Burden sharing for adaptation: a case for the EU?

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International symposium on ‘The Governance of Adaptation’
Amsterdam, 22nd and 23rd of March 2012
Regional exposure to climate change over the medium term (European Commission 2008)

Index based on change in population affected by river floods, population in costal areas below 5m, potential drought hazard, vulnerability of agriculture, fisheries and tourism, taking into account temperature and precipitation changes.
Annual impact of 2080s climate-change scenarios expressed as percent change in welfare (Ciscar et al. 2011)
Burden sharing in the EU

EU budget

Asylum seekers

Mitigation

Adaptation

Introduction
Questions

- Is there a case for EU action for burden sharing for adaptation?
- What are the motives/drivers for EU burden sharing efforts?
Framing burden sharing

Who are the subjects of burden sharing?

What is the burden to be shared?

How (according to what principles) shall the burden be shared?
Normative ethics

Strict equality → Emissions per capita

Difference (Rawls) → Putting the most vulnerable first

Solidarity → Ability-to-pay

Entitlement (Nozick) → Causal responsibility

Utility (Bentham, Mills) → Cost-benefit

More deontological

More consequentialist
Discourses shape what can and cannot be thought, they delimit the range of policy options and thereby serve as precursors to policy outcomes.

(Hajer and Versteeg 2005)
Focus groups

Group 1: EU level policy makers
Group 2: national level policy makers
Group 3: Researchers
Barriers

- Local dimensions of adaptation
- Definitions for adaptation and vulnerability
- Attribution

“What is a unit of adaptation?”
Instances for burden sharing

- Knowledge sharing
- Transboundary implications
- European implications
- Helping those who cannot help themselves
- Causal responsibility
- Beneficiary pays
- Network projects
“I would say most of, maybe all the instruments are in principle available but the only thing is now to use them in a proper way”
Adaptation is local, we don’t need burden sharing…

“But why would I finance an adaptation measure in, I don’t know, Bulgaria or Hungary when it’s not directly beneficial, because that is the actual nature of adapt its local its context specific”

Burden sharing yes, but there are too many challenges…

“At least several different hot points and that is so difficult to manage I don’t know if it its ever… We have to start thinking of it…”

Solidarity, nothing else matters…

“...the point of having an EU in some ways is to be solidary [sic!]…”
Adaptation is local, we don’t need burden sharing…

**Burden sharing yes, but there are too many challenges…**

Solidarity, nothing else matters…
Implications

- Missing momentum
- Role for the EU in standardizing definitions for adaptation and vulnerability
- Strong tendency to consequentialist thinking
Further research

- Including texts
- Crunching the numbers
- Case studies
- Investigating instruments
- Agenda-setting
References: