

Public Attitudes Towards Environmental Taxation

The Interplay Between Values, Trust, and Quality of Government

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Davidovic, D. (2022) Quality of government, trust, values, and public support for taxation for climate change mitigation: Evidence from 135 European regions. *Unpublished manuscript*.

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Abstract

Environmental problems are commonly understood to be rooted in collective action dilemmas where the rational course of action for individuals is to engage in polluting activities to receive short-term benefits, while the long-term costs of those activities are borne by the collective. Voluntary cooperation to solve large-scale collective action problems such as climate change is unlikely. Thus, state intervention is needed to enforce cooperation through implementation of various climate policy instruments. These tools are more likely to be successfully and effectively implemented if they are supported by citizens. Policy experts argue that environmental taxation is the most effective way to mitigate climate change; however, public support is lacking. This dissertation investigates whether the institutional context, specifically perceptions of low quality of government (QoG), moderates the link between individuals' pro-environmental and political-ideological value orientations and climate policy attitudes. Analyzing cross-sectional and original survey experimental data, the dissertation examines if quality of government shapes the climate policy attitudes of citizens, and through what mechanisms. The analyses show that perceptions of poor institutional quality lower trust in political actors and institutions, and generate negative climate policy attitudes even among those who otherwise hold pro-environmental values and concerns and favorable attitudes towards government regulation. The dissertation contributes to an improved understanding of the determinants of climate policy attitudes and more informed recommendations for policymakers, and will hopefully also inspire further research on how institutional factors affect the prospects for effective climate policy.

Key Words: Climate policy attitudes, Taxation, Value orientations, Trust, Quality of Government.