

The motivations behind cities' engagement in climate protection: An empirical assessment of how local objectives shape the production of a public good

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ABSTRACT

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Cities engage in greenhouse gas mitigation as a result of some combination of a desire to contribute to the public good by minimizing climate change, achieve local co-benefits, and respond to the preferences and pressures of influential political actors. The relative importance of each type of motivation is hypothesized to impact the composition and comprehensiveness of subsequent climate initiatives. In some cities, initiatives appear to be *ad hoc* collections of tangentially related actions whereas, in others, they are the result of a strategic planning process. This paper uses survey-based data collected from U.S. cities that are explicitly involved in climate protection efforts and empirically examines three related questions: (1) Why do cities pursue climate protection? (2) What factors shape their motivations? and (3) How do motivations shape climate planning? When controlling for other relevant characteristics, a strong public goods motivation is expected to be associated with a more comprehensive climate planning process.