How do political institutions shape the adoption of climate policy? Related to the policies themselves, does their cost structure and degree to which they depart from the status quo affect adoption? Finally, how effective are these policies at meeting the goals of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gasses (GhGs)? These questions apply to advanced democracies most responsible for contributing to the changes in climate as a result of the release of GhGs. As they have contributed the most toward the problem, these states have taken the most policy action on the issue. Studies of climate policy have overlooked many policy actions on the issue and my compilation of a novel dataset is used to examine these policies in a comprehensive manner.

Looking at the institutional makeup of a state, I find that when a state has more institutions, they tend to reduce the adoption of major and overall climate policy. Because these institutions reduce the amount of climate policy adoption, they intervene between the policies adopted and outcomes produced. Upon examining the effectiveness of these policies, I confirm my expectations that more major policy adoption and overall climate policy reduces emissions, particularly carbon dioxide. This indicates to policy advocates and lawmakers that efforts to adopt policy addressing climate change produce some positive results. Furthermore, institutions are obstacles to adoption, but could be overcome with deeper institutional penetration in states with more political institutions.