

International Political Economy / International Environmental Politics



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Our group focuses primarily on environmental policy and politics, using concepts, theories and methods of political economy and political science.

Questions we address in our research include:

- * How can we measure and explain environmental attitudes, policy preferences and behavior of citizens and consumers across different social, economic, political, and cultural contexts?
- * To what extent do climate change and resource scarcity cause societal challenges such as migration, reduced economic growth, and communal conflict and political violence?
- * How can we develop solutions to air pollution across developing democracies that are both feasible and effective?
- * How can we meet increases in demand while working towards rapid decarbonization of mobility in Switzerland?



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Our current research focuses on ...

Sociopolitical Feasibility of Climate Change Solutions

We study the feasibility of socio-technical and political solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Citizen support constitutes a core component of political feasibility, shaping policymaker’s decisions and agenda setting. Our focus includes exploring policies that optimize the feasibility-effectivity nexus at home and abroad, as well as citizen support for new emerging technologies (such as carbon capture and storage, negative emissions technologies). We use large-scale social surveys and survey embedded experiments to identify determinants of climate change attitudes and policy acceptance.

Mobility Governance, Environmental Externalities, and Decarbonization Pathways

Increased mobility demand places an ever-increasing strain on both the natural environment and transportation systems. Understanding how the public (as both customers and citizens) relate to mobility issues in a changing world is crucial to providing future solutions. To better understand this relationship, we have established the Swiss Mobility Panel, a longitudinal study that is representative of the Swiss resident population. The panel tracks and explores evolving public opinion dynamics, attitudes, behaviors and policy preferences. We adopt novel panel survey data, experimental methods such as survey-embedded choice experiments and behavioral observations to empirically capture the multifaceted needs of the changing mobility landscape.

Environmental Migration and Conflict

The relationships between climate change and armed conflict is becoming increasingly relevant within discussions about climate change. We are studying the channel of migration: whether changes in climate leads to migration, and whether this climate-induced migration subsequently causes conflict. Empirically, our research team uses survey data from different countries of the Global South, including Bangladesh, Kenya, and Vietnam, to empirically answer these important research questions.

Clean Air Policies for Urban Capital Cities in the Global South

Urban populations in the Global South are commonly exposed to air pollution levels that are detrimental to public health and the environment. Our research supports policymakers using advanced experimental and data collection methods to identify ideal clean air policy solutions. We explore the political feasibility of urban air policy measures focused around limiting the primary sources of local air pollution (e.g., vehicles, industry, households, construction) in urban capital cities across the Global South.

Air Quality Monitoring in the Global South

Comprehensive monitoring of exposure to air pollution is a necessary condition to implementing effective mitigation solutions. Empirically, we characterize observable air quality monitoring and how this varies within and across cities in the Global South towards identifying the political, socio- economic, and other factors that may cause variation in the scope and intensity of monitoring. Further, we assess how citizens across the global south view policies towards air quality monitoring.

Environmental Attitudes, Behavior, and Policy Preferences

Environmental governance efforts can only be effective if they gather sufficient popular support. To measure Swiss residents’ opinions, attitudes and policy preferences over time, we have established the Swiss Environmental Panel - a biannual survey in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment. We are interested in understanding relationships between a variety of variables, such as the effect of environmental pollution on health, and the impact of extreme weather on climate change attitudes. While the Environmental Panel focuses on Switzerland, other research projects also look at contexts across the globe, such as Western Europe or Vietnam.