

Lament for a Network: A Comparative Case Study Analysis of the Impacts of the Partners for Climate Protection Network on Climate Change Policy in Two Canadian Cities

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1. Introduction

To state that climate change is a complex, challenging issue is to risk trading in platitudes. Yet the implications and nature of this complexity are as yet quite poorly understood. It that has spawned much activity, much analysis, and much frustration. It has also produced extensive innovation, as individuals, organizations, corporations, cities, and provinces join nation-states in taking on the challenge of mitigating, and adapting to, the impacts of climate change. As these new actors enter the stage, and engage with efforts to define what kind of problem climate change is, what kind of solutions are most appropriate for addressing it, and how and by whom those solutions are implemented, there is a corresponding need to deepen our understanding of the nature of this unfolding process.

This paper engages that task by looking at the impact of a single city-network, the *Partners for Climate Protection* or PCP, on municipal climate change policy in Canada. Cities are relatively understudied in Canada, and there is a need to assess how, and to what extent, this city-network influences the activities of its constituent members. This paper aims to assess whether the findings generated in the extant literature on city-networks and climate change, which suggest that benefits accrue primarily to leading-edge cities (those with strong local leadership, financial and bureaucratic resources, institutionalized engagement with the issue, and political will), hold true in the Canadian context.¹ As such, this papers aims to assess whether the PCP is best understood as a “networks of pioneers for pioneers,”² or if the impact of the PCP on member cities takes on a different hue.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section introduces and briefly explores the broadening of both practical and conceptual focus beyond the state when it comes to the issue of climate change. Cities are central, as perpetrators of climate change, as victims of climate change, and as participants in the governance of climate change. Attention is directed to the fact that cities have formed, and joined, networks that operate both within, and across, national borders. Next, the PCP is introduced and briefly reviewed in terms of the history of the network in Canada, the institutional context in which it is embedded, and the functions that it performs. The following section explores different ways of thinking about, and studying, such networks. Central to my argument is the notion that these networks are not solely oriented towards impacting on national climate policy. While recognizing that one of the intended functions of city-networks such as PCP is to influence state and international climate change policy,³ I focus instead on city-networks as engaged in internal governance activities. Drawing on recent work on the role of cities and transnational city-networks on climate change governance, I review the pathways through which such networks exert influence on the municipal engagement with climate change: networking; regulating; guiding; and enabling. These pathways, analytically distinct but empirically co-

¹ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003: 184-185. In one of the foundational, and certainly the most detailed, study of city-networks and climate change, Betsill & Bulkeley concluded that, in the U.S., U.K., and Australia, the Cities for Climate Protection city-network was most influential in those cities that possessed the characteristics as outlined above.

² Bulkeley & Kern 2009: 329

³ Gore 2010; Bulkeley & Kern 2009; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink 1999

existing and typically overlapping, offer a means of conceptualizing the different ways that city-networks can exert influence on the interests and actions of their constituent members. The fourth section applies this framework to two case studies in order to explore how, and how much, the PCP has impacted on local climate policy in two members cities: Winnipeg and Toronto. Drawing on primary document analysis and interviews, I develop a picture of the impact of the PCP in these two cities and the particular pathways of influence that are most utilized. The paper concludes with some thoughts regarding avenues along which this research can be extended, and proposes some possible implications for climate change policy in Canada that emerge from the preceding analysis.

2. *Shifting Attention Away from the State*

The activities and role of sub-national (states, provinces, regional governments, municipalities) actors are an increasing area of interest for practitioners, media, and analysts of climate change governance.⁴ This shift in focus is a product of the inability of national representatives to forge binding and effective international treaties through the multilateral negotiating process operating under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol frameworks, the innovative efforts to fill this governance void undertaken by a host of sub-national (and non-state) actors, and the functional interdependencies created by the “wicked”⁵ nature of the issue.⁶ Among practitioners and policy-makers, cities have emerged as a key element in national, regional, and international climate change initiatives. Intergovernmental organizations including the OECD,⁷ the World Bank,⁸ and various UN agencies⁹ as well as non-governmental organizations including the Carbon Disclosure Project,¹⁰ and the Rockefeller Foundation¹¹ have developed programs aimed specifically at leveraging and increasing municipal climate change policy opportunities. The academic literature is working to catch up with this dynamic and unfolding phenomenon, and as such is beginning to grapple with the role of cities and city-networks in the global, national, and local governance of climate change.¹²

In Canada, attention paid to sub-national actors has been focused primarily on the activities of Provincial climate change plans and policies, which range from dedicated tax instruments (BC, Quebec), renewable energy incentives (ON, BC), clean energy production and export (MB, Quebec), and the creation of regional emissions reduction initiatives (WCI, MGGA, RGGI), autonomously from federal climate change policy and strategy.¹³ Much less attention has been paid to the activities of Canadian cities as they have stepped into the governance void created by federal inactivity on the climate change file.¹⁴ This lack of attention is a product of many different factors including the jurisdictional weakness

⁴ Simpson 2010; Betsill & Bulkeley 2007

⁵ On climate change as a “wicked” problem see Bernstein *et al* 2007; Lazarus 2009. On “wicked” problems more generally, see Rittel & Webber 1973.

⁶ Hoffman forthcoming; Bernstein *et al* 2009; Andanova *et al* 2009

⁷ Corfee-Morlot *et al* 2009

⁸ The World Bank, Fifth Urban Research Symposium 2009: Cities and Climate Change: Responding to an Urgent Agenda. Papers available at: <http://go.worldbank.org/P74DFSRCDD0>. Accessed May 24, 2010.

⁹ UN-Habitat Cities in Climate Change Initiative. Available at:

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=271&cid=6003>; UNECE Climate Neutral Cities. Available at:

<http://www.unece.org/hlm/sessions/docs2009/CNCprogramme.htm>; UNEP Campaign on Cities and Climate Change.

Available at: http://www.unep.org/urban_environment/issues/climate_change.asp

¹⁰ Carbon Disclosure Project Cities Project. Available at: <https://www.cdproject.net/en-US/Programmes/Pages/overview.aspx>

¹¹ The Rockefeller Foundation Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network. Available at:

<http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/what-we-do/current-work/developing-climate-change-resilience/asian-cities-climate-change-resilience>

¹² Betsill & Bulkeley 2003; Bernstein *et al* 2009; Hoffman forthcoming; Andanova *et al* 2009

¹³ Rabe 2007; Marshall 2006, 2007; Boyd 2003

¹⁴ Simpson *et al* 2008

of Canadian cities with the Canadian federal system, a tradition of inattention to the role and action of cities when it comes to all but local issues,¹⁵ as well as the common perception of cities as policy “takers,” not “makers”.¹⁶ Despite the strong engagement of Canadian cities with the issue of climate change, and some early academic attention,¹⁷ there has been a paucity of systematic study as to why Canadian cities have engaged with climate change policy, how they have been and are engaged, and what the real and potential impacts such engagement has in terms of local reductions in emissions, local improvements in resiliency and adaptive capacity, and contribution to global climate governance broadly conceived.¹⁸

One driving force behind the increased relevance of all matters urban in nature is rooted in prevailing trends in population and demography, trends that have witnessed an enormous shift from rural to urban concentrations over the past fifty years.¹⁹ Globally, cities now account for over 50% of total world population, a number that is projected by the UN to increase to 60% by 2030.²⁰ In Canada, whereas only 19% of the population resided in urban centers at the end of the 19th Century, today over 80% of the national population lives in urban agglomerations, with the vast majority of this number located in the four major Canadian urban corridors.²¹ This has prompted one Canadian scholar to assert that, “cities [are] *the* strategic places in the global age.”²² A variety of forces have driven a general process of diffusion of authority and legitimacy away from the state, including the neoliberal erosion of the welfare state, the increasing functional interdependence between the central state and other actors (sub- and non-state) produced by complex issues such as climate change, and declining confidence in the democratic institutions of the state in terms of both responsiveness and ability to respond effectively to public policy challenges.²³

Specific to the issue of climate change, cities are both a direct and an indirect source of emissions. Cities account for the generation of between thirty to fifty percent of all worldwide GHG emissions²⁴ and are responsible for over 60% of global energy consumption.²⁵ It is projected that by 2030 87% of all energy consumption in the US will take place in cities, 75% in the EU, and 80% in Australasia.²⁶ Furthermore, and directly related to the aforementioned trends in population and consumption activities, cities are increasingly recognized as being susceptible to the impacts of climate change. This can take the form of increased risk to vulnerable communities, damages and liability resulting from extreme weather events, and threats to infrastructure, water supply, and public health.²⁷ There is therefore both a practical and a moral foundation for increased attention on cities as they are related to climate change.²⁸

¹⁵ Gore 2010

¹⁶ Sancton 2006

¹⁷ Harvey 1993; DeAngelo & Harvey 1998; Lambright *et al* 1996; Wilbanks & Kates 1999

¹⁸ For recent efforts to address this gap, see Gore & Robinson 2005; Gore & Robinson 2009; Gore 2010

¹⁹ Satterthwaite 2007

²⁰ IEA 2008: 179.

²¹ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Government of Canada. Available at:

http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.lt.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=34#M_2. Accessed 10 May 2010

²² Bradford 2004: 2

²³ Hooghe & Marks 2003

²⁴ Gore & Robinson 2005; See also Lindseth 2004: 325. Dodman & Satterthwaite 2009: 12

²⁵ IEA 2008: 179

²⁶ IEA 2008: 179

²⁷ IPCC 2007: 48, 50, 53

²⁸ For an explicit treatment of the moral argument regarding action at the local level see Donald A. Brown. 2008. *Local and Regional Governments' Ethical Responsibility to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: the Case of Pennsylvania*. Climate Ethics website. Available at: <http://climateethics.org/?p=34>. Accessed May 15, 2010

The case can quite reasonably be made, therefore, that cities are important as both contributors to, and victims of, climate change.²⁹ The question, though, still begs to be asked as to whether and how cities matter when it comes to the *governance* of climate change. In response to whether cities matter as governance actors, there are two justifications commonly offered to support this notion. The first is that cities possess, in general terms, a set of jurisdictional capacities and responsibilities that relate to altering energy use and consumption, reducing GHG emissions, and increasing local adaptive capacity.³⁰ The broad set of generally agreed upon levers that cities (to varying degrees depending on context) have at their disposal include: land-use planning, waste disposal, transportation supply and demand, zoning/built landscape regulation, energy production and supply, and local infrastructure.³¹ In addition, it has also been suggested that cities are important due to their close connection with civil society, which may enable them to instigate the broad behavioural changes deemed to be necessary to reduce emissions to the necessary trajectory.³²

There is another compelling reason to explore the role of cities in the governance of climate change: they are doing it! Despite expectations that cities, being subject to the dictates of electoral politics and facing a cost-benefit calculus heavily skewed along both temporal and spatial scales towards inaction, should be expected to free ride, a large number of them are taking action.³³ Kousky and Schneider have made this case in the U.S.,³⁴ as have Gore and Robinson in Canada.³⁵ Such findings have been refined in follow-on studies, increasing awareness of the specific conditions favourable to local climate policy action.³⁶ As local policy actors have shifted from asking “should we do anything” about climate change to asking “what kind of action should we take,”³⁷ there is a corresponding need for scholars to stop asking “whether” cities matter to thinking about “how” they matter. When it comes to addressing the question as to *how* cities matter as governance actors, it is essential to further appreciate that cities are not acting solely, or most often, in isolation but rather are interacting in and through networks formed both within and across national borders.

3. *The Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) city-network*

The roots of the PCP stretch back to 1993 when the Urban CO2 Project operated by ICLEI (the International Council for Local Environmental Initiative) was transformed into the Cities for Climate Protection program, leading to the formation of specific policy programs, services, and dedicated staffing. The PCP, as a Canadian iteration of the international CCP network, was officially formed in 1998 through the merging of CCP-Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) 20% Club.³⁸ The PCP is a partnership between the FCM and ICLEI, in which FCM has the lead role on day-to-day operations, policy development, government relations and funding, while ICLEI provides international linkages, technical support, and the broad framework of targets and methodology for the

²⁹ Cavin *et al* 2009

³⁰ Harvey 1993; Deangelo & Harvey 1998; Lambright *et al* 1996; Wilbanks & Kates 1999; Kousky & Schneider 2003; Betsill & Bulkeley 2003: 2

³¹ Bulkeley *et al* 2009; Gore 2010; Betsill & Bulkeley 2003

³² Moser & Dilling 2007

³³ Kousky & Schneider 2003: 2.

³⁴ Ibid: 3.

³⁵ Gore & Robinson 2005: 107.

³⁶ Zahran *et al* 2008 have done work on this in the U.S. but nothing similar has as of yet been carried out in Canada to my knowledge.

³⁷ Selin & VanDeveer 2007: 17.

³⁸ FCM 2004: 12.

program.³⁹ Funding for the PCP is derived from the Green Municipal Fund (GMF), a federally funded pool of money administered by FCM that is intended to provide capacity-building loans and grants to municipal governments in order to foster sustainable municipal development in Canada.⁴⁰ The PCP, as of April 2010, has membership of 203 Canadian municipalities, accounting for over 78% of Canada's population and exerting control, whether direct or indirect, over more than 50% of Canadian GHG emissions.⁴¹ The broader international CCP network has, as of April 2010, grown to a membership of over 1000 municipalities, spanning six continents, and features operational networks in the United States, Australia, Europe, Japan, Latin America, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia in addition to the Canadian network.⁴²

The PCP program, following the CCP template, is built upon the provision of three core functions: target setting, technical support, and network building. The first function of the PCP is to establish a framework of emissions reduction targets, which member communities commit to achieving upon joining the network. The current target for PCP members is a reduction of corporate emissions (resulting from civic operations) by 20% below 2000 levels and a reduction of community emissions by 6% below 2000 levels within 10 years of joining the network.⁴³ This separation between corporate and community emissions is intended to provide a wedge to encourage, and enable, municipal government emissions reduction efforts. However, the PCP has significantly decreased the profile of target commitments for its members (there are no mentions of target requirements on the PCP website nor in any PCP promotional material) and has no enforcement or compliance mechanisms in place to police target attainment. Nor does the PCP have the capacity to monitor member performance should it wish to attempt to enforce commitments. These material factors are intermingled with an ethos within the PCP that it has an identify as an early action enabler, and interviews with ICLEI and PCP staff revealed that there is a conscious motivation on the part of the PCP to keep those initial barriers as low as possible, in order to foster as broad an engagement as possible while adopting an identity of being an “entry level kind of program.”⁴⁴

The second activity undertaken by the PCP is in the provision of technical assistance and support activities to member municipalities. These efforts are embodied in the five-milestone framework for emissions reductions utilized by the PCP, which all member municipalities adopt in their efforts to develop a policy response.⁴⁵ These milestones provide a generic framework for member cities, taking them through emissions inventory development, through goal setting and plan development, and ending with plan implementation and review.⁴⁶ The actual five milestones are: create a GHG inventory; set emission reduction targets; develop a local action

³⁹ FCM “About Partners for Climate Protection.” Available at: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/>. Accessed 16 May 2010

⁴⁰ FCM “The Green Municipal Fund.” Available at: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/GMF/>. Accessed 16 May 2010. The GMF was created as a means of allowing the Federal government to by-pass the traditional taboo regarding direct federal-municipal funding. It was endowed with an initial contribution of \$550 Million.

⁴¹ EnviroEconomics 2009: 5; FCM “PCP Members and Milestone Status” Available at: http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Milestone_Status.asp. Accessed 16 May 2010. See also Robinson & Gore 2005

⁴² International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, “Cities for Climate Change Program.” Available at: <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=10829>. Accessed 10 May 2010

⁴³ FCM “PCP Sample Council Resolution.” Available at: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Toolkit.asp>. Accessed 16 May 2010.

⁴⁴ Interview conducted March 31, 2010

⁴⁵ This approach is quite pervasive, and can be seen to have influenced those cities that are not PCP members. As an example, see the City of Vaughan Community Sustainability Plan April 2009. Available at: <http://www.vaughantomorrow.ca/EMP/index.html>. Accessed May 20, 2010.

⁴⁶ FCM 2005: 11.

plan; implement the plan; and monitor progress and report results. In support of this framework, the PCP provides a number of technical tools. Among these are an emissions inventory software package, emissions calculation coefficients and a set of protocols for completing a GHG inventory.⁴⁷ As well, the PCP supplies a set of support documents, including among others a *Quick Action Guide* for municipal policy actors that outlines the top twenty cost-effective activities that local governments can enact, *The Business Case for GHG Reductions*, which connects fiscal savings to climate change policies, and a *Model Climate Change Action Plan*, which provides a template for local policy actors to guide the process of developing a local action plan.⁴⁸ All of these documents and tools are aimed at assisting local policy actors in the development of policies and local emissions reduction plans, and place a strong emphasis on overcoming initial information deficiencies and linking climate change policy to local concerns, most evidently to the potential for local cost-savings. Furthermore, the PCP conducts workshops for local policy actors, and provides day-to-day technical support to member municipalities. Examples of such activities include issue or sector specific webinars, the *Sustainable Communities Orientation Workshop* for new members, and technical support for members regarding PCP protocols and software, data collection, emission inventory preparation, and target setting.⁴⁹

The final core activity of the PCP is creating network linkages between member municipalities. The PCP aims to be a network that, in the words of one interviewee, allows “municipalities [to help] themselves. By providing a conduit for a guy in Winnipeg to talk to a guy in Calgary, we’re providing a significant benefit – that’s important stuff. We’re kind of like the center of the wheel.”⁵⁰ When asked to quantify the nature of these networking activities, the respondent commented that,

...first and foremost the PCP acts as a network, to share experiences and contacts between municipalities. So if municipality A is experiencing a challenge, then one of the easiest things we can do is get them in touch with municipality B and municipality C, who have experienced something similar, and just let the peers communicate together. If we don’t have the solution, then somebody else in the field probably does.⁵¹

This networking function, which one would expect to be central to a *city-network*, receives little mention on either the PCP website or in annual reports.

4. *Cities and City-Networks*

The emergence of city-networks such as the PCP points to the need for increased attention not only to cities, but to the activities and impacts of city-networks, but how best to go about this task? Networks have garnered increasing levels of attention over the past several decades both as practical tools for policy-making and implementation and from the scholarly community striving to understand evolving political practices as well as the implications they hold for traditional concerns over the

⁴⁷ FCM, *GHG Inventory Quantification Support Spreadsheet; Electricity Coefficients Update for Inventory Quantification Support Spreadsheet; CCP/PCP Protocols for Completing a GHG Inventory*; and, *Estimated Inventory Guide*. Available at: <http://sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Toolkit.asp>. Accessed May 15, 2010.

⁴⁸ The documents cited, as well as all other support documents available to PCP members, are all available for download at: <http://sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Toolkit.asp>. Accessed May 20, 2010.

⁴⁹ FCM 2005: 13-14.

⁵⁰ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

⁵¹ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

governance legitimacy and effectiveness.⁵² Networks have proliferated in response to the increasing complexity of governance resulting from a host of secular trends that have rendered traditional boundaries between and within states blurred, and have increased levels of interdependence between state and non-state actors. Network theorizing in political science emerged as a means of illuminating the new ways in which policy problems were being put on the agenda, and on how policy responses were being developed and implemented. This body of theory has contributed enormously to contemporary thinking about the inter-relationships between state and non-state actors, moving the conceptual language beyond pluralism and corporatism as the sole archetypes of state-society relations and creating space for thinking about the different ways in which societal actors are integrated into governance processes. Policy networks as such as conceptualized as, “structures that regulate the interactions of state and civil society actors in the governance process.”⁵³ From this vantage point, policy networks are conceived of as being composed of various interest groups (whether civil society-based or private sector) organized around a particular government department, with attention focused on the manner in which they organize state-society relations, and the extent to which non-state actors are able to exert influence on state policy through agenda setting, policy design, and policy implementation.⁵⁴ Such networks are typically issue-oriented, and involve varying levels of cooperation and conflict depending upon the relative power relationship between the government department and the other actors.⁵⁵ This state-centrism has moved along with policy network analyses as they have been applied in varying contexts, from transnational advocacy networks,⁵⁶ to epistemic communities,⁵⁷ to the transnational networks of government bureaucrats.⁵⁸ And this approach can be seen applied to the activities of city-networks in terms of the extent to which they exert an influence on national climate change policy.⁵⁹

But is this the best way to theorize and think about city-networks? While the policy network approach brings much into the light, it simultaneously renders a great deal to the shadows.⁶⁰ One of the problems with applying this approach is that it mischaracterizes the nature of city-networks themselves by assigning them a singular function. City-networks, I argue, are *both* advocacy networks and governance networks.⁶¹ Governance as the term is used here is conceived of broadly as the act of “steering” through the creation and implementation of rules and rule-systems oriented towards maintaining order and producing common goods.⁶² The concept of “steering” is one that is central to the concept of governance. Networks must “steer” since they typically lack the formal power associated with hierarchical authority structures to compel, or threaten to compel, member compliance.⁶³ They engage in what Hajer refers to as “making policy without a polity.”⁶⁴ The primary distinction from the policy network literature is the notion that networks may also be sites of governance despite the absence of the formal political authority that is accorded to the nation-state. They may create rules, broadly

⁵² There is also a more abstract literature on networks as specific and discrete modes of coordination, as compared with hierarchies and markets. In this sense, markets are distinct due to the manner in which they rely on social relationships, extended interactions based on reciprocity, and purposive reason-based coordination. See for example Thompson 2003; Powell 1990.

⁵³ Montpetit 2003: 4; see also Howlett 2002

⁵⁴ Coleman & Skogstad 1990; Atkinson & Coleman 1992; Howlett 2002

⁵⁵ Montpetit 2003: 44

⁵⁶ Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink 1999

⁵⁷ Haas 1992

⁵⁸ Slaughter 2004

⁵⁹ Gore 2010

⁶⁰ Bulkeley & Kern 2009: 313-314

⁶¹ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003: 30; Bulkeley & Kern 2009: 310

⁶² Andanova *et al* 2009: 55

⁶³ Andanova *et al* 2009: 55; Rosenau 1997

⁶⁴ Hajer 2003

understood, that shape the actions of their constituent members. To paraphrase IR scholar John Ruggie, one does not have to imagine such non-state actors and institutions as *replacing* states in order to accept their capacity to enter the playing field and exert an impact on the game.⁶⁵ In the context of climate change, it is clear that there is a need to identify and examine all of the various contexts in which actors are engaging in efforts to understand and define the nature of the problem and the accompanying set of appropriate responses, and to develop, implement, and disseminate policy solutions. Attention must be paid to the “constellation of authoritative rules, institutions, and practices by means of which any collectivity manages its affairs.”⁶⁶ In other words, “a concern for governance should direct our attention to the mechanisms by which steering occurs as well as the particular social relations that enable governing to take place.”⁶⁷

There has been in recent years a shift in this direction in the study of city-networks, defined broadly as coalitions of municipal actors operating either within (national city-networks) or across national borders (transnational municipal networks or TMN’s), in an effort to better understand the activities and impacts of these new institutions. Attention has been directed towards the increasing number of city-networks operating in the area of climate change. The Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) international network and various national/regional iterations (PCP, CCP-Australia, CCP-NZ, CCP-USA, CCP-Japan, and others), the Clinton Climate Initiative C40, Energie-Cities, Climate Alliance, and The EU Covenant of Mayors, among others, have garnered research attention.⁶⁸ Analyses of these networks are grounded in the notion that they are part of an evolving system of national and global governance operating in the issue area of climate change. Starting from a broad understanding of governance as a process that “takes place through systems of rule in which an institution or actor influences or controls the behaviour of others,”⁶⁹ city-networks are examined in terms of the means through which they attempt to, and do, exert influence over their members, and in terms of the impact of such actions.

City-networks act as both non-state actors engaged in externally-oriented governance activities (including advocacy and lobbying aimed at national and international actors, as well as interaction with various networks, city and otherwise, creating and implementing rules related to climate change) as well as institutions engaged in internal governance activities (such as setting rules, building capacity, and guiding interests and activities of member cities).⁷⁰ This paper brackets out the externally oriented activities to focus specifically on the ways in which city-networks such as the PCP attempt to exert influence on the identities, interests, and actions of their constituent members. Building from the extant literature on modes of governance associated with non-nation state actors, four governance functions through which networks influence or “steering” their constituent members have been identified. These governance functions are: networking; enabling; guiding; and, regulating.⁷¹

Governance through *networking* is premised on the creation of links between multiple and disparate constituent members, links that allow for the free flow of information, knowledge, expertise, and ideas. “Steering” through networking takes place through the process of connecting various actors and forging the pathways along which norms and ideas regarding how to understand, and respond to,

⁶⁵ Ruggie 1993, 2004

⁶⁶ Ruggie 2004: 504

⁶⁷ Andanova *et al* 2009: 56

⁶⁸ Bulkeley *et al* 2009; Schroeder & Bulkeley 2008; Hoffman forthcoming; Davies 2005; Bulkeley & Kern 2004, 2009; Lindseth 2004; Toly 2008; Betsill & Bulkeley 2003, 2004

⁶⁹ Betsill & Bulkeley_2003: 14

⁷⁰ Bulkeley & Kern 2009: 319

⁷¹ These categories are inspired and informed by recent works from Selin & VanDeveer 2007, 2009: 313-316; Andanova *et al* 2009; Bulkeley *et al* 2009; Alber & Kern 2008; Hoffman forthcoming.

policy challenges like climate change.⁷² The key aspect of networking that takes it from being a descriptive term that captures what networks like the PCP do, and makes it a governance activity in which networks like PCP engage, is that it involves the purposive creation of communities that are engaged in similar activities or that share similar concerns.⁷³ In this sense, networking captures the efforts undertaken by city-networks such as the PCP to create the relational infrastructure along which increased flows of information and ideas can travel between members. There is also an agential aspect to networking that goes beyond the creation of relational infrastructure. Networks may be, to greater or lesser degrees, active in terms of pushing, pulling, or facilitating the flow of information along passageways.⁷⁴ The extent to which such information flows exert a “steering” effect on the actions of constituent network members is a question that must be addressed empirically.

Governance through *guiding* involves the generation and dissemination of ideas amongst constituent network members, ideas as to how to understand and define the policy issue at hand, what actions such definitions authorize, and what actions are appropriate to responding to the problem.⁷⁵ Networks engage in efforts to shift understandings of what kind of problem climate change is, and who should participate in the policy response.⁷⁶ This dynamic is clearly evident in the manner in which Senate legislation on climate change has recently evolved in the United States. As norms regarding the appropriate role of the market in allocating resources have shifted following the collapse of the housing and broader credit market, and as public anger over misdeeds and questionable practices on Wall Street have been brought to light, the definition of climate change as a problem most effectively addressed through market mechanisms has been strongly challenged. Whether this shift is permanent and “cap & trade is dead” or there is merely a need to shift the rhetoric until populist anger subsides, is an interesting and ongoing question.⁷⁷ In the case at hand, the PCP has clearly engaged in a challenge to the dominant norm regarding which political actors are expected to participate in the policy response to climate change. The PCP, along with other city-networks, has attempted to re-frame the policy issue of climate change from a global issue requiring multi-lateral negotiations between nation-states to one that is directly relevant to municipal governments.⁷⁸ Constructing norms is an explicit means of “steering” constituent members, to the extent that they are effectively socialized. Again, this is a question that must be rendered subject to empirical testing.

Governance through *regulating* consists of the most traditionally state-associated type of governance activity undertaken by networks. As Andanova *et al* note, “traditionally, the capacity to set rules and generate compliance is equated with a hierarchical, sovereign form of power backed by (the threat of) sanction.”⁷⁹ However, the lack of coercive power does not necessarily equate to an inability to establish rules, and to have constituent members abide by them. Rules are authoritative when they are perceived to be legitimate by those to whom they apply.⁸⁰ Rules may be followed even when such adherence is voluntary. City-networks such as the PCP engage in rule-making when they establish target emission reductions for constituent members. Despite the lack of formal coercive capacity, networks

⁷² Selin & VanDeveer 2009: 315

⁷³ Hoffman forthcoming.

⁷⁴ Andanova *et al* 2009: 64; Selin & VanDeveer 2009: 315

⁷⁵ Andanova *et al* 2009: 65

⁷⁶ Hoffman 2005; Selin & VanDeveer 2009: 315

⁷⁷ Stavins 2010

⁷⁸ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003

⁷⁹ Andanova *et al* 2009: 65

⁸⁰ Rosenau 2003

may also have recourse to other modes of compliance monitoring and enforcement including publication of performance relative to network benchmarks, and certification for rule-adhering members.⁸¹

Lastly, governance through *enabling* consists of efforts to build up or enhance member capacity to develop and implement climate policy.⁸² Enabling may take the form of access to financial resources, technical tools and expertise, or policy planning and implementation templates or guidelines.⁸³ “Steering” occurs through the deployment of knowledge and material resources in order to facilitate or encourage constituent member action, and to shape the nature and substance of that action. In the case of the PCP, governance through enabling occurs primarily through the provision to all members of a five-milestone climate policy framework, and is supported through the provision of tools to help constituent members calculate their emissions inventories, identify viable policy opportunities, legitimate the inclusion of climate change on the local political agenda, and provide access to financial resources to support the planning process.

There is a recognized need for more systematic study of city-networks operating across national borders, especially as regards their interactions with one another and with other governance institutions/actors, resultant points of contestation and converging interests, and in terms of possible comprehensive impacts/implications for climate change governance.⁸⁴ Yet there is still only a limited amount of research on the particular mechanisms through which city-networks exert influence on city-members (and other governance actors), on the factors that constrain and enable city-networks to exert such influence, and on how these dynamics play out in a specific Canadian context.⁸⁵ There is value then in assessing whether, and how, findings generated to date regarding the activities and impacts of city-networks apply in Canada. As such, this paper is oriented towards this national perspective while maintaining an eye towards how such arguments and analysis can fit into the broader picture.

5. *Governance Impacts of the PCP – Winnipeg and Toronto*

The empirical element of this paper consists of a case study analysis of two PCP member cities: Toronto and Winnipeg. These two cities were selected for a number of reasons. First, and as mentioned at the outset of this paper, the expectation prior to undertaking research was that the PCP would conform to the operation of other national CCP networks and act primarily as a “network of pioneers for pioneers.” As such, Toronto was an obvious choice as a result of its long history of policy engagement stretching back to the early 1990’s, its international standing as a leader in local climate change policy, and the strongly institutionalized commitment to climate policy evident within the city bureaucracy. Additionally, Toronto possesses all of the key factors identified by Betsill & Bulkeley as contributing to the local capacity to engage in effective climate change policy and to benefit from city-network membership: local policy entrepreneurs, institutionalized engagement with climate policy, access to financial and logistical resources, and political will.⁸⁶ As such, Toronto was expected to provide the best

⁸¹ For an example of a certification strategy, see The Climate Registry’s recent program to create multiple tiers of membership based on the depth of emissions cuts as verified by third party auditors. <http://www.theclimateregistry.org/how-to-join/membership-options/> Accessed May 20, 2010.)

⁸² Hoffman forthcoming

⁸³ Andanova *et al* 2009: 65

⁸⁴ Schreurs 2008; Bulkeley *et al* 2009; Alber & Kern 2008; Bulkeley & Kern 2009; Betsill & Bulkeley 2007; Bernstein *et al* 2009

⁸⁵ Davies 2005: 21. Davies makes a similar case in justifying her study of the impact of city-networks on climate change governance in Ireland. Her comment that “empirical evaluation of these transnational climate change networks is geographically limited,” is as valid for Canada as it is in the context that she makes it (Ireland).

⁸⁶ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003: 184-185

opportunity in Canada to test for the effects of a strong network-city linkage (in terms of benefits derived by the city, and contributions made from the city back to the network). Winnipeg, on the other hand, offers a counterpoint to Toronto in terms of its historical engagement with climate change, level of current engagement, degree of political interest and will, and extent to which the issue was institutionalized in the local bureaucracy. Winnipeg has been a member of the PCP since 1998 and as such was relatively early on the scene in terms of political engagement with climate change.⁸⁷ However, this early commitment did not translate into quick, nor aggressive, policy action. Winnipeg, as a large mid-sized Canadian city has had much weaker levels of political will, struggled to institutionalize engagement with climate change but eventually did so in the early years of the 2000's, and has much more limited access to financial and logistical resources as compared with Toronto. As such, Winnipeg was expected to provide a window onto the ability of the PCP to exert influence in a context whereby conditions were not entirely favorable.

Second, and in terms of the comparability of the two cases, Winnipeg and Toronto share several structural conditions that allow for comparative analysis. They both went through a process of amalgamation in the 1990's in which multiple disparate municipalities were consolidated into a "unicity" or "mega-city." Both negotiated agreements with their respective provinces for greater jurisdictional responsibility and autonomy in the early years of the 2000's.^{88 89 90} Both face significant pressures resulting from urban sprawl at their outer edges.⁹¹ Lastly, this paper follows an emerging convention in the extant literature on cities, city-networks, and climate change which explores the particulars of governance impacts and activities through the lens of a limited number of specific case studies.⁹²

The following sections apply the governance activities framework introduced above in order to identify the perceived and observable "steering" impact of the PCP in Toronto and Winnipeg. Analysis of the impacts of the PCP is based on primary research carried out in Toronto and Winnipeg in the spring of 2008 and draws on interviews with policy elites in both cities as well as extensive primary document research. In addition, interviews were conducted in 2008 and 2010 with PCP/FCM/ICLEI staff and primary documents from each were reviewed and analyzed.

⁸⁷ City of Winnipeg 2006: 1

⁸⁸ City of Winnipeg. . "History of City Government." Available at: <http://www.winnipeg.ca/Services/CityLife/HistoryOfWinnipeg/CityGovernment.stm>. In 2002, the province replaced the City of Winnipeg Act of 1972 with a new charter. Accessed May 18, 2010

⁸⁹ Province of Ontario. *Bill 53: An Act to revise the City of Toronto Acts, 1997 (Nos. 1 and 2), to amend certain public Acts in relation to municipal powers and to repeal certain private Acts relating to the City of Toronto*. Achieved Royal Assent June 12, 2006. Available at: www.toronto.ca/committees/pdf/torontoact.pdf. The City of Toronto Act was most recently amended in 2006 by Provincial Bill 53, increasing the powers of the municipal government. Accessed May 18, 2010:

⁹⁰ City of Toronto. "Background on the City of Toronto Act." Available at: http://www.toronto.ca/mayor_miller/summaryact.htm. These increases are embodied, generally, in a greater level of autonomy from the province, allowing for permissive power to pass by-laws relating to financial management, public assets of the city, the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the city, and city services, among others. Accessed May 14, 2010

⁹¹ Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006." Available at: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/popdwell/Subprov4.cfm>. Accessed May 14, 2010. If you take into account the commuter municipalities surrounding the City of Toronto (examples of which include Mississauga, Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, and, slightly further out, Oakville and Brampton) the sprawl pressures are significant. These municipalities have expanded at a pace far in excess of Toronto, with five-year growth rates ranging from 23% (Richmond Hill) up to 33% (Brampton).

⁹² Betsill & Bulkeley 2003; Bulkeley & Kern 2006; Davies 2005; Lindseth 2004; Gore & Robinson 2009; Schroeder & Bulkeley 2008; Bulkeley *et al* 2009

A. Regulating (creating, implementing, and enforcing rules)

The PCP, in a manner similar to other non-state governance initiatives, engages in very little formal regulatory governance activities.⁹³ This does not, however, imply that the PCP does not attempt to “steer” through regulation. The PCP has developed a number of “rules” that apply to its membership. The setting of emissions targets by the PCP, currently established as a commitment to 20% reduction in emissions within 10 years of joining the network, represents the assumption of a governance role by the PCP that is typically associated with the national, or even provincial, level of governance. The PCP, therefore, has created “a set of rules and norms intended to guide members’ behaviour” that exist “in parallel to the existing intergovernmental regime on climate change [the Kyoto protocol].”⁹⁴ The PCP has, however, significantly downgraded the emphasis on mandatory emissions reduction targets and accomplishments over the past decade. There is no mention at all of mandatory targets for PCP members.⁹⁵ Interviews with PCP and ICLEI staff members confirmed that the emphasis on targets was dropped intentionally, as a means of lowering barriers to engagement, increasing membership, and acting as an entry level system.⁹⁶

In Winnipeg, the target adopted has been subject to considerable shifting since the passing of a membership resolution in 1998. Whereas the initial commitment involved a reduction in both community and corporate emissions, the Action Plan that finally emerged in 2006 was silent on the issue of community emissions, and presented what can fairly be termed a watered down commitment for the reduction of corporate emissions. The current target, a 20% reduction in emissions by 2018 (using a 1998 baseline) is certainly a first step for the city, and an important one at that. By conforming to the PCP target, it also supports the important rule setting role played by the network in fostering municipal policy action. As such, it provides evidence of the PCP’s successful undertaking of an “initiative [to] link actors across boundaries and layers of governance to establish a set of rules not necessarily envisaged or specified by the UNFCCC or Kyoto Protocol but serving the general goals of climate change mitigation and management.”⁹⁷ However, the manner in which it is being approached, via “hot air” reductions achieved through the shifting of emissions off of the corporate ledger, does not signify a true translation of the PCP targets into real actions, and raises concerns regarding the willingness of the city to overcome the implementation gap and achieve real, meaningful, emissions reductions on a community-wide basis.

In Toronto, the opposite case appears to be true. Toronto has moved significantly past the PCP targets, and has now adopted the aggressive targets promoted by the EU in international negotiations and mandated in the IPCC AR4 report, of a 6% reduction by 2012, 20% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. These targets render the rule-setting role of the PCP a moot point, and underscore the independence of Toronto from the network. The engagement of Toronto with multiple governance networks in the issue area of climate change does raise interesting questions, however, as regards the permeability of network rule setting activities. As Toronto, influenced by international leaders, sets aggressive targets, it will be interesting to see if these targets and norms end up diffusing back through to the PCP and outward to other PCP member cities.

⁹³ Alber & Kern 2008: 26

⁹⁴ Andanova *et al* 2009.

⁹⁵ U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Center. Available at: <http://www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/revise/>. Accessed May 23, 2010. Compare this with the U.S. Mayor’s Agreement on Climate Change, for examples, which features an explicit commitment to attaining the U.S. national Kyoto commitment of a 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012 on its website and in promotional material

⁹⁶ Interview with ICLEI staff member conducted March 31, 2010. Interview with PCP staff member conducted February 28, 2008.

⁹⁷ Andanova *et al* 2009.

B. Networking (creating linkages along which information, knowledge, expertise, and norms can flow)

The PCP has a strong self-image as being primarily a linkage network, one that “provides a conduit for a guy in Winnipeg to talk to a guy in Calgary, which provides a significant benefit. We’re kind of like the center of the wheel.”⁹⁸ Interviews with PCP staff suggest that this networking capacity is perceived as a core strength of the network:

...first and foremost the PCP acts as a network, to share experiences and contacts between municipalities. So if municipality A is experiencing a challenge, then one of the easiest things we can do is get them in touch with municipality B and C who have experienced something similar, and just let the peers communicate together. If we don’t have the solution, then somebody else in your field probably does.⁹⁹

In Winnipeg there is evidence of agreement regarding the perceived impact of the PCP in terms of creating network linkages. Interview responses indicated a significant perceived value attributed to the ability of the PCP to provide connections to local policy actors in other Canadian cities, especially in terms of administrative questions regarding the development of an action plan, the administrative aspects of developing an inventory, and the challenges of implementation. This impact of the PCP was characterized as “important and influential” in the development of the Winnipeg climate change action plan, as network connections with policy actors in other Canadian cities provided support and advice in the development of the local action plan.¹⁰⁰ In terms of the observable impact of such network linkages, the evidence is scarce as a result of the lack of easily accessible observable indicators of network flows.¹⁰¹

While evidential support for the perceived impacts of network linkages can be found in the Winnipeg case study, such support is scarce when looking to Toronto. Interviewees at the City of Toronto expressed little perceived benefit derived from network membership among policy actors interviewed for this project. The linkages between the PCP and the City of Toronto appear to have weakened to the point that there is a general sense of disconnection between the two parties such that actors on either side of the equation “just don’t know” what the other is doing.¹⁰² This is most obviously indicated on the PCP website, where, despite having achieved PCP milestone five, Toronto is still listed as having only completed milestone three.¹⁰³ On climate change mitigation, there was a sense amongst interviewees that the majority of networking energy and attention was being directed towards other city-networks such as the C40. However, there is some evidence of the re-engagement of Toronto with the PCP network in the area of climate change adaptation. A publication recently published by the PCP *Municipal Resources for Adapting to Climate Change* contains a number of references to City of Toronto adaptation efforts, and may represent an effort to re-embed Toronto in the network.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

⁹⁹ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Interview conducted January 16, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Further research consisting of detailed process tracing to assess whether, and to what extent, specific policy initiatives have diffused throughout the network is needed in order to gain a better picture of the extent to which best practices do indeed move along network pathways.

¹⁰² Interview responses

¹⁰³ FCM “About Partners for Climate Protection.” Available at: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/>. Accessed 14 May 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Available at: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Toolkit.asp>. Accessed May 22, 2010.

C. Guiding (norm creation and dissemination)

In defining the importance of the normative impacts of governance networks, Selin and VanDeveer note that “[i]f climate advocates succeed in generating a broader political and public expectation that GHG emissions should decline over time, then policies and behaviors that reduce GHG emissions will be judged more appropriate than those that engender increases. Evidence suggests that such change is under way.”¹⁰⁵ In the context of the two case study cities examined in this project, there is mixed evidence of the impact that the PCP has had on such norm creation.

In Winnipeg, there is significant evidence in support of the uptake of the norm of city participation in the governance of climate change. Interviews revealed that the PCP is perceived to have played a major role in the creation of the local action plan, and in the general shift in attitudes within City Council that has allowed for climate change concerns to begin to become entrenched in the local policy decision making process. This sentiment is well captured in the words of one respondent, who stated that

...getting that old-boys network to actually sign on to the notion of climate change was probably the biggest benefit [of PCP membership]. It put the issue out there, and to have councilors that would have scoffed at the issue signing on, that is a major accomplishment.¹⁰⁶

However, while it is evident that the PCP was instrumental in getting climate change onto the local agenda, the extent to which such norms have diffused is debatable. The modest nature of current targets, in concert with the means through which they are being achieved, significantly weaken any argument made for the impact of the PCP to foster a norm of aggressive emissions reduction.¹⁰⁷

In Toronto, there is similar evidence regarding uptake of the norm of city participation in climate governance. Toronto has adopted very aggressive targets for the reduction of GHG emissions and appears to have internalized the norm of taking strong local action to address climate change. The linkages between such norm creation and the PCP are tenuous, but it could be argued that the antecedent of the PCP (the Urban CO2 Project) helped to empower local policy heroes¹⁰⁸ and to foster the norm of local policy action. Evidence of this can be seen in the recommendations of the 1991 *SACE* report, which emphasized the a central role of local policy actions in the global response to climate change.¹⁰⁹ However, due to the weakened links between the PCP and the city of Toronto, the continued impact of the network on the promulgation of norms is difficult to discern.

¹⁰⁵ Selin & VanDeveer 2007: 16

¹⁰⁶ Interview conducted January 31, 2008.

¹⁰⁷ A large portion of the emissions reduction achieved by the City of Winnipeg were produced by the sale of Winnipeg Hydro, a transaction that shifted emissions off of the corporate ledger and which were counted as contributing towards the city’s corporate target. City of Winnipeg 2006: 6. See also City of Winnipeg 2007a, 2007b, 2007c.

¹⁰⁸ Lambright *et al.* 1996: 469. Lambright *et al* provide some implicit support for this statement, in that they suggest that the existence of a local policy hero was essential to the early policy action on climate change, and that the Urban CO2 Project was a supportive mechanism for local policy heroes in early adopter jurisdictions.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*: 466.

D. Enabling (encouraging action through provision of ideas, best practices, and resources whether logistical or financial; capacity building through provision of tools to engage in policy)

Evidence regarding the ability of the PCP to enable climate change projects and policies was found in both case studies, albeit much more strongly in Winnipeg than in Toronto in terms of perceived and observable impact. The bulk of activities undertaken by the PCP can be considered under the rubric of enabling. These include the mandatory five-milestone policy engagement framework for all members, access to technical tools and resources, and access to funding from the GMF in order to facilitate preparation of emissions inventories and action plans. The enabling impacts of the PCP can also be found in the splitting emissions into corporate and community segments and encourages initial attention on quantifiable and manageable emissions resulting from civic operations. In this way the PCP helps to create a wedge with which to open the door to getting climate change on the local political agenda and enables local policy entrepreneurs by providing tools with which to build the case for policy engagement.

In Winnipeg the impact of such enabling is evident in both policy actor perceptions and in the process and substance of local climate change policy. There is a strong perception amongst interviewees that the PCP has enabled the city, in the face of political resistance within City Council and in the Mayor's Office, to create and pass emissions targets, begin integrating sustainability and climate change impacts into the regular decision-making process, and has helped to "normalize" the issue. This approach has helped to "finally put climate change into the light...to integrate some environmental and climate thinking into standard procedure."¹¹⁰ While the city has not yet moved past this initial phase of corporate targets and emission reductions, the activities taken to date have certainly helped create a much more supportive environment for climate change policy than existed prior to membership. It will be interesting to follow the progress towards a community-wide emissions reduction plan in Winnipeg, and to see if these small steps can be converted into a broader plan.¹¹¹ In addition, access to the GMF has provided a source of funding that has proven fundamentally important to building capacity for the development of climate change policy in Winnipeg. Winnipeg has accessed GMF funding for all five milestone activities, providing direct evidence of the enabling role of the PCP.¹¹² Winnipeg also relied on PCP methodologies and tools for calculating the local corporate emissions inventory.¹¹³ In the words of one interviewee, this process of capacity building in terms of generating an emissions baseline, creating an action plan, and entrenching practices oriented towards including emissions awareness in the policy process are the "greatest benefits" derived from membership in the PCP.¹¹⁴

Looking to Toronto, the approval of the "Toronto target" in the early 1990's, in line with the framework established by the Urban CO2 Project, provided the first steps along the path of emissions reduction that the city was able to take. Although it predated the PCP, the early enabling activities of the Urban CO2 Project/CCP focused on splitting corporate from community emissions and on the co-benefits derived from emissions reductions. Evidence of the impact of such capacity-building initiatives can be seen in the early days of Toronto's efforts, which featured a heavy emphasis on corporate actions such as civic building retrofits, streetlight upgrades, fleet right-sizing, and landfill emissions capture and

¹¹⁰ Interview conducted January 31, 2008.

¹¹¹ Bartley Kives. 2009a. "Gases Gone at Stroke of a Pen," *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 23. Available at: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/Gases-gone-at-stroke-of-pen38212854.html>. Accessed May 10, 2010

¹¹² FCM 2005: 14.

¹¹³ City of Winnipeg 2006: 2

¹¹⁴ Interview conducted February 19, 2008.

re-use.¹¹⁵ Such policies represented a process of legitimacy building, which one respondent characterized as one of the most important results of those early actions:

The best thing that somebody can do from a policy point of view is not to spout rhetoric, but it's to put in programs that work. Because that diminishes resistance and it also increases information.¹¹⁶

Such early actions have gradually given way to the more ambitious community-wide targets that emerged in the 2007 *Change is in the Air Action Plan*.¹¹⁷ At this stage, the enabling effects of the PCP appear to have declined significantly. The perceived benefits of PCP membership are non-existent amongst those policy actors interviewed for this project. City of Toronto interviewees were, to a person, completely unaware as to what resources were offered by the PCP, and did not consider the PCP as a resource for technical or policy support.¹¹⁸ This weakness in terms of perceived and observable enabling impacts extends to the other capacity-building tools employed by the PCP. In Toronto the resource differential between the PCP and the City of Toronto has resulted in a situation whereby the internal capacity within the city far exceeds that of the network. The City of Toronto has more in common with other major global cities, in terms of resource capacity, political clout, and ambition, and their engagement with such major international networks as the C40 is reflective of this desire to access a linkage network that is more appropriately matched to local context. This is not to deny that Toronto has not benefited from access to GMF funds, which it undeniably has, as a means of facilitating local investments in energy efficiency, brownfield redevelopment, and building retrofits.¹¹⁹ However, such access to GMF funds does not embody the “steering” through enabling function of the PCP, as access takes place outside of PCP channels.¹²⁰

6. *Evaluating the Evidence*

It is important to recognize that the PCP engages in all four steering mechanisms, and that not only are they by no means mutually exclusive, they are deeply interconnected. The emphasis on enabling as a primary steering mechanism is premised on a lack of formal political authority and legitimacy, and the attempt to exert influence through persuasion and information.¹²¹ Enabling mechanisms including the five milestone framework, the splitting of corporate from community emissions, the support documents that outline the co-benefits to be derived from implementing climate policy, and the technical tools for emissions inventory calculation and analysis, all offer means of facilitating engagement and participation in the governance of climate change. The emphasis on enabling is also strongly informed by, and serves to operationalize, the normative foundations of the PCP. This normative foundation is premised on contestation of the participation norm that defines climate change as a global problem that requires international coordination between nation-states.¹²² The PCP, and other similar city-networks operating within and across national borders, challenges this norm by asserting that climate change is in

¹¹⁵ Toronto Atmospheric Fund 2001: 1. DeAngelo & Harvey 1998: 129-130

¹¹⁶ Interview conducted March 1, 2008

¹¹⁷ Toronto Environment Office 2007a

¹¹⁸ Interview conducted February 29, 2008.

¹¹⁹ City of Toronto News Release, 11 February 2010. Available at:

<http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/it/newsrel.nsf/bydate/DF1BE9E3EB64A99D852576C70058688F>. Accessed May 22, 2010.

¹²⁰ Interview conducted March 31, 2010.

¹²¹ Andanova *et al* 2009: 60; Hoffman forthcoming. Both classify the CCP primarily as a capacity-building, or what I have termed “enabling” governance actors. However, both sets of authors explicitly acknowledge that the CCP engages in multiple modes of governance.

¹²² For an example of the argument that climate change as subject to contested attempts to “define what kind of problem climate change is,” see Hoffman 2005

fact a global problem that requires direct policy engagement by cities and local policy actors. This norm is underpinned, however, by a deeper commitment to what Bernstein terms “liberal environmentalism” (Bernstein 2001; Hoffman forthcoming). This deeper normative foundation is premised on the reconciliation of environment and economy, to the extent that they are conceived of as interconnected and mutually beneficial. This normative position is evident in the particular manner in which the PCP defines the potential solution set of policy responses available to municipalities. Solutions are defined in terms of “low-hanging fruit” – policies that have co-benefits in terms of saving money, increasing economic competitiveness, or creating employment opportunities.¹²³ The implications of this normative foundation can be seen in the particular regulations developed by the PCP. The weak targets, unwillingness to engage in attempts to enforce compliance, and downgrading of targets within the PCP framework can all be understood as attempts to expand membership and to diffuse the norm of participation by making it as painless as possible.

But these pathways of influence or “steering” mechanisms are not experienced equally in the case study cities. Winnipeg displays a much greater perceived and observable set of impacts resulting from membership in the network. Network links are stronger and more frequently and fruitfully utilized, enabling tools have been relied upon to a significant extent, rules regarding emissions targets have been integrated into local climate action plans, and the norm of cities as participants in the governance of climate change has been embraced. Toronto, on the other hand, revealed a much weaker perceived and observable impact resulting from network membership. The network links between Toronto and the PCP have become frayed and may have completely severed, enabling tools are seen as irrelevant as a result of the extent to which Toronto has advanced beyond the early action enabling tools provided by the PCP, although Toronto still employs the five milestone framework and does draw on the financial resources available from the GMF. In a similar manner, the PCP regulations regarding emissions targets are disconnected from the advanced efforts and international orientation of Toronto, and while the norm of city participation in the governance of climate change resonates strongly, there is little to suggest that the PCP exerts any influence in terms of the normative foundations regarding how climate change should be understood and addressed.

The perceived and observable impact of the PCP on local climate change policy thus appears to be inversely related to levels of city resources allotted to the issue area. In Winnipeg, there has been a minimal amount of funding, staffing, and resources allotted to the development of climate change policy, with only one administrative official designated to the issue.¹²⁴ Consequently, interviewees in Winnipeg perceive a significant value in PCP membership. This value includes the role of the PCP in “normalizing” the issue by lending it an air of legitimacy and enabling the link to be made to other local co-benefits, as well as the administrative and policy development learning requisite for the development and implementation of the local climate change action plan. While Winnipeg has only achieved a minimal level of implementation and has not as of yet addressed the vexing issue of community-wide emissions reductions, there is a real sense that the city might not have progressed to where they currently are without the support of the PCP. Toronto, on the other hand, has achieved a high level of institutionalization and has an entire office, the Toronto Environment Office formed in 2006,¹²⁵ dedicated to issues relating to climate change and the environment. Toronto has earmarked over \$1 billion over the next five years for capital budget expenditures related to climate change mitigation and

¹²³ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003; Slocum 2005; Lindseth 2004; but see Toly 2008

¹²⁴ This position, of environmental coordinator, has been officially vacant since April 2009 although an interim coordinator is currently in place. Bartley Kives. 2009b. Green Pointman Leaves City Hall, *Winnipeg Free Press* March 13. Available at: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/Green-pointman-leaves-city-hall-41199032.html>. Accessed March 2010

¹²⁵ City of Toronto 2007: 2.

adaptation projects, signaling a healthy level of commitment to addressing the issue.¹²⁶ As such, the level of commitment at the local level far outstrips the situation in Winnipeg. The perceived and observable impact of the PCP, however, is negligible. Local policy actors in Toronto have little interest in the activities of the PCP, and have not bothered to even keep the network apprised of policy achievements relative to the five milestone framework. The benefits of network engagement appear to be far outstripped by local capacity, leaving Toronto operating in isolation from the network and with a focus directed much more strongly towards international networks such as the C40. The discrepancy in profile is evidenced by the prominent presentation of information on the City of Toronto Office of the Mayor's website, regarding Mayor Miller's recent posting as Chair of the C40,¹²⁷ whereas there is virtually no mention of the PCP at all on any of the City of Toronto website pages.¹²⁸ As Toronto has moved farther along the policy engagement spectrum, the ability of the PCP to remain relevant appears to have diminished.

This asymmetry in terms of the impacts of network membership on member cities both reflects, and challenges, findings in the extant literature on city-networks as governance actors. It fits existing findings in that it illustrates that, in the Canadian context, city-networks tend to evolve into tiered entities in which benefits from membership are unevenly distributed amongst members. Bulkeley & Kern have explored this phenomenon, and assert that city-networks as such tend to be "networks of pioneers, for pioneers."¹²⁹ However, the findings outlined above challenge the implications of network asymmetry in the Canadian context and contradict the notion that the PCP is a network of, and for, pioneers. In fact, the PCP appears to be the exact inverse: a network of baby steps, for beginners, perhaps. What factors could account for this puzzling result? Betsill & Bulkeley assert that the extent to which network pathways remain "open" depends on the existence of local leadership, availability of funds, jurisdictional authority and bureaucratic capacity, recognition of local benefits, and political will.¹³⁰ So it is possible that Toronto has experienced a decline in one or more of these areas. However, the findings in this paper contradict this conclusion as Toronto continues to possess all of the aforementioned characteristics in spades, and points to the need to consider other factors impacting the nature of city-network-member relationships.¹³¹

Interviews revealed that engagement with the PCP is strongest at the early stages of engagement, as members prepare local inventories, select targets, and prepare local climate action plans.¹³² At the aggregate level, this finding is borne out by data regarding performance of member cities on the five-milestone framework. As illustrated in Figure 1.1, barely 7% of PCP member cities have moved beyond milestone three (preparation of a local climate action plan), and a mere 1% have attained milestone five. Compare this with the performance of the Australian CCP network in Figure 1.2 where 56% of member cities have completed milestone five, and 46% have actually moved to CCP-Plus status, a category of municipal engagement that does not even exist in the Canadian framework.¹³³

¹²⁶ Toronto Environment Office 2008: 3.

¹²⁷ City of Toronto. "Office of the Mayor." Available at: http://www.toronto.ca/mayor_miller/index.htm. Accessed May 17, 2010.

¹²⁸ A search of the entire City of Toronto website for the term "Partners for Climate Protection" resulted in only three positive hits, all of which were located in staff reports issued in 2006 or earlier.

¹²⁹ Bulkeley & Kern 2009: 311

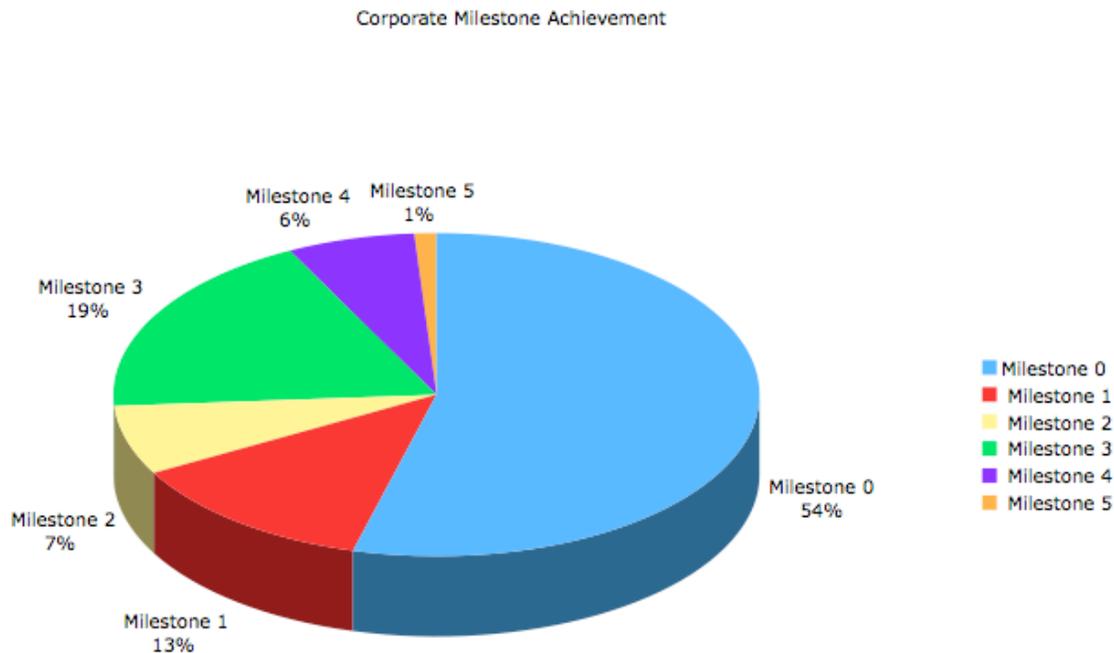
¹³⁰ Betsill & Bulkeley 2003: 184-185

¹³¹ The Climate Group 2005: 9

¹³² Interview conducted March 31, 2010.

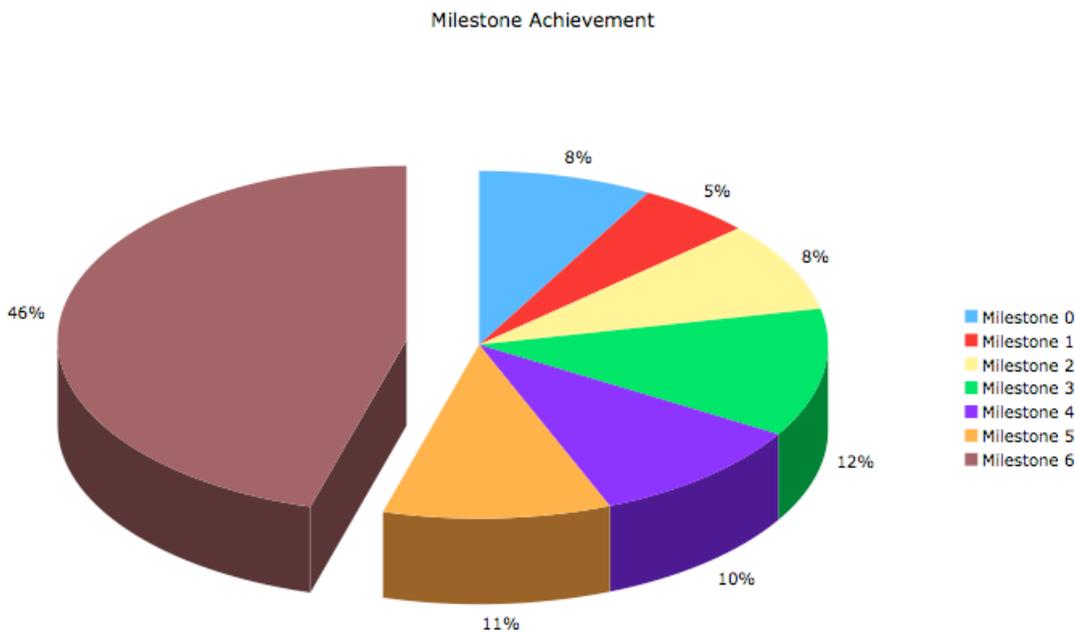
¹³³ CCP-Plus is a continuation project for extending engagement with network members who have completed all five milestones. It consists of support activities and resources in three areas: local action plan analysis and review; organizational review; advancing action projects that aim to enhance local capacity to attain deep emissions cuts through strengthening of

Figure 1.1. Corporate Milestone Status for PCP Members as of 10 May 2010



Source: Data taken from FCM “Partners for Climate Protection – Milestone Status”. Available at: http://www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Partners-for-Climate-Protection/Milestone_Status.asp. Data current to 10 May 2010.

Figure 1.2. Milestone Status for CCP-Australia Members as of December 2006



Source: Data taken from Australian Greenhouse Office. 2006. “Celebrating a Decade of Local Greenhouse Action. Cities for Climate Protection Australia Reporting 2006.” Available at: <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=ccp-reports>. Accessed 21 May 2010.

regional networks and links between councils and through strategies to overcome boundary and resource constraints. See Australian Greenhouse Office 2006: 13.

So why is the PCP not a network of, and for, pioneers? And what insights can be gained if it is indeed the case that the PCP does differ significantly from other national city-networks? One major constraint on network impact is an inability to fully utilize the experiences of head-of-the-pack members, or to reach out and prompt, cajole, or support slow-moving members that are having problems moving from rhetorical commitment to real policy action. As one interviewee put it, “what is lacking is really the time to network the network.”¹³⁴ The capacity of the PCP to engage in “steering” activities is limited and reactive in nature as a result of severe budget and resource constraints. An interviewee captured the essence of this challenge well in noting that it is,

...part of our challenge with the program. I mean, right now the program has \$150,000 and half of [one staff-member]. So the reality of the program at the moment is that it can deal with only those municipalities that are interested in moving forward. Those that are [relatively inactive] have got to come to us and say they want to move forward. Ideally we would be going out and coming back to [those slow moving municipalities] with a council presentation, show them what their peers are doing, apply some peer pressure, maybe bring in another [chief administrative officer] to show them how they did it. In the early days of the program it was much easier to do that – there was some more funding and resources, and there were a lot fewer [members]. We had 2 people and 30 municipalities, now we have half of 1 [staff member] and a lot more [members].¹³⁵

This reveals the importance of recognizing that city-networks such as the PCP are embedded in an institutional context, and that there is a high degree of dependence between local actors, newly emerging networks and traditionally dominant state actors. Institutions, like ideas, do not float freely.¹³⁶ As such it is imperative to consider the broader context in which emerging governance institutions such as the PCP exist.¹³⁷ In Canada, this broader context severely limits the PCP and its ability to impact on climate change policy in Canadian cities. As a relatively new entrant into the arena of climate change governance, the PCP has been severely constrained by the lack of federal interest in municipalities in Canada. When compared with a country such as Australia, which has endowed the Australian CCP with a \$3 million operating budget and fifteen staff members, in addition to distinct responsibilities for emissions inventory reporting as a part of the national effort,¹³⁸ the Canadian context is one in which there is a startling lack of engagement with local policy actors. This point is underscored by the political salience of the PCP, which one respondent familiar with the situation characterized as “relatively speaking...small fish.”¹³⁹ In response to a question regarding the activities within the FCM to push for greater support for the PCP from the federal government, the blunt answer given by one interviewee was that “when we send our people out in December to talk to all the MP’s, which we do, this just isn’t one of the things that we’re going to push.”¹⁴⁰

This points to evidence of Canada’s status as an “urban policy laggard,”¹⁴¹ and expose a central paradox inherent in contemporary climate governance in the Canadian context. Local policy actors and governance institutions such as the PCP have emerged as a result of federal inaction on the climate file,

¹³⁴ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

¹³⁵ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

¹³⁶ Risse-Kappen 1994

¹³⁷ Bernstein & Cashore 2000

¹³⁸ Interview conducted February 28, 2008.

¹³⁹ Interview conducted February 19, 2008.

¹⁴⁰ Interview conducted February 19, 2008.

¹⁴¹ Bradford 2004: 44.

filling the policy vacuum created by the absence of a coherent national policy strategy and framework. However, cities and city-networks are constrained as a result of the institutional context in which they are embedded, a context that accords junior status to cities and that limits the jurisdictional and financial capacity of cities to engage with climate policy. What is needed is a more inclusive, multilevel approach that enables cities and city-networks, but such an approach is reliant on national interest in enabling policy action on climate change. The experience of the PCP is part of a broader North American phenomenon, in which sub-, and non-, state actors are engaging in climate governance in contexts of federal apathy and inaction.¹⁴²

7. Next Steps and Concluding Thoughts

This paper has attempted to explore and illuminate the particular “steering” mechanisms through which the PCP, as a Canadian city-network operating in the issue area of climate change, impacts the interests and actions of its constituent members. As a counterweight to analyses that focus on the manner in which such networks impact on national climate policy, this paper has sought to address networks such as the PCP as governance institutions in their own right, and to look at how they engage in “internal” governance. The picture that emerged was one of the PCP as primarily an enabling governance actor, providing constituent members with access to resources, technical tools, specialized knowledge and support, and policy frameworks to guide the process and substance of local climate policy engagement. The case studies revealed the existence and overlap the four “steering” mechanisms, and also highlighted asymmetries in the extent to which these pathways of influence are utilized. This asymmetry runs contrary to findings in the extant literature on city-networks as governance institutions, leading to the tentative conclusion that the PCP is better characterized as a network of baby-steps, for beginners rather than a network of pioneers, for pioneers. It was suggested that the reasons for this can be found in the broader institutional and political context in which the PCP exists, a context that enables and constrains in both material (access to resources, political jurisdiction and formal authority) and ideational (norms regarding policy and governance legitimacy) terms.

There are several avenues along which the tentative conclusions and generalizations that have been put forward can be further explored. Three possibilities jump out. First, generalizations drawn from research conducted for this paper are limited by the fact that only two case studies were conducted. Expanding the study to include a larger, and more varied, set of cases would help to test some of the conclusions regarding the nature and extent of internal governance impact in the PCP. Interviews with policy actors in a broader set of member cities would also help to develop a picture of the extent to which PCP members establish peer-to-peer networks, and the extent to which ideas, norms, and best practices move along such pathways.¹⁴³ This would give a better picture as to what kind of relational pathways city-networks like the PCP evolve, how strong those network pathways are, and to what extent they actually produce learning and change. A second area of future research would build from this investigation into the types, and strength, of network linkages formed between PCP members, and would focus more broadly on the connection between institutional context, network form, and network function. Applying network theory to city-networks such as the PCP would help to illuminate the relationships that form between the network core and constituent members, and to identify key network nodes and the power, authority, and legitimacy that produces, and is produced by, this relational

¹⁴² Selin & VanDeveer 2009

¹⁴³ David Fidler proposes the concept of “open-source” governance in an article on the evolution of global health governance. Toby Warden suggests that the expansion of city engagement with the U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement can be understood as an instance of “viral governance.” Both of these are interesting examples of new thinking regarding the conceptual metaphors that inform efforts to understand contemporary and evolving governance phenomena and could be profitably applied to the material at hand, and refined theoretically through such application. See Fidler 2007; Warden 2009

infrastructure.¹⁴⁴ This would allow for a more nuanced investigation regarding the social relations that are formed by, and form, networks, and would direct attention to the manner in which such relations act to enable and constrain network members.¹⁴⁵ It would also open the door to a fuller exploration of the differences between the PCP and other city-networks, in order to explore how and why these networks differ, and to assess the strengths, weaknesses, openings, and closures that result.¹⁴⁶ A third area of research would look at the interactions between city-networks such as the PCP and other governance networks operating in the issue area of climate change. As the number of governance networks and institutions has increased, the extent to which they overlap and interact (functionally, in terms of membership, or in terms of geographically-concrete interactions in particular locations) and the implications of such interactions is an area of increasing interest and importance.¹⁴⁷ Diffusion of governance to a broader and more diverse set of actors and institutions increases the need for coordination between them, yet on-the-ground coordination and even communication between city-networks such as the PCP and the C40 remains stunted.¹⁴⁸ This raises questions as to the impacts of such inter-network competition and antipathy, and points to the need to extent research into city-networks in the direction of tracing and understanding their location in broader, multi-level contexts.

This paper is thus a first attempt at thinking about the role, activities, and impacts of one class of emerging climate governance institutions. As important as it is to explore the manner in which “pressure from below...[may] soon shape federal policy making and outcomes”¹⁴⁹ in the issue area of climate change, it is equally important to explore the emerging institutions and actors engaged in defining, understanding, and authorizing solutions to the problem of climate change. While such activities are to a large extent dependent upon the implementation of strong national, and international, policy frameworks, the expanding cast of actors and institutions engaged with climate change is an exciting, interesting, and relevant area of investigation that deserves sustained attention in the years to come.

¹⁴⁴ Okereke *et al* 2009

¹⁴⁵ Hafner-Burton *et al* 2009

¹⁴⁶ As an illustration of the opportunities and threats, CCP-Australia, as mentioned above, *was* a strong city-network that has benefited from empowerment by the Commonwealth government in Australia in the form of political authority and financial/bureaucratic resources. As a result, CCP-Australia *was* a network with a strong central node that has been able to engender significant emissions reducing performance amongst its membership. Note the past tense. CCP-Australia was officially shut down in June 2009 after the Commonwealth government cut all funding to the program. This points to the dangers inherent in such a network form, one whose strong core is the product of an dependence on national funds. The CCP-Australia network has been reconstituted by ICLEI-Oceania as a pay-for-service network, operating on a consultant basis. It will be interesting to see how the network evolves, and what lessons it might hold for the PCP and vice versa, now that the two networks find themselves in similar structural conditions. ICLEI Oceania. 2009. “Climate Funding Ends but Local Action Continues,” Media Release 21 May. Available at: <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=5223>. Accessed 24 May 2010.

¹⁴⁷ Bernstein *et al* 2009

¹⁴⁸ Interview responses.

¹⁴⁹ Selin & VanDeveer 2007: 21.

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