

**WATER AND CITY-REGIONALISM – DISCOURSE, POWER AND HIDDEN  
DYNAMICS**

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This dissertation is dedicated to

Maureen,

Chris,

Rachel, Jeffrey and Alastair

## Abstract

Region-based solutions present a promising avenue to water management in water stressed regions by providing increased flexibility. But regional solutions require the messy reworking of networks of power among multiple stakeholders, often leading to power struggles. This research examines the power dynamics of a case study involving 18 municipalities in the Calgary region of Canada called the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP). In 2005 these municipalities embarked on a major city-region rescaling initiative involving water sharing and land-use planning. However, by 2009 four rural municipalities had left, bifurcating the partnership along urban and rural lines.

Discourse analysis is used as a theoretical frame in which to examine power across multiple jurisdictions and scales. The research demonstrates how participants exercised differing degrees of discursive power and influence in the policymaking process. In exposing hidden dynamics, the research enhances our understanding of rescaling processes to improve regional outcomes and assist in solving broader water management problems.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Regional approaches have significant potential for managing water resources around the world, especially in water stressed regions that require increased flexibility. However, regional approaches attempted elsewhere have been found to be highly complex, involving re-working networks of power among multiple stakeholders, creating the potential for power struggles. This research uses discourse analysis to study the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power on a city-region rescaling process that involved a new water management scheme for the region. It explores a partnership among 18 municipalities within the region of Calgary, Alberta called the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP). The power struggles that emerged within the partnership led to it splitting along urban and rural lines with the remaining partners consisting solely of urban members.

Given the challenges power dynamics impose on regional processes, this research is guided by the following central research question: What are the nature<sup>1</sup>, extent and effects of stakeholders exercising varying degrees of discursive power on a city-region rescaling process involving water management?

The overall objectives of the research are to:

1. Add to existing scholarship through a discourse analysis approach applied to a city-region rescaling process involving water management.
2. Identify factors that will improve regional processes to address broader issues of:
  - a. avoiding unintended negative outcomes caused by the institutional structures under which rescaling processes are based;

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<sup>1</sup> The nature refers to the characteristics of the individuals or groups who acquired and exercised the varying degrees of discursive power.

- b. providing regional solutions to water management issues given fixed water allocation systems; and
- c. integrating water-related organizations in regional rescaling processes.

Water is a commodity which in some parts of the world, including Alberta, Canada, has become increasingly contested. Generally there are four reasons why water is contested - the extreme diversity of water uses across different types of users, institutions that are acceptable in situations of abundance but can be dysfunctional in times of scarcity, multiple institutions that are involved in its management, and institutions that privilege certain uses and users over others (Johns, 2008). This research studies the challenges in establishing a unique water sharing arrangement under a regional governance framework. The partnership espoused broad-based participation under the rubric of integrated water resources management and therefore involved a complex mix of municipal and water-related participants in its development.

Top-down government-based approaches to water resources management are no longer seen as workable (de Loe, Armitage, Plummer, Davidson & Moraru, 2009). Contemporary efforts towards water management have resulted in a shift from government to governance involving an integrated, participatory approach to planning and management. Governance should ideally involve decision-making processes that accommodate diverse views among state and non-state actors, shared learning, and opportunities for adaptability and positive transformation (de Loe et al., 2009). Governance “conveys the notion that existing institutions can be harnessed in new ways, that cooperation can be carried out on a fluid and voluntary basis among localities and that people can best regulate themselves through horizontally linked organizations” (Savitch & Vogel, 2000, p. 161). This observation leads this research to inquire how discursive power dynamics within the CRP worked in creating the partnership’s regional governance structure and the water management framework within it.

Water policy literature has advocated integrated water resources management for a considerable time, based on the notion that the watershed is the appropriate scale for organizing water management (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005). Since political boundaries almost never correspond with watershed boundaries, decision making structures on a watershed scale do not exist and hence should be created (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005). The process of shifting water management to the watershed level is a process of rescaling which implies, by definition, changing the size and/or making the size more appropriate. The CRP worked with water-related organizations already established in the region's watershed, therefore there were multiple municipal and water-related organizations working under a participatory framework. This research therefore explores the hidden dynamics of varying degrees of discursive power exercised by participants with differing degrees of access to the planning process.

Ward and Jonas (2004) suggest the process of rescaling is best understood as an ongoing struggle for control of space. In city-regions, divergent political, economic and ideological agendas, ranging from economic growth, environmental sustainability to social justice, have resulted in ongoing struggles among diverse actors, alliances and institutions seeking to manage a widely diverse set of issues (Brenner, 2002). Hence the study of the CRP with its multitude of divergent actors, investigates the struggle over control of space through discursive power.

For decades, the focus of city-region development was dominated by economics but by the 1990's the agenda shifted fundamentally to quality of living concerns, thereby elevating ecological issues (Wheeler, 2002). Indeed, the city-region scale had become a principle site for advancing sustainability (Wheeler, 2002). This has important implications for water management because as the scales over which water is managed are altered, so are governance, management and the planning processes. Swyngedouw (1997) emphasizes the importance of studying *processes* of rescaling as opposed to outcomes. City-region processes involve many networks of power as they are not only nested within each other, they also intersect and overlap. Foucauldian theory of

discourse, supplemented by Hajer's theory, will provide the theoretical framework for this research. The Foucauldian approach towards discourse explicitly acknowledges power differentials among net-like power configurations that underpin specific processes. As a result, certain discourses are elevated to socially constructed 'knowledge' and 'truth'.

During times of change, such as the time-frame of this research, discursive regularities or routines are disrupted and this can create a milieu within which power struggles can occur (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Howarth, 2000). The research's theoretical framework will allow for an exploration of the power dynamics of a decidedly complex process of rescaling involving multiple jurisdictions and multiple actors in a contemporary process. The questions probed in this research relate to the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power on the process. In this research a theoretical platform of Foucauldian concepts is deployed, consisting of: (a) governmentality, (b) creating and acting on objects, (c) mechanisms of exclusion, and (d) contestation and resistance. Hajer's concepts of discursive space, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions comprise the fifth set of theoretical concepts.

The balance of this chapter will first, explain the problem around which this research is centered by briefly describing the water challenges in the region. The section which follows discusses the CRP case study, describing the partnership's history, hopes, challenges and failures, underscoring its significance as a fruitful case study. The final section outlines the organization of the dissertation.

## **1.1 The Problem**

Balancing economic, social and ecosystem water requirements is a major challenge in southern Alberta. Rapid economic and population growth has taken its toll on the river systems and their compromised states have been well documented (Alberta Environment [AENV], 2005). Stress on water systems in the Calgary region was so intense that in 2005 the province took the unprecedented step to stop accepting applications for new water allocation licenses within three of the four sub-

basins of the South Saskatchewan River Basin. This included the Bow River Basin within which almost all the CRP municipalities are situated.

Water in the Calgary region is accessed from four rivers of the Bow River Basin – the Bow, Elbow, Sheep and Highwood rivers which service a population of approximately 1.2 million people (Bow River Basin Council [BRBC], 2010). The city of Calgary (population of 1.1 million in 2011) is surrounded by incorporated towns and cities as well as unincorporated suburban and country residential subdivisions under a variety of water service arrangements (Pernitsky & Guy, 2010). The Bow River Basin has been designated as ‘fully allocated’ meaning any additional water license allocations would compromise in-stream flow needs in the event all licensed allocations were activated. Agricultural uses and irrigation account for 71 percent of allocations, municipalities 18 percent, habitat management seven percent, industrial and commercial two percent, and other uses two percent (BRBC, 2010). Within the Bow River Basin numerous watershed organizations and partnerships are attempting to manage water under the principles embodied in an integrated water resources management approach. The 2005 closure of the Bow River Basin to applications for new licenses has meant that, given the basin is fully allocated, new water demands have to be met by reallocating existing licenses. Unfortunately, when they were able to do so, municipalities in the Calgary region did not apply for water license that would be sufficient to accommodate their long-term growth (Pernitsky & Guy, 2010). An exception is the city of Calgary which has enough water licenses to accommodate three million people, about three times the city’s current population.

A recent report concluded that without water conservation measures, more than half of the region will face a water shortage by 2030 and even with conservation, several communities will exceed their existing water allocations in the short term (Pernitsky & Guy, 2010). The problem will be most acute for municipalities obtaining water from the Sheep and Highwood rivers. However, due to the large volume of licensed water allocations held by the city of Calgary, municipalities in the region will have sufficient *aggregate* water supply to meet long-term projected demands to the

year 2075 (Pernitsky & Guy, 2010). Under the CRP, the city of Calgary indicated a willingness to share its licensed water allocations among the participating municipalities, envisaging that the water would be managed by a water utility. Of particular significance from an ecological point of view is that this agreement would depend on Calgary's water licenses to accommodate a significant amount of the population and industrial growth of the region. Instead of accommodating Calgary's future growth alone, the city's water licenses would accommodate growth of the entire region. Growth which otherwise might be constrained by water supply would occur and Calgary's licensed water allocations would be more fully utilized (and by extension reach maximum allocation more often) than if they were to only accommodate the city of Calgary's growth. Environmentalists contend that when Alberta's water allocation system was established there was little understanding of in-stream flow needs to maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem and that the basins in southern Alberta are actually over-allocated (Alberta Wildlife Association, 2013). In an over-allocated basin, if allocations were fully activated, in-stream flows would not be met, a situation aggravated by the CRP's water sharing plan. A central feature of the plan for the region was that water servicing would be provided to concentrated housing development within European-style compact communities.

As water in southern Alberta has increasingly become a valuable commodity, the Alberta government's water licensing system has come under increased scrutiny. Critics note that the system is antiquated, outmoded and unable to provide the flexibility needed to deal with the competing demands for water. However, this is a highly politically charged issue and one the government has been reluctant to act upon. The province's water management framework, the Water for Life Strategy of 2003, states that all existing licenses will be honored. A review of this framework was promised by the province but did not result in any changes.

To provide some much-needed elasticity in the water management system, the practice of buying and selling water licenses on both a temporary and permanent basis is permitted in some



watersheds through legislation. However, the practice is not widespread and the most controversial sale of a water license recently occurred right in the Calgary region, involving Rocky View County, one of the counties which ultimately exited the partnership. The high-profile case took place in 2007 when Rocky View County needed to increase its water allocation to accommodate an industrial and commercial development. When Calgary refused to provide water through its existing pipeline system, the issue turned into a rural-urban jurisdictional dispute. Ultimately the county turned to the Western Irrigation District<sup>2</sup> which sold the county 2,500 dam<sup>3</sup> of water. The plebiscite held in the irrigation district narrowly passed and public opposition, plus an unsuccessful appeal to the Environmental Appeal Board, underscored the high degree of discontent. In the absence of significant changes in water allocation policy or the acceptable and wide-spread use of the water market, it is likely that there will be an increased emphasis on regional arrangements where water is supplied to others by the holder of an existing license with significant available capacity (Pernitsky & Guy, 2010). However, past controversies over water are a harbinger of things to come, as my research found; history is difficult to surmount.

The province's Water for Life Strategy of 2003 has driven broad change to water management by devolving responsibility over it. The development of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) and various smaller watershed partnerships are a product of that devolution and are active within the Bow River Basin. WPACs are regional organizations involved in creating, implementing and assessing watershed management plans. Other watershed 'partnerships', known as stewardship groups, raise awareness and undertake local activities (promoting best management practices for example) to protect and enhance local lakes and streams. But de Loe et al. (2009), who have studied Alberta water governance, state that in Alberta new shared governance mechanisms, such as those envisaged under the Water for Life Strategy, are being created while existing mechanisms like the water allocations system remain in place. They stress that care will be needed to address questions

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<sup>2</sup> This is one of 13 irrigation districts in Alberta which distributes water for irrigated lands in the district. The Western Irrigation District is adjacent to the east side of the City of Calgary

of ‘fit and interplay’ among these mechanisms (de Loe et al., 2009, p. iv). They also advise that the levels of involvement by participants outside government must be matched by appropriate amounts of authority (de Loe et al., 2009).

Finally, within the basin there are broad policy-oriented organizations such as Water Matters and Ecojustice which work to advance watershed protection in the basin and can have significant influence on water policy. Ecojustice and Water Matters, for example, challenged the province’s practice of amending irrigation district licenses to allow them to supply more water for non-irrigation uses, resulting in the government discontinuing amendments until a policy was established.

## **1.2 CRP Case Study**

In 2005, 18 municipalities in the Calgary region of Canada embarked on a major initiative to develop a long-range, coordinated approach to land-use planning and water-sharing under a new regional governance framework<sup>3</sup>. The result is the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP). This region is depicted in Figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> A loose, more informal version of the partnership began in 1999. Crossfield, Wheatland County, Banff and Nanton were not original members in 1999 but joined in 2005. The Tsuu T’ina First Nation is included in the region but is under federal jurisdiction.

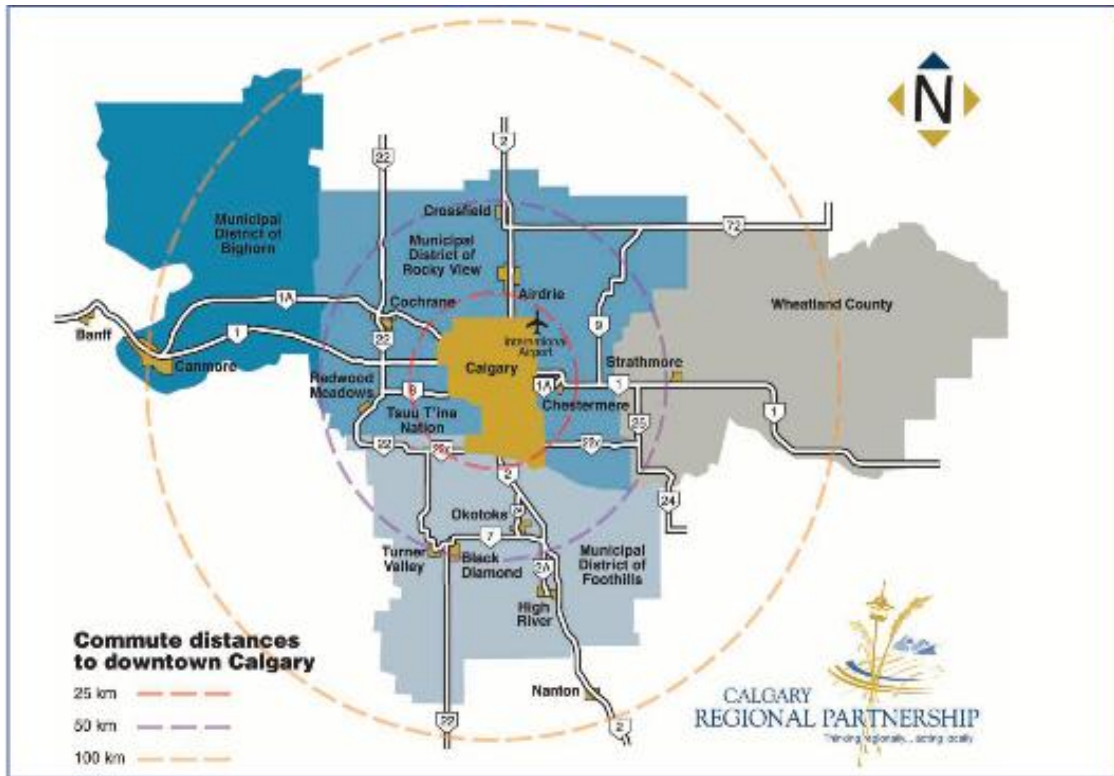


Figure 1. CRP Area.

Source: Calgary Region: Where Opportunity Drives Prosperity, [http://michaelrodway.com/crp/media/60176/calgary08\\_24pg%20\(2\).pdf](http://michaelrodway.com/crp/media/60176/calgary08_24pg%20(2).pdf)

Inter-municipal disputes are common in the Calgary region. Bursts of growth of the city of Calgary and the resultant infringement on bordering rural municipalities have resulted in a history of animosity, grounded largely in controversies over land and more recently, water. Issues over land have been sparked by continual annexation of peripheral property accessed by Calgary as the city has expanded rapidly outward. Water conflicts have involved access to water and associated infrastructure needed as jurisdictions vie for commercial and industrial development. As will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, the inability to reach an agreement over how to share water has resulted in very costly alternatives in accessing water from a considerable distance.

During the research period of 2005 to 2009, member municipalities attempted to set aside their differences and work to create a long-term 60 to 70 year blueprint for the region. At least initially, the CRP engaged in a highly participatory public exercise. Consultations and participation in the

CRP included: in excess of 2,000 participants in a visioning exercise; 700 people involved in nine workshops; 320 internal meetings of CRP elected leaders and staff; and 90 presentations to over 2,000 residents (Calgary Regional Partnership [CRP], 2009a). After four years of work, the overarching planning document, the Calgary Metropolitan Plan, was produced. The key feature was the inclusion of density targets that would reduce urban sprawl and concentrate housing development away from ecologically sensitive areas. The Plan also represented a major breakthrough in water management in the province, providing a unique situation where water would be moving from Calgary, endowed with water licenses for three times its current population, to member municipalities and counties, many of which will face water supply issues within the next twenty years. The creation of an independent water utility was also part of the original plan.

Contestation among some member municipalities accelerated between 2005 and 2009. By June 2009, the three large rural counties announced at the general assembly that they had reached an impasse in the partnership. The fourth rural municipality had left about a year earlier stating their rural nature did not fit with the urban nature of the partnership. The defection of the four rural municipalities bifurcated the partnership along rural-urban lines. In a prepared statement read at the general assembly, the rural representatives indicated they could not accept the land-use structure, CRP voting structure, and annexation provisions. Principles and approaches to accessing regional water were also at issue, involving what the counties believed was limited access to water by medium density rural developments, hamlets and villages. Since the departure of the four municipalities, two additional municipalities have left the partnership, suggesting the existence of ongoing issues.

City-regions are:

...complex areas that are inclusive of many different municipalities and the wider communities of interest that they anchor...In attempting to deal with (population) growth pressures and economic growth, city-regions quite often encounter inter-municipal disputes (Norman, 2012, p.23)

The CRP provides a useful case study because it reflects the type of dynamics described by Norman.

The academic literature notes that the ability of regions to take advantage of opportunities will depend on their ability to overcome internal divisions that can characterize policy making in them (Friskén & Norris, 2002). MacLeod and Goodwin (1999) stress that regional governance formations do not start with a clean slate but have to reform and restructure within the bounds of earlier interventions. Scales are perpetually being redefined, contested and restructured; they are sites of conflict, struggle and power dynamics (Brenner, 2002; Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; Ward & Jonas, 2004). In addition, integrated water resources management, espoused by the CRP, faces significant challenges. As Pahl-Wostl (2006) notes, 'integrated' signals a desire to functionally engage a range of perspectives by formally considering a wide range of potential trade-offs at different scales in space and time. Implementation has been highly problematic; so much so that it is believed few success stories exist (Biswas, 2004). In practice, both the formulation and implementation of water resource policy can be highly contested and social relations and power become important factors (Mollinga, 2001; Singleton, 2002). Many of the characteristics of regionalism cited in the literature are embodied in the CRP, including the partnership's attempt to overcome internal divisions, and the conflicts and struggles arising over power dynamics and water resource management. These factors make the CRP a suitable case study in which to explore multiple dimensions of rescaling.

City-region governance structures can be constructed in numerous ways but as Nelles (2009) states:

...cooperation of some form between local political authorities is at the heart of every regionally-developed governance arrangement. Consequently, any analysis of governance capacity at the city-region scale requires an understanding of the dynamics of inter-municipal collaborative relationships and their commitment to regional collective action (p. 4).

The academic literature speaks of city-regions as being ripe for new forms of governance, but the literature also warns of significant challenges in the development and implementation of these new forms. The CRP partnership demonstrates that processes can be as daunting as they are ambitious

and lead to questions involving the effectiveness of these processes and whether they can be improved.

The Calgary Regional Partnership is the nexus between multiple processes of rescaling involving municipal networks and water and land management. This research explores three linkages within this process. One link involves the CRP's interest in forming a partnership between a central city and a multitude of diverse municipalities that surround it. The second involves the intersection of interests between the CRP and the WPACs and other watershed partnerships that had various degrees of involvement in the process. The third link is the intersection of the CRP with ancillary water-related organizations. These organizations were not formally included in the CRP decision-making process as were the municipal representatives. They also may not have been invited to sit on working committees as some watershed organizations were. However, they may have had a desire to be involved in the process and sought other forms of access to it.

The analytical process of this research involves reconstructing the dynamics of the CRP by examining executive meetings, general assemblies, town-hall meetings, workshops, and visioning exercises through analysis of written documentation. Since the focus of the research is on the power relations that shaped the vision and policy construction of the region over time, the documents deemed most critical to understanding discursive power, contestation, and struggles were: texts of visioning exercises and workshop sessions; minutes from general assembly meeting (nine sets) and executive committee meetings (33 sets); documentation of public consultation and analysis of member issues following release of the draft Calgary Metropolitan Plan; and formal documents including the final version of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan and the province's Water for Life Strategy and the Land Use Framework.

Second, data was collected through 26 interviews involving 28 informants; this was done in order to obtain access through words to an individual's constructed reality and interpretation of his

or her own experience as advocated by Fontana and Frey (2000). In this way, interviews facilitate the exploration and subsequent understanding of how numerous participants in the CRP process engaged in development of a water management and regional governance strategy. Rapley (2004) stresses that qualitative interviews allow researchers the chance to “gather contrasting and complementary talk on the same theme or issue” in a manner that thereby makes sense to them as well as allowing previously hidden, or silent, voices to speak (p. 18). Table 1 lists interviewees by organization including 16 municipal representatives – nine from municipalities remaining in the CRP partnership and seven from municipalities which left; and 12 interviews from water-related organizations – seven from watershed organizations and five from ancillary organizations involved in water issues. This table lays out the stakeholders considered in this research.

<b>Table 1: Interviewees by Organization</b>			
<b>Municipal Representatives<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>Watershed Organizations - WPACs and Watershed Partnerships<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Ancillary water-related organization</b>
<b>Municipalities remaining in the CRP</b>	<b>Municipalities which defected from the CRP</b>		
Calgary	Wheatland County	Elbow River Watershed Partnership	Ecojustice
Strathmore	R.M of Bighorn – [1] and [2] <sup>3</sup>	Anonymous [1] and [2] <sup>4</sup>	Alberta Wilderness Association
Turner Valley – [1] and [2]	Rocky View County – [1] and [2]	Elbow River Watershed Partnership/ BRBC	Western Irrigation District
Airdrie	R. M. of Foothills – [1] and [2]	BRBC/Southern Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council (SRAC)	Anonymous [3] <sup>4</sup>
Black Diamond		BRBC/Water Smart	Water Matters
Redwood Meadows		Highwood River Watershed Partnership/BRBC	
High River			
Nanton			

<sup>1</sup> For some municipalities more than one person was interviewed. Where two individuals were interviewed, those individuals are identified in the study in [ ] brackets.  
<sup>2</sup> Some individuals were involved in multiple watershed organizations. In those instances the two most prominent organizations are identified.  
<sup>3</sup> For Bighorn the two interviewees consisted of the municipal reeve and the chief operating officer for the municipality. The chief operating officer concurred with the statements made by the reeve, therefore for brevity, in the study’s analysis his comments are taken together with those of the reeve to represent elected municipal representatives.  
<sup>4</sup> Three individuals from water organizations wished to remain anonymous. Two were from watershed organizations and are identified as [1] and [2]. One individual was from an ancillary water-related organization and is identified as [3].

Third, newspaper coverage was seen as a data source that provided external interpretation of the internal events occurring within the CRP. As such newspaper reports acted as a mirror on the process and provided a partial account of events. The newspaper coverage of the CRP, analyzed through the sample of 137 articles, included facts, interpretations, views, and opinions. In the building of discourse, the analysis of media coverage largely served two purposes. First, it helped in understanding whether the CRP itself was controlling the message and if so, how and why. It also assisted in ascertaining public response to CRP developments.

### **1.3 Dissertation Organization**

The dissertation is organized in the following manner. To provide the broad context to the research, Chapter Two sets out the socio-economic characteristics and the water management profile of the region; pertinent provincial policies and legislation; and the history of regionalism in the Calgary city region. Chapter Three establishes the theoretical framework of the research. Chapter Four provides the literature review of three subjects: rescaling city-regions, integrated water resources management and discourse analysis of the two subjects. The chapter identifies gaps in the literature which this research seeks to fill. Chapter Five explains the methodology. The research findings are presented in four subsequent chapters. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight present findings as the CRP process progressed through three phases characterized in the chapter titles as ‘Smooth Sailing’, ‘Choppy Waters’ and ‘Running Aground’. Chapter Nine presents findings specific to integrated water resource management. Chapter Ten provides a discussion of the results followed by the final conclusions in Chapter Eleven.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Research Context**

This chapter provides the context to this research. In first setting out the socio-economic characteristics and the water management profile of the region, it assists in establishing the interconnectedness of the region as well as its water management challenges. The next section on water in Alberta provides the broad provincial context and the attendant policy and legislative responses and thereby establishes the framework in which the CRP operated. Finally, the history of regionalism in the Calgary city-region provides valuable background in contemplating the CRP process, including municipal responses, as this research unfolds. Ultimately this chapter will permit contextualization of the research's findings within the complex social, political and historical features of the CRP region.

#### **2.1 Calgary City-region**

##### **2.1.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics**

This section describes the economic and social characteristics of the CRP geographic area during the research period from 2005 to 2009. Therefore data from the 2006 Census of Canada are utilized. Table 2 presents the population data for 2006. The data underscores the significant divergence in population size among participating communities. Population ranges from approximately one thousand people in one municipality to almost one million in another. The data also underscores the dominance of just one major city in the region, Calgary. During the research period, the population rapidly increased in many parts of the region. Between the census periods of 2006 to 2011 the population growth for the region was 12.0 percent. However growth was most pronounced in Calgary and the communities around the city. Calgary, and the communities within 50 kilometers of the city, experienced an average of 31.8 percent growth. This is higher than the

population growth for the province which was 10.8 percent, the highest rate of all Canadian provinces (for a discussion of issues relating to this rapid growth see Miller & Smart, 2011).

Municipality	Population (2006)	Population change 2006-2011 (%)	Distance from Calgary (km)
Calgary	988,193	11.0	-
Chestemere	9,564	55.0	19
Rocky View County	34,171	6.7	31
Airdrie	28,927	47.1	36
Cochrane	13,760	27.8	37
Redwood Meadows <sup>3</sup>	- <sup>4</sup>	-	40
Okotoks	17,145	43.0	45
Crossfield	2,648	7.7	47
Strathmore	10,225	20.0	52
Black Diamond	1,900	24.9	52
High River	10,716	20.6	64
Turner Valley	1,980	13.6	71
M.D. Foothills	19,736	1.7	75
Wheatland County	8,164	1.5	84
M.D. Bighorn	1,264	6.1	90
Nanton	2,005	3.8	92
Canmore	12,039	2.1	105
Banff	6,700	13.2	128

1 Source: Statistics Canada 2006, 2011 Census of Population.  
2 Source: [www.google.ca/maps](http://www.google.ca/maps)  
3 Redwood Meadows is included in Tsuu T'ina Nation population numbers.  
4 2006 Census of Population data for Tsuu T'ina Nation are not available.

Sorensen (2009) provides some useful findings in her study of the characteristics of the CRP, also using 2006 Census of Canada data. When considering the proximity to Calgary, all the CRP municipalities were, by definition, on the ‘urban periphery’ to the city of Calgary (Sorensen, 2009). And, according to the Statistics Canada definition of ‘rural’ and ‘small town’<sup>4</sup>, a very small percentage of the CRP population in 2006, only 5.4 percent, was considered rural. This was significantly lower than the provincial figure of 21.2 percent. In addition, the study concluded that the rural population of the CRP was more highly integrated with the urban population, more

<sup>4</sup> Regions that have a population of less than 10,000 and where less than 50 percent of employed individuals commute to a Census Metropolitan Area or a Census Agglomeration.

interdependent, than was observed for the province as a whole (Sorenson, 2009). This conclusion was based on the fact that for eight municipalities in the CRP, 50 percent or more of their labour force commuted into the urban core – Airdrie, Chestemere, Crossfield, Cochrane, Rocky View County, Okotoks, Canmore and Redwood Meadow. For three municipalities between 30 percent and 49 percent of the employed workforce commuted to the urban core – Black Diamond, M.D. of Foothills, and Turner Valley. For four municipalities at least five percent but less than 30 percent commuted to the urban core – High River, Nanton, Strathmore and Wheatland County. One municipality, Banff, had less than five percent commute to the urban core (Sorenson, 2009)<sup>5</sup>. Finally, generally speaking, incomes tended to decrease as the urban connectedness in the region decreased. However, overall, the CRP had greater economic strength than found in the province as a whole (Sorenson, 2009).

This census data is pertinent to this research because they demonstrate how the characteristics of the region are in some respects distinctly rural and urban, particularly considering how fewer and fewer people commute to the urban core as the distance from Calgary increases. However, there are some important elements of interdependence, especially in considering that apart from the four of five peripheral municipalities in the region, a high percentage of the labour force around Calgary commutes to the urban core. This connectedness did not, however, support further unity as the CRP process unfolded.

### **2.1.2 Water Management Profile**

Virtually all the municipalities of the CRP are situated within the Bow River Basin<sup>6</sup>. The basin is depicted in Figure 2 with some CRP municipalities located within it. The Bow River Basin is one of the four sub-basins of the South Saskatchewan River Basin<sup>7</sup>. The basin is large and complex,

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<sup>5</sup> Bighorn was not included in Sorenson's (2009) study as they had left the partnership by the time of her study.

<sup>6</sup> Some upper areas of the M.D. of Bighorn, Rocky View County and Wheatland County are situated in the Red River Basin and Nanton is located in the Oldman River Basin.

<sup>7</sup> The name of the Bow River Basin was inspired by the reeds that grow along the banks of the Bow River.

spanning 645 kilometers from the Rocky Mountains across to the prairies within which there are 15 sub-basins. The basin is home to 34 percent of Alberta’s population, or approximately 1.2 million people, making it the most highly populated river basin in the province. It is also one of the most highly managed with 13 dams, four weirs and eight reservoirs (BRBC, 2010). The power-generating company TransAlta is a major influence in the basin, having constructed 11 hydroelectric stations. As a result, the basin is highly altered from its natural state. Aside from physical constructions, human activities are impacting water quality and the basin’s ecosystem, with storm water and wastewater effluence presenting particular challenges (BRBC, 2005, 2010).

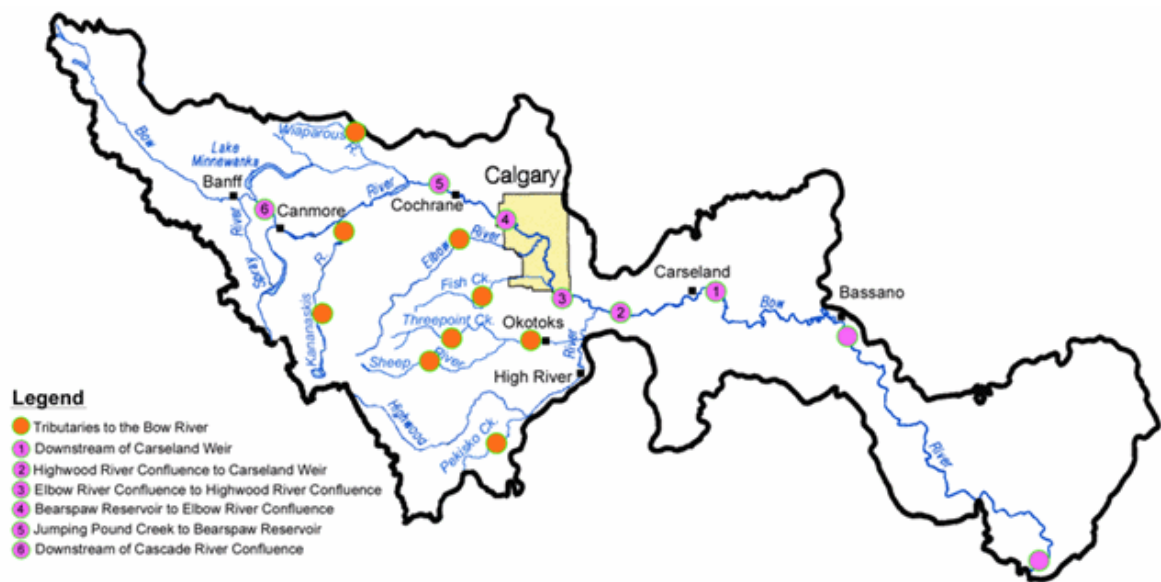


Figure 2. Bow River Basin.

Source: Environment and Sustainable Resources Development website,  
<http://www.environment.alberta.ca/apps/basins/>

It is estimated that between 60 percent and 70 percent of the average annual natural flow of the Bow River Basin is allocated to specific purposes. By sector, the total annual surface and groundwater licensed water allocations in the basin includes: agriculture and irrigation – 71 percent; municipalities – 18 percent; habitat management – seven percent; industrial and commercial – two

percent, other uses – two percent (BRBC, 2010). Within the context of the CRP, the large licensed water allocation to agriculture and irrigation does not imply that the rural municipalities in this study have significant water allocations. Agriculture and irrigation allocations are to irrigation districts and private irrigators. The allocations to rural municipalities are included in the 18 percent for municipalities. Within that 18 percent, Calgary’s allocation is substantial compared to rural municipalities. For instance, Calgary’s licensed yearly diversions total 460 million cubic meters. In comparison the licensed allocations for Rocky View County, spread across about 50 small privately-owned utilities and water co-ops, consists of approximately 4.7 million cubic meters per year or about one percent of Calgary’s licensed allocations (CH2M Hill, 2007).

Numerous organizations are involved in conservation and restorative projects in the basin. The Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) is the umbrella Watershed Planning and Advisory Council<sup>8</sup>. In addition to the one WPAC there are 31 water stewardship groups (Primeau, 2005). In 2008 the BRBC developed Phase I of the Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan focusing on water quality. In 2012 it developed Phase II which focused on land use, headwaters, wetlands, and riparian areas. Broad policy-oriented organizations such as Water Matters and Ecojustice work to advance watershed protection in Alberta and have influence in the basin. Water Matters engages in outreach, capacity building, and coordination to affect water management decisions (Water Matters, 2013). Ecojustice provides legal services to charitable organizations, including Water Matters, to advance environmental causes. In 2010, for example, Ecojustice appealed amendments made by Alberta Environment to the Eastern Irrigation District water license allowing it to provide water for non-irrigation uses. This resulted in the government discontinuing amendments until a policy was established.

Water has elevated urban-rural tensions in the Calgary region. For example, in 2003 a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) prompted the province to consider enhanced meat-

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<sup>8</sup> Further details of the role of the council are presented in section 2.2.2.

packing capability in order to reduce the need to ship live cattle for slaughter across the border. Political opposition to locating the facility in Calgary resulted in it being located in Rocky View County. At the same time the County was advancing a race track, casino and mall development. A deal to extend existing infrastructure between the city of Calgary and Rocky View County could not be reached given that it was perceived as an urban infringement on rural territory (Ghitter & Smart, 2009). Rocky View County was left searching for a permanent license for approximately 2,500 dam<sup>3</sup> of water. Ultimately, water was secured in a deal with the Western Irrigation District. In return for \$15 million to replace aging canals with a 50-kilometer pipeline, a portion of the saved water was sold. The plebiscite which was required under the Irrigation Districts Act in the Western Irrigation District was narrowly passed with 57 percent of the 328 voters approving the transaction, a difference of only 46 votes. The price of the transaction (at about CND \$6,000 per dam<sup>3</sup>) was the highest price paid for water in Alberta at that time (D'Aliesio, 2007). The pipeline that was built deliberately skirted the city, duplicating existing infrastructure, at a cost CND \$40 million (Ghitter & Smart, 2009).

The 18 municipalities involved in this research derive their water from a host of sources and methods including: surface water licenses, ground water licenses, private utilities, small water-coops, individual wells and Calgary water supplies. These are summarized below in Table 3. In 2007, a study commissioned by the CRP assessed the long-term supply needs of each municipality and determined if and when those supplies would be exceeded. For the three rural municipalities of Rocky View County, Wheatland County and the M. D. of Foothills, it was determined that they did not have sufficient water licenses for large-scale regional growth. The study also determined that for nine additional municipalities, within five to 20 years their current water supplies would no longer be sufficient. This assessment plays an important role in my discussion of the policy process because impending water shortages was a main motivator for some municipalities to participate in the CRP.

<b>Table 3: Water Supply by Municipality, Year Licensed Supply is Exceeded<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Year Supply Exceeds Demand</b>
Calgary	Five water licenses	-
Chestermere	Calgary	-
Rocky View County	Licensed surface and ground water through privately-owned utilities and small water co-ops	Sufficient to accommodate localized growth but not large-scale regional growth
Airdrie	Calgary	-
Cochrane	Two water licenses	2022
Redwood Meadows	One water license	2006
M.D. Bighorn	-Individual wells -Small water co-ops	-
Okotoks	Eight surface and groundwater licenses	2012
Crossfield	-Water treatment plant in Innisfail drawing Red Deer River water -One water license for irrigation	-
Strathmore	Two water licenses	2012
M.D. Foothills	-Individual and communal groundwater wells -Surface water licenses	Sufficient to accommodate localized growth but not large-scale regional growth
High River	Twelve shallow wells	2012
Black Diamond	Three water licenses	2020
Turner Valley	Licensed groundwater	2016
Wheatland County	Surface and groundwater licenses	Sufficient to accommodate localized growth but not large-scale regional growth
Nanton	Surface and groundwater	2025
Canmore	Four groundwater licenses from deep wells	2028
Banff	Four underground wells on Banff Aquifer	-

<sup>1</sup> Year licensed supply is exceeded is based on existing water utilization rates.  
Source: CH2M Hill (2007) CRP Regional Servicing Study: Existing Infrastructure and Operating Practices in the Calgary Region; Short and Long-Term Servicing Challenges.

## **2.2 Water in Alberta<sup>9</sup>**

### **2.2.1 International and National Context**

Increased water scarcity has evolved due to several converging developments. During the 1970's environmental problems associated with increased water use became a growing issue resulting in increased demand for water for environmental purposes. This added to a general increase in the demand for water due to population growth and economic development. Ultimately it became clear that existing water management policies were inadequate to manage the process of reallocating water between competing users (Bjornlund, Nicol, & Klein, 2007). During the 1980's this resulted in a policy shift in water management from supply side to demand side solutions, incorporated into international policy at the Rio Convention in 1992. The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 documents that grew out of that Convention spawned policy changes that recognized water as an economic good and heralded the use of economic instruments such as water trading and water pricing; water planning and public participation in water management processes; as well as the formal recognition of water requirements for environmental purposes (Bjornlund et al., 2007). These precepts have since been included in water policies of the World Bank, the OECD, the European Union and many countries such as Australia, Sri Lanka, Chile, Bangladesh, India, Egypt and Brazil (Bjornlund, 2005, Massarutto, 2003). Since then water has also increasingly become recognized as a human right and in July 2010 the United Nations established it as a basic human right (Weber, Samson, & Jakosben, 2010).

Managing water resources within Canada is complex. Under the Canadian constitution, water management falls under provincial government authority with the exception of some very specific areas such as fisheries, navigation and the regulation of inter-provincial and international trade. On a day-to-day basis, the province regulates water quality and quantity (Percy, 2000). Federal and

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<sup>9</sup>Material in this section was reproduced in part from the report "Water for Economic Development in the SouthGrow Region of Alberta" (SouthGrow, 2009) with permission granted to do so by the SouthGrow Board of Directors March 18, 2013.



provincial governments are organized along sectoral lines and responsibility for water management is shared among different levels of government and among several agencies and departments, directed by different and sometimes conflicting mandates (Ramin, 2004).

Water supply and demand conditions vary significantly across provinces, causing provinces to pursue very different policy objectives in their water management and policy. This has resulted in significant jurisdictional differences relating to allocation systems and water governance (Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation [WDGF], 2007). The basis for all provincial water management systems is their water allocation framework. Alberta is among the six jurisdictions that have adopted the 'prior allocation' doctrine, which assigns rights to fixed amounts of water to license holders (for example industries, municipalities and irrigation districts) under a priority system (WDGF, 2007). British Columbia, Manitoba, North West Territories, Nunavut and Yukon are the additional five jurisdictions. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador have water allocation systems based on the riparian rights doctrine whereby those who own lands adjacent to a water source have rights to use the water (WDGF, 2007). In Ontario, the rules for allocation vary according to the category of water; in Nova Scotia timing and priority are combined; and in Saskatchewan, Quebec and New Brunswick water allocation rules are not clearly defined (WDGF, 2007)

In recent years, several provinces have developed broad long-term water management strategies such as Alberta's 'Water for Life – Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability', Quebec's 'Quebec Water Policy: Water Our Life, Our Future', and British Columbia's 'Living Water Smart'. Public participation in the planning and implementation process distinguishes this new era of water management. Public participation involves, for example, stewardship groups, watershed planning organizations and conservation groups being involved in various stages of the planning and implementation process. This was the approach taken with the development and implementation of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. As one study notes: "The development of these formal

partnerships has had a significant effect on water management in Alberta in recent years and reflects a shift towards shared water governance through a process of decentralization” (Poirier, 2008, p. 83). This shift in water management is a movement from administrative processes, regulation and government to an emphasis on outcomes, watershed management, shared responsibility, and governance (Pollution Probe, 2008).

### **2.2.2 Alberta Water Challenges and Policy Responses**

Alberta has 2.2 percent of Canada’s fresh water supply but geographically it is unevenly distributed; eighty percent of water supplies lie in the northern part of the province. Given most of the province’s population and economic activity are situated in the south, the vast majority of water demand comes from the southern half (AENV, 2002). Hence balancing economic and ecosystem water requirements has been particularly challenging for the largest southern basin, the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB). The largest sectoral use of water in the SSRB is for agriculture where 72 percent of all water allocated is for irrigation purposes and an additional two per cent for non-irrigation agricultural purposes. The next largest allocations are for municipal (14.5 percent), habitat management (4.5 percent) and commercial (three percent) (Environment and Sustainable Resource Development [ESRD], 2013a). An assessment of the condition of the river reaches within the basin indicated that 30 out of 33 river reaches already had suffered some degree of environmental impact from the current level of water diversion with 22 main stem river reaches moderately impacted, five heavily impacted and three degraded (AENV, 2005). Within the SSRB are the sub-basins of the Bow River, Oldman, Red Deer and South Saskatchewan. As noted, almost all municipalities in this research are situated within the Bow River Basin. Figure 3 depicts the SSRB and its four sub-basins located within the province.

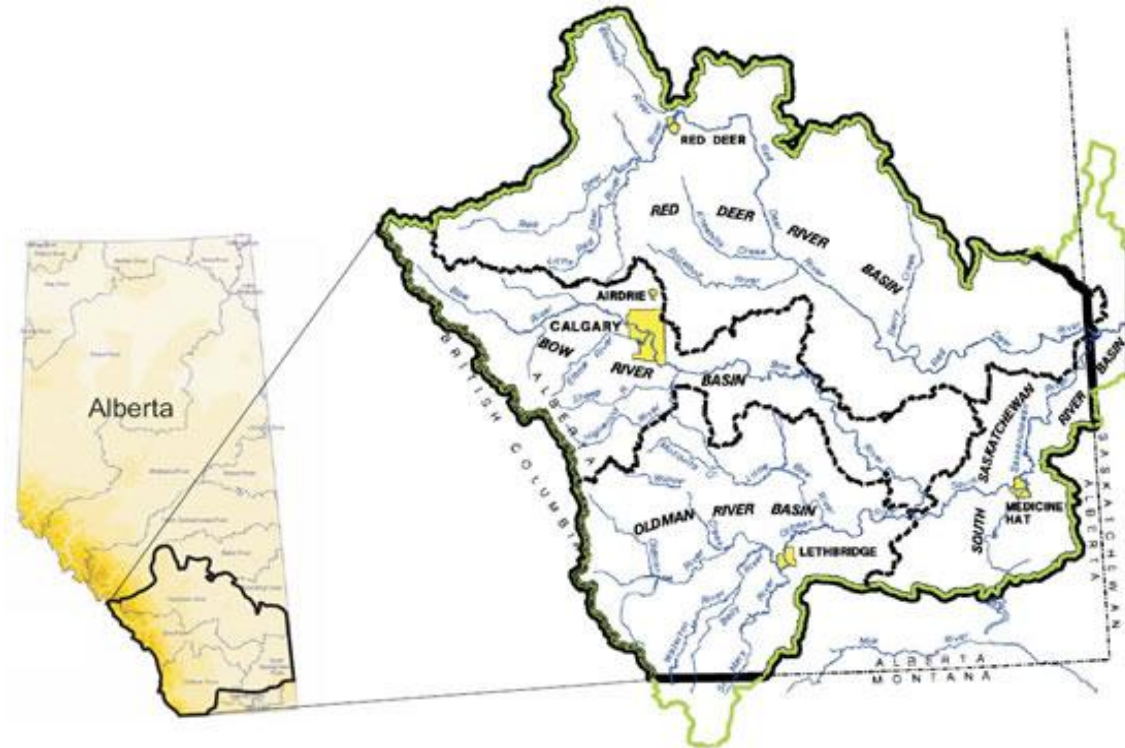


Figure 3. South Saskatchewan River Basin.

Source: Environment and Sustainable Resource Development website,  
<http://www.environment.alberta.ca/apps/basins/>

In 1991, new water management principles and instruments began to take shape in Alberta when strains on water resources were of sufficient concern that the Alberta government established guidelines that set maximum amounts on water allocated for irrigation in the South Saskatchewan River Basin. The subsequent review of water management policy and legislation that ensued culminated in the passage of the Water Act in 1999 and the Irrigation Districts Act in 2000, discussed in more detail below. Then in 2001 the Alberta government embarked on a public review process with the view of establishing a long-term provincial water management strategy. The result was the Water for Life Strategy, released in November 2003. The strategy confirmed that water resources in the South Saskatchewan River Basin were fully or over-committed and that demand for water was likely to continue to grow due to Alberta's population and economic growth as well as increased demand for in-stream uses. The strategy projected that water use efficiency and productivity could be increased by the use of economic instruments, such as taxes or subsidies,

generally regarded as the use of financial incentives or disincentives to affect the behavior of individuals

The Water for Life Strategy outlined three main objectives including: 1) a safe, secure drinking water supply; 2) healthy aquatic ecosystems; and 3) reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy (AENV, 2003). The strategy also established three directives which Albertans needed to concentrate on in order to achieve a number of specific goals and strategic outcomes:

- knowledge and research - all initiatives will be based on sound science and facts;
- partnerships - solutions to water issues need to be based on the effective management of watersheds through partnerships with stakeholders and the public; and,
- conservation - usage and storage of water must be improved through conservation efforts, and increased productivity and efficiency in water use and management.

Specific goals of the strategy were quite ambitious and had narrow timelines. For example these included the following:

- a. to evaluate the merits of using economic instruments to meet water conservation and productivity objectives by 2007;
- b. to ensure that Albertans understand the value of water to the economy and quality of life by 2007;
- c. to prepare water conservation and productivity plans for all water using sectors (best management practices) by 2010;
- d. to implement economic instruments as necessary to meet water conservation and productivity objectives by 2010;
- e. to complete watershed management plans by 2015; and,
- f. to improve the efficiency and productivity of water use by 30 percent by 2015 (relative to 2005 levels).

Since it was foreseen that current and future demands for water would result in demand outstripping supply, water conservation was necessary. That was to be achieved through a 30 percent increase in water use efficiency and productivity. The conserved water should then move to satisfy the increased demand from other sectors of the economy and the environment by voluntary reallocations (AENV, 2003).

The water strategy centres management at the watershed level through a network of partnerships, consisting of three facets (Alberta Water Council [AWC], 2008a):

- a. Alberta Water Council (AWC) – responsible for the development of strategic policy at the provincial level.
- b. Watershed Planning Advisory Councils (WPACs) - responsible for planning at the watershed or basin level. Each WPAC is a stand-alone, incorporated society with a mandate for effective water management in its watershed. Their principle mandates are to develop a state of the watershed (SOW) report and a watershed management plan.
- c. Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSG) – perform a combination of grassroots work, public education and engagement activities.

Currently, 11 watersheds have organizations that are formally recognized as Alberta WPACs. Over 140 Watershed Stewardship Groups have also been established in Alberta. However, concerns over the effectiveness of the WPACs and the ability to achieve their objectives have been raised (Conference Board of Canada, 2008; Poirier, 2008; Wenig, 2010). Issues related to effectiveness include: lack of resources, confusion over roles and responsibilities, volunteer burn-out, and variance in expertise and knowledge among WPAC members. Wenig (2010) concluded:

While having broad-based support, WPAC's seem to have little provincial direction as to what they must actually accomplish. They are supposed to be "leaders" in watershed planning but they can only provide advice. They may or may not produce watershed plans...(they) have a blank slate of tools to use; and they should somehow coordinate with

governmental decision-making [sic] across the land, water and other resource management spectra. The plans can be implemented but only if they are endorsed by governments and others with actual authority... (p. 27).

In their study of water governance, de Loe et al. (2009) state that in Alberta new shared governance mechanisms, such as those envisaged under the Water for Life Strategy, are being created while existing mechanisms like the water allocations system remain intact. They stress that care will be needed to address questions of fit and interplay among these mechanisms. They also advise that the levels of involvement by participants outside government must be matched by appropriate amounts of authority (de Loe et al., 2009)

Since the implementation of the Water for Life Strategy, four progress updates have been issued - the latest one in October, 2012. Over the course of time implementation issues have included: limited progress in managing water to support economic development (AWC, 2005); the need to safeguard water sources by taking immediate action to address aquatic ecosystem degradation; and the need for greater integration of land management and water (AWC, 2008b). The latest update in 2012 concluded that significant progress has been made but work still remains and momentum needs to be maintained (AWC, 2012).

As noted, there has been a general shift towards broad participation in watershed management in solving some pressing water management challenges. The overarching purpose of watershed planning is to “resolve water management issues such as the availability of water for future allocations and river flows needed for protection of the aquatic environment” (AENV, 2002, p. i). At the outset of the Alberta planning process, it was determined that the development of watershed management plans were essential, especially given the high degree of allocation in the Bow River Basin and Oldman River Basin, increasing demand for water, and evidence of negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems (Ohrn, undated).

Due to the scale of the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB), and the complexities involved, Alberta Environment developed water management plans in a phased process (Ohrn, undated)<sup>10</sup>. Phase I, approved in June 2002, ushered in fundamental changes to water management in the SSRB by authorizing the use of water allocation transfers. Phase II began shortly thereafter with the primary goal of determining a balance between water consumption and environmental protection. Its job was to recommend water conservation objectives (AENV, 2003). In August 2006 Alberta Environment released the Approved Water Management Plan for the SSRB which established the water conservation objective for the Bow, Oldman and SSRB sub-basins at 45 percent of the natural rate of flow<sup>11</sup> (AENV, 2006). This was deemed more of a policy instrument and not a licensed allocation. Individual WPACs were given the responsibility for developing recommendations for individual watershed management plans, with the water conservation objective acting as a guide (AENV, 2006).

As part of the implementation process of the Water for Life Strategy, the AWC also established the Wetland Policy Project Team to examine wetland issues in Alberta, acknowledging how integral wetlands are to watershed health (AWC, 2008). In addition, the government has sought recommendations for improving Alberta's water allocation and transfer system. In 2008 the Alberta government announced that it was reviewing legislative changes as to how water is allocated. However in 2013 it determined the current system meets Alberta's needs. Instead, the conversation has turned to optimizing the management and use of Alberta's water supplies (ESRD, 2013b). Finally, various other policy initiatives by the Alberta government began to reflect the integrated nature of natural resources, with the result that water resources would be included in multiple levels of planning<sup>12</sup>. Most notable was the development of the Land Use Framework. This initiative was

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<sup>10</sup> It is also not uncommon for there to be sub-plans involving individual rivers. Examples are the Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan and the Elbow River Water Management Plan.

<sup>11</sup> Or the existing instream objective plus 10 percent, whichever is greater at any point in time.

<sup>12</sup> Other plans include, for example, the Integrated Resources Plans, Forest Management Plan, Wildlife Management Plan, Species at Risk Recovery Plan, and Management Plans for Parks and Protected Areas. For more detail of numerous initiatives see AENV (2006).

significant within this study's context and is outlined in more detail in section 2.2.4 on integrated water and land management below.

## **2.2.3 Institutional and Legal Framework**

### **2.2.3.1 Acts**

In 1991, the Alberta government initiated a review of its water management policy and legislation. By that time the Water Resources Act was a 60 year old piece of legislation and it was clear that the Act did not provide the tools required to cope with the water management challenges that were looming. The government's review culminated in the passage of the Water Act in 1999 and the Irrigation Districts Act in 2000.

The Water Act has a much broader mandate than the management of water allocation, as was the case with the former Water Resources Act. The intent of the new Water Act is to support the conservation and management of water, sustain the environment, and support economic growth under a management paradigm that is to be integrated, shared and cooperative. The Act allows for the transfer of an allocation of water under a licence. This can include all or part of an allocation of water from a license, either permanently or for a specified period of time. The Act also: protects the seniority of existing water license holders that are in good standing; prohibits the export of Alberta's water to the United States; and prohibits inter-basin transfers of water unless authorized by the Minister. In Alberta, licensees are entitled to compensation for losses incurred from amendments, suspensions, and cancellation of water licenses (WDGF, 2007). Also new water licenses issued under the new Act are for a fixed period.

Under the Irrigation Districts Act, owners with land registered on the district assessment role are entitled to a certain number of acre inches of water per registered acre. They can also transfer licensed water allocations to other irrigators within the same district. Transfers of all or a portion of a district's water license outside the district is possible, but only if a plebiscite is held and a majority



of irrigators agree (a procedure noted earlier in the transfer of part of a water license from the Western Irrigation District to Rocky View County).

### **2.2.3.2 Mechanism to Transfer and Cancel Licensed Water Allocations**

Alberta is the only province that allows water to be transferred independently of land. It also stands out because water transfers are seen as a “mechanism to provide economic efficiency and flexibility in basins where water resources are fully allocated” (WDGF, 2007, p. 16). Under Alberta’s Water Act, potentially large amounts of water could be permanently transferred between very different users (a private irrigator who sells his/her water license to a municipality, for example). Therefore, third party and environmental effects may occur. Sections 81 and 82 of the Act establish the conditions under which a transfer will be approved and provides the basis for many of the procedures required in the process. Provisions for the consideration of environmental effects of the transfer are addressed specifically in the Water Act. If it is deemed water is required to protect the aquatic environment, up to ten percent of the allocation can be withheld for that purpose.

The Water Act also provides for the cancellation and reduction in size of licenses. These provisions, under Sections 54 and 55 of the Act, provide for cancellation of a license if the license has not been used for a period of three years and if there is no reasonable prospect of the license being used. The Act also provides for a reduction in the size of a license by any unused portions but, as will be seen in this research, this provision tends to be loosely enforced.

### **2.2.3.3 Amendments to Irrigation District Licenses**

In October, 2003, Alberta Environment approved an application from the St. Mary River Irrigation District to amend one of its water licenses. The license, with priority date 1991, authorizes diversion of 178,000 dam<sup>3</sup> for irrigation purposes. The amendment allowed the district to use about 9,700 dam<sup>3</sup> of water annually for purposes other than irrigation including municipal,

agricultural, commercial and industrial uses as well as other purposes that might enhance ecological values (Bankes & Kwasniak, 2005).

The practice of amending irrigation district licenses came to a halt when, in August, 2007, the Eastern Irrigation District applied to Alberta Environment for a similar amendment to two of its licenses, involving almost 940,800 dam<sup>3</sup> diverted at the Bassano Dam in Bassano, Alberta. Concerns about the health of the Bow River and about the policy ramifications of the amendments forced Alberta Environment to put the application on hold and not accept any further amendment requests while an internal review of the suitability of this type of amendment was conducted. The Minister of Environment directed that a policy regarding such amendments be developed. The policy was implemented in 2009, limiting the volume of water that may be applied for amendments for changes in purpose to licences to a maximum of 1,000 acre feet plus up to two percent of the remaining license volume (Dave McGee, personal communications, June 12, 2013). This practice was subject to legal challenge from those questioning the authority of Alberta Environment to approve these amendments based on change of use under the Alberta Water Act (Water Matters, 2010). This challenge was halted in 2013 when a judicial decision upheld the decision of the Environmental Appeal Board not to grant public interest standing to the parties that appealed the decision (Alberta Wilderness Association, Water Matters, and Trout Unlimited) stating that the parties were not directly affected by the Alberta Environment's decision to amend an irrigation district water license (Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, 2013).

#### **2.2.4 Integrating Water and Land Management**

Alberta policy initiatives have begun to have a major impact on how land and water are managed in the province to reflect the integrated nature of natural resources. Until the development of the Land Use Framework (LUF) of 2008 and its legislated product, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) of 2009, land and water resource management evolved separately. The new policy

creates seven regions based on the major watersheds in Alberta and aims to develop a regional plan for each. Central to the legislation is the notion of cumulative effects management that sets regional thresholds for air and water. The Act is over-arching<sup>13</sup> and as such, resulted in a host of amendments to numerous other provincial laws to bring them into alignment (Bankes, 2010). Also, under the Act provincial and local government decisions require consistency with regional plans developed under the Act (Weing, 2010). Roth and Howie (2011) believe the Act has radically changed land planning and development law. No similar land-use framework exists anywhere in Canada or in any other jurisdiction in the English-speaking world (Roth & Howie, 2011). Under the LUF of 2008 Edmonton and Calgary were mandated to develop a metropolitan plan that would guide development and focus on sustainable principles for the region (Norman, 2012).

Given the broad reach of the ALSA legislation, controversy and confusion has surrounded its power (Wingrove, 2011). A particularly problematic clause raised alarm because of the belief that it gave cabinet the power to rescind certain land development rights which could not be appealed. Critics assailed sections of the Act as being an attack on property rights resulting in the government ordering a review of the legislation. In 2011 the government introduced the Alberta Land Stewardship Amendment Act to clarify the original intent of the legislation and create a review process for people who believe they are directly and adversely affected by regional plans. It also requires public consultation during the planning stages and requires that drafts of the regional plans be provided to the Legislature before being approved (Land-Use Secretariat, 2011)

According to Bankes (2010) the Act lacks concrete commitments; therefore the strength of the legislation will depend on the regional plans as they emerge over time. Each region formed a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to bring expertise and collect local input in the formation of the regional plans. In 2009 the terms of reference for developing a South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) stated the Calgary Regional Partnership's sub-regional plan would be incorporated into the

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<sup>13</sup> For example, the 2012 revised statutes of the Water Act include a provision which directs the Minister to take actions in accordance with any ALSA regional plan.

broad regional plan. In 2011 a draft of the SSRP was present to the provincial government. In assessing the relative importance of regional plans compared to watershed management plans Bankes (2010) states that “a regional plan has the potential to be a remarkably powerful instrument; it is a more powerful legal instrument than a WMP (watershed management plan)...” (p.41).

### **2.3 Regionalism and the Calgary City-region**

Alberta has a long history of regional planning. For the purpose of this research, a detailed account of this history is not necessary (for details see Bettison, Kenward, & Taylor, 1975; Climenhaga, 1997). However, there is utility in appreciating the history of the tensions around regional planning in the Calgary region. This research will touch on major events in the evolution of regional planning and explain the regional tensions around them, providing useful context to this research.

The history of regional planning in the Calgary city-region began when the Calgary Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) formed in 1951. Although the Commission was not disbanded until 1995, over time regional planning has shown little consistency except in frequently generating anger and controversy. The McNally Commission of 1956 was pivotal for it laid out an agenda for orderly growth and development in the province which was to leave an indelible mark on regional planning for decades. The Commission’s recommendations set in motion a uni-city philosophy which, in the Calgary region context, implied “that optimal organization is best achieved through the use of a regional plan which is most efficiently aggregated at a regional scale with one, central, power-wielding entity coordinating growth at multiple scales” (Ghitter, 2010). The recommendations, most of which were enacted into law, effectively prioritized the agenda of urban growth over that of rural interests (Ghitter, 2010).

In theory, regional planning commissions have several useful purposes: they are intended to sensitize local governments to the prospect that local land-use decisions might have an adverse

effect outside the unit's boundaries, provide a forum for discussion and compromise, and provide a forum to discuss issues of mutual concern (Laux, 1990). Climenhaga (1997) discovered in his study of the history of regional planning in Alberta, that planning waxed and waned in concert with the ups and downs of an oil economy. Urban and rural conflicts have been especially pronounced during times of robust economic activity (Climenhaga, 1997). So despite the work of the Calgary Regional Planning Commission during the prosperous 1960's, contestation between the city of Calgary and Rocky View County (then called the M.D. of Rocky View) intensified. During that time Calgary was pursuing the uni-city growth concept and Rocky View County was experiencing a boom in country residential building (Bettison et al., 1975; Price, 1986). Recorded evidence indicates that by 1970 disagreements over Calgary's growth plan, which included plans for major annexations, had reached such a fevered pitch that Rocky View County passed a motion to remove itself from the Commission stating they felt "they had no alternative" (Bettison et al., 1975, p. 424)<sup>14</sup>.

In 1976, in response to Calgary's rapid and uncoordinated growth, the Alberta government established a Restricted Development Area (RDA), comprised of an eight kilometer wide area immediately surrounding the city of Calgary (Price, 1986). It encompassed 894 square kilometers of the M.D of Rocky View and the M.D. of Foothills. The RDA later was reduced to a five mile radius, incorporated at that time into the regional plan adopted by Calgary in 1984 (Price, 1986). The radius represented an urban fringe or buffer for urban expansion. During this time Calgary's annexation bids were, for Rocky View:

.. probably the single most important issue for Rocky View Council because it results in total loss of autonomy and jurisdictional control. This translates into a 'loss' of population and any commercial or industrial development with the lands annexed, leading to a drop in municipal tax revenue. The loss of agricultural land appears to be secondary compared to these issues (Price, 1986, p. 138).

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<sup>14</sup> The Minister did not approve the request to leave the Commission.

However, the city of Calgary saw annexation as a necessity in order to provide enough land for residential housing and industry expansion. Its needs resulted in a priority given to accommodating future urban expansion as economically as possible (Price, 1986). The official position of the city of Calgary has been that it should maintain at least a thirty-year supply of developable land within its boundaries (Sancton, 2005). Price concluded in 1986 that “(t)he structure of the political and planning organization does not appear to be conducive to cooperation” (Price, 1986, p. 202).

By the 1990’s an economic downturn dampened development and caused severe provincial budgetary constraints. As a result, province-wide restructuring was initiated by the government and Calgary’s Planning Commission created in 1951 was abolished through the 1995 Municipal Government Act. In the absence of an over-arching planning authority, the legislation “empowered (the M.D. of Rocky View) to act with new confidence in its development battles with the City of Calgary” (Ghitter, 2010, p. 295). This effect was demonstrated earlier in this chapter when in seeking solutions to water supply constraints, Rocky View County deliberately took steps to find solutions independent of Calgary. This history will be important to remember as Rocky View will become an important rural champion in the later discursive struggles between rural and urban municipalities.

The loose partnership of municipalities that formed in 1999 around the CRP was a tentative first step towards regional planning in the Calgary region since the abolition of the Planning Commissions in 1995. In the Edmonton region, a voluntary regional alliance formed between 22 municipalities in 1995, called the Alberta Capital Regional Alliance, collapsed when in 2006 Edmonton withdrew. This was attributed to lack of motivation to cooperate and an imbalance in voting procedures (Knight & Harfield, 2008). But by 2007 growth pressures in the Edmonton region drove the provincial government to act decisively. It commissioned a study of the region which produced the Radke Report, recommending implementing a board for the capital region with mandatory participation of 25 municipalities (Radke, 2007). In 2008 the Alberta government

officially established the Capital Region Board which has the authority to make binding decisions on regional land-use planning, inter-municipal transit, water and waste water management, social services and economic development, among others (Capital Region Board, 2008). In addition to the imposed regional plan for the Edmonton region, the provincial government initiated regional planning through the Land Use Framework, discussed earlier in this chapter. Together, these initiatives brought regional planning once again to the fore.

The city of Calgary meanwhile has had important fringe developments occur outside its municipal boundaries (Sancton, 2011). The city's own growth has been "relatively low-density, based on segregated land uses and automobile-dependent" (Miller & Smart, 2011, p.279). Given these converging growth pressures, Calgary faces a strategic choice of whether to work co-operatively with municipal governments on its fringe or absorb them through additional annexations processes which would be "considerably more difficult than those it won in the past" (Sancton, 2011, p. 107).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In the preceding sections I have set out the context to this research - the socio-economic characteristics and the water management profile of the region; provincial water policy and legislation in Alberta; and the history of regionalism in the Calgary city-region. The section establishes the existence of growth pressures, water supply constraints and provincial strategies that have converged, creating the impetus to a city-region spatial strategy. The next chapter turns to the theoretical framework.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Framework

All my books...are little tool boxes...if people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash system of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged...so much (the) better! (Foucault, 1975, cited in Patton, 1979, p.115).

Tracing the nature, extent and effects of discursive power within the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) is at the center of this research. This chapter will set out the theoretical framework through which this inquiry is conducted. It will first discuss the ontological and epistemological structure of the research by discussing social constructionism and the postmodern tradition in which it is embedded. Second, the chapter will present two dominant approaches to studying discourse and power - critical discourse analysis (CDA) and post-structural discourse analysis (PDA). Although the approaches share a joint interest in social change and the workings of power through discourse, their conceptualizations of discourse as well as power diverge. The chapter therefore includes a discussion of the rationale for the adoption of the PDA approach. Third, the chapter will identify the empirical strengths and weaknesses of the Foucauldian school thereby clarifying expectations of what the research can contribute and what it cannot. The final section will outline the 'toolbox' of Foucauldian concepts appropriated in this research, including: governmentality; creating and acting on objects; mechanisms of exclusion; contestation and resistance; and Hajer's concepts of discursive space, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions.

#### 3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Frame

Any analysis of discourse is broadly situated within a school of approaches described as social constructionism (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). The unique feature of social constructionism is that it centres on the notion that there are numerous socially constructed realities as opposed to a single reality governed by immutable natural laws (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Burr (1995) sets out four points that characterize social constructionism. First, social constructionism challenges the notion



that our understanding of the world is based on objective and unbiased observations of the world. Rather, it insists that we take a critical stance towards our understanding of the world. Social constructionism “causes us to be suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be” (Burr, 1995, p.3). Second, under a social constructionism lens, our understanding of the world is historically and culturally specific. Our understanding of concepts such as men and women, for example, is dependent on time and place. This has significant implications for our understandings of the world since everything is historically and culturally relative. Third, Burr (1995) posits that if our knowledge of the world is not derived from the nature of the world, then people construct it through the interaction of individuals in social life. Knowledge is therefore ‘fabricated’ or socially constructed (p. 5). These fundamentals of social constructionism lead to the view that there are numerous constructions of the world. Further, each construct invites a different kind of action from people. So for example, the contemporary social construction of ‘mental illness’ is different today than it was historically and the actions of people around the treatment of the ‘mentally ill’ are also vastly different.

Social constructionism is particularly interested in how ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ are constructed, given that they are formed through the social interaction among people. In Hajer’s study of acid rain, for example, he argues that dying forests and lakes and the science around these phenomena did not in themselves provide reason for the public attention to the issue at that time but rather the symbols and experiences that governed the way people thought and acted (Hajer, 1995). Within this framework, ‘discourse’ is seen as a frame of reference, a conceptual backdrop against which utterances can be interpreted (Burr, 1995). Discourse is also a practical tactic and technique within the exercise of power relations (Cocklin & Blunden, 1998).

Social constructionist epistemology is embedded in the broader postmodernism ontological paradigm. Postmodernism rejects the idea that there are ultimate truths, that the world can be understood in terms of grand theories or knowledge frames (Burr, 1995). So as Burr (1995)

explains, one can no longer appeal to one over-arching system of knowledge because there exists many knowledge forms (a host of natural and social sciences, medicines etc.) each operating within self-contained systems of knowledge. Social constructionism absorbed these postmodern influences, including intellectuals such as Foucault who operationalized these concepts (Burr, 1995).

To understand power inequalities in society, as my research attempts to do, a social constructionist approach would be interested in the discursive practices that create and uphold power. Foucault upheld this belief and adopted a post-structuralism view of language as a system of rules and constraints through which power is manifest (Mills, 2004). It is discursive mechanisms which are of interest: “what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and taken for granted” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 75).

There are numerous theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches to discourse analysis, including for example, conversation analysis, applied linguistics, critical discourse analysis and interactional social linguistics. These different approaches, ranging from micro to macro levels of analysis, serve different purposes with some being more suitable than others, depending on the research question. In this research, consideration of each of these approaches is unnecessary but discussion will focus on approaches that best suit this research’s line of inquiry – discourse and the distribution of power between large groups of actors.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and post-structural discourse analysis (PDA) share a joint interest in social change and the workings of power through discourse. They also share the view that discourses are not simply grouping of utterances or statements but they have meaning, force and effect within a social context (Macdonnell, 1986). However their definitions of discourse (and the theoretical concepts that emerge), plus their conceptualizations of power, differ (Baxter, 2002). These differences are discussed below and lead to a discussion of the reasons why post-structural discourse analysis is more suitable to this research.

CDA assumes discourse works dialectically in that it shapes society, has material effects, and is shaped by society (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The most prominent among CDA scholars is linguist Norman Fairclough. He believes discourses have important causal effects on knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and values effecting broader social changes (Fairclough, 2003). He explores the imbrications between language and social institutional practices and broad political and social structures, zeroing in on problems that are broad in scope. CDA is ‘critical’ because it seeks to uncover otherwise obscure connections between language and social change (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse is seen as ideologically steeped in Marxist tradition, producing and sustaining relations of domination between different groups in society. CDA’s analytic approach to discourse is three-fold – spoken or written language texts; text production, distribution and consumption; and discursive events. So, for example, Fairclough analyzes reform of the welfare state under New Labour in Britain. He studies in detail ‘orders of discourse’ (genres, styles and discourses) using textually oriented discourse analysis (TODA) to rigorously analyze public documents. By interrogating Britain’s Green Paper within the broader context of reform, Fairclough for example, demonstrates how a new vision of the world of welfare was linguistically constructed. By extension, his analysis raises global, hidden, and insidious effects of neo-liberalism and threats to democracy (Fairclough, 2001).

The contrasts between CDA and PDA begin with the definition of discourse. Under PDA and the Foucauldian school of thought, discourse is not purely a linguistic concept as adopted by the CDA school. In the Foucauldian interpretation, discourse is a set of statements with institutional force, enacted within a social context and determined by that social context (Mills, 2004). Foucault contemplates discourse in a broad sense comprised of a number of components including objects, the ways of treating those objects, terms, ideas, assumptions, themes, categorizations and theories found within the objects’ discipline (Hajer, 1995; McHoul and Grace, 1993). The first appeal of Foucault in the context of this research is that the broad view of discourse has generated a suite of

concepts which can be deployed, providing a nuanced approach to the empirical analysis. The assemblage of instruments comprising the ‘toolbox’ of this research is only a selection of Foucault’s theoretical concepts. The concepts in this research include: governmentality; discursive space within which objects are created and subsequently acted upon; mechanisms of exclusion and contestation and resistance. The empirical richness this toolbox offers is discussed in more depth below.

A second appeal of PDA over CDA is in the conceptualization of power. Foucault did not see power as ideologically based or emanating from centers of control as does Fairclough. As Mills (2004) explains, for Foucault power is first, not coterminous with economic relations; the economic base does not determine what can be said and thought at a particular time, as would a Marxist approach. Instead he saw economic, social structures and discourse as being intertwined, with none being dominant. Thus the nature of power could be multi-faceted. Second, notwithstanding the importance of the state, power extends beyond it. The nature of discursive power is not tied to a single source such as the state, creating a powerful entity and a powerless one: “(f)or him it is clear that power circulated through a society rather than being owned by one group. Power is not so easily contained” (Mills, 2004, p. 34). Therefore, Foucault saw power as a relation, not one of simple imposition (Mills, 2004). As such, Foucault had an intense interest in the ways in which people negotiate power relations (Mills, 2004). Thornborrow (2002), in her study of police station interrogations, applies Foucault’s theory to show how those in weaker positions, the suspects in her study, were nevertheless able to shape the interaction that took place. Manke (1997) similarly proves power relations between teachers and students was not one whereby complete authority was exercised by teachers.

Baxter’s (2002) study of discourses in the classroom demonstrates the difference between PDA’s and CDA’s view of power. The study observed girls’ and boys’ speech in discussing a particular topic amongst teachers and students in a classroom setting. She observed the students

competed for discursive space. Baxter found that power relations between boy and girl speakers fluctuated, continuously being reconstructed through competing discourse. Female students challenged and resisted male interruptions and hence were being positioned and repositioned through discourse. This observance adheres to Foucault's view that power circulates, rendering people at times powerful and at times powerless. Baxter (2002) zeros in on the difference between CDA and PDA and power:

Where I would suggest that PDA differs from CDA is in its interpretation of the ambiguities and unevenness of power. While CDA is more likely to locate a group identified as silenced or oppressed as unambiguously powerless, such as female speakers within a patriarchal society, PDA is more likely to argue that females are multiply located and cannot be dichotomously cast as powerless, disadvantaged or as victims (p. 840).

Foucault's later genealogical work focused on the *effect* of discourse, rather than *defining* discourse, which had been central to his earlier archaeological work. It was during the genealogical period that Foucault worked to unearth the emergence of dominant discourses. In so doing he established the link between power and knowledge. Foucault's 'power/knowledge' imbrication centers on power as constituted through accepted forms of knowledge. Therefore, at any point in time, he argued, multiple discourses compete in establishing what represents 'knowledge'. Hence, for example, one sees competing discourses over 'modern' medicine versus alternative approaches to healing and the efforts made to maintaining medical science as the authority of the 'truth' and the 'scientific' (Mills, 2004). Society privileges certain discourses as knowledgeable and true and that, to Foucault, was at the root of power.

Using a Foucauldian approach to this research enables me to examine the power dynamics of multiple actors occupying varying positions of power and knowledge. The approach towards discourse explicitly acknowledges power differentials, and their potential, which underpin specific processes. It will aid in my endeavor in understanding the dynamics of a process which attempted to find solutions to water management within the multiple scales and objectives of the CRP. The contestations over water management relates to fundamental issues of how this resource is to be

shared within the overall context of sustainability in the region. The broad discourse over water distribution and water ecology brought forth different interpretations of how water would be apportioned under the CRP framework and how water should be managed ecologically. Individual values and beliefs intersected with ‘scientific knowledge’ of water produced by experts in the field. This dynamic reinforces the need to consider the role of agency given that the host of participants occupied different positions and exercised differing degrees of influence in the policymaking process. This resulted in varying degrees of discursive power.

### **3.2 Foucault – Empirical Strengths and Weaknesses**

Foucault’s approach to studying discourse is especially effective during times of change, when “discursive regularities or routines” are broken up (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 182). This is typically prime time for power struggles to emerge (Howarth, 2000). Researchers have recognized the value in drawing on Foucault to enhance our knowledge of process during such junctures. Richardson’s research for example (Richardson, 1996; 2000 and Richardson & Jensen, 2000), centered on contestation around the implementation of new European Union policy, and how discourse conditioned the policy process, shaped the problems that needed to be solved, the methods of analysis and ultimately the solutions that were considered. On the other hand, Cocklin and Blunden (1998) studied the contested meaning of ‘sustainability’ at a particular point in time rather than over a period of time. Also, environmental debates that Hajer (1995) studied often took place within new institutional territory, where institutional rules and norms were absent. Such was the institutional milieu within which acid rain was debated. Hajer (1995) traced the development of policy from the early problem stages to the development of solutions.

A Foucauldian approach has been used to study issues of discursive power and process over periods of time as well as during particular points in time, but the capacity to generate policy recommendations is limited (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Foucault did not seek to provide

judgments about what should be done (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Sharp & Richardson (2001) state that unearthing and analyzing critical junctures in policy-making may allow for critical feedback on policy *practices*, such as the difficulties with public-participation programs or why certain types of barriers to policy implementation exist, but these studies cannot always be connected beyond practices to material outcomes. Thus one needs to be clear of the expectations of the research's product. In this research, embracing a Foucauldian approach permits, for example, the exploration of mechanisms of exclusion and their effect on discourse. The critical analysis undertaken provides the basis on which to recommend changes to mechanisms that affect process in order to avoid negative outcomes. Since Foucault did not seek to provide judgement about what should be done, as will be explained shortly, the recommended changes to mechanisms that affect process will be considered elements emerging outside Foucault but within Hajer.

Next, in studying contemporary planning processes such as water resources management, some argue that a Foucauldian approach to power and social dynamics leaves such consensual processes unachievable. Saravanan, McDonald, and Mollinga (2009) rightly observe that Habermasian communicative rationality has been adopted as the popular ideology around water management in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, given its participatory and consensual emphasis. But a Foucauldian critique and its emphasis of power and methods of constraint and exclusion would argue that integrated water resources management (IWRM) is thereby wholly impossible. Thus there are two extremes – an idealistic view (in which no party is excluded from discourse or excluded by asymmetries of power) set against a conflictual view of planning (in which consensus in planning is unachievable due to power dynamics). Alexander (2001) argues similar issues in approaching the study of contested city planning in Denmark (this line of discussion is also taken up in Richardson, 1996). He posits the question – how should planning be viewed? While acknowledging that planning is politically imbued, should it nevertheless be viewed as a sincere attempt at democratic discourse aimed to produce a 'win-win' solution, or a Machiavellian exercise involving powerful actors, strategic

action, alliances, and confrontation (Alexander, 2001)? It is therefore argued that the strength of the Habermasian approach relates to its utility as a model for normative analysis but its level of abstraction from reality renders it an ineffective tool for descriptive or empirical approaches. Alternatively, Foucault's genealogical theory and the belief in pervasive conflict and power relations are highly suitable for empirical analysis but do so in the absence of any normative foundation. Therefore, without a normative basis, a Foucauldian analysis cannot propose any concrete actions (Alexander, 2001). Alexander (2001) concludes that, depending on the circumstance, planning involves both approaches. He calls for an interdependent approach that understands the duality of interaction between people.

This research adopts a Foucauldian rather than a Habermasian critique. The research is above all, an investigation into a particular aspect of the process that failed. It is this line of inquiry that one trusts will provide the most fruitful lessons; that through studying the failing of the process we can learn the most. The research does not, however, deny the presence of communicative rationality at specific stages in the process. Indeed Chapter Six underscores the participatory and consensual context within which the early period unfolded. In addition, the research will reveal that even in the absence of a Habermasian critique, the results speak to the pervasiveness of a Habermasian communicative rationality. A central finding of the research is how Foucauldian mechanisms of exclusion created a back-lash, offset by counter-mechanisms that worked to push the process back towards Habermasian communicative rationality, demanding that silenced voices be heard.

The third point relating to empirical strengths and weaknesses involves criticism that Foucault's emphasis on the constraining work of discourse leaves the productive and enabling aspect weak (Mills, 2004; Hajer, 1995). Hajer (1995) argues this point and works to address it. He builds on Foucault by conceptualizing the possibility of story-lines and discourse coalitions that can bring together fragmented and contradictory discourses over issues, creating new discursive relationships and positions. Discourse coalitions are actors (for example, scientists, politicians, activists, or



organizations) whose discourses “merge, are sustained and contribute to particular ways of talking and thinking about a problem” (Hajer, 1995, p. 13). This can enable change through the creation of new meanings, new identities, cognitive patterns and positioning (Hajer, 1995). Hajer found this approach extremely useful in his landmark study of the highly complex and perplexing problem of acid rain. Over time a vast array of disparate discourses merged into the succinct concept of ‘acid rain’ linked to dying forests and lakes and the deleterious effects of smoke stacks. This coalescence had a powerful influence on mechanisms of change and the development of policy solutions. The example demonstrates how the formation of these coalitions into a common narrative, what Hajer refers to as ‘story-lines’, is instrumental in facilitating change (Hajer, 1995). Thus, to address any weaknesses in the enabling aspect of Foucault, Hajer’s concept of story-line and discourse coalitions has been adopted by this research.

### **3.3 Foucault’s and Hajer’s Theory**

I will now turn to detailing the conceptual content of the Foucauldian toolbox deployed in my empirical analysis. As will be seen in the analysis, there is a continual juxtaposition and evaluation of the findings against multiple Foucauldian concepts, along with those offered by Hajer. This section first provides a clear understanding of power and subjectivity before outlining the fundamental features of each concept taken from Foucault and Hajer employed in this research.

Foucault would conceptualize the ‘subjects’ of this research, the participants in the CRP process, as multiply located, at times powerful and at times powerless. Post-structural discourse analysis (PDA) sees the self as not fixed but as constantly positioned and repositioned through discourse. Individuals both negotiate and are shaped by their subject positions within a range of different and often conflicting discourses which vary according to the historical, cultural or social context (Baxter, 2002). Power is contextualized as “never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as commodity or a piece of wealth” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

Power is exercised through a “net-like organization” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Thus individuals are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power; they may be at times rendered powerful and at other times powerless (Baxter, 2002). Therefore within the context of this research, power is seen as circulating within social and institutional structures and individuals within it are not fixed but are being constantly fluctuating, being positioned and repositioned through discourse.

Foucault’s work has had enormous influence on scholarship ranging from sociology and anthropology to English studies and history (Given, 2008; Mills, 2003). He fundamentally reworked concepts of knowledge, discourse and identity, leading to expanding the boundaries across numerous disciplinary fields (Mills, 2003). Since Foucault encouraged people to ‘use this sentence or that idea’ and established numerous theoretical concepts to draw upon, scholars have chosen specific instruments in Foucault’s toolbox that best suits the nature of their study and their research question. Adopting specific instruments is the approach taken up by this research as well. There are four Foucauldian themes through which the central research question of this research is explored. These are: governmentality, creating and acting on objects, mechanisms of exclusion, and contestation and resistance. Hajer’s concepts of discursive space, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions are also employed. The section explains each concept and its applicability to the central research question - the nature, extent and effects of stakeholders exercising varying degrees of discursive power.

### **3.3.1 Governmentality**

Foucault’s concept of governmentality is fundamental to understanding power and post-structural analysis. According to Gordon (1991), Foucault understood the term ‘government’ in both a wide and a narrow sense. Governmentality to Foucault was seen as ‘the conduct of conduct’ or a form of activity “aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons”

(Gordon, 1991, p. 2). It consists of mechanisms for regulating, knowing and disciplining individuals and populations through increased knowledge and surveillance (Gordon, 1991; Malacrida, 2003). Thus Foucault spoke of institutions such as schools, factories and prisons where through ‘microphysics of power’ and ‘techniques of power’ the institutions observe, monitor, shape and control the behavior of individuals (Gordon, 1991). These top-down mechanisms also intersect with ‘technologies of the self’ involving self-surveillance (Malacrida, 2003). Foucault was therefore interested in the array of control techniques that ranged from wide control of populations to narrow control of the self (Gordon, 1991).

Within the CRP, the conduct of participants was shaped by the institutional framework in which it was imbedded. The CRP adopted a municipally-based institutional model. The model established the rules governing process including, for example, mechanisms by which decisions were made. The research found these mechanisms operated as exclusionary instruments deployed at critical stages in the process that silenced certain groups. The institutional model also established what Thornborrow (2002) refers to as the “context, the social relationships...between participants, and speakers’ rights and obligations in relation to their discursive and institutional roles and identities” (p.35). The municipally-based institutional framework helped establish the attendant roles, responsibilities and discursive power of participants.

In addition, this research contemplates governmentality because the CRP is a city-region rescaling exercise enacted within a broader provincial policy framework. As has been noted, water was central to the CRP process. In Alberta water is both geographically and legislatively situated and it is also a highly regulated and prized commodity. Within the CRP, the participants were required to operate under the auspices of broad policies governing water and land - the Water for Life Strategy and the Land Use Framework. The regional interpretation and enactment of those policies, combined with the objectives and pursuits of the participants within the CRP, created a complex power dynamic and became a salient feature to this research.

Miller and Rose (2008) extend Foucault's governmentality in observing contemporary practices and mechanisms that align economic, social and personal conduct to socio-political objectives. They state that while the discursive character of governmentality obviously requires an attention to language, it also requires attention to particular "technical devices of writing, listing, numbering and computing that render a realm into discourse as a knowable, calculable and administrable object" (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 30). Indeed, as is the case with water, 'knowing' water as an object requires notation, ways of collecting, presenting and delivering statistics to groups where judgments and decisions are made. In this case study, calculations of water supply and demand, its quality and quantity, measurements for human and environmental purposes, allocations, trades, and conservation techniques render the users of water administrable within the CRP discourse.

In this research, by establishing institutional power structures, participants are positioned based on the institutional roles and identities, creating a discursive hierarchy. Therefore governmentality has a significant bearing on the *nature* and *extent* of varying degrees of discursive power. Governmentality and the nature of discursive power, the characteristics of the individuals or groups who acquired and exercised the varying degrees of discursive power, will be explored through the institutional structures which endowed and upheld discursive power. Governmentality and the extent of varying degrees of discursive power will be explored through the degree and scope of discursive power exercised within the institutional context.

### **3.3.2 Creating and Acting on Objects**

Foucault conceptualized discourse as creating and acting on 'objects'. Under PDA, discourse is seen as producing something else. So for Foucault, there exist material items and actions which acquired meaning through discourse. Hence objects such as 'madness', 'punishment', and 'sexuality', subjects Foucault studied, only existed meaningfully within the discourses around them (Hall, 1997). The knowledge about, and the actions and practices around these objects, did not and

could not meaningfully exist outside specific discourses (Hall, 1997). In the CRP context, this conceptualization makes discourse critical for it is through discourse that three objects were ultimately established. These included two conceptualizations of water - water supply and distribution, and water ecology and sustainability. The third object was 'local autonomy'. In establishing how water would be managed in the region and in establishing the governance framework under which the CRP operated, these objects, and how they were 'acted upon', were central to the process.

The appeal of the social constructionist approach, as Richardson & Sharp (2002) and Hajer & Versteeg (2005) argue, is based on the belief that how concepts such as water and local autonomy are objectified cannot be imposed in a top-down fashion but are highly contested in struggles around their meaning, interpretation and implementation. Hajer & Versteeg (2005) state:

...these meanings do not emerge 'out of the blue', but come into politics channeled through a particular set of operational routines and mutually accepted rules and norms that give coherence to social life (p. 177).

The approach adopted by this research leads to an investigation into how the operational routines, rules and norms of the CRP constructed the dominant discourse around water and local autonomy. This research finds that objects can have multiple meanings that are determined by the dominant discourse and are also open to being challenged. Similarly, acting on objects can be determined by the dominant discourse and challenged by counter-discourses. These findings help establish the *extent* and *effect* of varying degrees of discursive power within the central research question. The extent of discursive power is associated with the relative degree to which dominant and counter discourses were able to shape the objects which were formed. The effect of discursive power is associated with the determination of the objects which ultimately emerged.

### 3.3.3 Mechanisms of Exclusion

Foucault believed there are processes of exclusion that limit what can be said and what can count as knowledge and truth. Foucault questioned the possible limits and forms of the sayable; what utterances are put into circulation and upheld as valid versus which ones are debatable. He also examined what individuals, groups or classes have access to a particular kind of discourse (Foucault, 1991b). These questions are tied to Foucault's belief that discourses have their boundaries, rules of formation, and conditions of existence. Discourse, he said, is formed by definable rules; it subsists, changes and disappears according to those rules (Foucault, 1991b). So at any point in time, because society privileges certain discourses, they privilege what is deemed knowledgeable and true. For example, Foucault was interested in how, within the discipline of psychiatry, the concept of 'madness' was conceived and how it transformed over time. He found that alongside the established psychiatric discipline were marginal knowledge forms, those which had been disqualified, taken less seriously (McHoul & Grace, 1993). He talks of "...a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980 p. 81). Therefore there are constraints that:

...imply prohibitions since they make it impossible to raise certain questions or argue certain cases; they imply exclusionary systems because they only authorize certain people to participate in a discourse; they come with discursive forms of internal discipline through which a discursive order is maintained; and finally there are also certain rules regarding the conditions under which a discourse can be drawn upon (Hajer, 1995, p. 49).

What is of most interest to studies of discourse is the range of mechanisms which are necessary to support one discourse and exclude and marginalize another (Mills, 2004). These mechanisms include formal rules and procedures as well as informal practices. The concept of mechanisms of exclusion furnish the lens through which the development of discourses, and hence the emergence of knowledge and truth, are traced within the CRP process. In so doing, this research finds that

mechanisms can marginalize discourse, control interactions between participants within decision-making structures, and control interaction between decision-making and peripheral stakeholders. In this exploration the *nature* and *extent* of varying degrees of discursive power is illuminated. The nature of discursive power, the relative degrees of discursive power acquired by individual and groups, is explored through the mechanisms that supported one discourse and excluded and marginalized others. The extent of discursive power relates to the formation of knowledge and truth conditioned through these mechanisms.

### **3.3.4 Contestation and Resistance**

Society deems certain discourses as being knowledgeable and true. Foucault opined that in elevating these discourses to ‘truth’, there is a constant conflict with other discourses that are struggling to gain hegemony. It was discovering how these dominant powerful discourses were created and upheld that was of most interest to Foucault. Power, he insisted, always engenders contestation and resistance. A useful example of utilizing these concepts was in Richardson’s (2000) examination of how the European Union’s concept of ‘rurality’ was constructed through contestation. The E.U.’s spatial vision, contained in key policy documents, was rigorously challenged, reflecting different interests in the specific construction of rurality with important policy implications.

Adopting Foucault’s approach allows one to ask how, why and by whom truth is attributed to particular discourses and not to others (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). In this research, technical knowledge was provided by planners, advisors, geologists and other specialists. Subjective values, beliefs and opinions held by politicians, interest groups and lay people also entered deliberations during this time. ‘Truth’ emerged in the form of policies contained in the Calgary Metropolitan Plan. However, along the pathway to the development of the Plan, contestations over landowner and municipal rights emerged. Conflict related to fundamental issues of how water resources were to be

shared within a regional framework and how that affected landowners and municipalities. It is of particular interest to this research to discover the *extent* to which dominant discourses were challenged. The extent of the varying degrees of discursive power is explored through the capacity to contest and resist as well as the bearing of this power on the formation of dominant discourses.

### **3.3.5 Discursive Space, Metaphors, Story-lines and Discourse Coalitions**

In this case study Hajer's embellishment of Foucault's toolbox furnishes the final components of the theoretical framework. These elements include Hajer's concepts of discursive space, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions.

Foucault spoke of the 'tactical polyvalence of discourse' to refer to the way in which various discursive elements can come together. Hajer (1995) extended this concept to characterize how new discursive space can be created within which problems could be discussed. Hajer (1995) uses this concept to denote the room in which new policy discourses around the environment emerged. In this research, the concept of discursive space is used in the instances when the objects of water and local autonomy emerged around which new discourses were formed.

Hajer's (1995) concept of 'story-lines' was developed as a correction to Foucault's theory given he believed Foucault lacked a proper theory of social change. In Hajer's opinion:

Foucault's emphasis on discipline as the dominant theme of modernization is paralleled by a heavy emphasis on the constraining workings of discourse, but is rather weak on the enabling aspect (p. 49).

To rectify this Hajer proposed the concepts of metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions used in his study of acid rain. Metaphors are the basis on which story-lines are formed. Metaphors are highly useful constructs in providing a common ground, reducing often complex problems into "a visual representation or catchy one-liner" (Hajer, 1995, p. 62). Hence a metaphor such as 'bubbly personality' serves as a visual representation of someone with a cheerful disposition. Story-lines build on metaphors by working to enhance understanding between groups of actors. They are



“...narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding” (Hajer, 1995, p. 62). Story-lines serve several purposes in that they: reduce the discursive complexity of a problem, acquire a ritual character as they are accepted by more and more actors, and allow the inclusion of several narratives (Hajer, 1995). Finally, discourse coalitions are groups of actors (for example, scientists, politicians, activists, or organizations) whose discourses “merge, are sustained and contribute to particular ways of talking and thinking about a problem” (Hajer, 1995, p. 13). The construction of metaphors into story-lines and then into discourse coalitions enable change through the creation of new meanings, new identities, cognitive patterns and positioning (Hajer, 1995). The relationship between story-lines and discourse coalitions is that story-lines are the glue that keeps the discourse coalition together (Hajer, 1995, p.65).

An appreciation of the utility of the elements is demonstrated in Hajer’s (1995) landmark study of acid rain. Acid rain was a highly complex and perplexing problem. But acid rain became a narrative that grew to be associated with dying forests and lakes. A complex problem was distilled into a simple concept, the metaphorical ‘acid rain’ around which diverse individuals could connect. The coalescence around a simple narrative had a powerful influence on mechanisms of change and the development of policy solutions.

In this case study, Hajer’s four concepts are used as conceptual frames in which to study the emergence and power of discourse coalitions which formed around both positive story-lines (the vision for the region) and negative story-lines (the threat to landowner and municipal rights) and the consequences on process that they generated. It is therefore possible to identify the formation of new meaning, new identities, cognitive patterns and positioning as Hajer (1995) found in his study. This line of inquiry helps illuminate the *extent* and *effect* of varying degrees of discursive power by exploring the nature of the development of story-lines and discourse coalitions and the effect on the creation and deployment of the dominant discourses.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter explains how postmodern, social constructionist ontology and epistemology underpin my approach in exploring the research question central to this research. I have enumerated the Foucauldian concepts, supplemented by Hajer, which form the theoretical platform. The essence of each concept was discussed, along with examples of their functionality demonstrated in studies carried out by other researchers or by Foucault and Hajer themselves. The links between each concept and the central research question are identified through the exploration of the nature, extent and effect of varying degrees of discursive power.

Given the capacity of the research to understand discursive power and its effects on the CRP process, the three objectives of the research can thereafter be explored. This is possible because, under the first objective, the research finds varying degrees of discursive power were established under the institutional structures adopted by the process and had significant effects on the process. Under the second objective, varying degrees of discursive power were established through the fixed water allocation system and conditioned the water management outcomes. Finally, under the third objective varying degrees of discursive power influenced the extent to which water-related organizations were integrated into the regional rescaling process. The following chapter will now turn to the literature review which will summarize the substantive literature in three subject areas in order to identify gaps in the literature and identify the contributions this research can offer.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Literature Review**

Rescaling city-regions and integrated water resources management are the subjects at the centre of this research and discourse analysis is the theoretical and methodological approach. The literature review therefore discusses the most prominent and applicable theories and associated studies under three subject areas: (a) rescaling city-regions, (b) integrated water resources management (IWRM), and (c) discourse analysis of those two subjects. The substantive literature in these subject areas tends to underscore the problematic nature of city-region and IWRM processes. However, scholarship often does not investigate these processes in detail to expose the institutional structures and social practices that create and uphold power dynamics. This common weakness forms the bases of this research's contributions. The chapter ends by linking the gaps in the literature to the contributions of this research via the research question.

#### **4.1 City-regions: Economics, Social Reproduction, and Reworking Networks of Power**

The literature on rescaling and city-regions presented below provides various constructs that assist in understanding the forces that have driven city-region formations. Early commentators linked institutional manifestations to broad economic forces. A critical observation was that scales were perpetually being redefined, contested and restructured. Thus Ward and Jonas (2004) suggest the process of rescaling is best understood as an ongoing struggle for control of space. In this vein, numerous theories were formulated and studies conducted to determine why the process was found to be arduous and fraught with problems. The focus on economic forces in studying city-region formations predominated until the 1990's and then gave way to concerns over suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, income inequities, and environmental degradation; this shift channelled regional planning into a new direction. Studies of city-regionalism and social reproduction (conserving open space, reducing commute times, and providing affordable housing) followed this development. The

literature justified why matters of social reproduction be addressed at the regional level. However issues common to rescaling efforts persist, especially reworking networks of power. We are told that numerous governance models exist and that manifestations will be based on societal and local conditions. In examining this literature below, it is argued that scholarship does not explore the processes, contestations, institutional mechanisms, and the microcosms of power which are the basis of this research's contribution.

#### **4.1.1 Literature**

This literature review traces two main avenues in studying city regions which include (a) economic drivers that drove early forms of city-regionalism and (b) social drivers including environmental degradation that drove more contemporary forms. Both drivers involve city-region power networks. Early studies of the formation of city-regions concentrated on the effects of globalization, neo-liberalism, and transitioning from Fordism to post-Fordism. Two streams of regulation theory conceptualized the broad evolution of governance given this transition. The first stream consisted of the concept of 'regimes of accumulation' which refers to the underlying basis of society, a balance between production and consumption as well as profit, reinvestment and consumption. The second, 'mode of regulation' refers to the institutional structure that supports the regimes of accumulation. Economic forces were found to expand and accelerate the movement of commodities, capital, money, people and information. In so doing, they redefined the scales under which these processes took place and the interaction between scales (Brenner, 2002; Jessop, 1988; Swyngedouw, 1997). Hence, "(v)irtually every government, at every conceivable scale of governance, has taken measures to align its social and economic policy to the exigencies and requirements of this new competitive realization" (Swyngedouw, 2000. p. 66). In this process, the nation state was seen to be rescaled with institutions emerging upwards, downwards and sideways relative to the nation state (Jessop, 1997). City-regions and private-public partnerships had shifted from government to governance. Governing power had become more fragmented, involving many

more agencies in framing local regulatory frameworks, in policy-making and in seeking access to the resources and capacities to implement policy. As such municipal government became but one agent in this mix (Jessop, 1995; Tickell and Peck, 1996). Cities that sought to be major players in this global enterprise are aware that they needed the peripheries to do so (Lefèvre, 1998). These studies established a rich theoretical body of work. Jessop's theory of regime of accumulation and mode of regulation were influential in the study of the institutional manifestations arising from economic forces. Foremost among these developments has been the European Union and numerous bi-lateral free trade organizations (Florida & Jonas, 1991).

While some argued city-regions had become privileged sites for important experiments in new forms of governance (Brenner, 2002; Swyngedouw, 1997), others argued it was the city and city-regions where the various contradictions and tensions of neo-liberalism were played out and where neo-liberalism had its most significant economic, political and social impacts on everyday life (Jessop, 2002). These scales were perpetually being redefined, contested and restructured (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999). This early work on city-regionalism tended to portray cities as hostile to each other, due to intense interurban competition for economic growth and investment within the context of neo-liberal ideologies (Peck and Tickell, 1995). Urban regime theory, the process of building powerful cooperative structures, was developed to emphasize the challenge in coordinating various actors, possessing varying types of resources, into a cooperative structure (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994; Stone, 1993). Human geographers, long working to develop theories and conduct studies to account for institutional, social and cultural factors, developed the widely-applicable rational choice theory which is based on the premise that individuals act by balancing costs and benefits to arrive at a solution that maximizes personal advantage. Amin and Thrift (1995) developed the concept of institutional thickness to assert that social and cultural factors are at the heart of economic success. In exploring these factors, some studies found a notable absence of trust, networks and inter-institutional synergy (MacLeod, 1997). Lefèvre (1998)

utilized public choice theory and fragmentation versus consolidation concepts to explain the difference in regional formations between Canada and the United States.

More recent work emphasizes that rescaling entails disruption and re-composition of the networks of power that tie political actors together within and across scales (McCann, 2003; McGuirk, 2000). These relationships are continuously being defined, contested, and reconstructed based on power relationships between actors across many political and economic levels (Silver, 2009). Game theory models have been used to assess municipal cooperation as local government actors must anticipate the response of those with whom they interact under a high degree of uncertainty (Feiock, 2004; Steinacker, 2004). Equally influential has been social capital theory which relates to the obligations, expectations and trustworthiness in which actors operate; the quality of information channels to which they have access; and norms and sanctions to discipline relationships (Maloney, Smith, & Stoker, 2000).

Sancton has been a leading researcher in studying city-region formations in Canada (see for example Sancton 1994, 2005, 2008). Historically Canada has experienced numerous regional amalgamations and consolidations through provincial government decree. Thus the networks of power were established by top-down provincial government mechanisms. Today this approach to city-regionalism is outmoded, seen as too costly, too inflexible and too disruptive to democratic local decision making (Sancton, 2003). The new Canadian reality is that increased globalization has resulted in Canadian provinces and economic regions becoming less linked to each other than they are to other parts of the world (Keil & Kipfer, 2003). For a major city such as Calgary, it sees itself as an 'emerging global city' (Calgary Economic Development, 2013). Globalization is forcing city-regions to look at themselves as a distinct entity (Norman, 2012). Those with strong partnerships and some form of partner-based governance are best able to exploit their strengths and remain more competitive (Tewdwr-Jones & McNeill, 2000). The sheer scale and scope of issues requires new

flexibilities at the regional level where concerns are more about results rather than structures, partnerships rather than mergers (Rosentraub & al-Habil, 2009; Sancton, 2002).

Efforts at forming regional alliances are still relatively new and require continual adaptation (Collin, Breux, & Rivard, 2006; Hodge & Robinson, 2001). Leibovitz (2003) argues that wider institutional and regulatory structures in Canada do not support the development of trust and collaboration. He studied Canada's technological triangle to investigate institutional constraints and found that major impediments to cooperative behavior included reluctance by local authorities to give up whatever powers they still have, failure to develop relationships of trust between local authorities and the regional level, concerns involving fair shares of incoming investment, and tensions between public and private sectors (Leibovitz, 2003).

Nelles (2009) states that the governance capacity of city-regions is based on the ability of actors in a city-region to recognize collective challenges and opportunities, assemble relevant actors, debate alternatives, secure agreement on solutions, and take collective action. She developed the concept of 'civic capital' to embody the notion of civic engagement at the regional scale to include both politically-driven and non-political community action, formal associations and informal interpersonal networks. In her study of Toronto, power asymmetries between Toronto and the region fuelled regional tensions and reinforced the incentives for municipal rather than regional outcomes. No regional leader emerged. She described the city-region as a "strong city, weak region" (Nelles, 2009, p.11). An additional study of ten middle-sized cities in Canada that sought to determine the extent of rescaling of power and new voluntary forms of governance found no real city-region scope to strategic planning exercises and believe the presence of a central city (considered 'low fragmentation') transpired against regional approaches to issues (Collin et. al., 2006). Some studies have focused specifically on urban-rural partnerships and found multiple challenges including partners preoccupied with defending local interest, long-standing points of contention, competitive attitudes, rural suspicion of urban motives, lack of skills and experience,

and bureaucratic and administrative structures that promote and perpetuate urban-rural division (Caffyn & Dahlstrom, 2005; City-Region Studies Centre [CRSC], 2010).

New institutional arrangements are built around governance “conveying the notion that existing institutions can be harnessed in new ways, that cooperation can be carried out on a fluid and voluntary basis...through horizontally linked organization” (Savitch & Vogel, 2000, p.161). The ability of regions to benefit from their comparative advantages will depend on their ability to overcome internal divisions, involving a high degree of social and political engagement among many individuals and groups (Friskin & Norris, 2002; Scott & Storper, 2003). The literature tends to conclude that the critical factor in relationships is the underlying culture, interrelationships, motivations, and values (CRSC, 2007). Earlier Foster (1997) argued that the greater the similarity between people and places within a region, the more apt they were to forge alliances.

Economic forces and networks of power drove the study of city-region formations up until the 1990's. At that point, concerns over social issues including environmental degradation began channeling regional planning into a new direction. Economic development which dominated regionalism was replaced by the paradigm of balancing environmental, equity and livability concerns with economic objectives (Wheeler, 2002). Sustainable development had become a necessary dimension in new regionalism (Haughton & Counsell, 2004). It is now commonly held that interconnections between ecological and social systems are such that environmental challenges cannot be resolved by arrangements that ignore these relationships or operate on a single scale (de Loe et al., 2009). Environmental geographers who study environmental integration find that combining economic and environmental policy at the regional level involves a shift away from considering the environment in the final stages of economic decision-making to it being considered at a more strategic level, in the early stages of policy design (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001).



The requirement for larger spatial scales is especially necessary for managing water and land (Gibbs and Jonas, 2001). Ultimately this implies the rescaling of environmental policy. Similar to rescaling of the state, discussed earlier, it is believed that environmental policy is marked by the displacement of power upwards, downwards and horizontally and is also ultimately a process of rescaling (Gibbs & Jonas, 2000). But establishing and implementing policy on a regional spatial scale is challenging, involving questions of who is in control, who sets the agenda, who allocates resources, who mediates disputes, and who sets the rules of the game (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; Wilbanks, 1994).

The creation of environmental governance is based on many factors including societal norms, objectives, how society should be organized, how problems should be addressed, and by whom (Glasbergen, 1998). In a study by de Loe et al. (2009) a variety of models are laid out that can include, for example, regulatory, market regulation and co-operative management as well as combinations of these forms. They use the case of the Murray-Darling Basin of Australia to demonstrate how a governance model can combine elements. Unfortunately, although Australia is seen as a world-class leader in water reform, the water crisis was so severe water reform may have been too late. They urge water governance be established and shored-up before a crisis (de Loe et al., 2009). In studying decentralized regionalism of environmental management in general in Australia, Lane, McDonald, and Morrison (2004) find that rates of citizen participation are not uniform and communities are as much sites of competition as cooperation, hence there is a continuing need for the role of government as a mediating force. Ultimately governance forms are embedded in, and emerge from, particular historical, political, biophysical and socio-economic circumstances. These forms of governance may have multiple centers of decision-making, many mechanism for coordinated action, and authority may be distributed with networks or nodes of actors linked across scales (de Loe et al., 2009).

While, Littlewood, and Whitney (2000) studied two English regions and their regional institutional contexts to interrogate environmental policy making and identify barriers to what might be achieved under a regional framework. The first barrier they found was past traditions of regional collaboration or conflict that may continue to influence the effectiveness of partnerships. Second, there were accountability issues due to the lack of a formal system of regional governance. Third, standard English administrative boundaries did not fit with the biological boundaries of water catchment-based areas (While et al., 2000). In underscoring the potential for contestation, studies have found conflict can broadly centre on ecological versus economic priorities as well as more narrowly on interpretations of the meaning of 'sustainability'. In examining regional development agencies in Britain, Gibbs and Jonas (2001) found them to be sites of struggles around economic and environmental issues and found regionalization of environmental policy in England is an uneven process. An additional empirical study by Gibbs et al. (2002), using urban regime theory (which argues that regimes are formed by political, economic and cultural contexts) and regulation theory (discussed earlier), found that while sustainability issues are important, they are rarely a driving concern in any locality and they are often in conflict with economic development. Cocklin and Blunden (1998) used real regulation theory (taken from Clark, 1992) which focuses more on social process, embedded in administrative frameworks and practices, to study interpretations of sustainability. Their study explored divergent interpretations of sustainability in the context of competing claims for the use of water in New Zealand and found the dominant discourse was upheld by the legal-administrative-regulatory system.

#### **4.1.2 Gaps in the Literature**

The value of the body of research on city-regionalism relates to its emphasis on the economic forces and origins creating regions, their manifestations and the challenges in their development. But these studies of scales, spaces and structures analyze institutional formations and changes, but not the process of establishing these formations that detail the dynamics amongst the participants

involved. Thus the outcomes resulting from various factors bearing on the process are based on broad observation. Aside from Richardson's studies, which are discussed in the section on discourse, very few studies analyze processes in detail despite urgings by prominent scholars such as Swyngedouw (1997) to do so.

The second stage in the academic literature which concentrated on the integration of social and environmental issues in rescaling efforts provides us with the rationale for the need to address these issues at the city-region level. In establishing environmental governance in a region, studies identify the issues commonly encountered and the nature of the governance models that have evolved. However, while the theoretical and empirical approaches discussed above identify contestation, marginalization of environmental concerns, and the bearing the past has on contemporary processes, they also do not provide detail of how these processes unfold, how conflicts are mediated and how solutions are developed.

As noted earlier, this study focuses on the reworking of networks of power within a rescaling process that sought to manage water and land regionally. The research goes beyond existing literature, which has focused on economic and social drivers and broad power dynamics, to study power dynamics in detail. It also advances the earlier concepts of networks of power found in the literature, including institutional thickness, game, social capital, civic capital and network theory, by using Foucault's theoretical lens as the basis for the investigation. This research explores the nature, extent and effects of stakeholders exercising varying degrees of discursive power, exposing the hidden dynamics of a city-region rescaling process. Through the exploration of Foucault's concept of governmentality, the research determines how institutional power structures were established, how that positioned participants with their institutional roles and identities, and how a discursive hierarchy was created. Through the exploration of mechanisms of exclusion, the marginalization of discourses and the effect on process is examined. Next, Foucault's concepts of creating and acting on objects reveals how the dominant discourse can define the meaning of objects such as 'water'

and ‘autonomy’ and condition how they are acted upon. The research also investigates how counter-discourses were created and their effect on the process. In addition to the knowledge gained from a detailed study of process and the effects of varying degrees of discursive power, juxtaposing findings alongside existing scholarship results in unconventional findings that relate to the prominence of municipal government relative to other participants, as well as the relative lack of public-private partnerships within the CRP.

## **4.2 Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**

The literature summarized below underscores how IWRM has gained widespread currency as a resource management concept<sup>15</sup>. Scholarship is therefore replete with empirical examples of challenges in its implementation. A consistent conclusion of the research is that while the watershed scale of management may be appealing, it is fraught with problems. Social capital theory, policy network, and adaptive management theory are the most frequently used concepts in studying the thorny and complex dynamics of these processes across institutions and organizations. Studies often conclude by stressing the need to link watershed management to other socially and politically relevant scales, as difficult as that might be. In examining this literature below, it is argued that, similar to city-regionalism, few studies interrogate process in detail to understand how contestations are navigated given the multi-layered, multi-purpose, multi-actor dimensions of contemporary water management.

### **4.2.1 Literature**

Given their world-wide perspective of water management, Saleth and Dinar (2000) believe that the paradigm shift from water development to water allocation is resulting in a radical reorientation of water institutions, one being the increasing importance attached to the concept of integrated water

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<sup>15</sup> Studies use the terms ‘integrated water resources management’, ‘integrated watershed management’, ‘integrated resource management’ and ‘integrated water management’. While the terminology differs, the studies have a common focus on the ‘integration’ of social and natural systems (including land and water) hence relate to similar subject matter. The current study adopted and used the term ‘integrated water resources management’.

resources management. Government decision making has been replaced by multi-scale, poly-centric governance which recognizes that a large number of stakeholders now contribute to the management of water (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007a). By definition, IWRM “is a process which promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems” (Johch-Clausen & Fugl, 2001, p. 502)

Two themes have consistently been advocated in the water policy literature – that the watershed is the appropriate scale for organizing water management and second, since decision making structures at the watershed level generally do not exist, they should be created (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005). However, using the watershed as a unit of organization raises a host of issues: where should the watershed boundaries be drawn, how should participation be structured, and how are decision-makers accountable? Watersheds are complex phenomena and answers to these key questions are politically charged. As Blomquist & Schlager (2005) stress: “(w)ater’s nature as a valued resource brings it squarely into the domain of politics, where individuals and groups struggle for control of decision making” (p. 113). Others contend water management issues, rooted in seemingly infinite ecological, social and political interactions across temporal and spatial scales, are highly complex, context-dependent, socially constructed and technically uncertain (Ferreya, de Loe, & Kreutzwiser, 2008; O’Riordan, 1989; van Bueren, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 2003). Some hold that it is fundamentally a relationship between water and social power (Steinberg & Clark, 1999).

Johch-Clausen and Fugl (2001) state that while ‘integrating’ means managing both land and water under IWRM, it also means integrating both natural *and* human systems. IWRM requires an unprecedented level of cooperation (Allan, 2003). In navigating this complex and thorny human terrain, work by Pahl-Wostl (for example Pahl-Wostl 2002, 2006; Pahl-Wostl et al. 2007a, 2007b) has been prominent in emphasizing ways to manage the human dimension to IWRM. Social capital theory tells us that new opportunities for multilevel cooperation and learning can be created. But

while social capital can be strengthened, it can also be diluted as Reddy & Reddy (2005) found occurred because of political interference and elite domination. In a world characterized by uncertainty and change, Pahl-Wostl (2006) advocates adaptive management - learning to manage by managing to learn. Actors need to rethink and renegotiate their assumptions, strive to answer good questions, take into account differing perspectives and avoid processes becoming immobilized (Pahl-Wostl, 2006).

Numerous empirical studies demonstrate why water management today, with its multi-layered, multi-purpose, multi-actor dimensions, is so difficult. In a study of IWRM in Ontario and Nova Scotia, Cervoni, Biro and Beazley (2008) find that neither province has achieved the ideal IWRM due to lack of coordination, water resources crossing political boundaries, constitutional responsibilities causing fragmentation and lack of clarity in water management and responsibilities. Ferreyra, et al., (2008) use policy network theory, which emphasises policy making and power in different policy sectors, to study water quality protection in Ontario. They find that there needs to be more flexible ways of linking watershed imperatives to other socially and politically relevant scales. Mitchell's (2005) research underscores that IWRM plans often become orphaned because they do not have any statutory basis. His review demonstrates how IWRM can enhance its effectiveness by linking to statutory based regional and land-use planning. Some call into question the workability of the IWRM paradigm, full-stop (Biswas, 2004).

All spatial scales, including the watershed scale, are constantly being redefined, contested and restructured (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999). Carter, Kreutzwiser and de Loe (2005) found that while increasing stakeholder involvement is a central tenant of IWRM, as more people are involved and as efforts are made to coordinate across sectors including land, the likelihood of conflicts increased. Their case studies found a host of issues, among them time constraints, lack of coordination, and lack of stakeholder involvement in decision making. Leach and Pelkey (2001) reviewed 37 empirical studies on watershed partnerships and, using factor

analysis to group themes, found one of the most significant findings was the importance of effective leaders and facilitators and interpersonal trust.

In the U.S. instances of successful IWRM are rare - the Tennessee Valley Authority is often held up as the ultimate model (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005). Singleton's (2002) study of three cases in the Pacific Northwest found successes in some areas. However, among her findings she reports that the larger the watershed scale the more problematic was collaboration due to much more complex linkages and asymmetries relative to small watersheds. Given the size and complexity of the Bow River Basin described in Chapter Two, the watershed scale in this research would be considered large. Second, similar to other studies' findings, place-based settings are seldom sites that are "politically innocent" but places with complicated socio-economic histories that can create "land mines" for contemporary processes (Singleton, 2002, p. 70). Finally she found public mistrust of expert and scientific knowledge was a major obstacle (Singleton, 2002). Steinberg and Clark (1999) argue that the common narrative which characterizes a clear division between the "rural/exurban victim and the urban exploiter" is incomplete and underestimates the potential for positive partnerships between resource-providing and resource-consuming communities (p. 479). Their study focussed on the resource-supply region, a local reservoir, providing water to a large city, and found underlying tensions among residents of peripheral resource-provision areas that were among those lacking power. While the relationship among stakeholders was not harmonious, it was also not a "zero-sum game" as stakeholders agreed it was in everyone's best interest to maintain the reservoir as a unique place (Steinberg & Clark, 1999, p. 482). Other studies conclude that participatory opportunities need to be carefully facilitated and mediated, effective conflict resolution tools are necessary, and improvements to approaches need to be made through constant review and learning (Lane et al., 2004; Margerum, 1995).

#### **4.2.2 Gaps in the Literature**

This literature tends to emphasize the institutional and jurisdictional challenges of integrated water resources management but few interrogate in detail the difficult processes organizations must navigate in working within complex environments that nonetheless try to be inclusionary. Challenges can come into sharp focus when, as in the CRP case, attempts are made to embed a major water sharing component within existing institutional structures, involving multiple municipal and water-related organizations. Foucauldian discourse theory and the concept of discursive power is used as a unique, alternate theoretical framework to provide the platform to study multiple levels of influence in a hitherto relatively unattended avenue of inquiry related to integrated water resources management.

The study is able to explore several new avenues related to IWRM which form its contribution to the literature. Existing literature has taken a broad perspective in focussing on the challenges in linking watershed management to other socially and politically relevant scales. This study delves deeper into these challenges using a Foucauldian theoretical approach, distinct from social capital, policy network and adaptive management theory. In deploying the concept of governmentality, the research interrogates how the provincial government shaped and conditioned the CRP's integrated water management plan. The research is also able to ascertain, through the concept of creating and acting on objects, differences in how water was objectified by various stakeholders and the influence of the dominant discourse on the water policy that emerged. The degree of involvement and effectiveness of water-related organizations in the CRP process is also evaluated through the theoretical concept of mechanisms of exclusion. Given that participating municipalities had asymmetrical rights to natural resources, an important dimension to this research relates to how water rights affected the process through endowing certain participants with discursive power.



### **4.3 Discourse Analysis**

This section summarizes studies which have used discourse analysis to examine rescaling of city-regions and integrated water resources management. In identifying gaps in this literature, the current research is able to contribute by exploring a unique Canadian case study with its own regional considerations and enhance contemporary research by drawing on both written documentation and interview data.

#### **4.3.1 City-regions**

The previous two sections show how the scholarly treatment of the rescaling of city-regions and water management takes numerous forms, based on numerous theoretical constructs. A limited number of studies use discourse as a theoretical and analytical framework. Studies involved in using discourse analysis are grounded in the social constructionist school of thought that places primacy on the social, cultural and historical milieu. The social constructionist approach adopted in this research has considerable appeal because it acknowledges the messy and complex interactions that make up policy processes and acknowledges that there are contestations and struggles (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Using a Foucauldian lens, the approach also offers a fruitful means of analyzing power dynamics and process because, relative to other studies, it permits a more detailed exploration of these topics.

Richardson's studies of rescaling and regional planning under the E.U. represent one of the most significant bodies of research studying discourse and rescaling (Richardson, 1997; Richardson, 2000; Richardson & Jensen, 2000). Foucault's theory of truth and power is deployed in interrogating the process of the emerging discourses of European spatial development involving a new policy language, new knowledge forms and new policy options (Richardson, 2000). By studying relations at work within broader policy processes, Richardson draws attention to how policy discourse is framed by wider process as well as a complex body of values, thoughts and practices which includes

scientific knowledge alongside lay knowledge and power relations (Foucault, 1979, 1990; Richardson, 2000). Rescaling and regional planning are seen as concepts that are contested through multiple discourses. What is deemed as ‘truth’ is socially produced. In studying the dynamics of these discourses, Richardson uses Foucault’s theory as a powerful tool to show, for example, how the mechanism of dominant discourses of European integration and a single market prevailed over the weaker discourses of environmental integration policy outcomes (Richardson, 1997). He shows how discursive struggles shape policy in unanticipated ways by reconstructing a particular discursive strand in detail. Discourses are identified directly from the policy and related literature and the discursive struggles and discursive shifts that became the focus of the research emerge from Richardson’s case study. Interviews with policy actors focused on their perception of the power struggles that were taking place (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). In another study Richardson (2000) demonstrates how the mechanisms of contesting discourses structured the new vocabulary of symbols and visions embedded in new institutional forms and relations to rescaling of European ‘new’ rural space.

Prominent linguist, Norman Fairclough, builds on Jessop’s work of globalization and the establishment of city-regions by analysing the discourse around globalization (for example, Fairclough, 2006). Distinct from a Foucauldian theoretical approach, Fairclough exercises his theory of power and change as emerging from changes in discourse, genre and style to identify the effects of powerful global neo-liberal ideology. One of his many studies includes the rescaling of the Romanian universities to understand how strategies and discourses from the ‘west’ (for example, mentoring) have been re-contextualized and institutionalized at the local level. Outcomes can be uneven, contradictory and unpredictable, linked to broader, global forces (Fairclough, 2006). Fairclough’s studies contemplate the imposition of globalization and its discourses on local practices rather than contestation, resistance or power asymmetries that produce those results.

In evaluating the success of regional governance formations in rural Australia, Morrison and Lane (2006) identify prominent discourses of regionalism, new public management (and its attendant principles), collaborative planning, and decentralized authority. However, they find these dominant discourses are replete with unjustifiable or problematic assumptions including the definition of a 'region' and efficiency gains that are automatically expected to flow from amalgamation when the capacity to do so does not exist at the regional level (Morrison & Lane, 2006).

There are strengths and weaknesses inherent in these studies. Lane and Morrison's study of regional governance in Australia, for example, identifies problematic assumptions around dominant discourses but does not extend the study to show how these discourses become the sites of contestation. Fairclough draws on Jessop's concepts of scalar fix, regimes of accumulation and modes of regulation to study how new and relatively innocuous processes such as mentoring can result in significant struggle at the local level, linking these local struggles to the broader forces of neo-liberal ideology and globalization. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, while both Fairclough and Foucault were interested in power, Foucault's conceptualization of power is superior in this case study because Foucault does not see power as ideologically based or emanating from centers of control. To summarize points made earlier, for Foucault power: is not coterminous with economic relations; extends beyond the state; is a relation rather than a simple imposition; and circulates through society rather than being owned by one group (Mills, 2004). As is the case in this current research, Foucault was highly concerned with the ways in which people negotiate power relations (Mills, 2004).

Richardson's studies are in line with the approach taken in this research. He employs Foucault in his studies of European rescaling, garnering an effective platform from which to study discourse and mechanisms of resistance, contestation and change. Recall, Foucault sees discourse as not purely a linguistic concept but as a set of statements which have some institutionalized force, shaped

by the relations between power and knowledge, and played out in language and practice at the micro level (Layder, 1994). As such, Richardson's explicit use of Foucault's theory is used to demonstrate how contested discourses shape the vocabulary of symbols and visions which socially construct the 'truth' and the new institutional forms that follow.

#### **4.3.1.1 Gaps in the Literature**

Given that a consistent theme in the literature on rescaling stresses the existence of tensions, resistance, contestations and power dynamics, a Foucauldian theoretical approach provides a nuanced approach to studying power. In so doing, it exposes dynamics of process that are not obvious and which in most studies, are therefore hidden. The research will enhance existing scholarship by employing a Foucauldian discourse framework to extend largely European-based studies to a Canadian context with unique regional considerations. As set out in section 4.1 on city-regions, this research is able to determine how institutional power structures were established and how that positioned participants, given their institutional roles and identities. The research also establishes how a discursive hierarchy was created. The marginalization of discourses will be shown to have a significant effect on creating a dominant discourse but this also prompted the development of counter-discourses with subsequent effects on the outcome of the process. The dominant discourse is also found to define the meaning of objects such as 'water' and 'autonomy' and condition how they are acted upon.

#### **4.3.2 Integrated Water Resources Management**

Contemporary scholarship of the discourse of water management in general, and IWRM in particular, primarily employs Foucauldian theory to unearth contestation and discursive mechanisms. They advance our understanding of processes which privilege certain discourses over others. They also stress how struggle over discursive hegemony is critical because the dominant discourse can ultimately define the problem, frame the debate and devise the solutions (Weber, et

al., 2010). While the literature on IWRM is helpful in exposing the dynamics and power of discursive mechanisms, the studies often rely on public documents and thereby lack a more in-depth analysis by drawing on the perceptions of the actors involved.

Scholars of discourse and water management have raised the notion that historically, there has been a prevalence of sanctioned discourses (Allan, 2003). These discourses, according to Allan (2003) are authorized by what he terms ‘hegemonic convergence’ – coalitions that come together that elevate particular assumptions, information, discussions and hence solutions. This finding is consistent with the earlier influential work of Hajer (1995). Hajer (1995) emphasizes the importance of Foucault’s tactical polyvalence of discourses - the way in which various discursive elements together create a new discursive space within which problems can be discussed.

Weber et al., (2010) explore the powerful discourse of global water governance and IWRM. Their comprehensive study builds on Foucault’s notion that governmentality is characterized by an ability to frame the field of thinking, action and imagination around specific issues. The authors use Foucault’s theoretical platform to explain how the most central actors in water governance (the World Bank, the World Water Forum for example) can formulate the problem, frame the field of debate and formulate the solutions (Weber et al., 2010). In addition, the knowledge that is viewed as legitimate builds on past, historical arrangements, practices and technologies that come from other established spheres of society (Weber et al., 2010). So, for example, they find within the Dublin Conference in 1992 and the Rio Conference later that year confusion existed over the status of water as an economic, social and/or a public good. The more recent World Water Forum promoted the notion of water as an economic good and supported IWRM.

Other studies adhere to Foucauldian notions of sites of resistance to help interrogate competing perspectives on sustainability. Cocklin and Blunden (1998) demonstrate how concepts of water and sustainability are contested and upheld through regulatory frameworks like the judicial system. They

analyze competing interpretations of ‘sustainable management’ between the Maori and district irrigators in New Zealand. In the final analysis, the researchers find the force of the respective arguments between the opposing parties was determined by the underlying power and authority of their alternative discourses on sustainability (Cocklin & Blunden, 1998).

In studying IWRM, Saravanan et al., (2009) juxtapose Habermasian communicative rationality against the Foucauldian critique of power. These contradictory and polarized views of discourse pit Habermasian ideal speech situation, in which no affected party is excluded from discourse, against Foucauldian insistence of the existence of asymmetries of power (Saravanan et al., 2009). Within IWRM, they argue, there is an interaction between the two. The authors suggest studies of IWRM would benefit from an interdependent approach in considering the communicative practices of IWRM (Saravanan et al., 2009). Alexander (2001) notes where actors pursue their own self-interest, Foucauldian power analysis works well, but actors with a high degree of interdependence, who are highly conscious of their interdependence, provides enabling power which a balanced analysis must recognize (Alexander, 2001)

Some studies employ discourse analysis in studying topics related to IWRM, namely partnerships. For example, Hastings (1999) uses Fairclough’s theory and analytical framework to explore the dynamics of power relations in partnerships. Hastings framework rests on Fairclough’s notion of the dialectical relationship between social practice and discursive practice that connects changes in the use of language to social change. Partnerships then can be viewed as a form of governance capable of “hot housing social change” (Hastings, 1999, p. 92). In the context of an urban regeneration partnership, Hastings finds the use of language provides valuable insight into the nature of the partnership, which may include contestation, something which would not have otherwise been apparent.

#### **4.3.2.1 Gaps in the Literature**

Empirical studies by Hajer (1995), Hastings (1999), Allan (2003), and Weber et al., (2010) are valuable in raising our awareness of discursive contestation in contemporary discourse. Saravanan et al. (2009) urges a more balanced approach to such studies, combining Habermasian and Foucauldian theory. It was argued in Chapter Three that the Foucauldian approach is preferred in studies that wish to analyse the nature, extent and effects of power asymmetries on a process. Enhancements to contemporary research results from the analysis of not only written documentation but interview data which will reveal the perceptions of the actors involved. As set out in 4.2 on IWRM literature, this research is able to explore: how the provincial government shaped and conditioned the CRP's integrated water resources management plan; differences in how water was objectified by various stakeholders and the influence of the dominant discourse on the water policy that emerged; the degree of involvement and effectiveness of water-related organizations in the CRP process; and how water rights affected the process through endowing certain participants with discursive power.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The literature review above draws together substantive studies in three subject areas, underscoring the considerable body of knowledge that has accumulated over time. The studies interrogate highly complex and challenging, multi-dimensional processes and mine evidence of processes that are frequently problematic but evolving. The capacity to harness learning from this research in order to improve processes has prompted this research to explore hitherto largely uncharted territory - a detailed examination of process that focuses on discursive power. The unique case at the centre of this research involves the rescaling of a city-region involving integrated water resources management under a participatory process. Given the presence of power differentials, the research warrants a Foucauldian theoretical approach in order to unearth the hidden

power dynamics of the process and their effects. The fundamental elements of the current research are enumerated below in linking the gaps identified in the literature to the nature of the research's inquiry to the central research question.

The Calgary Regional Partnership represents a relatively rare case that involves both a process of rescaling a city-region and a process of integrated water resources management embedded within it. This research therefore augments research that often considers these processes separately. Also, in a very limited number of studies, Foucault has been used to investigate power within processes of rescaling but no study has focused on a Canadian region with its unique political and social context. The characteristics of this research extend the current body of literature to a Canadian case. Further, most studies have not tapped into the potential knowledge that can be gained through an analysis of written documentation which is supplemented by interview data. The analysis of written documentation and interview data in this research provides an enhancement to studies that rely solely on written documentation.

Studies of city-regionalism tend to concentrate on economic, cultural, institutional and organizational factors. The post-structural objectives adopted in this research absorb the belief that social practices create and uphold power and that language has a system of rules and constraints through which power is manifest. By centering on the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power, the current research goes beyond a consideration of the factors identified above. Early studies of regionalism attributed economic forces as driving regionalism and studied them through concepts such as regimes of accumulation and modes or regulation. But for Foucault, power is not coterminous with economic relations (Mills, 2004) but is defined by something beyond economics. Power sources are less apparent, related more to the small microcosms of institutional structures and social practices that create and uphold power dynamics through discourse. Together, these microcosms form the platforms which undergird social systems, the scaffolding through which they operate and through which power is manifest. Other regional studies quite rightly acknowledge



the messy reworking of power but by focusing on varying degrees of discursive power, this research prompts us to consider that power is conditioned through exclusionary mechanisms that create and uphold power asymmetries. The research discovers significant consequences for power dynamics, given the strengthening and weakening effects of mechanisms of exclusion. Concepts such as game theory, networks, and civic and social capital assess the behaviour of actors given the nature of their association with each other but Foucault urges us to go beyond this thinking to consider something much more fundamental - how truth and knowledge is constructed and deployed and its effect on the power dynamics among actors. This leads the current research to investigate more nuanced relationships amongst actors. It is the underpinnings of power that are captured in the approach.

In considering integrated water resources management, studies center on the challenges in linking watershed management to socially and politically-relevant scales without a clear understanding of the discursive power dynamics amongst multiple participants involved in these processes. This research is able to consider, for example, the discursive power of the provincial government in shaping and conditioning the CRP's integrated water resources management plan. Studies have not made the connection between how water is objectified by various stakeholders with varying degrees of discursive power and the influence of the dominant discourse on the water policy that emerges, as this research will do. Finally, tracing mechanisms of exclusion and their effect on discursive power enables this research to identify hidden factors which impinge on discursive power and thereby the effectiveness of water-related organizations in broader processes.

The contribution of this research, through the characteristics of its inquiry, is linked through the research question which asks what are the nature, extent and effects of discursive power on a rescaling process. Having identified these linkages the next chapter turns to the methodology used in the research.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Methodology**

This chapter discusses several elements relevant to the methodology of this research including: (a) operationalizing Foucault (b) site selection (c) the strengths and weaknesses of case studies and (d) data collection and analysis. The chapter also discusses how Foucault's and Hajer's theoretical concepts were put into effect in reconstructing a policy making process. Under site selection I discuss why the CRP is a valuable case study. The academic literature on qualitative studies identifies strengths and weaknesses of the case study approach and these are presented in the section that follows. Recommendations on how to address weaknesses are also discussed. Finally the steps taken to collect and analyze both written documentation and interview data are outlined in the final section.

#### **5.1 Operationalizing Foucault**

Foucault's theory of discourse, as outlined in Chapter Three, underpins the means through which discourse works as a mechanism for social change. Notwithstanding the accomplishments of the CRP, this research focuses on a specific strand of inquiry – the process that led up to the exit of four rural municipalities and hence the rural-urban bifurcation of the partnership. This research studies the power dynamics, conflicts, and struggles which characterized this period of change. Attention is paid in particular to water management within a broad regional governance framework. The concepts used in this exploration are: governmentality; creating and acting on objects; mechanisms of exclusion; contestation and resistance; and Hajer's concept of discursive space, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions.

Foucault provides no guidance to undertaking post-structural discourse analysis. It is therefore difficult to find a coherent description of how one might go about discourse analysis using Foucault (Graham, 2005). For this reason, some perceive Foucauldian theory as inaccessible and risky

(O'Farrell, 2005). Graham (2005) claims discourse analysis greatly depends on the epistemological framework being drawn upon. This study is established within in a social constructionist epistemological framework, utilizing Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine how knowledge and truth are socially constructed, how discursive power is apprehended and exercised, how individuals come to function within multiple competing discourses, and discursive effects on policy outcomes. A social constructionist epistemological framework acknowledges that the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be linked and the findings are unearthed as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Early choices in the research will open up certain lines of inquiry whilst closing off others but ultimately the line of inquiry relates to the research questions being pursued. In this selection process the orientation of the researcher towards the focal point of the research is revealed, which is to reconstruct a particular strand of policy narrative in fine detail (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

Although some argue Foucauldian theory is inaccessible and risky, it has nevertheless been used extensively and some researchers who have done so provide methodological advice. Carabine (2001) outlines steps in operationalizing Foucault's genealogy specifically. Carabine (2001) states "(g)enealogy is about tracing the history of the development of knowledges and their power effects so as to reveal something about the nature of power/knowledge in modern society" (p. 277). According to Carabine, one should identify: discursive strategies and techniques, contestation and resistance, discourse coalitions, creation of 'objects' and emergence of knowledge and truth (Carbine, 2001). Many of these categories overlap with the five theoretical concepts of this research, outlined in Chapter Three. In addition to Carabine's recommendations, Sharp and Richardson (2001) identify 'core elements' in a Foucauldian discourse analytic approach that allows one to reconstruct the policy making process, unearthing deeper discursive struggles, all in a manageable way. They argue that policy documents be analyzed to detect particular discursive struggles and discursive dominance. But they add that discursive struggles may also be manifested in the

minutiae of changing institutional structures and practices, in events within the policy process and in policy outcomes (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Therefore it is important to look beyond the text. In Richardson's (1997) study, for example, discourses are identified directly from the policy and related literature supplemented by interviews with policy actors who focused on their perception of the power struggles that were taking place. The approach of my research also adopts this methodology to include analysis of policy documents, archival texts of forums and workshops, minutes of meetings, and interview data collected from 26 interviews involving 28 people, discussed in more detail in the data collection and analysis section below. First, however, a broader discussion of site selection; strengths and weaknesses of case study research; and the approach taken to address case study weaknesses, is presented.

## **5.2 Site Selection**

The CRP has been chosen as a unique case study. Its unique characteristics relate to the formidable challenge of developing a voluntarily water sharing and governance plan within a city-region rescaling process which involved multiple actors, multiple scales and multiple objectives. This case study is set within the wider provincial water and land management frameworks of the Water for Life Strategy and the Land Use Framework. In choosing the Calgary region as the site of this research, the research aims to address several gaps in the literature identified earlier. This includes providing a study of city-region and water rescaling effort in a Canadian context. It will focus in detail on agency and process, and the defection of four original rural municipal participants which essentially bifurcated the partnership along rural-urban lines and left only urban members. The research explores two dimensions of water – ecology and sustainability juxtaposed alongside water supply and distribution. Finally, the research seeks to understand the dynamics of the intersection of multiple organizations that claim to uphold integrated water resources management principles. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues in favor of unique case studies because of their rich offerings compared to the typical or average case. Unique cases like the CRP “activate more actors and more

basic mechanisms in the situation being studied” (p. 229). Flyvbjerg also states, “...it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur” (p. 229).

Under Flyvbjerg’s typology of cases, my study of the CRP would best be described as a ‘critical case’ – having strategic importance in relation to a general problem. Stake (1995) would classify the case as ‘instrumental’ – a highly scrutinized case that facilitates our understanding of issues beyond the case itself. This research, for example, helps provide regional solutions to water management issues given fixed water allocation systems, earlier identified in the objectives of the research. The in-depth nature of the research should help clarify the deeper causes behind these complex processes that seek solutions. Studies such as this one are especially critical at a time when governance and the participatory approach to problem identification and solving are being hailed as the new *modus operandi*.

### **5.3 Case Study Strengths and Weaknesses**

The attributes of case study research are well known. A case study allows the researcher to focus on understanding a specific setting to explore the meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). As a qualitative method, it provides for “richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity” (Mason, 2002, p. 1). It also provides a “means for describing and attempting to understand the observed regularities in what people do, or in what they report as their experience” (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000, p. 96).

Unfortunately the value of qualitative research has been questioned as being suspect, inferior because of the absence of well-defined variables or causal models (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006). Because a case study often involved a sample of one, it becomes doubly suspect. To ensure quality empirical social research, the section that follows will briefly enumerate the steps that have been taken to address validity and reliability, positioning, and reflexivity.

### 5.3.1 Validity and Reliability

A weakness of case study research commonly mentioned is its limited generalizability or *external validity*. Lincoln and Guba (2002) call for replacing the concept of generalizability with a more workable and realistic concept of ‘fittingness’ which emphasizes supplying a substantial amount of information to allow informed judgment about whether the conclusions are useful in understanding other sites and situations. In order to address this concern the research endeavored to provide clear and detailed descriptions to facilitate these kinds of judgments. Findings are consistently supported by texts reproduced from written documentation and interview data. Yin (2003) also states that with case study research, the analyst should address the issue of external validity by generalizing findings to theory. In this current research, the findings are consistently set against the five theoretical concepts taken from Foucault and Hajer.

Yin (2003) identifies *construct validity* as establishing operational measures that ward off subjective judgments in the selection of data collected and use of the data in exploring the research question. According to Yin (2003) three tactics used to increase construct validity include: using multiple sources of evidence (data triangulation), establishing a chain of evidence (relevant during data collection) and having the draft case study report reviewed by peers as well as key informants and participants (not to seek their approval of the conclusions and interpretations but their agreement over the actual facts of the case). Below each of these three tactics and their deployment in the current research is outlined.

Triangulation is used by drawing on three sources of information: 1) formal policy documents and archival data (in the form of documentation of meetings, workshops, visioning exercises, and forums); 2) interviews with multiple individuals with various degrees of access to and involvement in the CRP process; and 3) a sample of related newspaper reports. Below, I describe the specific procedures gleaned from the literature and operationalized to create a chain of evidence. Finally,

following from Yin's recommendation for peer review, the research results were periodically reviewed by members of the supervisory committee as the research's findings were collected and interpreted.

As a first step in creating a chain of evidence, Yin (2003) recommends developing a case study protocol which establishes the agenda for the research project. Guba (1981) suggests establishing an 'audit trail' that will permit an external examiner to trace how data were collected, analyzed and interpreted including actual interview notes and processes. This he terms a 'dependability' audit. A 'confirmability' audit involves identifying how the data supports the interpretation and how they are consistent with the available data (Guba, 1981). Yin (2003) states a general approach is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if it were intended to be audited. In operationalizing these approaches this research established the agenda for the research project through a detailed research proposal which included a time-frame for the research, refined over time and the research progressed. Documentation of how the data were collected includes a log of the dates and locations of the interviews. Documentation of the analysis includes the establishment and devolution of the codes over time through written notes and data organized through the NVivo software program. Documentation of the analysis and interpretation is found in the progression of numerous drafts of the thesis from early thoughts to the final product.

*Internal validity* relates to an analytical strategy to produce high-quality analysis. Case study research is difficult because the strategies and techniques are not well defined (Yin, 2003). The researcher should, above all, follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study<sup>16</sup>: "(t)he original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and new hypothesis or propositions" (Yin, 2003, p. 112). Thus the propositions of this research shaped the data collection plan and the analytic strategies. Internal validity was also enhanced by my drawing upon practical

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<sup>16</sup> Less pertinent to this study are rival explanations and developing a case description approach (Yin, 2003).

approaches advocated by the following: (a) viewing the case as instrumental as advised by Stake (1995); (b) placing data in multiple codes if necessary, developing emergent codes when necessary and eventually analyzing the data using the theoretical concepts, thus avoiding a content analysis approach to the data which discourse analysis should avoid, as recommended by Wood and Kroger (2000); (c) comparing and contrasting the results against the theoretical concepts which validated the theoretical framework as well as extending it by identifying findings outside Foucault, as recommended by Hsieh and Shannon (2005); and (d) in analyzing the data, using mental models, diagrams, tabulations and chronologies as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).

The goal of *reliability* seeks to minimize errors and biases (Yin, 2003). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), both validity and reliability rely largely on the skills of the researcher. The characteristics of a good researcher-as-instrument are: some familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study, strong conceptual interests, a multidisciplinary approach and good investigative skills (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In researching water management within the CRP, I have a strong knowledge base from which to launch this research. I have worked in the area of rural water management since 2003 when I began working on my M.A. in agricultural studies with my thesis research focusing on water markets in southern Alberta. That research involved, as part of the data collection, case study research. For an additional five years I worked as a research associate studying irrigation water management, continuing academic studies in water management, publishing several peer-reviewed articles. That work provided the conceptual and investigative skills platform, especially important when intuition and judgments are required. I am very familiar with water issues and policy in Alberta. My research capacity is enhanced by volunteer involvement in two WPACs - the Oldman Watershed Council and the Milk River Watershed Council of Canada. The Calgary region as the research site and regional water management as the topic, does, however, represent a new subject area for me. Therefore I hoped to bring a fresh perspective to the research given I had not worked in the region. The interviewees would likely not have perceived me as



possessing a predisposition towards 'rurals' because of my past research given I had never met the interview subjects, did not discuss my previous research with them, and I did not detect any awareness of this research through papers which have been published. Finally, this research undertakes an interdisciplinary approach to the research, drawing on elements of geography, political science and sociology disciplines, as Miles and Huberman (1994) advocate.

### **5.3.2 Positioning and Reflexivity**

A misunderstanding about case-study research is the belief of automatic bias toward verification, the tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions (Diamond, 1996). Qualitative research in general is thought to allow more room for the researcher's subjectivity and arbitrary judgment to infiltrate the process compared to other methods (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Qualitative researchers are therefore encouraged to disclose their personal perspectives on the subjects they are studying so that readers can be conscious of potential bias in the work (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). Denzin et al., (2006) state that the researcher must be aware of their moral and political commitments.

As regards my commitment, the primary objective of this research is to assist in finding solutions to pressing water management issues in the province of Alberta. Thus, as well as a desire to contribute to scholarship, it is hoped proposals forthcoming from the research will assist processes like the CRP. This contribution is particularly important if, as Pernitsky and Guy (2010) state, there will be increased emphasis on regional arrangements to address water management issues. My proposals come with an awareness of the politics of water in this province and a belief that water management is constrained by a highly inflexible water allocation system. Inherent inflexibilities put a premium on mechanism like those within the CRP that seek solutions within a rigid system. Aside from the fixed allocation system, one must be attentive to what is possible given the political, regulatory, legislative, and policy environment, especially given an issue as

sensitive, politically-charged and controversial as water. My awareness of these factors comes from experience working in water management for a decade.

Second, researchers are encouraged to practice reflexivity. Pillow (2003) states, reflexivity involves “an ongoing awareness during the research process which aids in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of our research” (p. 178). In practicing my own reflexivity, there are general practices such as those advocated by Wood & Kroger (2000) who suggests that when reading a text, one should ask: how am I reading the text, why am I reading it this way, why am I reacting to the text this way?

McLaren (undated) discusses the use of reflexivity under a Foucauldian discourse analysis as research methodology. This involves the sensitivity of the researcher to conceptualizing their own ‘truth’ and power over the research process when interpreting the data (McLaren, undated). She states that Foucault, after all, recognized the plurality of realities and the precarious nature of knowledge claims. However, “individual researchers must seek to understand the contexts that they attempt to fit their own ‘selves’ into, as well as their socially constructed inner selves from which they also gaze out before and during any attempts to understand the ‘realities’ of others (McLaren, undated, p.3). It is impossible to avoid the researcher’s subjectivity and debates about subjectivity versus objectivity are futile (Patton, 2002). Hence in her research, McLaren acknowledged her subjectivity and by “exposing and analyzing my own life scripts, my discursive formations and taint of my subjectivity on my research (makes) my analysis honest” (McLaren, undated, p.5). My personal rural background (growing up on a farm) and rural research may dispose me toward a rural bias but this is recognized and I therefore worked towards a balanced analysis of the data, realizing the potential for bias.

## 5.4 Data Collection and Analysis

### 5.4.1 Documents and Archival Texts

As noted earlier, during the 2005 to 2009 period there was considerable consultation with partnership municipalities, stakeholder organizations, and the public at large. These included: in excess of 2,000 participants in a visioning exercise; 700 people involved in nine workshops; 320 internal meetings of CRP elected leaders and staff; and 90 presentations to over 2,000 residents (CRP, 2009a). During the data collection process, publically-accessible documentation of almost all of these events and meetings was made available on the CRP website<sup>17</sup>. I requested minutes of the water and wastewater servicing committee but CRP staff needed to compile and format the material and ultimately my request was not met. Minutes from the Group of Seven committee meetings, a sub-committee discussed later, were also requested but access was denied by the CRP staff.

In keeping with Sharpe and Richardson's (2001) advice, the first step in reconstructing the particular strand of inquiry of this research involved analyzing written documentation. Given there was a considerable amount of activity, this stage involved collecting and reviewing multiple documents broadly categorized as archival records of minutes of the executive committee and general assembly, open houses, forums, and various consultation exercises. Documentation of focus groups and workshops related to water management were collected and reviewed in detail but similar documentation that related to regional transportation, economic development and GIS were not included in the review. Background papers and technical studies of water were collected but not reviewed in detail given the technical orientation of the documents. Included in the review were formal public policy documents that emerged in the research's time frame including the Calgary Metropolitan Plan of 2009 and the multiple drafts which preceded it. In addition, given the CRP

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<sup>17</sup> The website has since been re-designed. Access to most of this material now requires approval. Also material on the new website may not include material found on the original website.

emerged with the broader provincial policy framework, the review encompassed the Water for Life Strategy and the Land Use Framework. The materials reviewed are enumerated in Appendix A.

From this body of written material an understanding of how numerous pieces of the process fit together was gained. However, in exploring the central research question, some texts were deemed significantly more critical than others, warranting more detailed and in-depth analysis. Since the focus of the research is on the power relations that shaped the vision and policy construction of the region over time, the documents deemed most critical included those through which discursive power, contestation, and struggle could be detected - documentation of visioning exercises, focus group and workshop sessions; minutes from general assembly meeting (nine sets) and executive committee meetings (33 sets); public consultation and analysis of member issues following release of the draft Calgary Metropolitan Plan (CMP); and the final version of the CMP.

Foucault believed that the constitution of discourse has both internal and external mechanisms which keep certain discourses in existence while others did not survive. One of these mechanisms is commentary – “those discourses which are commented upon by others are the discourse which we consider to have validity and worth” (Mills, 2004, p. 60). Since virtually every municipality in the CRP region has a community newspaper, this source was deemed useful in analyzing how CRP developments circulated across the wide range of communities within the region. Regional newspaper coverage represented a second source of analytical data. The CRP’s own newspaper clipping service collected 137 newspaper articles from across the region which reported on CRP events and developments during the 2005 to 2009 period. These clippings comprised the newspaper coverage analysed in this research.

While analysis of the written materials denoted above assisted in constructing the policy making process, they provided a limited account of the process. Therefore, the findings from an analysis of written documents were juxtaposed alongside insights gleaned from the interview data collected

from 26 meetings involving 28 people during the May to September interview period in 2012. Supplementing written account with interview data enhances our understanding of the process given the perceptions and interpretations of events that interview data provides.

#### **5.4.2 Interview Process**

Data gathering through interviews are critical to this research project. As succinctly stated by others, they allow researchers to: obtain “qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject with respect to interpretation of their meaning” (Kvale, 1996, p. 124); permit access through words to an individual’s constructed reality and interpretation of his or her own experience (Fontana & Frey, 2000); and allow researchers the chance to “gather contrasting and complementary talk on the same theme or issue in a manner that thereby makes sense to them as well as allowing previously hidden, or silent, voices to speak” (Rapley, 2004, p. 18). Hence interviews facilitate the exploration and subsequent understanding of how numerous participants in the CRP process engaged in development of a regional governance and water management strategy.

Multiple perspectives are required in answering the research question posed at the outset of this research. The focus of this research is on the varying degrees of discursive power that individuals acquired and exercised in the CRP process. More specifically, first there were those that had formal membership in the process and were therefore centrally located - the municipal representatives. Second were members of watershed organizations (WPACs and water partnerships) who did not have a formal position in the partnership but became members of working committees and were consulted through forums and workshops - most notably members of the Bow River Basin Council and members of smaller watershed partnership organizations in the region. The third set comprised ancillary water-related organizations – individuals not centrally located or necessarily consulted but who may have had an interest or stake in water management and the CRP. They could choose to be involved in the process through avenues open to the general public such as participation in

workshops or other public forums or they could seek their own means to access the process. The interviewees, listed in Table 1 in the introduction, includes 16 municipal representatives – nine from municipalities remaining in the CRP partnership and seven from municipalities which defected; and 12 from water-related organizations – seven from watershed organizations and five from ancillary organizations involved in water issues.

The sample of interviews chosen was based on Patton's (2002) concept of 'homogeneous samples', the purpose of which is to gain in-depth information about particular subgroups. In this research there were three subgroups: municipal councillors, watershed organizations and ancillary water-related organizations. Within the municipal councillor group there were two subgroups – councillors from municipalities which stayed in the partnership and councillors from municipalities which left. In determining the sample size, there is considerable ambiguity in qualitative research around the sufficiency of numbers given that there are no rules. Patton (2002) states that the results have more to do with the case selected and the observational and analytical capabilities of the researcher than the sample size. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe the sample should be set at the point where no new information is forthcoming. Patton (2002) suggests being flexible and emergent by beginning with a minimum sample to provide reasonable coverage of the subject matter then add to the sample as the fieldwork unfolds. Ultimately the procedures and decisions must be fully described, explained and justified for interpretation and judgment of the results (Patton, 2002). In this research I deemed that a pool of approximately 30 interviewees provided sufficient representation from the three groups of interest in this research. The number was also deemed appropriate when considering time and budgetary constraints. An initial list of interviewees was established from the analysis of written documentation but there was flexibility to add individuals as names were suggested during the interview process. It was found that as the interview process approached completion, interviewees began to repeat points made by previous informants, suggesting limited additional knowledge would be gleaned from increasing the interview numbers.

The selection of individuals from the first group, elected municipal representatives, was based on a number of considerations. First, evidence from the preliminary analysis of written documentation suggested varying degrees of discursive power were derived from factors including individual municipalities' economic base, population base, and geographic proximity to Calgary. Given this study's interest in power dynamics, a cross-section of municipalities was chosen to represent the aforementioned factors. Individuals were identified directly from the minutes of executive committee meetings and contact information was obtained from municipal websites. In two cases municipal councillors had been defeated in municipal elections but contact information was readily traceable. Of the 16 councillors interviewed, all but three had been members of the CRP executive committee at some point during the research period. Two councillors interviewed were not members of the CRP executive but still attended CRP executive meetings and general assemblies. One interviewee was a chief operating officer who the municipal representative requested be included in the interview. Attempts to contact David Bronconnier, the mayor of Calgary during the 2005 to 2009 period, were unsuccessful because that individual has since returned to private life. One person of interest to this study, the municipal representative from Foothills who sat on the CRP executive committee, passed away in 2011. Given the interest in the water policy that evolved, several councillors who were on the executive committee were chosen to be interviewed because they were also on the CRP's water and wastewater committee. As explained in more detail below, I was asked to delay interviews with certain councillors given that events within the CRP continued to unfold during the course of the research.

The second list of interviewees was generated from watershed organizations in the region. The Bow River Basin Council is the large, overarching watershed council in the region, hence a number of board members warranted inclusion in the list. Numerous other smaller sub-basin watershed organizations are also active in the Bow River Basin and a cross-section of individuals from these organizations was selected. Of the seven individuals interviewed, four individuals were involved in

multiple watershed and provincial organizations. These individuals were extensively involved in water issues, being members of organizations representing the smaller sub-basin in which they lived, the umbrella BRBC organization, and often other water-related boards and committees. Individual's contact information was obtained from each organization's website.

The third set of interviewees, drawn from ancillary water-related organizations, was identified through my awareness of the organization's involvement in water-related issues in southern Alberta. For example, Ecojustice and Water Matters have been involved in high profile legal challenges against Alberta Environment, as noted. The Western Irrigation District warranted inclusion in this group of interviewees given my awareness of their substantial water license holding and their centrality to water dynamics in the region. I was also aware, through the analysis of written documentation, that the district also presented a proposal to the CRP executive for the building of a water reservoir. Individual contact information was also obtained through organization websites.

Interviews were conducted over the space of five months, from May 2012 to September, 2012. However, five interviews involving representatives from rural municipalities were delayed. At a meeting with the CRP's regional planner (a staff member) on March 26, 2012, reference was made to an upcoming general assembly on June 21, 2012 when an updated Calgary Metropolitan Plan was being unveiled. It was explained that due to the sensitivity around the departure of the rural municipalities, my interviews with rural municipal representatives be delayed until after the release of the updated plan. This request was upheld. Prior to the June 21, 2012 unveiling, 13 interviews had already been conducted. Therefore, following that unveiling, each interviewee was contacted again by e-mail to ascertain whether any of their views provided in the interview had changed. Seven interviewees responded. Their feedback is included in Chapter Eight of the research.

Invitation to participate in the interview process was initiated through e-mail correspondence, except in one instance where telephone contact was required in the absence of an e-mail address. In



the majority of cases, replies to my request were immediately forthcoming, thus follow-up e-mails were rarely required. In all cases, requests for interviews were granted.

The first three interviews were treated as ‘pilots’. These were transcribed, broadly coded and provided to the co-supervisors. The advice which was forthcoming related primarily to methods used in the interview process to avoid the interview questions influencing the response. Data from the pilot interviewees was still considered valid and were included in the analysis.

The initial set of interview question emerged from the research proposal. The list was vetted by the supervisory committee and sufficiently honed by the time the interview process commenced. During the pilot interview stage few modifications were made to the list. However, as the interview process evolved, some questions were triggered by informant statements and were added. For example, in the first interview an observation was made that there was a disconnection between the water-related input gathered during the CRP process and subsequent policy outcomes. This thread of inquiry was, for example, deemed critical to Foucault’s theory of knowledge and power.

Interviews began by asking individuals to speak about the nature of their involvement in the CRP. For those individuals not involved, further probing related to reasons for their lack of involvement as well as the individual’s peripheral views of the CRP process. For those involved, more specific lines of inquiry were pursued. The list of questions that guided the interview related first to the issue of water within the context of the CRP and second, the process itself. The interview guide can be found in Appendix B but a summary of the questions informants were asked to consider includes:

Water:

- i) The relative importance of access to water versus water ecology and sustainability;
- ii) The ways in which water was discussed;
- iii) Degree of involvement/effectiveness of watershed and water-related organizations;
- iv) Adequacy in addressing integration of land and water management.

The process:

- i) The most contentious/least contentious issue;
- ii) Greatest accomplishment/shortcoming of the process;
- iii) Forums or committees that allowed more open discussion than others;
- iv) Whether there was a change in dynamics of the process over time;
- v) Presence and nature of mediation of issues;
- vi) Whether certain people's views dominated discussions/ were adopted into policy to the exclusion of others;
- vii) Identifying procedures or processes that allowed certain people to dominate/be excluded from discussion;
- viii) Existence of coalitions forming around an issue or concept;
- ix) Connection between the intelligence gathered and policy outcomes.

The interview process proceeded under an in-depth, semi-structured interview format. This allows the researcher to adopt a flexible approach to data collection, altering the sequence of questions or probing for more information where appropriate, allowing unexpected themes and insights to be explored in detail (Gratton & Jones, 2003). Given the informal nature of the interview, the standard questions were inserted into the interview at varying points that were deemed suitable.

All interviews were held in person except for two – one case where the individual requested to be interviewed by phone and one instance where the individual had re-located to another province. In all cases except Bighorn and Turner Valley, where two persons were interviewed concurrently, individuals were interviewed individually. The sequence in which the interviews were scheduled was based on the principle that those deemed having the least discursive power would be interviewed first. This permitted the acquisition of the maximum degree of understanding of the

process prior to interviewing those with what I perceived as the highest degree of discursive power, people most central to the conflict. Generally, in carrying out the interviews this principle was upheld, however some flexibility was required based on the availability of interviewees and the desire for travel efficiencies given the geographic scope of the region.

Interviewees were invited to choose the location of the interview. Of the 24 interviews held in person, seven were conducted in the individual's home, seven in organization offices, five in coffee shops and five in town council offices. Each interview lasted on average approximately 90 minutes. There were two extreme cases with one telephone interview lasting about half an hour and an in-person interview lasting three hours. Issues of confidentiality and the opportunity to withdraw from the study were discussed prior to the commencement of the interview, as required through ethics approval. The ethics approval form was signed by all participants. All interviews were audio-recorded. Participants were aware they could review transcripts of the interviews if desired. In two cases, interviewees requested copies of the transcripts (Bighorn [1] and Rocky View [2]). The copies were provided but no changes were forthcoming. Interviews were typically transcribed within a week of conducting the interview and I transcribed all interviews. The interview data consisted of about approximately 350 pages of transcribed text.

Except for four interviewees, all persons permitted me to use their name, their organization's name, and reproduce excerpts from the interview. In three cases (two watershed organizations ([1] and [2]) and one ancillary water-related organization [3]) the respondent did not want their organization's name or the interviewee's name to be used. Of those, two also did not want their statements quoted and one allowed statements to be quoted but not attributed to them personally. And in the case of an additional ancillary water-related organization, the name of the organization could be used but not the name of the individual or the individual's statements. Because the CRP process is still unfolding and many of the informants are still in public office, it was felt there is potential for harm in using names. Therefore no names were referenced even though permission

was granted in the majority of cases. References in the study use the names of municipalities and in instances where two people per municipality were interviewed – Foothills, Rocky View, and Turner Valley – the statements attributed to each individual are denoted using [1] and [2]. The page numbers of quotations refer to the page number in the person's unique document transcript. The three interviewees from water-related organizations who asked to remain anonymous are also referenced using [1], [2] and [3].

While 28 people were interviewed, it was determined that not all were sufficiently involved in the process to comment knowledgeably on it. Therefore the data from 20 informants who were either members of the executive committee, general assembly or working groups were considered in the three chapters which explored the CRP process, entitled 'Smooth Sailing', 'Choppy Waters' and 'Running Aground'. Data from all 28 informants were considered in the chapter which explored the development of the regional water management strategy, entitled 'Integrated Water Resource Management and City-Region Rescaling'.

The presence of CRP staff emerges at various stages in the CRP process and they are therefore occasionally referenced in this research. However, I did not conduct interviews with any of the staff. This is possibly a limitation of the research in that they appear from time and time and may have had a certain degree of discursive power. Potential future research, identified in Chapter Eleven, includes the recommendation that the role of staff be explored to ascertain the significance of their discursive power relative to other actors.

At various stages in the research, informal meetings were held with CRP staff to obtain background information. Three meetings were held with two individuals who have held the position of Executive Director of the CRP over the course of the research and an additional two meetings were held with the CRP's regional planner.

## 5.5 Coding and Analysis

The initial analysis of the data followed Carabine's (2001) recommendation to read and re-read the data, getting a feel for the data. As advised, in the initial phase where the analysis of the written documentation was explored, I was looking to broadly identify issues, instances when water was discussed; the different contexts; the way problems were framed, presented and discussed; how solutions were presented, debated and achieved; and subsequent connections to policy outcomes.

My early preliminary coding attempted to apply certain theoretical concepts but they were found unworkable and I therefore shifted to others, ultimately finding the theoretical concepts set out in Chapter Three more workable. The first step in the analysis was highly useful given that the preliminary analysis allowed me to acquire an initial understanding of the issue and the process, develop a preliminary list of interviewees, and structure the interview questions for the next stage of the process. It also enabled me to evaluate the utility of the theoretical concepts employed at that stage, leading to subsequent modifications as discussed.

In the preliminary stages of data analysis - the written document stage, as well as the early stages of the interview data coding process – broad coding by theoretical concepts was undertaken by constructing tables using Word software. NVivo software was later purchased and used shortly after the interview data analysis process began. Interview data was downloaded into the software program and the coding continued. Except for the pilot interviews when general coding was undertaken, none of the subsequent coding of interviews was conducted until all the interviews were completed. Thus, when a code was identified, all interview data was systematically reviewed in search for statements that related to a particular code. There was constant interplay between findings, codes and the theoretical concepts. Sometimes statements related to more than one code and thereby were included under multiple codes.

A notion generated from the preliminary analysis of the written documentation was that there appeared to be three distinct phases to the 2005 to 2009 time period. At least in analyzing the data through my particular post-structural, social constructionist lens, I detected the process evolved from a period of optimism when the region's vision articulated an optimistic future, to realism when faced with the challenges of developing the details around implementing the vision, to pessimism when it was realized that issues of disagreement could not be reconciled. The notion of stages was confirmed through the interview data as informants recounted how the nature and tone of the proceedings evolved. The coding was influenced by this early three-stage contextualization. In addition, while water issues and integrated water resources management were foremost themes present through the analysis, it became apparent that water and integrated water resources management warranted a separate chapter. This would allow for the probing of specific issues separate and distinct from other dynamics which characterized the CRP process, explored in other chapters. Cross-coding by group (remaining and defecting municipalities, watershed organization and ancillary water-related organizations) became particularly salient especially when exploring IWRM, hence such cross-coding was conducted accordingly.

Initially the codes broadly related to the established theoretical concepts. Within each concept there were often multiple codes. So, for example, within the concept of mechanisms of exclusion there were sub-codes relating to activity outside the executive, capacity of the executive, exclusions relating to Calgary, mechanism within committees, and intelligence flowing to the executive. Constant circumspection was brought to bear as the codes were gradually tailored and expanded, emerging from repeated and systematic reading of the transcripts. Given the interviews were lengthy and informants were free to discuss many aspects of the process, there were many emergent codes. These codes were not always immediately connected to the broad conceptual categories. Rather, during the analytical phases of the research, the coded material was contemplated and appropriated to suitable theoretical categories. So for example, interviewees often spontaneously provided their

opinions of particular participants in the process, aligning their views along rural and urban lines. These statements were collected under one code and were later determined to fit most appropriately under the theoretical concept of mechanisms marginalizing discourse. In addition, separate codes were not generally established in groups relating to the three specific time-frames but the analysis was alert to the importance of this categorization. Time periods could often readily be deduced directly from the statements made by individuals however where not readily deducible, I made subjective judgments of the time period under which they belonged. Finally, the early coding of key written documents was conducted using the initial theoretical concepts. However, those concepts were modified, necessitating the reworking of the coding of the written documentation. In the end, with the analysis of written documentation and interview data all coded within the same five theoretical concepts, contrasts and comparisons between findings from the written documentation (which included the newspaper reports), and the interview data could readily be made in the analytical phase of the research.

Given that this was a study of discursive power, the number of times a particular statement or word was uttered was rarely deemed significant. Of greater significance was the force of the utterance - the individual who uttered the statement, when and where it was uttered, to whom, and the attendant response. Therefore counting was used in rare circumstances. However, it was used in instances when, for example, I wished to demonstrate how government discourse around 'sustainability' was reinforced through the constant uttering of the term by provincial ministers. When the term 'blue blob' and 'Calgary veto' emerged I wanted to demonstrate the degree to which the concepts were embraced. Therefore the number of times they were uttered, where they were uttered, by whom, and in what circumstance was another instance where there was significance in the number of utterances.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has laid out the methodology of the research based on the establishment of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings in Chapter Three. Procedural advice provided by Carabine (2001) and Sharp and Richardson (2001) were helpful in sharpening the methodological tools of this research. Researchers must be cognizant of the weaknesses of qualitative case study research and therefore I have endeavored to establish the recommended practices that aim for validity and reliability, positioning and reflexivity. The data collection and analysis section has outlined in some detail the collection and analytic process under the two written documentation and interview streams. Having established in the preceding chapters the research question and objectives of the research; the Calgary city-region context; the theoretical framework; the pertinent academic literature and the contribution of this research given gaps in the literature; and finally, the research's methodology, the thesis now turns to the presentation and discussion of the results.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Smooth Sailing**

The first phase of the CRP process entitled ‘Smooth Sailing’ relates to the early period in the planning process, from 2005 to 2007, when Foucault’s and Hajer’s concepts of governmentality and the formation of discursive space, metaphor, story-lines and objects provided the discursive framework around which the early features of the nascent regional planning process were created. Under discourse analysis, this context became highly significant in formulating the discourse which later became centered on water, land and autonomy.

The municipal-based institutional arrangements of the CRP established the decision-making structure, channeled the debate in a particular direction, and provided for new basis for knowledge via water and land management studies that centered attention on the region. Discursive space, created through broad-based visioning exercises engaged the wider public and established metaphorical ‘pillars’ that became the components of a subsequent story-line for the region. The CRP process mobilized hitherto disparate actors around a new common vision for the region. Water was objectified as an ecological as well as a strategic resource and multiple actions were set in motion. This activity was positively upheld by statements emerging from the region’s newspaper media. But the early formation of Foucault’s mechanisms of exclusion housed in the decision-making structure, and the development and legitimization of scientific knowledge around water which followed, occurred during this phase and had persistent ramifications for the formation of the discourses that ultimately emerged.

#### 6.1 Governmentality and mechanisms of exclusion: municipal frameworks

Perspectives on discourse and power emphasize that the institutional context is highly significant in formulating the discourse around an issue. “Any detailed analysis of power in interaction...needs to be informed by an account of the context, the social relationships it sets up

between participants, and speakers' rights and obligations in relation to their discursive and institutional roles and identities" (Thornborrow, 2002, p.35). As explained below, within the CRP this context was created when the municipally-based institutional framework was established, setting up the attendant roles, responsibilities and discursive power of participants. This section examines how this created the basis for governmentality within the CRP process. This section also examines how the institutional rules governing the process – particularly the committee structures and voting process - also created mechanisms of exclusion that were deployed repeatedly at critical stages in the process.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Foucault adopted the term 'governmentality' to describe the 'art of government' in both a broad and narrow sense (Gordon, 1991). "(Foucault) proposed a definition of the term 'government' in general as meaning 'the conduct of conduct': this is to say, a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons" (Gordon, 1991, p.2). Dean (1999) explains that a complete definition of the term governmentality includes government in terms of the state, as well as the mentalities and associations that relate to the concept 'conduct of conduct'. This includes the ways in which conduct is governed, not just by governments, but also by ourselves and others (Dean, 1999, p. 10). Hence:

To analyze government is to analyze those mechanisms that try to shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups (Dean, 1999, p.12).

The Alberta government charges municipalities with: providing good government, providing services, facilities or other things that are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality, (and) to develop safe and viable communities (Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2013). Elected municipal councillors are charged with working with other council members to set the overall direction of the municipality through their role as policy makers. The council is the governing body of the municipal corporation and the custodian of its powers, both legislative and administrative (Alberta

Municipal Affairs, 2013). Within the context of governmentality municipal government can be considered an institution governed by the municipal council to shape, guide or affect the conduct of populations in developing safe and viable communities. This is one level of control within the CRP process. Additionally there are other levels of influence which will be discussed, including the bearing of institutional structures on the conduct of municipal participants and the authority of the provincial government on the process.

Given that the CRP was established as a municipally-based institution, it adopted the attendant rules, roles and identities embodied in municipal government. The executive committee was comprised of elected municipal politicians, endowed with the highest degree of institutional power within the CRP because the committee:

...holds the responsibility for approving key Regional Land Use Plan proposals, work plans, communications, outcomes and implementation strategies before moving them to the General Assembly for final ratification (CRP, 2007a, p.10).

Given this authority, the executive committee had a significant degree of influence and control over the CRP process – its proposals, plans, communications and strategies. Within the Foucauldian context of discursive power, one would expect it to also have considerable influence in defining the problem, determining what counts as knowledge and truth and conditioning the solutions. Equipped with the mandate outlined above, members of the executive committee could be considered the architects of the regional plan.

Over the course of most of this study's period, the executive committee was chaired by urban and rural representatives – the chair was a councillor from Airdre and the co-chair was a councillor from Foothills (and later Rocky View) – and this was presumably aimed at underscoring the importance of balancing the urban-rural dimensions of the partnership (Foothills [1]). While the executive committee allocated considerable time and resources to obtaining the views of stakeholders in the region (developers, environmental and watershed organizations, and industry

representatives for example) the stakeholders were not part of the approval or decision-making process. This activity relates to governmentality in the broad sense whereby gathering information gives the public a sense that they are participants in a process but ultimately their influence on decision-making is not immediately apparent.

Within the committee, the decision making process was modeled on municipal precepts. Decisions which could not be reached unanimously were determined through a majority-rule voting process. Each member municipality on the CRP executive committee held one vote. Foucault emphasized the existence of mechanisms of exclusion that place limits on what can be said, keeping some utterances in place and maintaining some utterances as valid and debatable. The decision-making process of the executive committee would prove to be critical as a mechanism that upheld some utterances and marginalized others.

The decisions made by the executive committee were significant, given that they were then carried forward to be voted on by the general assembly and, if approved, were thereafter embodied in the Calgary Metropolitan Plan. The general assembly membership also consisted of municipal representatives. Under the CRP constitution it was required to meet twice a year and operated under a 'weighted voting' structure – Calgary had 12 votes, communities with populations between 15,000 and 100,000 had six votes each, and communities with populations under 15,000 had three votes each. Based on 2006 population figures, this would have meant Calgary was the only municipality in the first category (12 votes), Rocky View County, Airdrie, Okotoks and M.D. Foothills would have been in the second category (6 votes each) and the remaining 13 municipalities would have been in the third category (3 votes each). Under this structure Calgary could not exercise veto power but its influence would nevertheless be exercised through mechanisms of exclusion and the power endowed in the city's mayor by the city's population, economic dominance in the region and water licenses.

In addition to the formation of the executive committee and general assembly, in 2006 it was determined that a sub-committee of the executive would comprise a steering committee which would work to advance initiatives and grapple with what would become the most contentious issues – CRP governance relative to municipal and landowner rights. The steering committee was to:

...present recommendations from time to time regarding key developments of the regional plan and related governance and implementation strategies to the CRP Executive committee and ultimately to the CRP General Assembly (CRP, 2007a, p.11).

The original members of that committee included mayors and councillors from: Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, Chestermere, Rocky View County, and the M. D. Foothills. The smaller more geographically and politically peripheral communities such as Nanton, Black Diamond, Turner Valley, Strathmore and Canmore were not included in the committee. This committee also operated under a majority rule voting structure. As noted above, voting structures become especially important to the research because they operate as mechanisms of exclusion. Relatively quickly the power and importance of this committee grew because they were charged with bringing forward recommendations on the most critical and divisive issues. With the inclusion of one more member as a ‘spare’, which was Okotoks, the committee became known as the exclusive ‘Group of Seven’.

The interview data confirm the existence of mechanisms of exclusion based on the decision-making power of the executive committee in reference to the development of the regional water management strategy. In the interview process, the observation of mechanisms of exclusions was made in reference to the development of the regional water management strategy. The executive committee had power over the determination of the engineering firm, CH2M Hill, which conducted the water management study, as well as the legitimization of the results. Some municipal councillors as well as members of watershed organizations peripheral to the decision-making process were critical of the results emerging from the CH2M Hill study<sup>18</sup>. The informants

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<sup>18</sup> Findings of the CH2M Hill studies were compiled, submitted, peer reviewed, and accepted for publication as an academic journal article. The resultant article by Pernitsky & Guy (2010) has been cited several times in the introductory chapter of this study. This demonstrates how a technical report was elevated to academic standing and within the current study, was used as knowledge in justify

complained that the study produced recommendations emphasizing engineering solutions, not watershed or integrated land and water management solutions, helping create a dominant discourse around water servicing:

(There was) a certain amount of lack of understanding how will water use operate within the bigger system. And hence that's what ended up being (a) pipeline solution. ... That was the risk they took with CH2M Hill. They didn't think about the watershed and that was the biggest problem of all...(Highwood/BRBC: 5).

I've seen a lot of studies... Water is one of those very complicated but very simple things... We have 'x' amount of needs and we have these different stakeholders that need to be satisfied and how do we do that? So it's about quality and quantity and headwater protection and all those sorts of things that are, I don't know, the water-land thing (Foothills [2]: 9).

One interviewee stated that aside from surface water, which is fairly easy to measure, there was lack of data on aquifers, ground water sources, and wetland inventory and questioned how one can manage something that is not measured (anonymous [3]).

Several interviewees from rural municipalities (including councillors not on the executive committee) emphasized that the study did not account for the value of ecological goods and services and the rural communities' stewardship of water and other natural resources (Elbow River/BRBC, Bighorn [1], Foothills [2], Wheatland). Others said there was insufficient attention to the ecological consequences of maximizing water extraction from the basin (anonymous [3]); as one informant stated, the emphasis of the study was on growth:

There's been in the CRP too much emphasis on growth without thinking about the watershed itself and how that has to be better managed. And their single solution is well, we'll allow for growth and we'll support that with water from the Bow (river) (Highwood/BRBC: 3).

Surprisingly, one municipal councillor admitted that their council's *own* staff provided flawed data to the process (not discovered until years later), resulting in early findings that suggested their community would experience water shortage much earlier than will actually be the case (High

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particular points. This would be seen as an acceptable practice, even though the original study was criticized by some informants as being biased towards engineering. These points are made because they serve as examples of practices within this study of Foucault and his belief that certain discourses are elevated to socially constructed 'knowledge' and 'truth'.

River). Two municipal councillors expressed doubts about the population projections on which the water and land management plan was based:

There is a lot of debate about the very basis of the CMP...How many opinions did they look at? Maybe we need to revisit that (growth projections)... (Rocky View [1]: 15);

..they just took what our growth was in the past and they extrapolated that and that's what you get now. Just because we've had the growth rate to here, it doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to have that growth rate going forward (Foothills [2]: 4).

We see during this early phase of the CRP process that institutional mechanisms of exclusion - the decision-making authority of the executive committee and the legitimacy lent to new knowledge about water - were deployed by the executive committee, thereby setting in motion their discursive power which arose from the institutional context. In the interview process it was found that some municipal councillors not on the executive committee as well as some individuals from watershed organizations were critical of the water supply and distribution study which became the foundation for the entire water management plan for the region. Later in Chapter Nine, it is shown that other water-related organizations more peripheral to the process had similar criticisms.

Exploring governmentality in the context of the CRP process assists us in understanding the institutional context in which the rules, roles, conduct and identities of participants became established. The deployment of a municipal-based framework provided the scaffolding through which the regional Plan was built and had important influence on framing the debate around water and land, developing knowledge forms through new regional water and land management studies and henceforth conditioning solutions. In other words, the institutional context became highly significant in formulating discourses.

## 6.2 Creating discursive space, metaphor and story-line: visioning exercise

In the context of spatial planning such as the CRP initiative, a coherent vision was essential to the successful construction of a regional identity. In studies of the European Union's spatial planning process, for example, Richardson studied the construction of the new vision of 'rurality'.

Efforts were made to frame a common vocabulary of symbols and visions as part of the structuralization of a new discourse of European spatial development (Richardson, 2000).

Within a CRP process, the construction of the Calgary region began with the ‘TOGETHER, 2105’ visioning exercise conducted in 2005. Visioning workshops and an on-line survey were among the methods used to obtain public feed-back on the following questions: what people valued in the Calgary region, changes they would like to see, hopes and dreams for the region in the next 100 years and how they saw themselves helping in achieving that goal. It was reported that over 2,000 participants were involved in the visioning exercise (CRP, 2009a) and the results formed the broad brush strokes of the long-term vision for the region. It was recognized that constructing a regional identity would depend on the consent of many different individuals and groups requiring a high degree of social and political engagement (Scott & Storper, 2003). Also, as Nelles (2009) notes, the governance capacity of a region is based on the ability of actors to recognize collective opportunities and challenges.

In the discursive context, this observation relates to Foucault’s notion of the ‘tactical polyvalence of discourses’ – the way in which various discursive elements together create a new discursive space within which problems can be discussed (Hajer, 1995). The concept of discursive space is used by Hajer (1995) to explore how the emergence of a new policy discourse like ecological modernization may alter the individual perception of problems and possibilities and thus create room for the formation of new, unexpected political coalitions (Hajer, 1995). At the early stage of the CRP process we find discursive elements imprecating within a discursive space through which there emerged the metaphorical four ‘pillars’ for the region. Metaphors are highly useful constructs in providing a common ground, reducing often complex problems into “a visual representation or catchy one-liner” (Hajer, 1995, p. 62). ‘Pillars’ signify support, strength, a firm structure on which the region could be viewed as being constructed. This development demonstrates



how multiple, hitherto disparate actors mobilized and became engaged around a common theme. It re-ordered and created a new understanding of the region.

The four broad-based pillars of the CMP included: healthy environment, enriched communities, sustainable infrastructure and a prosperous economy (CRP, 2006a). The order of the four pillars suggests that, at least in this early phase, quality of life factors (healthy environment, enriched communities) supersede monetary factors (sustainable infrastructure, prosperous economy). These four metaphorical pillars became the components of a story-line which, by definition, is a narrative “...that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding” (Hajer, 1995, p. 62). Story-lines serve powerful purposes given that they enabled social change by allowing for the re-ordering of understandings among actors who otherwise hold established and specific positions (Hajer, 1995). They suggest unity in understanding as a way of moving forward. In this sense, the visioning exercise was the first step in creating and framing the discursive space upon which problems and solutions were thereafter discussed. The parameters of this space were defined by the vision of the region embodied in the four pillars. The visioning process gave meaning to the region and propelled the process forward. It was within this discursive space that numerous projects were initiated by the CRP executive committee.

These findings from the analysis of texts are supported by the interview data. The majority of the 20 informants spoke of the early stages as expansive, marked by cooperation, open conversations, a willingness to work together and lack of contentious issues. This is consistent with the earlier findings where an inclusive environment allowed for the creation of the discursive space that helped construct not only metaphors including the vision for the region but also, within the executive committee, new knowledge about water and policy options.

Within the executive committee, informants who were members of the committee frequently spoke of the positive tone of discussion, the respect given to their views and the constructive nature of the debate. For example:

...we were trying to feel our way and find solutions that were reasonable and made everybody as happy as possible...right from the get-go I could see (there were) things we had to overcome and we were doing pretty good... I liked that (the politics). There were a lot of different views and a lot of different people and yah, I really enjoyed it and most people were good, they wanted to make the thing work... (Foothills [1]: 6).

And when we attended the meetings the relationships were collegial, people were friendly, it was a great venue to come together to discuss issues (Rocky View [1]: 5).

..(at) the executive level everybody could talk, speak freely, everybody...it was an equal vote, everyone insisted on an equal vote, it was a one on one. That was in the executive, early days...I think that was really important because it created a sense we were all equal at the table, big and small.... early days so not huge difficult decisions to make... (Airdrie: 12).

It was a good group and went along fine (Nanton: 1).

Even those more peripheral to the process such a BRBC member of the water and wastewater servicing committee expressed similar perceptions of the early days:

They (the executive) were all very agreeable to one another. You know, they are politicians but they had good discussion. Maybe they weren't as agreeable, I don't know. The stuff I was presenting to them and discussing with them was around water flows and a little around licenses but more around how you get enough water in the stream with license and license transfers and how to use it....So at that meeting I found people asked intelligent questions and all had common ground of finding solutions to that particular problem (BRBC/Water Smart: 9).

Other interviewees reported similar collegiality in the proceedings of the various technical working committees. Descriptions included that: individuals were effectively working through the fundamentals of the Plan (Turner Valley [1]), issues were non-contentious (Airdrie), and debate was "healthy, building an academic platform from which knowledge could be achieved and synergies of action could potentially come from" (Bighorn [1]: 12). Another interviewee said: "...the majority of my dealings with the CRP have been through the transportation (committee). I have a very positive taste in my mouth in regards to how I was dealt with" (Strathmore: 3). One informant remarked how Calgary's representatives on working committees sought to temper their influence

based on their size and considerable presence in the region. He spoke about how the playing field was very level in those venues, how the atmosphere was open, inclusive, freely expressive and not politically charged; there was an honest willingness to cooperate (anonymous [3]). The interview data verified earlier findings of a welcoming, inclusionary environment that afforded the discursive space in which objects emerged. These concepts will be significant in this research's exploration of the process because it is later found that the creation of discursive space and objects were used to discredit, rather than uphold, the process.

Within the context of studies of regionalism, establishing a vision of the region based on environment, economic and social considerations, as was done in the CRP process, is consistent with Wheeler's (2002) observation that economic development no longer dominates regionalism. The new paradigm balances environment with livability concerns and sustainability development (Haughton & Counsel, 2004; Wheeler, 2002). Also, as a strategic document, the CRP visioning exercise placed consideration of the environment at the strategic or planning level rather than something to be considered during the final stages of economic decision-making as Gibbs and Jonas (2001) found in their study. Finally, the comprehensive vision of the region underscores Scott and Storper's (2003) observation that regional formations have little resemblance to earlier urban policy that focused strictly on infrastructure, housing and transportation.

### 6.3 Creating and acting on objects: water and local autonomy

Under post-structural analysis, discourse operates as practices that form the object of which they speak (Hall, 1997). Hence concepts such as 'madness', 'punishment' and 'sexuality', subjects which Foucault studied, only existed meaningfully within the discourses around them (Hall, 1997). The creation of objects can have a powerful influence in the formation of new social practices. The formation of more contemporary ideas such as dieting and physical fitness are often cited as prime examples of objects which, when acted upon, resulted in significant changes to social practices

including managing the human body, diagnosing and treating illnesses, and developing theories of the origins and treatment of diseases such as cancer (McHoul and Grace, 1993).

As a theoretical concept, creating objects is significant in studying the CRP process. Within the discursive framework established by the four pillars, water was being viewed as an ecological good as well as a strategic resource necessary for municipal growth and community well-being. Water could be seen as embedded within each pillar considering: 1) its quality and quantity is fundamental to a 'healthy environment'; 2) it is essential in meeting quality of life objectives for 'enriched communities'; 3) its supply to municipalities relates directly to 'sustainable infrastructure' in delivering it; and 4) its availability and acceptable quality are necessary for economic development and a 'prosperous economy'. In addition, the analysis of the written documentation found that the concept of integrated water resources management was frequently touted as a central principle to the planning process but the participatory nature of the process fell short of expectations. This line of inquiry is taken up in Chapter Nine.

In exploring the theme of water through this regionalization process, in this formative period of the CRP, water began to be objectified in two ways – first through the theme of ecology and sustainability and second through the theme of water supply and distribution. In acting on those objects, a working committee was established for water and wastewater management, staffed by technical experts and select members of the executive committee. Additional separate committees focused on transportation, special transportation, GIS mapping, and economic development. The aim of the host of committees was to ultimately develop a regional water, land, economic development and transportation policy framework, supporting the four pillars established in the visioning exercise. This process adheres to Miller and Rose's (2008) notion that 'knowing' an object requires attention to techniques of writing, listing, numbering and computing that render it knowable, calculable and open to intervention and regulation. By making an object knowable, one is also able to act on it.

With respect to water, the visioning exercise revealed that:

...some residents are worried that the future might not be as rosy for their predecessors unless urban growth is constrained and better managed. Concerns about the impact of urban sprawl on the environment and, particularly, the water supply, are paramount... Above all, respondents want the Region to remain clean, pristine, and safe for all living things, now and over time. (CRP, 2006b, p. 26).

Acting upon these concerns, the discussion circulated within the executive committee around developing a “regional water conservation strategy” (CRP, 2005a, p. 2). The committee tapped into local expertise by inviting presentations from representatives of ecologically-oriented watershed organizations including the small Elbow Watershed Management group and the large, Bow River Basin Council (BRBC), which is the umbrella organization for watershed management organizations in the entire Bow Basin. There were also presentations and discussion of findings of the Upper Bow Basin Cumulative Effects study. Connections between the CRP and the BRBC were formally established in 2007 when a member of the CRP was named to the BRBC board of directors. BRBC representatives also sat on the water and wastewater management committee, providing ongoing technical information and informed opinions. These actions helped to formulate what was to later become the less dominant discourse about water as an ecological good.

The second thematic strand relating to water was water supply and distribution. In June, 2005 the mayor of Calgary, David Bronconnier, proposed a comprehensive study on regional water supply and distribution that represented a critical step towards the conceptualization and development of the CRP’s water supply and distribution strategy. The mayor proposed that the study include: growth projections and impacts on water, short and long-term challenges and best solutions for the region as a whole (CRP, 2005b). As a result, the internationally-based engineering firm CH2M Hill was commissioned to conduct a technical study of water. This report provided a new basis for knowledge, given it was the first to conceptualize and study water supply and distribution within the region. The firm’s international stature appeared to give this group greater

discursive power than the more local expertise of watershed organizations. The report was also championed by the mayor of Calgary, who held substantial influence in the region.

In exploring Foucault's concept of power, McHoul and Grace (1993) state that different forms of power in society – legal, administrative, economic and so forth – have one thing in common. They all have shared reliance on certain techniques or methods of application, and they draw some authority by referring to scientific “truths” (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 65). The authority which the executive committee drew from scientific truths, and hence the creation of new knowledge, is particularly salient in the context of the CRP water policy process, given the more pressing concern that numerous municipal councillors had over long-term water supply compared to water ecology and sustainability concerns.

The findings of the CH2M Hill study could be considered the basis of the scientific knowledge and truth around which water management policy was rooted, and contributed to the nature of the executive committee's discursive power. The study was critical as it set in motion the CRP's spatial land and water management strategy. This study identified water shortages and recommended a regional solution which led to the notion that water access and servicing should be based on a specific land management scheme involving densification of housing. It also established the critical concept that water would be shared and distributed in the region with Calgary acting as the hub.

Given that the CRP executive committee recommended the study, determined the consultants, the study's terms of reference, and accepted and endorsed the results, it had significant influence on framing the debate and potential solutions around the issue of water supply and distribution. The scientific (engineered-based) ‘new’ knowledge was viewed by the executive committee as legitimate and as will be seen, the group drew authority from the scientific truths that were generated. Richardson (2000) states that in the construction of spatial policy, processing certain data using particular methodologies conditions specific ideas, practices and the solutions that are

possible. Applying Richardson's observation to the CRP, we can see that the CH2M Hill study is seminal in shaping the direction of the discourse around water.

The water consultants' reports were produced in phases over the 2007 to 2009 time-frame of this research. The first four phases were presented in 2007. The consultants inventoried existing resources and infrastructure, identified key issues, presented growth projections, and specified the region's short and long-term water challenges. The report's most significant findings were that under existing licensing arrangements some communities would experience water shortages as early as 2030, including the communities of Cochrane, Strathmore, Okotoks, Rocky View County, Wheatland County and the M. D. Foothills. The study concluded that for most of the servicing needs, a regional system originating from the city of Calgary was technically the preferred option. Management of water within the region would also require a 30 percent increase in water conservation, an objective consistent with the province's Water for Life Strategy (CH2M Hill, 2007). These early results need to be considered within the context of a land-management strategy which was yet to be developed.

The land management strategy was set in motion in 2007 when the CRP executive committee commissioned another equally influential, scientific-based consulting firm to provide regional planning advice and modelling services. A pivotal task was to study the region's 'ecological infrastructure' and develop options for land-use and population growth in the region. The 'learning' scenarios that were developed contemplated the effect on the region under different priorities and assumptions (CRP, 2008a, p.3). These scenarios would inform the public debate that took place in a series of workshops a few months later. The scenarios were: 1) the 'status-quo' scenario which assumed the continuation of current development practices including all approved municipal development plans and other projects currently in the planning stage; 2) the 'nodes and corridors' scenario which would intensify development around infrastructure and transportation corridors; and 3) the 'ecologically and culturally sensitive' scenario where ecologically and culturally sensitive

land bases would be excluded from development. A ‘hybrid’ scenario, on which the Plan came to be based, was built to include the most important conditions and assumptions emerging from each of the three learning scenarios. Critical to the process was that the hybrid scenario adopted the concept of compact urban nodes and growth corridors as the framework for the CRP land-use policy. Thus a second discourse began to emerge, centering on land management and landowner control. Within this framework density requirements (number of houses per acre) would be a pre-requisite for water servicing. The determination of the nodal characteristics and their location became the platform on which issues of governance and municipal autonomy would be fought. It is around municipal autonomy and land owner control that the third discourse was formed.

Documents indicate that as the executive committee worked toward the development of the final vision and mission of the CRP, they began grappling with the contentious issue of governance and municipal autonomy. During this time ‘local autonomy’ came to be objectified and acted upon. So, for example, in a data collection exercise in 2007, CRP staff fanned out across the region to conduct interviews with member municipalities and reported that: 1) municipalities have come into their own as distinct, complex municipalities with their own goals, aspirations and needs; 2) ‘rural’ is no longer an accurate description of their character; and 3) all municipalities highly value control, self-determination and autonomy (CRP, 2007b). In the contestation that was soon to emerge, the report was also perspicacious as it noted (CRP, 2007b):

Interviewees expressed concern about conflict arising in the following areas: water and wastewater services, the current annexation process, concerns about power and money, and perceptions of inequality between CRP members (p. 12).

But at this early stage, the ‘Terms of Agreement of Working Together’ which were developed satisfied the member municipalities because the terms specified that (CRP, 2007c):

The plan shall acknowledge, respect, and uphold the autonomy of individual jurisdictions, while serving as a plan for land-use and growth management throughout the region (p. 4).



The terms of agreement were approved at the June 2007 general assembly where the vision and mission of the CRP were also approved.

Studies in regionalism, such as those by Jessop (1995) and Tickell and Peck (1996), warn of the challenges and complexities involved in the development of governance structures. Under regional formations, governing powers shift and becomes more fragmented, involving many more agencies in framing local regulatory frameworks, in policy-making, and in seeking access to the resources and capacities to implement policy. Local governments are but one agent in this mix. Like the CRP process with its myriad municipalities, networks are re-worked and organized across a range of spatial scales (Amin & Thrift, 1995; Healey, Davoudi, & O'Toole, 1992) which involve co-operation, interdependencies, a multiplicity of actors, and networks that seek access to various resources necessary to create the capacity to govern and achieve policy goals (McGuirk, 2000).

In their acquisition of knowledge on governance, consultants specializing in the subject were commissioned by the CRP executive committee and workshops were organized and attended by executive committee members as they wrestled with what McCann (2003) speaks of as the re-composition of the networks of power among political actors within and across scales. McCann's (2003) point relates to Hajer's concept of discourse coalitions given that networks of power in this research are seen to coalesce around powerful story-lines. Issues of governance and autonomy which involve the reworking of networks of power, intensified within the executive committee as the CRP process moved forward.

As a discursive concept, focusing our attention on how water as an object was acted upon suggests that during this early period, efforts were made to consider water through a conservation and sustainability lens as well as a water supply and distribution lens. Also, the establishment of the four pillars set in motion a myriad of working groups established for specific purposes during this period. Local autonomy also became an object embraced and acted upon by formally recognizing

this principle in the Terms of Agreement of Working Together. But in re-composing the networks of power, its meaning became highly contested.

#### 6.4 Mechanism upholding discourse: media upheld regional vision, partnerships, enthusiasm

As noted in the methodology chapter, Foucault believed that the constitution of discourse has both internal and external mechanisms which keep certain discourses in existence while others do not survive. One of these mechanisms is commentary. During the ‘smooth sailing’ period newspaper coverage served as an external mechanism that supported the enthusiastic statements flowing from the CRP executive committee and supporters. The print media upheld the regional vision story-line embodied in the four pillars.

Prominent themes around the regional vision found in the sample of 53 articles during the 2005 to 2007 period were the value of the public consultation exercises and partnering of the many municipalities in the region which had a common goal of developing a long-term plan for the region. Statements in the press included:

The ratification of the Calgary Regional Partnership’s (CRP) Regional vision is a monumental achievement, according to the Mayor of Okotoks (Braitenbach, 2007, p.1).

It is an exciting time to be a part of the CRP as we continue to work towards creating a Regional Land Use Plan that all eighteen members can use to shape the future of our region (Massot, 2007, p. 1).

Calgary’s regional municipalities deserve a round of applause for setting aside their differences Friday and agreeing to work together in creating a land-use plan by January 2009....The municipalities have been bickering over growth issues since 1995... (“Calgary’s regional municipalities deserve a round of applause”, 2007, p. B3).

“Our partnership has taken on some tough regional growth and planning issues”, said Airdrie Mayor Linda Bruce, Chair of the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP). “To take these matters forward, we have assembled some of the best planning, engineering and economic minds in North America and are working with innovative decision making tools to guide the development of our strategies” (Massot, 2006, p.1).

The themes of these quotations – the capacity of the municipalities to work together on difficult issues and to articulate a common goal amongst diverse players within expressions of enthusiasm – underscore the smooth sailing which was characteristic of this period.

Virtually every newspaper article sampled articulated the views and statements of local mayors, town councillors, municipal managers, and the CRP executive and spokespersons, hence elevating and sustaining their views and opinions. Among the mayors, the involvement of the mayor of Calgary was of some interest. Given the mayor's influence and power, his ability to work as a team player was questioned: "Is Bronconnier simply a loose cannon (or is) he just a neighborhood bully who wants absolute control of the entire Calgary region?" (Remington, 2007, p. C6). Calgary was criticized as having mismanaged traffic while rural areas were criticized for permitting unsightly 'rural sprawl':

All city officials have been able to do, despite the millions of dollars they've already spent, is move whatever traffic jams there are just a little further down the street – about as far as the next traffic light... (Hope, 2007a, p. F1)

Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier... said what he qualified as "rural sprawl" could hamper the city's future expansion (Massot, 2005, p. 1).

Counter-discourses were rarely quoted in the newspaper coverage sampled but where they occurred the articles contained both anti-urban and anti-rural statement.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In considering the 2005 to 2007 time frame, four theoretical concepts were particularly pertinent to this formative period: governmentality; creating discursive space, metaphors and story-lines; creating and acting on objects; and the early creation of mechanisms marginalizing as well as upholding discourse. Discursive space gave room to the creation of multiple visions of the future that coalesced into four 'pillars' that spoke to the environment, communities, infrastructure and the economy. This framed a particular narrative or story-line around which to manage future growth. It was grounded in what is commonly known as the triple bottom line – environment, economy and

social life. Hajer's (1995) notion of story-line captures how the vision for the region became the narrative around which people could coalesce, helping to propel the initiative forward. We see that it served as the bases on which numerous studies and projects were initiated, setting into motion the CRP's capacity to act upon the objects it created.

The nature of varying degrees of discursive power was being formed through governmentality and its connection to mechanisms marginalizing and upholding discourse. The analysis in this section established that the CRP was constructed on municipally-based institutional concepts with power concentrated within a committee comprised of municipal councillors using decision-making mechanisms employed by municipal governments. This relates to Foucault's notion that discourse emerges within forms of internal discipline through which a discursive order is maintained. These forms of internal discipline established the mechanisms that had increasingly significant effects on marginalizing and upholding particular discourse as tensions grew. The issue of water supply and distribution became subsumed within discussions which were increasingly occupied by the highly controversial issues of land management and governance.

The connection and interplay between theoretical concepts can be observed in that the discursive space created objects which were acted on through government-related decision making processes by participants endowed with discursive power. The extent of varying degrees of discursive power exercised by stakeholders could be observed in Calgary's mayor readily assuming a dominant discursive position, especially given that during this time of 'smooth sailing' every other municipality was in agreement with the regional direction that was being charted. It was not until later that the other dominant discursive positions began to arise among participants who challenged Calgary's position on critical issues. It is then that the nature of varying degrees of discursive power among stakeholders began to shift. The extent of the varying degrees of discursive power among stakeholders also becomes more evident as the relative degrees of power begin to bear on the decision-making process, as will be seen in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight. As quoted in a

Calgary newspaper, during this early stage: “They (have) done a good job at picking the low-hanging fruit. The things that can be done easily because everyone agrees,” (anthropologist) Smart said” (D’Aliesio, 2008, p. B.1)

The discourse around control over land and municipal autonomy also began to take shape. The discourse around water was also present given that water was central to the CRP’s regional vision, having critical links to all four pillars. The executive committee readily seized upon this understanding. New and necessary knowledge about how water could be managed in the region were generated through a crucial water study commissioned by the executive committee. The results acquired legitimacy by the executive committee because of their scientific underpinnings and because the firm conducting the study was chosen by the executive committee. However, interview data reveal that other people more peripheral to the process viewed the results as ignoring ecological considerations. Thus early evidence of exclusion can be detected in this period, related to the executive committee’s authority over all facets of studies initiated at that time. It is one of the effects of the executive committee having a greater degree of discursive power than other groups. As will be seen in the following chapter, this marked the beginning of a process that channeled the water discourse towards supply and distribution and away from, and hence weakening, the discourse around water ecology and sustainability.

The findings of the analysis above are consistent with the academic literature on regionalism and the development of new spatial strategies. Similar to other studies of regional initiatives, the CRP relates to the broad-based, strategic nature of the issues which regional formations seek to tackle and the high degree of social and political engagement they require (Scott & Stroper, 2003; Frisken & Norris, 2002; McGuirk, 2000). The concern over issues within the CRP was not exclusively economic but environmental as well as social (Wheeler, 2002). The challenges of formulating a new system of governance began to emerge, given the necessary but, as will be seen, the increasingly messy re-working of networks of power. Phase one of the CRP process was

relatively smooth sailing during the early development of the new regional formation. The next chapter, entitled 'Choppy Waters' explores a more challenging phase that lay ahead.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Choppy Waters**

At the beginning of the second phase of the process, in 2008 when the plan started to take shape, discussions which earlier circulated around high level principles evolved into debates and disputes over details. The process acquired a much more controversial dimension and given that Foucault's concept of contestation becomes a dominant concept, the period is entitled 'Choppy Waters'. Governmentality is an equally important concept as pressure from provincial government directives and the time-frames shaped the conduct of municipal councillors and the CRP process. Governmentality could also be observed in the Calgary mayor compelling people to behave in a certain way, exercised through the city's water license holdings and the city's veto power within the proposed CRP voting structure. The third prominent Foucauldian concept in this chapter consists of mechanisms of exclusion, including those which arise from informal attributions of perceived power differentials and judgements about people's competency. These informal mechanisms supplement the more formal ones embedded in established rules and procedures, the most important of which are the voting mechanisms with the CRP.

#### 7.1 Contestation and governmentality: autonomy disputed; government and Calgary influences

Richardson explored the existence of contestation in the construction of rurality emerging from a European Union government-directed initiative. He concluded that spatial policy processes at all levels are pursued within a field of discursive conflict (Richardson, 2000). This section explores how contestation became a key dynamic within the construction of Calgary city-regionalism. Sites of contestation related to land management and municipal autonomy, which were grounded in access to water. Further, the CRP process and the construction of the Calgary region was taking place within a provincial government policy framework that strongly supported land and water management within regional constructs. Calgary's water license and veto power (within the proposed voting structure of the CRP) also worked to influence conduct. Thus the influence which

the provincial government and the city of Calgary had on the CRP process and the ‘conduct of conduct’ of participants within the CRP is also examined.

During the 2008 period, the minutes of the executive committee meetings reflect discussion around water as an object becoming increasingly channeled towards water servicing and distribution and away from water ecology. This was propelled by municipal representatives’ water supply concerns, validated by the CH2M Hill study which, in providing scientific credence to impending water shortages, conditioned the ideas and potential solutions that began to emerge. Although a scientific study of the ‘ecological infrastructure’<sup>19</sup> of the region had been undertaken, water supply and distribution considerations seemed to acquire greater urgency than water ecology. Emerging from the discussion within the executive committee was the concept that water access and servicing would be provided to nodal developments conceptualized in the land-use plan. As will be shown, the authority to determine the *placement* of the nodes and the *densities* of the nodes became grounded in highly controversial issues of control versus autonomy. The centre of controversy was thus grounded in access to water. To repeat, Blomquist and Schlager (2005) state “(w)ater’s nature as a valued resource brings it squarely into the domain of politics, where individuals and groups struggle for control of decision making” (p. 113).

As early as the fall of 2007, a document prepared by CRP staff identified the ‘major risk factors and barriers’ to successful completion of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan (CRP, 2007b). Among a host of issues, those most germane to this research were: 1) difficult trade-offs involving land use surfacing from diverging municipal perspectives; 2) timelines for activities, such as the development of the regional Plan, that were very condensed, involving considerable material that needed to be technically processed; and 3) stakeholder and CRP member processes that required working with CRP’s elected officials, requiring the project to slow down (CRP, 2007b).

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<sup>19</sup> This terminology also underscores Foucault and the notion of elevating certain discourses. By referring to ecological ‘infrastructure’, nature takes on a more scientific, engineering quality. Another example of contemporary wordsmithing for similar purposes is ‘social hydrology’ which gives the sociological study of water management and engineering quality.



While there were pressures to slow down the process, there were, however, opposing pressures to speed it up. There emerged the need to accelerate the development of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan in advance of the release of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) under the Land Use Framework (LUF). The view within the CRP was that in creating the Calgary region plan in advance of the SSRP, a home-grown Calgary region plan could be transplanted intact into the broader SSRP. This benefit was also reinforced by ministers in statements made at general assembly meetings (for example CRP, 2008b). The pressure was also compounded by the fear of the province mandating a regional plan on the Calgary region, given that they had recently imposed a plan on the Edmonton capital region. Together, it appeared these pressures contributed to the emergence and acceleration of discord within the executive committee as tight time lines and the threat of a provincial government-imposed regional plan came to bear on the process.

Thirteen interviewees commented that pressures to accelerate the Plan hindered the process. Six people spoke of political pressure imposed on them to have the Plan completed before the SSRP. Four interviewees attributed the pressure to the threat of having a regional plan forced on them as was the case in the Edmonton region. Two people indicated it was both. One person spoke about pressure due to an upcoming election. Within this group, two people commented that by the end of the process people were exhausted. Only one person said the pressure was a positive force:

...sometimes a deadline helps get down to brass tacks, makes you work, otherwise you could just let these things go on forever. We could still be naval gazing and never even come close to hitting the hard issues...(Airdrie: 22).

Governmentality is seen as compelling people to behave a certain way. Governmentality, specifically the time pressures imposed by the provincial government, tended to have a negative effect on conduct within the planning process.

In addition to provincial government pressure, water license holdings were also viewed by interviewees as shaping the conduct of municipalities. This served as a more subtle means of governing conduct. The license holdings also pertain to the nature of the different degrees of

discursive power, especially in how they were used by Calgary to influence behaviour. Some interviewees, for example, believed Calgary's water license holdings served to suppress municipalities that needed water, constraining what could be said. Five interviewees spoke of Calgary having control over municipalities because of water or wastewater servicing needs. An additional four people believed that some municipalities feared reprisals if they disagreed with Calgary. Two interviewees observed:

When you're supplying the water to all those municipalities and you want to control, how are they going to vote? There's no way they can vote any other way than with Calgary. So Calgary can do anything it wants without a rural member sitting at the table (Wheatland: 4).

With zero water license (Airdrie) was totally dependent on not pissing Calgary off, for lack of more oblique terms (Rocky View [2]: 23).

Thirteen informants characterized Calgary's water license in various, often negative metaphorical terms: a hammer (5), a lever (2), an even trade with land (1), a water gun (1), a carrot (1), a big stick (1), making or breaking the Plan (1), the bully (1). One person observed that people never viewed Calgary with indifference; they either viewed them as adversaries or people whose favour they wanted to win (anonymous [3]). Another believed the Plan was driven by Calgary to gain control of the region (Rocky View [1]).

The mayor of Calgary also exercised a formal mechanism of control through his expressed willingness to exercise a veto within the proposed CRP voting structure when necessary. The proposed voting structure provided that decisions would require a majority of the population and two-thirds of the CRP membership. Given that the city of Calgary comprised 85 percent of the population of the region (based on 2006 census data), any decision would require Calgary's approval. The chairman of the CRP described the effect of the mayor's statement:

I could always strangle Dave Bronconnier because at one of our big meetings, workshop seminar type of day, everything was going perfectly...and then he said veto. Calgary and veto. And I went Dave! And after that everybody referred to the Calgary veto (Airdrie: 14).

The mayor's use of the term 'veto' is a clear example of a statement with institutional force and relates to the nature of discursive power, given the repercussions of his statement as expressed in the quotation above.

In stark contrast to the optimistic discourse that characterized the 'smooth sailing' phase, statements of 'fear' and 'distrust' entered the debate that circulated within the executive committee. Whether fear and distrust was driving the process then *became* points of contention. Statements reported in the minutes of one executive meeting included (CRP, 2008c, p. 5-7):

Mayor McBride suggested that there is fear in the air...;

(Mayor Casey) noted he understands the caution and the fear but if we let fear drive us we would not do anything;

Councillor Branson stated he is not acting out of fear but acting pragmatically;

(Councillor Waddock) noted that it was not fear for him; he was just trying to draft a document that is clear and straight...

During the interview process, informants returned to the concepts of fear and distrust. A Foothills' representative believed the partnership ran into difficulty when, in his view, power inequities similar to those that existed in the days of the Regional Planning Commission began to appear: "And I said, if you start this thing with smackings of that you're dead in the water" (Foothills [1]: 3). And a second Foothills' interviewee recalled dishonest statements made in a discussion with urban members:

...the urbans have some interesting thoughts and opinions on some issues... When people would say things I would call 'bull shit' I did. We were talking about agriculture and both of them (urban members) said this is really important to conserve agriculture land and I said you guys don't give a damn about agriculture land. The only reason why they want it preserved, and if they were honest...it's unfettered development lands... So be honest about the reasons why (Foothills [2]: 2).

A Rocky View informant stated:

...don't say just trust us, sign on and we'll figure it out. And I remember some of the other mayors saying don't worry about it...we'll look after you when you sign up. We'll make sure you don't get kicked around. Really? ... Sorry, we're not going to take a leap of faith because we've been burnt in the past (Rocky View [1]: 6).

The statements enumerated above point to a lack of trust and hence the social capital necessary for a partnership inclusive of the rural municipalities to move forward.

Six interviewees spoke about the significance of a single statement or a discernible change that resulted in the positive nature or tone of discussions turning negative during the planning process. A Rocky View informant, for example, indicated how hurt and offended she felt by a public remark made by the chairman of the CRP executive:

And I remember a quote in the Calgary Herald...and Linda Bruce who was chair of the partnership said water will be the teeth of this agreement. That means we will use water to control the members and if they don't behave – that's how I interpreted it. And it was very offensive...Why do you need teeth in an agreement? That was very hurtful (Rocky View [1]: 5).

Nanton's representative noted that a change in the nature of the discussion occurred when, broadly speaking, discourse turned from 'us' to 'we'. This speaks to the effect of the change in the direction of the discourse at this time. The representative said "it was 'we' they were looking after and basically previous to that it was 'us', the whole region" (Nanton: 1). Bighorn's representative found that another juncture occurred at the point where the capital region model was being imposed on Edmonton, diverting the conversation towards urgencies in working out the details involved in accessing water within the broader Plan (Bighorn [(1)]).

The knowledge acquired through the land-use study that considered the ecological infrastructure of the region, identified earlier, framed the discussion, as well as contestation, that took place within the wider public in 2008. The learning scenarios<sup>20</sup> that had been developed by the consultants were used as the basis for discussion during six public workshops. Considering the list of invited attendees, the sessions were intended to elicit feedback from interest groups and individuals with particular expertise and concern for the specific topic that was being considered in that workshop. Each session was organized to begin with a presentation of the learning scenarios followed by panel

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<sup>20</sup> The scenarios were: the 'status-quo' scenario, 'nodes and corridors', 'ecologically and culturally sensitive' scenario and the 'hybrid' scenario.

presentations largely by people who were considered experts or authorities in their field (including municipal planners, town administrators, irrigation district managers, Alberta Environment government managers, and CRP project managers), followed by public participation in break-out sessions.

Earlier it was argued that water was central to the vision as well as the problems and issues of the CRP. This is why the subject of water emerged in almost all the workshops that were held. The frequency and scope of the debate underscores the importance and the complex and value-laded nature of the issues around water. The wide range of statements made in the workshops spoke, for example, of: the tendency to compromise watershed protection when land sells for millions of dollars; the need for paradigm change in order to move forward; water quality parameters not being addressed; the need for more innovative conservation based approaches; concerns raised about climate change and the cumulative impacts of activities on sensitive water resources and the carrying capacity of the natural systems; and the need for high quality and innovative solutions to water servicing (CRP, 2008a; CRP, 2008d). The workshops were productive because they articulated the issues and potential solutions over land and water resources within the consultative milieu the CRP espoused. At times, however, there were conflicting opinions, including experts at odds with interest groups and lay people. The recorded proceedings of these sessions also highlighted urban-rural divisions (CRP, 2008a, p. 5-6):

Western Irrigation District: Irrigation districts are giving up their future agricultural growth to satisfy urban water demands.

Participant: Has there been an analysis of food production in the irrigation district? The market place has the control on (irrigation) farming and in Alberta the religion is money.

And

Calgary: We should understand that all the problems in the water (quality) start on the land.

Participant: Does Calgary have any plans to reduce the amount of phosphorous that goes into the water?

These statements underscore the complex and diverse nature of the contestation over water.

Contestation over issues of municipal autonomy, detected earlier, was found in a workshop where municipal administrators from different jurisdictions expressed strongly contradictory opinions. This revealed that the effect of the contestation around governance and autonomy extended beyond the CRP executive committee level to include municipal staff. Statements from the recorded proceedings of a workshop include (CRP, 2008e, p. 3-4):

The regional land use plan doesn't have a role to play in alleviating tensions at the local level between municipalities. The regional land use plan needs to stick to regional issues. Deciding which land should be in which jurisdiction should not be part of the regional land use plan (Harry Riva Cambrin, Municipal Manager, M.D. Foothills).

Tensions will magnify if we don't deal with them (tensions) as part of the plan. Growth decisions are causing problems today because local decisions are out of sync with decisions we need to make in the regional plan (Julian deCocq, Chief Administrative Officer, town of Cochrane).

The regional land use plan must be statutory in order to have teeth... 'Edge conflicts' will be the biggest issue that the regional plan must address (Mary Axworthy, Director of Land Use Planning and Policy, city of Calgary).

These statements demonstrate how the contested discourse around local autonomy grew to encompass not only elected councillors within the CRP but their unelected staff. We see at one end of the continuum staff arguing that the regional initiative stick to regional issues versus others arguing that local decisions need to be made within a broader regional context. This contestation can be seen as grounded in conflicting views of governmentality because it relates to the ways in which municipal conduct would be governed by the CRP entity.

Hajer argues that "(p)ower is not simply in discourse but in the performance of the conflict, in the particular way in which actors mobilize discourse..." (1995, p. 182). Hence we see discursive contestation circulated within the executive committee as actors mobilized discourse, seeking discursive dominance given that, as Weber et al. (2010) discover, the dominant discourse can ultimately define the problem, frame the debate, and devise the solutions. It was at this juncture that the institutional framework, developed in the early stage of the process, was more fully deployed in a contested environment, upholding certain discourses and marginalizing other. This affected the

nature and extent of the varying degrees of discursive power. Thus mechanisms marginalizing discourse are the Foucauldian concepts explored in the following section.

## 7.2 Mechanisms marginalizing discourse: voting, institutional power of Calgary, judgements

This section explores three mechanisms which marginalized discourse. These include the voting procedures which silenced dissent within decision-making committees, the institutional power of discourse exercised by the Calgary mayor, and judgements which marginalized rural statements. The public participation exercises had resulted in the general acceptability of the concept of nodes and corridor development. The growth and sustainability framework committee, the Group of Seven, worked on critical complexities of the Plan upholding the scenario around nodes and the water access and servicing that would be linked to them. They also tackled the development of a governance framework, alert to events unfolding in Edmonton where recommendations emerging from the Radke report on regional planning<sup>21</sup> were being imposed by the provincial government at that time.

The Group of Seven committee presented the rough draft of the regional land-use plan and the governance framework to the executive committee in March, 2008. The draft document began by stating that the context of the discussion of regional planning and governance had changed quite dramatically given that the provincial government had embraced regional planning and had imposed a regional governance framework on the Edmonton region (CRP, 2008f). Recommendations in the draft CRP document included that (CRP, 2008f, p. 18-19):

Membership in the CRP...be mandatory; it should not be possible for communities to *cherry pick* (original emphasis), to opt into or out of individual components of the (Plan);

The governance structure...be expansive...within areas that are truly regional in scope e.g., regional land use planning, regional servicing, and transportation...;

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<sup>21</sup> Recall the provincial government commissioned a study of the Edmonton region which produced the Radke Report, recommending implementing a board for the capital region with mandatory participation of 25 municipalities (Radke, 2007).

A super majority decision-making process (comprising the votes of a majority of the region's population and two-thirds of the CRP membership) be implemented for an explicit list of decisions that affect the region as a whole...

These provisions would not address the issue of municipal autonomy raised by municipal staff in the workshops nor satisfy the elected councillors of those rural municipalities on the CRP executive committee. The provisions were therefore highly contested. During the March, 2008 executive meeting Foothills' representative stated the land-use provisions of the draft Plan represented an incursion into the authority of the municipality and did not represent regional issues.

In democratic societies, voting is viewed as an inclusionary practice that gives everyone a voice. But within the CRP several critical votes were taken at the March 2008 executive committee meeting that appeared to have marginalized the four dissenting rural municipalities through voting as a practice of exclusion. This observation can be traced through the executive committee minutes, beginning with issues raised by Foothills' representative concerning the scope of regional issues as stated above. A blunt exchange took place during the meeting when the recommendations quoted above were presented. It is curious that Foothills' objection arose despite the fact the municipality had a representative in the Group of Seven that drafted the recommendations. In the previous chapter it was noted, however, that a voting structure also existed within the Group of Seven, thus serving as a mechanism of exclusion at certain points in the deliberations within that committee as well. Foothills noted that their concerns and comments had not been addressed at four previous meetings of the Group of Seven committee. Based on minutes of the executive committee, Foothills' objections also appear to be largely disregarded as members argued that it was too early to have detailed discussions, that this was still very much a discussion paper. But a motion to accept the draft of the Plan prepared by the Group of Seven was approved by the executive committee (CRP, 2008g). Foothills voted against the motion, marginalizing the counter-discourse of municipal autonomy.



The M.D. Foothills persisted in its opposition given that their statements of objection were reinforced through a written submission to the CRP articulating “two immediate and serious concerns” which related to the “extreme interference” with the municipality and the rapid development of the Plan which “must be slowed down” (CRP, 2008g, p. 11). This prompted a separate meeting between Foothills and the CRP staff, resulting in a concession given to Foothills by the executive committee, agreeing to delay public release of the Plan from January, 2009 to June, 2009.

Committee structures are the more obvious examples of mechanisms that can marginalize or uphold discourse. But some of the more hidden dynamics of power relate to the way Foucault defines discourse as statements with institutional force. That is, statements are given force by their institutional setting or the authority of the person uttering the statements (During, 1992). Based on institutional roles, power differentials and asymmetries between actors are created. In the CRP case, power structures were embedded in political institutions elevating statements by provincial ministers as well as elected officials from cities endowed with substantial water licenses, large populations and economic clout. An exploration of institutional power relates to the context, the social relationships, participants rights and obligations in relation to their discursive and institutional roles and identities (Thornborrow, 2002). For example, provincial government ministers, alert to the challenges and tribulations the CRP was experiencing, visited the executive committee on two occasions in 2008. In the first instance, the Minister of Sustainable Resources stated that “...region-wide planning is critical for our future...Old rules just won’t do it any more” (CRP, 2008h, p.5). In the second instance the Minister of Municipal Affairs threatened that “if there are some bumps in the road, the province is not afraid to intervene if it is a big bump” (CRP, 2008i, p. 5). Thus the nature and extent of varying degrees of discursive power can be seen in the statements made by provincial government ministers who were cognizant of the impact of their utterances.

In November, 2008, Calgary's mayor exercised his discursive power when he presented an ultimatum to the executive committee in a meeting arranged to take place on the mayor's terrain, a meeting room of Calgary City Hall. The mayor stated the city would be unable to participate in the continued development of the Plan without "first ensuring that its citizens' interests are protected through a super majority governance structure to guide the implementation of the plan" (CRP, 2008c, p. 2). Recall the 'super majority' decision making structure required a majority of the population and two-thirds of the CRP membership. Thus in making any decision Calgary would have to agree. Excerpts from the minutes include (CRP, 2008c, p. 4-5):

Calgary: The easiest thing for Calgary to do right now is nothing. Everyone else wants Calgary services. Calgary has all its land and servicing plans for fifty years. Their growth will not be impeded. However, if we don't do anything the province will come in and mandate something...If we don't decide now, the City of Calgary will do something different; not sure what that might be, but something different.

Cochrane: Is there any other option than what Calgary proposed?

Calgary: No.

This exchange again underscores the institutional power of Calgary mayor's statements.

Rocky View's reeve requested "that Mayor Bronconnier give some comfort to the rurals on the super majority" (CRP, 2008c, p. 5). Bronconnier stated that Calgary, in offering to become a regional water service provider, was making a "very significant departure...a very major concession" (CRP, 2008c, p. 6). As if to bolster the forcefulness of his statements, he aligned himself with the provincial government, alluding to the statements made by the two ministers who directed the CRP to "get on with it" and that the Group of Seven, a committee appointed by the CRP executive itself, had also made its recommendations (CRP, 2008c, p.6).

A motion by the Rocky View councillor proposed an amended voting structure that would include a majority of the region's population, two-thirds of the CRP membership *and* at least one municipality of each incorporation type. This would mean that motions could only be passed with

Calgary's approval as well as at least one of the rural municipalities. This would dilute Calgary's voting power and its degree of governmentality. It would also provide the rural municipalities a degree of autonomy which they viewed as so necessary. The motion was defeated with three members voting in favor of the amendment and eight opposed. A subsequent motion reverted to the original proposal that the voting structure, advocated by the mayor of Calgary, include a majority of the region's population and two-thirds of the membership. This motion was approved with ten councillors in favor and one (Foothills) against. Again this demonstrated the institutional force of Calgary mayor's statements as well as the extent of his discursive power in upholding the voting structure proposed by Calgary. In the interview process Rocky View's representative justified his surprising vote in favor of the motion because he stated that "you don't want to shoot all of your bullets in the first round" (Rocky View [2]: 18).

While evidence above points to the marginalization of rural statements, interview data reveal not all participants would agree with that assessment. Two informants felt every member could be heard no matter what size of municipality (Nanton, Strathmore). One acknowledged that there were "power shifts" depending on one's competency, ability to articulate, ability to be informed but every community had equal influence in representing their municipality (Turner Valley [2]: 8). One individual commented that certain people attempted to dominate discussions but were "rapidly shut down and put into their place" (Black Diamond: 14). An additional five people spoke of the influence of the institutional power of rural municipalities. This included two references to the disproportionate influence elected rural representatives have in the provincial government, given the number of seats in the legislature that are occupied by rural relative to urban representatives (Calgary, Black Diamond); and one who said forcing rural municipalities into the CRP would be "another nail in the coffin" of the provincial government (Foothills [2]: 7). Two references were made to rural members having considerable discursive power (BRBC/Water Smart, Airdrie) as expressed in the following statement by the chairman of the executive committee:

There were times (when)...meetings were absolutely dominated by them (rurals). And you know what, I suffered a little bit of criticism because I allowed them to go on too much. But in my mind, if I stopped them and tried to limit, they could say they were never allowed to speak about the issues and I couldn't do that.....So yah, it was tough but (Foothills), without a doubt...dominated many of the meetings. And Rocky View certainly had opportunities (Airdrie: 17).

Interview data also revealed that perceived power differentials among members of the executive committee, the nature of varying degrees of discursive power, was based to some extent on judgements about the competency of people representing communities with relatively low population counts and little economic power. In analysing the interview data, almost every interviewee provided commentary on the issue of competency of particular participants that one could argue, could have diminished the credence of their statements relative to others. This observation relates to an informal mechanism that marginalized discourse based on habit or custom rather than mechanisms involving formalized rules or processes. Six respondents, for example, spoke about the perceived lack of competency of rural and small town members. They commented on a lack of mental capacity, lack of exposure to and discussion around issues, not attending conferences like their urban counterparts, not reading large volumes of material, their acting as councillors on a part-time basis, and issues which were urban in nature and therefore of little relevance to rural and smaller communities. Another individual said some rural members were just “kind of lost” (Calgary: 8). Informants acknowledged that within the Foothills council in particular, “some people are just along for the ride” (Foothills [2]: 7), and others lacked interest in the CRP, virtually “ignoring” it (Foothills [1]: 4). By another account there were “powerful players who tried to take advantage and others who were just terribly scared of what the alternative was” (High River: 16). Specific remarks that related to these points included:

It's just the nature of politics in small areas. You don't necessary get the best and the brightest and even if you get the best and the brightest, you have a small sample size to choose from (BRBC/Water Smart: 12).

So you get some very intense, if you will, people at the table and sometimes not well informed enough to stand with the position they have and this I find bothers me in the sense that we're not doing the greater good (Turner Valley [1]: 2).

Some were almost in awe of the big city mayor and oh, it was just wonderful that he wanted to talk to them and he knew them by name and gosh, it was nice...It's pretty, wow, it's this guy who's on TV or this lady and boy, they're always in the media and they know my name, wow, they're nice to me and charming. Those personalities can be very charming, very, very charming and you did feel flattered. I remember those days. But you have to set that aside and look at the plan. It's not about whose being nice to you (Rocky View [1]: 23).

These remarks reveal judgements made about small community rural members resulted in perceptions of their inferiority.

Two people cited the high rate of turn-over of people due to the frequency of municipal elections as a factor relating to competency. Thus competency is also underpinned by government practices. As one person said:

...you've got to develop that competency. It's not built into our democratic system. So what are the challenges here? We turn over every four years at the municipal level and what are you getting at the table? And you don't always get the best people at the table (Turner Valley [2]: 8).

Five informants referred to what appeared to be a lack of interest and lack of time on the part of some of the executive committee members. One characterized the CRP as similar to a social club: "Seemed like the ones who didn't put the work into it, just like a social club, they would look around and vote with the big cities", while some other members just didn't care about the issues (Rocky View [1]: 18). Some observed infrequent attendance at meetings by some participants (Bighorn [1]). All of these observations raise questions about the competency of participants.

The discussion above examines the nature of power differentials between actors within the decision-making process of the CRP. But because the partnership was, above all, a voluntary one, dissatisfied members always had the option to exit. So although statements made by rural municipal councillors may have carried relatively less discursive power than members such as Calgary's mayor, exiting the partnership would send a powerful message. In the final months of 2008, two municipalities exercised their option to leave. Bighorn asked for permission to leave because the

municipality "... does not fit with central metropolitan issues" (CRP, 2008c, p.4). Wheatland left the partnership without any notice. The explanation noted in the executive committee minutes read:

(The chairman) advised there was no advanced warning of their withdrawal, but that she suspects one of their issues may be that they have not been engaged in this process, and perhaps we should have worked harder to encourage them (CRP, 2008i, p. 3).

The departure of the rurals underscores Foucault's belief that people can in one instance be powerless and in another instance be powerful.

Reasons for the departure of the Municipal District of Bighorn and Wheatland County were explored in the interview process. Interviewees from those municipalities spoke of the importance of critical, discernible changes in the direction and tone of discussions at certain periods of time. For Bighorn's mayor it was a shift from a focus on water and the environment to water servicing and distribution:

We started to get into trouble when they started to leave the environmental scenario in favour of utility distribution scenarios....That started to lead us away from the environmental scenario. In the environmental scenario we were trying to connect supply with distribution. And we would talk about *security of supply, security of supply* (Bighorn (1): 2, original emphasis).

For Wheatland it was a shift towards Calgary dictating the conditions of the partnership:

Well, I remember the meeting in Banff where we all got up and signed the document where we were all going to work together to make this work....And after that when they started coming down and saying by the way, these conditions were put in place strictly for Calgary ... we said no it's not going to work and they said too bad, that's the way it's going to be. So it turned away from a partnership to a *dictatorship* (Wheatland: 9, original emphasis).

Three months after the departure of Wheatland County, in February 2009, the county returned. In the interview process the reason given for Wheatland's return differed, depending on the source. Some interviewees said Wheatland returned to provide support to the other two rural municipalities. Others said the provincial government directed them to return due to the strategic importance of their water in the region. A newspaper reported Wheatland rejoined the partnership following a meeting with the provincial minister of Sustainable Development who made it clear leaving the partnership may not be an option (Mundy, 2009). Bighorn was not asked to return, either by

member municipalities or the provincial government, everyone appearing to agree with Bighorn's view that it did not fit.

The significance of the concept of mechanisms marginalizing discourse, discussed in this section, relates to its bearing on the nature of the varying degrees of discursive power. Voting processes silenced oppositional debate, weakening the discursive power of rural participants and enhancing the discursive power of others, particularly Calgary's mayor. Further, if as the evidence suggests, some participants viewed others as less competent, then their statements were likely discounted. This finding, coupled with the discursive power of Calgary's mayor, assist in understanding the reasons why the mayor's statements were so highly influential. The evidence also points to the effect of key statements that resulted in a sudden change in the tone and direction of the debate. These changes affected the views of Wheatland and Bighorn and were significant factors in their decision to leave.

### 7.3 Acting on objects: water servicing and distribution not water ecology and sustainability

During this time, issues over water access and servicing were, as noted earlier, subsumed within contestation over the establishment of the nodal and corridor development concept and the governance framework. The evidence from written documentation suggests the ecological aspect of water was marginalized, despite public statements, as identified earlier, which placed a high priority on issues of sustainability within the scope of the CRP. For example, across all of the executive committee minutes during the five year period of 2005 to 2009, the ecology of water was expressed only twice, raised by the same representative from the municipality of Bighorn who ultimately left the partnership. Also, as noted, integrated water resources management was a principle of the CRP expressed frequently in documents, and the issue became the responsibility of the regional water and wastewater servicing committee. However, IWRM was one of five issues on the committee's terms of reference list. The other four issues all related to water access and servicing which included: fine-

tuning regional servicing option including water license requirements; developing and implementing a governance structure for regional servicing; confirming and enhancing regional servicing principles and cost allocation approach; and creating a ten year infrastructure investment and capital staging plan (CRP, 2011).

It was reported in a newspaper article that sustainability policy was excluded from the Plan and left to the province because it was anticipated that policy and regulatory tools would evolve out of the Land Use Framework (Herron, 2009). However in the interview process, the informant from Wheatland said the reason for the exclusion was the County's insistence that there be no urban control over rural ecology. As discussed further in Chapter Nine, members of the executive agreed with Wheatland's demand but to other peripheral players, it weakened the water ecology and sustainability provisions of the Plan.

As noted in the introduction to this section, studies find that struggles over discursive dominance are highly significant because of the power of the dominant discourse on processes (Weber, et al., 2010). The mayor of Calgary, above all other players, as champion of the dominant discourse around the CRP governance structure, defined the problem, framed the debate and devised the solution. He recommended the water supply study, upheld its findings, and championed Calgary as a central water supplier for the region under a governance structure that gave Calgary veto power. As Hajer (1995) explains, this influence is attributable to both the position of the individual and discursive mechanisms surrounding him:

The task (is to) explain how a given actor...secures the reproduction of his discursive position...in the context of a controversy. The influence of a stubbornly resisting actor, then, cannot be explained by reference to the importance of his position alone, but has to be given in terms of the rules inherent in the discursive practices, since they constitute the legitimacy of his position (p. 51).

The discursive power accorded to Calgary's mayor by virtue of his institutional position, upheld and reinforced by mechanisms of exclusion within the executive committee, afforded the mayor considerable discursive power. Recall that when, at the November 2008 meeting the mayor was



asked if there was any other option than what Calgary proposed, the answer was no. By exercising this power the mayor ultimately focused the issue on the governance structure of the region, narrowed the discursive space to this single problem and in issuing an ultimatum, dictated the solution.

#### 7.4 Mechanisms upholding discourse: media reported on progress, not contestation

The statements that circulated in the local media in 2008, based on a sample of 30 newspaper articles from the region reported on: CRP concepts and progress (14 articles), CRP and long-term transit (9), the Land Use Framework (4), and CRP issues of contention (3). So although the analysis of texts, principally the executive minutes, reveals there was a significant amount of contestation, this contestation occurred within the confines of the executive meeting and did not appear to be exposed to media scrutiny or wider public dissemination. The three newspaper articles that covered contentious issues – those related to interference in municipal affairs and issues with the proposed voting structure – were reported when the Foothills’ representative chose to air his concerns in public. The caption of one Foothills newspaper article read “Cracks Starting to Appear in Regional Partnership” (Braitenbach, 2008, p. 1). The one article in the sample which reported the exit of Wheatland said the departure was due to “philosophical differences” relating to land use policies and governance and no comment from Wheatland was provided at that time (Massot, 2008, p.1).

The significance of the media coverage during this choppy waters phase is that despite the contestation that was occurring within the executive, based on the sample of newspaper articles, it seemed to have been internally contained. The message coming out of the CRP was controlled. This suggests members did not choose to expose their differences, presumably remaining hopeful that differences could be resolved. As will be seen, this approach differed from the next ‘running aground’ phase when the media upheld statements by members of the executive committee who were now publically opposing the Plan.

## 7.5 Findings outside Foucault, within Hajer: effects of individual style and influence on power

It has been argued that the institutional power of Calgary's mayor was derived from the city's population, economic base and water license holdings. An additional observation, however, includes how the mayor's power was underscored by his personal style and ability. While Foucault acknowledged the effects of groups of individuals, such as doctors and intellectuals, he did not acknowledge the effects of particular individuals within power configurations.

In the interview process several informants described the mayor as a brilliant strategist, articulate, always well-prepared and knowledgeable of the issues. Another said the mayor "was a smart fellow but he really liked to push his weight around" (Foothills [1]: 5). Two interviewees referred to the mayor as dictatorial, a bully (Foothills [1], Elbow River/BRBC). The sentiment is best summed up in the remark:

Yes, he (Bronconnier) was very strong willed and very pro-Calgary, sometimes to the detriment of other municipalities (Bighorn [1]: 10).

One interviewee admired the mayor's aggressiveness:

Bronco Dave! Dave was okay. Dave was a straight shooter and that's what I admired about the guy. He knew what he wanted. He didn't wear any white gloves. He didn't beat around the bush. He laid his cards on the table and that's the way it's going to be. And you've got to admire that (Black Diamond: 14).

Two people viewed the mayor's ultimatum as a demonstration of the degree to which the mayor was able to exercise his power and influence. One said:

Yah, it was here's how it's going to work folks kind of thing. The CRP did not call that meeting so there again you have to wonder how many strings were pulled by whom... The CRP should have said, no, this is not how this works. They didn't. They didn't stand up and say no (Rocky View [1]: 17).

These statements highlight the need to account for the influence of key individuals in discursive power configurations, not just groups as Foucault tended to do.

Three respondents sympathized with the mayor because by late 2008 he had simply run out of patience, was fed up and told the members that they had to 'either fish or cut bait' (Nanton, Calgary,

Airdrie). Another person could understand the urgencies imposed on a mayor of a city of a million people regarding issues like water and transportation (Big Horn [1]). Others said: Bronconnier was elected to look after the needs of the city of Calgary and that is what he did, never hiding that motivation (Airdrie); there were issues for Calgary that were not negotiable (BRBC/Water Smart), Bronconnier dictated the governance structure (Elbow River/BRBC), given Calgary's powers, they are a city-state (Rocky View [2]).

Some informant's spoke of Calgary's mayor stage-managing the process. For example:

Calgary convinced the small urbans like the Cochran's, the High River's, the Airdrie's that they should vote with the city because they were all big boys together (Elbow River/BRBC: 2).

This is a Plan driven, I suspect, by Calgary to get control of the region and they convinced a few neighbours to go along with them so they wouldn't be seen as the only ones. And I think that was the agenda all along and that's what they achieved (Rocky View [1]: 26).

Still others spoke of the provincial government's inability to challenge the mayor given his political backing:

Calgary has a million votes so the (provincial) government isn't going to buck them too far (Wheatland: 3).

There's a lack of guts at the provincial level and they get a lot of MLA's from Calgary so they're not likely to rock the boat (Rocky View [1]: 3).

These findings, which relate to the discursive power of the individual, are outside Foucault's framework but they suggest that within planning processes, the style and ability of particular individuals can have significant effects on the nature of discursive power and should be recognized accordingly. Hajer provides a basis for this understanding. An excerpt from Hajer (1995) quoted earlier in this research acknowledged the influence a given individual, a "stubbornly resisting actor" in an important position who, legitimized by rules inherent in discursive practices, "secures the reproduction of his discursive position" (p. 51). Hajer therefore works to recognize the impact of an important individual, their style, position, and the discursive practices within which they operate. Within this research, Hajer's framework and the significance of the mayor of Calgary's style and

ability on the CRP process relates to the nature of varying degrees of discursive power as power became increasingly concentrated in the mayor of Calgary and, later, also the Foothills' representative.

## 7.6 Conclusion

The utility of Foucault's theory of discourse can be seen in how it focuses one's attention on power and its effect on process. The findings in this chapter highlight the nature and extent of varying degrees of discursive power, a theme of the central research question. The research finds the nature of discursive power was conditioned by mechanisms – rules, processes and procedures as well as judgements of competency - which marginalized some discourse (rural members) and upheld others (the mayor of Calgary). While during the earlier 'smooth sailing' phase, discourse *outside* of decision-making structures was marginalized, in the 'choppy waters' phases, certain discourses *inside* the decision-making structures were now marginalized. Discursive power acquired through the institutional setting and the authority accorded to certain individuals (government ministers) also accounts for differences in the nature of discursive power. The extent of discursive power could be observed in the bearing ministerial statements had on the process and the ability of Calgary's mayor to uphold the proposed voting structure and channel the debate in a singular direction towards governance. The effect of this degree of discursive power changed the direction and tone of the conversation from 'us' to 'we' and initiated the exit of some rural municipalities.

In this chapter the concept of governmentality was employed in stressing how the provincial government's agenda advocating regional formations had a bearing on the conduct of municipal councillors and discourse. Governmentality required a regional framework be developed and imposed certain time pressures that some felt hampered the process. Governmentality could also be observed in the Calgary mayor compelling people to behave in a certain way, exercised through the

city's water license and veto power within the CRP proposed voting structure. However, some people asserted that all participants had an equal voice.

The tone during the first phase of the process, characterized by most participants as being open and congenial, took on a much more contested quality, especially within the CRP executive committee. The broad discursive space which characterized the early phase narrowed significantly to a key issue of municipal autonomy. This was a highly contested issue during the second phase, one managed largely by the mayor of Calgary through his personal style and institutionally-established discursive power, affecting the nature of discursive power. The augmentation of discursive power derived from an individual's style and ability is a finding outside Foucault's framework but Hajer provides a basis for this understanding by acknowledging the influence a given individual in an important position whose discourse is legitimized by rules inherent in discursive practices.

Within the executive committee the marginalization of discourse through voting procedures within the executive committee and within the Group of Seven ultimately created dissent and left behind unresolved tensions. Marginalization is most clearly articulated by the Foothills councillor when he stressed his municipalities' concerns had not been addressed in four meetings of the Group of Seven committee. Nor does it seem were his issues addressed at the executive committee where he made those statements. The interview process revealed that additional marginalization of the statements of some participants, especially small community rural participants, was due to judgements of competency. This finding resonates with Mills (2004) who states that critical discourse analysis is concerned with, among other things, the way that certain people's knowledge is disqualified or is not taken seriously.

In the smooth sailing stage of the process, the media appeared to uphold a view of the regional partnership as very optimistic and in high spirits, framed by statement made by mayors and

municipal councillors. In the choppy waters stage, the media reported on progress but few, only three out of the 30 samples, spoke of dissent within the executive committee. This gives the appearance that any unhappiness occurred behind closed doors and the principles of civil decorum were maintained publicly.

The Foucauldian concepts discussed above are linked in that contestation took place within mechanisms that upheld certain discourses and excluded others. When viewed through governmentality, these effects emerged from government practices that determined voting structures and the participation of municipalities in the central decision-making apparatus. Pressure was also imposed on participants in the process through the agendas and initiatives of the provincial government, also drawing on the concept of governmentality. In addition, judgements about competency also served to marginalize discourse. These findings are distinct from those which emerged from the research of the earlier phase of the CRP process. Then a common broad vision dominated the process rather than contestation that arose over details in the later period.

Foucault's concept of discourse stress exclusionary systems authorizing certain people, and not others, to participate in a discourse (Hajer, 1995). Within the broader public domain, discussions at workshops underscored the complex and value-laden nature of water management, a theme taken up and explored in more depth in Chapter Nine where differing views of water are found among divergent stakeholders. However, within the executive during this period, issues around water were specifically tied to accessing it. Governance, the central issue, was linked to water servicing and distribution since water would be provided to compact urban nodes, the location and characteristics of which became embroiled in issues of landowner rights and municipal autonomy. We find during 2008 that there was an insistence that conservation instruments be left to the province and thus the Plan adopted statements of general ecological directions and principles rather than clear targets or methods, a topic also taken up in more detail in Chapter Nine.

The academic literature which reports on other studies of spatial processes, including the reconfiguration of space within the Economic Union, finds that the construction of regional spaces were pursued within a field of discursive conflict (Richardson & Jensen, 2000). This includes the necessary but messy re-working of networks of power. As McCann (2003) notes, rescaling entails disruption and re-composition of the networks of power that tie political actors together within and across scales, including the city-region scale. Hence one witnesses within the CRP heightened contestation over issues of CRP governance related to municipal autonomy. This contestation played out within the executive committee and Group of Seven arena where certain participants, notably Calgary and Foothills, jostled for discursive dominance, as is predicted in the discourse literature. As this research moves into the third and final 'running aground' phase of the year 2009, we will see how contestation escalated to the point where the process floundered.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Running Aground**

During the final phase of the CRP process the Calgary Metropolitan Plan increasingly took shape as drafts were written and presented to the public in the early months of 2009. Within the CRP, socially constructed metaphors and story-lines materialized around which discourse coalitions were built at this time. This development served to solidify and elevate opposition to the Plan in certain municipalities; hence the process began to run aground. Councillors representing the disgruntled municipalities on the executive committee were emboldened by this discontent, heightening contestation and resistance within the executive committee and Group of Seven. Given the development and effect of story-lines and discourse coalitions on the process, Hajer's concepts are significant in the analysis of this third phase. A unique dimension is this research's finding, opposite to what Hajer predicts, is the clashing of story-lines, the progressive and the status-quo, which ultimately immobilized the urban-rural dimension of the process. Voting as a mechanism of exclusion continued to silence dissent emerging from the rural municipalities however practices at the general assembly were tested when the silence of dissenting voices could no longer be contained. The break-down of mechanisms of exclusion underscores Foucault's belief that within power relations there is a force which may challenge or overthrow that power (Mills, 2004). Ultimately broad bifurcating discourses emerged during this phase: discourses that included the vision of the region versus land-owner and municipal rights that clashed; and the dominant discourse of water supply and distribution prevailed over the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability.

#### 8.1 Metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions: 'blue blobs', 'Calgary veto' and rights

Recall that within discourse, story-lines provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggests a common understanding. Hajer (1995) argued that story-lines enabled processes to move



forward because they allow for the re-ordering of understandings among actors who otherwise hold established and specific positions. The concept of story-lines becomes important in understanding the third phase of the CRP process as story-lines were used to shore-up resistance to the perceived threat to landowner rights and municipal autonomy that compact urban nodes and Calgary's power within the CRP grew to represent. The development and mobilization of these story-lines resulted in a shift in the nature of the relative degrees of discursive power among stakeholders. Discursive power which was earlier embodied in the mayor of Calgary now shifted to include representatives from the three rural municipalities, especially the representative from Foothills, whose power was derived and sustained by vigorous rural opposition to the CRP. Ultimately the clash of story-lines immobilized the urban-rural dimension of the process rather than moving the process forward.

Under the CRP, land would be designated as future growth areas referred to as 'compact urban nodes'. These areas would see concentrated housing of eight to ten units per acre. They were identified in blue on the conceptual maps of the region. Land owners perceived that by identifying this land and designating it for future development, their individual rights were being abdicated. 'Blue blobs' became the metaphor around which a story-line grew, coalescing opposition to the compact urban node concept and abdication of individual landowner rights. Associated with this story-line was the view that municipal autonomy was also being threatened by Calgary's power within the partnership, the city's ability to make decisions on matters considered municipal jurisdiction. The 'Calgary veto' became the metaphor around which that opposition coalesced. The two story-lines connected through the common theme of loss of rural control. Coalitions formed among the most fervent opponents of the CRP. Among the general public this included residents of the Municipal District of Foothills and members of communities such as Okotoks, located within the Foothills district. Among the CRP members, opposition was initially created by the Foothills councillor but grew to include Rocky View County and Wheatland County councillors. As discussed in more detail below, these two story-lines which represented existing land owner and

municipal rights, or the status-quo, ultimately collided with the more progressive story-line around the compact urban nodes, a metaphor that embodied the new vision for the region.

The compact urban node concept took form in 2009 when the knowledge produced by the land-use study was combined with findings from the final installment of the water supply and distribution study produced by CH2M Hill. Together the results conditioned the view that water be supplied to urban-style compact housing developments. Land for these compact urban nodes would be set aside to accommodate the long-term population growth that was forecasted in the region. Contestation around where the nodes would be placed and their densification accelerated during the final phase. It appears the strongest opponents within the executive committee worked to discredit the compact urban node concept through the creation of a story-line to transform it. Developing a fitting story-line becomes an important form of agency as Hajer (1995) predicted.

In the lead-up to the June 19, 2009 general assembly, there were just three executive meetings in February, April and early June. In written documentation, a derogatory reference by municipal councillors to compact urban nodes seemed to first enter the vocabulary at the executive level in February, 2009 when a draft of the CMP was presented for approval in advance of its unveiling at numerous public open houses planned for March and April. The compact urban nodes appeared on the region's map as misshaped forms colored in blue. They were now objectified as 'blue blobs', not neat and compact but rather something vague, formless, uncontrolled, ill-defined and intrusive. The committee minutes indicate reference was exclusively expressed by the three rural municipal councillors on the executive committee. The statements recorded in the minutes from that meeting included (CRP, 2009b, p. 6-7):

Reeve Lois Habberfield (RockyView) believed Foothills is saying because they have to take this draft plan to their public, they are concerned about the public reaction to seeing blue blobs showing no growth, and they haven't had any consultation process...

Shirley Reinhardt (Wheatland) concurred with Reeve Habberfield that there will be many questions surrounding the “blue blobs” at the open houses, and may be the first time they’ve seen these maps...

Regarding the “blue blobs” Deputy Reeve Waddock (Foothills) stated: We would rather they weren’t there at all....

These opponents were contesting the location of the compact urban nodes in the absence of any consultation with the public as well as the perceived absconding of municipal authority in the determination of their location and densification. ‘Blue blobs’ could then be seen as a metaphor appealing to collective fears, a powerful example of a story-line to which adherents could relate (Hajer, 1995). As predicted, it served its purpose to position actors and create a coalition among the strongest opponents of the CRP. It also shifted the nature of discursive power. The term ‘Calgary veto’ does not appear in statements made by executive committee members at these particular meetings but as noted, it had been uttered in statements by Calgary’s mayor and later seized upon by the general public.

Once the blue blob story-line was absorbed by rural communities, it was impossible to contain the damage according to the chairman of the partnership:

Blue blobs started as a kind of a thing to say to kind of lighten the mood but then everybody started harkening on and I asked the CRP staff specifically to never refer to them again as blue blobs. Everybody couldn’t let it go and I said every time you do that you discredit what we’re doing and then it was too late to start taking that back (Airdrie: 14).

Thus the term blue blob acquired the same harmful effect as the term Calgary veto.

The public consultation sessions that occurred in April and May found a hostile response delivered on the nodal concept by residents of Foothills and to a lesser degree by Rocky View and Wheatland residents. Thereafter within the executive committee, Foothills’ representative appears to have become unrelenting in his persistent questioning of the authority of the CRP to define the growth areas. He now argued that the blue blobs be removed from the maps. Rocky View now proposed that the Plan only be approved in principle in order to find resolution to issues with the blue blobs (CRP, 2009c).

The compact urban nodes grew to become the metaphor around a story-line representing the future of the region. The blue blobs represented the metaphor around the counter story-line of maintaining existing rights around land management. So in the sample of 54 newspaper articles in the region, of the approximate 20 articles that referred to the topic of land development under the CMP, seven referred to blue blobs and another four referred to land freezes or loss of control of land. The remainder related to Calgary urban sprawl, annexation of land, environmental protection of land and the cap on growth and land use in the city of Okotoks. All but one of the negative references was in newspapers from the Foothills area. Commentary included, for example:

...these blobs would affect land freezes on the areas and be a de facto annexation (Careen, 2009, p. 1).

What has caused the most concern are the now infamous “blue blobs” which identify areas of future dense, urban style development in the MD (MacPherson, 2009, p. A12).

...two large land masses...would fall under areas where further development would no longer be allowed, essentially permanently freezing the properties for years...(Stier, 2009, p. A13).

These developments demonstrate how opposition can solidify around catchy metaphorical phrases.

At the same time, the concept of Calgary veto was also a metaphor around which the story-line relating to loss of municipal autonomy revolved. Recall in Chapter Seven how the mayor of Calgary used the term Calgary veto, resulting in wide-spread use of the term: “after that everybody referred to the Calgary veto” (Airdrie: 14). In the newspaper coverage, references to the Calgary veto were not as frequent as blue blobs and land freezes but they did arise in newspaper coverage in the Foothills region about a half dozen times. Aside from references to a Calgary veto specifically, other references included: the city of Calgary having too much power; erosion of autonomy; disrespect for democracy; Calgary as the “heavy weight in this partnership” (Worthington, 2009, p. A14); and Calgary “pulling the wool over the eyes of rural land owners” (Stier, 2009, p. A13). In addition, Calgary veto was the basis around which the website ‘[www.nocalgaryveto.com](http://www.nocalgaryveto.com)’ was

established by a Foothills resident, serving as a communal space for often highly negative commentary and postings of petitions and protests.

Within the Foothills area negative newspaper coverage was supplemented by what appears to have been intense anger exhibited at open houses. At an open house in Okotoks, the local newspaper reported:

A draft development plan for the Calgary region was given a resounding ‘no’ vote by Foothills residents during a heated open house last week.....residents attending...roundly panned the Calgary Regional Partnership’s (CRP) plan (Patterson, 2009a, p. A1).

One interviewee described the experience as such:

We made a date...we would get to those meetings, they were ugly, they were horrible, people were ready, they were *mad* and they had these ideas we were called communists (Airdrie: 14, original emphasis).

Also about 40 protestors rallied in Okotoks, objecting to loss of control of their land. In the on-line survey designed to elicit feedback during this time, 94 comments were posted by Foothills residents compared to 46 from Rocky View, 18 from Wheatland and 77 from Calgary. And the highest percentage of negative comments also came from Foothills with 64 percent of their negative comments relating to issues with the Plan in general, 19 percent relating to issues of Calgary veto and power, and another 13 percent referred to blue blobs, land freezes and land expropriation (CRP, 2009d). These mechanisms – newspaper reports, websites, rallies, on-line surveys – were vehicles for the expression and fortification of highly negative views, which appeared to be considerably more intense in the Foothills area than elsewhere across the region.

Metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions provide the conceptual framework in tracing the development and deployment of a concept that served to solidify and elevate opposition to the regional Plan. Two story-lines seemed to have formed but they were connected through the common theme of loss of control. During this period story-lines around loss of land-owner rights (related to the blue blob metaphor) and loss of municipal autonomy (related to the Calgary veto metaphor) formed. They appear to be upheld by newspaper reports, websites specifically developed to express

opposition, public rallies and negative comments posted on an on-line survey. Coalitions around loss of land-owner rights were formed in the Foothills district as well as some communities within it. Connected to this were coalitions around loss of municipal control which began with opposition by the Foothills' representative within the executive committee but grew to include a coalition with the other two rural municipal representatives. These multiple developments – the creation of the blue blob and Calgary veto story-lines, the formation of discourse coalitions around them and the heightened public awareness brought to the CRP - speak to the extent to which the shift in the nature of discursive power was exercised. There were also significant reverberations for it increased the intensity of the debate within the executive committee (and likely with the Group of Seven committee as well) by empowered municipal councillors from the three rural municipalities as will be demonstrated below.

## 8.2 Contestation and resistance: local autonomy contested; story-lines collide; urban-rural divide

Foucault's concept of contestation and resistance is explored in this section. In Sharp's and Richardson's (2001) paper discussing the use of Foucault's theory in studying planning and environmental policy, they note how messy and complex concepts such as 'sustainability' can be. Major points of contention can take place over its meaning, interpretation and implementation. Such contestation was found in Cocklin's and Blunden's (1998) case study of the meaning and interpretation of 'sustainable management' in New Zealand. To the CRP decision-makers, sustainability was not a contested concept, but the meaning and interpretation of 'local autonomy' was. The concept of local autonomy became a major point of contention as unresolved tensions over what constitutes regional authority versus municipal authority as well as individual landowner rights accelerated in the third phase. At this stage, the vision for the region that would move the process forward collided with the perceived threats to municipal and landowner control, making Hajer's conceptualization of story-lines particularly useful in understanding developments during this time.

Contestation and resistance within the executive intensified as rural councillors became increasingly aware of the high degree of public discontent that sprung up and fermented within the Foothills area. So when the executive met for the April, 2009 executive meeting, a noticeably large number of municipal representatives attended, indeed by far the largest of all executive meetings in the research period. Dissenting municipal councillors were shoring up local support. Foothills and Rocky View, which typically sent one or two members, had respectively a six and three member contingent. Wheatland, which typically never sent a representative, had two. In total there were 32 elected representatives, a noticeable difference from the 12 elected representatives who showed up at the first executive meeting of this research period in January, 2005. One interviewee recalled:

Meetings were on-going and ...we assumed everything was going along quite well. (But) ...there were some moves afoot to make some changes...I did start going and sure enough there were things happening and it was at the very crucial point where the framework was starting to develop (Rocky View [1]: 1).

This demonstrated how as the process advanced, some stakeholders awoke to understand the seriousness of the partnership and what was at stake.

By early 2009 the CRP staff, recognizing the gravity of the issues, had collected and analyzed input from open houses and reported on the findings in the preparation of a new draft of the Plan. Calgary's mayor moved that the draft Plan be accepted and taken to each representative's council for final recommendations. However, rural councillors continued to be dissatisfied. The modified Plan would allow for an additional two years to refine the compact urban nodes, including their location. But Rocky View opposed that provision, as well as the density targets of the nodes and reference to annexation in the Plan. The rural members also wanted more time to reflect on the concerns expressed through the public consultation process (Rocky View [2]). Once these issues were laid out, discursive contestation and resistance, largely circulating between Calgary, Rocky View and Foothills characterized the rest of that meeting. Select excerpts of the exchanges paraphrased in the executive committee minutes include (CRP, 2009e, p. 3-4):

Mayor Bronconnier (Calgary) noted that in developing a plan for the region we have captured 90% of everyone's concerns. At some point we have to move forward to the next step.

Reeve Lois Habberfield (Rocky View) asked members to review the Terms of Agreement for Working Together, and to consider what we all agreed to do, and in particular speaking of municipal autonomy.

Ensuring municipalities continue to do what they do best for their own communities is paramount (Waddock – Foothills).

Vice Chair Branson (Rocky View)...noted they would not support the motion to approve the plan for consideration as it stands.

Mayor McBride (Cochrane) would not support any delays in this process.

There are a couple points of significance in these statements. An appeal is made to the Terms of Agreement of Working Together instead of appealing to the four pillars that established the vision for the region. As a metaphor for the foundation of the region, the 'pillars' tended to vanish as contention became grounded in municipal rights that to some, like Habberfield above, had been established in the terms of agreement. Also there was now a shift in the vocabulary from discussing regional approaches to issues to doing 'what is best for their own communities'. This relates to what an informant referred to earlier when he said "it was 'we' they were looking after and basically previous to that it was 'us', the whole region" (Nanton: 1). The motion to approve the revised draft Plan for the purpose of circulating it to CRP member councils was approved by 13 cities and towns and opposed by the three rural municipalities.

In May, 2009, all municipalities in the partnership were asked to issue formal letters to the chairman of the CRP either approving or disproving the Plan as was established at that time (CRP, 2009f). The rural municipalities enumerated their outstanding concerns. While in each case numerous problems were identified, Foothills raised a significant number of issues – approximately 50 points contained in an 11 page document. Among the litany of issues now expressed, the common objection amongst the rural municipalities was the proposed voting structure. They now stated that the voting structure must include the consent of two-thirds of rural members. The



additional key issues specific to each municipality were: 1) Rocky View: the inclusion of annexation of land (for urban growth) when this is a provision under the Municipal Government Act, questioning the lack of support for growth forms other than the density targets of the compact urban nodes (eight to ten houses per acre); 2) Foothills: the erosion of municipal autonomy in defining compact urban nodes, requiring removal of the compact urban nodes identified in their jurisdiction immediately south of Calgary; 3) Wheatland: changes imposed on the municipality against its will (CRP, 2009f). Thus, while in the second phase of the process issues appeared to be narrowed down to one or two problems, in the third phase the list of issues, and the discursive space within which they were discussed, broadened considerably. It appeared issues were no longer contained but were uncontained and unmanageable.

Rocky View and Wheatland appeared to express the greatest opposition to the water servicing arrangement under the Plan – that access to Calgary’s water would be tied to compact urban nodes which required urban style densities of eight to ten housing units per acre. Rocky View now said water was a provincial resource and should be equitably distributed through the region via a revamped water allocation system expected to be explored through a province-wide provincial government review. The chairman of the executive committee would reveal in the interview that she was blindsided by what she felt was Rocky View’s sudden change in position on water (Airdrie). Given that the time-frame coincided with the provincial review of the water allocation and transfer system, rural municipalities like Rocky View may have gained increased confidence, believing that they would obtain water through a new allocation framework; hence the ‘carrot’ that water presented through the CRP partnership may have been removed.

Given these requirements for approval of the Plan, it is perhaps not surprising that debate at the subsequent executive meeting held in June, 2009 was highly fractious. This was the final meeting before the Plan would be voted on at the general assembly one week later. The impression arising from the minutes is one of contestation dominated largely by Calgary, Foothills, and Rocky View

(CRP, 2009g). The shift in the nature of varying degrees of discursive power can be seen to settle largely on these three individuals. Calgary would not contemplate providing additional time to deal with issues; Foothills said that in light of the criticism they had been receiving from their residents, they could not support the document as it stands; and Rocky View reiterated that the Plan be approved in principle only. Wheatland was less vocal, only presenting a motion to allow members to caucus for 20 minutes and regroup. Cochrane's representative, a consistent and strong supporter of the Plan, seemed to inflame the tone of the debate when he alleged there had been a purposeful misinformation campaign advanced in public meetings and statements to the media. He said he had come to the realization that regardless of an extension, Foothills would remain unsupportive of the Plan. Statements from the meeting's minutes demonstrate the argumentative tone of the exchanges that took place (CRP, 2009g, p. 5-6):

Mayor Bronconnier...felt it fair to say there has been an inordinate amount of time taken to this point...We have an agreement in place and with great respect, he noted the City has moved 180 degrees on their position to provide servicing which is a monumental decision.

The MD of Rocky View would like to see a motion to recommend approving the plan in principle pending resolution of governance, water allocation and perhaps blue blobs.

The MD (of Foothills) would like the blue blobs removed from the maps to ensure municipal autonomy.

Mayor McAlpine (Canmore) noted...we have spent two years on this issue and it's time to move on.

Mayor Matthews (Chestermere) noted....perhaps if the blue blobs are so offensive, they should be removed. However, if we continue to debate these issues we will be in the same spot six months from now.

These statements underscore the degree of contestation and resistance over issues of governance and the establishment of the compact urban nodes. The data help contextualize these controversies, pointing to rural-urban tensions that could not be surmounted in attempting to develop a coherent regional identity. These findings resonate with other studies that report the presence of preoccupations with defending local interests (Roberts, 2007) and rural suspicions of urban motives (Caffyn & Dahlstrom, 2005).

Interview data, discussed below, reveal that highly divergent views on governance likely rendered that critical issue un-resolvable. Also the data point to a wide-spread lack of understanding between rural and urban based on the judgments and opinions that emerged from the interviews. In the interview process differences in culture were disparaged rather than embraced. These factors underscore the onerous nature of the task of finding agreement amongst numerous diverse municipalities.

(i) Un-resolvable governance issue

In the study of ten mid-size Canadian cities, Collin et al., (2006) found the presence of a major municipal actor, a central city, transpired against regionalism because of the challenge in reconciling power asymmetries. In this case study, power differentials and how those differentials were built into the balance of power within the Calgary region could not be reconciled; hence the process floundered largely over issues of governance. One interviewee articulated that Calgary is a very different geographic, political and cultural entity. It has substantial population and a huge economy. Therefore, he stated, it is unrealistic that pressure won't be exerted by the city. The challenge is to manage the perception of how that pressure is exerted (anonymous [3]).

The challenges in creating regional governance structures cannot be underestimated. Consider for instance the vast differences in opinion expressed in meeting minutes and interviews over what was considered an acceptable voting structure: Wheatland proposed the vote include two rural members and would have left the partnership solely on the basis of the voting structure (Wheatland); Rocky View proposed a stratified vote which would have required a vote from every incorporation type (Rocky View [2]); a Turner Valley councillor said if an issue is so contentious that it has to go to a vote, it shouldn't be on the table (Turner Valley [2]); and a Black Diamond councillor said the voting structure that was adopted in the Plan was appropriate - built on democracy and "guess where

the numbers are – Calgary” (Black Diamond: 4). Consider as well the incongruence in interview statements among the main players:

(The voting structure) is fair. Who’s paying the freight? We (residents of Calgary) are. Whose water do they want? Ours. What system they want? Ours. What water treatment plants do they want to use? Ours. Whose roads do they want to use? Ours.....Why wouldn’t we want a...say in what really happens ultimately (Calgary, p. 5)?

If there was any issues that the rurals felt strongly about, (the three rurals) would have had to pull three or four urbans on to our side on a vote. Now is that a healthy organization (Foothills [2], p.3)?

...these communities that were going to have a say about us, one person would show up and they had three votes (at the general assembly). Like you guys don’t really care. And you get more say than we do (Rocky View [1], p. 18)?

And as noted before, the chairman of the executive committee said once the word veto was uttered, the voting structure could never be explained otherwise. She came back to this critical turning point a second time in the interview:

And Dave (Bronconnier), if there was one thing we could go back in time I would have got him to zip his lip and never use that word again. It was very damaging, very, very hard to get past that because everybody say that oh, the truth comes out, this is a Calgary veto (Airdrie: 16).

The good-will built during the smooth sailing period of the process could not sustain the partnership when it confronted the irresolvable obstacle of governance.

(ii) The nature of rural and urban

As noted earlier, in Richardson’s (2000) study of the Economic Union and the development of a cohesive spatial vision, he studied the emergence and contestation over a socially reconstructed view of rurality. Recall that in this research, interviews with municipalities conducted by the CRP staff in 2007 concluded that ‘rural’ no longer accurately described their character (CRP, 2007b). Hence, one could anticipate that a reconstructed view of rurality would have been appropriated as part of the new spatial strategy under the CRP. However, in all the written documentation of the

2005 to 2009 period, the rural municipalities never referred to themselves as anything but rural. For instance:

Councillor Branson: ...the value of that asset called “land”, and I would say 97 percent resides in four jurisdictions all of which are rural, and I think that is being discounted (CRP, 2008g, p. 12).

Deputy Reeve Waddock stated that ...there may be slight differences in how matters are dealt with in rural and urban areas (CRP, 2008i, p.6)

Vice Chair Branson felt the CRP should support rural projects as well as those aimed at compact urban nodes (CRP, 2009c, p. 3).

Rural councillors also never took exception to any other member referring to them as such. In fact, as the process unfolded and contestation grew, rural distinctiveness and autonomy underpinned the contestation and resistance over incursion into rural jurisdiction. The interview data find the rural municipalities embraced their distinct rural nature and, between urban and rural participants in the process, there existed perhaps a certain lack of understanding of each other, given the comments enumerated below. Consider the comments made by rural members in the interview process: urban residents are disconnected and do not understand agriculture (Foothills [2], Elbow River/BRBC); there is a lot of natural capital in the rural areas which the urbans enjoy but do not pay for (Foothills [2]; Elbow River/BRBC); Wheatland and Foothills “don’t have a huge appetite for growth” (Foothills [2]: 4); rural people don’t need to be told how to manage their land when land is their livelihood (Foothills [2], Rocky View [1]); cities use the rural landscapes to promote their own communities (Foothills [2], Wheatland); and city residents use the rural landscapes as the dumping ground for their garbage (Elbow River/BRBC). Overall, it seems the rurals are complaining about urban lack of understanding of them and urban exploitation of resources which the rurals steward. Given the emphasis on the landscape, ecological goods and services, and stewardship of resources, it is a narrative which ties into the water ecology discourse.

Alternatively, for the urban members, their opinions of rural members include: rurals lack an understanding of the double majority and densities (Nanton); the rurals’ intent was not to collaborate

(Nanton); the rurals say they left but they “stand on the sidelines and watch with their binoculars” (Calgary: 1); they want to “keep an eye on things” (Airdrie: 7); Foothills wants a government-imposed solution so they don’t have to be accountable (Airdrie); and the rurals don’t want to change (Black Diamond). Several comments relate specifically to Foothills’ representative on the CRP: the most negative player was Foothills (Redwood Meadows); Foothills was “mercurial, almost schizophrenic about growth” (Airdrie: 7); and Foothills’ representative whose name was Terry Waddock was referred to by some as “Terry Will-not” (Nanton: 15). Overall, the interview data highlight a lack of urban-rural trust. The statements also underscore incongruence in the vision for the region given that the entire basis for the development of the CRP was to accommodate growth but some rural municipalities didn’t appear to want growth. This anti-growth narrative ties into the landowner rights and control over change.

Three interviewees, including the chairman of the CRP, stressed the challenges imposed on the CRP process due to the vast difference between rural and urban politics at the municipal level:

Municipal politics at the rural level is quite different than Calgary. You know, the mayor (of Calgary) and council can make decisions and they don’t have to go to each individual household and say this is our decision. Most of the people who live in Calgary don’t even know what the CRP is; they don’t even have to ask them. But on a municipal, small rural municipal, everybody knows what’s going on. So when councillors are there, they have to represent their area. If they don’t represent their area, they’re not in there again. (Highwood/BRBC: 6).

I don’t know how you would take (the Plan) out to the urbans. People couldn’t give a shit. We elected you, you are hired as a staff to go do this work, you don’t bug us, we don’t give a rat’s ass, make sure water comes when I turn on the tap, make sure roads get cared for, whatever, my garbage gets picked up but don’t bug me about it. That truly would be an urban response. The rurals are different because they live in fear all the time of their land and it’s that constant property rights thing (Airdrie: 18).

Well, you see the problem is not just the governance of the people in charge of each jurisdiction it’s the fact that we now have 80% of people living in urban centres and I’ll bet you 99% of that 80% think milk comes from a carton and water comes from a tap. They have been removed from the land for too many generations. They’re cement bunnies. And they’re done! (Elbow River/BRBC)

These statements present a very different view of urban ‘competency’ given statements of ignorance around the source of water and milk. When juxtaposed alongside the statements referring to rural incompetency discussed earlier, it seems judgements of incompetency of each other existed among both urban and rural participants. This would have led to the marginalization of statements by both camps, contributing to the bifurcation of the process along urban-rural lines.

For the rural interviewees, they expressed trouble in understanding the need for stringent density requirements attached to compact urban nodes and water servicing. For example, Wheatland questioned why there was a need for such control (Wheatland); Rocky View questioned why ‘one-size-fits-all’ was required (Rocky View [2]); and why the time frames for achieving those density targets were never specified (Rocky View [1]). These points relate to Ostrom’s (2008) belief in the importance of tailoring partnership solutions to the individual municipalities involved rather than imposing a common framework on every partner. But for regional processes that advocate unity, such as the case with the CRP, individual tailoring does not align with the principle of being a regional unit.

Finally, it appears that among others there was also confusion over what the rural members were asking for, and the extent of their involvement in defining the compact urban nodes that they opposed. One interviewee said the rurals initially wanted growth and later changed their mind and opposed growth (Nanton); three people recalled that the compact urban nodes were determined with rural involvement (Black Diamond; Turner Valley [1], Airdrie) but two people said the nodes were determined without rural involvement or consent (Foothills [2], High River) and still another deemed that Calgary alone determined the location of the nodes (Foothills [1]).

The concept of contestation and resistance traced in written documents and supplemented by interview findings, underscores the enormous challenges in rescaling processes attempting to establish partnerships amongst multiple, vastly different entities. As the Foothills councillor noted in

an executive meeting: “In some instances, we (urban and rural) have looked at the same words and have seen two totally different things” (CRP, 2009e, p. 4). By this time the process had moved beyond contemplating the ‘low hanging fruit’ to fundamental matters relating to power. Understanding what was at stake - what had to be given up in order to be a member of the partnership - was brought into stark focus and thereafter was vigorously contested and resisted.

While in phase two of the CRP process contestation was evident, phase three witnessed contestation as well as resistance by the three rural municipalities to the governance framework and the identification of the compact urban nodes. This is significant because it demonstrates how confrontation accelerated as members of the broader public became alert to the Plan and the seriousness of the issues, thus drawn into the debate over its controversial policies. As the exchange above underscores, those supporting the progressive story-line adhered to the new vision for the region. A second coalition adhered to the status-quo story-line that would maintain existing landowner and municipal rights. The status-quo story-line seemed to embolden the municipal councillors representing dissenting communities on the CRP executive committee. In this final phase the discursive space within which issues were discussed grew. By the third phase, within the broader public discourse these story-lines collided and instead of facilitating social change as Hajer argues that story-lines do, the incongruence between the two led to an impasse which, as discussed in the conclusions outlined in Chapter Eleven, has immobilized the process to this day. It appeared issues, tightly contained by institutional mechanisms in phase two, were now uncontained and ultimately unmanageable.

### 8.3 Mechanisms of exclusion: those which were in effect, others were breached

This section investigates the mechanisms which were in effect during this final stage – voting exercised by the Group of Seven, the executive committee, and the general assembly. It also explores the mechanisms which were breached – the rules of the general assembly which were



contested as well as the prevalence of discussion occurring outside established forums. In the previous chapter which studied phase two of the process, the voting and majority decision mechanisms were deemed to be Foucauldian mechanisms which marginalized, indeed silenced, the objections of the three dissenting municipalities. The unresolved tensions of the second phase carried into the third and final period where differences continued to build and the most serious consequences on the final outcome were delivered. At the June, 2009 executive committee meeting discussed above, the committee voted to make “minor conciliatory amendments so that everyone can agree” which did not address the substantive rural issues and could not have been seen as satisfying the disgruntled rural members (CRP, 2009g, p.6). Thus, in making a motion to approve the Plan to be presented to the general assembly, thirteen members voted for the motion and Rocky View and Foothills voted against it. By now two critical votes on iterations of the Plan did not receive unanimous consent yet the Plan continued to progress towards the final ratification at the general assembly with issues left unresolved.

Recall that the Group of Seven steering committee was charged with the responsibility of studying and discussing the issues of land management and governance. In the course of this research, a request made to CRP staff for documentation of that committee’s deliberations was denied. However, as noted earlier, the Group of Seven exercised voting procedures similar to the procedures adopted by the executive committee. Proof of this procedure was found in details of decisions made by the Group of Seven at an April 17, 2009 meeting. This material was assembled as background information for the executive committee, accessible on the CRP’s website. The background material outlined nine decisions that were made by the Group of Seven on that date. Only four of those decisions were unanimous. Although details of who voted for and against the motions were not included in the documentation, one to two municipalities voted against the most contentious issues including: the super majority decision making structure, annexation, and identification of the compact urban nodes and servicing provisions (CRP, 2009h). Lack of

unanimous decision could then be traced from the Group of Seven to the executive committee and, as will be seen, to the general assembly.

The June 19, 2009 general assembly was unlike any other because until this day, contentious issues were never on the agenda. Almost 50 elected municipal representatives attended the meeting, more than any general assembly in the research period. In total almost 130 people were present. Although dissenting voices may have been silenced by voting procedures in executive meetings, the general assembly provided the discursive platform to express the rural municipalities' discontent. The general assembly also provided the discursive platform for supporters to extol the virtues of the Plan. Together, the speeches made at that assembly would have brought into stark focus the sets of opinions and beliefs that could not be reconciled. As a joint effort among 18 municipalities, the process hit a point of departure - some municipalities would move forward as members of the partnership and others would not. The extent and effect of stakeholders exercising discursive power becomes apparent.

Discussion at the general assembly centered on municipal autonomy and landowner rights. Wheatland introduced what it described as a 'friendly amendment', asking that members be permitted to provide only conditional, rather than complete support to the Plan. Foothills also introduced amendments, notably of a less friendly tone. Foothill stated that since the compact urban nodes to the immediate south of Calgary had not been identified by the M.D. Foothills, they be removed. Foothills also sought to narrow the list of matters which would be subject to the super-majority decision-making framework. It stated that given that most policies will be implemented by the municipalities and not by the CRP, that the super majority vote required for the implementation of the Plan be removed from the list of decisions under the super majority framework. These motions were defeated (CRP, 2009i).

Rocky View chose to read a lengthy prepared statement which was recorded verbatim in the minutes. Habberfield, then the deputy reeve of the municipality, said the statement she was about to read was intended to ensure there could be no misunderstanding or unintended misrepresentation of Rocky View's perspective. In it the statement noted that Rocky View shares borders with 15 other jurisdictions and more than any other member of the CRP, works collaboratively to address inter-municipal issues on a day to day basis, enumerating a host of examples to demonstrate this point. But the majority of her speech identified the problematic and unsolved issues of the CRP, including (CRP, 2009i, p. 13-14):

The plan as it is currently proposed uses density calculations of 8 to 10 units per acre for new development areas as the sole criteria for gaining access to regional (water) servicing. This is a noteworthy flaw, particularly when you consider that the formula for calculating density has not been provided to the membership (original emphasis). Which begs the question: Do the members who are voting in favor of the draft Plan today even understand what they're voting for?

Rocky View and Foothills and Wheatland stand here today with 100% of the rural land-base and natural capital....Yet the majority of CRP members appear indifferent to our outstanding concerns and have no voice within the proposed voting structure to influence regional decisions.

Immediately following this speech, Cochrane's mayor countered by reading a statement that emphasized the attributes of the Plan, noting that members have had to compromise but that ultimately "we have all received more than we would without (the Plan)" (CRP, 2009i, p.15). A motion to accept the Plan as presented was tabled and approved by the majority, aware that most of the substantive changes required by the dissenting municipalities were not met and that these municipalities intended to exit the partnership.

Table 4 enumerates the major changes required by the dissenting municipally and decisions on acceptance or rejection. Of the twelve changes needed, four were accepted. Of those four, three related to water – agreeing to expand water servicing opportunities, inclusion off-stream storage as an option, and removal of water-related items that were argued to be a provincial, not municipal, responsibility. Hence most of the flexibility demonstrated related to water management, softening

ecological management. However, water supply and distribution remained unchanged. This further demonstrates, at least in analysing the written documentation, the difference in the relative degree of importance attributed to water supply and distribution over water ecology and sustainability. Later in this research's discussion of how individuals objectified water, the interview process revealed that rural municipalities, save for Rocky View, were more ecologically-oriented than these finding might suggest.

**Table 4: Changes Required by Municipality and Acceptance or Rejection**

<b>Changes needed</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Accepted or rejected</b>
Delay ratification of the Plan	Rocky View, Foothills, Wheatland	Rejected
Remove Annexation	Rocky View, Foothills	Rejected
Change voting structure	Rocky View, Foothills, Wheatland, Black Diamond	Rejected
Change appeal mechanism	Foothills	Accepted
Water servicing not tied to density forms	Rocky View, Wheatland	Rejected
Change water allocation principles	Rocky View	Rejected
Expand regional water servicing opportunities	Foothills	Accepted
Remove urban nodes south of Calgary	Foothills	Rejected
Postpone ratification of CMP	Foothills, RV, Wheatland	Rejected
Include off-stream storage	Rocky View	Accepted
Remove all items governed by provincial legislation and regulation re. water and environmental issues	Wheatland	Accepted
Remove economic development in the Plan	Rocky View	Rejected

Mechanisms of exclusion are a consistently important thematic thread through all phases of the CRP process. In this third phase, however, there is proof through written documentation that the voting within the Group of Seven silenced dissent as it did within the executive committee. At the general assembly, voting at this third and final level also left the rural municipalities in opposition but, knowing by that point that they would be exiting the partnership, they exercised their discursive

power by using the highest public platform to state their case. This is in contrast to the relative lack of discursive power in executive and Group of Seven committee meetings.

Interviews with participants help reveal the hidden dynamics of this final phase of the process. By this time dissent and discussion could no longer be contained within established forums. Rules within the general assembly were tested and in addition, pockets of individuals were having discussion outside the executive committee. These points are discussed below. Foucauldian mechanisms that hitherto had marginalized discourse were now breached, demonstrating the extent of the use of discursive power to challenge power relations. Given enough pressure, mechanisms of exclusion can be torn down, demonstrating the effect of discursive power.

(i) Procedural controversies – general assembly

Focusing on the rules of conduct and decision-making within the general assembly, how they were deployed as well as challenged, assists in identifying their effect on the discourse that turned within. To reiterate Hajer's (1995) point:

Discourses imply prohibitions since they make it impossible to raise certain questions or argue certain cases; they imply exclusionary systems because they only authorize certain people to participate in a discourse..." (p. 49)

As noted earlier, the general assembly was typically a forum for announcements and Plan updates but not an environment designed for discussion of controversial issues. Interviewees, including the chairman of the CRP, confirmed that discussion at the general assembly meetings was typically constrained:

The thing I noticed is everyone attending there is guarded. What I would like to see is a little honesty, come right out so all the members there could be clear (Highwood/BRBC: 13).

...the general assemblies, I would say there's no question, there's no discourse, they're there for lunch (Airdrie: 19).

This may explain why, when events strayed from the otherwise tightly scripted process at the June 2009 general assembly, procedural controversy arose. The issue related to accepting amendments from the floor without prior notice. The debate that ensued involved the chairman and representatives from Calgary, Rocky View and Wheatland. A legal opinion was obtained in advance and presented by the executive director of the CRP. The chairman made the final ruling that in the “spirit of openness” the amendments should be heard, discussed and voted on (CRP, 2009i, p. 9). In recounting the events at this meeting, interviewees believe deliberate attempts were made to silence dissent. Wheatland’s councillor, who presented the amendment, said Calgary’s representative did “everything he could” to keep them from speaking to the motion (Wheatland: 11). His and other recollections of the events of that day include:

I finally got up to the podium and addressed Linda Bruce and said you *cannot* do this, we have a right to speak. So they backed away... (Wheatland: 11, original emphasis)

I remember there was some wrangling over that because I think we were worried they were going to try and not allow us to make some amendments (Rocky View [1]: 14).

One interviewee said the staff member who presented the legal opinion was “highly principled” and thus he was “told” to present the legal opinion, “not asked” (Rocky View [2]: 19). Hence we observe how prohibitions within the general assembly were intended to silence dissent, at least according to some participants. As Hajer (1995) notes, prohibitions can make it impossible to raise certain questions or argue certain cases; acting as exclusionary systems because they only authorize certain people to participate in a discourse. The power of these rules in controlling discourse was underscored by the need to obtain a legal opinion on their interpretation and application.

(ii) Discussion occurring outside established forums

A majority of interviewees observed discussion occurring outside the formal committee structures. While this may be a common practice, in this context many interviewees described this activity as dishonoring the process, as being somewhat underhanded. Interview data found: five rural members who acknowledged holding separate joint meetings, three interviewees who

suspected the rural members were meeting, four interviewees who believed urban members were meeting, two people who believed Airdrie and Calgary were meeting, one person who believed developers were putting pressure on municipal politicians, and one who believed the 'south communities' were meeting. As one informant said, "there came a point where you were having two discussions, one at the table and one away from the table" (Black Diamond: 11). These observations were most frequently referred to as unconstructive. For example:

They put out the appearance that they were facilitating it but it was more one sided. I think there was a lot of back door or closed door meetings going on before some of these group meetings where you sat down and discussed were kind of just a courtesy (Wheatland: 9).

I think it happened so quickly (the final stages). I think (the rurals) made up their minds and I think they were having meetings outside, the MD's were having their own meetings (Turner Valley [2]: 11).

I saw the mayor of Chestermere, possibly Airdrie and I don't know if the Cochrane dude got into it or not...I think they had coffee more often than the other did, little coffee clutches (Calgary: 9).

Furthermore, according to some interviewees certain rural councillors on the CRP did not defend the Plan in open houses and in fact, worked behind the scenes to discredit the Plan. The chairman of the CRP said:

...the rurals went out in advance. We made a date...we would get to those meetings, they were *ugly*, they were horrible, people were ready, they were *mad* and they had these ideas we were called communists...They (rural representatives) did a delightful job in making sure we could never land correct information (Airdrie: 14, original emphasis).

...the municipal champions who agreed to all this should have been there. But it was just like lonely little old Colleen and Rick (CRP staff) and they're just like ducking and diving and you've got every critic in the world out there and I'm thinking, where the heck are the representative who all have agreed this is the way to go (Highwood/BRBC: 14)?

As demonstrated above, mechanisms within the general assembly which commonly resulted in tightly-scripted affairs were breached when such mechanisms had to accommodate dissent. No longer was this a forum strictly used to report on provincial initiatives and the CRP's progress, but was forced to accommodate dissenting voices. Within well-established procedures, one can see how those in control of the process struggled with this challenge. However, interviewees described how

they fought back. This demonstrates how the good-will so evident in the earlier phases, had been highly eroded by this point, power struggles ensued and the pressures of dissent broke that dam that was holding them back. Also the existence of discussion occurring outside established forums configured actors into separate pockets, breaking the dissenting dam and dispersing discursive power from central committees to the periphery where, potentially, deals could be made, ultimately eroding the concept of partnership that was so highly touted in the beginning.

#### 8.4 Mechanisms upholding discourse: media upheld dissention; survey revealed awareness

This section discusses how the media upheld public and internal dissention around landowner and municipal control and how an on-line survey revealed the level of public awareness of problems with the Plan. At this time, beyond the general assembly, opposition by the wider public was voiced through local newspapers and an on-line survey. In the sample of 54 newspaper articles printed in early 2009, coverage of the CRP was largely negative. The potential for improved transportation in the region was the one optimistic angle. Otherwise the negative topics covered a host of issues and multiple perspectives. The open houses held in Foothills were characterized in the media as battles between Foothills residents and the CRP, as well battles between Foothills residents and Calgary. Local papers frequently reported on sharp divisions within the community of Okotoks over whether to lift the existing cap on its population growth, necessary if they wanted to receive water and transportation servicing under the Plan (for example Patterson, 2009b). The contestation that occurred within executive meetings was no longer contained, as it was during the second phase. Their dissent was now exposed to the public. So for example, it was reported that Rocky View and Foothills had fundamental differences in principle with the CRP which were irreconcilable (Herron, 2009).

Perhaps most significant was that the blue blob and Calgary veto metaphors were connected to the loss of landowner rights as well as urban domination of municipalities in the region. The



metaphors widened the scope of the issue around autonomy by relating to issues including: Calgary has too much power; landowners should have been involved in the process; there is disrespect for democracy; and the housing construction sector lambasting the Plan (Massot, 2009; Careen, 2009). Other statements included that “the problem is the plan is an urban plan on a rural region” (Massot, 2009, p.1). Water was at times characterized as an enforcement tool, reported, as noted earlier, as “the set of teeth” by the chairman of the CRP (Kom, 2009, p.B1). In other reports water was essentially characterized as being offered in exchange for land (Massot, 2009).

Compared to the newspaper coverage, which generally tends to focus on confrontational subjects, the on-line survey commentary gathered at that time included both positive and negative opinions when each municipality’s postings are considered. Positive and constructive commentary related to the theme of environmental protection and the need for: watershed stewardship, land and residential growth management, and getting cars off the road through improved public transit. But by now a more informed public was alert to the issues circulating within the CRP. Statements from the on-line survey included that: 1) the process was moving too fast without sufficient consultation; 2) the voting structure allowed Calgary to dictate decisions that were up to individual municipalities; 3) there was a lack of details in the Plan; and 4) landowners were being unfairly treated (most notably expressed by residents living in the Foothill area) (CRP, 2009d).

The greatest significance of the statements circulating in this final phase relates to the lack of containment of negativity within the executive committee. Also, the blue-blob concept which seems to have originated within the executive committee found traction by being seized upon and reinforced by the concept of a Calgary veto in the print media. By now the dissenters within the executive must have believed their inclusion in the CRP partnership could not be salvaged, relying on their constituents’ anger to bolster support for their eventual departure from the CRP.

### 8.5 Findings outside Foucault, within Hajer: the effect of individual style and influence on power

In Chapter Seven it was argued that while Foucault acknowledges the effects of groups of individuals, such as doctors and intellectuals, he does not acknowledge the effects of particular individuals within power configurations. However, Hajer addresses the potential for this effect and has been used to explain how the mayor of Calgary had a particular style and ability that affected power differentials and the CRP planning process. The 2007 municipal election resulted in a change in the Foothills' councillor on the CRP which also had a powerful effect on the process, given this person's insistence of upholding municipal autonomy. The Foothills' representative who was defeated in the 2007 election and removed from the CRP executive was a booster of regional planning and in the interview process, this individual continued to express strong support for the initiative. Other interviewees found him to be a likeable, conciliatory individual. The representative who replaced him became the most outspoken critic of the Plan. His death in 2011 precluded an interview opportunity but several interviewees described him in obstructionist terms. Recall that one informant said the Foothills' councillor was referred to as "Terry Will-not" (Nanton: 15) and others spoke of his stubborn nature (Foothills [2], Airdrie). Indeed Hajer uses the term 'stubbornly resisting individual' to characterize these personalities. The evidence in this research suggests the change in one individual had a significant effect on the nature of varying degrees of discursive power by shifting the power dynamics from the city of Calgary to include the Foothills representative. Thus the CRP process grew to become an urban-rural power struggle.

### 8.6 Conclusion

Foucault speaks of power circulating, constantly shifting; rendering individuals at times powerful and at other times powerless (Baxter, 1998). In considering the central research question, the running aground phase underscores how the shifts in discursive power from the mayor of the city of Calgary to include the representative from Foothills significantly altered the nature of

discourse and the effect of this new balance of power on the process. The rural municipalities like Foothills did not have the institutional power of Calgary derived from a large population and economic base and its water license holdings. However, they did represent the vast majority of land in the region; they had the backing of a vocal, discontent population; and equally significant, they had the right to defect from the CRP. Relative to Calgary and Foothills, the rural municipality of Rocky View County and the small cities of Cochrane and Airdrie had intermediate degrees of power, given their proximity to Calgary (and for some a positive working relationship), the size of their populations and economic base, plus the positions they occupied on the executive committee – the Airdrie mayor being chair of the executive committee and the Rocky View County representative being co-chair. Cochrane was a strong, at times outspoken Calgary supporter. The remaining small municipalities, including Wheatland County, could be considered discursively marginal, given their more remote geographic location, small population and economic base, and in most cases, lack of previous working relationship with Calgary. The extent of the newly acquired discursive power by the representative of Foothills, was demonstrated in the sharp tone of the debate within the executive committee and the statements made by the rural municipalities to the general assembly, the effectiveness of the story-lines and discourse coalitions that formed in the Foothills region, as well as the challenge to the mechanisms of exclusion of the general assembly. The effect of this discursive power was in the breaching mechanisms of exclusion and the vocal exit of the three rural municipalities from the partnership. What is one of the most striking findings of this research is the momentum that the urban-rural incongruence had acquired by the final stage.

Consideration has been given to the significant negative effect that one individual had on the CRP process. This is similar to findings in Chapter Seven in contemplating the effect of the mayor of Calgary. Hajer, and his acknowledgement of the effect of individuals, is used to consider the significant impact of the discursive power of the representative of Foothills.

The vocabulary circulating in and around the CRP created the pall cast over the process by the third phase. In addition to story-lines which emerged from the blue blob and Calgary veto metaphors, these also included references to land freezes, communism, loss of democratic rights, and water being seen as a control mechanism. In some open house, anger had eroded common decency to such an extent an informant from one of the communities was prompted to say she was ashamed of the behavior (Highwood/BRBC). Viewing these developments within Hajer's (1995) conceptualization of story-lines, blue blobs and Calgary veto coalesced actors who held a common fear of losing control over land and municipal rights, fighting for the status-quo. It created a coalition among the most fervent opponents of the CRP. The second, alternate coalition consisted of progressive CRP supporters who held to the earlier story-line around compact urban nodes and a new vision for the region. By the third phase, these story-lines collided and instead of facilitating social change as story-lines are professed to do, the incongruence between the two led to an impasse which, as discussed in the concluding Chapter Eleven, has yet to be surmounted.

Mills (2004) states that "... Foucault discusses the way that discourse is regulated by institutions in order to ward off some of its dangers" (p. 57). Processes of exclusion that limit what can be said and counted as knowledge were central to Foucault's critique and, as argued, these can be observed within the executive committee and general assembly. But the exclusionary mechanisms that served to 'ward off dangers' could no longer contain the dissent growing within the CRP. During the second phase, opposition became evident within the executive committee but during the third phase it gained significant momentum in the executive committee, the general assembly and the broader public domain as the rural municipalities increasingly acquired discursive power. Within the CRP, power centering around Calgary was challenged. Ultimately, instead of successfully working out the details around the common vision that earlier had embodied so much optimism, the rural municipalities overthrew urban power and left the partnership. The CRP was reduced to strictly an

urban organization. The ramifications were captured by one interviewee when he said: “They’re all urbans now...we’re talking about islands of urban-ness” (Bighorn [1]: 7).

This chapter explored the running aground phase of the CRP process, concluding an analysis which charted the process’s development from smooth sailing through choppy waters to finally running aground. In its emphasis on water, this research now turns to integrated water resources management (IWRM) within city-region rescaling.

## Chapter 9

### Integrated Water Resources Management and City-Region Rescaling

This chapter explores integrated water resources management (IWRM) within a regional planning process, its challenges in achieving integrated water resources management objectives and as well as the participatory style of management it advocates. Using a Foucauldian theoretical framework, the chapter will discuss the way that the provincial government laid out broader parameters that shaped the way the Plan was developed, illustrating the dynamics involved in governmentality. The chapter will also highlight the ways in which water was objectified and acted upon, the discursive power of watershed and ancillary water-related organizations relative to those controlling the dominant discourse, and the perceptions of their effectiveness within the CRP water management process. In this chapter the views and opinions of all 28 informants are considered.

By definition, IWRM is: “a process which promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems” (Johch-Clausen & Fugl, 2001, p. 501). IWRM is oriented towards a bottom-up, decentralized and participatory approach to resource management (Mitchell, 1990). The challenge with IWRM has been to integrate natural systems with administrative organizations including political participation aimed at depoliticizing resource management (Saravanan et al., 2009). Foucauldian appraisals argue that IWRM is unattainable:

[Foucauldian] critiques argue *IWRM cannot be achieved* given the power dynamics in social interactions. The critiques reveal that the domain of water resources management is a discursive terrain of collective action, contestation and negotiation, making water management a social-political process, where there are multiple forms and meaning of integration (Saravanan et al., 2009, p.3, original emphasis).

Within the CRP literature, the principle of integrated water resources management was stated numerous times and espoused as a fundamental precept of the planning process. IWRM, or similar

terminology, is used in terms of reference of studies, workshops, committees and resource management frameworks. Terms throughout documents include reference to: integrated land use and integrated conservation (CRP, 2006c), integrated water resource planning (CRP, 2008a), integrating watershed management (CRP, 2011), and in the document prepared by CH2M Hill which sets out the regional water management framework it states:

The region with member municipalities will develop an integrated watershed management approach to deal effectively with the relationships between land use, water quality management and water supply (CH2M Hill, 2008, p.1).

Also, in 2009 the final version of the Plan stated: “Elected officials, planners, residents and stakeholders from our member municipalities have worked together to turn this vision into a working plan” (CRP, 2009a, p. 3).

Recall that in previous chapters the written and interview-based evidence from the CRP process from 2005 to 2009 indicated five main findings with respect to water management: 1) water servicing and distribution dominated discourse within the central decision-making body of the CRP; 2) early initiatives including developing a regional water conservation strategy were side-lined; 3) in pursuing municipal water management solutions, the executive committee drew authority from the scientific truths embodied in a water engineering study, supplemented by a land management study; 4) land and water integration merged into the concept of water being supplied to compact urban nodes, creating irreconcilable issues over municipal and landowner control; and 5) the greatest flexibility in changing the content of the Plan related to ecological management by removing reference to water conservation instruments but adding off-stream storage as an option and retaining water servicing to density forms. Given the departure of the four rural municipalities from the CRP, the Plan does not apply to the majority of land and associated water resources in the region. The absence of these municipalities inherently limits the amount of territory that can be ‘integrated’. This chapter will now explore four Foucauldian concepts: governmentality, creating and acting on water as object, mechanisms of exclusion, and mechanisms upholding water supply and distribution

discourse. In so doing, the nature, extent and effects of differing degrees of discursive power will be analysed.

### 9.1 Governmentality and lack of governmentality: water and the provincial government's role

Talk is shaped by the institutional context in which it occurs. In institutional talk the identity of speakers, their institutional roles and relationships are already established by the context (Thornborrow, 2002). The first topic explored in this chapter is the institutional context of IWRM through the broad Alberta government discursive framework constructed around integrated water resources management, via a document called the Land-use Framework (LUF), and upheld by ministerial statements via their institutional roles. The provincial government's intention was to shape and affect the conduct of the CRP in its water management strategy thus adhering to the Foucauldian concept of governmentality – a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some persons or persons. The provincial government's discursive framework, reinforced by ministerial statements, established the scaffolding in which the CRP's IWRM strategy was constructed.

During the research period, the Alberta government was developing its land and water management strategy through the comprehensive LUF. The LUF, the provincial expression of the IWRM approach to resource management, was considered a cornerstone of the government's policy agenda given the government's belief at that time that the province had reached an environmental "tipping point" (AENV, 2008, p.2). The LUF aimed to develop new planning tools and environmental management approaches that consider the province's landscapes across entire regions. At the same time in 2008 the Alberta government announced that it was reviewing the water allocation transfer system and whether the province needed to change "the way Alberta's water rights are divvied up..." (Cryderman, 2008, p.B3). These were parallel processes to the development of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan given that during the 2005 to 2009 period the provincial government engaged in a public consultation process leading to a draft LUF released in



May 2008. That was followed by further consultation and the eventual embodiment of the LUF in provincial legislation called the Alberta Land Stewardship Act in October, 2009. The water allocation transfer system review resulted in a report issued in late 2009 that focused primarily on improvements to the water transfer system rather than the water allocation framework (AWC, 2009).

Under section 92(8) of the Canadian Constitution Act, municipal institutions are placed under the power and responsibility of the provinces and as such, have no political autonomy in any meaningful sense:

They have no constitutional protection whatever against provincial laws that change their structures, functions and financial resources without their consent. For many of their responsibilities, they are subject to detailed administrative control from a wide range of provincial ministries... (Sancton, 1994, p.8).

Historically, provincial power and intervention have had major implications for municipal governments in Canada (see the extensive work by Sancton 1994, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008). Therefore, provincial ministerial initiatives and the statements made by such ministers embodied considerable institutional force, relating to the nature of discursive power among stakeholders. As will be seen, it was the provincial government's LUF that propelled the CRP's land and water management strategy forward.

During the 2005 to 2009 period under study there were nine meetings of the general assembly. As noted earlier, these meetings acted as a platform for ministerial statements as well as progress reports and housekeeping matters, such as reporting on the financial status of the organization as required under the CRP constitution. Six of the nine meetings were visited by at least one provincial minister and in five of those visits the theme of the ministers' speeches related to sustainability and the LUF. For example, within the minutes of those five meetings, the word 'sustainable' or 'sustainability' shows up 88 times. The minutes to the general assembly that record the ministers' statements include, for example:

Let's think about what limits we could put in place that still allow us to have a sustainable environment, a healthy ecosystem, clean water, and acceptable air standards. Developers will have to live within the parameters we provide. Our job is to protect the environment while still welcoming developers and industry; but there will be ground rules and we will continually monitor to ensure that they are being upheld (2007d, p. 4).

As discussed later, the frequent references to sustainability by the provincial government might have heightened expectation of how sustainability of water would be managed by the CRP but those with high expectations were ultimately left disappointed.

Governmentality is a significant concept given the pivotal role accorded to the provincial government and its influence on municipal governments and, by extension, the CRP. The provincial government established the broad IWRM philosophy around which province-wide and region-specific land and water management plans were constructed. In principle, the IWRM discourse and objectification of water around sustainability aligned with the statements emerging from the CRP which placed primacy on ecology. But the policy that emerged from the CRP contained general principles and direction rather than concrete measures. As will be discussed below, this satisfied the CRP member municipalities that remained in the partnership as well as the provincial government. However, interview data reveal dissatisfaction among the majority of other stakeholders that found the wording too weak. This suggests incongruence between stakeholders' expectations and the water ecology and sustainability policy that ultimately emerged. Interview data also reveal incongruence grounded in differences in how water was objectified and acted upon.

Gibbs and Jonas (2000, 2001) argue that much of the context and impetus for the formation of new environmental policymaking at the local and regional levels occurs through wider spatial scales; that measures taken at any one level will be partial, limited and possibly counterproductive if not located within a broader, supportive framework. They state the process of rescaling of environmental policy may lead to the need for yet more state intervention. The second exploration of this section therefore analyses the provision of a supportive framework, including state intervention, in evaluating the role of provincial government water policy, legislation and regulation

within the CRP context. The provision of this framework was found by all informants to be deficient.

As discussed, during this study's period of analysis the CRP Plan was being formulated within a provincial discursive framework that advocated sustainability within an integrated land and water management structure. As a *strategic* planning exercise, the approach was laudable but informants consistently spoke of lack of *concrete* provincial government leadership and action around water. As demonstrated below, complaints related to lack of provincial government leadership in general as well as within the CRP process in particular; lack of legislative and regulatory instruments; and where instruments exist, lack of willingness to enforce them. The complaints were not specific to any one group of interviewees but were expressed by individuals across all levels of involvement in the process including municipal councillors.

Six interviewees complained about the general lack of provincial leadership. This included comments on the uncertainty created by the long-awaited review of the water allocation system that was continually delayed (and ultimately did not produce any changes). One informant said they did not hold out much hope for the allocation review to be completed (Ecojustice). He hoped at least that there would be some recognition that the system does not work but expected large license holders such as the irrigation districts and industry to have a major influence on the outcome (Ecojustice). One informant commented that the provincial government has a tendency to fixate at the strategic level, producing high level statements but no execution (anonymous [3]). Another municipal councillor said they continued to wait for provincial input on the ecological impact of a proposed sub-regional reservoir development on their river:

What we are waiting for is what is the ecological impact on the rivers...where is Alberta Environment in giving us guidance relative to between now and when we made those final decisions and those project decisions? Will we have all the studies for the ecological impact, will we understand licensing and will we know where Alberta Environment is in terms of where licensing is? (Turner Valley [1]: 4)

Several comments related specifically to the need for greater provincial leadership within the CRP process. One interviewee said it was the provincial government's responsibility to play a leadership role in the regional planning process rather than leaving it to municipalities to figure out (BRBC/SRAC); another interviewee said if the province had legislation relating to transfer development credits and conservation easements it would have removed some of the emotion around setting aside land for urban nodes and would have given a greater sense of fairness - this was a "weakness of the CMP" he said (Rocky View [2]: 4); three people believed the province could have acted quicker or could have done more to facilitate the rural municipalities returning to the CRP once they had left (Turner Valley [2], Airdrie, Water Matters); and finally, one informant said the province sent out "no shortage" of confusing signals about how the CRP and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)<sup>22</sup> would be incorporated (Water Matters: 3). Ironically, despite interviewee's negativity towards the provincial inaction, Wheatland County insisted the development of conservation instruments continue to be a provincial, not municipal responsibility, stating that the county would rather depend on provincial instruments than urbanites dictating how to manage their resource. The Wheatland interviewee said:

...our comments were we are the stewards of the land...and we will participate but we don't want somebody else coming down from an urban society telling us how we will maintain our wasteland, or whatever they call it, pristine bodies of water, the sloughs, the creeks...Just work with us, don't mandate us; work with us (Wheatland: 6).

Of the seven interviewees who were members of municipalities that left the CRP, three said the SSRP is where they see their municipalities fitting, believing that ecological issues would be more effectively dealt with within the much broader southern regional plan than within the CRP. For example one interviewee said:

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is a seed that can now be incubated or cultivated that grows into something valuable for a large part of Alberta....The conversation is a

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<sup>22</sup> Recall the LUF created seven regions in the province based on major watersheds. Each region formed a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to bring expertise and collect local input in the formation of the regional plans. In 2009 the terms of reference for developing a South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) stated the Calgary Regional Partnership's sub-regional plan would be incorporated into the broad regional plan.

different tone. They have managed to keep their horizons...I'm confident that we'll get something I can work with though it may be formative (Bighorn [1]: 15).

Other people made negative statements specifically about the provincial department responsible for the environment. Three people from watershed organizations were highly critical of the department in general, obstructing rather than facilitating environmental management of resources (anonymous [1] and [2], Highwood/ BRBC); and another two municipal councillors spoke of a general lack of direction from the department (Turner Valley [1] and [2]). These statements support the point made earlier by Gibbs and Jonas (2001) that environmental policy measures taken at the regional level will be partial, limited and possibly counterproductive if not located within a broader, supportive framework.

An additional 12 comments related broadly to legislative and regulatory instruments, noting that there was either a lack of provincial regulation or that provincial regulation exists but is not being enforced. Three people spoke of provincial regulation that would allow a claw-back of Calgary's unused license but a lack of courage to do so because of Calgary's political clout (Wheatland, Rocky View [2]; BRBC/Water Smart). In the absence of action taken by the province, the city of Calgary was free to exercise governmentality in using their water license as a negotiating chip within the CRP process, as noted in Chapter Seven. One person stated:

...it's the audacity to think you can take a license bigger than you need and profit from it while others are trying to get water from a river that has a moratorium. There's something wrong with that...but there's a lack of guts at the provincial level and they get a lot of MLA's from Calgary so they're not likely to rock the boat (Rocky View [1]: 3)

Several comments related to the water allocation system. One informant said the problem with water management in the province is a systemic one around a fundamentally flawed water allocation system which has no connection between the amount of water allocated in the Bow River Basin and the amount of water that flows through it (anonymous [3]). Three interviewees said water should be managed as a provincial, not private, resource whereby water would be allocated according to need

or across all populations or across the Calgary region (Rocky View [1], Elbow River/BRBC; BRBC/SRAC). Statements included:

(Allocate water) based on some sort of need. Crops take this much, human nature just to stay alive takes this much. In other words lay out your list of needs and see how it goes (Elbow River/BRBC: 8).

The government's responsibility is to manage that water in the interest of *all* Albertans not to manage that water in the interest of somebody who bought that license or somebody signed a piece of paper for a license in 1902 right (BRBC/SRAC: 3, original emphasis)?

The concept of governmentality explores the belief that measures taken at any one level will be curtailed if not located within a broader, supportive framework. In this section the support of the provincial government's water policy and regulatory framework were evaluated within the CRP context. Based on interview data, there was a widespread view that if IWRM is to succeed, there is still a need for provincial government leadership, legislative and regulatory instruments, and where instruments exist, a willingness to use them. Given the long list of complaints enumerated by informants, one is led to believe the water management plans within the CRP process evolved within somewhat of a vacuum. Indeed in summing up, the governmentality void identified by the interviewees included: the review of the allocation framework that did not produce any results; the province's inaction towards clawing back of Calgary's licenses which it had the right to do; the government's fixation on the strategic level; the provincial environment department obstructing rather than facilitating; lack of provincial leadership in the regional exercise in general; lack of instrument such as transfer development credits and conservation easements; and lack of clear signals as to the connection between the CRP and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. This broad list underscores the complexity of governmentality in water management and the extensive list of expectations involving governmentality. Foucault defined governmentality as the 'art of government' which in general is a form of activity aimed at shaping, guiding or affecting the conduct of some person or persons (Gordon, 1991). The interview data underscores an absence of, and desire for greater governmentality around water management. This general void may have contributed to the shortcoming of the Plan discussed below.

## 9.2 Acting on objects: water

This section will first explore how the Plan evolved to include general principles and directions around water ecology and sustainability and water servicing which became tied to compact urban node specifications. Second, the research finds, not unexpectedly, that municipalities remaining in the CRP championed the water policies contained in the Plan, consistent with provincial ministers. The research is therefore interested in the degrees of satisfaction of water-related organizations with varying degrees of access to the process as well as the municipalities which exited the CRP.

In Chapter Seven it was concluded that water servicing and distribution was the water-related ‘object’ around which debate circulated within the central decision-making body of the CRP. More in-depth analysis of the executive committee minutes show references to water ecology and sustainability as object occurred in the early period of 2005 but, at least according to those minutes, disappeared over the course of the research period. Absent were any statements around IWRM, water quality or watershed protection within the executive committee. As noted, two references to ecology and water supply were made by the Bighorn reeve, one of two rural municipalities to exit the partnership in 2008. Hence we see the nature of the dominant discourse as relates to water. Without access to minutes of the water and wastewater servicing committee it is difficult to ascertain how IWRM and the policies around water came to be developed. These policies are outlined in Table 5. What can be ascertained is that provincial ministers and those remaining members of the CRP upheld the adequacy of the Plan in addressing IWRM. To all other participants who were interviewed, IWRM as a tool of governmentality was not effective within the CRP hence certain discourses were upheld and others were marginalized. For them the Plan only embodied largely broad principles and directions with respect to water ecology and sustainability. Some believed IWRM was more effectively dealt with within the broader South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

**Table 5: Water Policy of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan, 2009 (CRP, 2009a)**

- CRP and member municipalities will support the provision of regional water and wastewater infrastructure and services to existing and new compact urban nodes, corridors and rural employment areas...
  
- The CRP/member municipalities will:
  - align the CMP to the Provincial Land-use Framework;
  - align and coordinate local, regional and inter-municipal plans to protect the five key elements of the region's ecological infrastructure;
  - work with the Province of Alberta to develop and implement a regional cumulative effects management approach;
  - work with the Province of Alberta, the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC), and other key stakeholders to support the development and implementation of an Integrated Water Management (IWM) approach...;
  - commit to achieving provincial water management goals and targets as a region;
  - work with the province, member municipalities and the private sector to develop and implement a range of conservation tools to support the goals of the CMP and the Provincial Land-use Framework;
  - protect the ecological function of riparian lands within their jurisdiction and will recognize site-specific needs;
  - work to support the development and implementation of an IWM approach to deal effectively with the relationships between land use, water quality management and water supply in the Calgary region;
  - adopt a 'no net loss of wetlands' approach by avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts on wetlands;
  - strive to work together to maintain the diversity of species and ecosystem types in the region.

It is safe to assume the members of the CRP executive committee were aware of the importance of water ecology and sustainability, given the provincial government's agenda which placed primacy on the concept and given that one of the four pillars of the CRP was a 'healthy environment'. Thus one of the first policies of the Plan was that municipalities will align the Calgary Metropolitan Plan to the Provincial Land-use Framework. The core of the Plan was built around compact urban nodes that directed growth away from sensitive natural areas. At the June, 2009 general assembly where the Plan was revealed, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development stated that "(b)asically, your goals mirror those of the Land Use Framework" (CRP,



2009h, p.6). In the private meeting the minister visited on the executive committee earlier in 2008 it was noted in the minutes that the province wholly supported the nodes and corridors concept of the CRP. The minutes to that meeting state (CRP, 2008h):

To the question about the Land-use Framework and its consideration of cumulative environmental and socioeconomic effects, again the Minister noted that the CRP is further ahead than any other region with its triple bottom line analysis on such issues as water and associated issues. CRP has done the triple bottom line analysis, but remained realistic. This is a science and not an art...(p. 4)

Recall that Wheatland County argued that any reference to conservation instruments specifies that provincial instruments, not municipal, be developed. The Plan stated (CRP, 2009a):

The CRP will work with the province, member municipalities and the private sector to develop and implement a range of conservation tools to support the goals of the CMP and the Provincial Land-use Framework (p. 8).

So, despite the wide-spread complaints of the lack of provincial leadership and action around environmental matters arising from the interview process, the CRP agreed to work to establish provincial rather than municipal conservation instruments.

This section now turns to investigate the degrees of satisfaction of the CRP's water policy by water-related organizations with varying degrees of access to the process, as well as the municipalities which exited the CRP. Gibbs, Jonas, and While (2002) studied policy making within wider rescaling processes in the United Kingdom, juxtaposing economic alongside environmental objectives. They concluded that environmental representation was not privileged in relation to economic representations, helping to explain the relative absence of environmental issues from policy and strategy within some of their case study areas (Gibbs et al., 2002). In contemplating the Foucauldian concept of acting on objects the section now turns to the intersection of water ecology versus water supply and distribution within and CRP process. This approach is similar to the approach taken by Gibbs et al., (2002) in contemplating the economic-environment juxtaposition in their study.

**Table 6: Views and Opinions of Water Management Policy**

<b>Organization or Municipality</b>	<b>Water Policy Sufficient/ Insufficient</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>WPAC's:</b>		
Highwood River Watershed/BRBC	Insufficient	IWRM 'absolutely not' addressed
Elbow River Watershed/BRBC	Insufficient	An engineering solution with a facade of ecology
BRBC/SRAC	Insufficient	Politicized; water access dominated ecology and sustainability; no value given to ecosystems
Anonymous [1]	Sufficient	Plan holds a 'stick' in having to meet ecological requirements to be part of the partnership
Anonymous [2]	Sufficient	Plan identifies vulnerable areas; moving forward with concrete measures
BRBC/WaterSmart	Sufficient	Plan is 'pretty good'
Elbow River Watershed	Don't know provisions	N/A
<b>Ancillary Organizations:</b>		
Anonymous [3]	Insufficient	Executive preoccupied with water access
Water Matters	Insufficient	Plan not rooted in legislation and cumulative effects, just incentives and disincentives
Alberta Wilderness Association	Yes and no	Some positive aspect of the Plan (protecting wetlands, river corridors) and some negative (allowing raw water storage and absence of stronger municipal regulations results in lowest environmental standards to attract industry).
Ecojustice	Don't know provisions	N/A
Western Irrigation District	Insufficient	No regional plan to manage storm water, regional tensions unresolved
<b>Defecting Municipalities:</b>		
Foothills [1]	Insufficient	Plan does not consider rural ecological goods and services; other mechanism (inter-municipal development plans and South Sask. Regional Plan) address ecology
Foothills [2]	Sufficient	IWRM in its infancy by the time this interviewee left the CRP (defeated in municipal election in 2007, asked to remain involved until 2008) but satisfied with the direction at that time
Wheatland	Insufficient	Plan is an urban agenda to access rural ecological goods and services. Ecological motivation a smoke screen
Bighorn [1] and [2]	Insufficient	Urgencies over water supply and distribution marginalized ecological considerations; did not consider ecological goods and services provided to urbans
Rocky View [1]	Sufficient	Agree with ecological principles but ended up not being a partnership so Plan is unworkable
Rocky View [2]	Sufficient	Reasonable job of addressing IWRM but requirements to access water too strict, resulted in an unworkable Plan

Table 6 (above) summarizes the views and opinions of various participants in the process on the adequacy of the CRP's water ecology versus water distribution policy. In the interviews, nine councillors from municipalities which remained members of the CRP not unexpectedly championed the water policy provisions of the CRP. The views and opinions of members of the watershed and ancillary water-related organizations which had various degrees of access to the process, as well as the municipal councillors from the municipalities that left the partnership are of more interest.

Results show that out of the 19 interviewees from watershed organizations, ancillary water-related organizations and the rural municipalities who left the partnership, six were satisfied with the Plan's water policy. Thirteen people either: found it wholly insufficient (10), had both positive and negatives views of the Plan (1) or were unaware of the content of the Plan (2). So almost three-quarters of the interviewees listed above (68%) had problems with at least some of the water policy aspects of the Plan or were unaware of the Plan's provisions despite the bearing the Plan would have on water in the region. Negative views on the provisions of the Plan are summarized in the table above but broadly speaking, the problems with the Plan related to the dominance of water supply and distribution over ecology and sustainability. These individuals' reaction to the policy is illustrative of 'acting on objects' and the potential impact on social practices. For Foucault, objects only exist meaningfully within the discourse around them. In acting on water, the dominance discourse around water supply and distribution, as opposed to the weaker discourse, conditioned the Plan's content. Statements reflect the effect of the dominant discourse:

The access became the overriding issues because the South Saskatchewan River Basin was closed. So access was really the only thing anybody even pretended to deal with which is silly from my point of view because if we'd had gone the other direction and used the ecological value first they would have been able to prove that access had to be done differently. But they dealt only with access and left out the reason why – they left it out (Elbow River/BRBC: 3).

I guess for me the Plan was never rooted in legislation and cumulative effects. Without grounding in law what it ended up being was a lot of leveraging of water versus land use and I guess I would say that isn't necessarily management. It's creating a set of conditions

for incentives and disincentives but I wouldn't necessarily call it management...(Water Matters: 3).

Of the rural municipalities which defected, informants consistently argued that ecological goods and services provided by their districts needed to be considered in the Plan but were not (although they fought against the inclusion of conservation instruments). This also underscores how the water policy that emerged reflected the dominant discourse of supply and discourse that circulated within the executive committee and speaks to the extent of discursive power. As a rural municipality, Rocky View informants' views were distinct from the other rural municipalities in that they were satisfied with the ecological provisions of the Plan. This result is consistent with findings below that Rocky View, considered the most growth-oriented rural municipality in the region, objectified water in less ecologically-oriented terms than the other rural municipalities.

The relatively small number of individuals from watershed or ancillary organizations who found the Plan sufficient (three people) consisted primarily of individuals with limited involvement in the process. Unlike some opponents who believed the Plan was weak, only providing general directions and principles, those who favoured the Plan expressed the opposite view. One individual stated that they liked the Plan because of the requirements that had to be firmly met in order to be included in the partnership. Another individual also commented on the concrete features of the Plan:

What I felt with the regional partnership was they were actually starting to put money where their mouth was. They'd say this is what is valued. I felt they were saying this will cause conflict but this is the reality, that this area is vulnerable...I really felt someone was finally really taking a stand, not taking a political way out by being wishy-washy with it all (anonymous [2]).

These individuals for the most part had no involvement with the process, were satisfied that they were not involved in the process and were satisfied with the outcome.

Based on the evidence, one is led to believe that in the development of the CRP's water policy, environmental representation was less privileged relative to water supply and distribution. This helps to explain why in the intersection of water distribution versus water ecology, water

distribution dominated. This also explains why, aside from the remaining municipalities, the majority of people involved in the process were left unhappy with the water management outcome.

### 9.3 Objectification of water: meanings relating to water ecology versus water servicing

Cocklin and Blunden (1998) have drawn on Foucault to explain how regimes of truth are sustained by society's discourses, how the discourse of dominant groups hold influence and inscribe these truths in regulatory structures. In their case study, New Zealand's Maori contested their meaning of 'sustainability' and water resources against the dominant Foucauldian power/knowledge systems of western science and economics (Cocklin, 2002). This finding resonates with the CRP process given that the interview data reveal the meaning of water by individuals from water-related organizations and rural municipalities differed from its objectification by most of the members of the executive committee. Hence, this section discusses how the meaning of water varied significantly across those who had differing degrees of discursive power. The multiple meanings ascribed to water also suggest that individual objectifications of water directly relates to individuals' views on the adequacy of the CRP Plan in addressing water management.

Given the semi-structured approach to the interview process, interviewees were allowed considerable latitude to express their views and opinions about water. The manner in which they spoke about water suggests a divergence in the meanings individuals ascribe to water and by extension how it should be managed within the regional framework. Individuals from watershed, and ancillary water-related organizations often spoke of water as intrinsically valuable and placed primacy on its ecological aspect. The terms used in conceptualized water included: water is a "gift" along with the "infinite value of the landscape" (Elbow River/BRBC: 3); there existing a bond between land and water (anonymous [2], anonymous [1]); and water being part of the "ecological infrastructure" (Highwood/BRBC: 3). Others spoke in terms of ecosystem functions and impacts, watershed ecology, and ecological value (Alberta Wilderness Association, anonymous [3]). And as

noted earlier, two people from watershed organizations said water is not a private resource but a provincial resource and should be managed in the interest of all Albertans. Their statements referred to “rights under the constitution of Albertans” (BRBC/SRAC: 2) and “(Calgary) happens to have some licenses but it is not their water” (Elbow River/BRBC: 2). For one individual from an ancillary water-related organization, he simply hoped the CRP exercise would result in more water left in the river, stating if managing water regionally makes water use more efficient, that should benefit river ecology (Ecojustice).

Three of the interviewees from rural municipalities consistently used the term ecological goods and service within the context of water and natural resources in general (Foothills [2], Wheatland, Big Horn [1]). Their comments included:

The thing we were trying to say, we are doing cheerfully and well, good stewardship on a large landscape. On the other hand, if you go back to those people and tell them they haven't got any benefit, well we're providing all sorts of benefit to those downstream...(Bighorn[1]: 3).

But generally the rural population are very good stewards of their land and water, that's their livelihood. They're going to look after it. But just because somebody wants to come out and view that...somebody else better start stepping up to the plate and put dollars in and so far that isn't happening (Wheatland: 6).

In all instances, references to ecological goods and services were used within the context of urban dwellers' exploitation and/or misunderstanding of natural resources in rural Alberta<sup>23</sup>.

Less ecologically-oriented expressions of water were made largely by interviewees from one rural municipality, Rocky View, and the remaining urban (including small town) municipalities. The two interviewees from Rocky View, having significant issues with Calgary around water in the past, spoke specifically of Calgary's water licenses and the unfair control this allowed Calgary to exercise. This is why, as pointed out earlier, Rocky View argued that water be allocated to their municipality to be managed as they saw fit. For an additional ten interviewees, most of which were

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<sup>23</sup> Dibden, Mautner and Cocklin (2005) observe neo-liberal reforms have resulted in landholders being seen as responsible for environmental protection and management for the public good. Their Australian research concludes that the responsibility to provide ecosystem services cannot be ascribed to landowners alone but must have some form of government support.

urban councillors, rather than speaking of water ecology being of primary importance as in the quotes noted above, water access and servicing and water ecology to them are connected, stating that a person cannot speak about one without the other. And for two additional urban councillors, they considered water servicing more important than water ecology (Airdrie, Strathmore).

In this section I have explored the different ways in which water was objectified, noting that people from rural municipalities and watershed and ancillary organizations viewed water as fundamentally different from those from non-rural municipalities, save for Rocky View. This is critical to our understanding of the CRP process. It assists in our understanding of IWRM processes. Even though the process is supposed to be inclusionary, this does not preclude the development of a dominant group with discursive power. This was the finding in Cocklin and Blunden's (1998) study. The dominant discourse within the executive committee upheld water servicing over water ecology. And the regulatory structure, allocating water to the central city over all other municipalities, sustained the dominant discourse. The weaker discursive power, held by the more ecologically-oriented group, was discursively marginalized.

#### 9.4 Mechanisms of exclusion: decision-making process, judgements

This section explores mechanisms of exclusion specific to water policy making, including the closed nature of the decision-making process and judgements of ecological-oriented individuals. The section also explores the effectiveness of water-related organizations involvement in the CRP process, discovering an inverse relationship between their involvement in the process and satisfaction with the outcome. In addition, the research found dissatisfaction with water-related organizations' effectiveness across all the municipal councillors.

IWRM requires an unprecedented level of cooperation (Allan, 2003). But decision-making arrangements involving resources are a political choice and all decision-making processes are flawed (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005). Water resource decision making structures are likely to have

their own specific policy orientations. They are also likely to “vary in their accessibility and responsiveness to particular interests, their capacity to generate the appropriate flow of information, and their preference for certain problem solutions” (Ingram, Mann, Weatherford, & Cortner, 1984, p. 328). These statements related to Foucauldian mechanisms of exclusion.

The CRP advocated an inclusionary process in embracing IWRM principles but the decision-making processes were structured upon much less inclusionary principles, based on municipal government practices. The opinions and perceptions of members of water-related organizations, expressed in interviews, show how mechanisms of exclusion affected their involvement in the process of developing the CRP’s water management policy. The findings reveal that the majority of these organizations found their involvement marginalized, compromising the IWRM approach which advocates inclusion. The nature of the marginalization tends to relate largely to a disconnection between the working committees and the decision-making apparatus, discussed in more detail below. As a result the research discovered an inverse relationship between involvement in the CRP process and satisfaction with the process itself. In addition, municipal councillors consistently held largely negative views of the effectiveness of water-related organizations’ involvement. This relatively high degree of dissatisfaction across multiple individuals suggests the need for more effective forms of involvement than existed in this case study if IWRM is to function as intended.

In the previous chapters it was established that the decision-making process was housed in three assemblages - the Group of Seven, the executive committee and the general assembly – through which a succession of critical decisions were made. These committees were comprised of municipal councillors but largely excluded water-related organizations. Interviews with individuals from watershed and ancillary water-related organizations showed a range of degrees of access to the process. Across the 12 individuals interviewed, the range included: participation in the CRP’s water and wastewater committee, participation in committees other than the water and wastewater



committee, writing letters to the minister, meeting with staff, attending workshops and presenting to the executive committee. The nature of their involvement outside the decision-making structures, how their involvement intersected with the decision-making structures, their satisfaction with their level of involvement in shaping the water policy and their views on the presence or absence of mechanisms of exclusion are summarized in Table 7.

<b>Individual's Organization</b>	<b>Involved</b>	<b>Nature of Involvement</b>	<b>Satisfied with involvement in shaping water policy</b>	<b>Comment on mechanisms</b>
Highwood River Watershed/BRBC	Yes	Participated in Water and Wastewater Committee	No	Disconnect between water committee and the executive committee
Elbow River Watershed/BRBC	Yes	Participated in Water and Wastewater Committee	No	Disconnect between water committee and the executive committee
BRBC/WaterSmart	Yes	Participated in Water and Wastewater Committee	Yes	Watershed organizations appropriately involved
Anonymous [3] ancillary water-related organization	Yes	Participated in a CRP working committee, participated in BRBC board meetings	No	Disconnected between the CRP and the BRBC watershed planning process
Water Matters	Made efforts	Wrote letter to minister, provided verbal advice on policy to CRP staff	No	Advice was marginalized, not found in the Plan
BRBC/SRAC	Made efforts	Met with CRP staff	No	Generally, CRP very closed process
Western Irrigation District	Made efforts	Presentation to executive committee	No	CRP not in spirit of collaboration and cooperation
Anonymous [2] watershed organization	Marginal	Attended one workshop	Yes	Satisfied that BRBC representing watersheds' interests
Elbow River Watershed	Marginal	Attended one workshop	Yes	Personally occupied with own watershed issues
Alberta Wilderness Association	Marginal	Attended one workshop	Yes	AWA not oriented to urban-rural but wilderness area
Ecojustice	No	None	Yes	Ecojustice strictly involved with litigation over natural resources
Anonymous [1] watershed organization	No	None	Yes	Satisfied not to be involved – should limit numbers of participants

One central mechanism of exclusion can be identified when considering the comments of those dissatisfied with the nature of their involvement, contained in the last column of the table. Virtually all the comments point back to the closed nature of decision-making structure of the CRP. Of the six interviewees who expressed dissatisfaction, three pointed to the disconnection between the working committees and the decision-making apparatus. Two additional informants made general statements about the closed process and their advice not finding its way into the Plan. One informant who made a presentation to the executive committee found an absence of a spirit of cooperation.

Interview data uncover the reactions to this mechanism. Analysis of the interview data show there was an inverse relationship between involvement in the CRP process and satisfaction with the process itself. The more involved the informants were with the CRP process the less satisfied they were. The majority of individuals (three of the four) who had the most extensive involvement, were dissatisfied with the working committee-executive committee connectivity. Two individuals from the Highwood River and Elbow River Watershed organizations were considered prominent members of the watershed community in the region: they participated in the water and wastewater management committee and faulted the process for a fundamental lack of connection between the knowledge generated in that committee and the executive committee's acquisition of the knowledge (Highwood River/BRBC, Elbow River/BRBC). As one of these persons stated:

The executive committee, they had their own agenda and it didn't necessarily and quite frequently didn't consider all the information coming to them from the committees and the forums (Elbow River/BRBC: 8)

One anonymous interviewee, from one of the other CRP working committees, stated that the CRP and the BRBC were involved in parallel, disconnected processes. He felt the CRP was developing its plan separate from the BRBC's development of the Bow Basin watershed management plan. He strongly encouraged interaction between the two groups multiple times, was dissuaded from doing so, and without pressing further for this interaction, it did not occur

(anonymous [3]). The one interviewee who had relatively extensive involvement with the process and was satisfied with his watershed organization's involvement believed the level of involvement was appropriate given the watershed organization does not have any authority, that it is only advisory (BRBC/Water Smart).

Three people were not formally involved in the CRP as committee members but made efforts to access the process. One person wrote letters to the minister and sought personal contact with staff to advocate for defined targets in the Plan. He felt the CRP staff did their best but his concerns were marginalized (Water Matters). Another person who sought out CRP staff to express concerns about the land and water mapping of wildlife corridors and ecosystem habitats for migration (because she felt it was an "aesthetic gloss over") observed the highly closed nature of the process in general (BRBC/SRAC: 1). She stated the solutions were based on the engineering study and were not open to debate:

Very closed. You know what I found very disturbing is even the water regional servicing reports, they were sole sourced! They were, hire one engineering firm to give the solution, that's the solution we're going to look at.... We're going to make a decision based on that. Rather than this open door, that we're talking about this and we want to hear from communities about this. I felt it was a very closed process (BRBC/SRAC: 7).

The third person, from the WID, made a presentation to the executive, proposing the development of a reservoir which would be an anchor for regional water supply. He stated excuses and lack of collaboration and cooperation resulted in it not being considered a regional solution (WID).

The remaining five informants from water-related organizations were either involved marginally (by attending one workshop), or had no involvement at all. All but one of the interviewees from these organizations was satisfied with their limited or complete lack of involvement in the process. One was satisfied not to be involved, arguing that too many players dilutes the process (anonymous [1]); one believed the BRBC provided the appropriate representation of their organization, confident the BRBC would do a good job (anonymous [2]); two people who attended a workshop were

satisfied because in one instance the person was highly consumed with other watershed matters directly affecting their community (Elbow River), the other because their organization was oriented to wilderness preservation not urban and rural concerns (Alberta Wilderness Association). One organization is strictly focused on litigation so was not involved in the process and satisfied not to be involved (Ecojustice).

This section now turns to an exploration of municipal councillors’ awareness of watershed organizations’ involvement and their views and perceptions on the appropriate degree of the organizations’ involvement and/or effectiveness. The results are summarized in Table 8.

<b>Table 8: Views and Perceptions of Involvement of Watershed Organizations by Municipal Councillors</b>			
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Awareness of organization’s involvement</b>	<b>Positive view of involvement</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Foothills [1]	Yes	No	Question level of understanding of rural by some watershed organizations
Foothills [2]	No	N/A	Not re-elected, left process so unaware of involvement
Wheatland	Yes	No	Some organizations believe rurals do not care for resources; felt rural voices often get drowned out by environmental groups
Bighorn [1] & [2]	Yes	Yes and no	Positive contribution of organizations but entire process got stuck in water distribution issues and did not grow to the next level
Rocky View [1]	Yes	No	Groups mean well but some go overboard – ‘tree huggers’
Rocky View [2]	Yes	No	Their involvement could have been enhanced but they have a limited mandate
Black Diamond	Yes	No	CRP could have involved the organizations earlier in the process
Nanton	Yes	Yes	Groups were highly involved and had access to the executive
Turner Valley [1] & [2]	Yes	Yes	Nothing but the highest technical information and advice informed the Plan
Calgary	Yes	Yes	Groups were in the background which is appropriate given they are not elected
Strathmore	No	N/A	Unaware
Airdrie	Yes	Yes and No	BRBC the most professional and logical, other smaller watershed organizations emotional, “wildly accusing the CRP of all sorts of things”
High River	Yes	No	BRBC not sufficiently involved in the early years, also not sufficiently funded or given sufficient authority
Redwood Meadows	Do not recall	Do not recall	Could not recall

Of the 16 councillors interviewed, the majority (13) were aware of the involvement of watershed organizations but only three unequivocally had positive comments about their involvement. A mixture of negative views was expressed by the remaining ten people. Some comments relate to the opinion that: 1) the groups could have been more involved; 2) they made a positive contribution in the beginning but the contribution stopped when the process became preoccupied with water distribution; and 3) their limited mandate compromised their contribution. Specific statements arising in the interview process included, for example:

They barely appeared on the radar screen. They weren't at the table when we were discussing these things. They were back in the background some place...If you want to get to the table you've got to get elected (Calgary: 6).

I think the discussions were very thorough and very well done, considering that they were initial discussions. What they needed to do was to grow to the next levels. It didn't happen, started talking about urban (water) distribution (Bighorn [1]: 14).

Lots of those kinds of things (watershed management) were part of the discussion...Now in retrospect could it be argued they should have had a stronger voice, should they have had a seat at the table? I guess those are the kinds of things that could be debated, yes (Rocky View [2]: 14).

Some comments related back to the informal mechanisms of exclusion discussed in Chapter Seven, to mechanisms that marginalized discourse based on judgements concerning competency. In the previous chapter a tendency to perceive a lack of competency of rural and small town members was noted. This same notion was also present with respect to judgements of the competency of environmentally-oriented individuals given the following three comments:

I don't think the watershed groups have a political agenda. They aren't the teeth of anybody's agreement, they are genuinely trying to make sure the ecosystem is healthy and that the trout are healthy....I don't know if they go a little overboard, kind of like tree huggers. They're very zealous (Rocky View [1]: 13).

The BRBC they're logical to work with. When you get into some of the smaller ones they get very emotional and it's more about them...it's about their beliefs, their fundamental heartfelt beliefs and they've got to protect the water, the watershed, and the greater water basin. They're going to be the ones, they're going to do it because it's vitally important...but I think their focus gets really, really lost in the emotion... (Airdrie: 8).

And some of them have a good understanding and others are very, very blindered when they're looking at whatever they're looking at they put the blinders on and go straight ahead on it (Wheatland: 7).

These comments suggest a marginalization by some of statements made by environmental groups by diminishing the logic and value of their statements.

The concept of mechanisms of exclusion was employed to explore the bottom-up inclusionary principles of IWRM in the CRP process, alert to the issues raised by Ingram et al. (1984) concerning decision-making structures and their responsiveness to particular interest, their capacity to generate the appropriate flow of information and their preference for certain solutions. This research finds informants from watershed and ancillary organizations were less satisfied with the process the more extensive was their involvement. The dissatisfaction frequently related to lack of connection between the water and wastewater committee and the executive committee, between the BRBC and the executive committee, or a general feeling that the process was closed. Interestingly, the majority of individuals from organizations with very marginal or no involvement were satisfied with that arrangement. Their justification was that too many people dilute the process, the BRBC adequately represented their organization, they were too consumed with other issues, or the orientation of their organization was not on water and regional issues.

Based on the views of rural municipal councillors who left the CRP, almost all considered watershed and ancillary organization involvement with some reservation. This is interesting considering the ecological-oriented objectification of water by rural councillors was highly congruent with that of water-related organizations. Yet surprisingly, rural councillors often stated that water related organizations didn't understand them, that they are wrongly viewed as poor stewards of the natural resources<sup>24</sup>. Aside from criticism that the organizations lacked an understanding of rural, other informants also felt organizations' involvement came too late in the process, that they have restricted mandates which limited their contribution, that they were

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<sup>24</sup> For work on urban-rural views about water see, for example, Bjornlund et al. (forthcoming).

excessively ecological or that their contribution was limited because the direction of the CRP changed.

These results together suggest IWRM and its bottom-up inclusionary principle are confounded by some of the results. The individuals from organizations with the least or no involvement with the process were satisfied with their lack of involvement even though the CRP would fundamentally alter water management in the region. And most were satisfied with the water management provisions of the Plan. However other results adhere to predictions in the academic literature because we find those individuals who were most involved in the process found it too disconnected and too closed, related to the common problems of accessibility and responsiveness of decision-makers to certain solutions. Also the municipal councillors who observed the organizations' involvement were by and large, unenthusiastic about their contribution or expressed problems with the timing of their involvement. These concerns also relate in part to responsiveness of the decision-making structure to particular interests and preference to certain solutions. The incongruence in the way the urban councils objectified water (the relative greater importance attached to servicing versus ecology) assist in understanding these results. But rural councillors' and water organizations' objectification of water seemed to align, leading to the result that rural councillors found water organizations did not understand them.

#### 9.5 Mechanisms upholding discourse: land management, water servicing

During the research's time frame, the newspaper coverage was occupied more by land management and population growth concerns than water issues. Where water was an issue, the dominant dialogue focussed on water servicing and distribution, consistent with the central concern of the executive committee. Within my sample of newspaper articles from 2005 to 2009, there were approximately 200 references that related to public concerns over land management, growth, transit, annexation, water supply, regional planning, and authority. Statements relating to land management

and accommodating growth were referenced almost twice as often as those related to water. An example of the common concerns:

So the questions are: “Where do we put 1.5 million people and then put the water lines and transportation route to them? How do we get water to everybody who needs it... in a planned way based on effectively managing growth...(Hope, 2007b, p.B1)

In zeroing in on issues around water there was a noticeable variance in the relative degree of its importance between communities. Water supply issues and watershed capacity were most commonly identified in articles produced by the Okotoks paper, the community which had taken the unprecedented move to place a cap on population growth due to water supply constraints. Okotoks personified the worst-case water supply scenario, as one town resident lamented:

“I don’t think we can remain a little dot on the map surrounded by larger growing economies and hope to survive in the next 20 to 30 years. We would become an island surrounded by everybody else, and what good what that be to us?” said Wilson (Patterson, 2009c, p.2)

References in the press were also made to historic high-profile disputes over water servicing between Calgary and Rocky View. These disputes reminded the public how intense inter-community tensions can become. For example, articles referred to “Calgary’s mayor Dave Bronconnier who’s had several run-ins with the M.D. of Rocky View on (water) servicing land annexations” (Barber, 2007, p. 1) and “When the two are fighting, both are losers” (Massot & Barlow, 2007, p.1). But for some communities like Airdrie and Cochrane, for example, transit was noticeably the prominent theme in their local papers. During the months of 2009 when the CRP Plan was released for public review, newspaper coverage in the Foothills area increasingly reflected the intense opposition to the land management component of the Plan, with frequent reference to the ramifications for specific communities.

In tracing statements made in the newspaper media over the research period, the subject matter was occupied by land management and population growth concerns and where water was an issue the dominant theme concerned water servicing and distribution. On a community basis the relevance



of issues, and the statements around them, varied considerably depending on the priorities of the community. Thus water supply and servicing was a highly significant for some and of little concern for others. These findings are valuable to this research because it appears that overall, the talk around water servicing was more dominant than water ecology and sustainability in the wider public and this was reflected within the executive committee. Municipal councillors on the CRP executive committee, as representatives of their communities and presumably hoping to stay in office, were intent on seeking water supply solutions through the CRP.

## 9.6 Conclusion

In this chapter IWRM is explored within a multi-dimensional rescaling process of a city-region. The chapter investigates the intersection of the provincial government, municipal councillors and water-related organizations within a highly centralized decision-making apparatus. The asymmetrical nature of discursive power across various groups, the extent to which power was exercised and its attendant effects are ascertained with IWRM as a focal point.

The nature of discursive power pertaining to water begins with provincial ministers who propelled the CRP's land and water management framework forward within the broad provincial regional thrust of their policies. The closed nature of the decision-making process within the CRP marginalized the weaker ecologically-oriented discourse of water and sustained the discourse around water supply and distribution. The CRP process did not uphold the IWRM principle of inclusion and this affected the nature of varying degrees of discursive power by weakening that of water-related organizations. In addition, judgements of the competency of ecologically-oriented individuals would have compounded their weaker discursive power. The extent and effect of the dominant discourse could be seen in the water policies contained in the Plan which were confined to directions and principles. This result was also based on the fact that some of the more ecologically-oriented rural municipalities argued for general directions and principles because they did not want

urban municipalities to dictate how they managed the rural ecology. And, despite the provincial government espousing sustainability, it was also satisfied with the relatively weak content of the Plan.

The concept of governmentality established that the principles of IWRM, which includes integrated land and water management within a sustainable framework involves a bottom-up inclusive approach. The rhetoric around which land and water management would be constructed within the CRP was based on inclusiveness. Within the decision-making apparatus, however, the discourse centred on water supply and distribution. The water policy contained in the Plan, acceptable to the municipalities which remained in the partnership and anointed by the provincial government, was found inadequate by virtually all other participants.

Objects cannot exist outside the discourse around them. Through the written and interview data water was objectified in distinctly different manners, with common ecological-based objectifications among water-related organizations and municipal councillors from three of the four rural municipalities. These individuals were the least satisfied with the content of the water policy. This contrasts with the less ecological-orientated Rocky View councillors who found the water ecology component of the Plan to be satisfactory but disagreed with the requirements to access water. We can therefore trace the objectification of water to the level of acceptability of the water policy in the Plan. The Plan reflected how water was objectified and acted upon by the dominant discourse. Instead of a bottom-up approach advocated by IWRM, the process was inherently top-down with the provincial government as well as the municipal councillors who formed the dominant discourse, determining the Plan's content.

Water organizations with the greatest degree of involvement in the process were the most dissatisfied with the process, largely because of the high degree of disconnect between the water and wastewater committee and the executive. The majority were thus dissatisfied with the policy

outcome. Those water-related organizations with the least involvement were, somewhat surprisingly, content not to be involved. This finding is somewhat at odds with the IWRM literature which speaks of the importance of their involvement in these processes. Further, unlike other water-related organizations, they were satisfied with the Plan or were completely unaware of it despite the significant bearing the Plan would have on water management in the region. Finally, virtually every municipal councillor participating in the process found the participation of water-related organizations unsatisfactory for a host of reasons. Ultimately many of the findings can be traced back to mechanisms of exclusion as well as the complex and value-laden nature of water management, some elements of which were detected in early CRP workshops discussed in Chapter Seven<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Recall the statements made at workshops included: the tendency to compromise watershed protection when land sells for millions of dollars; the need for paradigm change in order to move forward; water quality parameters not being addressed; the need for more innovative conservation based approaches; concerns raised about climate change and the cumulative impacts of activities on sensitive water resources and the carrying capacity of the natural systems; and the need for high quality and innovative solutions to water servicing (CRP, 2008a; CRP 2008b).

## **Chapter 10**

### **Discussion**

This chapter will piece together the findings of this research to answer the central research question and fulfill the objectives of the research. To show the construction of the broad discourse and the nature, extent and effect of varying degrees of discursive power, this chapter summarizes findings under each theoretical concept. The chapter also highlights the interplay between concepts as the process unfolded. The applicability of the concepts to IWRM is also explored and findings outside Foucault's theory are also identified. In the first section, key observations arising from the research which connect to the objectives of the research are identified in italics. The second section summarizes the final, broad discourse that emerged: the discourse of the vision of the region that clashed with the discourse of land-owner and municipal rights; and water supply and distribution versus the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability. The third section of the chapter discusses the relevance of the research's sources in the construction of discourses including formal document and archival written data, interview data and media coverage. Finally, the relevance of the research's findings will be compared and contrasted with those identified in the broader literature. This discussion is drawn together in the concluding section.

#### **10.1 Development of Concepts and Interplay between Concepts**

The central research question that seeks to establish the nature, extent and effects of stakeholders exercising varying degrees of discursive power is discussed below through a summary of findings under each theoretical concept. Table 9 summarizes the main findings across the three phases of the research as conceptualized in this study. Table 10 summarizes the findings by theoretical concept under IWRM.

<b>Table 9: Prominent Theoretical Concepts and Findings by Phase</b>			
<b>Concept</b>	<b>Phase I Smooth Sailing</b>	<b>Phase II Choppy Waters</b>	<b>Phase III Running Aground</b>
Governmentality	-CRP established as a municipally-based institution - discursive and institutional roles and identities established	-provincial government influenced municipal councillors to accelerate the Plan. Province also created fear of imposing a regional solution	-voting structure of the Group of Seven, executive committee and general assembly - influence of Calgary's water license holdings and Calgary veto - time pressures imposed by government
Mechanisms upholding and excluding discourse	-central committees established and comprised of municipal councillors -majority-rule voting procedure established -regional vision story-line upheld by print media	-voting silenced dissent within executive committee and Group of Seven -institutional power of discourse exercised by Calgary -newspaper coverage upheld discourse of progress not dissention - discursive shifts -attitudes and judgments of lack of competency	-voting exercised by Group of Seven, executive committee and general assembly -mechanisms of exclusion were breached -newspaper coverage upheld public dissent and internal dissention -on-line survey revealed heightened public awareness of the Plan
Creating Discursive Space, Metaphors and Objects	- visioning exercises, inclusionary environment -four 'pillars' as a early metaphor for vision of the region -identified the principle of 'local autonomy' -water seen both as an ecological good and strategic resource for water servicing	-'local autonomy' versus municipal rights challenged -water discourse channelled towards supply and distribution	-'blue blobs' and 'Calgary veto' created as metaphors within story-lines around land owner and municipal rights -compact urban nodes replaced 'pillars' as metaphor for vision of the region
Acting on Objects	- water conservation strategy begun but later abandoned -study of water supply and distribution produced scientific knowledge around water servicing.-study of land management produced scientific knowledge around land -explored meaning of 'local autonomy	-ecological aspect of water marginalized, prominence of water supply and distribution -CRP governance versus 'local autonomy' becomes major issue	-Plan included general principals and direction around water ecology and sustainability -water servicing tied to compact urban node specifications -governance structure upholds Calgary veto in Plan
Contestation, resistance		-debate over municipal autonomy raised in executive committee; debates in workshops over municipal autonomy and water management	-unresolved disputes over meaning and interpretation of 'local autonomy' - collision of two story-lines – vision for the future versus landowner and municipal rights -urban-rural divisions
Story-Lines and Discourse Coalitions	-creation of common vision around four 'pillars' created story-line around which region coalesced and moved forward	-metaphor of "pillars" that formed early story-line disappeared	-'blue blob' and 'Calgary veto' story-line created coalition around those opposing future vision of region; compact urban nodes coalition formed around regional future -collision of the two opposing story-lines
Findings outside Foucault		- influence of Calgary mayor's style and ability	-influence of change in one person on the CRP - change in Foothills' representative due to election

<b>Table 10: Prominent Theoretical Concepts and Findings Under IWRM</b>	
<b>Concept</b>	<b>IWRM</b>
Governmentality	-provincial government shaped and conditioned the CRP's integrated water resources management through LUF - <i>lack of governmentality oversight over water management</i>
Acting on objects	-Plan included general principles and directions around water ecology and sustainability -water servicing tied to compact urban node requirements -provincial ministers and remaining members of the CRP upheld water policy within the Plan, other stakeholder found it inadequate
Objectification of water	-diverse meanings ascribed to water
Mechanisms excluding and upholding discourse	-closed nature of decision-making apparatus - attitudes and judgments of ecologically-oriented individuals -inverse relationship between involvement in process and satisfaction with outcome for water-related organizations; dissatisfaction with the organizations' effectiveness by municipal councillors -media upheld land management issues over water; water access and distribution over ecology and sustainability

The analysis below explains how the CRP discourses were formed through the development and deployment of varying degrees of discursive power. In mapping this development, the understanding of the process is attenuated and in so doing, the research is able to specify first, that multiple factors contributed to the creation of a discursive hierarchy. Second, integrating the management of hitherto separate land and water is highly challenging. Third, not all water-related organizations will have an interest or capacity to participate in regional processes. Fourth, mechanisms of exclusion have significant effects on the nature and extent of varying degrees of discursive power, marginalizing discourse of participants and creating dominant discourses. An associated fifth point is that in marginalizing discourse, those participants who are affected can be prompted to create story-lines and discourse coalitions that can overthrow mechanisms of exclusion and thwart processes, demonstrating the extent and effect of discursive power. Therefore, in moving outside Foucault and adopting Hajer's view of advancing processes, the research prescribes that in voluntary processes, mechanisms of exclusion be recognized and minimized. This includes the recommendation that majority rule be replaced with unanimous decision-making structures. These points are developed through the following analysis.

### 10.1.1 Governmentality:

The CRP process was shaped by governmentality. Municipally-based institutions established who could speak through committee structures, voting mechanisms as well as the institutionally-established discursive power structures. The provincial government monitored developments emerging from the central CRP decision-making body which in turn oversaw the peripheral working committees that reported to it. In shaping the discourse around water, the nature of stakeholders exercising differing degrees of discursive power was established through a discursive power hierarchy. This hierarchy included: provincial ministers followed by municipal councillors, working committee members, and thereafter those with the most tenuous connections to the process (for example, those writing letters to the minister and speaking to CRP staff as earlier noted). This research has also argued there was a discursive hierarchy within the executive committee. The hierarchy began with the greatest discursive power embodied in the mayor of Calgary. This power later shifted such that ultimately, the greatest discursive power resided in Calgary *and* Foothills. Discursively, the next level included Rocky View and the municipalities geographically adjacent to Calgary. The least discursive power was held by the small, geographically peripheral towns and the rural municipality of Wheatland. *This research reveals that multiple factors reinforced each other and contributed to creating a discursive hierarchy of stakeholders, thus establishing the nature of varying degrees of discursive power. These factors included: the population and economic base of the municipality, judgements of competency, water license holdings, Calgary veto, and the style and ability of specific individuals - Calgary's mayor and Foothills' representative on the CRP.*

Discourse was shaped within a broad formative and somewhat unpredictable legislative and regulatory framework. The dimensions to this unpredictability included, first, the regional framework being imposed on the Edmonton region and the threat this imposed on the CRP process. It was never clear how serious the government's intentions were towards imposing a regional solution, thus CRP participants would have had to evaluate the seriousness of that threat and act

accordingly. Second, a complete restructuring of land and water management within the Land Use Framework (LUF) was being developed in conjunction with the CRP. The LUF was the government's expression of IWRM but when enacted within the CRP, it became a top-down rather than the bottom-up process of development it advocated. Thus provincial ministers used their institutionally-endowed discursive power to push the CRP to adopt this initiative within a particular time-frame. Within this context, by 2009 when the LUF was enacted in legislation through the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) legislation, issues over landowner rights, especially within rural Alberta, were abundantly evident. Issues over landowner rights within the CRP context were embroiled within this broader-based discontent. The backlash against ALSA was so strong that amendments to ALSA legislation were subsequently made later, in 2011.

It is within these major shifts in land and water management policy that the discourse around water management was developing. Up until the advent of the LUF, water had always been managed within a separate, parallel process to land. This included the Water for Life Strategy, released in 2003, which set in motion certain exceptions over water management. A few years on, however, many were disappointed by the lack of progress. Few initiatives had been implemented, some regulatory instruments were in place but not used, and a promised review of the allocation framework dragged on and ultimately did not produce and changes. Interviewees in this research were unanimously urging greater governmentality in managing people and their interconnections with water.

There was an incongruence between how people view land and water management related to the very different and unique natures of the two resources. There is land which is a firm resource imbued with a sense of private ownership and water, a fluid resource over which many were imploring greater provincial oversight. The provincial regulatory and legislative framework sought the integration of two vastly different, hitherto separately managed resources. Creating an integrated water and land management framework within the CRP was therefore occurring within a



complex policy environment. *This underscores the challenges in integrating management of hitherto separate and vastly different resources of land and water under a single policy framework.*

### **10.1.2 Mechanisms of exclusion, governmentality**

The evidence from this research indicates that some statements and utterances were marginalized while others were upheld. It has been argued that government-based institutions that established the decision-making structure had the most obvious bearing on this effect. Two sets of discourses emerged. The first set was the discourse of the vision of the region which ultimately clashed with the discourse of landowner and municipal rights. The second set was the discourse of water supply and distribution versus the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability. These discourses were shaped by the Foucauldian concept of mechanisms of exclusion, directly connected to the concept of governmentality. This finding is contrary to democratic governments which aren't usually seen as exclusionary.

This research's findings suggest the CRP process began with honest intentions of creating an inclusionary environment. This included public consultation exercises. Also water-related organizations were integrated into the working committees and connections between those committees and the executive committee were established and functioning in the early days. As time passed, however, one observes a rather rapid marginalization of water-related organizations as well as the broader public through less frequent or virtually no interaction. Weak connections between working committees and the decision-making structure were also evident. In addition, the research charted the effect of majority-rule voting on the marginalization of debate and opposition within the decision-making structure and the significant bearing on the nature of varying degrees of discursive power.

Foucault believed that where there was power there was resistance, that no power relation was simply one of total domination. Within power relations there is a force which may challenge or

overthrow this power (Mills, 2004). Within the CRP this capacity was harnessed through breaching existing mechanisms of exclusion and developing new forms through which to channel dissent. This included discussion outside established committees, open houses used as a platform for dissent, creation of a website, and public rallies. Discursive constraints arose from the municipal government-inscribed institutional framework, and the mechanisms of exclusion within it. But counter-discourses found expression through other channels. The nature of varying degrees of discursive power shifted such that Foothills, supported by the other rural municipalities, acquired considerable discursive power. This research also found newspaper messaging tended to be effectively controlled at one stage but later expressions of dissent found their voice through that medium.

Mechanisms of exclusion marginalized the contributions of water-related organizations involved in the process, pertinent to the extent of varying degrees of discursive power. In the early days of the research period, these organizations tended to believe that they were engaged in meaningful discussion over water issues. But as time passed and water ecology and sustainability was marginalized relative to the water supply and distribution discourse, so was the influence of water-related organizations in the water discourse. In addition to the mechanisms of exclusion already discussed, their contribution may also have been constrained by the broader institutional context of those organizations. WPACs operate within a provincial legislative and regulatory framework and their role is government-mandated. Those organizations' mandates within the CRP were consultative, devoid of any decision-making capacity. One should also consider that WPACs were not only created and mandated by the provincial government, they are funded by the province. Thus, their contribution to discourse around water may have been constrained by their dependency on the provincial government. Also, in the case of the BRBC, one interviewee raised the point that the organization also receives funding from the city of Calgary. Some further checking found the BRBC received funding from several sources including the city of Calgary and Rocky View County

(BRBC, 2010). One anonymous water-related informant spoke about constraints arising from conflict of interest concerns. As the urban-rural conflict intensified, her organization could not appear to support the CRP given that organization was in partnership with Rocky View County (anonymous [1]). These arrangements speak to spheres of influence and the 'conduct of conduct'.

In broadly considering the mechanisms of exclusion with the CRP process, they had considerable effect on the discrepancies that arose in the nature and extent of varying degrees of discursive power across stakeholders. *Mechanisms of exclusion, especially majority-rule voting structures, can marginalize the discourse of participants, potentially weakening counter-discourses and enabling the emergence of dominant discourses.*

For other water-related organizations, various factors may have resulted in the marginalization of their contribution. The research found some water-related organizations did not contribute to the CRP process because it was outside their mandate or they had insufficient time and/or resources. *Thus one should not assume all water-related organizations have the interest or capacity to participate in regional processes involving water.*

In focusing on IWRM in this research the interview data also reveal water organizations with the greatest degree of involvement in the process were the most dissatisfied. The data confirms the belief that mechanisms of exclusion resulted in an increasing disconnection between the water and wastewater committee and the executive committee. Ultimately the majority of those water-related organizations which were involved were thus dissatisfied with the policy outcome. In addition virtually every municipal councillor involved in the process found the participation of water-related organizations unsatisfactory, possibly because these exclusionary mechanisms prevented greater effectiveness.

### **10.1.3 Governmentality and creating discursive space, objects, metaphors**

As seen in this case study, discursive space was created during two phases of this research – phase one ‘smooth sailing’ and phase three ‘running aground’. The purpose for creating this space, however, was significantly different between these periods. In the early stage discursive space was created through public consultation exercises within which there emerged a vision and a story-line for the region’s future. In the third phase discursive space was created for a vastly different reason – to create a story-line that discredited the policies that were emerging around the region’s future. In the first phase a consultative and inclusionary environment created the metaphorical pillars as the vision for the region, later replaced by the compact urban nodes metaphor. However, by the third phase the blue blobs and the Calgary veto metaphors grew to represent the ills of the CRP with the compact urban nodes representing the potential absconding of landowner and municipal rights.

Over time the mechanisms through which discursive space was created evolved. In the early days the CRP used primarily open houses to create a vision for the region and enforced that vision through statements in the local media. By the third phase when open houses were again used to unveil the Plan, the forums were used by some as platforms to vent their anger with the Plan. In venting this anger, these communities seized upon other discursive spaces – the local media, websites and public rallies. Traction was acquired given that more wide-spread dissent was found within the broader discursive space created in objecting to the LUF and ALSA. Here the research found the interplay between several theoretical concepts – governmentality through the LUF and ALSA worked to gain greater control over people’s interaction with land set against the creation of metaphors, story-lines and coalitions to oppose this specific form of governmentality.

It has been posited that within the CRP executive committee, two perceptions of water as objects were created as well as the object of ‘local autonomy’. Over time the objects of water supply and distribution strengthened as water ecology and sustainability weakened. Later local

autonomy became the sole dominant object of attention while water servicing, attached to the concept of compact urban nodes, continued to prevail over water ecology discourse.

In the IWRM chapter the interview data reveal significant differences in the way individuals objectified water, leading to different expectations of the treatment of water in the Plan as well as opinions on the adequacy of the Plan in addressing water management. Thus the research assists in our understanding of how the meaning ascribed to objects affects the expectations of how the object should be acted upon.

#### **10.1.4 Acting on objects, story-lines**

Within this research I have shown the capacity to act on objects is tied to the theoretical concepts of mechanisms of exclusion and governmentality. This had consequences on the effect of varying degrees of discursive power among stakeholders. The interplay between concepts can be seen in that the power to act on objects within the CRP was housed in the decision-making apparatus and governmentality which controlled the agenda, the knowledge sources, the science that was produced and upheld, as well as the creation of the final policy results. As has been argued, water was embedded within the four visionary pillars but over time within the executive committee water supply and distribution became dominant relative to water ecology and sustainability. In the interview process, for those who objectified water in less ecologically-related terms – all the members of the executive committee save for the Bighorn, Foothills and Wheatland councillors – the approach taken by that committee towards water management was in keeping with their objectification. For Bighorn, the representative raised issues over ecology and the security of water supply but they were the lone statements and hence tended to be ignored. The rurals were opposed to placing conservation instruments in urban municipal hands thus opted for weak language. On the other hand, they wanted ecological good and service recognized and addressed but this did not find its way into the Plan. Finally, for all the water-related organizations, either directly or very

peripherally involved, their influence in acting on water was constrained by the decision-making structure, the relegation of their role to peripheral advisory status, judgements made about their competency, and for some, conflicts of interest with partnering municipalities. It has also been argued above that constraints may have included their dependence on the provincial government that created and financially supported them.

Very early in the process the executive committee became aware that ‘local autonomy’ as an object was going to be contentious. Like water, divergent meanings were attached to local autonomy which were thereby contested. During the first and second phase of the process, efforts were made to manage and contain the issue within the executive. However, as an issue, it was apprehended and aligned with issues of private rights over land and municipal rights within the CRP governance structure. Interplay occurred between the Foucauldian concepts of acting on objects (grappling with the rights of landowners and municipalities relative to the rights of the CRP) and mechanisms of exclusion that grew to be ineffective in containing dissent that grew around this issue.

Earlier it was noted that the creation of objects and acting upon them can have powerful influence in the formation of social practices. This power was implicitly recognized in the force that the object of local autonomy came to elicit. Around that object there arose blue blobs and Calgary veto metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions that captured the fear of loss of landowner and municipal rights. As a powerful influence on the formation of social practices, the definition ascribed to local autonomy spoke to the fundamentals of individual and community rights. The story-line around blue blobs and Calgary veto came to clash with the story-line embodied in compact urban nodes and the discourse coalition that struggled to move forward, immobilizing a partnership that sought to include rural municipalities. The findings suggest counter story-lines and coalitions have significant bearing on the nature of discursive power and when mobilized, can derail processes.

### **10.1.5 Mechanisms of exclusion, story-lines**

Story-lines suggest unity in understanding among a particular discourse coalition as a way of moving forward. Recall in phase one of this process the visioning exercise was the first step in creating and framing the discursive space upon which problems and solutions were thereafter discussed. The parameters of this space were defined by the vision of the region embodied in the metaphor and story-line around the four pillars. The visioning process gave meaning to the region and propelled the process forward. A second story-line and discourse coalition appeared in the third and final phase of the process. This time it centered on a highly negative concept – blue blobs and Calgary veto. The metaphors quickly grew to represent several highly negative themes including loss of landowner rights, big city domination, communism and erosion of democracy. Around these themes a distinct group of people formed a coalition, which included residents of the Foothills district and communities within it, delivering the effect it sought. It emboldened rural councillors to oppose the CRP's Plan and when Rocky View and Wheatland joined the coalition, the entire rural contingent jointly exited the partnership. Within the broader context, more wide-spread opposition resulted in the government being forced to amend ALSA.

Within Hajer's (1995) framework where story-lines are perceived to move processes forward, they take on a new dimension within this research. It appears that when coalitions form around opposing story-lines – those who saw a bright future for the region versus those that combated this vision – the story-lines collided and resulted in immobilization of the urban-rural dimension of the process. Further, there is a unique interplay between Hajer's and Foucault's concepts of story-lines and mechanisms of exclusion. The blue-blob and Calgary veto story-lines and attendant discourse coalitions were created to *work around* and *combat* mechanisms of exclusion. This demonstrates Foucault's belief that within power relations there is a force which may challenge or overthrow mechanisms of exclusion (Mills, 2004). In this case these included such measures as apprehending the open houses for their own purposes, accessing the local media, creating websites and organizing

public rallies. In demanding the hitherto silenced voices be heard, the process was pushed towards Habermasian communication rationality. In reference to the research question, the nature of discursive power shifted, changing the power dynamics within the partnership and ultimately brought a dimension of the process to a halt. This result demonstrates the extent and effect of this discursive power. In so doing, it alerts us to the potentially damaging consequences of mechanisms of exclusion and the impulse to create movements that challenge or overthrow them.

Foucault was not prescriptive, believing that power and its attendant exclusionary dynamics is a persistent and unavoidable fact of life. Hajer, however, does believe processes can move forward. In stepping outside Foucault but keeping in line with Hajer's view of progress, this research recommends that *for processes that advocate inclusion, such as IWRM, mechanisms of exclusion need to be recognized and minimized, given that counter story-lines and discourse coalitions can form to challenge to overthrow these mechanisms and thwart processes.*

#### **10.1.6 Mechanisms of exclusion, contestation, governmentality**

The CRP was shaped by contestation out of which a dominant discourse materialized. In this case study contestation was grounded in water. Water servicing and distribution would be provided to compact urban nodes over which the most contentious issues of governance and local autonomy were fought. The dominant discourse was supported and upheld by mechanisms of exclusion which, by extension, was connected to governmentality in that the mechanisms were modeled on municipally-based decision-making institutions. Thus there is the obvious interplay between the three Foucauldian concepts of contestation, mechanisms of exclusion and governmentality.

Within the broader context of governmentality, given governing and oppositional party systems, governments in general work within an adversarial culture and environment. Contestation is common even in municipal governments. When unanimity cannot be reached, majority voting is a regular decision-making mechanism. While voting can be viewed as inclusionary if everyone has



the right to vote, within the concept of governmentality voting can also be viewed as mechanism of controlling individuals. However, it should be remembered that council members on the CRP executive committee were not acting within the provincial legislature or a municipal council chamber. It was within a voluntary-based organization formed as part of a regional rescaling exercise. It consisted of numerous and diverse municipalities undertaking a complex task. Thus the research finds that in the early days of the process when contestation was largely absent, rural municipalities may have been motivated to participate in the hopes of accessing water (recall the reference to water as the ‘carrot’). But as the contestation accelerated and grew into issues of local autonomy and fundamental issues of municipal power, by then the losses to certain municipalities outweighed the gains. Recall in Chapter Eight how the most heated debate within the CRP corresponded to the time of the provincial review of the water allocation and transfer system. Rural municipalities like Rocky View may have believed water could be obtained through means other than the CRP if the province took steps to change the water allocation framework. Hence the ‘carrot’ had been removed. By this juncture the three rural municipalities exercised their freedom to leave the voluntary partnership, given their right to do so. Majority-rule may have marginalized their power within the executive committee, but ultimately the rurals maximized power garnered through an ultimate act of defiance. Again, in stepping outside Foucault but keeping in line with Hajer’s view of the potential for progress, this research recommends that *given the ability of participants to leave regional processes, voluntary city-region rescaling initiatives should not be established on a majority-rule but rather a unanimous decision-making structure.*

### **10.1.7 Findings beyond Foucault**

It has been found in this research that two specific individuals were central to the power dynamics of the CRP. This is a finding beyond Foucault’s theory. The individuals in the research included the mayor of Calgary and the Foothills representative on the CRP. Given the bearing these individuals had on power configuration and the CRP process, the style and ability of particular

individuals needs to be recognized in studies of processes and power. It has been argued that Hajer provides a basis for this recognition. He acknowledges the influence of particular individuals in positions of power, upheld by rules inherent in discursive practices. Given their discursive power, the nature and effect of the varying degrees of discursive power in the current research was significantly conditioned by these individuals.

## **10. 2 CRP Discourse**

Changes in society, including the rescaling of city regions can be conceptualized as shifts in the relative influence of different discourses (Sharp and Richardson, 2001). Earlier in this research discourse was defined as comprising a number of components including objects, the ways of treating those objects, terms, ideas, assumptions, themes, categorizations and theories found within the objects' discipline (Hajer, 1995; McHoul and Grace, 1993). Discourse is shaped by power relations within a complex body of practices, values, thoughts, opinions, and knowledge (Richardson, 2000). This research investigated a regional rescaling process and found how multiple forces shaped the CRP discourse.

Governmentality and mechanisms that marginalized and upheld statements created the objects, metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions that formed the broad discourse set out in Table 11. The *objects* included the early vision for the region, local autonomy, water supply and distribution and water ecology and sustainability. The *metaphors* included the four pillars, blue blobs, Calgary veto and compact urban nodes and their attendant *story-lines*. The *coalitions* were comprised of CRP member municipalities remaining in the CRP set against members of municipalities in the Foothills district, later joined by Rocky View and Wheatland. These coalitions also aligned by agreeing with compact urban nodes and water servicing to the nodes versus those opposed to the concept. The *discourses* became first, the future vision of the region versus landowner and

municipal rights and second, a dominant discourse of water supply and distribution set against the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability.

<b>Objects</b>	<b>Metaphors and story-lines</b>	<b>Coalitions</b>	<b>Discourses</b>
Vision for the region	Four pillars and compact urban nodes comprise early and later story-lines, respectively, around future vision of the region	Progressive coalition including CRP member municipalities remaining in the CRP	Future vision of the region versus landowner and municipal rights
Local autonomy	Blue blobs and Calgary veto comprise land-owner and municipal rights story-line	Status-quo coalition including municipalities in the Foothills district, joined by Rocky View and Wheatland	Landowner and municipal rights
Water supply and distribution; water ecology and sustainability	Water supply and distribution connected to compact urban nodes	Coalition adhering to compact urban nodes and water servicing to the nodes versus those opposed to the concept	Water supply and distribution versus the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability

### **10.3 Comparing and Contrasting Data Sources**

This research sought construct validity (Yin, 2003) by establishing operational measures that ward off subjective judgments in the selection of data collected and use of the data in exploring the research question. Using multiple sources of evidence, or data triangulation, was one of three tactics used to increase construct validity, discussed in Chapter Five. In this research project, triangulation was used by drawing on three sources of information: formal policy documents and archival data, interviews with multiple individuals with various degrees of access to and involvement in the CRP process, and analysis of newspaper coverage through a sample of newspaper reports produced in the region.

In reconstructing the policy making process using a Foucauldian theoretical framework, the three sources of data were used together to construct the discourse from which policy was developed. In and of themselves, the sources serve vastly different purposes given that the purpose of policy documents and minutes of meetings, for example, is very different from newspaper

articles. Each source illuminates a different perspective on the process and together they help to build, layer upon layer, the discourse.

In this research, although a considerable volume of documents were reviewed in the preliminary analysis (Appendix A), the analysis of written documentation drew heavily upon archival data in the form of minutes of the executive committee and the general assembly. The purpose of keeping minutes is to:

...provide a record of the organization's actions, for the information of absent members and for future reference. Minutes are not generally intended to be a news report, or a record of all that was said in a meeting. For most meetings, it is enough to record the essential facts and the actions of the organization

<http://www.workerseducation.org/crutch/procedure/minutes.html>

Given that minutes are not intended as a 'record of all that was said in a meeting', they form but a partial, limited account of proceedings. This is why analyzing the written documentation comprised but the first stage of this research. The limitations that the data from the written documentation presented were addressed as much as possible by the interview data and newspaper reports.

Analyzing written documentation allowed for an initial impression of the discourse as it evolved over the 2005 to 2009 time-frame. The documentation was highly significant in helping trace governmentality within the decision-making process. The documents were also important in detecting how, through mechanisms of exclusion, discourse was being marginalized and upheld.

The minutes serve as a historic record of events, comprising a valuable layer to the research's data. The interview process significantly enriched the understanding of the process. As Fontana and Frey (2000) indicate, it permits access, through words, to an individual's reality and interpretation of his or her own experience. The interview data at times upheld as well as contradicted the findings from the preliminary analysis of written documentation, adding a second layer of understanding to the discursive construction process. Interviewees' perceptions helped reveal how mechanisms, as well as cultural norms around civility and diplomacy, constrained what was said (especially when what people said is juxtaposed alongside what interviewees actually thought). Through the interview

process one could also better detect degrees of distrust and the influence of history on the process that written material could not reveal. There were many instances in the interview process, for example, where people expressed personal opinions about other participants, including perceptions of competency, style and ability. The interview process also helped me appreciate how each individual brought their own motives, ambitions, history and interrelationships to the process. It revealed what was thought or felt above what was recorded in official documents.

Because the minutes from meetings only recorded the proceedings involving municipal councillors, the interview process was the only source available (aside from some recorded information from workshops) to reconstruct the dynamics involving people representing water-related organizations<sup>26</sup>. Further, investigating certain lines of inquiry, such as how different individuals objectified water, could only be undertaken through the interview data collection and analysis process.

The recorded minutes document events at the specific time in which they occurred whereas interviews reflect individual interpretation and perceptions of past events. The interpretive nature of past events has been extensively studied, underscoring the biases that can emerge through the retelling of events (more detail can be found in Walter & Walter, 2010). The implications for studies that rely on these interpretations is in recognizing their subjective nature, interpreting the results accordingly, and making a clear distinction between data from the recorded minutes versus interviews (Patton, 1979).

The third layer, media coverage, served as one source that provided external interpretation of the internal events occurring within the CRP. As such, the media coverage acted as a mirror on the process and provided a partial account of events. As is customary, the newspaper coverage of the CRP, analyzed through the sample of articles, included facts, interpretations, views, and opinions. In the building of discourse, the analysis of media coverage largely served two purposes. First, it

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<sup>26</sup> Recall minutes to meetings of the water and wastewater committee were requested but were not provided.

helped in understanding whether the CRP itself was controlling the message and if so, how and why. It also assisted in ascertaining public response to CRP development in reporting of such events as public rallies and open houses.

#### **10.4 Relevance to the Broader Literature**

Chapter Four presented the three components of academic literature relevant to this research – rescaling city-regions; water and integrated water resources management (IWRM); and discourse analysis of those two subjects. This research’s main findings and their relevance to this broader literature will therefore be presented in the same sequence as the literature was presented in Chapter Four. There tends to be general congruence between findings but in this research more nuanced investigation of discursive power within institutions and social structures, supplementary findings adding to the body of scholarship are enumerated.

##### **10.4.1 Rescaling City-regions**

The literature review established that by the 1990’s concerns over urban sprawl, traffic congestion, income inequalities and environmental degradation began channeling regional planning into a new, diverse societal-oriented directions, a “new regionalism” (Wheeler, 2002, p.267). This case study research finds the motivating forces towards new city-regionalism are consistent with Wheeler (2002) given that the vision for the Calgary city-region embraced environmental, economic and livability objectives. According to Brenner (2002) there are four basic goals of regional initiatives and, broadly speaking, the CRP’s purpose was in accordance, given that Brenner’s list includes: 1) to coordinate the activities of competing municipalities in a metropolitan region according to shared priorities for regional growth; 2) to establish a regional framework in which local planning policies, infrastructural investments and other aspects of inter-local governance may be coordinated; 3) to pool fiscal resources at a regional level; and 4) to limit environmental destruction through the establishment of compulsory region-wide land-use planning.

The CRP was also a regional initiative that, in keeping with Savitch and Vogel's (2000) findings, attempted to create a new voluntary, institutional structure in moving from top-down government to broad-based, more inclusionary governance. Numerous studies from the academic literature (for example Amin & Thrift, 1995; McGuirk, 2000; Tickell & Peck, 1996) emphasize that in seeking to harness capacity, there are many coalitions and networks organized across a range of spatial scales and that municipal governments are but one agent in the mix. In this research, coalitions could include discourse coalitions. Given the geographic scope of the CRP, the process was destined to become complex as the literature emphasizes. However, at least from the perspective taken in this research, municipal governments were not one agent in the mix, they were the *primary* agent in the mix. While other agents, such as watershed organizations were consulted, it is argued they were peripheral and formal decision-making partnerships were not intended (discussed further below in the section on IWRM literature). Further, although this research focused specifically on the development of water policy, within this process there did not appear to be an emphasis on public-private partnerships which some regional literature suggests is central to these processes (Jessop, 1997). Recall, for example, in Chapter Eight, when presented with the draft Plan private housing developers 'lambasted' it. This lack of public-private partnerships may not be surprising, however, given that historically the evolution of regionalism in Canada is significantly different from other countries like the United States, given the divergent cultures and political institutions within those countries (Sancton, 2002, 2003).

The findings of this research are consistent with Nelles (2009) and Collin et al., (2006) in that regions with dominant cities find power asymmetries can create a very problematic regional environment. The foremost site of contestation within this research centered on governance and local autonomy as the CRP wrestled with re-composing 'networks of power' as coined by McCann (2003). Between the city of Calgary and the rural municipalities, the main issue centered on control of space, as predicted by Ward & Jonas (2004). Foster (1997) said that success at regional alliances

are more likely where people and places in the region are similar. Thus the research finds greater congruence between Calgary and towns and cities that are geographically close and have a history of working together<sup>27</sup> compared to Calgary and the rural municipalities that, it has been argued, worked to emphasize their differences, embracing and defending their rural character. This research detects what Leibovitz (2003) and other studies (CRSC, 2010) deem is a lack of willingness by local authorities to give up power within regional relationships where there is lack of trust and suspicion over motivations. Finally, Ostrom (2008) argues that one-size does not fit-all and partnership solutions therefore need to be tailored to individual municipalities. This is a particularly salient point considering Rocky View argued that there must be flexibility in the densities required around compact urban nodes because that formula did not fit with the housing needs of their constituents. In the formation of discourse, Rocky View was part of the coalition that opposed compact urban nodes for reasons which were less about the location of the nodes and more about the density requirements.

The literature review of this research also delved into ecological integration within city-regions. The CRP can be viewed as an initiative seeking to manage the environment on a larger spatial scale which Gibbs and Jonas (2000) advocate. Interest in new ways of governance that involves multiple stakeholders managing environmental issues as de Loe et al. (2009) found was also a motivating factor for the CRP. But as de Loe et al. (2009) warn, within the Alberta context, new governance mechanisms are being created within existing regulatory mechanisms that remain intact. Indeed within the concept of governmentality the CRP governance framework was being established within a water allocation framework that remains firmly embedded. The research found that this endowed Calgary with a certain degree of power which the rural municipalities could not tolerate, given the degree of distrust they held towards Calgary. One could also speculate that a contributing factor to

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<sup>27</sup> These include Airdrie, Cochrane and to a lesser extent Chestemere and Strathmore.



the demise of the partnership was the rural municipalities' belief that the water allocation framework would be re-worked to their benefit.

Gibbs et al., (2002) found in their British study that while sustainability issues were important, they were often in conflict with discourses around economic development. In their study, groups with environmental views were often marginalized within the economic development process. This research argues that municipalities' hunt for water supplies and Calgary's considerable influence over water supply and distribution trumped water ecology and sustainability and as such, marginalized the majority of ecologically-oriented water-based organizations. But this research found that at least with respect to compact urban nodes, a portion of future housing development would be moved away from sensitive areas, confirming Gibbs and Jonas (2001) finding that regional approaches place ecological considerations at the strategic level rather than in the final stages of decision-making (Gibbs & Jonas, 2001).

#### **10.4.2 Integrated Water Resources Management**

It has been argued that as an IWRM initiative whose principles advocate a bottom-up inclusive approach, the CRP process fell short. Issues emerging through this research over power, trust, lack of belief in scientific findings (especially by water-related organizations) and lack of legislative support, are identified and discussed within the broader IWRM literature below. This section also explores the issue of whether government decision-making over water has been replaced by multi-scale, polycentric governance as argued in the academic literature. The findings discussed herein relate to earlier questions around how institutional arrangements should be designed to facilitate IWRM.

The CRP espoused the principles of IWRM in its promotional material and general literature. The research finds, however, that water organizations with the greatest degree of involvement in the process were the most dissatisfied with the process as well as the outcome, largely because of the

closed nature of the decision-making process. Also, this research finds that virtually every municipal councillor involved in the process viewed the participation of water-related organizations unsatisfactory for multiple reasons including that the groups: 1) could have been more involved; 2) made a positive contribution in the beginning but the contribution stopped when the process became preoccupied with water distribution; 3) lack an understanding of rurals; 4) have a limited mandate thereby compromising their contribution; and 5) were excessively ecological. This is consistent with the literature which speaks to the challenges of processes involving multiple stakeholders in water management (for example Cervoni et al., 2008; Ferreyra et al., 2008; Mitchell, 2005). Considering that some water-related organizations in this research cited either lack of resources, faced time constraints, or were unaware of the CRP process, the findings are also consistent with those of Carter et al., (2005) who found time constraints and lack of coordination factors restricted involvement.

Some studies of IWRM focus on issues of power and contestation (Blomquist & Schlager, 2005; Steinberg & Clark, 1999) Within the CRP, issues over power between rural and urban jurisdictions were central to this research's findings and instrumental in the bifurcation of the process. Steinberg and Clark (1999) point to the common prevalence of power asymmetries between dominant cities and weaker rural areas. However, in this research, while it has been argued Calgary's power was evident, the rural municipalities also acquired considerable discursive power in confronting Calgary. For Foucault, power circulates such that at one point individuals may be powerless, at other points powerful. Thus Foucault would modify Steinberg and Clark (1999) to say that rurals were not unambiguously weak. This was demonstrated in the current research by the heightened discursive power garnered by the three rural municipalities in the lead-up to their exit. For those municipalities which remained in the CRP partnership, they were willing to accept the CRP governance structure and the Calgary veto, presumably determining that the gains under the partnership such as water servicing and transport, outweighed any perceived losses.

The long history of discord between Calgary and Rocky View in particular compromised trust and, at least among some participants, negatively affected the process (recall interview statements of ‘being burnt in the past’). This finding is consistent with Steinberg and Clark (1999) who state that situations can be plagued by past conflicts that threaten to erupt at any time. Trust is not developed over night. Singleton (2002) found in one of her case studies that trust among water users, property owners and environmentalists could be developed but it took more than a dozen years of patient effort to reach that point. Leach and Pelkey (2001) recommend that partnerships assess levels of trust and address deficiencies through activities or procedures that cultivate it. Their study, as well as Singleton’s (2002) study, emphasizes the importance of good and effective leaders. Considering that this concept focuses on particular individuals with style and ability, it relates to findings outside of Foucault but within Hajer discussed earlier. In this research, the presence of a leader that championed the region was noticeably absent; this was especially clear in the latter stage of this research when participants were plainly looking after their own parochial (municipal) interest. The mayor of Calgary, who could have emerged as a powerful regional champion, given his discursive power as well as his style and ability, stated in a meeting that his city and its citizens were first and foremost (CRP, 2008c).

Finally, the expert and scientific knowledge acquired through the CRP process was questioned by some water-related organizations, resonating with the findings from Singleton’s (2002) case studies. One of the strongest recommendations coming out of her study was that collaborative processes needed to address mistrust of expert and scientific knowledge. In this research, the evidence of mistrust was expressed by some watershed organizations. A unique finding in this research was that some water-related organizations were cast as too emotional, thereby non-scientific, undercutting the extent of their discursive power.

Admittedly, this research found significant policy development towards IWRM occurring on the province-wide scale. IWRM, through the Land Use Framework, was one of the provincial

government's major initiatives during the time frame of this research. The provisions of the LUF were eventually enacted in ALSA legislation, preventing what Mitchell (2005) found in his study that IWRM plans became orphaned because they did not acquire a statutory basis. However, the outcry over land-owner rights resulted in forced amendments to ALSA in 2011. Further, at the time of this writing the CRP Plan had not been enacted in legislation and thus remains in abeyance. Finally, even legislative developments do not eliminate all water management issues. As will be discussed in the following chapter, in 2013 the Alberta Government announced that it would be seeking answers through another public water consultation exercise. The government stated that the water allocation framework would remain intact but the goal is to 'optimize the management of water supplies' (ESRD, 2013b).

Pahl-Wostl, a leading researcher of IWRM, argues that government decision-making over water has been replaced by multi-scale, polycentric governance which recognizes that a large number of stakeholders now contribute to the management of water (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007a). This implies that there are many centers of control and authority. Formalizing relationships with community groups and developing watershed governance structures and processes is part of that important step towards IWRM (Cervoni et al., 2008). In regards to the CRP process this research argues that in the emergence of the dominant discourse, the expansion and formalization of relationships involving control and authority over water supply and distribution (Calgary as the service provider and municipalities as the users) were advanced to a greater degree relative to sharing responsibility over water ecology. Thus governance may be advanced on some fronts but not others.

The findings discussed herein relate to the broader question raised by Mitchell (2005) – how should institutional arrangements be designed to facilitate IWRM? In answer to this question, the CRP process found that water-related organizations were consulted but they did not have a meaningful role to play in the decision-making process. This is a finding consistent with that of

Carter et al., (2005) who identifies lack of stakeholder involvement in decision making as problematic to IWRM. Within the CRP there also appeared to be an absence of any long-term formalized partnerships within which water-related organizations were accorded a role beyond consultative and advisory. The role of such organizations as the WPACs, including the umbrella BRBC, was not re-worked or enhanced as the literature seems to suggest is part of the IWRM process. As such, WPAC functions as ascribed and bounded by the provincial government remained unchanged.

Yet it can be argued, however, that governance and the centers of control and authority over water distribution and supply were re-worked within the CRP. Thus while some arrangements are not re-worked, there is the capacity for other arrangements to be, thereby upholding the findings in the broader literature. The CRP was, after all, a municipal-centric organization comprised of members who had real concerns about future water supply. Therefore, one witnessed a high degree of interest by municipal councillors in governmentality and the governance structure under which the supply and distribution of water in the region would be controlled, including the development of a Calgary own and run water utility. Ultimately, unlike water-related organizations, every participating municipality had voting privileges within the CRP governance structure. Water ecology and sustainability would be managed under the general principles and directions outlined in the Plan.

#### **10.4.3 Discourse Analysis**

Few studies have used Foucault as a theoretical framework to study city-regionalism. Of those that have, none has used as extensive a suite of Foucauldian concepts as this research. Therefore there are limited comparisons that can be made to the broader literature. However, among these studies that do exist, there is a high degree of congruence of their findings with those in this

research. This section addresses consistencies involving the social constructionist nature of policy and the discursive power relations that come to bear on such processes.

Richardson and his collaborators who have studied European re-scaling offer the most significant body of work pertinent to the CRP case study (see Richardson, 1997, 2000; Richardson & Jensen, 2000; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). The research of the CRP, like Richardson's research, focuses on the power relations among participants within a broad policy process. Together these studies enhance our understanding of how policy is socially constructed; shaped by mechanisms, values, opinions, thoughts, and knowledge forms. Consistent with Richardson's (2000) findings in his study of the discourses of rurality in European spatial planning, the CRP research has demonstrated how in the construction of policy, ground rules were set out for the creation of knowledge, agendas were established and ideas and solutions were conditioned by the participants who were at the centre of the decision-making process. And as Richardson (2000) found in his study, the CRP process was also shaped by wider processes. In the CRP case this related to the over-arching policy initiatives at the provincial level. In Richardson's (2000) study he discovers a new discourse of rurality being constructed and institutionalized, just as a new discourse of city-regionalism had emerged in this research.

In an additional study by Richardson and Jensen (2000), they address the power relations which had shaped European spatial development through new policy language, knowledge forms and policies. The authors found policy was based on a "discursive process of re-imagining territory and urban space" around a new discourse grounded in specific knowledge forms and a market and competition-orientation towards spatial policy (Richardson & Jensen, 2000, p. 12). This discourse emerged at the expense of social and environmental interests. Similarly, it can be argued within the CRP, the regional territory was being re-imagined and within it there developed a water policy discourse grounded in specific knowledge forms led by supply and distribution concerns at the expense of ecological concerns.

In their study of regional governance discourse in rural Australia, Morrison and Lane (2006) broadly discuss discourses of regional governance embraced by the Australian government and imposed on rural regions. They warn that regional governance processes can result in elite domination, the gradual disenfranchisement of less powerful actors, and even corruption (Morrison & Lane, 2006). One could perhaps describe Calgary's dominance as 'elite' but the gradual disenfranchisement of less powerful actors, rural municipalities, was ultimately combated.

In turning to Foucauldian analysis of water issues, Allan's (2003) study argues that the history of water management has been subject to a sequence of sanctioned discourse causing the marginalization of others. At this time in history, he believes the new paradigm of interests of society as well as the economy and the environment are gradually being adopted in semi-arid north regions of the world. As this current research has shown, the balance between these three interests is highly tenuous and the relative degree of importance accorded to any one interest is subject to the discourse that comes to bear on processes.

Saravanan et al., (2009) studied recent attempts at IWRM to interrogate the presence of Habermasian and Foucauldian conditions. In IWRM, a Habermasian perspective sees no affected party excluded from discourse or inhibited by power asymmetries or resources. Alternatively, the Foucauldian approach emphasizes complexities, contextuality, power dynamics and real world analysis (Saravanan et al., 2008). The researchers stress within IWRM there is an interaction between the two. The relevance of the current study to this literature is couched in the research findings. Indeed, the research finding could relate to Habermas' theory. Parties that found themselves excluded from discourse or inhibited by power asymmetries found outlets that worked to overcome the exclusionary and power-related obstructions, pushing the process back towards a more Habermasian environment where no voice is unheard.

Cocklin and Blunden (1998) turn to Foucault as a frame in which to expose issues of inequality of power and access to resources within an environment of competition. They highlight contradictory discourses around the meaning of sustainability and the allocation of water resources in New Zealand. The meaning of sustainability was socially constructed and through court processes the legitimization of a specific interpretation arose. The relevance of this research to the CRP case is found in the degree of contestation that was waged over the meaning of 'local autonomy'. But the final interpretation was not upheld by the legal system but was left irreconcilable amongst the participants. In this case study the meaning of local autonomy had more to do with contestation and resistance than governmentality. However, the regulatory structure around water rights was seen to uphold the dominant discourse around water supply and distribution given that the city of Calgary (and the power of its water license holdings) influenced the water discourse.

The Dublin Conference in 1992 and the Rio Conference later that year (which produced Agenda 21), reveal some confusion over the status of water as either an economic or a social good according to a recent study by Weber et al., (2010). They find that the more recent World Water Forum seemed to promote the notion of water as an economic good and support IWRM. The authors use a Foucauldian approach to understand the conceptualization of water in these world-wide forums. This research similarly exposes differences in the conceptualization of water and further evaluates its effects on the shaping of water discourse. Although Weber et al. (2010) take a more narrowly focused theoretical approach, basing their analysis on governmentality rather than a multi-faceted approach as this research has done, the studies jointly underscore the multiple meanings ascribed to water and their effect on discourse and policy development at multiple levels.

In Fairclough's (2006) study of rescaling and globalization he exercises his theory of power and change as emerging from changes in discourse, genre, and style. He uses his own theoretical framework to link local struggles to broader neo-liberal forces. Given this orientation, the CRP study is less relevant to this literature than the studies discussed above. The Foucauldian framework



sees power as circulating, rendering people at times powerless and at other times powerful (Baxter, 2002). Unlike Fairclough, Foucault did not conceptualize power as a centralized, ideologically-based institutional force. Nonetheless, Fairclough's study does illuminate power within rescaling exercises from a different, but also highly valuable, perspective because he is able to identify the effects of powerful global neo-liberal ideology on local conditions.

## 10.5 Conclusion

This chapter details how five of Foucault's and Hajer's concepts worked to shape discourse. In the course of the discussion around those concepts, some notable observations relating to re-scaling processes involving integrated water resources management emerged under the objectives of this research. These were identified in section 10.1 and are compiled below, listed in the order in which they appear in the discussion:

- *multiple factors reinforced each other and contributed to creating the discursive hierarchy of stakeholders, thus establishing the nature of varying degrees of discursive power. These factors included: the population and economic base of the municipality, judgements of competency, water license holdings, Calgary veto, and the style and ability of specific individuals - Calgary's mayor and Foothills' representative on the CRP;*
- *there are significant challenges in integrating management of hitherto separate and vastly different resources of land and water under a single policy framework;*
- *mechanisms of exclusion, especially majority-rule voting structures, can marginalize the discourse of participants, potentially weakening counter-discourses and enabling the emergence of dominant discourses;*
- *one should not assume all water-related organizations have the interest or capacity to participate in regional processes involving water;*

- *for processes that advocate inclusion, such as IWRM, mechanisms of exclusion need to be recognized and minimized, given that counter story-lines and discourse coalitions can form to challenge to overthrow these mechanisms and thwart processes;*
- *given the ability of participants to leave regional processes, voluntary city-region rescaling initiatives should not be established on a majority-rule but rather a unanimous decision-making structure.*

As this research moves towards drawing final conclusions, these salient findings are taken up and considered within the discussion of process and the answers to the central research question which are presented in Chapter Eleven.

In upholding Foucault's tradition, this research breaks down discourse into a multiplicity of component discourses that are produced through an array of mechanisms in an institutional context (Hajer, 1995). In so doing, it illuminates the emergence of bifurcating discourses of the future vision of the region versus landowner and municipal rights along with the stronger discourse of water supply and distribution and the weaker discourse of water ecology and sustainability. Within the broader academic literature there is a high degree of congruence between findings however this research has taken a more nuanced approach to the study of city-regionalism and IWRM and some additional findings were established in this case study's results.

Three unique findings relate to story-lines, governmentality and the role of particular individuals. Creating discursive space and objects can have a powerful bearing on moving processes forward given that large numbers of people can coalesce around new ideas and visions. However, the power can also be harnessed to counteract processes. If story-lines clash, as seems to have been the case in this research, processes can be immobilized. Second, there emerged an alternate view towards governmentality. It is often held within Foucauldian thought that governmentality presents intrusions and incursions. Indeed, in the debate over local autonomy, local landowners and rural

municipal councillors fought against compromising their rights. However, the evidence in this research also supports the interesting finding that when it comes to distinct resources, especially water, people welcome, indeed urge, governmentality. Finally, the current research draws attention to the power of key individuals in processes. In this research this involved particular individuals championing their municipality, not the region, who had significant effects on the CRP beyond Foucault's observance of the power of specific groups. The next chapter now moves to focus on the central research question and objectives of this study.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Conclusions**

Having established an understanding of the dynamics of the CRP process and the development of the broad CRP discourses, this chapter now turns to address the central research question and objectives of this research. As will become clear in the conclusions that are presented below, the discussion about regional processes and the issues and constraints around them benefit from an awareness of developments around the CRP and broader provincial water policy since 2009. Following that brief update, findings from the previous chapters relating to the central research question will be drawn together to evaluate the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power. The third section carries these findings forward to address the objectives of the research – identifying factors that will improve regional process given institutional structures and a fixed allocation system and the need to integrate water-related organizations in regional re-scaling processes. Contributions to scholarship are outlined in section four followed by a discussion of avenues for future research in the final section.

#### **11.1 Developments since 2009**

The list of developments around the CRP and broader water policy includes: (a) advancement of sub-regional water solutions outside the CRP; (b) release of an updated version of the Plan; (c) ongoing issues with city-regionalism; and (d) revamping Alberta's water allocation framework. This section addresses each of these in turn.

##### **11.1.1 Sub-regional Water Solutions**

The 2009 Calgary Metropolitan Plan stated that water supply options in the region could include Calgary centered, sub-regional and local servicing approaches. Sub-regional systems outside of compact urban nodes would not, however, be within the scope of the Plan's regional servicing

system (CRP, 2009a). The three rural municipalities that left the CRP in 2009 have been actively pursuing sub-regional solutions as an answer to their water supply problems. All initiatives involve partnerships of one sort or another; some even involve member municipalities which are current members of the CRP, given the ability to do so under CRP rules.

It has been reported in the media that Rocky View County has “made strides in creating home-grown solutions to the issues of water and growth” (Smith, 2012, p.1). Notably, this has included additional water of approximately 1,000 acre feet, acquired from the Western Irrigation District (WID) to service the east area of Rocky View County. The County will determine the distribution of that water between its hamlets and developments (Erwin Braun, personal communication, March 7, 2013). Other commercial and industrial enterprises moving into the county are independently seeking out and purchasing water licenses (Rocky View [1]). Meanwhile the WID has also obtained approval to amend its license to provide 1,000 acre feet of water for growth of hamlets in Wheatland County. The Municipal District of Foothills is partnering with Turner Valley, Black Diamond and Longview in a sub-regional reservoir development (High River). Other municipalities including High River (which exited the partnership in 2013) and Okotoks (still remaining in the partnership) are reportedly steering away from a Calgary-based solution, also exploring sub-regional solutions (Foothills [2], High River). Interviewees stated:

Unfortunately we had to leave (the partnership). But in the end maybe that was a good decision because we did find alternative water sources and we are not under the control of a group we don't have any voting power (under) (Rocky View [1]: 2).

The end game is that water issues aren't going to be simply solved and I believe it will be these sub-regional partnerships. If there is a solution that's where it will come from because a lot of communities really do not want to get in bed with Calgary (Foothills [2]: 8).

I think communities need to at least be in control of their destinies. When you have a resource like the Highwood River or the aquifer that we draw water from, it would be very disheartening to me as a taxpayer to see that get handed over to the city of Calgary (High River: 1).

The creation of off-stream reservoirs is not without environmental consequences (Bayart et al., 2010). Whether these sub-regional initiatives provide long-term water management solutions in the CRP region is also debatable according to some, including the former chairman of the CRP:

They (the rurals) are on the outside but that's not a bad thing too because at some point they'll get hungry enough (for water); they'll find a way to work with the region again (Airdrie: 17).

Other water supply options continue to be very costly compared to cooperative arrangements that could be managed under the CRP. Current examples of uneconomical solutions include: a 1,700 unit housing development five kilometers from Calgary's city limits which will have to obtain water at far greater costs from a reservoir 25 kilometers away; a commercial development unable to tap into a Calgary-to-Airdrie water main running under its land; a development that has a sewage line ready but unconnected to Calgary's system thus the wastewater is trucked to a treatment plant; a community with a Calgary pipeline which "you can throw a rock at" but which pipes water in from another community which "costs a fortune" (Markusoff, 2013, p. B2).

### **11.1.2 Updated Version of the Plan**

In June, 2012 the CRP unveiled an updated (but still not legislated and implemented) Plan at its general assembly. Although there have been some changes<sup>28</sup>, it is doubtful they will satisfy the rural municipalities since the super majority voting structure remains intact. It appears that in an effort to erase blue blobs from discourse within the CRP, the term 'compact urban nodes' has been eliminated and changed to 'priority growth areas'; their identity on regional maps is no longer in the color blue but in orange.

In this research's data-gathering process, by the June, 2012 release of the updated Plan, 13 individuals had been interviewed. Those individuals were contacted by e-mail, asking whether any

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<sup>28</sup> The super majority voting structure (two-thirds of the CRP municipalities and 50 percent of the CRP population) still applies to amendments to the CMP however "regional scale implementation decisions" has been removed and replaced with "regional water and wastewater system and regional transit system". Also the updated Plan indicates compact urban nodes, now called priority growth areas, will undergo an analysis and refinement study over a two-year period (CRP, 2012).

of their views had changed following the release of the updated Plan. Eight interviewees responded – four from municipalities and four from water-related organizations. Only four noted they had some knowledge of the updated Plan. Two of those four, from municipalities still in the CRP, indicated they were pleased the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the keynote speaker at the general assembly, emphasized the importance of working together and remaining at the table to resolve issues (Turner Valley [1], [2]). The other two respondents were from watershed organizations and gave negative feed-back, stating:

Unfortunately my opinions are now even more strongly entrenched based on what is in the document and how it was handled. All their grand photos are of the beautiful rural land that are not part of their plan – but are certainly part of their desire for control – so should be removed (Elbow River/BRBC, personnel communication, June 27, 2012).

My view remains unchanged in that CMP is a good urban plan that remains constrained by the lack of involvement of the rural municipalities...I noticed the highly controversial designated lands for development of new urban node developments...still prevail and this designation has never been discussed with landowners within those node areas and their inclusion in the plan was against the will of the rural municipalities (Highwood/BRBC, personal communication, July 3, 2012).

These statements emphasised the continued existence of rural-urban incongruence.

### **11.1.3 Ongoing Issues with City-regionalism**

Since 2009 two municipalities have left the CRP. In December, 2011 Crossfield announced its departure. Their main concern was their belief that municipalities that are tied to Calgary infrastructure would be subservient to the CRP, creating another layer of governance (Moore, 2011). In April, 2013 High River also announced it would be leaving. Council members opposed to the CRP said the Plan provides the CRP with too much power. According to one councillor, the CRP would become “another bloated layer of government sapping away power and crucial resources from our town” and another said “I do not like the veto (that Calgary would have) ...” (Vigliotti, 2013, p. 1). This demonstrates the ongoing issue of power, and the Calgary veto, within the region

but also the emergence of a common fear of greater governmentality over municipalities through the CRP.

In November, 2011, the rural municipalities' umbrella organization, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties, released a report entitled 'Finding Local Solutions: Examining the Impact of Forced Regionalization'. It states the CRP is an example of regional solutions being imposed on municipalities. The report concludes:

The pendulum swing from forced to un-forced regionalization must stop, and it must stop at the point where regional solutions are not imposed and municipal councils are allowed to carry out their sworn duty. Forced regionalization is an unwarranted attack on the independence of local municipalities as guaranteed in the MGA (Municipal Government Act) (Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties [AAMDC], 2011, p. 7).

Given the message contained in this report - that rural municipalities abhor any infringement on their authority through regional systems - and given the message is from the umbrella organization of all rural municipalities, any future attempts to impose city-regionalism will be met with significant opposition.

In February, 2013 a war of words broke out between the mayor of Calgary<sup>29</sup> and the Municipal Affairs Minister over implementation of the CRP. The dispute arose when the mayor openly criticized the province for not moving faster to legislate the Plan. He also said the city was being wrongly accused of using size and power to force its view on neighbours (Cuthbertson, 2013). In opposition to the mayor, the Minister said the province would not impose the plan on unwilling partners and he stated:

It's really unfortunate that (the mayor is) so determined that everything he's going to do is right, he doesn't need to consult, he doesn't need to build consensus, he doesn't need to pull a team together (Cuthbertson, 2013, p. A7).

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<sup>29</sup> In the 2010 municipal elections, David Bronconnier did not run for mayor of Calgary. The winner of the mayoral race was Naheed Nenshi. Very generally, the new mayor seems to be exercising the same discursive power as the previous mayor of Calgary, demonstrating how in this instance a municipal election did not make a difference to the power configurations of the region.



A councillor from Foothills stated:

I can understand the mayor...trying to influence the province to legislate this plan, simply because the mayor and Calgary have everything to gain from it...But in the case of rural municipalities that are surrounding Calgary, we have everything to lose (Cuthbertson, 2013, p. A7).

The Minister has appointed a mediator to try to resolve the conflicts in order to bring the CRP to fruition. He also stressed that “if regional municipalities want to talk about water and the infrastructure that goes with it, they will have to be part of the regional plan” (Henton, 2013, p. A4).

The dynamics within the Edmonton region under the Capital Region Board, formed in 2008, are not altogether unproblematic either. A recent study indicated that while the Board has succeeded in producing a growth plan for the region, not all municipalities were supportive and acrimony and mistrust between member municipalities, grounded in the past, still exist. One mayor contended that the process of developing a growth plan pitted municipalities against each other and resulted in backroom deals (CRSC, 2010b). A recent newspaper referred to the mayors in the region as enemies, stating:

...(the Edmonton mayor) took a shot at the mayors of nearby towns, familiar foes of his, saying Edmonton pays a disproportionate share of costs in the region. Many of the nearby mayors refute his claims and have clashed with Edmonton over regional issues (Wingrove, 2013, p. A6).

These statements underscore clear regional tension.

#### **11.1.4 Revamping the Water Allocation Framework**

As noted earlier, in 2008 the Alberta government announced that it was reviewing legislative changes as to how water is allocated, and examining whether the province needed to change “the way Alberta’s water rights are divvied up...” (Cryderman, 2008, p.B3). Although there was a review and consultative process, it did not result in any changes to the allocation framework. In 2013 the government indicated that “Alberta’s current system for allocating and managing water has generally met Albertans’ needs”, and that notwithstanding future challenges to Alberta’s water

system, “...these challenges do not signal a need to abandon or completely change the existing water allocation management system” (ESRD, 2013b, p.31). The government also noted its commitment to fundamental principles including the principle of first-in-time, first-in-right. It stated that rather than manage water solely from an individual allocation perspective, the province would engage in a “conversation” with Albertans to work within the current system to “optimize the management and use of Alberta’s water supplies” (ESRD, 2013b, p.31).

The significance of the four developments enumerated above suggest that years after the bifurcation of the CRP partnership, the potential for successfully implementing a voluntary regional plan remains in many respects, more elusive than ever. Municipalities are hunting for sources of water outside of Calgary-based solutions despite, in some cases, exorbitant cost. Rural-urban tensions have not abated as evidenced by the political rhetoric. The entrenched water allocation framework remains in place and regional power asymmetries based on water licenses persist. Clearly, an updated CRP Plan does not resolve long-standing issues. These findings are relevant to the central research question given that there appear to be long-term effects of discursive power established in an earlier period. These early effects, relating to the 2005 to 2009 period, are enumerated below.

## **11.2 Nature, Extent and Effects of Varying Degrees of Discursive Power**

The following section enumerates each theoretical concept and its bearing on discursive power established in this research. From this synopsis, the most salient findings are identified in determining the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power in this case study.

The *nature* of discursive power was derived from governmentality for it established the institutional power structures and the identities of participants, creating a discursive hierarchy among municipalities. Governmentality, which established the water allocation framework, also bestowed discursive power on Calgary. Discursive power was further conditioned by mechanisms of

exclusion that marginalized discourses by establishing and controlling the interaction between participants within decision-making structures by upholding urban views, silencing rural objections. The decision-making structures also determined the source of knowledge regarding water and land management and further legitimized it, thereby establishing scientific ‘truth’. The mechanisms also controlled the interaction between the decision-making structure and peripheral stakeholder organizations by creating the disconnection between the executive committee and peripheral working committees, minimizing the latter’s influence.

The *extent* of discursive power was demonstrated through the discursive hierarchy that was created and the power asymmetries embedded in it. The actors at the top of the hierarchy, the mayor of Calgary and later, the councillor from Foothills, illustrated the extent of their discursive power by channelling discourse in a particular direction, framing the debate and significantly influencing the outcomes. Relative to those individuals, the weaker discursive powers exercised by others resulted in the remaining municipalities either aligning themselves with Calgary (urban) or Foothills (rural), hence creating the urban-rural divide. Weaker discursive power was also exercised by water-related organizations and the extent of their power was illustrated in the relatively minimal influence they had on the process.

The *effects* of varying degrees of discursive power has been seen in the dominant discourse defining objects and channelling the actions around them in a particular direction – establishing two definitions of water and directing action towards water supply and distribution to compact urban nodes. But this research finds that contestation and resistance can serve to establish counter-discourses, in this instance around the meaning of the most controversial object – local autonomy. This spawned the creation of metaphors, story-lines and discourse coalitions that created such a powerful counterbalance to the dominant discourse, it bifurcated and arrested the process.

### **11.3 Factors that can Improve Regional Processes**

By elevating our awareness of processes, this research can offer recommendations to help avoid the pitfalls encountered by the CRP. The objective of the research was to identify factors that will improve regional processes to address issues of:

- avoiding unintended negative outcomes caused by the institutional structures under which processes are based;
- providing regional solutions to water management issues given the fixed water allocation system;
- integrating water-related organizations in regional rescaling processes.

Recommendations pertaining to each of these components are provided below.

#### **11.3.1 Avoiding Unintended Negative Outcomes**

Unintended negative outcomes can be caused by the institutional structures under which processes are based. This research underscores the significance of the institutional structures which were adopted in city-region rescaling processes. They established the power structures; endowed the participants with various degrees of discursive power; and legitimised ‘scientific’ studies on water and land management. They also influenced communications and the relations between the decision-making structure and outside participants. In other words, the structures have an enormous bearing on policy outcomes. This research has demonstrated that given the effect on process, the institutional structure was the single most important factor. Also, the personalities within the institutional structure can be instrumental given the effect, for example, of the change of one elected representative on the CRP process.

Decision-making within the institutional structure has important ramifications on process. This research discovered that the voting structure effectively marginalized some discourses and upheld

others. This can have long-term serious consequences on process. If discourses are constantly marginalized, fundamental issues can become sidelined. This compromises the capacity to move forward as a unit. This research has shown how discontent builds until it bursts. The discontent will find outlets for expression. For processes which are voluntary, the outcome can be especially pernicious. It must be remembered that at any point participants can exercise their right to leave. *For processes that advocate inclusion, such as IWRM, mechanisms of exclusion should be recognized and minimized.* Consideration should be given as to whether decisions should be made by majority rule. *Decisions under unanimity, where everyone is in full agreement,* may require more time and patience and may result in partnerships charting a different path, but at least decisions made in this way *will prevent participants from leaving.*

Within institutional structures that are politically-based, where participants are elected representatives, politics can trump rational decision-making; this is important to regional processes. Rescaling processes like the CRP operate within an adversarial environment. In this case study, if indeed the blue-blob story-line originated in the executive committee, its broader public development had highly negative consequences for the process. *Measures should be taken to mitigate the need for, and development of, counter story-lines which can have damaging effects.* Work should be done to calm combative atmospheres and build trust. This can take considerable time and effort. At a minimum commissioning a mediator to lead participants through the process is advisable. Within the CRP a mediator is only now attempting to bring the sides together, aiming to work out an agreement to salvage a process that failed several years ago. Further, failed processes can have negative ramifications long after the process is over, as evidenced by the rural-urban tensions that continue to persist in the region.

### 11.3.2 Regional Solutions and Fixed Water Allocation Systems

The challenge in seeking regional solutions in Alberta is that new governance mechanisms are being created within existing regulatory mechanisms (de Loe et al., 2009). This research demonstrates the effect the fixed regulatory mechanism had on process. The ramifications were quite extensive. A central finding of this research was that *multiple factors contributed to creating the discursive hierarchy of stakeholders*. These factors included: the population and economic base of the municipality, perceptions of competency, water license holdings, and the style and ability of specific individuals. Given that water access was central to the CRP process, perhaps the most serious consequence of the water allocation system was the power asymmetries that it established. In a politically-charged environment like the CRP, power asymmetries were reinforced and heightened by rights to scarce resources. This research revealed how these power asymmetries were exploited and the negative consequences that resulted. As noted earlier, with the entrenched water allocation framework remaining in place, regional power asymmetries based on water licenses persist.

In addition, recall that in discussing governmentality, interviewees identified multiple problems with the provincial government. This included the review of the allocation framework that did not yield any results. Second, they pointed out provincial inaction towards clawing back Calgary's unused license which it has the right to do. Third, the government appeared to be fixated at the strategic level. Fourth, the provincial environment department tended to be obstructing rather than facilitating. Fifth, there was a lack of provincial leadership in the regional exercise in general and more specifically, a lack of instruments such as transfer development credits and conservation easements, and no clear signal as to the connection between the CRP and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. In some respects the CRP process was left largely to its own devices and struggled, confirming the belief that measures taken at any one level will be partial, limited and possibly

counterproductive if not located within a broader, supportive framework. *This provincial leadership void in water management needs to be filled with meaningful direction and concrete action.*

In the aftermath of the CRP bifurcation, a plethora of divergent solutions have emerged in the hunt for water, some which are extremely costly and some have negative environmental consequences, arising because Calgary-based water solutions have been unattainable. Based on developments since 2009, regional tensions seem to have exacerbated, leading to positions that are further entrenched and solutions becoming even more elusive. The current research has shown the deleterious effects that power asymmetries, created in part through water license holdings, can have on regional processes. *The provincial government should revisit the water allocation framework with the view to reallocating water within the region based on need. A second, alternative solution could be establishing a water supply and distribution agreement separate and apart from the CRP, allowing a Plan to be reworked under a new set of dynamics.*

### **11.3.3 Integrating Water-related Organizations in Regional Processes**

If water-related organizations are to have meaningful involvement in regional processes they need to have regular and on-going contact with the decision-making unit. *There is a need to identify mechanisms of exclusion that thwart the effectiveness of water-related organizations within a re-scaling process.* If the roles of organizations like Alberta's Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) are mandated and relegated to advisory roles only, their influence on decision-making may be limited. But in due time, as the water councils evolve and increase their capacity, they could be ascribed more decision-making power in regional contexts, potentially having more influence and thereby leading to policies that are more ecologically oriented than those emerging from the CRP process.

It should be recognized that water-related organizations have specific mandates as well as limited time and resource potentially leading to lack of interest or ability to be involved in regional

processes. *One should not assume all water-related organizations will have the interest or capacity to participate in regional processes involving water.* Further this research found that water-related organizations do not necessarily represent ‘rural’. The research revealed quite the opposite, that water-related organizations often view rural people as being poor stewards of natural resources. More generally, studies have found the views around water between urban and rural are very different (Bjornlund, Zuo, Wheeler, & Edwards, forthcoming) and that the views around water between watershed organizations and other water-related environmental and conservation organizations are also very different. This research reinforces conclusions in the IWRM literature that the complexity of IWRM is heightened when a multiplicity of participants bring their unique objectifications of water and expectations to a process.

It has also been argued that water and land are viewed as fundamentally different resources. At least in the context of this research, people tend to be seeking policy solutions that recognize this difference. Land is seen by many as a private resource and water seen more as a public one. This has implications for the relative degrees of government involvement in their management as well as for policy making in regional contexts. *There are significant challenges in integrating land and water management under a single policy framework given the highly divergent and unique characteristic of land and water.* The significance of this fact should not be underestimated given that the abhorrence towards eroding private right over land was a major factor grounding the CRP process. There must be an appreciation of, and respect for, the uniqueness of land and water.

#### **11.4 Contribution to Scholarship**

In the literature review set out in Chapter Four, gaps in the literature were identified and the contributions of this research towards filling those gaps were specified. The post-structural frame adopted in this research centered on the nature, extent and effects of varying degrees of discursive power, allowing the current research to go beyond a consideration of economic, cultural,



institutional and organizational factors often considered in other studies of city-regionalism. This research viewed power sources as residing in the microcosms of institutional structures and social practices. This focus enabled the research to identify hidden factors which impinge on discursive power. The research prompted a consideration of power as conditioned through exclusionary mechanisms that create and uphold power asymmetries through discourse. Beyond game theory, social networks, and civic and social capital theory, this research's assessment of the behaviour of actors was based on the fundamental acquisition of truth and knowledge and its effect on the power dynamics among actors. It was the underpinnings of power that were captured in this approach. In considering integrated water resources management, the research was able to advance beyond current scholarship to consider the discursive power of the provincial government. It established the connection between how water was objectified by various stakeholders with varying degrees of discursive power and the influence of the dominant discourse on the water policy that emerged. It also traced mechanisms of exclusion and their effect on discursive power, enabling this research to identify factors which compromised the effectiveness of water-related organizations in a broader process.

In Chapter Ten the discussion around the relevance of this research's findings to the broader literature upholds many earlier findings, contributing to the body of research through these confirmations. In addition, however, there were findings outside the literature which also add to the body of knowledge. Under the subject of rescaling city regions this research found municipal government were not one agent in the mix of participants but the primary agent in the mix. There was also a unique lack of public-private partnerships within the CRP. Within IWRM literature the research revealed interesting findings in comparing and contrasting satisfaction with the outcome to various degrees of involvement. Also the research found the role of water-related organizations was not re-worked or enhanced as the literature seems to suggest is part of the IWRM process. Control and authority over water supply and distribution advanced relative to shared responsibility over

water ecology. In this research, big city power was unable to dominate rural regions as has been found in other studies. Under discourse analysis this research also found that while the literature argues that the triple bottom line is the new water management paradigm, the balance of these three interests is highly tenuous and the relative degree of importance accorded to any one interest is subject to the discourse that comes to bear on the process. Finally, contestation over meaning can be determined through governmentality processes such as the legal system, as was found in Cocklin and Blunden's (1998) study. However, this research found contestation over meaning of such concepts as local autonomy can be waged through struggles for discursive hegemony within voluntary attempts at forming regional partnerships.

In addressing the issue of limited generalizability or external validity, it has been recommended that studies supply a substantial amount of information to allow informed judgements about whether the conclusions are useful in understanding other sites and situations (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). This research has sought to maintain in the forefront Foucault's and Hajer's theories by consistently evaluating the findings against the five concepts chosen. The research has also endeavoured to provide clear and detailed descriptions to facilitate judgements as to the research's applicability. Cautious of the need to limit generalizability, this research's findings may nevertheless be helpful when setting up decision-making processes and participatory mechanisms in other regional initiatives. However, since Alberta is the only province in Canada that allows water to be transferred independently of land, the significance of the findings may be limited. In addition, the unique nature of Alberta's land-use framework may also suggest caution be used in applying the research's findings to other sites and situations.

### **11.5 Future Research**

There are several additional research streams that could be explored, building on the contribution to scholarship this research has presented. Given that this research is of a particular,

singular case, its applicability may be limited to other cases. Scholarship could benefit by utilizing a similar framework with similar concepts to study other city-region rescaling processes. This will enable comparisons and contrasts. In addition, one could take one theoretical concept, for example, governmentality, and explore the potential influences and affects it could have on process applied across a host of cases. A third stream could approach this case study using Fairclough as a lens (see for example, Fairclough, 2006) whereby greater attention would be given to broader policy documents and legislation, most notably the Water for Life Strategy, Land Use Framework and the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and the effects on local processes.

Integrated water resources management was but one vein of this research. Scholarship would benefit from a more comprehensive approach to determine how specific mechanisms within rescaling processes can be strengthened to ensure connections between advisory water-related organizations and decision-makers are on-going and effective. An additional study of the evolution of the capacity of those organizations over time would assist in determining whether a decision-making role in regional processes could be justifiably advocated. On a broader scale, scholarship would benefit by studying the dynamics of all of the many water-related organizations that operate within a very large watershed like the Bow River Basin.

During the course of this research the Alberta government conducted consultations on the water allocation framework. Early on there seemed to be a willingness to consider changes to the allocation framework but this process floundered and the reworking of the framework was abandoned. A study of contemporary consultation processes such as these would help understand discursive power and the dynamics within them which produce these results.

It was noted in Chapter Five that CRP staff emerged from time to time in this research but they were not included in the list of interviewees. The study of the CRP would benefit from an evaluation of the nature, extent and effect of their discursive power. In addition, applying the same

theoretical framework to a study of the CRP process since 2009 would contribute to building a comprehensive body of work around the CRP.

## **11.6 Conclusion**

This research began with the intent of exploring the hidden dynamics of reworking power networks in a contemporary rescaling process. The contribution of the research is in exposing power through the microcosms of institutional structures and social practices via discourse. This enhances the capacity to understand why processes fail, pin-pointing factors that may help avoid unintended consequences. Given the world-wide search for solutions to water management, the research's findings have the potential to advance water management through regional frameworks in other locales. However, the circumstances of this case study are unique, somewhat limiting its applicability. Therefore, I will leave to other scholars the task of extending this research, possibly by utilizing a similar framework with similar concepts to study city-region rescaling initiatives involving water management elsewhere. This may enable comparisons and contrasts to identify if there are common problems and, if so, whether common solutions can be found.

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## Appendix B: Interview Guide

Were you, either as an individual or as a representative of an organization, involved in any way in the Calgary Regional Partnership process between 2005 and 2009?

If yes go through question sets 1 to 3  
If no, go through question sets 2 to 4

### **Set 1: Background of interviewee involvement:**

To begin, could you explain in some detail your involvement in the CRP process in the 2005 to 2009 time frame.

Overall, how *extensive* would you say your involvement was?

How *influential* would you say your involvement was?

### **Set 2: General questions about issues:**

I'd now like to ask a few questions about your view of some of the main issues the CRP has tried to address.

#### **i. Water**

How important do you feel water sharing (accessing water) was in the development of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan?

How important do you think accessing water was compared to the ecological aspects of water in the Plan?

When you consider access to water *versus* the ecological aspect of water, do you think the Plan has given the appropriate emphasis on these issues?

#### **ii. Water and Land**

The Calgary Metropolitan Plan supports the concept of integrated water resources management which involved the joint management of land and water. In that respect:

- a. Do you think integrated water resources management is adequately addressed in the Plan?
- b. Do you think integrated water resources management can be achieved under the Plan?  
If yes, how?  
If no, why not?

The statement "water is being exchanged for land" - could you comment on that?

**iii. Economic, Ecological and Social Balance**

How do you feel about the ability to balance economic, ecological and social objectives under the Plan?

**iv. Overall Issues:**

In the development of the Plan, what would you consider has been:

- a. the most contentious issue?
- b. the least contentious issue?
- c. the greatest accomplishment?
- d. the greatest shortcoming?

**Set 3: Specific questions about process:**

**I would like to turn now to talk a little bit about the partnership *process* from 2005 to 2009, and ask your views of the process itself.**

**If you were not involved in the process, I would like your *impressions* of the process.**

i. (Contestation and mediation):

Were there certain forums that allowed a more open discussion than others?  
Were discussions facilitated so all persons' views were heard?  
How would you describe the tone of the discussions?  
Did the tone of the discussions change over time?  
Were there sufficient attempts to come to agreements?  
How were issues mediated, if there were efforts to do so?

ii. (Creation of Objects):

In what ways was water discussed?  
In what ways was water considered an asset or a problem?  
In discussion, what ways was water to be managed?

iii. (Existence of Discourse Coalitions):

Did you observe the formation of groups to produce a common front like a coalition?  
Did you observe coalitions form around certain ideas or concepts?  
If there were coalitions, what were their effects?

iv. (Existence of dominant discourse):

Did you feel certain people's views dominated discussions?  
Did you feel certain views were adopted into policy to the exclusion of others?

- v. (Mechanisms, procedures, processes):

Across the entire process, can you identify any mechanisms, procedures or processes that:

- a. Allowed what certain people said to dominate?  
If so, how?
- b. Allowed what certain people said to be excluded?  
If so, how?

**Set 4: Questions related to lack of involvement in the process:**

1. Why do you think you, or your organization, were not involved in the process?
2. Do you think you should have been involved?  
If so, how?