



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Between climate justice and climate finance

A discourse analysis of Alliance of Small Island States and
the European Union during the establishment of loss and
damage fund

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Abstract

The conceptualization of loss and damage reflects diverse perspectives, evident in the disparities observed in climate negotiations. This thesis examines how the Alliance of Small Island States and the European Union portrayed loss and damage during the establishment of the loss and damage fund. Carol Bacchi's WPR approach is used for comprehending the portrayal of loss and damage, and the methodology is guided by her analytical questions applied to the material. The empirical analysis, focusing on statements made at the Conference of the Parties from 2018 to 2022, reveals two thematic representations. The Alliance of Small Island States, with longstanding advocacy, depicts loss and damage as an urgent and life-threatening problem, emphasizing climate justice. In contrast, the European Union infrequently references the concept, often presenting it in the context of mitigation and adaptation within climate finance. Despite initial opposition, the European Union, during the 27th COP, acknowledged the necessity of loss and damage for supporting the most vulnerable countries. The results highlight contrasting views of representing loss and damage by the actors.

Key words: Loss and Damage, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), European Union (EU), Discourse analysis, Climate change

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Abbreviations

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
COP	Conference of the Parties
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
WPR	What's the Problem Represented to be?

1 Introduction

Climate change poses severe consequences for the global environment, as highlighted in the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2023. The report draws attention to an increase in events attributed to human-induced impacts, including extreme occurrences such as droughts, wildfires, rising sea levels, floods, polar ice melt, destructive storms, and declining biodiversity (IPCC 2023). Recognizing the heightened risk of extreme weather events, the Emissions Gap Report (2023) advocates for a more ambitious approach to mitigate these occurrences. In alignment with Paris Agreement commitments to limit temperature rise, achieving the 2015 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) requires that nations with higher emissions capacity take substantial actions and actively support low-emissions development in developing nations (UNEP 2023). The annual report from the Global Carbon Project (2023) further stresses these concerns, indicating that global fossil emissions are expected to increase in 2023, with emissions projected to be six times higher than in 2015 when the NDCs were adopted (Friedlingstein et al. 2023).

Small island developing states (SIDS) are particularly vulnerable to adverse climate change impacts owing to their geographical locations (Thomas et al. 2020 p. 2). Despite contributing less than one percent of worldwide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (UNDP 2022), these nations bear the brunt of climate change impacts while being the least accountable for them (Tietjen and Gopalakrishnan 2023). This paradox, evident in reality, has been a focal point in global climate negotiations, particularly under the concept of loss and damage. This was introduced under the advocacy of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) during the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 (Tietjen and Gopalakrishnan 2023).

Under the UNFCCC, achieving consensus on the conceptualization and addressing loss and damage has proven challenging during the Conference of the Parties (COPs). Smaller parties have advocated for a mechanism, while larger parties, such as the European Union (EU) and the United States (US), have opposed creation of new frameworks addressing the concept (American Journal of International Law 2023).

Despite three decades of discussions, an agreement was reached during the 27th COP in Sharm el-Sheikh in 2022 to establish a financial mechanism addressing the concept of loss and damage, in the form of a fund (Wyns 2023).

1.1 Purpose and research question

The establishment of a fund signals a change in climate policy, despite conceptual disparities and the gradual inclusion of loss and damage. How a problem is presented is crucial, as it can shape its widespread perception. This thesis will explore this perspective by studying the portrayal of loss and damage among parties at the COPs. Given the establishment after extensive discussions, it can be assumed that the discourse regarding loss and damage has changed in the way a fund on the matter is presented. To explore this, discourse analysis and Carol Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to be?" (WPR) approach will be employed to examine proposals by AOSIS and the EU in climate negotiations preceding the fund. These actors are selected due to their historical participation in the UNFCCC, offering contrasting views on implementing a mechanism on loss and damage, providing different insights into the surrounding debate. Guided by this objective, the thesis will address the following research question:

How did AOSIS and the EU portray loss and damage during the establishment of loss and damage fund?

The thesis will begin by outlining the conceptualization of loss and damage, exploring its development in the UNFCCC process and reviewing relevant research. The subsequent section presents the theoretical and methodological framework, rooted in discursive premises, along with an overview of the methodology. The empirical analysis, guided by questions from Bacchi's WPR framework used to examine statements by AOSIS and the EU, is then introduced. This will lead to a discussion and concluding reflection on the findings, including potential avenues for future research.

2 Setting the stage

This section will provide an overview of the conceptualization of loss and damage, delving into its evolution within the context of climate negotiations. Additionally, a review of prior research on the topic will be presented.

2.1 Conceptualization of loss and damage

The concept of loss and damage is commonly referenced resulting from climate impacts and risks, encompassing both sudden and gradual onset events. Gradual impacts involve processes for instance glacial retreat, sea level rise, or desertification, while sudden events encompass extreme weather events such as floods or cyclones (Vanhala, Calliari and Thomas 2023; McNamara and Jackson 2019; Baltzer 2023). However, the concept lacks an accepted formal definition which is due to differing perspectives in defining the concept. This disparity is evident through a pronounced deviation between the global south and the global north. Advocacy from the global south has long emphasized its recognition as a distinct third pillar of action on climate change (Tigre and Wewerinke-Singh 2022, p. 2-3).

Moreover, the elusive nature of the concept is also attributed to its intertwining with other approaches, including adaptation, mitigation, litigation (Tigre and Wewerinke-Singh 2022, p. 2-3), as well as concerns regarding climate risks (Mechler et al. 2020 p. 1246). The conceptual intertwining views on loss and damage have contributed to its slower development compared to other concepts such as mitigation (Johansson et al. 2022, p. 1200).

Efforts to strengthen the inclusion of the concept within the climate change regime are reflected in IPCC Assessment Reports. By synthesizing science-based evidence, reports have referenced loss and damage as impacts or risks resulting from the gradual onset of climate change-related slow-onset hazards and extreme weather events (IPCC 2022b).

The Paris Climate Agreement, particularly through Article 8, references loss and damage, supporting its inclusion. Under the UNFCCC, the relatively accepted definition holds “loss and damage” in reference to impacts and risks related to climate change, encompassing both sudden-onset extreme events and slow-onset events. This conceptualization underscores both the monetary and non-monetary aspects of losses (Mechler et al. 2019, p. 11).

The economic and non-economic conceptualization categorizes “losses” and “damages” into monetizable aspects. Economic losses refer to aspects such as crops, assets, or infrastructure, while non-economic losses relate to loss of biodiversity, health, territory, or heritage losses (Vanhala, Calliari and Thomas 2023, p. 2). The term “losses and damages” is sometimes used in its plural form in reports due to argued political sensitivity (Hartz 2023, p. 41-42).

The concept can also interpret “irreversibility”, viewing losses as irreversible effects, such as the permanent destruction of coral reefs or fatalities from heat disasters. Damages encompass impacts that can be mitigated or repaired, such as damages to infrastructure (Boyd et al. 2021, p. 1365). Another perspective underscores avoidability, categorizing impacts based on scales of avoidability to loss and damage. “Avoided” losses and damages can be mitigated through measures due to disaster risk reduction, such as GHG emissions reduction or climate change adaptation. “Unavoided” loss persists due to lack of implemented measures due to financial or technical constraints. “Unavoidable” losses cannot be avoided through any measures of mitigation or adaptation (Verheyen and Roderick 2008, p. 30).

2.2 Loss and damage in the UNFCCC process

The concept of loss and damage was initially introduced during the creation of the UNFCCC through the advocacy of AOSIS (Tietjen and Gopalakrishnan, 2023). Its formal initiation occurred in 2007 at COP 13 with the Bali Action Plan, representing the

first inclusion of loss and damage in COP negotiated outcomes. Subsequently, loss and damage acquired reference as ‘loss and damage’ within its own emerging framework, distinct from insurance, risk transfer, adaptation, mitigation, or compensation and liability. While this elevated the concept within the global climate regime, formal institutionalization remained elusive (Vanhala and Hestbaek 2016, p. 120).

In the lead-up to the Doha COP in 2012, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had urged conference parties to respond upon loss and damage and climate change, emphasizing the necessity for a new mechanism on the matter. These demands consistently laid the groundwork for the events in the subsequent year at Warsaw for 19th COP, where loss and damage were institutionalized through the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) aimed to promote implementation of approaches addressing loss and damage (Vanhala and Hestbaek 2016, p. 120).

To guide the institutional arrangement, the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the loss and damage mechanism was created through an initial two-year work plan to implement its functions. The committee consisted of 10 developed and 10 developing country members to oversee operations within the WIM (Vanhala 2023, p. 429). However, the WIM still carried different meanings for policy actors, as acknowledged in Doha (Benjamin and Thomas 2023, p. 396).

Formal institutionalization of loss and damage was further strengthened with the establishment of the Paris Climate Agreement during COP 21 in 2015. This conference set new global directions, as the international treaty enabled an agreement on targets for achieving carbon neutrality and adopting measures to reduce GHG emissions. The commitment was demonstrated in the adoption of the long-term goal to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Furthermore, the NDCs outlined comprehensive long-term objectives, emphasizing the transition from ‘below’ to ‘well below’ as a reinforced goal (Mace and Verheyen 2016, p. 211).

Progress on loss and damage was made through Article 8 of the Paris Climate Agreement, anchoring the issue in international climate policy (Article 8, p. 1-5). This article exclusively focuses on loss and damage, rather than dispersing it across several

sections. Alongside addressing loss and damage, provisions for adaptation (Article 7) and mitigation (Articles 4, 5, 6) were outlined. In terms of practical implementation, the Paris Climate Agreement also underscores collaboration with the WIM (Otto 2023, p. 815).

Additionally, Article 9 of the Paris Agreement highlights the financial dimension, stating that developed countries must provide financial resources to aid developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts (Article 9, para. 1). Notably, this reference excludes provisions for loss and damage. The article also explicitly declares that it does not suggest premises for any liability or compensation, reflecting the opposition by developed state parties (Decision 1/CP.21, p. 51) (Mace and Verheyen 2016, p. 204).

Following COP 21, the 2016 Marrakech COP established an Excom framework, approved with a five-year rolling work plan, setting the stage for corresponding activities, particularly in adaptation communication (Orlove 2022, p. 557). The 24th COP in 2018 witnessed the adoption of the Katowice climate package, a direct outcome of the aftermath of COP 21. This package functions as the ‘rulebook’ of the Paris Climate Agreement, offering parties guidance on operationalizing key treaty mechanisms, such as the NDCs (Pekkarinen, Toussaint, and van Asselt 2019, p. 35).

The subsequent meeting in Madrid during COP 25 in 2019, the Santiago Network was established within the WIM to offer technical assistance for loss and damage. However, finalizing procedures for managing this assistance was pending due to G77 and China presenting two demands. These included technical support and the creation of a fund, with the Santiago Network addressing the former and the latter being rejected by high-income parties, including the EU and the US (Wyns 2023, p. 2).

In the 26th COP, under the UK presidency, decisions on the Santiago Network’s functions were made. Additionally, the conference called for the phase-down of unabated coal power and the phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. This represents the first direct targeting of fossil fuels, the primary driver of climate change, in the climate regime (Obergassel 2022, p. 226).

Leading up to the conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, finance was a key priority for developing countries. Referenced as ‘the African COP’, the conference aimed to underscore climate issues most pertinent to African and other developing nations. The conference concluded with all parties, including the previously opposed EU and the US, signing the adoption of a new financial mechanism for addressing loss and damage, referred to as the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (2/CP.27).

The decision encompassed creating a fund to target loss and damage, accompanied by financial pledges from many developed countries prior to and during the conference. While the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan represents a new approach to addressing the climate finance needs, the COP stagnated in delivering new global commitments, in contrast to its predecessor under the UK presidency (Adger 2023, p. 142-143).

In preparation for COP 28 in Dubai in 2023, the objective was to establish institutional arrangements for the loss and damage fund with the intention of operationalizing it during the conference. The conference witnessed what seemed to be a successful outcome in this regard. Nonetheless, additional conditions and institutional arrangements are still required for the fund to initiate financing projects. Larger pledges are imperative to provide adequate support to the communities of vulnerable countries (Waskow et al. 2023).

2.3 Literature review

A literature review on loss and damage highlights early diverse conceptualizations and variations in framing by influential actors, contributing to the intractability of the issues, including conflicting themes like liability, compensation, and finance (Hossain, Huq, and Khan 2021).

The academic exploration of this topic gained momentum around 2010. During this period, Betzold (2010) demonstrated how small island states received disproportionate influence despite being a minor party in the climate change regime. This influence became apparent in proposals during negotiations from 1990 to 1997, framing climate change as an existential threat to those least responsible for the problem (Betzold 2010). Calliari (2018) supports this influence regarding negotiation strategies by examining contrasting positions of developed and developing parties on the issue of loss and damage, delving into their negotiation strategies that culminated in the formation of the WIM. As illustrated, she stated that developing nations primarily relied on legal propositions, portraying loss and damage as a matter of state responsibility for wrongful acts. The strategic use of compensation in relation to loss and damage was aimed to legitimize loss and damage within the UNFCCC discourse, rather than serving as a solution to the problem. Developed countries advanced their arguments based on scientific knowledge and ethical considerations to encounter proposals presented by developing parties (Calliari 2018).

Building upon the significance of knowledge in negotiations, Serdeczny (2023) argues that political knowledge has been employed by developing nations to justify predetermined policy positions, aiming to defend their interests in loss and damage negotiations. In addition to Calliari (2018), her study revealed that the use of political knowledge seemed to exert an indirect empowering effect on individuals (Serdeczny 2023).

Wallimann-Helmer (2023) recognizes the use of justice arguments in the debate regarding loss and damage. However, In contrast to Betzold (2010) and Calliari (2018), he does not view this representation of loss and damage as an effective instrument. He contends that this framing fails to fulfill the role of loss and damage under the UNFCCC, especially considering proposals of liability for compensation. This is attributed to the current political circumstances. Instead, he advocates for the application of capacity and solidarity to determine remedial responsibilities regarding loss and damage (Walliman-Helmer 2023).

Another study by Allan and Hadden (2017) further delves into the examination of loss and damage, exploring the use of framing an issue and particularly emphasizing how it

serves as an instrument for NGOs. Grounded in NGO statements during the high-level segments of COPs, their examination focused on the framing of climate justice. This study confirmed that NGOs enhanced the recognition of loss and damage, enabling them to build alliances within civil society and state partners. However, in contrast to justice arguments, their research confirmed that NGOs employed persuasion and shaming in their proposals, surpassing what vulnerable developing countries could have achieved through diplomacy alone. This suggests that NGO advocacy could have autonomously impacted the outcome (Allan and Hadden 2017).

Jackson et al. (2023) investigates the discursive aspects of loss and damage, exposing the consequences of framing, acknowledging an emergence of a governmentality. Their examination reveals a sustained framing of loss and damage over the past two decades through institutional, reflective and procedural means. The study identifies a disregard for the root causes of loss and damage, shedding light on presupposed perspectives regarding individuals in the global south. Claiming that these presuppositions affect those directly impacted by the climate crisis (Jackson et al. 2023).

3 Theory

This section outlines the theoretical framework. Initially, by emphasizing the discursive premises accepted by discourse analysis and then presenting foundations, encompassing both theory and method, focusing on elements that serve as key components.

3.1 Discursive premises

The discourse approach is rooted in language philosophy that integrates structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives and contends that society is a social construction shaped by individual perceptions of reality through language, actively constructing representations (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, p. 10-12). Asserting the absence of a neutral representation of reality, it established an inseparable connection with human subjectivity as language shapes representations, influencing perceptions. Understanding words within their contextual discourse is crucial, and the term “discourse” serves as the avenue for accessing representations of reality, allowing for diverse meaning-making concepts within discourse analysis (Bergström and Boréus 2018, p. 255).

Despite theoretical nuances in discourse analysis, embracing epistemological and ontological foundations is principal for its empirical application. Consequently, discourse analysis functions a dual role as both theory and method (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, p. 7-10).

Due to the foundational premises of discourse analysis, it is deemed beneficial for investigating socially constructed issues through language. Various approaches adopt this discursive stance, contributing to the field of discourses. For instance, Foucault’s exploration of how discourses, framed by the concept of ‘governmentality,’ shape specific problems (Foucault 1982). Another scholar, Fairclough, examines the interplay between language, social practices, and power using a critical discourse analysis

approach. This approach focuses on constructing representations through three dimensions regarding text, discursive practices, and social practices (Fairclough and Wodak 1997:271ff, as cited in Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, p. 67-70).

For this thesis, which aims to comprehensively examine how something is presented as a problem, especially in terms of a change in policy portrayed through language, Bacchi's framework is suitable. It allows for a thorough analysis of both what is manifested and what is silenced, along with its consequences (Bacchi 2009).

3.2 What's the 'Problem' Represented to be approach

Carol Bacchi's approach (2009) adopts an ontological perspective rooted in poststructuralism that emphasizes how language constructs reality (Bacchi 2009). Aligned with the theoretical foundations of Foucault, Bacchi's framework serves as a strategic instrument for the thorough examination of prevailing perceptions and beliefs regarding contemporary political challenges and power relations (Bergström and Ekström 2018, p. 271).

Through the application of WPR approach, the foundational premise she asserts is that problems do not inherently exist in external reality for stakeholders to identify and resolve through policies. Rather, it is the policy itself, by proposing a specific solution, that designates something as a 'problem'. The objective is to examine the implications, generation, implementation and resulting consequences of the 'problem' (Bacchi 2009, p. 14).

3.3 Examine problematizations instead of ‘problems’

In accordance with discursive premises, Bacchi’s framework operates on the assumption that there is no exclusive correct way to perceive a problem. To fully comprehend a problem, it must be analyzed through its embedded *problem representation*, defined as the implied meaning within a ‘problem,’ the core element in problematization. The analysis is grounded in the concept of *problematization*, emphasizing how something is presented as a problem, originating from governing practices (Bacchi 2009, xi-xii).

According to Bacchi, expressing a problem through policy has the potential to shape its widespread perception, individual understanding, and self-perception. She emphasizes that within a broader context, the representation of the problem contributes to a framing process that may exclude historical aspects. Bacchi underscores that by studying problem representations in policies or policy proposals, it is possible to comprehend the dynamics of governance (Bacchi 2009, p. xii-1).

Problematization holds a central and crucial role, influencing not only the governance process and the profound comprehension of problem representations but also contributing to a broader understanding of how the ‘problem’ is perceived. This perception diverges from the conventional notion of something complex or in need of solving (Bacchi 2009, p. x). Bacchi challenges this interpretation, asserting that problems are endogenously, internally, generated within the realm of problem representation, rather than being perceived exogenously, externally, outside the policy-making process. According to Bacchi, policies play a formative role in shaping ‘problems’, their purpose is not to address these issues but to define and structure them which affect the perception of the problem (Bacchi 2009, p. x-xi).

As a consequence of problematizations and subsequent policies, these create ‘subjects,’ referring to a process of *subjectification* that generates effects of different problem representations within policy to oppose each other. This aligns with Foucault (1982) and his notion of ‘dividing practices’ (Foucault 1982, p. 208). The formation of a ‘subject’ encompasses the diverse behaviors one is expected to adopt and involves the

categorization of individuals into various groups, binaries. These implications also imply attributions of responsibility, which help to identify the categories created and underscore what is silenced (Bacchi 2009, p. 16-17).

3.4 Policy, discourse, knowledge and power

The concept of *policy* assumes a significant role in Bacchi's approach. Commonly associated with a course of action, resembling a program, policy implies a positive intention and assumes the existence of a problem. Moreover, a policy may encompass multiple problem representations (Bacchi 2009, p. 4). Foucault (1986), suggests that policies often are crafted as prescriptive texts or texts written with the purpose of providing rules or intended to be read (Foucault 1986, p. 12). Following this interpretation, policies can be categorized as various types of texts, all implying some form of implicit changes (Bacchi 2009, p. xi).

Aligned with discursive premises, the term regarding *discourse* is important. Bacchi terms it as 'policy as discourse,' asserting that all actions, objects, and practices carry social meaning, shaped by the social and political struggles in socio-historical contexts. Her perspective acknowledges policy as context-specific (Bacchi 2009, p. 35).

Inherent to the discourse is *knowledge*. Knowledge is facilitated by its incorporation within discourses, and conversely, discourses are enabled by the existence of these 'accepted truths.' In addition, not all forms of knowledge are accorded equal standing, with some being discredited or disregarded. Exploring alternative constructions of a 'problem' serves as a means of recognizing diverse forms of knowledge. Subjugated knowledges, however, may face silencing. The rejection of specific types of knowledge arises from the complex interconnection between knowledge and power. In this context, knowledge is perceived as a manifestation or expression of power (Bacchi 2009, p. 36-39).

Power gains legitimacy through the creation of knowledge and discourses, establishing an intricate relationship between power and knowledge. It is involved in the production of knowledge, while knowledge, in turn, exerts influence over lives. This dynamic interplay between power and knowledge is complex and mutually reinforcing, ultimately shaping societal structures (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, p. 28-29).

4 Methodology

This section delves deeper into the methodology, building on the theoretical and methodological aspects outlined in section 3. It will introduce the guiding questions for analysis from the WPR approach, followed by discussions on research design, methodological reflection, materials, and limitations

4.1 Questions of analysis

Bacchi's methodological framework comprises six analytical questions applied to the material used for the analysis. Due to the scope of the thesis, a comprehensive examination of all six questions was not possible. As argued by Bergström and Boréus (2018), certain questions from Bacchi's framework can be omitted based on their alignment with the intended purpose of the study (Bergström and Boréus 2018, p. 273).

Consequently, three of the analytical questions have been selected, question one, two and five, which will be outlined below. The selection was based on evaluation of all questions, choosing those best aligned with the thesis purpose, as they explore constructed beliefs and their effects. In the analysis, each question will be addressed separately in accordance with empirics. Questions not included in the thesis will be briefly presented in the limitations (section 4.4).

Question one, "what is the 'problem' represented to be?" serves as the cornerstone of the approach, functioning as the initial step in the analysis to illuminate the problem representation. Bacchi acknowledges that identifying problem representations can be a complex task, and a simplified method involves studying the proposed allocation of finances (Bacchi 2009, p. 2-4).

Question two, “what presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?”, aims to identify the underlying assumptions lodged within the problem representation. By exposing these assumptions, it becomes possible to address the *conceptual logics* on which the problem representation relies. Conceptual logic terms the essential meanings that must occur for a specific problem representation to be consistent (Bacchi 2009, p. 5). Linguistic elements play a crucial role in constructing meaning within the discourse, exemplified by the concept of *binaries* and *categories*. Binaries simplify opposite relationships, while categories are pivotal in how governance occurs. Recognizing these aspects does not presuppose their existence, instead it helps understand how they function within a problem representation. Aligned with the topic, as categories center around people, an illustrative example could be focusing on AOSIS as vulnerable countries and the EU as a leader in governing processes (Bacchi 2009, p. 7-9).

Question five, “what effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?”, relates to the assumption that problem representations can have varying degrees of negative consequences for individuals within various social groups. Bacchi recognises three kinds of effects. Firstly, *discursive effects* refer to inherent assumptions within the problem representation expressed in discourse and the silences the discourse contains, potentially leading to the exclusion of certain feasible options. Secondly, *subjectification* emphasizes how discourse shapes certain subject positions. This is important to examine since problem representations in policies tend to create conflicts between different social groups. There is also focus on attributions of responsibility, as representations of the ‘problem’ often imply accountability. Thirdly, *lived effects* highlight the material impact, centering the consequences of problem representations that directly affect people’s lives (Bacchi 2009, p. 15-17).

To enhance transparency, foster intersubjectivity, and improve validity of the thesis, the selected questions have been reformulated to align with the specific research topic and purpose. The following questions will be adopted in the analysis:

- “What is ‘loss and damage’ represented to be?”
- “What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of ‘loss and damage’?”

- “What effects are produced by this representation of ‘loss and damage’?”

4.2 Methodological reflection

A decision regarding the thesis was regarding its problem representation, selecting a descriptive purpose to explore use of language in conceptualizing loss and damage. While an explanatory purpose deepens understanding, the use of Bacchi’s guiding questions, with its diverse questions, in particular about effects, contributes to a comprehensive analysis (Teorell and Svensson 2007, p. 22-23).

Criticism towards interpretive methods centers the role of the analyst, regarding potential relativism in the interpretation of the material (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, p. 28). To mitigate subjective tendencies and ensure validity and increase transparency, articulating steps in the research process and providing explicit findings are essential (Bergström and Ekström 2018, p. 291-292). In the context of this thesis, emphasis is placed on using primarily primary sources in the analysis, referencing the speaker of statements in analysis if noted, to enhance credibility, and explicitly present research findings (Bergström and Ekström 2018, p. 288).

In alignment with the WPR approach, inherently designed for examining policy documents, this thesis takes a different stance by focusing on another form of text. This choice was considered, as the combination of this method with theory enhances comprehension of the historical tensions surrounding the issue of loss and damage in the governing process. Bacchi’s emphasis on studying various kinds of texts justifies this approach (Bacchi 2009, p. xi).

4.3 Material

The material for the thesis is limited to the years 2018 to 2022, covering COP 24 in Katowice, Poland, up to COP 27 in 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. This timeframe was selected to focus on the crucial years leading to the decision for establishing the loss and damage fund, capturing recent debates on the subject. A gap occurred in conferences in 2020 due to the pandemic, COP 28 is excluded from the material.

Material selection primarily focuses on primary sources, through statements made during COPs. Examining the COPs is chosen as those represent the highest decision-making body of policy articulation in the UNFCCC in addressing climate change. Examination includes key segments of the COPs, such as opening speeches, closing plenaries, and statements made in connection to the conferences. The analysis will incorporate transcriptions of speeches delivered by representatives of AOSIS and the EU. References to statements incorporate the speaker when explicitly mentioned. Otherwise, if the speaker is not explicitly named, it is attributed to the relevant organizational entity.

Statements from AOSIS are sourced from AOSIS digital document library, while EU materials are mainly obtained through the European Commission or the European Council. Secondary sources, complemented by news articles, are also integrated to some extent when examining the EU. These sources are deemed credible, emphasizing the use of authoritative references and maintaining a commitment to transparency.

Selection criteria for sources include keywords such as “loss and damage,” “fund,” “AOSIS,” or “EU,” along with the respective COP number. Additionally, for the conceptualization of loss and damage (section 2.1), the UNFCCC database was used to access meeting reports and agendas. These meeting records are presented in English, accompanied with translated versions in various languages.

4.4 Limitations

The timeframe for examining material from 2018 to 2022 served as a necessary constraint, although the validity of this constraint, especially concerning the onset of the ‘crucial years’ during establishment, may be questioned. Delimitation was necessary to make meaningful assertions, leading to the selection of a reasonable and justified timeframe of approximately five years to establishment.

The decision to focus the analysis on two actors, namely the EU and AOSIS, was also influenced by constraints. While it would have been interesting to include more prominent actors in the discourse, such as the US or China, constraints led to the selection of AOSIS and the EU. AOSIS was chosen as a unit for analysis for its historical significance in the loss and damage debate, advocating for inclusion since the initiation of the UNFCCC. The EU, on the other hand, was selected for its role in resisting the creation of a loss and damage mechanism. Despite the potential inclusion of other major parties like the US could have been considered, the EU’s leadership role in the COPs justified its selection.

For the analysis, three out of Bacchi’s six analytical questions were omitted after evaluation due to their perceived lack of relevance in addressing the research objectives. Specifically, question three (“How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?”) highlights the conditions allowing specific problem representations to occur.

This exclusion is followed by question four (“What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?”), prompting reflection on what remains unproblematic in the representation and where the silences lie. This encourages consideration of alternative perspectives. Since questions three and four focus on the ‘problem’ in the context of loss and damage, excluding them is justified due to alignment with the earlier presentation of the setting in the thesis (section 2). Furthermore, these questions are closely linked to the fifth question, exploring the concept of discursive effects, which will be adopted.

Question six (“How/where is this representation of the ‘problem’ produced, disseminated, and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted, and replaced?”) revolves around certain problem representations becoming dominant over challenges perceived as harmful. This question builds upon the nature of the third question. However, providing extensive depth to unsaid aspects is not possible, given the constraints related to the limited material.

5 Empirical analysis

The analysis will examine proposals of AOSIS and the EU, structured separately for each question. This approach allows for a comprehensive assessment of key findings, presented in section 6 for discussion.

The analysis has been carried out by thoroughly reviewing available material and subsequently posing questions related to it. Owing to the extensive nature of the material, a selection had to be made, and not all relevant aspects could be thoroughly examined. Instead, extracts from the respective documents will be consistently adopted and commented upon. This approach is justified as it aims to enhance transparency.

5.1 What is ‘loss and damage’ represented to be?

5.1.1 AOSIS

The urgency of addressing loss and damage, deemed unjust, particularly for those less responsible, was addressed in 2021 during the COP 26 World Leaders Summit by Gaston Browne, then-Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and AOSIS chair:

Our countries are the least liable for the damage to the world’s environment; but we pay the highest price (Browne 2021, p. 1).

This sheds light on the injustice towards developing countries, highlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change on states with a historical and ongoing lower contributions to emissions.

There are also references regarding the urge of loss and damage to be addressed in relation to existential survival. On behalf of AOSIS, in aftermath of decision to the fund's establishment during 27th COP, this reference is evident as a matter of survival for the most vulnerable, here being portrayed in terms of being a lifeboat:

This loss and damage fund must become the lifeboat that we need it to be. But it is just a lifeboat, nonetheless, in a brewing hurricane (AOSIS 2022, p. 2).

This signals an urgent call to conference of parties, underscoring the fund's vital role in assisting developing countries. Ensuring its further implementation is paramount to fulfilling the fund's intended purpose. The severe impacts on the most vulnerable highlight the fund's significance, likened to a lifeboat, emphasizing the need for action in the midst of a climate crisis.

Furthermore, this was reiterated in AOSIS's closing statement during COP 25 in 2019, emphasizing the critical importance of a financial mechanism on loss and damage, framing it as a matter of survival:

Climate action is not a wish. It is a matter of survival and it must be funded (AOSIS 2019, p. 1).

Continuously, this existential concern for the most vulnerable communities is also present in the opening statement by ambassador Lois Young, chair of AOSIS:

With our very existence at stake, COP 25 must demonstrate unprecedented ambition to avert ecocide (Young 2019, p. 1).

This further emphasizes the injustice, illustrated with strong words as he refers to ecocide, underscoring the consequences of inaction that threaten all populations and ecosystems, including both present and future generations. Young also highlights that loss and damage is not a new concept, rather, it has persisted for a considerable period of time without being recognized by the global community, indicating the concept's sustained existence:

Despite 30 years of consistent advocacy, tireless engagement and action within our means, global inaction and inadequate commitments signal a willingness to sacrifice the very existence of small island developing states (Young 2019, p. 1).

5.1.2 EU

During the 24th COP in 2018, there is rarely any mention of loss and damage. In the opening statement, the Czech Minister of the Environment, Anna Hubáčková, representing the EU, in the context of climate efforts emphasizes mitigation and adaptation:

Adopting a robust outcome of the Paris work programme, with clear provisions on all key issues including transparency, means of implementation, mitigation and adaptation, is the EU's top priority for COP 24. The outcome must be fully in line with the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement, be applicable to all Parties, take into account different national circumstances and capacities and ensure that our efforts reflect the highest possible ambition over time (Hubáčková 2018, p. 2).

Hubáčková states adaptation and mitigation as a top priority during this COP, not referencing the concept of loss and damage may view what lack of recognition. Moreover, during the opening plenary of the ministerial segment of COP 25 in 2019, on behalf of the EU and its member states, there is an explicit reference to loss and damage:

We want to complete the second review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage. Mobilizing and catalyzing effective action remains essential for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage (The European council 2019, p. 2).

This highlights the ambition, expressing the desire as “we want to,” indicating a commitment to further advance climate action. However, the term remains vague, lacking explicit arguments on its significance and a sense of urgency in the proposal.

References to loss and damage as a distinct concept are rarely employed. Further evidenced by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, in a statement during anticipation of COP26 in 2021:

We must mobilise climate finance for supporting vulnerable countries to adapt and leapfrog to clean growth. The European Union will fully contribute to achieve our global goals on adaptation. With close to USD 27 billion in 2020, Team Europe is already the largest provider of climate finance. Almost half of our finance is for adaptation (Von der Leyen 2021, p. 1).

There is an urge to support vulnerable countries, still there is no explicit connection to loss and damage, instead emphasized by broadening the reference to climate finance.

Nevertheless, leading up to the 27th COP in 2021, there is a notable shift as loss and damage is explicitly mentioned as a concept. This focus may have contributed to stronger efforts in creating a mechanism for addressing loss and damage. During the closing plenary, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans requested greater support for loss and damage, particularly for the most vulnerable:

But do we walk away, and thereby kill a fund that vulnerable countries across AOSIS, AILAC and the LDCs, have fought so hard for, for decades? And kill the opportunity it gives us for a conversation about expanded sources of funding? To open a whole new chapter on loss and damage and create a new and lasting method to increase solidarity? And bridge the gap between those in need and those in a position to contribute to address their needs, on the basis of their today’s potential? (Timmermans 2022, p. 2).

This shift in language is more assertive than observed in previous COPs, indicating that the EU recognizes loss and damage as a concern. Timmermans is urging other parties of

the conferences to take joint action to address needs for the most vulnerable countries, referencing solidarity. The adopted elements, viewed as ‘opening a new chapter’ declare that the EU is welcoming new measurements on the concept as in adopting a new mechanism for loss and damage. He emphasizes that ‘it is not over’, stressing that climate action is loss and damage is overdue and must be prioritized:

I strongly urge us all to roll up our sleeves, and show to the world that the fight for ambition, for a better future, is not yet over. In fact, it has only just begun (Timmermans 2022, p. 2).

5.2 What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of ‘loss and damage’?

5.2.1 AOSIS

In examining AOSIS proposals, binary patterns emerge regarding the acknowledgment of loss and damage as a concept, representing the third pillar of climate change. This underscores the necessity for a certain level of action, primarily from developed countries. This implicit stance is evident in the language used on behalf of AOSIS, demonstrated in the opening statement during COP 24 in Katowice in 2018. The statement references how the ‘Modalities, Procedures, and Guidelines’ through the Katowice Climate Package (decision 18/CMA.1) must adopt the inclusion of the term loss and damage:

We also must see explicit reference to the term ‘loss and damage’ in the MPGs. We cannot accept only indirect or implicit references to loss and damage via other terms (AOSIS 2018, p. 3).

This implies that loss and damage should be addressed independently, a perspective echoed in the statement delivered on behalf of AOSIS by Browne at the COP 26 World Leaders Summit:

AOSIS calls for direct attention to loss and damage at this COP, as a distinct issue in its own right, not just on the margins of adaptation (Browne 2021, p. 2).

Refocusing on categorization and recognizing the widespread and severe impacts of loss and damage, AOSIS highlights the responsibility of specific groups to address this issue. They advocate the urgency of addressing loss and damage, assert that developed countries must enhance explicit action in the governance process. This suggests an underlying assumption that current efforts are insufficient:

Such loss and damage have persisted for decades, but compensation has been neglected by the governments of the worst polluting countries, for far too long (Browne 2021, p. 2)

Browne further adds:

The difference between small island developing states and industrialized nations, is the capacity to respond (Browne 2021, p. 1)

Highlighting responsibility, this underscores the obligation of industrialized nations to tackle loss and damage, aligning with developing countries that have experienced these impacts and are prepared to act upon loss and damage but lack resources. Consequently, as an underlying assumption, developed countries are urged to formally acknowledge loss and damage.

The use of binaries and categorizations facilitates addressing the underlying problem representation of loss and damage. The recurring perspective on loss and damage requires action from developing countries, emphasizing the need for them to explicitly recognize loss and damage as the third pillar of climate change. Developing countries advocate for justice, contending that developed countries should bear the heaviest

burden in this regard, as it manifests in the form of a binary pattern regarding more responsibility from developed countries.

5.2.2 EU

The utilization of categories becomes apparent when examining Bacchi's second analytical question. It exposes that, in linguistic terms related to loss and damage, the reinforcement of categorization, particularly affecting developing countries, is evident. This is exemplified by the EU's cautious commitment, as articulated on behalf of the EU and its member states during the 25th COP:

We must make sure that the most vulnerable are supported *in their* efforts – that they are empowered and have the capacity to deal with the changes and find new and sustainable ways forward (The European Council 2019, p. 3).

In the opening plenary statement, the emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable is noted. However, the statement specifies that support is crucial 'in their' efforts, referring to the vulnerable states. This implies a categorical perspective, seeing loss and damage as primarily affecting the most vulnerable countries and not being a significant concern for the EU. Conversely, when discussing the EU's commitment to countries most impacted by climate change, there is no articulation of a commitment to establish a fund:

We don't think that this process is ready to agree in principle that a new fund or facility is the right or the only way forward. But we are not excluding that and couldn't exclude that as a significant part of the conversation (Werksman 2022).

As expressed during the COP 27 negotiation proceedings, Jacob Werksman, the head of the EU delegation, articulates that the fund is not considered the suitable and only format for the mechanism. He proposes that it remains an option open for discussion, implying that contextualizing it as a fund may not be the most appropriate approach. Werksman further elaborates on this perspective by stating:

The scope of our conversation is not going to be focused on one single solution, as *some parties see it*, to the challenge of loss and damage – the establishment of a new fund or a facility – at this COP (Werksman 2022).

Additionally, by emphasizing the distinction from other parties, the focus shifts to the certainty surrounding some while excluding others. The EU frames the issue within the context of climate finance, signaling that they are not the primary victims of loss and damage. Consequently, further explanation suggests that establishing a mechanism for loss and damage in terms of a fund is not evident for the EU. Alternative options may be equally viable, the question does not solely hinge on a fund. Instead, other approaches could be appropriate.

The gradual pace of discussion may imply that addressing loss and damage is not a foremost priority for the EU. This perspective prevails until the conclusion of COP 27, as evidenced by Timmermans' speech in the closing plenary:

It does not address the yawning gap between climate science, and our climate policies. The European Union tried to bridge these gaps. As you know. We showed our commitment to ambition by being fully in line with a 1.5 scenario and even being able to update our NDC (Timmermans 2022, p. 1).

Timmermans emphasizes the EU's role in the negotiation process, specifically highlighting the efforts made by the EU. The use of 'we' in reference to the EU's commitment underscores their proactive stance in addressing action on loss and damage. This emphasis serves to illuminate the EU's sustained dedication to the cause of loss and damage.

5.3 What effects are produced by this representation of ‘loss and damage’?

5.3.1 AOSIS

Regarding the impacts arising from loss and damage, as previously observed, addressing loss and damage is of significant concern, especially for SIDS. However, it is also a global concern, as all nations will endure the consequences of increasing climate change events. These effects correspond to the assumptions embedded in the discourse surrounding loss and damage, a correlation emphasized in statement articulated on behalf of AOSIS during the joint plenary in 2018:

If the global community doesn’t immediately increase investment in renewables and provide new and additional support for those most vulnerable to climate impacts and loss and damage, we may never be able to recover (AOSIS 2018, p. 2).

This recognizes discursive effects, interpreting loss and damage urgently requiring action due to its existential threat to the most vulnerable. Therefore, the global community must address loss and damage promptly and enhance its support.

Subjectification effects are acknowledged, particularly in recognizing appeals for solidarity and clarity not always, but sometimes, explicitly referencing developed states. The establishment of a fund is emphasized as a means of achieving justice. Despite this, it is explicitly noted that small island states will consistently collaborate despite existing injustices, which may be specific to a lack of commitment from developed countries. Further complicating matters, examining the lived effects, which encompass material and non-material losses such as territories and cultures, highlights the complexity of the situation:

Given the scale of loss and damage that we face relative to the size of our populations and economies, and the decades it has taken of patient laboring to get here, establishing a loss and damage fund under the UNFCCC is only the

beginning AOSIS appeals for solidarity not charity. We will work as always in a cooperative spirit despite the injustices we are suffering (AOSIS 2022, p. 2).

Further stating:

Now people are dying, losing homes and migrating - not just in SIDS, but in many tropical regions (AOSIS 2022, p. 1).

AOSIS stresses that they are not responsible for bearing the costs of the increasing impacts and loss and damage. They call for action from developed countries, implying that these nations are accountable for it, creating subjective effects. Additionally, the lack of resources on their part exacerbates the problem of escalating climate impacts, becoming evident in the loss of lives. This issue could be mitigated by addressing efforts for loss and damage, efforts that developed countries have ignored:

Colleagues, this is now the perennial experience that small island developing states suffer, through no fault of their own (Browne 2021, p. 1).

In Browne's statement, he addresses the lack of commitment from developed states, which fail to engage with the concept of loss and damage, despite being responsible for it. This places blame on these vulnerable states through no fault of their own. Their fragile position gives rise to an emerging subjective standpoint.

5.3.2 EU

The representation of loss and damage has predominantly been situated within the context of finance, with the exception of the 27th COP, where loss and damage was presented and recognized independently. Prior to that, when addressing loss and damage, the EU frequently referred to its own contributions. As von der Leyen stated in 2021 during COP 26:

There is still a small gap and I think that we should put a lot of emphasis and try to close that gap. As you know, the European Union and its Member States are already the largest contributor to climate finance, with more than USD 25 billion per year (von der Leyen 2021, p. 2).

Additionally in 2018, as expressed by Hubáčková:

[...] to finance climate action in developing countries. In 2017 alone, the EU and its Member States contributed a total 20.4 billion Euro in climate finance – through this, the EU is leading efforts of developed countries as climate finance continues to rise in line with a pathway towards the goal, as shown by recent SCF and the OECD analysis (Hubáčková 2018, p. 1).

Furthermore, in the lead-up to COP 27, Hubáčková comments on the anticipated advancements, addressing the developments before the conference takes place:

All eyes will be on us in Sharm El-Sheikh. The EU has always been at the forefront of climate action and we will continue to lead by example (Hubáčková 2022).

As a result, discursive effects may arise from the representation of loss and damage, particularly in terms of omissions that could lead to the exclusion of viable options. The proposition could be that addressing loss and damage is necessary but not necessarily through a fund assisted by developed states. It is possible that the EU recognizes other concerns that may overshadow the concept of loss and damage, thus leading to its lack of recognition for it.

Subjectification effects become predominantly evident by the conclusion of COP 27, characterized by the acknowledged attribution of responsibility. As articulated by Timmermans, the EU emphasizes that developed countries bear a greater responsibility for loss and damage. Framed as a global concern, the EU uses inclusive language such as ‘we’, encompassing all conference parties. It is not solely a concern for the most vulnerable countries, as ‘all’ are called upon to take joint action:

But I urge you all to acknowledge, when you walk out of this room, that we have all fallen short in actions to avoid and minimize loss and damage. We should have done much more (Timmermans 2022, p. 1).

Furthermore, he targets the lived effects by referencing the impacts of climate loss. These effects were not prominently visible in reference to loss and damage until the 27th COP, as emphasized by Timmermans:

Just listen to our friends from Pakistan, just now, how the country was ravaged by floods. It breaks your heart to listen to it. Or Eastern Africa, where a drought rages that has no parallel. Or to those in the line of monster storms in the Pacific or the Caribbean (Timmermans 2022, p. 1).

6 Discussion on key findings

The analysis underscores two thematic findings from the empirical analysis, one of these underscores the representation of loss and damage as an existential threat. The problematization of loss and damage is prominent in the advocacy efforts by AOSIS. In statements there is use of elements in reference to injustice, emphasized by the immediate necessity to address loss and damage before it is too late, which highlight that loss and damage is of grave concern and a life threatening problem. The conceptual logic references the recognition of loss and damage as the third pillar of climate change, implying an act of serving justice within the global community.

This is supported by the reference to irreversible losses, as articulated in statements describing lived effects, particularly evident in the loss of lives. Additionally, subjectification effects highlight the vulnerable position of vulnerable countries, especially SIDS, emphasizing the inaction from conference parties. This serves as an underlying assumption, sometimes explicitly mentioned, that action from the one's accountable is the most crucial, especially their recognition of the need for further climate action by developed countries. Proposals reflect upon the minimal contributions to emissions, viewed through use of scientific knowledge (Serdeczny 2022), as AOSIS refers to their minimal contributions to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, reflecting the injustice.

The second theme concerns the portrayal of loss and damage as a financial matter. Analysis of statements in analysis reveals that the EU rarely references loss and damage as an independent concept, opting for references to adaptation or mitigation. The discourse predominantly associates loss and damage to financial matters, particularly addressing the EU's contributions to climate finance for the most vulnerable. This conceptual logic can be interpreted due to the silences within policy text. The lack of explicit references to loss and damage in the governing process, during UNFCCC, may suggest that the EU prioritizes other commitments or perceives the issue as less significant or too complex.

The EU employs categorizations, portraying measurements on loss and damage as ‘their’ efforts, potentially indicating a lack of recognition of this concern as a foremost priority and a possible absence of acknowledgment of accountability. Furthermore, it does not primarily regard loss and damage as concerning the EU. This is reinforced at the end of COP 27 when loss and damage are referred to as ‘all’ or ‘we’ when referencing joint action. As discursive effects, these silences potentially lead to the exclusion of certain feasible options. One implication could be that while acknowledging the need to address loss and damage, it may not be framed in terms of a fund assisted by developed states.

However, during the 27th COP, the problematization of loss and damage appeared to be similar to the one adopted by AOSIS, with the EU acknowledging the urgency for support to developing countries and calling for action by other conference parties, listing loss and damage as a priority. This contrasts with Calliari’s research (2018), as the EU encountered and supported proposals similar to those adopted by developed countries. This is viewed in subjectification effects during this COP, as the EU states their responsibility for addressing loss and damage. Additionally, the focus on the lived effects, acknowledging the losses from extreme weather events impacting countries, further illustrates this. The analysis also indicates that the EU did not rely as much on scientific knowledge in their arguments.

The absence of explicit references to loss and damage by the EU, especially in the early years of the selected material (2018 to 2019), posed challenges in comprehending their perception of the concept. However, in line with the theoretical assumptions of the WPR approach, this absence can be significant in understanding the problematization of the issue, appearing as a form of silence. The omission may be intentional and indicative of the EU’s perspective on the necessity of a fund. While speculative, interpreting the significance of what is not explicitly stated contributes to the discourse analysis field, providing insights into potential underlying perspectives.

The portrayal of loss and damage by AOSIS aligns with problematization found in prior studies, particularly Betzold (2010), as statements view the justice-based proposals in climate negotiations and the framing of climate change as an existential threat. This also shares the views of Calliari (2018), however also contrasting with her study, as the

analysis suggests that the proposals depict the fund as a solution, implying recognition for these states. However, it is also supporting the power within how something is presented can win influence within the climate regime. Due to Bacchi's theory regarding interpretation of power, due to the fund's adoption it could be viewed as AOSIS with their construction of loss and damage as a problem exerted influence in the negotiations, by discredit other arguments as their proposals surrounds their discursive knowledge, consequently gained influence in the governing process, holding power to influence the widespread perception of loss and damage, leading to the fund's establishment.

The similar argument can be applied to the EU, which in the discourse regarding loss and damage, frequently attributes their own contributions to climate action, possibly as a strategy to avoid addressing the root cause of loss and damage, as demonstrated by Jackson et al. (2023). This can be seen as an effort to maintain legitimacy. Consistent with the study, the exclusion of mentioning loss and damage may serve as a way to silence the problem, especially if the EU does not consider the creation of a fund as the optimal solution for addressing loss and damage. This can be interpreted as a rejection of knowledge, stemming from the intricate relationship between power and knowledge.

The findings contrast with Wallimann-Helmer's perspective (2023), as these findings indicate that the problematization of loss and damage, due to theory, can wield influence. The question if it is normative under the UNFCCC, is reserved for another study. Indications from the problem representations, particularly in the case of AOSIS, may align with the approach outlined by Allen and Hadden (2017) for shaping an agenda through framing. However, the emphasis on addressing shaming in proposals, despite some explicit references in AOSIS statements, appears limited.

The agreement to establish the loss and damage fund signifies a policy outcome. The analysis suggests potential alignment in the EU and AOSIS problematizations of loss and damage at the 27th COP, as they adopted similar acknowledgments. Speculatively, findings may indicate that institutionalizing a mechanism or framework for the concept within the context of climate change might have occurred sooner if the representation of loss and damage had been less contrasting before the conference in Sharm el-Sheik.

Given the dynamic nature of the topic actively debated, reflected in the utilization of recently published sources for the research study, the relevance of the subject is evident. However, this dynamic nature also introduces the possibility of changes in perspectives or the evolution of societal attitudes. The ongoing relevance and discussion of the topic have the potential to influence the outcomes of the thesis, a factor essential to acknowledge.

7 Concluding reflections

The ongoing debate on the concept of loss and damage, particularly in terms of institutional arrangements before operation, highlights its relevance. The increasing urgency to address environmental concerns, exemplified by reports, underscores the importance of taking action to support those affected by climate change impacts within the environmental field.

This study employs theory by Carol Bacchi's WPR approach, supported by a methodology based on the selection of three of her analytical questions. The material comprises statements by representatives of AOSIS and the EU during the COPs, supplemented to some extent by secondary sources in the form of news articles. The framework, integrating theory and method, is advocated for its orientation and capacity to delve deeply into problematizations concerning representations of how a problem is portrayed.

The establishment of the loss and damage fund signifies a policy shift, resolving a prolonged debate and indicating a change of loss and damage within governing processes. The research question is, "How did AOSIS and the EU portray loss and damage through the establishment of the loss and damage fund?" The findings suggest that AOSIS portrayal of loss and damage as urgent and life-threatening, requiring immediate action with emphasis on climate justice and accountability of developed countries. The EU positioned loss and damage within climate finance discussions with scarce references to loss and damage within its own concept. During the 27th COP, the portrayals of both actors seemed to be aligned, addressing loss and damage as a concern crucial to address for all parties of the climate regime, particularly for the most vulnerable facing increased climate change impacts. Due to the influence of problem representations, it seems that AOSIS's portrayal has gained influence in the conceptual understanding of loss and damage.

Given the focused scope of this thesis on the problem representation of AOSIS and the EU, reflecting differentiated perspectives on loss and damage within climate negotiations under the UNFCCC, expanding the examination to include additional

parties could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding. Exploring the stances of influential participants in the conferences, such as the US or China, might provide valuable insights and serve as potential avenues for future studies.

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