

The background of the cover features a dark blue world map on a light blue gradient. A series of vibrant, curved light streaks in shades of yellow, orange, and red sweep across the lower right portion of the map, creating a sense of dynamic movement and global connectivity.

Geopolitical Dynamics and the moral imperative of addressing Loss and Damage in the Global South

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Abstract

In a world marked by unprecedented global interconnectivity, geopolitics is undergoing a profound transformation driven by existential challenges, with climate change at the forefront. The ethical imperative to address climate-induced inequalities, catalyzed by international agreements, global consciousness, and moral urgency, compels the Global North to confront its historical contributions to climate change and prioritize comprehensive climate action. This evolving moral imperative shapes the discourse on climate justice and global responsibility, bridging the gap between economic interests and ethical obligations.

This research delves into the profound transformation of contemporary geopolitics in the face of pressing global challenges, notably climate change. Historically responsible for significant carbon emissions, the Global North grapples with the moral imperative to address Loss and Damage in the Global South. It investigates the growing urgency surrounding the climate crisis, international climate agreements, awareness of power imbalances, and environmental justice based on data to create a well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of the ethical and moral aspects. The study uses Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments and the framework Environmentalism of the poor by Joan Martinez-Alier to investigate the moral and ethical dimensions of Loss and Damage that are amplified by an evolving global consciousness, fostering a collective sense of moral urgency and galvanizing international movements.

This research finds that as current geopolitics continue to evolve and climate change's impacts intensify, the pressure to align policies with moral and ethical principles will grow. This shift urges countries, especially those in the Global North, to prioritize the moral responsibility to rectify historical wrongs and address the suffering of vulnerable communities. In doing so, they can foster a more equitable and sustainable global response to the climate crisis, encapsulating the broader global responsibility and cooperation narrative in an era marked by unprecedented global challenges.

Keywords: climate change; loss and damage; moral; ethics; global north; global south; geopolitics; power imbalances

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1. Introduction

In an era characterized by unprecedented global interconnectivity, the intricate tapestry of geopolitics is undergoing a profound reweaving, driven by a convergence of existential challenges that transcend traditional boundaries (Kalantzakos et al., 2023). Among these challenges, the ominous spectre of climate change looms large, casting its shadow over nations and continents and laying bare the intricate web of interdependence that binds the fate of disparate regions (Brooks, 2017). Within this intricate narrative, a compelling and morally charged dimension has emerged: the engagement of the Global North with the moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South. This multifaceted engagement, as catalysed by the intricate interplay of political dynamics, international agreements, ethical imperatives, and the evolving expectations of a globalized society, encapsulates nations' evolving moral consciousness and ethical obligations as they grapple with the unequal burdens of climate-induced adversity.

The trajectory of modern geopolitics is no longer confined to pursuing traditional power and security paradigms. Instead, it has expanded to encompass a broader spectrum of challenges and responsibilities, with climate change as one of the foremost among them (Brooks, 2017). The Global North, often attributed with historical contributions to carbon emissions and industrialization, now faces a moment of reckoning that transcends the narrow scope of national interests (United Nations A, n.d.). The repercussions of a changing climate manifest with stark clarity in the Global South, where vulnerable communities contend with rising sea levels, intensified weather events, ecological degradation, and resource scarcity (ibid). The consequences of these environmental shifts reverberate far beyond physical landscapes, impacting economic stability, social cohesion, and political resilience.

Central to the evolving discourse on Loss and Damage is the ethical imperative to address the systemic inequalities underpinning the disparate impacts of climate change (Newell et al., 2021). The moral quandary at hand compels the Global North to realize that the brunt of ecological suffering is borne by those who have historically contributed the least to the problem (ibid). This realization reverberates through international corridors and national legislatures, reshaping policy narratives and political agendas. Geopolitical actors are ethically

obligated to rectify historical injustices and confront the structural imbalances perpetuating vulnerability in the Global South (United Nations B, 2023).

The paradigm shift in geopolitics is intrinsically tied to the emergence of international agreements and frameworks designed to address the multifaceted dimensions of climate change (European Commission, 2023). The Paris Agreement, in particular, represents a watershed moment, embodying a collective commitment to limit global temperature rise and foster climate resilience (United Nations C, 2022). However, while such agreements lay the groundwork for cooperative action, the question of Loss and Damage transcends mitigation and adaptation strategies. It delves into the uncharted territory of reparation, responsibility, and solidarity.

Moreover, the moral and ethical dimensions of Loss and Damage are further catalysed by an evolving global consciousness and a burgeoning sense of shared humanity. Technological advancements have transformed information dissemination, enabling real-time access to the struggles of distant communities (Guterres, 2022). This heightened awareness fosters a collective sense of moral urgency, galvanizing transnational movements and public demands for equitable responses to climate-induced hardships (ibid). The global audience, armed with a newfound ability to witness the human faces behind statistics, drives the Global North toward a more compassionate and morally conscious engagement with Loss and Damage.

The confluence of political dynamics, international agreements, ethical obligations, and the amplified voices of a global society compels the Global North to confront its historical contributions to climate change and shoulder its responsibilities toward vulnerable nations and communities. The trajectory of this engagement is shaping not only the discourse on climate justice but also the broader narrative of global responsibility and cooperation in an era of unprecedented challenges. Due to the above-mentioned social-economic problems, the problem this thesis seeks to address is:

How does current geopolitics move the Global North to engage with moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South?

1.1. Thesis relevance

The relevance of exploring the research question must be considered. This inquiry lies at the intersection of pressing global challenges, ethical responsibilities, and the evolving nature of international relations. Climate change is unequivocally one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. Its consequences, ranging from extreme weather events to sea-level rise and ecological disruptions, pose an existential threat not confined by borders (United Nations A, n.d). Recognizing climate change as a global crisis necessitates a deeper understanding of how geopolitics intersects with the moral imperative to address its effects, particularly on the most vulnerable regions in the Global South.

The Global North, historically responsible for a significant share of carbon emissions, now grapples with a moral responsibility to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change (Chancel et al., 2023). This historical legacy underscores the need to investigate how geopolitical actors navigate this ethical terrain, acknowledging past contributions to the problem while seeking equitable solutions.

The Paris Agreement and other international accords underscore developed nations' obligation to support developing countries dealing with Loss and Damage (United Nations A, n.d). The compliance with, or deviation from, these agreements by the Global North is intrinsically tied to geopolitical interests, highlighting the need to examine the ethical dimensions of their engagement.

Loss and Damage in the Global South often precipitate humanitarian crises and human rights violations (Chancel et al., 2023). Understanding how current geopolitics shapes responses to these crises is crucial for assessing nations' moral and ethical obligations in the face of such suffering. In an era of unprecedented information dissemination, global public opinion and activism wield significant influence over political decisions. As the public becomes more aware of climate change impacts and Loss and Damage in the Global South, geopolitical actors are under increased pressure to align their actions with moral and ethical imperatives, making this research highly relevant to understanding contemporary global dynamics. Climate-induced disruptions can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, leading to conflicts and instability. The moral and ethical dimensions of addressing Loss and Damage are linked to global stability and security, necessitating a nuanced understanding of how geopolitical decisions impact the geopolitical landscape.

The relevance of exploring how current geopolitics moves the Global North to engage with the moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South lies in its profound intersection with global crises, historical responsibilities, international agreements, humanitarian concerns, and global security. As the world grapples with the far-reaching impacts of climate change, this research offers critical insights into the evolving nature of international relations and the ethical imperatives shaping a response to one of humanity's most defining challenges.

2. Context section

2.1. Global North and Global South

The terms "Global North" and "Global South" are often used to describe the world's broad political and socio-economic divisions. These terms transcend geographical locations and reflect complex historical, economic, political, and social dynamics. They are used to highlight the disparities in wealth, development, power, and influence that exist between different regions of the world (Dados & Connell, 2012).

The Global North refers to the more economically developed and industrialized countries. These countries have higher levels of industrialization, technology, education, and standard of living. Many of the world's wealthiest and most powerful nations are located in the Global North. According to the United Nations (UN), the Global North broadly covers Northern America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Israel, Japan, and South Korea (Dados & Connell, 2012; UNCTAD, n.d.).

Characteristics

- **High Economic Development:** The Global North countries generally have advanced economies characterized by high GDP per capita, diverse industries, and advanced technological infrastructure.
- **Industrialization:** These nations have a history of industrialization and technological advancement, leading to significant economic growth.

- **Education and Research:** High-quality education systems and robust research institutions contribute to innovation and technological progress.
- **Political Power:** Many international organizations, political alliances, and powerful multinational corporations are headquartered in the Global North, contributing to their political influence.
- **Healthcare and Infrastructure:** Well-developed healthcare systems and modern infrastructure are common features of Global North countries (Dados & Connell, 2012; UNCTAD, n.d).

The Global South refers to the less economically developed and often less industrialized countries, primarily located in the Southern Hemisphere. According to the UN, the Global South broadly comprises countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and parts of Oceania. [5] These countries face various challenges related to limited access to education and healthcare, poverty, political instability, and underdeveloped infrastructure. The term "Global South" is often used to draw attention to the structural inequalities and historical legacies contributing to these nations' relatively disadvantaged positions. The Global South has been described as being in the process of industrializing or newly industrialized and is frequently a former subject of colonialism (Dados & Connell, 2012; UNCTAD, n.d).

2.1.1. Characteristics

- **Economic Challenges:** Many Global South countries struggle with poverty, underdevelopment, and limited access to resources. They often face difficulties in diversifying their economies beyond traditional sectors.
- **Limited Industrialization:** Industrialization levels are generally lower, and there is often a reliance on agriculture or resource extraction as primary economic activities.
- **Inequality:** The Global South is characterized by significant income and wealth inequality, with a large portion of the population living in poverty.
- **Political Challenges:** Political instability, corruption, and lack of access to democratic institutions can be prevalent in some Global South countries.
- **Health and Education Gaps:** Access to quality healthcare, education, and social services may be limited, leading to lower life expectancies and lower levels of human development (Dados & Connell, 2012; UNCTAD, n.d).

2.2. Global North and Global South in a climate change context

The Global North, consisting of economically developed and industrialized countries, has historically been the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. These countries have been responsible for the majority of carbon dioxide emissions due to their long history of industrialization and consumption of fossil fuels. As a result, they have accumulated higher levels of carbon emissions in the atmosphere over time (Fuhr, 2021; Sinan, 2021).

2.2.1. Characteristics

- **High Carbon Footprint:** The Global North has a high per capita carbon footprint due to its energy-intensive industries, transportation systems, and consumption patterns.
- **Industrialization and Emissions:** These countries have historically relied on fossil fuels for energy and have contributed significantly to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- **Consumption and Lifestyle:** Consumerism and resource-intensive lifestyles are common in the Global North, contributing to higher demand for goods and energy, which in turn increases emissions.
- **Technological Capacity:** While the Global North has the technological and financial resources to develop and adopt cleaner technologies, the transition away from fossil fuels can be a complex process.
- **Climate Policy:** Many Global North countries have implemented climate policies and international agreements to address emissions, but the effectiveness of these efforts varies (Fuhr, 2021; Sinan, 2021).

The Global South, comprising less economically developed and often less industrialized countries primarily in the Southern Hemisphere, faces significant challenges due to climate change. Despite contributing less to global carbon emissions historically, these countries are disproportionately impacted by the consequences of climate change.

2.2.2. Characteristics

- **Climate Vulnerability:** Many Global South countries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, extreme weather events, droughts, and food insecurity.
- **Limited Adaptive Capacity:** These nations often lack the financial resources, technology, infrastructure, and institutional capacity to adapt effectively to changing climate conditions.
- **Agriculture and Livelihoods:** A significant portion of the population in the Global South relies on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods, making them highly susceptible to changes in weather patterns and environmental conditions.
- **Limited Historical Emissions:** The Global South's historical contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is relatively lower compared to the Global North, yet they bear the brunt of the consequences.
- **Climate Justice:** The concept of climate justice emphasizes that the countries least responsible for causing climate change are often the ones suffering the most severe impacts. The Global South advocates for fairness and equity in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts (Fuhr, 2021; Sinan, 2021).

2.3. Loss and Damage

Loss and Damage (L&D) encapsulate the ramifications of climate change induced during the Anthropocene epoch. The influence of climate change extends to altering the intensity, frequency, and geographic spread of extreme climatic events such as heatwaves, floods, and storms, alongside gradual developments like ocean acidification, biodiversity depletion, rising sea levels, and desertification. These collective impacts give rise to L&D, both in terms of economic and non-economic consequences (Thomas, 2022). Economically, L&D encompasses various aspects, including harm to crops, residences, infrastructure, revenue loss, and the gross national product (GNP). Non-economic implications encompass impairment to human health, mobility, settlements, territorial access, cultural heritage, as well as the erosion of biodiversity, habitats, indigenous, and local knowledge (ibid.).

3. Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and elucidate the intricate interplay between contemporary geopolitics and the evolving engagement of the Global North with the moral and ethical dimensions of Loss and Damage in the Global South. By scrutinizing the dynamic nexus between geopolitical factors and the recognition of Loss and Damage issues, this research seeks to uncover the underlying motivations, challenges, and implications that drive the Global North's increasing involvement with these ethical and moral concerns.

3.1. Research Strategy

The thesis uses critical realism as a scientific theoretical point of view, where the world is viewed as complex and contextual. Thus, critical realism is ontologically close to positivism and critical rationalism, which consider that the world exists independently of the observer, albeit with the caveat that the context and complexity are influencing factors (Ingemann, 2017).

This scientific theoretical position presupposes that knowledge is created in line with a step-by-step strata division, where the top and empirical stratum is considered observable just like the second-top factual stratum. The third and last stratum is not overtly observable, but rather depends on the causal mechanisms, which are crucial for uncovering the causal relationships (ibid). The first-mentioned stratum and thus the empirical stratum will unfold the historical and contextual part of this study, which will present the connection between the global north and south. In continuation of this, it can be stated that the factual stratum will unfold the analysis in the thesis, and thus the geopolitical measures that have been taken in relation to the Loss and damage problem. Thus, the thesis in the deep stratum will use theoretical tools to meet and clarify the existing causal relationships. With the deep stratum, the opportunity is created to consider the connections, which are to a large extent complex and contextual and would not obviously be possible for the present study to identify without theory, the factual circumstances and the empiricism presuppose.

In the thesis, it is recognized that the formulation of the problem takes place in a complex and contextual context due to the many factors and actors that influence the connection of the causal mechanisms in this question. In continuation of this, the thesis is aware that the

construction gives some weaknesses, which are about the application of the current geopolitical situation. This choice means that the thesis considers geopolitical actions as a possible point of reference, although it cannot be guaranteed that these are not the subject of another agenda, such as own political gain in countries and international institutions. There is thus a risk that the study's conclusion may create a distorted picture of concrete geopolitical actions.

Nevertheless, the thesis seeks to find several actors who carry out geopolitical actions in the global south on the basis of loss and damage, which can thereby support the analysis and the answers that are extracted from it. Thus, this challenge is considered a basic condition where the geopolitical actions in the global south are used without all the underlying political agendas being taken into consideration. There may thus be actions, which cover other agendas than actual political positions.

Thus, this thesis has had a need to create a broad foundation and analysis approach to illuminate the constructed problem formulation. Therefore, the problem formulation and scientific theoretical standpoint have shaped the study's direction towards an inductive exploratory approach, where it is recognized that political hot topics are associated with a high degree of contextuality and complexity. In extension of this, the complex and contextual world can change character over time, which will have an impact on the results of this thesis. Nevertheless, this is considered a prerequisite for studies of this kind, where current affairs as well as contextual and complex conditions are examined.

The thesis will have its methodological starting point in a qualitative empirical analysis, which is basically built around existing empirical evidence and literature from already existing sources. This means that the thesis will use primary literature, such as speeches, publicly available reports and secondary literature, such as previous research and the interpretations of others.

3.2. Choice of empirical data

The choice and use of data in this research have been carefully considered to create a well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of the ethical and moral aspects related to Loss and Damage with a particular focus on the dynamics between the Global North and Global South. The selection encompasses a diverse range of source types, including academic

research, international agreements, reports from reputable organizations, and insights from influential figures in the field. These sources serve various essential purposes in this study. First, they provide a historical and philosophical context for understanding the ethical dimensions of climate change, this historical grounding helps frame ethical discussions.

Second, the selected data offer conceptual frameworks for sustainable development and societal change, which are central to ethical discussions on climate. Third, the data help unravel the complexities of climate injustice and the political dynamics surrounding climate issues. Moreover, the inclusion of the Paris Agreement, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, and reports on COP conferences elucidates the global commitments and mechanisms for addressing Loss and Damage. These documents are pivotal to understanding international responses to climate issues.

Moreover, the inclusion of various perspectives, including academic research, reports, and speeches expands the global viewpoint and offers insights from different stakeholders and provide a foundation for understanding the ethical aspects of environmental issues and social injustice in the context of climate change. Overall, the selection and use of the selected data are instrumental in providing a well-informed and balanced exploration of the ethical engagement of the Global North in addressing Loss and Damage, as well as the broader ethical considerations in climate change discussions.

3.3. Theoretical considerations

In the exploration of how current geopolitics influences the Global North's engagement with the moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South, two pivotal theoretical frameworks are employed: the Theory of Moral Sentiments and the framework The Environmentalism of the Poor. These two provide essential lenses through which to comprehend the moral, ethical, and socio-economic factors that drive Global North nations' responses to climate-induced vulnerabilities, and loss and damage.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, developed by Adam Smith, forms a foundational theoretical framework for understanding the psychological and ethical motivations that drive human behaviour, including ethical engagement (Butler, 2011). This theory posits that human actions are guided by sentiments of sympathy, empathy, and moral judgments and suggests that

individuals are naturally inclined to feel for the suffering of others and to engage in actions that align with their moral sentiments (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.).

In the context of the thesis, the Theory of Moral Sentiments is used to elucidate how current geopolitics influence the moral reasoning of Global North nations when addressing Loss and Damage in the Global South. This framework helps explore how geopolitical factors such as power dynamics, and international relations shape the moral sentiments of empathy and responsibility towards vulnerable communities impacted by climate change-related events. By delving into the moral psychology of decision-makers, the theory provides insights into why and how Global North countries are driven to engage with Loss and Damage in moral and ethical terms.

"The Environmentalism of the Poor" is a conceptual framework that underscores the unique perspectives and motivations of marginalized communities, particularly those in the Global South, when addressing environmental and climate-related challenges (Martinez-Allier, 2002). This framework highlights how vulnerable populations often have a deep connection to their natural environment, and is disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and climate change (Martinez-Allier, 2002). Their concerns are driven by the immediate impact of these changes on their livelihoods, cultures, and well-being (Martinez-Allier, 2002).

In the context of the thesis, "The Environmentalism of the Poor" serves as a lens through which to understand the motivations of Global North nations to engage with Loss and Damage in the Global South. The framework acknowledges that Global North engagement is not solely driven by geopolitical interests, but also by ethical considerations arising from the recognition of the dire circumstances faced by vulnerable communities. By examining how Global North nations respond to the environmentalism expressed by marginalized populations, the thesis uncovers the ethical dimensions that underpin their engagement efforts.

There have also been considerations about pros and cons combining Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments and Environmentalism of the Poor in the context of current geopolitics can

influence how the Global North engages with the moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South.

On one hand, this combination offers a robust ethical foundation, emphasizing empathy, compassion, and shared responsibility. It encourages a holistic approach that balances economic interests with ethical obligations, potentially leading to more comprehensive and equitable solutions. It fosters greater global cooperation as stakeholders acknowledge their moral duty to address Loss and Damage.

However, on the other hand, there are significant challenges. Resistance may come from actors with vested economic interests who fear potential impacts on profitability or competitiveness. The complex nature of ethical integration can lead to difficult trade-offs and policy dilemmas. There's also the risk of superficial actions or "greenwashing," where ethical rhetoric doesn't translate into meaningful change. Additionally, integrating ethics may exacerbate existing political divides, hindering progress on climate change policies and loss and damage.

In conclusion, combining Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments and Environmentalism of the Poor in the context of current geopolitics can enrich the problem formulation surrounding Loss and Damage in the Global South. However, it also introduces complexities and potential resistance from some actors in the Global North. Striking a balance between ethical imperatives and practical considerations remains a significant challenge in addressing this critical issue on the global stage.

4. Theory

By integrating the Theory of Moral Sentiments and the framework of "The Environmentalism of the Poor," the thesis offers a comprehensive analysis of how the interplay between moral psychology and the unique perspectives of vulnerable communities influences the Global North's ethical engagement with Loss and Damage. This synthesis provides a more holistic understanding of the motivations, challenges, and implications of Global North nations' involvement in addressing loss and damage in the Global South. It emphasizes that geopolitical factors intersect with intrinsic human empathy and solidarity, as well as the

ethical responsibility to respond to the needs of the most affected and marginalized populations.

4.1. Theory of moral sentiments

Adam Smith's "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" represents a scientific achievement, illuminating the origins of our moral concepts and behaviours as intrinsic attributes of our social nature (Butler, 2011; Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Smith argues that our social psychology serves as a more dependable guide to ethical behaviour than reason alone. Within his work, Smith not only clarifies the essential principles of prudence and justice essential for the survival of society but also illustrates how further acts of kindness contribute to the flourishing of communities (Butler, 2011). While the theory does not directly address climate change, it is some key principles from Smith's work that can be applied to the contemporary issue of Loss and Damage and environmental ethics.

Smith's central thesis contends that morality is not a calculation but rather an intrinsic aspect of our human nature, saying that our emotional responses to the joy or sorrow of others directly influence our emotional states (Butler, 2011; Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). We derive pleasure from actions we endorse and suffer distress when we believe others are causing harm, including harm to the environment. Smith acknowledges that our emotional responses toward others are not as intense as those directly experiencing these emotions (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). This leads to individuals tempering their emotions to align with the reactions of those around them, aiming to achieve a level of emotional equilibrium where a typical, disinterested person – the impartial spectator – would empathize with their perspective. This process ultimately gives rise to a system of behavioral rules, constituting morality (Butler, 2011). The theory elucidates the fundamental tenets of prudence and justice as prerequisites for societal survival and elucidates how additional acts of benevolence foster societal prosperity.

4.1.1. Self-Interest, Sympathy and Moral rules

Smith underscores our innate inclination as individuals to safeguard our own interests, an aspect he aptly terms prudence (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Yet, Smith equally acknowledges that as social beings, we possess a natural empathy – a contemporary interpretation would

equate this to empathy – towards others (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). When we witness the distress or happiness of others, we experience a corresponding emotional response, albeit to varying degrees. Conversely, others seek our empathy and reciprocate in kind. In situations where emotions run particularly high, empathy impels individuals to temper their feelings, aligning them with the less intense reactions of their peers (Butler, 2011). Over time, from childhood to adulthood, individuals internalize societal norms, learning what is acceptable behaviour within their community (Butler, 2011). Smith contends that our sense of morality is intrinsically tied to our social nature, encompassing the recognition of a problem inflicted on others by our actions (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Smith argues that through continual evaluation of countless actions, individuals gradually formulate rules of conduct (ibid). These moral standards serve as guides for behaviour, obviating the need to analyse each new situation afresh and can translate into a set of principles and practices that guide responsible and sustainable interaction within the society.

4.1.2. Justice and Conscience

For society to endure, rules must be in place to prevent individuals from harming one another, forming the foundation of justice (Butler, 2011). Justice necessitates rules and regulations that prevent harm to the society, mitigating potential conflicts and problematics. Furthermore, Smith emphasizes the role of conscience as an intrinsic mechanism that serves as a more immediate reminder than punishment of the importance of others' well-being, including the well-being of future generations (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Smith asserts that punishments and rewards fulfill crucial roles in society (Butler, 2011). Actions that benefit society are not only approved but also rewarded, while those causing harm are disapproved of and punished. Smith intriguingly suggests that our natural instincts, guided by appetites and aversions, essentially act as an invisible hand that directs our behaviour to promote the continued existence of our species and society (Butler, 2011).

Smith concludes "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" by defining the character of a virtuous person, who, he suggests, would embody the qualities of prudence, justice, beneficence, and self-command (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Prudence moderates individual excesses and promotes responsible resource management. Justice limits harm to the society. Beneficence

fosters efforts to preserve and restore the society, while self-command restrains impulsive actions that could result in harm in the society.

In his closing remarks, Smith posits that freedom and human nature serve as more reliable guides for creating a harmonious, functional society than the supposed reason of philosophers and visionaries (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.). Smith believed that individuals possess a degree of moral freedom (Butler, 2011). While he acknowledged the influence of social norms and the impartial spectator on human behavior, he also recognized that individuals have the capacity to make moral choices independently (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.; Butler, 2011). This moral freedom allows individuals to exercise their judgment and act in accordance with their own sense of right and wrong.

Although Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" predates the contemporary comprehension of climate change, its principles of sympathy, impartiality, self-interest, justice, and the role of institutions hold the potential to offer valuable ethical and moral perspectives for tackling the intricate issues entailed by climate change, including considerations of loss and damage. These principles align with his overarching philosophy of human behaviour and morality, making them relevant guides for addressing the multifaceted challenges presented by climate change while acknowledging its impacts on individuals and societies.

4.2. The environmentalism of the poor

Historically, environmentalism has often been viewed as a pursuit reserved for the privileged, while poverty has been linked to practices that harm the environment and a lack of interest in ecological issues. For example, the Brundtland Report (1987) concluded that poverty ranks among the foremost catalysts of environmental deterioration. Furthermore, political scientist Ronald Inglehart (1997) posited that more prosperous societies tend to be more committed to preserving the natural world. Similarly, Kuznets curves have suggested that environmental enhancements correlate with higher per-capita income, implying that increased economic growth is the solution to environmental degradation (Stern, 2004).

Consequently, as per Martínez Alier's perspective, 'poor people' are engaged in a distinct form of environmentalism, characterized as the 'environmentalism of the poor' (Martinez-Alier, 2002). The Environmentalism of the Poor is a subset of the broader

environmental justice movement, presents a compelling lens through which to understand and address the complex challenges arising from environmental degradation, social disparities, and the ethical obligations of societies, particularly those in the Global North.

At its core, Environmentalism of the Poor challenges conventional environmentalism by asserting that environmental issues are deeply interconnected with social, economic, and political contexts. The inequitable Environmental Burdens where it is acknowledged that marginalized and impoverished communities, often situated in the Global South, disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental degradation (Martinez-Alier, 2002). These burdens range from exposure to hazardous pollutants to the consequences of climate change.

Also the vulnerability and disproportionate impacts where Environmentalism of the Poor underscores that the poorest and most marginalized populations tend to be the most vulnerable to environmental hazards and climate change impacts due to their limited resources and political influence (Martinez-Alier, 2002). Vulnerability becomes a pivotal concept in understanding the ethical dimensions of environmental injustice.

The theory places strong emphasis on structural injustices, particularly historical legacies of colonialism, economic exploitation, and global power imbalances (Martinez-Alier, 2002). These structural inequities underpin the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and harms, highlighting the importance of historical context.

At its core, Environmentalism of the Poor emphasizes the moral and ethical obligation to rectify environmental injustices. It posits that addressing these injustices demands not only the equitable distribution of environmental benefits but also acknowledgment of past harms and the prevention of future injustices (Martinez-Alier, 2002).

The concept of environmental justice among marginalized communities prioritizes both social equity and the safeguarding of land for their exclusive use. Drawing upon the fields of political ecology and ecological economics, Martinez-Alier constructs a foundational framework for a global environmental justice movement that originates from local environmental disputes. This particular strain of environmentalism emerges due to the unequal distribution of environmental burdens within society, referred to as "ecological distribution conflicts" by

Martínez Alier and Martin O'Connor (1995). These conflicts arise from economic activities and growth, leading to the assertion that the Global North exports environmental harm to the Global South (Larkin, 2013). It also contends that impoverished individuals are more susceptible to environmental damage than their wealthier counterparts, and racialized communities face a higher risk than white populations (Martinez-Alier, 2002).

Consequently, this environmentalism comprises a diverse array of movements united by a common thread: the threat posed to their livelihoods due to this unequal distribution of environmental burdens (Martinez-Alier, 2002). Here, "livelihood" is understood broadly, encompassing not only the material aspects of human life but also the cultural, communal, and individual foundations. Martínez Alier (2002) asserts that as the economy scales up, disadvantaged individuals are increasingly deprived of access to environmental resources and services, and they endure a disproportionate amount of pollution (Martinez-Alier, 2002). Those facing threats to their livelihoods rally against the environmental harms imperiling them and those responsible for these harms (Martinez-Alier, 2002).

In doing so, they protect their livelihoods, often preserving traditional ways of life that have evolved in harmony with the environment, thus ensuring sustainability (Norgaard, 2006). Norgaard (2006) posits that traditional livelihoods have historically adapted to environmental conditions, utilizing resources and sinks sustainably (ibid). Consequently, protecting these livelihoods equates to preserving sustainable ways of life. For example, traditional farmers actively protect their sustainable, local practices from the intensive, transnational agribusiness model (Martinez-Alier, 2002).

Martínez Alier (2002) argues that individuals simply defending their livelihoods typically align with resource conservation and a clean environment. Although they might not identify as environmentalists and may employ different terms like "sacredness" or "sovereignty" to articulate their goals, they resist environmental destruction jeopardizing their livelihoods, culture, and survival (Martinez-Alier, 2002). People are reluctant to exchange their livelihoods for economic investments and development opportunities that offer monetary gain because certain values, such as sovereignty and sacredness, are immeasurable in

monetary terms (Martinez-Alier, 2002). For instance, some cultures value sacred places or their freedom and sovereignty more highly than money. Consequently, "poor people" often reject even the most economically lucrative projects if they jeopardize what they hold dear and what sustains their way of life (Martinez-Alier, 2002).

The environmentalism of the poor thus represents, in part, a struggle to shape the language used to assess the costs and benefits of resource extraction, gentrification, and other processes that threaten their use of the land.

5. Analysis

Climate change is no longer a distant concern but an urgent global crisis demanding immediate attention. As the world grapple with its far-reaching consequences, ethical considerations emerge as a crucial lens through which to understand the responsibilities and actions. This analysis delves into the intricate ethical dimensions of climate change, through theoretical lenses from Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" and the conceptual framework Environmentalism of the poor.

Climate change is inherently geopolitical, marked by intricate power dynamics, particularly among global north nations. The participation of industrialized nations shapes international climate negotiations, introducing a delicate balance between self-interest, often rooted in economic considerations, and empathy for the global climate crisis (Engberg-Pedersen, 2011). State governance and decision-making processes are at the heart of climate action. The challenge lies in reconciling self-interest, driven by short-term economic priorities, with empathy for the plight of vulnerable communities and future generations (Mittiga, 2022). Effective climate governance demands ethical considerations that prioritize sustainability, equity, and long-term well-being (Mittiga, 2022).

The first analysis chapter will investigate the geopolitics in the global north related to loss and damage through Adams Smith concepts self-interest, sympathy and moral rules from the theory of moral sentiments. Determining the geopolitical dynamics of climate change, as influenced by self-interest, sympathy and moral rules, will provide insight into how these

dynamics shape international negotiations, and discussions about addressing loss and damage.

5.1. The Geopolitical Landscape - determining the moral instinct

This section embarks on an exploration of how Adam Smith's ethical framework can shed light on the contemporary geopolitical landscape of climate change negotiations. By delving into key elements of the geopolitical landscape, such as the urgency of the climate crisis, international agreements like the Paris Agreement, the influence of major global players like the United States and the European Union, the demands of developing nations, and the transformative force of global climate activism, the analysis aims to unravel the moral underpinnings that shape the choices made by nations in the pursuit of a sustainable and equitable future.

The intentional actions of individuals, institutions, and nations that contribute to climate change raise significant ethical questions, and the intentional nature of these actions implies a level of responsibility for the resulting environmental harm (Jamieson, 1996). The motivations behind intentional actions that exacerbate climate change are often rooted in self-interest, and individuals and entities may prioritize short-term economic gains over environmental concerns, leading to a moral dilemma (Jamieson, 1996). The prioritization of economic interests over environmental and ethical considerations or in other words, pursuit of economic growth at the expense of the environment and future generations, is morally justifiable (Jamieson, 1996). This perspective invokes Adam Smith's notion of self-interest tempered by moral sentiments, suggesting that a balance between self-interest and moral responsibility is needed. While self-interest may drive actions that harm the environment (Jamieson, 1996), there is also a call for individuals and nations to cultivate sympathy or empathy toward the future generations and vulnerable communities disproportionately affected by climate change.

One geopolitical aspect is the disparity between the Global North and the Global South concerning contributions to climate change, since much of the historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions lies with the Global North (Jamieson, 1996). This geopolitical divide raises questions of equity and justice in addressing climate change, and is characterized by the historical and current differences in contributions to greenhouse gas

emissions, economic development, and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change (Jamieson, 1996). The question of whether they have a duty to take stronger and more immediate actions to mitigate climate change and assist vulnerable nations in the Global South is at the heart of ethical debates within international climate negotiations. International climate agreements attempt to rectify disparities by recognizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This principle acknowledges historical responsibility and varying capacities among nations to address climate change (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.).

The disparities between the Global North and Global South can lead to geopolitical implications. Geopolitical power dynamics influence climate negotiations, and major emitters from the Global North often have more influence in shaping international climate policies (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This can lead to tensions and conflicts over equity and responsibility, and also lead to Smith's self-interest concept that suggests that powerful nations act to protect their economic interests, which may conflict with the collective good. Smith's concept, sympathy, on the other hand, calls for recognizing the suffering of vulnerable nations and acting in their interest.

The current geopolitical landscape in the context of climate change negotiations is marked by a complex interplay of factors, with each element shaping the dynamics of global efforts to combat climate change. First and foremost, the sense of urgency regarding the climate crisis has reached unprecedented levels. Scientific consensus, continually reaffirmed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022), has elevated concerns to unprecedented levels and emphasizes the dire consequences of global warming, including extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecological disruptions (IPCC, 2022). It is this heightened sense of urgency that exerts substantial pressure on nations, necessitating more aggressive and immediate action in response.

This urgency is not just a matter of policy or economics; it resonates with the moral sentiment of empathy and concern. The recognition of the dire consequences of global warming, from devastating weather events to ecological upheaval, evokes a shared moral responsibility to alleviate suffering and protect the well-being of all. This aligns with Smith's

emphasis on empathy (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.) as a fundamental human trait, motivating individuals and nations to take action in the face of adversity.

Within the climate change context, the Paris Agreement occupies a linchpin of global climate action. Adopted in 2015, the Paris Agreement represents a global commitment to mitigating climate change (United Nations Climate Change A (n.d.)). Yet, the path towards its realization is not without its challenges. Progress in implementing its commitments has proven to be uneven, with numerous countries falling short of their pledged emission reduction targets (Mitchell et al., 2018). This discrepancy has led to ongoing negotiations, further complicated by the need to establish robust rules for tracking and reporting emissions. As such, the Paris Agreement finds itself at the center of international deliberations, where nations grapple with the intricacies of climate governance.

The Paris Agreement embodies principles of justice and fairness. It acknowledges historical emissions by developed nations as major contributors to the climate crisis, reflecting a moral sentiment of equity and impartiality. The agreement requires all countries to make commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while recognizing differentiated responsibilities among nations (United Nations Climate Change A (n.d.)). This commitment to fairness aligns with the moral imperative of addressing climate change in a just and equitable manner and mirrors Smith's notion of justice as an essential component of moral conduct in human interactions (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.), and underscores the ethical imperative of addressing climate change while considering historical responsibilities.

The change in U.S. leadership with President Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021 has significantly impacted global climate politics. The Biden Administration has undertaken various initiatives that have reshaped the trajectory of climate negotiations on the world stage (The White House, 2023). A notable action was the United States' renewed commitment to the Paris Agreement (Mitchell et al, 2018), signifying a deepened dedication to international climate efforts. As the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases (Mitchell et al, 2018), this move carries significant moral weight. It aligns with the principles of moral responsibility and duty as outlined in Adam Smith's philosophy. Historically, the United States has been a major contributor to the climate crisis due to its substantial

emissions (Mitchell et al, 2018). The decision to rejoin the Paris Agreement acknowledges this historical contribution and underscores a moral imperative to rectify past actions. This aligns with the concept of moral obligation and the idea that moral conduct involves correcting past wrongs.

Furthermore, the commitment to ambitious emissions reduction targets reflects a moral obligation to protect the planet for present and future generations. Adam Smith's philosophy places importance on acting in the best interests of future generations (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.), and setting such targets resonates with this principle. Addressing climate change transcends national interests; it is a global imperative that aligns with the idea that moral duty extends to actions that promote the welfare of all. In this context, the United States' commitment embodies the pursuit of the greater good, as emphasized by Adam Smith's philosophy. Lastly, the U.S. commitment to climate action highlights the significance of international cooperation and leadership. Smith's theory underscores the importance of influential actors taking a leadership role in promoting moral conduct (Butler, 2011). By rejoining the Paris Agreement and setting ambitious goals, the United States assumes a leadership role in the global effort to combat climate change, aligning with Smith's concept of moral duty and responsibility. Therefore the United States' actions in the realm of climate change reflect moral principles of responsibility, duty, and the pursuit of the greater good, echoing the ethical dimensions present in Adam Smith's philosophy and emphasizing the importance of addressing climate change as a global moral imperative.

The European Union (EU) stands at the forefront of global climate action, marked by its unwavering commitment to ambitious emissions reduction targets and the embrace of sustainable energy practices (Delbeke & Vis, 2015). The EU's steadfast dedication, notably encapsulated in the European Green Deal, wields significant influence over global climate discussions and exerts pressure on other major economies (Delbeke & Vis, 2015). The EU's pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, relative to 1990 levels (Delbeke & Vis, 2015), exemplifies its proactive approach to addressing climate change and sets a benchmark inspiring others to elevate their climate commitments.

Participation in international climate negotiations further enhances the EU's global influence. Its ambitious climate goals and active engagement in forums like UN climate

conferences serve as a model for other nations, shaping the direction of global climate policy and fostering greater cooperation and ambition. Moreover, the European Union's leadership in global climate action extends beyond policy commitments; it embodies the strategic application of soft power diplomacy and the exercise of moral influence on the world stage (Delbeke & Vis, 2015). By committing to ambitious emission reduction targets and embracing sustainable practices, the EU not only sets a moral example but also employs a sophisticated form of diplomacy that aligns with Adam Smith's principles.

Firstly, the EU's commitment to ambitious emission reduction targets underscores the moral dimension of its leadership. By taking proactive steps to combat climate change, the EU signals to the world that it sees addressing the environmental crisis as a moral imperative. This aligns with Smith's idea that moral sentiments (Butler, 2011), such as concern for the well-being of others, can guide collective actions for the betterment of society. Furthermore, the EU's emphasis on sustainable practices and green technologies highlights the economic opportunities inherent in addressing climate change (Delbeke & Vis, 2015). This approach not only showcases the EU's commitment to moral principles but also reflects an understanding of the economic benefits that can result from transitioning to a sustainable and low-carbon economy. Smith's philosophy recognizes the role of self-interest in human behavior, and the EU's approach aligns with the idea that addressing climate change can bring economic advantages, making it a more appealing proposition for other nations.

Soft power diplomacy, as exercised by the EU (Delbeke & Vis, 2015), involves influencing others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. By leading by example and offering a model of climate leadership, the EU seeks to persuade other nations to follow suit. This approach aligns with Smith's belief in the power of moral persuasion as tool for shaping collective actions. It emphasizes that leading through moral principles can inspire others to act in a similar manner. Based on the above, the European Union's leadership in global climate action embodies the principles of moral influence, soft power diplomacy, and recognition of the economic opportunities in addressing climate change. It aligns with Adam Smith's philosophy by demonstrating the potential of moral persuasion and self-interest to guide collective efforts for the betterment of society and the global community. The EU's actions not only set an example but also highlight the moral and economic imperatives of addressing the climate crisis on the global stage.

Developing nations, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, face distinct challenges in climate negotiations (Mitchell et al., 2023). They argue that historical emissions by developed nations have been the primary contributors to the current crisis and call for financial assistance, technology transfer, and capacity-building support to address climate change effectively (Mitchell et al., 2023).

This is linked to the issue of climate finance remaining a crucial point of contention in negotiations. Developing countries seek increased financial support from developed nations to adapt to climate impacts and transition to clean energy (Mitchell et al., 2023). Climate finance commitments have often fallen short of expectations, leading to frustration and strained negotiations (Mitchell et al., 2023). The pleas from developing nations for financial support in the context of climate change negotiations carry profound ethical dimensions. These appeals are deeply rooted in principles of justice, fairness, and moral responsibility, echoing Adam Smith's ideas on ethical obligations and benevolence in human interactions.

The historical context evokes a sense of moral responsibility and duty among developed nations to assist those disproportionately affected by climate change. Smith's philosophy underscores the importance of moral obligations (Butler, 2011), particularly in situations where one party has benefited at the expense of another. The ethical appeal made by developing nations seeks to rectify historical injustices and imbalances. It calls for a fair and just approach to addressing climate change's impacts, especially on vulnerable populations. This aligns with Smith's emphasis on justice and fairness as essential components of moral conduct in human interactions. The developing nations' appeal underscores the need for equitable solutions that consider the well-being of all, reflecting Smith's concept of benevolence toward fellow humans.

Furthermore, these appeals highlight the moral imperative of solidarity and cooperation in addressing global challenges. Developing nations are not merely seeking assistance; they are emphasizing the shared responsibility of the global community in mitigating the impacts of climate change (Newell et al., 2021). This sense of collective responsibility resonates with Smith's view that individuals and nations are guided by moral sentiments that promote the common good and the welfare of all (Adam Smith Institute, n.d.).

The ethical considerations embedded in developing nations' pleas for support in climate change negotiations align with Adam Smith's principles of moral responsibility, justice, fairness, and benevolence. They emphasize the need for a just and equitable approach to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change, reflecting the moral dimensions of global efforts to combat this pressing issue.

Global climate activism, championed by movements such as Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future, has emerged as a formidable and transformative force that transcends geographical and demographic boundaries (Bugden, 2020). It has mobilized an unprecedented number of individuals worldwide, igniting a global awakening to the pressing issue of climate change. One of the most significant impacts of this activism has been its ability to amplify concerns about climate change. Through innovative and attention-grabbing protests and demonstrations (Bugden, 2020), these movements have effectively communicated the imminent dangers posed by climate change. This has resonated deeply with people from all walks of life, transcending political and societal divides, and highlighting the urgency of the climate crisis.

Importantly, climate activism has translated into concrete changes in government policies and priorities. The sheer weight of public demand for action has compelled governments to reevaluate their climate strategies and adopt more ambitious policies. Policymakers are increasingly recognizing the need to align with the expectations of their constituents and the global community (Bugden, 2020). Another crucial aspect is the role of climate activism in fostering political accountability. Activists and concerned citizens are closely monitoring government responses, demanding transparency, and holding leaders accountable for their climate commitments (Bugden, 2020). Furthermore, climate activism has encouraged leaders to take more ambitious measures to combat climate change. This realization has led to a virtuous cycle of leaders vying to showcase their commitment to climate action (Bugden, 2020). Lastly, climate activism has promoted global collaboration and solidarity. Recognizing the interconnected nature of the climate crisis, these movements have transcended national borders (Mitchell et al., 2023), creating a sense of shared purpose and a global movement for climate action. In a world where climate challenges demand collective efforts, climate activism has played a vital role in encouraging international cooperation.

Looking at climate activism through the lens of Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments provides a deeper understanding of how climate activism taps into fundamental human values, driving individuals to work collectively for the greater good.

Climate activists leverage the notion of moral sentiments by framing climate action as a moral duty to future generations. Concern for the well-being of others, even those yet to be born, is a universal human value that unites people across geographical and demographic differences. Furthermore, the climate activists probably use the idea of the invisible hand to present climate change as a matter that should concern everybody. Taking action to combat climate change aligns with the invisible hands sense of justice and empathy, as it prevents harm to both current and future generations. Also Climate activists effectively tap into the emotion of sympathy (empathy) by sharing personal stories and highlighting the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities (Bugden, 2020) and evoke sympathy and empathy from the public, nurturing a shared sense of responsibility for addressing the climate crisis. Likewise, the climate activists invoke this sense of moral responsibility by portraying climate change as a collective obligation to protect the planet and future generations (Bugden, 2020). This appeal resonates broadly, as it aligns with the shared understanding of ethical responsibilities to safeguard the environment and ensure intergenerational equity.

The above-determined geopolitical landscape in climate change negotiations reflects a mix of urgency, ambition, and challenges. While there is a growing global consensus on the need for substantial climate action, achieving meaningful progress remains a multifaceted endeavour that requires cooperation among nations with diverse interests and priorities. The moral imperatives underpin the decisions and actions taken to protect the planet and ensure the well-being of present and future generations. In an increasingly interconnected world, the moral dimension of climate negotiations is more critical than ever in fostering international cooperation and achieving meaningful progress in combating the climate crisis and Loss and Damage.

5.2. Power Imbalances and moral sentiments

This section will focus on the power imbalances and consequences among nations through the lens of Adam Smith's Theory of moral sentiments. The focus will particularly be between the

Global North and the Global South, that are central to the discourse on climate change and efforts to address its impacts. These imbalances manifest in various dimensions, including political and economic power, and climate justice.

First of all, the political power regarding the influence in International Climate Agreements. The historical emissions responsibility of the Global North is a central aspect of international climate agreements (Martins, 2020). These countries, historically responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, have played a dominant role in shaping climate agendas and outcomes (Martins, 2020). The emissions they released over decades have accumulated in the atmosphere, contributing significantly to the current climate crisis. Therefore, they bear a substantial share of the responsibility for addressing this global issue (Martins, 2020; Harlan et al., 2015). Furthermore, the Global North's political influence is often reinforced by their economic leverage. These nations possess not only the financial resources but also the financial capabilities necessary to drive climate agendas and determine the terms of international agreements (Martins, 2020). This economic advantage can lead to agreements that may not fully account for the concerns and needs of the Global South, potentially perpetuating disparities in climate action.

The decisions made by the Global North in international climate negotiations can also have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities in the Global South (Martins, 2020). Policies related to emissions reductions and climate finance can directly affect the ability of developing countries to adapt to climate change and achieve sustainable development (Martins, 2020). These disparities underscore the need for a more equitable approach to addressing climate change, one that recognizes historical responsibility and prioritizes the interests of the most vulnerable populations.

The presence of political power imbalances deeply entrenched within international climate negotiations has profound consequences that hinder equitable and effective climate action (Harlan et al., 2015). These structural inequities, ingrained within the decision-making processes, often grant the Global North a more substantial self interested role in shaping agendas and outcomes. Unfortunately, these imbalances undercut the fundamental principles of fairness and equity that should underpin climate negotiations, thereby perpetuating disparities. Adam Smiths concept, self-interest, is a fundamental human

motivation, and nations are no exception in seeking their own well-being (Butler, 2011). However, the challenge in international climate negotiations lies in balancing national self-interest with the broader global well-being. When the Global North prioritizes its economic interests over the well-being of the Global South in climate negotiations (Harlan et al., 2015), it raises questions about the moral principles governing international relations. This self-interested approach can lead to disparities in addressing climate change and undermine the moral standing of nations that prioritize it.

Moreover, a stark contrast in negotiating capacity is evident, with the Global North's superior financial and human resources enabling them to engage more comprehensively. They can assemble larger delegations, invest in extensive research and analysis, and embark on substantial lobbying efforts (Martins, 2020). Conversely, many countries in the Global South may lack the capacity to fully engage, placing them at a distinct disadvantage (Harlan et al., 2015). Furthermore, political alliances and interests frequently influence climate diplomacy, a pivotal element of international climate negotiations (Grabbe & Lehne, 2019). The Global North often forms diplomatic alliances to advance their positions, potentially isolating or weakening the negotiating power of developing countries (Grabbe & Lehne, 2019).

By looking at the issue through Adam Smith's concept of moral rules, it can include principles of fairness, equity, and shared global responsibility (Butler, 2011). These rules are foundational in guiding the behavior of nations in international diplomacy. In the context of climate negotiations, decisions that perpetuate disparities and hinder the Global South's ability to adapt to climate change can be seen as direct violations of these moral rules. Violating these principles can be considered not only morally unjust but also ethically unacceptable, especially in addressing an issue as globally significant as climate change.

Furthermore, in these negotiations, the Global South often encounters formidable obstacles when striving to exert meaningful influence (Martins, 2020). These power imbalances can lead to negotiations that consistently prioritize the interests of the Global North. The unequal representation within climate-related bodies can result in disparities in terms of voice and influence, with delegations from the Global North benefiting from more extensive resources and greater diplomatic leverage. This perpetuates a system where the voices of the more privileged nations hold more sway (Martins, 2020), further underscoring

the necessity for a moral reckoning and a shift toward more equitable global cooperation in addressing the urgent climate crisis.

Addressing these imbalances of political power within climate negotiations is not only crucial but a moral imperative for the attainment of climate justice (Grabbe & Lehne, 2019). Reimagining fairness and equity in climate negotiations can stand as a paramount step toward establishing a more just and effective global response to the challenges of climate change.

Second of all, going deeper into the issue of economic power imbalances in the context of climate change negotiations reveals the intricate dynamics that shape global climate action. The carbon legacy of the Global North is a critical aspect of the climate crisis, these countries, due to their historical industrialization and high emissions over the past century have left a substantial carbon legacy (Harlan et al., 2015). Their disproportionate contribution to the current levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases underscores their obligation to assume a leading role in addressing climate change (Martins, 2020). Furthermore, the economic prosperity of the Global North has been closely intertwined with the burning of fossil fuels and industrialization (Harlan et al., 2015). These activities have been significant drivers of both economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions (Harlan et al., 2015; Martins, 2020). This historical connection between economic prosperity and emissions emphasizes the ethical imperative for these nations to not only mitigate their emissions but also provide substantial support for global climate action.

An ethical perspective would require these nations to acknowledge their role in this crisis and assume a leading role in addressing climate change. While some powerful nations may express empathy and sympathy for the vulnerabilities of the Global South, there is a need to assess whether their actions align with ethical principles. This involves not only mitigating their own emissions but also providing substantial support for global climate action. The economic prosperity of the Global North is intricately linked to historical activities that drove economic growth but also resulted in high greenhouse gas emissions (Martins, 2020). Ethically, this connection could emphasize the imperative for these nations to prioritize not only emissions reduction but also the provision of support for global climate action. Sympathy for the Global South's vulnerabilities could translate into decisions that

address economic dominance and its ethical implications, ensuring a just transition to a sustainable global economy.

The economic disparities between the Global North and the Global South have profound implications for climate finance and, consequently, climate action (Martins, 2020). The affluence of the Global North grants them a distinct advantage in financing climate mitigation and adaptation efforts (Martins, 2020). They possess the resources to support clean energy transitions and invest in climate resilience projects (Martins, 2020). These economic disparities between the Global North and the Global South can lead to profound ethical implications for climate finance. While the affluence of the Global North grants them a distinct advantage in financing climate action, ethical alignment requires these nations to go beyond pledges and address disparities in the distribution and allocation of climate finance. Empathy and sympathy should lead to equitable access to resources for all nations, particularly those in the Global South.

Despite pledges to provide climate finance to developing nations, disparities persist in the distribution and allocation of funds (Martins, 2020). The Global South often grapples with challenges in accessing the financial resources required for effective climate project implementation (Martins, 2020). This limitation hampers their ability to adapt to climate impacts and transition toward sustainable, low-carbon development pathways (Martins, 2020).

Moreover, the financial advantage of the Global North can result in disparities in the implementation of climate projects and strategies. This can lead to initiatives that align more closely with the priorities and technologies of the Global North while potentially neglecting the unique needs and contexts of the Global South.

Third of all, going deeper into the dimension of climate justice and equity, it shows that it is a central theme that underpins efforts to redress power imbalances in the context of climate change negotiations within the moral and ethical imperative.

Firstly, it acknowledges the historical responsibility of the Global North for the present climate crisis due to their disproportionate emissions over time (Martins, 2020). This

moral perspective underscores the obligation of developed nations to take more significant and immediate steps to mitigate climate change (Martins, 2020).

The acknowledgment of historical responsibility and the ethical obligation to mitigate climate change, rooted in conscience, represents a profound aspect of how moral sentiments can guide nations in addressing the climate crisis. Adams Smiths concept, conscience (Butler, 2011), in this context, serves as a moral reminder of the actions and choices that have led to the climate crisis. It compels nations to reflect on the consequences of their historical emissions and to take responsibility for the harm caused to the environment and vulnerable populations. Conscience acts as a moral compass (Butler, 2011) that guides nations to do what is right, just, and ethical in the face of a global crisis. It emphasizes that it is not enough to merely acknowledge historical emissions; nations must also take actions that align with their moral duty to rectify the harm they have caused (Grabbe & Lehne, 2019).

Secondly, climate justice places a particular focus on the vulnerabilities of marginalized and disadvantaged populations, often found in the Global South (Harlan et al., 2015). Despite contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, these communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate impacts (Harlan et al., 2015). Addressing these vulnerabilities is regarded as a matter of ethical duty, highlighting the imperative for targeted actions aimed at protecting and supporting these populations (Martins, 2020). This recognition can be rooted in an ethical framework that deems such disparities as unjust. Nations, driven by empathy, acknowledge the unjust suffering and hardships endured by these communities (Harlan et al., 2015). Climate justice underscores the principle of shared responsibility. It promotes a collective approach to addressing climate change, recognizing that it is a global challenge that necessitates coordinated action from all nations, irrespective of their historical emissions or current economic status. Also, climate justice encourages a sense of solidarity and empathy between countries and peoples. It calls for recognition of the interconnectedness of the world and the need to support one another in the face of climate impacts.

Within the Global South, marginalized and vulnerable populations often bear the brunt of climate impacts (Harlan et al., 2015). However, their voices and interests may not be adequately represented in international negotiations (Harlan et al., 2015; Martins, 2020). This can lead to policies and agreements that do not fully address their needs. Furthermore, the

Global South may struggle to build the capacity needed to effectively advocate for the interests of their most vulnerable communities.

5.2.1. International climate agreements

Going further within power dynamics and moral sentiments, this section will investigate and analyse whether Global North countries exhibit empathy and sympathy toward the Global South in the context of Loss and Damage and the international agreements, but also look at specific instances, to see how power imbalances in climate negotiations have affected the prioritization of ethical considerations related to Loss and Damage, as vulnerable nations in the Global South struggle to gain recognition and support for addressing the irreversible impacts of climate change.

During the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP19) in Warsaw, there was significant contention regarding Loss and Damage. Developed countries, including the United States, were hesitant to acknowledge Loss and Damage as a separate category under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Wolfgang et al., 2013). This reluctance to formalize Loss and Damage as an integral component of climate negotiations highlighted a power imbalance, with developed nations resisting the ethical responsibility of compensating vulnerable countries for the adverse effects of climate change (Wolfgang et al., 2013). While the Paris Agreement recognized the importance of Loss and Damage and established the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, the agreement lacked a clear financial commitment for addressing Loss and Damage (Mitchell et al., 2018).

Developed countries were successful in preventing language that would have legally bound them to provide compensation for irreversible climate impacts (Mitchell et al., 2018). This outcome reflected the influence of powerful nations in shaping the agreement and diluted ethical considerations related to Loss and Damage (Mitchell et al., 2018). Their reluctance to provide adequate funding for vulnerable countries affected by climate-related disasters can be seen as driven by self-interest and a lack of sympathy for the suffering of the developing nations in the global south. This power imbalance leads to a failure in prioritizing ethical obligations to compensate for the damage caused.

The Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) is a crucial component of international climate governance, aiming to address the increasingly evident and devastating impacts of climate change that go beyond the scope of mitigation and adaptation efforts (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019).

The WIM was established during the 2013 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP19) held in Warsaw, Poland (United Nations Climate Change B, n.d.). It marked a significant milestone in acknowledging the limitations of mitigation and adaptation alone in addressing the impacts of climate change (United Nations Climate Change B, n.d.). Vulnerable nations, particularly those from the Global South, advocated for a mechanism dedicated explicitly to addressing loss and damage caused by climate change, acknowledging that some effects are irreversible and cannot be adapted to (United Nations Climate Change B, n.d.).

Mitigation efforts focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent further climate change, while adaptation measures aim to minimize the impacts that are already occurring (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019). However, there are instances where the effects of climate change are so severe that they result in loss and damage that cannot be mitigated or adapted to (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019). This includes events like extreme weather disasters, sea-level rise, and loss of biodiversity.

Adam Smith's theory of self-interest posits that individuals, acting in their rational self-interest, collectively contribute to the betterment of society as a whole. When applied to the WIM, this concept suggests that nations, acting in their national self-interest, may find benefits in supporting the mechanism. Nations have a stake in global stability and avoiding conflicts that may arise from climate-induced displacement and resource scarcity. By contributing to the WIM and assisting vulnerable nations, countries can mitigate the potential global destabilization caused by climate-related loss and damage. Self-interest often revolves around economic prosperity. Climate impacts can disrupt global supply chains, affect markets, and lead to financial losses. Contributing to the WIM can be seen as an investment in safeguarding economic interests by ensuring the stability of global systems. Nations also have an interest in their global reputation and soft power. Being proactive in addressing loss and damage demonstrates leadership and ethical responsibility, potentially enhancing a country's standing in the international community.

One of the core principles underpinning the WIM is the concept of climate justice and equity. Vulnerable countries argue that they bear a disproportionate burden of climate impacts despite contributing the least to global emissions. The WIM is seen as a means to address this inequity by assisting those who are most affected but have the least capacity to cope (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019). The WIM serves as a platform for climate negotiations where discussions on loss and damage take place. It provides a forum for vulnerable nations to voice their concerns and seek support from industrialized nations, recognizing the historical responsibility of the latter in emitting greenhouse gases (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019).

The mechanism encourages transparency and dialogue among nations, fostering a sense of shared responsibility in addressing loss and damage (United Nations Climate Change B, n.d.). An essential aspect of the WIM is the provision of financial support to vulnerable countries affected by loss and damage. This includes funding for disaster risk reduction, insurance mechanisms, and compensation for loss of livelihoods and infrastructure (ibid). Financial assistance is a tangible way for developed countries to express solidarity and help vulnerable nations in their time of need.

Adam Smith's concept of sympathy, or empathy, suggests that individuals have an innate ability to understand and share the feelings of others (Butler, 2011). In relation to international relations and the WIM, sympathy underscores the moral imperative to assist vulnerable nations suffering from climate-related loss and damage. Sympathy implies that nations, particularly those historically responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, have an ethical obligation to assist those who are disproportionately affected. The WIM embodies this ethical dimension by providing a platform for empathy and solidarity (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019). Sympathy can foster international cooperation by promoting a sense of shared responsibility. When nations empathize with the suffering of others, they are more likely to collaborate in finding effective solutions, including financial support and capacity building through the WIM. Recognizing the suffering of vulnerable nations and taking action through the WIM can contribute to long-term global stability. Climate change poses a threat to social, political, and economic systems, and addressing loss and damage is essential for avoiding humanitarian crises that could have far-reaching consequences.

The intersection of self-interest and sympathy within the context of the WIM illustrates that actions driven by self-interest can align with moral imperatives. Nations may initially engage with the mechanism due to their self-interest in global stability, economic protection, and reputation enhancement. However, as they participate and witness the real suffering of vulnerable communities, empathy can grow, strengthening their commitment to the mechanism's objectives.

While self-interest may drive nations to engage with the mechanism initially, the moral imperative of sympathy underscores the ethical obligation to assist vulnerable nations facing climate-related loss and damage. This intersection of self-interest and sympathy can lead to a more equitable and cooperative approach to addressing the impacts of climate change on a global scale. It underscores that addressing climate-related loss and damage is not just a technical challenge but a multifaceted endeavor that involves navigating the intricate web of global politics, economic interests, and ethical imperatives.

One of the outcomes as well, is the recognition of the geopolitical tightrope that climate governance walks. Geopolitical dynamics significantly influence how nations engage with mechanisms like the WIM. Major emitters, often geopolitically influential, can shape international climate policies, leading to tensions and conflicts over equity and responsibility. This influence can sometimes overshadow the ethical imperative of sympathy.

However, it can also lead to that geopolitics can be harnessed for positive change. Diplomatic negotiations and international agreements can leverage geopolitical interests to achieve common climate goals. For example, the Paris Agreement brought together nations with diverse geopolitical interests under a common framework, illustrating that self-interest and global cooperation can coexist (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.).

Sympathy, as a moral and ethical principle, remains central to climate governance. It signifies the global recognition that climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable nations and communities (ibid). However, sympathy is not a mere sentiment but a driving force behind international climate commitments. It invokes a sense of responsibility among nations to assist those who suffer the most from climate-related loss and damage. The challenge lies in maintaining and strengthening this sense of sympathy despite geopolitical power struggles. It

requires fostering a global consciousness that transcends national interests and fosters a genuine commitment to helping others in need.

The dynamics underscores that climate governance is, at its core, a balancing act. Nations must balance their self-interest, which often revolves around economic growth and security, with the ethical imperative of sympathy. Striking this balance is not easy, but it is essential for effective climate action. Geopolitical dynamics can either facilitate or hinder this balance. Major emitters from the Global North must acknowledge their historical responsibility and leverage their geopolitical influence to support vulnerable nations. At the same time, developing nations from the Global South must engage constructively, emphasizing their unique vulnerabilities and needs.

Going further looking at the Paris Agreement, which was established in 2015 (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.) nations' self-interest is evident in their participation in the Paris Agreement. The agreement's primary goal is to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with an aspirational target of 1.5°C. (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). The rationale behind this goal is to avoid catastrophic climate impacts that could disrupt economies, lead to extreme weather events, and threaten food security (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This suggests that nations, especially those with strong economies, have a vested self-interest in preventing these consequences as they recognize that unchecked climate change poses risks to their national interests, including economic stability and public health. Therefore, their participation in the agreement aligns with self-preservation and safeguarding their citizens' well-being.

The concept of sympathy can be reflected in the Paris Agreement's acknowledgement of the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable and developing nations (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). While self-interest may drive some countries to act, sympathy plays a role in recognizing the suffering and vulnerabilities of others. The agreement's inclusion of the 1.5°C target demonstrates empathy for nations and communities that are already experiencing severe climate-related impacts. It acknowledges the need to prevent further harm and is a testament to the global community's sympathy toward those most affected by climate change.

The Paris Agreement is grounded in moral principles, including equity, responsibility, and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This moral framework acknowledges historical emissions by developed nations and their moral obligation to take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It recognizes that not all countries share the same responsibility for causing climate change or have the same capacity to address it (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This moral rule guides the distribution of responsibilities and contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, emphasizing fairness and historical accountability (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.).

Climate finance is a crucial component of the Paris Agreement (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d; Sinan, 2021), and embodies both self-interest and moral rules. This translates as the developed nations contribute to climate finance out of self-interest, as they recognize that supporting developing nations in reducing emissions and adapting to climate impacts is essential for global stability. However, this contribution is also guided by moral principles, as developed nations have a historical responsibility to assist those disproportionately affected by climate change. The allocation of climate finance reflects a moral commitment to address the global climate crisis collectively.

Geopolitical power dynamics can be seen to influence the Paris Agreement's negotiation process and its implementation. Major emitters, often geopolitically influential nations, play a significant role in shaping international climate policies (Grabbe & Lehne, 2019). These dynamics can lead to tensions over equity and responsibility. The self-interest of powerful nations in protecting their economic interests can sometimes clash with the sympathy and moral rules espoused in the agreement. However, the Paris Agreement's framework attempts to strike a balance by encouraging collective action while respecting historical responsibility and varying capacities.

In translation the Paris Agreement represents a complex interplay of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules in addressing the global climate crisis. While self-interest motivates nations to protect their own interests and economies, sympathy drives acknowledgment of the suffering of vulnerable communities. Moral rules, particularly the principle of equity, guide the allocation of responsibilities and resources. Geopolitical

dynamics further shape the negotiation landscape, emphasizing the need to balance these motivations and values for effective global climate cooperation. The 1.5°C target in the agreement (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.) exemplifies this balance, as it aims to prevent catastrophic climate impacts while showing empathy toward the most vulnerable.

Moral rules, particularly the principle of equity, can underpin the Paris Agreement. It recognizes historical responsibility for emissions and differential capabilities among nations (United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This moral framework guides the distribution of responsibilities and financial contributions, emphasizing fairness and historical accountability. The agreement's commitment to climate finance aligns with these moral rules, addressing the ethical dimension of climate action.

Also the Paris Agreement incorporates mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Nations are required to submit nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and report on their progress transparently. This ensures that self-interest is coupled with a commitment to take concrete actions, aligning with the agreement's objectives.

It also represents a remarkable achievement in global cooperation. It brings together nations with diverse interests, and while self-interest is a driving force, the agreement's core goal is to prevent catastrophic climate change impacts that threaten all nations. This collective endeavor reflects a sense of shared responsibility and sympathy for the well-being of the planet and future generations.

In essence, the above outcome demonstrates that the Paris Agreement's success lies in its ability to navigate the complex interplay of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules. It acknowledges the realities of international politics and power dynamics while upholding a moral commitment to address the global climate crisis. The outcome of this delicate balance is a framework that strives to limit global warming, support vulnerable nations, and foster global solidarity in the face of one of humanity's most pressing challenges.

In general, looking at the geopolitical dynamics within the Paris Agreement and the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) through the lens of Adam Smith's concepts of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules provides insights into the motivations and behaviours of nations in addressing climate change.

Self-interest, a fundamental aspect of Smith's theory (Butler, 2011), is evident as nations advocate for positions that best serve their economic and political interests within climate negotiations. Developed nations, often located in the Global North, prioritize emissions reduction to safeguard their economic stability and competitiveness (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019; United Nations Climate Change A, n.d.). This aligns with their self-interest, as it can minimize potential economic disruptions caused by climate change. Conversely, developing nations, primarily in the Global South, emphasize adaptation and compensation for loss and damage, reflecting their self-interest in safeguarding vulnerable populations and economic assets from climate impacts.

However, it is within the realm of sympathy, as understood by Smith (Butler, 2011), that the call for empathy and recognition of shared responsibility is observed. Vulnerable nations, particularly in the Global South, appeal to the sympathy of historically high-emitting nations in the Global North. They ask these nations to empathize with the suffering and challenges faced by vulnerable communities due to historical emissions. This appeal to sympathy invokes a sense of moral duty and ethical obligation to assist those most affected by climate change.

The moral rules, guided by principles of equity and justice, underpin international climate negotiations. The principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" reflects the moral rule of historical responsibility. It emphasizes the moral obligation of historically high-emitting nations to take more substantial actions in mitigating climate change and assisting vulnerable nations. This moral rule guides discussions on how the burden of addressing climate change should be shared and how the historical emissions of the Global North should translate into support for the Global South.

The climate finance, a critical component of climate agreements, is influenced by self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules. Nations contribute to climate finance partly out of self-interest, recognizing the potential global economic repercussions of unchecked climate impacts. Additionally, contributions can enhance a nation's international reputation and diplomatic influence. However, contributions also reflect sympathy or empathy toward vulnerable nations. Developed nations may feel a moral duty to assist those most affected by climate change, recognizing the suffering and vulnerability of these nations. Moral rules,

rooted in notions of fairness and responsibility, guide climate finance contributions, reflecting the recognition of historical emissions as a moral imperative.

Geopolitical power dynamics significantly shape climate governance. Major emitters wield substantial influence in shaping international climate policies. These dynamics can lead to tensions and conflicts over equity and responsibility. The concepts of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules intersect within these dynamics. Major emitters assert their self-interest in shaping climate policies, but vulnerable nations appeal to their empathy, urging them to consider the consequences of their emissions on the most affected regions. Moral rules related to equitable burden-sharing and responsibility play a role in shaping negotiations, guiding discussions on how major emitters should be held accountable and the extent to which they should assist vulnerable nations.

Going further looking at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow (COP26) witnessed debates over Loss and Damage financing (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). Despite calls from vulnerable nations for increased financial support to address Loss and Damage, developed countries remained resistant to making concrete commitments (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). Power imbalances in financial negotiations led to inadequate funding for addressing the ethical dimensions of Loss and Damage (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). In the context of the COP26 discussions on loss and damage, Adam Smith's concepts of justice and conscience, as outlined in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, offers insights into the ethical dimensions of addressing climate change impacts. Smith's theory focuses on the role of justice and conscience in shaping moral judgments and guiding human behaviour (Butler, 2011).

In the COP26 context, the urgent calls for addressing loss and damage can be seen as a reflection of the collective conscience of nations and communities. Vulnerable countries and climate activists appeal to the moral sensibilities of the global community, emphasizing the moral imperative to assist those adversely affected by climate change. The urgent calls to address loss and damage resonate with Smith's idea that conscience operates at both the individual and collective levels. Vulnerable nations and climate activists are invoking a shared moral imperative that transcends national interests. They appeal to the global community's collective conscience, emphasizing the moral duty to assist those suffering from climate change impacts. When individuals witness the suffering of others, they

often experience a moral sentiment that drives them to take action. Similarly, the vivid and distressing images of climate-related disasters, such as floods and wildfires, evoke empathetic responses from people worldwide. This collective empathy becomes a driving force behind the demands for action on loss and damage. Vulnerable communities and activists seek to evoke moral sentiments that lead to greater support and assistance, drawing on Smith's belief that conscience is deeply influenced by our capacity to empathize with the suffering of others.

In the case of COP26, discussions on loss and damage underscore the moral responsibility of nations, particularly those with historically high emissions. The moral imperative to provide financial assistance and support to vulnerable countries is rooted in the belief that nations, like individuals, should act in accordance with their conscience and ethical principles. In the COP26 negotiations, appeals to address loss and damage are framed within the context of shared global values, such as justice, fairness, and compassion (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). Vulnerable nations and climate activists argue that assisting those affected by climate change is not just a matter of financial assistance but also a reflection of the world's shared moral values (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021).

Looking at the outcome through the lens of conscience from the Theory of moral sentiments, one particular outcome from COP26 is interesting and relevant to investigate further.

Creation of the Glasgow Financial Facility for Loss and Damage, which is a proposal and discussion surrounding the establishment of a "Glasgow financial facility for loss and damage" reflect the moral conscience of vulnerable nations (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). This initiative sought dedicated financing to assist those most affected by climate change (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). It aligns with the idea that conscience urges individuals and, in this case, nations to take moral action by providing financial support to vulnerable communities.

The proposal to establish the "Glasgow financial facility for loss and damage" stands out as a beacon of moral responsibility within the COP26 negotiations. It underscores the acute awareness of vulnerable nations regarding the moral imperative to address the suffering caused by climate change.

This initiative represents a collective conscience among these nations, who, despite facing their own climate challenges, recognize the urgent need to assist those most

severely affected. It reflects a spirit of global solidarity in which nations are driven by their conscience to support and uplift the most vulnerable. By advocating for dedicated financing (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021), vulnerable nations are elevating the moral dimension of climate negotiations. They are emphasizing that conscience should guide nations not only in setting emissions reduction targets but also in providing concrete assistance to those who bear the brunt of climate impacts.

Importantly, the call for dedicated financing acknowledges historical responsibility for climate change (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). Vulnerable nations are, in effect, calling on historically major emitters to recognize their role in causing loss and damage and to act accordingly (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021), aligning with Smith's concept of conscience urging individuals to rectify harm.

However, the fact that this proposal gained momentum and garnered support from a coalition of developing countries, including the G77 + China (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021), is a symbol of progress in recognizing the moral dimensions of climate action. It showcases how conscience can influence collective decision-making on the global stage. The creation of the "Glasgow financial facility for loss and damage" exemplifies how the concept of conscience, as articulated by Adam Smith, can play a significant role in shaping the moral response of nations in addressing the impacts of climate change. It signifies a growing recognition that conscience should guide both individual and collective actions in the face of a global crisis.

Also Smith's theory acknowledges that individuals' moral sentiments are influenced by their past actions and behaviors. Similarly, discussions on loss and damage at COP26 revolve around the historical responsibility of developed nations for their significant contributions to greenhouse gas emissions (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). This historical context shapes the moral obligations and conscience of developed countries, who are called upon to take responsibility for the impacts of their past actions. Smith's philosophy underscores the significance of justice and fairness in moral judgments. The debates at COP26 concerning financial support for loss and damage can be framed as matters of justice. Developing nations argue that it is morally just for wealthier countries, which bear historical responsibility for climate change, to provide financial assistance to mitigate the suffering caused by climate-

related disasters (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). This argument aligns with Smith's concept of a sense of justice as a fundamental aspect of human conscience.

Smith's theory also allows us to explore the idea of compensation and reparation in the context of loss and damage. Vulnerable nations often frame their demands for financial support as a form of compensation for the harm caused by climate change (Schalatek & Roberts, 2021). This aligns with Smith's notion that individuals or nations with a guilty conscience may seek to make amends for their past actions or negligence.

Despite the lack of funding for loss and damage at COP26 from developed countries, the Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon pledged of financial assistance (£2 million) to address loss and damage (Lo, 2022), while relatively modest, serves as an example of a moral response to the urgent issue. It illustrates how political leaders can be influenced by moral sentiments to take action in support of vulnerable nations, aligning with the concept of conscience.

However, while Nicola Sturgeon's pledge of £2 million to address loss and damage at COP26 (Lo, 2022) signifies political leadership and moral responsibility, it is important to note that it is just one of many steps that can be taken to address this complex issue (Plumer et al., 2022). Even though the financial commitment may be relatively modest compared to the scale of the issue, it carries significant moral weight. It sets a precedent for other political leaders and nations to consider their own moral obligations in addressing loss and damage. Moreover, Sturgeon's pledge is not merely a financial commitment; it reflects empathy and solidarity with vulnerable nations. It highlights the moral dimensions of climate action and suggests that political leaders can be motivated by their conscience to alleviate the suffering of others. Nevertheless, it's important to recognize that while Sturgeon's pledge may influence discussions on loss and damage finance, it represents just one aspect of the broader conversation. It underscores the moral aspects of the issue, but the practicalities of financing mechanisms and policy implementation remain significant challenges.

Sturgeon's pledge aligns with the growing public awareness of climate change and ethical issues. However, it also underscores the increasing scrutiny and accountability that political leaders face regarding their responses to climate-related challenges.

By that saying, Nicola Sturgeon's pledge serves as a notable example of political leaders being influenced by moral sentiments to address loss and damage. However, it should be viewed as one piece of a complex puzzle, with broader discussions and actions required to comprehensively tackle this urgent global issue. Also Denmark took the pioneering step of committing funds specifically for Loss and Damage (Lo, 2022). This involved an allocation of 100 million DKK (equivalent to \$14.1 million) to bolster resilience and aid recovery among climate-affected communities. Additionally, the government of the Belgian region of Wallonia pledged 1 million Euro (around \$1.05 million) for administrative support in this area (Lo, 2022). Denmark and the Belgian region of Wallonia's commitment to allocate funds specifically for Loss and Damage serves as a clear instance where power imbalances didn't affect the prioritization of ethical considerations. These actions reflect a commitment to ethical principles and recognition of the moral imperative to support climate-affected communities. The notion of pledging had long been resisted by the United States and other affluent nations due to concerns about potential legal liability stemming from the greenhouse gas emissions fueling climate change (Plumer et al., 2022).

Denmark and Wallonia's decisions can be understood as rooted in moral responsibility, climate justice, solidarity, and leadership and accountability. On the other hand, the resistance of well-off nations, including the United States, to providing direct funding for Loss and Damage reveals a different perspective. Their reluctance can be attributed to concerns related to legal liability, economic interests, geopolitical power, and short-term interests. The actions of Denmark and Wallonia illustrate that ethical considerations related to Loss and Damage can take precedence, even in the face of power imbalances. Resistance from well-off nations highlights concerns about legal liability, economic interests, and geopolitical power dynamics. The varying responses to Loss and Damage initiatives reflect the complex interplay of ethical, legal, economic, and geopolitical factors in global climate negotiations.

The G77, a coalition encompassing more than 130 developing countries, advocated for the establishment of a financial mechanism to assist victims of climate-induced disasters during COP26. However, developed countries staunchly resisted providing direct funding for this,

driven by the desire to evade the responsibility and potential legal repercussions arising from climate-vulnerable nations suing them (Plumer et al., 2022).

The G77's advocacy for a financial mechanism to assist climate-induced disaster victims during COP26 serves as a notable instance where power imbalances did not deter the prioritization of ethical considerations related to Loss and Damage. This initiative underscores a commitment to ethical principles, particularly climate justice and solidarity with vulnerable communities. The resistance from developed countries, despite the G77's efforts, can be attributed to various factors. Firstly, concerns about potential legal repercussions and financial liability played a significant role. Well-off nations may fear being held legally responsible for the climate-induced disasters, leading to substantial financial claims. Secondly, these nations may prioritize their own economic interests and financial stability. Acknowledging Loss and Damage could result in substantial financial commitments, impacting their economies and industries. Lastly, there might be geopolitical power dynamics at play. Wealthier nations may resist the G77's proposals to maintain their dominance in international climate negotiations and avoid yielding to demands from developing countries.

Furthermore, one of the central ethical considerations related to Loss and Damage is the question of liability and compensation. Vulnerable nations have argued that historically high emitters should bear responsibility for the damages they have caused (Plumer et al., 2022). However, developed countries have been reluctant to acknowledge liability and provide compensation, citing legal and economic concerns. This ongoing disagreement reflects power imbalances that hinder progress on ethical aspects of Loss and Damage.

At COP27 the creation of a dedicated Loss and Damage Fund indicates the continuing influence of vulnerable countries and climate justice movements (United Nations C, 2022). It reflects their persistence in pushing for financial support to respond to loss and damage resulting from climate disasters (United Nations C, 2022). The agreement to provide loss and damage funding for vulnerable countries affected by climate disasters can be analyzed through the concept of virtue from Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. Virtue, as presented by Smith, encompasses moral qualities such as empathy, conscience, and justice (Butler, 2011).

The establishment of a dedicated fund and new funding arrangements to assist developing countries in responding to loss and damage reflects a sense of conscience. Governments at COP27 showed a commitment to supporting those in distress and demonstrated a willingness to help communities whose lives and livelihoods have been adversely affected by climate change. This aligns with Smith's concept of conscience as a virtue guiding individuals and nations to seek the well-being of others.

The COP27 outcome emphasizes justice by recognizing the need to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and by strengthening action to cut greenhouse gas emissions (United Nations C, 2022). This reflects a commitment to addressing the impacts of climate change and upholding a sense of fairness and impartiality. The decisions made during COP27 aim to ensure that nations take responsibility for their contributions to climate change and rectify historical and current disparities (United Nations C, 2022). Justice, as a virtue, plays a pivotal role in shaping these actions. The increased prominence of young people and stakeholders in climate action, as well as the commitment to empower them, reflects in Smith's concept of moral sentiments. By engaging with and listening to young people's solutions and incorporating them into decision-making, COP27 underscores the importance of incorporating diverse voices and perspectives to drive inclusive climate action (United Nations C, 2022). This resonates with the idea of moral engagement with all stakeholders in the pursuit of a common goal.

The COP27 outcome aligns with the virtues of empathy, conscience, and justice as outlined in Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. The decision to provide loss and damage funding demonstrates a moral engagement with the suffering of vulnerable communities and a commitment to addressing climate change in a just and well-being manner. It also emphasizes the importance of engaging all stakeholders in climate action, in line with the principles of moral sentiments.

One of the prominent challenges associated with the Loss and Damage fund is the need to ensure that it genuinely provides "new, additional, predictable, and adequate financial resources." This aligns with Smith's virtue of conscience, promoting the well-being of others. The challenge here is to guarantee that the fund's resources are indeed additional and do not divert funds from other essential areas, such as humanitarian aid (Hill, 2023).

The proposal to use Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), which is an international reserve asset created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to supplement the official reserves of its member countries, as a potential funding source for loss and damage finance (Hill, 2023) represents an application of the virtue of prudence. Smith's prudence encourages wise and careful decision-making. The challenge is to navigate the complexities and restrictions surrounding SDRs to mobilize additional finance while ensuring that it aligns with the principle of prudence.

Another suggestion involves employing debt forgiveness as a means of loss and damage finance (Hill, 2023). This aligns with Smith's virtue of justice, encompassing the ideals of fairness and equity. Debt-for-climate swaps aim to deliver justice by alleviating the financial burdens faced by climate-vulnerable nations. However, addressing complexities and weighing trade-offs, including achieving consensus among creditors, encompassing both public and private entities (Hill, 2023), presents the challenge of identifying a just and equitable solution within the confines of financial systems.

Minimizing fragmentation in the delivery of loss and damage finance is a challenge that connects with Smith's virtue of justice. Justice, in this context, involves ensuring that the distribution of funds is fair and equitable. To minimize fragmentation, the proposal to deliver finance through government systems and budgets aligns with the principle of justice. It aims to provide a just and efficient way for smaller and vulnerable countries to access funds. However, the challenge lies in resisting pressures for carve-outs and political favoritism, which could undermine the principles of justice.

5.2.2. Findings summarized

Examining the dynamics of power imbalances among nations concerning climate change, Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" provides a valuable perspective. These imbalances are particularly evident between the Global North and the Global South, central to the discourse on climate change and efforts to address its impacts.

The power imbalances in climate change negotiations, particularly between the Global North and the Global South, are marked by disparities in both political and economic influence. The Global North, historically responsible for a substantial share of emissions, wields significant political influence, shaping international climate agendas. These imbalances can result in policies that may not fully address the needs of the Global South, perpetuating

disparities in climate action. The consequences of these power imbalances are significant. The Global North's self-interested approach can lead to disparities in climate action and questions about the moral principles governing international relations. Furthermore, differences in negotiating capacity and unequal representation in climate-related bodies further strengthen the Global North's influence. Economic power imbalances are also prominent, with the Global North's historical emissions tying them to a substantial carbon legacy. Their economic prosperity, closely linked to fossil fuels, emphasizes their ethical obligation to support global climate action. However, disparities in climate finance distribution persist, limiting the Global South's ability to adapt to climate impacts and transition to sustainable development.

Climate justice principles underpin efforts to rectify these imbalances. They emphasize historical responsibility and the ethical duty to protect marginalized and disadvantaged populations, especially in the Global South. The principle of shared responsibility calls for global cooperation to address the interconnected challenges of climate change.

In the context of international climate negotiations, there is a dynamic interplay of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules among nations. Self-interest is a driving force as nations advocate for positions that align with their economic and political interests. Developed nations prioritize emissions reduction to safeguard their economic stability and competitiveness, while developing nations emphasize adaptation and compensation for loss and damage to protect vulnerable populations and economic assets.

Sympathy comes into play as vulnerable nations, particularly in the Global South, appeal to historically high-emitting nations in the Global North. They seek empathy and recognition of shared responsibility, asking developed nations to understand the suffering and challenges faced by vulnerable communities due to historical emissions. This appeal invokes a sense of moral duty and ethical obligation to assist those most affected by climate change.

Moral rules, guided by principles of equity and justice, underpin international climate negotiations. The principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" emphasizes the moral obligation of historically high-emitting nations to take substantial actions in mitigating climate change and assisting vulnerable nations.

These moral rules guide discussions on how the burden of addressing climate change should be shared and how the historical emissions of the Global North should translate into support for the Global South.

Climate finance, a critical component of climate agreements, is influenced by self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules. Nations contribute to climate finance partly out of self-interest, recognizing the potential global economic repercussions of unchecked climate impacts and enhancing their international reputation and diplomatic influence. However, contributions also reflect sympathy or empathy toward vulnerable nations, driven by a moral duty to assist those most affected by climate change.

Geopolitical power dynamics significantly shape climate governance, with major emitters wielding substantial influence. Within these dynamics, the concepts of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules intersect. Major emitters assert their self-interest in shaping climate policies, but vulnerable nations appeal to their empathy, urging them to consider the consequences of their emissions on the most affected regions. Moral rules related to equitable burden-sharing and responsibility play a role in shaping negotiations, guiding discussions on how major emitters should be held accountable and the extent to which they should assist vulnerable nations.

In summary, the dynamics within international climate negotiations are a complex balance of self-interest, sympathy, and moral rules. While nations often begin with self-interest in mind, the appeal to sympathy and the recognition of moral obligations guide discussions and actions, shaping global climate cooperation. The moral framework of climate agreements and the ethical imperative of addressing climate-related challenges remain central in the face of geopolitical power dynamics.

COP26 discussions highlighted the moral responsibility of historically high-emitting nations to assist those suffering from climate change. The ethical imperative for financial assistance was framed within shared global values of justice, fairness, and compassion. While some nations resisted providing direct funding for Loss and Damage due to concerns about legal liability and economic interests, others, like Scotland, Denmark and Wallonia, committed funds specifically for this purpose. This demonstrated a commitment to

ethical principles and climate justice, highlighting the complex interplay of ethical, legal, economic, and geopolitical factors in global climate negotiations.

The creation of the Glasgow Financial Facility for Loss and Damage at COP27 continued the influence of vulnerable countries and climate justice movements. It reflects a sense of conscience, justice, and a commitment to support affected communities. The funding mechanism also addressed challenges related to ensuring the resources are genuinely "new, additional, predictable, and adequate."

Ethical considerations rooted in Smith's concepts of justice, conscience, and virtue play a significant role in shaping climate action, particularly in addressing Loss and Damage. The evolving moral landscape in climate governance highlights the need for ethical action to confront climate change's impacts.

5.3. Environmentalism of the poor within power imbalances

This section will analyse the ethical implications of power imbalances, using the framework Environmentalism of the poor by Joan Martinez-Alier.

Power imbalances are a recurrent and pressing theme in contemporary discussions about global crises and environmental justice. According to Gordillo (2021), marginalized communities, particularly indigenous groups, develop deep emotional connections to their natural surroundings. However, these communities often find themselves in environmental conflicts due to power imbalances (Martinez-Alier, 2002). The emotional and affective dimensions of the environment play a pivotal role for marginalized communities. These emotional bonds go beyond sentimentality; they are integral to the cultural, spiritual, and existential identities of these communities (ibid). However, it is these very emotional connections that make them vulnerable to exploitation by more powerful actors seeking to exploit their lands and perpetuate these power imbalances.

Power imbalances often lead to environmental conflicts between marginalized communities and dominant groups (Gordillo, 2021). These conflicts, however, are not solely about resources but also about the ethical dimensions of environmental justice, which inherently involve addressing and rectifying these power imbalances. However, environmental justice advocates argue that it is unjust for powerful actors to

disproportionately benefit from environmental resources while marginalized communities bear the brunt of environmental hazards and degradation, reflecting the pervasive power imbalances at play (Gordillo, 2021).

The affective dimension of power imbalances in environmental contexts, marginalized communities establish deep emotional bonds with their natural surroundings (Martinez-Alier, 2002). These emotional connections serve as a stark contrast to the power imbalances they face, as more powerful actors often exploit and degrade their lands and environments.

However, there are arguments that prevailing development stories have exacerbated global inequalities and environmental degradation, emphasizing the need to challenge these narratives (Baskin, 2019). These state that reimagining development pathways is crucial, with a renewed focus on social and environmental justice (Baskin, 2019). This perspective highlights the transformative potential of recognizing and rectifying power imbalances.

Furthermore, when these insights are considered through the lens of environmentalism of the poor by Joan Martinez Allier, it is possible to see a convergence of themes. The framework emphasizes the marginalized communities' struggles against environmental injustices stemming from power imbalances. These communities demand fairness and equity in the distribution of environmental benefits and protection from environmental hazards, mirroring the ethical imperative highlighted by Gordillo (Gordillo, 2021). Recognizing the impact of power imbalances on ethical engagement can lead to efforts that empower these communities. It can involve giving them a more prominent role in decision-making processes, acknowledging their rights, and providing support for their environmental initiatives.

Also understanding the relationship between power imbalances and ethical engagement can fuel environmental justice movements, who can use this knowledge to highlight instances where dominant actors exploit natural resources, causing harm to vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, this understanding can also lead to calls for policy reforms that address power imbalances in environmental governance and can drive efforts to create or

amend policies that ensure fair resource distribution, accountability for environmental harm, and participation of affected communities. The recognition of power imbalances in both local and global contexts can foster greater global solidarity, but also understanding how power dynamics affect ethical engagement can lead to increased collaboration between marginalized communities and activists across borders.

Building on Baskin's perspective (Baskin, 2019), this understanding can pave the way for alternative development narratives. Acknowledging the role of power imbalances in perpetuating inequalities and environmental degradation can inspire new narratives that prioritize sustainability, social justice, and community well-being, and influence policy discussions and decision-making processes.

5.3.1. Power dynamics within the geopolitical landscape

When it comes to the geopolitical landscape, it is increasingly shaped by the complex interplay of urbanization, climate change, and social-ecological violence (Silver, 2019). Urban areas are becoming epicenters of environmental vulnerability and gentrification, leading to significant loss and damage for marginalized communities. Furthermore, climate change exacerbates these challenges, with cities experiencing the brunt of its impacts, such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise (Silver, 2019). Vulnerable communities within urban areas, often composed of low-income and minority populations, bear the disproportionate burden of these climate-related damages.

However, the historical injustices inflicted upon Indigenous communities through settler colonialism have had long-lasting consequences, including loss of land, cultural disruption, and environmental degradation (Whyte, 2018). Indigenous communities continue to experience loss and damage as a result of these historical injustices. Additionally, the exploration of gentrification within urban contexts aligns with the urban political ecology (Silver, 2019; Whyte, 2018). Gentrification frequently results in the eviction and relocation of low-income communities, pushing them towards more precarious positions within the city (Silver, 2019). This phenomenon compounds the adverse effects experienced by marginalized urban residents, magnifying their exposure to climate change impacts while simultaneously grappling with social and economic displacement (Silver, 2019).

According to the framework of environmentalism of the poor (Martinez-Allier, 2002), environmental conflicts often stem from the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. In the context of Silver (2019), it becomes evident that marginalized urban populations, typically composed of low-income and minority groups, bear the brunt of environmental burdens. These communities face the loss and damage resulting from climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events and rising temperatures, while having limited access to resources and representation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the concept of ecological distribution conflicts, central to environmentalism of the poor, is applicable in urban areas, where ecological distribution conflicts manifest as disparities in exposure to environmental hazards and unequal access to green spaces and clean air (Silver, 2019). Similarly, within the context of settler colonialism and gentrification (Whyte, 2018), Indigenous communities experience ecological distribution conflicts as their lands are historically and systematically taken away, leading to environmental degradation and loss.

Additionally, the concept of environmental justice is at the core of environmentalism of the poor (Martinez-Allier, 2002). The disproportionate impacts of environmental changes and historical injustices highlight the urgent need for environmental justice, whether it is addressing climate-related loss and damage in urban areas or rectifying the historical injustices faced by Indigenous communities, the principles of justice and equity are paramount.

However, it is essential to recognize that addressing these issues requires challenging the existing power structures and systems that perpetuate environmental injustice. The concept of political ecology (Silver, 2019) sheds light on the power imbalances within urban areas that contribute to gentrification and vulnerability to climate change impacts. Environmentalism of the poor emphasizes the agency of marginalized communities in demanding justice and equitable environmental practices (Martinez-Allier, 2002). Therefore, recognizing the agency of these communities and incorporating their voices in decision-making processes is a crucial step toward addressing loss and damage and achieving environmental justice.

Unequal power distribution is a critical factor that can lead to the uneven distribution of environmental burdens and benefits, ultimately undermining the ethical considerations related to climate justice. Silver (2019) highlights how urban areas often become epicenters of social-ecological violence, where marginalized communities bear the brunt of environmental burdens such as air pollution, extreme heat, and inadequate infrastructure (Silver, 2019). These burdens are not randomly distributed but tend to concentrate in neighborhoods with less political and economic power (Silver, 2019). This concentration is a manifestation of unequal power dynamics that enable industries and policymakers to make decisions that disproportionately affect these communities (Silver, 2019). The ethical consideration here lies in the disproportionate suffering of the less powerful (Martinez-Alier, 2002), which goes against the principles of climate justice that demand the equitable distribution of the costs of environmental degradation and climate change impacts.

Martinez-Alier's "Environmentalism of the Poor" framework (Martinez-Alier, 2002) further illuminates how marginalized communities often lack the political and economic power to influence environmental policies and decisions. They find themselves disempowered, unable to protect their interests, and prevent the inequitable distribution of environmental burdens. These communities are often excluded from decision-making processes, exacerbating the unequal power dynamic (Silver, 2022). The framework underscores the ethical imperative of providing these communities with a voice in shaping environmental policies and actions, which is a fundamental principle of climate justice.

The unequal distribution of environmental burdens is not just an unfortunate consequence of these unequal power dynamics; it is a moral issue. Climate justice calls for the fair treatment of all communities (Silver, 2019), ensuring that no group bears a disproportionate share of the environmental burdens while others enjoy the benefits. When certain communities are burdened with environmental hazards and simultaneously excluded from environmental benefits, it not only perpetuates social injustices but also contravenes ethical principles of fairness and equity. These disparities undermine the ethical foundation of climate justice, emphasizing the need to address these power imbalances and ensure a more equitable, ethical, and just allocation of environmental costs and benefits.

Empowering marginalized communities is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It entails recognizing the diversity among these communities, understanding their unique challenges, and tailoring empowerment initiatives to suit their specific needs (Whyte, 2018). This means acknowledging that different groups may be impacted differently by environmental injustices (Whyte, 2018). For instance, indigenous communities may experience land dispossession and cultural erasure, while low-income urban neighborhoods might confront issues related to gentrification and lack of access to green spaces (Silver, 2019). Furthermore, granting marginalized communities a meaningful voice in decision-making processes goes beyond mere token representation. It implies creating mechanisms through which their perspectives are not only considered but also play a fundamental role in shaping policies and projects.

5.3.2. Findings summarized

Power imbalances within contemporary geopolitics have significant ethical implications for addressing issues of loss and damage in the Global South. These power imbalances are closely associated with environmental conflicts that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including indigenous groups. These communities often develop deep emotional connections to their natural environments, forming an integral part of their cultural and spiritual identities. However, these emotional bonds also make them vulnerable to exploitation by more powerful actors who seek to benefit from their lands, perpetuating these power imbalances. These conflicts extend beyond mere resource disputes; they carry ethical dimensions. It is considered unjust for more powerful actors to reap the benefits of environmental resources while marginalized communities bear the brunt of environmental hazards and degradation. These dynamics underscore the ethical imperative of addressing and rectifying power imbalances.

Joan Martinez-Alier's "Environmentalism of the Poor" framework emphasizes the struggles of marginalized communities against environmental injustices arising from these power imbalances. It calls for fairness and equity in the distribution of environmental benefits and protection from environmental hazards, aligning with the ethical imperative highlighted earlier.

The geopolitical landscape is increasingly influenced by urbanization, climate change, and social-ecological violence. Urban areas are becoming epicenters of environmental

vulnerability and gentrification, leading to substantial loss and damage, particularly for low-income and minority populations. Historical injustices stemming from settler colonialism have long-lasting consequences, including the loss of land, cultural disruption, and environmental degradation. These injustices persist, and gentrification within urban contexts exacerbates the problems, pushing low-income communities toward precarious positions within the city.

Within the framework of "Environmentalism of the Poor," it becomes evident that marginalized urban populations, primarily composed of low-income and minority groups, bear the brunt of environmental burdens. These communities suffer loss and damage due to climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events and rising temperatures, while having limited access to resources and representation in decision-making processes. Concepts like ecological distribution conflicts, central to environmentalism of the poor, are applicable in urban areas, where disparities in exposure to environmental hazards and unequal access to green spaces and clean air are prevalent.

Environmental justice is central to the framework, and it calls for addressing climate-related loss and damage in urban areas and rectifying the historical injustices faced by Indigenous communities. Achieving environmental justice requires challenging the existing power structures and systems that perpetuate environmental injustice.

Unequal power distribution is a critical factor leading to the uneven distribution of environmental burdens and benefits, ultimately undermining the ethical considerations related to climate justice. The ethical concern here lies in the disproportionate suffering of less powerful communities, which goes against the principles of climate justice that demand the equitable distribution of the costs of environmental degradation and climate change impacts.

Empowering marginalized communities is essential for addressing power imbalances and promoting ethical engagement. This empowerment involves recognizing the diversity of challenges faced by different groups, acknowledging their unique needs, and ensuring that their voices play a fundamental role in shaping policies and projects. It goes beyond mere token representation, implying the creation of mechanisms through which their

perspectives are not only considered but also hold significant weight in decision-making processes.

5.4. Environmental Justice and non-economic loss and damage in the Global South

Joan Martinez-Alier's framework of "Environmentalism of the Poor" has significant implications for the issue of loss and damage associated with climate change. It emphasizes the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens globally (Martinez-Alier, 2002), and is relevant to discussions on loss and damage. The framework highlights that marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities often bear the greatest burden of environmental degradation (Martinez-Alier, 2002). This inequity in exposure to environmental harm makes these communities more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, leading to increased loss and damage, including damage to infrastructure, loss of livelihoods, and adverse health effects (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019).

Just as Environmentalism of the Poor recognizes the global dimensions of environmental injustice (Martinez-Alier, 2002), the issue of loss and damage is similarly global. Climate change, driven by activities in developed countries, disproportionately affects vulnerable and less-developed nations, leading to loss and damage that transcends borders. The framework underscores that the responsibility for addressing this loss and damage should also be shared more equitably.

Economic disparities and power imbalances play a central role in both environmental injustices and loss and damage (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019). Vulnerable communities often lack the resources to adapt to the changing climate and are more likely to experience significant loss and damage (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019). This exacerbates the socio-economic disparities and underlines the need for financial support to address loss and damage.

Environmentalism of the Poor introduces the concept of "ecological debt," emphasizing the historical responsibilities of developed countries for environmental degradation (Martinez-Alier, 2002). This idea has parallels with the discussion on compensation for loss and damage, where developed nations are expected to provide financial assistance to compensate for the impacts on vulnerable nations. Loss and damage from climate change are not limited to economic impacts but also encompass cultural and biodiversity loss, non-economic loss and damage (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019).

Environmentalism of the Poor recognizes the interconnection between environmental justice and cultural diversity (Martinez-Allier, 2002), highlighting how the loss of cultural practices and ecosystems is a significant component of the loss and damage associated with climate change.

Both the framework and the discourse on loss and damage acknowledge the role of grassroots movements and community empowerment. Environmentalism of the Poor recognizes the agency of communities in advocating for their environmental rights (Martinez-Allier, 2002). In the context of loss and damage, these movements often play a critical role in seeking compensation, adaptation support, and raising awareness (Bugden, 2020).

Joan Martinez-Alier's Environmentalism of the Poor framework relates to the issue of loss and damage by emphasizing the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, both at the local and global levels (Martinez-Allier, 2002). It underscores how marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation (Martinez-Allier, 2002), which in turn makes them more vulnerable to loss and damage associated with climate change. Also it highlights the need for more equitable solutions, financial support, and global cooperation to address loss and damage and prevent further environmental injustices.

Environmental injustice is prevalent in the Global South, where marginalized and impoverished communities disproportionately bear the brunt of climate-induced loss and damage (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019). This injustice is rooted in historical and contemporary inequalities, making these vulnerable communities more susceptible to non-economic losses. Martinez-Alier's framework focuses on environmental injustice, highlighting how marginalized and impoverished communities, often located in the Global South, bear a disproportionate burden of environmental harm (Martinez-Allier, 2002). It also underscores the fact that environmental degradation and exploitation often result from resource extraction and industrial activities (Martinez-Allier, 2002). These processes tend to occur near marginalized communities, who may lack the political or economic power to prevent or mitigate these harmful practices (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019). This can lead to the disproportionate exposure of these communities to ecological hazards, including pollution, deforestation, and land degradation. Environmental injustice often infringes upon human

rights, including the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment (Carthy, 2022). Viewing these issues through the lens of human rights can create a moral imperative to uphold and protect these rights for all, regardless of their geographic location.

A deeper exploration of environmental injustice reveals the historical dimensions. Many Global South nations were formerly colonized, and the legacy of colonialism is often reflected in environmental exploitation (Bhambra & Newell, 2022). Natural resources were extracted and exported to benefit colonial powers, leaving these nations with the environmental and social costs (Carthy, 2022). This historical context contributes to the current environmental injustices they face. Colonial and post-colonial dynamics are integral to understanding the historical roots and lasting impact of environmental injustice in the Global South (Carthy, 2022).

During the colonial era, European powers often exploited the abundant natural resources of their colonies for economic gain (Carthy, 2022). Timber, minerals, fertile lands, and other resources were extracted at a rapid pace, resulting in ecological degradation (Carthy, 2022). The land was often cleared for monoculture plantations or mined for valuable minerals, leading to deforestation, soil erosion, and contamination of water sources.

Indigenous and local communities were often dispossessed of their traditional lands to make way for colonial enterprises (Bhambra & Newell, 2022). This land dispossession not only deprived these communities of their primary means of subsistence but also disrupted their sustainable land management practices, which had evolved over generations (Carthy, 2022). The environmental degradation that occurred during the colonial era has had enduring consequences. Deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution of water bodies have persisted long after colonial rule ended (Bhambra & Newell, 2022). These ongoing environmental issues continue to harm communities in the Global South, particularly those that were dispossessed of their lands and resources (Carthy, 2022).

The perspective on how non-economic loss and damage, as well as the principles of environmental justice, intersect within the context of historical colonial and post-colonial dynamics in the Global South within the framework of Environmentalism of the poor sheds light on different dimensions.

First within the context of colonial exploitation, Environmentalism of the poor acknowledges that the extraction of natural resources had far-reaching consequences beyond monetary value (Martinez-Allier, 2002). It recognizes that indigenous and local communities in the Global South have endured deep-seated non-economic losses as a result. These losses extend beyond financial figures; they encompass cultural heritage, spiritual ties to the land, and traditional practices (Bhambra & Newell, 2022). These aspects hold immense significance for the affected communities and shape their identities (Carthy, 2022).

The framework also emphasizes the cultural and social importance of environmental resources and landscapes (Martinez-Allier, 2002). It recognizes that indigenous and local communities often maintain profound cultural and spiritual connections to their environments (Martinez-Allier, 2002). Disruptions to these connections, brought about by environmental harm, result in non-economic losses that have enduring impacts on the cultural and social well-being of these communities (Carthy, 2022).

The framework "Environmentalism of the poor" underscores the advocacy for environmental justice that frequently arises from affected communities (Martinez-Allier, 2002). They contend that environmental harm, including non-economic losses, disproportionately affects marginalized and impoverished communities (Martinez-Allier & O'Connor, 1995). In response, they advocate for justice, demanding equitable resource distribution, reparations for historical exploitation, and changes in policies and practices that perpetuate these injustices (Martinez-Allier, 2002). The framework encourages the development of policies that not only aim to prevent further harm but also consider restorative measures to address the non-economic consequences of past environmental injustices. In doing so, it promotes a more comprehensive approach to environmental policies, one that encompasses the cultural and social dimensions of environmental harm and recovery.

Furthermore, the emphasis on non-economic losses and environmental justice within "environmentalism of the poor" resonates with international environmental and social justice movements (Martinez-Allier, 2002). This solidarity amplifies the voices of marginalized communities and fosters a global understanding of the necessity to address both economic and non-economic aspects of environmental injustice (Bhambra & Newell, 2022).

Walliman-Helmer et al. (2019) asserts that recognizing non-economic loss and damage is an essential component of addressing environmental justice. It underscores that these losses are not merely collateral damage but represent ethical concerns that require attention, particularly in the Global South (Walliman-Helmer et al., 2019). This aligns with Martinez-Allier concept that environmental injustices extend beyond economic considerations (Martinez-Allier, 2002). Martinez-Allier underscores that non-economic losses are not merely incidental outcomes but ethical concerns that demand attention, especially in regions where marginalized communities are disproportionately affected (Martinez-Allier, 2002). Prioritizing compensation and support for non-economic loss and damage can help in achieving more equitable resource distribution. This may involve policies and mechanisms that aim to rectify historical resource imbalances and ensure that affected communities have access to resources for recovery and resilience.

5.4.1. Findings summarized

Joan Martinez-Alier's "Environmentalism of the Poor" framework offers critical insights into the moral and ethical aspects of loss and damage in the Global South within the context of climate change. This framework emphasizes the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens both at local and global levels. Marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities often bear the heaviest burden of environmental degradation, making them more susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change, leading to increased loss and damage.

Moreover, it underscores the global nature of the loss and damage issue, highlighting how climate change, driven primarily by activities in developed countries, disproportionately affects vulnerable and less-developed nations. This places loss and damage squarely on a global stage, demanding equitable responsibility-sharing.

Economic disparities and power imbalances are central to both environmental injustices and loss and damage. Vulnerable communities frequently lack the resources to adapt to a changing climate, exacerbating socio-economic disparities and underscoring the need for financial support to address loss and damage. The concept of "ecological debt" introduced in the framework parallels discussions on compensation for loss and damage, where developed

nations are expected to provide financial assistance to compensate for the impacts on vulnerable nations.

Furthermore, loss and damage associated with climate change extends beyond economic impacts, encompassing cultural and biodiversity loss, reflecting non-economic loss and damage. This facet of the framework recognizes the interconnection between environmental justice and cultural diversity, emphasizing how the loss of cultural practices and ecosystems is a significant component of the loss and damage in the context of climate change.

The framework also acknowledges the critical role of grassroots movements and community empowerment. It recognizes the agency of communities in advocating for their environmental rights. In the context of loss and damage, these movements often play a pivotal role in seeking compensation, adaptation support, and raising awareness.

In addition to these points, a deeper exploration of environmental injustice in the Global South reveals the historical dimensions rooted in colonial exploitation. Many nations in the Global South were formerly colonized, and the legacy of colonialism is often reflected in environmental exploitation. Natural resources were extracted and exported to benefit colonial powers, leaving these nations with the environmental and social costs. This historical context contributes to the current environmental injustices they face, including loss and damage. The colonial and post-colonial dynamics are integral to understanding the historical roots and lasting impact of environmental injustice in the Global South.

Recognizing non-economic loss and damage as a moral imperative is crucial, particularly in regions where marginalized communities are disproportionately affected. Prioritizing compensation and support for non-economic loss and damage can help achieve more equitable resource distribution and foster a comprehensive approach to environmental policies that encompass the cultural and social dimensions of environmental harm and recovery.

5.5. Why is it so hard to act and actually do something?

Climate change has become an undeniable global crisis, with far-reaching consequences for the environment, economies, and human well-being. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly visible and severe, nations around the world have recognized the need to address loss and damage – the harm and economic losses caused by climate change, despite mitigation and adaptation efforts (Toussaint, 2021). Many countries have acknowledged their responsibility and pledged to take action to combat climate change (Lo, 2022). However, a persistent and perplexing gap often exists between the words spoken by nations and the concrete actions taken (Toussaint, 2021). The dichotomy between rhetoric and action on loss and damage is a multi-faceted issue, influenced by political, economic, psychological, and structural factors (Gardiner, 2006). Why it is so hard for countries to move from recognizing their responsibility and expressing commitment to taking the decisive steps necessary to address the pressing threat of loss and damage in a moral perspective?

From a moral perspective, the discourse surrounding loss and damage related to climate change often highlights the stark disparity between what countries say, acknowledging their moral responsibilities, and the challenges they encounter when attempting to translate these words into meaningful actions (Gardiner, 2006).

One instance is the economic Interests vs. Moral Duty. Many developed nations, while recognizing their moral obligation to address climate-induced loss and damage, find themselves ensnared by their economic interests (Harder, 2019). For instance, countries heavily reliant on fossil fuel industries may struggle to transition to more sustainable practices (Harder, 2019). The moral duty to mitigate climate change is eclipsed by economic gains and political pressures (Harder, 2019).

Another instance is the political Will and Short-Termism (Markman, 2018). Politicians, despite understanding the moral imperative of climate action, often operate within short electoral cycles (Markman, 2018). The moral duty to future generations clashes with the political desire for immediate voter support. Thus, policies that reflect moral responsibility may be abandoned in favor of short-term gains (Gardiner, 2006). Gardiner introduces the concept of "moral corruption" as a key challenge. This refers to situations where moral agents, such as governments and industries, become complicit in actions that undermine their moral responsibilities (Gardiner, 2006). For example, governments may

prioritize short-term economic interests over long-term environmental ethics, leading to moral corruption (Gardiner, 2006).

The moral perspective underscores the principle of intergenerational justice as seen in section 5.1 and 5.2 working with Adam Smith's Theory of Moral sentiments, emphasizing that the current generation has a duty to act in a way that does not compromise the well-being and opportunities of future generations. The failure to address climate change effectively raises concerns about the moral character of contemporary society. Gardiner (2006) points out that countries often grapple with conflicting economic interests. For instance, the fossil fuel industry wields considerable economic and political influence, which can deter governments from taking necessary climate action (Harder, 2019). This tension between economic prosperity and moral duty is a central moral challenge. Also political leaders, driven by short electoral cycles, may prioritize immediate gains over long-term climate action (Markman, 2018). This short-termism often runs counter to the moral responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

Another concept that Gardiner (2006) highlights is moral myopia, where moral agents fail to recognize the moral significance of their actions. Governments may fail to see the ethical dimensions of policies that contribute to climate change, such as subsidizing carbon-intensive industries (Gardiner, 2006; Harder, 2019). The concept of moral myopia is a critical aspect of the moral challenges faced by governments and industries when addressing climate change. It adds depth to our understanding of how moral agents may overlook the ethical dimensions of their actions, especially when it comes to climate policies.

A prime example is when governments provide subsidies to carbon-intensive industries. While such subsidies might be seen as promoting economic growth and employment in the short term, they often lead to increased carbon emissions and environmental harm (Harder, 2019). Moral myopia prevents these governments from recognizing the ethical consequences of their support for industries that exacerbate climate change (Gardiner, 2006). Moral myopia is closely linked to the short-term perspective that many governments and industries adopt in the act on loss and damage (Markman, 2018). They may prioritize immediate economic gains and political expediency while neglecting the long-term implications for the environment and future generations (Markman, 2018).

The concept of moral myopia raises questions about moral responsibility and accountability. Are these moral agents excused from ethical wrongdoing due to ignorance? Gardiner (2006) suggests that the failure to recognize the ethical dimensions of one's actions does not absolve them of moral responsibility, especially in an age where information and awareness about climate change are widely available.

Climate change is characterized by scientific complexity and uncertainty, which can create moral dilemmas. Countries may use uncertainty as a justification for inaction, raising moral questions about the ethical responsibility to address risks, even in the face of uncertainty (Gardiner, 2006).

Governments often find themselves in the position of defending their inaction on climate change, despite having made promises or commitments to take action (Maizland, 2023). Their justifications for inaction can vary, and they may employ several common arguments to defend their positions:

One argument for inaction revolves around economic concerns where governments claim that taking aggressive climate action would lead to economic harm, job losses, or increased costs (Maizland, 2023). They argue that they are safeguarding the well-being of their citizens and the stability of their economies by prioritizing short-term economic interests (Maizland, 2023). Another defense is the fear of economic competitiveness where some argue that stringent climate policies could put their nation at a disadvantage in the global market, as other countries may not have similar regulations (Maizland, 2023). This argument suggests that unilateral action might not yield substantial benefits if others do not follow suit and if so, they need time to develop and implement the necessary solutions. (Maizland, 2023; Markman, 2018).

Also the political leaders may assert that they are constrained by the political realities of their constituencies (Maizland, 2023). Taking bold climate action can be politically risky, particularly when there is resistance or skepticism among the public. They may defend their inaction that they need to secure re-election or maintain political stability. Some governments contend that they are fulfilling their international commitments by taking partial or gradual steps (Maizland, 2023; Markman, 2018), and argue that their actions align with the agreements they have made without jeopardizing their national interests. Although

countries make strong commitments in international climate agreements, the enforcement mechanisms and consequences for non-compliance are often limited (Maizland, 2023). This lack of accountability reduces the incentive for countries to take aggressive actions on climate change (Maizland, 2023). They may argue that they are fulfilling their obligations by making commitments, even if they are not meeting their targets.

5.5.1. Findings summary

Countries often make commitments and express their responsibilities to address loss and damage associated with climate change in international agreements and forums. However, their ability to act on these commitments is hindered by the above factors, which they use as defences for their inaction. These factors include among other things, economic interests, political considerations, the need to align with public opinion, limited consequences for non-compliance with international agreements, concerns about economic trade-offs and competitiveness, and existing legal and regulatory constraints.

In defense of their inaction, countries cite these factors to justify delays and the limited scope of their climate policies. While these arguments may have some validity, they are often challenged by critics who stress the moral and ethical imperative to take immediate and robust climate action to address the loss and damage caused by climate change (Maizland, 2023).

Conclusion

Returning to this thesis problem on how current geopolitics move the Global North to engage with moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South. There are multiple angles from which to approach this thesis' problem. However, current geopolitics are increasingly compelling the Global North to confront and engage with the moral and ethical aspects. This shift results from several interconnected factors that underscore the ethical imperative of addressing climate-related impacts on vulnerable nations. The ethical engagement of the Global North concerning Loss and Damage is evolving. While economic interests and political considerations have historically influenced their climate policies, the mounting moral imperatives and criticisms are compelling these nations to reevaluate their

positions. The Global North's response to Loss and Damage increasingly acknowledges the moral responsibility to protect the planet and address historical injustices. However, the accurate measure of their ethical engagement will be seen in their commitment to immediate and comprehensive climate action and their willingness to transcend the barriers posed by economic and political considerations.

At the forefront of this change is the heightened sense of urgency surrounding the climate crisis. The Global North, primarily responsible for historical emissions, is witnessing the intensification of climate-related disasters. A profound sense of ethical responsibility now accompanies the moral sentiment of empathy and concern. As the consequences of global warming become ever more evident, a moral duty to address the suffering of vulnerable communities is emerging as a driving force behind climate action.

International climate agreements, most notably the Paris Agreement, have played a pivotal role in accentuating climate change's moral and ethical dimensions. The Paris Agreement is rooted in principles of justice, equity, and fairness, recognizing historical emissions by developed nations as significant contributors to the climate crisis. This recognition echoes the moral imperative of rectifying past wrongs, shedding light on the ethical basis of international climate cooperation. Developed nations in the Global North increasingly acknowledge the need to rectify historical injustices and assist the Global South in its climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Global leadership in climate action further accentuates the ethical considerations. The decisions of nations in the Global North, such as the United States under the administration of President Joe Biden and the European Union, to rejoin international climate agreements signify a deepened dedication to global climate efforts. Their acknowledgment of historical contributions to the climate crisis reflects a moral imperative to correct past actions and aligns with Adam Smith's principles of moral duty and responsibility.

Additionally, the awareness of power imbalances in climate change negotiations plays a pivotal role in fostering moral and ethical engagement. These imbalances are particularly pronounced between the Global North and the Global South and are marked by disparities in political and economic influence. Historically responsible for a substantial share of emissions, the Global North wields significant political influence, shaping international

climate agendas. However, these power imbalances can lead to policies that may not fully address the needs of the Global South, thereby perpetuating disparities in climate action. The ethical concern here lies in the disproportionate suffering of less powerful communities, which runs counter to the principles of climate justice. Joan Martinez-Allier's "Environmentalism of the Poor" framework emphasizes the struggles of marginalized communities against environmental injustices arising from these power imbalances. It calls for fairness and equity in the distribution of environmental benefits and protection from environmental hazards, aligning with the ethical imperative highlighted earlier.

Global climate activism, exemplified by movements like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, has harnessed fundamental human values such as empathy, sympathy, and concern for future generations to mobilize a global movement for climate action. This framing of climate action as a moral duty to protect the planet and secure the well-being of future generations nurtures a shared sense of responsibility and ethical commitment to safeguard the environment and ensure intergenerational equity.

Developing nations in the Global South have consistently appealed for financial support and assistance in climate change negotiations rooted in principles of justice, fairness, and moral responsibility. These appeals aim to rectify historical injustices and imbalances, advocating for a just and equitable approach to addressing climate change. The moral principles of justice and fairness as essential components of moral conduct are central to these appeals.

In the context of countries making commitments to address loss and damage associated with climate change, it is imperative to acknowledge that such commitments often face significant challenges in implementation. The factors impeding these commitments, including economic interests, political considerations, public opinion alignment, limited consequences for non-compliance, concerns about trade-offs and competitiveness, and existing legal and regulatory constraints, serve as justifications for countries' inaction. These justifications are frequently used to rationalize delays and the limited scope of climate policies.

However, it is crucial to recognize that these valid arguments are increasingly encountering robust challenges from critics who emphasize the moral and ethical imperative

of taking immediate and comprehensive climate action. The moral and ethical dimensions of addressing loss and damage, particularly in the Global South, have gained prominence in international discourse. They form a powerful counterargument to the barriers posed by economic and political considerations, urging nations, particularly those in the Global North, to prioritize the moral responsibility of rectifying historical wrongs and addressing the suffering of vulnerable communities.

As current geopolitics evolve and climate change's impacts become more urgent, the pressure to align policies and actions with moral and ethical principles will intensify. This will further compel countries to reevaluate their positions, transcend the abovementioned barriers, and prioritize the ethical imperative to protect the planet and ensure justice for those disproportionately affected by climate change. In doing so, countries can demonstrate their commitment to addressing the moral and ethical aspects of Loss and Damage in the Global South, thereby fostering a more equitable and sustainable global response to the climate crisis.

In conclusion, current geopolitics have ushered in a notable shift in the Global North's engagement with the moral and ethical dimensions of Loss and Damage in the Global South. The urgency of the climate crisis, international climate agreements, global leadership, recognition of power imbalances, global climate activism, and appeals from developing nations all contribute to an evolving moral imperative. This imperative urges the Global North to take responsibility for its historical contributions to climate change, aligning its actions with principles of justice, fairness, and empathy and ensuring that it considers the ethical dimensions of its climate policies and international cooperation.

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