

Addressing Fairness in the International Climate Change Regime

Fairness and Climate

Paris Agreement (2015) was the first legally-binding agreement covering all UNFCCC members

- By requiring INDCs, sought to get at the issue of fairness
- Principle of the UNFCCC: “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR)

UNFCCC mechanisms for addressing CBDR:

1. Climate Finance

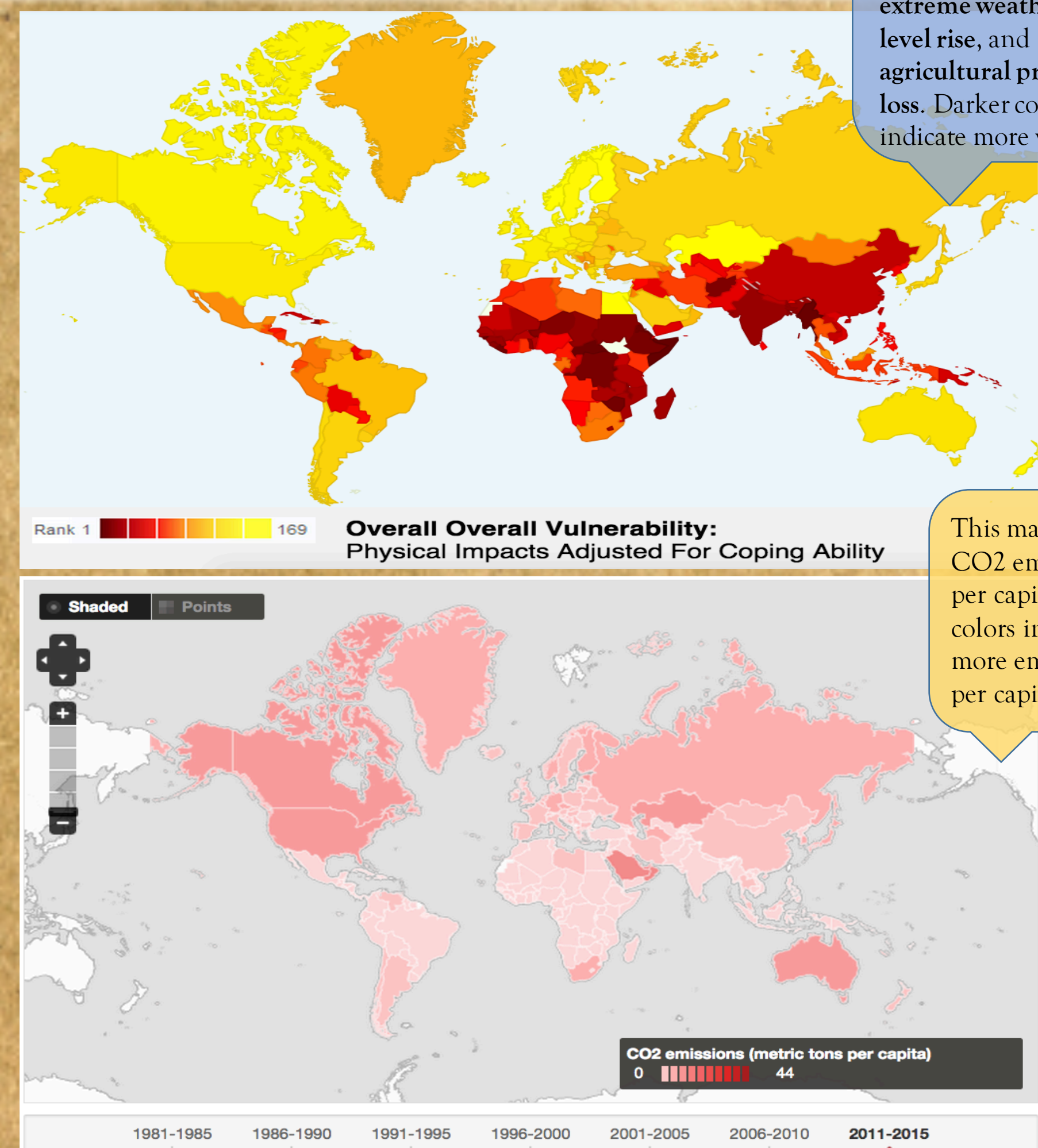
- Ex. Green Climate Fund
- Developed countries provide fin. assistance under CBDR: “It is important for all governments and stakeholders to understand and assess the financial needs developing countries have so that such countries can undertake activities to address climate change” (UNFCCC 2016).

2. Technology

- Ex. Technology Mechanism: UNFCCC (governance), Tech. Exec. Committee (policy), and Climate Tech. Center & Network (implementation).
- Works to “support developing countries’ efforts to address both policy and implementation aspects of climate tech. development & transfer” (UNFCCC 2016).

3. Mitigation

- Ex. Kyoto “Bubble” Scheme → EU BSA



This map shows overall vulnerability to climate change measured by three variables: vulnerability towards extreme weather, sea level rise, and agricultural productivity loss. Darker colors indicate more vulnerable.

This map shows CO2 emissions per capita. Darker colors indicate more emissions per capita.

The two above maps illustrate discrepancies in fairness regarding climate change. The biggest emitters are often less vulnerable to the effects of climate change, despite their contribution.
 Source: Center for Global Development; World Bank 2015

What is the Burden Sharing Agreement (BSA)?

- Emulates “common but differentiated responsibilities” under Kyoto Protocol “bubble” scheme
- Redistributed EU’s emissions reduction goal of 8% below 1990 levels (decided at Kyoto) between member states
- Allocations based on equity and efficiency
- Negotiated in 1997, 1998; ratified in 2002
- Used Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) as a mechanism
- Germany is EU’s biggest emitter, was allocated 21% below 1990 levels between 2008-2012



Examining Germany

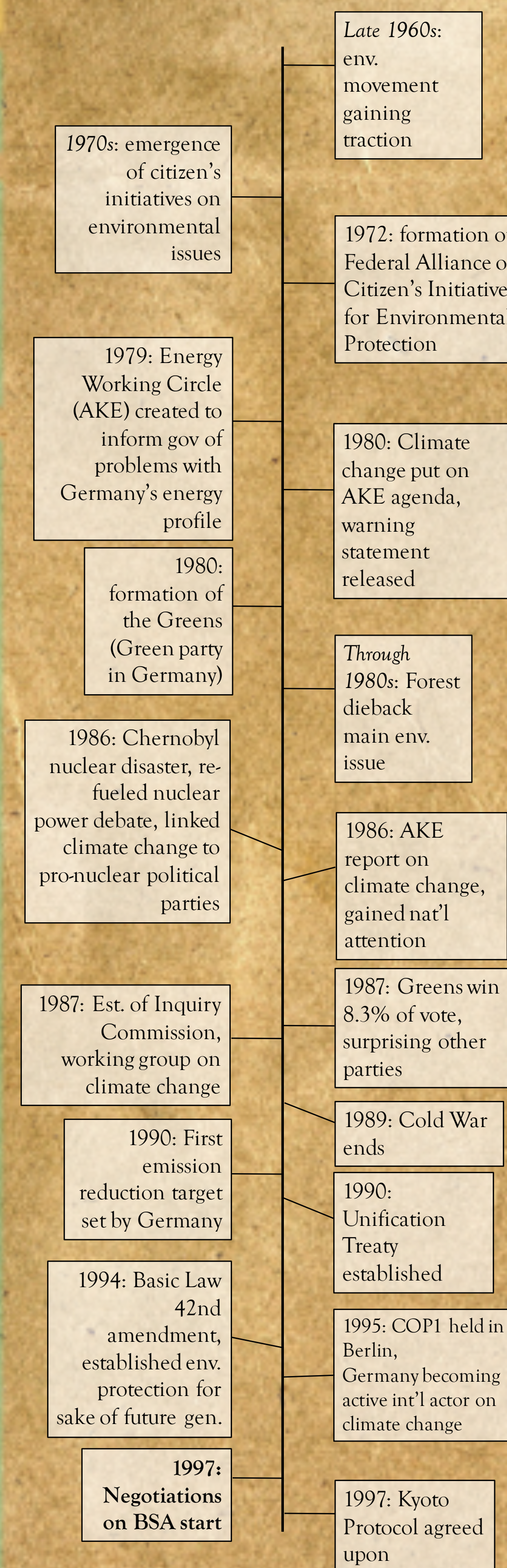
Main Research Questions:

- What factors contributed to Germany’s acceptance of the EU BSA?
- Is the EU BSA “exportable”?

Findings

- The environmental movement in Germany grew and adapted to the needs of society by focusing on societal concerns, like forest dieback.
- The Greens, and growing acceptance of env. movement institutionalized environmentalism through the 1980s.
- During this time, environmental issues, including climate change, were adopted into moral rhetoric that focused on German responsibility.
- This rhetoric transferred into policy and facilitated the rise of Germany as a leader on the international stage on climate change, where it urged the EU and the world to pursue similarly ambitious emission reduction targets.
- Env. issues were “normalized” and legitimized during this time.
- Adoption of Kyoto, the EU BSA was logical step.

Germany Timeline 1960-1997



Is the EU BSA “Exportable”?

- EU principle of solidarity was not a driving factor in the EU BSA, domestic factors more important.
- Prevailing sense of responsibility to future gen. in Germany and the EU on climate change can be extended outside of the EU, to some extent.
- Germany experienced a legitimization of env. issues – Does environmentalism need to be normalized for widespread acceptance of policies?
- Aspects of the EU BSA are generalizable → good possibility that it could be exported.

Implementing Another BSA

EU ETS as a mechanism

- Facilitated member state’s ability to meet targets
- Designed to link up to global carbon market

Potential for Regional BSAs

- Smoother negotiating process
- Geographic specificity

Implications

- Other solutions for tackling fairness don’t address mitigation, but are more transferable.
- Rather than a replacement for other fairness solutions, burden sharing could complement climate finance and tech. investments.

Considerations:

- Responsibility played a key role in env. policy implementation, & therefore in the EU BSA.
- How much do feelings of responsibility for others matter for a burden sharing regime?
- How much do they matter for fairness when addressing climate change? For society?

This poster directly relates to my senior thesis titled “Norms and Responsibility in the International Climate Regime: Examining German Motivations in Burden Sharing.”

Select References:
 Quotes: UNFCCC. 2016. “FOCUS: Climate Finance.” UNFCCC; UNFCCC. 2016. “Technology Mechanism.” UNFCCC.
 Maps: Center for Global Development. “Mapping the Impacts of Climate Change.” 2016. Center For Global Development. Accessed April 13; The World Bank. 2015. “CO2 Emissions (metric Tons per Capita) | Data | Map.” Data.
 Images: “Oak Tree Free Clip Art” from clker.com; EU icon from: JB. 2014. “Notice for Ugandan Exporters to the EU.” Uganda Export Promotion Board. October 22; UNFCCC logo from UNFCCC home page.