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ENVS Senior Thesis Outline  
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## **Background and Introduction to the paper: (1200 words)**

### **Brief history of climate change negotiations and the main barriers (750-1000 words)**

In this section I will give a brief overview of the UNFCCC COPs and the main takeaways, which will help me explain why equity (and burden distribution) has been such an important and divisive issue in international climate negotiations.

### **Sharing the burden of climate (250 words)**

The notion of burden sharing has been pivotal in climate discussion since its inception. The debate has been on who should emit less and how much – that distribution is burden sharing. I will briefly explain the concept of burden sharing as it relates to global climate change and emphasize that on the international level, no agreement has succeeded on creating a burden sharing agreement, which is part of the reason the EU's BSA is so important.

### **Framing question:**

Can burden sharing work on an international scale as a means to combat climate change?

### **Main questions to answer:**

- What aspects of the EU allow for burden sharing of emissions (i.e. the creation of “winners and losers”)?
- Is this system of burden sharing exportable outside of the EU?

### **Road map of paper (100 words)**

This will be a paragraph explaining the structure of the paper.

### **Main argument, Thesis (max 50 words)**

This will be a few sentences explaining what I am going to argue and will include my thesis statement. I do not yet know what I am going to argue because I need to complete the research before I can do this.

## **Burden sharing, not a new concept (1000 words)**

### **Theory of burden sharing (1000)**

This section would explain that burden sharing relates to many areas, not just climate change. It will introduce theories behind burden sharing, which will help me with my argument. I have found key literature on burden sharing with regards to both NATO and refugees in the EU. This section will summarize these examples and articulate the theory behind why this burden sharing is successful.

## **Burden sharing in the EU (2000 words)**

### **Role of the European Union in negotiations (Kyoto and beyond) (250-500 words)**

The EU has always pushed for large emissions cuts even before Kyoto, largely due to influence from Germany. This section would explain the EU's presence in negotiations (explaining the larger context), which will illustrate why the EU is particularly relevant to study.

### **Burden sharing in the EU (1000)**

This section will give a brief overview and history of the BSA, including key meetings and the document itself when relevant. It will explain the BSA as a tool to allocate Kyoto targets on the basis of both equity and efficiency, which will then help me illustrate why this agreement requires further consideration and thus, why I am writing my thesis on it.

### **Role of the EU ETS and other mechanisms to reach Kyoto targets (250 words)**

In this section I would also spend time explaining the EU Emissions trading scheme and other mechanisms like the carbon tax that were used to meet individual targets allocated by the BSA. They are not central to my argument, as I will not be doing an economic analysis of any of the EU policies, but they are important to recognize.

### **Carbon/Energy Tax within the EU and Germany specifically (250 words)**

This section would explain when the carbon tax was implemented in the EU and how it helped meet the Kyoto target. It will also introduce Germany's eco-tax, the politics of which will be examined later on in the paper.

### **EU wide policies to reduce emissions coupled with national plans (250 words)**

The EU had many EU-wide policies designed to help member states meet their national targets for Kyoto. This section would briefly mention these policies and explain how they were coupled with national plans to meet BSA allocations.

## **Why Germany? (1500 words)**

### **Germany's influence in the EU (250 words)**

This section would briefly explain how Germany is such a big player in the EU, what their relative influence is both economically and politically.

### **The Climate Debate, from Chernobyl on (750 words)**

I will give an overview of the German political and social environmental climate, which has its origins in the Chernobyl accident of the mid-1980s. This will discuss the role climate change discourse played in Germany environmental policy through the 1990s, and the relevant political and social dynamics.

### **Germany accepts its burden (500 words)**

This section would explain how Germany accepted the largest emissions cuts allocated by the BSA even though member states were actively involved in the creation of the agreement

(i.e. it could have pushed for a smaller burden). This also explains why Germany is important to study in this case.

## Methodology: (750 words)

### Focus question(s)

- What was Germany's involvement in the decision making process leading up to the Burden Sharing Agreement and how influential was it? Why?
- What impacts has the BSA had in both Germany and Portugal (for comparison) since its inception in 1997? More specifically, how has the BSA affected Germany's National Climate Programme?
- How do norms and ideas about climate change and responsibility impact EU policy (and German policy more specifically)?
  - What is the role of the "Principle of Solidarity" in the EU and its climate policies, if any?

### Literature review

A literature review will be used to research burden sharing theory as well as the EU ETS (and other mechanisms) as I will not be doing an economic study on it myself. I also want to look at constructivist theory of international norms and how they change state behavior.

### Examination of EU law and the principle of solidarity

The principle of solidarity has come up a lot in preliminary research and is present in significant EU charters and treaties. This is a normative principle and seems particularly relevant to the BSA. I am going to examine key treaties (like the Treaty of Lisbon) that explicitly state the principle for their normative value.

Key treaties that mention the principle of solidarity:

- European Commission Treaty
- The Lisbon Treaty
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Title IV)

### Examine Germany's national law for principle of solidarity and normative language

I need to look at how Germany uses normative language within their environmental laws to determine 1. How they relate to EU law and 2. If they were central to the document or filler. I believe that my knowledge of constructivist theory from my International Affairs major will allow me adequately examine normative language within the policies and treaties.

A few key documents to examine for normative language:

- National Climate Change Programme
- 1990 'CO2 Reduction' working group
- German 'eco-tax' 1998-9

### Examination of Germany's involvement in the BSA Meeting/negotiations

I need to examine Germany's involvement in negotiating the BSA by examining the meeting notes and public statements made by Germany on this topic. Key to this examination will be a look at the language used by Germany as well as their demands and the concessions

they took. A recent class I took, Studies of Diplomacy, provided me with tools to understand undertones within negotiations and the relevance of them.

### **Examination of Germany's political and social climate through the 1990s**

I also need to look at Germany's public opinion towards climate change and Kyoto in 1997 and, if the data is there, public opinion towards environment since Chernobyl 1986. I would like to compare political power against public opinion data to determine whether political will was driven by social factors; the data could possibly be presented on a graph. The Environmental Studies methods class (ENVS220) and various labs, like Environmental Geology, have given me the skills required to analyze this data.

## **Burden Sharing in Germany: (5500 words)**

### **Role of EU law: (1000 words)**

This section will describe my outcome from my analysis as outlined in the "Examination of EU law and the principle of solidarity" section of my methodology. It will discuss principle of solidarity in law and will relate my findings back to my main argument.

### **Germany's national law (2000 words)**

This section will discuss Germany's national climate programme and how they constructed it to meet their BSA allocation. It will also include the examination of the other agreements and meetings outlined in the "Examine Germany's national law for principle of solidarity and normative language" section of the methodology. I will discuss the presence of EU law (and the principle of solidarity, if applicable) in these documents, thereby relating this section to the one above it.

### **Germany's involvement in the negotiation process (1000 words)**

This section will answer these key questions: what was the language used in the BSA negotiations? Was Germany acting out of self-interest or not? This relates to the "Examination of Germany's involvement in the BSA Meeting/negotiations" section of the methodology. Examining whether or not Germany made demands will help me determine whether Germany was actually acting in self-interest or if another factor (like norms) was at play.

### **German political and social climate (1500)**

This section will explain what I find from examining Germany's public opinion towards environment and environmental policy and the relative power of Germany's political parties. This will include a description of the parties' stances towards environment as well. All of these sections together paint a picture of what factors were at play with Germany's decision to accept a large burden, which can then be generalized to a broader context.

## **Results (1000+ words)**

This section will tie together everything from the previous section and will address the main framing questions through the German context. Here I would synthesize the evidence

gathered from the previous section on Germany, and how it answered my focus questions, to try to pick out key points to emphasize that I will expand on in the discussion section

### **Discussion (1500-2000 words)**

The discussion section will take the main points from the results and make them generalizable. In this section I will attempt to answer the main framing questions by generalizing the German context.

- “What aspects of the EU allow for burden sharing?”
- “Could burden sharing be exportable?”

### **How does the BSA affect other countries in the EU? (750 words)**

This section would discuss Portugal’s approach to meeting their BSA targets, which will look wildly different than Germany’s because it was able to increase rather than decrease emissions relative to 1990 levels. It will add to the discussion by talking about how burden sharing looks from another view, and how that view adds to the idea of exporting the BSA.

### **How do my findings relate to a broader context? (1250)**

The first part of the discussion would take my ideas from the results section and extrapolate those to outside of the EU. I would like to address whether I think Germany’s role could be fulfilled by other countries or if it is distinctly a German “thing” – this section will address both what aspects of the EU allow for the BSA and whether or not it’s exportable.

### **Conclusion (750 words)**

The conclusion will provide concluding remarks on the main findings and how they support my main argument in the paper. I will then try to imagine what burden sharing would look like on an international scale (and in what context it would occur) given my argument.