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The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCPC) and the Framing of Local Climate Policy

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ABSTRACT   *The paper contributes to the research on understanding local global warming politics. Strategic documents from The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCPC) are analysed to show how CCPC has constructed climate change protection as a local issue. The paper's premise is that the climate change issue must be translated or framed to enable actors to work with this problem in a local context, and that successful framing requires establishing a coherent method of describing social reality. CCPC emphasises that the different elements of local and global sustainable development agendas can be mutually reinforcing, and that climate change protection can be reconciled with local priorities and initiatives that reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). It is argued that this framing of climate change makes it difficult to see why and how climate change should be an important concern for local communities. The modest reductions of GHG in CCPC cities thus far highlights that finding meaningful new ways of linking the global and the local should be a core concern of CCPC.*

Introduction

The Aim of the Paper

The climate issue is conventionally seen as the province of nation states and international organisations and negotiations. Global agreements, such as Kyoto, and national policies can encourage or require greenhouse gas (GHG) abatements. However, the actions taken to reduce GHGs are never really global. They are, and will remain, mostly local efforts by local institutions, communities and individuals (Agyeman *et al.*, 1998, p. 245).

Data from numerous countries show that local authorities control policy measures that deal with 30–50% of national GHG emissions (Groven & Aall, 2002). Local authorities are generally responsible for local transport and development planning, and for energy management (Coenen & Menkveld, 2002; Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003). Policy space for local climate policy is dependent on

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institutional and political conditions at higher government levels. Many matters such as the liberalisation of energy markets, lack of funding for research on renewable energy and the failure of national governments to prioritise climate politics, can hinder local work to reduce GHGs. Nevertheless, cities take the climate challenge seriously, and there are numerous examples worldwide of community-level climate protection initiatives.

This paper looks at the local climate protection issue and, more specifically, the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCPC). A constructivist approach is used to indicate that the problem's actual severity does not alone determine whether it becomes politically important. To initiate action, the political discourse must also frame the issue in a way that makes the problem solvable. The analysis focuses on how CCPC has constructed the local level as a relevant geographical space for climate protection, and assesses to what degree climate protection can be organised and cities motivated around the frame established by CCPC. The paper aims to bring forward knowledge about core problems and the prospects of translating into local action the climate issue's global dimensions and seriousness.

The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign

The CCPC grew out of the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), and its forerunner was ICLEI's Urban CO_2 Reduction Project (1991–93), which brought together American, Canadian and European cities at six working meetings to develop a municipal planning framework for GHG reduction and strategic energy management. The participants at the international summit of municipal leaders (New York, 25–26 January 1993) established CCPC. They invited local authorities to work together and with national governments and international agencies to develop and implement strategies to reduce GHG emissions and to protect the biological environment's ability to remove CO_2 (ICLEI, 1993a, p. 1). The four stated goals of CCPC are: (1) Strengthening local commitments to reduce urban emissions of GHG; (2) Disseminating planning and management tools to facilitate development of cost-effective CO_2 reduction policies; (3) Research and development of best practices, and development of model municipalities that lead by example; (4) Enhancing national and international ties so that municipal-level actions are included in national action plans and international deliberations (ICLEI, 1993b).

To become a CCPC member, an appropriate local authority must adopt a resolution. Once inducted, the local government should complete *five perform-ance milestones* (see ICLEI, 2004). The milestones are a methodology helping local governments to understand how municipal decisions affect energy use, and how reductions in energy use can mitigate global climate change while improving the quality of life. CCPC also designed GHG emissions software for municipalities, which streamlines emissions analysis. Today, CCPC is a transnational municipal network constituted of 579[1] cities, and organised with international and regional campaign offices.

This paper chooses to see CCPC (organisation) as an actor trying to mobilise and persuade cities to work on climate protection. Rather than summarising the work in all member cities, it concentrates on several strategic documents from

CCPC and ICLEI[2] organisations, in which are laid out their positions and perspectives on climate change protection. The paper's reference point is not the tools available to better attack climate problems, but rather an examination of how the climate change protection issue is understood in the first place. In order to understand CCPC's results, developments and focus, it is vital to recognise that the climate change protection issue has a history, and that the issue is already framed. Thus, this paper's empirical material is mainly from CCPC's early phase (1993–97), when the campaign's framework was established. Materials used in sketching out CCPC's framework are: local leaders' declarations at summits (ICLEI, 1993a; 1995a; 1995b; 1997a) where actors from 150–200 municipalities worldwide developed CCPC's position on climate change protection (A. Waldmann, 2003, personal communication); and two key documents from ICLEI's World Secretariat (ICLEI, 1993b; 1993c) that present a municipal action agenda. Based on this framework established in CCPC's early phase, the remainder of the paper uses results from the campaign, from the CCPC organisation and from other researchers' studies of CCPC, and discusses the campaign's profile.

The next section presents the paper's theoretical perspective and assesses how CCPC initially framed climate change. The third section looks at CCPC's results. The following section discusses the problems of implementing climate protection action in relation to CCPC's frame. The final section concludes the paper.

Constructing Climate Change as a Local Issue

Framing Local Climate Policy

A 'frame' is an idea through which political debate unfolds, and political alignment and collective actions take place (Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 39). The word 'framing' emphasises that reality always needs to be represented. Framing means that some aspects of a perceived reality are selected and made more salient, so as to promote the definition of a particular problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or recommended treatment of the issue described (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Using the word 'framing' emphasises that climate change rests on scientific facts, but that science is an encoded form of knowledge requiring translation. Moreover, climate change is a diffuse 'problem of the common', and if the local level is to contribute constructively in climate change work, it is important to clarify the 'in between' substance linking the local and the global (Høyer & Aall, 1995). In this context, framing translates climate change into understandable categories; both providing an explanation for why climate change is important, *and* showing how cities can work with this issue. Therefore, frames matter because they define the boundaries of the discourse of an issue (e.g. climate change) and categorise relevant actors based on an established scheme of social classifications. Framing makes an issue more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to audiences (Entman, 1993). Framing can be seen as a means of community building (Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 41).

As do Pan and Kosicki (2001), I see framing as a strategic action in a discursive form, involving political actors making sense of an issue and participating in public deliberation. The key to success for a network such as CCPC is twofold (Latour, 1987): to enrol others in the campaign, but also to control their behaviour in order to make their actions predictable. If local-level action is to matter, more communities must be enrolled, but at the same time it is important that their actions actually contribute to reducing GHG emissions. Framing is thus a continuous task that must be carried out as the campaign develops and as the results of the campaign become evident and are communicated. Despite increasing salience, using a frame does not guarantee that an audience's thinking will be influenced (Entman, 1993). As more cities and actors get involved in CCPC, strategic framing becomes less manageable; it becomes a multifaceted process of public deliberation in which influences travel in different directions. Frames are continually in the process of gaining or losing organising value, being adopted or abandoned accordingly (Reese, 2001, p. 15). As CCPC develops, framing thus involves interpreting political activities and statements to construct the reality.

The discursive approach argues that frames shape action. Successful framing requires establishing clear boundaries separating ideas, perspectives, images—whatever is the frame's core aspect. The next section addresses the frame into which climate change has been set by CCPC.

Motivation for Climate Change Protection

According to CCPC the need for local action has many justifications. Cities are seen as vulnerable to climate change—part of both the problem and the solution. They can also benefit from climate change protection.

The 1993 briefing book *Saving the Climate—Saving the Cities* contains a thorough overview of the GHG problem and the effects of climate change. Scientific evidence and the focus on threats facing humanity are themes repeated in later ICLEI documents. According to CCPC, public acceptance of the causes of the greenhouse effect has reached such a high level that lack of knowledge is no longer a sufficient reason for (political) inaction (ICLEI, 1993c, p. 29). The threats to humanity of climate change are situated in a local context and threaten city dwellers: "Cities and communities are where people live and hence are urgently threatened by climate changes" (ICLEI, 1993c, p. 13). Cities are part of the *problem*. Urban areas are a major source of GHGs. The heating and cooling of urban buildings, consumption of electricity by local industries and businesses and energy-intensive activities producing GHG and other noxious emissions affect urban quality of life (ICLEI, 1993b, p. 1). But cities are also part of the *solution*. Involving the local level is necessary since it is the level closest to the people. The success of climate change action will depend on concerted local support (ICLEI, 1995a; 1995b). Furthermore, CCPC points to the possibilities local governments have because they exercise key power over many activities which create sources and sinks of GHG emissions such as decisions governing urban form; transportation; energy use, production and distribution; waste and waste-water management, and forest protection (ICLEI, 1995a, p. 1). Finally,

cities can also *benefit* from saving the climate. Some benefits are environmental, emphasising the clear links between solving global and local problems. Such links include better air quality and improvements in public health, and reductions in traffic congestion and greater urban liveability. Other benefits are focused on economic issues such as lower costs of municipal operations, and local job creation (ICLEI, 1997a).

The CCPC Frame

Two aspects of the frame into which CCPC has put climate change should be highlighted: First, the problem is established and made relevant through scientific knowledge explaining that we will increasingly notice the effects of climate change. City dwellers are at risk from climate change and therefore should cut emissions. Second, motivation for action is based on the assumption that local and global issues are linked. The briefing book *Saving the Climate— Saving the Cities* clearly suggests, even in its title, that local entities benefit from climate change protection work.

   CCPC focuses on local problems, like air quality and related health problems, to generate concern about climate change, because people actually feel in their bodies its local effects. Rather than saying that traffic is mainly a local problem, CCPC says that reducing traffic will solve both local and global problems (see for instance ICLEI, 1993c). A closer examination of CCPC must thus concentrate on determining to what degree the different elements of local and global sustainable development agendas can be mutually reinforcing, and whether climate change protection can be reconciled with local priorities and initiatives that reduce GHG.

The Profile of CCPC

The 1997 Milestone Survey

In 1997 a Milestone Survey was sent to all participants to ascertain which milestones they had completed (see ICLEI, 2004 for an overview of the milestone methodology). This survey's purpose was to provide preliminary data and insights drawn from local government efforts to reduce GHG emissions (ICLEI, 1997b). ICLEI also issued a report with in-depth case studies of the most successful local government initiatives (ICLEI, 1997c). By 30 June 1997, CCPC had surveyed 174 local governments representing 100 million people worldwide. The survey's most important numbers are:

- 65 CCPC participants formally adopted reduction targets and timetables for their achievement.
- 31 CCPC participants completed all five milestones and were well on their way to implementing policies and measures to reduce CO_2 emissions.

By 1997, of CCPC's 174 cities, 53 had established reduction targets, most of which pledged to reduce emissions to 1990 levels (in some cases 1988 levels) by 2010. Urban CO_2 emissions in these 53 cities accounted for about 5% of total

global CO_2 emissions. The survey stated that most CCPC participants appeared to follow through on their political commitments. Furthermore, participants usually set and adopted targets and timetables after thoroughly analysing local energy use and emissions, as well as quantifying the potential for reducing local energy use. Many cities as a first step began immediately to implement measures to build public support and to gain initial experience in energy efficiency retrofits before considering more comprehensive measures (ICLEI, 1997b). The case study report stated that the key to success in cities had been the development of partnerships with state, provincial, and national governments, as well as with private financial institutions, all of which enabled cities to raise significant capital for climate projects. Other successful initiatives included recycling, reuse and reduction of solid waste. The report also stressed the importance of a city owning and operating its own energy utilities (ICLEI, 1997c).

The Milestone Survey portrays this level of concern and interest as a promising start for CCPC's local climate change protection work. It became evident, however, that although cities strive to set ambitious goals, climate change protection planning is difficult and requires broad cooperation between many social sectors. According to CCPC, over the long term, the most effective local initiatives in reducing transportation energy consumption will require more overall planning and the use of physical instruments in order to design communities that are more compact and energy efficient (ICLEI, 1997c). The CCPC report, however, rather than recommending these tougher measures, stressed instead the multiple benefits derived from climate change protection work (ICLEI, 1997b, p. 3).

Local Benefits of Climate Change Protection Work

Since 1997, no comprehensive surveys of CCPC have been conducted. However, today CCPC consists of 579 cities, generating 8% of the world's GHG emissions. CCPC could be seen as a success because the network has managed to extend itself and cities have taken up the idea of climate change protection work. Although it is difficult to get an overall picture of how cities are doing today, there exists data from regional CCP campaigns (see ICLEI, 2000; 2003a; 2003b), and also studies of CCPC by other researchers (Betsill, 2000; 2001; Bulkeley, 2000; 2001; Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003; Slocum, 2004a; 2004b).

After over 10 years in existence, there are in CCPC cities many projects and initiatives portrayed and 'labelled' as climate protection work. Recent studies of CCPC cities in Europe (ICLEI, 2003a) and Australia (ICLEI, 2003b) contain good examples of ongoing initiatives and projects. However, CCPC is premised on the belief that local efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change will have cumulative effects contributing to global efforts to control GHG emissions. In this regard, CCPC has little to show for its work. Even if cities were to reduce emissions, it is clear that many emission reductions reported by CCPC communities were realised by including reductions from policies and programmes that existed prior to CCPC (Betsill, 2001). Europe, the US and Australia show only minor emissions reductions due to CCPC. The Australian campaign claims to be the most successful (ICLEI, 2003b). There are 164 councils in the Australian

CCPC, representing more than 65% of Australia's population. CCPC Australia reported that CO_2 –e abatement increased from 225,000 to 664,000 tonnes in the period 2000–2002 (ICLEI 2003b). However, the abatement total is in stark contrast to the overall national emissions total, which shows Australia emitted 542.6 million tonnes CO_2 –e in 2001, and that from 1990–2001 emissions in most sectors increased significantly (AGO, 2003). The US campaign estimated in 2000 that US CCPC communities reduced their annual GHG emissions by 7.5 million metric tonnes (an average of 100,000 tonnes per city). This is a fraction of the 1,800 million metric tonnes of GHGs emitted by the US each year (EPA, 2001 in Betsill, 2001). The European survey had no overview of emission reductions in individual EU CCPC cities; however, EU estimates for the whole EU region show that emissions rose during 1990–2001 in most member countries (EEA, 2003).

The Australian and European surveys (ICLEI, 2003a; 2003b) confirm the 1997 Milestone Survey results (ICLEI, 1997b; 1997c), that cities' main environmental priorities with regard to tackling climate change are energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling. Betsill (2001) and Betsill and Bulkeley (2003) point out that stressing co-benefit, such as focusing on energy efficiency, often implies that that cities are merely repackaging existing efforts as 'climate' initiatives, and not going beyond business as usual. Bulkeley (2000), in a closer look at the Australian campaign, points out that attempts to secure support for the programme primarily stress the monetary benefits gained from emissions reductions. Furthermore, she argues that the programme's non-calculable and non-monetary benefits tend to get sidelined in a discourse that stresses the need for quantification and concrete outcomes. Slocum (2004a; 2004b) has studied the US CCPC. She states that CCPC frames the problem as one of win-win approaches to economic development and environmental protection. CCPC is selling climate protection as energy efficiency and constructing the public as energy consumers. The CCPC approach does not address values and structural change.

The research done on CCPC, together with CCPC's own surveys and their interpretations of the results, reinforces the climate change frame prevalent in the 1997 report, i.e. that there is overlap between local and global problems and that this is the basis for local climate change protection action.

Implementation as a Dispersed Discourse

The Added Value of Climate Change Protection Work

Bulkeley and Betsill (2003, p. 173), writing about CCPC, state that "climate change has been added to other rationales for energy conservation, rather than providing a justification for policy action in and of itself". CCPC has localised the *policy* of controlling GHG emissions (which happens to be the primary response to climate change) rather than the *problem* of climate change (Betsill, 2001). Slocum (2004a) emphasises that CCPC discusses climate without reference to climate change or the harm it causes nature, but with reference to local

benefits and the need to appeal to many diverse interests. Slocum states that CCPC promoters are at a loss as to how to convey their message in the cities.

These writers stress the definition of the climate issue and the question of how people can find ways to understand the importance of climate change. Climate change is certainly a local issue because it entails local actors working with local projects to reduce GHG emissions, but at the same time, the motivation for action at the beginning of CCPC had an element of global awareness: CCPC emphasised scientific evidence, risks and moral concerns outside the time perspective and space location of people that were encouraged to take action. This idea of climate change as a moral responsibility and risk issue requiring immediate action was lost as CCPC entered the phase of local implementation. Today one can read in the section about CCPC's background on its web page the following (ICLEI, 2004):

> … Technical tools and information, training workshops, and overall assistance have been designed to link the global issue of climate change with air quality and other local issues such as energy costs, traffic congestion, waste management and community liveability. It is such links—the overlap in the causes of air pollution and global warming pollution and the adverse impact rising local temperatures have on smog formation, for instance—that *primarily motivate* local leaders to participate in a Campaign focused on climate protection. (my italics)

It could be that CCPC takes the moral and ethical aspects for granted; that it believes that these have become accepted truths, which do not need to be articulated. However, Betsill (2001) states that in most US CCPC cities, local politics and programmes to control GHG emissions are motivated by co-benefits rather than by concern about global climate change. Indeed, ICLEI officials often emphasise co-benefits first, and point to climate protection as a secondary consideration (Betsill, 2001).

The Challenge of Extending a Network

Latour (1987, p. 208) shows that the simplest way to spread a statement is to leave a margin for negotiation to each actor involved. It is easier to interest more people in the claim since less control is exercised on them. CCPC could be viewed this way; it is attempting to assure that climate change protection action is understood in its broadest sense, as encompassing many measures, and the means to link them to local issues. Latour (1987, p. 208) states that this approach has a price. Once less control is exercised over a statement or idea (the definition of climate change protection), the original statement is transformed and adapted to local circumstances as one sees fit. Everyone will adapt the statement to his or her own experience and context, resulting in the original idea (of climate change) being modified (cf. Latour, 1987).

As CCPC grows, the task will still be to make many act as one; to establish wider networks while still keeping one's "informants by your side while they are far away" (Latour, 1987, p. 234). The CCPC programme, initially coordinated by

ICLEI's international headquarters staff in Toronto, has become decentralised and very widespread geographically as new members have joined. Today, local and regional campaigns have developed close partnerships with a number of national governments (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003). Latour (1987, p. 209) states that a network could try to increase its control over its actors by forcing them to adhere more closely to the campaign's original focus (e.g. you should reduce your GHG emissions because otherwise the earth, your country and your city will be severely affected). The danger in this approach is that fewer people will be interested, and that many resources will have to be utilised to persuade cities about the seriousness of climate change. As mentioned earlier, CCPC emphasises the co-benefits that are involved in climate change protection action, rather than emphasising the issue's seriousness, or increasing control over actors within the network (cf. Latour, 1987). CCPC has understood that giving priority to options with clear co-benefits is helpful in persuading groups that would otherwise not be persuaded to adopt innovations. From the perspectives of businesses, consumers and local authorities, this might seem wise. By integrating climate change into the broader sustainability debate, the window of opportunity is bigger and more actors can be a part of the process. However, CCPC's lack of results brings into question whether the co-benefit strategy has sufficient potential to reduce emissions (see section on *Local Benefits of Climate Change Protection Work*).

From Global Awareness to Local Action

The CCPC case illustrates the problems and prospects of organising climate initiatives to represent a global awareness. I argue that at some stage we are no longer talking about climate change policy per se, but about integrating climate concerns in other sectors of local policy, such as traffic, economic development, urban and land-use planning, housing, tax policy, etc. This entails recognising that the environmental sector alone will not be able to secure climate objectives, and that each sector must therefore take on board climate objectives if these are to be achieved (Lafferty & Hovden, 2003). As such, CCPC's focus on co-benefits is a form of policy integration. However, there is a danger that the sector having responsibility for climate change protection action will not be given the principle authority and will therefore lose out to other sector interests. One is bound to question whether CCPC's focus on co-benefits, technical tools and performance-based indicators (the milestones), could manage to achieve their goal of portraying climate change as a serious issue requiring immediate action. My argument is that CCPC has not explicitly shown how climate change is an overarching responsibility rather than just a number of more or less loosely connected projects. CCPC does not argue strongly that prioritising climate change is also about saying 'no' to unsustainable development, and about restricting practices and policies in other sectors of society.

Bulkeley (2001) suggests that a civic subpolitics of climate change will emerge by providing explicit means through which people feel they can collectively respond, and assuring that the responsibilities of other actors and

institutions are acknowledged. The criticism of CCPC opens up a discussion on other ways that climate change protection action could be framed. The risk dimensions were central in the initial CCPC framing and CCPC did try to construct a picture of the vulnerability of city dwellers. However, using risks as a basis for local climate protection action is not easy. No clear link exists between a city's emissions and their impact on climate change. Beck (1999) states that we are living in the age of 'second modernity', and that the consequences of our actions have no limits. We are constantly confronted with opposing perspectives of the nature of risks, and no one, neither the layperson nor the expert, can predict the consequences with any certainty. In the words of Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1996, p. 44): "If the need for change is justified by environmental changes people don't understand and can barely perceive, they will be susceptible to a contrary view that assures them all's well with the world". Studies show that people do not define global climate change as an issue that represents personal risk, mainly because there are weak linkages between cause and effect (Davidson *et al.*, 2002).

This paper has commented on how CCPC has framed climate change. Snow and Benford (1992) argue that empirical credibility is of vital importance to the mobilising potency of a particular frame. In this regard the climate change issue, due to its extreme complexity, might not lend itself to being portrayed in a way that is empirically credible to those who need to be mobilised. This paper contributes to the debate on how to address an environmental problem institutionally, on a scale that corresponds to the geographical dimensions of the problem (Cash & Moser, 2000). In this regard, constructing climate change as a local issue might pose a problem because it creates the impression that climate change matters can be solved locally.

Conclusion

The discursive perspective in this paper has highlighted that CCPC has not managed to build an ideational framework around the issue of climate change through which local actors can collectively respond. CCPC has framed climate change pragmatically; it is about solving problems locally and enjoying local benefits. I have argued that such an understanding of climate change makes it difficult to see why and how climate change should be an important local concern.

It might be that CCPC is failing to use all its potential or that other strategies could bring about more emissions reductions (within the cities' available policy space). Finding new and meaningful ways of linking the global and the local should be a core concern of local climate change protection action. This paper emphasises that frames matter. Successful climate change protection planning will thus require knowledge about the context into which the climate issue has been placed, and how local actors come to understand the various dimensions of climate change. CCPC administrators and local actors involved in CCPC could benefit from learning more about how frames structure action and how different discourses can become resources in planning climate change protection action.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] As of 18 March 2004.
[2] CCPC has its own staff and its own campaign organisation. However, CCPC grew out of ICLEI and is a campaign under ICLEI's organisational umbrella. Thus there will be made no effort to distinguish between the two.

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