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Program Planner Dignity and Negotiation in Collaborative Projects
Dignité des responsables de planification de programmes et pratiques de négociation dans les projets collaboratifs

Cheryl K. Baldwin and Doug Magnuson

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Breaking the Armour and Stirring the Soul

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See table of contents

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Article abstract

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Abstract

In this qualitative interpretivist study, we investigated the types of interactions and negotiations that supported or constrained adult education program planners' capacity to act, conceptualized as dignity. Data were drawn from interviews with 14 program planners working in collaborative partnerships in U.S. underperforming urban schools. Planner dignity is supported by practice-focused relationships, jointly developing new practices, and program success. Dignity is constrained by organizational hierarchy, unmanageable daily expectations, and ineffective feedback mechanisms causing distance between planners and fracturing the planning table. Dignity affirmation or constraint affect planner uncertainty regarding access to students and resources, control over one's time, and accountability. Social conditions also affect the quality of interactions. Individualistic and competitive orientations constrain dignity and impede negotiation practices. Co-operative goal orientations support bargaining and consultative problem-solving negotiations; however, these were less common. Findings advance understanding of interactions that underlie and evolve effective negotiation.

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative interprétativiste explore les interactions et négociations appuyant ou limitant la capacité d'action des responsables de planification de programmes d'éducation adulte, conceptualisée comme dignité. Les données proviennent d'entrevues avec 14 responsables de planification d'écoles urbaines sous performantes aux États-Unis travaillant en partenariat collaboratif. La dignité est appuyée par les relations centrées sur la pratique, le co-développement de nouvelles pratiques et la réussite des programmes. Elle est limitée par la hiérarchie organisationnelle, les attentes quotidiennes irréalisables et les mécanismes de rétroaction inefficaces qui distancent les responsables et fracturent les tables de planification. L'affirmation ou la limitation de la dignité influence l'incertitude quant à l'accès aux personnes étudiantes et ressources, au contrôle de son temps et à la responsabilisation. Les conditions sociales influencent la qualité des interactions.

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Les orientations individualistes et compétitives limitent la dignité et entravent les négociations. Les orientations coopératives axées sur les objectifs, notamment celles consultatives de résolution de problèmes, quoique moins fréquentes, soutiennent la négociation. Les résultats contribuent à la compréhension des interactions sous-tendant et faisant évoluer les négociations efficaces.

Program planning is a key area of adult education practice and research (Käpplinger & Sork, 2014; Sork, 2010), and Cervero and Wilson (2006) explained program planning as a "social activity in which people negotiate with and among common interests at planning tables structured by socially organized relations of power" (p. 85). Individual power reflects a planner's capacity to act within structural power relations and competing interests in a social space comprising complex social dynamics, including varying goals, values, and priorities (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1996, 2006; Wilson & Cervero, 2011). Given this conceptualization, negotiation is a central and important practice, and planner competency is associated with the ability to manage power and interests while maintaining a commitment to an inclusive participatory process. Negotiation involves efforts to affect the program as well as efforts to acquire power. It ranges from friendly problem solving to managing highly conflictual interactions requiring planners to analyze context dynamics and act in creative and adaptive ways (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Sork, 2019; Sork & Käpplinger, 2019).

However, Sork and Käpplinger (2019) noted that despite the body of research substantiating Cervero and Wilson's (2006) theory, there is still a need to better understand the nature of planner dilemmas in varying types of program contexts. As Sork and Käpplinger (2019) described, resolving interests, motives, and power relations is challenging and difficult as planners face both socio-political and ethical dilemmas. For example, questions remain regarding how planners find the capacity to act in the face of constraint, misunderstanding, and conflict. What happens when the inclusive participatory process does not exist or is imperfect? There has been less study of these kinds of dilemmas where actions are uncertain (Sork & Käpplinger, 2019). In fact, while other fields have studied the emotional strain and effort needed to manage interpersonal power dynamics (Savage & Sommer, 2016), there is less inquiry about these issues in the adult education programming literature. Research is needed that further explores power and negotiation in collaborative program contexts and describes types of planning implementation dilemmas that occur and how these setting and interpersonal dynamics affect planners' capacity and willingness to act. In addition, as cross-sector and inter-agency collaborative program models grow internationally, there is a need for further study of planning practice.

Purpose

We take up Sork and Käpplinger's (2019) and Wilson and Cervero's (2011) call for more research. This study examined the types of interactions and negotiations that supported—or constrained—planners' capacity to act. This focus was conceptualized using workplace dignity, which reflects an individual's inherent sense of value and was selected because of its applicability to a context with variable power relations and negotiation as an interactive and multifaceted practice (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). We then explored the central dilemmas regarding negotiation and the capacity to act—that is, the conditional factors affecting the quality of interactions.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cervero and Wilson's Adult Education Program Planning Theory

Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996, 2006) explained that planners act to resolve ethical and social program dilemmas, and they used the concept of negotiation and the metaphor of a planning table to demarcate the space within which interactions occur. As Cervero and Wilson explained, planners act on interests—their own and others—and their actions are enabled and constrained by social norms and power relationships. These forces work recursively through negotiation.

This theory has been substantiated by several studies. In a study of programs in the U.S. Cooperative Extension System, Mills et al. (1995) found that both personal and organizational interests of planners affected the kinds of programs planned and implemented. Rees et al. (1997) showed that planners' discourses or communicative actions about a program were a means to exercise and reposition power. These studies substantiated the centrality of interest and power in programming practice. Other research showed that power in the form of personal, political, and organizational factors was used to justify programs and explained how power and interest narratives limited and excluded some non-dominant groups (Archie-Booker et al., 1999; Sessions & Cervero, 1999). Programming also reinforced dominant cultural norms, which was met with resistance from other program planners and participants (Maruatona & Cervero, 2004). Ryu and Cervero (2011) broadened the social and organizational factors to include cultural values, showing that Korean planners' capacity to act, interests, and negotiations were rooted in their Confucian values.

Other studies addressed negotiation. Cervero and Wilson (1998) showed that two types of negotiations occurred. Substantive negotiations address program features and meta-negotiations address the use of power to advance interests. These occur concurrently as programs are developed and implemented. This conceptualization was later refined by Umble et al. (2001) where frame factors were added as another type of meta-negotiation. Frame factors are material (e.g., funding, equipment) and conceptual (e.g., norms, standards), which constrain the space for action. This study showed that power is required to affect substantive and frame factor meta-negotiations. That is, programmers wishing to change a program must have power to influence meta-negotiations or secure that power through negotiations. These studies also showed that these types of negotiations happen concurrently during planning and implementation.

In one of the few studies exploring the relationship between programmers' approaches, the politics of the organizational context, and interpersonal dynamics, Yang and Cervero (2001) found that in high-conflict contexts, planners employed either a tactic of passive withdrawing or competitive aggressiveness. Other tactics in less conflictual interactions included reasoning, personal appeals, networking, and applying pressure. Their study was one of the few that detailed how planners' capacity to act was affected by the quality of interactions. Negotiations as emotion-laden and tactics affected by level of trust were further elaborated by Cervero and Wilson (2006). They noted that negotiations can be characterized as bargaining, consulting, and managing disputes. Bargaining reflects interactions where it is harder to achieve mutuality because of power differences and both common and competing interests. In bargaining, planners are constrained by multiple and competing interests, adding a level of tension to interactions. Situations of consulting involve interactions that are mutual, friendly, noncoercive, and focused on problem solving.

In this case, planners are supported in their agency and adaptive actions are made in pursuit of interests. The most conflictual type of negotiation is a dispute, which is characterized by highly discordant interactions involving distrust and power battles. Thus, substantive negotiations, meta-negotiations about material and conceptual frame factors, and meta-negotiations about power vary in degree of trust and conflict.

Since negotiations are emotion-laden interactions ranging from concordant to conflictual and context factors also affect action, it is important to better understand what supports and constrains planners' capacity to act. Workplace dignity theory provides a means to explore planners' sense of power in planning and it is the second component of the theoretical framework.

Workplace Dignity

Workplace dignity refers to the inherent worth, intrinsic value, and esteem of all individuals (Bolton, 2007; Hodson, 2001; Lucas, 2015, 2017). Dignity is an essential human need reflecting one's innate potential and sense of agency (Bolton, 2007; Lucas, 2015). It has a situated character responding to the subjective and evaluative experiences of self in everyday interactions; it encompasses a sense of social vulnerability affected by one's treatment by others (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007). Thus, work-related social interactions that validate one's intrinsic worth and support effective action affirm one's dignity.

The hierarchical and instrumental nature of relationships at work also means that dignity is characteristically at risk (Lucas, 2017). Workplace interactions that affirm dignity support a worker's flourishing and agency. In contrast, when agency and flourishing are ignored or threatened, dignity is violated. Dignity affirmations and threats or violations can derive from interpersonal interactions, problematic procedures and policies, and power dynamics (Lucas, 2017).

In the context of program planning, dignity provides a lens for analyzing workplace power relations, including the context and social dynamics that enhance agency. In contrast, dignity threats constrain a program planner's sense of agency. Thus, the qualities of the context and negotiations may be dignity supporting or dignity constraining. Because program planners are often also responsible for the implementation of those programs, their agency about both planning and implementation are important to their experience of dignity. Thus, dignity reflects a sense of agency, which underlies a planner's sense of willingness and capacity to act and provides a means to characterize negotiations that support or constrain planners' sense of power.

Next, we describe social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1973), which explains how the perception of one's fate influences experiences of dignity and collaboration. It is the third component of the theoretical framework.

Social Interdependence Theory

Deutsch (1973) suggested that social situations can be divided into (a) promotive interdependence, (b) contrient interdependence, and (c) non-interdependence, corresponding to co-operative, competitive, and individualistic goal orientations. When members of a group perceive that their fate is co-operatively linked to others in such a way that they can achieve their goal only if everyone achieves their goal, "inducibility" (Deutsch, 1973, p. 25) is more likely; that is, members will facilitate each other's success

(Shimizu et al., 2020; Stevahn & McGuire, 2017). If they perceive that others are working on the same goal, they tend to like other group members and they are more willing to specialize, leading to improvements in efficiency (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Moreover, co-operation encourages perspective taking, the willingness to see another's point of view (Butera & Buchs, 2019).

In competitive conditions where goals are contrient and where members perceive that they can achieve their goal only if others do not, groups compete for resources, they duplicate each other's actions by trying to outdo the other, and they actively undermine the efforts of others (Spangle & Isenhart, 2003). Finally, under individualistic conditions, members perceive that their own goals are independent of others, and their choices do not have any direct relationship to others, except as temporary alliances (Butera & Buchs, 2019).

Social interdependence theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2017) asserts that any social group responds to the perception that group members have of their fate, and this helps us understand power-laden program contexts in terms of these varying goal pursuits. As such, it explains conditions affecting the development of trust, the quality of negotiations and, ultimately, the experience of dignity. Especially in competitive situations, dignity is under threat, while co-operation tends to support dignity affirmations.

Method

A qualitative interpretivist design (Tesch, 1990) was selected because of the focus on the adult education planners' contextualized experience and interactional dynamics of power. The following research questions guided the study: How do adult education program planners experience collaborative program implementation, particularly the gaps between initial goals and plans and actual context conditions? How do interpersonal and organizational interactions, conceptualized from a dignity framework, afford and constrain program planner perceptions of agency and negotiation?

The sample comprised 14 adult education program planning leaders working in five different collaborative projects in underperforming U.S. urban schools. All projects had a collaborative component where planners from multiple agencies worked interdependently on school-based projects with school staff to advance a specific collective program reform. Each project was also supported by an embedded developmental evaluator. As innovations, it was expected that each program model would evolve based on continuous development in response to dynamic and ongoing conditions rather than testing a program model.

Each leader participating in this study functioned as an educator of fellow adults. Collectively, they sought to improve school climate, instruction, and student performance. Focus areas included fostering new reading instruction, reading and math tutoring interventions, integrating arts into the curriculum, principal and teacher development and mentoring, coaching adults on social and emotional practices, and connecting afterschool programs with day-school activities. Some leaders oversaw a project across multiple schools, while others were site-based.

At the time of the interviews, the collaborative programs had been in operation from 1 to 4 years. Interviews were held at the school or the planner's office. Data were collected by graduate student research assistants using a semi-structured interview protocol. Twelve of the 14 leaders agreed to be audio-recorded, and these were transcribed by the first author, who, at the time of the interviews, served as a developmental evaluator for one

of the sites. Interviewer notes were used for the other two interviews. The data for this study were collected as part of a study on process use in developmental evaluation and were drawn from a set of questions designed to elicit adult education planners' experience with emerging implementation and dignity affirmations and threats. To assess implementation, the planners were asked to describe the rollout and unfolding of their program, attending to gaps between initial goals and plans, conditions of implementation, and evolving implementation over time. Applying the workplace dignity framework, planners were also asked a set of questions to elicit times, situations, or interactions in their work when they felt valued or respected, devalued or disrespected, and where pressures seemed unrealistic.

Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method beginning with several readings of the transcripts and then followed by first-cycle descriptive open coding (Saldaña, 2016). Data were then structurally analyzed by grouping codes focused on the two respective research question topics of emerging implementation and dignity affirmation, dignity threat, and pressures. Finally, an axial coding strategy was employed to identify dominant themes and interpretive findings (Saldaña, 2016).

Findings

The presentation of the findings begins with a description of situations and interactions that either affirmed or constrained planners' sense of dignity. Then we explore the implications of these findings for understanding negotiation and power dynamics as issues or dilemmas that planners face. Based on these findings, we further examine conditions that foster and constrain trust, dignity interactions, and negotiations.

Interactions That Affirm Planners' Dignity

Dignity affirmations were associated with individual and team interactions that built shared and sustained program practices. On the individual level, an overriding theme for the planners was that dignity affirmation was experienced when others supported them and recognized their contributions and expertise. As Jake summarized in reflection on his work at a school, "We started seeing gains through a concerted effort, that experience is one where I felt very valued and respected." As discussed next, dignity affirmations were rooted in trust, relationships, and shared practices.

Practice-Focused Relationships

Dignity was the product of practice-focused relationships that were built over time through work as a team, though this state was not achieved for all. Dignity was an outgrowth of developing and sustaining trust and collaborative ways of work. For example, Ian, a non-profit partner external to a school, explained how increased understanding by school leaders of his agency's work changed their inter-agency working relationship.

> I think it (respect) came through in moments of partnership, so if a teacher [from his agency] was struggling, we would get information immediately [from school leaders] for our next coaching session with them. And coaches being a part of weekly [school] leadership meetings and having an equal voice. I think the value there is always clear when there is collaboration and trust, that's the best affirmation you can get.

In another example, Alicia explained that she felt respected when a project leader understood what those in her program were doing. As she said, "knowing that they trust the why behind [our agency program], so really leveraging that . . . and being an advocate . . . She trusts [our agency program], is what I've felt."

Developing New and Shared Practices

Dignity affirmation was also associated with effective practices that fostered other emergent practice changes. As Nathan, an administrative leader working with a high school, explained,

> It isn't just one principal who's trying to push this forward but really you have a strong number of adults now who really want the school to be successful. And just seeing the difference in the pride of performance that they have from the first year until now. You can see the difference, even in their classroom set-ups; it's a place of welcoming and they're being thoughtful about what's being presented in the room and how it's displayed.

It was important that the program be seen as a contributing and important part of the school.

Some participants were specific about the goals with students shared by everyone across roles and hierarchies, including Alicia. She said that everyone was committed to using data to identify students in need of help and from that data they identified two goals: decreasing the number of referrals of students and increasing the socio-emotional support for students. Further, they also identified two goals for the working relationship between organizations—increasing co-operation and communication. Including relationship goals between organizations nurtured respect for and by practitioners.

Martha too described how co-operatively using data to identify students for services built positive relationships across partners:

> The absolute biggest thing that we achieved was the intentional selection of kids for interventions [from different agencies]. We worked really closely between [three agencies] to identify kids based on scores [achievement tests], mostly those who needed interventions that could be specifically met by various organizations. . . . So, each intervention is looked at—how can we best serve the kids? And in doing so, we were able to chart up that every student we could possibly manage was getting the correct intervention.

In this case and others, shared practices also included relationship goals, though as Alicia noted, "it isn't easy to measure the building of relationships."

Accomplishing Program Successes

A number of participants mentioned seeing program successes as affirming dignity. Esty's comments illustrate the value of accomplishing work under difficult circumstances:

> We were able to show that we can break through the barrier of persistent, stagnant low student achievement and that that's quite extraordinary given all of the sort of systemic challenges like politics and competing for approaches and pipeline of teacher talent and all of those things; so

> I think the challenge is to be able to say we can do a lot more and it's worth it and to be able to make that case clearly to people who can have influence and help actually pull it off.

The success relativized day-to-day problems and helped create a sense of a shared outcome to which everyone could see how they might have contributed.

Interactions That Constrained Planners' Dignity

Loss of dignity was associated with obstacles that inhibited the development of practice-focused agency and relationships. As described next, they included some structural factors and were, not surprisingly, the inverse of those things that supported dignity.

Organizational Hierarchy

The organizational structure of program management was a primary source of dignity threat and constraint. Organizational dynamics and interpersonal relationships sometimes undermined a planner's knowledge and expertise. For example, Esty described being the content expert and direct supervisor of school instructional coaches but felt that her voice was not heard on the hiring committee for coaches. She described a lack of knowledge about the content of the coaching work and what skills and talents were needed. "I'm not saying there shouldn't be a team to interview but I just get outvoted when I am the one to work with that person and know what kind of person it takes."

Holly worked on a partnership program between two schools in one building where hierarchical rules of one of the schools created roadblocks to success for both. As she described, "[School name] doesn't have a lot of meeting time because of the union," thus inhibiting partner work together at the end of the school day. She explained the impact of time and district control, noting that the principal only has "nine planning days . . . and the district decides that." Furthermore, "time is the real issue because how do you teach somebody to completely revise how they do their lesson plans [in one day a month]?" The district overruled this principal's uniform policy and controls many staffing decisions: "It's amazing how few of her staff she gets to choose." In terms of scheduling and space use, Holly noted the problem of "who is going to have lunch at what time? They use the gym all of the time, well we haven't figured out when we are going to offer gym and they are going to offer gym." These broader organizational and bureaucratic policies constrained dignity and were fuelled by site-based mistrust and competition for resources. Across participants, these types of issues were described as discouraging.

Other planners said that those in the upper-level positions lacked understanding of site conditions, showed their misunderstanding of the program, and outrightly excluded planners. Joy, a planner in a central administrative role, indicated that her project was not valued by other administrators. When asked about not feeling valued, she responded: "Every day. Really, I mean it." Regarding her project, she further said, "I feel like it is seen as a cute little add-on that will sometimes bring celebrities here." As she stated, "No matter how many times I ask to meet or talk about it or try to invite them [i.e., other district leaders doing reforms] to things or ask to be invited to their things, there is just no overlap." Despite her attempts to change the interpersonal dynamics, the lateral and hierarchical power dynamics meant that she was routinely excluded.

Time Pressure and Unmanageable Daily Expectations

Generally, planners noted that time as a resource was limited and that programs had overly ambitious goals. Thus, they faced unmanageable daily expectations. Alicia said, "I think time is a big thing and how to get everyone at the table whose voices need to be heard when we all have like a million moving pieces." Constraints included practical programming needs like gaining access to key stakeholders to carry out the work as well as the urgency associated with high-stakes implementation. Holly described being in the second year of a project where she felt influential stakeholders would give up on the program if they did not have notable improvements in a short amount of time. Martha reflected on how time pressure affected her interactions with the adults she worked with: "I think we put too much pressure on our front-line staff with urgency, and it is urgent, but if we put too much pressure on a well-meaning person with only so much capacity, they're going to crack."

Time pressures intersected with the constraint of being held to rigid and inflexible implementation of the program, which created an impasse in advancing an innovation—for example, being held to outcome measures that were out of line with a program's current situation. As Brooke described, "When you are seeing growth even if it's slow, it's kind of defeating . . . How do you quantify how kids are actually moving when you see movement, but it's not reflected on a computer-based test? I think that is frustrating."

Poor Evaluation Practices

Planners described being misunderstood when reporting strategies and when evaluation, generally carried out by outsiders, was implemented without a sense of program conditions. In one case, Emma, a school leader, described how she used a grant-funded position in a manner different from other school sites in the project. In the evaluation report, the practitioner in this position expressed a negative view of how the position was structured, and the evaluator did not include Emma's or others' perspectives. Emma explained,

> I felt kind of offended they put [her claim of feeling like a babysitter] in the report because that's her perspective. I had to take a minute to get over that. I was pretty offended by that, saying it nicely. Because basically, I think she was just bashing the leadership and at the same time highlighting her skill level and [claiming that] her skill level wasn't being used to its full capacity and by fault of possibly me.

Expectations of Collaboration Without Guidance

The expectation to collaborate without the means or willingness of all parties caused gaps and stalled program implementation. These constraints were not presented as outright disputes but reflected challenging interpersonal dynamics and lack of a coordinated strategy or purpose. Kendra described having "a lot of meetings that felt pointless" and that "there were a lot of people and a lot of voices, and it didn't feel beneficial, so more than anything I just felt like my time wasn't being utilized." While the context conditions were extremely challenging, Nathan also noted relationships and "adult behaviours" as the source of problems.

Joy was surprised at the competitive reaction to program implementation, including at the district office and by teachers. Her view was that the district said they supported the

program but then did not follow up with any concrete actions. Teachers initially resisted participation and the district culture was individualistic and competitive, making it difficult to create a co-operative, goal-oriented system in the face of wider pressures. Moreover, Joy's experience was reflected by other programmers in their efforts to work with school leaders and other agency partners at school sites.

Lack of Feedback Mechanisms

Another serious constraint on planners' agency was the lack of any feedback mechanisms. In these cases, it was unclear how to affect implementation and a lack of a clear articulation of the need for change. As Allison described it, there was a "fear to change course or direction," noting that if the practices were not making traction or gains then they needed to "shift gears." In cases of dignity constraint, there were few structural feedback loops for support to make these adaptive changes and not enough discussion of alternatives.

Planner Uncertainty and Dilemmas

Given these findings, we sought to further interpret trust-building interactions, distancing between planners—including the nebulous space of uncertainty characterized by constraints on the capacity to act—and contentious conditions of conflict as low trust. In terms of the tensions and dilemmas, planners faced the following conceptual frame factor meta-negotiation issues. Given the uncertainties, they needed to resolve:

1. Who controls my time, and why?
2. Who controls access to students and other adults essential for program implementation?
3. To what or whom am I accountable?

Social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1973) provides a useful interpretive framework for these questions, and we describe these tensions under competitive, individualistic, and co-operative conditions.

Interdependence, Dignity, Power, and Negotiation

Competitive Fate and Interactions

Dignity and negotiations were difficult to sustain under conditions of competitive interdependence. As described, disputes about territory and authority constrained dignity and limited the opportunities for planners to display their competence and solve problems.

Competition and Issues of Time. Competitive conditions included (a) the pace of the work controlled by others or by other organizations, (b) no time for experimenting with other methods when they saw that program implementation was not working as planned, and (c) no time for recognizing or exploring practitioner or student growth other than those prescribed by predetermined outcomes. Time was wasted in non-productive meetings and by inaction due to constraining forces, and planners had to discern who controlled time for the work that needed to get done.

For example, Holly described the most dramatic circumstance, with two schools that were supposed to be collaborating actually competing for the same classroom and gym spaces. The use of teachers' time for training in the partner school was scripted; as a result, teachers were not interested in listening to partners who were perceived as outsiders asking for more time and commitment.

Similarly, Joy reported that she was surprised by teachers' behaviour, and she wanted more time for the development of relationships, but this was unlikely while competing for resources, and it explains her exclusion despite her efforts. Nathan also reported that there were multiple projects going on simultaneously, so it was too busy to work on coordinating with others.

Competition and Issues of Access. To advance program goals and implementation, planners needed systems to support program reform activities. However, systems were not designed for this type of work. One example of this was related to who had access to students for individualized tutoring provided by school personnel and community partners. There were rigid boundaries between these planners and there was competitiveness about whose methods were most valuable. In these situations, planners felt constrained in carrying out their assigned duties.

Competition and Issues of Accountability. In competitive conditions, expectations imposed by others are often unrealistic (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Planners faced decisions being made by managers or others without consideration of the consequences. Unclear lines of accountability meant that planner practices were dismissed without consideration of the evidence. One participant even described leadership as a euphemism for problems with people. Relationship building was nearly impossible under competitive conditions because unclear accountability and lack of feedback mechanisms fostered mistrust that constrained dignity and inhibited negotiation about power conflicts.

Individualistic Fate and Interactions

When one's own fate is independent of others, dignity within one's own sphere of work is achievable, though it is often fragile and can decay if others are disinterested (Goclowska et al., 2017). However, this individualistic orientation is counter to the intent of collaborative programs.

Individualism and Issues of Time. The attraction of individualistic conditions is that one's own time is largely self-determined. This can also be a problem, especially in collaborative programs, as the collective program may be ignored and accomplishments may be unacknowledged. For example, Kendra expressed that she was not sure why her organization was even there, reflecting a sense of meaninglessness that occurs when working together feels like a waste of time and one's individual goals are disconnected from others.

Individualism and Issues of Access. In conditions of individualistic orientations, planners had authority in their program space but little influence outside of it. As Julie described, this condition leads to planners putting their own needs first. However, if a planner was in a role that was dependent on others supporting their work and gaining access to other leaders, teachers or students, then they were not in position to act or bargain as they did not have the power to move others out of their individualistic orientation. It is a lonely fate as interests are not aligned. In this condition, dignity and all types of negotiation were constrained because there was little to no opportunity to contribute one's expertise or advance problem solving.

Individualism and Issues of Accountability. Despite their best efforts, many planners worked largely on their own goals, or at least what they perceived their goals should be. In some cases, this individualistic orientation toward one's own accountability rather than collective accountability deterred discussions of collective goals and conveyed a sense of inaction. In this space of uncertainty, there were calls for accountability, but how that would

happen was not made clear and was in fact counter to how collaboration actually works. As Jill described, "It seems like everyone is present for their own interests and collaboration depends on convincing them to give that up."

Co-operative Fate and Interactions

Earlier we noted that some planners mentioned that decisions were made based on more deliberative processes, understanding of others' programs and data, and these situations created a superordinate goal to which each partner and their staff were committed. In this condition, a planner's own goals were compatible with others and advanced a broader program goal. Co-operation was dignity affirming, which supported more productive interactions.

Co-operation and Issues of Time. Under co-operative conditions, practitioners described opportunities to try things and there was dedicated time to share ideas with others. Scheduling was somewhat flexible and controlled by planners and their partners through dignity-affirming interactions. A co-operative condition does not mean that there will not be conflicts, and there were challenges caused, for example, by the pace of the school calendar, but within their collective sphere of influence were opportunities to experiment and slow things down.

Co-operation and Issues of Access. In co-operative conditions, as Martha reported, there was a focus on students and implementation resources were aligned with this superordinate goal. This sounds obvious, but it requires skill to resolve issues of access. Martha reported that there had been success identifying the students who needed the extra help, and school leaders and planners rallied around this goal. There was an incentive to accommodate, share, and align interests for the greater collaborative goal. Alicia said that the most important position of power was that of the person who granted authority to those present at decision-making meetings, which signalled that issues of access required developing trusting social relationships. When relationships were elevated to the level of co-operative goal orientations, controls on access were lessened.

Co-operation and Issues of Accountability. Here too the determination was whether the authority was based on power or on something else like shared practices relevant to co-operative goals. For example, when shared data practices clarified issues of time and access and were collaboratively understood, then everyone could respond to it. Such group accountability made other things possible, like the conceptual frame factor negotiations about strategies, norms, and standards and how to cope with change. In these cases, as Emma reported, there were opportunities to negotiate who had what authority.

Discussion

Planners' sense of dignity and capacity to act were supported by building practice-focused relationships, developing and sharing new practices, having one's expertise recognized, and being able to see how one's work affects positive program results, even in small ways. These findings provide some support for consulting and bargaining types of negotiations about substantive program features as conceptualized by Cervero and Wilson (2006); however, it is also important to see negotiation as an evolving process. Dignity-affirming interactions occurred despite obstacles, and the concept of bargaining does not fully convey the hard, precarious, messy, and time-pressured contextual demands that planners worked through.

Importantly, dignity-affirming interactions built social relationships and developed trust, showing negotiation as a co-operative process that enables other types of negotiations (Cervero & Wilson, 1998). Negotiation involves more than advancing one's own interest and power. Trust and understanding of individual and collective interests must be created by planners through dignity-affirming interactions, which underlie more successful negotiations and the capacity to act. That is, dignity-affirming interactions helped planners engage in substantive negotiations about program components and their engagement in meta-negotiations of material and conceptual frame factors (Cervero & Wilson, 1998; Umble et al., 2001). For example, to accomplish collective work, planners needed dignity-affirming interactions to manage material factors of time and resource limitations. They also had to create and clarify frame factors, such as shared norms, standards, and practices. Trust was central to frame factor meta-negotiations, and these convey using one's power to advance planners' individual interests *and* collective interests, but in many cases, they had to discover what that shared interest was and then create practices to support it.

Interactions that constrained dignity offer some support for the concept of negotiation as managing disputes (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Yang & Cervero, 2001) as they were characterized by conflicts, impacts of power assertions, and distrust. Many of the dignity threats were associated with organizational hierarchy and top-down interpersonal approaches to planning and programming. Hierarchical power often excluded planners and played a role in upholding rigid yet impractical implementation standards, maintaining unattainable daily expectations, and sustaining poor evaluation practices. In these situations, planners described that those with more organizational power were disconnected from the real work of the program. The expectation to collaborate without means to do so and lack of feedback created a distance between planners.

Yang and Cervero (2001) found that planners responded to conflict by withdrawing or becoming more aggressive. In this study, there were no reported attempts of aggression. Instead, participants withdrew. Withdrawing suggests a pulling-away, which in this study meant that planners found themselves in a disconnected and powerless position with little to negotiate. Dignity threats were also associated with a nebulous space of uncertainty, enduring flawed practices without clear means of how to resolve the stasis. Even when planners wanted to exercise power, there was either constraint on changing the program or unclear means of who should affect change. There was little perceived capacity to act and often a sense of mistrust. However, planners could not completely withdraw. Rather, they existed in poor conditions and lived with the distances between planners.

Planner negotiations and power are constrained by dignity threats weakening trust and social relationships. They inhibit power and take planners out of all types of negotiations. It also increases planner uncertainty and was associated with dilemmas of time, access, and accountability, which vary based on whether interactions and conditions were competitive, individualistic, or co-operative (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Dignity threats are common in competitive and individualistic conditions inhibiting problem solving. In contrast, dignity affirmation and planners' resolutions of these dilemmas are easier to negotiate under co-operative conditions when planners understand one another, have means to set and achieve mutual goals, and are able to contribute their expertise.

The findings also have an implication for the metaphor of the planning table. As described, problematic dynamics created distance between planners, which limits power and all forms of negotiation. In terms of Cervero and Wilson's (2006) theory, in these cases,

the planning table did not exist or was severely fractured and tenuous. One way that the planning table is undermined in practice is in treating the planning and implementation roles separately, lodged in different people and different structures. Everyone involved in a program has some planning role, and when the roles are separated—especially when they are hard-wired into job descriptions, disruptions are created in communication, relationships, access to participants, and accountability.

This study did not include data about the broader organizational systems that encouraged or discouraged co-operative conditions and the subsequent support for the affirmation of dignity. Deutsch's (1973) explanation suggests that fate is important; that is, that the consequences—good or bad—of decisions have to be shared. It is not possible to do this simply by being nice. How to do this when working across the divide between agencies and formal and informal education is a planning and management challenge. Not surprisingly, structures that undermined dignity were more common than those that supported dignity. More study of planners building co-operative programming structures is needed.

This study is limited in that it is a cross-sectional point-in-time analysis and does not provide a longitudinal assessment of how collaborative implementation unfolds over time. However, in terms of future research, it suggests the need to study interactions that foster mutuality, trust, and co-operation, which in this study helped build and clarify conceptual frame factor meta-negotiations that evolved the programs through substantive negations. There is a need to better understand power sharing and fostering one's own as well as others' interests as a planner competency central to planning as an inclusive and participatory process (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). It would be useful to study these processes longitudinally so that one could study how the setting and practitioner's roles change over time.

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