



# The political economy of passing climate change legislation: Evidence from a survey



Sam Fankhauser<sup>a,\*</sup>, Caterina Gennaioli<sup>a</sup>, Murray Collins<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (CCCEP), London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK

<sup>b</sup> School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh, The King's Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JW, UK

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 14 December 2014

Received in revised form 29 July 2015

Accepted 14 August 2015

Available online xxx

### Keywords:

Climate change legislation

Climate politics

Political economy

## ABSTRACT

Climate change is now a major aspect of public policy. There are almost 500 identified climate change laws in the world's leading economies. This paper reviews the main domestic factors that drive this legislation. The analysis is based on a unique dataset of climate legislation in 66 national jurisdictions for the period 1990–2013. We find that the passage of new climate laws is influenced by several factors. One important factor is the quantity and quality of previous legislation: the propensity to pass more laws decreases non-linearly with the stock of existing legislation, but increases in the presence of a strategic “flagship law” that sets an overall framework for climate policy. Contrary to widespread belief, political orientation is not a decisive factor. We find no significant difference in the number of laws passed by left-wing and right-wing governments, except perhaps in Anglo-Saxon countries. However, left-leaning governments are more inclined to pass laws in difficult economic times. Despite these elements of bipartisanship, political economy factors still matter: In democracies climate laws are less likely to be passed immediately before an election and legislation is aided by a strong executive that can take on vested interests.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Practically all major emitters of greenhouse gases (GHGs) now have in place laws to control emissions, conserve energy, avoid deforestation or promote cleaner forms of energy production. At the same time, those countries that are vulnerable to climate change are taking steps to prepare for its impact. At the end of 2013 there were close to 500 climate or climate-related laws on the statute books of 66 major economies. On average, these countries pass a climate change-related law every 18–20 months (Nachmany et al., 2014).

The urgency to address climate change, combined with the quantity of laws and policies now being issued, makes climate change one of the most important aspects of public policy and a key focus of environmental legislation. Understanding the domestic dynamics of climate legislation is therefore of academic interest in its own right. There is also a strong interest in this question from a practical policy perspective. The international climate architecture is now moving toward a system of *intended nationally determined contributions*, and it is domestic legislation that gives credibility to

these. Moreover, additional domestic legislation may well be required to achieve global climate objectives.

Existing research indicates that the passage of climate laws is influenced by a combination of international factors, such as treaty obligations, and country-specific domestic factors, such as the institutional context or the energy-economic situation (Never and Betz, 2014; Falkner, 2013; Bernstein and Cashore, 2012; Busch et al., 2005 and Kern et al., 2001). Yet until now there has been no attempt to explain systematically and in a statistically robust manner what drives the growing inclination to legislate on climate change. The purpose of this paper is to help filling this gap. Its focus is on the domestic drivers of climate change legislation. A parallel paper using the same data and similar methods examines international factors (Fankhauser et al., 2015).

To begin to understand what factors drive the adoption of climate legislation we use a powerful global dataset assembled over a series of climate legislation surveys (see Nachmany et al., 2014; Townshend et al., 2011, 2013). The data cover legislative action between 1990 and the end of 2013 in 66 jurisdictions, constituting 65 countries and the European Union (EU) as a block. Together these jurisdictions are responsible for almost 90 per cent of global GHG emissions. The data also include countries which are among the most vulnerable to climate change. Although not

\* Corresponding author at: London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

E-mail address: [s.fankhauser@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.fankhauser@lse.ac.uk) (S. Fankhauser).

perfect (as discussed below), the data set constitutes one of the richest sources of information about climate change legislation currently available (see [Dubash et al., 2013](#) for a list of alternative data sets). The data set can be downloaded on the website of the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/legislation/>).

The comprehensive nature of the data allows us study legislative dynamics econometrically and draw broadly valid, statistically rigorous conclusions. We use the data to test a number of hypotheses, which are either derived directly from the climate change debate (e.g., on the relevance of political orientation) or explore how findings from other areas of public policy apply to climate change (e.g., on the importance of a strong executive).

There have been some prior attempts at exploring the hypotheses we post. There is a considerable literature of qualitative comparative studies dealing with climate change policy (e.g., [Never, 2012](#); [Harrison and Sundstrom, 2010](#); [Selin and van Deveer,](#)

[2009](#); [Compston and Bailey, 2008](#)). There is also a quantitative literature exploring the political economy of narrower climate issues (such as treaty ratification) or different environmental problems (e.g., [Von Stein, 2008](#); [Fredriksson et al., 2007](#); [Fredriksson and Gaston, 2000](#); [Neumayer, 2002](#)). However, to our knowledge there is as yet no global econometric assessment of the domestic drivers of climate change legislation.

In addition to these studies, other authors have conceptualised the political economy of environmental policy ([Oates and Portney, 2003](#); [Congleton, 1992](#); [Hahn, 1990](#)). They highlight the role of institutions and the political interaction between governments and interest groups. [Lachapelle and Paterson \(2013\)](#), [Bernauer and Koubi \(2009\)](#) and [Fredriksson et al. \(2005\)](#) test these theories empirically. Yet rather than focusing on the adoption of laws and regulations, as we do, they measure directly the impact of political factors, broadly defined, on particular environmental outcomes (such as GHG emissions or urban air quality).

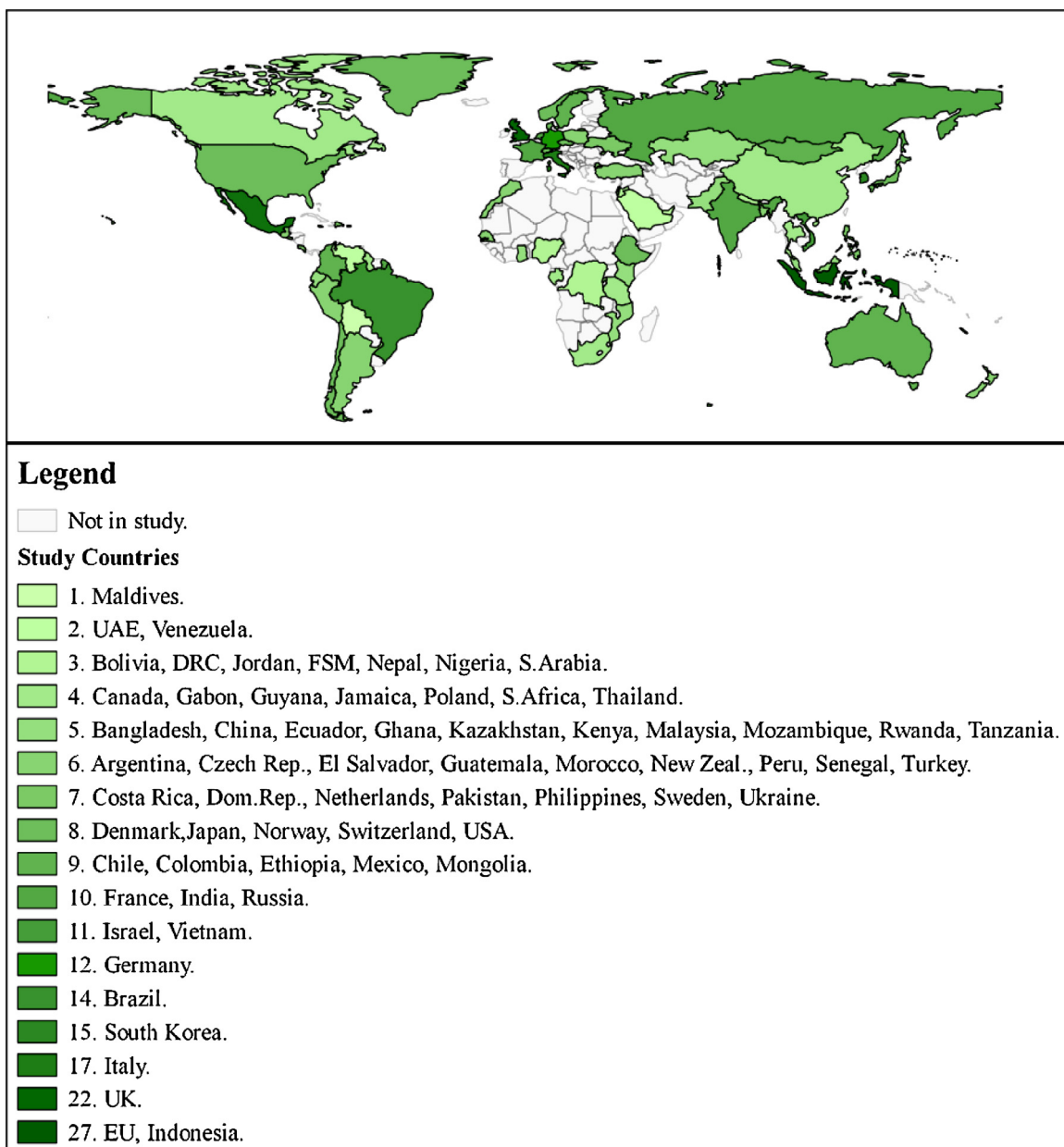


Fig. 1. Number of climate change laws at end-2013.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7469607>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7469607>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)