UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

NEGOTIATING THE TENSIONS OF COLLECTIVE CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

CARRISA SHELL HOELSCHER
Norman, Oklahoma
2016

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/34544

NEGOTIATING THE TENSIONS OF
COLLECTIVE CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

BY

_____
Dr. Michael W. Kramer, Chair

_____
Dr. Young Y. Kim

_____
Dr. Ryan S. Bisel

_____
Dr. James O. Olufowote

_____
Dr. Eric A. Day

© Copyright by CARRISA SHELL HOELSCHER 2016
All Rights Reserved.

To Cassidy, for showing me how to grow.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the culmination of a doctoral program that has forever changed the person I am. As such, I relish this opportunity to recognize the individuals who have influenced my growth along the way. First, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the participants of the "Interorganizational Prevention Board." Even when it was probably uncomfortable to do so, these individuals welcomed my presence as the researcher typing away in the back of the room. While I observed their meaningful work, they also taught me some important lessons about communication and about life in general. My favorite such lesson was: "Sometimes life is all about pushing the rock uphill with your face."

Second, to my advisor, Michael Kramer: Thank you. Your mentorship and guidance has made be a better teacher, a better scholar, and a better member of the academic community. The stability and voice of reason that you provide to me is more valuable than I can describe. I am proud to have been your advisee and I will carry the lessons learned from you throughout my career. I am similarly grateful to my committee members: Young Kim, Ryan Bisel, James Olufowote, and Eric Day. The direction and advice I received from each of these individuals proved to be seminal in my dissertation project and in my approach to research in general. I am proud to have selected a committee full of supportive and stimulating members who model for me what it means to be successful and influential scholars.

Last, I owe much of my good fortune in life to my family. To the friends who became family (you know who you are!): You crazy people taught me what it means to climb the mountain. Thank you for climbing it with me, for finding meaning in the

moments, and for making time for laughter along the way. To my parents: Your love and unwavering confidence in me has fueled my passion since I was a little girl begging to stop at all the museums and libraries. Mom, you taught me to never lose sight of what matters most in life and your perseverance amazes me. You continually show me what it means to be ardently committed to the ones I love. Dad, you taught me the power of focus and hard work. You have modeled true wisdom and I am grateful for your guidance. Finally, to Seth: You are my safe haven. You are my true partner and the love of my life. Thank you for taking leaps of faith with me, for putting in the hard work of true love, for believing that I can shine, and for being the proudest one in the room when I do. Lover you.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments....iv

List of Tables....ix

Abstract....x

Chapter 1: Introduction....1

Rationale....1

Review of Literature....5

Interorganizational Relationships and Collaboration....5

Types and Characteristics of IORs....6

Communication Concerns in IORs....10

Organizational Change....15

Types of Change....16

Classic Models of Change....20

Categories of Change Theories: Research Perspectives....23

Communication Concerns during Change....26

Theoretical Perspective: Dialectical Tensions....29

Common Tensions and Negotiation Strategies....33

Dialectical Theory in Groups and Organizations....35

Research Questions....39

Chapter 2: Method....43

Research Site....43

Access....46

Data Collection....47

Observation.....47
Interviews.....49
Document Collection.....51
Data Analysis.....52
Verification Strategies.....54
Chapter 3: Results.....56
Dialectical Tensions Manifest in Communicative Interactions.....56
Commitment-Based Tensions.....58
Collaborative/Competitive.....58
Optimism/Skepticism.....62
Process-Based Tensions.....64
Full Participation/Continued Progress.....64
Creativity/Parameters.....66
Outcome-Based Tensions.....68
Impactful Change/Viable Change.....69
Broad Progress/Nuanced Progress.....71
Necessary Change/Palatable Change.....74
Communication Strategies for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions.....78
Privilege One Pole.....80
Balance or Alternate between Both Poles.....81
Move Action Forward.....83
Communicative Tactics Used when Negotiating Dialectical Tensions.....84
Acknowledging.....85

Suspending.....87
Hedging.....90
Deferring to Authoritative Text.....92
Summary of Results.....96
Chapter 4: Discussion.....97
Communication Concerns in Collective Change.....102
Dialectical Tensions of Collective Change.....108
Strategies for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions.....113
Communicative Tactics for Achieving Negotiation Strategies.....117
Limitations and Future Directions.....123
Conclusion.....126
References.....127

List of Tables

Table 1. Timeline of Meetings Observed and Interviews Conducted.....49

Table 2. RQ1: Dialectical Tensions Manifest in Communicative Interactions.....57

Table 3. RQ2a and RQ2b: Strategies for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions.....79

Table 4. Results Linked to Previous Literature: Dialectical Tensions.....112

Table 5. Results Linked to Previous Literature: Negotiation Strategies and Communicative Tactics.....115

Negotiating the Tensions of Collective Change Implementation

Abstract

Given the increasing number of interorganizational collaborations across governmental and private sectors, this study furthers theoretical understanding of these important relationships by focusing on dialectical tensions experienced in a collective change effort. The site of this study was an 11-member state-wide interorganizational board tasked with the goal of creating practice and policy change across all involved organizations. Data collection included prolonged observation of meetings over a period of 18 months and multiple interviews with taskforce leaders. Analytical procedures began with a modified version of constant comparative analysis that ultimately guided the research toward a tension-centered approach for ongoing data collection and analysis. The use of dialectical theory allowed for a deeper understanding of the meaning-making processes of the taskforce under investigation.

Results indicated seven specific dialectical tensions representing three broad tensions types: commitment-based tensions, process-based tensions, and outcome-based tensions. Commitment-based tensions included the collaborative/competitive tension and the skepticism/optimism tension. Process-based tensions were the full participation/continued progress tension and the creativity/parameters tension. Last, outcome-based tensions included the impactful change/viable change tension, the broad progress/nuanced progress tension, and the necessary change/palatable change tension. Further, three unique strategies for discursively negotiating such tensions included privileging one pole of a tension, balancing or alternating between both poles of a tension, and/or moving action forward. Finally, the seminal contribution of this study is the finding of four distinct communicative tactics utilized to implement a given

negotiation strategy. These communicative tactics were acknowledging, suspending, hedging, and deferring to authoritative texts.

This study contributes an extension of dialectical theory by distinguishing between the strategies or goals apparent when participants are negotiating tensions and the communicative tactics utilized to achieve those strategies. The results of this study clarify how negotiation strategies and communicative tactics are separate but related, consequently providing a more complete overall picture of the group meaning-making process. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are offered as a means of better understanding and negotiating dialectical tensions in collective change efforts.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale

Today's societal, political, and economic landscape has led organizations across a variety of sectors to determine how they essentially can do more with less. One increasingly popular way of doing so, particularly in the government sector, is through organizational collaboration. Collaborations are seen as necessary given that "many of the meaningful results that the federal government seeks to achieve […] require the coordinated efforts of more than one federal agency, level of government, or sector" (U.S. Government Accountability Office [G.A.O.], 2014, p. 1). Such coordinated efforts are becoming progressively more common between governmental and nonprofit agencies. In fact, it was recently reported that an estimated 56,000 nonprofit organizations across the U.S. are engaged in official collaborations with the government sector (Pettijohn, Boris, & Farrell, 2014).

The increasing popularity of collective efforts among organizations have not gone unnoticed by organizational scholars. Interorganizational relationships (IORs) and collaborations have been well studied in the past few decades. Koschmann (2013) defined these relationships as "distinct organizational forms composed of members who organize around focal problems/issues to leverage resources and accomplish objectives that could not be realized alone" (p. 62). Barringer and Harrison (2000) have done extensive research on IORs, providing a typology of theories describing motivating factors for involvement in such collaborations. As these authors explained, IORs are an important area of study given the complexities, high stakes, and potential rewards involved for contributing organizations. As such, a variety of topics in the area have been examined, including interorganizational networks (Abrahamson & Fombrun,

1992), collaboration specific to nonprofits (Miller, Scott, Stage, & Birkholt, 1995), and collaborative tensions experienced by involved parties (Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010). Our theoretical and practical knowledge of IORs has been steadily expanding in past decades. However, as IORs increase in popularity, scholarship must continue to examine the multiple and ever-changing types of such collaborative relationships among organizations.

The site of this study—the Interorganizational Prevention Board (IPB)—provides a compelling example of an interorganizational effort. IPB is comprised of representatives from 11 governmental and community-based nonprofit agencies that have come together to address a rising statewide health and safety concern stemming from substance abuse issues. In fact, the state in which IPB operates reports some of the worst numbers in the country for deaths and accidents related to the abuse of both legal and illegal substances. While the structure of IPB is similar to a typical IOR, this board does have a unique characteristic: IPB has an end goal to produce change across all involved agencies with regard to their policies and practices related to substance abuse offenses and concerns. Essentially, IPB can be understood as a large-scale *collective change* effort.

The agencies represented on IPB are involved with addressing substance abuse concerns in a variety of ways, including public relations, education, prevention, treatment, enforcement, and prosecution. As Gray (1989) explained, collaboration in this sense is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (p. 5). Thus, the interorganizational change

effort under examination in this study is one that seeks to solve a problem by changing or altering a variety of organizational policies, programs, and perceptions surrounding the issue across multiple agencies.

In her seminal book on organizational change from a communication perspective, Lewis (2011) opened with an oft-cited quote by Confucius: "Only the wisest and the stupidest of men never change." As this quote and Lewis' work indicate, change is a topic that has long permeated all aspects of life. We are a society simultaneously fascinated by, fearful of, and resistant to change. As such, it should be unsurprising to know that the study of change has maintained popularity among organizational communication scholars for many years. The body of literature has much to offer in terms of varying types of organizational change, communication throughout the change processes (i.e., change announcements, solicitation of input), outcomes of change, and resistance to change (Lewis, 2014). While we know much about organizational change, questions regarding how a change effort might communicatively occur in an interorganizational context remain unanswered by the existing body of research.

To extend what we know about organizational change to the realm of interorganizational change, the broad goal of this study is to better understand participant experiences of communication processes in a collective change effort. An inductive, grounded approach to inquiry was utilized to achieve this goal and, early in the research process, the discovery of persistent tensions permeating communicative aspects of the collective change process became central to data collection and analysis. Consequently, a tension-centered approach to inquiry was adopted as a means of

examining how participants accepted and managed tensions, rather than seeking to eliminate them (McNamee & Peterson, 2014; Tretheway & Ashcraft, 2004). Utilizing such a perspective allows scholars to remain open to the co-presence of tensions and strategies for managing such tensions in communicative interactions.

As previous work in related fields has indicated, this tension-centered approach is appropriate for investigating both organizational change (e.g., Barge, Lee, Maddux, Nabring, & Townsend, 2008; Seo, Putnam, & Bartnuek, 2004; Stolzfus, Stohl, & Seibold, 2011) and interorganizational relationships (e.g., Lewis et al., 2010). This study, however, seeks to move toward synthesizing these two areas of research by investigating the tensions, particularly those dialectical in nature, experienced during a collective change effort.

Utilizing prolonged observations of IPB interactions, in-depth interviews with taskforce leaders, and pertinent document collection, this study illuminates the tensions apparent in the communicative interactions of participants involved in a collective change implementation effort. As Lewis (2014) noted, "rarely have researchers examined interaction among stakeholders in real time to uncover how communication plays various roles throughout a change process" (p. 518). By observing this interorganizational group from its inception through its initial implementation of planned changes, this study emphasizes and analyzes the communicative nature of the collective change process. The following chapters provide a review of relevant literature, a description of methods utilized, a presentation of results, and a discussion of theoretical and practical implications for dialectical tensions of collective change.

Review of Literature

As a means of better understanding both the interorganizational collaboration and organizational change scholarship, and to better situate this study as an examination of a collective change implementation effort, the appropriate literature will be reviewed in what follows. Furthermore, the theoretical lens of dialectical tensions will be explained and related to the context of an interorganizational change effort. Last, this chapter concludes by presenting the research questions to be addressed by this study.

Interorganizational Relationships and Collaboration

Most simply, interorganizational relationships (IORs) can be understood as "relatively enduring linkages among multiple organizations" (Miller et al., 1995, p. 681). The study of organizational collaboration and IORs is largely attributed to beginning with systems scholars who focused their attention on organizations during the mid-20th century. In fact, since the rise of the open systems perspectives of organizations (Katz & Kahn, 1966), IORs have often been utilized as a mechanism for examining environmental factors that influence organizations because "a major portion of the environment consists of other organizations" (Miller et al., 1995, p. 680). However, given the ability of IORs to create and increase value by allowing for the sharing of resources and knowledge across organizational lines (Oliver, 1990), and given the increased popularity of IORs across private and public sectors (Pettijohn et al., 2014), scholars eventually turned their attention on IORs from environmental factors of secondary interest to the primary unit of analysis. While a vast literature on IORs exists in the field of management (for an overview, see Barringer & Harrison, 2000), organizational communication scholars have also examined communication issues in IORs more recently (Keyton, Ford, & Smith, 2008; Lewis, et al., 2010).

Types and Characteristics of IORs. As Koschmann (2013) explained, IORs take on "distinct organizational forms" that make them a unique context for the study of organizational issues (p. 62). Barringer and Harrison (2000) provided a description of the six distinct forms that IORs can take. Borrowing terms from Weick (1979), the authors generally distinguished between IORs that are tightly coupled and those that are loosely coupled. As they explained: "Tightly coupled forms of organizing […] are those in which the participants are linked together by formal structures and may involve joint ownership" (Barringer & Harrison, 2000, p. 384). Examples of tightly coupled IORs include *joint ventures* (an IOR in which a new entity is formed), *consortias* (a unique type of joint venture that focuses on meeting an exclusive need), and *networks* (collections of organizations bound together through a social arrangement). Essentially, tightly coupled IORs are seen as such because the relationship between organizations becomes quite interdependent with formal structures, arrangements, and policies put into place to govern the operations of the IOR. Given the extent to which IPB is focused on an exclusive need (i.e., reducing the instances of substance abuse cases) and the formality of its structure (i.e., the board was created at the order of high-ranking state government official), IPB would likely be considered a tightly coupled consortia.

In contrast, loosely coupled IORs typically do not involve joint ownership and instead are comprised of more informal structures. Examples of loosely coupled IORs include *alliances* (an exchange relationship between two or more entities), *trade associations* (nonprofit organizations formed by collections of agencies in the same industry), and *interlocking directorates* (a relationship involving executives of one or more agencies sitting on the board of another). These types of IORs are less

interdependent than their tightly-coupled counterparts as agreements between organizations are considered less formal and therefore less restricting.

While an IOR such as the taskforce examined in this study might broadly be considered a tightly coupled consortia given the formality of the arrangement, some of the relationships among organizations involved in IPB are likely to be more loosely coupled. For example, most of the organizations involved are governmental agencies that work together often, both formally and informally. However, a few of the organizations are nonprofits not consistently in partnerships with governmental agencies. These nonprofits might consider their involvement more loosely tied to other organizations represented on IPB given their unique substance abuse related functions (e.g., public awareness, victim support). Ultimately, understanding how tightly or loosely coupled an IOR is allows researchers to uncover unique issues these collaborations might face. These issues include transaction costs and benefits, resource dependence, strategic choice, stakeholder theory, organizational learning, and institutional theory (Barringer & Harrison, 2000).

Another way of categorizing IORs was offered by Whetten (1981), who explained that IORs can be understood through the dimensions of inclusivity (i.e., how extensive the relationships are) and intensity (i.e., how committed the relationships are). With regard to inclusivity, the four main types of IORs are dyadic linkages, organization sets, action sets, and networks. *Dyadic linkages* describe the most basic type of IOR, which is an established relationship between only two organizations. *Organization sets* are groups of organizations that have one central linking organization. In other words, an organization set is the term used to explain multiple dyadic linkages

held by one central organization. *Action sets*, however, refer to multiple organizations interacting with one another typically due to their mutual interest in one issue or field. Finally, *networks* refer to more complex action sets in which organizations outside a given field might be involved for their environmental relevance. Utilizing these terms, the interorganizational relationship of interest in this study would likely be considered an action set. IPB, the board comprised of eleven governmental and community-based organizational representatives, was formed as a means of addressing a statewide substance abuse issue. As such, each organization is included given their interest or part in addressing the issue at hand.

With regard to the intensity of IORs, Whetten (1981) proposed a continuum to better understand how committed relationships might be. At the most intensive end of the continuum is *corporate relationships*, in which a central authority is given formal control. Utilizing Barringer and Harrison's (2000) terms, corporate relationships can be understood as tightly coupled. At the least intensive end of the continuum is *mutual adjustments*. These loosely coupled IORs are often only temporary, informal, and have few shared goals. In the middle of the continuum, *alliances* maintain the informality of mutual adjustments, but strive to coordinate an independent organization comprised of representation from multiple organizations. Examples of alliances include federations, consortiums, and coalitions. From this perspective, an interorganizational relationship like IPB would be considered an alliance; it is clearly focused on the coordination of interdependent efforts to address a specific issue.

While much work has been done to categorize types of IORs, scholars have also examined a variety of motivations for participating in IORs. Oliver (1990) presented

one of the most well-known typologies of motivations for involvement in IORs, offering six main contingencies. First, and perhaps most frequently occurring, is the motivation of *necessity*. Often organizations must adhere to regulatory or legal requirements that demand involvement in IORs. Therefore, necessity is one contingency that is not voluntary in nature. Second, the term *asymmetry* explains the motivation of entering into an IOR as a means for exercising power over other organizations. In contrast, *reciprocity* is a motivation that seeks high levels of collaboration rather than power and control. Next, *efficiency* refers to the motivation for simply improving production, while *stability* is the motivation of obtaining greater means for prediction and in turn reducing uncertainty. Last, the motivation of *legitimacy* refers to an organization's desire to improve their reputation or image in a greater network, community, or industry.

In a collaborative setting like IPB, all six of these motivations might be at work. For example, because the taskforce was put together at the insistence of a government official, the involvement of each organization might be described as necessary. However, because there is one coordinating agency (described in more detail in the following chapter) whose representatives fulfill a variety of leadership roles in the group, asymmetry might also be at play. Yet, while some involved organizations might perceive asymmetry, others might view their involvement in IPB as a means for reciprocity, or stronger collaboration with other organizations that what might have been experienced in the past. Further, some involved organizations might experience increased efficiency and/or stability as a result of their participation in IPB as processes are refined or resources are shared or redistributed. Finally, given the nuances of the

substance abuse problem being addressed by IPB, legitimacy is also a likely motivating factor. To illustrate, organizations playing a role in substance abuse issues in the state include both law enforcement and prevention/treatment agencies. Traditionally, these types of agencies do not collaborate much because of their fundamentally different approaches to certain issues. By participating in IPB, certain prevention or treatment organizations might see a potential opportunity for increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of law enforcement agencies and vice versa, promoting future cooperation between the two. Ultimately, understanding the motivations for organizations' involvement in an IOR, such as the one examined in this study, can point researchers to important communicative issues at play.

Communication Concerns in IORs. Our knowledge of IORs has been steadily expanding in past decades, particularly with regard to the types of characteristics of such relationships between and among organizations. However, research must continue to evolve as IORs change with the fast pace of their ever-changing environments. Organizational communication scholars, for example, have investigated collaborations among organizations and highlighted a number of communication-related concerns that have advanced our understanding for both theory and practice.

One unique type of interorganizational relationship that has received attention in the field of organizational communication is the collaboration of nonprofits. For example, in a study of 23 nonprofit agencies focused on addressing homelessness, Miller et al. (1995) presented compelling arguments relevant to communication issues in collaborations. First, results indicated the necessity of involvement from the larger community in the form of volunteers and/or awareness for the IOR to be successful.

Such a finding highlights the importance of a network or systems perspective that accounts for environmental factors when examining IORs.

Second, Miller et al. (1995) found that some organizations struggled with an "autonomy issue." In other words, organizations experienced a tension between the desire to remain autonomous in their decisions and operations and the need to give up some of that autonomy in order to receive assistance or benefit from the IOR. In this case, such assistance was in the form of governmental funding. This tension, which is likely to appear in any type of IOR (Galaskiewiez, 1985), will be negotiated in a variety of ways. For example, some organizations might see the relinquishing of control as a necessary evil, while others will refuse to give up autonomy and instead become more dependent on other resources in the environment.

Thus, while collaboration among nonprofits is a relatively unique context of IORs, past research provides important contributions to our understandings of how a variety of IORs might function in terms of relinquishing or maintaining autonomy. For example, Maguire and Hardy (2005) examined issues of identity that were closely related to the autonomy issue in their study of a cross-sector collaboration involving non-profits and pharmaceutical companies. Participants in this study dealt with autonomy issues and drove strategic change either by further identifying with their home organization, by counter-identifying from their home organization (i.e., showing themselves as someone who is different than others in the organization and others in the collaboration), or by dis-identifying with their home organization to further identify with the collaborative effort.

In the case of IPB, the board is not solely comprised of representatives from nonprofits or traditional organizations, but also includes government agencies. Because government agencies are unique types of organizations that are neither nonprofit nor for-profit, the individuals in IPB might experience autonomy tensions similar to those explained by Miller and coauthors (1995) and Maguire and Hardy (2005).

In another important contribution to the communication literature on IORs, Keyton et al. (2008) proposed a mesolevel model of collaboration. This model describes the concurrent communication of collaboration participants that occurs at multiple levels when organizations work together. In their study, the authors examined a collaboration in which members from multiple organizations worked together in a variety of teams managed by a singular coordinating agency. Therefore, communication occurred at three levels: among team members, among teams and the coordinating agency, and between the collaboration and the public. From this perspective, communication both creates and modifies collaboration; as individuals communicate at multiple levels, the collaboration completes its work. Heath (2007) also substantiates this claim by explaining that meaningful dialogic moments (i.e., consequential moments in talk) can be the catalyst to long-lasting, meaningful changes in collaborative efforts. Ultimately, this mesolevel model of collaboration highlights the importance of communication given that "organizations cannot collaborate, but individuals representing them can" (Keyton et al., 2008, p. 298). In the case of IPB, collaboration occurs at three similar levels: among members of workgroups (described in greater detail in the following chapter); between workgroups, the board, and the coordinating agency; and between IPB and the public.

By examining communication occurring at multiple levels during collaboration, Keyton and coauthors (2008) were able to recognize that "collaboration structure is messier and more complex than previously acknowledged." This complexity can be partially attributed to the difficulty experienced by coordinating agencies trying to create and monitor a communication structure, due in part to constantly changing memberships. This observation is consistent with a bona fide group perspective, which acknowledges that authentic groups typically have fluctuating membership, along with interdependence among members and indefinite boundaries (Putnam & Stohl, 1990; Frey, 2003). In other words, the membership, contextual influences, and identities of a group will change over time.

Stohl and Walker (2002) argued that the bona fide group perspective was particularly useful for understanding collaborating groups, highlighting unique concerns that face groups of collaborators from multiple organizations (as opposed to the oft-studied traditional, singular-organization groups or virtual/online groups). For these authors, examination of a collaborating group should begin with an understanding of environmental exigencies and the impetus for creating the collaborative effort. Understanding such exigencies is important because "they affect both the structure and process of the collaborative effort. Obviously, the impetus for the organizations involved has direct impact on the 'results' of a collaborative effort" (Stohl & Walker, 2002, p. 242).

The bona fide collaborating group model directs scholars not only to issues of changing membership, interdependence, and permeable boundaries, but also to characteristics of the environment that produced the collaboration. Similarly, Cooper

and Shumate (2012) successfully applied the bona fide group perspective to a collaboration network, emphasizing that collaborations are "embedded in a complex environment that enables some configurations and constrains others" and that the relationships in IORs are mutually influential (p. 647). Thus, environmental features will influence communication in a collaborating group, perhaps more so than in a single-organization group.

Ultimately, the mesolevel communicative model of collaboration and the application of the bona fide group perspective to collaborating groups highlight the constitutive nature of communication in interorganizational collaborations. The conceptualization of communication as constitutive (that is, communication generates or produces organizational realities) is a metamodel prevalent in communication theory (Craig, 1999) and has been utilized in describing and explaining a number of communication phenomena. In one important example relevant to the current study, Koschmann (2013) proposed that collective identity in collaborations should not be understood as a cognitive construct as traditionally explained by existing group literature. Instead, a collective identity for collaborative groups can be understood as "an authoritative text that emerges from the text-conversation dialectics of coorientation" (p. 81). In this manner, the collective identity of a group will be (re)constituted through communication across time. The identity is formulated into text via the recurring use of communicative tools such as metaphors or themes that are ultimately codified. Furthermore, the authoritative text produced by the group can be drawn upon for strategic ends to keep the collaboration moving toward achieving its goal(s). Thus, understanding the constitutive nature of communication in collaboration

will not only relate to membership and environmental concerns, but also to identity and continued progress concerns for an IOR.

As this overview of IORs indicates, a variety of unique characteristics and communication issues are likely to have significant influences on interorganizational collaborations such as the one examined in this study. As more and more organizations are choosing to partner with one another for a variety of tactical and pragmatic reasons (Barringer & Harrison, 2000), and because "all IORs are communicative in part" (Miller et al., 1995, p. 685), communication scholars ought to continue examining collaborative relationships between and among multiple organizations as a means of both advancing theory and positively influencing practice.

Organizational Change

The IOR under examination in this study is engaged in collaboration because the organizations represented on the board are involved firsthand with addressing the rising statewide substance abuse concern through their various organizational policies and practices, which include education, prevention, treatment, enforcement, and prosecution. All of the involved organizations are seeking to enact change in some way. As Gray (1989) explained, collaboration in this sense is "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (p. 5). Thus, this collaborative group is engaging in collective change implementation, seeking to address a societal problem by altering a variety of policies, programs, and perceptions surrounding the issue across multiple agencies. Given that

change implementation is at the forefront of this group's effort, an overview of organizational change scholarship is presented below.

Types of Change. With regard to the organizational change literature, a variety of terms are utilized extensively as a means of categorizing or describing types of change. First and perhaps most notably, discussions of change often begin with a distinction between planned changed and unplanned change. *Planned change* in an organizational context is utilized to refer to any intentional modification to processes or structures of an organization (Zorn, Page, & Cheney, 2000). Planned change might be a merger or acquisition, an adoption of new technology, or the implementation of a new strategic plan. In the case of IPB, for example, the taskforce produced and intends to implement a statewide strategic plan for addressing health and safety concerns caused by substance abuse issues. As such, it represents a planned change.

Interestingly, as Weick and Quinn (1999) explained, planned change "routinely occurs in the context of failure of some sort" (p. 362). Thus, when organizations fail to perform as intended or expected, planned changes often ensue. For example, Zorn et al. (2000) examined the change efforts of a business services department of a public sector organization. The department was undergoing significant planned changes in response to poor operational performance reviews. This change included the relocation of the departmental offices, downsizing, implementation of new technologies, and restructuring of positions and hierarchies. The authors explained how this planned change effort resulted in a culture that expected and essentially celebrated change. In one sense, IPB is also hoping to incite planned change in the context of failure. As previously mentioned, the state in which IPB operates routinely reported some of the

worst substance abuse numbers nationwide. Consequently, given the perceived failure of the state's former substance abuse prevention programs, the strategic plan implemented by IPB can be understood as necessary planned change.

Alternatively, *unplanned changes* refer to those "brought into the organization due to environmental or uncontrollable forces or emergent processes and interactions in the organization" (Lewis, 2014, p. 504). As examples, an unplanned change might be the deterioration of employee skills over time or an unexpected closing due to a catastrophic event such as a fire or tornado. For example, Lee, Taylor, and Chung (2011) investigated how credit card companies significantly changed their advertising strategies to adapt to a changing economic, social, and political landscape due to a severe economic downturn. This environmental change was beyond the control of the involved organizations, but change was deemed necessary for continued organizational success and even survival. In this sense, unplanned changes might be necessary even in the context of broad planned changes such as those being undertaken by IPB.

A second categorization made in the change literature is the distinction between material changes and discursive changes (Zorn et al., 2000). *Material changes* involve distinct and observable modifications to an organization's way(s) of doing. These changes can involve structures, positions, policies, and practices and are often quite consequential to an organization. For example, Edmonson (2003) chronicled the implementation of new technology in teams working in operating rooms at a hospital. Such change heavily impacted the day-to-day practices of all organizational members, including the patients or constituents who were undergoing operations.

In contrast, *discursive changes* are changes made to an organization's discourse or language used to describe certain aspects of organizational life. As Lewis (2011) explained, discursive changes "give the appearance of changed practice without really doing things differently" (p. 38). However, discursive changes can be just as consequential, or perhaps even more so, than material changes in organizations. By altering the way organizational members talk, discursive changes can alter members' perceptions of reality. As Fairhurst (2011) explained, "neither words nor symbols can alter the physical or material conditions of our world" but they might "influence our perceptions of them" (p. 3). For example, Doolin (2003) examined the discursive changes occurring in a New Zealand hospital during a time of health care reform. During this reform, management of the hospital attempted to discursively change the way clinicians were viewed by constructing them not simply as caregivers but as "clinician managers." As the author explained, "The whole notion of clinical leadership was predicated on the assumption that clinicians are the natural managers of health care, because they determine the treatment required for each patient" (p. 762). Thus, leaders of this particular organization began instituting this discursive change by the telling and retelling of narratives that framed clinicians as managers. This discursive change altered the way clinicians were viewed by other organizational members.

In the case of an interorganizational collaboration such as IPB, the taskforce is likely to introduce both material changes and discursive changes throughout their strategic plan implementation phase. For example, a material change might be something relatively minor such as changing the way certain district agencies file paperwork with their state counterpart. On the other hand, a material change might be

more significant, such as drafting new legislation and eventually changing state laws associated with substance abuse issues. Discursive changes in a context such as IPB might also be relevant. Because the rising health and safety concerns are due to the abuse of substances at an illegal rate, past discourses about the problem might have highlighted it as strictly a law enforcement concern. Given the collaborative, interorganizational nature of a group like IPB, the group is likely to recognize the need for the involvement of multiple agencies—not just law enforcement agencies. Therefore, when individuals involved in IPB begin to describe the severity of the substance abuse problem in the state by saying, "We can't arrest our way out of this problem," they have essentially introduced a discursive change.

Last, organizational changes have also been discussed in the literature in terms of first, second, and third order changes (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). This distinction denotes the size and scope of changes within organizational schema or mental models. *First order* changes refer to small, relatively predictable changes in day-to-day practices. For example, a first-order change might be the introduction of a new copy machine in an office. *Second order* changes refer to larger, more radical changes that bring about a completely new way of doing or thinking in an organization, such as changes to the organizational chart and positional hierarchies. Finally, *third order* changes refer to the preparation or readiness for ongoing change. In other words, third order changes will be focused on preparing organizational members for change that is likely to occur in the future. Much like the examples provided above relating to material and discursive changes that might be implemented by IPB, this group might also engage in first, second, and third order changes. A first order change might involve introducing

new technologies relating to substance abuse prevention programs. A second order change would be more large scale, such as a law change or the integration of previously separate programs. Finally, a third order change that could be introduced by IPB is a policy of ongoing program review that will allow for continued changes to programs as necessary.

While these distinctions regarding the size and scope of changes might be useful for characterizing change, Lewis (2011) argued that this typology is a limited means of assessing the magnitude and success of change because different organizational members are likely to experience and view changes in different ways. Thus, a variety of studies have sought to characterize change utilizing the terms introduced above while also describing the process organizations endure when changing. In fact, more traditional scholarship on organizational change began by providing models of changes processes. These classic models of change are introduced below.

Classic Models of Change. Traditional research on organizational change began by posing models that describe the chronological sequence through which changes might play out. One of the most widely referenced descriptors of organizational change across a variety of fields is Lewin's (1951) three-step model. In this model, change follows three steps: unfreezing, changing, and freezing. *Unfreezing* involves dismantling the status quo and convincing organizational members of the need for change. *Changing*, or the transition phase, is the implementation of the new practices or policies. Finally, *freezing* is a stage of solidifying the change as the new status quo.

This model, while straight-forward and valuable in traditional change-based research, does not take into account the nuanced complexities of change processes or

the ways in which a variety of organizational members might experience and make sense of change. In fact, Lewis (2011) indicated that, while some organizational members (typically management) might be in favor of a given change, others might resent it. In the context of an interorganizational group such as IPB, the extent of the responses to such an organizational change becomes even more complex as individuals and organizations beyond an initiating organization will be affected by the change. Consequently, Lewin's model only accounts for a management-centered and limited view of instituting change.

Another widely utilized model of change is Rogers' (1995) diffusion of innovations theory. Much like Lewin's (1951) model described above, diffusion of innovations seeks to explain change in a linear manner. The distinction, however, is that this theory not only describes the stages of change, but also the rate of change and how/why some changes are adopted while others are not. From Rogers' perspective, there are five distinct stages in the adoption of innovations or changes. The first stage is *knowledge*, during which a potential innovation or change is first introduced. Second, the *persuasion* stage involves seeking more information about the innovation. Next, a *decision* is made regarding whether to accept or reject the innovation. The fourth stage, if an innovation is accepted, is *implementation*. Last, the *confirmation* stage involves the finalization of the adoption decision. Consider, for example, the implementation of an initiative by IPB to integrate two previously separate programs dealing with substance abuse offenders. Using diffusion of innovations theory, this change implementation might progress as follows: (1) the idea for the initiative is introduced to the group by concerned or involved individuals; (2) the individuals who presented the

initiative and other supporters begin campaigning for its implementation among other IPB members, disseminating more information on their stance; (3) support for the initiative gains enough momentum among members that group leaders call for a vote on the idea and ultimately the group decides to adopt the initiative; (4) the initiative to integrate two previously separate programs is implemented. Thus, as a linear change model, diffusion of innovations describes the processes or stages through which a change must be implemented.

Although diffusion of innovations theory does not differ drastically from other classic models of change with regard to the linear stages of the process, it does enhance our understanding of change and innovation adoption by describing five distinct categories of adopters: (1) *innovators*, with whom the idea for change typically originates; (2) *early adopters*, the first small group of individuals who are convinced by the innovators; (3) *early majority*, the first large group of organizational members who adopt the change; (4) *late majority*, secondary large group who make the change; and (5) *laggards*, those who are last to change due to resistance or perhaps lack of knowledge or skill. According to Rogers (1995), all diffusions of innovations will have each of these categories of adopters, typically following a standard- deviation curve. In other words, there are very few innovators and laggards, and most individuals will adopt an innovation or change with the early or late majority.

It is important to note that the organizational change literature is much more expansive, beyond the foundational models and typologies of change presented here. Scholars have examined other areas such as readiness (e.g., Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993), change announcements (e.g., Armenakis & Harris, 2002),

solicitation of input (e.g., Lewis & Russ, 2012), and resistance (e.g., Piderit, 2000). However, given that the purpose of this study is to examine communication processes in a collective change effort, attention should be turned to theoretical perspectives that allow for a deeper understanding of change as it occurs in communicative interactions, beyond typologies and linear processes.

Categories of Change Theories: Research Perspectives. As the change literature continued to grow rapidly, addressing a variety of issues related to change such as those mentioned above, several scholars began to see the need for better ways to categorize the vast scholarship. In one seminal attempt to do so, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) provided a typology of change theories that account for different sequences of and mechanisms (i.e., motors) for generating change, as understood from a variety of epistemological perspectives. The four categories of theories are: life cycle, teleological, dialectical, and evolutionary. These categories are best understood as falling along two dimensions: the unit of change (i.e., the number of entities involved: one or multiple) and the mode of change, prescribed or constructive. As the authors explained, a *prescribed change* "channels the development of entities in a prespecified direction, typically of maintaining and incrementally adapting their forms in a stable, predictable way" while a *constructive change* "generates unprecedented, novel forms that, in retrospect, often are discontinuous and unpredictable departures from the past" (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 522). In other terms, prescribed modes of change include a sequence of events to change a pre-existing policy or program (e.g., amending a substance abuse rehabilitation program in light of new research) while constructive

modes of change produce new actions, programs, or routines (e.g., introducing new legislation or implementing a new media campaign).

Van de Ven and Poole's first category describes functional life cycle theories that explain change as following a somewhat linear, chronological sequence of events from startup, to growth, to harvest, to termination. The *life cycle metaphor* is used to describe change in a single entity that was often prescribed logically by managers or key stakeholders—much like Lewin's (1951) model described change. The second category, the *teleological model* of change, relies on the belief that goal-setting is what drives an organization. As organizations set goals, they become dissatisfied with the goals themselves or with progress toward goal attainment and then, during times of change, seek to agree upon and implement new goals. From this perspective, change occurs through socially constructed sequences. According to Van de Ven and Poole (1995), the life cycle and teleological theories are perhaps the most utilized means for describing change in scholarship, particularly in management literature.

The third category, *dialectic theory*, sees change as occurring in response to conflict or tensions within an organization (or multiple organizations, as is the case with IPB). The key from this perspective is the existence of competing theses or viewpoints. "Change occurs when these opposing values, forces, or events gain sufficient power to confront and engage the status quo" (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 517). On the surface, it might seem that change from this perspective results in a synthesis of two or more opposing viewpoints (i.e., a win-win). However, it is important to note that change from a conflict perspective can result in the complete elimination of one or more viewpoints. Last, *evolution theory* borrows from the biological evolution theory to

explain that change occurs or accumulates through a natural, repetitive process of variation, selection, and retention. From this perspective, change is both prescribed and predictable given its necessity to adapt to changing environments.

Another important distinction with regard to terms utilized to describe theoretical researcher perspectives is the distinction between viewing change as episodic or continuous. In other words, these are not types of changes but ways to view change. These terms were introduced by Weick and Quinn (1999) as a means of broadly describing the tempo of change in organizations. An *episodic* view of change sees it as "infrequent, discontinuous, and intentional" (p. 365) while a *continuous* view of change sees it as "ongoing, evolving, and cumulative" (p. 375). Episodic changes are understood as resulting from some sort of distinct interruption to business as usual while continuous changes is a pattern of modifying and adapting within business as usual. From this perspective, episodic changes are those that researchers might observe in highly bureaucratic agencies such as government. As Weick and Quinn (1999) explained, these organizations, "with their reporting structures too rigid to adapt to faster-paced change, have to be unfrozen to be improved" (p. 381). However, these authors argue that the ideal organization will seek to produce a culture of accepting continuous change and adaptation. For example, DeCock (1998) found in a case study of two manufacturing companies that management tended to favor and even strictly impose discourses of continuous change as a means of "keeping up" with competitors and staying current in practices.

The favoring of continuous change in the literature in more recent years (Lewis, 2014) is another divergence from classic, linear change theories such as Lewin's (1951)

unfreeze-change-freeze model, which is a clear representation of viewing change as episodic. By viewing change as necessarily continuous and non-linear, scholars have also allowed for a shift in the view of change from management's perspective to that of a variety of organizational members and stakeholders (Lewis, 2011). Furthermore, organizational communication scholars have focused their attention on a number of key non-management centric communication concerns during organizational change. This literature is reviewed below.

Communication Concerns during Change. One distinctive organizational change issue involving a unique type of interorganizational relationship, which has been well-studied from a communication perspective, is the examination of mergers and acquisitions. A merger is the combination of two equal organizational entities while an acquisition is the purchase of a smaller entity by larger one. While this body of literature is not directly relevant to the topic at hand, it is one of the earliest literatures providing some valuable implications regarding interorganizational change. For example, Napier, Simmons, and Stratton (1989) provided a model of communication phases experienced during a merger. Much like other classic models of change (described above), this model is somewhat linear in nature, including four phases: the *pre-merger* phase involving negotiations and a variety of stories or rumors, the *in-play* phase following an official announcement, the *transition* phase during which the two organizations actually merge, and the *stabilization* phase that is characterized by the organizational members accepting the merger and routinizing their new policies, procedures, and everyday norms.

Given the high levels of uncertainty experienced by organizational members during mergers and acquisitions, communication during such changes has been examined in a variety of research utilizing an uncertainty reduction approach (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Kramer, 1999). Interestingly, in a study of the experiences of pilots during an airline acquisition, Kramer, Dougherty, and Pierce (2004) found that increased communication and information seeking reduced the uncertainty of pilots, as predicted. However, the reduction of uncertainty was not predictive of better attitudes among participants. This finding was explained through qualitative data that indicated information received during uncertainty reduction was, in fact, unwanted or negatively perceived information (i.e., while pilot jobs were considered secure after the merger, credit for years of service was to be decreased). In other words, simply focusing on communicating *more* information during interorganizational change from a management perspective may not result in positive outcomes for all organizational members. These findings again reinforce the concept that change is complex and should be investigated from a variety of perspectives (Lewis, 2011).

In fact, the organizational change literature has been extensively criticized for focusing too strongly on managerial perspectives and on planning for change (i.e., readiness messages and overcoming resistance), rather than focusing on communication during change implementation (Lewis & Seibold, 1998). For example, an expanding literature on multi-sector collaboration and strategic change seeks to address managerial challenges by offering a framework for managers to utilize when engaging in change-based conversations with collaborative partners (Hardy, Lawrence, & Phillips, 2006).

To address such limitations, Lewis (2007) offered the stakeholder model of change implementation communication. This model utilizes the propositions of stakeholder theory, which emphasizes that conflict in organizational life should be managed or at least understood from multiple viewpoints (i.e., stakeholders) throughout the organization, particularly when such viewpoints are relatively divergent (Frooman, 1999). Lewis (2007) contends that the various stakeholders involved in an organizational change effort will have varying viewpoints, largely due to their different levels of power, legitimacy, and urgency as related to the change at hand. Thus, according to the stakeholder model, change should be viewed and understood as a negotiative communication process among the key stakeholders involved, rather than as a linear process that follows certain phases. Deetz (2001) also argued for this process when he claimed that "interaction among stakeholders can be conceived as a negotiative process aiding mutual goal accomplishment. Communication is the means by which such negotiation takes place" (p. 39). This perspective might be particularly valuable when examining a collective change effort such as IPB. As multiple representatives from multiple organizations are involved in a change effort, the varying stakeholder viewpoints will likely be even more latent than would be the case in a singular organization introducing change.

Last, more recent work in organizational communication has utilized a discourse perspective to better understand the role of communication during organizational change. For example, Bisel and Barge (2011) utilized positioning theory to explain how communication about change positions individuals to make sense of organizational change in certain ways. As these authors explained, "Planned change messages

(re)position organizational members in different ways and generate consequences for the individual and collective in terms of sense making and emotionality" (p. 274). From this perspective, communication can be understood as particularly constitutive as messages literally enable and constrain the change process by influencing the way change agents and participants make sense of the organizational change.

Embracing the enabling and constraining nature of communication in both organizational change (Bisel & Barge, 2011) and interorganizational collaboration (Keyton et al., 2008) in a study of a collective change effort such as the one undertaken by IPB calls for a particular theoretical lens. Utilizing an interpretive paradigmatic standpoint that assumes reality is somewhat constructed by social interaction (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979), early stages of data collection and analysis in this study revealed a presence of tension in the communicative interactions of IPB members (see the following chapter for a detailed explanation). Howard and Geist (1995) argued that investigating tensions allows for scholars to examine participant interpretations of change as participants express those interpretations through their own discourse/talk. Thus, dialectics theory became the theoretical perspective utilized in this study. This theoretical perspective is detailed in what follows.

Theoretical Perspective: Dialectical Tensions

The success of dialectical tensions as a broad theoretical perspective is largely attributed to the field of interpersonal communication, beginning with relational dialectics theory (RDT; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, 1998; Baxter 2011). This theory provided an interpretive, social constructivist approach to examining interpersonal relationships as the ongoing management of, or negotiations between, dialectical or

opposing tensions. Grounded in Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism, dialectical tensions can be understood as "competing systems of meaning (discourses) that are constituted in and through communication" (Baxter & Scharp, 2015, p. 1). From this perspective, tensions (also referred to as *contradictions* in interpersonal communication literature) should not be viewed as conflicts to be eliminated, but rather as the normal, constant, interdependent presence of opposing forces in social phenomena that can be managed or negotiated. Johnson and Long (2002) explained the ongoing interplay of the two poles of a tension in this way: "These tensions do not function in a dualistic way, with choices made between mutually exclusive polar opposites, but as ongoing 'pulls,' with each tension exerting continual pressure in opposing directions on relational partners and creating exigencies that must be negotiated through communicative action" (p. 28). Therefore, while dialectical tensions may seem contradictory and mutually exclusive on the surface, the two poles of a tension are constantly at interplay with one another, drawing relational participants simultaneously toward both poles.

As Baxter and Braithwaite (2008) explained, tensions between competing discourses are not negative: "Instead, they are the heart of the meaning-making enterprise. The central claim of RDT is that such discursive tensions are both inevitable and necessary" (pp. 349-350). Thus, the goal of this interpretive theory is to show how meanings are socially constructed, negotiated, and maintained through processes of communicative interaction. Research from this perspective has most often focused on identifying types of tensions relevant to a given relational or group/organizational context as well as explaining the way(s) individuals manage or negotiate tensions in their interaction (Baxter, 2011).

To best understand dialectical theory, a few key ideas must be examined. First, this theoretical perspective is consistent with the constitutive view of communication (Craig, 1999). As Baxter and Braithwaite (2008) explained, "this view positions communication as constitutive of the social world, not merely representational of an objective world that precedes communication" (p. 355). Baxter (2006) contends that this construct of dialectical theory contributes to its strength; examining the process of making meaning through the "tensionality of difference" allows scholars to observe communication constructing reality.

Furthermore, this constitutive view of communication also points to two important terms in dialectical theory: totality and praxis. *Totality* refers to the notion that relationships are constituted by, and balanced with, contradictions playing out by certain relational partners at a certain time and place. Bakhtin (1981) referred to this notion of the overall context of social interactions as chronotope. Thus, dialectical scholars must examine tensions in totality by examining the contextual factors that influence how the opposite poles of a tension unite and are at interplay with one another. Furthermore, *praxis* refers to the idea that tensions are created, sustained and recreated through communicative interaction in relationships. As Johnson and Long (2002) explained, "over time, patterns of behavior emerge from the communicative choices partners make as they attempt to return to those communicative behaviors that have successfully served to manage tensions in the past" (p. 29). In other words, praxis describes the practice of "doing" relationships through the ongoing (re)creation and management of tension (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998).

Second, discourses as examined by RDT can be either broad cultural systems of meaning or more localized systems of meaning (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). For example, a cultural discourse about substance abuse might be a reference to the long-celebrated "Just Say No" campaign that rose to prominence in the U.S. in the mid-1980s. A more localized discourse in the case of IPB could be the often-repeated claim that "we can't arrest our way out of this problem." Therefore, tensions can arise because of contradictions between multiple and overlapping cultural or localized discourses. Moreover, dialectics theory assumes that the interplay of discourses is both synchronic and diachronic (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). While the analytical unit of dialectical theory (i.e., situated meanings in talk) allows for a scholar to capture meaning through communication at one moment in time, it must be understood that that meaning will ebb and flow in the context of the relationship over time.

This idea of discourse and meaning-making being a dynamic process is consistent with a third key construct for dialectical theory: The competing discourses or the two poles of a dialectical tension are not equal. Some discourses or poles of a tension will be more dominant than others: "Meaning-making can be a power-laden dynamic in which more marginalized, centrifugal discursive positons are voiced or silenced in the presence of a centripetal or dominant taken-for-granted discursive viewpoints" (Suter, Baxter, Seurer, & Thomas, 2014, pp. 62-63). In fact, in an updated version of RDT, Baxter (2011) argued that power imbalance should become a key focus for dialectical scholars, particularly those driven by a critical discourse approach to scholarship. This concept is consistent with the idea that meaning-making is always a fragmented and contested process (Deetz, 2001). Furthermore, dominating features in

dialectical tensions are not static, but can change over time. As one pole of a tension begins to be dominant, the other, marginalized discourse will contest the meaning being made by the central discourse. Power continues to shift in a cyclical nature, and this shift in power will influence the way individuals negotiate or respond to tensions.

Common Tensions and Negotiation Strategies. Overall, RDT has been utilized by interpersonal scholars to examine a variety of relationship phenomena, resulting in numerous descriptions or typologies of specific dialectical tensions. However, Baxter and Simon (1993) described three main tensions that have appeared in the literature repeatedly, insinuating that these tensions might be formative and consistent in most interpersonal relationships. Baxter and Scharp (2015) refer to these as the "big three dialectical tensions" that emerged from much of the early dialectical research. The first is a tension between *connectedness and separateness*. This tension describes the simultaneous desire to be dependent upon relationship partners and to maintain a certain level of independence or autonomy. Second, the tension between *certainty and uncertainty* describes that most relationships encounter an ongoing interplay between predictability as a means of comfort and novelty as a means of excitement. Third, the tension between *openness and closedness* describes how both relationship partners expect a certain level of disclosure and information sharing while also maintaining a sense of privacy.

Furthermore, past research has also focused on identifying the strategies or tactics used to manage dialectical tensions in ongoing relationship maintenance. This focus is what early dialectical scholars referred to as praxis, or "the examination of how communicative practices manage (or constitute) contradictions" (Baxter & Scharp,

2015, p. 3). Baxter and Montgomery (1996) comprehensively described six main strategies for managing tensions: reaffirmation, reframing, spiraling inversion, segmentation, balance, denial, and disorientation. *Reaffirmation* is a negotiation strategy that celebrates tensions, recognizing that they are omnipresent and not inherently negative. *Reframing* involves the attempt to minimize tensions or make the two poles of a tension appear closer together by changing the perspective or discourse surrounding a given tension. The next three strategies—spiraling inversion, segmentation, and balance—all involve a compromising of sorts in that neither pole of a tension becomes the sole, consistent focal point in discourse. *Spiraling inversion* involves alternating between poles over time in a recurring and cyclical fashion. *Segmentation* is the temporary privileging of one pole or the other dependent upon varying relational activities. *Balance* is the attempt to achieve an ultimate compromise by not favoring either pole. Last, denial and disorientation are described by Baxter and Montgomery (1996) as dysfunctional. *Denial* is a tension management strategy that recognizes only one side of the tension while ignoring the other. *Disorientation* is the discursive act of viewing tension as inevitable and negative, as opposed to the reaffirmation strategy, which views tension as positive. While other scholars have attempted to identify additional strategies for negotiating tensions, most of these strategies can be mapped onto the original list offered by Baxter and Montgomery (Apker, Propp, & Ford, 2005). Ultimately, by examining the strategies used for managing and negotiating tensions in talk, scholars are not only able to better describe relational constructs, but also prescribe management tools for more successful relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998).

Dialectical Theory in Groups and Organizations. The use of a dialectical view in organizational and group communication scholarship is not a new concept. Benson (1977) argued for the use of dialectical theory when studying organizations almost two decades before the work of Baxter and colleagues became prevalent in interpersonal communication. Benson's (1977) piece draws upon many of the same Bakhtinian perspectives that relational dialectics theory utilizes, along with a Marxist perspective that was largely ignored by mainstream organizational scholars at the time. However, since its inception in interpersonal communication, the use of dialectical theory in organizational and group communication research has increased in popularity (e.g., Kramer, 2004; Lewis et al., 2010) and has since joined with a broader category of organizational scholarship focusing on a variety of tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes in organizational life (McGuire, Dougherty, & Atkinson, 2006; Tracy, 2004). An overview of this body of work as relevant to the study at hand is provided below.

In one seminal piece, Kramer (2004) applied dialectical theory to the study of group interaction in his examination of tensions experienced by a community theater group. This study resulted in the identification of four dimensions of tensions, categorizing 11 specific dialectical tensions that are likely to be apparent in a variety of group contexts: group/other commitment, ordered/emergent activities, inclusion/exclusion, and acceptable/unacceptable behaviors. The *group/other commitment* tension describes the simultaneous desire to be highly involved and committed to the group and to maintain commitment to other life activities such as school, work, and family obligations. Kramer (2004) explained that individuals managed this tension by committing to the group's obligations only when the tension

could be minimized, by segmenting or delaying certain activities on one side of the pole or the other, or by negotiating conflicts before making commitments.

The *ordered/emergent activities* category of tensions included those tensions focused on how group activities would progress. For example, the group experienced a tension between maintaining precision and also showing flexibility in their activities. Management strategies for these tensions included partitioning or segmenting poles of the tension based on different activities or locations, venting frustration about the tensions, and adjusting attitudes toward the tension (i.e., simply accepting the presence of the tension). The *inclusion/exclusion* category referred to tensions over who was involved or left out of certain group activities. Specific dialectical tensions existed over whether the group was unified or divided, over whether merit or politics was utilized when assigning group roles, and over whether the group represented the larger community or a more specific subgroup. Participants negotiated these tensions by utilizing a number of management strategies: denying, avoiding, venting, naturalizing, and minimizing tensions.

Last, the category of *acceptable/unacceptable behaviors* described tensions such as showcasing tolerance or judgment, managing or expressing emotions, exhibiting a volunteer or a professional identity, and participating in the group for friendship or utility. Individuals managed such tensions through two key strategies: integrating tensions (i.e., accomplishing both poles simultaneously) or balancing between the two poles of a tension. While Kramer's (2004) work on group dialectics provided four clear categories of tensions that all groups might experience (including groups like the IPB under examination in this study), along with a number of strategies for managing such

tensions, he also provided valuable insight into the praxis of tensions in groups. Specifically, he argued that "group dialectics must consider the communication strategies group members use to cope with the interconnectedness of the tensions" (p. 328). In other words, tensions and negotiation strategies are likely to influence one another throughout group interactions.

Since Kramer's (2004) work related to a community theater group, other scholars have focused their use of dialectical theory in the context of interorganizational collaborations contexts. Lewis et al. (2010) applied dialectical theory to better understand tensions practitioners might experience when collaborating in the nonprofit sector. Conducting focus groups of professionals involved in collaborations, the authors assessed what participants might perceive as tensions in collaboration and how such tensions are handled or negotiated communicatively. Results revealed two main types of tensions: relational and structural. *Relational tensions* included the interplay between external demands (i.e., concerns of the home organization) and internal demands (i.e., dynamics of the collaboration). Individuals coped with relationship tensions by building trust, creating buy-in with everyone involved in collaboration, and oftentimes disassociating with the collaborative effort rather than voicing dissenting opinions. *Structural tensions* were the interplay between participants' desire for rules and clear structure but also flexibility and free-flowing participation. These structural tensions were described in more detail as encompassing two main types: accountability tensions (i.e., ensuring the collaboration adheres to its goals) and decision-making tensions (i.e., codifying processes for making decisions or allowing for spontaneity). Coping mechanisms for structural tensions included using formal leadership roles, invoking

mission statements or shared visions, and fluctuating between informal and formal procedures.

The application of a tension-centered perspective has also seen popularity in scholarship on organizational change. Of course, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) drew upon a dialectics theory perspective when describing their dialectical motor of change in organizations, explaining that tensions can be the impetus for change. In a related study, Fairhurst, Cooren, and Cahill (2002) focused on contradictions inherent in organizational change messages. While these authors did not explicitly draw upon RDT or dialectical theory, their focus on contradictory messages revealed many of the main tenants of a tension-centered approach to inquiry. In their investigation of three successive downsizings in a single organization, the authors found organizational members utilized contradictory messages to construct their organizational realities. Those affected by the downsizings utilized three strategies for managing contradictions: selection, integration, and transcendence. *Selection* involves denying or ignoring one pole of a contradiction. *Integration* is the process of combining both poles of the contradiction through means such as neutralization. Last, *transcendence* is a strategy that involves reframing the contradiction "through transforming opposites into a reformulated whole" (p. 508). These authors drew on the work of Seo and coauthors (2004), who also claimed strategies such as *separation*, which recognizes both poles of a contradiction separately, and *connection*, which balances or gives voice to both poles).

As organizational communication scholars have continued to embrace the use of dialectical tensions in research, this perspective joins along with a broader vein of organizational communication scholarship that can best be described as the tension-

centered inquiry of organizations (McNamee & Peterson, 2014). Scholars have focused their attention on distinguishing between tensions, dualities, contradictions, dialectics, and paradoxes (McGuire, et al., 2006). However, as Tracy (2004) acknowledged organizational members themselves are unlikely to distinguish between varying types of tensions and contradictions: "Employees may frame organizational tensions as simple contradictions, complementary dialectics, or pragmatic paradoxes" (p. 141). Thus, the use of this perspective allows scholars to draw upon such intricate distinctions as they become apparent in participant communication. Further, given the complex body of scholarship focused on identifying types of tensions and contradictions along with varying negotiation or management strategies, new work in this area must make an effort to situate novel findings and theoretical explanations in an ever-expanding body of literature utilizing a tension-centered approach to inquiry.

Research Questions

As previously explained, the overarching purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of participants involved in an interorganizational collective change implementation effort. With this purpose in mind, the use of a dialectical tension centered approach to investigation allows for a focus on participant experiences and meaning-making processes as revealed in talk (Howard & Geist, 1995). Given the commitments and key constructs of this theoretical perspective, a primary assumption for this study is that localized meanings emerge through the negotiation or struggle of opposing systems of meaning (Bakhtin, 1984). In this sense, the use of a dialectical theory provides a "means of viewing group communication using (instead of ignoring) the paradoxical nature of social phenomena" (Johnson & Long, 2002, p. 37).

Determining what tensions might be present in a given context allows for a deeper understanding of meaning and communicative interaction within that context (Tracy, 2004). Thus, the first research question posed is as follows:

> ***RQ1:*** *What are the dialectical tensions manifest in the communicative interactions of participants of an interorganizational collective change implementation effort?*

Identifying the specific tensions associated with a collective change effort will not only allow for a deeper understandings of situated meanings in the context, but it will also allow for an integration of two traditionally separate bodies of scholarship: organizational change and interorganizational collaboration. Given the ever-increasing need for organizations to engage in collective change efforts such as the one being undertaken by IPB (Pettijohn et al., 2014), the integration of these literatures will become increasingly important. A need exists to understand the communication issues that arise when organizational members come together to introduce change across multiple organizations simultaneously.

Second, because the contested discourses apparent in dialectical tensions will allow for the shift in meaning over time, it is important to note how tensions are (re)negotiated by participants, rather than fully eliminated (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). Strategies for negotiating tensions through talk identify certain communicative goals that individuals are likely to strive for in a given context. In other words, negotiation strategies illuminate what participants want to do with tensions when they arise through communicative interaction. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

RQ2a: *In what ways do participants of an interorganizational collective change effort communicatively negotiate or manage dialectical tensions?*

Furthermore, while much of the existing literature has identified a variety of negotiation strategies (e.g., Baxter, 2011; Fairhurst et al., 2002), scholars often stop short of explaining what these strategies mean or how they are achieved. In fact, a premise of this current study is that the existing dialectical literature utilizes the term "negotiation strategy" to conflate two distinct concepts: the overarching goal(s) for managing or negotiating strategies and the given communicative tactic(s) utilized to achieve such goals. By explicating these two concepts, scholarship can provide a more nuanced means of investigating beneath the surface of the nature and effects of group communication. Therefore, the final research question is:

RQ2b: *What are the communicative tactics utilized by participants when negotiating dialectical tensions?*

To summarize, both interorganizational collaboration and organizational change has been examined extensively by scholars across a variety of fields. Previous literature has examined the types and characteristics of interorganizational relationships, the motivations for engaging in such collaboration, and a variety of communication concerns associated with organizational collaboration. Similarly, the organizational change body of scholarship has offered typologies of change efforts, a number of models describing how changes take place in organizations, and in-depth examinations of communication concerns that are likely to arise during organizational changes. Combining these two broad areas of work, however, allows for a better understanding of an ever-increasing type of collaborative effort: the collective change effort that takes

place when multiple organizations come together to enact changes across all involved organizations simultaneously. This unique albeit increasingly popular context demands the attention of communication scholars who adopt the view that communication can both enable and constrain collaboration and change.

The theoretical perspective of dialectical tensions allows for a nuanced understanding of locally situated meanings in a given context as they emerge through competing or contradictory discourses. This perspective draws upon the constitutive view of communication and assumes that meanings are created and recreated through the ongoing interplay and negotiation of tensions. Therefore, the research questions guiding this study point toward an examination of which dialectical tensions might exist in a collective change effort, which negotiation strategies are apparent when managing tensions, and what communicative tactics are utilized in tension negotiation efforts. The methods utilized to address these research questions are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Method

To address these research questions, this study utilized an interpretive paradigm that assumes a socially constructed reality in organizations (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979; Weick, 1995) that allows for an emphasis on the ways in which individuals assign meaning to their experiences (Putnam, 1982). For this study, I followed the Interorganizational Prevention Board (IPB) and their associated workgroups over a period of 18 months while strategic changes were implemented across multiple organizations. Data were collected through extensive meeting observations, interviews with collaboration leaders, and relevant interorganizational documents. Analysis utilized a constant comparative method that allowed for theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006; Tracy, 2013). The research site, data collection and analysis techniques, and validation strategies are detailed below. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms or participant numbers are used for all agencies and participants and purposefully ambiguous language is utilized occasionally to describe the context.

Research Site

IPB is an interorganizational council operating in the capital city of a Midwestern state. The board, comprised of high-ranking representatives from 11 government and nonprofit agencies, was formed to address a rising health and safety concern stemming from widespread substance abuse issues. In fact, the state in which IPB operates consistently reported some of the worst numbers in the country with regard to deaths and accidents caused by the abuse of both legal and illegal substances. To describe these rising concerns, leaders of IPB often utilized the metaphor of "the perfect storm," which was produced by the collision of two separate factors: an increasing population of 18 to 25 year olds abusing a variety of both legal and illegal

substances, and an aging baby-boomer population seemingly unintentionally abusing legal substances such as prescription drugs. Given the confluence of these factors, many of the organizations involved with substance abuse concerns felt a pressure to address the problem. Consequently, after a federally mandated review of the state's substance abuse programs, an influential, high-ranking official in state government formed IPB to formulate and ultimately implement a statewide strategic plan for reducing the number of deaths and related incidents attributed to legal and illegal substance abuse.

To begin their task, IPB formed seven initial advisory workgroups comprised of experts in specialized areas: education, law enforcement, treatment, legal processes, scientific testing, planning, and communications. These workgroups provided relevant recommendations to IPB, who then utilized those recommendations to draft a strategic plan for addressing substance abuse concerns during the decision-making phase in their first year of operation. This plan was ultimately submitted to the appropriate high-ranking state official, who officially approved the plan and extended the life of IPB indefinitely so that implementation of the plan could begin.

Thus, IPB began their second year of operation focusing on implementation of their collaboratively-crafted strategic plan. Given that widespread change through a collaborative effort began occurring across all involved organizations at this point, the initial implementation phase (i.e., the 18 months following year one) is the period of focus for this study. At this point, the seven advisory workgroups were dissolved and replaced with three new implementation workgroups, which were created to begin carrying out the changes recommended in the strategic plan. One of these workgroups was focused on introducing legislative changes, one created and piloted a new legal

process for substance abuse offenders, and one examined the collection and reallocation of resources connected to substance abuse programs. Much like the advisory workgroups, these implementation workgroups continued to report to IPB. The membership of the implementation workgroups included some IPB members, some members who were previously involved with advisory workgroups, and some new members added for their expertise or involvement with a given agency or issue.

The primary coordinating agency for IPB and its workgroups is the State Safety Office (SSO). This agency is a state-level governmental entity concerned with a variety of health and safety concerns, beyond simply the substance abuse issues for which IPB was formed to address. The director of SSO was voted into position of IPB chair by other IPB members during their first official meeting. As such, this individual, with much help and involvement from two of his assistant directors from SSO, attended meetings and performed many of the necessary administrative functions for IPB. These administrative functions included the coordination and facilitation of taskforce meetings, the compilation of workgroups, the assignment of workgroup leaders, and the completion of necessary tasks outside of meetings, such as creating IPB plan documentation, drafting and distributing agendas, and keeping minutes or other records.

Given this overarching structure of a collaborative board, a coordinating agency, and sub-workgroups reporting to the board, the IPB collaboration is similar to that which was examined by Keyton et al. (2008) when producing their mesolevel model of collaboration from a communication perspective. Collaboration occurred at three levels: among members of the workgroups, among workgroups and IPB members, and publicly between IPB and their community constituents. Furthermore, the nature of membership

in IPB and in workgroups was relatively fluid. Attendees changed from meeting to meeting, and IPB had a change in official membership early in its implementation phase. This fluid membership along with the varying levels of participation and power exhibited by IPB members categorizes the board as a bona fide group (Putnam & Stohl, 1996). As Keyton and Stallworth (2003) explained, collaborations such as IPB possess four key characteristics that make the bona fide group perspective particularly useful: "(a) members from various organizations addressing a shared problem, (b) the potential imbalance of power, (c) divided membership loyalty, and (d) rotating organizational representation" (p. 239). Thus, adopting a bona fide group lens and examining collaboration at multiple levels positions this study to address collective change from a communicative perspective.

Access. I was originally granted access to IPB due to my role as a member of a research team working on a grant funded by the National Safety Council. The purpose of that grant was to document the decision-making phase (i.e., year one) of IPB as a means of: (1) identifying the mechanisms associated with support for certain initiatives, and (2) developing a model of the state's attempt to organize and coordinate an interorganizational taskforce aiming to improve health and safety concerns. For IPB's year-long decision-making phase, I worked on this grant funded project in all phases of the study, including data collection, analysis, and writing the technical report. In this role, I led data collection efforts by attending and writing extensive field notes for eight of the 13 workgroup and taskforce meetings held during this phase and by conducting or co-conducting 37 of 42 total interviews with participants.

As the decision-making phase of IPB—and therefore the grant funded project—drew to a close, I was asked by IPB leaders to continue studying the group as they began implementing the changes set forth in the finalized strategic plan. The director of the SSO, who also served as the IPB chair, granted me permission to maintain access to the board and corresponding workgroups by attending meetings, conducting interviews with leaders, and collecting documents. The two principal investigators for the grant funded decision-making project also gave me permission to pursue the study of IPB's change implementation phase as a dissertation project. As such, it was agreed upon that data previously collected for the grant funded project would be available as necessary to inform and better contextualize the current study, although these data were not specifically analyzed as part of this project. Thus, while this study focuses on change implementation and includes a data collection and analysis process separate from the grant-funded project, I have firsthand knowledge of and access to data regarding IPB's decision-making phase that informed collection and analysis for this study. Both the funded project and this study of IPB's initial change implementation phase were approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board.

Data Collection

Observation. The primary means of data collection for this study was through the observation of meetings during IPB's initial implementation phase—the 18-month period following the finalization of IPB's strategic plan. During this time, IPB held seven meetings: one per quarter and one "special meeting" to approve a budget. The meetings ranged in length from just under one hour to approximately two and a half hours. It is important to note that the official membership of IPB was changed at the

third meeting during this period, as an initial member was removed and two new members were added. This change in membership also changed the organizations who were participating in the collaboration. A typical IPB meeting included all 10 or 11 members of the taskforce or their proxies, as well as a number of other attendees such as workgroup members or individuals who were there to provide agency representation at the request of an IPB member. Thus, including SSO personnel, attendance at IPB meetings was typically between 20 and 25 people. During this implementation phase, I also observed a two-day safety forum that IPB co-sponsored with SSO, which was attended by approximately 100 participants who were representatives from organizations involved with health and safety across the state.

Over this 18-month period, IPB's three implementation workgroups (legislative, offender process, and resources) met a total of eight times with meetings ranging in length from 90 minutes to two and a half hours. Participants in these meetings ranged from 4 to 12 individuals, including IPB members or other representatives from the involved organizations and other subject matter experts who were either involved in the advisory workgroups or whose position/agency was deemed necessary for the task at hand. As such, there were no official, static membership lists for workgroups as invited participants and attendees often changed dramatically from meeting to meeting.

It is important to note that many of the changes resulting from IPB's statewide strategic plan were implemented through one-on-one conversations or simple policy changes within single organizations and therefore not observed for purposes of this study. The implementation workgroups, however, focused on large-scale changes that required true collaborative and cooperative efforts from multiple organizations

represented in meetings. Thus, it was in these meetings, more so than IPB meetings, that I was most able to observe collective change efforts.

Table 1
Timeline of Meetings Observed and Interviews Conducted

Date	Meeting	Approximate Length
March 2014	Legislative Workgroup 1	100 minutes
April 2014	Legislative Workgroup 2	90 minutes
	Legislative Workgroup 3	90 minutes
	IPB Meeting	50 minutes
May 2014	Interview 1 with SSO Leaders	60 minutes
June 2014	Legislative Workgroup 4	90 minutes
	Offender Process Workgroup 1	90 minutes
July 2014	Legislative Workgroup 5	75 minutes
	Offender Process Workgroup 2	75 minutes
	IPB Meeting	110 minutes
September 2014	Offender Process Workgroup 3	105 minutes
October 2014	IPB Meeting	60 minutes
November 2014	Interview 2 with SSO Leaders	65 minutes
January 2015	IPB Meeting	120 minutes
April 2015	IPB and SSO Forum	480 minutes
	Interview 3 with SSO Leaders	50 minutes
	IPB Meeting	135 minutes
July 2015	IPB Meeting	50 minutes
September 2015	IPB Special Meeting	30 minutes
	Resources Workgroup	120 minutes

During all meetings, I acted as an observer rather than a participant observer (Neyland, 2008), sitting away from the main interaction and taking detailed notes on a laptop computer. Having received consent from meeting participants early in the research process, I included verbatim quotes for particularly important or relevant concepts. After each meeting, the notes were expanded upon and filled in from memory or "head notes" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to create an extensive set of field notes. Given the overlap between data collection and analysis (described in more detail below), I was

able to bracket preconceptions and initial theorizing from the corpus of raw data during this process of finalizing field notes (Tufford & Newman, 2012). In sum, these observations totaled approximately 31.5 hours across 17 meetings/events and yielded 179 pages of field note data (see Table 1, page 49).

Interviews. As a supplement to the observational data described above, I conducted three joint interviews with the director of the SSO, who was also the chair of IPB, and one of his assistant directors who was heavily involved in IPB processes. These two individuals assumed the primary leadership roles throughout both the decision-making and implementation phases and, as such, provided valuable insight into the collective change effort. These interviews were conducted at two months into implementation, eight months into implementation, and at the conclusion of IPB's second year. Although I interviewed the chair and his assistant director more formally and with a strict interview protocol during the decision-making phase of IPB as a part of the first project, these semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask clarifying questions regarding taskforce processes and also provided an opportunity for leaders of the taskforce to comment on current data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). In this sense, my interviews with these two individuals were conversations with a purpose (Kvale, 1996), and became increasingly important given the overlap between data collection and analysis. For example, when early data analysis revealed a particular tension experienced by IPB participants, these interviews allowed me to ask the taskforce leaders to comment on their experiences, understandings, or observations of such tensions or to better contextualize the moment(s) during which the tension was present.

Because these participants are public officials and governmental employees, interviews were not recorded. This practice alleviated concerns about recordings becoming public and also allowed for less guarded interview interactions and responses. However, IPB leaders did give me permission to keep extensive field notes of the interviews, including verbatim quotes for particularly important and relevant ideas or concepts. Each joint interview lasted approximately one hour and yielded a combined 21 pages of single-spaced interview field note data. See Table 1 (page 49) for dates of interviews, as situated in the overall timeline of data collection.

Document Collection. As a final means of data collection serving to supplement observational and interview data, a variety of organizational texts were collected (Bowen, 2009). These texts include meeting agendas, attendance lists, meeting handouts, referenced publications, communication materials (i.e., press releases), and multiple versions of IPB's strategic plan.

One of these documents was utilized heavily throughout the group's decision-making phase as the group drafted the strategic plan. This document was a list of recommendations provided by an external panel of experts that conducted the federally-mandated assessment of the state's substance abuse related programs as they existed prior to the formation of IPB. These recommendations were broken down by area or field: education, law enforcement, treatment, legal processes, scientific testing, planning, and communications. Thus, each corresponding advisory workgroup had a specific set of recommendations tailored to their area. This document was utilized as the starting point or springboard for discussions in the workgroups that ultimately reported their own recommendations to IPB. As such, one seminal and relevant finding from the

grant-funded study of the decision-making phase is that the initial set of recommendations provided by the external panel of experts heavily influenced the content of IPB's final strategic plan. Moreover, this plan and its corresponding documentation continued to influence the change implementation process. Consequently, the strategic plan documentation is referenced repeatedly in the presentation of results for this study.

Data Analysis

Analysis of all observation and interview field note data followed a modified version of the constant comparative analysis process (Charmaz, 2006; Tracy, 2013). First, utilizing NVivo software, I engaged in a process of open coding which was guided by the study's initial broad purpose (i.e., to understand how participants communicatively assign meaning to experiences in a collaborative change implementation effort). During this process, which began while data collection was still underway, data first were broken down into units, or portions of data that represented a singular and coherent idea, narrative, or exchange. Units of data were then assigned to a broad code or category. Each of these categories represented a theme initially apparent in the data. While some of these codes utilized concepts in existing relevant literature, others represented themes that were more descriptive and contextual in nature. During this stage, I began to generate memos (i.e., short notes regarding particular units or categories and their potential relation to relevant theory/literature) that were continually expanded upon as analysis progressed (Charmaz, 2006).

Following the initial open coding process, I utilized the constant comparative method. During this process, the first code or category created during open coding was

compared to the next. If the two codes were similar or represented comparable ideas, they were collapsed into one; if not, both codes were retained. This process continued in an iterative, cyclical nature as codes were collapsed, created, or deleted. The resulting set of codes were distinctive and all retained units of data were accounted for by at least one code. Because the codes were not mutually exclusive, some units of data were coded into multiple codes. For example, the following statement was made at an IPB meeting by the director of SSO: "We have been truly inspired by the willingness of the people in this room and the agencies they represent—by everyone involved participating in this database. That's encouraging to us. This may actually become a reality." This unit of data was coded as both *optimism* and *collaboration* during this phase of data analysis.

At this point in the analytic process, I began to recognize persistent tensions apparent in the data, although a tension-based approach to analysis was not the initial intent or focus of the study. Charmaz (2006) described this occurrence as the emergence of "unexpected ideas" that should be further investigated (p. 59). Thus, I began investigating the literature on tensions in the context of organizational change (e.g., Barge et al., 2008; Seo et al., 2004; and Stolzfus et al., 2011) and interorganizational relationships (e.g., Lewis et al., 2010), as well as further examining tension-related theoretical perspectives (e.g., Baxter & Montgomery, 1998; McGuire et al., 2006). As I began pursuing the idea of tensions, future data collection became more focused utilizing theoretical sampling techniques (Morse, 2007), and the process shifted from inductive to abductive (Charmaz, 2006; Timmermans & Tabory, 2012) as I moved iteratively from data to existing literature and theory, and back to data again (Tracy,

2013). In other words, observations and the writing of field notes became primarily focused on the presence of tensions and the way(s) in which participants negotiated such tensions in talk.

The comparative analysis process continued from here with focused coding. Similar to McNamee and Peterson's (2014) work on dialectical tensions in volunteer management, I implemented a "tension-centered approach to inquiry" and focused analysis on tensions that "were indeed dialectical, or inextricably, indelibly bound in nature" (p. 222). Thus, during this stage of analysis, the existing set of codes were further refined through constant comparison into the codes presented in the results below. Finally, after specific tensions, negotiation strategies, and communication tactics were identified, I determined via axial coding the interrelationships between and among the codes produced during focused coding. This process allowed for the resulting tensions to be grouped into broader categories or types as described below and also allowed for the nuanced exploration of the relationship between strategies for negotiating tensions and tactics used to achieve those strategies.

Verification Strategies

To enhance the credibility of qualitative research, Creswell (2007) recommended a number of verification or validation strategies. As a means of conducting analytically rigorous qualitative research, I employed five such strategies. First, I was able to observe IPB for a total of two and a half years (one year during the decision-making and strategic plan crafting stage and 18 months during the initial change implementation stage). This prolonged engagement in the field allowed for ample time to reach data saturation and seek disconfirming evidence to further validate

results. Second, I utilized a method of crystallization (Ellingson, 2009) that involved the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and documents). This process allowed me to confirm that multiple bases of evidence point toward the same analytical conclusion.

The attributes of the first two strategies also allow for a third: thick description (Geertz, 1973). Thick description, or the relaying of the contextual significance of data and findings, is a distinguishing feature of qualitative, interpretive scholarship that relies on observation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). By obtaining rich data through extensive field notes that included detailed narratives (Charmaz, 2006), I was able to describe with empathic detail the communicative interaction that surrounded moments of interest in the exemplars presented in the following chapter.

Fourth, I engaged in member checking by presenting findings to two individuals engaged in the IPB process. These participants, who served in leadership roles for IPB, confirmed the validity of the results, and no changes were necessary as a result of this process. Last, I also utilized peer review throughout the analytical process by presenting preliminary findings at a national conference and seeking feedback and advice from other qualified scholars. These "early intervention sessions" allowed me to better develop the necessary next steps throughout the research process (Lucas & D'Enbeau, 2013). Given this rigorous combination of verification strategies, I contend that the resulting analysis possesses strong qualitative validity and provides a valuable contribution to the literature on organizational change, interorganizational collaboration, and tension-centered approaches to understanding organizations.

Chapter 3: Results

Data analysis for this study revealed seven dialectical tensions categorized into three main types of tensions that participants experienced in a collective change effort. Three key strategies for negotiating such tensions and four communicative tactics used in negotiations also emerged from data analysis. Each of the study's research questions are answered in detail below, using exemplars from the data to better describe and contextualize tensions, negotiation strategies, and communicative tactics. In the following sections, all names of participants are replaced with identifiers that reveal their role in IPB and provide a number unique to that participant (e.g., IPB1 to represent a IPB member, LW1 to represent a Legislative Workgroup member, OPW1 to represent an Offender Process Workgroup member, RW1 to represent a Resources Workgroup member, and SSO1 to represent a State Safety Office representative). The names of places and other identifying language is replaced with more ambiguous language to protect participant confidentiality.

Dialectical Tensions Manifest in Communicative Interactions

The purpose of Research Question 1 was to identify the dialectical tensions manifest in the communicative interactions of participants of an interorganizational collective change effort. Analysis of the data revealed seven distinctive tensions that were apparent in the interactions of IPB participants. These tensions can be further categorized into three broad categories of tension types: (a) commitment-based tensions, (b) process-based tensions, and (c) outcome-based tensions. See Table 2 (page 57) for a broad overview of tensions and their typology (along with an example data excerpt for each). Each tension type and specific tension therein is described in detail

below, using excerpts from data to indicate how tensions were apparent in communicative interaction among IPB participants.

Table 2
RQ1: Dialectical Tensions Manifest in Communicative Interactions

Type of Tension	Tension	Example from Data
Commitment-Based Tensions	Collaborative/ Competitive	LW2: If push came to shove, [my director] would probably give them want they want. I'm the one trying to limit the information. They originally wanted access into our database. […] When they went beyond that and asked for so much more and we declined, the original process stopped.
	Skepticism/ Optimism	SSO1: We had one [IPB] member say he didn't want to be involved unless something was really going to happen this time. The fact that there's buy-in now will help us be successful.
Process-Based Tensions	Full Participation/ Continued Progress	IPB Chair: We literally had to drag things out of people sometimes. So if we hadn't done that, there would be no progress.
	Creativity/ Parameters	SSO1: That was our biggest challenge—to make this work within our current statutory scheme. We had significant limitations with respect to what we could do, so we are pleased with what we got done. That was a significant challenge that took a significant spirit of cooperation.
Outcome-Based Tensions	Impactful Change/ Viable Change	LW4: Who is going to establish and run this database? SSO1: Everyone. We're talking about pushes and pulls to that system from a variety of agencies. These are big undertakings. These are game changers.
	Broad Progress/ Nuanced Progress	SSO1: At the end of the day, our overarching goal is to get individuals through this process better. I'm concerned that the legislature is going to see this as just several fee increases. […] I want to be prepared to stand in front of the legislature and defend it in light of our broader goal.
	Necessary Change/ Palatable Change	IPB Chair: We've tried to be very careful […] trying to move some of these things forward. We've tread very carefully about not infringing upon the authority of the prosecutor or the discretion of the judge in these cases.

Commitment-Based Tensions. The interagency taskforce experienced two dialectical tensions related to commitment issues: *collaborative/competitive* and *skepticism/optimism*. Such tensions were focused on the nature of the collaborative effort, as it required multiple organizations to come together to address a rising concern, and the level of participants' investment and belief in the overall process, which indicated whether or not participants were optimistic that IPB's goals would be reached.

Collaborative/Competitive. First, any interorganizational effort is likely to produce a tension for participants between feeling a loyalty to their home organization and feeling a willingness to compromise and collaborate for the good of the interorganizational effort (Lewis et al., 2010). For IPB, this tension manifest itself in individuals expressing either collaborative and cooperative mindset or a competitive and individualized mindset. At times, both poles of this tension were manifest in a single utterance of one participant or in the interaction of multiple participants. The tension also became more apparent when data analysis revealed that one participant made a statement or claim that seemed to be very collaborative in nature at one meeting and then said something more competitive at another meeting.

First, the collaborative pole of this tension was often made apparent when individuals would verbally express their notice of and appreciation for collaborative efforts made by participants. In one IPB meeting, for example, the assistant director from SSO stated, "We have been truly inspired by the willingness of the people in this room and the agencies they represent—by everyone involved participating in this [project]. That's encouraging to us. This may actually become a reality." This leader

acknowledged the presence of the collaborative pole of the dialectic from others involved and took the opportunity to express appreciation for it.

Beyond the acknowledgement of others' efforts, participants often indicated their own willingness to collaborate by simply expressing their belief in the cause or through their specific actions (i.e., volunteering for a task or offering home agency resources). Consider, for example, the following excerpt of field notes from a Legislative Workgroup meeting:

> It became clear at this point in the meeting that [LW1] had done the bulk of the work on the bill outside the meeting and was simply presenting/defending his choices in the document. He did this, though, with an attitude that did not appear defensive in anyway. He was open to suggestions and questions, and ultimately made several changes based on others' ideas.

This excerpt described interactions that occurred when LW1 was presenting his work on draft legislation that would ultimately create a new type of court for hearing substance abuse cases. LW1 in this excerpt was not an official member of IPB, but had been involved in the process through various workgroups since IPB was first created. He had spent countless hours writing this draft legislation and this particular meeting was the second time he had presented it to the group. Although he had his own ideas, he was willing to set them aside and create a document that was truly collaborative in nature.

Participants simultaneously expressed a competitive approach when indicating their loyalty to their home organization or their unwillingness to collaborate or compromise to the extent requested by the board. In one IPB meeting, an individual (IPB1) responded to an ongoing discussion about a recommended policy change that would cut into his organization's revenue:

> I, for one, am not ever going to be in the business for free. We're barely keeping our head above water by getting [our current revenue]. That just staffs the office

> to do it. […] I just want to make sure you guys see the dynamic from [our] perspective. Literally, you need to see what's going on.

The revenue referenced in the above excerpt was collected by assessing court fees to substance abuse offenders. The fees were collected and retained by a single agency (the home agency of the individual making the statement above). The policy change under discussion at the IPB meeting would ultimately redistribute these funds to multiple agencies for the purpose of instituting a better offender monitoring system. Although the taskforce was asking for cooperation from all involved agencies even when it meant possible budget cuts, IPB1 ultimately chose to take a stand that was loyal to his home organization. This statement was similar to several others made at various meetings as participants strove to handle the tension between the desire to collaborate and the desire to compete for themselves or their home organization.

The collaborative/competitive tension became even more apparent through data analysis when coding revealed instances in which the same individual would make conflicting statements seemingly dependent on the individuals present at different meetings, such as a competitive utterance at one meeting and a collaborative utterance at another. For instance, the following exchange occurred at a Legislative Workgroup meeting when the topic of information sharing between agencies was brought up by participants. The two particular agencies in question involved a law enforcement agency and a treatment and prevention agency. LW2, a representative from the law enforcement agency, began the first exchange:

> LW2: Be aware that [the director of the law enforcement agency] and [the director of the treatment and prevention agency] are close and they have a strong working relationship. If push came to shove, [my director] would probably give them what they want. I'm the one trying to limit information. They originally wanted access into our database. So we created a Dropbox where we'd both

> share information. When they went beyond that and asked for so much more and we declined, the original process stopped.
> IPB Chair: [The treatment and prevention agency] says it's not working at all and blames [your agency].
> LW2: And they're the ones who insisted that certain forms had to be electronic.

In this exchange, LW2 is clearly voicing a competitive mindset. He admits that he is unwilling to share information, even when his direct supervisor has agreed to it. LW2 also claims that the collaborative information sharing stopped at the fault of the other agency (due to their request for more information in specific format), rather than at the fault of his own agency.

This same participant, however, revealed the tension he was experiencing between collaborating and competing at an Offender Process Workgroup meeting a few months later when he was conversing with a representative from the treatment and prevention agency in question (OPW1 in the exchange below). The following excerpt includes field note comments and a portion of the second exchange:

> Conversation ensued about the breakdown of communication between [the law enforcement agency] and [the treatment and prevention agency]. They were discussing the electronic data sharing system that [LW2] spoke openly about at past workgroup meetings, when no treatment and prevention representatives were present.
> OPW1: We had access to most of the information we were needing at one time. Full cooperation was almost occurring, but has since broken down.
> LW2: I am completely out of the loop on that.
> OPW1: I talked to you about it at the last [IPB] meeting.
> At this point, it seemed as if [LW2] realized he wasn't going to avoid the conversation. He asked [OPW1] some questions and wrote down some notes, indicating his willingness to reopen the issue of collaboration.

This excerpt shows the multifarious tensions experienced by participants of a collective change effort. LW2 felt a strong urge to remain loyal to his agency, even when his supervisor did not indicate the same urge. Yet, given the overarching purpose of interorganizational change throughout the IPB process, he was forced to realize that his

involvement with IPB would require collaboration with agencies with which he did not have a strong working relationship in the past. Both exchanges presented here indicate a strong and ongoing presence of the collaborative/competitive tension.

Optimism/Skepticism. The second commitment-based tension that was evident in the communicative interactions of IPB participants was a tension between feeling optimistic that the collective changes made would be successful and feeling a need to express a healthy skepticism of the process or of planned changes. At almost every meeting, participants voiced an excitement about the taskforce and the opportunity for "real and lasting change" because the state was clearly in the position to require changes to overarching substance abuse programs and policies. For instance, the SSO Assistant Director said the following during an Offender Process Workgroup meeting:

> This is a really unique opportunity to change in a positive way our [substance abuse] system. If we can get this [new process] as a part of a sentence, then all of a sudden that becomes much more meaningful. Anything that we can do to encourage [offenders] to do the right thing long-term will be valuable. But there will be bumps in the road. We're not looking for a home run right off the bat.

While this statement recognizes the skepticism pole of the tension ("there will be bumps in the road"), the main emphasis is on the optimism expressed toward IPB's opportunity to make meaningful change.

However, along with these overt declarations of optimism, skeptical statements were also often made in the same meeting, same discussion, or even by the same individual. For example, the following exchange took place during an IPB meeting when the assistant director from SSO (SSO1) was providing an update on a piece of draft legislation that had been unsuccessful in being presented on the floor of the state senate.

> SSO1: I hope you're aware of how complex it is. Everyone has a dog in the fight. We've had high profile individuals express support, even though we weren't successful. […] We'll reload and go again. We'll see what happens.
> IPB1: I want to speak to that and perhaps express my frustration. I disagree with you when you talk about it being complicated. It's about as simple a solution as you can come up with. My interpretation is that it's just one or two dudes who just decided they're not going to entertain it [the draft legislation]. If they want to shoot it down in committee after we got a chance to present it, that's fine. But that's not what this is. Whoever has the pen to decide what their committee is going to see is who shot it down.

In this exchange, SSO1 was trying to maintain optimism although the first attempt at introducing new legislation had failed. IPB1, however, was visibly frustrated by the failure and voiced his skepticism that the second attempt would work.

While some participants would be optimistic about the overall goal of IPB and skeptical about certain attempted changes, like IPB1 in the excerpt above, other participants wavered between skepticism and optimism even over the same change initiative. The excerpt below is a statement made by a law enforcement representative presenting at the IPB and SSO Forum. The individual was explaining his experiences with new equipment his agency had been using as a direct result of a change implemented through IPB. He stated:

> When I first saw these [pieces of equipment], I wasn't a believer at all. I thought, "Oh great, here's something new we gotta deal with and learn about and it probably comes with a lot more bureaucracy and red tape." But then I used them. And I have to tell you—I'm an absolute believer about these things now, just after our first [use]. They're effective.

Here, the law enforcement representative explained for others how he transitioned from one pole of the tension (skepticism; "I wasn't a believer") to the other pole (optimism; "I'm an absolute believer") relatively quickly ("just after our first [use]"). The interplay between skepticism and optimism remained dynamic throughout communicative interactions.

Last, one intricacy of this particular dialectical tension is that optimism was not consistently accepted as positive and skepticism was not always viewed as negative. In fact, skeptical statements frequently came in the form of participants stating they were "playing devil's advocate" for the sake of the quality of the outcome. The chair of IPB made a statement in an interview that fully expressed both sides of this tension:

> Changing this entire system—or getting everyone to see that we need to change this entire system—is not easy. Not everyone is saying, "Oh yeah, great. Let's embrace all this change." But there is an interaction and an optimism. And I think it's our duty to work through those disagreements and concerns to try to get the best benefit we can.

In this statement, the chair acknowledges that people are optimistic about the collective change effort, but that disagreements and concerns do exist. His statement also indicates the healthiness of such concerns by stating the need for working through them to get the "best benefit." Ultimately, skepticism and optimism were intricately linked for participants, both viewed as necessary and useful. This dialectic represented a commitment-based tension as participants constantly negotiated between the two poles.

Process-Based Tensions. Second, IPB participants experienced two tensions related to the process utilized in interactions: *full participation/continued progress* and *creativity/parameters*. These types of tensions related to the structure of the group's interaction, including who spoke up and when, or the ways in which decisions or changes were made, such as the encouragement of creative thinking or adhering to constraints caused by the recommendations document or by the participants themselves.

Full Participation/Continued Progress. This dialectical tension was present most clearly in moments when the taskforce had not yet heard opinions or ideas from everyone involved yet needed to move on from a particular issue to ensure continued

progress. At times, full participation was lacking because individuals simply did not speak up. For example, field notes recorded at a Resources Workgroup meeting indicated "At this point, it's an hour and ten minutes into the meeting and the [treatment and prevention] representatives haven't spoken at all. But they are actively following along in the handouts and taking notes of their own." Consequently, it might be that full participation was not achieved when representatives from certain agencies or types of agencies did not feel they had anything to contribute to the topic at hand.

However, this tension primarily manifest itself when individuals, particularly those with some level of perceived authority in the group, wanted to move on from the current discussion topic (i.e., continued progress), but seemed concerned about doing so because they wanted to ensure that the opinions of all participants were heard (i.e., full participation). In one such instance at the IPB and SSO Forum, IPB2 admonished participants for not contributing: "… it takes collaboration. If you don't speak up, shame on you. You're wasting your time. So do your part. Speak up. Contribute." Interestingly, this particular IPB member (IPB2) had a high-level position in his law enforcement agency and was highly esteemed by many individuals involved with the IPB process. After his statement, field notes reported that dialogue seemed to increase, albeit for a short time.

In other instances, full participation was not achieved due to a lack of time in the current meeting. For example, the IPB chair stated in one IPB meeting:

> Now, for as long as you want to… Although we did say this wasn't going to be a long meeting, so if you want to email us or talk to us later, do so. But, from your own agency's or your discipline's perspective, are there other things in this report that we need to address? I'd like to open it up now.

This excerpt from field note data indicated that participation from everyone was desired but that time might not allow for it. The chair encouraged participants to provide their opinions and ideas outside of meetings so that they could be included in any decisions or changes made, thus pushing for further progress.

On the surface, this tension seemed to be a contradiction; that is, data analysis initially appeared to suggest that the IPB and/or the workgroups had to make a choice between achieving full participation or making continued progress. Upon further examination of the data, however, it became apparent that the two poles were indeed a dialectic that existed in a dynamic interplay. The IPB chair succinctly explained this continual tension in an interview when he said, "We literally had to drag things out of people sometimes. So if we hadn't done that, there would be no progress." Full participation was desired in the collaborative efforts of IPB; every agency representative had a place at the table for a particular reason and taskforce leaders wanted to ensure that everyone's voice was heard. However, when individuals were not contributing or voicing their opinions, progress would wane. In sum, progress and participation were equally reliant on one another.

Creativity/Parameters. Another tension related to the process of the collective change effort was the interplay between wanting to allow for creativity while also adhering to the group's parameters when making decisions and implementing changes. From the early stages of the group's operations, creativity was encouraged by IPB leaders. For example, in a Legislative Workgroup meeting, SSO1 stated:

> We've emphasized throughout the [IPB] process that the blinders are off. We don't have to make this fit into the current statutes. You can create a brand new statute with new language if you'd like. If that is something that would help us standardize [processes] around the state, please consider it.

This excerpt indicates that creativity was encouraged, even when it felt unusual for participants to "take the blinders off." Leaders and participants in the IPB process reminded each other at almost every meeting that "nothing is off the table" and that all new ideas for addressing the issues and implementing positive change should be encouraged and entertained.

However, the use of creative ideas was frequently met with a reminder that it was still necessary for IPB to adhere to certain parameters. These parameters were occasionally legal in nature. For instance, the assistant director from SSO explained a certain change initiative at an IPB meeting:

> That was our biggest challenge—to make this work within our current statutory scheme. We had significant limitations with respect to what we could do, so we are pleased with what we got done. That was a significant challenge that took a significant spirit of cooperation.

In this description, SSO1 was alluding to the tension that was felt when the Offender Process Workgroup attempted to redesign the court and administrative process that individuals went through when they were convicted of a substance abuse offense. The Workgroup wanted to pilot their new, innovative process (i.e., creativity), but were forced to conduct a pilot study that adhered to current laws (i.e., parameters).

At other times throughout the process, participants in the discussion would self-impose certain parameters. The following portion of field notes from an Offender Process Workgroup meeting provides an illustration of these self-imposed parameters:

> [OPW2] mentioned that, if the opportunity exists to write a new law, the opportunity should be taken. [SSO1] said he wanted to remind the group that the program should not limit the options/authority of prosecution and judiciary, because then the program will not be supported. In other words, the political landscape in [the state] is one that supports the authority of prosecutors and

> judges to seek and impose punishments at their discretion or on a case-by-case basis.

The description of this conversation highlights the desire for creativity ("if the opportunity exists to write a new law…") along with the self-imposed parameter that the group should only implement changes that would be deemed politically acceptable. By introducing this limitation to the discussion, the group was faced with managing the pull between new, creative initiatives and initiatives that fit within certain guidelines.

Last, the parameters that participants in the IPB process met with were occasionally the taskforce's own goals. The following exchange occurred in a Legislative Workgroup meeting when the group began discussing an idea that would lead to increased fees for first-time substance abuse offenders:

> LW3: I don't think that's a good idea. Remember one of the purposes of [IPB] is to make it easier for the individual who is getting their one and only [conviction].
> SSO1: Yes, I wanted to bring us back to what the recommendation actually is [in the strategic plan].

This exchange provides an example of how discussion would indicate the desire for allowing for creative ideas while still adhering to necessary parameters of the group. Both were encouraged, but doing so created a dialectical tension that ultimately needed to be negotiated.

Outcome-Based Tensions. In conjunction with commitment-based and process-based tensions, this collective change effort experienced tensions related to the actual changes being made and/or the outcomes or results of those changes. These outcome-based tensions included *impactful change/viable change*, *broad progress/nuanced progress*, and *necessary change/palatable change*. Such tensions were manifest when individuals communicated a clear desire for changes that reflected both poles of a

tension; in other words, both types of change were deemed desirable and almost all of the changes implemented by IPB and its workgroups represented the interplay of one or more of the three tensions.

Impactful Change/Viable Change. IPB's processes led the group to exhibiting a tension between the desire for changes that carried big impacts and changes that were thought to be viable or logistically feasible. Given the state's steady rise in the number of substance abusers, one purpose of IPB articulated early on was to institute statewide changes that would have a broad cultural impact on reducing instances of substance abuse. The idea of making meaningful, impactful changes was alluded to during every meeting. For example, the following exchange that took place during a Legislative Workgroup meeting described a compelling change that included a data management system that would be utilized by multiple organizations, including some that were not included in the IPB network:

> LW4: Who is going to establish and run this database?
> SSO1: Everyone. We're talking about pushes and pulls to that system from a variety of agencies. These are big undertakings. These are game changers.

Clearly, the emphasis in this statement is that the change would be impactful. Although the question from LW4 raised viability concerns, the response from SSO1 implied that every agency involved would have a part in running the database but shifted the focus of the discussion to how impactful the change would be.

In another example of logistical concerns being raised along with how impactful a change might be, the following discussion occurred between an IPB member (IPB3) and a Legislative Workgroup member (LW2) at an IPB meeting. The group had just

seen a presentation on the pilot study for a new offender process that would combine the legal and administrative procedures.

> LW2: Do you have any concerns—or do you anticipate large numbers of people trying to take advantage of [the new process]?
> IPB3: With the pilot study, not at all. When [the original process] was changed years ago, we were expecting a huge onslaught of individuals. That never happened, but maybe this change will bring it about. We might have some constraints, but I feel confident we can handle it. We have to handle it because it's a much better process.

Once again, LW2 in this exchange questioned whether or not there were viability concerns. IPB 3 admitted that the new process might be logistically challenging ("we might have some constraints"), but implied that the logistics simply needed to be handled given how impactful the change would be ("it's a much better process"). These exchanges show how participants in the IPB process experienced a dynamic interplay between two poles of the tension—desiring a change that was not only viable but also one that had a high, positive impact.

While the conversation seemed to privilege the impactful change pole of the tension in most instances (such as the two examples provided above), interactions would occasionally privilege or conclude with logistical and viability concerns. In a Legislative Workgroup meeting, the group began discussing the proposed new system for substance abusers who had been charged with a misdemeanor. As previously alluded to, the new system would combine judicial and administrative processes and ask offenders to follow a series of steps that would ultimately lead to ensuring that all paperwork was filed properly, necessary treatment was received, and pertinent fines and fees were paid. This change to the offender process was deemed necessary and impactful by all participants because the old system was cumbersome for offenders to

navigate given the fact that involved agencies rarely shared information with one another. However, a concern arose in discussion regarding who would monitor the progress of the offenders through the new system. Some members wanted an official monitoring agency that would have more of a day-to-day contact with offenders while others were arguing for an agency that would simply certify the completion of each major step for each offender. The following exchange took place:

> IPB Chair: I think if we try to build in a monitoring system, we're biting off more than we can chew. I don't think anyone is prepared to deal with monitoring to that extent. But if we clearly have an entity say, "I'll be a court of record for these and I will be accountable for them," then we have a record. And that's vital.
> SSO1: Keep in mind that this is just one small piece of a very large pie here. We don't have to reinvent the wheel.
> LW5: If you get the tracking system together and data is being input (into the new shared data management system), then you're producing a report every year already. […] If you have your tracking system, the monitoring is built in.

This excerpt indicates that "monitoring," in the legal sense of the term, might be an impactful change but was probably not viable because it would require too much manpower. The suggestion made by the IPB Chair indicated a tension between impact and viability and ultimately landed on a change that was deemed more feasible (using a court of record that monitored offender progress through the data management system) while still allowing for a meaningful impact on the issue at hand.

Broad Progress/Nuanced Progress. A second tension regarding the outcome or types of changes made by IPB materialized in conversations about the focus or emphasis of certain changes—whether the change would instigate broad, wide-reaching progress toward taskforce goals or more nuanced, micro-level progress. The distinction between these two poles was frequently compared to the number of agencies a change

would impact, the number of offenders potentially reached, or even the overall public perception of the substance abuse problem.

Many of the changes recommended seemed only to address the day-to-day processes of one involved agency and were therefore viewed as enacting more nuanced progress. For example, one enacted change was introducing a new, consistent arrest form for substance abuse offenders that would be utilized by all law enforcement agencies across the state. In one Legislative Workgroup meeting, the following discussion took place regarding the new form:

> SSO1: One of the recommendations that came out of our [strategic plan] was to use a [standardized] arrest form. It's a small step, but I hope we can get law enforcement agencies to do this.
> LW6: Let me just give you one case example. I had a guy a few weeks ago who had gotten two different [arrests] within 13 days. The second case was amended down to [a lesser offense] because they didn't know about the first case. There's just no accountability for how things are reported. If we can track these cases with one standard form, then we will have accountability. As a matter of daily business, we have no way to track it right now.

The change being discussed in this interaction—implementing a standardized arrest form—only impacted arresting law enforcement agencies. It was a "small step," but was seen as necessary nuanced progress toward the broad goal ("accountability" and data sharing across agencies). Other changes, like the statewide data sharing system described previously, had a more wide-reaching progress as it impacted more than simply law enforcement agencies.

Both change characteristics were desirable, but often held in tension with one another. For example, the SSO Assistant Director made the following statement in Legislative Workgroup meeting when discussion was focusing on including increased fines for offenders in a piece of draft legislation:

> At the end of the day, our overarching goal is to get individuals through this process better. I'm concerned that the legislature is going to see this as just several fee increases. If that's what we have to do, that's what we have to do. But I want to be prepared to stand in front of the legislature and defend it in light of our broader goal.

This excerpt encapsulates the tension between nuanced progress (including a fee in a piece of draft legislation) and broad progress (achieving one of the IPB goals of simplifying the court process for offenders).

The SSO Assistant Director privileged broad progress in the example above, but in a later Legislative Workgroup meeting, he responded to another participant's questions about the pilot study of the new offender process in a manner that seemed to privilege more nuanced progress.

> OPW3: What's the measure of success [for the pilot study]? Will you be documenting the costs involved?
> SSO1: We'll take a look at all that stuff. But again, our focus is the process. What do we need to change to facilitate this? We can sit down and come up with 20 things that will come out of this pilot. Cost will certainly be one of them. But overall, we don't want to get too far down a rabbit trail. The purpose is to evaluate the process.

While OPW3 was concerned with the kinds of general information that might be obtained from the pilot study, SSO1 redirected the focus to simply document the process that offenders go through during the pilot study. His statement here privileged the nuanced progress of simply tracking offenders ("evaluate the process") rather than also being concerned with broader information ("20 things that will come out of this pilot"). Thus, while members of IPB seemed to want to instigate changes that made macro-level progress toward their broad goals, that change characteristic was also constantly held in tension or interplay with the need to make more nuanced, micro-level progress.

Necessary Change/Palatable Change. The last outcome-related tension is one that speaks to the intricacies of the issue at hand. Communicative interactions during IPB meetings revealed a tension between making changes that were necessary to address the wide-spread and rising substance abuse problem and making changes that were palatable or acceptable to the individuals and agencies involved, to the state legislature, or even to the broad political and cultural landscape of the state.

In one instance, a telling exchange occurred between three participants at a Legislative Workgroup meeting. Participant 1 began the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation that showed several disheartening statistics about the immensity of the substance abuse problem in the state. These updated numbers were presented early in IPB's plan implementation phase and seemed to cast a somber mood over the meeting as participants were contemplating how challenging it would be to achieve their overarching goals. The meeting then progressed toward a discussion about changes to statutes that dictate how courts operate with regard to substance abuse cases. The following exchange occurred:

> SSO1: Are we setting up a process that's [too] unique for [judges] to handle? Is it different than existing courts?
> LW7: Yes, it is [different].
> SSO1: Is it too much to ask?
> LW3: Not in light of the numbers you just gave us!

In this exchange, LW3's response indicated that she felt the enormity of the problem at hand, and therefore viewed the change to statutes as absolutely necessary, even while SSO1 was concerned the change would not be viewed as palatable by the legislature or by the judges who would be asked to implement new changes.

As another example of this tension, which showcases the concern for the palatability of changes, the IPB chair made the following statement at a meeting:

> We've tried to be very careful in visiting with all of you and in trying to move some of these things forward. We've tread very carefully about not infringing upon the authority of the prosecutor or the discretion of the judge in these cases.

The chair admitted to treading carefully with regard to changes that might not be viewed in a positive light by certain agencies. Furthermore, SSO leaders explained in an interview that removing authority or discretion from judges or prosecutors would not be well accepted by the general public given the political landscape of the state. Thus, IPB felt the need to balance changes that would make a difference with those that would be well accepted.

Interestingly, individuals involved with IPB also seemed to grapple with this tension in a manner that suggested palatability also affected themselves. In some meetings, but not all, IPB participants would discursively distance themselves from substance abuse offenders by "othering" offenders with their language. Field notes from Offender Process Workgroup meetings three months apart captured this sense of othering. The first excerpt includes researcher notes while the second includes an exchange between participants.

> Throughout the discussion, several jokes or offhand comments were made about offenders' ability to "get their life together" and take care of certain steps in the legal process. One of the jokes with regard to fees included offenders having to sell plasma and "steal from mom's purse" in order to pay fines.
>
> ***
>
> LW8: [Offenders] need to be told, "The bare minimum is this and these are the things that cost you more money."
> LW5: So we need to put together a fee schedule.
> LW3: So that could just be in the information that [the county] is giving out to defense attorneys.
> LW5: (joking) We can even give them a mason jar that they can take home and put their pennies in.

> LW2: (joking) Not a mason jar, they'll fill it with moonshine.
> (laughter around the room)

These passages reveal how IPB participants would discursively distance themselves from the offenders they were trying to help. Their jokes revealed a lack of respect for offenders that implied any financial breaks or incentives offered to offenders were not necessarily palatable for the agency representatives involved in IPB. The overall consensus was that offenders had to "pay their debt to society" given the choices that led them to a substance abuse arrest.

However, one of the clear recommendations in IPB's strategic plan was to consider costs to offenders and to help offenders settle their cases, receive any necessary treatment, and re-enter society as stable, law-abiding citizens. Thus, several communicative interactions revealed the tension between what was palatable (offenders paying their dues) and what was necessary (helping offenders with affordability issues). For example, the following exchange occurred at a Resources Workgroup meeting:

> RW1: So the [healthcare] fund is stinging 'em for $300 for every [substance abuse offense]? Well God knows… I'm glad [substance abuse offenders] have such deep pockets! (said sarcastically)
> SSO1: Yep. Guys, now you should see why this is necessary. The burden is solely and squarely on the shoulders of the offender.

The focus of this conversation became what is necessary to reduce the burden on the offender. The othering of offenders remained somewhat apparent when RW1 sarcastically refers to their "deep pockets," but the tone of the conversation implied a concern that overshadowed disrespect.

In another discussion that took place during a Legislative Workgroup meeting, the tension between necessary and palatable changes became even more nuanced as participants contended with othering offenders. This exchange shows how the group

tried to adhere to politically and culturally acceptable changes while making the necessary changes to ultimately reduce substance abuse numbers:

> LW2: I don't know if you guys ever think of these kinds of things—equal protection concerns, treating one class of person differently. But, to the extent that it pops into anyone's head, let's start thinking about it.
> LW9: I keep thinking about that. Our criminal statutes address that well already; I'm not worried about it. But the concern I keep coming up with is indigency and how we treat them differently. I don't want to make someone ineligible [for the new offender process] just because of poverty status. We combat that through waiving fees in the pilot study. We need to keep that in mind when drafting legislation later on.
> SSO1: My concern is the difference between indigency and affordability.
> […]
> LW8: The [existing program] says flat out that you have to be able to pay for it—that's just the bottom line.
> SSO1: Okay, just whatever you all come up with is fine with me.
> LW9: If we deny someone below the poverty line, it would cause everyone problems.
> SSO1: Yes, we need to give it some thought. We don't want to be above the fold on anything. Let's have one more meeting before we reach out to others.

This conversation highlights several issues within the necessary change/palatable change tension. LW2 and LW9 are primarily concerned with making sure all offenders are treated similarly while LW8's statement indicates that offenders should be able to pay for a new program. SSO1 makes a telling statement toward the end of the conversation ("we don't want to be above the fold"). By making this statement, he cautions others to make sure whatever decision is reached will not be newsworthy. In other words, it should be politically and culturally acceptable.

In all, the tension between necessary changes and palatable changes seemed to be the most intricate tension that IPB participants exhibited. The intricacies of this tension highlighted how both poles were held in a dynamic interplay with one another. The tension was addressed in almost every meeting and was carefully negotiated during communicative interactions.

In sum, participants of this interorganizational collective change effort revealed three main types of tensions in their communicative interactions: commitment-based tensions, process-based tensions, and outcome-based tensions (see Table 2, page 57). Commitment-based tensions encompassed participants' dynamic level of affiliation with or belief in the collaborative effort and included both the collaborative/competitive and skepticism/optimism tension. Process-based tensions focused on how communicative interactions took place for participants and included the full participation/continued progress tension as well as the creativity/parameters tension. Finally, outcome-based tensions were those that revealed tensions regarding the type of changes made by IPB. These tensions were the most complex and included impactful change/viable change, broad progress/nuanced progress, and necessary change/palatable change. In the section that follows, the strategies utilized for negotiating these tensions through communication are explained.

Communication Strategies for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions

The results presented above describe the distinct dialectical tensions experienced by members of this collective change interorganizational board. However, simply listing the tensions apparent in communicative interactions does not address Research Question 2a, which asks how participants negotiated or managed these tensions in their talk. As Seo and coauthors (2004) explained, tensions such as those presented above require active management and, by investigating management or negotiation strategies, scholars can better understand the communicative choices that individuals make when facing tensions. These choices are likely to have significant impacts on relationship maintenance and on organizational or interorganizational outcomes.

Table 3

RQ2a and RQ2b: Strategies and Tactics for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions

		Communicative Tactics			
		Acknowledging	Suspending	Hedging	Deferring to Authoritative Text
Negotiation Strategies	Privilege One Pole	*(not used)*	LW3: Nobody has to certify it yet. Maybe we can worry about the oversight later. This would be taking a baby step rather than a giant leap. *(Broad/Nuanced Progress)*	LW5: I'm perfectly willing to accept that I'm wrong about this, but it appears that this issue is outside the scope of what we're trying to do here. *(Creativity/ Parameters)*	LW6: So she's wanting to raise [a fee]? LW2: Don't do that here. SSO1: I agree. […] If you'll look at page 32 of the plan, one of our recommendations is to consider cost to offenders. *(Necessary/ Palatable Change)*
	Balance/Alternate Poles	OPW2: Again, I'm concerned that judges should not only have a yes/no option. SSO1: Well then maybe we should add an option so that it says: "Yes," "No," and "Yes, but." *(Necessary/ Palatable Change)*	*(not used)*	LW6: If our goal is to create something that is marching down the train tracks together […], we need to be addressing these issues. I'll freely admit it if I'm going off in the minutia. But I'd like to address this now. *(Impactful Change/ Viable Change)*	SSO1: The assessment and recommendations have really been a neutralizer. When we can stand up and say, "This is the assessment saying we need to fix this. It isn't us." *(Referencing multiple tensions)*
	Move Action Forward	IPB2: This is a large, complex problem […] But incrementally, I think we're making progress. *(Broad/Nuanced Progress)*	SSO1: […] maybe we should be looking into that kind of language. IPB Chair: That's outside the scope of this group. That can be addressed at a later date. *(Creativity/ Parameters)*	*(not used)*	IPB Chair: We're not really debating the necessity of the recommendation here. That's already been vetted all last year. *(Skepticism/ Optimism)*

Thus, further data analysis revealed three strategies for negotiating or managing tensions through communication: *to privilege one pole*, *to balance or alternate between both poles*, and/or *to move action forward*. See Table 3 (page 79) for a broad overview of these strategies, along with the communicative tactics used to achieve such strategies and example data excerpts that illustrate how negotiation strategies and communicative tactics worked together in participant interactions.

These strategies, which can also be understood as the communicative goals participates had when managing tensions in talk, should not be seen as unique to one tension type or as mutually exclusive. While they are each addressed separately below for purposes of clarity, participants regularly attempted to *move action forward* in conjunction with one of the other two strategies, *privileging one pole* or *balancing/alternating between both poles*. Furthermore, individuals would occasionally attempt to manage multiple ongoing tensions with the use of a single strategy. Thus, the strategies described in detail below should be understood as being utilized in an ongoing, dynamic interplay of tensions communicated through IPB's interactions.

Privilege One Pole. Throughout the communicative interaction in IPB's collective change efforts, it frequently became apparent that participants would manage a given tension by attempting to focus solely on or privilege one pole of that tension. This negotiation strategy or goal was utilized by participants more often than the other two strategies. In fact, many of the example excerpts presented in the above sections that identified tensions also provide examples of privileging one pole.

In another example, the IPB Chair made the following statement at an IPB meeting after the SSO Assistant Director had provided the group with a progress report on the pilot study for the proposed offender process:

> IPB Chair: As [SSO1] indicated, we're looking at maybe bringing legislation on this in the coming year. But there's no specific timeline there. Maybe we'll want to extend the pilot. This is the first steps necessary to begin the process. We're just going to see how it works, what the impacts are, and make recommendations. We'll be discussing this a lot in the next year or two.

Interestingly, this one statement alludes to two different tensions being experienced during the meeting at the time: the broad progress/nuanced progress tension and the impactful change/viable change tension. To contextualize the statement, the ongoing conversation involved SSO1 answering a number of specific questions from various IPB members regarding the pilot study of the new offender process. The line of questioning revealed the presence of both the broad progress/nuanced progress tension and the impactful change/viable change tension as IPB members were concerned about various aspects of the pilot study. When the IPB Chair joined the conversation with the above statement, he utilized the communicative tactic of suspending (described in detail below) to make it clear that he wanted to privilege the nuanced change ("This is the first steps necessary…") and viable change ("We're just going to see how it works…") poles of the two present tensions. The tacit directive in his statement is that the group should focus on these certain poles of the tensions and deal with the other poles at a later time. Ultimately, this negotiation strategy allowed IPB participants to make statements that were clearly in support of one side of a given tension.

Balance or Alternate between Both Poles. The second negotiation strategy utilized by IPB participants was that of attempting to balance or alternate between the

two poles of a given tension. This strategy was almost always utilized more surreptitiously than the strategy of privileging one pole, which was used more overtly in conversation. However, the primary goal for participants using this strategy was to allow for both sides of a pole to be recognized or privileged, either by simultaneously balancing the two or by quickly alternating between the two.

In one example of the use of this strategy, the following statement indicates how LW1 wanted to balance both poles of the creativity/parameters tension while he was presenting his ideas for draft legislation at an IPB meeting:

> LW1: In addressing some of these issues and looking at this draft, I don't see it as set in stone. I've got a broad perspective. I'm not an expert. I've just had a lot of experience. So that's the source from which this information is coming. If you have any questions or criticisms or additions or changes to this proposed legislation, please feel free to do that. I'm open to all of it.

This statement was made before LW1 went on to present in detail the draft legislation he had crafted along with other members of the Legislative Workgroup. By presenting the draft, LW1 indicated to IPB members that he and other members of the workgroup were pleased with the draft as it was. In other words, he was essentially placing parameters on IPB's decision to accept the draft in its current form. However, his statement above also indicated his willingness to allow IPB members to make changes (i.e., to show creativity). Thus, by utilizing the communicative tactic of hedging ("I'm not an expert" and "I'm open to all of it"), which is described in detail below, LW1 was attempting to maintain a balance or at least allow the group to alternative between the two poles of the creativity/parameters tension.

While LW1's comment above predicates a conversation, the strategy of balancing or alternating between two poles was repeatedly utilized by participants who

simply wanted to bring up one pole of a tension that seemingly was being ignored in the ongoing conversation. In such instances, participants would use a variety of communicative tactics to introduce the pole of a tension that was perceived to be ignored or left out of the conversation at hand so that ongoing conversations would represent a balance between the two poles.

Move Action Forward. The last negotiation strategy utilized by IPB participants was that of attempting to keep action going by moving the conversation along to other topics by forcing a decision to be made when a stalemate was apparent. This strategy was frequently used together with one of the other two strategies. In other words, a participant might simultaneously attempt to move action forward and privilege only one pole of a certain tension.

For example, in one Legislative Workgroup meeting, a particular recommendation in IPB's strategic plan was being discussed with some skepticism. The overall tone of the conversation was that the recommendation should not have been included in the plan in the first place for various reasons being offered by workgroup members. The IPB Chair broke into the conversation by saying, "We're not really debating the necessity of the recommendation here. That's already been vetted all last year. So the task of this workgroup is to try to come up with language that we can introduce in the next legislative session to create the entities." In this statement, the Chair redirected the conversation back to what he believed was the task at hand (coming up with language for draft legislation) by reminding participants that they had already agreed to (or "vetted") the strategic plan. This example shows how the Chair negotiated

the skepticism/optimism tension in a manner that ultimately redirected the conversation to move action forward.

Interestingly, this example also illustrates how the strategy of moving action forward was often utilized in conjunction with another strategy. Here, the Chair was also privileging the optimism pole of the tension by implying that the group's skepticism about the recommendation at hand was pointless or unfounded. Ultimately, this strategy was a relatively functional one that allowed participants to move IPB's progress along toward a given decision or change implementation.

In sum, participants of IPB's collective change implementation effort exhibited three strategies or communicative goals for negotiating and managing dialectical tensions: to privilege one pole, to balance or alternate between both poles, and to move action forward. These strategies were not unique to a certain type of tension, nor were they mutually exclusive. Participants frequently utilized the strategy of moving action forward simultaneously with one of the other two strategies. While these negotiation strategies point to the goals or desired outcomes participants had in mind when managing tensions, they do not reveal the means utilized to achieve those goals. Therefore, the following section describes the communicative tactics participants used to achieve their negotiation strategies.

Communicative Tactics Used when Negotiating Dialectical Tensions

The final research question guiding this study (RQ2b) focused on describing the communicative tactics utilized by participants when negotiating dialectical tensions. In other words, what were the communicative means by which participants were able to implement or achieve their negotiation strategies? Extensive data analysis revealed four

communicative tactics utilized when negotiating dialectical tensions through communication: *acknowledging*, *suspending*, *hedging,* and *deferring to authoritative text* (see Table 3, page 79, for a broad overview).

Similar to their negotiation strategy counterparts, it is important to note that these communicative tactics were not unique to certain tensions or types of tensions. Participants utilized each tactic to manage multiple types of tensions and they also utilized multiple tactics to achieve a given negotiation strategy. For example, to move action forward, participants would use the acknowledging, suspending, or deferring to authoritative text tactic. Table 3 (page 79) indicates when certain strategies and tactics were not used together. Each strategy is further explained below through the use of examples from data.

Acknowledging. The first tactic utilized when negotiating or managing tensions is perhaps the most apparent and most widely used by participants. When a dialectical tension arose during communicative interactions, individuals at times tried to balance or alternate between the two poles or to move action forward by simply acknowledging the presence of both concepts represented by the tension. For example, the excerpt below illustrates how the IPB chair used the tactic of acknowledging when negotiating the collaborative/competitive tension during one IPB meeting.

> As we wrap up this meeting, I want to thank you again for all of your work and prolonged commitment to this effort. Given our competing commitments, I know we can't all agree 100%, but I've been very pleased with the consensus we've gotten from this group.

This quote indicates how, rather than trying to overcome the collaborative/competitive tension or privilege one pole or the other, the board chair simply acknowledged that the tension exists as his negotiation strategy was to balance both poles. He recognized the

"competing commitments" along with the "consensus," which revealed both poles of the collaborative/competitive tension. By using the acknowledging tactic here, the Chair was able to thank participants for working through competitive issues and simultaneously encourage them to continue their participation in the collaboration.

In another IPB meeting, one of the more influential IPB members (IPB2) made a statement that acknowledged both poles of the broad progress/nuanced progress tension:

> This is a large, complex problem and it's not going to get any better if we stick our head in the sand and not deal with it. You guys have been with it for two years and it's going to take a long time to get where we want it to go. But incrementally, I think we're making progress and I think that's all we really ask for.

In this statement, the need for broad progress was recognized ("This is a large, complex problem"), as was the need for nuanced progress ("incrementally, I think we're making progress"). This use of the acknowledgment tactic allowed IPB2 to move action forward as he encouraged other participants to continue with their commitment to the task at hand.

Not all uses of this communicative tactic were so overtly positive and encouraging, however. In some instances, an acknowledging tactic was used in a manner that allowed participants to point out sarcastically or humorously that a tension exists. In other words, it allowed individuals to make a statement akin to "We can't always get what we want." Consider the following exchange and description from field notes of an Offender Process Workgroup meeting:

> OPW2: Again, I'm concerned that judges should not only have a yes/no option.
> SSO1: (sarcastically) Well then maybe we should add an option so that it says: "Yes," "No," and "Yes, but."
> At this point in the conversation, OPW4 held his hands up in the shape of a diamond and discreetly asked, "What shape does this make?" SSO1 laughed. My interpretation of this interaction and use of the crude gesture, which is meant

> to be a representation of female anatomy, was that OPW4 was calling judges (or at least [OPW2]) weak or scared of change. Ultimately, judges were left with a yes/no option when the court is given the option to terminate an offender's involvement in [the new offender process].

This interaction showcases how the acknowledging tactic was utilized to achieve a balance between a necessary change and a palatable change. The SSO Assistant Director utilized sarcasm and OPW4 utilized humor essentially to acknowledge that a proposed change (giving judges only a yes/no option) would not be agreeable with most judges. Eventually, the group decided that the yes/no option for judges was the necessary change to make. However, the use of humor and sarcasm at this moment provided participants with a linguistic tool that acknowledged not every necessary change would be acceptable to everyone involved. In other words, these participants were trying to balance the tension between necessary changes and palatable changes.

Be it through encouragement or through humor and sarcasm, acknowledging was a tactic habitually utilized by participants of this collective change effort. Interestingly, however, this communicative tactic was not utilized as a means of achieving the strategy of privileging one pole of a tension. Such was the case because simply acknowledging both poles of a tension was not a means of giving the advantage to one pole over the other. Thus, this communicative tactic allowed participants to balance or alternate between two poles of a tension and to move action forward after the group accepted the presence of the tension.

Suspending. Second, individuals throughout the IPB process used a tactic best described as suspending when negotiating a variety of dialectical tensions. Essentially, this communicative tactic allowed individuals to delay or prolong addressing a tension—or at least one pole of a tension—by saying it could be addressed in the future

and should not be a concern in the present discussion. For example, when the Legislative Workgroup was discussing the possibility of new legislation that would create a new type of court for hearing substance abuse cases, the following conversation occurred:

> LW7: Well, wait a second. What would be the process for certifying these courts?
> LW3: Nobody has to certify it yet. Maybe we can worry about the oversight later. This would be taking a baby step rather than a giant leap.

LW3's statement made use of the suspending communicative tactic to achieve the negotiation strategy of privileging one pole of the tension. In other words, she wanted to focus on nuanced progress (i.e., "a baby step") rather than broad progress (i.e., "a giant leap"). By stating that the group could "worry about the oversight later," LW3 suspended the focus on broad progress and allowed for the temporary privileging of the nuanced progress pole of the tension.

As another example of the suspending tactic, the following exchange took place during an Offender Process Workgroup meeting when the group was discussing language use in draft legislation.

> SSO1: A number of states have already changed the language [in their statutes] from "indigency" to "affordability," so maybe we should be looking into that kind of language.
> IPB Chair: That's outside the scope of this group. That can be addressed at a later date.

The broader context of this discussion was centered on a concern that the language of the draft legislation appeared as if too many fees and fines would be administered to substance abuse offenders of a certain class or socioeconomic status. SSO1 offered a creative idea about mimicking language used by other states that was deemed less harsh. The IPB Chair, however, stated that taking such a step did not adhere to IPB's

parameters by stating it was "outside the scope of this group." Thus, the creativity/parameters tension was clearly apparent. In his very next statement, the Chair used the suspending tactic to say the issue could be addressed in the future. Interestingly, the use of this tactic in this statement allowed the Chair to achieve two negotiation strategies at once: privilege one pole of the tension (parameters) and move action forward.

Beyond the two examples presented here, the suspending tactic was regularly utilized when individuals were attempting to negotiate the full participant/continued progress tension. Most notably, individuals would argue for waiting until a later date to worry about the full participation of agencies represented in IPB. For example, the following discussion occurred in an Offender Process Workgroup meeting when there were no treatment and prevention representatives present:

> SSO1: We need to talk about what's egregious enough for you guys to [agree to the pilot study]. Our hope is that there's some benefit in the treatment group and we're getting more information about these folks—egregious offenders—than we get now. The people who need more treatment than what they're currently getting will reveal themselves. We just need to sit down together with them and develop that piece further.
> LW2: Do we care about that right now?
> SSO1: No, I don't really care about that now to be honest.

In this exchange, the conversation was focused on the pilot study for the new judicial/administrative process for offenders. The question at hand was whether or not egregious offenders (those who were abusing substances at a relatively high amount and/or rate) should be admitted into the pilot study. SSO1 first suggests that admitting such individuals into the pilot study might allow for the collection of more data related to treatment, but that the idea would need to be discussed with representatives from treatment agencies before they could move forward. In other words, the full

participation/continued progress tension was at play. At this point, LW2 asks a question that initiates the use of the suspending tactic ("Do we care about that right now?"). By asking this question, he allows for SSO1 to acknowledge that the treatment piece of the puzzle was not vital for continued progress at that time. Therefore, one pole of the tension was privileged and the issue was suspended to be dealt with at a later date.

As each of the above examples indicate, the suspending tactic was functional in that it allowed participants to suspend one pole of a tension to be addressed later. This tactic allowed participants to focus attention on the other pole of a tension, even if temporarily. Interestingly, this tactic was never utilized to balance or alternative between the two poles of a tension. By engaging in suspending, the presence of the dialectical tension was communicatively minimized (i.e., one pole was privileged temporarily) as interaction continued (i.e., the speaker moved action forward).

Hedging. Another communicative tactic utilized by participants when managing or negotiating dialectical tensions was that of hedging, or lessening the impact of a statement. By utilizing hedging, participants were able to make statements that clearly emphasized or privileged one pole of a particular tension or that allowed for the simultaneous presence of both poles (i.e., balance). Consider, for example, the following statement made by one individual (LW6) in a Legislative Workgroup meeting as he was negotiating the impactful change/viable change tension:

> If our goal is to create something that is marching down the train tracks together with [existing processes] and this new thing, we need to be addressing these issues. I'll freely admit it if I'm going off in the minutia. But I'd like to address this now.

In this excerpt, the participant was referencing previous discussion centered on the proposed offender process that would require wide-spread change to the processes and

procedures of multiple organizations. The group began focusing on the possible impact such a change could have. However, this participant wanted to discuss the viability of such a change and was attempting to bring up some logistical issues such as staffing and access to technology. Thus, in this utterance, LW6 was able to achieve the negotiation strategy of alternating between both poles of the impactful change/viable change tension. The participant engaged in hedging by claiming, "I'll freely admit if I'm going off in the minutia." This tactic made sure that both poles were brought up in discussion but also allowed for the possibility that the rest of the group wanted to focus only on impact.

In another example of the hedging tactic, one participant broke into an ongoing conversation and said, "I'm perfectly willing to accept that I'm wrong about this, but it appears that this issue is outside the scope of what we're trying to do here." This statement was made in response to several ideas being suggested for additions to the group's piece of draft legislation. The participant wanted to privilege the use of parameters by saying that the issue at hand was "outside the scope of what we're trying to do here" and he did so by first hedging his statement ("I'm perfectly willing to accept that I'm wrong about this"). In other words, the creativity/parameters tension was managed as the participant privileged the parameters pole, but hedging lessened the impact of his statement that did so.

Hedging was also utilized when an IPB member wanted to raise his skepticism about the proposed new offender process. As the IPB chair and SSO1 were introducing the new process at an IPB meeting, the IPB member (IPB 4) interjected with the following request:

> I'll preemptively strike what I'm about to say if I'm the only one who believes this. It doesn't seem very complex, but is there any way we can get a flowchart or schematic of the different options this thing goes through? I'm skeptical that this will work and I might be more willing to accept it if I see it on paper. Again, I'll strike that if everyone else in the room understands it.

This IPB member was admittedly skeptical of the change being introduced and he utilized multiple hedging statements ("I'll preemptively strike what I'm about to say if I'm the only one who believes this" and "Again, I'll strike that if everyone else in the room understands it") when requesting more documentation that would perhaps help ease his skepticism. Thus, hedging allowed the member to privilege skepticism when others in the room were privileging optimism with regard to this particular change.

While the first two communicative tactics introduced (acknowledging and suspending) seemed to be utilized most often to move action forward when both poles of a tension were already apparent in conversation, hedging seemed to do the opposite. The use of hedging statements provided participants with the opportunity to (re)introduce the pole of a tension that was being ignored at the time. Consequently, hedging provided a communicative tactic for temporarily halting action when an individual felt that one pole of a tension needed to be better emphasized or when a better balance between the two poles needed to be achieved.

Deferring to Authoritative Text. The last communicative tactic utilized by participants of this collective change effort involved referencing IPB's strategic plan. This strategic plan, which was crafted and agreed upon by all IPB members during the taskforce's first year of existence, contained a list of recommendations for addressing the state's rising substance abuse concern. In deferring to this strategic plan as an

authoritative text, individuals would manage or negotiate a given tension essentially by giving agency to the text and claiming that it privileged one pole of the tension.

In the following exchange, which took place during a Legislative Workgroup meeting, participants were discussing the suggestions of a member who was not in attendance at this particular meeting. This member had emailed her suggestions to the others and the group was going through her list.

> LW2: So she's wanting to raise [a fee] from $100 to $500?
> LW6: Don't do that here.
> SSO1: I agree. I had a concern that this was going to get us off of the recommendation at hand. If you'll look at page 32 of the plan, one of our recommendations is to consider cost to offenders.

The implication in this exchange was that the absent member saw the fee raise as necessary, but that others voiced their disagreement because raising fees had already been established as disagreeable or unpalatable to members and constituents of IPB. Thus, SSO1 defers to the strategic plan as an authoritative text, even going so far as to point to a specific page of the plan. The implicit message through the use of this communicative tactic is that everyone in the room had already agreed to the specifics of the plan. Therefore, if a recommendation in the plan seemed to privilege one pole over another, the tension should be addressed by focusing conversation or decisions on the privileged pole. In this case, that meant privileging a palatable change over a necessary one.

In a similar instance, SSO1 referred to the strategic plan in an attempt to manage the broad progress/nuanced progress tension. The following exchange occurred at a Resources Workgroup meeting when the group was discussing a strategic plan

recommendation that required the group to gather a list of all costs associated with a substance abuse arrest.

> RWG1: Unless you're wanting to get a big, broad picture of all costs…
> SSSO1: That's the recommendation.
> RWG1: Yeah, but it [the recommendation] is about fines and fees that go into programs. What I'm saying is—do you have the ability to actually estimate what every single cost would be? And do we even want to go down that road?
> RWG2: [RWG1] is right in that a lot of this stuff, strictly speaking, isn't included in our marching orders. But in order to accurately assess and figure out if there are fees that can be attained and reallocated from these areas, we need to include more in our list.

In this discussion, RWG1 was hesitant to list out all associated fees given the time it would take and because several fees (such as having a vehicle towed after a substance abuse arrest) were not collected by any of the agencies involved in IPB. Thus, he saw the full list as inhibitive of the broad progress that needed to be made. The SSO Assistant Director, however, was adamant that the full list was necessary because that is what the strategic plan's recommendation said. While RWG1 disagreed about the letter of the law, so to speak, RWG2 joined the conversation and turned attention to the spirit of the law (i.e., that the recommendation was really about collecting a list of all costs, as SSO1 had inferred). Consequently, deferring to the authoritative text allowed SSO1 and RWG2 to maneuver the conversation back to the nuanced progress of compiling a full list of offender costs, ultimately managing the broad progress/nuanced progress tension.

Unsurprisingly, the individuals who most frequently utilized this communicative tactic were those who seemed to be most familiar with IPB's strategic plan. These participants primarily included the IPB Chair, representatives from SSO, and a few other individuals who had been actively engaged in the process from the beginning.

When asked in an interview whether or not the strategic plan was purposefully utilized to manage tensions, the IPB Chair and the SSO Assistant Director explained the following:

> IPB Chair: Changing this entire system—or getting everyone to see that we need to change this entire system—is not easy. Not everyone is saying, "Oh yeah, great. Let's embrace all this." But there is an interaction. And I think it's our duty to work through those disagreements and concerns to try to get the best benefit we can.
> SSO1: I agree one hundred percent. The assessment and recommendations have really been a neutralizer. When we can stand up and say, "This is the assessment saying we need to fix this. It isn't us."
> IPB Chair: It's about how do I get people to improve their services when they didn't think their services were bad?
> SSO1: And I don't want to say that the plan was predetermined or driven…
> IPB Chair: No, but it was directed.

These interview responses shed light on the deferring to authoritative text communicative tactic as the SSO leaders implied that they purposefully used the authority of the strategic plan and the coinciding assessment that ultimately led to the creation of the plan to manage strategies in a variety of ways. Specifically, SSO1 pointed to the value of this tactic when balancing between the two poles of a tension ("the assessment and recommendations have really been a neutralizer"). These leaders directed the plan in a way that recommendations would help other agencies and agency representatives recognize the need for change. As such, the leaders (and others) purposefully utilized the plan to manage tensions and direct conversations in purposeful ways. Thus, much like the use of acknowledging and suspending, deferring to the authoritative text was a functional tactic used to keep action and interaction going. It was also utilized to balance between poles or overtly privilege one pole over another. As such, this communicative tactic was the only one of the four utilized to achieve all three negotiation strategies.

Summary of Results

To conclude, the results presented here indicate that a variety of dialectical tensions were apparent in the communicative interactions of participants of this interorganizational collective change effort. These tensions included commitment-based tensions (collaborative/competitive and skepticism/optimism), process-based tensions (full participation/continued progress and creativity/parameters), and outcome/based tensions (impactful change/viable change, broad progress/nuanced progress, and necessary change/palatable change). These tensions were communicatively negotiated using three strategies: privileging one pole, balancing or alternating between both poles, and moving action forward. To achieve one or more of these three strategies, IPB participants used four different communicative tactics: acknowledging, suspending, hedging, and deferring to authoritative text. The implications for theory and practice are discussed in the concluding chapter that follows.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The overarching purpose of this study was to better understand the communicative experiences and meaning-making efforts of the organizational representatives taking part in a collective change implementation process. The term collective change is best understood as a contextual descriptor of the process of multiple organizations coming together in a collaborative effort to introduce change in the policies and procedures of all involved organizations simultaneously. Given this unique context, the body of scholarship on both interorganizational collaboration and organizational change point to a number of relevant concepts. However, this study addresses an important limitation of existing research by combining these two broad subfields of organizational scholarship to better understand an ever-increasing occurrence in organizational life across a variety of sectors as organizations continue to work together to introduce change.

The site of this study was the Interorganizational Prevention Board (IPB), a collaborative taskforce comprised of representatives from 11 governmental and nonprofit organizations. IPB's main goal was to implement their strategic plan, which would introduce statewide changes across all involved organizations to address a rising concern stemming from alarming numbers of substance abuse deaths and related incidents. To assist in their implementation efforts, IPB was guided by a coordinating agency (the State Safety Agency, SSO) and three workgroups (Legislative, Offender Process, and Resources) that focused on implementing specific initiatives in IPB's strategic plan.

Utilizing an interpretive paradigm that assumes a constitutive view of communication (Craig, 1999; Putnam, 1982), data collection and analysis began in an

inductive attempt to broadly understand the communication and meaning-making processes of IPB. Data collection for this study primarily consisted of observations at IPB and workgroup meetings over a period of 18 months. In total, detailed field notes from observations at 17 meetings served as the primary source of data. As a secondary data source, two individuals central to the IPB process were interviewed at three various intervals throughout the 18 months of initial plan implementation. The director of SSO, who was also the chair of IPB, and his assistant director consented to multiple interviews as a means of clarifying issues of concern for the researcher and commenting on current analysis. Finally, a number of pertinent documents were collected throughout the research process to serve as a third data source. These documents included IPB's strategic plan, meeting agendas, various proposals and drafts related to specific initiatives or plan recommendations, and membership/attendance lists.

Data analysis, which began early in the data collection process, followed a modified version of constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Initial data analysis efforts revealed a number of communicative tensions apparent in the interactions of IPB participants. Thus, subsequent data collection and analysis moved from an inductive approach in which analysis was primarily grounded in data to an abductive approach (Timmermans & Tavory, 2011), in which analysis remained focused in data while simultaneously drawing upon existing literature to inform the themes and concepts emerging from the dataset. This tension-centered approach to inquiry led to the determination that the tensions apparent through data analysis were dialectical in nature (i.e., tensions were comprised of two contradicting discourses held at constant interplay with one another; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Therefore,

dialectical theory became the guiding theoretical perspective for all subsequent data collection and analysis.

Dialectical theory is particularly useful for understanding the meaning-making process of groups, as it allows for tension in communicative interactions to be understood not as conflict to be eliminated but as the normal, interdependent presence of opposing forces, meanings, or ways of thinking (Johnson & Long, 2002). Furthermore, the way(s) in which individuals communicatively manage such tensions can point scholars and practitioners alike to a deeper understanding of complex processes experienced in (inter)organizational life (Lewis et al., 2010). Thus, the use of this theoretical perspective led to three research questions:

RQ1: *What are the dialectical tensions manifest in the communicative interactions of participants of an interorganizational collective change implementation effort?*

RQ2a: *In what ways do participants of an interorganizational collective change implementation effort communicatively negotiate or manage dialectical tensions?*

RQ2b: *What are the communicative tactics utilized by participants when negotiating dialectical tensions?*

In answering the first research question, findings revealed that IPB participants experienced three main types of dialectical tensions: commitment-based tensions, process-based tensions, and outcome-based tensions. Commitment-based tensions were those focused on how devoted individuals were to the overall IPB effort. The collaborative/competitive tension in this category revealed how participants

simultaneously felt a need to show a cooperative spirit for the interorganizational effort while also remaining true to the goals and desires of their home organizations. The skepticism/optimism tension revealed that individuals felt a strain between having faith that the changes being implemented by IPB would be successful and being cynical that outcomes would be successful.

Second, process-based tensions were tensions related to the way(s) in which IPB members would interact, make decisions, and implement changes. The full participation/continued progress tension in this category was made apparent when individuals felt that making continued progress on their task at hand would have to be done at the sacrifice of full participation from everyone in the room. The creativity/parameters tension indicated an ongoing interplay between the desire for IPB interactions to utilize creative thinking and the desire for interactions to adhere to a variety of parameters placed on the group by leadership, the strategic plan, or members themselves.

Last, outcome-based tensions were those focused on the types and characteristics of the actual changes being made by IPB. The impactful change/viable change tension in this category illustrated that IPB participants struggled with making changes that would have a meaningful influence on the overall substance abuse problem at hand while also making changes that would be logistically feasible. The broad progress/nuanced progress tension focused on the pressure to make broad, wide-reaching progress toward the overall goal of reducing substance abuse while simultaneously making the necessary, nuanced progress at a smaller scale. Finally, the necessary change/palatable change revealed that IPB participants felt that changes made

should be acceptable or agreeable to the organizations involved or to outside constituents, yet any change deemed necessary should also be implemented.

The final research questions (RQ2a and RQ2b) asked how participants communicatively negotiated these dialectical tensions and what communicative tactics were utilized to achieve the desired strategies. Analysis revealed that participants had three main strategies for negotiating tensions: to privilege one pole, to balance or alternate between both poles, or to move action forward. These negotiation strategies or goals for managing tensions were achieved through four communicative tactics: acknowledging, suspending, hedging, and deferring to authoritative text. Acknowledging simply allowed participants to recognize or admit that a tension existed and was utilized to move action forward and/or to balance between poles. Second, suspending was the attempt to delay addressing one pole of a tension (with the promise to return to it at a later date) so that attention could be focused on the other pole of a tension. Suspending was used to privilege one pole and/or to move action forward. Third, hedging involved the use of seemingly apologetic words or phrases as a means of lessening the impact of statements. Hedging was utilized to privilege one pole of a tension and/or to move action forward. Last, deferring to authoritative text involved assigning a certain level of authority to IPB's strategic plan and then drawing upon that authority to negotiate a tension in certain ways. This communicative tactic was used to achieve all three negotiation strategies.

By exploring the tensions experienced by participants of a collective change effort along with the strategies and tactics used for communicatively negotiating such tensions, this study contributes to our theoretical proficiency in a variety of ways. These

implications are discussed in what follows, along with the limitations of this study and proposed directions for future research.

Communication Concerns in Collective Change

IPB was an interorganizational collaboration focused on implementing changes recommended by the group's strategic plan. Given the unique nature of IPB, the findings of this study are relevant to a variety of concepts existing in both the interorganizational relationship (IOR) literature and the organizational change literature. First, Miller and coauthors (1995) originally suggested that IORs are likely to experience an "autonomy issue" that influences communication as organizational representatives struggle between maintaining autonomy and giving up control to remain involved with the collaboration. As tension-centered approaches to inquiry began increasing in popularity, Miller et al. (1995) were among the first to point future scholars to a dialectical tension that might be apparent in a variety of collaborative efforts. While these authors were specifically examining a collaboration of nonprofits, the issue of autonomy was clearly present in IPB interactions as well. In fact, the collaborative/competitive tension found in this study might be understood as an extension of the autonomy dialectic or as a representative of how such a dialectic can play out in communicative interaction. While Miller et al. (1995) first cautioned that members of a collaborative effort are likely to feel pulled in different directions and others have since confirmed it (e.g., Lewis et al., 2010), the results of this study point to the varying ways that individuals will manage such a tension along with the communicative tactics utilized when doing so. Given that scholarship has confirmed the existence of the autonomy dialectic, the implications of the findings in this study point

to a more pragmatic benefit. As scholars continue to refine our understanding of the ways in which the autonomy dialectic is manifest and managed communicatively, we can begin to point practitioners to prescriptive theory that will allow collaborating partners to competently address the tension with the use of certain communicative tactics.

Another concern that is related to the prominent autonomy dialectic is the varying motivations organizations might have had for participating in IPB. Oliver (1990) argued that organizations involved in IORs were driven by one or more of six different motivations: necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, and legitimacy. Given the characteristics of the IPB collaboration, all six of these motivations were apparent at different times. Because the taskforce was put together at the directive of a high ranking state official, the involvement of each organization was not officially or legally mandated, but might be considered necessary in the political and social landscape of the state. However, because there is one coordinating agency whose representatives fulfill a variety of leadership roles in the taskforce, asymmetry was often at play. The representatives from SSO were regularly fulfilling roles of authority throughout the process by leading discussions, offering ideas, and responding to ideas from others. Their role in the overall process might have contributed to the collaborative/competitive tension if other members felt a sense of asymmetry.

Yet, while some involved organizations might perceive or even desire asymmetry, others might have viewed their involvement in IPB as a means for reciprocity, or stronger collaboration with other organizations than what was experienced in the past. For example, the prevention and treatment organizations had

not consistently worked with the law enforcement organizations on substance abuse concerns prior to the establishment of IPB. Consequently, reciprocity was established through IPB in a manner that might have propelled a sense of collaboration rather than competitiveness and autonomy. Further, some involved organizations experienced increased efficiency and/or stability as a result of their participation in IPB. Throughout the change implementation effort, a number of organizational processes were refined and resources were shared, thus highlighting a potentially key motivating factor for certain organizations and a contextual concern that might have influenced the ways in which organizational representatives managed ongoing tensions.

Finally, given the nuances of the substance abuse problem being addressed by IPB, legitimacy was also a likely motivation. As previously mentioned, law enforcement agencies and prevention/treatment agencies do not traditionally collaborate given their fundamentally different approaches to issues such as rehabilitation and incarceration. By participating in IPB, certain prevention/treatment organizations might see a potential opportunity for increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of law enforcement agencies (with the opposite also potentially being true), promoting future cooperation between the two. Therefore, although not a primary focus of this study, a variety of motivations were seemingly apparent throughout the IPB process. These motivations were likely to have influenced the tensions participants felt and/or the way tensions were managed. It may be that future research should examine more overtly the relationship between organizational motivations and tension management. Furthermore, recognizing the interplay of motives, rather than seeing them as independent of one

another, might provide scholars with a mechanism for better understanding the communicative behaviors of individuals involved in collaborative efforts.

Another key concern in the existing literature is the perspective from which organizational change is examined. As Lewis' (2007) stakeholder model of change implementation communication illustrates, change in organizations is perhaps best understood as the ongoing negotiation of key stakeholders involved in the change. A hallmark of the dialectical perspective utilized in this study is that that analysis of dialectical tensions does not inherently privilege a management or leadership perspective on organizational change. In fact, by examining the tensions experienced by IPB, this study was able to capture the negotiative process involving multiple parties that drove change implementation progress. To move action forward was a key strategy or goal apparent when participants were managing dialectical tensions. Therefore, it was in the communicative management of tensions by *all* participants of IPB (not just leaders) that change occurred.

By observing the progress of change in talk, the results of this study also illustrate Van de Ven and Poole's (1995) dialectical motor for change. These authors explained that "change occurs when these opposing values, forces, or events gain sufficient power to confront and engage the status quo" (p. 517). In many cases, one pole of the tensions identified in this study could represent the status quo that had to be confronted for change to occur. For example, IPB created a piece of draft legislation that would change the way judges tried substance abuse cases. An ongoing concern for IPB members was that these changes would not be considered agreeable to judges throughout the state. Thus, the status quo was represented by the palatable change pole

of the necessary change/palatable change tension. As the tension would arise in conversation, individuals would engage a strategy for managing it, either by privileging one pole or by attempting to balance both poles. Decisions were most often made and changes would be implemented when individuals would use one of these two strategies in tandem with the strategy of moving action forward. It was only through the negotiation of the two poles, which represented disparate values and meanings at interplay with one another, that changes were made to the judicial system. In this sense, a dialectical perspective of collective change allows for a more nuanced understanding of the way(s) changes occur, as opposed to the constricting nature of more traditional, linear models of change such as those offered by Lewin (1995) and Rogers (1995).

Last, this study adopted a constitutive view of communication (Craig, 1999) that has been utilized by several other scholars who study both collaboration (e.g., Keyton et al., 2008; Koschmann, 2013) and organizational change (e.g., Bisel & Barge, 2011; Fairhurst et al., 2002). Understanding how communication enables and constrains the change process in a collaborative effort points to a number of key implications. First, the bona fide group perspective (Stohl & Walker, 2002) and the mesolevel model of collaboration (Keyton et al., 2008) highlight key issues such as communication occurring at multiple levels, changing membership, permeable boundaries, and interdependence among group members. The fluid nature of a bona fide group such as IPB will influence the ways participants communicate, in turn influencing the ways meaning is constructed.

In IPB's case, there were multiple IPB meetings and workgroup meetings over the 18-month period of data collection for this study, indicating multiple levels of

communication. Never once was the attendee list the same from one IPB meeting to the next IPB meeting, and the same can be said of workgroup meetings. Furthermore, as Keyton and coauthors (2008) described, communication was occurring at and across multiple levels— in both workgroup meetings and IPB meetings. Therefore, individuals participating in the meaning-making process through the negotiation of ongoing dialectical tensions varied over time. This variation is likely to influence which topics, tensions, negotiation strategies, and communication tactics were utilized in IPB interactions. It may be that certain tensions were more or less pronounced to members who had only attended one meeting (or one type of meeting—IPB or workgroup) as compared to those who were present for most meetings. Likewise, it may be that certain members felt they did not have access to all of the communicative tactics used to manage tensions (e.g., not all members were familiar enough with IPB's strategic plan to use it as an authoritative text). Future research should consider the implications of varying membership and attendance on the management of tensions in a collective change effort. One way of doing so might be to track the communication network created by the IOR, examining more closely which tensions are present in which meetings as well as which network actors utilize certain strategies and communication tactics when negotiating tensions.

Furthermore, agency and authority also shifted from meeting to meeting depending upon who was present. It was impossible to observe conclusively how the power, legitimacy, and urgency of stakeholders (Lewis, 2007) would be drawn upon differently based on who was in attendance. However, evidence of such shifts was apparent throughout the data. For example, as further explained in the previous chapter,

one individual who was a member of both the Legislative Workgroup and the Offender Process Workgroup, spoke about a data sharing system quite differently in meetings of each workgroup. Based on observations and contextual understandings, these differences were largely attributed to which organizational representatives were present or absent from each meeting. Thus, future research should continue examining issues of power, legitimacy, and urgency as it influences the communicative tactics and negotiation strategies members (a) have access to and (b) are willing to use when managing ongoing dialectical tensions.

Dialectical Tensions of Collective Change

Given the rise in tension-centered approaches to scholarship (McNamee & Paterson, 2014; Tracy, 2004), expanding that approach to the previously unexamined context of collective change in this study allowed for the further synthesizing of dialectical tensions from an organizational and group communication perspective. This advance in synthesis answers the calls by Johnson and Long (2002) and Kramer (2004) to continue developing a theory of group dialectics. As indicated by the results of this study, this dialectical tension-centered approach offered a means of examining both organizational collaboration and interorganizational change as it occurred in the communication of the collective group.

The findings in this study connect with and extend existing literature in that the tensions of collective change represent tensions found in other dialectical studies (see Table 4, page 112, for an overview). First, as described in Chapter 1, the "big three dialectical tensions" of connectedness/separateness, certainty/uncertainty, and openness/closedness that are often found in interpersonal relationships provide a logical

starting point for understanding the dialectical tensions experienced by IPB members. The collaborative/competitive tension found in this study most closely aligns with the connectedness/separateness tension that Baxter and Sharp (2015) describe. In this sense, the simultaneous desire for independence and interdependence appears to be a common characteristic of both dyadic relationships and group interactions. The uncertainty/certainty tension, however, was not apparent in IPB interactions in the same manner as the interpersonal communication literature describes. While the skepticism/optimism tension might appear to be closely related, for IPB members this tension represents opposing beliefs about the group's goals. In interpersonal relationships, the certainty/uncertainty tension represented a simultaneous desire to have comfort through predictability and to experience novelty from or with the relational partner. Last, the openness/closedness tension described in interpersonal literature is suggestive of process-based tensions for IPB members, as these tensions related to how the group interacted. In this sense, group members had to traverse process-based tensions when deciding when to disclose information and how much information was appropriate to disclose. However, IPB members did not overtly express an openness/closedness tension. As such, the tension between openness and closedness appears to be one that is more evident and discernable in interpersonal relationships.

To more explicitly connect the findings of this study to existing literature, I turn to related group and organizational communication scholarship. The commitment-based tensions apparent in this study are similar to the relationship tensions described by Lewis et al. (2010). Specifically, these authors described relationship tensions as a "we-orientation" versus a "me-orientation," stating that this type of tension "concerns the

attention and focus of collaborations as they contemplate and balance external demands and internal dynamics of the collaboration" (p. 467). These same demands were apparent in the communicative interactions of IPB members as they were confronted with the collaborative/competitive tension (i.e., balancing external and internal demands). Kramer (2004) also found a tension between inclusion and exclusion as well as a tension between group commitment and other commitments to other life activities. This consistency across the literature indicates that relationship, commitment, and membership related tensions are likely to be apparent in a variety of group and (inter)organizational contexts.

However, as Table 4 (page 112) indicates, the skepticism/optimism tension experienced by IPB members is a new finding and might be one that is unique to a collective change effort. This tension has not been identified by any previous studies focused on interorganizational collaboration or organizational change. Given the change-related nature of IPB's goals (i.e., to implement change across all organizations), this tension was likely more apparent than it would be in other collaborative groups. When individuals expressed the tension between skepticism and optimism, it was almost always related to whether or not a given change would be successful when implemented. As such, it may be that this tension was overlooked in previous studies and future research should examine whether or not the skepticism/optimism tension is present in other organizational change efforts.

The process-based tensions found in this study also mirror tensions identified in previous literature (see Table 4, page 112). In particular, both the full participation/continued progress tension and the creativity/parameters tension

articulated by participants in this study are similar to the structural tensions described by Lewis et al. (2010) that occur in collaborative settings. Furthermore, the creativity/parameters tensions was also found by Kramer (2004), as he described the tension experienced by community theater members as one between ordered activities and emergent activities. Viewed in tandem with existing literature, the results of this study further solidify our understanding that communication occurring in group and organizational settings, particularly those that are collaborative in nature, is likely to include dialectical tensions surrounding group processes. Members are likely to feel a tension between waiting for everyone to participate and maintaining progress on the task at hand, as well as between engaging in a process that is more formally structured and a process that maintains flexibility.

A unique contribution of this study, however, is the outcome-based tensions identified. These tensions focused on issues deriving from the board's purpose to implement changes to the policies and practices of all involved organizations. Unlike other tension-centered approaches such as paradoxes, contradictions, and double binds (c.f., McGuire et al., 2006; Tracy, 2004), the focus on dialectical tensions in this study assumes that tensions are not necessarily negative and will be managed or negotiated, rather than overcome or eliminated. Therefore, the outcome-based tensions of impactful change/viable change, broad progress/nuanced progress, and necessary change/palatable change provide valuable insight into communication practices of a collective change effort. Each pole of these tensions were considered desirable by collaboration participants. While a change with broad impact is valued, so is a potentially smaller change if it is deemed viable or easily and logistically accomplished. This finding

reinforces the widely-accepted cultural belief that change is always good, even necessary (Zorn, et al., 1999). As such, these outcome-focused tensions are likely to be unique to a collaborative effort focused on collective change. Future research should continue to examine tensions of collective change efforts to verify whether or not these outcome-based tensions are transferable to like contexts.

Table 4
Results Linked to Previous Literature: Dialectical Tensions

Type of Tension	Tension	Existing Literature
Commitment-Based Tensions	Collaborative/ Competitive	• Connectedness and Separateness (Baxter & Sharp, 2015) • Autonomy Dialectic (Miller et al., 1995) • Relationship Tensions (Lewis et al., 2010) • Inclusion/Exclusion (Kramer, 2004) • Group/Other Commitment (Kramer, 2004)
	Skepticism/ Optimism	***New Finding***
Process-Based Tensions	Full Participation/ Continued Progress	• Structural Tensions (Lewis, et al. 2010)
	Creativity/ Parameters	• Structural Tensions (Lewis, et al. 2010) • Ordered/Emergent Activities (Kramer, 2004)
Outcome-Based Tensions	Impactful Change/ Viable Change	***New Finding***
	Broad Progress/ Nuanced Progress	***New Finding***
	Necessary Change/ Palatable Change	***New Finding***

Ultimately, this study extends our understanding of the dialectical tensions experienced in group settings by confirming the commitment- and process-based

tensions that have been found in previous studies and clarifying newly found tensions that might be unique to a collective change process. It has been well established that dialectical theory is a useful tool for understanding communication in group and organizational scholarship, as it "provides a different means of seeing below the surface of the traditional linear view into the nature and effect of group communication itself" (Johnson & Long, 2002, p. 37). However, the findings of this study not only revealed new types of tensions apparent during a collective change effort, they also revealed valuable implications for how these tensions are managed in communicative interactions.

Strategies for Negotiating Dialectical Tensions

The negotiation strategies utilized by IPB participants in this study can also be synthesized by and further understood through existing literature (see Table 5, page 115). IPB participants attempted to manage dialectical tensions by focusing on or privileging one pole, by balancing or alternating between poles, and/or by moving action forward through the use of distinct communicative tactics. These three negotiation strategies are similar to the seven strategies Baxter and Montgomery (1996) described.

First, the denial strategy, which essentially involved ignoring one pole, is the equivalent of privileging one pole as participants did in this study. The spiraling inversion, segmentation, and balance strategies that Baxter and Montgomery (1996) described are all more nuanced ways of balancing or alternating between the two poles of a given tension. While spiraling inversion and segmentation indicated distinctions between alternating over time and alternating according to different activities or

locations, it may be the case that this study was not able to capture data that revealed such nuances. It also may be that the negotiation strategies explained by Baxter and Montgomery (1996) are unique to interpersonal relationships in which tensions and meanings are constantly (re)created and negotiated over time as the relationship progresses. Group communication, when compared to a dyadic relationship, can easily become so complex that it does not allow for an observer (or even a participant) to distinguish between such closely related management strategies (Johnson & Long, 2002). Last, the disorientation and reframing strategies described by Baxter and Montgomery (1996) are quite similar to the strategy that moved action forward for IPB participants. Disorientation is a relatively negative view of conflict or tension as inevitable, while reframing seeks to minimize tensions. Both of these strategies allow for individuals to manage a tension in a manner that accepts the presence of tension (whether negatively or positively) and allows the interaction to move on from the focus on the tension, much like participants of IPB did when they attempted to move action forward.

Furthermore, Seo and coauthors (2004) provided a number of management strategies for negotiating tensions experienced during organizational change; these strategies represent areas of overlap with the findings of the present study (see Table 5 for an overview). Integration, which is the process of combining both poles, and connection, which is the process of giving voice to both poles, are both strategies that would fall under the balancing/alternating between poles strategy offered by this study. However, separation, which is the process of recognizing poles separately, and selection, which is the process of denying one pole, are both types of strategies that

privilege one pole as the participants of IPB often did when managing tensions. The transcendence strategy, which involved reframing a tension by changing its meaning into a reformulated whole (Seo et al., 2004) was not apparent in the interactions of IPB members in this study.

Table 5
Results Linked to Previous Literature: Negotiation Strategies and Communicative Tactics

	Finding	Existing Literature
Negotiation Strategies	Privilege One Pole	• Denial (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994) • Separation (Seo et al., 2004) • Selection (Seo et al., 2004)
	Balance/Alternate Poles	• Spiraling Inversion (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994) • Segmentation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994) • Balance (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994) • Integration (Seo et al., 2004) • Connection (Seo et al., 2004)
	Move Action Forward	• Disorientation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994) • Reframing (Baxter & Montgomery, 1994)
Communicative Tactics	Acknowledging	***New Finding***
	Suspending	***New Finding***
	Hedging	***New Finding***
	Deferring to Authoritative Text	• Collective Identity (Koschmann, 2013) • Invoking Mission Statements (Lewis, et al., 2010)

Interestingly, previous scholarship on dialectical tensions in groups found that specific tensions were managed with specific strategies. For example, Kramer (2004) found that group members would manage the group/other commitment tension with

strategies that included minimizing the tension, segmenting or delaying commitments, and negotiating conflicts before committing. However, group members would manage ordered/emergent activities tensions by segmenting between the two poles, venting frustration about the tension, or adjusting attitudes toward the tension. Similarly, Lewis et al. (2010) found that relational tensions were managed by building trust, creating buy in, and/or disassociating from the group while structural tensions were managed by using leadership roles, invoking mission statements, and fluctuating between formal and informal procedures. In other words, previous group communication scholarship does not offer a consistent list of negotiation strategies that can be used for a variety of tensions or types of tensions. Heretofore, negotiation strategies in group contexts have been primarily understood in relation to a specific tension

The results of this study, however, revealed that participants would use one of three broad negotiation strategies to manage a variety of tensions and types of tensions. Simply put, there was no direct and mutually exclusive relationship between a tension and a strategy used to manage it. It may be that there are certain characteristics of a tension in group communication which indicate only a certain type of negotiation strategy can be utilized, or it may be that our conceptual definitions of strategies should be refined in ways that explain why they can be utilized for multiple types of tensions. As it is, existing scholarship leaves the relationship between tensions and strategies used to manage them relatively unclear. The findings of this study, which reveal a distinction between negotiation strategies and the communicative tactics used to achieve those strategies, may be an initial step at further clarifying this relationship. These implications are discussed below.

Communicative Tactics for Achieving Negotiation Strategies

A unique contribution of this study is the distinction between strategies for negotiating dialectical tensions and the communicative tactics used to achieve or implement those strategies. In other words, strategies can be understood as the ends individuals wanted to achieve when faced with a tension, and communicative tactics can be understood as the means to achieving those ends. While early rounds of data analysis for this study focused on the traditionally-utilized method of coding for dialectical tensions and negotiation strategies only, it became apparent that data originally coded under the umbrella term "negotiation strategies" were much more complex than this category implied. Consequently, after further analysis through memoing, added rounds of coding, and peer review discussions (Charmaz, 2006), the coding scheme was altered to reflect the differences between strategies and communicative tactics used to implement those strategies. This flexibility in the research process allowed the findings to illustrate more fully the nuanced ways in which IPB members communicatively responded to dialectical tensions. As such, the results of this study represent an important initial step at extending the original components of dialectical theory by distinguishing between negotiation strategies and communicative tactics.

Much of the existing literature using a dialectical perspective stops at identifying negotiation strategies or conflates the strategy with the tactic used to achieve it. Some dialectical scholars have implied or alluded to the use of communicative tactics to achieve certain goals when managing tensions, but have not utilized clear language to delineate between the two. For example, Lewis et al. (2010) found that individuals

would implement more formal leadership roles to "cope" with certain tensions, but these authors did not describe the connection of this tactic to a clear goal when managing tension, such as privileging one pole, balancing both poles, or moving action forward.

For a more explicit example, I turn to Kramer's (2004) seminal study of a community theater that first applied dialectical theory to a group communication context. The findings in this study illustrated a number of strategies for managing tensions, and even explained how unique strategies were utilized for different types of tensions. However, these findings could potentially be further clarified by applying the concept of communicative tactics used to employ or achieve a negotiation strategy. To illustrate, one way theater group members managed the tension between group commitments and other commitments was by delaying commitments to other activities so they could temporarily focus on their commitment to the theater group. Applying the terms used in the present study, Kramer's (2004) findings might be further clarified in the following manner: The strategy or goal of the members was to manage the group/other commitment tension by privileging one pole of the tension (i.e., group commitment). The communicative tactic employed to privilege one pole was suspending. Much like IPB members would make statements that indicated their privileging of one pole would only be temporary (i.e., "maybe we can worry about that later"), participants in Kramer's (2004) study would plan to go back to other life commitments when their temporary commitments to the theater were deemed complete. The use of these separate but related terms allows for a more nuanced understanding of how tensions are managed through everyday talk.

As previously mentioned, no existing work utilizing dialectical theory has distinguished between a management/negotiation strategy (or goal) and the tactic used to achieve it, nor has any literature attempted to explain the relationship between these two concepts. It may be that previous scholarship has relied too heavily on interview data as a means of asking participants to reflect on how they manage tension. The primary means of data collection in this study was observation. By being present for the moments in which dialectical tensions arose in group interactions, I was able to observe how participants responded communicatively. Capturing these communicative interactions provided the means for distinguishing between a strategy that participants might be more likely to describe in an interview and the tactic they used to achieve that strategy. That is, communicative tactics reveal what participants actually said in the moment when faced with a tension.

This distinction between strategy and tactic is important because it offers a more complete overall picture of the group itself. As Johnson and Long (2002) explained, "the sum of the tensions and members' responses, within the group's relevant contexts, literally *is* 'the group'" (p. 31; emphasis original). Therefore, if group communication scholarship is committed to understanding and explaining the communicative interactions among group members, the use of a dialectical perspective demands that responses to tensions are examined in totality.

Moreover, examining the communicative tactics themselves offers valuable implications for scholars and practitioners of collective change. The tactics utilized by IPB members are not new concepts in the realm of communication scholarship. In fact, most of the communicative tactics are relatively simple and common features of

everyday talk. First, the tactic of acknowledging was a way for IPB members to openly recognize that a tension existed. While this tactic is a new finding with regard to dialectical tensions in groups, previous scholarship has alluded to it by addressing similar concepts. For example, Kramer's (2004) management strategies of adjusting attitudes and naturalizing tensions both seemed to be a more distinctive way of simply acknowledging the existence of tensions.

Second, as described above, the suspending communicative tactic is similar to what Kramer (2004) referred to as delaying and what Baxter and Montgomery (1996) referred to as segmentation. However, by operationalizing suspending as a communicative tactic rather than a negotiation strategy, this study provides a theoretical means to understanding communicative responses to tensions. In other words, participants might have an unspoken negotiation strategy of moving action forward when faced with a given tension. However, to achieve that strategy, the participant could employ the communicative tactic of suspending by uttering a statement such as "that can be addressed at a later date."

Third, the communicative tactic of hedging is a concept that has been discussed often by communication scholars. The term hedging, which has been found to increase perceptions of speaker credibility, can be defined as "the use of linguistic elements to signal tentativeness or caution while expressing information" (Jensen, 2008, p. 348). In a well-known contribution to the field of sociolinguistic scholarship, Brown and Levinson (1987) explained hedging as an attempt at politeness when trying to save face or protect the face of others. Hedging in the context of this study allowed IPB participants to qualify or lessen the impact of their statements that either privileged one

pole or attempted to balance both poles. By using statements such as "correct me if I'm wrong" or "I'll freely admit if I'm the only one who feels this way," IPB members were able to make strong statements in a manner that others might find more acceptable or agreeable. Again, by understanding hedging as a communicative tactic that could be utilized when implementing a given negotiation strategy, this study further clarifies exactly how members of a collective change effort might communicatively respond to dialectical tensions.

Last, the communicative tactic of deferring to authoritative texts relies heavily on the notion of collective identity as an authoritative text. In an examination of an interorganizational collaboration, Koschmann (2013) observed that the collaborative group produced an authoritative text through their ongoing communication and codifying of group decisions. This authoritative text became the collective identity upon which group members drew when a voice of authority and power was needed to move action forward. For IPB participants, the authoritative text was the strategic plan that the group had created and formalized during their first year of operation. Given that the authoritative text was a physical document that all IPB members had helped formulate and had officially approved, the strategic plan carried with it a significant amount of authority during ongoing IPB interactions.

As the findings of this study illustrate, individuals with adequate knowledge of the details in the plan could point to it as the voice of authority when negotiating tensions. In this sense, this communicative tactic was very similar to management strategy explained by Lewis et al. (2010) when members of a collaborative effort would invoke mission statements to respond to a given tension. For IPB members, this

communicative tactic not only allowed for a certain participant to try to move action forward, but it was also a way for individuals to either privilege one pole or balance both poles of a tension according to what was written in the plan. Moreover, certain IPB members seemed to be more knowledgeable of the group's strategic plan, either because they were more heavily involved in the decision-making phase than others, or because they had spent the time to familiarize themselves with the document outside of meetings. By illustrating how deferring to authoritative texts operates as a communicative tactic to implement a given negotiation strategy, this study reveals initial insights into how power differentials are created and maintained when only certain members of a group have access to a given communicative tactic. A significant practical implication of this finding is that collective change groups and similar collaborative groups should be aware of the identity and coinciding voice of authority they create when formulating their goals and purposes into documents such as a strategic plan.

Furthermore, by illustrating when participants use certain tactics to accomplish certain strategies and which tactics are not feasible with certain strategies (see Table 3, page 79), this study provides a more complete picture of the communicative interaction in response to dialectical tensions. For IPB members who wanted to privilege only one pole of a given tension, there were three tactics at their disposal: suspending, hedging, and deferring to an authoritative text. Acknowledging was not a valuable communicative tactic when privileging one pole, because the process of acknowledging seemed to naturalize the presence of both poles rather than focusing on one pole. In a similar manner, IPB members did not utilize suspending (i.e., claiming that one pole

would be addressed later) as a communicative tool when attempting to balance both poles. The other three communicative tactics, however, were useful in balancing the two poles of a tension. Last, the negotiation strategy of moving action forward, which could be used in tandem with privileging one pole or balancing both poles, was achieved by acknowledging, suspending, or deferring to authoritative texts. Hedging was not utilized to move action forward because it most often halted conversation to focus the group's attention elsewhere. Ultimately, however, by revealing a relationship between negotiation strategies and the communicative tactics used to achieve them, this study clarifies and extends one of the hallmarks of dialectal theory.

Future research should continue to examine the use of communicative tactics such as acknowledging, suspending, hedging, and deferring to authoritative texts. The relationships between communicative tactics and negotiation strategies emerged as the result of multiple rounds of focused and axial coding during data analysis for this study. As such, these relationships are contextualized within the data collected for this study. It may be that these tactics are unique to IPB participants and that a wider range of communicative tactics are at a communicator's disposal when negotiating dialectical tensions in other contexts.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study contributes to our understanding of interorganizational change and dialectical tensions, it is not without limitations. First, this study offers one theoretical explanation of the meaning-making and communicative interactions of IPB participants. As such, it should not be considered as a comprehensive analysis of the entire IPB process. Moreover, by examining the dialectical tensions experienced in a

single case of collective change, these results cannot be assumed to be generalizable to all collective change efforts. However, if applied prudently, the findings of this study might be transferable to other contexts in which a variety of organizations are working together to implement change.

First, it is important to view these results through the lens of our existing knowledge of both interorganizational relationships and organizational change. IPB, the collective change taskforce under examination in this study, represents a relatively tightly coupled IOR (Barringer & Harrison, 2000) with high inclusivity and intensity (Whetten, 1981). Given the formality of IPB's structure and processes, the results presented here should be interpreted accordingly. As such, the tensions experienced by IPB participants might have been more manifest or more nuanced than in loosely coupled, temporary, and/or informal collaborative efforts.

Further, IPB was engaged in making planned changes (rather than unplanned; Weick & Quinn, 1999) and incorporated both materialistic and discursive changes (Zorn et al., 2000) across a variety of mostly governmental organizations. Thus, these results must be interpreted with an understanding of such contextual intricacies. It may be that different tensions are present when, for example, a loosely coupled IOR is faced with the need to implement unplanned changes. To further solidify our understanding of dialectical tensions, future work should focus on a variety of other interorganizational relationships and other change initiatives.

Second, Baxter and Braithwaite (2008) caution dialectical scholars that tensions and the meanings assigned to those tensions can shift and change as relationships develop over time. While this study was longitudinal as it followed IPB through its

initial 18-month change implementation phase, IPB as a group was not together daily. In fact, the board and its workgroups occasionally went multiple months without holding a meeting. While all official meetings were observed, the inability to observe the backstage interactions among IPB participants or the work done outside of formal meetings might have limited researcher access to contextual issues surrounding tensions. Therefore, it might be the case that even more time spent observing IPB, particularly in backstage settings, would reveal a shift in the meanings and negotiations of tension over time.

Relatedly, the access granted to IPB for this study did not include access to all board and workgroup members for interviews. While the author did interview several of these individuals for a previous study (see Chapter 3 for more details), interviews for this study were only conducted with board leaders. As such, a limitation of this study is that the vantage point of IPB members and participants was not fully captured as interviews only served to contribute the perspective of IPB leaders. Future studies should strive to capture the voice of as many individuals as possible to fully understand the complexities of tension management.

Moreover, this manuscript did not detail the intricacies of governmental and nonprofit organizations as opposed to private industry; as theorizing progresses, scholars should examine the unique characteristics of organizations and industries involved in collective change efforts. And last, much like the early writings on dialectical tensions suggest (Baxter & Montgomery, 2006), and as (inter)organizational scholars have mimicked (Lewis et al., 2010), future research should move toward testable predictions of tensions, management strategies, and communicative tactics.

Conclusion

This study examined the dialectical tensions experienced by participants of an interorganizational taskforce working to produce change across all involved organizations. This collective change effort involved three main types of dialectical tensions experienced and negotiated by participants: commitment-based tensions, process-based tensions, and outcome-based tensions. Interestingly, the outcome-based tensions seem to be most unique to the collective change context. Further, the study revealed three negotiation strategies for managing these tensions in communicative interactions: to privilege one pole, to balance poles, or to move action forward. A key contribution to dialectical theory made by this study was the finding that these strategies were achieved through the use of four communicative tactics: acknowledging, suspending, hedging, and deferring to an authoritative text. By arguing for the need to understand both the end and the means used when negotiating dialectical tensions, this study offers new insight into the ways that individuals make sense of their tension-filled experiences in collective change efforts.

Ultimately, this study is situated in the tension-centered approach to organizational communication scholarship that continues to rise in popularity. The findings provide valuable insight into communication concerns in the distinctive context of collective change. This context will continue to be an important focus of scholarship as organizations across a variety of sectors will continually strive to work together in change efforts. Scholars and practitioners alike must recognize that collaboration, change, and tension are ubiquitous concerns in organizational life. As one IPB member put it, “There are two things that everyone hates: change and the way things are.”

References

Abrahamson, E., & Fombrun, C., J. (1992). Forging the iron cage: Interorganizational networks and the production of macro-culture. *Journal of Management Studies, 29*, 175–194. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.1992.tb00659.x

Armenakis, A. A., & Harris, S. G. (2002). Crafting a change message to create transformational readiness. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 15*, 169–183. doi:10.1108/09534810210423080

Armenakis, A. A., Harris, S. G., & Mossholder, K. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations, 46*, 681. doi:10.1177/001872679304600601

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barge, J.K., Lee, M., Maddux, K., Nabring, R., & Townsend, B. (2008). Managing dualities in planned change initiatives. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 36*, 364-390. doi: 10.1080/00909880802129996

Barringer, B. R., & Harrison, J. S. (2000). Walking a tightrope: Creating value through interorganizational relationships. *Journal of Management, 26*, 367–403. doi:10.1177/014920630002600302

Bartunek, J. M., & Moch, M. K. (1987). First-order, second-order, and third-order change and organization development interventions: A cognitive approach. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 23*, 483–500. doi:10.1177/002188638702300404

Baxter, L. A. (2006). Communication as dialogue. In G. Shepherd, J. St. John, & T. Striphas (Eds.), *Communication as. . . : Stances on theory* (pp. 101-109). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Baxter, L. A. (2011). *Voicing relationships: A dialogic perspective*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Baxter, L. A., & Braithwaite, D. O. (2008). Relational dialectics theory: Crafting meaning from competing discourses. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), Engaging theories in interpersonal communication. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogues and dialectics*. New York: Guilford Press.

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1998). A guide to dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships. In B.M. Montgomery & L.A. Baxter (Eds.), *Dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships* (pp. 1-16). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Baxter, L. A., & Scharp, K. (2015). Dialectical tensions in relationships. In C. R. Berger & M. E. Roloff (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of interpersonal communication*. Wiley-Blackwell. doi: 10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic017

Baxter, L.A., & Simon, E. (1993). Relationship maintenance strategies and dialectical contradictions in personal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10*, 225-242. doi: 10.1177/026540759301000204

Benson, J. K. (1977). Organizations: A dialectical view. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 22*, 1-21. doi: 10.2307/2391741

Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: Toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication.

Human Communication Research, *1*, 99–112. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.1975.tb00258.x

Bisel, R. S., & Barge, J. K. (2011). Discursive positioning and planned change in organizations. *Human Relations*, *64*, 257–283. doi:10.1177/0018726710375996

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*, 27–40. doi:10.3316/QRJ0902027

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage.

Cooper, K. R., & Shumate, M. (2012). Interorganizational collaboration explored through the bona fide network perspective. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *26*, 623-654. doi: 10.1177/0893318912462014

Craig, R. T. (1999). Communication theory as a field. *Communication Theory*, *9*, 119-161.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (2nd, Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DeCock, C. (1998). Organisational change and discourse: Hegemony, resistance and reconstitution. *Management*, *1*, 1–22.

Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual foundations. In F. M. Jablin and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Doolin, B. (2003). Narratives of change: Discourse, technology and organization. *Organization*, *10*, 751–770. doi:10.1177/13505084030104002

Edmonson, A. C. (2003). Speaking up in the operating room: How team leaders promote learning in interdisciplinary action teams. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*, 1419–1452. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00386

Ellingson, L. L. (2009). Ethnography in applied communication research. In L. R. Frey & K. N. Cissna (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of applied communication research* (pp. 129-152). New York, NY. Routledge.

Fairhurst, G. T. (2011). *The power of framing: Creating the language of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fairhurst, G. T., Cooren, F., & Cahill, D. J. (2002). Discursiveness, contradiction, and unintended consequences in successive downsizings. *Management Communication Quarterly, 15*, 501-540. doi: 10.1177/0893318902154001

Frey, L. R. (2003). *Group communication in context: Studies of bona fide groups (2nd ed.)*. Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Frooman., J. (1999). Stakeholder influence strategies. *Academy of Management Review, 24*, 191-205. doi: 10.5465/AMR.1999.1893928

Galaskiewiez, J. (1985). Interorganizational relations. *Annual Review of Sociology, 11*, 281–304. doi: 10.1146/annurev.so.11.080185.001433

Geertz, C. (1973). *Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture*. New York: Basic Books.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press.

Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hardy, C., Lawrence, T. B., & Phillips, N. (2006). Swimming with sharks: Creating strategic change through multi-sector collaboration. *International Journal of Strategic Change Management, 1*, 96-112. doi: 10.1504/IJSCM.2006.011105

Heath, R. G. (2007). Rethinking community collaboration through a dialogic lens: Creativity, democracy, and diversity in community organizing. *Management Communication Quarterly, 21*, 145-171. doi: 10/1177/089318907306032

Howard, L. A., & Geist, P. (1995). Ideological positioning in organizational change: The dialectic of control in a merging organizations. *Communication Monographs, 62*, 110-131. doi: 10.1080/03637759509376352

Jensen, J. D. (2008). Scientific uncertainty in news coverage of cancer research: Effects of hedging on scientists' and journalists' credibility. *Human Communication Research, 34*, 347-369. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.00324.x

Johnson, S. D., & Long, L. M. (2002). "Being a part and being apart": Dialectics and group communication. In. L. R. Frey (Ed.), *New directions in group communication* (pp. 25-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: John Wiley.

Keyton, J., Ford, D. J., & Smith, F. I. (2008). A mesolevel communicative model of collaboration. *Communication Theory, 18*, 276-406. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2008.00327

Keyton, J., & Stallworth, V. (2003). On the verge of collaboration: Interaction process versus group outcomes. In L. R. Frey (Ed.), *Group communication in contexts: Studies of bona fide groups* (pp. 235-260). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Koschmann, M. A. (2013). The communicative constitution of collective identity in interorganizational collaboration. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *27*, 61–89. doi:10.1177/0893318912449314

Kramer, M. W. (1999). Motivation to reduce uncertainty: Reconceptualizing uncertainty reduction theory. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *13*, 305–316. doi: 10.1177/0893318999132007

Kramer, M. W. (2004). Toward a communication theory of group dialectics: An ethnographic study of a community theater group. *Communication Monographs*, *71*, 311–332. doi:10.1080/0363452042000288292

Kramer, M. W., Dougherty, D. S., & Pierce, T. A. (2004). Managing uncertainty during a corporate acquisition: A longitudinal study of communication during an airline acquisition. *Human Communication Research*, *30*, 71–101. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.2004.tb00725.x

Kvale, S. (1996). Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lee, T., Taylor, R. E., & Chung, W. (2011). Changes in advertising strategies during an economic crisis: An application of Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *39*, 75–91. doi:10.1080/00909882.2010.536846

Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper.

Lewis, L. K. (2006). Employee Perspectives on Implementation Communication as Predictors of Perceptions of Success and Resistance. *Western Journal of Communication*, *70*, 23–46. doi:10.1080/10570310500506631

Lewis, L. K. (2007). An organizational stakeholder model of change implementation communication. *Communication Theory, 17,* 176-204. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00291.x

Lewis, L. K. (2011). *Organizational change: Creating change through strategic communication*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lewis, L. K. (2014). Organizational change and innovation. In L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 503–524). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Lewis, L. K., Isbell, M. G., & Koschmann, M. (2010). Collaborative tensions: Practitioners' experiences of interorganizational relationships. *Communication Monographs, 77*, 460–479. doi:10.1080/03637751.2010.523605

Lewis, L. K., & Russ, T. L. (2012). Soliciting and using input during organizational change initiatives: What are practitioners doing? *Management Communication Quarterly*, *26*, 267–294. doi:10.1177/0893318911431804

Lewis, L. K., & Seibold, D. R. (1998) Reconceptualizing organizational change implementation as a communication problem: A review of literature and research agenda. In M. Roloff (Ed.) *Communication yearbook* (vol. 21, pp. 93-151). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2011). *Qualitative communication research methods*. (3rd, Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lucas, K., & D'Enbeau, S. (2013). Moving beyond themes: Reimagining the qualitative analysis curriculum. Qualitative Communication Research, 2, 213-227. doi: 10.1525/qcr.2013.2.2.213

Maguire, S., & Hardy, C. (2005). Identity and collaborative strategy in the Canadian HIV/AIDS treatment domain. *Strategic Organization, 3*, 11-45. doi: 10.1177/1476127005050112

McGuire, T., Dougherty, D.S., & Atkinson, J. (2006). "Paradoxing the dialectic": The impact of patients' sexual harrassment in the discursive construction of nurses' caregiving roles. *Management Communication Quarterly, 19*, 416-450. doi: 10.1177/0893318905280879

McNamee, L. G., & Peterson, B. L. (2014). Reconciling "third space/place:" Toward a complementary dialectical understanding of volunteer management. *Management Communication Quarterly, 28*(2), 214–243. doi: 10.1177/0893318914525472

Miller, K., Scott, C. R., Stage, C., & Birkholt, M. (1995). Communication and coordination in an interorganizational system: Service provision for the urban homeless. *Communication Research, 22*, 679–699. doi:10.1177/009365095022006006

Morse, J. M. (2007). Sampling in grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 229-244).

Napier, N. K., Simmons, G., & Stratton, K. (1989). Communication during a merger: The experience of two banks. *Human Resource Planning, 12*, 105–122. doi: 10.1007/978-3-322-83820-9_11

Neyland, D. (2008). *Organizational ethnography*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Oliver, C. (1990). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: Integration and future directions. *Academy of Management Review, 15*, 241–265. doi: 10.5465/AMR.1990.4308156

Pettijohn, S. L., Boris, E. T., & Farrell, M. R. (2014) *National study of nonprofit-government contracts and grants 2013: State profiles.* Urban Institute: Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/research/publication/national-study-nonprofit-government-contracts-and-grants-2013-state-profiles

Piderit, S. K. (2000). Rethinking resistance and recognizing ambivalence: A multidimensional view of attitudes toward organizational change. *Academy of Management Review, 24,* 783–794. doi: 10.5465/AMR.2000.3707722

Pondy, L. R., & Mitroff, I. I. (1979). Beyond open systems models of organization. In B. M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 1, pp. 3–39). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Putnam, L. L. (1982). Paradigms for organizational communication research: An overview and synthesis. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 46,* 192–206. doi:10.1080/10570318209374077

Putnam, L. L., & Stohl, C. (1990). Bona Fide Groups: A Reconceptualization of Groups in Context. *Communication Studies, 41,* 248-265.

Putnam, L. L., & Stohl, C. (1996). Bona fide groups: An alternative perspective for communication and small group decision making. In R. Y. Hirokawa & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Communication and group decision making* (2nd ed., pp. 147-178). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Seo, M., Putnam, L.L., & Bartunek, J.M. (2004). Dualities and tensions of planned organizational change. In M. S. Poole & A. H. Van de Ven (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational change and innovation* (pp. 73-107). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stohl, C., & Walker, K. (2002) A bona fide perspective for the future of groups: Understanding collaborating groups. In L.R. Frey (Ed.), *New Directions in Group Communication* (pp. 237-252). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stoltzfus, K., Stohl, C., & Seibold, D.R. (2011). Managing organizational change: Paradoxical problems, solutions, and consequences. *Journal of Organizational Change, 24*, 349-367. doi: 10.1108/09534811111132749

Suter, E. A., Baxter, L. A., Seurer, L. M., & Thomas, L. J. (2014). Discursive constructions of the meaning of "family" in online narratives of foster adoptive parents. *Communication Monographs, 81*, 59-79. doi: 10.1080/03637751.2014.880791

Timmermans, S. & Tavory, I. (2012). Theory construction in qualitative research: From grounded theory to abductive analysis. *Sociological Theory, 30*, 167-186. doi: 10.1177/0735275112457914

Tracy, S.J. (2004). Dialectic, contradiction, or double bind? Analyzing and theorizing employee reactions to organizational tension. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 32*, 119-146. doi: 10.1080/0090988042000210025

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collective evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Tretheway, A., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2004). Practicing disorganization: The development of applied perspectives on living with tension. *Journal of Applied Commuication, 32*, 81-88. doi: 10.1080/0090988042000210007

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative resaerch. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*, 80-96. doi: 10.1177/1473325010368316

U.S. Government Accountability Office [G.A.O.]. (2014). *Managing for results: Implementation approaches used to enhance collaboration in interagency groups.* (No. GAO-14-220). Retrieved from http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/660952.pdf

Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. (1995). Explaining development and change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review, 20*, 510–540. doi: 10.5465/AMR.1995.9508080329

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weick, K. E., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Organizational change and development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *50*, 361–386. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.50.1.361

Whetten, D. A. (1981). Interorganizational relations: A review of the field. *Journal of Higher Education*, *52*, 1–28. doi: 10.2307/1981150

Zorn, T. E., Christensen, L. T., & Cheney, G. (1999). *Constant change and flexibility: Do we really want constant change?* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Zorn, T. E., Page, D. J., & Cheney, G. (2000). Nuts about change: Multiple perspectives on change-oriented communication in a public sector organization. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *13*(4), 515–566. doi:10.1177/0893318900134001