

# Viral Governance and Mixed Motivations: How and Why U.S. Cities Engaged on the Climate Change Issue, 2005-2007

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## CONTEXT

- **February, 2005** - The Kyoto Protocol entered into force without the United States
- **February, 2005** – Mayor Greg Nickels of Seattle, Washington launches the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (USMCPA)
- **February, 2007** – 407 U.S. cities representing 59,490,205 citizens signed on to the USMCPA

## Question

- How and why did U.S. cities engage on the climate change issue between 2005 and 2007?
- A) Examined the actions and interactions of key actors
- B) Considered the context of emerging awareness of climate change issue in the U.S.
- C) Investigated the nature of cities

## Methodology

### ➤ Qualitative Research

Data Analysis of 200 Archival sources of data to identify emerging themes

#### **HOW**

Policy Network Analysis to examine Actors, Context, and Interactions (Marsh and Smith, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Rhodes and Marsh 1992)

#### **WHY**

Direct statements of motivation for participation analyzed for 125 cities

#### **TRIANGULATION**

Semi-structured interviews with 17 key informants

# Results

## SEVERAL FACTORS

- Key actors
- Catalyzing activities
- Fertile broader context
- Cities compete and cities share
- Simple
- Flexible
- Easy/low Cost
- Different cities
- Compelling reason

## FIRST STEP

## HOW AND WHY

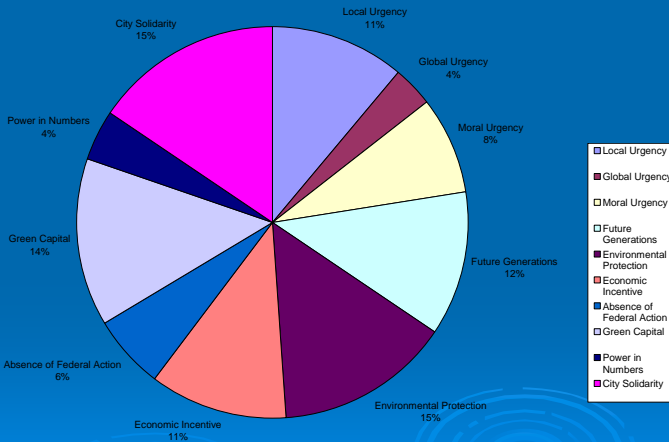


FIGURE  
Emergent Themes - Why Cities Participate in the USMCPA, 2005-2007  
n=125 cities (227 thematic occurrences) (Warden, 2007)

# Policy Consequences and Future Research

## ➤ Viral Governance

- Spreads without additional effort by key actors
- Simple, flexible, non-binding design
- Accommodates mixed motivations / compelling reasons
- Participant as promoter model

## BUT...

- Only a first step
- More resources and coordinated dialogue are needed

## MORE RESEARCH

- How effective is the initiative?
- Are cities making progress toward their goals?