

What is vulnerability to climate change and who are the particularly vulnerable?

An analysis of Nordic and African perceptions of vulnerability in relation to the new loss and damage fund

**EMILIE GREVE POBIEGA 2024
MVEM31 MASTER'S THESIS FOR 30 CREDITS
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE | LUND UNIVERSITY**



What is vulnerability to climate change and who are the particularly vulnerable?

An analysis of Nordic and African perceptions of
vulnerability in relation to the new loss and damage fund

Emilie Greve Pobiega

2024



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Emilie Greve Pobiega

MVEM31 Master's Thesis, 30 credits, Lund University

Supervisor: Murray Scown, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund University

Co-supervisor: Alicia N'guetta, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund University

CEC – Centre for Environmental and Climate Science
Lund University
Lund 2024

Abstract

The effects of climate change are resulting in harmful impacts — known as loss and damage — hitting the most vulnerable countries the hardest. At COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, a new “loss and damage fund” was agreed upon, creating history within the international climate change policy arena. However, the question of who may benefit from this fund, remains. The fund is to address the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, but the concept of *vulnerability* is in its nature vague, and its implications are many. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with Nordic and African climate strategy experts, this study sets out to investigate whether the ambiguity of perceptions behind *vulnerability* may influence the effectiveness and operationalization of the new loss and damage fund. The study examines (i) how the perception of *vulnerability* differs between the two groups, (ii) how this difference relates to the larger political debate between developed and developing countries, and (iii) what implications these results may have for the future process of the fund. The study takes a constructionist stance, arguing that it is not possible to separate actors from the world in which they are embedded, resulting in different perceptions of core concepts. Concepts are therefore assigned a large degree of linguistic uncertainty, which may hamper the effectiveness of negotiations and operationalization of institutions tasked with applying climate strategies. The study finds that the world view of different political actors is dependent on their positionality in the international arena. These positionalities result in diverging perceptions of the *vulnerability* concept and the concept of *particularly vulnerable*, which in turn have large implications for countries’ eligibility to access the loss and damage fund. This study further finds that the linguistic uncertainty of core concepts may have large implications for the future effectiveness of the new fund. Lastly, the study argues that there is a spill-over effect of linguistic uncertainty from terms to other terms in near connection, in this case from *loss and damage* to *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*.

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning

Under många decennier har världen påverkats av klimatförändringar, och problematiken fortsätter öka alltmer. Effekterna av människoskapade klimatförändringar leder till förödande konsekvenser i form av skador och förluster för människor världen över. Det finns en tendens till att skador och förluster drabbar utsatta människor i utvecklingsländer värst. Förutom att historisk ha bidragit minst till de globala klimatförändringarna är dessa folkgrupper också ofta minst kapabla att hantera dessa skador och förluster på grund av ekonomiska, sociala och strukturella utmaningar.

För att hantera den stora problematiken kring skador och förluster behövs det ny klimatfinansiering på området. Vid det årliga internationella klimattoppmötet 2022 (COP27) enades världens länder om en ny klimatfond med syfte att hantera skador och förluster som har uppkommit i världens *mest sårbara* länder som följd av klimatförändringarna. Operationaliseringen och strukturerna av denna fond klubbades igenom vid klimattoppmötet 2023 (COP28). Genom tiden har det dock varit stor skillnad på hur *sårbarhet* definieras och vem som anses vara *särskilt sårbara*, vilket inte heller har specificerats i beslutet bakom den nya fonden.

Denna studie undersöker hur synen på vad sårbarhet är och vem som anses vara *särskilt sårbara* kan skilja sig åt och vilka konsekvenser dessa skillnader kan tänkas ha för effektiviteten av den nya fonden. Detta görs genom intervjuer med insatta aktörer i nordiska och afrikanska länder. Det undersöks därutöver vad bakgrunden till dessa skillnader kan tänkas vara. Studien visar att det finns tydliga skillnader på hur företrädare för nordiska och afrikanska länder förstår *sårbarhet* och vem de identifierar som *särskilt sårbara*. Dessa olikheter grundas till stor del på de två gruppernas position i den internationella ordningen och den historiska debatten mellan utvecklingsländer och utvecklade länder. Studien visar dessutom på att sådana osäkerheter kring språkbruk kan leda till en sämre effektivitet av fonden, särskilt om skillnaderna i förståelse av termerna inte reds ut innan fonden blir verklighet.

Abbreviations

AR	Assessment Report
COP	Conference of the Parties
EU	European Union
EXCom	Executive Committee
G77	Group of 77
GcF	Green climate Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
L&D	Loss and Damage – in relation to the political debate
l&d	loss and damage – in relation to the actual losses and damages occurring due to the effects of climate change
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
NFP	National Focal Points
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAR	Second Assessment Report
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TAR	Third Assessment Report
TC	Transitional Committee
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts

Table of Contents

Abstract 3

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning 5

Abbreviations 7

Table of Contents 9

1. Introduction 11

- 1.1. *A global fund to address loss and damage from climate change 12*
- 1.2. *The linguistic issues of vulnerability 13*
- 1.3. *Contribution 14*
 - 1.3.1. *Actors 15*
 - 1.3.2. *Aim and research questions 16*
- 1.4. *Outline of study 17*

2. Theoretical framework 19

- 2.1. *Discourse and Framing 19*
- 2.2. *Linguistic uncertainty 20*
 - 2.2.1. *Language in global climate change negotiations 20*
- 2.3. *Global political climate change regime 21*
- 2.4. *Summary of theory 24*

3. Methodology 25

- 3.1. *Qualitative research strategy 25*
- 3.2. *Semi-structured interviews 25*
- 3.3. *Sampling strategy 27*
- 3.4. *Method of analysis 27*

3.5.	<i>Methodological reflection</i>	29
3.5.1.	Differences in types of interviews	29
3.5.2.	Limitations	29
3.5.3.	Ethical considerations	30
4.	Results	33
4.1.	<i>Nordic and African perceptions of vulnerability</i>	33
4.1.1.	Vulnerability	33
4.1.2.	Particularly vulnerable	34
4.1.3.	Summary	36
4.2.	<i>Connections between vulnerability perceptions and the larger political debate</i>	36
4.2.1.	Summary	38
4.3.	<i>The effect of uncertainty on the future process of the l&d fund</i>	39
4.3.1.	Summary	40
5.	Discussion	41
5.1.	<i>Perceptions and uncertainty of vulnerability and particularly vulnerable</i>	41
5.2.	<i>The political debate and process of the fund</i>	42
5.3.	<i>What now?</i>	45
6.	Conclusion	47
	Thanks	49
	References	51
	Appendixes	59
	<i>Appendix A – Interview guide</i>	59

1. Introduction

In their latest synthesis report (2023) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated that “[h]uman activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming” (IPCC, 2023, p. 4) and that:

Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people (...). Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected (p. 5).

Anthropogenic climate change is manipulating natural systems resulting in an increase in both extreme weather events and slow onset processes (Trenberth, 2019), and the severe effects are already felt by people and ecosystems worldwide (IPCC, 2023). In their quest for economic growth, developed¹ countries have generally been the largest emitters of CO₂ (Huber & Murray, 2023), providing them with a historically responsibility for the climate changes, and the effects of such, that the world is facing today. On the other hand, developing countries have been driving the advocacy for climate justice with the objectives to include loss and damage (l&d) in climate discussions, and importantly, to hold developed countries accountable for climate change, including financial reimbursement (Calliari et al., 2019). Developed countries have been opposing this, especially in relation to any acts of compensation (Calliari et al., 2019). Therefore, developing nations have for more than three decades advocated for a financial mechanism to address l&d from climate change (Boyd et al., 2021; Falzon et al., 2023; Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016). Climate justice is what developing countries in fact have been advocating for since the early 90’s (Falzon et al. 2023). Climate justice encapsulates the notion that climate change is not distributed equally throughout the globe, and that regions, countries and groups are disproportionately hit by its effects (Sultana, 2021).

¹ Even though the categorization of developed and developing countries may seem superficial, as these groups seldom can be seen as homogenous in appearance, political views, or level of development, it is the categorization used in this study to describe the division within the global political climate change regime, as this is the categorization commonly used by the UN, which is the organization framing this study.

1.1. A global fund to address loss and damage from climate change

Due to the effects of climate change, devastating losses and damages are occurring throughout the planet, often affecting vulnerable communities most severely (Boyd, et al. 2021; Byrnes & Surminski, 2019; South, 2023). The concept of loss and damage in a climate change context has no formal definition, however l&d occurs when mitigation and adaptation are insufficient (Boyd et al., 2021; Byrnes & Surminski, 2019; Morrison & Pickering, 2012; Scown et al., 2021) and resultant climate impacts lead to both economic and non-economic losses (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019; Preston, 2017; Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016). Loss and damage can refer both to the actual impacts from climate change (written in lowercase loss and damage “l&d”), and to the political debate surrounding this issue (uppercase abbreviation “L&D”) (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019).

The core of applied climate change strategy is to minimize and address climate change and its effects. It is argued that L&D should be viewed as third pillar of global climate change policy, next to mitigation and adaptation (Boda et al., 2021A; Jackson et al., 2023), which is why L&D must play a substantial role in a global applied climate strategy.

In 2013, the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) was established but lacked a financial mechanism (Calliari et al., 2019). In 2022, COP27, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, delivered a historic result when the establishment of a new fund for responding to l&d (“the l&d fund”) was agreed upon (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2023). The new l&d fund was seen as a victory for developing countries as the importance of l&d was finally recognized (Tigre & Wewerinke-Singh, 2023). The fund itself can be perceived as a global strategy increasing the efforts to address l&d caused by climate change.

The decision behind the establishment of an l&d fund notes that the parties “[d]ecide to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in responding to loss and damage” (UNFCCC, 2023A, p. 2). L&D encapsulates a deep-rooted political debate surrounding whom should be compensated for l&d and who should finance this compensation, with the developing countries historically having called for compensation from developed countries (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019; Robinson et al., 2022).

Although the decision to establish an l&d fund is a positive sign, there are still large issues to overcome. One such issue is eligibility (McDonell, 2023). The fund is supposed to be directed towards *particularly vulnerable*, however even in the summary from the fourth Transitional Committee² meeting (TC4), there were still no specific clarification of whether the fund was to be for all developing countries or only ‘least developed countries’ (LDCs) and ‘small island developing states’ (SIDS) (Transitional Committee, 2023), or how the grading of *particularly* should be carried out. In fact, Anisimov and Vallejo (2023) find that no specific list or criteria to distinguishing between vulnerable and *particularly* vulnerable has ever been made under the UNFCCC.

1.2. The linguistic issues of vulnerability

The relationship between l&d and vulnerability to climate change is placed at the center of the decision behind the establishment of the fund. It is further specified that some developing countries are to be understood as *particularly vulnerable* in this regard. In this study, it is therefore argued that vulnerability is a core concept of l&d.

The IPCC defines vulnerability as “the propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected and encompasses a variety of concepts and elements, including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt” (IPCC, 2022, p. 5). Even though the concept has a clear definition within the global political climate change regime³, that definition has changed in several ways since the establishment of both the UNFCCC and the IPCC (Anisimov & Vallejo, 2023; Estoque et al., 2023), leading to a dispersed landscape of the perceptions surrounding vulnerability. With a definition of vulnerability that has been altered various times, one could argue that the perceptions surrounding the concept are various as well, attaching a certain amount of linguistic uncertainty to the term. Vulnerability is therefore an ambiguous term with different connotations and perceptions to it. However, despite the conceptual difficulty of the term, it has become mainstream in climate research and policy (Klein, 2009).

Further complicating the situation, the formulation *particularly vulnerable* implies that vulnerability can be graduated, yet without clarifying how the grading is carried out. Carey & Burgman (2008) describe this as linguistic uncertainty through underspecificity, which will be further clarified in the theoretical framework. The lack

² A transitional committee was established to make recommendations for consideration and adoption by COP 28 regarding, amongst others, institutional and funding arrangements.

³ The global climate change regime refers to the political arena in which global climate change negotiations take place including global climate change institutions and the actors embedded within.

of explanation regarding which countries and/or regions belong to the group of *particularly vulnerable*, opens questions on who will be eligible to receive funds, and how these funds will be prioritized (Jackson & Sakshi, 2023). With no unanimous understanding of vulnerability, the perception of the term will be based on normative and subjective ideas by the parties deciding who are vulnerable and who are *particularly vulnerable* — this will be political.

This issue echoes long political tensions between developed countries, who have previously had a more negative attitude towards an l&d financial mechanism, and developing parties, who have defended the fund and have amongst them countries that likely qualify as *particularly vulnerable* (McDonnell, 2023). Developed countries have previously used obstructionist tactics to stall progress in L&D negotiations, e.g. by “manipulating the meaning of the language” (Falzon et al., 2023, p. 15), through using unclear language and ambiguity or in other ways distorting the language used (Falzon et al., 2023). Therefore, for the l&d fund to be effective in its operationalization, it is necessary that there is an undisputed understanding of what the term *particularly vulnerable* implies. By assessing the theoretical basis of linguistic uncertainty, which will be developed in this thesis, it is evident that the concept of vulnerability and the categorizing *particularly vulnerable* are currently ambiguous, vague, and underspecified.

1.3. Contribution

To date, very little research has been conducted on the definition of vulnerability in relation to l&d. What has been done has mostly taken the viewpoint of critically assessing political definitions of the concept (Anisimov & Vallejo, 2023; Estoque et al., 2022; Jackson & Sakshi, 2023). Yet, there is a lack of empirical research centering on the perception of vulnerability from different actor perspectives and how this might hinder the effectiveness of the l&d fund as a global climate change strategy.

This research aspires to reduce that research gap by studying the perceptions of vulnerability in a climate change context through theory of language and global climate politics. Instead of focusing solely on the definitions of vulnerability, this study progresses and centers on the perceptions of vulnerability deriving from different actors, and (i) the connection and differences between these, (ii) linguistic uncertainty, and (iii) the larger debate within the global political climate change regime.

Regarding the societal relevance of this study, unpacking different perceptions of vulnerability will provide more insights on the different climate political interest, as well as it may give a notion on which direction the fund may take, including which countries may potentially be targeted. The study may even provide us with a notion on how language, and core terms in particular, may impact future multilateral institutions. Even after the structure of the fund and criteria for receiving funding have been clarified, this study will still be relevant in its effort to portray the connection

between language and politics and shed more light on perceptions and positionality. This study places itself on the edge of the construction of the l&d fund and is therefore of great relevance to the academic field, and to future research within the field on l&d, climate negotiations, and multilateral institutions. Even though this study is placed within social research, it still has a strong environmental relevance as it is of highest importance that the l&d fund is implemented and operationalized as quick as possible, due to the continuous climate changes that the world is experiencing. Furthermore, in the quest of handling climate change to the best of abilities, it is important to broaden the understanding of the effect of language perception on environmental and climatic negotiations, to ensure the efficiency of these. This relates not only to l&d but also to adaptation and mitigation negotiations.

1.3.1. Actors

The study focuses on countries respectively part of the Annex I and Non-annex I groups as per the UNFCCC categorization, referring to the *common but differentiated* principle in the original UNFCCC framework from 1992, suggesting that all countries shall combat climate change to the best of their social and economic abilities (UNFCCC, 1992, art. 3). Annex I parties consist of developed countries, and economies that were in transition in 1992. Non-Annex I parties consist of developing countries. The OECD⁴ members of Annex I parties are to provide and assist developing countries financially in their mitigation and adaptation efforts (UNFCCC, n.d). This division is thus based on a 30-year-old understanding of socioeconomic traits of different countries. One could argue that a part of the issues regarding eligibility is grounded in the fact that the institutional, structural, and socioeconomic bases of many countries have altered since then, why this divide may be outdated.

On the side of Annex I countries, the study takes a Nordic perspective. The Nordic countries have a long history of cooperation within the international political arena, including work on climate and l&d. The Nordic council and The Nordic Council of Ministers state that “[t]he Nordic Region is seen as a role model with regard to the environment and climate (...)”. (Nordic co-operation, n.d.) This self-notion of being a pioneer within the arena of climate, combined with their integrated work on l&d makes the Nordic countries a suited case. Denmark was the first developed country to offer climate funding for l&d, in 2022 even before the fund was decided upon (Volcovici, 2022). Even after the establishment of the fund was decided, the Danish government has been pledging that they are to contribute financially to the fund (Weise, 2023), breaking the long tradition of developed countries opposing climate

⁴ OECD stands for The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and is an international organization holding 37 members of market-based economies, with the goal to promote sustainable economic growth.

finance for l&d. Sweden, on the other hand, has been more reluctant and at COP27 the Swedish government officially questioned the need of a new fund for l&d (Harvey et al., 2022). The Nordic countries that are included in the European Union (EU) are part of the EU delegation in the negotiations regarding the new fund, so their positionality is also influenced by this multilateral arrangement.

Regarding Non Annex-1 countries, often framed as developing countries, the study focus is on African countries. IPCC (2022) has identified numerous key climate impacts across the continent, such as species extinction, loss of human life, increased water and energy insecurity, and loss of natural and cultural heritage to mention a few. In relation to l&d, Africa is vulnerable in several sectors e.g. human settlements and infrastructure, food systems, health, and heritage. Ayanlade et al. (2023) argue that Africa's vulnerability to climate change is intersectional and multidimensional, making it a complex entity to understand. They further find that reducing this vulnerability is the most effective way to reduce climate risk in Africa. Furthermore, several African countries are still tied to the economic and social consequences of colonialism, the legacy of which has left many countries more vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Abimbola et al., 2021). For these reasons, perception of African actors on vulnerability is an interesting case to study.

Even though neither of these two groups are homogenous, as seen by the different positions taken by Denmark and Sweden above, this study focuses on the differences between the two groups and not on the internal differences within groups.

1.3.2. Aim and research questions

The aim of the study is to understand whether the ambiguity of perceptions behind core terms may influence the effectiveness and operationalization of international political institutions and global climate change strategies: in this case, how language affects the politics surrounding the new l&d fund. Since the fund is currently under construction, it stands as a relevant and timely case to scrutinize in this matter. To achieve this aim, three research questions guide the study:

- *How is the definition of vulnerability and particularly vulnerable perceived from Nordic and African expert perspectives and is there difference and ambiguity in the perceptions?*
- *How does the different perceptions of vulnerability and particularly vulnerable play into the larger political debate between developed and developing countries?*
- *How might the uncertainty created by the different perceptions affect the future process of the loss and damage fund?*

1.4. Outline of study

Chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework of the thesis, which is followed by the methodological approach in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the results. Chapter 5 contains a discussion connecting the results to the theoretical framework and other academic literature. Thoughts on what future research could be executed on the back of this study, will also be discussed. The final chapter concludes the study.

2. Theoretical framework

Analyzing the perception of vulnerability invites one to draw on several literatures. This framework is made up of literature on language and the global political climate change regime. Further, the framework clarifies how language is used in the global setting surrounding climate change discussions. This is done in order to guide the analysis of the results in relation to the research questions.

2.1. Discourse and Framing

Theories of discourses and frames will assist in understanding the role of language in negotiations throughout this thesis. Language is subjective, and one person's understanding or definition of a concept, idea, or happening is different than that from another person (Goffman, 1974). A *discourse* is "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 1). Hence, language is organized in different patterns depending on the social reality in which they are embedded. Therefore, there is not one true social reality, and the understanding of a word is only true in connection to the reality in which it was created. Knowledge and how words are understood is highly dependent on the time and cultural setting in which it was produced (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002). Discourses are not, then, engaged with finding the objective truth. Instead, they are engaged with uncovering the underlying ideas of language, definitions, and concepts, and through that, understand how the social world is understood by the person expressing the language. The way that a perception of a word or an idea is presented is called a *frame* or *framing* (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993), and it can be argued that frames are what larger discourses are constituted of. Following this argument, the discourse of the global climate change regime is constituted of the frames created and brought forth by its parties.

Theories of discourse and frames place themselves on a constructionist note within the ontological debate. Constructionism maintains that the separation of an object and the social context that surrounds it is impossible. As Bryman (2012) argues, "constructionism prescribes that social phenomena are created through social interaction and that not one objective truth can be established" (p. 33). By using theories of language this study is placed within constructionism arguing that the

positionality of actors within negotiations are based on the social reality in which they are embedded, which in turn is expressed in their understanding of language and concepts.

2.2. Linguistic uncertainty

Linguistic uncertainty occurs when the core meaning of a concept or word is either imprecise or multiple (Carey & Burgman, 2008). In their work on linguistic uncertainty in risk analysis, Carey and Burgman (2008) describe how this kind of uncertainty may be present in many arenas including “(...) committees, and other face-to-face language-based settings where words and phrases used to describe hazards may be interpreted differently by participants, resulting in misunderstanding and arbitrary disagreement” (Carey & Burgman, 2008, p. 13), i.e., the UNFCCC. They further underline the importance in resolving these kinds of uncertainties, to achieve consensus (Carey and Burgman, 2008).

It is possible to distinguish between four types of linguistic uncertainty: 1) ambiguity – words with various meanings where no specification of the meaning is given; 2) vagueness – the meaning of the word is unclear or imprecise; 3) underspecificity – includes underspecified generality such as the lack of reference class (e.g. when the forecast shows 30% chance of snow in a region, there is a lack of reference class for ‘30%’. 30% of the day, area etc.); and 4) context dependence – the absence of context specification (Carey and Burgman, 2008).

Klein (2009) made the connection between vulnerability and linguistic uncertainty, without referring specifically to the theory, by arguing that vulnerability is “[a] [p]oorly [d]efined [c]oncept without an [a]greed [m]etric” (Klein, 2009). He continues to explain how vulnerability has become common use, however with most people using it only having an intuitive understanding of its actual meaning (Klein, 2009), which can lead to confusion and misunderstandings when used in different contexts.

2.2.1. Language in global climate change negotiations

Fischhendler (2008), argues that ambiguity is a deliberate tool used to progress negotiations on international agreements. This tactic is called *constructive ambiguity* and is possible since the imprecision of ambiguity may result in more parties agreeing on a treaty by pushing the clarification of the ambiguity to the future (Fischhendler, 2008). In their work on language and frames of L&D within previous UNFCCC negotiations, Vanhala and Hestbaek (2016) find that the ambiguity of the L&D concept was the reason why developed countries, who have historically used obstructionist tactics to

avoid progress in L&D discussions (Falzon et al., 2023), finally agreed to the establishment of the WIM at COP19 in 2013 (Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016). Hence, they argue that the ambiguity of the concept of L&D is what increased willingness to progress discussions of L&D, because “[l]oss and damage’ was an amorphous concept to which policy actors attached different meanings” (Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016, p. 112). Prior to the emergence of what Vanhala and Hestbaek call the “Loss and Damage” frame, developing countries had used a “liability and compensation frame” when negotiating L&D, whereas developed countries made use of a “risk and insurance” frame. The “Loss and Damage” frame developed as an overarching frame which would merge and incorporate both previous frames. The linguistic ambiguity of L&D was incorporated into the new master frame, enabling all parties to see their own view represented, which allowed for progress in discussions which in turn resulted in the WIM being established (Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016).

Even though constructive ambiguity often is used in diplomacy and international negotiations to increase efficiency in negotiations, it does have negative effects to it. Leaving critical issues to be decided on at another time may damage the relationship between parties at the point of implementation of the agreement (Fischhendler, 2008). One could also imagine that treaties agreed upon through ambiguity could render them ineffective, especially if no solution to the ambiguity is found in the implementation phase. Fischhendler (2008) proposes that when linguistic uncertainty in the form of ambiguity occurs during negotiations, the focus should be on “developing and agreeing upon mechanisms to accommodate ambiguity in the face of unforeseen events” (Fischhendler, 2008, p. 132). Even though such a process may delay negotiations, in the end it is preferable to situations with incapacity to clarify ambiguities (Fischhendler, 2008).

2.3. Global political climate change regime

The structural divide between developed/developing countries has deep historical roots and pervades global climate politics. In her extensive work on national delegations and negotiators, Falzon (2023) finds that the UNFCCC reproduce structures of the global world order, and that the institution favors delegations from developed countries, based on “normative ideals of national development” (Falzon, 2023, p. 186). In turn, this type of institutional privilege decreases the negotiating power of developing countries (Falzon, 2023). As an example, Falzon examines the “ideal delegation” in relation to UNFCCC negotiations and finds that these consists of four traits: 1) large in size, 2), English speaking, 3) western scientific and legal expertise, and 4) stability in the sense that the same people are in the delegation year after year. Parties that align with the ideals behind institutional structures will continue

to benefit from them and therefore they will want the structures to prevail. On the other hand, parties that do not fit in with these ideals, will experience a disadvantage in power (Falzon, 2023). Especially in relation to climate change, these unequal structures are challenging, since they give advantage to the countries that historically have driven climate change the most, and disadvantage to the countries that have contributed the least to climate change but who are experiencing the largest effects (Falzon, 2023). Abimbola et al. (2021) also argued that international institutions and climate change projects, are oblivious towards the fact that they built on norms, practices and ideologies that stems from a colonial past. Neocolonialism⁵ is enforced when international institutions are, often, led by people from developed countries, underpinning ideas of development based in western ideologies.

One way to comprehend the unequal structures within the UNFCCC system is to assess how developed countries have used tactics to obstruct climate justice by delaying negotiations on L&D. This has been done through stalling progress of l&d finance, and further hindering language of compensation and liability (Falzon et al., 2023). When it was no longer possible to keep the distinction between l&d and finance, the decision on the new funding mechanisms and the new fund used no language of compensation or liability (Calliari et al., 2019; UNFCCC, 2023A).

The IPCC definition of vulnerability has evolved over time, starting from their first actual definition in the second assessment report (1995), to the sixth, and latest, assessment report (2022), see figure 1. The most important change happened between the fourth and fifth assessment report (AR4 and AR5), where vulnerability was no longer a function of its own. Instead, there was a change in paradigm where exposure was removed from the vulnerability function, and where vulnerability and exposure were levelled and together included into the broader framing of risk (IPCC, 2014). Firmest was the definition in the third (2001) and fourth assessment report (TAR, 2021 and AR4 2007), see figure 1.

The most recent definition of vulnerability underlines the complexity and multiplicity of the definition that lies at the center of this study. Phrases such as *a variety of* and *such as* apply a large degree of linguistic uncertainty in the form of both ambiguity and vagueness, as they imply that other concepts can also be incorporated.

⁵ Neocolonialism can be defined as “the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means (Britannica, 2023).

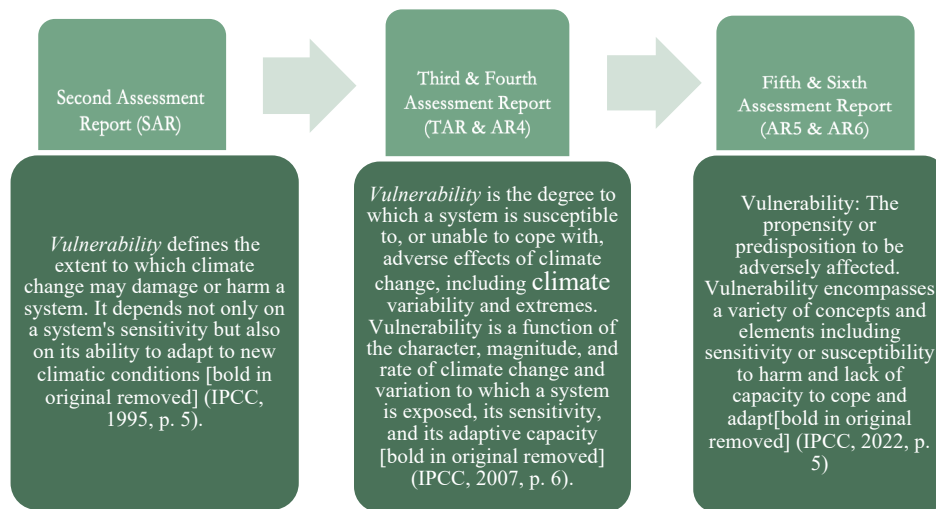


Figure 1
The definitional evolution of IPCC's definition of vulnerability

The concept of *particularly vulnerable* is often referred to in decisions within the UNFCCC arena, describing different groups of developing countries. However, the group of developing countries is not homogeneous, and the word *particularly* places a large degree of linguistic uncertainty in the form of underspecificity by neglecting to use a reference class to which *particularly* relates.

In COP decisions throughout time, different country groups have been both included and excluded of the *particularly vulnerable* group. For example, *particularly vulnerable* has gone from referring to “especially the least developed countries and small island developing States” (UNFCCC, 2003, p. 4) at COP8, to also include Africa at COP13 and COP15. In the Bali action plan agreed upon at COP 13 *particularly vulnerable* refers to “the least developed countries and small island developing States, and further taking into account the needs of countries in Africa affected by drought, desertification and floods” (UNFCCC, 2008, p. 4). In the Paris Agreement, on the other hand, *particularly vulnerable* is once again only referring to LDCs and SIDS, however incorporating the trait of capacity constraints (UNFCCC, 2016). In the decision to establish the new fund, it is stated that the fund is to assist “*developing countries that are particularly vulnerable*” (UNFCCC, 2023A, p. 12).

McDonnell (2023) finds that the lack of specification of *particularly vulnerable* is creating much tension between countries at the negotiations, with various developing

countries wanting to be included in the list of *particularly vulnerable* to benefit from future l&d financial mechanisms.

2.4. Summary of theory

The theory presented above outlines how unequal structures in the global political climate change regime are reproduced, largely through language and norms. These structures reinforce a developed/developing divide and are based on a world order that favors a western-centric idea of development. These are detectable in the language of international negotiations, where language is used as a strategy to exercise power. Theory of language, frames, and discourses takes a constructionist standpoint, and creates an image of the world seen from the view of the person presenting it. Hence, words represent the social reality of a single person or group. In the context of this study, this means that the perception of vulnerability may differ from a developed, or Nordic, point of view to a developing, or African, point of view, depending on how the reality of these groups are experienced. This diversity in perception of language creates linguistic uncertainty where concepts such as *vulnerability* or *particularly vulnerable* are not easily defined and become saturated with ambiguity in negotiations related to climate change. Hence, there is a need to develop a methodology that uncover these ambiguities, which this thesis provides.

3. Methodology

3.1. Qualitative research strategy

This study is of qualitative character, as qualitative strategies often favor words over quantifiable data (Bryman, 2012). The main objective of this study is to gain deep understanding on the *why* and *how* in relation to the research area, as specified in the research questions. Therefore, a qualitative strategy focusing on an in-depth analysis of language and the understanding hereof is an appropriate choice (Bryman, 2012).

Qualitative research as such does have some methodological matters to consider. Both in relation to replicability and generalization it stands as weaker than quantitative (Bryman, 2012). If someone was to replicate this research, they would not get the exact same result due to the subjectivity of qualitative research. This study takes a constructionist stand, which further weakens its generalizability. This study, and constructionism in general, is concerned with the social reality from an individual point of view, which is why it will never be possible to generalize this study to, for example, all developed/developing countries. However, the aim of this study was never to extrapolate or generalize, so a weak generalization should not be seen as an issue undermining the findings of this study.

3.2. Semi-structured interviews

The data in this study is collected through semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012). These were conducted to investigate the perception of vulnerability and the concept's relation to the new I&D fund from the view of actors from Nordic and African countries. Conversational interviews are appropriate when the researcher is interested in how the interviewees themselves perceive their world (Esaiasson et al., 2017). Interviews were the most appropriate data collection method given the constructionist stance of this study that words are based on the understandings of the social world in which the interviewee is imbedded.

In semi-structured interviews, an interview guide is prepared prior to the study, allowing for the researcher to keep a red thread through the interview and ensure that certain key questions are asked (Bryman, 2012). The questions asked are open ended

and allow for the interviewee to answer in any direction wished. This is a flexible form of interviewing, allowing for the researcher to follow up questions in relation to answers, and to catch and follow up on points that are important to the interviewee (Bryman, 2012). This is very important when the aim of the research is to understand actors' perception of language, since it will be difficult to completely decide what questions are needed to be asked before there is a comprehension of the social reality from the understanding of the interviewee.

Six interviews were conducted as part of this study. Prior to the interviews, all interviewees had been presented with a form of consent explaining the purpose of the interview and how their participation would assist in the study, further explained in section 3.5.3. All six interviewees accepted the terms in the consent form.

Four of the interviews were conducted through either Teams or Zoom, both online platforms. Three of these used the computer camera to allow for a more face-to-face atmosphere. One did not use camera from the side of the interviewee due to bad internet connection. The researcher chose to keep her camera on, to give the interviewee the feeling of a face-to-face interview. Due to bad internet connection, one interview was conducted through the telephone app WhatsApp. The last interview was conducted face-to-face on the suggestion of the interviewee.

The time estimation of the interviews were 45-60 minutes, however one of the interviewees was only able to set of 30 minutes for the interview. Even though this could possibly lead to a less extensive interview, the researcher found that the interviewee had expertise that would be such an asset to the study, that the shorter interview would be of greater value than replacing the interviewee with another.

Five of the six interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. The sixth interview was not recorded on request of the interviewee. Instead, the researcher took notes throughout the whole interview as well as recorded a memo with her own thoughts and memories of the interview directly after the interview had taken place.

3.2.1.1. Interview guide

An interview guide (appendix A) was prepared prior to the interviews. The guide was used as a backbone of the interviews, however the order in which the questions were asked varied depending on how interviewees answered previous questions. This was deliberately done to keep the stream of thought of the interviewee uninterrupted to better allow for holistic and in-depth answers to truly comprehend their understanding of concepts, language, and the global climate change regime. The constructionist stance of this study, with its aim to deeply understand the interviewees perception of vulnerability, also resulted in these semi-structured interviews being on the looser, more conversational, end of the interview scale.

3.3. Sampling strategy

The interviewees in this study have been selected through a purposive sampling method in the form of criterion sampling, which is sampling in a deliberate way with a specific purpose, often in relation to the research questions (Punch, 2014). In criterion sampling all units are sampled based on criteria (Bryman, 2012). The period of sampling went from the 24th of September to the 18th of October 2023. Following the sampling (outlined below), six interviewees were recruited. For confidentiality, throughout the results the Nordic interviewees are labelled 1, 2, and 3, and the African interviewees 4, 5, and 6.

The first sample criterion was that the units sampled were either from a Nordic or an African country. The group of Nordic countries consisted of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Finland. The group of African countries consisted of all 55 countries currently included in the African Union. The second sample criterion was that the units had to be, either previously or presently, working with climate change and the issue of vulnerability. Three direct ways to locate sampling units were used by examining: 1) the Transitional Committee for the new l&d fund, 2) the Executive Committee of the WIM (EXCom), and 3) the national focal points of the UNFCCC⁶.

64 units were contacted through this strategy, 62 by email and two through the webpage LinkedIn. All units that did not respond were contacted two-three times. In total, three interviewees were sampled through the strategy above. The goal was to conduct six to eight interviews in total, half with Nordic actors and half with African actors. Therefore, additional ways to target sampling units were explored. The researcher encountered two additional interviewees through referral from a third party. Both interviewees were contacted through email by the researcher herself. The researcher further contacted the foreign ministries and development agencies of all countries belonging to the Nordic group, as well as the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Ten agencies were contacted and one more interviewee was sampled through this strategy. In total 76 units were contacted, and of these, six interviewees were sampled.

3.4. Method of analysis

The analytical framework used to analyze the data in this study was inspired by the *Miles and Huberman Framework for qualitative data analysis* (Punch, 2014). This framework is made up of three stages:

⁶ A national focal point is an authority nominated by a state to undertake that states interest in international arenas.

- 1) Data reduction
- 2) Data display
- 3) Drawing and verifying conclusions

These three stages are interdependent and interact throughout the whole analysis (Punch, 2014). Before engaging in the analysis, all interview material was read thoroughly to truly comprehend the data set. All interview transcriptions, and notes from the interview that was not recorded, was imported to NVivo, a digital software program for qualitative data analysis, for coding. Codes were then established; first in three themes aligning with the research questions, and secondly sub-codes were created. Table 1 displays the codes and subcodes guiding the analytical work of this study. In this analytical process, the two first steps were joined, and the data reduction and display was performed simultaneously. In the step of data reduction and display, the transcriptions and notes were fragmented into pieces aligning with the subcodes established. This way data *reduction* occurred as only the data relevant for the research questions was extracted, and it was at the same time *displayed* in different subcodes to organize the dataset. The data was then analyzed one research question at a time. In the last step conclusions was drawn connecting the data from the subcodes to the research questions.

Table 1
Overview of codes and subcodes created to structure the data in the analytical process.

Codes	Sub-codes
Theme 1: Perceptions of vulnerability	Definitions and perceptions of l&d Definitions and perceptions of vulnerability Particularly vulnerable Differences in perceptions Consequence of difference in perceptions
Theme 2: Connection between perceptions and the larger global political debate	The developed/developing divide Key actors in relation to the fund Vulnerability in relation to the fund
Theme 3: The effect of different perceptions on the future process of the l&d fund	Linguistic uncertainty Effectiveness of the fund Actors' ideas of how different perceptions may affect the fund

3.5. Methodological reflection

3.5.1. Differences in types of interviews

The six interviews were conducted in four different manners: 1) through video with both cameras on, 2) through video with camera on from the researcher's side only, 3) by phone, and 4) face-to-face. Bryman (2012) finds that there is not a lot of difference in answers given in face-to-face interviews and phone interviews. However, there are still aspects to be aware of. For example, it is not possible to observe body language when interviewing by phone, something that may be of interest in qualitative research. Misunderstandings or misinterpretations may also occur more often due to the lack of facial expressions to analyze (Bryman, 2012). These issues also apply in the interview where only the researcher's camera was on. The researcher did not, however, experience that these were issues that decreased the quality of the interviews in question.

Five of the interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed. This way the researcher made sure that the dataset resembled the opinions of the interviewees completely. In the sixth interview, where no recording took place, notetaking was carried out through the whole interview. This may have resulted in some points being lost, since the researcher had to use some of her focus for notetaking. Furthermore, the aspect of *how* the answers were provided may be lost when no recording is used (Bryman, 2012). However, this was also the only interview that occurred face-to-face, and in the end, the researcher found that this was the interview that had run most smoothly and provided her with most detailed data.

The interviews were conducted in three different languages, Danish, Swedish, and English depending on the interviewee's preference. Danish is the researcher's mother tongue, why one could find that it would be easier to catch nuances when interviewing in this language. However, the researcher found that because she has done all her academic studies in English, the interviews conducted in English were easiest due to the use of key technical terminology in English. In the end, the researcher does not find that the difference in languages had any significant effect on the results of the interviews. However, the transcriptions in Danish and Swedish have been translated when quotations have been selected, and therefore minor nuances in the language may have been missed, but nothing that have had a substantial effect on the results.

3.5.2. Limitations

Due to the rather small number of interviews, this study cannot provide a general picture of the perceptions of the Nordic or African countries as a group. However, it

does provide an understanding of the some of the differences behind these groups and may expose some tendencies of how different groups experience and understand language differently.

Another limitation to this study is a bias that might implicitly be present when a researcher, who herself is from Denmark, attempts to understand differences in perceptions between Nordic view and African views. Due to the researcher's origin, she might have a more natural understanding of the stream of thought coming from the Nordic actors than the African actors, which may, in some implicit sense, have had a skewing effect on the interviews and the data thereof. However, the researcher was aware of this bias going into the research and has reflected on it when drawing the questions and conducting the analyses. Furthermore, the researcher never included herself in the group of Nordic countries when undertaking the interviews and during the conversations with the interviewees.

Besides the methodological matters of qualitative research discussed above, qualitative data often requires more processing than quantitative data before an analysis is possible. Therefore, the data has already been managed by the researcher prior to the analysis, applying a certain amount of subjectivity to the data. As Punch (2014) describes: "Once data is put into words it is the researcher constructed text that are used in the analysis" (Punch, 2014, p. 87). Hence, it is the researcher's interpretation of the data that is the building ground for the analysis, and with the researcher being present in her own social reality, it will never be objective. Once again, however, this should not question the strength of the results, since the objective of qualitative research is not generalizability, instead it is the in-depth analysis of subjective perceptions that is in focus throughout this study.

3.5.3. Ethical considerations

Throughout this research, the researcher has taken measures to address ethical considerations. First, all interviewees were provided with a consent form composed of the following sections (i) presentation of the researcher, (ii) nature of the study, (iii) right to withdraw and the fact that no compensation was provided. Further, the following was specified clearly:

- The recorded interviews will be transcribed and coded in a manner where only the researcher will have access to a list of names and codes.
- Personal information and individual results of the participants will not be linked to the research material and will not be identifiable in the final report of this study. The result will only refer to respondents as being either from a Nordic or African country.

- The research material will be kept on a password protected computer and only accessed by the researcher. The recordings and research materials will be destroyed five years after the research is finalized i.e., in January 2029.

This way, the researcher secured that all interviewees were well informed and knew what they had accepted to. All interviewees agreed to the form of consent either written or orally. When transcribing, the researcher guarantees that only the exact wordings of the interviewees has been used, and quotes have only been used in correct manners without manipulation.

4. Results

4.1. Nordic and African perceptions of *vulnerability*

This section outlays the results in relation to research question 1: *How is the definition of vulnerability and particularly vulnerable perceived from Nordic and African expert perspectives and is there difference and ambiguity in the perceptions?* The focus is on perceptions and differences hereof. The aspect of ambiguity will be addressed in the discussion.

4.1.1. Vulnerability

Before going into to the definition of *vulnerability*, one dichotomy appeared in the results with the Nordic actors equalizing l&d (impact) with L&D (policy level) while the African actors defined l&d in more pragmatic terms as actual l&d. A similar dichotomy was reflected in the concept of *vulnerability*, with the African actors choosing more pragmatic and less stringent ways to explain their perception of *vulnerability*, than the Nordic actors.

From the Nordic perspective, there was consensus that the perception of *vulnerability* was rather unified:

I would claim that if you are discussing the facts, if you look at the IPCC texts and when you talk about who are vulnerable and who are most vulnerable, then I would say that we have a pretty unified picture of it. Then how you choose to interpret particularly vulnerable in negotiations diverts heavily due to political reasons (Interviewee 2).

This view was shared by all Nordic actors. Further, the idea of interpretation of language in relation to achieving political objects was pervasive from the Nordic view. On the other hand, two African actors believed that the perceptions of *vulnerability* were very different:

This formula that they [IPCC] use. And for me, that formula is from the north, you can explain with your factors from the north. From us here when you throw in stuff like traditional practices and so on that formula does not work. So therefore, the understanding of what vulnerability is (...) will be totally different

from the north and the south. The climate changes you are facing are also different from what we are facing. The social systems you have in place are different, the social patterns you have are different. So, it is going to be different of course (Interviewee 6).

An interesting aspect here is that the institutionalization of concepts and the understanding thereof often used by the Nordic actors, is exactly what the African actor of the previous quote is criticizing.

4.1.2. Particularly vulnerable

From the Nordic perspective, the term *particularly vulnerable* is profoundly laden with political implications, as seen in the previous quote by interviewee 2. Interviewee 3 explains how the Nordic understanding of *particularly vulnerable* has always been heavily connected to development and poverty. The interviewee further mentions Africa as being of special focus in relation to developmental work in the case of the Nordic countries. Interviewee 1 agrees with the notion that poverty is central to the *vulnerability* concept but highlights how the physical conditions are what differentiates the various levels of *vulnerability*. However, all three Nordic actors attach a lot of political value to the concept. Interviewee 3 underlines how the concept is subjective, and that the perception of it will be different depending on who you ask and their political agenda behind. In relation to who is within the group of *particularly vulnerable*, interviewee 2 explains:

Particularly vulnerable was the textual compromise that could be agreed upon in Sharm el-Sheikh in relation to the financial arrangements (...). From the viewpoint of the EU, we wanted an even clearer text. Our first proposal was that it should be SIDS and LDCs, but then many countries opposed this saying 'but there are many other very vulnerable countries who does not belong within those groups' (...) (Interviewee 2).

Both interviewee 1 and 2 are aligned with this position. Interviewee 1 even includes African countries as being *particularly vulnerable*, supporting the notion that African countries have always had a strong placement in relation to development work from a Nordic perspective. Interviewee 3 further explains how the eligibility criteria, also mentioned by interviewee 2, are for the future board (of the l&d fund) to decide. Interviewee 3 even underlines how the criteria should be based on exposure and

adaptive capacity, explaining how the G77⁷ countries are against this kind of division between *particularly vulnerable* developing countries and other developing countries based on some kind of criteria, because many countries who belong to the developing group know that such a criteria-based division will exclude them from funding. On the other hand, interviewee 3 describes how SIDS and LDCs, unofficially, know that the only way they will benefit from a fund is if there are some kind of diversification criteria.

From an African perspective, the concept of *particularly vulnerable* is less politically laden and more about the actual situations of the vulnerable and the drivers behind this extreme *vulnerability*:

When we talk about the least developed countries it is because they are not really adapted to climate change (...) some of them have installed adaptation systems but they are not really strong or effective. If the adaptation system is not effective and is not playing the role for which it was implemented, then we talk about maladaptation. (Interviewee 5).

Here we see how the perception of *particularly vulnerable* connects to the driver of *vulnerability* instead of a larger political discussion. The same applies for interviewee 4 who describes the difference between *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* as *vulnerability* being general and *particularly vulnerable* being specified by particular issues and situations of communities and individuals on a level that is not generalizable.

One interviewee found that the politization of the concept of *vulnerability* was based on “development” criteria that do not take the unique situation of each country into consideration:

And the definition of LDCs (...) that classification I don't understand it, it is done by economists, they look at per capita income etc. Because Uganda is an LDC and Kenya is middle income, but to me there is no difference. Actually, Uganda is food secure, Kenya is not (Interviewee 6).

Further, in relation to using *particularly vulnerable* as an eligibility criterion for the fund, one actor found that due to the multiplicity of both *vulnerability* and l&d, all countries should be funded if they experienced l&d, however to different degrees depending on their socioeconomic basis and degree of development.

In relation to the scale of *vulnerability*, Nordic actors are implicitly stating that *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* is to be understood in a national context. African actors, on the other hand, see the multiscale and multiplicity of *vulnerability* as one of

⁷ The group of 77 is an intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the UN with the aim to promote collective economic interest, enhance negotiation capacity and promote development cooperation between developing countries

the reasons why *vulnerability* is so difficult to define, as some of the most vulnerable groups may be found in countries who are classified as non-LDCs but who still do not have the possibility to prioritize this issue.

4.1.3. Summary

In summary, there are different perceptions of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*, depending on whether you look at it from a Nordic or an African perspective. The Nordic understanding of *vulnerability*, *particularly vulnerable*, and *l&d*, was institutionalized, stringent, and politicized, whereas the African perception of these concepts was more pragmatic and context-dependent, related to the underlying drivers of *vulnerability*, and incomprehensive towards the northern institutionalization of the concepts and indicators. In relation to *particularly vulnerable*, the Nordic actors saw this concept as being highly politicized, subjective, and relevant at the national level, while African actors again argued for context-dependence.

4.2. Connections between *vulnerability* perceptions and the larger political debate

This section outlays the results in relation to the second research question: *How does the different perceptions of vulnerability and particularly vulnerable play into the larger political debate between developed and developing countries?* The focus is on how the actors describe this debate both implicitly and explicitly.

From a Nordic perspective there was consensus that the larger political debate surrounding the l&d fund is rooted in the issue of financing. Financing, in turn, is embedded within the issues of global positionalities and the division between developing and developed countries, which again mounts into questions of difference in expectations and distrust between the two groups. The subject of *vulnerability* is connected to all these issues.

To begin with the division between developing and developed countries, one interviewee explained how there has been an opposition towards this type of financial mechanism from developed countries:

The reason that this decision was made, that we started to look at this kind of fund, was because it was felt that we had to give something, it was a negotiation thing, but I don't think that any developed country was pro (Interviewee 1).

The issue of different expectations was found in answers from all Nordic actors. Interviewee 3 explains how there, from the side of developing countries are extremely

high expectations to this fund and its financial resources, something that interviewee 2 agrees with:

In the propositions that have been sent to the transitional committee from different groups, it becomes clear that there are very different expectations to what this should be (...). Some of these proposals also have very little connection to climate (...). So yes, everything from very large expectations and down to a niche fund with a focused prioritized gap within an already existing architecture (Interviewee 2).

Both interviewee 2 and 3 mentions how the fund sometimes is viewed as a future global ATM. Interviewee 3 further finds that some developing countries want this fund to provide money for everything without any constraints or obligations. Interviewee 1 underlines this point by stating that:

Developing countries wants money fast and with as little counterclaims as possible, while developed countries are unwilling to just give away money without seeing clear results (Interviewee 1).

The political division is connected to who is included in the group of developing countries and who is eligible to receive funds. This is one of the reasons why, from a Nordic angle, there is an unwillingness to postulate that all developing countries are equally vulnerable in relation to eligibility. Interviewees 2 and 3 describe how the developed/developing divide is built on a 30-year-old socioeconomic ranking of countries, and that many of these countries within the developing group, are no longer developing in the traditional sense, which is why developed countries are reluctant to provide financial support to the developing country group as a whole.

In the different perceptions of *vulnerability* found previously, the Nordic actors had a very politicized understanding of the concept. This is now explained by the fact that the group of developing countries is not equally vulnerable, amongst others, due to an outdated socioeconomic ranking, which is why the developed countries do not see it as their obligation to provide rich developing countries, interviewee 2 explicitly mentions Saudi Arabia and China, with finances that should go to actual vulnerable countries. This point made by the Nordic actors is further used to explain why the developing countries do not want eligibility criteria based on a grading of the *vulnerability* concept, as interviewee 3 explained previously. Thus, the concept of *vulnerability* is heavily connected to the developed/developing divide which is imbedded within the structural political debate found within the arena of climate politics. Interviewee 3 describes how the *vulnerability* concept and the idea of *particularly vulnerable* is used in a “political game”, that has little to do with the actual fund and more to do with the political balance of the world order.

From the African view, this debate is going to affect the future progress of the fund. Regarding decision-making power over the new fund, one actor found that:

Right now, it is in particularly the west and the north, maybe it will switch back to Asia, but right now it is Europe and US that is deciding (Interviewee 6).

That same interviewee explained how, in other institutions of climate change funding, there is a western/northern centric idea of development, *vulnerability*, and I&D, and that the experience is that practicalities of these institutions, such as criteria and templates, are based on northern ideas and theories.

A large difference in the perceptions of the Nordic and African actors is that Nordic actors find that developing countries have unrealistic expectations towards funding and results, whereas African actors find that the developed countries have a skewed idea of the whole process trying to push developed standards on developing countries without engaging the developing countries in the dialogue. The skewed balance between the two groups is affected by distrust as mentioned by actors from both the African and Nordic group. This is essentially based on the notion that developing countries are distrustful towards anything that developed countries want to put conditions on, and developed countries are distrustful in regard to whether developing countries are spending the money on the issues to which it was intended.

The idea of a hierarchy within the global world order is persistent throughout the answers. All interviewees are stating that the largest actors of the fund are going to be the largest donor countries, specifically mentioning the EU and the US.

Interviewee 3 further explains how the suggestion that the top five donor countries should be offered a seat at the board of the fund, is a strategy to get rich developing countries to contribute.

4.2.1. Summary

In summary, the difference in *vulnerability* perceptions found in the first part of the results, may be rooted in the division between developed and developing countries. Developed countries, here represented by Nordic actors, find that the division is outdated and misleading, which is why they are not willing to accept the notion that all developing countries are vulnerable to the same extent. Furthermore, they find that developing countries have unrealistically high expectations to the fund. On the other hand, African actors find that the developed countries have a larger say within the international arena, leading to the vulnerable countries not having a say in the debate. All this mounts into issues regarding distrust, skewed balances, and finance disagreements. Hence, even though *vulnerability* is not always explicitly connected to the larger political debate between developed and developing countries, many issues regarding this debate seems to come down to the aspect of who should be eligible and

who should not be eligible, which again is based on the notion of *particularly vulnerable*, and who should belong to this group.

4.3. The effect of uncertainty on the future process of the l&d fund

This section targets the issue of uncertainty in relation to the future process of the l&d fund by attempting to answer the final research question: *How might the uncertainty created by the different perceptions affect the future process of the loss and damage fund?* The focus is on how the different actors perceive this connection.

All interviewees believed that the different perceptions of *vulnerability* (section 4.1) and the political debate between developed and developing countries (section 4.2) will compromise the effectiveness and operationalization of the fund. When asked whether these issues would have a negative effect on the effectiveness of the fund, one interviewee answered short and concise “Yes, I think so”.

From the view of the Nordic actors, there is a slight pessimism in relation to the operationalization and effectiveness of the fund, however often carefully embedded in phrases surrounding how these issues can be overcome. Interviewee 3 explains that by not specifying the group of *particularly vulnerable*, this question is pushed until the implementation phase of the fund, which in turn can result in prolonging the timespan until the fund is operational. The interviewee finds that one solution to this could be to establish one fund with various sub-funds relating to different groups/purposes. This way, donor countries can choose whether they want to donate money to the overarching fund or a sub-fund that they find more suited. This is also a way of getting around the specification of *particularly vulnerable* countries, while at the same time operationalizing the fund faster. Interviewee 2 explains that:

We of course understand that if we leave it at particularly vulnerable without any clarification, then it is going to be very difficult for the board of the fund to handle this issue, and the risk is that the result is going to be that the most vulnerable won't be prioritized (...).(Interviewee 2).

It is further stressed that the interviewee does not believe that a board will be appointed if these uncertainty issues are not solved prior to, therefore there is a strong will to overcome these issues to progress on the implementation of the fund. Hence, even though the actors all find that there certainly are large issues of uncertainties that need to be clarified, there were, at least from two actors' point of view, a hopefulness and willingness in relation to overcoming these issues.

From the African perspective, view on the effectiveness of the fund was very doubtful. One Interviewee described the future effectiveness of the fund this way:

Practically zero. There is the adaptation fund, GcF etc. All these funds are actually applied for by governments. The trickledown effect down to the communities that are most effected. Zero. (...) The money does not reach them. And the same thing is going to happen here (Interviewee 6).

Interviewee 4 agrees with the pessimistic view of the effectiveness of the fund:

Yes, I see a situation whereby it will take very long before the fund is operational. You will see very soon issues to do with the highly vulnerable LDCs, issues will come on the table very soon and we shall see a lot of controversy, and there will be delays in the establishment of this fund. (Interviewee 4).

Conclusively, African actors were doubtful in relation to the effectiveness of the fund. This was mainly due to the uncertainties and differences in perceptions of *vulnerability*, and the ongoing political debate surrounding the construction of the fund.

4.3.1. Summary

In summary, both groups of actors were aware of the issues relating to *vulnerability* that will need to be clarified for this fund to be effective. From a Nordic perspective, there was a slightly negative tone regarding the effectiveness of the fund, however at the same time, there was a hopefulness and willingness to try and overcome the issues of uncertainty in relation to *vulnerability*. From the African perspective, there was little hope of the effectiveness of the fund, and the uncertainties due to difference in perceptions regarding the *vulnerability* concept, was seen as a large strain in relation to the operationalization and effectiveness of the fund.

5. Discussion

5.1. Perceptions and uncertainty of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*

It is clear from the findings that a divide exists in perceptions of *vulnerability* between different actor groups, and that this divide both creates, and is created by, linguistic uncertainty. The results show that, out of the four types of linguistic uncertainty described by Carey and Burgman (2008), the concepts of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* are mainly associated with ambiguity. However, elements of vagueness and underspecificity are also discovered. Especially in relation to *particularly vulnerable*, the lacking reference class of *particularly* attaches a certain amount of underspecificity to the concept. In relation to L&D, Vanhala and Hestbaek (2016) argue that the ambiguity of the concept was what brought the discussions on L&D forward. However, as Carey and Burgman (2008) argue, it is important to resolve linguistic uncertainties to achieve consensus on the understanding of a concept. This study argues that the linguistic uncertainty of L&D was never resolved, which is why the issues regarding the concept persisted and have spilled over to other connected concepts such as *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*. *Vulnerability* is not only a core concept of L&D but also of l&d. The *vulnerability* perceptions connected to L&D were found to be based on an institutionalization of the concept connecting it to the former IPCC function, whereas the *vulnerability* perceptions connected to l&d were built on a pragmatic understanding of the concept relating to the actual and practical aspects of *vulnerability*.

The linguistic uncertainty of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* has not been resolved prior to the negotiations on the new l&d fund. Therefore, a situation has occurred where core concepts relating to the discussions on the fund are attached with such a large degree of linguistic uncertainty that the understandings and perceptions of the concepts are numerous. This leads to confusions and misunderstandings which may affect the future effectiveness of the fund and cooperation within the field. While constructive ambiguity about *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* may have been used strategically to advance the decision on the fund, as it was for an L&D framework in general (Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016). Fischhendler (2008) argues that initial use of constructive ambiguity may in the long run stall progress. Hence, this ambiguity could potentially harm the effectiveness of the fund, if parties fail in clarifying core concepts,

such as *vulnerability* prior to the implementation phase of the fund. Instead, what should have been done, was to make a larger effort to reduce the linguistic uncertainty of *particularly* in the initial negotiation phase.

The Nordic institutionalization of the vulnerability concept develops into a politicization when discussing *particularly vulnerable*. Here, Nordic actors apply a large amount of subjectivity to the concept, arguing that it can be framed in different ways depending on the political gains of different actors, aligning with arguments made by Druckman and Wagner (2021). Genovese et al. (2023) argue that coalition building is based on similar economic development and/or, in the case of climate coalitions, similar environmental *vulnerability*, which underlines the ideas that issues are framed subjective depending on the gains of a coalition. African actors use a pragmatic argumentation when discussing *particularly vulnerable*, arguing that the definition should be based on the practicalities of each developing country. This is based on the social reality surrounding them which is conflicting with the Nordic political idea of *particularly vulnerable*. This debate stresses the issue of underspecificity. The lack of reference class makes it possible to attach different meanings and understandings to *particularly*, which further problematizes the concept by ascribing another layer of vagueness and ambiguity to it.

This study centers on the relationship between language and politics in the realm of climate change. De Wit & Haines (2021) discuss how the cultural meaning making process has an effect on how different actors understand words that are important to the climate change discourse. An issue in international climate change politics is that the translation of words does not include the cultural understanding encapsulated in a word. They use the example of adaptation, however the same can be said of *vulnerability*. Even though the word is translated, the connotations are often lost in translation, both due to differences between translators and differences in cultural meaning. Once again, this supports the constructionistic stance of this study, that it is impossible to separate actors from their social reality when it comes to the understanding of language and discourses. Due to the linguistic uncertainty of the concept, there is no way to decide whose perception of the concept is to be applied. Therefore, the decision on which understanding of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* should form the basis of the new l&d fund, will likely be based on normative and subjective ideas of the actors who have the most power. As Jackson and Sakshi argue, by not concretizing the implication of *vulnerability*, it will be possible to use subjective definitions to increase economic control over the funding (Jackson & Sakshi, 2023).

5.2. The political debate and process of the fund

This study argues that the different perceptions of *vulnerability* found in the results are based on the political divide between the two groups. This divide clearly illustrates

how the actors of this study are embedded within two different social realities, in line with constructionistic theories of language (Bryman, 2012; Jørgensen & Philips, 2002), allowing for them to understand the world differently. Therefore, it is only natural that the perceptions of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* differs considerably.

By using a constructionistic lens when analyzing the results, it is evident that the linguistic uncertainty of core concepts within the climate debate is a result of the opposing social worlds that the actors are embedded within, which in turn is a result of the structural divide, unequal power structures, and imbalances between the two groups. Carey and Burgman (2008) suggest various pragmatic ways to reduce linguistic uncertainty, however this study argues that the constructionist base of linguistic uncertainty makes it difficult to extinguish, since actors would have to revolve their whole world view. Hence, the difference in perception is fundamental with roots that run deeper than what pragmatism can resolve.

A central claim of this thesis is that the divide between developing and developed countries is based on unequal structures pervasive within the international climate change regime, and in the institutions from which it has evolved. These structures are rooted in theories favoring a western idea of development, which is why there is an imbalance within these institutions where developed countries have a larger say, a stronger bargaining power, and in general have more influence (Calliari, 2019; Falzon, 2023). Nordic actors did not find that *vulnerability* was an ambiguous term, instead, they found that there was a consensus based on the formal IPCC definition of the concept. On the other hand, African actors attached a great deal of ambiguity to the concept. These differences may be based on the positionality just described, where the Nordic countries are used to the favorable imbalances within the international arena. It is therefore natural that they find their understanding of a concept to be the one that prevails, since they are used to international institutions based on theories, norms and values aligned with the positions they hold. On the other hand, the heavy weight of history connected to the African actors results in them being aware of the ambiguity of political concepts, in this case *L&D*, *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*. They acknowledge that the groups within the international arena are so diverse that differences in perceptions are bound to happen. Their experience with the international political system is that it is built on norms, values, and theories unfavorable of their position, which is why they have a completely different understanding of how the international arena works.

The interview findings support the theoretical framework postulating that the international arena is skewed in a developed favor, and that developing countries have little say in progress and negotiations (Calliari, 2019; Falzon, 2023). They further underline the argument made by Abimbola (2021), that developing countries are oblivious towards the developmental privilege within the international arena. As long as the power balances are skewed this way, it will be difficult to extinguish the linguistic uncertainty found in the decision regarding the new l&d fund. In order for this to happen, the world view of the two groups would have to be levelled, which can only

happen of the structural hierarchy is reorganized. Both groups acknowledged that the country classification used is outdated and inappropriate. Hence, a way to “level the playing field” could be to introduce a reclassification of countries based on new and different criteria. However, a reclassification could in turn imply a reconstruction of the power structures present within the global hierarchy. As all actors described, “the ones who pay are the ones who decide”, meaning that donor countries have more bargaining power and leverage than receiving countries. Hence, if the country classification is restructured, the group of donor countries will no longer only consist of western developed countries, insinuating that the power of the global world order would also be shifting, which in turn may be what the world is experiencing. The question is whether this is something that the traditional developed countries are interested in.

The way that the two groups use language to frame their perception in this debate is based on their positionality in the global arena. The perceptions, from a Nordic view, is constructed to fit their world view, and the frames they are applying when debating these issues are used to hold on to the power which they possess. On the other hand, African actors uses a decolonial framing of the issues to underline how and why the system is skewed, aligning with ideas of postcolonial literature (Abimbola et al., 2021; Martinez, 2014; See et al., 2023 Sultana, 2022), and why there is a need for a systemic restructuring. There is an emphasizing of the connection between colonization, climate justice and the global system present (Abimbola et al., 2021; Martinez, 2014; Sultana, 2022). Language, frames, and discourses is a way to either exercise power or challenge the power structures present. The findings of this study suggests that there is a strong synergy between the field of language and the field of global politics. De Wit & Haines (2021) argue that “[l]anguages can develop into hegemonic systems of expression and reflect historical and political trajectories of domination and subjugation” (de Wit & Haines, 2021, p. 5), something that the findings of this study underlines, by revealing how language and the perception hereof is a way to exercise power.

The question now is what these findings have for implications for the future process of the fund. As this is being written, COP28 has just ended. On its first day, the new l&d fund was approved with various countries, including, e.g. UAE, who were hosting the COP, Germany, EU as a whole, and the US, already pledging funds (Harvey & Lakhani, 2023). However, the fund is still in its preliminary phase, and initial funding does not say much about the future operationalization or effectiveness of the fund. Even if the fund is well funded to begin with, is operationalized quickly, and has strong support, this does not promise effectiveness in the long run. Firstly, if the fund is run as a continuation of the old global structures, we may account a situation where “who pays decides” is applied, meaning that vulnerable groups and countries may be neglected due to their weak position within the global hierarchy. We know now that the World Bank is hosting the fund for the first four years (UNFCCC, 2023B), indicating that an institutionalization of the fund, in line with what Nordic actors

avored, will be a reality. One could argue that embedding the fund within the old institutional structure will result in a “business as usual” approach in relation to what countries will set the discursive agenda, which is what African actors feared. Secondly, In the final text on the operationalization of the fund, it is still not specified who the most vulnerable countries are (UNFCCC, 2023B). This finalizes the claim that constructive ambiguity has been applied, leaving it for the future board to decide on. The question then remains on which understanding of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* will lay as grounds for the eligibility criteria? When examining the board, 12 seats are to be held by developed countries and 14 are to be held by developing countries, including two seats to LDCs and two seats to SIDS. Hence, on paper developing countries are well represented on the board. However, as we have seen in the theoretical framework of this study, developing countries are holding a much smaller amount of bargaining power than developed countries (Calliari, 2019; Falzon, 2023; Falzon et al, 2023), meaning that the composition of the board itself does not ensure that developing country voices will be reflected in the end. Furthermore, only four seats are held by countries we know for a fact will be eligible for funding; LDCs and SIDS, making this group fairly underrepresented, especially if we reflect on the notion from African actors in this study, who were wishing for larger inclusion of developing countries in programs specifically concerning them.

5.3. What now?

This study has only started to scratch the surface of issues relating to the connection between language and politics, more specifically the connection between linguistic uncertainty and effectiveness of political institutions. Additional work focusing on this synergy needs to be done. Especially research that is based on empirical evidence on country-actors’ understanding of the issues prevailing within this arena. Only by genuinely understanding how the different positionalities within the arena interpret the world, will it be possible to change structures and obtain positive results. The findings of this study show that the difference in understanding of single words may have large implications for the effectiveness of global institutions. The next step from here is to examine how this type of linguistic uncertainty can be eliminated in the initial negotiation phase, to obtain a smoother implementation phase of decisions. Climate change is the world largest crisis at the moment, meaning that all efforts to alleviate it and its effects must be as effective as possible, which is why we cannot afford linguistic uncertainties to stand in the way. With the operationalization of the fund having been decided on during COP28 in December 2023, another important step now is to scrutinize how language is in fact affecting its work and effectiveness. As discussed above, eligibility criteria are still to be decided on, hence, with this study as a backbone, it would be natural to further examine what idea of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*

will be used as a flagship in this matter. Furthermore, it is also of importance to study whether the new fund will stand out as just that, new, or whether it, in fact, will just reproduce the same old structures as previous, as it will be, at least temporarily, hosted by the World Bank.

Lastly, this theme is not only important in the field of climate change. Since global structures are based on a hierarchy favoring developed countries, issues equal to the one studied here will be found within numerous other arenas. Hence, studies focusing on the global structures, the reasoning behind these and how these could be altered, needs to be done to attain real social change throughout the world.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to understand whether the difference of perceptions behind core terms may influence the effectiveness and operationalization of international political institutions, in this case how language affects the politics, and political processes, surrounding the new l&d fund. RQ1 investigated the different perceptions of *vulnerability*. RQ2 examined the correlation between perceptions of *vulnerability* and the larger political debate between developed and developing countries. RQ3 examined how the uncertainty regarding *vulnerability* might affect the future process of the l&d fund.

The results show that there are very different perceptions of *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable*. The Nordic understanding was institutionalized, stringent, and politically laden, whereas the African perception of these concepts was more pragmatic, related to the underlying drivers of *vulnerability* and uncomprehensive towards the northern institutionalization of the concepts and indicators. Furthermore, African actors argued for context dependency in relation to *vulnerability*, but especially in relation to including countries into the group of *particularly vulnerable*. In the discussion, this study argues that there is a spill-over effect of linguistic uncertainty from term to term. In this case, the linguistic ambiguity has spread from l&d/L&D and further again to *vulnerability*. Nordic actors were furthermore oblivious of the ambiguity of *vulnerability*, an obliviousness that may be explained through constructionism by the fact that developed countries are embedded within a social reality where international institutions are built on norms, theories and values favoring them.

The perceptual division of *vulnerability* discovered through the first RQ is found to be based on the political divide between developed and developing countries. Nordic actors found the classification of countries to be outdated and misleading, which is why they are not willing to accept the notion that all developing countries are vulnerable to the same extent. African countries found that there is a skewed balance within the global institutional system which is why their voices are not heard in the debate. The constructionist lens of this study supports the argument that these disagreements are based on the different world views of the two groups, which is exposed in issues regarding distrust, skewed balances, and finance disagreements. Even though *vulnerability* is not at all times explicitly associated with the overarching political debate in this topic, the core seems to be the aspect of who should be eligible and who should not be eligible, which again is based on the notion of particularly

vulnerability, and who should belong to this group. All in all, the findings of this study underlie the main argument of constructionism; that it is impossible to separate actors from the social world in which they are imbedded.

In relation to the effectiveness and future operationalization of the fund, both groups of actors were aware of the issues relating to *vulnerability* that will need to be clarified for this fund to be effective. From a Nordic perspective, careful optimism was expressed regarding how to overcome these issues. From the African perspective there was little faith in the effectiveness of the fund. The uncertainties due to difference in perceptions regarding the *vulnerability* concept, was seen as a large strain in relation to the operationalization and effectiveness of the fund.

The discussion portrays a strong connection between language and politics. The linguistic uncertainty found regarding *vulnerability* and *particularly vulnerable* can be traced to the linguistic uncertainty of I&D/L&D and is grounded in the different world views of the two groups, underlining the arguments made by constructionist theories. Furthermore, the issues regarding perceptual differences are rooted in historical and cultural differences and the political divide within the global climate change regime, which in turn is built on norms, theories and values favoring a western idea of development. These developmental ideas are permeated throughout the international system and creates a hierarchy where developed countries are more powerful than developing countries, which is why they are used to their world view and perception of ideas and concepts to be the fundamental one. These power structures are infected with a profound distrust from both sides, making it a difficult issue to deal with. Before the issues of inconsistent understandings of language and unequal power structures are resolved, it may be difficult to solve the issues of climate change on a higher level. The linguistic uncertainty found in this study may hamper the effectiveness of the future progress of the fund, and it will be interesting to follow how the next phases paving the way for the fund to become operational will deal with the issues uncovered throughout this study.

An important last note is that climate change is occurring as we speak, and it is reinforcing itself. Therefore, strong and effective climate change strategies need to be in place as soon as possible. We do not have time for power structures or linguistic uncertainties to hamper the effectiveness of important climate change strategies and institutions. Therefore, both issues of inconsistent understandings of language and unequal power structures must be resolved for an effective addressment, alleviation and minimization of climate change to be possible.

Thanks

First and foremost, I would like to express my largest gratitude and sincerely thank my supervisors Murray Scown and Alicia N'guetta for the support and guidance throughout the process of this study. Additionally, I would like to thank all interviewees for taking the time and assisting me in collecting valuable data for my study. Without you, this study and its important findings would not have been a reality. Lastly, I would like to thank my dear family for support through this process, you made it light and easy when it seemed dark and difficult.

References

- Abimbola, O., Aikins, J. K., Makhesi-Wilkinson, T., & Roberts, E. (2021). *Racism and climate (in) justice. How racism and colonialism shape the climate crisis and climate action*. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Washington, DC
- Anisimov, A. & Vallejo, L. (2023). *Defining climate vulnerability in the context of Loss & Damage: a scientific, legal and political question*. (study number 02/23) IDDRI. <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/study/defining-climate-vulnerability-context-loss-damage-scientific-legal>
- Ayanlade, A., Smucker, T. A., Nyasimi, M., Sterly, H., Weldemariam, L. F., & Simpson, N. P. (2023). Complex climate change risk and emerging directions for vulnerability research in Africa. *Climate Risk Management*, 40, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2023.100497>
- Boda, C. S., Scown, M., Faran, T., Nastar, M., oo, K., Chaffin, B. C., & Boyd, E. (2021A). Framing loss and damage from climate change as the failure of sustainable development. *Climate and Development*, 13(8), 677-684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2020.1851640>
- Boyd, E., Chaffin, B., Dorkenoo, K., Jackson, G., Harrington, L., N'guetta, A., Johansson, E., Nordlander, L., De Rosa, S. P., Raju, E., Scown, M., Soo, J., & Stuart-Smith, R. (2021). Loss and damage from climate change: A new climate justice agenda. *One Earth BECC: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in a Changing Climate*, 4(10), 1365-1370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2021.09.015>
- Britannica. (2023). Neocolonialism. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Byrnes, R., & Surminski, S. (2019). *Addressing the impacts of climate change through an effective Warsaw international mechanism on loss and damage*. London: London School of Economics Grantham Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, (16)

- Calliari, E., Surminski, S., & Mysiak, J. (2019). The politics of (and behind) the UNFCCC's loss and damage mechanism. In Mechler, R., Bouwer, L. M., Schinko, T., Surminski, S., Linnerooth-Bayer, J. (ed.). *Loss and damage from climate change: Concepts, methods and policy options*. (p. 155-178). Springer Open.
- Carey, J. & Burgman, M. (2008). Linguistic uncertainty in qualitative risk assessment and how to minimize it. In Tucker, W. T., Ferson, S., Finkel, A. M., & Slavin, D. *Strategies for Risk Communication*. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. Vol. 1128
- de Wit, S. & Haines, S. (2022). Climate change reception studies in anthropology. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews-Climate Change*, 13(1). 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.742>
- Druckman, D. & Wagner, L. (2021). The role of issues on negotiation: Framing, linking, and ordering. *Negotiation Journal*, 37(2), 249-278.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12358>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractures Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Estoque, R. C., Ishtiaque, A., Parajuli, J., Athukorala, D., Rabby, Y. W., & Ooba, M. (2023). Has the IPCC's revised vulnerability concept been well adopted?. *Ambio*, 52(2), 376-389. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-022-01806-z>
- Esaiasson, P., Gilljam, M., Oscarsson, H., Towns., & Wängnerud, L. (2017). *Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad* (5:e uppl). Wolters Kluwer.
- Falzon, D. (2023). The ideal delegation: How institutional privilege silences “developing” nations in the UN climate negotiations. *Social Problems*, 70(1), 185-202. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spab040>
- Falzon, D., Shaia, F., Roberts, J. T., Hossain, M. F., Robinson, S., Khan, M. R., & Ciple, D. (2023). Tactical opposition: obstructing loss and damage finance in the United Nations climate negotiations. *Global Environmental Politics*, 23(3), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00722
- Fischhendler, I. (2008). When ambiguity in treaty design becomes destructive: a

- study of transboundary water. *Global Environmental Politics*, 8(1), 111-136.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/glep.2008.8.1.111>
- Genovese, F., McAlexander, R. J., & Urpelainen, J. (2023). Institutional roots of international alliances: Party groupings and position similarity at global climate negotiations. *The review of International Organizations*, 18(2), 329-259.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-022-09470-4>
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Northeastern University Press.
- Harvey, F. & Lakhani, N. (2023, November 30). Agreement on loss and damage deal reached on first day of Cop28 talks. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/nov/30/agreement-on-loss-and-damage-deal-expected-on-first-day-of-cop28-talks>
- Harvey, F., Lakhani, N., & Carrington, D. (2022, November 15). Fear of backsliding on Glasgow pledges dominates Cop27. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/15/fear-of-backsliding-on-glasgow-pledges-dominates-cop27>
- Huber, J., & Murray, U. (2023). Turning climate justice into practice? Channeling loss and damage funding through national social protection systems in climate-vulnerable countries. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* e867. 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.867>
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (1995). *Climate change 1995. Impacts, adaptations and mitigation of climate change: Scientific-technical analyses. Contribution of working group II to the second assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*.
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ipcc_sar_wg_II_full_report.pdf
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2001). *Climate change 2001: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of working Group II to the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*.
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/WGII_TAR_full_report-2.pdf
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2007). *Climate change 2007: Impacts,*

adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of working group II to the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar4/wg2/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2022). *Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of working group II to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.*
<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-ii/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2023). Summary for policymakers. In: *Climate change 2023: Synthesis report. Contribution of working groups I, II and III to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.*
https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

Jackson, G., N'Guetta, A., De Rosa, S. P., Scown, M., Dorkenoo, K., Chaffin, B., & Boyd, E. (2023). An emerging governmentality of climate change loss and damage. *Progress in Environmental Geography*, 2(1–2), 33–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/27539687221148748>

Jackson, G & Sakshi. (2023) Political and legal implications of defining “particularly vulnerable” for the Loss and Damage Fund. OSFpreprint,
<https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/k2cp9>

Jørgensen, M., & Philips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage Publications.

Klein, R. J. (2009). Identifying countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change: an academic or political challenge. *Carbon & Climate L. Rev.*, 3(3), 284-291. <https://doi.org/10.21552/CCLR/2009/3/99>

Martinez, D. E. (2014). The right to be free of fear: Indigeneity and the United Nations. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 29(2), 63-87.
<https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.29.2.0063>

McDonnell, S. (2023). The COP27 decision and future directions for loss and damage finance: Addressing vulnerability and non-economic loss and damage. *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*. 32(3), 1-12.

Morrison, C. & Pickering, C. (2012). Limits to climate change adaptation: Case study

- of the Australian alps. *Geographical Research*, 51(1), 11-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-5871.2012.00758.x>
- Nordic co-operation. (n.d.). The environment and climate.
<https://www.norden.org/en/environment-and-climate>
- Preston, C., J. (2017). Challenges and opportunities for understanding non-economic loss and damage. *Ethics, Policy & Environment*, 20(2), 143-155.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21550085.2017.1342962>
- Punch, K. F. (2014). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative & qualitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Robinson, S. A., Roberts, J. T., Weikmans, R., & Falzon, D. (2023). Vulnerability-based allocations in loss and damage finance. *Nature Climate Change*, 1-8.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01809-y>
- Scown, M. W., Chaffin, B. C., Triyanty, A., & Boyd, E. (2022). A harmonized country-level dataset to support the global stocktake regarding loss and damage from climate change. *Geoscience Data Journal*, 9(2), 328-340.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/gdj3.147>
- See, J., Cuaton, G. P., Placino, P., Vunibola, S., Thi, H. D., Dombroski, K., & McKinnon, K. (2024). From absences to emergences: Foregrounding traditional and indigenous climate change adaptation knowledges and practices from Fiji, Vietnam and the Philippines. *World Development*, 176, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106503>
- South, D. W. (2023). COP27 Loss and Damage Fund—Financial Band Aid or Effective Mechanism?. *Climate and Energy*, 39(11), 29-32.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/gas.22351>
- Sultana, F. (2021). Critical climate justice. *The Geographical Journal*, 188(1), 118-124.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12417>
- Sultana, F. (2022). The unbearable heaviness of climate coloniality. *Political Geography*, 99, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102638>
- Tigre, M. A., & Wewerinke-Singh, M. (2023). Beyond the North–South divide: Litigation's role in resolving climate change loss and damage claims. *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 32(3), 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/reel.12517>

- Transitional Committee. (2023, 9 October). Fourth meeting of the Transitional Committee on the operationalization of the new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage and the fund established in paragraph 3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4. (TC4/2023/6).
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TC4_2023.pdf
- Trenberth, K. E. (2018). Climate change caused by human activities is happening and it already has major consequences. *Journal of energy & natural resources law*, 36(4), 463-481. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02646811.2018.1450895>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *The sustainable development agenda*.
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (n.d.). “UN list of least developed countries”. <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). “Parties & observers”. <https://unfccc.int/parties-observers>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992,
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2003, 28 March). Decision 1/CP.8 Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. In Report of the conference of the parties in its eighth Session, held in New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002. (FCCC/CP/2002/7/Ass.1). United Nations.
<https://unfccc.int/documents/3216>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2008, 14 March). Decision 1/CP.13 Bali Action Plan. In Report of the parties on its thirteenth session, held in Bali from 3 to 15 December 2007. (FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1*) United Nations. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G08/610/35/PDF/G0861035.pdf?OpenElement>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2016, 29 January). Decision 1/CP.21 Adoption of the Paris Agreement. In Report of the conference of the parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015. (FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1). United Nations.
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf#page=2>

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2023A, 17 March). Decision 2/CP.27 Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan. In Report of the conference of the parties on its twenty-seventh session, held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 6 to 20 November 2022. (FCCC/CP/2022/10/Add.1). United Nations. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2022_10a01_adv.pdf
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2023B, 28 November). Operationalization of the new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage and the fund established in paragraph 3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4. (FCC/CP(2023/9-FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/9). United Nations. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2023_09_cma2023_09.pdf
- Vanhala, L. & Hestbaek, C. (2016). Framing climate change loss and damage in UNFCCC negotiations. *Global Environmental Politics*, 16(4), 111-129. https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00379
- Volcovici, V. (2022, September 20). Denmark becomes first to offer 'loss and damage' climate funding. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/denmark-becomes-first-offer-loss-damage-climate-funding-2022-09-20/>
- Weise, Z. (2023, November 8). Denmark to make 'generous' pledge for climate damage fund, minister says. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/denmark-mulling-generous-funding-pledge-for-climate-damages-minister-says/>

Appendixes

Appendix A – Interview guide

Interview questions
<p>1. How would you define l&d?</p> <p>2. How would you define vulnerability in relation to l&d?</p> <p>a) What is then the difference between vulnerability and being <i>particularly</i> vulnerable?</p> <p>3. What is the difference in the way developed and developing countries understand vulnerability in relation to l&d?</p> <p>a) Where do you think this difference comes from?</p> <p>b) In relation to l&d, what is the consequence of different understandings of vulnerability?</p> <p>4. Is there one perception of vulnerability that is more prevalent within the l&d work of international organizations?</p> <p>a) Is there a hierarchy among countries that establishes what definition of core terms that becomes dominant?</p>
<p>5. What definition or perception of vulnerability do you think will lay the grounds for the new l&d fund?</p> <p>6. How do you think that it can be ensured that the particularly vulnerable groups will be targeted if there are different ideas of vulnerability?</p>
<p>7. Do you think that the possible lack of a common understanding of vulnerability and who is particularly vulnerable, will influence the fund's operationalization?</p> <p>8. How effective do you think that the fund can be if there is a lack of common understanding of vulnerability?</p> <p>9. Who do you think could be key actors in relation to the operationalization of the fund?</p>



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

WWW.CEC.LU.SE
WWW.LU.SE

Lunds universitet

Miljövetenskaplig utbildning
Centrum för miljö- och
klimatforskning
Ekologihuset
223 62 Lund