” messages, which communicated to members and put into practice alternatives to the pressures (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). For example, the sensemaking message of “that’s how it’s always been done” may elicit a sensebreaking message from a member seeking change in a football organization; that sensebreaking message might be that “the way it has always been done has never resulted in our ultimate goal of a championship.” In

addition, one major conclusion of the study was the importance of securing sociomaterial resources when an institutional resistance leader sought to resist pressures at the organizational level. Bisel, Kramer, and Banas (2016) called for further investigation of the types and combinations of material resources used by an IRL and the implications of those resources for institutional resistance. Examples included creating social legitimacy for organizational members to resist or having access to physical assets that enable acting on alternative ideas. One possible sociomaterial resource that may help organizational leaders and other members resist institutional pressures will be explored in the next section.

In summary, institutionalism provides insight into the examination of how organizational members may resist pressures to conform. Reflecting the embedded agency paradox, members often do not even realize everything that is taken for granted, but if they do, they feel limited in their abilities to communicate about actions or ideas that do not align with the homogeneity in structures and processes in an industry. Institutional logics represent actual practices and symbolic messages that constitute organizing principles. However, few studies have examined how institutional pressures are resisted. The few studies that have touched on this topic did not involve evidence-based calls for change and overlooked organizational communication scholarship regarding discursive resources available to resisters. In addition, the importance of an institutional resistance leader securing sociomaterial resources is worthy of further study.

Evidence-Based Management

An organizational concept that may have application to understanding how institutionalism could be communicatively resisted is evidence-based management (EBM). EBM is the academic study of how members of an organization make decisions via scientific research-based evidence. Giluk and Rynes-Weller (2012) define EBM as “making decisions that integrate

the best available research evidence with practitioner expertise and judgment, evidence from the local context, and the perspectives of those who might be affected by the decision” (p. 376; Briner, Denyer, & Rousseau, 2009). For example, in the health care context, a doctor guided by EBM would consult the latest medical studies, especially in regard to how they may challenge previous knowledge and experience. This would be done before engaging in a plan of care, followed by consideration of the current situation’s context and consultation with the patient. In a sports organization, a coach guided by EBM would consider statistical analyses rather than simply considering tradition before making a decision.

EBM evolved from evidence-based practice (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006), which has a more extensive history of research and application in the organizational contexts of healthcare (Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, & Richardson, 1996), especially multiple physician practice areas (Champagne & Lemieux-Charles, 2004), mental health, nursing (Stevens, 2013; Wallis, 2012), dentistry (McGlone & Sheiham, 2001), and health care administration (Walshe & Rundall, 2001). Many of these studies revealed that the organizations that acted on EBM realized better performance outcomes such as improved speed and quality of healing (Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, & Richardson, 1996), decreased costs (Lemieux-Charles & Champagne, 2004), and increased collaboration and efficiency (Walshe & Rundall, 2001). Researchers extended evidence-based practice to education (Thomas & Pring, 2004) and policing, too (Sherman, 2015) and found it led to decreased crime rates and improved knowledge-gain and graduation rates. Research in these diverse areas has revealed EBM results in “convergent evidence of pervasive cause-and-effect relationships, which in turn have been translated into everything from powerful drug therapies to effective early childhood educational interventions” (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007, p. 95).

Sackett and his colleagues (1996) are often credited as the founders of evidence-based practices in health care, as he and others urged physicians to adopt a more empirical approach to practice, a concept that was consistent with training and education experiences found in research hospitals (Sackett et al., 1996; Sackett, Straus, Richardson, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 2000). Eventually, organizational researchers and management professors began to call for evidence-based practice to expand beyond the initial three categories of health care, education, and policing, resulting in the practice expanding to management in business and the teaching of management in higher education (Rousseau, 2006; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007).

Regardless of the context, however, most researchers agree that organizational actors who seek to implement EBM have faced significant resistance that has resulted in the practice being implemented rarely or ineffectively (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rynes, Giluk, & Brown, 2007; Gubbins & Rousseau, 2015; Wright, Middleton, Greenfield, Williams, & Brazil, 2016). For example, some managers have adopted a cultural perspective that management is primarily learned through hands-on, self-taught experience and intuition (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). EBM can also make some managers uncomfortable by increasing performance expectations; EBM creates accountability, especially when intuitive decision-making fails. In addition, managers may be slow to adopt EBM because of the demands on information-seeking, efforts that are hampered by limited time, resources, and often, educational experiences that were not evidence-based as well (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). If a professional was not trained to consult the latest research before taking action, then that person may be resistant to the adoption of EBM. However, resisting EBM can have litigation consequences (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). If a doctor unsuccessfully treats a patient's illness in a way that the doctor has always treated that illness, patient families

may work with legal counsel to sue for malpractice if recent, available research indicates an alternative treatment would have had a different outcome (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007).

In addition to the management field, the context of healthcare also has provided useful data on why some organizational actors have been slow to adopt EBM. For example, Giluk and Rynes-Weller (2012) reviewed multiple studies that examined EBM adoption and found healthcare organizational members did not adopt due to distrust of three main concepts: academics and scientists, statistics, and research sponsored by for-profit companies. Skeptics dismissed academics and scientists for being too disconnected from the front lines of a field, believed statistics were viewed as confusing or distorted, and viewed research sponsored by for-profit companies as not trustworthy. One might summarize this resistance as distrust of people, numbers, and organizations. In addition, healthcare organizational members were slow to adopt EBM when research findings did the following: threatened the status quo and caused anxiety, contradicted personal experience, required change, or seemed irrelevant to a local context, such as the belief that the context in which the evidence was discovered was not similar enough to an individual's organizational context (Giluk & Rynes-Weller, 2012). Members of health care organizations who had worked longer in their industry also indicated they were less likely to adopt EBM than those who had worked for less time (Melnyk, et al., 2012).

In summary, evidence-based management is a young, well-studied concept, especially in the health care context. Increased performance outcomes reveal that EBM can provide legitimacy to organizational members resisting institutional pressures, yet the adoption of EBM often encounters significant resistance. A distrust of sources of evidence and a fear of change present a need for organizational members to call on discursive resources to more effectively persuade others to resist institutional pressures. Given the likelihood that organizational actors

will face difficulty in achieving member buy-in to resist institutional pressures, it is useful to next explore research on resisting institutional pressures.

Institutional Entrepreneurs and Institutional Resistance

Previous research regarding resistance responses to institutional pressures, whether the calls for change were evidence-based or not, have centered on institutional work and more specifically entrepreneurs (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Levy & Scully, 2007; Mutch, 2007; Munir & Phillips, 2007). Responding to critiques of the embedded agency paradox, these scholars believed that institutional structures do not completely take away an individual's ability to act against institutional pressures; in fact, those pressures sometimes result in individuals who engage in institutional work to change, resist, disrupt, or create a new institution (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007; Lammers & Garcia, 2014). Institutional entrepreneurship seems to have received more attention, though, as the concept was defined by Maguire, Hardy, and Lawrence (2004) as the "activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones" (p. 657). The study of institutional entrepreneurs and the creation of new institutions have resulted in these actors being presented as heroic and omniscient agents (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016).

In the context of football, an institutional worker could be a coach defending an approach to play-calling that goes against what is practiced by all other coaches. The coach who sees this counter-institutional approach as beneficial likely would not want opponents to copy those plays because the coach would lose a performance advantage. In contrast, an institutional entrepreneur could be a coach calling for sport-wide changes to safety procedures. The entrepreneur would use resources to transform existing practices that impact all teams that play at a certain level (such as high school) or all teams at all levels.

Interestingly, institutional work has been understudied, according to Lawrence et al. (2009), as “practices associated with actors attempting to undermine institutional arrangements [are] not well documented” (p. 9). This weakness of existing research extends to an omission of how an institutional worker’s change efforts often start at the organizational level (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). Few studies have examined organizational decisions made to change institutional norms, and even less attention has been given to the role of communication in the institutional work of resisting institutional pressures, especially at the organizational level (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). Therefore, the idea that actors might want to engage in institutional work that disrupts existing institutions without the goal of creating a new institution has been largely overlooked (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

In fact, institutional entrepreneurship does not quite capture the essence of an organizational innovator who resists institutional pressures primarily for the benefit of that person’s organization. The assumption in institutional scholarship that entrepreneurs naturally seek to convince other organizations to resist institutional pressures and collectively change an institution (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009) overlooks a basic exploitive principle of entrepreneurship theory. The entrepreneur who develops an innovation, at least initially, often does not want other organizations in a field to adopt that change (Schumpeter, 1942). Being the only adopter of the innovation confers competitive performance advantages. Therefore, previous research has not considered institutional work in which organizational actors would resist institutional pressures while simultaneously hoping that competing organizations would continue to acquiesce to those same pressures.

In summary, much of the previous research regarding institutional resistance has centered on individuals who have created new institutions beyond the organizational level. As Bisel,

Kramer and Banas (2016) highlighted, previous research has also overlooked “leadership communication strategies that persuade organizational members to resist institutional influences on local practices” (p. 5). That research overlooked institutional work in which organizational actors might want to disrupt institutions without the goal of creating a new institution. This oversight of a basic principle of entrepreneurship theory is worthy of further exploration, as is a deeper look at the role of communication in the institutional work of resisting pressures. Some organizational members resisting institutional pressures may actually want others in a field to continue to acquiesce to existing institutions. In addition, more scholarship needs to examine how institutional change can start at the organizational level.

Resources for Resisting Institutional Pressures: Organizational Communication

Perspectives

Previous studies of resistance to institutional pressures have not truly included organizational communication and public relations perspectives regarding discursive resources available to actors. This reflects a general omission of the role of communication in resisting institutional pressures at the organizational level (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). Examining organizational communication and public relations research is appropriate because they reflect what Oliver (1991) terms as “influence tactics” by resisters interested in shaping values and criteria for acceptable action.

This section examines specific strategies that can be used to resist institutional pressures. Those strategies come from a wide range of research areas such as organizational rhetoric, legitimation rhetoric (Lammers & Garcia, 2014; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), dialogic public relations (Kent & Taylor, 2002, appreciative inquiry (Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2003), framing in public relations (Hallahan, 1999), and leadership framing (Fairhurst, 2011, 2009). An

exhaustive look at communication strategies used to establish legitimacy establishes a framework for identifying similar and unique themes throughout the literature. Much of the discursive resources available to an institutional resistance leader center on efforts to co-create legitimacy among organizational members.

Legitimation Rhetoric. Legitimation rhetoric is one organizational communication concept available to actors seeking to persuade organizational audiences to resist institutional pressures toward conformity. Legitimation rhetoric is best understood by first discussing broader, overarching terms of rhetoric and organizational rhetoric.

Most discussions of rhetoric start with the term's Athenian roots, especially Aristotle's (trans. 1932) well-known definition as "the faculty of observing in any case the available means of persuasion." Situated in an organizational case or context, Hoffman and Ford (2009) define organizational rhetoric as "the strategic use of symbols by organizations to influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences important to the operation of the organization" (p. 7). The power of organizational rhetoric as a discursive resource available to actors seeking to persuade organizational audiences to resist institutional pressures comes from interpretive notions of the concept. For example, Conrad's (2012) concept of rhetoric is informed by his assertion that "societies are defined by a characteristic set of taken-for-granted assumptions, which provide citizens with a sensible, stable, and predictable perceptual world, but also functions as a form of self control" (p. 37-38). Therefore, communication is at the center of rhetoric, which he sees as "a complex process through which people develop and refine their beliefs, values, and views of reality by communicating with others" (Conrad, 2012, p. 2). Communication in organizations establishes, maintains, and potentially challenges the stability of these taken-for-granted assumptions.

In addition, Conrad (2012) argues that rhetorical situations “have an ideological component: the set of beliefs, values, and frameworks for making sense out of reality. Therefore, identifying an organization’s rhetoric allows one to better understand how members co-create reality. Finally, Conrad (2012) argues that rhetoric exists alongside social myths, the articulated, dominant values that are believed to be true by members of a society. Even if they are not true, those values are consonant with the power of institutionalism. Identifying an organization’s rhetoric may allow an innovator to adopt or challenge social myths about the efficacy of maintaining the institutional status quo. For example, a football coach would have to evaluate the reasons that are communicated when players, staff, and supporters are asked why many play-calling and safety decisions have remained consistent regardless of outcomes and evidence of better approaches.

With an understanding of the potential power of organizational rhetoric in general, legitimation rhetoric offers specific discursive resources relevant for persuading organizational members to resist institutional pressures. This is due in part to the power of institutions’ tendencies to become uncontested. For example, Meyer and Scott (1983) wrote that institutional pressures are “the extent to which the array of established cultural accounts provide explanations for existence, function, and jurisdiction, and lack or deny alternatives” (p. 201). In football, a coach may consider that punting on fourth down is statistically inferior, but the established institutional expectations in football regarding fourth-down decision-making is that refusing to punt is simply too risky; those who ignore this expectation are framed as having a riverboat gambler mentality, which is not a respected metaphor for someone leading young men. Influenced by Meyer and Rowan (1977), institutional researchers like Lammers and Garcia (2014) have argued “external symbolic pressures [that are] perceived as legitimate” influence the

structure of an organization beyond simple production requirements (p. 200). Legitimate in this institutional context means a course of action is “desirable, proper, or appropriate,” especially compared to alternatives (Suchman, 1995, p. 574).

Types of Legitimacy. The concept of legitimacy in institutional and strategic literature was examined in depth by Suchman (1995), who identified three main types: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. Referencing Wood (1991), pragmatic legitimacy, as Suchman (1995) explains, involves organizational members evaluating “the practical consequences, for them, of any given line of activity” (Suchman, 1995, p. 578). An example in football would be emphasizing the dangers of refusing to update safety measures. Moral legitimacy is an evaluation of whether a particular organizational activity is “the right thing to do” (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). Similarly, an argument for increasing safety measures would emphasize that protecting youth was the highest good regardless of the financial costs. Finally, cognitive legitimacy involves “plausible explanations of the organization and its endeavors” or legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness (Suchman, 1995, p. 582). The latter arises from the way institutions can render ways of doing and talking as “givens” for which it is “literally unthinkable” for there to be alternatives (Suchman, 1995, p. 583). This kind of legitimacy is the most powerful, subtle, and rare form. An example might be resisting calls to eliminate hard hits in football because the sport has always been about “getting your bell rung” and “bouncing back like a big boy.”

The use of legitimacy messages in rhetoric can be a discursive resource for organizational leaders, especially those situated in fields that are highly regulated and behave similarly (such as football teams that play by the same rules). Leaders often use these tools to persuade members that existing practices are consistent with externally established expectations (Lammers & Garcia, 2014; Deephouse & Carter, 2005). Persuasion aimed at signaling legitimacy will include

“rational myths,” which are untestable means-ends statements (Lammers & Garcia, 2014, p. 200). An example would be arguing that everyone knows kicking on fourth down is the safest decision most of the time (one can’t actually find out what everyone thinks). A way to enhance the legitimacy of resistance persuasion in this instance might be an appeal to statistical studies of fourth-down scoring probabilities. Therefore, those seeking to resist externally established norms need to account for the rational myths used to maintain the legitimacy of conformity and then develop persuasive messages about the legitimacy of resistance.

The need to use rational myths for legitimacy reflects the language-dependent nature of rhetorical legitimation strategies (Salge & Barrett, 2011; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Berger and Luckman (1966) said as much by asserting “the edifice of legitimation is built upon language and uses language as its principal instrumentality” (p. 64). The messages used by organizational leaders and found in organizational policies rarely exist to simply inform; those messages also structure the organization and aim to assure audiences of decisional legitimacy (Lammers & Garcia, 2014). Similarly, as Suchman (1995) argued, communication is at the center of legitimation strategies, which aim to gain, maintain, and repair legitimacy. In fact, scholars generally agree that the communication of legitimation processes centers on rhetoric and discourse (Salge & Barrett, 2012; Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

Five Classes of Theorizations of Change. The alignment of discourse, rhetoric, and legitimacy is a logical fit with the tasks of organizational leaders who resist institutional pressures. Studies of these leaders have revealed how they sought to influence legitimacy-granting audiences (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Oliver, 1991; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Vaara and Tienari, 2008; Salge & Barrett, 2011). For example, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005)

identified five classes of theorizations of change in legitimating discourses: ontological rhetoric, historical justifications, teleological persuasion, cosmological explanations, and value-based accounts. The researchers analyzed the discursive struggle between supporters and opponents of a new organization that resulted from a Big Five accounting firm purchasing a law firm.

Ontological rhetoric was used by both change opponents and supporters to talk about what “can or cannot exist” in their respective industries after the merger (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 51). Historical rhetoric was used mostly by opponents who viewed “change as something that is significant and threatening,” though some supporters appealed to history to show change as natural and evolutionary (Sudaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 52). Teleological theorizations presented change as necessary to fulfill a greater objective or vision (Sudaby & Greenwood, 2005). An example in football is a coach calling for significant changes if a team has never won a championship in the organization’s history. Cosmological theorizations explain change as an inevitable response to some external force outside the control of individuals and therefore cannot be resisted (Sudaby & Greenwood, 2005). For example, a coach could argue for increased safety measures due to pressure from state high school athletics associations. Finally, value-based theorizations “involve ethical evaluations of the “goodness” or “evil” of a proposed change” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 56), which echoes Suchman’s (1995) notion of moral legitimacy.

Regarding the theorizations of change, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) found that historical arguments were used the most and almost equally by supporters and opponents; opponents almost overwhelmingly used ontological and value-based arguments. Supporters of change “almost exclusively used teleological theorizations of change” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 57), which may be particularly useful for countering organizational isomorphism. For

example, a coach may reference that doing what has always been done (especially if that team has always fallen short of a championship) will not result in a different outcome.

Five Legitimation Strategies. In yet another study of legitimation rhetoric, Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla (2006) identified legitimation strategies used by journalists writing about a large, institutionally disruptive merger of a Finish company and a Swedish company in the pulp and paper industry. Their analysis of discourse identified five strategies: normalization, authorization, instrumental rationalization, moralization, and dramatic narrativization. Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla (2006) defined legitimation strategies as “specific, not always intentional or conscious” use of different messages and language to establish legitimacy (p. 9). The first strategy, normalization, is when actions or ideas may be labeled normal or natural, and therefore, worthy of emulating, whether in the past or the future (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006). The second strategy, authorization, seeks legitimation by reference to an authority, such as an expert or an institution like “the investment markets” (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006, p. 15). The instrumental rationalization strategy “focuses on the benefits, purposes, functions, or outcomes” of actions, especially those that disrupted the industry in their study (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006, p. 17). For example, a football coach might argue that adopting statistics-based decision-making will increase a team’s ability to score points. The moralization strategy seeks legitimacy by appealing to specific values such as nationalism or humanism; this strategy was similar to rationalization and was often used by journalists to delegitimize the merger (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006). Finally, the dramatic narrativization strategy highlighted how an organizational member, such as a leader, can use stories to provide “evidence of acceptable, appropriate, and preferential behavior” (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006, p. 21). In dramatic narrativizations, specific types of people or organizations are depicted as “winners, losers, heroes, adversaries, or

culprits” (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006, p. 21). This strategy and its use of character labels could be called on by those seeking resistance or conformity regarding changes to safety or play-calling in football.

While the strategies above were identified in journalists’ accounts of disruption in an industry, the five may provide insight into the communication of organizational actors directed toward fellow organizational members. Each strategy is relevant to the current study; normalization, authorization, and moralization were more common for groups that resisted change. The instrumental rationalization strategy was used primarily by advocates of change, and the dramatic narrativization could be called upon by both resisters and adopters. Each of the preceding legitimation strategies appears to have the potential to be called on by organizational actors seeking to persuade members to resist institutional pressures. Situated in the context of a football team, the authorization strategy might include an appeal to an expert researcher, the instrumental rationalization might include the benefits of play-calling changes (including increased scoring with a more aggressive approach), and the moralization strategy might include messages regarding safety that emphasize moral duty to protect athletes.

Though the five legitimation strategies explicated by Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla (2006) may offer potential benefits to organizational actors seeking to persuade members to resist institutional pressures, caution is warranted. Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) offered a warning to organizational members attempting to achieve legitimacy; those attempts can actually achieve the opposite of legitimacy. Using the metaphor of stage actors, the researchers identified clumsy, nervous, and overacting organizations engaged in efforts of achieving legitimacy (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990). The first type of organization may communicate in such a way that it is perceived as “unethical, heavy-handed, or insensitive,” the second may be seen as “dogmatic, intolerant, or

evasive,” while the third may be viewed as over-reacting to blame or overstating legitimacy claims (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990, p. 177). For example, a clumsy organization might try to ban dissent or discussion among members, while a nervous organization might ignore rather than respond to criticisms, and an overacting organization might exaggerate the conclusions of evidence or logical fallacies.

Project Rationales in Legitimizing Discourses. Another study may offer insights that can minimize the likelihood that legitimation communication undermines rather than enhances legitimacy. Salge and Barrett (2011) identified project rationales in their study of legitimating discourses regarding development projects in a hospital. A legitimating discourse is the intentional use of language and messages to influence how audiences evaluate the legitimacy of a specific action or idea (Salge & Barrett, 2011). A project rationale in their study, for which they found anecdotal but not statistically significant support, was the written and presented proposals by teams in a hospital that sought funding and support to launch a new service for patients. These teams skillfully sought legitimacy in these proposals since limited resources were available, meaning some proposals would be rejected (Salge & Barrett, 2011).

Referencing rational models of choice (Radner & Rothschild, 1975; Hey, 1994; March, 1991), the researchers divided project rationales into two types: exploitive and exploratory (Salge & Barrett, 2011). Exploration projects involved the pursuit of knowledge unknown and were more uncertain (involving risk-taking and experimentation) but presented potentially greater returns, while exploitive projects involved knowledge already known and had less uncertainty but presented less notable returns (Salge & Barrett, 2011; March, 1991; Levinthal & March, 1993). Organizations depend on both to survive, though exploration appears to need autonomy while exploitation benefits from routinization (Salge & Barrett, 2011; He & Wong,

2004). The two approaches are often viewed by organizational leaders as competing for managers' attention and resources; one receives support at the expense of the other (Salge & Barrett, 2011; Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). An example of an exploration projects in football is adopting statistics-based play-calling, while an example of an exploitive safety project in football is deciding to adopt a no-helmet policy in practices (as advocated by some) after already using a no-pads approach. Not using helmets in practice has been advocated for and adopted by some coaches as a safety improvement, primarily based on teaching players to be less reckless due to the presence of protective equipment.

The two types of projects make a unique contribution to the legitimation rhetoric literature because different types of legitimacy seem to fit better for the different projects. Salge and Barrett (2011) found that Suddaby and Greenwood's theorizations of change were used differently by advocates of the two types of development projects. Teleological theorizations were common for both but more pronounced for exploitive projects. In addition, legitimating discourses for exploratory projects relied more on cosmological theorizations of change than for exploitive projects. In football, exploitive safety projects might be legitimated by appealing to regulatory pressures. Salge and Barrett (2011) also found persuasive appeals performed differently for the two different types of projects, especially in regard to the use of classical rhetoric. Logical appeals were more common than emotional or ethical appeals for both exploitive and exploration projects. These logical justifications sought to "link new actions to effective outcomes, and thus fit well with the evidence-based logic dominating" health care (Salge & Barrett, 2011, p. 148). In addition, the researchers found that emotional appeals were common in legitimating discourse for exploitive projects, and they proposed that emotional appeals would be less common in legitimating discourse for exploratory projects.

Though Salge and Barrett's (2011) project rationales did not achieve statistical significance, the authors referenced anecdotal support for the concepts. The four rationales were economic, strategic, clinical, and isomorphic. Economic rationales included cost-benefit arguments, strategic rationales included arguments of competitive advantage, clinical rationales included arguments about improving patient experiences, and isomorphic rationales included arguments about the need to comply with established industry practices or regulatory norms (Salge & Barrett, 2011). The most common rationales were coercive (rather than mimetic) isomorphism, as advocates for both exploratory and exploitive projects argued for change that would meet the demands of external pressures.

However, two of Salge and Barrett's (2011) rationales, economic and strategic, seem to provide rhetorical resources to organizational actors interested in resisting conformity pressures. An example of an economic rationale is a proposal to invest in a new technology that would generate more positive outcomes than the cost of the technology. Applied to football, an economic rationale might emphasize how new safety practices could reduce the occurrence or costs of injuries. An example of a strategic rationale from Salge and Barrett (2011) is a proposal that would emphasize how adopting a new technology would help the organization offer a service that competitors did not offer. A strategic rationale in football might be an argument for statistics-based play-calling that would enhance a team's chances of winning, especially against teams that do not use an evidence-based approach.

Table 1			
<i>Communication Strategies In Legitimation Rhetoric</i>			
<u>Authors</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Strategies</u>
Suchman	1995	Types of Legitimacy	Pragmatic Moral Cognitive
Suddaby & Greenwood	2005	Theorizations of Change	Ontological Rhetoric Historical Justifications Teleological Persuasion Cosmological Explanations Value-Based Accounts
Vaara, Tienari & Laurilla	2006	Legitimation Strategies	Normalization Authorization Instrumental Rationalization Moralization Dramatic Narrativization
Salge & Barrett	2011	Project Rationales	Economic Strategic Clinical Isomorphic

Table 1

Returning to Suchman's (1995) argument that there are three main types of legitimacy, it is difficult to decide in which of the three categories one should place each of the studies of legitimation rhetoric and their 14 strategies [see Table 1 for a summary of Suddaby and Greenwood's (2005) five classes of theorizations of change in legitimating discourses, Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla's (2006) five legitimation strategies, and Salge and Barrett's (2011) four project rationales]. Admittedly, some strategies likely can be used for more than one type of legitimacy. However, using the researchers' definitions, most strategies seem to have a goal of one primary type of legitimacy. The legitimation strategies of value-based accounts,

moralization, and clinical rationales are natural fits with moral legitimacy regarding a course of action as the right thing to do based on a pre-existing value system. The legitimation strategies of teleological persuasion, instrumental rationalization, economic rationales, and strategic rationales fit well with pragmatic legitimacy, with its focus on practical consequences of actions. The remaining seven strategies seem to have a primary function of supporting cognitive legitimacy that is based on taken-for-grantedness. These seven strategies seem to center on protecting or establishing preferred ways of doing and talking for which alternatives are not welcomed. For example, ontological rhetoric, cosmological explanations, normalization, authorization, and isomorphic rationales focus on ways of being that can or cannot be allowed. Similarly, historical justifications are used to support resistance or change due to what the organization did in the past, and dramatic narrativization is used to paint a picture of preferred taken-for-grantedness. Therefore, another way of summarizing these 14 legitimation strategies is by collapsing Suchman's (1995) three types of legitimacy into two categories. One type would be cognitive taken-for-granted legitimacy, and the other type would be non-cognitive legitimacy focused on morality or practical consequences of actions. The 14 strategies would divide evenly in these two types of legitimacy, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2	
<i>Summarized Types of Legitimacy and Communication Strategies</i>	
Type of Legitimacy	Strategies
Cognitive (based on taken-for-grantedness)	Ontological Rhetoric Historical Justifications Cosmological Explanations Normalization Authorization Dramatic Narrativization Isomorphic Rationale
Non-cognitive (based on morality or practical consequences)	Teleological Persuasion Value-Based Accounts Instrumental Rationalization Moralization Economic Rationale Strategic Rationale Clinical Rationale

Table 2

After summarizing legitimation strategies, a few parallels with the institutional literature stand out. Institutional resistance leaders may find particular interest in communication strategies available for enhancing different types of legitimacy. Some strategies may help enhance what Oliver (1991) labeled the defy response to institutional pressures. For example, a communication strategy aimed at gaining cognitive legitimacy, such as dramatic narrativization, might be called on to create a new vision of taken-for-grantedness. Similarly, communication strategies aimed at gaining non-cognitive legitimacy may work well for resisting institutional pressures that try to maintain an existing taken-for-grantedness. Oliver (1991) lists defy tactics as dismissing norms and values, challenging requirements, and attacking sources of pressure. Resisting institutional pressures through communication that emphasizes the morality or practical consequences of an innovation, rather than the taken-for-granted nature of the pressures, may be an effective discursive resource for organizational members.

In fact, one unique contribution of the legitimation strategies literature is the discussion of moral legitimacy, a concept that Oliver's (1991) typology of responses did not really address. Her five main types of responses to institutional pressures seem to center on arguments. Her five responses of acquiesce, compromise, avoid, defy, and manipulate include a number of tactics that include outright deception. Tactics like conceal, ignore, assault, and control seem to share similarity with legitimacy that is based on practical consequences of actions. The entire article has almost zero discussion of morality. It seems possible that communication strategies based on moral legitimacy may broaden options for responding to institutional pressures. In fact, defying pressures by appealing to moral legitimacy is at the heart of Salge and Barrett's (2011) clinical rationale for project proposals (with its focus on improving patient outcomes).

In addition to parallels with the institutional literature, communication strategies that appeal to cognitive or non-cognitive legitimacy are relevant to the EBM literature. These legitimation strategies seem to offer ways for institutional resistance leaders to counter expected objections to persuasion about EBM. For example, non-cognitive legitimacy based on morality seems especially important when objections to EBM are made out of a fear of changing the status quo. In football, a coach might appeal to moral legitimacy when encouraging organizational members to go beyond the minimum requirements in regard to safety. In addition, communication strategies aimed at gaining cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness, such as dramatic narrativization, authorization, or historical justifications, might be well-suited for countering common objections to EBM: it is seen as irrelevant to a local context, it requires change, it contradicts personal experience, and its use of statistics is not trusted. In football for example, dramatic narrativization might be called on to counter a belief that EBM would not work in a smaller school with fewer players and resources.

Summary. In summary regarding legitimation rhetoric, organizational communication research reveals a number of discursive resources that organizational members could call on to persuade members to resist institutional pressures. Identifying an organization's rhetoric allows a member resisting institutional pressures to challenge socially constructed myths about the efficacy of maintaining the status quo. The power of institutional logics to become taken-for-granted and uncontested creates a need for organizational members to use legitimation rhetoric for their resistance messages. While Salge and Barrett's (2011) work helped establish and identify types of legitimation rhetoric, their quantitative research findings were anecdotal and not statistically significant. As such, the concepts were not examined from a qualitative research perspective, which seems to be a good fit for studies of taken-for-grantedness. Communication of legitimation centers on rhetoric and discourse, which matches the work of organizational leaders who resist institutional pressures. A review of legitimation communication highlights 14 strategies that fall into two broad categories of cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness and non-cognitive legitimacy based on practical consequences or morality. Few of these strategies have been examined in the context of resisting institutional pressures or the communication of an institutional resistance leader, including responding to objections to EBM.

Dialogic Public Relations. In addition to legitimation and organizational rhetoric, recent dialogic conceptualizations of public relations contribute to an understanding of discursive resources available to organizational actors seeking to resist institutional logics. In fact, public relations research and theories are natural extensions of rhetoric about organizational legitimacy. Public relations is strategic communication for the purpose of mutual relationship-building between an organization and its stakeholders or publics (Kent, 2015). For much of the field's history, that communication and relationship-building involved working closely with journalists,

though somewhat as adversaries, in media relations and crisis communication. In recent years, public relations has evolved to be seen as an essential management function and important element of organizational leadership (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Kent's definition of public relations reflects a more recent co-creational turn in the field, a turn that evolved from a functional perspective. The functional approach sees "publics and communication as tools or means to achieve organizational ends," with a "focus on the use of public relations as an instrument to accomplish specific organizational goals rather than relationships" (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 651). On the other hand, the co-creational perspective "sees publics as co-creators of meaning and communication as what makes it possible to agree to shared meanings, interpretations, and goals" (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652). This definition reflects notions of interpretivism in organizational communication. Applying a co-creational perspective of public relations to an institutional context is especially warranted because both concepts share those interpretive underpinnings (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Frandsen & Johansen, 2013). In fact, the co-creational perspective views ideal public relations involving organizations and publics as partners in the process of meaning-making, which transcends public relations professionals simply achieving an organizational goal (Botan & Taylor, 2004).

The dialogic theory of public relations is among the most recent additions to co-creational concepts of public relations. The theory was developed shortly after the widespread adoption of the internet as a communication medium. Kent and Taylor (1998) proposed a fuller conceptualization of public relations that involved strategic communicators engaging stakeholders in a fully realized relationship of equal dialogue rather than one of manipulation and coercion. Online tools enabled two-way communication and offered new potential for public relations practice to be transformed from a functional mindset that involved primarily one-way

communication by organizations. Drawing on writings about dialogue by Martin Buber (1970) and an influential dissertation by Pearson (1989), this two-way relational communication model expanded on other co-creational approaches. As Pearson (1989) argued, dialogue has the potential to highlight how organizations can realize ideal public relations through dialogic “systems rather than monologic” policies (p. 442).

One reason the dialogic theory of public relations has generated scholarly discussions is the theory’s descriptive components. Kent and Taylor’s (2002) five overarching tenets of dialogue include the features of mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment. The researchers define each:

“mutuality, or the recognition of organization-public relationships; propinquity, or the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics; empathy, or the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests; risk, or the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms and in ways that suffer the uncertainty or risk of such engagement; and finally, commitment, or the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in its interactions with publics” (pp. 24-25).

The authors elaborate further that mutuality is an acknowledgement that organizations and publics are inextricably tied together and should pursue a “spirit of mutual equality” (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 25). Propinquity means that publics are consulted (and in proximity to the organization) in matters that influence them in an effort to cultivate kinship, while empathy requires “walking in the shoes” of the publics that public relations professionals interact with (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26-27). Finally, commitment requires “genuineness “and authenticity, “commitment to the conversation” and to co-interpretation (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 29).

Examples of the components of dialogic theory of public relations in the context of an organizational member seeking to persuade others to resist institutionalism would include communication that highlights mutually beneficial benefits and messages that acknowledge empathy for those who may disagree. In addition, dialogic theory would inspire a resistor to engage in the risk of being truly transparent and with commitment to honor those in the organization who disagree rather than demonize them. Applied to a football context, a coach seeking to persuade organizational members to resist institutional pressures could highlight shared goals and benefits, engage through empathy and transparency, and honor those who object. Engaging in these manners would not require compromising beliefs, but it would likely encourage better civility in persuasion and debate.

The dialogic approach to public relations echoes Burke's (1969) thoughts that "the dialogue seeks to attain a higher order of truth, as the speakers, in competing with one another, cooperate towards an end transcending their individual positions" (p. 53). Therefore, organizational spokespeople are called to an ethical mission through the dialogic approach to public relations. In fact, Botan (1997) argued a year before Kent and Taylor proposed the dialogic theory of public relations that "dialogue elevates publics to the status of communication equal with the organization" (p. 196).

Scholars have conducted a number of studies to test and advance the tenets of the dialogic theory of public relations. While two studies (McAllister-Spooner, 2008; 2012) sought practitioners' perspectives on and challenges faced implementing the dialogic theory, the majority of studies have examined online public relations tactics of organizations (e.g., McAllister, 2012; Sommerfeldt, Kent, & Taylor, 2012). In every study involving the dialogic

theory of public relations, the online public relations tactics fell short of the ideals of dialogue (McCalister-Spooner, 2008).

The dialogic theory has itself received criticism from other scholars. For example, some have indicated that the dialogic theory is simply too ideal and disconnected from realistic needs and demands of practitioners (Pieczka, 2010). Similarly, Meisenback and Feldner (2011) add that “dialogic frameworks, while admirable, are hyperbolic at best” (p. 566; Boyd & Waymer, 2011). Pieczka further critiques the dialogic theory for being too universal and not practically specific. She argues “public relations’ normative interest in dialogue seems not to have translated into developing expert dialogic tools or spaces in which public relations experts routinely use such tools” (Pieczka, 2010, p. 108).

Pieczka (2010) further criticizes the limited scope of existing dialogic public relations research, arguing that “there is a danger inherent in the methodologies used so far of reducing the search for genuine dialogue to somewhat mechanistic principles of building feedback loops, or ‘dialogic loops’” (p. 117). The point is valid since there is more to dialogic practice than feedback forms on websites. Just as McCallister-Spooner (2008) concluded that “the dialogic promise of the web has not yet been realized” (p. 321), Meisenback and Feldner (2011) add that public relations “theories and practice seem to fall short of reaching this [dialogic] ideal. The question remains as to why” (p. 563). Another co-creational communication concept discussed in the next section may offer some potential answers.

This brief overview of the dialogic theory of public relations suggests that tenets of the theory may offer an enhanced approach for institutional resistance leaders. Dialogic public relations seems to offer a unique perspective from most influence and public relations tactics (especially applied in the context of resisting institutional pressures). Traditional influence tactics

that prioritize organizational goals, which seem to characterize Oliver's (1991) responses to institutional pressures, are not focused on co-creating mutually beneficial outcomes. In fact, many of Oliver's (1991) tactics involve outright deception and no discussion of moral legitimacy. Dialogic public relations aims to be less manipulative than traditional notions of public relations. Influence tactics aimed at co-creating mutually beneficial outcomes rather than seeking one-sided organizational goals seems to offer a strong appeal to non-cognitive legitimacy based on morality. In fact, dialogic public relations may be much better suited for overcoming objections to evidence-based management based on distrust, whether those objections are to people, numbers, or organizations. An institutional resistance leader operating at the organizational level might appeal to mutuality, propinquity, and empathy when members object to EBM out of a distrust of statistics or groups that fund research. Involving objectors in the planning process of any discussions of EBM would likely be even more beneficial.

In sum, the dialogic theory of public relations offers guidance to organizational members seeking to co-create mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders; this relationship-enhancing goal is a logical fit with a leader seeking to persuade members to resist harmful institutional pressures. The five tenets of dialogic theory call organizational spokespeople to an ethical mission that transcends manipulation. However, studies of dialogic theory have revealed that those who use public relations fall short of the ideals of dialogue. Emphasizing a need for dialogic practices is not enough, but dialogic planning may offer some promise.

Dialogic Organizational Development. The co-creational concept of dialogic organizational development speaks to potential ways that dialogic public relations may be more fully realized by an organizational leader. Specifically, dialogic OD brings a co-creational approach to the planning process before an organizational spokesperson even gets to the

influence tactics stage. Taken together, dialogic public relations planning and tactics offer enhanced discursive resources for leaders seeking to resist institutional pressures at the organizational level.

The process of strategic planning as practiced by most U.S. businesses and nonprofit organizations has been largely unchanged for more than 50 years (Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2003). Given that stability, strategic planning in U.S. organizations, including strategic planning by leaders who practice public relations, is done in a largely non-dialogic manner. Cooperrider et al. (2003) add that most non-dialogic strategic plans start with a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and move to a strategic planning flowchart that, as Cowley and Domb (1997) highlighted, included no shared vision and was developed by a department that would not actually implement the plan. Stroh (2007) echoes these frustrations in her call for strategic planning in communication influenced by postmodern approaches that are “more participative,” “nonlinear,” and that “accentuate the importance of interaction, relationships, and self-regulation” (p. 200). Stroh argues that most of the strategic planning in public relations reflects “that public relations messages are aligned with organizational goals already decided by the dominant coalitions,” often through the use of a “step-by-step guide to follow” (2007, p. 199). Therefore, a co-creational mindset is not part of traditional strategic planning in public relations, whether used by institutional resistance leaders or others. It is incredibly perplexing and ironic that dialogic public relations has not been paired with dialogic strategic planning.

In the search for a co-creational approach to strategic planning consistent with the dialogic theory of public relations, leaders can turn to the field of study called dialogic organizational development. Dialogic organizational development is a postmodern response to

classical organizational development, the field of study that “presumes the existence of an objective, discernable reality that can be investigated” for the purpose of influencing change (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 350). This diagnostic, positivist approach to achieving organizational change has dominated management research, but the approach’s results have been spotty. In fact, copying a successful innovation from one organization, which is essentially mimetic isomorphism, “almost never has the same result,” and even “attempts to transfer transformational changes between sub-units of the same organization rarely succeed” (Bushe, 2009, p. 619). Instead, a dialogic approach to organizational development looks at organizations as “interpretive, discursive, or meaning-making systems” (Bushe, 2009, p. 619). One guiding concept for taking a dialogic approach to organizational development is appreciative inquiry. As a method of dialogic strategic planning, appreciative inquiry may be able to enhance an institutional resistance leader’s persuasion by addressing a weakness of dialogic public relations research; a focus on online feedback tools has not provided a strategic planning roadmap to dialogue.

Appreciative Inquiry. Among dialogic organizational development, the practice that is relevant for cultivating dialogic strategic planning for organizational spokespeople to enhance their public relations is appreciative inquiry, which articulates “a stance different from the positivism of Diagnostic OD,” (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 352). First explicated by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), appreciative inquiry is somewhat similar to the Long Now Foundation’s approach to “counseling as an activity designed to make someone better” (Kent, 2011, p. 552). Appreciative inquiry asserts that organizational communication should motivate members to focus on language and behaviors that give life to the organization in the present and future, rather than a focus on blame. According to Barge and Oliver (2003), it is not enough for social systems

to simply address disease in organizations. It is often easy to identify life-taking, or negative behaviors to avoid. However, only identifying problems results in finger pointing, negative visualization, and member defensiveness. Identifying life-giving ideas and actions results in a changed strategic plan for the future. These changes are co-created through communication. In a football context, this might include a coach co-creating rules, goals, and behaviors for the upcoming season through engagement with all members of the organization regarding what an ideal future would look like and how it could be achieved.

Barge and Oliver (2003) describe appreciative inquiry as a way to effect organizational change as conversation happens, a goal highly relevant to organizational leaders seeking to persuade members to resist institutional pressures. By emphasizing turn-taking, leaders and organizational members create generative dialogue. One discursive way appreciative inquiry creates generative dialogue is through the concept of scenario planning, especially by asking questions about what an ideal organizational situation or description would be in the near future. Similar to the concept of play (Deal & Key, 1998), this focus on life-giving activities, rather than simply positive behaviors, allows organizational members to co-create organizational change. In addition, reflexive language and questions allow members to emphasize a growth mindset rather than a complacent, fixed mindset (Dweck, 2006; 2012).

One way appreciative inquiry could enhance an institutional resistance leader's use of public relations activities is by moving the emphasis away from identifying problems and blame. Instead, planners could include multiple organizational stakeholders in decision-making and planning discussions of a hopeful, mutually beneficial future. Likewise, a leader in a football organization could enhance persuasion efforts through appreciative inquiry. The coach could work with fans, players, players' families, coaches, and sponsors to have open discussions of

what an ideal future would look like for the organization as well as how everyone working together could work to co-create that reality.

One of the most common elements of appreciative inquiry is the four Ds of inquiry. This 4-D Cycle, as seen in Table 3, seeks co-inquiry from multiple organizational perspectives to co-create a vision, goals and objectives to fulfill that mission, and then to identify specific strategies and tactics (Stavros et al., 2003). The stages of the 4-D Cycle are:

“discovery – finding out about moments of excellence, core values, and best practices; dream – envisioning positive possibilities; design – creating the structure, processes, and relationships that will support the dream; and destiny – developing an effective inspirational plan for implementation” (Stavros et al., 2003, p. 9).

This model of appreciative inquiry did not become fully developed until the late 1990s, but now, many summarize it as the essence of AI (Bushe, 2012). Some researchers and consultants refer to a 5-D Cycle in which Define serves as the first step of “identifying the focus of the inquiry itself,” though Cooperrider (1986) simply called this the affirmative topic or the organizational situation (Bushe, 2012).

Table 3	
<i>Four Stages of Appreciative Inquiry in an Organization (Stavros et al., 2003)</i>	
<u>Stage</u>	<u>Description</u>
Discovery	Finding out about moments of excellence, core values, and best practices
Dream	Envisioning positive possibilities
Design	Creating the structure, processes, and relationships that will support the dream
Destiny	Developing an effective inspirational plan for implementation

Table 3

Applying the 4-D cycle to a football organization seeking to resist institutional pressures, the discovery stage might include an organizational leader like a coach searching for what the

team does well and best practices that could be added. The dream stage could include developing a narrative of a future with positive achievements that are presently not occurring (like a championship), while the design stage could include implementing changes (such as evidence-based management) that enhance new, life-giving capabilities. Finally, the destiny stage could include identifying inspirational messages to build member buy-in.

Reflecting its communicative essence, appreciative inquiry practitioners often choose from eight forms of engagement, according to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003). These forms range from progressive appreciative inquiry meetings, appreciative inquiry learning teams, positive change consortiums, to appreciative inquiry summits. A summit is a four-day event involving representation from every department (ideally, every member of the organization) and, to the degree possible, every public connected to an organization (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). The summits are the most common forms of engagement used by consultants and researchers. On a smaller scale, a core group inquiry or an AI learning team involves a small group of members who select topics, create questions, and interview members. While some have criticized distilling appreciative inquiry to a single event (Bushe, 2013), most practitioners do just that. Regardless, appreciative inquiry has been found to be a powerful tool to identify and initiate life-giving organizational change, even if an organization may not organize another engagement event for many years.

Drawing particularly on the category of applied tactics, appreciative inquiry has been applied and studied extensively in corporate and non-profit contexts, though not necessarily in an institutional context. One of the more famous cases is Roadway Express, among the largest trucking companies in the United States, and a company that had experienced conflict between its managers and unionized workers (Cooperrider, 2008; Kinni, 2003; Bushe, 2011). Bushe

(2011) asserts that organization-wide appreciative inquiry summits at multiple locations “transformed union-management relations and dramatically improved performance” (p. 97; Ludema & Mohr, 2003). After using appreciative inquiry throughout various locations for four years, an internal audit found those locations “achieved cost savings almost seven times higher than sites which had not” (Bushe, 2011, p. 97; Barrett & Fry, 2005).

Applied to a football organization seeking to resist institutional pressures, an appreciative inquiry summit would likely include multiple-day meetings with all members of a football organization. Participants might be asked to develop scenarios of an optimum future for the organization. On the high school level, this kind of engagement with players is not considered common because students are often not legal adults and coaches are not known for valuing student perspectives. Therefore, a core group inquiry might be more likely as a form of engagement with a selected group of members.

In addition to appreciative inquiry’s four stages and eight forms of engagement, the concept revolves around three assumptions and five core principles. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) first articulated the three assumptions in their initial writings; see below in Table 4. The first is that “problem-solving, as a tool for social innovation, did not do a very good job and might, in fact, be counterproductive” (Bushe, 2011, p. 90). Next, organizations are “socially constructed realities, and that forms of organization were constrained only by human imagination and the shared beliefs of organizational members” (Bushe, 2011, p. 90). This assumption seems to echo legitimation strategies that appeal to cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness. Finally, new ideas were the “most important force for change,” something a problem-focused approach to change did not generate well (Bushe, 2011, p. 90).

Table 4	
<i>Three Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987; Bushe, 2011)</i>	
<u>Assumption</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Problem Solving Limits Innovation	Problem-solving, as a tool for social innovation, did not do a very good job and might, in fact, be counterproductive
2. Organizations Are Socially Constructed	Organizations are “socially constructed realities, and that forms of organization were constrained only by human imagination and the shared beliefs of organizational members
3. Change Occurs Through New Ideas	New ideas were the “most important force for change,” something a problem-focused approach to change did not generate well

Table 4

More than a decade after appreciative inquiry’s creation, Cooperrider and Whitney (2001) argued that the concept included five core principles: constructivism, simultaneity, anticipation, poetry, and positivity. These are defined in Table 5.

Table 5	
<i>Five Core Principles of Appreciative Inquiry</i> (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Barge & Oliver, 2003)	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Constructivism	“Organizations are socially constructed through the language and stories members use, and...are best understood by exploring the storytelling practices and narratives of their members”
Simultaneity	“Inquiry and change are simultaneous, not linear, as “the questions we ask set the stage for what we...discover”
Anticipation	“Positive images of the future lead our positive actions” in the present
Poetry	Organizations are “constantly being co-authored,” their “pasts, presents, or futures are endless sources of learning, inspiration, or interpretation,” similar to the various ways good poetry can be interpreted
Positivity	An “individual should inquire into the life-generating and affirmative choices of the organization by eliciting ‘positive stories’ of organizational life”

Table 5

The one-word principles for appreciative inquiry represent a distillation of the lengthier three assumptions. The constructivist principle is that “organizations are socially constructed through the language and stories members use, and as a result, are best understood by exploring the storytelling practices and narratives of their members” (Barge & Oliver, 2003, p. 126). This principle echoes the cognitive legitimation strategy of dramatic narrativization. The constructivist principle reflects how using appreciative inquiry should help create “generative theory,” which are “anticipatory articulations of tomorrow’s possibilities” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, p. 15). This notion of generative theory pushes participants to envision positive, life-giving ideas and actions that achieve organizational improvement and goal attainment. The principle of simultaneity is that “inquiry and change are simultaneous, not linear, as “the questions we ask set the stage for what we...discover” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, p. 15).

The poetic principle is that organizations are “constantly being co-authored,” their “pasts, presents, or futures are endless sources of learning, inspiration, or interpretation,” similar to the various ways good poetry can be interpreted (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, p. 16). The anticipatory principle is that “positive images of the future lead our positive actions” in the present (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, p. 17). Finally, the positive principle is that an “individual should inquire into the life-generating and affirmative choices of the organization by eliciting ‘positive stories’ of organizational life” (Barge & Oliver, 2003, p. 126). This narrative focus means that those who use appreciative inquiry must observe, identify, and even co-create the stories that organizational members tell, whether defending the status quo or communicating about possible changes. Similar to the social construction assumption, the positive principle echoes appeals to cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness through dramatic narrativization.

Appreciative inquiry’s three core assumptions and five principles highlight the interpretive and dialogic nature of the concept. In fact, the concept shares similarities with features of dialogic public relations. The dialogic features of mutuality, propinquity, and risk have some similarity with appreciative inquiry’s constructivist, simultaneity, anticipation, and positive principles. The mutuality feature and the constructivist principle both depend on collaboration to co-construct something new and beneficial to organizational members and publics. Likewise, the propinquity feature and the simultaneity principle both require concurrent information-seeking from others along with articulations of a hopeful, generative future. Propinquity also shares the desire to construct a beneficial future with the aspirational principle. Finally, the risk feature and the poetic principle both emphasize a subjective search for co-creation of meaning through conversation that requires openness and vulnerability,

characteristics beneficial for generating new ideas (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). Therefore, given the similarity with the principles of dialogic public relations, it seems possible that an institutional resistance leader may enhance his or her influence tactics by applying appreciative inquiry to the public relations strategic planning process. These strategic planning activities done before a change is implemented may only be one-time events, but they potentially lay the groundwork for enhancing ongoing public relations efforts.

Contrary to popular sentiment among consultants, appreciative inquiry, whether used by an institutional leader or others, is not simply the identification of the positive in an organization. Responding to critiques of appreciative inquiry, Bushe (2007) emphasized that a focus on the positive is not the purpose of the concept; appreciative inquiry exists to help organizational members “generate a new and better future,” which may require addressing negative aspects (p. 4). Reflecting Johnson’s (2011) assessment of critiques of appreciative inquiry, Bushe (2007) argued that the key activities are conversations with multiple stakeholders involving generative questions and scenario-planning for a better future.

In sum, appreciative inquiry provides a dialogic organizational development perspective that is counter to the negative effects of the diagnostic, positivist approach that has dominated strategic planning in the U.S. for five decades. Dialogic strategic planning shares similarities with dialogic public relations. This is important since public relations can be called upon as an influence tactic when resisting institutional pressures (Oliver, 1991). Planning that is consistent with and complementary to public relations likely enhances public relations and institutional resistance persuasion. Appreciative inquiry’s emphasis on co-created language and behaviors that give life to the organization in the present and future may help an institutional resistance leader build cognitive legitimacy. This legitimacy can help organizational members achieve life-

giving change, which contrasts with a focus on blame. In addition, appreciative inquiry's 4-D Cycle helps members to seek co-inquiry from multiple perspectives to co-create a vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and specific tactics to make life-giving change a reality. Through specific forms of engagement, appreciative inquiry's interpretive and dialogic principles may be an excellent communication-centered method for enhancing an institutional resistance leader's persuasion.

Framing in Public Relations. Another possible discursive resource an IRL could call upon for influence tactics is framing. Framing is related to public relations, and research in organizational communication that is relevant to the current study includes framing in public relations and framing in leadership communication.

Understanding framing in public relations is important given the significance of public relations to organizational leaders (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). One of the most influential discussions of framing in public relations was offered by Hallahan (1999), whose literature review crossed several academic disciplines. He argued that framing involves processes of inclusion, exclusion, and emphasis. In fact, framing in public relations is consistent with an interpretive perspective in organizational communication since "shaping the perspectives through which people see the world...is a critical activity in the construction of social reality" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 207). This idea reflects the metaphor of a "window or portrait frame drawn around information that delimits the subject and thus, focuses attention on key elements within" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 207). Hallahan identified seven main types of framing that apply to public relations, which are relevant because public relations is used by organizational leaders and spokespeople who work as "frame strategists" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 224). The seven types are the framing of situations, attributes, risky choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news

(Hallahan, 1999). Hallahan argues framing theory serves as a beneficial umbrella for analyzing what happens by users of public relations, including organizational leaders, as the theory touches on the rhetorical view of the creation of messages as well as the “psychological processes that people use to examine information, make judgments, and to draw inferences about the world” (1999, p. 206).

Drawing on a rhetorical view of framing, Hallahan identified individual messages and the representation of objects or problems in people’s minds as the building blocks of framing. In regard to a message, “a frame limits or defines the message’s meaning by shaping the inferences that individuals make;” these frames mirror the evaluations of the creators of the messages (Hallahan, 1999, p. 207). Four of Hallahan’s conclusions about frames seem most relevant to organizational leaders seeking to resist institutional pressures: the framing of attributes, risky choices, actions, and news.

The framing of attributes in public relations involves characterizations of objects, events, people, and even procedures (Hallahan, 1999). Considering EBM to have similarity with an organizational procedure, framing research has shown that the positive framing of attributes leads to more favorable evaluations than negative framing. Framing a procedure as having a 60% success rate would result in more favorable evaluations than framing the procedure as having a 40% failure rate. Similarly, the framing of attributes by the news media has been found to achieve second-order agenda setting, potentially enabling an organizational spokesperson to help the public focus on more specific aspects of a news story or topic. Therefore, news media can be very “effective in telling people what to think about – and how to think about it,” providing a potentially powerful tool to institutional resistance leaders skilled in working with news media

(Hallahan, 1999, p. 213). What is interesting about the framing of attributes is how well positive frames work; positive frames are much less effective in the framing of risky choices and actions.

The framing of risky choices involves individuals who have to choose “between two independent options when some level of uncertainty or risk is present” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 214). These message frames center on an individual’s willingness to take a risk. The framing of risky choices has been studied extensively, especially by psychologists such as Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981, 1987). They defined a frame as an evaluation or perception of “the acts, outcomes, and contingencies associated with a particular choice” (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 263). The evaluation, which likely represents one of many potential interpretations, is at the center of framing. One of the key contributions of Kahneman and Tversky’s (1979; 1984; 1987) research was that people experience gains and losses unequally and illogically. Tversky and Kahneman (1981) found “the response to losses is more extreme than the response to gains. The displeasure associated with losing a sum of money is generally greater than the pleasure associated with winning the same amount” (p. 454). Hallahan summarized one aspect of their work with the assertion that “people tend to avoid risks when a choice is stated in terms of gains but will take greater risks when choices are stated in terms of losses,” especially when confronted with uncertainty (Hallahan, 1999, p. 214). In addition, people can be risk-averse in the face of certainty with loss or gain frames. More people chose a 100% chance to gain \$9,499 than a 95% chance to gain \$10,000 (Kahneman, 2011, p. 312).

In football, these concepts likely help explain why so few coaches even consider going for it on fourth down in most situations. If the coach takes a risk and fails to convert a fourth down, the opposing team will now be in a much better scoring position. The coach who took a risk by not punting would likely be upset he did not play it safe. To that coach, playing it safe

would have provided perceived certainty (that the opponent would be further from their goal line) that is hard for humans to resist. Attempting to convert a fourth down does not provide certainty. Similarly, loss aversion has been referenced as a reason why coaches make decisions that go against statistical evidence of an increased likelihood to score more points (Romer, 2005; Burke, 2009; Carroll, Palmer, & Thorn, 1989; 1998).

In regard to framing of risk, Hallahan concludes that spokespeople and leaders who use public relations “face a difficult challenge when trying to encourage key publics to make choices that involve even moderate levels of risk” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 226). In this situation, “message creators” must “overcome the comfort afforded by the status quo and thus accentuate positive gains that can be attained by” change (p. 226). For example, framing the adoption of EBM should include communication of an ideal future in which organizational members attain goals that are currently being missed. Therefore, when leaders use public relations messages to frame taking a risk, the importance of communication about a positive, hopeful future related to goal attainment is central to that framing. Another risk communication theory also speaks to this importance.

Though separate from Hallahan’s (1999) work, one additional area of research regarding the framing of risk has particular relevance for this study. In the area of risk management and communication, leaders, risk managers, and communication professionals have been frustrated by the fact that creating safer conditions sometimes results in members of the public simply becoming more tolerant of risk (Wilde, 1988). For example, installing anti-lock braking systems in taxi cabs has been found to result in no overall improvement in safety outcomes because drivers took more risks than before the change was made; the ABS resulted in overconfidence and more risk-taking rather than overall safer behavior (Wilde, 1988). This concept is known as

the risk homeostasis theory, and Wilde argues that “people at any moment of time compare the amount of risk they perceive with their target level of risk and will adjust their behaviour in an attempt to eliminate any discrepancies between the two” (1998, pp. 89-90). Innovations aimed at decreasing risk and increasing safety can improve existing conditions, but humans then readjust behavior to take even more risks. Therefore, an institutional resistance leader, such as a football coach guided by statistical analysis, might, after experiencing success, embrace an aggressiveness that could actually be counter to statistical probabilities for success in some situations. For example, the adoption of improved safety practices in football, such as more advanced helmets made to prevent concussions, could result in players being more reckless than before adopting the new helmet, resulting in no decrease in the number of concussions.

What is most interesting about risk homeostasis theory, however, is that Wilde finds the best response to preventing the escalation in risky behavior is not punishment but “expectationist interventions, which offer people more positive anticipations regarding their future than is currently the case” (1998, p. 91). While expectationist interventions often involve incentives, Wilde argues the incentives work best when they are small because what is most important is activating a framed view of a hopeful future: “the prospect of future gratification causes people to look forward to the future with positive expectation” (1998, p. 91). An expectationist intervention frame may enhance a leader’s legitimacy in regard to persuading members to adopt EBM. In addition, given that small incentives are sufficient, expectationist interventions are relevant to both small and large organizations. Risk homeostasis theory speaks to the need for leaders to frame gains for risk-averse audiences, and it shares similarity with principles of appreciative inquiry and the practice of imagining an ideal, hopeful future. In a football context, the application of risk homeostasis theory might look like a coach who frames the adoption of a

new helmet in terms of 10% fewer concussions in a season. The goal of fewer concussions than are currently occurring becomes the frame for the new innovation, not engaging in riskier on-field behavior, which would maintain the same level of concussions.

Somewhat distinct from the framing of risky choices is Hallahan's framing of actions, which involves "persuasive attempts to maximize cooperation," especially when "no independent options or choices are involved" (1999, p. 215). These public relations and leadership activities involve communicating about "the best way to describe an action that might be undertaken by individuals to achieve a desired goal" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 215). Common applications of framing of actions involve a leader or spokesperson seeking member compliance or support for a decision made to achieve an organizational goal, which also involves the framing of goals. Some of the most studied areas of the framing of actions, though not exclusive to organizational settings, have been pro-social health behaviors such as "preventing automobile accidents, cancer, Down syndrome, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and weight control" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 216). Similar to research into the framing of risky choices, Hallahan found framing alternative actions in "terms of negative consequences appears to have greater persuasive impact than framing that emphasizes positive consequences or gains" (1999, p. 216). Even if a "negative frame can be nothing more than the obverse of the positive frame...evidence suggests it might be more effective" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 226). In a football context, this might look like a coach framing the use of evidence-based management. The coach could frame the innovation as a way to avoid failure to win a championship rather than framing the performance gains of an improved offense.

Hallahan also offers some nuance to the positive framing of risky choices or actions in public relations. He referenced Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990), who "found that

positively framed messages might be more persuasive when people engage in little detailed processing of messages and that negative framing of actions only applies when people engage in high levels of cognitive elaboration” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 216). For a football organization, a leader may have an easier time achieving buy-in about resisting institutional pressures through negative frames (focusing on losses) if members are more likely to engage in effortful thought processes. This may be less likely in an organization in which members (like players) are expected to follow an authoritarian leader (like a coach). A gain frame seems to be effective only if audiences are not interested in engaging in high levels of cognitive elaboration. That finding seems curious since change persuasion often frames innovations by emphasizing benefits. However, the negative versus positive frame dilemma is even more complex. Block and Keller (1995) asserted the negative frame effect is moderated by perceptions of self-efficacy of actions. Therefore, it matters whether an individual believes that following a specific action will lead to a desired outcome (Hallahan, 1999). Those with a high level of “self-efficacy are less inclined to engage in effortful processing, in which case positive and negative frames are equally persuasive” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 217). Therefore, in a football context, those who think they can be successful with an evidence-based approach, even if it goes against institutional pressures, may be equally affected by positive or negative frames. That insight provides institutional resistance leaders with multiple discursive options to consider when persuading organizational members.

Finally, Hallahan (1999) argued that spokespeople, such as an institutional resistance leader, often seek to frame news for the purpose of socially constructing publics’ views of an organization’s reality. These spokespeople serve as frame sponsors (Gamson, 1984; C. Ryan, 1991) who seek to have a news story presented in the way they want it told. The frame sponsors

are often competing with other organizations that desire the story to be told in another way, resulting in a frame contest. In fact, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) emphasized that organizational spokespeople, which could include institutional resistance leaders, can use framing devices to make a preferred frame more attractive to reporters and their audiences. This includes “metaphors and similes, familiar exemplars and illustrations, provocative language and descriptors, catchphrases, and visual imagery” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 208). What is intriguing about these framing devices is that they are some of the key tactics used in leadership framing as well, which will be addressed a little later.

Research on the power of framing in public relations in regard to risk and actions seems to suggest the discursive resource enhances a leader’s ability to defy institutional pressures. The manner in which risk is framed can enhance a leader’s non-cognitive legitimacy (moral or pragmatic) by framing what course of action is most feasible and right. In addition, the framing of risky choices helps an institutional resistance leader counter objections based on a distrust of statistics. In fact, whether statistics are framed positively or negatively can increase or decrease the evaluation of a risk. In addition, consistent with dialogic public relations and appreciative inquiry, the framing of risk related to evidence-based calls for change may achieve better outcomes through positive, future-looking frames of ideal outcomes. Similarly, an institutional resistance leader’s legitimacy can be enhanced by winning frame contests to secure preferred news media frames. Hallahan (1999) describes this contested nature as involving manipulation. That manipulation highlights the double-edged nature of how common rhetorical framing tools can be used to obfuscate and delegitimize critics, not just build up support.

To summarize public relations framing research, framing focuses on how messages are created and processed by audiences. Previous research highlights how positive frames work

better than negative frames in regard to the framing of an idea or procedure like EBM. However, drawing on the non-rational nature of human decision-making, research on the framing of risky choices reveals that loss frames have more influence on audiences than gain frames. In addition, some innovations that increase safety and certainty can result in humans behaving more recklessly. However, communication that frames positive anticipations of the future minimizes that reckless behavior. Finally, the framing of actions mostly mirrors the framing of risky choices. However, audiences with high levels of self-efficacy may be equally affected by positive or negative frames regarding risky actions that go against institutional pressures. In addition, organizational spokespeople like an institutional resistance leader can act as frame sponsors in attempts to enhance legitimacy through preferred news frames of stories. Finally, many of the tactics used to influence news media frames are similar to discursive resources used in leadership framing, and those tactics can be used to obfuscate and delegitimize critics.

Framing in Leadership Communication. Similar to framing in public relations is the concept of framing in leadership communication. This discursive resource also has application to organizational actors seeking to resist institutional pressures. Leadership framing involves how leaders manage meaning and co-construct reality for others, such as organizational members, through communication. As Fairhurst (2011) argues, framing is both “a cognitive device and a communicative activity defined by selection, emphasis, interpretation, and exclusion” (p. 167). In leadership framing, language and artifact choices focus organizational members on certain values while deflecting focus from other ideas. Framing choices can reveal a strategic goal of maintaining consistency and harmony among followers in the face of criticism of a leader’s risk-taking. An institutional resistance leader may first seek to persuade organizational members to resist institutional pressures. However, once members resist those pressures and receive

criticism, the leader likely will try to maintain consistency and harmony of that resistance (Fairhurst, 2005).

Similarly, leaders and supportive followers seek to reassure members and enhance their self-esteem with framed messages. Leaders often communicate to both external and internal audiences to “confirm the sending organization’s own merits of good intentions” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 246). For organizational leaders who seek to resist institutional pressures, framing can help members determine internal organizational identity. Likewise, Liska, Petrun, Sellnow, and Seeger (2012) found a CEO seeking organizational change used discursive framing to call employees to adopt an identity of accountability. This identity frame highlighted their responsibility to help the organization overcome a past culture of negativity that inhibited profitable performance.

Regarding external public communication by organizational leaders, Cheney and Christenson (2001) explain that messages have a self-enhancing function. Organizational leaders remind external audiences and organizational members that the members are a relevant part of the industry, their organizational actions are legitimate, and the organization’s plans are sound. In addition, Cheney and Christensen (2001) add “when externally directed communication becomes an integral part of an organization’s operating discourse, the self-enhancing dimension of communication may turn out to be more important than the substantive messages themselves” (2001, p. 246). An example of this idea in football might be a coach who received national news attention for actions that go against institutional pressures. The notoriety of the attention, which would likely enhance the football organization’s members’ self-esteem, might be more important than the content of the coach’s messages in the news stories. In this case, members may remember the coach was on the news, but they would not remember the content of his messages.

A number of the discursive resources used in the framing of news in public relations can also help leaders frame resistance to institutional pressures. These resources are especially likely to be used in response to expected criticisms. The tools of metaphor (simple or complex), contrast, and spin are among the most common (Fairhurst, 2011; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Metaphor involves talking in a nonliteral manner about a subject as similar to something else; contrast involves discussing a subject in terms of what it is not; spin involves discussing a subject in a highly positive or negative light. In regard to framing resistance to institutional pressures, a leader might frame with the metaphor of “Adopting a statistics-based approach is our secret weapon,” or a contrasting message of “Conservative play-calling is not safe play-calling.” Additional framing strategies include more of Fairhurst’s (2011) basic language forms in framing, such as argument, analogy, and repetition. An example of repetition, which involves discussing a subject through repetitive, parallel form, might be “No-tackle practices improve safety. No-tackle practices improve form. No-tackle practices improve stamina.” Leaders may also use moral positioning as a leadership communication frame to influence organizational members. Fairhurst (2011) defines moral positioning as the who or what organizational members claimed they were in justifications for actions or goals. Similarly, leaders can call on legitimacy frames to “rationalize a course of action by invoking another credible source” (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 108). In football, a coach could frame through moral positioning to claim that player safety is the highest priority in all decisions. An example of a legitimacy frame might be a high school coach framing a statistics-based approach to play-calling by referencing a research study or a professional team that uses statistics.

The tools and discursive resources identified in leadership framing scholarship show that institutional resistance leaders can enhance appeals to pragmatic and moral legitimacy. These

resources strengthen a leader's ability to defy institutional pressures and more effectively counter objections to evidence-based calls for change due to distrust of statistics, people, or organizations. Leadership framing resources seem to offer ways to enhance a leader's ability to co-create mutually beneficial relationships and positive visions of an ideal future. However, leadership framing tools can be used to obfuscate and deceive, even though those aims run counter to principles of dialogic public relations and appreciative inquiry.

To summarize, framing in leadership communication helps leaders manage meaning and co-construct reality for others, such as external audiences and organizational members. For leaders who seek to resist institutional pressures at the organizational level, framing can help members determine internal organizational identity. This is especially true for framing in external public relations, which can help enhance members' self-esteem in response to criticisms. A number of discursive resources exist to help leaders frame resistance to institutional pressures. Some examples are language forms, moral positioning, and legitimacy frames.

Organizational Innovation Champions

Discussions of a member who introduces an innovation in an organization also align well with the diffusion of innovation literature. Most closely associated with Rogers' (2003) diffusion curve, the concept represents the process through which new ideas, practices, or objects are communicated "to members of a social system" (p. 5). Diffusion of innovation research began with and primarily examined those processes on the individual level. Therefore, evaluations of innovations included relative advantages over existing ideas, compatibility with the "values, past experiences, and needs" of adopters, simplicity of the idea, how easy it is to try the new idea, and how visible the future results are to others (Rogers, 2003, p. 15).

Different personality types come to different evaluations for innovations. The diffusion curve labels individuals in groups based on how they respond to an innovation (innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards). In this model, innovators were the first users of innovations; these people are characterized as venturesome, “due to a desire for the rash, the daring, and the risky” (Rogers, 2003, p. 282).

More relevant to the current project, and receiving less attention in diffusion research, is innovation decisions in organizations. The organizational context includes considerably more complexity in regard to whether or how an innovation is adopted and implemented than the innovation decision process among individuals (Rogers, 2003). One type of innovation decision studied is labeled the authority innovation decision because the decision-maker holds most of the authority for implementation. The authority innovation decision applies in the current study because the football team’s coach possesses the “power, high social status, and technical expertise” to adopt innovations that all members must comply with (Rogers, 2003, p. 403).

Organization innovation studies, which have been overwhelmingly quantitative, have highlighted and overlooked a few concepts relevant to the institutional context. Those studies have often ignored nonexecutive members’ perspectives (Rogers, 2003). In addition, studies have privileged larger organizations, finding them more innovative (Mytinger, 1968; Mahler & Rogers, 1999), probably due to access to more resources. Innovation was more likely to occur in an organization if leaders had a positive attitude toward change, power and control were not in the hands of multiple rather than few members, members had high levels of knowledge and expertise, if rules were strongly expected to be followed, and if departments were more interconnected (Rogers, 2003). However, the studies these findings were based on revealed low

correlations and often looked at just one innovation. Regardless, as Meyer and Goes (1988) found, innovations were more likely to be adopted if promoted by a champion.

Likely coined by Schon (1963), champions “display persistence and courage of heroic qualities” (p. 84). This person is charismatic and overcomes “indifference or resistance that the new idea may provoke in an organization” (Rogers, 2003, p. 414). Similar to innovators, organizational champions take more risks, are more innovative, and have more influence with others than organizational members who do not champion innovations (Howell & Higgins, 1990). These champions are especially needed if an “innovation’s expected consequences are perceived by the organizational members” as more losses than gains (Van de Ven and Rogers, 1988). In addition, Madique’s (1988) review of champions research revealed different champion roles: the technical innovator designed the innovation, the business innovator was in charge of the project’s success, the product champion promoted the innovation through stages of adoption, and the chief executive oversaw the innovating team.

According to Rogers (2003), innovations in organizations occur in five stages: two during initiation and three during implementation. Initiation in an organization is “all the information-gathering, conceptualizing, and planning for the adoption of an innovation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 420). Interestingly since innovators are sometimes seen as independent, the more members that help design, discuss, and implement an innovation, the more likely it is to last (Rogers, 2003), which aligns with appreciative inquiry. Implementation is “all the events, actions, and decisions involved in putting the innovation in use” (Rogers, 2003, p. 420). The first two stages, explained next, are agenda-setting and matching, and the last three stages are redefining/restructuring, clarifying, and routinizing.

Agenda-setting involves defining an organizational problem that creates a need for an innovation, and it may take several years. In this process, a champion or leader identifies a “performance gap,” which is the “discrepancy between an organization’s expectations and its actual performance” (Rogers, 2003, p. 422). After identifying the performance gap, the champion or leader conducts opportunistic surveillance to find new, beneficial ideas. This focus on life-giving future possibilities, similar to appreciative inquiry, can mean “answers often precede questions” (March, 1981). Knowledge of an innovation can lead to the search for a solution. Occasionally, “knowledge of an innovation creates a need for” the innovation (Rogers, 2003, p. 423); once an improved idea exists, the need to use it to improve performance is also created.

Matching is the stage in which an organizational problem is matched with an innovation to find a good fit. This stage determines feasibility by “anticipating the benefits, and the problems, that the innovation will encounter when it is implemented” (Rogers, 2003, p. 423). The restructuring stage is when the innovation is adapted for the organization’s needs; the organization’s structure may need to be modified. In this stage, “perceptions of the organization’s problem and the innovation come together and each are modified by the process” (Rogers, 2003, p. 425). This is especially true for a radical innovation. A radical innovation is “such a major change that it represents a new paradigm for carrying out” a particular task important to the performance of an organization (Rogers, 2003, p. 425). This stage is particularly important because of how much “perceptions of an innovation shape public acceptance, not objective indicators” like measures of benefits (Rogers, 2003, p. 431).

The penultimate stage, clarifying, occurs when use of an innovation helps a leader gradually clarify the innovation for organizational members (Rogers, 2003). Moving too fast

during implementation can obfuscate rather than clarify. This notion of gradual development echoes Bisel, Kramer and Banas' (2016) findings that an IRL often introduces innovations slowly. Interestingly, news framing is an important communicative tool for leaders and members to use during this stage; positive or negative media coverage of an innovation can determine public acceptance (Rogers, 2003). The last stage, routinization, occurs when an innovation becomes such a part of "regular activities of the organization and has lost its separate identity" (Rogers, 2003, p. 428).

Applied to the context of football, an innovation champion such as a coach would gather information on new ideas such as new plays or safety practices (initiating stage), organize activities for implementing the innovation (implementation stage), and define for members the performance gap the organization faces that the innovation addresses, such as falling short of a championship or having too many injuries (agenda-setting stage). Next, the coach might identify benefits and challenges of the innovation and make structural changes to ensure success (matching stage), and then the coach might try to clarify the innovation to members over time (clarifying stage). Finally, the coach could seek to make the innovation routine in the organization, achieving a status as something that is taken for granted (routinization stage). An example could be new plays that players expect will be called and followed without necessarily even knowing why.

In sum, diffusion of innovation research regarding organizational innovation champions reveals those leaders introduce innovations in stages. While research has overlooked member perspectives, studies have identified communication as important for persuading members about performance gaps, benefits of an innovation that fills those gaps, and structural changes needed to introduce an innovation. In addition, innovation research has shown that a clarifying stage

may take considerable time and could be enhanced through framing in news coverage. Last, champions will likely begin to use messages that emphasize taken-for-grantedness once the innovation becomes routinized in the organization.

Research Questions

The review of literature about organizational communication and institutional resistance suggests a set of research questions worthy of additional study. Previous research has not examined organizational communication about resisting institutional pressures through the adoption of evidence-based management. This area of organizational communication is worthy of further study because researchers have assumed organizational actors who resist institutional pressures also desire to change institutions. In addition, existing literature has not used the lens of organizational communication and public relations theory to study the discursive influence tactics used by organizational members who adopt EBM. Not using an organizational communication lens reflects a general omission of the role of communication in resisting institutional pressures at the organizational level (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the discursive resources used by an IRL and members of an outlier organizational that adopts and resists evidence-based calls for change. With a view of communication as the co-creation of reality, understanding an organization requires studying members' communication.

Previous research has overlooked leadership communication strategies aimed at persuading members to resist institutional pressures at the organizational level (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). Much of the discursive resources available to an IRL seems to help co-create legitimacy among organizational members. Previous researchers helped establish and identify types of legitimation rhetoric, though quantitative methods resulted in insignificant findings. As

such, the concepts were not examined from a qualitative research perspective, which seems to be a good fit for studies of taken-for-grantedness. A review of legitimation communication highlights 14 strategies that fall into two broad categories of cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness and non-cognitive legitimacy based on practical consequences or morality. Few of these strategies have been examined in the context of resisting institutional pressures or the communication of an IRL, including responding to objections to EBM.

Public relations-based influence tactics aimed at co-creating mutually beneficial outcomes rather than seeking one-sided organizational goals seem to offer a strong appeal to non-cognitive legitimacy based on morality. In fact, dialogic public relations may be much better suited for overcoming objections to EBM based on distrust, whether those objections are to people, numbers, or organizations. In addition, appreciative inquiry may help enhance public relations, which may in turn enhance the effectiveness of institutional resistance persuasion.

Research on framing in public relations reveals that people are risk-averse when confronted with uncertainty. In addition, some innovations that increase safety and certainty can result in humans behaving more recklessly. However, communication that frames positive anticipations of the future minimizes that reckless behavior. Research on the framing of actions has shown audiences with high levels of self-efficacy may be equally affected by positive or negative frames regarding risk-related resistance to institutional pressures. These resources may strengthen an IRL's ability to defy institutional pressures and more effectively counter fear-of-loss-based objections to evidence-based calls for change.

Similarly, leadership framing resources seem to offer ways to enhance a leader's ability to co-create mutually beneficial relationships and positive visions of an ideal future. The framing tools leaders choose can help manage meaning and co-construct reality for others such as

external audiences and organizational members through appeals to non-cognitive legitimacy (pragmatic or moral). For leaders who seek to resist institutional pressures at the organizational level, framing can help members determine internal organizational identity. This is especially true for framing in external public relations, which can help enhance members' self-esteem.

The first research questions will address the overlooked topic of communication strategies used by IRLs to persuade organizational members to resist institutional pressures.

RQ1: What discursive resources does an IRL of an outlier organization that is known for resisting institutional pressures use to gain adoption of evidence-based management?

RQ1a: What discursive resources does an IRL use to call organizational members to adopt EBM?

RQ1b: What discursive resources does an IRL use when countering organizational members' objections to EBM?

The adoption of EBM, as called for by an IRL, often encounters objections from outsiders and organizational members due to distrust of sources of evidence (statistics, people, or organizations) and a fear of change. In fact, internal organizational objections may be directed toward the leaders (such as IRLs) seeking to introduce EBM. Thus, organizational members, influenced by criticisms from both outsiders and fellow organizational members, can use discursive resources to either support or object to EBM. Little was known about the discursive resources used by organizational members in response to objections to EBM, especially when those objections come from fellow organizational members. Therefore, the next research questions examined organizational members' communication in response to an IRL's calls to adopt EBM.

RQ2: What discursive resources do organizational members use to respond to an IRL's call to adopt EBM?

RQ2a: What discursive resources do members of an institutional outlier organization use to respond to criticisms of the adoption of EBM?

RQ2b: What discursive resources do organizational members use when objecting to an IRL's call to adopt EBM?

Chapter 2: Method

Qualitative methods were used to address the research questions. Qualitative methods provide thick description (Geertz, 1988), which provides concrete detail about an organization and its members. This research used an in-depth case study of one organization, Private Academy (PA: pseudonym used throughout). The choice of one organization was appropriate for the purpose of understanding how an outlier organization's leaders and members communicatively resist institutional pressures through the adoption of EBM. In fact, this exemplar organization and its top leader remain among the only institutional resisters in all of football. The leader of this organization has an unparalleled national reputation for resisting institutional pressures through the adoption of EBM. This football team has been featured in numerous national news stories about its use of statistics-based play-calling such as never punting on fourth down. The members in the organization are consistently presented with messages about resisting institutional pressures. Given this organization's reputation for EBM adoption, the leaders' and members' communication about resisting and adopting EBM provided insight into the enabling and constraining nature of organizational communication in the context of institutional pressures.

The coach in this organizational case study is an institutional resistance leader (IRL) because he identified institutional pressures with which he disagreed, developed alternative practices, instituted those into his organization, sought to persuade members of the legitimacy of adopting those alternative practices, and then defended resisting institutional pressures through external news interviews (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). However, the coach explicitly said he did not want others to follow his lead because he would lose his performance advantage. The coach demonstrated he was not an institutional entrepreneur because he did not engage in efforts

to get others in his field to join him in creating new institutions. The coach did indicate that he wanted to operate at the organizational level to influence just his members to resist institutional pressures, which is the work of an IRL.

Design and Procedures

Referencing excellent qualitative research practices (Tracy, 2010), this study involved two stages or studies, moving back and forth between data collection and analysis. This allowed the researcher to constantly evaluate the data by checking for disconfirming examples. In Study 1, extant archival documents (news stories and videos about the organization's adoption of EBM, sports broadcast interview transcripts, and public presentations by the organization's head coach) were analyzed. All available stories via the news database Lexis Nexis were gathered. Examining news coverage of the IRL and his team, both print and video, enhanced the case study by including multiple methods of data collection. Archival documents, observation of communication through video, and member interviews served as three unique sources of data to better understand the organization's communication. Given that the exemplar organization is a small high school in the Midwest, rather than a more prominent professional organization that receives daily news coverage, a near census of news stories was possible. The researcher examined 81 stories in which the IRL discussed his unconventional methods (48 local, 31 national, and 7 coaching) with 201 single-spaced pages. Local news coverage also included searching the archives of the state's daily newspaper that covered the IRL's team; stories were examined that addressed the IRL's unconventional methods, especially through the first few years of national news coverage; after that point, local reporters rarely revisited the IRL's novel methods. A reflexive, iterative process was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the first-stage data in regard to how comprehensively and meaningfully research questions were addressed. The

initial analysis and the preceding literature review guided the creation of interview protocols for leaders and members. Experienced interviewers were consulted to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview protocol. Their insights were incorporated into the revised interview protocol.

In Study 2, organizational leaders (coaches and administrators) and members (players, parents, supporters) were interviewed. Upon receiving internal review board approval, the organization's top administrator, the president of the school, provided permission to recruit organizational members for interviews. The school's football coach has a reputation for being accessible and open to interviews regarding the team's use of EBM. This coach and administrator helped provide a pool of assistant coaches, players, parents, and supporters to serve as a snowball sample. The first participants suggested additional organizational members to interview; these first participants also provided contact information for the subsequent interview participants. All interviews were semi-structured with primary and follow-up questions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), but the interviewer was free to follow disconfirming examples and ask for elaborations (Baxter & Babbie, 2003; Keyton, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Questions were developed with the goal of having fair presuppositions that are not leading, loaded, or biased against eliciting participants' lived experience (Dillon, 1991). The interviewer asked planned and unplanned follow-up questions to the main interview questions. Interview questions were presented in a logical order, first obtaining information regarding participants' connections to the team, and then gradually introducing the interviewees to the topics of interest (communication about the adoption and resistance to institutional pressures) in order to address the research questions. Interviews with the IRL were conducted in a classroom at Private Academy in a spring semester weekday. Interviews with members (assistant coaches, administrators, players, parents) who could not meet in person were conducted via phone, as was a follow-up interview

with the IRL. Each participant provided consent, in keeping with institutional review board oversight. This consent was requested verbally for phone interviews. The total number of interviews was dependent on achieving theoretical saturation. Interviews with 15 organizational members were divided evenly with five coaches and an administrator, five players, and five parents.

Recordings and Transcriptions. For Study 2, a digital audio-recording device captured each interview and a number was assigned to each audio file and recorded on a document kept separate from the audio files so the data provided by the participants could not be traced back to them. Audio transcriptions were handled by professional transcribers and totaled 375 single-spaced pages and 68 pages of researcher notes. Prior to analysis, the researcher listened to each interview recording with the typed transcripts in hand to ensure accuracy in the transcribed versions of the interviews. Transcription inaccuracies were corrected and reexamined with handwritten notes taken during the interview. The average length of the interviews was 44 minutes.

Constant Comparative Analysis

Once collected, a thematic analysis was used to analyze the data in studies 1 and 2. The same analytical steps below were taken for both studies, but Study 1 was completed first since the interview schedule was based in part on that analysis. A thematic analysis helped answer the research questions, and a constant comparison method identified the emerging themes (Suddaby, 2006). A modified version of constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to answer the research questions. The analysis involved five components or iterative steps: data reduction, unitizing, open-coding, focused coding, and axial coding. The first step was data reduction in which archival stories and interview data not related to

communication about EBM use in the organization were removed. An example was game recap news stories in which EBM practices were not mentioned at all. The data was then unitized by dividing quotes from archival documents and interview quotes into units of a complete thought. These thoughts encompassed a few words or an entire paragraph. Each unit of thought was given one code.

The researcher then began open-coding, which involved giving each unit of thought one code to summarize and account for the data provided (Charmaz, 2001). These codes served as labels that reflected and summarized the data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Tracy, 2013), and the codes were modified by comparing each unit of data to previous codes. Data collection and analysis had overlap in that archival documents were coded before all interviews were conducted. This same overlap applied to interview transcripts analysis, which allowed the researcher to change interview questions based on previous interview data. This open-coding process was repeated in an iterative process as new codes were identified, which resulted in codes changing from general to specific codes (Tracy, 2013).

Next, the researcher engaged in focused-coding, in which the researcher compared and contrasted open codes in order to categorize them. A category was a similar set of coded excerpts, examples, and themes from the data. This process involved a constant comparison of codes to codes and categories to categories, allowing the placement of related codes into categories that suggested or revealed a pattern (Tracy, 2013). At the same time, the researcher looked for opposite, negative, or better examples (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Once categories were created, the researcher read through the archival data and transcripts again. This required stepping back to open-coding and then returning to focused coding again. The constant comparative analysis continued until new categories could be identified in the data and the

existing categories remained stable, achieving theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Next, the researcher conducted axial coding in an attempt to reflect the relationships between the categories created in focused coding. This step included the creation of new categories that helped explain those relationships. This step required that the researcher re-read the archival data and transcripts to ensure that the new categories fully accounted for all codes and categories in the data. Similar to focused coding, axial coding required returning to focused and open-coding. In addition, the axial coding stage required the researcher's new categories to be mutually exclusive without overlap across the categories. This process helped in the reduction and consolidation of categories that were created during focused-coding to a smaller, final number of categories (Charmaz, 2006).

As Crewsell (2007) has argued, high quality qualitative research requires the use of validation strategies. This study used four of those strategies. First, the researcher conducted a negative case analysis by accounting for data that did not fit the codes and categories created in analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Any negative cases in the archival data were re-examined and fully described in the study to be sure that all data were represented. Another validation strategy the research used was member checks. This strategy allowed the researcher to confirm that the analysis reflected members' lived experiences. Though members contacted were busy and not all replied, those who did respond did not indicate disagreements or inaccuracies. In addition, a third validation strategy used was expert checks. The analysis and conclusions were shared with expert qualitative researchers in organizational communication to gauge their perspectives on any ways in which the data could be more fully accounted for. In addition, a fourth validation strategy was the use of thick description during the interview process. Interviews were structured, especially through the use of probe questions, to elicit thorough accounts that verified

the researcher's interpretation was accurate in regard to participants' lived experiences as members of an organization that communicates about and uses EBM. If an interview transcript did not appear to provide thick description, follow-up interviews were conducted to gain additional understanding (Creswell, 2007).

Chapter 3: Results of News Media Communication

The data from the IRL's organizational messages found in news media coverage revealed several discursive resources used by the IRL to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members about resisting institutional pressures. The news media data (86 stories and more than 200 pages) fell into three particular types: local news, national news, and a few coaching media stories. Local news consisted of 48 newspaper, TV, or radio stories in the IRL's city that were about his team's unconventional methods. National news included 31 print, online, and broadcast stories about the coach's methods that were distributed to a nationwide audience. This data was nearly a census of the IRL's communication in national news; the researcher was unable to secure transcripts from only a few cable TV show appearances. Coaching news consisted of seven print and online coaching magazines that reached a national audience and that conducted interviews with the IRL about his unique methods.

In an effort to provide the news media data with more context, a timeline of the IRL's adoption of innovations was created. Following the timeline is a description of the IRL's guiding values; these served as the foreground for the IRL's rejection of specific institutional logics. Next, those logics will be identified, followed by the IRL's sensebreaking messages (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016) used to reject the logics, as well as how those sensebreaking messages appealed to types of legitimacy. Finally, the IRL's news media communication revealed framing tools used to persuade organizational members of the legitimacy of resisting the institutional pressures embodied by the rejected logics.

The IRL's News Media Communication: Timeline of Innovations

An analysis of the data revealed the IRL had an extensive history of adopting innovations in his organization, with a number of those innovations being overlooked for a handful of tactics

that received the majority of the news media attention. The coach's no-punt philosophy received the most attention, followed by his onside kicking philosophy. However, there were other innovative aspects to his coaching approach. Some of those innovations began years before or after his no-punting philosophy. Table 6 presents a list of the IRL's innovations, significant news coverage, acquisition of some material resources, and markers of performance success.

Table 6	
IRL's Adoption of Innovations and News Media Communication	
Strategies & Tactics	Performance & News Coverage
1997: Coaching friend of IRL introduces a new spread offense to HS football	
2001: IRL stops trying to be a power run team and adopts spread offense	2001: Lose in state final four
2003: IRL chooses to arrive at away games just 25 minutes before kickoff	2003: Win state championship
2003: IRL asks 'Why do we do what we do?' to all members about all aspects of team	
2003: IRL becomes head coach and chooses to punt 1-2 times a game	
2003: IRL's friend publishes definitive book on HUNH offense	
2004: Romer study published; IRL sees a video about it	2004: Lose in final four
2005: IRL starts planning a summer 7 on 7 league for next year to increase players' confidence with HUNH	2005: Lose in final four
2005: IRL decides he will mostly stop punting next year	
2005: IRL reads Freakonomics, The Tipping Point, Blink & develops psychological emphasis	
2006: Team has almost no punts; removes punting unit from team & never practices punts	2006: Lose championship game by 1 point game featured 9 of 10 fourth-down conversions
	2006: IRL receives first local news coverage for not punting
2007: No punting featured in first national news story	2007: Lose in final four
2007: Team starts onside kicking after some scores	
2007: IRL stops punting completely	
2008: Team onside kicks 75% of the time after a score	2008: Win championship
	2009: Lose in final four
	2009: IRL focus of many national news stories
2010: Putting study published; IRL reframes performing under pressure	2010: Lose in championship game
2011: Team now onside kicks after every score	2011: Win championship with zero losses
	2011: IRL focus of more national news
	2012: Lose in final four
	2013: Lose in final four
	2014: Win championship
2015: Team now arrives 45 minutes before start of away games	2015: In national news, IRL now says coaching is more than knowing stats
2015: IRL introduces rugby-style plays	2015: Win championship
2016: Son achieves fastest known ACL surgery recovery	2016: Win championship
	2017: Win championship
	2018: Lose in championship game

Table 6

As the timeline shows, the IRL's news media communication revealed he was comfortable with change and innovation; the timeline very closely follows Rogers' (2003) stages of innovation development by a champion in an organization. It took years for reporters to

realize those changes had been implemented. In fact, the first development on the timeline may have created an environment that allowed the IRL to operate below the radar in his state. A previous high school coach had created an innovation in football in 1997 known as the hurry up no huddle (HUNH) approach to play-calling; that coach wrote the definitive book on it in 2003. HUNH was a specific up-tempo, pass-heavy approach that did not rely primarily on power rushing football that most high school teams in the state used for decades. HUNH helped that coach achieve significant increases in his team's scoring and wins (including state championships). The coach, who was a friend of the IRL, took his innovation to the college level in 2006, where he won a national championship in the 2010 season.

In the IRL's state from 2000 on, many high schools adopted variations of the HUNH. The IRL, who was his team's offensive coordinator in 2001, adopted a spread, pass-heavy play-calling system that was similar to the HUNH system. In 2006, after three years of being the head coach, the IRL fully adopted HUNH and he decided to stop punting. The no punting approach went under the radar until the end of the season when a local news reporter noticed it. The first national news story about the IRL not punting was not until the middle of the next season (2007). The HUNH innovation appears to be an example of an exploitive project (Salge & Barrett, 2011), where an innovator acts on existing knowledge with less uncertainty and less flashy returns. HUNH was not necessarily a new concept; it was a recombination of play-calling often called the two-minute drill, which was usually only used in the last two minutes of a game when a team was behind with a close score. HUNH gave that first coach success, and others in the state began to adopt it (replicating their own smaller exploitive projects). This all occurred at the same time the IRL began his own exploratory projects of statistics-based decisions making; exploratory projects involve pursuing new knowledge or methods through uncertain

experimentation and risk-taking (Salge & Barrett, 2011). In fact, the development of HUNH and the IRL becoming a head coach (rather than just an assistant) seems to be where he started identifying what was taken for granted in coaching, which is where he was first confronted with the embedded agency paradox. This change in his personal career and the organization's structure, in which the IRL was now in charge of how the organization operated, seemed to act as the impetus for seeking out alternatives to what was taken for granted in coaching. The IRL indicated that without considering new approaches, the team was unlikely to ever win a championship. Once the IRL started this process of entertaining alternatives that many found to be ridiculous, he sought out evidence-based play-calling over institutional pressure to conform to what everyone else did. It was likely not surprising then that observers initially viewed the IRL's system as just another HUNH approach. The well-known and copied exploitive project (HUNH) provided cover for the IRL to launch his own exploratory project (EBM) and receive less criticism. That under-the-radar method likely conferred strategic benefits to the IRL. The delay between the IRL's implementation and outsiders' (such as reporters) identification of his exploratory project allowed him time to achieve significant success and legitimacy.

In fact, one recurring aspect of the IRL's coaching is that he quietly, rather than brashly, introduced innovations that went against institutional pressures. The news media data revealed he punted about one time a game in his first year as head coach; that was much less than virtually any coach in the country, but it was not what he later became known as – “the coach who never punts.” Four years later, he decided to stop punting entirely; that was the first year he received national news coverage for not punting. The same year, 2007, the IRL started onside kicking after a few touchdowns in a few games; the next year he started doing it 75% of the time. It was not until 2009 that his onside kicks received national news coverage. Yet, it was not until 2011

that the IRL began onside kicking after every score. Similarly, in 2014, the IRL introduced rugby-style plays; he waited a year to talk about it, and that resulted in a few national news stories in 2015. The news media data revealed the IRL chose soft launches when implementing organizational behaviors that resist institutional pressures. Those soft launches appear to have given him time to achieve success and legitimacy, which enhanced his persuasion about resisting institutional pressures once external audiences noticed the changes or when he introduced new innovations.

An IRL's Communication Model for EBM

With an understanding of the timeline of the IRL's adoption of innovations, an analysis of the news media data next revealed the IRL's communicated values that guided his leadership of the organization. Those values emphasized what the IRL wanted members to believe the organization represents. As discussed a little later, the IRL's guiding values were reinforced with sensebreaking messages that helped members reject institutional logics. Finally, those sensebreaking messages were clarified through framed stories, which also reinforced member identity. Taken together, the IRL's use of guiding values, sensebreaking messages, and framing through stories represent an IRL communication model regarding EBM, which is represented below in Table 7. Each tactic will be discussed in order, starting with guiding values.

Table 7	
<i>A Model of IRL Communication Regarding EBM</i>	
<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Guiding values	To reject rational myths
Sensebreaking messages	To reject institutional logics
Framing through stories	To clarify sensebreaking messages and reinforce member identity

Table 7

The IRL's Guiding Values Compared to Rational Myths in Football

The IRL's values are listed in Table 8. As explained below, the IRL also used framing tools to supplement some of his persuasion aimed at replacing rational myths. In fact, most of the values are understood as opposites of what the IRL believed to be rational myths in football. As a reminder, rational myths are “untestable means-ends statements” used to justify conformity to institutional pressures (Lammers & Garcia, 2014, p. 200). The IRL's guiding values also communicated how the institutional pressures he wanted them to resist went against the best interests of the organization.

<u>Guiding Value</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Honest Inquiry	Honest questions and answers are necessary to generate new ideas
2. Responsible Feedback	Leaders should solicit feedback from members in a responsible way
3. Negative Effects of Emotions	Decisions should not be influenced by emotions
4. Self Determination	A team should determine how it will play and how the opponent will react
5. Earned Entitlement	Players deserve to win when they put in more work and practice than anyone else
6. System Advantages	The system confers advantages despite the limitations of an organization's context
7. Failure is the Leader's Fault	Failure occurs because the leader did not prepare the team better
8. News Media Can Help	The news media can help promote an IRL's ideas and tell success stories

Table 8

The IRL's guiding values: honest inquiry. The first guiding value of honest inquiry compared to the rational myth that it's okay to answer “I don't know” to a question. This guiding value was what drove the IRL to adopt his statistics-based decision-making philosophy. When the IRL became the head coach, he started examining all aspects of the team's program. He

explained one of his first discursive choices in an interview about his unique program in a leading football coaching magazine.

I implemented a directive that forced us to ask, "Why are we doing this?" And we applied that simple question to every single aspect of our football program. It's a tougher question than you might think – especially when you begin to apply it to every single aspect of your football program. With our program, we needed a good reason to do something, and not just say, "Because that's the way we've always done something," or say, "Because that's what everybody else does in football." In my opinion, those aren't justifiable reasons to do something and that is not progressive thinking from someone in a leadership role as a coach (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

In another interview, the IRL went into even more detail regarding his philosophy of honest inquiry:

Every system we utilize...stems from blocking everything else out, tuning out all the ancillary clutter and getting back to asking ourselves the basic, yet critical questions necessary for true self-evaluation in every aspect of our football program.

We ask: What are we doing?, Why are we doing this?, Is there a better way of doing this stuff?

Being honest with ourselves and answering those essential questions have been the guideline template for building our program. The answers to those questions shaped what we have done on offense, they led to the development of our no-punt philosophy, they ultimately decided our defensive style of play, and they helped us to determine whether or not we should implement onside-kicking as a regular kickoff strategy (AFCWeekly.com, 2015).

In the preceding quotes, the IRL highlighted how honest inquiry, particularly in the first year when the coach sought organizational changes, involved having every member of the organization ask the question ‘Why do we do what we do?’ and ‘Is there a better way?’ about every aspect of the program. Including all members of the organization echoes appreciative inquiry’s summit form of engagement, which seeks representation from all organizational levels (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). After asking why something is done, the IRL then said if a good answer cannot be given, the action must stop. That assessment was especially true of any action that was done simply because it had always been done that way. The IRL’s approach to honest inquiry created the foreground he needed to persuade organizational members to resist institutional pressures. As the data will show in the next few sections (after highlighting each guiding value), the answers gleaned through honest inquiry helped to delegitimize institutional logics and simultaneously enhance the legitimacy of the IRL’s sensebreaking messages. In fact, the discursive resource of engaging in honest inquiry may be the bedrock upon which the IRL’s entire system and persuasion was built. The importance of this phenomenon seems to have been overlooked by virtually all news media reporters in the data.

The IRL’s first guiding value arose from his decision to essentially engage in the 4-D stages of appreciative inquiry (Stavros et al., 2003). The IRL’s individual research and then questions to members mirrored the discovery stage of finding moments of excellence and best practices. Asking members what did not work (not just a focus on the positive) and what could be better so the team could realistically attain a national championship mirrored the dream stage. Based on the feedback and co-created conversation, the IRL began creating the structures, processes, and relationships particularly with coaches and players to support the dream, which mirrored the design stage. Upon identifying answers to the questions asked through honest

inquiry, the IRL then began developing an inspirational plan for implementing the new ideas. That inspirational plan was the selection of specific messages to motivate the team regarding the changes players and coaches co-created and identified through communication, reflecting the destiny stage of appreciative inquiry. While guiding values four through seven effectively served as motivational messages in support of the IRL's new ideas, values four (self-determination) and seven (failure is the leader's fault) were developed in year one, following the initial appreciative inquiry event.

In addition to the 4-D stages, the discursive resource of honest inquiry reflected appreciative inquiry's assumptions and principles. Honest inquiry was central to identifying and embracing new ideas. For the IRL, asking 'Is there is a better way?' resulted in new ideas, especially where there were not good reasons to hold on to old ideas. This guiding value mirrors the core assumption that new ideas are the most important force for change (Bushe, 2011). Asking why things are done is not a question generally asked in traditional, non-dialogic strategic planning; instead, that approach asks how to fix problems. Similarly, the IRL's guiding value of honest inquiry reflected the second assumption of appreciative inquiry. As a socially constructed reality (co-created by all members of the organization in a year-one strategic planning event), the football program was "constrained only by human imagination and the shared beliefs of organizational members" (Bushe, 2011, p. 90). That assumption echoed legitimation strategies that appeal to cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness. The IRL's guiding value of honest inquiry was consistent with "anticipatory articulations of tomorrow's possibilities," the generative theory central to appreciative inquiry. Similarly, the IRL's honest inquiry echoed appreciative inquiry's simultaneity principle that the questions asked set the stage for what is discovered (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).

In addition, the IRL's honest inquiry hit even closer to home. His son played on the team, and in his senior season, the son tore his ACL in his knee the month before the season began. For most athletes, an ACL tear is a 6-12 month recovery; that meant the son would miss his senior season and likely not play football again. The IRL researched the fastest known ACL recovery, which was 77 days by a professional soccer player in Europe 13 years prior; the IRL asked doctors why ACL recoveries take so long, and most could only say 'because they always have' (Muck, 2015). That was obviously not an adequate answer in the process of honest inquiry. In fact, the IRL said "I'm not the kind of guy where because things are always done that way, that's the way it's got to be done" (Muck, 2015). The IRL and his son engaged in further research, talked to multiple medical experts, and proceeded to use experimental recovery methods; the IRL claims his son now has the world record for fastest ACL surgery recovery. The son scored a touchdown in a game 57 days after surgery, and he received a college football scholarship after that season.

Similarly, the IRL told a story about how honest inquiry in year one led the team to decide to arrive to games less than an hour before kick-off, a practice that goes against the institutional habit of arriving three hours early. This story was told by the IRL as an example of an outcome of honest inquiry; no one knew why teams arrived three hours early, and players hated all the downtime. Therefore, the team decided to adopt a new, better idea. This story represented the constructivist principle of appreciative inquiry, demonstrating one way the organization was socially constructed was through the stories members used in the past and the present (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).

The IRL's guiding values: responsible feedback. The next guiding value of responsible feedback replaced the rational myth of pure democratic dialogue. This discursive approach

allowed the IRL to strike a balance between being a fully authoritarian leader who prohibits member feedback and a fully open democratic organization in which members have a significant impact on organizational decision-making. This concept was explained more fully by the IRL in a football coaching magazine interview.

I will let the players try to come up with new stuff we could try – but only if they can prove to me that they did their homework on it, studied it, practiced it and can explain clearly to me why it may work for our team. If they follow through on all that work, I'll try it.

Allowing athletes to have input in a responsible way gets everyone involved in your program and keeps players dialed-in. It also creates a bond between players and coaches, as well as provides a player with a sort of “badge-of-honor feeling” when something they suggested works during a game (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

In the preceding quotes, the IRL's emphasis on feedback in a responsible way enabled him to allow some members to develop new ideas for institutional resistance, but not at the expense of organizational control by the IRL. As most appreciative inquiry summits are one-time events for planning before initiating organizational change, this revision to the IRL's year-one feedback practices was not necessarily surprising. This form of engagement somewhat mirrors an appreciative inquiry learning team, which is a smaller group of people working on a specific project in the pursuit of new, life-giving ideas (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). As Rogers (2003) argued regarding organizational innovation champions, more participation usually means innovations were more likely to last, especially if the innovations were radical like EBM. The IRL's communicated notion of responsible feedback may be a discursive resource that balanced control and trust. That trust was significantly conditional, but possibly still an expansion for a

high school football team. It is possible the invitation to participate is itself a morale builder regardless of whether the IRL implements the members' ideas in a game. The purpose of the solicitation was new ideas to experiment with in practice. The IRL's communication showed new ideas were at the heart of an appreciative mindset: solicitation of new ideas from all members for the purpose of improving the organization. Similarly, Rogers (2003) argued an organizational innovation champion like the IRL often had to communicate and co-solicit new, life-giving, future possibilities. Therefore, examining the members' perspectives on this concept in Study 2 was revealing. An analysis of the IRL's news media communication did not show whether organizational members interpreted this discursive resource in the same manner that the IRL intended. The second part of this study examined that question.

The IRL's guiding values: decisions should not be influenced by emotions. The IRL's next guiding value that "decisions should not be influenced by emotions" compared with the rational myth the IRL believes exists in in football – nearly all other coaches' decisions are influenced by emotions. What is interesting about this guiding value is that it appears to have evolved over the first half of the IRL's career. After only his fourth game as a head coach, a game he lost, the IRL talked about how emotion harmed his team. "They [the opponent] played with a great deal of emotion and it showed. After two emotional wins for us the last couple of weeks, we didn't bring that same kind of emotion tonight. You can be sure that we'll be bringing it the rest of the season" (Hourston, 2003). Similarly, the IRL discussed how difficult managing his team's emotions was, especially for a rival. "Certain games you have to treat more importantly than others because you can't continually keep your kids at their emotional peak every week" (Cooper, 2005). Both quotes reveal the IRL's view of emotion as something unpredictable that the coach must try to manage. However, the IRL's news media

communication about emotion seemed to change in future interviews after 2005 when he read a number of books on psychology. In fact, in a one-point championship game loss, the coach of the winning team talked about emotion in a way that seemed to be directed at the IRL. That coach said “[Our players] play with passion. It’s a true passion. I call it enthusiasm. They say enthusiasm is that feeling that lives inside of you. Emotion is on the top of your head. It goes out quickly” (Yates, 2006). This opposing coach’s negative view of emotion (something that is temporary and not sustainable), coupled with such a close loss, may have influenced the IRL. However, Salge and Barrett (2011) did find that emotional appeals were less common in legitimization communication about exploratory projects like the IRL’s use of EBM.

Regardless, the IRL’s future news media communication had a slightly different take on emotion. He seemed to evolve from trying to manage and harness emotion as a beneficial tool for his team to calling plays that were more likely to rattle the emotions of opponents. The IRL began to emphasize the ways in which statistics-based play-calling, when successful by his team, emotionally drained opponents.

Emotionally, it takes so much out of you when the other team goes for it successfully or recovers an onside kick...The built-in emotion in football is unbelievable, and that’s where the benefits [of our system] really pay off... I don’t think it’s a coincidence that on more than half of our touchdown drives, we converted a fourth down (Wertheim, 2009).

To the IRL, using his approach to deflate the emotions of the opponent was an additive benefit of EBM. This was centered on his belief that acting on emotions is bad, which he argued in a local sports radio interview four years later. He said that not punting is “100% about the numbers...don’t base your decisions [as a coach] on emotions...The few times I have punted it’s because I’ve been mad at our offense and I try to punish our quarterback rather than doing it for

the right reason” (Game On, 2013). One year later, he put it even more bluntly: “I believe humans make mistakes when they base decisions on emotion” (HLN STAFF, 2014). These quotes reveal the IRL did not frame emotion as something that helps coaches or players make the best decisions. However, he did see emotion as a tool that can be used against opponents. His negative view motivated him to use emotion in a punitive way. And, as the IRL’s news media communication will reveal a little later, the negative effects of an emotion like fear are likely to be worse for a team with smaller and slower players than most of their opponents.

Similarly, this guiding value regarding emotion aligned with the IRL’s news media communication about why other coaches, especially at higher levels, have not followed his lead. Referencing the emotional fear of loss, the IRL argued that those coaches were afraid of losing their jobs if they tried his approach but failed. “These coaches are making millions of dollars, and if they lose close games doing it the traditional way, they’ll probably keep their jobs” (Himmelsbach, 2012). The IRL was even more blunt three years later: “The coaches I’ve talked to...they’re afraid of the media or the fans or losing their jobs” (Staples, 2015). The IRL saw the refusal of higher-level coaches to try his system as mistakes since those decisions were based on fear of failure. Admittedly, the IRL did not have the same kind of financial pressures that college or NFL coaches have. In addition, his track record of incredible success meant that a few losses using his system would not result in his firing.

Another message from the IRL that involved his negative view of letting emotions affect decision-making was that no good came from being afraid of criticism from parents and fans. The IRL believed players and coaches were who mattered most. The IRL’s message was included in a cable television news show in which he said he was not concerned with pleasing people who were not coaches or players. “The kids were easy to convince because they never

punt on video games. When I showed my coaches that it gave us the best chance to win, they were on board. And then the rest, you kinda don't worry about" (HLN Staff, 2014). This quote from the IRL was an example of him seeking to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion aimed at convincing organizational members to reject institutional pressures through a value-based account. That account included an evaluation of a potential change as right or wrong (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). The IRL viewed his primary leadership responsibility to players and coaches. He did not consider pleasing any other groups as the right thing to do.

The IRL's guiding values: self-determination. The IRL's next guiding value of self-determination compared to the rational myth of panicked reactionism. From the IRL's perspective, players were often upset when the unexpected occurred, especially when calls or plays did not go the players' way. This uneasy feeling was not normal to players, and they did not perform as well as they were capable when the unexpected occurred. Since games include many unexpected experiences, the IRL sought to make familiarity with the unexpected the new normal for his teams. He sought to explain his program's philosophy in his interview with a football coaching magazine.

In football, you can *react* to things that happen, or you can *dictate* how other teams are going to react. And that's what we try to do. We want to dictate the course of events that occur during a football game. ... Well, in our program, we ... motivate players by saying things like....

'We're the ones who are going to determine how other teams react.'

'No one dictates how we're going to play.'

'We're the ones who are in control of what happens during a game' (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

The IRL used the preceding messages to instruct his players that the mindset they chose for a game was up to them, not opponents or disappointing circumstances. The IRL found this mindset essential since his team rarely had players as athletic as the teams they played. His players could not add six inches of height and 50 pounds of muscle, but they could develop mental toughness that did not let momentary setbacks cause the team to fall apart or give up before a game ended. Once again, this discursive resource allowed the IRL to delegitimize critiques of his system, such as “not punting was too risky.” With a self-determined mindset, players operating in doubt (for example, because the system is not used by anyone else in football) was simply not an option. By instilling a confident mindset, doubt of the system was not even considered.

Much of the idea of dictating how the other team would react was based on convincing the IRL’s players to act in ways that other teams would not expect. If an opponent stopped the IRL’s team on a third down, the opponent would celebrate and expect to see a disappointed team sending a punter to kick the ball. When the IRL’s team stayed on the field, the opponent would begin to panic. If the IRL’s team converted the fourth down, which they have done from 50% to 80% of the time, the opponent would then be disappointed. This philosophical belief appeared to evolve into a self-fulfilling prophecy for the IRL’s team. In the program’s history, if the team converted a fourth down on a drive, the team scored a touchdown nearly 80% of the time. In addition, nearly 75% of the time, that touchdown was scored within the next three or four plays after the fourth down. Similarly, the IRL’s research revealed his team has never lost when it has recovered two or more onside kicks in a game. “Psychologically, it’s a big difference. Besides taking possessions away, our guys believe we’re going to win at that point. They just know it”

(Muck, 2017). The IRL believed the confidence drain the opponent experienced became confidence fuel for his team.

Interestingly, as the IRL experienced success, his emphasis on self-determination was overlooked for his statistical play-calling. A somewhat flattering criticism arose in which some wondered if the IRL was even coaching anymore if he was just following the statistics. The argument was that anyone could achieve the same outcomes if they just did what statistics revealed a coach should do. The implication was the IRL's success was based on the fact that no one else used statistics-based play calling (Demirel, 2015). The IRL obviously did not agree with this assessment, which he addressed in an interview with a local sports reporter. "It's not true that just making decisions based on numbers means you don't need a coach" (Vernon, 2015). He responded to this criticism by referencing how much of football success was due to psychological beliefs held by the players. This view of mental self-determination was reflected in a local radio interview in which he said something virtually unheard of in football; games were won by mental skills far more than physical skills. "Psychology is probably 75% of football" (Game On, 2013). He expanded on this topic a little later in a coaching magazine interview.

I'm a tremendous believer and proponent of the psychological aspect of the game.

Confidence, preparation, challenging ourselves and being aggressive – it's like we're grinding all that stuff together, mixing it all into a program philosophy and getting the players to completely buy into it.

Add in a strategic component such as a unique style of play that we believe gives us a statistical, numerical advantage and it bolsters the team's confident, aggressive mindset even more and takes everything to another level (AFCWeekly.com, 2014).

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion aimed at convincing organizational members to reject institutional pressures through instrumental rationalization. Advocates of a change use instrumental rationalization to emphasize the benefits, purposes, and outcomes (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006); this kind of communication highlighted an intricate system's inherent and holistic features rather than singly focusing on costs or only competitive advantages. The IRL's language above emphasized the collective benefits, underlying reasons for, and expected outcomes of a belief that the sport is much more mental than physical.

Similarly, the IRL communicated about self-determination by emphasizing that the team sought to win a state championship every year; there were no years in which he wanted to simply try to be competitive. Trying to be competitive means aiming to win more games than a team loses. It is a common mindset when teams graduate a class of good players. The younger players likely will need a season or two to get better. The idea of simply being competitive (often understood as just getting to the playoffs) was seen as the dominant mindset at the IRL's small, resource-limited private school before he was head coach. The IRL rejected that idea, which he explained in an interview with a national sports website reporter. "Not winning a state championship wasn't good enough for me. Other schools have more kids to pull from. We couldn't play the same game as them and expect to have better results" (Meet Kevin Kelley, 2016).

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion aimed at convincing organizational members to reject institutional pressures through an instrumental rationalization. The IRL's emphasis on the ultimate benefit of his institutional resistance, having a chance to win a state championship every year, enhanced his legitimacy. Before the IRL arrived, no coach at the school had ever won a state championship.

Supplementing self-determination with framing. The analysis of the IRL's news media communication also revealed the guiding value of self-determination was supplemented with the use of framing tools. The IRL specifically reframed preferred three organizational identities for members: being aggressive, confident, and in control. Reflecting leadership communication research (Cheney & Christensen, 2001; Liska, Petrun, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2012), the IRL appeared to use framing to help members determine organizational identity, an identity that communicated a rejection of institutional conformity. The preferred identities helped increase the legitimacy of the IRL's persuasion to resist institutional pressures. These new identities served as the communication strategies of instrumental rationalizations, strategic rationales, and authorization. The identities also enhanced both loss and gain frames used by the IRL. Each of the identities are discussed below.

Reframed identity: aggressive. Most football coaches say they emphasize aggressiveness in their coaching and playing. However, that aggressiveness often is relegated to plays on the field. The IRL knew the types of players he would have to work with at a private, college-preparatory school that has to play one level higher than its enrollment would rarely be able to match the talent of most opponents. Therefore, to instill sustained aggressiveness, the IRL redesigned almost every part of his program to be up-tempo, as he explained in a coaching magazine interview.

I stepped back and really started thinking about when we arrive at the stadium for road games...our team bus will pull up for the game promptly at 6:15 pm, that's 45-minutes before kickoff. 45 minutes. That's it. 45 minutes means we've got 10 minutes to unload the bus and get inside, and about 5 minutes to get dressed. I'm not going to lie – it's very much a 'hustle-up-hurry-up' mindset and that's exactly what we're striving for. We

hustle our butts, we get on the field for a sharp, highly organized 10-minute warm-up-and-stretch period...When our bus pulls up at that opposing stadium, we are all business. The hustle-up/hurry-up mindset on game-day dovetails nicely with our philosophy offensively and defensively, which is to be very aggressive and to always be in 'attack mode.' So our playing style fits our arrival-time mindset perfectly. (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

The IRL framed the identity of aggressiveness in nearly all aspects of his program. He wanted his players to understand that they needed to be hyper-focused and ready to dictate the outcome of the game. What appeared to be unique is that the IRL instilled this in practice and pre-game travel and arrival, not just play-calling. Pre-game travel was traditionally known for being times of relaxation and even goofing off. In those moments, players could let their guard down, adopt lax tactics, and then try to refocus once the game begins. Some players, particularly those that are more athletic, may be able to get away with more sloppiness. The IRL did not believe his team, especially with smaller, slower players could be sloppy. This aggressive mindset appeared to simultaneously enhance the legitimacy of his approach to play-calling that went against institutional pressures. The IRL might have been communicating that his institutional resistance was more than a tactic (like not punting); it was instead an entirely different mindset focused on the behavior needed to give his team the best chance to win any game. The IRL's framing might have helped build self-efficacy in players, which can enhance framing about statistical play-calling. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy can be equally affected by persuasion about actions that are framed in terms of losses or gains (Block & Keller, 1995; Hallahan, 1999). Additional framing about EBM by the IRL that focused on what the players would gain may have been enhanced when it was preceded by framing that built up self-

efficacy. In fact, the IRL argued the aggressive mindset went hand-in-hand with the next reframed identity, which he applied to both offensive and defensive players.

Reframed identity: confident. The next framed identity the IRL created for followers was being confident, which he explained in a few coaching magazine interviews. “Always going for it on fourth down...demonstrates that we have a high degree of confidence in our offensive players...no matter the distance needed or game situation. We expect our offense to successfully convert on fourth down” (Football Coach Daily, 2014). While the identity of being confident was built into the aggressive offense, one might expect that confidence was missing for the defense in the moments when the offense failed to convert a fourth down. The IRL argued in a magazine interview the confidence the coaches have in the offense communicated confidence in the defense.

[It] tells our defensive players that during those situations where we fail to convert, and we trot them out there with only 20 yards to defend, that we believe they can get a stop. We have enormous confidence that our defensive unit will dig down deep and keep the other team from scoring. And we expect they will get stops with their backs against the wall, time after time, game after game.

If you're never going to punt, and if you onside kick every time – then you better have the ultimate confidence in your defense... Not only are we sending a message to players that we have complete confidence in them, we're challenging them... We keep telling our players that we have confidence in them and by challenging them to do the extraordinary (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

The IRL knew his team was viewed as one that did not play football the way all other teams did. This suspicious view could have contributed to players and supporters having doubts

about how they could perform. The IRL wanted his players to have full confidence in themselves and in the system that they used, regardless that no one else used the system. In fact, he wanted his team to be even more confident *because* they were only team that used an EBM-approach to play-calling. Once again, the IRL took what would be an expected criticism of his institutional resistance and turned it into a reason to feel more confident and better prepared to win than any opponent. This framed identity may enhance players' self-efficacy, which once again increases the likelihood for subsequent gain-based framing about EBM to work just as well as loss-based framing (Block & Keller, 1995).

Reframed identity: in control in chaos. Finally, the last identity the IRL created for followers was being in control in the midst of chaos. The IRL explained in another coaching magazine interview how many teams have pre-game schedules planned down to the minute so players have a very set structure. The IRL did not believe in that approach.

The first time something goes wrong with that planned-out schedule – that comfortable road-game, pre-game routine where they don't have to think – the players begin to panic. They panic when they're out of their comfort-zone and suddenly now have to think about the unexpected. It rattles them and I've seen teams fall apart psychologically because of a pre-game problem... We kind of always arrange things so that things are always going wrong for players. We always take our players out of their comfort zone mentally, and we constantly challenge them with the unexpected. What we've found is, that when adversity and the abnormal becomes the norm, that our players have become much more adept at shaking problematic things off and quickly re-focus on the task at hand. Our players don't get shaken up mentally, and they have a conditioned ability to stay focused

amidst chaos. That helps us immeasurably during games, too. When things don't go as planned during a game, our players don't panic" (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

The IRL knew that one of the biggest challenges of adopting a no-punt philosophy was that players would encounter many more stressful situations (almost every fourth down). Therefore, he sought to condition the players to be much more comfortable with stress. His belief was that players often don't perform well under pressure not because of the pressure itself but because the players were not used to the pressure. By putting his players in stressful situations on a regular basis, and by giving them an EBM plan to succeed in those situations, the IRL sought to elevate the level of performance his team could achieve under stress (and their belief about their ability to do so). Most football players would view the pressure of a fourth down as comparable to a chaotic situation. The first three downs are not viewed as chaotic situations in football, but the fourth is simply because failure means the other team will get the ball at that location. The IRL wanted his team to view a fourth down with as much comfort and confidence as it viewed the first three downs. This framing identity likely contributed to increased self-efficacy by players, which enhances a gain-based frame regarding EBM. The IRL believed his players would not feel particularly more stressed attempting a fourth down at the end of the game if they had been going for it throughout the entire game.

The IRL's guiding values: entitlement was earned. The IRL's next guiding value of "entitlement was earned" compared with the rational myth of assumed entitlement. The IRL wanted his team to reject assumed entitlement, when a team thinks it will win because it has a better record than an opponent. The IRL was staunchly opposed to a team believing that its won-loss record was a reason to be confident before playing an opponent. This concept was not really unique among coaches. The IRL addressed assumed entitlement in a local news interview before

playing a team with a losing record, but one that had defeated PA in a few playoff games years before:

I said, 'Guys, it's the same thing over and over again, so here we are. Everybody's telling you you're going to win. Don't believe it. These guys are good, and you're going to have go out there and win' (Yates, 2011).

The IRL contrasted assumed entitlement with entitlement is earned, which he explained in a pre-season interview with local sports radio reporter.

I want them to believe they deserve to win. Somewhere in the back of your mind, you might go a little harder when you're a little [more tired] than the guy across from you is if you think you deserve to win because you put in that time and effort (Lion Fan, 2015).

In the IRL's emphasis on the idea that entitlement is earned, he routinely communicated to his team that if they put in more work than anyone else (which he would enforce at practices) and used a statistically superior system for play-calling that no one else used, the team would be practically unbeatable. An important element of this concept was that the IRL's team spent more time on offensive drills than any other team in the country because it did not practice punting or returning punts. The confidence the coach sought to instill was conditional; if the players put in the work (and due to his emphasis on the butterfly effect as discussed later), the players should believe they deserve to win.

The IRL's guiding values: system advantages. The next guiding value of system advantages compared with the rational myth of assumed private school advantages. Opponent fans had said the IRL's private school enjoyed benefits cash-strapped public schools did not. The IRL rejected this idea by communicating that the opposite was true. His school's much smaller size and academics-first nature meant he had considerably smaller and slower players to choose

from than his much larger public school opponents. The IRL was quick to point out in a coaching magazine interview that his system created advantages that were essential to being able to even compete against the more athletic teams.

We generally don't get a lot of huge linemen type of players. Our typical athletes are more linebacker or safety sized types of players, so we wanted a style of defense that best utilized our athleticism – all while playing into our program's aggressive philosophy on both sides of the ball (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

With an emphasis on how the system provided his team with specific benefits that traditional play-calling did not, the IRL's communication bolstered the legitimacy of resisting institutional pressure. His core message was that if he did not resist those pressures, his team could not be successful with smaller, slower players. Yet again, the IRL took a suspicion of his approach and argued the opposite was true. Rather than agreeing that his success was due to his private school being able to recruit (illegally) superior athletes, the IRL argued his players were not superior athletes. In an effort to bolster the legitimacy of his argument, he said his team's success was due to the system. However, later the data will reveal the IRL did not believe traditional play-calling was superior even with bigger, faster players. In addition, the IRL did praise his players as good; he did not say he had players who were bad or without talent. He made a distinction that his players tended to smaller, especially his linemen.

The IRL's guiding values: failure is the leader's fault. The IRL's next-to-last guiding value of "failure is because the leader did not prepare the team better" compared to the rational myth of "failure is because the team does not use traditional play-calling." In local news media coverage of close losses, the IRL had been criticized when a more traditional approach to play-calling might have resulted in a win. The IRL completely rejected that idea by stating in local

news interviews that failures rest on his performance as a coach. In one of his team's most stinging losses (before he began onside kicking), his team failed on a two-point conversion after its last touchdown at the end of the game (rather than trying for a safer one-point kick that would have guaranteed at least a tie). The other team quickly scored a touchdown and succeeded on a two-point conversion, winning by one point. In the high-scoring game, critics argued that a few more punts or the safer one-point kick would have prevented a loss. The IRL disagreed when interviewed by a local sports reporter. "No. If I would had made some better decisions, I feel like it would have given us a better chance" (Yates, 2006). Future interviews revealed a similar pattern of not even entertaining the possibility of using a more conservative approach to play-calling following a close loss.

In the only tie in the IRL's career, the local news reporter wrote that fans of the IRL's team groaned when he did not punt. The team failed on fourth down, and the opponent quickly scored. This was a prime example for critics to argue regardless of statistics, the IRL should have punted. The IRL did not budge, telling the reporter that instead of being too aggressive, he was not aggressive enough. "I've got to do a better job of getting us into some big play calls. Maybe I'm being so cautious because we're young" (LeMaster, 2007).

This was a moment when one would likely expect the IRL to admit that his approach to play-calling, which many perceived to be more risky, contributed to losing the game. Punting at the very end of the game would surely have helped reduce the chance that the opponent would score again. The IRL never did so; he always doubled down on his belief that his approach was the best way to win a game. If the team failed, it's because the IRL did not prepare them well enough to score more points in his system. In building legitimacy for his philosophy, the IRL refused to allow that philosophy to be doubted. For the IRL in this instance of doubt, the EBM

system and plan were sound; the implementation of the plan was not. As the person in charge of preparing the team, the coach said ‘blame me,’ not EBM. Obviously, this strategy to legitimate the IRL’s system was risky because too many losses would indicate EBM was not legitimate and the coach was incapable of leading the organization to success. The IRL’s strategy was called on after his very first game, but he only lost one more time that season. The blame-me strategy after a loss likely resonated with members when the team rarely lost.

The IRL’s guiding values: partner with the news media. The IRL’s last guiding value of partner with the news media was understood as a rejection of the rational myth that coaches should not trust the media. High school football coaches, like leaders of other types of organizations, know that news reporters have to report on the good and the bad that happens in a game. It is the reporters’ jobs to ask why leaders, like coaches in football, make choices that go against institutional pressures. The IRL knew this and thought the news media would mock him, which he told to a regional sports radio host: “I was afraid of the media” (Vernon, 2015). In fact, he almost did not adopt his no-punt philosophy because of that fear, as he explained in an interview with an ESPN reporter. “If you go for it and fail, the first question in the postgame press conference will be, ‘Aren’t you to blame for losing the game because you didn’t punt?’” (Esterbrook, 2007). This admission was surprising given the IRL’s guiding value that decision-making should not be influenced by emotions. However, he did not let that fear affect his decision-making.

Much to his surprise, the news media loved his novel approach, and that worked to his advantage. “When we started doing it, we had absolutely no idea that media would like it. I have talked to college coaches, NFL guys, etc., as a byproduct of the media coverage” (Shrout, 2010).

The IRL even used that unexpected professional coaching support to strengthen the legitimacy of his philosophy that goes against institutional pressures. Virtually no other high school team in the country has a coach who can tell players HBO, ESPN, and even the pros come to their team to learn new ways to win in football. That external validation from the highest levels of the sport, which was the cognitive legitimization strategy of authorization, had to be a confidence booster for the players regarding the IRL's philosophy. Authorization includes a reference to an expert source or an institution and can be used by supporters of change (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006). If the IRL's team used traditional play-calling, national sports shows and pro coaches would not have visited the school.

In summary, the IRL's news media communication revealed his guiding values that compared to rational myths the IRL believed exist in football. Those values emphasized what the IRL wanted members to believe the organization represented. The IRL's guiding values also communicated how the institutional pressures he wanted them to resist went against the best interests of the organization. The value of honest inquiry served as the bedrock of his evidence-based philosophy, mirroring the 4-D stages of appreciative inquiry and generating new, life-giving ideas. While honest inquiry initially included representation from all levels, the IRL later was guided by soliciting feedback from members in a responsible way, which meant the suggestion of new ideas that were properly researched. The IRL also communicated his negative view of emotions' effects on decision-making. Similarly, the IRL's guiding values of self-determination and system advantages communicated the aggressive, confident, and in-control mindset he wanted his smaller, slower athletes to embody. In addition, the IRL's guiding value that failure was the leader's fault and entitlement was earned negated criticisms of using a system no one else used. The main criticism of EBM was turned around and seen as a key

competitive advantage. Finally, the guiding value that the news media could help tell success stories enhanced the legitimacy of resisting institutional pressures.

After identifying the IRL's guiding values understood as the opposite of rational myths, an analysis of the news media communication next revealed institutional logics in football that the IRL rejected. As a reminder, institutional logics are the often-unwritten rules leaders are expected to follow in industries or fields. These institutional expectations enable and constrain how organizations communicate and act, which affects the cognitions and perceptions of members (Lammers & Garcia, 2014).

Institutional Logics: Rejecting and Replacing Through Sensebreaking

The IRL's news media communication revealed three main institutional logics (isomorphic, taken-for-granted assumptions in football) he rejected, as well as his non-isomorphic assumptions he sought to establish and maintain in his organization, those he wanted his organizational members to take for granted. The assumptions he sought to establish and maintain were sensebreaking messages. Once again, sensebreaking messages can be used by an IRL to criticize institutional influences on organizational practices (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016). The sensebreaking messages often involve assessments of existing sensemaking messages found in institutional logics as "illegitimate, unethical, or inadequate" (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016, p. 5). The institutional logics and sensebreaking messages identified by the IRL are presented below in Table 9. The first logic also included sub-logics that exemplified specific applications of the concepts. The IRL appealed to both cognitive and noncognitive legitimacy in communication to organizational members regarding the rejection of those logics.

Table 9	
<i>Institutional Logics Replaced with Sensebreaking Messages and Supplemented with Framing</i>	
<u>Institutional Logics</u>	<u>Sensebreaking Messages</u>
1. Play conventionally safe	Play statistically safe
1a. Punt or kick on most 4 th downs	Go for it on every 4 th down -Punts reframed
1b. Kickoff to the other team after scoring	Onside kick after scoring -Turnovers reframed
1c. Return punts from your opponent	Do not return punts
2. Defense wins championships	Increased scoring opps win championships -Defensive failure reframed
3. Game-day fixes are helpful	Preparation ends the day before a game -Elite identity framed

Table 9

Institutional logic 1: play conventionally safe. The first isomorphic institutional logic the IRL rejected was that teams should play conventionally safe. That logic was rejected with the sensebreaking message that coaches should play statistically safe. As the IRL explained in an interview with the world's leading sports website (ESPN), the traditional, subjective approach to decision-making is just too risky for him. "When coaches go for it on fourth-and-short, announcers call that a huge gamble. It is not a gamble, it is playing the percentages. The gamble is punting" (Easterbook, 2012). In fact, the IRL routinely laid out the statistical differences between punting and not punting on fourth down, as he explained in another football coaching magazine interview.

...if we go for it on fourth down and don't make it – our opponent takes over and has a first-and-goal from the 5-yard-line. The math shows that in that situation, they have a 92-percent chance of scoring a touchdown.

But, if we don't even try to go for it on fourth down and we punt the ball from the end zone, with the average net punt, our opponent will get the ball somewhere around the 40-

yard-line. From our 40-yard-line, the opposing team will still have a 77-percent chance of scoring a touchdown from that distance. The number is that high, according to the data. So, if we punt, we're virtually assuring that the opponent scores points. But, if we convert that fourth down, then we keep the drive alive and stop them from scoring" (Britton, 2014).

Thus, statistics-based decision-making, a form of evidence-based management, was the opposite of taking risks for the IRL, which he explained in a video interview with a national sports website. "I'm not the gambler. If you're doing it against the numbers, that's when you're the gambler. That's what we are at the casinos" (Meet Kevin Kelley, 2016). The IRL used the well-known gambling analogy of a casino to show that his approach was in fact not gambling. The likely strongest and most stinging critique of his system, being a reckless gambler, was turned around and applied to traditional coaching that critics preferred. In addition, he emphasized how his approach to play-calling was not as statistically risky as his critics (who only engaged in gut-level analysis, not statistical analysis) thought it was. The sensebreaking message that statistics-based decision-making was the best strategy, when communicated in news media, served as a discursive resource for the IRL. He again took one of the more common and negative views of his system and turned it on its head. His efforts appeared to be aimed at bolstering his persuasion to organizational members who could be tempted to doubt the system. Rather than granting that there was a valid, different perspective on his system, the IRL doubled down and did not give an inch.

Similarly, the IRL used statistics to evaluate whether to kick for one point after a touchdown or try for the more difficult two-point conversion play, which he explained in his first published interview with a football-coaching magazine. "We practice game-winning two-point

plays, which is very unique for a high school team. If we convert half of them, that's 100% of' one-point kicks, a success rate high school teams do not achieve on kicks (Purdum, 2012). As the previous quotes show, the IRL used going for two points after a touchdown (instead of kicking for one) to show that failure half of the time on two-point plays would equal as many points as 100% success on kicking plays. No high school achieves 100% on kicks, so the IRL showed that critics were not correctly framing the issue of risk for two-point plays and, as he will explain below, many aspects of football. The IRL's communication about being guided by statistics generally centered on the ways in which his approach was superior to traditional play-calling. Again, the sensebreaking message of playing statistically safe communicated in news media served as a discursive resource that simultaneously delegitimized traditional play-calling.

In addition, the IRL talked specifically about using statistics-based decision-making in risky situations. Risky situations in the IRL's communication were identified as offensive fourth downs, kickoffs after his team scored, and returning punts. The conventionally safe approach was to punt on fourth downs, kickoff (rather than onside kick) after a score, and return a punt. Those were the traditional decisions made by most coaches most of the time. The IRL rejected all three with sensebreaking messages, which he included in an interview with ESPN.

If you're not obsessed with field position, then you don't punt. You onside a lot. You don't even try to return punts or to block punts, because getting the ball back is far more important than risking a muff or roughing the kicker flag... When coaches go for it on fourth-and-short, announcers call that a huge gamble. It is not a gamble, it is playing the percentages. The gamble is punting (Easterbook, 2012).

The preceding quote by the IRL represented the three main pillars of that first institutional logic he rejected. Though described as pillars of the "play conventionally safe"

logic, they were smaller logics by themselves. The three represented smaller logics because the IRL was still virtually the only coach in the country who rejected all three. The IRL talked about each of those risky situations in more detail below.

Institutional logic 1a: punt on fourth down. One component of the play conventionally safe institutional logic was that football teams should almost always punt on a fourth down. The IRL replaced that with the sensebreaking message that his team would never punt on fourth down. He explained it further in a Sports Illustrated interview. “It’s like someone said, ‘[Punting] is what you do on fourth down,’ and everyone did it without asking why” (Wertheim, 2009). In his first national TV interview, the IRL explained that he developed his no-punting philosophy after reading Romer’s (2005) economics study, and statistics from ESPN (Kilgore, 2015). He explained his approach in a New York Times interview: “I love numbers. From everything I’ve seen, it says do not punt. Period” (Sabol, 2008).

In the example above, the IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members to reject the institutional logic through authorization. This legitimization strategy includes a reference to an expert source or an institution (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006). The IRL’s appeal to statistics and statistical experts provided him with authorities that granted legitimacy to his message.

Supplementing sensebreaking with framing: punts. The IRL supplemented his sensebreaking message by reframing punts. Conventional wisdom in coaching is that the risk of failing on a fourth down is too great, essentially echoing loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). If a team fails to get a first down, the opponent gets the ball where the team failed. However, punting pushes the opponent back and forces it to cover more ground before scoring. The IRL explained this idea in a Sports Illustrated interview in

which he explained that if he went for it and failed close to an opponent's goal line, that team would score 92% of the time. If he punted, the opponent would score 77% of the time. Not punting and letting his offense stay on the field was an easy decision for the IRL since, as he said, "the odds of the other team scoring only increase 15 percent" (Wertheim & Moskowitz, 2011).

The IRL discussed the statistical numbers that were the basis of his system in a simple, matter-of-fact manner. His communication emphasized that the numbers revealed a rather small chance of failure compared to the traditional approach to play-calling. Having likely increased players' self-efficacy through reframed identities, the IRL emphasized the gains were more likely than losses. His messages also revealed a philosophy that was opposite of gut-level play-calling based on what almost everyone else did. His use of numbers appeared to be a simple way of explaining the legitimacy of resisting institutional pressures. This statistical explanation likely enhanced his persuasion to members and supporters.

In addition, the IRL even redefined punts, in a way that virtually no coach ever has. Punting is generally seen as an extension of defense, even though it is done during the last down of an offensive possession. Forcing the opponent to receive the ball further away means the opponent has to cover more ground to score. However, it guarantees that the punting team will not score. The IRL hated that, as he explained in an HBO sports show interview. "It's offensive failure. We failed. What was our goal when we attained the ball? To make four downs to score a touchdown. If we don't score a touchdown, we failed" (Frankel, 2015). Most coaches would likely frame the IRL's preferred decision (not punting) when it failed (not converting a fourth down) as offensive failure. Punting on fourth down likely avoids that situation, so punting is not seen as failure. The IRL completely rejected that and framed punting in a very negative light.

Rather than using the institutionally approved positive frame, the IRL reframed punting as the team losing an opportunity to score. Negatively framing punts in turn framed going for it on fourth down much more positively. This framing of punts contributed to the IRL's belief that football was about scoring, or gaining points, not trying to keep from losing field position.

Interestingly, the news media data revealed some changes in the IRL's communication over time regarding the way he framed punts. He punted about one time a game during his first three years as head coach. He only punted once in 2006 and 2007; the punt in 2007 was returned for a touchdown and the IRL decided to never punt again. In 2008, he never punted and won his second state championship. However, the IRL did punt one time in 2009 (ending a 28-game puntless streak), but he acted surprised when local reporters asked why. He punted again during a game filmed by Sports Illustrated in 2015, and he punted at the end of his last state championship game in 2017 (ending a 54-game streak). In all of these situations, the coach used similar communication to emphasize a point that he felt was consistent, rather than contradictory, with his previous communication about never punting. "If that was my goal, not punt, I just wouldn't have punted. To me, I've always thought this way: 'What is going to give us the best chance to win the game?' At that time, I thought punting gave us the best shot in that situation to win the game" (Yates, 2009). The IRL's news media communication revealed a somewhat changeable stance on this reframed concept. Yet, the notion that sometimes he should punt was consistent with Romer's (2005) statistical analysis. In the 2015 game, the IRL's team was facing fourth down and 30 yards for a first down just a few yards from the opponent's goal line. Even the IRL agreed that was truly too risky.

Institutional logic 1b: kickoff after scoring. The second component of the play conventionally safe institutional logic was that after scoring, teams should almost always kick

the ball to the opposing team. The IRL replaced that with the sensebreaking message that his team would onside kick after every score. The IRL explained in his first Sports Illustrated interview that he came to this conclusion by examining data on average kicks in high school football; most teams catch and return a punt to the 33-yard line, while most onside kicks are caught and returned to the 48-yard line (Moscowitz & Wertheim, 2011). “So you’re giving up 15 yards for a one-in-three chance to get the ball back. I’ll take that every time” (Wertheim, 2009). Again, the IRL tied this back to a preference for scoring over field position; onside kicks allowed a team a chance to acquire an additional opportunity to score.

In addition, the IRL’s implementation of the new idea (for his team) to onside kick after every score also mirrored an appreciative inquiry learning team for a specific project; the IRL would consider new ideas if they had been fully researched. Reflecting the guiding value of seeking feedback in a responsible way years after the year-one appreciative inquiry event, the IRL tried out in practice many player’s ideas for unique onside kicks. In fact, the IRL said in a coaching magazine interview that quite a few of those ideas became adopted plays used in games. This co-creation of the new tactic helped with organizational buy-in and provided unique playing opportunities for some players that were too small to play other positions. This resulted in organizational pride among players that would see less playing time on a team following institutional practices regarding onside kicks.

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his tactic and persuasion to organizational members to reject the institutional logic through an economic rationale. His cost-benefit analysis of the new practice was that any recovered kicks resulted in additional turnovers. Kicks that were not recovered only allowed the opponent marginally closer to scoring. However, the recovered

kicks gave the IRL an extra scoring chance. In fact, the turnover concept was an important part of the IRL's sensebreaking message, which is discussed below.

Supplementing sensebreaking with framing: turnovers. Acting on the knowledge that statistics from college-level football games showed that the greatest predictor of who would win a football game was the team that created the most turnovers (they win 80% of the time), the IRL redefined recovering an onside kick as gaining a turnover. Virtually no coach in football had ever framed turnovers in this way, though the concept had been discussed one year before in an online post from one of the IRL's sources of statistical studies (Schieb, 2006). This new strategy was not without risk, since a failure to recover the ball would allow the opponent a little closer to their goal. The IRL researched the statistical difference between kickoffs and onside kicks in high school and found he would only give his opponent an average of 15 more yards after a failed onside kick. The IRL framed the potential of a gain by emphasizing how little could be lost. He explained this concept further in a coaching magazine interview.

We consider the recovery of an onside kick to be the same thing as forcing a turnover... You are taking an offensive possession away from your opponent, while simultaneously giving your offense an extra offensive possession... We did a risk-reward analysis to ferret out all potential negatives... What onside-kick recover success-rate could we live with before it became harmful to our team? (AFCA.com, 2014).

The IRL used an EBM approach to play-calling to identify the statistic that best predicted which team would win a game. He then sought to increase the number of turnovers his team created, but he did it by reframing how turnovers were defined and counted. He framed a successful onside kick as gaining a turnover rather than potentially losing 15 yards, but given the IRL's framed identities that may have enhanced self-efficacy, the reframed turnover concept

likely worked. Acknowledging that his onside kick tactic did come with risk, the IRL analyzed his own team's statistics after adopting onside kicks and arrived at a conclusion. He explained his finding in an interview with a national sports website. "We recover 20% of our onside kicks. If we get 18-25%, I'm ecstatic. One a game is a game-changer" (Grantland Staff, 2013).

Once again, the IRL enhanced the legitimacy of his institutional resistance by reframing success with this noninstitutional tactic. The IRL found that failing to recover an onside kick 80% of the time still provided his team with a statistical advantage via an additional recovered turnover. If he kicked off to his opponent, he simply was not expecting to regain the ball. If he onside kicked, succeeding only 20% of the time made a significant difference. The times his team did not recover an onside kick, the opponent obtained only a marginally better field position. The IRL acknowledged a negative frame existed for this individual play choice, but that it did not matter across an entire game. The low-level of success needed (one in five) for the onside kick tactic to positively affect the game made it powerful because the team almost always scored five or more times. If the team succeeded more than 20% of the time, the positive-framed tactic was much more powerful. In fact, one of the reasons the IRL caught the attention of national news reporters was due to a viral video of one of his team's games. His team started the game with four consecutive successful onside kicks, leading 28-0 after six minutes.

Institutional logic 1c: do not return punts. The final component of the play conventionally safe institutional logic revealed the IRL was not completely risk-averse, at least in regard to responding to an opponents' fourth-down punt. He rejected the idea that teams should always attempt to gain better field position by returning a punt. He replaced it with the sensebreaking message that returning a punt is too risky and likely to result in a fumble or penalty. "I have what I want, possession. Too many things can go wrong so I don't return them."

(Frankel, 2012). If the other team punts to him, the IRL will not have his team return the punt because he believes it is too likely that his team would fumble the return or get penalized for roughing the kicker. For the IRL, increased scoring trumped field position yet again.

Taken together, all three pillars of the play conventionally safe institutional logic represented the tactics for which the IRL received the most attention. He reiterated the rightness of his views about statistics-based decision-making in an interview with a football-coaching magazine a few years later.

Doing what's right is to put your players in the best possible situation to win games. Your players are out there working hard and putting everything on the line for you. As their coach, you owe it to them to give them the best possible chance to win. Our system gives us the best statistical chance to win any given football game (AFCA.com, 2014).

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members through a value-based account. Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) assert a value-based account is an ethical evaluation of a proposed change, an evaluation of that change as right or wrong. In the quote above, the IRL appealed to the statistical analysis of play-calling and showed how “safe” calls were statistical gambles. Gambling with his team's chances for winning was simply not the right thing to do as a coach. The right thing for him to do as a coach was give his players the best chance to win.

Institutional logic 2: defense wins championships. The next rejected institutional logic was that defense wins games. In an interview with a coaching magazine, the IRL argued against that logic with the sensebreaking message that increased scoring wins games. “As a football coach, the importance of defense is ingrained into you. Coaches automatically think ‘defense wins championships’” (Football Coach Daily, 2014). The IRL rejected this notion by

emphasizing, in an interview with ESPN, that scoring more points is how a team wins, not by focusing on keeping the other team from scoring points. “Everyone says football is a game of field position, but it’s not. It’s a game of scoring points, which only happens when you possess the ball” (Easterbook, 2012). In fact, a high school coach opposed to the IRL had this to say in a local news interview: “That system has very little to do with field position and defensive football” (Jacobs, 2015). That comment reflected the institutional pressure for coaches to conform regarding the role of defense in football.

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members through a strategic rationale. A strategic rationale is a legitimation strategy used when proposing a project primarily to attain a competitive advantage that is not realized with the status quo (Salge & Barrett, 2011). In the example above, the IRL argued that focusing on defense and field position missed the key point to winning games over opponents: scoring more points.

Supplementing sensebreaking with framing: slowing down is defensive failure. Similarly, and as an extension of the rejection of “defense wins games,” the IRL rejected the notion that a defense’s goal should be to slow down the other team. The IRL framed that approach as defensive failure. Instead, his sensebreaking message was that he wanted his team’s defense to speed up the opponent, which he explained in a coaching magazine interview.

I’d rather have an opponent score in two plays than have them control the game.

Sometimes being too aggressive comes back to bite us – like when the other team scores on a failed defensive gamble...I don’t want an opposing team to go on an 18-play scoring drive on us that eats up a bunch of clock and keeps our offense off the field (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

With the IRL's preference for the sensebreaking message that more scoring opportunities win championships (rather than the institutional logic of defense wins championship), he would rather the defense "fail fast" trying to get a high-reward turnover. The IRL's preference for scoring and rejection of a defense-first mindset meant that when his team failed to convert a fourth down, the opponent got the ball, often in a location on the field that required a short distance to score. The IRL's defensive players would now be in a difficult situation because the opponent had a shorter distance to score than if the IRL had punted. As referenced above, the IRL framed an identity of aggressiveness for his players, which likely enhanced their self-efficacy and enabled gain frames to strengthen the framing of actions (Hallahan, 1999). Therefore, he did not want his defense to slow down the other team. He wanted an aggressive blitz that was more likely to result in a gained turnover (which was consistent with his preferred identity frame for players as being aggressive on offense). An aggressive blitz also left his defense vulnerable to the opponent getting a quick score. That quick score would be considered defensive failure to most coaches; the defense failed to prevent the other team from scoring. This likely would be demoralizing to the defensive players. It appears the IRL used a redefinition and minimization of defensive failure to negate that demoralizing possibility.

The IRL sought to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members through an economic rationale. An economic rationale is a legitimation strategy used when proposing a project based on a cost-benefit analysis; the benefits are argued to outweigh the costs (Salge & Barrett, 2011). The IRL acknowledged that occasional costs will be incurred with an aggressive approach to defense, but he was convinced the benefits, especially for his offense, far outweighed any costs. In fact, in the moments when costs were incurred, failure was not the term he believed should be applied to his team.

Institutional logic 3: no last-minute fixes. The next institutional logic the IRL rejected was that coaches could achieve last minute fixes. He replaced that with the sensebreaking message that coaches should prepare players before game day. A common practice among coaches was to meet with players on game day, especially right before a game begins, to go back over plays and concepts the coaches want the players to execute. The IRL believed that approach increased game-day stress and rarely if ever helped a player. Instead, he wanted his coaches to believe their roles on game-day were to remind players that they were already prepared, so those players become more relaxed and performed better. He explained this approach in a magazine interview.

I don't allow my assistant coaches to have meetings with our players on game days. I put more stress on the importance of Monday through Thursday. I mean, if our players aren't prepared for everything they need to know by the time game day arrives, then we haven't done a very good job of preparing and coaching in our allotted practice time (Football Coach Daily, 2014).

The IRL emphasized that his coaches were responsible for preparing the players Monday through Thursday. While many coaches of other teams have extensive game-day routines and last-minute fixes, the IRL found that approach to be counterproductive. It was yet another way his organizational members resist institutional pressures. The IRL viewed coaches as being responsible for putting players in the best position to succeed before game day. He wanted his players to have a calm confidence that was built on trusting the process. During the game, he wanted the players to believe and trust that they had done everything needed to perform at a high level that evening.

Supplementing sensebreaking with framing: identifying as elite. To supplement the IRL's sensebreaking message opposed to last-minute fixes, he also framed a preferred identity for players as being elite performers. The IRL asked the team to identify some of the most important professions in the world to see how individuals in those fields prepared for success, and the team chose brain surgeons. The IRL then interviewed brain surgeons and found they preferred minimal pre-surgery downtime. He explained his preferred identity for his players in a coaching magazine interview. "We like to think of football as important, meticulous, and detail-oriented, so why [were] we doing things so differently" than the surgeons? (Football Coach Daily, 2014). The IRL contrasted one of the most respected professions in the world with the unique and superior philosophy his players used. His team did not play like any other team, and a necessary element of that unique play was the pursuit of excellence. Other teams may not view playing football as something that required a similar level of focus and excellence required of a brain surgeon, but other teams were likely not as prepared to win as the IRL's team was. Once again, this framing likely contributed to enhanced self-efficacy, which strengthens the persuasive power of gain-frames regarding EBM. In addition, a framed identity of elite contributes to increased self-esteem, which can enhance evaluations of the legitimacy of a leader's choices (Cheney & Christensen, 2001).

In summary, the news media data revealed that the IRL identified institutional logics that he rejected and sensebreaking messages he used to enhance the legitimacy of resisting those logics. The IRL's news media communication revealed three main institutional logics (isomorphic, taken-for-granted assumptions in football) he rejected, as well as his non-isomorphic assumptions he sought to establish and maintain in his organization, those he wanted his organizational members to take for granted. The assumptions he sought to establish and

maintain were sensebreaking messages. The first logic also included sub-logics that exemplified specific applications of the concepts. The IRL appealed to both cognitive and noncognitive legitimacy in communication to organizational members regarding the rejection of those logics. The logics were that teams should play conventionally safe, defense wins championships, and game-day fixes are helpful. The logics were rejected with sensebreaking messages, and those messages were supplemented with framing.

An analysis of the IRL's news media communication regarding institutional logics also revealed a strategic use of stories. Those stories were yet another way the IRL's sensebreaking messages were supplemented with framing.

Framing Through Stories to Enhance Sensebreaking

An analysis of the news media data revealed the IRL used leadership framing tools (Fairhurst, 2011) and drew from a well of illustrative stories in multiple interviews to frame key aspects of his organizational philosophy that ran counter to institutional logics. Those stories, presented below in Table 10, served as dramatic narrativizations (Vaara et al., 2006) and appear to have been used to enhance the legitimacy of his sensebreaking messages about resisting institutional pressures to conform. The stories included suspended assumptions about football, explanation through the butterfly effect, the casino theory, the putting experiment, and the school's perfect season. These stories served as leadership framing tools and enhanced cognitive legitimacy; the stories themselves were evidence that the IRL's ideas were the preferred mindset. Of course, as Cheny and Stohl (2001), Putnam and Fairhurst (2016) and Fairhurst and Putnam (2018) have pointed out, leadership communication often involves irony. It is ironic that an organizational leader known for using evidence-based practices rooted in statistical studies used

stories to persuade members to resist institutional pressures. Humans are storytelling animals (Kent, 2015), and the IRL did not simply present studies to achieve member buy-in.

Table 10	
<i>Framing Through Five Stories to Enhance Sensebreaking & Cognitive Legitimacy</i>	
<u>Story</u>	<u>Sensebreaking Message Enhanced</u>
Suspended assumptions about football	“Play statistically safe”
The butterfly effect	“Go for it on every 4th down”
The casino theory	“Play statistically safe”
The putting experiment	“Go for it on every 4th down”
The school’s perfect season	“Play statistically safe”

Table 10

Reframing through stories: suspended assumptions. Regarding suspended assumptions, when the IRL defended his innovations, he sometimes asked those who questioned him to assume they had no knowledge of how the game of football worked. In a local radio interview, the IRL used the leadership framing tool of analogy: “You’ve got to completely forget you know anything about football” (Vernon, 2015). In an interview with a national sports reporter, the IRL repeated his point. “Imagine...if punting had never been part of football. What would fans think if a coach suddenly sent out a specialized player to kick away the ball after three plays?” (Kilgore, 2015).

The IRL believed that if a person pretended institutional pressures to conform (such as the need to punt on most fourth downs) did not exist, that person would reject the traditional view of punting. The IRL challenged others to think about play-calling in football without pre-conceived notions about conforming to institutional pressures. Maintaining the status quo without good evidence to do so was like refusing to acknowledge that a belief had been disproven.

For example, an extension of the suspended assumptions story form was the IRL's reference to how humans used to believe the world was flat, which he mentioned in interviews with national sports reporters. This story was used by the IRL to bolster his stance on refusing to punt, since he believed it was a practice rooted in incorrect data. "500 years ago, we knew the world was flat. It was fact. Now, 500 years later, and that's not the case" (Sabol, 2008). The IRL used this story to show that many people agreeing on an idea was not proof that the idea was correct. The IRL equated institutional pressures to conform in football as equivalent to believing the world was flat. That conformity did not prove concepts to be correct. The flat world story appeared to be an effort to enhance the IRL's legitimacy of rejecting institutional pressures. Those who can't suspend assumptions and continue to criticize his no-punting philosophy were like those who refused to believe evidence of the world being round.

Reframing through stories: the butterfly effect. Another story the IRL used to clarify sensemaking messages was the butterfly effect. He explained how his tactics that run counter to institutional pressures increased the likelihood of winning while diminishing his opponents' abilities to adequately prepare for his team. The phrase butterfly effect, first coined by mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz (1963; 1969), refers to the idea that small changes in initial conditions of a system can cascade into significant changes in that system. Lorenz's work, made possible by the development of computer forecasting, significantly advanced Chaos Theory (Gleick, 1987). The phrase butterfly effect came from the name of a presentation Lorenz gave in 1972, which was titled "Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?" That title and phrase simplifies Lorenz's work, but it was a somewhat succinct summary of his findings regarding how linear statistical meteorological forecasting was ultimately unpredictable. He was particularly interested in how imperceptible

amounts at the beginning of a forecast model could “evolve into two considerably different states” (1963, p. 133). Small initial changes could eventually result in significantly different outcomes.

Regarding the IRL’s use of the butterfly effect as a metaphorical story, he believed not punting allowed his team to focus on more important tactics during practices, a net benefit for his team. He also believed opponents spent more time practicing how to prepare for his onside kicks than when that opponent practiced for other teams. This out-of-the-ordinary practice took away from other important tactics, which resulted in the opponent not being as prepared as usual. Opponents being less prepared than usual benefited the IRL. He explained this additive advantage concept of the butterfly effect in one of his first national sports interviews. “It’s the butterfly effect. Much like the punting situation, [the onside kick] becomes something the other team has to work on a lot during the week. That’s taking time away from their preparation against your offense or defense” (Fedotin, 2008). The additive benefit of this butterfly effect also applied to the IRL’s ability to spend additional time improving the team’s skills. “Not practicing punts means we have an extra 15-20 minutes every day for other things” (Vernon, 2015). Additionally, the butterfly effect of not punting also opened up the coach to more creative play-calling. In fact, this notion was presented in one of the sources of the IRL’s statistical studies (Schieb, 2006) the same year he stopped punting. However, the IRL did not use the butterfly effect to emphasize the advantage of being able to be more creative in play-calling. Instead, he used the story to show how not punting gave his team more time to practice and threw the opponents off of their regular practice routines.

The IRL used the butterfly effect story to help others understand the positive (gain-based) and not always immediately recognizable benefits of his philosophy that rejected institutional

pressures. Having already framed punting as a tactic that decreased a team's chance of winning, the IRL was not concerned about anything lost by not practicing punts. For the IRL, having more time to spend in practice, especially on offense since games are won by scoring more points, helped his team practice more and longer than any other team it would face. That additional time appeared to be a significant part of the IRL's guiding value of entitlement was earned. He wanted his players to believe they deserved to win because they spent more time practicing offense than any other team in the country. In addition, forcing opponents to spend more time than usual practicing for the IRL's on-side kicks took away from the opponents' ability to practice as much as usual. This allowed the IRL to simultaneously achieve his team being more prepared than the opponent while the opponent was more unprepared.

Reframing through stories: the casino theory. Another story the IRL used to clarify sensebreaking messages was what he called the casino theory. This metaphorical story was used in the context of a discussion regarding how the IRL's philosophy did not mean the team had success with every play or game. He explained this concept in a local sports radio interview.

When you walk in a casino and play blackjack by the book, you've got a 48.5% chance to win, and the house has a 51.5% chance to win. The only advantage they have is when you bust on 21 and if they bust on 21 at the same time, they still get your money first. That's the only advantage they have, but that's where that 1.5% difference comes. Well, over the long haul, they're always gonna win. So, if the numbers dictate that you're increasing your chances to win by a certain percentage, you gotta keep doing it because over the long haul you're going to [win] (Game On, 2013).

The IRL was certain that his philosophy provided his team with the best statistical chance to win any game. However, that did not guarantee that he would win every game or score a

touchdown every time his team had the ball. Regardless, just like a casino, the IRL was convinced EBM play-calling would achieve the best outcome over the long run. This story helped the IRL frame that an EBM approach would provide the most gains, while a traditional approach would provide the most losses. Having emphasized identities that enhanced the self-efficacy of players, the IRL communicated the need to understand that the numbers were simply true. In fact, this casino theory story represented the IRL's moral positioning frame (Fairhurst, 2011). He did not care about institutional pressures; if the numbers showed that play-calling based on statistical advantages gave the IRL's team the best chance to win, he would choose that approach every time, even after a loss. It was his responsibility to his players to do so.

Reframing through stories: the putting study. The IRL also used the story of the golf putting study to clarify sensebreaking messages related to performing well under pressure, realizing that the players needed to be conditioned to that pressure. He discussed this illustration to frame a news story in a local sports radio interview.

When I looked into how I wanted to talk to the kids about this cause the numbers backed up what I wanted to do, I found a study in Arizona.

They walked in randomly to a golf course and picked 10 sets of 10 people throughout the day playing golf. They give 10 guys a 10-foot putt. They hooked them up to a heart-rate [monitor] and said we're just doing some biological research. They let them putt 10 times. On average, all day long there's like a 100 putters. The average made was seven out of 10 for all putters. They gave those same guys 10 putts and hooked them up to the same machine and said "we're going to give you \$300 if you can hit those seven." Same putt, same everything. The average made on that was three out of 10.

Our kids get used to the pressure of rolling out there. Our kids are used to that pressure on fourth down. You put a defense against us, and [that defense is] not used to that pressure. (Game On, 2013).

The IRL used this story to impress upon organizational members that responding negatively under stress was normal for those who have not been there before. The illustration served as a leadership legitimacy frame (Fairhurst, 2011) with its reference to a credible, sports psychology experiment. However, those who had become accustomed to stressful situations became more comfortable. Since stress was normal for his team, the IRL wanted his players to understand they were especially prepared, and their opponents were not. Once again, this was another framing tool that synthesized with the IRL's entitlement was earned concept.

Reframing through stories: the school's perfect season. Finally, the last story the IRL used to clarify sensebreaking messages was the school's perfect football season. He used the story as a form of leadership framing to make an argument (Fairhurst, 2011) about the benefits of his play-calling approach even in an optimal talent-level organization. The IRL explained his story-based argument to a sports radio reporter. "Some have said if we had better players we wouldn't have to use this system. In 2011, I truly believe we had the best team in the country. This system makes a good team great, and a great team unstoppable" (Vernon, 2015). The IRL's communication also seemed to be framing an argument through the news, an effective method of public relations framing used to win frame contests (Hallahan, 1999).

The IRL seemed to have developed the perfect season story as an argument years after earlier referencing how his system worked well for a school that had smaller, slower players. Apparently, critics then began saying that the IRL's philosophy only worked in schools like his. The new criticism, then, was that the IRL's system would not be needed or work in a large

school. The IRL, as a news frame sponsor, sought to present his preferred frame for this frame contest (Hallahan, 1999). The IRL developed the perfect season story after those criticisms arose, emphasizing that for one year, he did have superior athletes. The story seemed to be an attempt to enhance the legitimacy of his institutional resistance; in that year, his philosophy made a talented team truly unbeatable. The IRL added to the story that he was certain the team was the best in the nation that year.

In summary, an analysis of the IRL's news media communication revealed strategic framing through stories to clarify sensebreaking messages. These dramatic narrativizations (Vaara et al., 2006), though ironic for an IRL using EBM, likely enhanced the legitimacy of his sensebreaking messages about resisting institutional pressures to conform. Metaphorical stories (suspended assumptions, the butterfly effect, and the casino theory) and stories about the putting experiment and the school's perfect season likely enhanced self-efficacy of players and strengthened the power of gain frames. The casino theory represented the IRL's moral positioning frame, the putting experiment illustration served as a leadership legitimacy frame, and the story of the school's perfect football season served as framing to make an argument (Fairhurst, 2011). These stories potentially enhanced cognitive legitimacy in that the stories, told to news reporters in a frame contest, served as evidence that the IRL's ideas were the preferred frame and superior to institutional conformity.

Summary of Study 1

The data from Study 1's analysis of the IRL's communication found in news media revealed several discursive resources used to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members about resisting institutional pressures. First, the IRL had an extensive history of adopting innovations in his organization, with a number of those innovations being

overlooked for a handful of tactics that received the majority of the news media attention. The delay between the IRL's implementation and outsiders' (such as reporters) identification of his exploratory project allowed him time to achieve significant success and legitimacy. One recurring aspect of the IRL's coaching was that he quietly, rather than brashly, introduced innovations that went against institutional pressures.

The IRL's news media communication also revealed his guiding values that compared to rational myths the IRL believed exist in football. Those values emphasized what the IRL wanted members to believe the organization represented. The IRL's guiding values also communicated how the institutional pressures he wanted them to resist went against the best interests of the organization. The value of honest inquiry served as the bedrock of his evidence-based philosophy, mirroring appreciative inquiry and generating new, life-giving ideas. While honest inquiry initially included representation from all levels, the IRL later was guided by soliciting feedback from members in a responsible way, which meant the suggestion of new ideas that were properly researched. The IRL also communicated his negative view of emotions' effects on decision-making. Similarly, the IRL's guiding values of self-determination and system advantages communicated the aggressive, confident, and in-control mindset he wanted his smaller, slower athletes to embody. In addition, the IRL's guiding values that failure was the leader's fault and entitlement was earned negated criticisms of using a system no one else used. Those criticisms were turned around and seen as key competitive advantages. Finally, the guiding value that the news media could help tell success stories enhanced the legitimacy of resisting institutional pressures. The IRL's guiding values served as the foreground for the IRL's rejection of specific institutional logics.

The news media communication next yielded the institutional logics in football that the IRL rejected. Those logics were replaced with sensebreaking messages, the assumptions he wanted his organizational members to take for granted. The IRL appealed to both cognitive and noncognitive legitimacy in communication to organizational members regarding the rejection of those logics. The logics were that teams should play conventionally safe, defense wins championships, and game-day fixes are helpful. The logics were rejected with sensebreaking messages, and those messages were supplemented with framing.

Finally, the IRL's news media communication exemplified strategic framing through stories to clarify sensebreaking messages. These dramatic narrativizations (Vaara et al., 2006) likely enhanced the legitimacy of his sensebreaking messages about resisting institutional pressures to conform. Metaphorical stories (suspended assumptions, the butterfly effect, and the casino theory) and stories about the putting experiment and the school's perfect season likely enhanced the self-efficacy of players and strengthened the power of gain frames. The stories, told to news reporters in a frame contest, likely enhanced cognitive legitimacy as they served as evidence that the IRL's ideas were the preferred frame and superior to institutional conformity. Taken together, the IRL's use of guiding values, sensebreaking messages, and framing through stories represent an IRL communication model regarding EBM.

Results of Study 2: Interview Data

While the results and analysis of Study 1 were instructive, they only provide a partial picture of the organizational communication processes at PA. To better understand discursive resources used by members of an outlier organization that resists institutional pressures, interview data was gathered with three additional organizational audiences: coaches and administrators, players, and parents. The results and analysis of communication by those three

groups follows. The data will be divided into two sections: IRL interview data and interviews with the remaining coaches and administrators.

Study 2 IRL Interview Data

The data from interviews with the IRL revealed similarities with and differences from the IRL's news media communication. In particular, the interview data revealed extensions of a few themes identified in Study 1. Additionally, the IRL's interview data revealed new insights directly related to communication about resisting institutional pressures. Those insights fell into two categories: communication used to introduce concepts counter to institutional pressures and communication used when responding to criticism of resisting institutional pressures. See Table 11 for a listing of each concept.

Table 11	
<i>IRL Interview Data Insights</i>	
<u>Expanded Concepts</u>	<u>Description</u>
The news media can help an IRL	Let the media find you Media coverage can create some difficulties
Entitlement is earned	Keep the faith after a loss
Defensive failure	“Go zero or out”
<u>New Concepts</u>	
Communication used introducing EBM	Leaders and members need to commit fully Supporters need to change the way they think Leaders need to respond to doubts with reasons Leaders should try to collaborate with doubters
Communication responses to criticism	“Pick and choose” criticism is not valid Statistics-based play works at all levels IRL's statistics are persuasive and not skewed Benefits of playing football outweigh health risks

Table 11

Study 2 IRL interview data: expanded concepts identified in Study 1. In regard to interview data that extended concepts from the first study, the IRL expanded on the importance of the following guiding values and sensebreaking messages: news media can help promote an

IRL's ideas and tell success stories, entitlement was earned, and defensive failure was being on the field too long.

The news media can help promote an IRL's ideas. In Study 1, the eighth guiding value identified in the data was the news media can help promote an IRL's ideas. In the interview data, part of the IRL's strategy regarding this concept was how he waited for the news media to find him. This strategy went against one of the most common beliefs of public relations, which is to seek out the news media (Hallahan, 1999). The IRL explained how after winning a championship his first year as a head coach, local news media became curious, especially at the beginning of the next year. "A lot of media came and watched our games. And I just said, 'I'll let them ask the questions.' And surprisingly enough, they didn't ask a lot of questions about it." (Kelley, 2017). Two years later in the IRL's third year as head coach, the first local news story finally addressed the no-punt philosophy. "One of them did a story and somehow a national affiliate picked it up. That's kinda when things really took off. At that point, I was ready to be under attack, to be honest. It just didn't happen that way at all. I think people were curious and enamored by it" (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL's choice to wait for the news media to discover his evidence-based approach resulted in the very outcome many organizational leaders seek when proactively soliciting media coverage in a frame contest: positively framed stories (Hallahan, 1999). By rejecting a traditional public relations strategy of soliciting news media coverage, the IRL enabled reporters to feel like they had discovered the story. Reporters seemed intrigued by a coach who was not seeking attention for his maverick ways. The IRL's decision to be publicly quiet about his play-calling only seemed to make reporters want to be louder about it.

An additional way in which the interview data with the IRL extended the news media guiding value from Study 1 was that a leader needs to “spin” positive media coverage to organizational members. The IRL expanded on how it was not enough to simply receive positive media attention; the leader needed to capitalize on the authorization legitimacy (Vaara, et al., 2006) granted by the news coverage. His use of the term spin matched one of the tools available to organizational spokespeople to use when framing news (Hallahan, 1999). Additionally, the IRL and his coaches made sure to communicate to players just how special that positive coverage was, especially if the stories were from national outlets.

We get a lot of media attention. When HBO comes out, or ESPN, or we get a game on television or whatever, we definitely spin that as a positive to kids. We say, ‘Hey, what other school in [the state] are they coming to? Matter of fact, how many schools are even picked? Just a handful. It’s usually the elite programs.’ We spin it in a real positive direction. Not too many kids get to play in a program where they care what you’re doing nationally...I know [they players] really enjoy it when media comes out and puts them on television and shows up in practice and comes to our games (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL capitalized on his guiding value by framing the news coverage as a sign of a rare, elite high school football program. He used news coverage to frame his preferred identity for organizational members. Once again, those who played at the IRL’s school were unique and different from the majority of players in the country. Therefore, players at a unique, elite program did not do things the same ways that most schools did. The framing of the media coverage also provided external legitimacy to the IRL’s play-calling approach. The IRL’s strategy also reflected an organizational innovation champion’s work, since media coverage can

shape perceptions and acceptance of an innovation more so than benefits of the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Interestingly, the IRL's interview data also highlighted a few ways that news media coverage can cause problems. He argued that for someone implementing a statistics-based system, too much news media attention makes it difficult to resist institutional pressures. "In high school, people are willing to try stuff simply because there's not as much media attention on them. They're not worried. It's not as widespread and known when they screw it all up" (Kelley, 2017). Similarly, the IRL explained that parents and players on other teams at the school felt a little jealous of the positive attention the football team received. "Parents more so than kids, for sure... That can be a negative sometimes... Probably half our administration appreciates the good free publicity that we get, and the other half is worried about the other sports feeling bad" (Kelley, 2017). Of course, even though he was the school's athletic director, the IRL was primarily concerned with the football team he coached.

Entitlement was earned. Study 2's interview data with the IRL also revealed more insight about the guiding value of entitlement was earned. In Study 1, the IRL explained that a team deserved to win if it puts in more preparation work than the opponent; the IRL's refusal to practice punting and punt returns was then framed by the IRL as how his teams always put in more offensive practice than opponents do. The interview data expanded on entitlement was earned when the IRL talked about how he handled his first game as a head coach, which was a blowout loss.

I just constantly kept telling the guys... 'We deserve to win.' I say that to them all the time. 'You work hard enough to deserve things in your life. There are very few things that are really given to you. And you guys deserve to win. And if you'll keep the faith

and we'll just focus and do the things I ask you to do, you've put in the time and effort, and you deserve to win' (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL did not chew out his team after an embarrassing loss; instead, he saw it as his responsibility to rebuild his team's psychological confidence. As early as the second game of his career, he wanted his team to believe that entitlement was earned. He wanted his team to buy into the notion that the team deserved and should expect to win if it worked hard. Good luck or bad luck were not concepts the IRL wanted his team to focus on. He wanted them to focus on what they had control over, which was how hard they worked in practice.

Defensive failure is being on the field too long. Finally, Study 2's data also revealed more insight into the IRL's concept of defensive failure. As Study 1 revealed, the IRL believed allowing an opponent to spend a lot of time trying to score was defensive failure. The IRL preferred high-risk, high-reward blitzes that resulted in a quick turnover or a quick score by the opponent. Those outcomes allowed the IRL's team to more quickly get back to offense and win the game by scoring more points. His interview data revealed this notion in an even more extreme manner than the news media data showed. "I told my defensive coordinator I want him to go zero or out. I'll gamble with that. If they go 80 yards, that's fine. Just don't let them go five. At least if they go 80, we get the ball back and could go score again" (Kelley, 2017). Once again, the IRL revealed an extreme outlier philosophy that virtually no other coach practiced. Yet, his communication was consistent with his preference for scoring instead of defensive field position. Allowing the opponent to quickly score on a long drive, viewed by virtually everyone else in football as failure, was actually reframed as success.

In summary, the data from interviews with the IRL revealed similarities with the IRL's news media communication. In particular, the IRL expanded on the importance of the news

media can help promote an IRL's ideas, entitlement was earned, and defensive failure. The IRL's interview data also highlighted a few ways that news media coverage can cause problems.

Study 2 IRL interview data: new concepts. The Study 2 IRL interview data also revealed a few new ideas, not just extensions of Study 1 findings. Those new ideas fell into two categories: communication used in introducing institutional resistance and communication used when responding to criticism of resisting institutional pressures.

IRL communication when introducing innovations counter to institutional pressures.

In Study 2, the IRL interview data revealed how he discursively introduced his innovations that went against institutional pressures. The four concepts he used were that leaders and members needed to commit fully, supporters needed to completely change the way they thought, a leader needed to respond to doubting questions with reasons, and a leader should try to collaborate with doubters.

Commit fully. The first new concept identified in Study 2 was the IRL's directive to commit fully. He expounded on this concept when asked about how he first introduced his evidence-based concepts, especially with coaches, players, and parents. Since the IRL slowly rolled out his no-punting philosophy, rather than an immediate, full change, he understood how parents were sometimes confused and frustrated.

I didn't do it completely right with the parents early on. And what I mean by that is I was a little apprehensive about parts of what we were doing, so I dabbled with it in the [first] season... And it was just enough for people to go, 'What the heck are you doing?'... When I committed fully to it, then I thought, 'Okay, I need to tell the parents' (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL identified one of the main reasons for lack of buy-in from organizational supporters was that he had not fully committed to his innovative change. That lack of full commitment resulted in confusion rather than confidence among organizational supporters.

Similarly, in discussing a news media story in which the IRL lost a close game after failing to convert the team's last fourth down, he explained why he should have been even more aggressive rather than not punting that time. To the IRL, he needed to clarify to organizational members that he was fully committed to his plan.

As a leader, when you do make a mistake, a lot of times it's not in your plan, it's in your execution of the plan. You also don't want to question your own plan in front of [the team]. You certainly don't want the people you're leading to question the plan. They gotta be committed to it, maybe more than you do... That was just a few games after we had fully committed to what we were doing (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL believed his responsibility as a leader was to instill confidence in his plan. To achieve that confidence, the IRL had to demonstrate full commitment so he could in turn demand it from organizational members. "It's hard to do part of the time. When you don't commit to something, you've kind of committed to nothing" (Kelley, 2017). In fact, the IRL said that statement when talking about how he offered the same advice to coaches from around the country that talk to him about adopting his methods, though almost all have not fully committed to his approach to play-calling.

Supporters need to completely change the way they think. Another new concept identified in Study 2 was the IRL's directive that those unsure of EBM play-calling needed to completely change the way they thought. He added this concept when he described how he used the term "game-winning percentage" to explain his statistics-based play-calling. Game-winning

percentage is a measure of how every coaching decision can increase or decrease a team's chance of winning a game. For most situations, choosing to punt decreases a team's game-winning percentage. "So, I tried to lay it out there and really explain to them, 'Here's why were doing this. You gotta quit thinking in the normal realm... You gotta completely change the way you think. You can't look at it in the traditional sense'" (Kelley, 2017). The IRL's message when explaining his philosophy was that the issue was not really about punting. The central issue was making coaching decisions that give the team the best chance to win. That meant a new mindset was required to fully understand and commit to the new strategy.

Respond to doubts with reasons. Another new concept related to the IRL's communication used to introduce innovations was that a leader should respond to doubts with reasons. One example of the IRL's communication with parents of players was a mandatory meeting with him before the season starts. At that meeting, the IRL explained the reasons for his philosophy, and he invited parents to ask any questions. The IRL was very intentional about inviting questions but not debates. Those questions were then answered with reasons.

So we have a parent meeting before the season starts... And I make it required; every parent has to come... 'I want to talk to you face-to-face, and if you got any questions about the season, now is the time to ask because once we start tomorrow, it's over'... So I tried to reason it out like that and, so I said, basically, 'This is what we're gonna do, I hope you're with me'... I went that route with the parents, and I even told them, 'Now's the time, wanna ask me questions, ask me questions and I'll tell you the reasoning behind everything. I'm not here to change your minds and I'm not gonna debate, but I'll be glad to answer any questions.' I just think transparency in that area is a good thing. (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL's approach to supporter doubt was to provide reasons or explanations aimed at reducing those doubts. However, the IRL argued he was not interested in a debate or in trying to change someone's mind. He simply wanted to present evidence and let the parent evaluate it. He was essentially treating them the way he evaluated courses of action; he used what worked very well for him, objective evidence, to clarify his philosophy. In fact, this approach was exactly what the IRL used when facing an unknown medical dilemma involving one of his players.

The IRL faced doubts about a situation he had not been in before, and he sought reasons for the "why" questions he had. When his son was facing ACL surgery and being told he would not play his senior year, the IRL asked for convincing reasons to explain that conclusion. He did not receive any, which paved the way for imagining the impossible, a notion he asked his own team to embrace. The IRL recalled his conversations with knee surgeons regarding the expected six-month timeframe for recovery.

I said, 'What's the reason for that?' [The surgeon] said, 'Well, slowly but surely, 20 years ago it took two years to come back. And slowly but surely, we just started moving up the time when they would start rehabbing those muscles.' And I'm like, 'So there's no specific reason why it's about that time?' He said, 'No, we've just slowly but surely seen what the knee can take and moved it up' (Kelley, 2017).

So, the IRL began asking more questions about how ACL surgery recovery actually occurred. He asked for specific explanations and reasons for how healing occurred; he wanted to better understand if healing timeframes were rooted in convincing reasons or evidence.

What is the healing that has to take place, what has to happen? Can you give me a generic summary?' And they were like, 'Well, time.' And I said, 'No, it's not time, it's not a ticking of the clock. What has to happen inside your body?' 'Well the easiest way to

summarize it would be, the amount of blood flow, a certain amount of blood flow healing agent has to pass over that injury.’ And I said, ‘Okay, now we’re onto something.’

(Kelley, 2017).

For the IRL, having good evidence or reasons as answers to why questions allowed a leader to truly reframe the possible. Good evidence was the bedrock upon which innovations could be considered and developed. With that clarity, the IRL identified new, realistic goals that just might run counter to institutional pressures. As the IRL established in his Study 1 communication, continuing to do something because it has always been done was not a good reason. Once the IRL realized that recommended ACL surgery recovery times were not rooted in good reasons, he identified an accelerated approach that allowed his son to achieve the fastest recovery in the world. “He went through the same protocols that other people go through... in a shortened amount of time... [He did] muscle hypertrophy exercises a lot earlier than anybody else did.” (Kelley, 2017). In part because of the IRL’s insistence on good reasons, his son had an impressive senior season and received a college football scholarship.

Try to collaborate with doubters. Additionally, the IRL’s communication revealed he believed a leader should seek to collaborate with doubters. The three tactics used to do this were establishing commonalities by expressing shared goals, directly asking for supporters’ trust, and directly asking parents to avoid criticizing the coach’s philosophy in front of players. In regard to establishing commonalities by expressing shared goals, the IRL did so during the mandatory parent meeting in which he communicated dialogic and appreciative principles as crucial to leader-supporter relationships.

I said, ‘Look, here’s the deal. There’s hopefully, there’s no doubt in your mind that I wanna win. And what I think is that you wanna see two things outta your kids. You

wanna see them get to play, but you also want to see them win. So we're all on the same page on winning' (Kelley, 2017).

Continuing the IRL's desire for supporters to feel invited to be part of the organization, he verbalized that both had the same goals. They were interested in appreciative, life-giving outcomes (Barge & Oliver, 2003) for the organization. With that established, the IRL wanted to go a step further and ask for a dialogic relationship (Kent & Taylor, 2002). He communicated at the beginning of the season that he did not seek an adversarial existence with supporters. Communicating those shared goals provided the IRL with the foundation for a potentially trusting relationship.

In fact, the second tactic used in the IRL's strategy of collaborating with doubters was directly asking for supporters' trust. This communication tactic extended from communication of shared goals, but it also likely enhanced legitimacy by appealing to authorization via expert research (Vaara et al., 2006). The IRL recounted the conversation he had at the first parent meeting when he fully committed to EBM.

'I've done tons of research, this is my job. You've got a job that you do extremely well, I've got a job that I do extremely well. And I'm gonna do everything I can to win.' I told them, 'There's mathematical, statistical information that will support what I'm gonna be doing. I need you to trust me in that' (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL explained his desire for doubters' trust was due to the knowledge he accumulated from experts. He also emphasized that his job was to coach, and he was very good at his job. Doubting supporters were very good at their jobs, but their jobs did not involve coaching the football team.

The last tactic used in the IRL's strategy of collaborating with doubters was directly asking supporters to avoid criticizing the coach's philosophy in front of players. In some ways,

this tactic paralleled the IRL's "commit fully" concept, except that he extended it to doubting supporters.

You don't have to agree with me but if you go home and tell your son, 'Coach Kelly's stupid, he's gonna cause y'all to lose by these dumb decisions,' that's not helping you and my goal ... My ultimate goal, that is, your kid to play, and your kid to win. We both wanna win. I'm gonna do this whether you say anything bad or not. So, if you say anything bad, it's doing no good and it might be doing harm because it causes your own son to question me (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL knew he could not control supporters, but after asking them to trust him, he asked for their help in another way. He clarified to the supporters how their expressed doubts would not actually support or help their children, which went against everyone's shared goals. The IRL once again emphasized the need for organizational members to focus on life-giving communication, and he appealed to shared, mutually beneficial goals as the reasons why.

Interestingly, the IRL's account of how he first explained his new philosophy years ago seems to conflict with some of his current beliefs regarding doubting supporters. Having attained sustained success, the IRL now is most concerned with coaches and players. "The only people that I care to convince now are my team and my coaches. I mean literally. I just don't care about anybody else" (Kelley, 2017). To some degree, this notion aligned with the IRL's approach to providing reasons, but not trying to convince or debate with people. "I do want people to think it's okay to think differently.... So, while I don't want to convince anybody, I certainly don't mind anybody going...At least he's got a good reason, and thinking differently is okay" (Kelley, 2017). Additionally, the IRL even appeared to view his philosophy as a sort of higher calling. "I'm not good at a whole lot, but [God] did give me a different kind of thought process. He

allowed me to have that different [way] of thinking.” With a belief that he was made differently, the IRL simply was not concerned if some audiences did not understand or agree with him. His first priority was to the coaches and players he led. The irony was that his description of coaches and players almost sounded like an organization not open to innovations. “They really buy in easy. So now, it's almost a blind thing. But, I try not to make it a blind thing. I tell them why” (Kelley, 2017). To his credit, the IRL felt it was important to explain the “why” of any innovations regardless of how much trust certain members had in him.

In summary, the Study 2 IRL interview data revealed a few new ideas regarding communication used when introducing institutional resistance and communication used when responding to criticism of resisting institutional pressures. When introducing innovations that went against institutional pressures, the IRL emphasized that leaders and members needed to commit fully, supporters needed to completely change the way they thought, leaders needed to respond to doubts with reasons, and leaders needed to try to collaborate with doubters. The three tactics used to do collaborate were establishing commonalities by expressing shared goals, directly asking for supporters’ trust, and directly asking parents to avoid criticizing the coach’s philosophy in front of players. In addition, the IRL’s account of how he first explained his new philosophy years ago seemed to conflict with some of his current beliefs regarding doubting supporters. Having attained long-term success, the IRL now is most concerned with coaches and players.

IRL communication when responding to criticisms of institutional resistance. Study 2’s data also revealed new insights about the IRL’s discursive responses to criticisms. Unlike questions of doubt posed by organizational supporters like parents, criticisms came from mostly external audiences and went beyond doubt to outright disagreement. In the face of criticisms, the

IRL rejected the following ideas: the validity of “pick and choose” critiques, failure was fatal, statistics-based decision-making would not work beyond high school, statistics were not persuasive since they can be skewed, and health risks meant one should not play football.

“Pick and choose” critiques were not valid. The first critique the IRL rejected by was “pick and choose” criticism. He talked about the first time hearing it after a close, one-point loss in a championship game. “But that was the first time afterwards...people started going, “If you hadn't have gone for it on fourth down here, maybe y'all would've won.” I said, “Two of our touchdowns, we never would've had, had we stayed traditional” (Kelley, 2017). The IRL found criticism for a failed fourth-down conversion at the end of the game absurd if critics were silent regarding earlier conversions that resulted in touchdowns.

You can't have it your way at the end... and go, ‘Well, look at that fourth down.’ Well, okay, if you're gonna look at that one, let's look at these two, too, that we made and scored that you said we should've punted. Because they just wanna isolate the wrong one. If I knew we weren't gonna make it, sure I'd punt. I mean, that'd be easy...My pet peeve about the whole thing, if you had to say what part bothers you the most, when somebody tries to separate...the game into different compartments...If you're gonna do that, that's fine, but make sure you point out the other three as well, where we should have punted, but we ended up scoring on those drives (Kelley, 2017).

Really, this approach by critics was the opposite of the IRL’s fully commit concept. Criticizing his philosophy only when it fails was the epitome of not committing fully to a system.

Failure was not fatal. Similarly, another criticism the IRL rejected was that failure was fatal. When asked about a number of close games in which critics might argue that punting could have won the game, the IRL emphasized that failure allowed the leaders and players to learn.

When one was fully committed to a plan, failure provides an opportunity to perfect the plan, not doubt it. This concept was established after the IRL's first loss.

I learned something then, because the first thing I did was instead of walking to the team afterwards and saying, 'Guys we've gotta fix all this, all I did was say, 'This is 100% all my fault.' ...I took all the blame, walked in here and took all the blame off my coaches, but did say, 'Here's my plan'...And instead of bringing all these problems...How about solutions (Kelley, 2017).

Echoing appreciative, life-giving principles (Barge & Oliver, 2003), the IRL chose to respond to failure by learning from it and developing solutions. In fact, he viewed not learning as much worse than initially failing. "That's the number one belief in my life...We're not gonna lose that way again. There's a million different ways you can lose, but let's not...keep making the same mistakes over and over" (Kelley, 2017). For the IRL, even losing was not truly a loss if the team was learning and growing. This counterintuitive idea complemented the IRL's goal to win a championship every year. "I'm always talking about big picture...Even if we take a chance on losing this game because of something we're doing, if it's helping us for the playoffs, something new we're working on, we're gonna do it because it's big-picture thinking" (Kelley, 2017).

Similar to his rejection of "pick and choose" criticism, the IRL rejected occasional failure using his system as a legitimate assessment that it was not superior to traditional play-calling. This strategy enhanced the legitimacy of EBM, but it would be risky if the coach lost too many games. He has lost very few in his career, so the blame-me strategy appears to have worked.

Statistics-based decision-making worked at all levels. The next criticism the IRL rejected was that statistics-based play-calling would not work beyond the high school level. He was completely convinced this was not true.

Guys I know that have coached college, that have coached high school, will tell you...football is football. Some people say your offense isn't going to work in the SEC (college) because the defenses are better...My answer to that, 'Aren't the offenses better too than high school offenses? Those players are bigger and faster too, right?' It's all relative...It's the same thing (Kelley, 2017).

Once again, the IRL sought to respond with logical reasons and statistics. He pointed out that it was illogical to emphasize only one part of football (defense) gets harder at the college level. The IRL also appealed to ESPN data to show that high school punting numbers were hardly different at all. This authorization strategy (Vaara, et al., 2006) was used to enhance the legitimacy of the IRL's criticized claim.

Statistics were persuasive even though they can be skewed. The next criticism the IRL rejected was that citing statistics was not persuasive since they could be skewed or manipulated. He countered this with the concept of "pure" statistics, complex measures advocated by the few advanced statistical experts in the game of football such as FootballOutsiders.com. The IRL also emphasized that manipulating statistics went against his belief that statistics-based play-calling gives his team the best chance to win. For the IRL, statistics were indifferent, unemotional facts. He had no reason to manipulate them, especially when his team benefited if more people did not adopt his methods.

I'm not going to manipulate statistics when I'm trying to win. That's the opposite of self-serving. That would be dumb to do...I'm not going to manipulate statistics to convince anybody because I truly don't want to convince anybody. I have zero motive to do that, to manipulate those things. Matter of fact, I'm constantly trying to find ways to make the statistics more pure. Football Outsiders is the best place to go ... and Advanced Football

Analytics. Those are the two best places to go to get more pure statistics... They've purified the statistics where they're harder to A, manipulate, and B, where they tell a true story... If anything, I'm trying to unmanipulate them, not manipulate them (Kelley, 2017).

The IRL again used an authorization communication strategy to counter what he viewed as incorrect criticisms. By learning from the most advanced statistical experts in football, the IRL actually tried to find statistics that were more predictive and reliable. He again took a criticism of his EBM and adopted the opposite of that message.

The benefits of playing football outweighed the evidence of health risks. The next criticism the IRL rejected was that football's health risks meant one should not play football. The most talked about health risk has been concussions, which have received more research and evidence-based claims in the last five or so years than ever before. This criticism was exemplified in Dr. Omalu's plea, based on his studies, that no one younger than 18 should play football (Omalu, 2015). The IRL responded with an economic legitimacy rationale (Vaara, et al., 2006) for playing with a cost-benefit argument in which the rewards were much higher than the risks.

In anything we do in life, there's risk. What you have to decide is does the reward outweigh the risk? For instance... this is the example I give whenever I'm asked the question when parents are worried about breaking a neck... I put together some numbers, and basically I went to show our parents and anybody that asked me when I was out speaking, your kid is 110,000 times more likely to get a major injury in a car accident as a teenager than he is as a football player. 110,000, but we still toss them the keys...

In the face of that, I say, 'Why would you do that?' 'Because, he has to drive, he has to go to school.' No, no, he doesn't have to. If you really believe that everybody else wouldn't do it if it was that dangerous, the numbers I just gave you, you would take him

yourself... 'Well, the reward's worth the risk... Well, it's probably not going to happen to them, or they've got to get from A to B, it allows us to go to work, it allows us to change our schedule.' (Kelley, 2017).

From this quote, the IRL made clear he believed those concerned with safety in high school football, such as parents, took much greater health risks with their children off of the football field every day. Though the IRL did not provide a source and this researcher could not verify the statistic, it is a message that served as the IRL's reality about safety in football. Given that perceived reality based on a statistic identified somewhere, the IRL felt his claim that football was not that risky was persuasive. The IRL then proceeded to use an instrumental rationalization (Vaara, et al., 2006) to highlight the benefits of playing.

The lessons I got out of football about commitment, hard work, and finishing strong, and even when it looks like you're going to quit, do it, keep going... So many lessons that I don't think you can get at school, I don't think you can get at a job, I don't think you can get anywhere else... The rewards you get out of that, are they worth the possible risks that come along with it? Well, in my opinion, more so, much more so, than driving a car. If I'm going to let my son drive a car, I'm darn sure going to let him play football (Kelley, 2017).

Having established the low risks of injury in football relative to driving a car, the IRL segued into a detailed account of the many benefits of playing. To the IRL, the rewards far outweighed the risks, and therefore, that criticism had very little merit; the reasons to believe it were not convincing to him. Clearly, he also benefitted from students continuing to play.

Interestingly, the IRL was not swayed by all football statistics. He believed the NFL had a guiding value of political correctness that caused the organization to gather manipulated or

skewed data in one health measure (concussions). Therefore, the IRL did not trust the statistics on concussions in pro football.

The concussion data they've got, a lot of it, especially when you go to CTE and the major things they're talking about, came from...looking into brains of the NFL players, and they said of all the NFL players' names I've read that they've studied their brains, post-NFL, there's not a one of them I know that didn't drink and party hard. Right? That's all the other things these guys are doing on top of that at the same time. That's exaggerating the injury and head trauma, in my opinion of this (Kelley, 2017).

At first, the IRL seemed to demonstrate cognitive dissonance through his objection to data that suggested his sport was too dangerous to play. Was the IRL simply doing what traditionalist critics do to him? While that may have perhaps been true, his additional explanation once again appealed to authorization legitimacy communication (Vaara, et al., 2006) to enhance his persuasion. The IRL referenced an NFL legend, whom the coach met at one of the exclusive sports analytics conferences at which he is often invited to speak.

Tim Brown, who played 18 seasons for the Raiders, won the Heisman Trophy at Notre Dame, he's one of the greatest advocates of this, but he's scared to speak out. I heard him in a small room talking, got to meet him and hang out with him, and he's a big believer in this, and he says, 'But we're scared to say it because the NFL doesn't want to come out and say that,' because they don't want to paint their guys as a bunch of partiers... They're certainly not separating it, going, 'Okay, let's dissect people that we know are clean'... So, to me the data is a little skewed (Kelley, 2017).

Continuing with the skewed data claim, the IRL then pointed out that the NFL concussion data was based on a small number of pros, which ignores the much larger number of high school players who were not, he presumed, experiencing the same number of concussions.

The thing that really irritates me, really, really irritates me is there's only about 1.2 million kids in high school playing football right now. And then you go to college, the number shrinks down dramatically. You go to the NFL, it's really cut down... You're looking at 2,500. And we're spending all this money, all this time, all this effort, when we have so many other things that... we should be focusing our efforts on (Kelley, 2017).

So, not only did the IRL find the data on the comparatively smaller number of pro players skewed, he also believed much bigger problems in society deserved more attention. The IRL's response did seem curious given his openness to data in many other contexts.

In summary, Study 2's IRL interview data also revealed new insights about the IRL's discursive responses to external criticisms. The IRL rejected the validity of "pick and choose" criticism, and he argued that failure was not fatal, statistics-based decision-making would work at all levels of football, statistics were persuasive even though they can be skewed, and benefits of playing football outweighed evidence of health risks, partially due to an assessment of skewed data.

Study 2 Interview Data from Organizational Members

Having extensively gathered and analyzed data on the IRL's organizational communication in both Study 1 and 2, the remainder of Study 2's interview data is the communication of other organizational members. The following sections seek to understand how consistent and contradictory other coaches, parents, and players found the IRL's persuasion about resisting institutional pressures. In many ways, interview data from organizational members

revealed considerable consistency with the IRL. Below, the communication of other coaches, parents, and players was analyzed in regard to its consistency with the IRL's guiding values, sensebreaking messages, communication when introducing EBM, and his communication responding to criticisms. However, some of the more interesting results in Study 2 were ways in which organizational members communicated differently from the IRL's communication. Those concepts will be addressed last.

Organizational member communication consistent with the IRL: guiding values and sensebreaking messages. In many cases, the members' communication was consistent with the IRL's guiding values and sensebreaking messages identified in Study 1. Those results are presented in Table 12. Examples of that consistency are presented below in the order of communication from other coaches, parents, and players. Seven of the eight guiding values were found in the members' interview data, suggesting the IRL may have attained second-order agenda setting through framing in news media (Hallahan, 1999). The third guiding value (decisions should not be influenced by emotions) was not addressed by members. The last guiding value about how the news media can help promote an IRL's ideas was discussed by members, but not consistent with the IRL. Therefore, the six guiding values (numbered to match Table 8 from Study 1) that members discussed in ways consistent with the IRL will be addressed first.

<i>Member Communication</i>	<i>Consistent With the IRL's Guiding Values</i>
<u>Guiding Value</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Honest inquiry
2	The leader should solicit feedback in a responsible way
4	A team should determine how it will play and how the opponent will react
5	Players deserve to win when they put in more work than anyone else
6	The system confers advantages despite limitations of an organization
7	Failure occurs because the leader did not prepare the team better

Table 12

Guiding value 1: honest inquiry. Some organizational members discussed the first guiding value of honest inquiry in a way consistent with the IRL's communication. Given that honest inquiry mirrored the 4-D stages of appreciative inquiry in year one, members with a connection to the first year, such as coaches or parents in particular, indicated understanding and co-ownership of the concept. One coach nearly echoed the IRL verbatim.

“That whole question of, ‘Why we’re doing this?’ literally happens 24/7, anything we do... There’s always going to be a reason for something we do in our program. It’s not just going to be, ‘Well, we’re going to do it just because we’ve done it before.’ It’s going to have a reason whether it benefits us or there’s a good reason that the kids are getting out of it” (Apple, 2017). Another coach shared a similar thought. “There are a lot of things in coaching, and a lot of things in football... if you don’t have a good reason as to why you’re doing it, then you probably need to figure out either why you’re doing it, or you need to change it” (West, 2017).

Interestingly, this quote was among only a few in which a member connected honest inquiry and new ideas, the result of needing to replace a choice or tactic for which one cannot give a good reason why it should continue.

In addition, only one parent echoed the coaches. “You can see it in our boys, in their everyday lives” (Wheeden, 2017). “[The players] know to stop and look and evaluate and make sure what they’re doing makes sense. They’ve been in coach’s ear asking, ‘Why do we do that?’” (Wheeden, 2017). This quote was surprising because students never indicated that they asked the IRL why they were to do something. One player did remember honest inquiry being discussed, though. “There [were] a lot of instances where you know he’ll bring it up and tell us why we do this” (Morris, 2017). That player said the IRL would take it a little further at practice. “He would

ask a player in the middle of something going on or something going wrong...asking, 'Now, why am I coming to you to do this?'...and expecting an answer along the lines of, 'We need to always be doing the right thing'" (Morris, 2017). As an example of how honest inquiry applied, another player said it was the basis for the team's entire offense, suggesting that no offensive choices were made unless the IRL believed they gave the team the best chance to win. Among at least a handful of organizational members, the IRL's first guiding value was understood and communicated in a similar fashion.

Guiding value 2: seeking feedback in a responsible way. Related to the guiding value of honest inquiry and the production of new ideas was the IRL's notion of seeking feedback from organizational members in a responsible way. This guiding value was used by the IRL to solicit member feedback and suggestions, but only if members could give compelling reasons for their ideas. To some degree, this guiding value may help explain why most players were not fully understanding of the first guiding principle. In the IRL's effort to make sure members knew fully why they were asking or doing something, some members may have responded by just choosing to be quiet and compliant. The second guiding value was discussed by only one member, a younger assistant coach who had been a player about nine years before, but he described it in a way that was consistent with the IRL's communication in Study 1.

Coach is very hard on the kids. If they come to him with some question about something, he'll try to minimize it or try to take them another direction or ask them a bunch of questions about it to make them figure out why they're actually asking that, and he's very, very good at playing mental games with kids like that...Let's just say they come up to him and say, "All right, is it okay for us to rep weights and get out of here?" He'll have three or four questions as to, "Well, are you guys ready to get out of here? Did you

guys work hard enough?" Just constantly, not really nagging at them, but just probing at them as to why they came to ask that question. It's ingrained throughout the whole program... That goes for everything...it's literally, any question that a kid comes to him with, he's going to have questions to make them rethink themselves and make sure that they're sure they want to ask that question (Apple, 2017).

Though only talked about by one organizational member, the second guiding value did seem to be practiced in a manner consistent with the IRL's Study 1 communication. With this guiding value being similar to an appreciative inquiry learning group, the member data was likely affected by not having many members who indicated they had suggested a new idea to the IRL. In addition, the same assistant coach connected the manner in which the IRL solicited feedback in a responsible way to also represent another way the IRL conditioned players to be in-control in stressful situations.

I do think it makes kids and coaches both on their toes all the time, but I think that also translates to better performance in pressure situations on the field. We're constantly having to think like that and think of reasons why, good reasons to do something else, and kids are constantly having to think of good reasons to ask this question, good reasons to make this change, and it puts them in a pressure situation, mentally, to where once they get out into the game, it's not as big of a pressure situation there because they're used to it constantly, all the time (Apple, 2017).

Though no other member or even the IRL discussed the second guiding value as also helping condition players to be in-control in stressful situations, the coach's example demonstrated just that.

While this leadership communication approach by the IRL was intentionally stressful, the longer players were involved in the program, the more comfortable the process became, according to the assistant coach. In fact, the IRL allowed humor to help lighten the mood of this demanding experience. The assistant coach explained that concept further.

Sometimes it's very funny to watch and some of the younger kids are so shocked about it, and it just completely throws them for a loop or, if he calls them out in a team huddle and says, "What do you think about that Johnny?" He's a ninth or 10th grader, he's goes to a deer in the headlights like, "Oh my gosh, Coach is talking to me and asking me a bunch of questions," but then you'll see the progression as kids get to be seniors, they're so comfortable around it, and they're just begging for him to ask them some weird question so they can test themselves and see if they can hold it together [without cracking or laughing] (Apple, 2017).

From this example, it appeared the members understood the IRL's second guiding value in an intimidating manner in their first few years on the team. As members approached the end of their tenure, they seemed more comfortable with the process and reveled in new members struggling with the stress. In this manner, the IRL appeared to simultaneously communicate the seriousness or necessity of having a good reason while softening the blow of failing to provide a good reason for a suggestion, question, or answer under pressure, especially in practice.

Guiding value 4: self-determination. The next guiding value that member communication was consistent with was self-determination, especially the emphasis on psychological benefits. Self-determination was the idea that the IRL's team should determine how it will play and how the opponent will react. In the Study 2 data, coaches echoed the IRL's views

on the importance of psychology in football. For example, an offensive coach discussed what he had learned in his first few years coaching.

As a coach now, I understand more of how the coaching staff is responsible for the mentality and the psychological side of his players, and the coach has to have his players psychologically ready to play the game, and I think that psychological part is something that people really, really underestimate about football and coaching in general is that the coach's philosophies and psychological aspects mold right into the kids. The way that the coach thinks molds right onto the kids and molds right onto the other coaches (Apple, 2017).

The assistant coach echoed the IRL's messages regarding the psychological aspects of the game. This is not necessarily surprising since the assistants implement the IRL's system. As a reminder, this guiding value ran counter to the idea that football was mostly physical. The assistant coach emphasized that the IRL's approach was different from what most people thought regarding football. The coach emphasized the psychological advantage of the IRL's system by appealing to the first and second guiding values of honest inquiry and seeking feedback in a responsible way. When the IRL sought feedback from a player but expected that feedback to be rooted in good reasons, those players were under public pressure. The coach saw that as another way the IRL was psychologically preparing the team for success.

I do think it makes kids and coaches both on their toes all the time, but I think that also translates to better performance in pressure situations on the field... and it puts them in a pressure situation, mentally, to where once they get out into the game, it's not as big of a pressure situation there because they're used to it constantly, all the time (Apple, 2017).

According to the coach, any situation in which the players were asked to perform under pressure better conditioned those players to perform well in a fourth-down situation. This coach's communication seemed to match the IRL's communication about conditioning players to be in control under stress.

In addition, the school president talked about the IRL in a manner that was consistent with the IRL's guiding value of self-determination.

One of the things I think gets underestimated is how good [he] is as a coach, how compelling he is as a human being. You talk about persuasion, he's gotten everyone to believe every time they go out there that if they follow this system, they subscribe to this philosophy, they can take anybody on and beat them, no matter how big or strong [the opponents] are (Wade, 2017).

While this administrator was not involved in practices or game-day decision-making, he could identify that players bought in to the IRL's EBM approach, and that had translated into increased confidence, expectations, and performance of play.

Similarly, the parents' communication also echoed the importance of psychology to the team's success. One parent explained how the IRL's system resulted in added pressure on the opponent, which served as a psychological tool.

[Coach] knows how to do really well even with just average players, but you throw a few really, really talented players in there and it's really hard for the average high school team to stop it, especially in [our state]. It's just really hard. Then when you start building that kind of pressure it becomes such a psychological tool, all those become psychological tools because you've got the other team on their heels, you know? 'Oh no, can we stop them? Oh no, can we ... We've got to make sure we get the onside kick or they're going to

get it. Oh no, they're going for it on fourth down. Can we stop them?' It becomes a real psychological tool and it makes the game so exciting, I mean it really does. [Our] football games are just exciting (D. Norris, 2017).

For this parent, the IRL's EBM system created additional pressure on the opponent that resulted in a psychological advantage since the opponent was not conditioned to perform under that pressure.

Another parent emphasized the psychological component was more important to the team's success than many realized. "It's 60% the system and 40% buy-in; the boys know they will win if they follow the system's rules" (Wheeden, 2017). The parent even went a little further by using the very small rural school he attended as an example. "If [the IRL] came to my tiny, rural 3-A school, they would win state the next year" (Wheeden, 2017). That bold statement indicated the highest level of buy-in by a parent in the interview data.

Perhaps even more powerful, according to the players, was the psychological effect of the defense being successful in a negative situation. This unique perspective offered by a defensive player touched on a topic no one else discussed: what happens when the team's defense stops an opponent after the team failed to convert a fourth down.

There is nothing more crushing than when a team thinks [they've]...stopped [us] on the 8-yard line, and then our defense comes out really not rattled at all, and we stop them for four straight downs. That always was like a turning point in a lot of games where it would kind of feel like [for the opponent], 'Man, the one chance we had to really turn the tide, we got stopped' (And. Norris, 2017).

As the quotes above showed, most members discussed the guiding value of self-determination in ways that were consistent with the IRL's communication. Coaches, parents, and players knew

the value of psychologically rattling the opponent, and they gathered confidence from those experiences. When the players knew they had a psychological advantage, their confidence was enhanced and they felt they performed at an even higher level; this was all rooted in knowing the IRL's EBM approach increased their likelihood of winning.

Guiding value 5: entitlement was earned. The next guiding value that was identified in member communication was that entitlement was earned. The concept was reflected in the only story used by the IRL in Study 1 that also appeared in Study 2. That story was the butterfly effect, which highlighted how the IRL's unique tactics required opponents to spend less time than usual practicing on offense. That resulted in the IRL's team being more prepared than opponents simply because the IRL's team had spent more time practicing its own offense. One assistant coach spoke about the butterfly effect in a way that was consistent with the IRL's communication. "When you don't have to practice punt returns and punts, then it allows you...30 minutes more a day on offense and defense, and then that adds up to two hours a week" (Talley, 2017). This coach knew that practicing for two more hours than an opponent resulted in a positive benefit for the team at the end of the week.

Similarly, the parents also echoed the IRL's communication regarding the butterfly effect that resulted from using EBM. "The more time these people had to spend preparing for the onside kick was less time they could do preparing their defense for our offense, and it was a distraction to them, and it works in our favor two times" (Pryor, 2017). This parent discussed the butterfly effect concept almost exactly the way the IRL did in Study 1. The parent fully understood that EBM simultaneously increased the team's preparation and decreased the opponent's preparation.

Interestingly, the group that spoke the most about the butterfly effect was the players.

“We never practiced punts or punt returns, so that’s probably another 20 minutes a day. So, we had this significant time advantage on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball” (And. Norris, 2017). The same player spoke extensively about the butterfly effects of not punting.

We had spent two more hours than [our opponents] studying and preparing [on defense], and our offense had spent two to three more hours studying and preparing for their defense, and...you could tell we had the advantage... Week to week, we were more prepared than most of our opponents, which did give us a confidence in him, a confidence in our coaches, because we knew every week that they were putting us in a better chance to win than the other team (And. Norris, 2017).

The player succinctly explained the IRL’s butterfly effect story, and then he showed how the butterfly effect resulted in players having more confidence. There was no doubt among the players that the butterfly effect resulted in them feeling more prepared than their opponents.

Guiding value 6: system advantages despite limitations. The next guiding value revealed in the Study 2 data was that the IRL’s EBM approach best fit the school’s smaller-sized athletes. All coaches or administrators echoed the IRL’s communication about this guiding value, which was explained by the school president. “[Coach] wanted to see how he could win with these 5’8” 150-pounders” (Wade, 2017). A little later, the president added to this thought by emphasizing the IRL showed smaller-sized players could indeed perform at a higher level. “A lot of non-traditional football players can do well in this type of arrangement” (Wade, 2017). Similarly, an assistant coach said the team’s players “don’t look like division-one athletes” (Apple, 2017), and another explained that “most people that come to a game, when they look at [our] players, they’re surprised, because what they thought they were going to see... just these massive human beings”

(Talley, 2017). According to these quotes, coaches and administrators embraced an organizational identity of having much smaller athletes.

The parents' interview communication also reflected the IRL's guiding value that EBM conferred advantages despite the limitations of an organization's context. Almost all parents framed the team as smaller and less athletic than most high school teams. The parents discussed that identity when talking about how EBM, not athlete size, was key to the school's success. "Most of these kids are 150 or 160 pounds sopping wet" (Seaver, 2017). Another parent explicitly stated that due to the team's players, the IRL's EBM system gave the team the best chance to win (Wheeden, 2017).

Finally, the players' interview communication also reflected the IRL's guiding value that EBM conferred advantages despite the limitations of an organization's context. Almost all players embraced a team identity of being smaller and less athletic than most high school players. The interviewed players, whose experiences spanned the coach's entire tenure, discussed that smaller identity when talking about how EBM was key to the school's success. "[People] look at our football team and are like, 'You really don't have that good of athletes'" (Z. Kelley, 2017). Another player agreed. "We don't have a whole lot of stellar athletes here" (Morris, 2017). These players made clear in their communication that the team was mostly smaller, slower athletes than their opponents.

Guiding value 7: failure was the leader's fault. The next of the IRL's guiding values from Study 1 that was reflected in member communication was that failure was the leader's fault. The parents' communication did not touch on this guiding value, but it was in communication by coaches and players. One coach discussed this guiding value when talking about his and the IRL's first game, which was a blowout loss. This was one of the few members

who was present for the initial appreciative inquiry event in year one, and he knew the organization was still in the destiny stage and needed inspirational messages like the concept embodied in this guiding value. The defensive coordinator emphasized that the coaches went straight to work on what needed to be improved. “[The coaches] took a look very quickly at what we had between that game and the next game, and we made multiple changes” (West, 2017). Players also echoed the IRL’s language that losses and failures were the IRL’s fault for not preparing the team better. “He owned losses and meant it – following him was easy” (And. Norris, 2017). The coach and player communicated how the IRL did not blame players or referees for losses; he blamed himself and immediately worked to be more prepared the next week. In addition, the players expressed an increase in trust when the IRL took the blame for losses. The responsibility for developing a better plan was his. There was risk with this strategy, because too many losses would cause members to see the coach and EBM as not legitimate. However, the members expressed the opposite.

In summary, the Study 2 interview data showed members communicated consistently with the IRL about six of his guiding values. Honest inquiry and seeking feedback in a responsible way were talked about in often verbatim manners. All members discussed the guiding value of self-determination in a way that reflected the concept’s psychological and confidence benefits, which were understood to translate into higher-level performance. All members of the organization discussed the IRL’s guiding value that entitlement is earned by referencing the butterfly effect story. In addition, all members, identified as being less athletic than their competition and echoed the IRL’s guiding value that EBM offered system advantages. Finally, members communicated that organizational failure was understood to be on the IRL’s

and coaches' shoulders, not the players, reflecting an organizational co-ownership of that motivational message following an appreciative inquiry event in year one.

Alternative perspectives among members regarding the IRL's guiding values.

Having addressed member communication that was consistent with the IRL's guiding values, this section addresses alternative perspectives on the IRL's guiding values found in member communication. Those results are presented below in Table 13.

Table 13	
<i>Guiding Values: Alternative Member Perspectives</i>	
<u>Guiding Value</u>	<u>Alternative Perspective</u>
Honest Inquiry	Meant "thinking outside the box"
The news media can help	News privileged offensive players over defensive players
	News increased support from fans
	New increased hate from rivals
	News increased player pride in the organization

Table 13

Guiding value 1: honest inquiry. Interestingly, the guiding value of honest inquiry was also talked about in ways inconsistent with the IRL's communication. The most common communication from players was not fully remembering honest inquiry being discussed, as one player explained. "I read that before where he said that, too, but I don't remember any specific instances where that came up for me" (Kent, 2017). Other players indicated that they were excited to do something unique and different rather than understanding why. "You asked me if I questioned anything, and the answer is no. A lot of the reason we didn't is because you grow up and you saw he was winning 10 games per year at least. It was fun to do things differently" (Tyson, 2017). Another player explained that players simply did what coach told them to. "When he says jump, we just say how high?" (And. Norris, 2017). From the majority of players, the

guiding value of honest inquiry either did not register at all, or the players operated in the coach's EBM system with unquestioning trust. However, many members interviewed were not present in year one during the appreciative inquiry event.

Parents and an administrator also discussed the guiding value of honest inquiry in a unique way. They saw it as more of an extension of an unorthodox coach. "One of the things that does make him successful is he does question..., 'Why do we do this?' And he does do unorthodox things" (D. Norris, 2017). That parent did not connect honest inquiry with the creation of new ideas. Another parent had a similar sentiment. "I've never really given it much thought...It's getting back to thinking outside the box. Just because you've always done something one way doesn't necessarily mean it's the right way to do it" (Pryor, 2017). The school's president discussed honest inquiry similarly. "He likes to think of things in a contrarian fashion, and I mean that in a positive way, just to look at things in an unconventional manner, and to question assumptions" (Wade, 2017). For most parents and the top administrator, honest inquiry did not seem to be understood consistent with how the IRL explained it in Study 1. These members discussed the concept almost as a synonym for "thinking outside of the box" or being different but not necessarily for only taking actions if one knows why those are the best actions to take.

Guiding value 8: news media can help promote an IRL's ideas. The next aspect of the members' communication that was unique from the IRL's guiding values involved views of the team's news media coverage. For example, one defensive coach saw the coverage as key to gaining fans' (especially parents) support for EBM, something the IRL did not discuss. "It has excited our fan base. I do think that from the parents' perspective, the media coverage and notoriety has helped many of them...not necessarily buy into it, but just support it and believe in

it more so” (Talley, 2017). The same coach also saw the news coverage of the team as self-reinforcing for the players’ identity formation. “We just basically tell the guys, ‘So and so [news organization] is going to be here today, and the best thing we can do, since they are here just to study what we do, is to be who we are’” (Talley, 2017). The coaches emphasized that the team’s unique EBM approach was why the news media was present, but the coaches wanted the players to understand that behaving normally was the best way for the news media to understand the team.

Another coach felt the news coverage was marginally positive only because it did not result in more students attending the school. “I think it has been positive, but...[our team] being big and being advertised isn't really going to bring kids here from across the world” (Apple, 2017). One of the players said the same thing, but juxtaposed against that perspective was the opposite view, which was voiced by a parent who also taught at the school. “The thing that I love is my kids get to experience that...The other thing is it brings money to the school. It brings attention to [us], with me teaching the lower grades, it might bring in new students and things like that...” (Seaver, 2017). Another parent echoed that thought.

“Because of the news about him, because of people watching him over the years, I'm just wondering if now he has all this talent, man, that just seems to be there that wasn't there before, and I just wonder if it's because he is so successful that parents of elementary age kids, junior high kids, are going, ‘Hey, let's take our kids to PA so they can play under Coach’” (D. Norris, 2017).

Some of the parents’ communication indicated a belief that the news coverage had actual material benefits to the school through increased enrollment. To that point, the parents did raise funds and build a weight room a few years after the team’s national news coverage. However, the school’s

enrollment and the number of players on the football team have grown less than 10% since 2004 (Ledbetter, 2018), suggesting no significant increase due to the team's success.

Additionally, a few parents even indicated some negative outcomes of the news coverage. A parent of a defensive player felt the news coverage celebrated all things offense while ignoring the team's defensive players. "As a mom of defense players, I always would read the articles and go, 'Wait a minute...' The offense kind of gets more of the glory at times..." (A. Norris, 2017). Another parent added that a negative outcome was that news coverage made rivals hate the school even more. "The only thing negative about it, and I've never really thought about it, is where we live and the people we compete against are like, 'Here we go again. It's PA'" (Seaver, 2017). This thought was echoed by a player, too. "I feel like it hurt and helped... Everyone in [the state] hates [our team], but once you get out of this state, everyone loves it and they are all about it. They think it's the best thing ever." (Z. Kelley, 2017). The organizational members may have discussed increased hate by rivals as a negative outcome of the news coverage, but it was not an outcome that actually inhibited the team's success in any way. In fact, it may have even strengthened the members' organizational identity in the face of increased outsider derision.

In addition, parents also indicated news stories were where they had the coach's EBM approach explained to them. This aspect of the news coverage was not addressed in the IRL's communication. Members who were part of the team when the IRL fully committed to his EBM approach did not recall a structured explanation about the innovations beforehand, though they did recall the IRL explaining his reasoning at a later point. A parent of a defensive player explained how news coverage helped him better understand the IRL's EBM.

I can't remember any kind of big sit-down, congregational meeting, if you will, where it was explained to us. You know, of when he started doing that. He started getting some

media attention. If you watched the news, he would talk about his philosophy and what it was based on. That's where I got a lot of my information about what his philosophy is. It'd probably be more in depth from that with him explaining it and catch it up through the media. I can't recall where anyone just sat down and did it and explained to the people why he was doing it (Pryor, 2017).

As the parent explained, the IRL did not fully explain his EBM approach, but he did sit down for extensive explanations with reporters. The parents sought out those news stories to more fully understand the team's EBM. Perhaps even more surprising than the parent quote above was that a player echoed the same thought. "Honestly, when coach told us we were doing that [not punting anymore], he never explained the math to us as far as I remember... But when I actually saw [the news video], it was the first time I was seeing that explanation, too" (Tyson, 2017).

In addition to helping players better understand the IRL's EBM, members' communication revealed another unique perspectives on the news media coverage the team received. One of the more common themes was that the IRL encouraged players to ignore the news crews.

At first, it was kind of invisible... They were doing a lot of, I think, interviews in his office and stuff with people. It started to become pretty apparent when they come out for practices, being around when we were practicing onside kicks, stuff like that. It didn't really ever bother me too much. I think Coach was always really good about sitting down with all of us and talking about how to ignore it. 'Don't let it get in the way of this offense or what we need to do'" (Morris, 2017).

From the players' perspectives, the news coverage was exciting, but the IRL wanted players to understand the priority was still to use practice to prepare to win the next game, just like it was every week.

Another common theme in the player interview data was the power of the news media coverage to enhance organizational identity and pride, as one player indicated. "I see it as a positive thing, any time you see your high school or football coach who you spend hours with every week, you see his face on TV from the small rural high school. It makes you proud" (Tyson, 2017). Another player said it made players want to work harder. "I guess it gave us a little more motivation, because it was pretty cool to have a national story written about you in high school" (Kent, 2017). Another player credited the news coverage with causing better teams from other states to schedule his school. "It definitely got our school out on the map, and got us some notoriety. After I was done, they played some pretty notable teams out-of-state; they got to branch out a little more" (Kent, 2017). These players could identify a few tangible benefits to the news coverage.

In summary, organizational members communicated about three of the IRL's guiding values in ways different from the IRL. Most members discussed honest inquiry as a synonym for thinking outside the box. Distilling the concept down that much seemed to lose a little of what the IRL explained as his reasoning for asking why questions. Additionally, members expressed multiple alternative perspectives on the guiding value that the news media could help promote an IRL's ideas. Members said the news coverage resulted in more support from fans, privileged offensive players over defensive players, increased rival hate, and increased player pride in the organization.

Organizational member communication consistent with the IRL's sensebreaking messages. Having examined the organizational members' communication that was consistent with and unique from the IRL's guiding values, the next section will examine members' communication consistent with the IRL's sensebreaking messages from Study 1. Members understood that playing statistically safe meant not punting. Members also expressed that scoring more points won the most games, not defense.

Sensebreaking messages: increased scoring opportunities win games. The first of the IRL's sensebreaking messages that was consistent with organizational members was that scoring wins games (rather than defense). One of the assistant coaches summarized the IRL's thoughts. "We want the ball as many times as we can get it because the more times you have the ball, the more chances you have to score" (Talley, 2017). The parents and players also echoed the IRL's communication that football games were won by scoring more points. One parent talked about a game in which the team was so conditioned to scoring that a player didn't think to run a few more seconds off the clock before getting a touchdown. With extra time, the opponent was able to catch up. "All of a sudden your running back's in open territory, he's looking for the goal line and he's thinking, 'Man, that's what we're out here for, to score. That's what we do. We score points'" (D. Norris, 2017). Similarly, a player described why he was comfortable going for it on fourth-down on his own 6-yard line. "You have to understand, every offensive play is a chance to score" (Pryor, 2017).

Sensebreaking messages: play statistically safe. The next of the IRL's sensebreaking messages echoed in organizational member interview data was the concept of playing statistically safe instead of conventionally safe. Again, to play statistically safe meant to choose the strategies and tactics that gave the team the best chance to win regardless of institutional

pressures to conform. One of the assistant coaches explained the team's EBM approach. "We play this way because we truly believe that this is the way, the style of play, the strategy, that gives our team the best chance to win" (Talley, 2017). Another assistant coach described the approach in a manner similar to the IRL's use of percentages. "I think if you look at the analytics of football, and you go, 'Okay, I can either go for it here and gain two yards, or I can punt it and only decrease the chances of the other offense scoring by 10% to 15%,' it kind of gives you an answer there, you know?" (Talley, 2017). One of the parents described the school's EBM approach in a similar manner. This parent emphasized how the players understood that plays are called based on what gives the team the best chance to win. "If they think that he has got this all figured out, anything that he tells them they know it's probably different and probably well-thought out, and it will give them the highest chance to be successful" (Wheeden, 2017). For these members, playing statistically safe is understood as the best way for the team to increase its likelihood of winning, which is again by scoring more points.

The players also communicated in ways consistent with the IRL's sensebreaking message that teams should play statistically safe. "This gives our team a better statistical chance to win the game" (And. Norris, 2017). Another player expanded on that idea. "I think every other coach in the world is stupid for not doing it. They are like, 'Oh, it's too risky to go for it on 4th down.' Well, really, according to the numbers, they are doing the risky thing by not going for it" (Z. Kelley, 2017). In this quote, the player emphasized the notion of playing conventionally safe was not safe, echoing the IRL's Study 1 communication.

Sensebreaking messages: defensive failure reframed. Related to the previous section, the next sensebreaking message used by the IRL that was repeated in member communication was defensive failure reframed. Most football coaches would view failing to stop an opponent

from scoring as defensive failure, but that was not how the IRL framed defensive failure. He still tried to stop the opponent, but often with risky blitzes that were aimed at creating a turnover or minimizing the time the defense was on the field. The defensive coordinator discussed the topic in a manner consistent with the IRL's communication. "Success to me is to get the ball back in the hands of the offense as fast as you can" (West, 2017). With that acknowledgement, the defensive coordinator challenged his defensive players to do their jobs regardless of the circumstances, and maybe even because of the circumstances. "I really did go to the kids and say, 'Okay, when we fail [on offense], this is our time to shine,' and that kind of thing. No matter where the ball fell, 'We do our job' (West, 2017). These words from the coach reflected the IRL's communication about being aggressive in Study 1. Similarly, the defensive coordinator continued to explain in further detail the purpose of defense. "If they're going to score, I'd rather them score quick than drag on a 12-, 13-, 14-play drive and take 6, 7, 8 minutes off the clock... The purpose of the defense is to get the ball back to the offense as fast as they possibly can" (West, 2017). The coach reflected the Study 1 communication about defensive failure, using language virtually identical to the IRL.

One parent discussed the reframed concept of defensive failure by referencing a game in which letting the opponent score quickly gave the IRL's team enough time to score more points and win. "We turned the ball over on the 6-yard line. Two plays there, they hammer it in on us and they go up another score. Well, three-and-a-half minutes to go in that game, [we are] behind two touchdowns. We come back and win that game" (Pryor, 2017). This parent's story highlighted how the best thing the defense did was not stay on the field too long. Even though the defense failed to stop the opponent, there was enough time left in the game to come back and win. It is important to note that in the interview data, no coaches or parents suggested the defense

should intentionally let the other team score. As the IRL communicated in Study 1, the defense still tried to stop the opponent.

Finally, the players' communication also reflected consistency with the IRL's notion of defensive failure. Most players emphasized that the defense needed to quickly stop the opponent; the most important principle was to try to give the offense enough time to score again. In fact, the players expanded on this idea in an even more radical way. That communication will be examined in a subsequent section below.

In summary, member communication reflected the IRL's sensebreaking messages. Members echoed the IRL's rejection of the idea that defense wins games; they emphasized that increased scoring wins the most games. This scoring message was also reflected in members' communication about how playing conventionally safe was not the way to score more points. Similarly, members communicated that the goal of a defense was to get the ball back to the offense as soon as possible, the IRL's sensebreaking message that reframed defensive failure.

Alternative perspectives on the IRL's sensebreaking messages. The preceding section examined how organizational members' communication was consistent with the IRL's sensebreaking messages in Study 1. The next section will examine ways in which members' communication was unique from the IRL's sensebreaking messages. Those results are presented below in Table 14.

Table 14	
<i>Sensebreaking: Alternative Member Perspectives</i>	
<u>Sensebreaking Message</u>	<u>Alternative Perspective</u>
Go for it on every 4th down	A way to gain more points and confidence
Onside kick after scoring	A no-lose (gain) strategy
Increased scoring opps win games	Sometimes meant letting an opponent score quickly
Play statistically safe	Outcomes were certain to occur, regardless of outsider doubt

Table 14

Sensebreaking messages: alternative frames for not punting. One unique finding from the Study 2 interview data was how other coaches used different ways to frame not punting on fourth down compared to the IRL’s communication. The defensive coordinator explained the concept as parallel to the notion that increased scoring opportunities win games. “If we punt, then the other team gets the ball and they have more possessions. If they have more possessions, [that’s] more time they can use up the clock, [which] means less points [scored by us]” (West, 2017). In essence, the coach framed not punting almost the same as defensive failure. Another defensive coach had an additional way to frame punts, which was demonstrating that a team with smaller, slower players had the cards stacked against them when punting.

But who is returning kicks or punts on a football team? Most of the time it's their fastest, best athlete...A lot of times on special teams, [coaches] put their backups or players that maybe aren't starters because they don't want to risk getting hurt...Why would I willingly kick the ball... to one of the best athletes that is going to be faster than at least six or seven guys on our team? (Talley, 2017).

This coach used the IRL’s guiding value of system advantages of EBM for a team with smaller players to frame not-punting, or more specifically, to frame the benefits of not punting.

However, the most unique reframing of the punting concept came from the defensive coordinator as he discussed the difficulties his players faced when the offense failed to convert a fourth down. He used the IRL's own language to show his defense was put in a nearly impossible situation. "According to his own statistics that [the IRL] uses for not punting, if you give up the ball inside your own 20-yard line, it gives the other team an 80% chance of scoring. You're putting my defense in a position where we have a 20% chance of success" (West, 2017). For the defensive coordinator, this difficulty was not easy on his male ego, but it was assuaged by winning more games, which the team's system resulted in. "Well, even if they [the offense] put us in a bad situation, they continue to score enough points to give us success, and we continue to win... One of the quick ways to break down that rock that is the male ego is to win" (West, 2017). For this coach, the sensebreaking message of "scoring wins games" was extended to why he could live with the no-punt approach. Though the defense would be in nearly impossible situations, the team would win more games by scoring more points than if it used a traditional system.

In addition, some parents framed going for it on fourth down as yet another way the team enjoyed a psychological benefit over opponents. A parent of three boys who played over eight years discussed how a fourth-down attempt by most teams resulted in players being nervous. They think things like, "Oh my gosh, I'm going on a fourth down. We've got to do it. We've got to make this. If we don't, we're going to ruin" the game (D. Norris, 2017). From the parent's view, always going for it on fourth down resulted in the team being calm in those situations. When what was usually uncommon becomes routine, there was no longer a nervous discomfort experienced by the players.

When all of a sudden that becomes not a rare thing that you do... It just becomes, 'Hey,

it's fourth down. Okay, let's go line up and go for it.' You know? Again, it puts that pressure on the defense. [My son said], 'Dad, just think the pressure that it puts on the defense because they're going, 'Oh stink. I thought we were going off the field and getting some rest, and now we've got to stop these guys again.' And, you've got to stop a team that is known for their offense (D. Norris, 2017).

The parent framed the no-punt approach as key to making opponents more nervous, and by default, making his son's team more confident.

Another unique reframed notion of not punting came from a different parent. Once again, one of the few discussions that touched on injuries came from one of the two mothers who were interviewed. She uniquely framed not punting as safer than defending a punt return. "The punt return seems like the time when a lot of the injuries can occur, so I liked that... It feels a little safer, and it probably is a little safer... Those boys, when they receive the ball, either run in for a touchdown, or they run out. It's been a little safer" (Seaver, 2017).

Sensebreaking messages: alternative frames for onside kicks. The Study 2 interview data also revealed unique ways of framing onside kicks. For example, the defensive coordinator reframed the risks involved when talking about the minimal statistical difference in field position compared to a traditional kick-off. "There's almost a no-loss situation in it. There's a total gain to it. If you onside-kick and you get the ball, that's a plus. If you onside kick and you don't get the ball, there is no higher percentage for the other team to score" (West, 2017). Referencing statistics, the defensive coach framed on-side kicks as a no-loss, win-win approach. Failure to recover an on-side kick made nearly no difference, while success resulted in another turnover gained.

In addition, another coach added to the previous idea and framed onside kicks as the embodiment of the school's approach to once create psychological advantages over larger-sized opponents.

The biggest psychological thing about [our approach] I think, outside the coaches leading the players, is an on-side kick recovery. You can look over at the other team and just see all their heads completely drop when they lose an onside kick and we get it back. Our crowd and our players are going completely nuts. Their crowd is completely upset and down. When you realize we just scored, we on-side kicked, and we got it and we scored within another couple plays, it is a downer psychologically...If we recover one onside kick, we've only lost like five games, ever (Apple, 2017).

Once again, this coach framed success during an on-side kick as resulting in increased confidence and almost a certainty that the team will win.

Interestingly, parents and players did not use reframed notions of on-side kicks. Among players, this is perhaps not surprising since the guiding value of seeking feedback in a responsible way resulted in appreciative inquiry learning teams, which in turn helped players have co-ownership of the new tactic. However, one parent did discuss an unexpected institutional outcome of the team's approach to on-side kicks. According to the parent, the team had so much success with its numerous formations created to cause confusion that the state's high school sports association actually changed rules to minimize the confusion caused by the team's methods. Without the element of surprise, since all opponents knew the team on-side kicked after a touchdown, and with an institutional rule change, the team had less success than in its first years. In fact, the team has even had one team return an on-side kick for a touchdown. It

was described by the parent as though no one even thought that was possible. However, the IRL's team still won that game.

Sensebreaking messages: alternative frame of defensive failure. As mentioned earlier, member communication revealed consistency with the IRL regarding the concept of defensive failure, but the players' communication extended the concept even further. The players' communication reflected buy-in and an even more radical expansion of the concept not referenced by coaches or parents. One defensive player explained how the IRL sometimes told the defense to let the opponent score. "We just had so much confidence in our offense that there were multiple times where [the IRL] would say, 'Hey look, they're on the 30-yard line. I need you to let them score.' And we would" (And. Norris, 2017). While the idea seems almost crazy, the same player indicated that the IRL adopted this method after losing in a state championship when another coach did the same thing to them. "In the state championship game, [the opponent] beat us that way. They let us score; we scored too quickly" (And. Norris, 2017). The opponent used up the remaining time and won with a touchdown in the final seconds. Since then, the IRL began implementing the same approach in his system, and the players bought in.

Sensebreaking messages: Playing statistically safe results in members' confident anticipation of the future. As discussed earlier, organizational members communicated in ways consistent with the IRL's notion of playing statistically safe. However, what was even more intriguing was how buying into that particular guiding value seemed to result in a confident anticipation of the future among organizational members. Since that anticipation was built on statistics, it was not an emotional hope built on subjective feelings. One defensive coach explained this confident anticipation was built on objective numbers that showed particular outcomes were certain to occur on a regular basis.

Let's say we don't recover an onside kick the whole game. There's always that hint of the next one. At some point, the percentages are going to change and that ball's going to bounce a little bit different and we might get it. Every time we score, there's that small little chance to just completely open the floodgates up.

We've averaged over 40 points a game for the last probably 10 years, so if you're scoring 40 points, that's six to seven touchdowns a game, and that's six to seven onside kicks attempts... We're probably going to recover one of those. I think that's just the benefit of, we're always going to be the aggressor, and we're always going to put a little bit of doubt in your head that you've recovered all of them up to this point, but if you let us score again, there's a small chance that we recover it and completely open up this game (Apple, 2017).

For a team that on-side kicks five-seven times a game and recovers 20% of those attempts, the members know that one recovery a game is almost guaranteed. That recovery represents a potentially explosive, game-changing play. The members communicated about the IRL's EBM approach with a belief the team is always one explosive play away from putting the game out of reach for an opponent. That confidence booster, built on communication, seems to almost work as a belief that the team simply will win if just one recovery occurs.

Similarly, that coach also talked about not focusing on risk of failure, but focusing on the positive possibility of gains.

It's all about how you think and how you present it to your kids because whenever we do get stuck on the one-yard line, that is our mentality [on offense]. We're going to go out, and right as the kids are running out on the field, we're like, 'All right, Let's go. We got a 99-yard drive. Let's go. Let's get it in one play.' Something like that. We're constantly

thinking about the positive side of it whereas other coaches might think..., 'We just lost this drive.' (Apple, 2017).

Once again, the coach's communication showed how the IRL's EBM approach was used to persuasively motivate players to attempt what most would view impossible.

In fact, the power of "one-big-play" as a potential outcome was seen in parents' communication, too. One parent explained his understanding of the team's philosophy, which his son had explained to him: "Every offensive play is a chance to score" (D. Norris, 2017). Another parent explained how seeing one of the first explosive plays in person was what pushed parents out of being skeptics. "It's about a 60-yard touchdown play on fourth and 19 or fourth and 20. When I saw that, I became more of a believer" (B. Pryor, 2017). Of course, as the parent explained, the true power was the buy-in the players had. "What matters is those kids believe and they know they're going to convert... They actually expect and believe to convert every fourth down. I think that kind of sums up a lot of the whole concept of the no-punt theory. These kids believe. He has them believing" (B. Pryor, 2017). As the parent explained, players do not go into games hoping to win; they go in expecting to win based on trust in a system built on objective numbers, not fear-based (emotional) assessments of the size of an opponent.

The interesting power to the hopeful anticipation of the future that results from playing statistically safe is the positive mindset players have even in the worst of situations. One parent explained this well when describing his son suffering a broken collarbone.

I went over to my son. This was fourth game of the season. I thought he'd be crying like I would have. I would have cried at that age. I said, "How you doing, boy?" He said, "I'm fine." I said, "Doctor says it's six weeks." He looked at me and he goes, "Well, I'll be well

by the time playoffs come." He already believed that they knew they were going to the playoffs. It goes back to that mindset that coach instills in these kids (Pryor, 2017).

The parent in the preceding quote was nearly floored to hear his son so confident of the team's future success, but the parent understood it as an extension of the confident mentality cultivated by the IRL and his EBM system.

Similarly, most of the players communicated about the team's EBM approach by stating that objective statistics meant particular positive outcomes were almost certain to occur.

"Because of the system we're going to run, we're going to score five to 10 more times" (And. Norris, 2017). That confident, hopeful anticipation extended until the end of the game. "It was almost like until the clock hit zero, you could be down 30 points, but you were thinking, 'How could we pull this together and win this in the last two minutes?'" (And. Norris, 2017). There are very few organizational contexts in which members face what appear to be impossible odds and their base assessment is that anything is possible. Yet that is exactly what the members in this organization did on a regular basis.

In summary, organizational members expressed a number of alternative perspectives on the IRL's sensebreaking messages. Not punting was understood as a way to increase scoring, build more confidence among players, and avoid negative situations in which the opponent had an athletic advantage. Onside kicks were discussed as being no-lose situations that created psychological advantages over opponents. Defensive failure was extended to mean players sometimes purposely let an opponent score so enough time would be left for the offense to score again. Related to this message was players' belief that certain statistical outcomes were objectively certain to occur. The persuasive power of this belief was a calm confidence in the face of what others subjectively saw as impossible.

In the preceding section, member communication was presented as consistent with or unique from the IRL's communication about guiding values and sensebreaking messages. The next section will examine member communication consistent with and unique from the IRL's communication about introducing EBM.

Member communication consistent with the IRL's introduction of EBM. In many cases, the members' communication was consistent with the IRL's communication about introducing EBM identified in in the IRL interview data. Members communicated that leaders and members needed to commit fully and completely change the way they thought. Examples of that consistency will be presented below in the order of communication from other coaches, parents, and players.

Introducing EBM: commit fully. Unlike parents and players, the coaches did not directly address the idea of fully committing. One coach did talk around the topic. That discussion was in regard to his wishes that a college or professional team would fully embrace the no-punt mentality. "I just want somebody, I want one team, NFL or college, to completely go all in and try it, just to see if it works" (Apple, 2017). The coach's second indirect reference to the idea of needing to commit fully when introducing EBM was included in an answer about what a leader would need to do to successfully implement EBM in an organization. He talked about how a successful organization had a leader fully committed. "[In] a failing organization, whether it's business or sports, you can look up at the top and look at the psychology of the leader of the group. Is that leader completely sold on this is the way to do it and this is the right way?" (Apple, 2017). According to this coach, successful organizations must have leaders who are fully committed, which reflects the IRL's interview data.

The notion of being fully committed was more evident in the parent communication because they could identify when the IRL had not fully committed to his no-punt approach. That lack of full commitment caused confusion among parents. One parent who had three children play for the coach in his first 10 years coaching at the school explained it well.

Why I think it took a while for all of us to embrace it is because there were times where, he kind of moved into it. I think at first it was, ‘You know, I think this is the direction I’m going to go.’ So he did it a lot, [but] he didn’t do it all the time... The parents were kind of going, ‘Coach, what in the world are you doing?’ Of course, our sons were on defense and we were going, ‘Coach, come on man... Punt the ball. We’ll get the ball back and we’ll score again. Why are you doing this?’ (D. Norris, 2017).

This parent, whose sons graduated years ago, understood the IRL’s concept of needing to fully commit, but that understanding was rooted in the IRL’s failure to do so at the beginning of his coaching career.

Interestingly, a parent whose son was a current player indicated full buy-in was necessary for success, a perspective different from the parent above. “Coach didn’t just come out and say, ‘I want to try this and see if it works.’ Coach came out and said, ‘I’ve done all the research. I am fully bought in, and the only way this will work is if every one else buys in.’ If you’re not in, get out” (Wheeden, 2017). The same parent even went on to explain why others, such as parents, needed to be fully committed to the IRL’s EBM approach.

You never question because if we did it part of the time, it wouldn’t have that fundamental principle that is so engrained in the boys. If he compromised a lot, then he would just be a guy who calls plays different. But the way he does it, it’s fundamental to the game (Wheeden, 2017).

This parent did not express any reservation about fully committing to the program. In his view, full commitment distinguished the IRL from someone who simply thinks outside the box. Other parents expanded on fully committing by referencing how a leader did not need to be afraid to fail. Anyone who wanted to be like the IRL needed to "...go out there and don't be afraid to fail" (D. Norris, 2017).

Similarly, every player talked about the need to be fully committed to the IRL's EBM system. "You gotta do it all the time. It can't be something you're just like, 'Oh well. You know, now it's getting crunch time, we're gonna change this up.' You have to be someone that's really gonna do it the full extent in order to actually give it a real shot" (Morris, 2017). Another player succinctly explained his view of the IRL's approach. "There was never a time when I thought punting would help us win" (Kent, 2017). Finally, a player echoed the hopeful anticipation of the future when he said that unquestioned acceptance of the system meant he simply always expected to win. "I never played thinking I would lose...There was zero doubt we should go for it on fourth down" (And. Norris, 2017). For this player, full commitment while he played meant never even considering punting.

Introducing EBM: completely change the way you think. Another concept from the IRL's interview communication in Study 1 about introducing EBM that was reflected in Study 2 was how organizational members needed to completely change the way they think. One of the offensive coaches explained why a traditional mindset did not work with the IRL's EBM approach. This coach tied the need for a different mindset to the organization's resource limitations.

People don't understand or buy into the fact that our personnel, our players, are not going to allow us to play and win football games here in the traditional way, and so, sometimes

when you are trying to communicate with someone who doesn't understand or won't understand anything that is variable from what the norm is, what they see on football and other Friday nights, other schools, and on Saturdays, they are unable to put their mind in this world. What we are doing, they continue to look at things from the traditional perspective, so they can't understand it when you start looking at it from our perspective.

... Playing football in this type of system requires a paradigm shift, and some people either A, don't want that, or B, they are just not ready for it yet (Talley, 2017).

This coach's communication directly matched the IRL's from the interview data. The assistant coach extended this a little beyond the IRL's communication by emphasizing that people resisted completely changing the way they thought because they simply did not want to or were not ready.

Players' and parents' interview communication also reflected how people needed to change the way they thought. One parent emphasized how tradition was not a good reason to keep doing something. "It's getting back to thinking out of the box. Just because you've always done something one way doesn't mean it's necessarily the right way to do it" (B. Pryor, 2017). Similarly, a player talked about the IRL's EBM approach by comparing it to perceived and actual boundaries. "We need to look at what are the actual boundaries for this game and how do we be creative and innovative within the actual boundaries, not the perceived boundaries" (And. Norris, 2017). He summed up the idea further by emphasizing a key belief of the IRL found in Study 1. "If these are the rules of the game, so much more is allowed than what we're thinking is allowed, so let's explore that" (And. Norris, 2017). This player's communication reflected the IRL's ideas; his interview communication encouraged following the rules but pushing the boundaries to gain any edge possible.

In summary, member communication was consistent with messages used by the IRL to introduce EBM. Parents and players indicated a need to commit fully, and all members expressed a belief that failure was not fatal, and therefore, a leader should not be afraid of taking risks when decisions were based on statistics. Members also echoed the need to change the way one thought to benefit from EBM, yet understanding statistics was itself not enough to be successful.

Alternative member perspectives on the IRL's introduction of EBM. Having discussed organizational member communication that was consistent with the IRL's introduction of EBM, the next section addresses ways in which member communication differed. Those results are presented below in Table 15. These different perspectives also included communication about organizational factors that affected the introduction of EBM.

Table 15	
<i>Introducing EBM: Alternative Member Perspectives</i>	
<u>Alternative Perspectives</u>	<u>Description</u>
What is needed from leaders	Preparation; statistics alone is not enough
Videos are powerful	Get video proof of EBM working in a best-case scenario
What is most persuasive	Success, statistical studies, and player buy-in
Consider organizational factors	Resources and an innovation culture will affect introduction

Table 15

Introducing EBM: Leaders needed to be prepared. One of the more interesting findings in the Study 2 interview data was members' recommendations for others who wanted to introduce EBM in an organization. The need to be prepared was reiterated by multiple members. One coach emphasized preparation when he discussed a model of change initiation for anyone that wanted to implement EBM.

First of all, you are going to have to identify why the way that it is being [done] isn't working. Secondly, you are going to have to identify or define how the change, whatever

it is, big or small, is going to lead to positive results. Thirdly, you are going to have to communicate both of those things to your constituents, your stakeholders, top to bottom, everyone involved in the whole deal. You are going to have to communicate that to them. After that, then you are going to have to let people tell you what the intended or unintended impact of this very well may be as far as, 'If we do this, then this gets cut or this gets cut, or it changes this person's job or whatever it is.' After that, then you've got to decide how you are going to go about communicating it publicly and basically selling your idea based on the information, opinions. And then probably in there I'd sure put that you've got to communicate the strategy with which you are going to execute the changes that are going to occur.

You've got to have a strategy to enact it. It's like, 'Hey, we want to score more points on offense.' Okay, well, you are going to have to change the way you call plays. You are going to have change the way you practice. You are going to have to change your terminology, your system, what your coaches are coaching. It's a whole, long continuum of a process to make those changes (Talley, 2017).

That coach's recommendations were logical, and they aligned well with the defensive coordinator's recommendations, too. "It's knowing how to do it, and being prepared to sell it to your kids, to the parents, sell it to the program and all that. For anyone saying I want to adopt it [EBM], it's more than just [statistics]" (West, 2017). The defensive coordinator's statement highlighted his view of the importance of preparation. Successfully introducing EBM included much more than simply understanding the statistics that guided the IRL.

In fact, the defensive coordinator explained further that the key to successfully implementing an evidence-based innovation was preparation. That answer was a little unique

compared to other members' communication, but it made sense given the IRL's EBM approach was built on the ability to execute a spread offense capable of making significant gains (something less common with a power-running approach). In some ways, the following messages from the defensive coordinator indirectly supported the notion voiced by other organizational members that the IRL's innovative spread offense provided cover for him to introduce his no-punt tactic.

No. 1 thing that I tell people about this idea of change, this idea of doing something that's different and trying to get everyone to embrace it, is preparation. I believe that if you want anyone to change, any program to change, you need have some type of preparation. Preparation, as in they need to know why they're doing what they're doing. But they also need to know how to do it...I've got to make sure my offense is able to make the first down. It's got to actually have the capability to make the first down. There has to be some kind of preparation to be able to do it. I'm not going to go into a situation where I take over a program and I go 'okay guys, we're never going to punt.' The offense is not as efficient as they need to be [yet]... If you can't be successful, and it doesn't have to be success quickly, but there has to be some sort of success, whether it be small or big over a period of time, you're going to lose those people that you need the most (Woods, 2017).

This coach's change model emphasized less communication with multiple stakeholders, but the coach made clear that players had to be prepared before a leader introduced an innovation. In addition, the coach emphasized the need to achieve some level of success fairly soon after introducing an innovation.

Similar to the coaches' change models, one of the parents also discussed the importance of preparation, based on his experience with the IRL's introduction of EBM.

Have good, objective reasoning, good, objective content of why you want to do what you do. His is all the research and statistics from the Stanford professor... And then second of all, make sure that you have developed a system or... processes to carry that out. And then have the right people around you... And then doing whatever you could to get others to buy in" (D. Norris, 2017).

This parent's recommendations were similar to those of the assistant coach discussed earlier, but the parent's model included less of an emphasis on communication with stakeholders, which may have matched that parent's experience with the IRL.

Introducing EBM: video proof was persuasive. Interestingly, a coach indicated that one game in particular did the most to successfully introduce EBM. That event was the game made famous on YouTube that first attracted the national news attention. In the game, the team scored and recovered on-side kicks four times in a row to go ahead 28-0 in the first six minutes of the game.

I think the biggest time we had people persuaded over to our side was that game... That's pretty much the epitome of the whole program and everything put together in one. That's the best-case scenario ever. It's the perfect storm of scoring every drive, getting onside kicks and scoring immediately after that for four or five straight drives. When you show people that and you show them the power it can have, that usually gets people on board (Apple, 2017).

This coach's perspective on the most persuasive message was video proof of what the IRL's EBM approach looked like in a best-case scenario.

Interestingly, echoing the assistant coach's idea, a player indicated showing college teammates (who were not familiar with the IRL's system) news coverage was the most persuasive tactic.

They watch one of the videos that [coach has] done with HBO or Grantland... The Grantland one, I liked when they stopped in the middle and they had all the numbers. They showed the football field and really laid it out for someone who might have trouble understanding just numbers from someone talking to you. I might just show them that one or just tell them to look up one of the videos and watch. They come back and they love it (Z. Kelley, 2017).

For this player, a short, professionally produced video by a credible, national sports news organization was the best method of explaining the IRL's EBM approach, especially to peers.

Introducing EBM: success, statistical studies, and player buy-in were persuasive. In addition, parents and players indicated what was most persuasive when talking to outsiders about why the school used an EBM approach was both the team's success and the statistical explanation. Parents thought the same messages would best apply when introducing EBM in an organization. "When he started doing it and you saw a lot of the success he had with it, you kind of go, 'Oh, okay. I kind of get it now'" (Pryor, 2017). Players agreed. "I guess the success that we had is the main thing" (And. Norris, 2017). Another player agreed regarding winning. "I'd say statistics really get people. Maybe even more than that is seeing how successful [we are] in doing it" (Z. Kelley, 2017).

Another aspect of the parents' communication about introducing EBM was how much players brought parents on board. "With [our son], this new thing was not just every once in a while, but all the way, and so he bought into it, and he helped us get over it as parents kind of

whining” (An. Norris, 2017). Of course, that did not mean it was easy for the parents, especially the parents of defensive players, as one mother explained.

It was hard. It took a while. It's not something you can expect watching your son get beat up right away. There was a buying in. We didn't buy in instantly, I can attest to that. I don't know of any parents that did instantly because it was very... It's a very foreign ... It's changing the game. They don't change the rules but the way you play it and it's all fair, but if your son's the one out there, it was hard at first (An. Norris, 2017).

This parent quote highlighted just how important player buy-in was. The parents wanted to resist, but they also wanted to support their sons. One player explained how player buy-in neutralized parent dissent. “The players were bought in, so there were comments [from parents] like, ‘There’s really not much we can say’” (An. Norris, 2017).

Introducing EBM: organizational factors that helped or hurt. Member communication also revealed some organizational nuances about the introduction of EBM. First, the school had so few players on the team in the IRL’s first years as head coach that many players played both offense and defense. The IRL did not fully commit to not punting until after the school employed a two-team (offense and defense) structure. As one might imagine, asking players to go for it on every fourth down and then to turn around and play defense would be physically exhausting. In fact, the change to the two-team approach came after a season in which one player collapsed after a game due to dehydration. According to the parents, the player did not come off of the field the entire game. The next year, the IRL committed to a two-team approach, which enhanced his EBM concepts. “That’s when...going for it on fourth down even gained so much more power” (D. Norris, 2017).

Another organizational factor that may have contributed to a slower roll-out of the IRL's EBM, according to a player and parent, was that the team had a good kicker the last couple of years the team punted. He graduated, and the next year was when the IRL fully adopted the no-punt approach. Similarly, the IRL did not stop returning punts kicked to his team until that season. This change occurred after the team's punt returner had committed three turnovers in three games.

Similarly, member communication indicated the school's culture may have helped introduce EBM. According to the school president, and echoed by parents, that culture encouraged innovation. "This is a school and a community that responds very well to new ideas just in general... When new things are introduced, there's not a lot of naysaying; people will give it a chance because they're willing to explore and be creative" (Wade, 2017). The general belief of those at college preparatory, nonreligious schools is that privatized education can allow for innovative differences compared to public schools. The school's president seemed to indicate that appreciation for innovation extended to the football team, too.

Player and parent communication revealed another aspect of the organization's context that seemed to help the IRL. His team in his first year was more talented than many previous teams at the school, and the coach won the state championship that year. Subsequent players believed the early success gave the IRL some benefit of the doubt when he introduced future innovations.

I think especially there may have been something kind of magical to coach winning a championship his first season. It just kind of gave him some super leeway, but it was just kind of like from the top down, everybody just embraced that style of football, and I think embraced it as innovative and smart and yeah, I mean, there was such an acceptance even

from the administration and nobody was giving him pushback (Norris, 2017).

As this player saw it, others were hesitant to criticize or scrutinize the practices of a coach who had done in his first season what no one had done in 30 years. That hands-off approach allowed the IRL to experiment with little concern for criticism.

The last organizational factor unique from the IRL's communication about introducing EBM that was found among coach and player communication was that not punting was easier for players to accept when compared to playing videogame football. The IRL briefly mentioned this in Study 1. As the members discussed it, players rarely punted when playing football in a video game because there were no real-life consequences. "I think for most high school players, I mean, who doesn't want to play for a team that blitzes 80% of the time, goes for it on fourth down every time? ... This is how I play college football on the Xbox" (And. Norris, 2017). The players' assessment of that approach was that it was fun and high-scoring. Therefore, the players often described the IRL's EBM approach with similar terms: fun and exciting. Among organizational members' communication, the two groups who did not talk about this video game concept were those who did not play video games: older coaches and parents.

Overall, five organizational factors may have contributed to a slower roll-out of the IRL's EBM. The team in the IRL's first years had many players who played both offense and defense, and the team had a good kicker the last couple of years the team punted. In addition, the school's culture may have helped introduce EBM, and early success gave the IRL some benefit of the doubt when he introduced future innovations. Finally, not punting was easier for players to accept when compared to playing videogame football.

In summary, member communication differed in some ways from messages used by the IRL to introduce EBM. Members indicated leaders needed to be prepared, achieve success soon,

and have video proof of the system working in a best-case scenario. Members also revealed success, statistical studies, and player buy-in were persuasive with doubters. Last, five organizational factors likely contributed to the IRL's introduction of EBM.

Organizational member communication consistent with the IRL's responses to criticisms. Having examined the ways in which member communication was different from the IRL's communication regarding the introduction of EBM, this section addresses member communication about criticism of EBM. Member communication that was consistent with the IRL's responses to criticisms will be examined first, and communication that provided alternative responses to criticisms will be examined second.

In many cases, the member communication was consistent with the IRL's responses to criticisms identified in the Study 1 interview data. Members agreed that pick and choose critiques were not valid, failure was not fatal, and the benefits of playing football outweighed health risks. Examples of that consistency will be presented below in the order of communication from other coaches, parents, and players. The last message about health risks will be addressed in a subsequent section about concussion responses.

Responding to criticism of EBM: rejection of pick and choose critiques. One of the IRL's assertions in the Study 2 interview data was that pick and choose critiques were not valid. Similarly, the coaches also rejected the validity of "pick and choose" criticism of the team's EBM system, especially after a close loss. For example, one defensive coach argued the real issue in regard to that kind of criticism was the team's identity. "This is what we are. This is what we believe. You look at the success and how it has helped us win to get to the championship level and to win all these games...You can't just say, 'This one time if we hadn't played that way, we would have won'" (Talley, 2017). The coach expanded on the concept of

pick and choose criticism being wrong by arguing the team's identity was as a group that simply did not punt, and therefore, did not question that decision.

The parents' communication was consistent with the IRL's regarding the need to reject pick-and-choose criticism, but there were a few doubts mixed in. This was especially true for a parent after a heart-breaking state championship game loss.

It hurts, especially when your kid's on the short end of that, like the state championship game. We lost by one point in the last 90 seconds of the game. I mean, it hurts. It hurts really bad, but maybe my kid had influenced me enough that I kind of bought into the system. I just have to accept it that nothing works all the time, but our success rate has been to the point that I try not to second-guess him. I just have to accept the fact that it doesn't work all the time and enjoy the times it does work, because I think it's worked more for us than it has against us (Pryor, 2017).

This parent honestly communicated about the disappointment from a close loss, but he quickly followed that up by highlighting the IRL's EBM had helped more than it had hurt.

Similarly, the players expressed agreement that pick-and-choose criticism was illogical. One player even added that most games are decided by 10 plays, not one. "The biggest thing that he would tell us is you know, in any given game there's at least 10 plays that basically are up for grabs. It's who is gonna make more of those plays? So... it can't be any one play" (Morris, 2017). This player's communication went a step further from a condemnation of pick-and-choose criticism to show that one would have to pick 10 plays to criticize, not one or two at the end of a game or quarter.

Responding to criticism of EBM: failure was not fatal. Another response to criticism by the IRL that organizational members discussed in a similar manner was that failure to convert a

fourth down is not fatal to the whole game. The school president explained the concept in his discussion of what a leader could learn from the IRL in regard to introducing an innovation that went against institutional pressures.

If you have the right person, then that person has the resilience and persistence to keep on going and pushing in the face of some second-guessing, doubting and all of that.

That's a pretty important aspect of it. You have to have a pretty willing person who is willing to put himself out there and risk failure. Basically, it comes down to having the courage to risk failure" (Wade, 2017).

This administrator almost echoed the IRL verbatim, emphasizing that a leader needed the courage to fail if he or she were to introduce an EBM approach in an organization. This concept was echoed in parent communication, too. "We're playing our style of ball. And so are you going to win every time in every game? No. Are you going to fail some? Yeah, but don't be afraid to fail. Just keep working the plan" (D. Norris, 2017). The parent had bought in to the idea that failure was not fatal.

Most players brought up that other coaches have not copied the IRL because most people (including other coaches) are afraid of taking risks. "Most people are afraid of doing something different" (B. Tyson, 2017), and another player said "most people are afraid to think outside the box" (Morris, 2017). Interestingly, one player explained in more detail how all decisions involve risk and that playing it safe was an inherently risky choice, which matched with the IRL's news media communication in Study 1. "There is a tendency to... resist change because of the risk of failure, and it's a myth. You're risking failure regardless of what you do... Let's try, let's fail, let's continue to learn and grow as people, as an organization, as a team" (And. Norris, 2017).

That player's understanding of risk paralleled the IRL's explanations in Study 1. The player explained it in even more detail.

I think coach was probably living in the vulnerability more than the players, because we're just playing high school football. He had a reputation and a career that he was kind of defending, but looking back, it took a lot of courage and a lot of risk to say, 'I'm going to be true to myself. I'm going to be true to what I think is best, and if we fail, we're going to learn, we're going to move forward, but I'm not going to let shame or just what is ordinary or normal or assumed guide me' (And. Norris, 2017).

From this player's perspective, the IRL was successful in introducing his EBM approach because the coach had the courage to do what he thought was best even if it failed at times.

In addition, member communication also reflected a positive framing of failure, especially on a fourth-down attempt. This reflected the organizational buy-in of the IRL's communication; the defensive coordinator said as much when discussing the defensive players' mindsets. "They take it as a spotlight moment. If we fail on fourth down [on offense], they take it as, 'This is our time to shine,' and they embrace the moment (West, 2017). Interestingly, the parents' communication did not include a discussion of failure was not fatal. The only mention of the concept was when one parent talked about the coach quoted above. The parent expressed how much buy-in the defensive coordinator had for the concept. "He loved coach's philosophy about not punting. I don't know too many defensive coordinators that could have taken that challenge in a positive light the way he did" (B. Pryor, 2017).

The defensive players, and even a few offensive players, also communicated about the difficult task of defending in a statistically unfavorable position when the offense failed on a fourth down conversion. All positively framed that situation. "The defense felt they had

something to prove” (Kent, 2017). Another player said the same. “Our defensive mindset was, ‘Bring on the challenge – no big deal’” (Morris, 2017). In addition, the IRL was viewed favorably due to his response when the defense did not succeed. “He was also gracious when we failed on defense” (And. Norris, 2017). This line was particularly unique, but it was consistent with a coach who did not view taking a risk and failing to be a fatal decision. It was consistent for a leader with that mindset to be gracious toward players when they did take a risk and fail.

In summary, member communication was consistent with some of the IRL’s communication regarding responses to criticisms of EBM. Members rejected pick and choose criticism, and they expressed that moments of failure were not enough to reject EBM; the system worked most of the time.

Alternative responses to criticisms in organizational member communication.

Having analyzed how member communication was consistent with the IRL’s responses to criticism, this section analyzes alternative responses to criticism as found in member communication. The main criticisms of the team that members responded to were most often from outsiders, such as opponents. There were two main criticisms: that PA recruited (against the rules) better athletes since it was a private school, or that the school’s football approach was a gimmick. There were two messages that members used when responding to these criticisms: the team had smart players and the team had superior coaches, not better athletes.

Responding to criticism of EBM: having smart players (not more athletic). One response by members was to emphasize that the team’s success had to do with intelligence instead of superior athletes. This concept was not identified in the coaches’ interview data. One parent’s quote exemplified the idea. “It might hurt coach’s feelings, but I’m not so sure you could teach it

to somebody with an average IQ, or a low work ethic” (Seaver, 2017). Another parent explained it further.

I've always kind of had the position that a lot of PA's football games is won above the shoulder pads. What I mean by that is I look at my son's playbook and I went, "Heck, I couldn't play for you guys. I'm not smart enough to understand all these different options and things that you have." Those kids are smart... They outthink a lot of their competition. They play smart. For the most part, they're bright kids. They're highly motivated. I sit there. I look in the stands and I look out there in the field, and I see these kids. They're just driven. They're so type-A personalities. Then I look over to the stands at their moms and dads, and this is my family included, well little wonder. Dad's a type-A. Mom's a type-A. They're bound to have a type-A kid, too. There's a lot of buy-in with that mindset and that kind of personality type. That still translates to me of winning a lot of games. A lot of the football games they win above the shoulders (Pryor, 2017).

This parent clearly held the view that only a select few could master the team's complicated offensive schemes. This bolstered the response to critics convinced the team cheated somehow, and it simultaneously supported a selective and elite organizational identity for members.

Perhaps not surprisingly for a private, college preparatory school, the players also viewed themselves as smart. “It probably does help a little bit that it's a little private school, just because of the average student is a little bit smarter than if you go to a public school... Our very complicated offense, it does help to be a little bit smarter to understand that” (Z. Kelley, 2017). This intelligent identity was not relegated to just the offense. “[Our defensive players are] smart kids and they bought in really quickly how winning was more important than defensive statistics” (Kent, 2017).

Responding to criticism of EBM: having superior coaches (not athletes). Another response to criticism expressed by organizational members was that the team's success was due to superior coaches, not superior athletes. This criticism assumed that a private school had more resources than public schools and produced better athletes. One of the former players found the criticism to be laughable.

I laugh at that accusation [that PA has better athletes]. PA has really good coaches who are able to develop their players... The only reason they're successful is because the coaches do a good job of developing them. It's a scheme thing. It doesn't matter whoever is quarterback and graduates the next year. They say that Coach just has a great system. You can plug and replace" (Tyson, 2017).

Similarly, the defensive coordinator discussed the same concept. He said the team's players "aren't that big, but they play well. They play disciplined. They're well-coached, they know their assignments and they do them well" (West, 2017). The coach emphasized that outsiders who watched the team were surprised to see how small the players were, and they're surprised to see the players were successful simply because of preparation, not superior size.

Parent communication also credited superior coaching rather than superior athletes. "There's 11 little boys exactly where they're supposed to be, doing exactly what they're supposed to do every single play. We're not the toughest, we're not the neatest; we just try to work on execution always" (Wheeden, 2017). This parent's compliment toward the team's discipline was a reflection of the superior coaching players received. Not surprisingly, those players felt the same way. One explained how good the coaches were by describing his experience winning a game against a team with much larger and faster players.

The team that we played against in the state championship, we only beat them because of coaching and preparation. They were in every aspect, almost, on the field, more talented, gifted. I think they had a significant handful of players play college ball. A guy played pro ball, but we were just so much more prepared (And. Norris, 2017).

The player described beating a physically superior team, but he gave credit to the coaches, not to the players.

In summary, member communication revealed alternative responses to criticism from those used by the IRL. In the face of accusations that the team's success was due to recruiting better athletes, members expressed that the organizational strength of the players was their intelligence. Similarly, members rejected the claim that the team had superior athletes by claiming instead it had superior coaches.

Member perspectives consistent with the IRL's responses to concussion risks.

Another message from organizational members that was consistent with the IRL's interview data in Study 1 was communication about playing football in the face of concussion risks. Most members viewed football concussion data or reservations about playing as wholesale criticism of the sport and those who played it. These members were not open to Dr. Omaluh's main argument that no one should play tackle football before age 18 because the brain was still developing.

Risk in football: benefits of playing outweighed health risks. Nearly all members emphasized the benefits of playing football in light of the health risks. In fact, all coaches talked about concussion risks and football benefits in the same way the IRL did. An assistant coach explained that positive life lessons outweighed the possible health risks.

To say that someone shouldn't play football until they are 18, they are obviously not looking at the big picture of America. They are not looking at the percentages of

comparing kids who were involved in football and those that aren't [to] the academic rates. You look at the success rates of keeping kids off the streets, keeping kids out of trouble, instilling values in them, instilling discipline and character. Just all the great things that come from Friday night football from the band involvement, the cheerleaders, the dance teams, the booster clubs, and bringing communities together, and competition (Talley, 2017).

This coach's response to the idea that players should think twice about playing football was to emphasize benefits of football. He also argued concussion data did not tell the whole story about football's positive effects on society in multiple ways. An offensive coach said much the same thing. "The good stuff you get out of it, the hard work, the persistence, the grinding mentality. You don't get all that by just sitting at your house and then starting to play football when you're 18" (Apple, 2017).

Finally, parents' communication also largely reflected the IRL's communication that the benefits of football outweighed the risks of playing. One parent explained that risks simply cannot be avoided in life.

It's like anything else I think in life. There's always a risk associated with anything, and you've got to take the risk to get the benefit associated with that... There is the risk, and you have to accept that assumed risk... To counter that, I think the benefit of playing high school athletics and team sports has such a positive impact on impressionable young people that it can carry them forward in life... I think the benefits outweigh the risk (Pryor, 2017).

The parent did not dismiss that playing football comes with inherent risks, but he simply felt the benefits for success in life were more important.

Similar to the majority of parents, most players also felt the benefits of playing football outweighed risks. “I just learned too much valuable information about myself and about life and about teamwork that I didn’t learn in the classroom or even the collegiate level” (Tyson, 2017). Another player specifically referenced being disappointed that some students were not playing football because of concussion threats. “A lot of parents have kept their kids from playing football because of all the concussion stuff going on, and I think they're keeping their kids from a great activity... It's something that will teach them a lot of lessons later on” (Z. Kelley, 2017).

Alternative member perspectives on responses to criticism of concussions risk in football. While the previous section highlighted member communication that was consistent with the IRL’s communication about concussions risks in football, a few members offered additional perspectives not communicated by the IRL. Those additional perspectives were about safer approaches used today, how concussion data cannot be fully understood, and a few worries that the risks should not be ignored.

Modern practices are safer. Most coaches, a few parents, and almost all players highlighted that modern players are taught the proper way to tackle, with an emphasis on not using one’s helmet, and that should help reduce concussions. Others, like a defensive coach, emphasized that modern football was safer than in the past. “If you compare what football is now to what it was in the 70s, there’s no comparison... Even the 80s and early 90s, I don’t think we can even compare those games” (Talley, 2017). Similarly, another player compared modern helmets with what he used as a small child in the early 2000s. “Helmets are better today; mine when I was 6 didn’t protect anything” (Z. Kelley, 2017).

Discounting concussion data. Another different way members responded to criticism of playing football given concussion risks was by discounting concussion study data. This was done

by asserting the member's review of that data was unfinished, comparing football's risk to other sports, and questioning if the risk can be truly studied or known at all. First, some coaches and an administrator indicated simply not knowing enough about the evidence to make an informed assessment. "I just don't know enough about the research done about it to answer in an intelligent way" (Wade, 2017). An offensive coach shared a similar sentiment. "I don't feel I'm 100% thoroughly through all of [the] studies" (Apple, 2017).

Other coaches took a different approach from saying they had yet to review the data; they compared health risks in football to other sports. This comparison was made with the belief that football was unfairly singled out, especially, as they argued, all activity carried some aspect of risk.

I think you look at the risk of other sports...I've watched some high school and club soccer matches with no equipment on where guys are doing headers and slide tackles, and I think even look at baseball. You see a pitcher, the ball gets away from him going 80, 85, 90 miles-an-hour-plus in the major leagues, and the risk of a kid getting hit with the bat...Even basketball, an elbow to the head, coming down on somebody, on their ankle. There's just inherent risk in activity (Talley, 2017).

An offensive coach discussed the same thoughts.

You also risk a concussion when you water ski. Has [Dr. Omalu] never water-skied? If you go snow skiing, if you go riding a skateboard, if you do anything active, you risk falling down and getting a concussion or you risk tripping over yourself and tearing your ACL. There's going to be risk in everything. If you just run around the block, you could tear your ACL (Apple, 2017).

The preceding member quote highlighted the coach's belief that human activity involves risk, so singling out football did not seem fair.

Parents also responded to concussion criticism by addressing issues indirectly related to concussion data. One parent discounted the data by stating that individuals simply cannot know when a safe age is to play football, while also saying Dr. Omalu may not really have expertise (which was not true). "Is 18 the correct age, or is 22 the correct age, or is 15 the correct age? There's absolutely no way of knowing, and just because a guy made a movie out of it does not make him the foremost. Maybe he is, maybe he isn't, I don't know" (Wheeden, 2017).

The concept of "one simply cannot know with certainty things about concussions in football" was echoed by players, too. One implied certainty could only be achieved with an alternate universe. "I feel like the only way you'd be able to prove that is if you took ... Let's say you took me, and you had an alternate universe to where I didn't play football until I was 18 or didn't play football at all. And you compare that with me now. You can't really do that in the real world" (Z. Kelley, 2017). And finally, another player discounted concussion data in football by saying that plenty of other unhealthy behaviors are allowed before age 18, so why really try. "If we made every decision as a society on what's the best for our long-term health, there's a lot of things that wouldn't be legal until we were 18 or be legal at all" (And. Norris, 2017).

Resistance to concussion risk denials. A few parents and players did indicate some hesitation about playing football given more recent concussion studies. The parents who communicated this alternative perspective from the IRL were a mother and father of players who had significant football injuries, though not necessarily in high school. The mother brought the topic up first.

I don't know...All the news about all the head injuries and things. It's making people

question some things, particularly if you're a smasher. That's what the game, I mean, people love that kind of thing...I used to encourage moms that were afraid, but now there's so much news with this, so I'm not sure... (Anne Norris, 2017).

This mother indicated relatively recent news coverage of concussions in football had her worried. She even referenced the term for hard-hitting football: being a smasher. That parent's spouse echoed her hesitation, mentioning that their son was now asking questions about whether he is having concussion/CTE issues.

Football was like everything to my son for years; It was too much. And he would agree now it was too much. And you say, "You want your [own]son to play football?" And he'll look back at you and say, "No, I don't." He said, "I don't want him to play football... I really don't want him to play football, because it just beats up your body so badly" (D. Norris, 2017).

Interestingly, in the midst of coaches and parents quickly dismissing concussion fears as less important than the social benefits of playing football, two parents of children who suffered football injuries expressed doubt. Hearing more stories about the reality of concussions in football, which functioned as dramatic narrativizations, and watching children get hurt seemed to have made the parents more uncertain.

Additionally, a few players expressed some reservations. One player gave a mixed answer about the benefits of playing compared to the risks of getting hurt.

Football was really worth it to me as I look back based on the guys I played with, the coaches I had, and really the school, the environment I was in, but I mean, outside of just the two knee injuries, playing linebacker starting all through junior high and high school, a lot of head, just a lot of trauma, and I've wondered does this affect me? Am I going to

be less present as a dad or as a husband at some point in the future because of trauma from playing? Personally, yeah, I would probably be more on the, I would discourage my kids or heavily suggest them not play football, especially before the age of like 14 or 15 (And. Norris, 2017).

This quote was telling because the player wanted to say the benefits of football outweighed the health risks, but as he talked, he just couldn't convince himself of what he was saying. Similarly, the player's parent expanded on his growing concerns about students playing football.

Are there some things that [coach] needs to be more aware of, and he needs to be looking at, because it is an issue, and those guys hit so hard? My son hit so hard. And at the time, we were like, "All right, look at my son! Look at him go!"

"Man he just hit so hard, you know? And now, I probably would look at that differently. And looking back, I think my son would say, "Man, I don't know if I should have done that."

I think it needs to be talked about. I think it needs to be discussed. I think that there's too many ... The price is too high to not be dialogued about. Kind of like I guess I go back to coach's, it's kind of one of his philosophies is, why do we do what we do? There needs to be a reason behind it. Or we need to not do it, because of the reason behind it, or whatever we find out about it (D. Norris, 2017).

This communication by a parent was dramatic because it was almost the only occurrence in the data of an organizational member spending an extended amount of time considering the concussion risk in football in light of the team's evidence-based identity. In fact, the parent's struggle with how the seemingly best approach for safety would rule out playing football seemed

to embody the struggles some organizational members experience with institutional pressures and the embedded agency paradox (Seo & Creed, 2002).

In summary, most organizational members agreed with the IRL that the character-building benefits of playing football were more important than health risks of concussions. In addition, members expressed that concussions were less of a risk because teams used safer approaches today, and concussion data could not be fully understood. However, a few players and parents were also convinced, after they experienced personal injuries, that concussion risks were likely too great to keep playing. These dissenting views were communicated through stories, which served as dramatic narrativizations for these members.

Additional member perspectives: why the IRL was successful. Finally, the last new finding from interviews with members in Study 2 came from their discussion of why the IRL was successful as a coach. Those results are presented below in Table 16. These explanations were overwhelmingly positive, such as the IRL's explanations of why he did things or his genuine character. Other explanations were somewhat negative, such as the IRL not being approachable. Members indicated the IRL communicated reasons for change, acted genuinely, demonstrated expertise, inspired confidence in players, was trustworthy, cultivated a culture expecting innovation, and was generally not approachable. Each of those findings are discussed next.

Table 16	
<i>Alternative Member Perspectives: Why the IRL was Successful</i>	
<u>Type of Reason</u>	<u>Description</u>
Communication	He gave reasons and evidence for changes
Character	He was genuine
Communication	He inspired confidence among players
Character	He demonstrated expertise
Communication	Innovation was expected
Character	He was trustworthy
Communication	He was not approachable

Table 16

Positive aspects of the IRL’s communication. As for coaches’ thoughts on why the IRL was successful, a defensive coach said it was due to his communication of the reason why he was introducing an innovation. “[He] does a great job of communicating with our staff and our coaches and our kids and with the parents...why we are doing this. And whereas other coaches..., it's like when whoever is in charge, ‘This is what it's going to be. Don't ask me why’” (Talley, 2017). According to this assistant coach, the IRL explained why he wanted to do something new before doing it. While this idea does match previous coach communication, it does not align with previous parent and player communication. Those organizational members did not feel the IRL communicated clearly why he was doing something before implementing it.

The next positive reason given for the IRL’s success came from another organizational member who was not a player or parent, the school president. He described a genuine nature about the IRL, which was important when asking members to take a risk.

I think he has a very real quality to him. He’s very genuine. He’s not false, he’s not fake at all. He’s a very real person, so when he says something, I think people know he means it in everything. That’s a very important quality to have in leadership, but it’s especially

important when you know what you're trying to do is risky and might fail at the onset. I think they know he's very passionate, and he's a believer. So they have respect for that. I think they also respect his intelligence (Wade, 2017).

The school president emphasized that the IRL being a genuine, true believer of his concepts was necessary for members to trust him in the midst of criticism.

Parent communication also reflected a positive reason for the IRL's success. Parents said the IRL had an ability to make players believe they would win no matter what. "Coach knows what he's doing and knows his capabilities well. He's smart enough to devise a game plan that will win" (Wheeden, 2017). Another parent felt that if other teams copied the IRL's methods, it would not matter. "I think Coach is smart enough to see if other people adopted this style, he would find a way to still win, or reinvent the wheel to beat them" (Seaver, 2017). This assessment of the IRL centered on his intelligent expertise in football and statistics.

Just as the coaches praised the IRL, the parents also spoke well of his direct style and information. "When we talked to Coach [for the first time], I could tell what he was saying wasn't coach-speak. I could tell he's not going to baby anybody; he not the kind of coach that wants all his kids to like him. But he is the coach that cares deeply for all of his kids" (Wheeden, 2017).

Not surprisingly, the players' interview data also emphasized reasons why the IRL was successful. As one player explained, trust was at the heart of that success.

There was just such a high level of trust for him as a person... I think he was just consistent. He was always himself. He was the same person. Yeah, and I think he never used that authority, that loyalty, just to be mean or just to be manipulative. It really was, he was always trying to make decisions to help us develop as people, help us develop as a

team” (And. Norris, 2017).

This player quote seemed to speak to the same idea expressed by the school president. The IRL was not phony, and that engendered trust from members he asked to take a risk.

In addition to developing trust, the last positive reason players said the IRL had success was that he created a football team culture in which innovations were expected. This resulted in players not viewing his no-punt philosophy as all that radical when he introduced it. “We were already used to the aggressive style and having a wacky idea at the beginning of the week that I don’t think anybody lost any sleep over [not punting] or gave it a second thought” (Tyson, 2017). Another player expanded on the unexpected situations players would encounter at practices, which created a context that expected and embraced innovation.

One week we were playing a good team, and I don’t know why the heck he decided to do this, but our defensive lineman didn’t get down in a stance before the snap. They stood up and almost did jumping jacks, scrambling and running around. I don’t think it gave us any kind of competitive advantage or anything; I think he was just trying to screw with the minds of the offensive lineman. We didn’t do that every game, but we did it one week...

In that book the Art of War, [Coach] always talks about some quote in there that he likes...It’s something about the most difficult enemy to fight is the one who does many different things. I think he did all of that wacky stuff, not really thinking that it would be the difference in the game, but doing it knowing the other coaches are watching on film somewhere in the state, and they’re freaking out about how to stop this one little thing that he doesn’t even care about (Tyson, 2017).

The IRL enjoyed keeping players on their toes. He liked the players not knowing what to expect, and then having to respond to that unpredictable situation. This appeared to be yet another way he sought to help players be comfortable in chaos and under pressure, and it was viewed by players favorably.

The IRL's unapproachable nature. One of the more intriguing aspects of the Study 2 data was members' assessments of the IRL as someone that was not very approachable. Member communication about this aspect of the IRL suggested he used his unapproachable persona as an intentional strategic goal to minimize critical opposition. That perspective is similar to how the IRL sought feedback in a responsible way from players and limited interaction with parents.

The coaches' communication asserted that it was not easy for players or parents to talk to the IRL. "Coach has a reputation of being hard-to-talk to outside of the football community, so most of these parents...they're probably scared to even bring [EBM] up or question it" (Apple, 2017). The idea that the IRL was not approachable came from his desire for players to grow up.

He ingrains into the kids, especially in high school that, "if you've got a problem or a question, you come to me. Don't tell your mom to email me about the schedules. If you don't know what time something starts, you come to me or you ask a player. You don't have your mom emailing me and say, what time is practice on next Thursday?" Stuff like that. He's very, very adamant about that. Make them grow up.

Occasionally, you'll have a mom or dad that'll step up and try to question something and that just gets shot down very fast. Either that kid's going to be punished or the whole team's going to be punished for it so that fixes that problem pretty fast (Apple, 2017).

The IRL said players must act like adults, and that meant talking directly to the IRL, not having parents handle high school students' difficult situations. Another coach said the hard-to-talk-to

persona was not what the IRL was like toward coaches. “When you're a coach with him, he's not always that way. He puts that face on for the kids and the parents most of the time” (Apple, 2017).

In addition, the IRL did have one common area in which he will open up to the players, which was in the weight room in the off-season.

“We work out after school..., so we have a relaxed time there where we're very easy to talk to. Even Coach is very easy to talk to. He's willing to sit around and not workout for five minutes and talk to some kid about whatever he's doing this weekend or where is he going for vacation or something. We do that intentionally because we're so hard on them throughout the whole rest of the year and during the season. It's most of the time, very hard for the kids to get close to Coach. That I think, is the reason why he's so easy to talk to more in the weight room” (Apple, 2017).

This coach's perspective on the IRL selectively being open to players shed a light on an interesting dynamic. It appears when players and coaches (who also lift) are engaged in an activity that did not have to do with play-calling practices (in this case, weightlifting), the IRL let down his guard and personally connected with players.

Just as the coach emphasized the IRL was not very approachable, parents expressed the same thing, but with support for that stance. One parent relayed the IRL's beginning-of-season talk. “He said, ‘I've gotten a little soft and I've taken a little too much information from people wanting to try to give me pointers or help me out. I'm dialing it back, I'm taking it back again. I don't want your input into the program.’ He might have offended some, but I totally agree” (Wheeden, 2017). The parent then told the IRL not to worry about what parents think. “I sell for a living. I don't want you telling me how to sell. I'm not going to tell you how to coach”

(Wheeden, 2017). Another parent added this: “You’re always going to have people that are always going to moan and groan and do a little crying to the coach, but...they don’t usually do it twice” (Plyer, 2017).

Similar to the communication of coaches and parents, a former player also indicated the IRL was hard-to-talk to. “When I was in school...I was deathly afraid of him because I guess, it's more of his knack to just go off and do whatever at anytime. All of us players back then were completely worried like, "Is this the day he just makes us run 10 miles” (Apple, 2017). Players seemed concerned with bringing something up to the IRL that might make him decide the team needed more work in an area. The former player indicated players didn’t always accurately evaluate the IRL. “Now as people get to know him, he's very easy to talk to. He's always got a story to tell” (Apple, 2017).

In summary, member communication of why the IRL was successful was overwhelmingly positive. Members expressed that he gave reasons for change, acted genuinely, demonstrated expertise, inspired confidence in players, was trustworthy, and cultivated a culture that expected innovation. In addition, member communication also indicated the IRL was not seen as approachable while playing for him. That assessment among players was known to change after graduation.

Summary of Member Interview Data

In summary, the communication of other coaches, parents, and players was largely consistent with the IRL’s guiding values, sensebreaking messages, communication when introducing EBM, and communication responding to criticisms. However, organizational members did communicate differently about three of the IRL’s guiding values, and members expressed a number of alternative perspectives on sensebreaking messages. In regard to the

introduction of EBM, members indicated a number of organizational factors not identified by the IRL that contributed to the successful adoption of EBM. Similarly, members expressed that the organizational strength of the team was their intelligence and superior coaches, not athleticism. In addition, most members viewed football concussion data or reservations about playing as wholesale criticism of those who played football. The last new finding from interviews with members in Study 2 came from their discussions of why the IRL was successful as a coach. These explanations were that he communicated reasons for change, acted genuinely, inspired confidence in players, demonstrated expertise, was trustworthy, cultivated a culture expecting innovation, and was generally unapproachable.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter is organized into a summary of the current research study, a discussion of the findings, the theoretical contributions resulting from the analysis, the practical recommendations from the study, limitations, and suggestions for future directions.

As a reminder, almost no research has been gathered on organizational communication about resisting institutional pressures through the adoption of EBM. The purpose of this study was to examine the discursive resources used by an institutional resistance leader (IRL) and members of an outlier organization that adopts evidence-based calls for change. This area of organizational communication is worthy of further study because researchers have assumed organizational actors who resist institutional pressures also desire to change institutions. In addition, existing literature has not used the lens of organizational communication and public relations theory to study the discursive influence tactics used by organizational members who adopt EBM. Previous researchers helped establish and identify types of legitimation rhetoric, but the concepts were not examined from a qualitative research perspective, which seems to be a good fit for studies of taken-for-grantedness (what is or is not allowed). A review of legitimation communication highlighted 14 strategies that fell into two broad categories of cognitive legitimacy based on taken-for-grantedness, and non-cognitive legitimacy based on practical consequences or morality. Few of these strategies have been examined in the context of resisting institutional pressures or the communication of an IRL, including responding to objections to EBM. This study has demonstrated those strategies can be used by an IRL in both expected and unexpected ways.

Public relations-based influence tactics aimed at co-creating mutually beneficial relationships rather than seeking one-sided organizational goals seemed to offer a strong appeal

to non-cognitive legitimacy based on morality. In fact, dialogic public relations seemed promising for overcoming objections to EBM, whether those objections were to distrust of people, numbers, or organizations. More dialogic public relations and appreciative communication might enhance the effectiveness of institutional resistance persuasion.

Research on framing in public relations revealed that people are risk-averse when confronted with uncertainty. In addition, some innovations that increase safety and certainty can result in humans behaving more recklessly. However, communication that frames actions with positive anticipations of the future can minimize that reckless behavior. Research on the framing of actions has shown audiences with high levels of self-efficacy may be equally affected by positive or negative frames regarding risk-related resistance to institutional pressures. Leadership framing scholarship has shown that IRLs can use frames to enhance appeals to non-cognitive legitimacy (pragmatic or moral). These resources likely strengthen a leader's ability to defy institutional pressures and more effectively counter objections to evidence-based calls for change (due to a fear of change and a distrust of statistics, people, or organizations).

Similarly, leadership framing resources seem to offer ways to enhance a leader's ability to co-create mutually beneficial relationships and positive or appreciative visions of an ideal future. Framing tactics in leadership communication can help leaders manage meaning and co-construct reality for others such as external audiences and organizational members. For leaders who seek to resist institutional pressures at the organizational level, framing can also help members determine internal organizational identity. This is especially true for framing in external public relations, which can help enhance members' self-esteem.

RQ1a: The IRL's Communication Strategies

The first research question sought to address the overlooked topic of communication strategies used by an IRL to persuade organizational members to resist institutional pressures.

RQ1: What discursive resources are used by an IRL of an outlier organization that is known for resisting institutional pressures to gain adoption of evidence-based management?

The first primary research question was divided into two secondary questions. The initial secondary question concerned the communication used by an IRL to persuade members to adopt EBM:

RQ1a: What discursive resources does an IRL use to call organizational members to adopt EBM?

To answer the first primary research questions and the initial secondary question, this research project involved a two-part study design. The first study included an analysis of the IRL's news media communication in which he talked about EBM. The second study was based on interviews with the IRL and multiple coaches, parents, and former players. The data from Study 1's analysis of the IRL's communication found in news media revealed several discursive resources used to enhance the legitimacy of his persuasion to organizational members about resisting institutional pressures. Those resources, which largely aligned with existing organizational communication theory, included: quietly introducing innovations, developing guiding values to counter rational myths, using sensebreaking messages to reject institutional logics, using strategic framing to clarify those sensebreaking messages, and using leadership frames to introduce EBM and respond to criticisms.

Quietly introducing innovations. First, the IRL had an extensive history of adopting innovations in his organization, with a number of those innovations being overlooked for a handful of tactics that received the majority of the news media attention. The delay between the IRL's implementation and outsiders' (such as reporters) identification of his exploratory project (Salge & Barrett, 2011) allowed him time to achieve significant success and legitimacy. One recurring aspect of the IRL's coaching is that he quietly, rather than brashly, introduced innovations that went against institutional pressures.

Developing guiding values. The IRL's news media communication also revealed his guiding values that compared to rational myths the IRL believed existed in football. Those values emphasized what the IRL wanted members to believe the organization represented. The IRL's guiding values also communicated how the institutional pressures he wanted them to resist went against the best interests of the organization. The value of honest inquiry served as the bedrock of his evidence-based philosophy, mirroring appreciative inquiry (Bushe, 2014) and generating new, life-giving ideas. While honest inquiry initially included representation from all levels, the IRL later was guided by soliciting feedback from members in a responsible way, which meant only the suggestion of new ideas that were properly researched. The IRL also communicated his negative view of emotions' effects on decision-making. Similarly, the IRL's guiding values of self-determination and system advantages communicated the preferred leadership frame (Fairhurst, 2011) of an aggressive, confident, and in-control player he wanted his smaller, slower athletes to embody. In addition, two of the IRL's guiding values (failure was the leader's fault and entitlement was earned) negated criticisms of using a system no one else used. Those criticisms were turned around and seen as key competitive advantages; since no one else used EBM, the team was more prepared on offense and deserved to win. Finally, the guiding

value that the news media can help tell success stories reflected how an innovation champion (Rogers, 2003) can shape acceptance of EBM and enhance the legitimacy of resisting institutional pressures.

Expanding on guiding values. The IRL expanded on a few of his guiding values in Study 2's interview data: the news media can help promote an IRL's ideas, and entitlement was earned (the notion that a team should expect to win because it put in more work than the opponent). He emphasized how leaders should let the news media discover the coach's innovations to increase the likelihood of stories being framed positively. This strategy by the IRL appeared to be his approach to winning the frame contest (Hallahan, 1999) in the news coverage of his EBM. Most leaders follow traditional public relations advice of proactively seeking positive news coverage. Of course, this IRL, unlike an institutional entrepreneur, did not want others in his field to follow him. In addition, interview data from all members revealed that achieving positive news coverage of the IRL's EBM positively shaped perceptions and acceptance of his system, which can be just as important as performance improvements of an innovation (Rogers, 2003). The IRL's interview data also highlighted a few ways news media coverage can cause problems, such as making other internal groups jealous. In addition, the IRL explained that entitlement was earned was even more important to emphasize after a loss; the IRL framed rare losses as not true reflections of the team; he reinforced member's self-esteem with the preferred frame (Fairhurst, 2011) of players who put in more work than opponents and deserved to win the next game.

Using sensebreaking messages. After the identification and explanation of guiding values, the IRL's communication revealed the institutional logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991) in football that he rejected. Those logics were replaced with sensebreaking messages (Bisel, Kramer,

& Banas, 2016), the assumptions he wanted his organizational members to take for granted. The IRL appealed to both cognitive and noncognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) in communication to organizational members regarding the rejection of those logics. The logics that were challenged with sensebreaking messages were: teams should play conventionally safe, defense wins championships, and game-day fixes are helpful.

Clarifying with framed stories. Finally, the IRL's communication revealed a strategic use of framing through stories to clarify sensebreaking messages. These dramatic narrativizations (Vaara et al., 2006) likely enhanced the legitimacy of his sensebreaking messages about resisting institutional pressures to conform. The IRL's use of stories reflected Flanagin et al.'s (2000) assertion that "narrative is not just about storytelling; it is the basis on which events are structured in the first place" (p. 112). Metaphorical stories (suspended assumptions, the butterfly effect, and the casino theory), the story of the putting experiment (people perform worse under pressure if they're not used to pressure), and the story of the school's perfect season likely enhanced the self-efficacy of players and strengthened the power of gain frames (Hallahn, 1999). The stories, told to news reporters in a frame contest and viewed by players and parents, likely enhanced cognitive legitimacy as the stories served as evidence that the IRL's ideas were the preferred frame and superior to institutional conformity. In addition, the IRL's use of stories represented irony in his leadership communication (Cheney & Stohl, 2001; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2018; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2012). An organizational leader known for using statistical evidence to make decisions could not simply present the studies to achieve member buy-in. Stories more than simply the presentation of evidence persuaded members to change. In addition, the members did not indicate being aware of this irony either.

Leadership framing to introduce EBM. When introducing innovations that went against institutional pressures, the IRL chose four frames for preferred organizational actions and identities while appealing to harmony among members (Fairhurst, 2011). Those four frames were: leaders and members need to commit fully, supporters need to completely change the way they think, leaders need to respond to doubts with reasons, and leaders should try to collaborate with doubters. The three tactics the IRL used to collaborate with doubters were establishing commonalities by expressing shared goals, directly asking for supporters' trust, and directly asking parents to avoid criticizing EBM in front of players. These concepts also echoed aspects of the dialogic theory of public relations that call for engagement with those who oppose organizational decisions (Kent & Taylor, 2002). In addition, the IRL's account of how he first explained his new philosophy years ago seemed to conflict with some of his current beliefs regarding how he communicated with doubting supporters. Having attained ongoing success, the IRL now is most concerned with coaches and players; he does not seem to care if parents are believers in EBM. Interestingly, this current perspective held by the IRL was in direct contradiction to appreciative (Bushe, 2014) and dialogic principles of engagement (Taylor & Kent, 2014) with disagreeing organizational members.

RQ1b: IRL Communication: Responding to Criticism

The next secondary research in this study was related to how the IRL communicated in the face of objections and criticisms of EBM.

RQ1b: What discursive resources does an IRL use when countering organizational members' objections to EBM?

Discursive resources the IRL used to respond to criticisms of EBM included rejecting the validity of "pick and choose" critiques and making the following four arguments: failure was not

fatal, statistics-based decision-making would work at all levels of football, statistics were persuasive even though they could be skewed, and benefits of playing football outweighed evidence of health risks. The last argument was partially due to his assessment that concussion data were skewed. Much of the IRL's criticism responses were through gain frames that highlighted what the team stood to benefit from EBM. By arguing the statistical superiority of EBM, the IRL sought to enhance self-efficacy of organizational members, which helps gain frames perform just as well as the usually superior loss frames (Hallahan, 1999).

Interestingly, the IRL's response to concussion studies reflected the most common objections to EBM. The IRL distrusted an organization (the NFL), people (professional players), and data gathered from studying NFL players (Giluk & Rynes-Weller, 2012). Somewhat surprisingly, it appeared the IRL was himself not immune to resisting evidence-based arguments. His responses to concussion data were appeals to cognitive legitimacy of normalization (football is an inherently valuable endeavor that is unmatched by other activities) and noncognitive legitimacy of moralization (the unique ability to build character in young men through football must be maintained).

RQ2: Members' Understanding of IRL Communication

The next research question was answered through analysis of interview data with other members of the organization. Internal organizational objections can be directed toward leaders (such as IRLs) seeking to introduce EBM or toward other members. Thus, organizational members, influenced by criticisms from outsiders and fellow organizational members, can use discursive resources to either support or object to EBM. Little was known about the discursive resources used by organizational members in response to objections to EBM, especially when

those objections came from fellow organizational members. Therefore, the next research question examined organizational member communication in response to an IRL's calls to adopt EBM.

RQ2: What discursive resources do organizational members use to respond to an IRL's call to adopt EBM?

The communication of other coaches, parents, and players was largely consistent with the IRL's self-reported communication strategies. The discursive resources used by members included the IRL's guiding values, sensebreaking messages, and leadership frames when introducing EBM and responding to criticisms.

Guiding values. Members communicated consistently with the IRL about six of his guiding values. Honest inquiry and seeking feedback in a responsible way were talked about in nearly a verbatim manner; member communication indicated honest inquiry resulted in appreciative, life-giving new ideas (Bushe, 2014). All members discussed the guiding value of self-determination in a way that reflected the concept's psychological and confidence benefits, which were understood to translate into higher-level performance. Members also echoed the IRL's preferred frames for organizational identity as confident athletes who expected to win (Fairhurst, 2011). All members of the organization discussed the IRL's guiding value that entitlement was earned by referencing the butterfly effect story. This story reflected the IRL's use of dramatic narrativization (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006), which served to enhance cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). In addition, all members identified the team as being less athletic than their competition and echoed the IRL's gain frame (Hallahan, 1995) and guiding value that EBM offers system advantages. Finally, members communicated that organizational failure was understood to be on the IRL's and coaches' shoulders, a leadership frame that helped maintain member consistency and harmony in defeat and adversity (Fairhurst, 2011). Though it

carried risk when paired with performance success, the blame-me strategy legitimized EBM for followers.

Unique from the IRL, organizational members communicated about two of his guiding values in different ways. Most members discussed honest inquiry as a synonym for thinking outside the box. This simile frame (Hallahan, 1999; Fairhurst, 2011) by members was not used by the IRL. Distilling the concept down that much seemed to lose a little of what the IRL explained as his reasoning for asking why questions. Members also expressed alternative perspectives on the guiding value that the news media can help promote an IRL's ideas. Members said the news coverage privileged offensive players over defensive players, and it increased support from fans, hate from rivals, and player pride in the organization. The privileging of one group of players over another was not one of the IRL's preferred news frames (Hallahan, 1999), and it appeared to be an unexpected negative result. However, the positive enhancements to organizational member identity did reflect the IRL's leadership frames (Fairhurst, 2011) and enhanced acceptance of his innovations (Rogers, 2003).

Sensebreaking messages. Members' communication also revealed consistency with the IRL's sensebreaking messages, indicating an acceptance of the IRL's preferred frames aimed at enhancing members' organizational identity and self-esteem in the face of risks (Fairhurst, 2011). Member communication echoed the IRL's rejection of the idea that defense wins games; members emphasized that increased scoring wins the most games. This scoring message was also reflected in members' communication about how playing conventionally safe was not the way to score more points. Similarly, members communicated that the goal of a defense was to get the ball back to the offense as soon as possible, which matched the IRL's sensebreaking message of defensive failure reframed.

In contrast, organizational members also expressed alternative perspectives on the IRL's sensebreaking messages. Not punting was actually framed by members, who indicated having high self-efficacy, as a gain frame (Hallahan, 1999): a way to increase scoring, build more confidence among players, and avoid negative situations in which the opponent had an athletic advantage. Onside kicks were discussed as being no-lose situations (gain frames) that created psychological advantages over opponents. Defensive failure was extended to mean that players sometimes purposely let an opponent score so enough time would be left for the offense to try to score again. In addition, player communication revealed a player belief that statistical outcomes were objectively certain to occur. The persuasive power of this belief was a calm confidence in the face of what other teams subjectively (through the emotion of fear) saw as impossible. This aspect of member communication matched the IRL's powerful gain frames that enhanced member confidence. As risk homeostasis theory asserts, increased self-efficacy, based on positive anticipations of the future, minimizes reckless behavior when facing a risky choice (Wilde, 1998); those positive anticipations result in gain frames working just as well as loss frames.

Leadership framing to introduce EBM. In many cases, the PA member communication about introducing EBM was also consistent with the IRL's leadership framing. Parents and players indicated a leader needed to commit fully, be prepared, and not be afraid to take risks when decisions were based on evidence (like statistics). Members also echoed the need to change the way one thought to benefit from EBM. These concepts indicated the IRL was successful in establishing those preferred leadership frames for members (Fairhurst, 2011).

However, member communication also revealed additional ideas not discussed by the IRL that affected the introduction of EBM. Members said it helped if an organization achieved early success and secured news and video proof of EBM working. Early success gave the IRL

some benefit of the doubt when he introduced future innovations; video proof of EBM working appeared to positively shaped organizational acceptance of his innovations (Rogers, 2003). In addition, the team's somewhat slow adoption of EBM in the IRL's first years was due in part to many players playing both offense and defense and having a good kicker the last couple of years the team punted. Also, the school's culture of innovation likely helped introduce EBM and resulted in more organizational buy-in and participation, which strengthened the innovation champion's ideas as more likely to last (Rogers, 2003). Finally, not punting was easier for players to accept when compared to playing videogame football. By using this simile leadership frame (Fairhurst, 2011) that players identified with, the IRL also enhanced players' self-efficacy regarding adoption of his EBM.

Expanding on leadership framing. Other leadership framing examples identified in member communication came from discussions of why the IRL was successful as a coach. Those explanations were overwhelmingly positive, and they showed he successfully communicated preferred leadership frames that enhanced organizational identity (Fairhurst, 2011). Members indicated the IRL communicated reasons for change, acted genuinely, demonstrated expertise, inspired confidence in players, and was trustworthy. Members also said the IRL cultivated a culture expecting innovation, as Rogers (2003) asserted an innovation champion would, though the concept had not been applied to an IRL before.

RQ2a: Member Communication: Responding to Criticisms

Similarly, members also talked about responding to criticisms of EBM. Research question 2a sought the discursive resources used by members in those moments of criticism.

RQ2a: What discursive resources do members of an institutional outlier organization use to respond to criticisms of the adoption of EBM?

In many cases, the members' communication was consistent with the IRL's responses to criticisms. Members rejected pick and choose critiques, and they expressed that moments of failure were not fatal indications that EBM did not work most of the time. These member messages indicated the IRL successfully communicated his preferred leadership frames (Fairhurst, 2011) to coaches, parents, and players.

Among organizational members, another response to criticism that was consistent with the IRL's interview data was communication about playing football despite concussion risks. Most members viewed football concussion data or reservations about playing as wholesale criticisms of the sport and those who played it; none of the members had seen the data. The members resisted evidence that threatened what they valued greatly: playing football. Those responses reflected appeals to cognitive legitimacy by opponents of an innovation (Suchman, 1995) such as Suddaby and Greenwood's (2005) historical justifications (change is a threat to an established field) and Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla's (2006) normalization (playing football is a normal and accepted practice). Most organizational members agreed with the IRL's moralization that the character-building benefits of playing football outweighed health risks of concussions. These appeals to non-cognitive legitimacy reflected an instrumental rationalization of the benefits that would be lost (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurilla, 2006). In addition, members expressed that concussions were less of a risk because teams used safer methods today (not true and reflective of risk homeostasis theory), and concussion data cannot be fully understood, which reflected a distrust of statistical studies by opponents of EBM (Giluk & Rynes-Weller, 2012).

However, there were a few ways in which member communication revealed different responses to criticism than those used by the IRL. In the face of accusations that the team's success was due to recruiting better athletes, members expressed that the organizational strength

of the players was their intelligence, not their athleticism. This self-esteem boosting organizational identity is a frame that leaders seek to instill in members (Fairhurst, 2011), but it appeared to have naturally evolved from the players and parents, as it was not found in the coaches' communication. Similarly, members rejected the claim that the team had superior athletes by claiming it instead had superior coaches; no other team had those coaches, and that advantage had nothing to do with athleticism. This confidence-building assertion among players and parents was also a concept not found in the IRL's communication or that of the coaches.

Similarly, negative case analysis indicated a few players and parents were actually convinced by criticisms of playing football due to concussion study data. Each of these members had experience with injuries as players or as parents of injured players. Their conclusion was that concussion risks were likely too great to keep playing. These value-based accounts (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005) about what was the right thing to do reflected an appeal to non-cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). These members used a clinical rationale (Salge & Barrett, 2011) to argue that the greatest responsibility one had to boys playing football was protecting them from brain injuries. For a minority of members, noncognitive legitimacy enhanced the persuasiveness of an EBM argument regarding concussions risks. Additionally, as Vaara, Tienari, and Laurilla, (2006) claimed, dramatic narrativization could be called upon by both resisters and adopters of institutional pressures.

The last research question was the most difficult to examine because members interviewed did not truly object to the IRL. The question presumed that at least some organizational members would have objections to the IRL. The data did not quite affirm that.

RQ2b: Objections to the IRL

RQ2b: What discursive resources do organizational members use when objecting to an IRL's call to adopt EBM?

The member interview data did lightly touch on this topic. A negative case analysis of one parent opposed to the IRL's EBM was identified, but multiple attempts to contact the parent were not successful. He simply did not want to talk about his lack of full support. Members indicated no one objected to the IRL in any substantive way; moans from the stands were almost the only way members objected. The sparse data that did speak to RQ2b may be better understood in light of the one negative reason members gave for the IRL's success. He was seen as generally not approachable, which was not consistent with appreciative (Bushe, 2014) or dialogic (Kent & Taylor, 2002) communication by organizational leaders. However, being unapproachable to members meant they viewed the IRL as a leader who could not be persuaded to conform to institutional pressures.

Contributions to Theory and Research

This study advances theory or contributes to research in six ways. First, no previous study examined organizational communication about resisting institutional pressures through the adoption of EBM. As such, this study further contributed to a catalog of discursive resource used by an IRL and members who adopt evidence-based calls for change. Second, this study was among the first to identify legitimation communication strategies used by an IRL and members responding to criticism of EBM. Third, this study extended IRL research by identifying different types and combinations of material resources used by an IRL to help with institutional resistance. Next, this study was among the first to evaluate the use of dialogic public relations and appreciative communication by an IRL, finding only partial implementation. However,

appreciative communication was important for bolstering gain frames in IRL communication. Fifth, this study extended an understanding of how leadership framing can help an IRL counter objections to EBM and co-construct reality for members. Finally, this study contributed to theory by identifying boundary limitations of evidence-based institutional resistance persuasion directed to an IRL and members.

The first way this study advanced theory was by contributing to a catalog of discursive resources used by an IRL and members who adopt evidence-based calls for change. Previous IRL research (Bisel, Kramer & Banas, 2016) called for other researchers to help catalog communication strategies and resources used by an IRL and organizational members. Once the IRL in Bisel, Kramer and Banas' study made sense of what institutional pressures she wanted her organization to resist, she used sensebreaking messages to disparage institutional norms and raise up her alternative methods as superior. Similarly, analysis of the IRL's communication in the current study provided additional support for sensebreaking as the "core communicative action taken by IRLs" (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016, p. 20). Both members and the IRL used guiding values to counter rational myths about high school football, sensebreaking messages to reject wider-held institutional logics about football in general, and framing through stories to clarify sensebreaking messages. Answering the call from researchers (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016) to further investigate identity violations that lead IRLs to resist institutional pressures, the current study demonstrated how an IRL socially constructed an identity violation retrospectively and used sensebreaking to create alternative tactics. The IRL in the current study used honest inquiry to evaluate his identity as someone who made decisions based on objective data; seeing himself as someone who did not act without a statistically supported reason meant he had to reject institutionally preferred actions simply because everyone chose those actions.

The next way this study advanced theory was by identifying legitimation resources used by an IRL and members responding to criticisms of EBM. This study specifically extended legitimation communication research by demonstrating the power of dramatic narrativization in IRL and member communication. Stories from the IRL that illustrated and brought statistical evidence alive were recited much more by members than the statistical evidence alone. This finding continues the idea that leadership communication is often ironic or paradoxical (Cheny & Stohl, 2001; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2018). The IRL did not simply present evidence to achieve member buy-in, and the members recalled stories far more than statistical evidence. Similarly, in a negative case analysis of only a handful of members, personal stories were used as legitimation of evidence-based calls for better concussion prevention in football. Additional legitimation resources that were important for responding to criticisms were the IRL's performance success and positive news coverage. Members cited the two resources as persuasive reasons for buying into institutional resistance. Together, dramatic narrativizations, performance success, and positive news coverage appear to be "resources of resistance" available to IRLs (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007, p. 1347), which previous institutional researchers (McGuire & Hardy, 2009) have argued needed more clarification. Previous institutional resources have been vague concepts presented with unclear understandings of how those resources are used. The three resources in the current study, presented below in Table 17, are concrete, and it is clear how the IRL and others used the resources to resist institutional pressures.

Table 17

Resources of Resistance Available to IRLs and Members Using EBM

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Communicative Power</u>
Performance success	Members using it in persuasion (reinforces IRL's preferred organizational identity)
Dramatic narrativization	Available to IRL for strengthening sensebreaking messages
Positive news stories	Interpreted as the most persuasive message to doubters

Table 17

The third way the current study extended IRL research was by further investigating the types and combinations of material resources used by an IRL and the implications of those resources for institutional resistance. Previous research (Bisel, Kramer, & Banas, 2016) has shown an IRL develops alternatives to institutional pressures over a period of years. Similarly, the IRL in the current study introduced innovations over a period of years. After attaining performance success, those innovations were aided by adding a traveling summer team and a weight-lifting facility. The summer team allowed the coach to practice his innovations before seasons started while playing ranked teams from out of state. The weightlifting facility gave the team what nearly all well-funded schools had and helped build up his smaller athletes. Neither of these resources were talked about by the IRL or members as significant components to the team's success. However, both resources are found among most large high school football programs.

The fourth way this study advanced theory was by evaluating the use of dialogic public relations and appreciative inquiry by an IRL, finding only partial use. While the IRL initially sought input from nearly all members of the organization through honest inquiry, which reflected dialogic (Kent & Taylor, 2002) and appreciative principles, he now screens feedback from players and limits input from parents. This study continued a thread of research that indicates

most public relations practices still privilege organizational goals over true engagement with publics (Taylor & Kent, 2014). However, positive anticipations of the future (a concept that shares some similarity with appreciative communication) seemed to help the IRL's gain frames persuade members. The IRL argued for the statistical superiority and certainty of EBM, which members interpreted as positive anticipations of the future. This in turn enhanced the self-efficacy of organizational members; player communication revealed a belief that statistical outcomes were objectively certain to occur, which served as confidence fuel in the face of what most outside the organization subjectively saw as impossible.

In addition, the self-production of full gain frames by members ("it's a no-lose situation") when describing a tactic that the organization gave up (not punting) was surprising. While the idea that negative frames achieved better persuasion outcomes was well established, positive frames can perform just as well when those receiving the messages about risky choices have high self-efficacy (Hallahan, 1999). This study extended framing research by identifying specific strategies for increasing member self-efficacy while using gain frames in IRL communication. In fact, initial IRL communication that emphasized gain frames may lay the groundwork for members to interpret future innovations as gains, even without the IRL communicating that explicit message.

The fifth way this study advanced theory was by demonstrating how leadership framing served as a discursive resource for an IRL. Leadership framing enabled the IRL to counter objections to EBM and co-construct reality for members. For example, members communicated that organizational failure was understood to be the fault of the IRL and coaches, a leadership frame that helped maintain member harmony in adversity (Fairhurst, 2011). This frame was particularly strategic because the material resource of performance success, which legitimizes

EBM, implied performance failure would delegitimize EBM. The IRL's leadership frame for failure strategically reinterpreted the logical opposite understanding of how members framed performance success. While risky if losses piled up, the blame-me strategy legitimated EBM since the team rarely lost. Members also revealed the IRL's framing of EBM through positive news coverage strengthened organizational identity for members, reflecting a hoped-for outcome of leadership frames (Fairhurst, 2011). Finally, member communication revealed leadership framing can result in the self-production of self-esteem-boosting organizational identities by members. In the face of accusations that the team's success was due to recruiting better athletes, members co-created an identity of being smart and well-coached, not having superior athletes. This communication naturally evolved among the players and parents, as it was not found in the IRL's communication. Therefore, this study advanced theory by highlighting how leadership framing as used by an IRL can result in members self-producing preferred organizational identities, specifically in response to false accusations. The potential for members to self-produce preferred organizational identities may be a resource for IRLs whose organizations are nearly certain to be looked at with suspicion after rejecting institutional norms.

The last way this study advanced theory was by highlighting conditions by which evidence-based persuasion about resisting institutional pressures failed to convince both an IRL and members. The IRL's response to persuasion based on concussion studies was to doubt an organization (the NFL), people (professional players), and data gathered from studying those players. He and members normalized and moralized the rightness of continuing to play football. In the current study, an IRL asking members to alter tactics was accepted more easily than research experts asking members to quit playing. When evidence-based persuasion is perceived

as a request to quit participating in an institutionalized field that members strongly identify with, rather than simply changing tactics, that persuasion is unlikely to be accepted.

Practical Recommendations

As an analysis of how an IRL and members used discursive resources when responding to evidence-based calls to resist institutional pressures, the study suggested the following practical recommendations. Though the characteristics of this organization are a school with a football team led by an authoritative leader, a coach, the following recommendations are directed to leaders and members of multiple types of organizations.

Consider Quietly and Slowly Introducing EBM

The IRL did not actively seek out news coverage of his innovations, and he did not make wholesale changes in one season. Members indicated his success was due in part to not overwhelming supporters with all EBM practices at one time. In fact, the few coaches who have sought to emulate the IRL have not had nearly as much success. Those coaches also tried to introduce entire new systems in one season. Similarly, achieving success early helps mitigate objections, and video proof of EBM working at its best considerably silenced critics.

Frame Resistance as a Competitive Advantage

The IRL's guiding value that entitlement was earned negated criticism of using an EBM system no one else used. That criticism was turned around and seen as a key competitive advantage; since no one else used EBM, the team was more prepared on offense and deserved to win.

Emphasize That Failure When Using EBM is the Leaders' Fault for not Better Preparing Members

The IRL never wanted members to doubt the superiority of EBM. Therefore, if the team experienced failure, the leaders took full responsibility for not better preparing the team for success. They never entertained questions of whether EBM worked. Though risky, when coupled with performance success, this strategy further legitimates EBM.

Do Not Underestimate the Power of Statistical Certainty

The IRL's team has never lost a game when it has recovered two onside kicks. The team knows that once an onside kick is secured, they are virtually guaranteed to win. Similarly, the team knows that it scores nearly 80% of the time when a fourth down is completed. The members know the statistics and their confident beliefs guide their actions with expectancy, regardless of how impossible a situation seems to those outside of the organization.

Metaphorical Stories Have Staying Power

Among all the appeals to legitimacy used by the IRL to persuade members to resist institutional pressures by adopting EBM, ironically it was the dramatic narrativization of metaphorical stories, not statistical evidence, that had the most staying power in members' minds, though members never indicated that reality being ironic. Nearly all members could cite and explain the butterfly effect. The story reinforced for members how EBM gave them superior benefits and meant the team was more prepared and should expect to win.

Consider Applying Honest Inquiry to Safety

The IRL and members have developed an EBM system that used objective data to achieve performance outcomes that look impossible to outsiders. Given that track record of achieving what was considered impossible, organizations that want to emulate PA would be well

served to seek evidence-based answers to questions like “How can we prevent concussions from ever happening again on our team?” It may seem impossible, but that does not usually stop an IRL.

Limitations and Future Directions

There were a number of limitations in this study. Almost all members who were interviewed were males in age from early 20s to late 50s. In addition, the participants were not particularly diverse in ethnicity, though not all players were Caucasian. This study used an organization that did not have a particularly democratic leadership structure. A football coach wants discipline and focus, not debate and disagreement. Next, this organization was not a for-profit organization. Last, the data did not include true detractors of the organization’s EBM, though attempts were made to do so.

Future directions for research could examine IRLs who use EBM in organizations with more ethnically diverse members who comprise more than one gender. Additionally, future studies could look at communication practices of IRLs in more participatory leadership structures in for-profit organizations that rely on team-based project management, for example. Future studies could also attain a fuller picture of IRL communication by studying opponents who were not persuaded by legitimation appeals or performance improvements. Finally, an additional perspective that the current study did not examine was online chat forum and social media communication by supporters and opponents of the IRL’s EBM. These growing media where organizational assent and dissent occur likely offer an additional nuanced understanding of how the adoption and resistance of EBM is communicated.

Conclusion

Organizational leaders and members who face a choice of conforming to institutional pressures or resisting those pressures through the adoption of EBM have a number of discursive resources to choose from. The power of legitimation communication and framing can help leaders and members co-construct reality, preferred organizational identities, and hopeful anticipations of the future. Though some evidence may present such a threat to organizational identity that it will be rejected, confidence built on statistical certainty can potentially persuade members to achieve organizational outcomes that outsiders consider impossible. This case study demonstrates how one IRL achieved success using these strategies.

Appendix 1: Rules of Football (from Romer, 2005)

This appendix describes the main rules of football that are relevant to the paper.

A football field is 100 yards long. Each team defends its own goal line and attempts to move the ball toward its opponent's. The yard lines are numbered starting at each goal line and are referred to according to which team's goal line they are closer to. Thus, for example, the yard line 20 yards from one team's goal line is referred to as that team's 20-yard line.

The game begins with a kickoff: one team puts the ball in play by kicking the ball from its own 30-yard line to the other team. After the kickoff, the team with the ball has four plays, or downs, to move the ball 10 yards. If at any point it gains the 10 yards, it begins a new set of four downs. Plays are referred to by the down, number of yards to go for a first down, and location. For example, suppose that the receiving team returns the opening kickoff to its 25-yard line. Then it has first and 10 on its own 25. If it advances the ball 5 yards on the first play, it has second and 5 on its own 30. If it advances 8 yards on the next play (for a total of 13), it now has first and 10 on its own 38. The team with the ball is referred to as the offense, the other team as the defense.

If a team advances the ball across its opponent's goal line, it scores a touchdown. A touchdown gives the team 6 points and an opportunity to try for an extra point, which almost always produces 1 point. If a team has a first and 10 within 10 yards of its opponent's goal line, it cannot advance 10 yards without scoring a touchdown. In this case, the team is said to have first and goal rather than first and 10.

On fourth down, the offense has three choices. First, it can attempt a conventional play. If the play fails to produce a first down or touchdown, the defense gets a first down where the play ends. Second, it can kick (or "punt") the ball to the defense; this usually gives the defense a first

down, but at a less advantageous point on the field. Third, it can attempt to kick the ball through the uprights located 10 yards behind the opponent's goal line (a "field goal"). If it succeeds, it scores 3 points. If it fails, the defense gets a first down at the point where the kick was made, which is normally 8 yards farther from its goal line than the play started. (If the field goal was attempted from less than 20 yards from the goal line, however, the defense gets a first down on its 20-yard line rather than at the point of the attempt.) After either a touchdown or a field goal, the scoring team kicks off from its 30-yard line, as at the beginning of the game.

The final (and by far the least common) way to score is a safety: if the offense is pushed back across its own goal line, the defense scores 2 points, and the offense puts the ball in play by kicking to the other team from its 20-yard line (a "free kick").

The game is divided into four 15-minute periods. At the beginnings of the second and fourth quarters, play continues at the point where it left off. At the beginning of the third quarter, however, play begins afresh with a kickoff by the team that did not kick off at the beginning of the game.

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

Questions for Organizational Leaders (head coach, assistant coaches, administrators)

1-Briefly provide a history of how you were convinced to reject how everyone else plays football for the no-punt, always-on-side-kick approach. What messages particularly persuaded you?

2-Please discuss how you as a PA leader have talked about the risks of implementing practices like never punting or always on-side kicking. How did you discuss using this different approach to football with:

- Other PA coaches?
- PA administrators?
- PA players?
- PA players' parents?
- Others outside of PA (coaches, players, parents, etc.)?

3-When advocating for the no-punt approach to football with different audiences (players, coaches, parents, administrators, supporters), what messages have seemed persuasive and what messages seemed to miss the mark?

4-How have you responded to the national news media attention PA has received regarding its no-punt, on-side kicking approach? Has this attention helped or hurt your experience at PA?

5-How do you respond to people who still criticize PA for its decision to never punt?

6-There have been a few close losses in championship games for PA teams. How did you respond to criticisms of PA's fourth-down, no-punt approach in light of those close calls where doing what other coaches normally do possibly would have resulted in a victory? (For example, critics say punting would have been safer with a lead at the end of a game)?

7-Some have said PA's success is because it is a selective private school, not because of its unorthodox methods. How do you respond to those criticisms, which seem to suggest the no-punt approach is not why PA has had success?

8a-Why do you think some PA members hope no team copies PA's no-punt, on-side-kick approach?

8b-If you shared this assessment, how would you describe your decision to advocate for it for PA but not for other football teams (especially those you would not play against)?

9-One of PA's stated philosophies from news interviews is asking "Why do we do what we do?" about all aspects of the program. Please talk a little about how that maxim is realized in your program and your communication?

10a-What advice would you offer to someone who seeks to introduce innovations rooted in statistics (like never punting in football)?

10b- What if this person's organization is in an industry that does not welcome innovations over what everyone else currently does?

Questions for Organizational Members (players, players' parents, and supporters)

1-Describe your involvement with PA's football program (such as how long, what capacity, etc.).

2- The coach of PA never punts because he says that statistics show that going for it on fourth down is more successful in the long run. What do you think of this practice? Why do you support or oppose this approach to football?

3-Similarly, the coach of PA does an onside-kick after touchdowns because he says that statistics show this practice increases opponents' turnovers. What do you think of this practice? Why do you support or oppose it?

4-In addition, the coach of PA never returns punts because he says that statistics show it results in too many turnovers for PA. What do you think of this practice? Why do you support or oppose it?

5-Please discuss how you as a PA member have talked about the risks of implementing practices like never punting or always on-side kicking. How did you discuss using this different approach to football with:

- PA coaches?
- PA administrators?
- PA players?
- PA players' parents?
- Others outside of PA (coaches, players, parents, etc.)?

6-How have you responded to the national news media attention PA has received regarding its no-punt, on-side kicking approach? Has this attention helped or hurt your experience at PA?

7- The coach of PA never punts, always on-side kicks, and does not return punts because he says that statistics show that these practices are more successful in the long run. However, not everyone in football is convinced. How do you respond to people when they criticize PA for this practice?

8-There have been a few close losses in championship games for PA teams. How did or would you respond to criticisms of PA's fourth-down, no-punt approach in light of those close calls

where a not doing what all other coaches do seems to have cost the championship. (For example, critics say punting would have been safer with a lead at the end of the game)?

9- Some have said PA's success is because it is a selective private school, not because of its unorthodox methods. How do you respond to those criticisms, which seem to suggest the no-punt approach is not why PA has had success?

10a-Why do you think some PA members hope no team copies PA's no-punt, on-side-kick approach?

10b-If you shared this assessment, how would you describe your decision to advocate for it for PA but not for other football teams (especially those you would not play against)?

11-When talking about the no-punt approach to football with different audiences (players, coaches, parents, administrators, supporters), what messages have seemed persuasive to others and what messages seemed to miss the mark?

12-One of PA's stated philosophies from news interviews is asking "Why do we do what we do?" about all aspects of the program. Please talk a little about how that maxim is realized in your program and your communication?

13-What advice would you offer to someone who seeks to introduce innovations rooted in statistics (like never punting in football)?

14- What if this person's organization is in an industry that does not welcome innovations over what everyone else currently does?

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