SOCIAL PROCESSES OF A PROFESSIONAL LICENSING BOARD DECIDING TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the decision-making process that resulted in the board establishing mandatory continuing professional education (MCPE). This study involved understanding interpersonal actions among board members and the educational, economic, and political interests that served as a foundation for these actions. How these variables influenced the decision to establish MCPE was of specific interest to adult education program planners, in that it informed how a decision in the context of a professional licensing board was made.

The study involved the content analysis of interviews conducted with board members involved in program planning and of various documents used during program planning. Four themes described how and why the Midwest engineers’ licensing board established MCPE were developed—For Every Cause There is a Champion; MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests; Embracing a Myth; and the Last Man Standing. For Every Cause There is a Champion provided how a champion, advocate, or campaigner was needed for causes to be realized. MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests provided how interests served as the bases for assertiveness and
actions of people involved in the planning context. Embracing a Myth provided how a belief could result in people taking a stand absent supporting evidence. The Last Man Standing explored the struggles of the only remaining person representing what they believed to be right—a dissenter among the majority.

Five major conclusions were developed as a result of the study: (a) reasons for establishing MCPE were compelling to overcome opposition to MCPE; (b) a powerful advocate was instrumental in ensuring that a cause was satisfied; (c) negotiation was unlikely among decision-makers in deciding whether to establish MCPE when a powerful advocate was present; (d) the composition of the decision-making group likely affected the ultimate decision whether MCPE was established; and (e) decisions to establish MCPE were likely based more on self-serving interests of decision-makers than interests in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. As a result of the study, a model was developed illustrating how the decision to establish MCPE was made.
Dedication

To all middle-aged learners who decide to chase their dream.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Last, to my parents Patsy and A.C. Whatley. Mom, you departed this life before I started my academic journey, but I know you would be proud having a
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The increase in knowledge and improvement in technology has resulted in pre-service education not being able to prepare professionals for a lifetime of practice. Pre-service education merely exposes people to basic information that provides the basis for entering practice. Continuing professional education (CPE) picks up where pre-service education leaves off by providing learning opportunities throughout a lifetime of practice.

Emergence of CPE

The emergence of CPE has been attributed to four premises: (a) that professionals should maintain and improve knowledge through their lifetime of practice; (b) for professions to gain public respect; (c) to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public (Houle, 1980); and (d) to regulate professional practice (Cervero, 2000). Initially voluntary and based on the need or desire to update knowledge, CPE became mandatory and the tool used to regulate professionals (Queeney & English, 1994). Professionals are required to accumulate educational
credits over a particular period of time for re-licensure and the right to continue practice, i.e., lawyers in one Midwestern state were required by state administrative rules to complete 24 credit hours of CPE every two years to continue practice.

**Mandatory Continuing Professional Education**

Mandatory continuing professional education (MCPE) was “education required for a professional practitioner to: maintain the right to practice, use a professional title, or to earn and maintain a specialty certification” (Queeney & English, 1994, p. 9) by state professional licensing boards and for membership in professional associations. Proponents of MCPE point to the need to guarantee participation in continuing education to update knowledge and skills by connecting MCPE to the right to continue practice. Opponents to MCPE point to the hallmark of adult education that MCPE violates—namely, voluntary participation. Other problems associated with MCPE include the difficulty of verifying increased competence (Queeney & English, 1994), the relevance of MCPE to learning and practice (CAB, 2002; Whatley, 2003), and the quality of the education experience (Whatley, 2003). Amid the controversy and these issues, the trend is that professional licensing boards continue using MCPE to regulate professional practice (Cervero, 2000; Queeney & English, 1994). Therefore, it is important to focus on how adult education programs, in particular MCPE, are planned.
Adult Education Program Planning Models

Program planning models range from technical, step-by-step models (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949) to a model that explains that program planners make decisions based on the social, political, and ethical contexts in which they become engaged (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b).

Technical, step-by-step models (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949) are intended to guide planning by having planners follow steps such as identification of the target audience, assessment of education needs of the audience, statement of program goals and objectives, identification of appropriate program content, selection of delivery methods, selection of instructional methods, and program evaluation. Typically, the models do not acknowledge the social interaction involved in program planning as offered in social process program planning models.

Program Planning as a Social Process

Research studies demonstrate the substantive and meta-negotiation (Elgström & Riis, 1992) that occurs during adult education program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Hendricks, 1996; Mabry, 2000; Miller, 1997; Umble, Cervero, & Langone, 2001). Research has also identified power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang, Cervero, Valentine, & Benson, 1998).
Cervero and Wilson (1994b) offered that program planning “is a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests in contexts of structured power relations” (p. 253). Research within this context has identified particular power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998). Relationships among power and influence tactics and political contexts (Almuhairi, 2000; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001) and power and conflict and problem-solving effectiveness and years of experience (Hendricks, 2001) also have been studied. From these studies, it can inferred that political contexts and power and influence tactics have as much to do with program planning decisions, if not more, than the consideration of rational bases for the decisions.

Case studies also have considered substantive and meta-negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Elgström & Riis, 1992; Hendricks, 1996; Mabry, 2000; Miller, 1997; Umble et al., 2001) and power relationships (Archie-Booker, Cervero, & Langone, 1999), as well as the use of strategies based on the interests represented (Carter, 1996; MacLean, 1996; Mills, Cervero, & Langone, 1995). The use of terminology or language used by program planners has also been studied (McCullum, Pelletier, Barr, & Wilkins, 2003; Rees & Cervero, 1997). These studies regard what occurs within the social interaction of program planners but not how programs are planned.

In summary, CPE was established to improve the respect of professions, improve professional practice, and protect the public. Program planning literature has
explained what program planners do but not how decisions are made. While arguments continue regarding mandatory continuing education and the contribution, if any, of CPE to learning and improved practice, a trend of establishing MCPE continues. Therefore, it is important to investigate how and why program planning decisions are made and, in particular, how and why a professional licensing board decided to establish MCPE.

**Context of the Study**

A professional licensing board charged with the responsibility for the licensure and re-licensure of 7,000 professionals in a Midwestern state considered establishing MCPE. The Midwest engineers’ licensing board, interested in learning the advantages and disadvantages of MCPE, asked representatives from a state university to provide information about MCPE. Representatives from the university presented a summary of CPE literature; views of MCPE held by licensing boards, professional associations, and professionals; and the controversy involving MCPE.

Members of the licensing board held differing opinions, with few members proposing MCPE to follow the trend of establishing MCPE in the profession and facilitating reciprocity. Opponents to MCPE stated that education would not solve the problems experienced by the board and should not be established without a need for education. After discussing the decision for approximately three years at quarterly board meetings and with rational information indicating that mandatory education was not needed, it is interesting that the licensing board decided to establish MCPE.
Statement of the Problem

The program planning literature encompasses program planning models ranging from technical step-by-step models to a social process of negotiation. Research studies discussed the types of negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Elgström & Riis, 1992; Hendricks, 1996; Mabry, 2000; Miller, 1997; Umble et al., 2001), identified the types of power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998), and correlated power and influence tactics with other variables (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001). The context of these studies included (a) human resource professionals planning CPE programs in business settings, (b) adult education program planners planning community-based education programs, and (c) program planners planning programs in higher education settings. The research in these contexts focused on the negotiation of power and interests involved in “program purpose, content, audience or format” (Yang & Cervero, 2001, p. 289).

The implications of program planning research are that personal and organizational interests were the subject of negotiation and that power and influence tactics were used in satisfying those interests. Research studies imply that decisions about program planning are not based on a rational process or rational bases, but on the power, interests, influence, and social interaction that occurs (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b). The research, however, has not explored or described how and why
planning decisions are made and, in particular, had not addressed the context of decisions concerning whether to establish an education program.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the decision-making process that resulted in the board establishing MCPE. This study interpreted the meaning of interpersonal actions among board members and the educational, economic, and political interests that served as the bases for board member actions. How these factors influenced the decision to establish MCPE was of specific interest, in that it informed how a decision in the context of a professional licensing board was made. The qualitative case study method allowed engagement of study participants and an understanding of participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions—individually and collectively—during the decision-making process.

**Research Questions**

In particular, the qualitative case study investigated the following research questions:

1. How did professional licensing board members think, feel, and act in deciding to establish MCPE?

2. What decision-making processes were used by professional licensing board members in deciding to establish MCPE?
**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant by adding to the understanding of program planning theory, understanding the broader social issue of MCPE, and contributing to the practice of program planning. Regarding program planning theory, the study was significant in its application to program planning models ranging from technical step-by-step models to models suggesting that program planning is a social process of negotiation. This research studied whether the decision-making was a rational process, at least in the context of a professional licensing board making the decision to establish MCPE. The study also explored and described the struggle of power and interests from the perspective of all planners involved in the decision, unlike other studies (Almuhairi, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Mabry, 2000) that only offer the perspectives of key planners involved in the planning situations. Also, unlike other studies that describe what planners do (Almuhairi, 2002; Yang et al., 1998), this study included the thoughts, feelings, and actions of all planners involved in the decision-making process, providing a more complete understanding of the program-planning process and how and why the decision to establish MCPE was made. In that sense, the study will determine the degree to which, if any, the model-describing program planning as the social process of negotiation is supported and how the model might be improved.

Regarding the broader social issue of MCPE, the study will add to the understanding of whether or not MCPE is more of a tool used to regulate professionals than to provide learning opportunities and improve practice. A pilot study of ten
professions in a Midwestern state revealed that no steps were taken by the licensing boards or professional associations that represented the professions to determine if learning occurred or if practice was improved (Whatley, 2003). The literature cited both that “continuing education can and often does improve professionals’ knowledge and positively impacts our organization” (Cervero, 2000, p. 9) and that improved competency in practice is not related to mandatory continuing education (CAB, 2002). Learning is difficult to measure, and the relationship of learning, continuing education, and improved practice would prove more difficult. Again, this focuses attention on the question of why MCPE is established.

The perceptions of professionals serving in a few of the ten professions studied indicated that MCPE benefits few people, namely the sponsors and providers of educational offerings. Additional shortcomings included the absence of verifiable need for MCPE, verification whether the goals of MCPE offerings are attained, and relevance of MCPE activities and practice. Regardless, MCPE is established and used as a tool to regulate professionals. The significance of the study in this regard will be the contribution to the understanding of how and why decisions are made to establish MCPE in light of what may be needed and the difficulty in substantiating the establishment of MCPE other than for regulatory purposes.

The study also will be significant in contributing to program planning practice by understanding how decisions to establish MCPE are made, at least in the context of a professional licensing board. Stated differently, what happened during the program-planning process and how and why it happened can be applied to improve program
planning practice. For example, how interests are represented most effectively, the effective use of power and influence tactics, and how social interaction contributed to the creation and recreation of relationships with other planners and resulting decisions can be applied. Second, the study can contribute to practice by informing program planners of the expectations when involved in planning situations. This will add to the understanding of the emotions, tensions, and dilemmas that may be experienced by planners in decision-making situations.

**Theoretical Support for the Study**

Program planning involves the negotiation of interests and power (Caffarella, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Isaac, 1987; Yang et al., 1998). Program planning models range from technical, step-by-step models to a model that explains that planning is based on the social, political, and ethical contexts in which they become engaged (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b). Program planning models essentially are decision-making models (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Yang et al., 1998).

Technical program planning models typically do not specify the social interaction involved in planning adult education programs. Studying three cases in which adult education programs were planned, Cervero and Wilson (1994b) found that the programs were the result of negotiation and offered “planning practice is a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests in contexts of structured power relations” (p. 253). Stated differently, program planning or decision-making is about social interaction rather than what appears to be a socially detached technical
process. Social interaction often involves people with varying interests and capacities to exercise power.

Cervero and Wilson’s (1994a, 1994b) guide for program planning included four elements that guided the social process of negotiation: social power, interests, influence, and social interaction. These elements are in the context of a model, the Power-Negotiation Cycle (Figure 1), which depicts the interaction of elements that were essential to the social process of program planning or decision-making: power, personal and organizational interests, influence, and social interaction. The model is based on an interpretation of the literature that represented program planning as a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests.

![Power-Negotiation Cycle Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 1. Power-Negotiation Cycle**
The first element in the cycle, power, is the capacity to act (Isaac, 1987). Reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert (French & Raven, 1959) and informational (Raven, 1992) bases of social power provide capacities to act. Additionally, power is dynamic (Yang et al., 1998), meaning that the capacity to act is created and recreated with the negotiation cycle. Power provides a foundation on which and with which planners or decision-makers act.

Second, personal and organization interests are represented by those involved in negotiation or decision-making. Isaac (1987) discussed three interests—subjective, objective, and real. These interests are central to the social interaction during which power is exercised and interests satisfied. Stated differently, interests serve as the basis for the power that is exercised and may only relate indirectly to stated goals or subjective interests of overall negotiation. Planners or decision-makers negotiate with and on interests, although interests can change during negotiations.

Next, influence, “the mechanism by which power is exercised” (Yang et al., 1998, p. 228), occurs by representing interests through social interaction with others. Yang et al. (1998) identified seven power and influence tactics used in program planning or decision-making (Yang, 2003)—reasoning, consulting, appealing, networking, bargaining, pressuring, and counteracting. According to Yang et al. (1998), the type of tactic used was related to the nature of interests shared by and power relationships of planners involved in the planning situation (Table 1).
Social interaction was the element that involved planners communicating, verbally and nonverbally, and emotions, thoughts, and feelings that were created, experienced, and recreated. With each interaction, power, interests, and social relationships were negotiated and created or recreated. It was through this interaction, or meta-negotiation, that a foundation was formed for substantive negotiation.

Meta-negotiation and substantive negotiation are the two levels of negotiation depicted in the model. The elements with which meta-negotiation occurs (power, interests, and social relationships) are dynamic, changing based on the meta-negotiation that occurs. Substantive negotiation regards discussion about program purpose, content, audience, and format. Based on the power, interests, and social relationships formed through meta-negotiation, interests regarding program purpose, content, audience, and format negotiated at the substantive level may or may not be fulfilled. Decisions whether or not to establish programs or decisions made during program planning are likely a result of negotiation at both levels.

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Table 1. Aspects Involved in the Use of Power and Influence Tactics
Assumptions and Delimitations

Members of a professional licensing board agreed to participate in this study. For this reason, the researcher assumed that members of the professional licensing board would participate fully by providing information through interviews and documents related to the decision-making process to establish MCPE. The researcher also assumed that participants would be honest when providing their perspective of the decision-making process. It was also assumed that the professional licensing board, a state-funded entity that operated according to state administrative codes, possessed a complete and accurate accounting of the decision-making process to establish MCPE, namely board meeting minutes, designs of other MCPE programs, feasibility studies, survey research, etc., used to establish MCPE.

The researcher utilized the qualitative case study method that limited generalizability of the study to the group studied. A limitation was the extent to which information, gathered via interviews or documents, could be verified. Other limitations could be the extent to which perspectives of all members of the board were represented and the extent to which each board member participated.

The researcher verified data collected using the constant-comparative method—comparing interview data among members of the professional licensing board and information collected from documents. The researcher interviewed members of the board in a manner to obtain the decision-making experience from their perspective and to ensure that their entire experience regarding the decision-making experience was captured.
Definition of Terms

Influence is the “mechanism by which power is exercised” (Yang et al., 1998, p. 228).

Influence Tactics are forms of communicative action or behavior whereby negotiation occurs, thus power is exercised. In the context of this study, influence tactics include reasoning, consulting, appealing, networking, bargaining, pressuring, and counteracting (Yang et al., 1998); shaping needs, setting agendas, determining populations, making decisions, allocating resources, including voices, seeking divergent sources, providing alternative ideas, finding funding sources, using the democratic process, and adequate stating for content and skills (Caffarella, 2002).

Interests are things that cause feelings of intentness, concern, or curiosity (Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 1999). Three types of interests include subjective, objective, and ideal (Isaac, 1987). In the context of this study, members of the professional licensing board held interests that favored establishing MCPE and interests that disfavored establishing MCPE.

Meta-Negotiation is the framework in which substantive negotiations occur (Elgström & Riis, 1992). In the context of this study, the creation and recreation of power, interests, and social relationships represented meta-negotiation.

Negotiation is to confer, bargain, or discuss with others to arrive at the settlement of some matter. Negotiation is the context where power is exercised (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a). In the context of this study, negotiation was defined as
discussions that occurred and where power was exercised at regularly scheduled board meetings during which establishment of MCPE was discussed.

Objective Interests are to the benefit of a person, whether they believe so or not (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Isaac, 1987). In the context of this study, an objective interest was the resolution of problems not requiring education.

Power is the capacity to act (Isaac, 1987). In the context of this study, each board member held an equal vote, thus had the capacity to act. Additionally, they had the capacity to negotiate and use influence tactics based on their personal and organizational interests.

Real Interests are the norms and values that underlie actions and shape subjective interests but are interests that may or not be revealed (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Isaac, 1987). In the context of this study, a real interest was expansion of economic interests and regulating the profession.

Subjective Interests demonstrate a person’s desire and are interests that are made public (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Isaac, 1987). In the context of this study, a subjective interest was to establish MCPE for re-licensure and continued practice.

Substantive Negotiation is the conferring, bargaining, and discussion about content issues (Elgström & Riis, 1992). In the context of this study, the decision to establish MCPE was the issue of substantive negotiation.
Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, including (a) the context of the study, (b) statement of the problem, (c) purpose of the study, (d) significance of the study, (e) theoretical support for the study, (f) assumptions and delimitations, and (g) definition of terms.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature that includes (a) the theoretical basis or lens through which the research was conducted, (b) the emergence of CPE, (c) program planning as technical and social process, (d) social power, interests, influence, social interaction, and (e) power and influence tactics.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature regarding the emergence of CPE and how it became a tool used to regulate professionals. This chapter also reviews the literature regarding adult education program planning, in particular, technical program planning models (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949) and program planning as a social process of negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Isaac, 1987) that was enhanced by the identification of power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Caffarella, 2002; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998).

Emergence of CPE

The increase in knowledge and improvement in technology has resulted in pre-service education not being able to prepare professionals for a lifetime of practice. Pre-service education merely exposed people to basic information that provides the basis for entering practice. CPE picks up where pre-service education leaves off by providing learning opportunities throughout a lifetime of practice. CPE has
contributed to professionalization by providing opportunities for update learning, improving oneself and their practice, and solving problems (Cervero, 2000). CPE has provided occupations with the opportunity to improve and be recognized as professions, thus blurring the line separating occupations and professions (Houle, 1980). The establishment of CPE has been attributed to four premises—that professionals should maintain and improve knowledge through their lifetime of practice; for professions to gain public respect; to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public (Houle, 1980), and to regulate professional practice (Cervero, 2000). Professionals are required to accumulate a number of educational credits over a particular period of time for re-licensure and the right to continue practice. For example, lawyers in a Midwestern state are required by state administrative rules to complete 24 credit hours of CPE every two years to continue practice.

As early as 1889, the Supreme Court of the United States recognized the right of states to regulate professional practice to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public (Dent v. West Virginia, 1889). Following the high court’s lead, Smith, Mann, Smith, Turner, Kitchens, and Fordham (n.d.) cited that state courts began supporting “ongoing professional learning” (p. 7) on behalf of the public. In Gamble v. Board of Osteopathic Examiners (1942), completion of an annual education requirement was upheld. In Week v. Wisconsin State Board of Chiropractic Examiners (1947), an educational requirement for re-licensure was also upheld. With this support, states could empower licensing boards to hold professionals accountable in their practice. Thus, there was a legal basis for professional licensing boards using
MCPE to regulate practice. Initially voluntary, based on the need or desire to update knowledge and in lieu of regular reexamination for re-licensure and the right to continue practice, CPE became mandatory and the tool used to regulate professionals (Queeney & English, 1994).

MCPE was “education required for a professional practitioner to maintain the right to practice, use a professional title, or to earn and maintain specialty certification” (Queeney & English, 1994, p. 9) by state professional licensing boards and for membership in professional associations. Proponents of MCPE pointed to the need to guarantee participation in continuing education to update knowledge and skills by connecting MCPE to the right to continue practice. Opponents of MCPE pointed to the hallmark of adult education that MCPE violates—voluntary participation. Other opposition to MCPE included the difficulty of verifying increased competence (Queeney & English, 1994), the relevance of MCPE to practice and learning (CAB, 2002), and the quality of the education experience (Cervero, 2000). Amid the controversy and these issues, the trend of professional licensing boards was to regulate professional practice using MCPE (Cervero, 2000; Queeney & English, 1994). Therefore, attention refocused on the use of MCPE to regulate professionals and to question how MCPE was established.

Adult education programs, including MCPE, had been planned using a variety of adult education program planning models. Most program planning models were technical step-by-step processes. Adult education program planners were expected to follow the processes that had been represented to result in desired adult education
programs. Other models introduced a social interaction element that was represented as primary in planning adult education programs. In the next section, adult education program planning models are discussed.

Models of Adult Education Program Planning

Program planners had been guided by technical, step-by-step program planning models (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949) to establish adult education programs. For example, Tyler (1949) offered a model that included such stages as identification of the target audience, assessment of education needs of the audience, statement of program goals and objectives, identification of appropriate program content, selection of delivery methods, selection of instructional methods, and program evaluation. Tyler suggested following what seemed to be a rational process that would result in the best educational program. Knowles (1980) and Queeney and English (1994) reinforced Tyler’s model by offering linear models, but neither mentioned the social interaction of people involved in program planning. This was not to say that the requirements of a technical model were not important but focused on how requirements actually were accomplished.

Caffarella (2002) offered an interactive model of program planning that included social interaction (e.g., discerning the context) among other planning stages similar to those described above. Caffarella offered that the model was not a linear but interactive; however, political or social aspects of planning were not only to be discerned but also aspects in which planners were engaged and had experienced.
Other than the model introduced by Caffarella (2002), technical models like those described above did not acknowledge the element of social interaction or negotiation involved in planning adult education programs. Program planning literature contained studies that demonstrated substantive negotiation and meta-negotiation (Elgström & Riis, 1992) during the planning of adult education programs (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Hendricks, 1996; Mabry, 2000; Miller, 1997; Umble et al., 2001). Research also identified power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Almuhairi, 2002; Caffarella, 2002; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998). A program planning model that described program planning as a social process and relevant literature is discussed in the next section.

**Program Planning as a Social Process**

Finding that adult education programs were the result of a social process, Cervero and Wilson (1994b) offered that “planning practice is a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests in contexts of structured power relations” (p. 253). Stated differently, program planning concerned social interaction rather than what seemed to be a socially detached technical process, often involving people with varying interests and capacities to exercise power. Miller (1997) supported Cervero and Wilson in that the multi-case study conducted about the negotiation of power and interests revealed that planners did not follow a linear step-by-step planning process because of the social interaction or negotiation of power and interests.
Qualitative and quantitative research had been conducted ranging from the negotiation of power and interests or what program planners do (Carter, 1996; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Hendricks, 1996; MacLean, 1996; Miller, 1997; Mills et al., 1995; Umble et al., 2001) to identifying particular power and influence tactics used by program planners (Almuhairi, 2002; Caffarella, 2002; Mabry, 2000; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998). In particular, the literature provided studies that discussed substantive and meta-negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Elgström & Riis, 1992; Hendricks, 1996; Mills et al., 1995; Umble et al., 2001). Other studies investigated personal and organization interests (Carter, 1996; MacLean, 1996) as they pertained to adult education program planning, while other studies investigated terminology or language used in program planning (McCullum et al., 2003; Rees & Cervero, 1997).

Cervero and Wilson (1994a) discovered in their investigation of three case studies that program planning involved more social interaction than simply following a step-by-step program planning model. Those cases occurred in three types of organizations—a service-oriented business, a college of pharmacy, and a social services agency. The first case involved management education—the substantive negotiation of program content and meta-negotiation of power of the human resources department (Elgström & Riis, 1992). The second case study regarded the planning of continuing medical education for pharmacists at the college of pharmacy at a state university. This continuing education program served to satisfy a variety of interests ranging from updating knowledge to showcasing the college to enhancing the position.
of the college as a leader in the pharmacy profession. The nature of interests at various levels was consensual, and much of the negotiation that occurred was merely to validate what had been decided by the primary program organizers. The third case involved a social services agency established to “reduce the incidence of development disabilities and to improve the life of people with development disabilities” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 88). In particular, the case focused on program planning designed to educate employers about the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and elevated the image of the social services agency as a resource for the employer community but more importantly as an advocate for social change.

In summary, four elements emerged from these studies—power, interests, influence, and social interaction—all of which are discussed later in this chapter. Negotiation in these studies occurred at two levels (substantive and meta-negotiation) (Elgström & Riis, 1992) and focused on three types of interests (subjective, objective, and real) and whether interests were consensual (Yang et al., 1998).

Primary for the model introduced by Cervero & Wilson (1994a) was negotiation. In particular, Rees and Cervero (1997), borrowing aspects of the first case study of Cervero and Wilson (1994a), found that the social process of negotiation was not just talk but the use of language to exercise power. Rees and Cervero studied the conversations among three program planners during two program planning meetings involving the management education in the service-oriented organization. “The study revealed that political relationships enacted through the use of language situated crucial planning action” (p. 1). Stated differently, “program construction is contingent
upon communicative action” (p. 1). This finding became important when studying the negotiation of personal and organizational interests and the use of power and influence tactics (Yang et al., 1998).

Using a Power-Negotiation Cycle model (Figure 1, page 11), the research discusses the four elements identified within the program planning model by Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b)—social power, influence, interests, and social interaction—and relevant literature. The overarching concept of the social process of program planning—negotiation—will be discussed first.

**Negotiation**

Negotiation is “to confer, bargain, or discuss with a view to reaching agreement with others” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 156). Others had various capacities to act and various personal and organizational interests that may have been conflicting with others involved in the planning or decision-making process.

Negotiation theory supported substantive negotiation—negotiation about a program, issue, or decision. Substantive negotiation occurred within various contexts, set by and within organization bounds, political and ethical constraints, structured power relationships, and interests. Frame-factor theory (Elgström & Riis, 1992) supported these contexts that are also negotiated. Negotiation in this context was referred to as meta-negotiation. Meta-negotiation occurred simultaneously or in conjunction with substantive negotiations. Meta-negotiation was about changing or restructuring frame-factors such as power relationships and interests and ideational
structures such as personal competencies, attitudes, values, beliefs, etc. (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Elgström & Riis, 1992; Forrester, 1989, 1993; Yang, 2003). In this sense, interests, power, and resulting relationships were dynamic.

Umble et al. (2001) examined the utility of distinguishing between substantive and meta-negotiation in the planning of a public health continuing education course. Using the qualitative case study method, the researchers learned that stakeholders whose interests were not completely fulfilled engaged in meta-negotiation to change power relationships and in substantive negotiation to change the content of and audience for the education program being planned.

Negotiation was communicative action that served to create and recreate social relationships through the impressions, understanding, expectations, and reactions of people involved (Forrester, 1989). Stated differently, negotiation was the action component (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b). Elgström and Riis (1992) offered that negotiation was a political process whereby influence was used to obtain one’s objective(s) whether the objective(s) is encompassed either within the program, issue, or decision at the forefront and/or the context in which negotiation occurred.

Elgström and Riis (1992) provided two case studies that supported this approach to negotiation—substantive negotiation and meta-negotiation. As the cases unfolded, one could see interests driving negotiators in their negotiating the issues at the forefront, i.e., substantive negotiation, while attempting to restructure the bounds encompassing substantive negotiations and ideation structures of the groups and individuals. Meta-negotiations were instrumental in both cases by renewing
negotiations and ultimately satisfying interests. While this case demonstrated the two
dimensions of negotiations and characteristics of negotiations that occurred or in
essence how interests were satisfied, the cases did not demonstrate why negotiations
resulted in the manner in which they did. The elements of the social process of
program planning are discussed next.

**Social Power, Interests, Influence, and Social Interaction**

“Planning practice is a social process of negotiating personal and organization
interests in the context of structured power relations” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, p.
253). The Power-Negotiation Cycle (Figure 1, page 11) depicts the social process of
negotiation as interpreted from the literature, showing the elements of negotiation
involved in program planning, including social power, interests, influence, and social
interaction. The model also depicts the levels of negotiation—substantive negotiation
of purpose, content, audience, format, and relative decisions and meta-negotiation
about power interests and social relationships (Elgström & Riis, 1992; Cervero &
Wilson, 1994a; 1994b). The first element in the model, social power, was defined as
the capacity to act (Isaac, 1987). The next element, interest, included personal and
organizational interests represented in the social interaction with other planners. The
third concept, influence, was the actual exercise of power, whereby power and
influence tactics were used. Last is the social interaction concept where planners
interacted with other planners.
Social Power. People involved in program planning had at their access various types of power. These types of power included traditional bases of social power as offered by French and Raven (1959)—reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert—and Raven (1992)—informational. These types of power provided planners the capacity to act but were not the only sources of power. “Power is not held by one individual or group, but rather is present in the relationships among them” (Kilgore, 2001, p. 57). Stated differently, power was dynamic (French & Raven, 1959; Yang et al., 1998). Power was not merely the absolute control one had over another, although that could have been true based on the relationship among people; it was more about the social interaction or negotiation of power between or among people. Even the slave in a master-slave relationship had a capacity to act; for example, perform the tasks demanded of the master or refuse to do so, potentially suffering a severe penalty (Isaac, 1987). The negotiation of who may relinquish power occurred in particular contexts, and the resulting influence was structured within negotiations or actions of people involved (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Isaac, 1987). Mills et al. (1995) hinted at the extent to which university extension program planners operated considering the capacity of others in a power relationship to act. The planning process in that case was shaped by the power relationships and resources that could be provided by those people perceived as possessing the capacity to act in the context of the situation. The exercise of power evolved from the capacity to act and was limited by the contexts of socially structured relationships and various interests presented.
Subjective, Objective, and Real Interests. At the core of social interaction were various interests that created biases and were central to the exercise of power (Isaac, 1987). These interests and the social setting drove the exercise of power and influenced tactics that were used (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998). Interests, then, were the basis and product of social interaction.

MacLean (1996) provided a case in which different planners negotiated various interests at different levels at a university medical center. Continuing medical education (CME) fulfilled interests of updating knowledge—a subjective interest and possibly an objective interest as well—but, at another level, CME fulfilled the interest of expanding clinical practice and increasing referrals to the medical center—a real interest. Decisions at one level impacted interests at other levels of the organization.

Archie-Booker et al. (1999) determined that organizational and societal factors influenced the program planning process regarding a community service agency. Findings revealed that three programs were affected by the interests of organizational leadership and lack of interest in focusing programs based on sex and race.

Like the interests described in the cases studies conducted by Elgström and Riis (1992), subjective interests included the interests of handicraft teachers, the handicraft teachers’ union, and natural science orientation teachers to integrate technology with their subjects. Additionally, technology teachers and their union representatives opposed integrating technology with handicraft. These interests were made public and demonstrated the desire of the teachers or their representative groups.
Subjective interests were identified in each of Cervero and Wilson’s (1994a) case studies. In the study involving management training, the subjective interest involved the vice president’s desire to change to problem-oriented training rather than information-sharing sessions. In the study involving pharmacists’ training, the subjective interest was to enhance the college of pharmacy’s position as a leader in the profession by showcasing the college faculty and enhancing alumni relations. In the social services agency case, the agency desired to leverage resources of their not-for-profit organization.

Objective interests were “what is really in the interest or good, of a person, whether he or she thinks so or not” (Isaac, 1987, p. 97) and guide a person on what should be done but interests that were more difficult to discern. In Elgström and Riis’ (1992) case study, the Swedish government viewed linking technology to other subjects as an advantage by increasing the number of students who would eventually become prepared for high technology employment. On the other hand, technology teachers viewed technology as having a relationship limited to a few subjects, thereby affecting the government’s goal. Stated differently, what was in the interest of one party may negatively have affected another.

In each of Cervero and Wilson’s (1994a) cases, objective interests were identified. In the service-oriented business case, the vice president had a subject and possibly objective interest in moving company management toward participative decision-making. In the pharmacy CME case, planners had the objective interest in the college of pharmacy being a leader in the field. In the social action agency case, the
planner had the objective interest in helping the disabled by helping employers learn about the ADA.

Real interests were the norms and values that underlied actions and shaped subjective interests but were interests that might or might not be revealed. While specific real interests were not revealed in the two cases by Elgström and Riis (1992), it appeared that norms and values were conflicting in the first case based on the type of bargaining. In the first Cervero and Wilson (1994a) case, the vice president wanted to strengthen his department, thereby increase his power within the company. In the second case, the planners had to ensure that the CME would result in economic rewards both for the continuing education department that depended solely on programs for funding and the college of pharmacy that could gain financially through partnerships created with participants. In the social action agency case, the agency wished to create social change and through their efforts become a central source of employment information for employers.

Subjective, objective, and real interests were central to negotiation, the attainment of interests was sought, and meaning was conveyed to others (Forrester, 1993). Programs resulted from the negotiation of power and interests within particular social structures (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Isaac, 1987).

Influence. Influence was the “mechanism by which power is exercised” (Yang et al., 1998, p. 228). Research by Yang et al. (1998) enhanced the program planning model of Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b) by identifying influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Table 2). Yang et al. developed a scale whereby
seven power and influence tactics (reasoning, consulting, appealing, networking, bargaining, pressuring, and counteracting) were identified, ranging from least to most influential in relation to the nature of interests and power bases. Table 1 (page 13) depicts the nature of interests, power bases, and particular influence tactics used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactics</th>
<th>Associated Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reasoning | 1. Convincing that your plan is viable.  
2. Presenting facts, figures, and other data that support your plan.  
3. Using logical arguments to gain support for your plan.  
4. Demonstrating your competence in planning the program.  
5. Showing the relationship between your plan and past practices of your organization. |
| Consulting| 6. Asking for suggestions about your plan.  
7. Asking about any special concerns about your plan.  
8. Indicating your willingness to modify your plan based on input.  
9. Indicating that you are receptive to ideas about your plan. |
| Appealing | 10. Saying that someone is the most qualified individual for a task that you want done.  
11. Waiting until someone is in a receptive mood before making a request.  
12. Making someone feel good about you before making your request.  
13. Making someone feel that what you want done is extremely important.  
14. Appealing to someone’s values in making a request. |
| Networking| 15. Getting other people to help influence people.  
16. Linking what you want someone to do with efforts made by influential people in the organization.  
17. Obtaining support from other people before making a request of someone.  
18. Asking people in your organization to persuade someone to support your plan. |
| Bargaining| 19. Promising to support future efforts by someone in return for his or her support.  
20. Offering to do some work for someone in return for his or her support.  
21. Offering to do a personal favor in return for someone’s support.  
22. Offering to speak favorably about someone to other people in return for his or her support. |
| Pressuring| 23. Repeatedly reminding someone about things you want done.  
25. Raising your voice when telling someone what you want done.  
26. Challenging someone to do the work your way or to come up with a better plan.  
27. Demanding that someone do the things you want done because of organizational rules and regulations. |
| Counteracting| 28. Communicating your plan in an ambiguous way so that no one is ever quite clear about it.  
29. Taking action while someone is absent so that he or she will not be included in the planning process.  
30. Withholding information that someone needs unless he or she supports your plan.  
31. Telling someone that you refuse to carry out those requests that you do not agree with. |

Table 2. Tactics and Associated Items in Power and Influence Tactics Scale

It is interesting that Pettigrew and McNulty (1995), in a study involving part-time board members of 200 top-tier organizations in the United Kingdom, found that
structural (power base) and contextual (nature of interests) factors worked together to create the power and influence of the board members.

Two studies (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001) after Yang et al. (1998) reported on the relationship of power and influence styles and organizational political contexts of 226 adult educators. The survey research involved identifying power and influence styles—bystander, tactician, ingratiator, and shotgun—that were used by adult educators. Bystanders were defined as very passive, although they might have counteracted the use of influence tactics by others. Tacticians were classified as having clear goals and the tendency to use rational tactics; for example, reasoning and consulting to accomplish the goals. Ingratiators leaned toward appealing and bargaining influence tactics, indicating that interpersonal interaction was viewed as more effective influence strategies. Planners who used the shotgun influence style were viewed as competitive and using networking, bargaining, pressuring and counteracting but primarily taking an offensive position and leaning toward pressuring and counteracting.

Mabry (2000) identified 17 influence tactics by interviewing 14 adult education program planners and having them reflect on significant program planning experience. Mabry found that the use of 17 specific negotiation strategies depended on the interests of program planners and their relationship with other planners. Although the multiple-case study described the strategies employed by program planners other than the strategies used, it did not describe how planners negotiated interests as much
as what they did. Stated differently, the study did not explore the effect of the influence on the target of the influence (Almuhairi, 2002).

Almuhairi (2002) studied 263 university extension educators regarding their perceptions of power and influence tactics used in program planning. The program planning model by Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b) and enhanced by Caffarella (2002) and by Yang et al. (1998) was used as a lens for the study. It is interesting that power and influence tactics were correlated mostly with the nature of interests but less so with the type of power base for the planning contexts identified. In short, some influence tactics (e.g., bargaining and consulting) were correlated with the nature of interests regardless of power base. Only one influence tactic—bargaining—was correlated with the type of power base. Further, it was found that the nature of interests was correlated with consulting, pressuring, counteracting, and networking and reasoning. Like Yang et al. (1998), these findings had implications for the type of tactics used relative to the nature of interest and power base. Almuhairi added to the work by Yang et al. regarding the use of power and influence tactics or what planners do; however, this study did not answer why planners do what they do.

Caffarella (2002) offered several program planning elements associated with both positive and negative influences (Table 3). Positive influences among elements were used that allowed input from all parties and inclusion at programs regardless of socioeconomic status. Negative influences among elements were used to construct programs specifically based on personal or organizational interests.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Planning Elements</th>
<th>Positive Influences</th>
<th>Negative Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaping Needs</td>
<td>Voices are included</td>
<td>Apply pressure on planning team to have them accept your version of what is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Agendas</td>
<td>Divergent sources sought and alternative ideas provided</td>
<td>Use a political agenda as a basis for an agenda setting that is popular, although not in the best interest of those being served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Populations</td>
<td>Finding funding sources so opportunities can be given to any community member to attend no matter their income level</td>
<td>Choose the populations to be served totally on their ability to pay large program fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Decisions</td>
<td>Democratic process used</td>
<td>Suppress any differences of opinion and conflicts that arise among planning members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocating Resources</td>
<td>Adequate staffing for excellent content and instructional skills</td>
<td>Mandate technology based programming be used although technical support is inadequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Program Planning Elements and Positive & Negative Influences

The literature included examples like McDonald (1996), who used her expert status to create her capacity to act while serving as participant-observer planning a community-based adult education program. McDonald used pressuring (Yang et al., 1998) to keep planners focused on planning and becoming a voice for community activists with less capacity to act. The case also demonstrated how the program that resulted was dependent on the power relationships.

Hendricks (2001) found in a qualitative case study that, in a planning situation involving conflicting interests, counteracting was the favored influence tactic over reasoning and consulting. Further, in a planning situation with consensual interests, reasoning and consulting were the favored influence tactics, which confirmed findings of Yang et al. (1998).
Carter (1996) reviewed the negotiation of power and interests but, in particular, the actions by program planners taken during negotiation. While Carter did not identify particular influence strategies, she did state that planners “are influenced or empowered by their actions, interactions, and interrelationships” (p. 34), indicating that the exercise of power and social interaction about various interests eventually shaped the adult education program.

Hendricks (1996), in her study of power and interests in the context of a nurse education setting, recognized that negotiations occurred in program planning but also in typical day-to-day interaction with others. In particular, the case study described the persuasion and networking of program planners, although the actions were not identified as influence tactics. Further, program planners influenced and were influenced by communicative action (Forrester, 1989) or the use of language (Rees & Cervero, 1997). McCullum et al. (2003) discussed the importance of the choice of terminology in exercising power by managing knowledge, problem-framing, developing trust, and obtaining consent.

Supported by the research described above, Yang et al. (1998) and others (Almuhairi, 2002; Caffarella, 2002; Mabry, 2000) narrowed the gap of learning what adult education program planners did; however, the research fell short in describing how program decisions were made.

**Social Interaction.** Social interaction concerned the communicative action (Forrester, 1989, 1993) of program planners. In this instance, people negotiated with and on their capacities to act, personal and organizational interests, and exercise of
power. Social interaction also concerned the context that was created and recreated as negotiation occurred. Further social interaction concerned “who is at the planning table” (Wilson & Cervero, 1996, p. 21), their capacity to act, and interests they represented. People “with the most power will construct programs according to their interests” (Wilson & Cervero, 1996, p. 21); however, power was created and recreated through the social interaction and negotiation that occurred. Therefore, the social interaction element in the social process of negotiation was essential.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature regarding the emergence of CPE and how it became a tool used to regulate professionals. This chapter also reviewed the literature regarding adult education program planning, in particular technical program planning models (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949) and program planning as a social process of negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Isaac, 1987) that was enhanced by the identification of power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners (Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998).

The literature demonstrated that program planning included technical, step-by-step, and social process program planning models. To determine what program planners did, the social process program planning model was applied to previous cases involving business managers and adult education program planners negotiating “program purpose, content, audience or format” (Yang & Cervero, 2001, p. 289). The
literature supported that “program planning is a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests in the context of power relations” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, p. 253), thus what planners do. Some studies claim to have determined how program planning was done in the context of using power and influence tactics; however, it is still significant that administrators learn how and why program planning decisions are made and, in particular, a decision to establish MCPE.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

The lens for this study offered that “planning practice is a social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests in the context of structured power relations” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, p. 253), which involved the use of power and influence tactics (Caffarella, 2002; Yang et al., 1998). Program planning was about the social interaction of people with varying interests, power, and influence, rather than what was presented as a socially detached technical process (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994; Tyler, 1949).

Program planning as a social process (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b) was applied to previous cases involving business managers and adult education program planners negotiating “program goals, objectives, and content” (Yang & Cervero, 2001, p. 289). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the decision-making process that resulted in the board establishing MCPE. This study involved interpreting the meaning of interpersonal actions among board members and the educational, economic, and political interests represented that served as the bases for board member actions. How these factors influenced the decision to establish...
MCPE was of specific interest to adult education program planners, in that it informed how a decision in the context of a professional licensing board was made.

**Research Design**

The qualitative case study research method was most appropriate for this study for several reasons. The qualitative case study method allowed for in-depth exploration of a particular event or activity, such as the decision-making process experienced by the professional licensing board (Creswell, 2003). The experience of the professional licensing board could be better understood through interaction with and learning the participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions. In other words, the case study method could reveal not only what happened but how and why, a benefit not afforded by other research methods (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). The qualitative case study method demands that the context of the event or activity is included for better understanding of the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To capture the phenomenon, the qualitative case study method required more general, broad questions that solicited explanations of how and why a process occurred, unlike survey research questions based on preconceived notions.

This qualitative case study involved multiple data collection methods—interviewing and document review that provided the ability to study the process using different data sources. Using different data sources strengthened the trustworthiness of the study. Interviewing allowed the flexibility of asking not only general, broad predetermined questions but additional questions created while engaged in the
interview. This flexibility allows researchers to follow the inquiry as guided by the data, a benefit not afforded by other research methods. Reviewing documents that were produced or used during the decision-making process added insight and understanding to the process not provided by other data collection or research methods (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

**Context of the Study**

The unit of analysis for this study was bounded by a particular group of people, a decision made by the group, and the timeframe during which the decision was made. The group, the Midwest engineers’ licensing board, located in a Midwestern capital city, decided to establish MCPE for the profession that they regulated. The decision-making process occurred during board meetings and strategic planning sessions between January 2000 and August 2003. This bounded system served as the basis to explore board member interactions, power, interests, and influence and how and why the Midwest engineers’ licensing board decided to establish MCPE.

The Midwest engineers’ licensing board charged with the responsibility for the examination and licensure of new professionals and re-licensure of engineering professionals in a Midwestern state was considering establishing MCPE. Interested in learning about MCPE, the board asked representatives from a state university to provide information about mandatory professional education. Representatives from the university presented a summary of CPE literature; views of MCPE held by
licensing boards, professional associations, and professionals; and the controversy involving mandatory versus voluntary CPE.

Members of the Midwest Board held differing views, with few members proposing MCPE to follow the trend of establishing MCPE in the profession and facilitating reciprocity. Opponents to MCPE stated that education would not solve the problems experienced by the Board and should not be established without a need for education. It is interesting that, after discussing the decision for approximately three years and with rational information indicating that mandatory education was not needed, the professional licensing board decided to establish MCPE.

**Research Questions**

In particular, the qualitative case study investigated the following research questions:

1. How did professional licensing board members think, feel, and act in deciding to establish MCPE?

2. What decision-making processes were used by professional licensing board members in deciding to establish MCPE?

**Methods**

**Setting**

This qualitative case study was conducted with a professional licensing board charged by state administrative rules to regulate the licensure of new professionals and
re-licensure of professionals statewide. The professional licensing board was located in a Midwestern capital city. The mission of the board was to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public through regulation of the profession. The mission was imperative because failure in practice could result in serious injury or death to many people at one time. Responsibility in this profession could be equated to the responsibility of an airline pilot or structural engineer. The board discussed establishing MCPE during board meetings and strategic planning meetings between January 2000 and August 2003.

**Site Entry**

The researcher met with the Midwest engineers’ licensing board on April 23, 2004, to gain entry into the site. Four of the five members serving on the board at that time served when the decision was made to establish MCPE. The meeting included a description of the research study and a request for approval to conduct the study. It was decided that board members would decide individually whether to participate in the study rather than the board render an official decision.

**Participants**

The Midwest engineers’ licensing board was comprised of five members of the profession, each of whom prepared for practice by attending a four-year pre-service baccalaureate degree program. Some members of the profession also earned graduate
degrees designed for practice in the profession. In addition to formal education, the members were tested and licensed by the board.

Members of the profession from various parts of the state were appointed to the professional licensing board by the state governor for five-year terms. Board members elected a president, vice president, secretary, assistant secretary, and member-at-large among themselves. Board meetings were held eight or more times annually, and decisions were made by a quorum with action requiring at least three matching votes (Ohio Revised Code, 1990).

The study involved three present and two former members of the board (five white males ranging from 45 to 60 years of age, and one African-American approximately age 50 years) and the former executive director. The study will involve nine participants total—five present members. The former executive director was a white male approximately 65 years of age who managed day-to-day operations of the board and provided guidance to members concerning board operations and professional membership. The executive director was treated as an informant because he provided insight into the norms, culture, and dynamics of the board from a unique perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Collection

The decision-making process had occurred, so the researcher was required to rely on the recollections of what others had observed and relevant documents (Stake,
1995). Data for this study were collected using two data collection methods—
interviews and document reviews.

**Interviews**

The purpose of interviewing was to collect descriptions of the decision-making
process from the participants’ perspectives and to construct meaning of the process.
While focused on understanding the process being studied, interviews were intended
to be flexible (Kvale, 1992) or more “fluid and than rigid” (Yin, 2003, p. 89). The
interview style was semi-structured, beginning with predetermined questions but
allowing for additional questions formulated simultaneously as the data were
collected, potentially guiding the researcher in “important directions, yielding new and
worthwhile knowledge” (Kvale, 1992, p. 11). The researcher developed an interview
guide (Appendix C) that ensured focus on the process being studied but did not elicit
particular themes or responses (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). The semi-structured
interview consisted of open-ended questions, allowing participants to describe their
thoughts, feelings, and actions during the decision-making process (Patton, 2002; Yin,
2003). Caution was used not to ask leading questions, unless they were intended to
check the consistency of participant responses (Kvale, 1992).

Conducting face-to-face interviews was preferred so nonverbal behavior of
participants could be observed and noted. The researcher remained conscious of the
nonverbal behavior of participants that communicated discomfort and disengagement
as participants conveyed their perspective of the process being studied. Nonverbal
behavior also served as a cue to inquire more deeply the issue at hand. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in either the participant’s office or home, providing privacy and the ability to audio record the conversation. It was preferred that individual participants selected a site to provide an environment in which they were comfortable. When face-to-face interviews were not possible, telephone interviews were conducted and audio recorded. Audio recording of interviews was essential in being able to review interviews multiple times, interpret data, and construct meaning. All recordings were transcribed in their entirety (Merriam, 1998) so the data could be categorized into themes and all verbal responses could be considered for interpretation. Also, field notes were taken during each interview.

Listening to determine if questions were soliciting the data needed (Glesne, 1999) and to determine whether to probe an issue more deeply (and, if so, when to do so) was essential. Listening provided the opportunity for spontaneity by following the direction of participant responses and asking clarifying questions or additional, unanticipated questions based on the data provided. Listening also attuned the researcher to the comfort level of participants so adjustments could be made to ensure that participants were comfortable and remain engaged. On average, 1.5-hour interviews were conducted with each participant.

**Document Review**

Additional data was sought by reviewing documents believed to be relevant to the research questions. These included documents that provided a historic perspective
of the professional licensing board, participants, and the establishment of MCPE within the profession. Documents included board meeting minutes, letters, or memos and research studies, exhibits, or any other document used for or in conjunction with the decision to establish MCPE.

The document review provided data relevant to the research questions not revealed through interviews, giving new directions for interviews that were planned (Glesne, 1999). Documents were used to verify themes and findings revealed through interviews (Stake, 1995). It was hoped that documents prepared during the decision-making process would contain pertinent information about the decision-making process and role of the participant decision-makers. Some documents, for example, board meeting minutes, were the only means of learning what occurred during board meetings other than participants’ recollections. Documents contained information about the Midwest board members’ actions during the decision-making process.

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of data analysis was to understand the process being studied (Stake, 1995). In the context of this qualitative case study, the purpose was to understand how and why a professional licensing board decided to establish MCPE. The social process program planning model by Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b), enhanced by the power and influence tactics identified by Yang et al. (1998) and program planning elements by Caffarella (2002), was used as a lens with which to understand the decision-making process.
The research analyzed data using the constant-comparative method (Creswell, 2003; Merriam 1998; Stake, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, one piece of data was compared (e.g., interview, document, paragraph, and sentence) with another piece of data to determine similarity or differences. Similar data were aggregated into categories or themes (Stake, 1995), the purpose of which was to analyze and synthesize data so the process could be understood and the research questions could be answered. Data grouped by categories assisted in interpreting and making meaning of how and why the professional licensing board decided to establish MCPE. The researcher sought the frequency of patterns that helped explain the process being studied or contributed toward theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For instance, in this case, categories or themes were indicated by data, describing the use of specific power and influence tactics or behaviors interpreted as demonstrating actions corresponding to power and influence tactics (Stake, 1995). Data that demonstrated the use of a power and influence tactic—for example, pressuring (Yang et al., 1998)—were grouped into a Pressuring Tactic category.

The constant-comparative data analysis strategy allowed the researcher to adjust the data collection strategy, addressing, in particular, issues or questions as data collection and analysis continued (Merriam, 1998).

**Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in this qualitative case study was that of the research instrument. Stated differently, the researcher was the filter through which data were
collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Creswell, 2003; Kvale, 1992). The role of interpreter in this qualitative case study was significant in that the knowledge of the process being studied was constructed based on the interpretation of the data collected (Stake, 1995).

The researcher experienced situations in which a similar process occurred—group decision-making. The researcher had served in management groups and in two-to four-person project groups with the responsibility of making decisions affecting people, monies, and equipment. The researcher believed that this experience in group decision-making assisted in understanding of aspects of the decision-making situation. It was acknowledged, however, that the process or decision being studied could not be understood based on the researcher’s experience but instead on interpretation of the data collected.

While the experiences of the researcher proved beneficial, the experience also brought with it particular assumptions, including the exercise of power by group members to control decision-making processes, thus the exercise of power to satisfy personal goals. The researcher acknowledged that these assumptions could shape the way particular occurrences, actions, and language were viewed. Being conscious of these assumptions and supplying data to support interpretations assisted the researcher in controlling the extent that biases were formed based on these assumptions.

Biases also had been formed by the researcher based on his view of MCPE and interaction with the executive director of the board and one board member. The researcher’s view of MCPE was based on his interpretation of the literature and a pilot
study involving ten professions regarding the purpose of establishing MCPE (Whatley, 2003). The researcher believed that MCPE was typically established using the pretext of regulating professionals but that establishing MCPE benefited few people, namely people who sponsored educational offerings (for example, professional associations) and the people who provided the educational offerings. Interaction with the executive director of the professional licensing board and one board member created a preconceived notion of how the decision to establish MCPE may have been made. It was understood, however, that additional data could have indicated otherwise. The researcher worked to overcome these biases by seeking data that explained the overall decision-making process and answered the research questions whether or not they opposed biases that had been formed.

Using interview and document review methods, it was important to engage participants. The interviewer approached case study participants curiously, as one who was there to listen (Stake, 1995). The researcher asked participants to teach him about the process from their perspective.

In quantitative research, it was essential that research findings were valid and reliable. Validity and reliability also played a role in qualitative research but were represented using more appropriate terms for the qualitative research method—trustworthiness.
Trustworthiness

Researchers have an “ethical obligation to minimize misrepresentations and misunderstandings” of research studies (Stake, 1995, pp. 108-109). To ensure the best representation of research findings and provide an understanding of the process being studied, several methods were used to increase trustworthiness. Components of trustworthiness included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

By comparison, the credibility of a qualitative study is equated to the internal validity of quantitative research. Unlike the findings of quantitative research studies with which findings are discovered, findings or interpretations of qualitative research studies are constructed. With this constructivist paradigm comes the probability of “multiple constructed realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 295); however, the multiple constructed realities or interpretations must be demonstrated to be credible when viewed or reconstructed by others.

Only the methods for ensuring credibility through interview and document review could be used. The researcher utilized triangulation—the use of multiple data sources and data collection methods. In the context of this qualitative case study, multiple data sources included the five present or former board members, the former executive director, and various documents including but not limited to board meeting minutes, letters, and memos, etc.
The researcher also used member checks to ensure accuracy of data interpretation. Participants examined interpretation of the data to check plausibility and palatability. Of the five participants from which data were used, two participants responded, both acknowledging the plausibility of the study. The researcher also provided a “rich, thick description” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196) of the case so readers could experience vicariously the decision-making setting and process that occurred (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). George offered, “I could almost hear the voices of the proponents and the opponent.”

The researcher enlisted a peer debriefer familiar with the research design who reviewed data interpretations, asked questions, and provided feedback to ensure accuracy of the interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The goal was for data interpretation to be found plausible by any reader unfamiliar with but interested in the decision-making process studied.

**Transferability**

While external validity—the generalization of research findings to other subjects and situations—was routine in quantitative research, external validity took on somewhat a different meaning with qualitative research—transferability. Unlike quantitative research that was used primarily to determine what research findings meant to the larger world, qualitative research studies a particular process or phenomenon in-depth. The task then became determining the transferability of qualitative research interpretations to other situations and subjects (Lincoln & Guba,
If one considered that quantitative research was used to generalize the specific to the general, then one also might consider that the strength of the qualitative case study—an in-depth analysis of single unit or units of analysis—could be used to “see similarities in new and foreign contexts” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211).

To identify similarities among cases, the researcher provided a “rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211), giving readers the opportunity to apply the study’s findings to other situations, i.e., transferability. Stated differently, “people can learn much that is general from single cases” (Stake, 1995, p. 85). The researcher followed suggestions in the literature for strengthening transferability (Stake, 1995), including but not limited to providing information familiar to readers so they could weigh transferability; providing raw data-like verbatim language from interviews or text from documents, so readers could construct their own interpretation; and describing case study research methods that were used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Dependability**

From the perspective of quantitative research, reliability was defined as the stableness or consistency of measures taken repeatedly. The measure confirmed, for example, quantifying survey results or the results of statistical tests. Reliability of the measure required internal validity or accuracy of the measure. Because qualitative research did not normally include quantifiable measures, reliability took on a different appearance and meaning—dependability. Replication of a qualitative study would include the collection of different data because the replications would occur at
different times, thus the studies would not yield the same result (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, the measure of dependability for a qualitative study was whether the data were consistent.

Several methods contributed to the dependability of the study, including triangulation—the use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis. In the context of this study, interviews and document review were used. Constant-comparative analysis was used, and a peer review of the researcher’s interpretation of the data was conducted. Further, an “audit trail” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207) provided how data were collected, analysis categories determined, and decisions made during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Confirmability**

Objectivity from the quantitative research paradigm consisted of one-on-one correspondence between the research and reality—“distance between observer and the observed is respected and value-free inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 299). Objectivity was defined as “reliable, factual, confirmable, or confirmed” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). Stated differently, qualitative research considered objectivity or confirmability of the data, not the researcher.

The researcher used an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to establish confirmability of the study. Audits have included having an investigator independent of the researcher assess the entire research process. Audits included a review of raw data, field notes concerning data analysis, and categorical theme construction, etc. A
detailed record of the research process, raw data, historical records, and notes was maintained so an audit could be conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Ethical Issues**

The researcher adhered to the highest ethical standards concerning data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and final reporting. The researcher’s ethical stance was demonstrated by acknowledging his assumptions and biases concerning the case study. Further, approval was obtained from The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board to conduct this study (Appendix A), and university research policies were followed.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were told that participation in the study concerned their roles as members of the professional licensing board before, during, and after deciding to establish MCPE. They also were advised about the model guiding the research (Caffarella, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Yang et al., 1998). The researcher respected the rights of participants who decided not to be interviewed.

Participants had the right to ask any question at any time during the research study. To protect the privacy of participants and the profession, the final dissertation research document does not identify the profession regulated by the professional licensing board. Pseudonyms were used for members of the professional licensing board and the executive director to protect their identity. The researcher asserted that not identifying the profession and using pseudonyms for board members would in a
broad sense protect the identity of the profession and board members while acknowledging that members likely would be identifiable merely by the familiarity that board members had with one another.

**Human Subjects’ Concerns.**

In relation to potential “physical, psychological, social economic or legal harm” (Creswell, 2003, p. 64), the researcher did not anticipate any harm to participants. It was, however, anticipated that particular questions or merely revisiting the process might have elicited strong emotions but that those emotions would be the extent to which participants experienced any discomfort and that the discomfort experienced would diminish shortly after the interview was concluded. Research questions were asked in a manner to help participants feel safe and gradually moved to questions with more depth and detail about the decision-making process to minimize emotional discomfort.

**Ownership and Use of Data**

All raw data collected became the property of the researcher who would retain it for five years from the date the final dissertation document was accepted by the researcher’s dissertation research committee. Upon the fifth anniversary date, the raw data would be destroyed.

The utmost dignity and respect for participants were maintained. Data were used only to the extent that it assessed and answered the research questions. No
disagreement with the use of particular data or their interpretation occurred with participants.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter encompassed a discussion about the qualitative case study design, the context of the study, the research site and participants, data collection and analysis, the role of the researcher, trustworthiness, and ethical issues. The chapter began with a discussion about the social process of program planning that involved power, interests, influence, and social interaction. This social process would serve as the lens to explore and describe the decision of a professional licensing board to establish mandatory continuing education. Interviews were conducted and documents were reviewed to learn about the dynamics of the board and how and why a professional licensing board decided to establish MCPE. The data collection methods provided by the qualitative case study design allowed interaction with participants and the ability to learn how the board members thought, felt, and acted during the decision-making process that occurred between January 2000 and August 2003.

Six people—three present board members, two former members, and the executive director—participated in the study. The former executive director observed the decision-making process and served as an informant during the study.

Because the decision-making process had occurred, only interviews and document review were used for data collection. Constant-comparative analysis was conducted to allow data analysis as it was collected and allowed data collection
strategies to be adjusted as needed. Similar data were aggregated into categories so that the research questions could be answered and the decision-making process could be understood.

Unlike quantitative research designs where, for example, survey instruments are used, the researcher served as the research instrument. This was significant in that the researcher interpreted the data and answered the research questions. The researcher was required to keep in mind assumptions and biases formed about group decision-making, MCPE, and the decision-making process.

The researcher had an “ethical obligation to minimize misrepresentations and misunderstandings” (Stake, 1995, pp. 108-109). To do this, the researcher took steps to ensure trustworthiness by using several methods. Triangulation was used to increase credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Member-checks were used to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation and increase credibility. A peer reviewer was utilized to ask questions and provide feedback to ensure accuracy of data interpretation and increase credibility. An audit trail was used to establish confirmability. A historic record of the researcher’s activity was maintained so an audit could be conducted. A rich, thick description of the decision-making process was provided so readers could experience the phenomenon vicariously (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and credibility and confirmability could be increased.

Participants had the right not to participate or to terminate participation in the study at any time. Measures were taken to protect the profession, the board, and participants by not disclosing their identities. This provided protection in a broad
sense but not at the board level; board members would likely be identifiable because of familiarity that board members had of one another.

Approval was obtained from the university institutional human subjects’ review board to conduct the research (Appendix A). The highest ethical standards were followed concerning data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and final reporting. The utmost respect for participants was maintained. Participants in essence own the data and guided its use and interpretation.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the decision-making process that resulted in the Midwest engineers’ licensing board establishing MCPE. This study involved interpreting the meaning of interpersonal actions among board members and the educational, economic, and political interests represented that served as the basis for board member actions. How these factors influenced the decision to establish MCPE was of specific interest to adult education program planners, in that it informed how a decision in the context of a professional licensing board was made. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the emergence of CPE, followed by the context of the study and the findings as a result of the study.

Emergence of CPE

The emergence of CPE was attributed to four premises—that professionals should maintain and improve knowledge through their lifetime of practice; for professions to gain public respect; to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the
public (Houle, 1980); and to regulate professional practice (Cervero, 2000). Since the late 1800s, a struggle to mandate CPE (Smith et al., n.d.) resulted in many professions establishing MCPE for re-licensure and the right to continue practice. This struggle involved tensions among proponents of and opponents to MCPE. Proponents of MCPE contended that CPE must be mandated to ensure the update of knowledge and skills. To ensure participation, MCPE was linked to re-licensure and the right to continue practice. In contrast, opponents to MCPE cited the difficulty of verifying increased competence (Queeney & English, 1994), the relevance of MCPE to practice and learning (CAB, 2002), and the quality of the education experience (Cervero, 2000). Amid these tensions, a trend of using MCPE to regulate professional practice developed (Cervero, 2000; Queeney & English, 1994). The trend to establish MCPE as a regulatory tool, marked by the tensions among proponents of and opponents to MCPE, begged the question: how and why professional licensing boards went about establishing MCPE. The following section describes the context in which the findings of the study were interpreted.

**Context of the Study**

The Midwest engineers’ licensing board was comprised of five practitioners from the profession who were appointed by the state governor for 5-year terms. Board members typically served two terms, and board membership changed periodically as terms expired. Day-to-day operations of the board were managed by an executive director who had limited decision-making authority.
The executive director and members of the Midwest engineers’ licensing board from 1999 to 2003 are listed in Appendix D. Participants involved in the study and data from documents reviewed identified the executive director and each board member as either a proponent of or opponent to MCPE. The executive director and five former and present board members participated in the study. One former and one present board member did not respond to numerous invitations to participate in the study. Another former member of the board was not invited to participate because he did not participate in the decision-making process.

The international professional association for engineers established MCPE as a membership requirement in 1995. The association believed that the profession should join the ranks of other professions mandating continuing education and that increased education might equate to increased marketability (Brown, 2003).

In 1999, Tim, a practitioner in the state governed by the board, was appointed to the Midwest engineers’ licensing board and eventually initiated a discussion about MCPE. According to participants involved in the study, Tim came to the board with the intention of establishing MCPE. This analysis revealed that board membership attrition and Tim’s effective use of influence tactics and keeping the discussion about MCPE alive resulted in the establishment of an MCPE program.

The basis for establishing educational programs included solving educational-related problems or focusing on learning and improvement. Some board members reasoned that MCPE was needed to solve problems experienced by the board. The
evidence that was presented, however, did not support this reasoning. In 2003, the Midwest engineers’ licensing board voted unanimously to adopt an MCPE program.

**Findings**

How and why the Midwest engineers’ licensing board established MCPE included four themes—For Every Cause There is a Champion; MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests; Embracing a Myth; and the Last Man Standing. For Every Cause There is a Champion provided how a champion, advocate, or campaigner would be needed for causes to be realized. MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests provided how interests served as the bases for assertiveness and actions of people involved in the decision-making context. Embracing a Myth provided how a belief could result in people taking a stand absent supporting evidence. The Last Man Standing explored the struggles of the only remaining person representing what they believed to be right—a dissenter among the majority.

**For Every Cause There is a Champion**

This fellow was very interested in continuing education.... He seemed to have an agenda about continuing education. (George)

It was pretty obvious that Tim had an agenda when he came with the Board [relative to MCPE]. (James)

Tim ... was a strong proponent for it.... He was the person who led the charge and said “we’ve got to get this accomplished.” He pretty much pushed it through, ... constantly coming back and saying “Well, ... let’s discuss it, let’s talk it through.” ... It was ... a continuous ongoing dialogue. ... I would say it was a very strong charge, you know ... a
continuous question.... What are we going to do with continuing education? (Robert)

Tim was relentless.... I had the feeling that this was a battle that Tim wanted to win. (Tom)

Tim was the champion of establishing MCPE. He led the board’s transition from studying the need for MCPE as an educational solution for resolving problems experienced by the board to establishing a program for re-licensure and reciprocity. Tim led the transition by first initiating and then keeping a discussion about MCPE alive. Soon the discussion focused on the establishment of MCPE for re-licensure and to facilitate reciprocity. Tim frequently provided information to board members about other MCPE programs and the number of states adopting MCPE over time.

**Transition of the Midwest Board**

Before 2000, the Midwest engineers’ licensing board demonstrated little interest in establishing MCPE. According to George, the reasons why other boards within the profession established MCPE were contradictory and the Midwest board could not determine whether MCPE should be established.

We were getting mixed information.... Boards in other states thought, yeah, this is a pretty good idea, and it’s keeping us sharp, and it’s keeping the profession up. Other states came back with “this is a waste of time.... It’s just creating another level of bureaucracy.... It’s inconveniencing our licensees by having to go through these programs,” and [they] were very uncertain as to whether it was worthwhile. (George)

As indicated in George’s comments, the feedback from other licensing boards was unclear whether MCPE would be beneficial; hence, there was little interest in
establishing MCPE by the Midwest board. By 2000, however, something had changed.

In 2000, the Midwest board authored an internal document, its 2000 Strategic Planning Report, which indicated that the Midwest board’s interest in MCPE had increased. During the 2000 strategic planning meeting, the board discussed the lack of knowledge demonstrated by some practitioners and the quality of practitioners’ work and work ethic. As stated in the strategic planning report, the board decided to research the benefits of MCPE.

In an effort to determine if continuing education should become mandatory for licensure maintenance [re-licensure], the board will research the needs to determine if CE can be helpful and if so, how it can most effectively be administered…. The board will research these areas to determine how widespread the problem might be and if it lends itself to an educational remedy. (2000 Strategic Planning Report)

According to the above excerpt, the board had decided to study the need for mandating continuing education for re-licensure within the context of education being a solution for complaints reviewed by the board. Keeping in mind that the board was considering whether MCPE could “lend itself to an educational remedy” (2000 Strategic Planning Report), an assumption could be that, if the board did establish MCPE, it would be based on a legitimate need.

The board meeting minutes (October 6, 2000) stated that “the intention of the board is to continue to monitor the states that have adopted continuing education as a requisite for licensure maintenance.” This revealed that the interest of the board had shifted to the adoption of continuing education for re-licensure by other unknown state
boards. Participants involved in the study revealed that monitoring the states adopting continuing education was actually tracking the number of states that adopted MCPE rather than why the states adopted MCPE. In other words, there was more emphasis placed on the number of states adopting MCPE than on the benefits, if any, that were being realized from MCPE.

The later board meeting minutes (March 30, 2001) stated, “[The board] discussed the merits of continuing education as a requirement for licensure maintenance. Some material was provided for further discussion. No action was taken.” This indicated that continuing education had moved to the forefront of the board’s agenda and that discussion had transitioned to mandatory continuing education for re-licensure and continued practice. The transition from studying the need for MCPE to studying the establishment of MCPE for re-licensure was confirmed May 11, 2001, when the board passed a motion made by Tim. The motion demonstrated Tim leading the transition from the studying the need for an educational solution to problems experienced by the board to the studying MCPE for purposes of re-licensure in the form of a formal motion and official vote by the board. Tim’s motion essentially advanced the idea of establishing of MCPE for regulatory purposes.

Tim moved the board continue to study the need for and the impact of a continuing education requirement for licensure maintenance. Paul seconded the motion. The vote passed 3 to 1.

Later board meeting minutes (October 2001) revealed that the board scheduled a spring 2002 meeting for “determining a direction ... on this matter [MCPE].” Tim
and Claude, both proponents of MCPE, also formed a continuing education committee.

An expert in CPE presented the advantages and disadvantages of MCPE to the board during April 2002 board meeting. There was no indication that MCPE was discussed again until August 9, 2002, when Tim, then president of the board, presented for review programs from two states recently adopting MCPE. Although no official vote by the board was cited, the 2002 strategic planning report revealed that the board would develop a continuing education plan.

The board will proceed to develop a plan for implementing continuing education as a requisite for continued registration [re-licensure] ... and seek to develop a program to facilitate reciprocity.... When a plan has been developed, the board will meet with [practitioners] throughout the state to introduce the program. (2002 Strategic Planning Report)

The above excerpt from the 2002 Strategic Planning Report indicates that the board was focused on establishing MCPE for re-licensure and to facilitate reciprocity with other states. Re-licensure was a regulatory issue, while reciprocity was an economic issue. In essence, the result of establishing MCPE was the regulation of practitioners governed by the board and the expansion of economic interests.

In board meeting minutes (October 15, 2002), Tim indicated that “reciprocity and continuing education were among the popular interest areas” during a recent meeting of the profession’s national council of licensing boards—an organization consisting of state professional licensing board members. He also offered another state’s MCPE plan as a guide, and it was reported that “the Board will continue to develop a plan ready for consideration next fall” (board meeting minutes of October
The minutes revealed Tim citing of the National Council’s interest in reciprocity and MCPE in discussing the topic with the board. Tim’s action could be viewed as an attempt to influence the board using the interests of the National Council as leverage.

The board meeting minutes (November 22, 2002) revealed that Tim provided an additional MCPE model from another state and described how planning would proceed.

Tim presented a matrix evaluating the Illinois CE requirement with suggestions for improvement and the actions that would be required by this Board. The Committee (Tim & Claude) will review this material and offer solutions. Upon completion of the work of the committee, the board will present the program to the [practitioner] community for further input. (board meeting minutes, November 22, 2002)

The above excerpt suggests that the Illinois program could become the model for the Midwest Board, although an official vote by the board to establish MCPE had not been taken. The excerpt also outlined a plan that in effect excluded the 7,000 member practitioner community from participation in decision-making (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a).

The board meeting minutes (November 22, 2002) also revealed that the board approved for distribution to the state’s 7,000 practitioners the winter 2003 newsletter. The newsletter, provided in part in the next section, included a “Message from the President” from Tim, announcing the board’s intent to establish MCPE, although the board had yet to take an official vote to establish a program.
During the next four board meetings, it was reported that planning an MCPE program continued without an official vote by the board. The board meeting minutes (January 17, 2003) revealed that the Continuing Education Committee had proposed the rules for establishing MCPE. The minutes also revealed the board’s intent regarding the timing of establishing a program.

It is the intent of the board to have a continuing education program in place by the end of this year to be effective for the 2004-2005 license renewal period. Information is to be sent to all [practitioners] with a public hearing to be scheduled for August or September. (board meeting minutes, January 17, 2003)

It is interesting that the “intent of the board” (board meeting minutes, January 17, 2003) was in reality the intent of the three proponents of MCPE—the only board members present at the above meeting. The only board member opposing MCPE was absent. The fifth position on the board was vacant.

The board meeting minutes (February 20, 2003) revealed that Tim delivered additional information regarding laws related to continuing education. Also revealed was that the Continuing Education Committee continued to develop a law for establishing MCPE.

Tim presented additional material and studies concerning continuing education law based upon the law adopted by the state of Massachusetts. He and Claude will continue work on the development of the proposed language for review at the April meeting and a draft at the May meeting for discussion with other groups. (board meeting minutes, February 20, 2003)

By this time, Tim had continuously provided MCPE information to the board. Providing information such as models of MCPE programs served to manage that the
decision by the board would be about which MCPE requirements would be adopted rather than whether or not to establish MCPE.

The board meeting minutes (April 18, 2003) revealed that the requirements were reaching final preparation. The board also was seeking assurance of their authority to establish MCPE. The board voted to table the matter until the May 2003 meeting. The board meeting minutes (May 30, 2003) revealed that the board reviewed the draft of the rule adopting MCPE and recommended several changes. The board meeting minutes (August 8, 2003) revealed that the board voted unanimously to establish MCPE.

The board approved proposed amendments to ... the proposed new rule ... as modified for filing on motion by Tim, second by Robert and a vote of 4 to 0. (board meeting minutes, August 8, 2003)

To summarize, within one year of agreeing to monitor other state boards’ adoption of MCPE, the board passed a motion made by Tim to study the need and impact of MCPE for re-licensure and to facilitate reciprocity. By 2001, Tim and Claude, both proponents of MCPE, had formed a continuing education committee. In August 2002, the board acted upon MCPE by allowing the committee to develop a plan for establishing a program. Tim kept the subject of MCPE before the board through discussion and providing information to board members while planning a program.

In addition to initiating and continuing the discussion, once Tim became president of the board, he focused the board’s attention on a particular MCPE program rather than whether MCPE should be established. According to James,
Tim did come out with a rather extensive program for doing this [establishing MCPE] and almost immediately ... he had researched what other state laws had ... in their laws as far as mandatory continuing education.... It was just like “this is what we’re going to do and this the way we’re going to do it.” And he was doing all the research on it and giving me stuff and I was putting it together in such a way ... so they could adopt the rule.... It wasn’t really discussed. It was “this is what we’re doing” and it moved along at that, with that understanding. What was discussed was how [emphasis by interviewee] it was going to be implemented.... That was the discussion. It was not whether to have continuing education or not to have it; it was how it was to be [inaudible] immediately took it from a point of long range planning to reality. (James)

Using James’ perspective, Tim’s goal of establishing MCPE can be identified, but, more importantly, Tim’s proactive approach (Yang et al., 1998) also can be identified. In essence, Tim approached the board with a menu of MCPE requirements from which to choose rather than a choice of whether or not to establish a program at all. By not discussing if but how a program would be established, the likelihood was greater that the board would ultimately adopt a program. Tim’s championing the establishment of MCPE was demonstrated particularly through the use of power and influence tactics that are discussed below.

**Use of Power and Influence Tactics**

The power and influence tactics scale (Yang et al., 1998) and program planning elements (Caffarella, 2002) provided tools to explore if the use of power and influence tactics contributed to the decision to establish MCPE and, if so, how. Comparing the data with the power and influence tactics, Tim used reasoning,
pressuring, counteracting (Yang et al., 1998), shaping needs, setting agendas, and making decisions (Caffarella, 2002) to establish MCPE.

**Reasoning.** Tim reasoned why MCPE should be established in his message to professional membership printed in the board’s winter 2003 newsletter. Reasoning involved the presentation of facts, figures, and other information in the form of a logical argument to convince others that an idea, concept, plan, or decision was viable and that they should have supported what was being proposed (Yang et al., 1998). Tim’s message to the membership stated,

> In our immediate region of the country, ... West Virginia, Kentucky and Illinois have implemented programs.... Indiana is considering one and Michigan has legislation in place.... These facts and their impact upon the reciprocity of licensure will be to the disadvantage of [our state’s practitioners].... We adopted a number of parameters for a program we would consider for [the state].... We feel however, that in order to assure a desirable future for [the state’s practitioners] and to preserve the interests of the citizens of [the state] in protecting their health, safety and welfare we need to prepare a program now. (Tim)

Tim indicated that MCPE should be established to positively impact reciprocity, thus, facilitating economic interests. He also asserted that MCPE was important for protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public—a provision already afforded to the board with their authority to regulate practice within their profession. Tim used factual information (the trend of other states adopting MCPE) and reciprocity in the form of a logical argument to reason that establishing MCPE was becoming a norm in the profession. Tim used his position as president of the board to make declarations for the board when in reality the board had not officially voted to establish a program.
Pressuring and Shaping Needs. Participants indicated that Tim pressured board members. Pressuring was the repeated reminding or the insistence that a person do what one desires (Yang et al., 1998). Pressuring resulted in shaping the needs of others by having them ultimately accept what one desired (Caffarella, 2002). In the context of this study, the frequent discussions about MCPE during which the growing number of states adopting MCPE was mentioned and the insistence to always move forward and establish a program served to pressure board members.

Tim was pushing so much..... Before it was ... infrequently discussed, but now all of a sudden it seemed to be an agenda item on each one of our meetings.... One of the subjects obviously was which states are now doing this. (George)

They would have a report about who else had brought on continuing education, who was looking at it.... We were always having an awareness of it, ... and it just seemed that with each report, you know, there was the desire to do more and more and more.... I thought that James had made some wonderful points.... The presentation that we had ... made wonderful points. I thought that a lot of the material out there as continuing education really didn’t amount to much.... In spite of that, there was just that pressure to move on, to always take the next step. (Tom)

Tim ... was the person who led the charge and said “we’ve got to get this accomplished.” ... And he pretty much pushed it through.... It was a point of discussion on our ongoing meetings that would come up periodically.... He put the time and effort in to start developing the legislation, .... bringing it to the board.... Tim constantly coming back and saying “well, ... let’s discuss it, let’s talk it through.” ... It was pretty much a continuous ongoing dialogue that Tim presented at the board meetings to keep bringing up.... I would say it was a very strong charge, you know, ... a continuous [inaudible] question. “Well, what are we going to do with continuing education? How about this?” (Robert)
In particular, the frequency that Tim brought up MCPE, his reporting of what had become a trend of adopting MCPE by other boards in the profession, and his insistence to take the next steps to establish MCPE served to pressure board members. Ultimately, the board voted to establish the MCPE program designed under Tim’s leadership. Tim’s pressuring resulted in shaping the needs of the board and, in essence, the profession to the extent that the board adopted a program.

Counteracting and Making Decisions. As board records depicted, a transition from studying the need for MCPE as an educational solution to studying the impact of MCPE for re-licensure and reciprocity occurred. Amid the transition, an MCPE program was developed and ultimately adopted. Counteracting encompassed taking action to exclude participation in decision-making (Yang et al., 1998). Negative influences associated with making decisions encompassed the suppression of different opinions and conflict (Caffarella, 2002). The original idea was to include practitioners in decision-making; however, according to James, planning ensued and a rule to establish MCPE was established without their participation.

Tim had talked about having something together—a proposed rule for mandatory continuing education and then going out to all the [national professional association] chapters in the state and talking to the membership ... about what we’re going to do, and getting their input into it... It wasn’t even long after we talked about doing that, that got put aside totally, and timing was more important. (James)

The professional practitioners governed by the board were not only excluded from decision-making, membership was not notified of the decision preparation until after an unofficial decision was made to establish MCPE. These actions excluded
members of the professional community from participation in a democratic decision-making process (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a).

More specific counteracting (Yang et al., 1998) and negative influences related to making decisions (Caffarella, 2002) occurred among board members during what was actually the establishment of a program rather than a democratic decision-making process (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a). In particular, actions curtailing participation and suppressing opinions that opposed MCPE effectively controlled the decision that was ultimately considered. Particular incidents were identified that demonstrated Tim was ignoring information that opposed MCPE that served to counteract opponents’ actions.

Ideas that people would have, such as Tom ... were kind of dismissed off-hand by Tim.... Tom’s position was that continuing education wasn’t a good idea ... and Tim would say, “yeah, that’s fine.” ... Just kind of like it wasn’t important. “that’s fine, thanks for sharing that with us, now let’s get on with it,” you know. (George)

Tom cited two instances when Tim ignored information opposing MCPE.

Well, for instance, I let them know what my conversation was with the [executive director] from the other state and it was just like I hadn’t said anything, you know.... They both hold this [person] in high regard, but just paid no attention to that they wouldn’t do it [MCPE] again. They would say “don’t do it.” And it was like, you know, that the statement wasn’t even made.... No one could really probably talk any better about continuing education and its relevance in the state than James ... and yet, it meant nothing to Tim, you know. I think James’ comments were just dismissed immediately. (Tom)

James cited an instance when he offered information from a study (CAB, 2002) conducted by one of the profession’s state boards that resulted in finding “a broad-based mandatory continuing education program is not warranted” (p. 1). Tim,
according to James, stated, “Well, they just don’t have all their facts straight,” once again, ignoring information that opposed MCPE.

Overall, opponents to MCPE were ignored, which served to counteract (Yang et al., 1998) their efforts to be heard, thus suppressing differences of opinion (Caffarella, 2002). Ignoring or disregarding opposing opinions eliminated a democratic decision-making process (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a) and thereby controlled the ultimate decision to establish a program.

The analysis revealed that establishing MCPE resulted in satisfying particular personal interests. The next theme—MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests—will explore those interests.

**MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests**

The analysis revealed that economic and political interests provided the basis for establishing MCPE. Economic interests related to expanding the bounds of practice, and the political interest related to using MCPE to regulate a profession. This theme is discussed via two sub-themes—Satisfying Economic Interests by Establishing MCPE and Satisfying Political Interests by Establishing MCPE.

**Satisfying Economic Interests by Establishing MCPE**

The interest of the professional association to increase marketability by mandating professional education equated to expanding economic interests (Brown, 2003). Since 1995, MCPE increasingly has become a prerequisite for practitioners
desiring to work in other states. Practitioners were typically required to adhere to MCPE requirements of the state in which they were applying to work or demonstrate that they adhered to MCPE requirements in their state. Practitioners residing in states without MCPE were typically required to adhere to MCPE requirements of the state in which they wanted to work. Adhering to MCPE requirements resulted in practitioners being able to expand economic interests. Establishing MCPE tended to better serve practitioners whose practice could be classified in any or all of the following ways—practitioners located near states that required MCPE, practitioners in large firms that practiced in other states, or practitioners licensed to work in other states. The three proponents of MCPE could have been classified in at least one if not all of these ways.

Study participants and data from reviewed documents revealed that proponents of and opponents to MCPE acknowledged the economic interests of establishing MCPE. Robert, a participant of the study, represented the economic benefit of establishing MCPE to the profession that also encompassed the views held by proponents of and opponents to MCPE alike. Thus, Robert represented this sub-theme to discuss the satisfying of economic interests by establishing MCPE.

Referencing the global economy, Robert cited that reciprocity was so important that the profession’s national council of licensing boards had negotiated reciprocity agreements internationally. Special attention should be drawn to the term “reciprocity agreements.” Using educational standards and CPE credit, Robert offered that the national council was facilitating international reciprocity to access the global economy.
They’ve been meeting with like the European Common Market.... We’ve [our state] already made agreements between Canada and ourselves for controlled reciprocity.... They’re [the National Council] working directly with Australia [and] China, .... with a similar organization of Pacific Rim countries that have grouped together along the lines of controlling their professional, you know, reciprocities.... We’re working directly with Mexico. So that, you know, there’s a vast number of countries that [the National Council] are working with to establish a program for reciprocity. (Robert)

Obviously, continuing education was the means with which reciprocity agreements with other countries were being negotiated. Continuing professional education was being used as a standard on which all practitioners would be judged, and reciprocity provided and economic expansion facilitated internationally. Robert offered that ...

The real struggle of [the National Council] ... is to create a national license, ... have the same standard ... would their ability to say the European Common Market, if your countries recognize our [professionals] and if you meet these standards that we agreed upon, you know, we will give you a [national council of licensing boards] license. (Robert)

The national license would facilitate obtaining licensure from individual states, thereby expanding economic interests. From Robert’s perspective, it was reciprocity at the international level that served as a primary driver of MCPE.

[It] wasn’t so provincial in the sense of what does [our state] do as looking at it from a national basis and maybe even the trend to more of an international basis.... Our two biggest [board] functions we have are certification of other corporations, and reciprocity from out of state. (Robert)

Based on Robert’s perspective, the board was more about regulating economic interests than their mission to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. As
indicated above, MCPE had been and was the means with which economic interests were expanded nationally and internationally. The analysis also revealed that establishing MCPE would satisfy political interests, as discussed below.

**Satisfying Political Interests by Establishing MCPE**

Typically when we see people that are in violation of other rules, we find that they also are very lax at participating in any continuing education on a voluntary basis.... By mandating this, we are doing one of two things—we are either requiring that they indeed do keep up with industry trends, or that they no longer practice. (Claude)

Once it’s [MCPE] established, I think it should limit some of those normal complaints that we get because some of the practitioners that are around now probably won’t follow through and get their continuing education. (Robert)

Essentially, both Claude and Robert’s view was that voluntary CPE was not effective, hence the association of rule violations with low or nonparticipation in CPE. In their view, MCPE required both participation and maintaining up-to-date knowledge. Either situation—the lack of participation or not maintaining up-to-date knowledge—would result in expulsion from the profession (Phillips, 1987). In other words, MCPE would be used to regulate the profession. A fundamental issue with this view was that the board did not have data pertaining to practitioner participation in continuing education.

In review, two personal interests—the expansion of economic interests and regulating the profession—served as bases for establishing MCPE. Reciprocity had economic implications nationally and internationally. Linking the right to continue
practice to participation in MCPE resulted in MCPE becoming a regulatory tool. The analysis also revealed an assertion that merely establishing a mandatory continuing education program could resolve competency issues, discussed in the following section that explores the theme, Embracing a Myth.

**Embracing a Myth**

This theme explores a belief held by Claude that served as a foundation for establishing MCPE. As the theme unfolded, it was shown that Claude believed that competency and MCPE were inextricably linked and that merely the establishment of MCPE would result in resolving competency issues, which essentially is a myth.

So what it [MCPE] does is help us ensure health, safety, and welfare by ensuring a minimum level of competency of some of the registered professionals that may not otherwise get that continuing education.

(Claude)

Claude asserted that a problem with the competency of practitioners existed that MCPE could and would resolve—an assertion not supported by the data. This analysis included a review of complaints investigated by the board from 1995 to 2001. The nature of the complaints, as defined by the board, included competency, ethics, illegal advertising and practice, practitioner-client disputes, unauthorized use of others’ work, etc. Of the 327 complaints investigated between 1995 and 2001, 48% involved licensed practitioners, while 28% involved people not associated with the profession. Of the 48% or 158 complaints involving practitioners, only 3 were classified as competency issues by the board. Of the 3 competency issues, 2 were
dismissed by the board citing insufficient evidence. In review, based on the board’s classification of complaints, only 1 of 158 investigations concerning practitioners between 1995 and 2001 was associated with competency.

In Claude’s comment above, he also asserted that merely establishing MCPE would maintain competency. Further, as shown in the following excerpt, Claude related competency and MCPE as if there were inextricably linked.

… not that they also have a problem. I’m not sure which is first, the chicken or the egg. But those that are doing … work below the threshold of minimum competency typically are also … not doing anything as far as continuing education. I’m not sure which one drives the other, whether because they don’t have competence they are not interested in continuing education or because they don’t have continuing education are incompetent. I believe it’s probably a combination. (Claude)

Claude’s comment and his embracing the myth encompassed the assumption that practitioners would participate in continuing education relevant to their area of practice, learning would occur, practitioners would improve, learning would be applied to practice, and practice, thus the profession, would improve. Little research supported that continuing professional education could and did result in learning and improved practice (Umble & Cervero, 1996).

During the time MCPE was discussed, three board membership changes affected the decision-making process. Board membership transitioned from a majority of board members opposing MCPE to a minority of one. This change is discussed in the following section exploring the theme, the Last Man Standing.
Last Man Standing

The Last Man Standing signifies the struggle of being the only person left to fight for what was believed to be right. Two sub-themes will describe how one lone board member opponent remained on the board and the experience of the last man standing. First, the Attrition of the Midwest engineers’ licensing board is presented, followed by I Was Just Worn Down.

Attrition of the Midwest Engineers’ Licensing Board

From the time MCPE was brought to the forefront of the board’s agenda until the board voted to establish a program in August 2003, the board underwent three board member changes that affected the decision-making process. The Attrition of the Midwest engineers’ licensing board 1999-2003 (Appendix D) depicts the transition of the board and whether a board member was a proponent of or an opponent to MCPE. The interest in establishing MCPE started changing sometime after Tim, a proponent of MCPE, was appointed to the board in July 1999. In November 2000, Claude joined the board, and it was learned that he also was a proponent of MCPE. At this point, the board was divided among proponents of and opponents to MCPE. Two board members (Tim and Claude) favored establishing MCPE, while three board members (Paul, George, and Tom) opposed MCPE.

The next change in board membership occurred in January 2002, when Robert was appointed to the board. Robert, a proponent of MCPE, provided the third vote required to pass any measure voted on by the board. Robert’s appointment to the
board was timely in that Tim became president of the board when the person representing the deciding vote for MCPE joined the board. Once Robert was appointed to the board, a vote to establish MCPE would have passed; however, a vote regarding MCPE was not taken until August 2003. Based on the progress depicted by proponents in planning a program, a vote was not necessary until an actual program was offered for consideration, thus an official vote.

Participants of the study were divided as to whether the attrition of the board contributed to MCPE being established, which Claude believed. On the other hand, James believed that the attrition that naturally occurred did contribute to MCPE being established. Claude believed that by participating in discussions, the board members were convinced that establishing MCPE was appropriate.

I don’t think it really did. I think that that typically it takes a minimum of three meetings for people to really start getting comfortable with where we are. And as they were hearing the discussions during those first two or three meetings, it was becoming apparent to them, I believe, that it was appropriate to move forward with continuing education. (Claude)

With this comment, Claude asserted that discussions followed a logical and rational process, resulting in new board members adopting similar beliefs as incumbent board members. On the other hand, James asserted that as a particular goal was pursued with a group and if that group changed over time, sooner or later the likelihood of attaining the goal increased.

As the thing churned along, that’s when we lost board members and got new board members and so as they came on ... somebody once said that they were able to accomplish things in an organization by attrition. And, you know, if somebody, if the people didn’t like it, eventually
they knew they’d just plug away, plug away with it, people that are opposed to this are going to go off ... and eventually I’ll get my way. (James)

As cited above, James believed that attrition contributed to the establishment of a program in that, as board members changed, so did perspectives on MCPE. In the context of the Midwest board’s program planning, James offered,

There were two strong people for it. I think there could have been two or three opposed to it. But two of those, two or three went off the Board and as the new people came ... I don’t think they saw it any other way because they had missed all the presentations, all the literature that was put out to the Board in opposition to it. That was never brought up again. (James)

As membership changed, so did perspectives on MCPE. A vote earlier than January 2002 would have failed to establish MCPE; however, as of January 2002, board membership included the minimum number of votes required to establish MCPE, which ultimately occurred in August 2003. The attrition of the Midwest board explained how one board member opponent remained when MCPE came to a vote. However, attrition did not explain the experience of being the last man standing. In the following section, the theme I Was Just Worn Down is explored.

**I Was Just Worn Down**

I felt like I was just worn down, and I thought we were voting to take the next step, but the next step was proceeding to implement. And I didn’t vote against that. I was the last to cast my vote. (Tom)

Above, Tom articulated how he felt as the vote to establish MCPE was taken. Tom was the last opponent to MCPE and represented the only obstacle to a unanimous
vote to establish a program. In the following excerpt, Tom describes being ignored by board member proponents of MCPE.

Well, for instance, I let them know what my conversation was with the woman from California, and it was just like I hadn’t said anything.... They both hold this [person] in high regard but just paid no attention to that they wouldn’t do it again. They would say don’t do it. And it was like, you know, that the statement wasn’t even made. (Tom)

The interaction cited above was one of several challenges that Tom posed to proponents, only to be ignored, which ultimately led to Tom’s becoming worn down. Tom’s perspective encompassed whether MCPE was needed, the value of MCPE, and his belief that MCPE was not a regulatory issue. He believed that most problems experienced by the board were not educationally related.

It would be hard to demonstrate ... that there was any real huge problem out there among the public that needed to be addressed.... Most of the issues that came ... before the board.... Often it would turn into being a contract dispute.... I didn’t see it in the complaints that were brought before us. I didn’t see any outcry from the public about any issue that continuing education would solve or address. (Tom)

Tom’s perspective was based on whether MCPE was needed. Stated differently, Tom’s perspective was not based on satisfying economic or political interests. In particular, Tom was focused on the benefit of MCPE.

The value of MCPE as information versus education focused on how participants involved in the study defined continuing education (Queeney & English, 1994). Tom defined continuing education as more informational than educational and questioned the value of MCPE offerings.

I thought that a lot of the material out there as continuing education really didn’t amount to much, didn’t educate me very much on, I mean
you know, the few that I went to because I had an interest in it. I certainly didn’t put much importance in it as an education. It was just something that I wanted to know. (Tom)

Tom’s comment indicated the value he placed on then current-day MCPE offerings. His perspective also tended to reflect concern in mandating what he did not consider to be education.

While proponents of MCPE acknowledged that most professionals were already participating in voluntary continuing education, they asserted that mandatory continuing education was still needed because it would improve less competent practitioners or eliminate them from practice. Tom, however, believed that professionals could be trusted to manage their self-development throughout a lifetime of practice.

If you’re a professional, ... you automatically search out anything that you feel could help the profession. But you recognize that as professionals, that there are many things that you should and must do to remain relevant and to provide the best level of service you can to your client and to your profession. I’m not saying I’m categorically against continuing education ... and that isn’t something to me that you legislate. (Tom)

Tom’s point was that education or, in essence, self-development should not be legislated. He looked upon professionals as possessing the ability to effectively manage their lifetime of practice, including keeping current within the profession.

In the end, Tom joined his colleagues on the Midwest engineers’ licensing board in a unanimous vote to establish MCPE. When challenged why he voted to establish MCPE after opposing it, Tom replied, “I was the last one to cast a vote. It was either one dissent or unanimous.” Tom wanted the board to be united in their
efforts, although he later regretted his decision. “But I still wish that I were not on record as having supported it.”

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an understanding of the interactions, power, interests, influence, and tensions of a professional licensing board that established MCPE. The chapter discussed the emergence of CPE, the context of the study, and findings identified as a result of the study. The transition of the Midwest engineers’ licensing board from studying the need for MCPE as an educational solution for problems experienced by the board to establishing MCPE for re-licensure and the right to continue practice was presented. Four themes—For Every Cause There is a Champion; MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests; Embracing a Myth; and the Last Man Standing—provided an understanding of how and why the Midwest board decided to establish MCPE.

For Every Cause There is a Champion discussed that for, every cause to be realized, a champion or advocate was required. In the context of this study, the champion kept the cause of establishing MCPE alive until the cause was realized. MCPE: It’s About Personal Interests described how two primary interests—expanding economic boundaries and regulating the profession—served as bases for establishing MCPE. Embracing a Myth encompassed the belief that competency and MCPE was inextricably linked and that merely establishing MCPE would resolve what was perceived as competency problems. This belief occurred in the face of evidence that
competency was not an issue and the little research that espoused MCPE could and likely did result in learning. The Last Man Standing explored the three-year attrition of the Midwest board that began with a majority of board member opposing MCPE but changed to one board member opposing MCPE. The struggle of the last man standing as the lone representative of the opposing view was also explored. In review, the four themes provided an understanding of how and why the Midwest engineers’ licensing board established MCPE. Next, Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study, conclusions that can be drawn, and a discussion of recommendations that can be made based on the study.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This is a case study of how a Midwest engineers’ licensing board was faced with a dilemma of whether to establish an MCPE program. A need for an educational program was not evident. A trend among other licensing boards within the profession, however, was establishing MCPE for re-licensure and to facilitate reciprocity. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the decision-making process that resulted in the board establishing MCPE. This study involved interpreting the meaning of interpersonal actions among board members and the educational, economic, and political interests represented that served as bases for board member actions. How these factors influenced the decision to establish MCPE was of specific interest to adult education program planners in that it informed how a decision in the context of a professional licensing board was made. In particular, the qualitative case study investigated the following research questions:

1. How did the professional licensing board members think, feel, and act in deciding to establish MCPE?
2. What decision-making processes were used by professional licensing board members in deciding to establish MCPE?

**Research Design**

This qualitative case study involved two data collection methods: document review and interview. Document review sources such as board meeting minutes, strategic planning documents, newsletters, and a study regarding MCPE within the profession were analyzed. Semi-structured interviews with two former and three current board members and the former executive director of the board were conducted. The constant-comparative method was used to analyze document and interview data. For example, data from interviews or documents were compared to determine similarity or differences. Similar data were aggregated into categories or themes (Stake, 1995). The purpose of categorizing data was to analyze and synthesize data so the process could be understood and the research questions could be answered. The data from documents provided a basic account of what occurred to establish MCPE but not how or why the board established MCPE. Data from documents were used as a basis with which to interview participants involved in the study and to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study by having a documented account of what occurred to establish MCPE. Board meeting minutes and strategic planning documents were reviewed first, followed by interviews of participants involved in the study.

Interviews with two former and three present board members and the executive director of the board were conducted. Interviews lasted 1.5 hours, and participants
were interviewed one time. An interview guide (Appendix C) was used during interviews as a basis to explore the decision-making process. Allowing participants to share their perspectives of the decision-making process openly, with fewer direct questions, resulted in a more fluid interaction with participants. Thus, the interview guide was used to ensure that areas of interests were covered rather than as a primary source for specific questions. This strategy also allowed for more flexibility to follow the inquiry as the data were collected.

Of the six interviews conducted, data from only five of the interviews were used. One participant involved in the study had not participated in the actual vote to establish MCPE. Interviews were transcribed in their entirety. Interview data were then summarized, and questions and inferences were noted.

Data from documents and participant interviews concerning board member dynamics and discussions were analyzed. Data that were similar were classified into categories, which were analyzed further to determine their value in interpreting the decision-making process. As a result of the analysis, data within categories were synthesized, helping to identify broad themes that described more clearly the decision-making process.

Member checks with participants involved in the study were conducted, the purpose of which was to provide participants an opportunity to consider the plausibility and palatability of the findings and provide feedback from their perspective. Only two participants (James and George) responded, stating that the findings were plausible. George offered:
I could almost hear the voices of the proponents and the opponent going through the motions of discussing the issues and the ramrod strategies being employed!!

**Summary of Findings**

This study provided an opportunity to explore a decision of whether to establish MCPE using program planning concepts (Caffarella, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b; Yang et al., 1998). Of particular benefit was the ability to track an actual decision of a professional licensing board to establish MCPE. In this case, reasons to establish MCPE included keeping practitioners’ knowledge current, improving less competent practitioners, facilitating reciprocity, and regulating the profession. Findings suggest that interests in improving practitioners were incidental to personal interests in establishing MCPE. Particular findings identified as a result of this study are summarized below.

A cause must have a powerful, assertive advocate who takes the action necessary, including confronting whatever opposition or impediments exist, so that the cause is fulfilled. Necessary action was required for a cause to be recognized as an issue that demanded attention and action. The attention and action required demanded that a spokesperson who could himself demand attention was required. It was likely that a cause received the attention required for action when the spokesperson or advocate for the cause possessed power to demand that attention and subsequent action required of others for the cause to be satisfied. Otherwise, the cause became no more noticeable and actionable than any other cause. For a cause to be realized, the
cause must have been put before decision-makers until a favorable outcome occurred. The advocate must have possessed the power to place the cause before decision-makers and must have been willing to take the necessary action (e.g., controlling agendas, reasoning, pressuring, and counteracting) that brought the cause to the forefront and convinced others to ultimately commit to the cause.

Satisfying self-serving interests rather than protecting the public from incompetence may have served as the basis for the establishment of MCPE. Continuing education had been the only means used in the profession studied to eliminate barriers to reciprocity. Typically, practitioners could obtain licenses to practice in other states by demonstrating they abided by CPE requirements in their home state. Continuing education requirements also had been used as the only means to negotiate reciprocity agreements with foreign countries, thereby eliminating barriers to reciprocity internationally. This case demonstrated how reciprocity—the expansion of economic interests—and MCPE were linked within the profession. Establishing MCPE could result in the expansion of economic interests nationally and internationally.

This case demonstrated how proponents desired to use MCPE as a regulatory tool. There was a perception that rule violations by practitioners were educationally related. Proponents wished to establish a mandatory education requirement so violators would either decide to update their knowledge and eliminate rule violations or leave the profession. MCPE would then become significant in deciding who remained in the profession.
Satisfying these self-serving interests was compelling. Merely by establishing an MCPE program, economic interests could be expanded and an additional regulation tool could be adopted.

The trend of adopting MCPE in the profession influenced the board’s decision to establish MCPE. The preeminent association for the profession studied and the profession’s council of licensing boards, both international organizations, adopted MCPE as a requirement for membership. Approximately half of the state licensing boards within the profession had followed suit by adopting MCPE as a standard for relicensure and to facilitate reciprocity. This trend was used as leverage by the champion to convince or pressure others to agree with the establishment of MCPE.

In the absence of evidence, a myth that established MCPE would have improved and maintained the competency of practitioners served as a basis for supporting MCPE. A belief existed that competency and MCPE were inextricably linked and that merely the establishment of MCPE would have resulted in resolving competency issues. Data gathered during the study revealed that the competency of practitioners was not an issue. The belief asserted that, by merely participating in MCPE, practitioners would learn and that learning would be transferred to practice and the practitioner; thus, the profession will improve.

Attrition of the board resulted in board membership change and a change in perspective toward MCPE. Over a 3-year period, the board changed from a majority of board members who disfavored MCPE to a majority of board members who favored MCPE. The attrition worked to the advantage of the champion and other
proponents of MCPE. It was not determined if the attrition occurred by chance; however, the attrition was timely with the champion becoming president of the board and fostering a greater effort to establish MCPE.

**Conclusions**

Following are five conclusions derived from the findings identified as a result of the study.

**Reasons for establishing MCPE must have been compelling to overcome opposition to MCPE.** There were as many reasons to establish MCPE as there were reasons not to establish MCPE (Cervero, 2000; Houle, 1980; Queeney & English, 1994). These reasons represented opposing forces, and, unless these forces became unbalanced, it was unlikely that MCPE would have been established. Stated differently, the findings in this study suggested that, for MCPE to have been established, reasons supporting MCPE must have been persuasive to the extent that they outweighed reasons opposing MCPE. Reasons that may have disrupted opposing forces and shifted momentum in favor of MCPE included following trends of a profession and satisfying personal, political, professional, or organizational interests.

**A powerful advocate was instrumental in ensuring that a cause was satisfied.** Causes, including compelling causes, required representation to the extent that they were satisfied. A powerful advocate required the power (Isaac, 1987) with which to act and the willingness to take influencing action (Caffarella, 2002; Yang et al., 1998) to the extent that a cause was satisfied. The findings of this study suggested that the
advocate must have possessed referent and legitimate power (Erchul & Raven, 1997; French & Raven, 1959) that resulted in participant decision-makers’ commitments to the advocate’s cause. Such power may have arisen from holding a powerful position within a profession or decision-making group and resulted in having prestige with decision-makers. A person with less power in the face of opposing forces, while championing a cause, likely would not have been successful.

Negotiation was unlikely among decision-makers deciding whether to establish MCPE when a powerful advocate was present. Negotiation in the context of program planning has been defined as to “confer, bargain, or discuss with others to arrive at the settlement of some matter” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 156). In particular, when there was a powerful champion who took the action necessary to ensure that his cause was satisfied, negotiation was not likely. Rather, the findings from this study suggested that decision-making resulted from the approach to the decision question by and as a result of the proactiveness (Yang et al., 1998) of the champion. In this sense, decision-making results from controlled discussions focused on the establishment of MCPE. The goal of the champion was to satisfy their interests and not to otherwise compromise.

The composition of the decision-making group likely affected the ultimate decision of whether MCPE was established. Attrition of a decision-making group resulted in changes in group membership and in a potential change in perspectives of the decision-makers toward MCPE. For example, group changes could have resulted in either a majority for or against MCPE. Attrition could work to the advantage or
disadvantage of the champion. If attrition resulted in a majority of decision-makers who supported the cause, advocating the cause became much simpler. If attrition, however, resulted in a majority of decision-makers who opposed the cause, the champion’s work became more difficult.

Decisions to establish MCPE were likely based more on self-serving interests of decision-makers than interests in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The health, safety, and welfare of the public had been a premise associated with the emergence of CPE (Houle, 1980). The findings of this study suggested that self-serving interests—for example, the expansion of economic interests nationally and internationally and the regulation of practitioners—served as a basis for establishing MCPE. This conclusion supported, in part, previous research studies (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; Elgström & Riis, 1992; Hendricks, 1996; Mabry, 2000; Miller, 1997; Umble et al., 2001; Yang, 2000; Yang & Cervero, 2001; Yang et al., 1998) that implied program-planning decisions were based on, among other things, the personal and organization interests held by program planners.

This study began with a conceptualization of the social process of negotiation as a Power-Negotiation Cycle (Figure 1, p. 11). The study resulted in an understanding of how a decision to establish MCPE in the context of a professional licensing board was made. The findings identified during the study have been used to reframe the cycle that will be discussed in the next section.
Power-Negotiation Cycle Revisited

The Power-Negotiation Cycle introduced in Chapter 1 (Figure 1, p. 11) was developed as a result of the interpretation of the literature representing program planning as social process of negotiating personal and organizational interests. The cycle illustrated four elements that guided the social process of negotiation—social power, interests, influence, and social interaction. These elements served as a basis with which to understand how and why the Midwest board decided to establish MCPE. The cycle depicted power—the capacity to act (Isaac, 1987)—in both the substantive and meta-negotiation levels. The cycle also depicted social interaction as an independent element of negotiation. Interests were depicted both in the substantive negotiation level as the basis for influencing or exercising power and a subject of negotiation at the meta-negotiation level.

The decision-making process that resulted in the establishment of MCPE was compared to the Power-Negotiation Cycle (Figure 1, p. 11). As a result, the Power-Negotiation Cycle was revised to better describe the decision-making process and incorporate elements that expanded the conceptual model.

The Decision to Establish MCPE was a social interaction model depicting what occurred during the decision-making process. Elements of the model were characterized as the cause, champion, proactiveness, influencing action, and the target. Aspects that affected the decision-making process included the assumptions and the attrition of the Midwest board. Other aspects that affected the decision included power, interests, and social relationships.
Figure 2. Model of the Decision to Establish MCPE

**Cause.** A cause was a subjective, objective, and/or real interest (Isaac, 1987) that served as the basis for establishing MCPE. The cause could have been as simple as the desire to establish MCPE but was more likely the primary interests that would have been satisfied as a result of establishing MCPE. The cause must have been compelling to the extent that it could have prevailed over other interests that opposed the establishment of MCPE. The cause was the “banner” with which the champion used to campaign or advocate for the establishment of MCPE.
**Champion.** For a cause to have been satisfied, a powerful champion was required. The champion was the primary supporter or advocate of a cause that would take the necessary action to ensure that a cause was satisfied. The champion must have had the power with which to facilitate decision-making to the extent that even subjective or irrational interests supporting the cause were satisfied.

Power—the capacity to act (Isaac, 1987)—resulted from holding a position of power within the decision-making group (e.g., president) and prestige within the profession (e.g., position within a national professional association) (Erchul & Raven, 1997; French & Raven, 1959). A powerful position within the decision-making group provided the likelihood that agendas could be controlled, such as prioritizing the establishment of MCPE and making other interests secondary on agendas, if at all. Based on how the decision-making group was structured, the position may have been viewed by the decision-makers as directing the agenda for a particular period of time, thereby providing a platform for satisfying personal and organizational interests.

Prestige within a profession tended to result in others giving credence to what one communicated regarding particular issues. In this sense, decision-makers were likely influenced by the prestige held by the champion more so than by others not possessing such prestige. People were likely more influenced by someone with prestige than by those without. Stated differently, people without the prestige required of a champion would likely be less successful in satisfying such cases.

Together, prestige and position provided power with which one could be a champion. Prestige and position could have provided an increased capacity to act as a
result of the credence given and the influence of others that resulted (French & Raven, 1959).

**Proactiveness.** Proactiveness (Yang et al., 1998) indicated the extent to which the champion was assertive and took actions to see that causes were satisfied. Proactiveness also could have involved the approach to the decision to establish MCPE to control the decision question, thus the ultimate decision. For example, approaching decision-makers with the question of *what* MCPE program to establish rather than *if* MCPE should have been established controlled the decision question.

**Influencing Action and Target.** Influencing action referred to action taken by the champion that resulted in facilitating the establishment of MCPE and the cause being satisfied. Influencing action was directed toward the target (other decision-makers) and can have included initiating the discussion and keeping the discussion alive until a favorable decision was made, proactively approaching the decision question, controlling the decision-making group agenda, providing information supporting the cause, avoiding opposition to satisfying the cause, effective use of power and influence tactics, and acting as the voice of decision-makers promoting the cause in the absence of a decision. All of these actions may have affected the target in a manner that served to affect the cause and whether it was satisfied.

**Assumptions.** Assumptions consisted of rational or irrational beliefs that either supported or did not support a cause and were held by the champion and the decision-makers with whom the champion interacted. The champion contended with the assumptions of others to the extent that they affected decision-making. Assumptions
may have affected the proactiveness and influencing actions of the champion. Assumptions may have included the belief that problems experienced by professional licensing boards were not educationally related, an extricable link between competency and MCPE existed, and problems experienced by professional licensing boards could be resolved by establishing MCPE.

**Attrition.** Attrition pertained to changes in the decision-making group over time that may or may not have affected the decision and whether the cause was satisfied. In short, attrition could have affected changes in power, interests, and social relationships. As decision-making group members changed, so could the perspectives of decision-makers toward MCPE. Attrition could have resulted in a majority of members in favor or disfavor of MCPE, thus affecting the proactiveness and influencing action of the champion. The affect of attrition could have resulted in relinquishing power, changes in interests, and social relationships that also affected the ultimate decision.

The champion also could have used attrition to his advantage. Proactiveness of and influencing action by the champion could have been timed with attrition of decision-makers, resulting in a majority of decision-makers favoring MCPE. Stated differently, there was no better opportunity to champion a cause than when a majority of decision-makers favored MCPE.

**Power, Interests, and Social Relationships.** As a result of the decision-making process, three elements were a part of the process and affected as a result of the process. Power—the capacity to act—changed by relinquishing power of the less
powerful. Specifically, the champion acquired additional capacity to act by the less powerful giving up their capacity to act. This was likely a result of the champion’s action and other decision-makers becoming less influential to the extent that they surrendered their power and influence.

Interests also changed during the decision-making process. A result of the effort of the champion had to be convincing opponents to change their interests to the extent that a favorable vote or decision could have been accomplished. Opponents have believed strongly in their original interests but made adjustments to satisfy an interest that became a higher priority. For example, a decision-maker may have changed his interest in a manner to agree with establishing MCPE when group unity became a higher priority.

The affect of the decision-making process and, in particular, the proactiveness and actions of the champion resulted in changes to social relationships. Based on the perspectives of decision-makers, social relationships may have grown or weakened. As decision-makers aligned their perspectives with the champion, social relationships with the champion grew. When decision-makers’ perspectives opposed the champion, social relationships changed as the champion took action to suppress the opposing view and reduce the potential influence of the opposing view, resulting in that opposing voice becoming ostracized. As suggested in this study, a change in the social relationship was the lack of respect afforded to those with opposing opinions.

The Model of the Decision to Establish MCPE required that a compelling cause was present and that cause was represented by a powerful advocate. The
advocate must have had the power with which to facilitate decision-making that would result in the cause being satisfied. This included the advocate being proactive and willing to take the influencing action, in light of assumptions and attrition that resulted in a decision to establish MCPE. The Model of the Decision to Establish MCPE was interpreted in light of the following limitations.

**Limitations**

The first limitation was that the study did not encompass all board members who were involved in the decision-making process. The three board members not involved in the study may have provided more insight as to how and why the Midwest engineers’ licensing board established MCPE. Two of the three board members participated in board meetings for the 3-year period during which MCPE was discussed. While their perspective on MCPE was learned through the interviews of others, had they participated, they could have shared their perspective first-hand, and more detail could have been obtained. For instance, one of the two board members could have provided insight into his interests in establishing MCPE and could have addressed questions as to his approach and tactics used to satisfy his interests. Two board members did not respond to numerous invitations to participate in the study.

Six participant interviews during the study consisted of four face-to-face and two telephone interviews. The face-to-face interviews provided the opportunity for observation of participant reactions to interview questions and reactions to their
experience of the decision-making process. The telephone interviews precluded the opportunity to make these same observations.

Another limitation related to the timing of the study in relationship to the timing of the decision-making process. The process occurred during a 3-year period, and the study began 17 months after the process concluded. The timing affected the memory of participants, thus the researcher’s ability to obtain more specific details of what occurred during the decision-making process. For example, many times participants could not remember exactly what was said during discussions about MCPE but only the context in which the discussion occurred. Along this line, participants could only identify few documents or studies used during the planning process. Had the study commenced sooner, a more detailed account of the process could have been obtained.

An additional limitation was the lack of a detailed account of the decision-making process. Unlike what was anticipated, board meeting minutes and strategic planning documents provided limited information about the planning process. For example, in many instances board meeting minutes and strategic planning documents did not mention who provided MCPE information. Similarly, the names of studies or documents used by the board were not provided, thereby preventing the researcher from obtaining the studies or documents for analysis. In this situation, the researcher was forced to rely on participants’ recollections as to the use of particular studies or documents that pertained to the decision-making process.
Implications and recommendations for decision-making in the context of a professional licensing board and recommendations for future decision-making research in the context of program will be discussed next.

**Implications and Recommendations**

Implications and recommendations from this study were applicable to the understanding of program planning theory and contributions to the practice of program planning. This study expanded program planning theory by suggesting that the decision to establish MCPE was based on unsubstantiated reasoning. Reasons given for establishing MCPE included (a) rule violations and their relationship to participation in CPE; (b) the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public; (c) the relationship of competency and MCPE; and (d) to facilitate reciprocity. The findings in this study indicated data regarding competency refuted the need for MCPE, while no data was found that supported the other reasons given to establish MCPE. A recommendation would be for policy-makers to ensure that decision-making processes included data to support the need for and basis of establishing MCPE.

The findings of this study contradicted previous depictions of power in the context of program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a; 1994b). Program planning has been illustrated as an orderly process during which opposing interests were represented and influence tactics used in a manner to simply influence decision-makers so those interests would be satisfied. The findings of this study, however, suggested that power (Erchul & Raven, 1997; French & Raven, 1959; Isaac, 1987)
and influencing action (Caffarella, 2002; Yang et al., 1998) was used to control the entire decision-making process to guarantee that MCPE was established and that interests were satisfied.

The findings in this study also contradicted earlier findings by Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b) indicating that decision-making in the context of program planning was a social process of negotiation. The findings in this study suggested that negotiation did not occur—rather, one-sided discussions that focused on what program to establish versus whether to establish MCPE. The champion took the action necessary to control the decision question, focus discussions on what MCPE program to adopt, and suppressed opposing voices. These actions ultimately resulted in the establishment of MCPE.

The approach to the decision whether to establish MCPE also expanded the concept of proactiveness previously introduced. Yang et al. (1998) discussed the extent to which decision-makers would take action to ensure interests were satisfied in the context of conflict management styles. Approaching the decision of what program to establish, however, rather than if a program should be established expanded our understanding of proactive planning behavior.

This study also expanded Yang et al.’s (1998) model of power and influence tactics used by adult education program planners by broadening the items associated with the influence dimension, counteracting. This finding suggested that ignoring opposing opinions served to counteract actions of the opposition and advanced the satisfying of interests.
A recommendation is that decision-makers pay particular attention to how the expansion of power, proactiveness, counteracting, and how these concepts may be involved in and may impact program planning. Awareness of these concepts could guide decision-makers’ approaches to and actions during program planning, thereby possibly affecting decisions ultimately made.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research should include replicating this study with other professional licensing boards to determine how they established MCPE. Of importance would be to determine any similarities or differences in the decision-making processes and the bases for the decision whether to establish MCPE. Of additional interest would be to compare the process of a group that remained intact during the decision-making process to a group similar to the one in this case to detect similarities and differences. For example, the roles of decision-makers, their assumptions, and the role of attrition should be considered.

Future researchers should also consider a large-scale study within a profession to investigate the effectiveness of MCPE relative to problems experienced in practice or rule violations reviewed by professional licensing boards. This study should focus more on MCPE as an effective educational solution than a regulatory tool.

Another large-scale study within or across professions might investigate the ethical aspect of decision-making in the context of establishing MCPE. A primary
interest would be whose interests are being represented—those impacted by establishing MCPE or the decision-makers establishing MCPE.

**Final Comments**

This study revealed that one powerful person representing a compelling cause and taking the necessary effective action at an opportune time could establish a mandatory education program when no rational reason for mandatory education was evident. The mission of Midwest engineers’ licensing board was to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public through regulation of the 7,000 practitioners licensed by the board. It was unlikely that the decision to establish MCPE was to protect the public, but more likely a decision to satisfy personal interests.

Additionally, the decision-making experience also affected the professional practice of participants. Proponents of MCPE, primarily Tim, obtained what he sought—a mandatory education program that facilitated economic interests. Two opponents, however, were affected a bit differently. As a result of the experience, after 28 years as executive director, James decided to retire. Tom, the last man standing, decided to stand no more. As a result of the experience, he decided not to seek another term on the board. In Tom’s words, the decision-making experience was “the most disappointing experience I had in the 10 years on the board.” The price of these professionals leaving public service was incalculable. Only time and additional research would reveal the ultimate price of decision-making processes such as experienced with the Midwest engineers’ licensing board.
In addition to providing opportunities for learning and improved practice and serving as a gatekeeper to professions (Cervero, 2000; Houle, 1980), CPE also had a place in society as a means to facilitate change in professions (e.g., expanding economic boundaries) and accomplishing personal, professional, or organizational goals that were typically not addressed through any other means.
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD X Original Review
RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS ___ Continuing Review
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY ___ Amendment

ACTION OF THE REVIEW BOARD

Research Protocol:

2004B0429 THE SOCIAL PROCESS OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING: A CASE STUDY OF A PROFESSIONAL LICENSING BOARD ESTABLISHING MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION, David S. Stein, Steve L. Whatley, Workforce Development & Education/PAES

presented for review by the Behavioral/Social Sciences Institutional Review Board to ensure the proper protection of rights and welfare of the individuals involved with consideration of the methods used to obtain informed consent and the justification of risks in terms of potential benefits to be gained.

The protocol was APPROVED by expedited review.

NOTE: The committee approved the waiver of documentation of informed consent in accordance with 45 CFR 46, section 117 (c)(2), as participation in the interviews presents no more than minimal risk to the subjects and does not involve procedures that would normally require consent outside of this context.

NOTE: Please revise the start date to occur after the IRB approval date.

Approval for proposed research includes all materials submitted by the investigator unless otherwise noted.

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to retain a copy of each signed consent form for at least three (3) years beyond the termination of the subject's participation in the proposed activity. Should the principal investigator leave the University, signed consent forms are to be transferred to the Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board for the required retention period. This application has been approved for a period of not more than one year. You are reminded that you must promptly report any problems to the Review Board, and that no procedural changes may be made without prior review and approval. You are also reminded that the identity of the research participants must be kept confidential.

Date: January 28, 2005 Signed: 

Chairperson

hs-025h Biomedical approval letter (08.04)
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF CONSENT
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH STUDY OF:

*The Social Process of Adult Education Program Planning: A Case Study of a Professional Licensing Board Establishing Mandatory Continuing Professional Education*

As an invited participant in the entitled study above, I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore and describe the decision to establish mandatory continuing professional education (MCPE) by the professional licensing board in which I am/was a member. In particular, I acknowledge that the researcher will seek to understand the decision-making phenomenon, and in particular, answer:

1. How did professional licensing board members think, feel, and act in deciding to establish MCPE?

2. What processes were used by professional licensing board members in deciding to establish MCPE?

I understand the benefit of participation in the study involves interest in the decision-making phenomenon in particular, learning how and why the decision to establish MCPE was made which might be transferable to other decisions made by the board. This knowledge may contribute to how board members approach future board decisions.

I understand that the study will consist of interviews and document review. Interviews will consist of one initial one-hour interview, and one one-hour follow-up interview, both to be audio recorded to preserve the authenticity. Audio recordings will be transcribed in their entirety and the transcription used to abstract themes related to the decision-making phenomenon.

I understand that documents prepared by or reviewed by the board in relation to the decision to establish MCPE will be reviewed and used to abstract themes related to the decision-making phenomenon.
I understand that the intended use of the data includes: dissertation research, publication, and presentation at professional conferences. I understand that steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality. The profession and professional licensing board will not be identified in the study. Also, the names of participants and identifying features will be changed. Further, when possible, data will be reported in aggregate so as not to direct attention to individual participants. I understand as a participant that I will have access to research data that I produce and a final dissertation report.

I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question and the right to terminate participation in the study at any time, without penalty. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and obtain answers to my questions. I understand that I can contact the researcher at [redacted] with any additional questions. Further, if I have any questions about my rights as a research participant, I can call the Ohio State University Office of Research Risks Protection at [redacted] I understand that I will not be provided any incentives, inducements, or reimbursements for participation in the study.

By freely and voluntarily signing below, I signify that I have read and understand this letter of consent. Further, my signature signifies my willingness to participate in the study. I also understand that I will be provided a copy of this letter of consent.

Consent:

Participant’s Printed Name: ____________________________

Participant’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Researcher’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Decline: I understand the purpose of this study and decline to participate.

Participant’s Printed Name: ____________________________

Participant’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________
## INTERVIEW GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tell me how the idea of establishing MCPE was introduced to the professional licensing board.</td>
<td>Introduction. Perspective</td>
<td>Interview and board meeting minutes</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>What was your initial reaction to the idea of establishing MCPE?</td>
<td>Perspective, thoughts, feelings</td>
<td>Interview and board meeting minutes</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>What were your reactions during the discussions to establish MCPE?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Tell me about specific tensions among board members in reference to the decision-making experience.</td>
<td>Perspective, thoughts, feelings</td>
<td>Interview and board meeting minutes</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>How did board members attempt to influence you to commit to their position?</td>
<td>Influence tactics used.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Tell me the words, tone, and nonverbal behavior used during discussion about establishing MCPE.</td>
<td>Communicative action. Influence</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>How did you react to the final decision to establish MCPE?</td>
<td>Reaction to being target of influence</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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APPENDIX D

BOARD’S CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD MCPE – 1999-2003
# BOARD’S CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD MCPE – 1999-2003

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<td>George</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tim</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Effective February 23.

** Joined the board in August 2003.

*** James had no vote on the board.
REFERENCES


Ohio Revised Code. (1990). §47. A more complete, specific citation here would violate the confidential nature of the study.


*Week v. Wisconsin State Board of Chiropractic Examiners.* (1947). 252 Wis. 32, 30 N.W. 2d 187


