

# The Loss and Damage fund

An investigation of discourse and power under the UNFCCC



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# Abstract

At the international climate negotiations at COP27, parties reached the historic agreement to establish a fund to provide assistance to countries in responding to costs associated with climate change, the loss and damage fund. The decision is a result of many years of struggle for the recognition of loss and damage under the UNFCCC which have long been opposed by post-industrial countries. This thesis aims to explore the discourses shaping this decision and identify where current struggles lie, examine the G77's strategies in these negotiations, and to investigate whether the decision outcome on loss and damage funding at COP27 challenge power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC. To investigate these questions, the thesis employs Fairclough's framework for critical discourse analysis. The results indicate a divide in discourses between pre-industrial and post-industrial countries regarding loss and damage financing, leading to struggles over the issue's nature, urgency, and how the issue should be addressed. The thesis further identifies three discursive strategies employed by the G77 to overcome these struggles. While the pre-industrial coalition obtained an agreement to establish the fund, they encountered challenges in integrating their perspectives on liability and compensation.

*Key words:* loss and damage; the UNFCCC; critical discourse analysis; political ecology; climate justice

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introductory chapter .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction .....	1
1.2	Research aims and questions .....	3
1.3	Previous research.....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Political Ecology. ....	7
2.2	How the theoretical framework aligns with critical discourse analysis .....	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodological framework.....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Why critical discourse analysis? .....	12
3.2	Critical discourse analysis as a method.....	13
3.3	The analytical framework.....	14
3.3.1	Discursive level .....	15
3.3.2	Textual level.....	16
3.3.3	Investigation of power.....	16
3.4	Material .....	17
3.5	Critical considerations.....	19
<b>4</b>	<b>Analysis.....</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1	Discursive level .....	20
4.1.1	Analysis of the submissions made on agenda item 8(f) .....	20
4.1.2	Analysis of the main communicative event - <i>Decision 2/CP.27</i> .....	27
4.2	Textual level .....	33
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1	The issue.....	36
5.2	How the issue should be addressed .....	38
5.3	How the fund should function .....	40
5.4	Conclusionary discussion .....	42
5.4.1	Strategies .....	42
5.4.2	Power.....	44
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusionary part .....</b>	<b>47</b>
6.1	Conclusions .....	47
<b>7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>49</b>

7.1	Official documents .....	50
7.2	Online resources .....	51

# 1 Introductory chapter

## 1.1 Introduction

In November 2022, parties attending the international climate negotiations at COP27, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, reached an agreement to establish a fund aimed at addressing loss and damage. The fund is supposed to “*... assist developing countries particularly that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to loss and damage*” (UNFCCC 2023). This sort of financial mechanism is something that climate vulnerable pre-industrial nations have long been pushing for (UNEP 2023). The fund aligns with the growing calls for climate justice as there is currently a large adaptation gap between nations (UNEP 2022). For instance, the IPCC recently estimated that approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change (IPCC 2022). At the same time, there are large disparities among nations in contributing to the causes of climate change (Hickel 2020) meaning that many countries will suffer immense and unjust consequences from climate change although they have contributed little to it.

The topic of loss and damage in international climate negotiations can be traced back to 1992, which is when the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) started campaigning for an insurance pool to support nations vulnerable to climate change impacts (McNamara and Jackson 2018). In recent years, more countries have joined in on the calls for loss and damage to be recognised as a third pillar in international climate negotiations and some milestones have been reached in the pursuit of adding loss and damage to the agenda. However, the countries pushing for loss and damage to be recognised have been pre-industrial countries while post-industrial countries have been against adding loss and damage to the agenda. Consequently,

existing power imbalances in the international negotiation sphere have affected the possibilities of realising loss and damage policies.

Nevertheless, some advancements have been made by the G77 alliance, representing pre-industrial nations, in the pursuit of recognising loss and damage under the UNFCCC. For instance, in 2013, the Warsaw International Mechanism was established at COP19 which aims to promote the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage (United Nations University 2013). At COP25, which was held in 2019, it was further decided to establish the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage as part of the WIM, which is aimed at catalysing technical assistance to relevant organisations working to implement approaches to address loss and damage in vulnerable nations (UNFCCC).

Despite some advancements in putting loss and damage on the international climate agenda, post-industrial nations have been particularly against discussing compensation and liability in relation to loss and damage (Harris 2023). The WIM, for instance, focus more on knowledge and expertise sharing rather than accountability and economic compensation (Calliari 2016). Even as recently as at COP26, the US and the EU refused the proposition to establish a loss and damage compensation fund. Moreover, Article 8 of the Paris Agreement includes a provision on loss and damage but does not include wording on liability or compensation (Wyns 2023). Thus, the recent developments where parties have agreed to establish the loss and damage fund at COP27 could be argued to be a surprising development, which begs one to wonder how the decision came about and what strategies were employed by the G77 to realise an outcome on the issue.

However positive this development might seem, there are still worries as to how the decision outcome will be realised moving forward (Wyns 2023). This begs for an investigation into where the current discursive struggle lies and how these were resolved – or not resolved – in the decision outcome. Moreover, due to the power-imbalance nature of international climate negotiations, it would be interesting to gain insights into how much of their agenda that the pre-industrial country coalition was able to push through and consequently gain insight into their ability to influence

the UNFCCC, especially as the outcome of COP27 might seem like a shift in power at first glance.

## 1.2 Research aims and questions

The theoretical framework for this paper draws on political ecology which is a field of studies concerned with power relations in environmental governance. At the centre of political ecology is the understanding of the environment as politicised and thus an aim is to critically investigate how institutions, environmental policies, and environmental truths are shaped through the interaction of power relations. Thus, at the centre of this paper is the understanding of international climate policies as shaped by an interaction of imbalanced power relations and a fundamental concern of this paper is how these come to shape meaning-making in environmental policies and thus prioritisation in the international climate agenda.

This thesis aims to contribute to the critical literature on international climate negotiations and, more specifically, on the topic of loss and damage in three aspects: to provide an analysis of the discourses influencing current negotiations and policy on loss and damage under the UNFCCC and provide insight into where current struggle lie; to offer insights into discursive strategies employed by the G77, the coalition representing pre-industrial countries, in the COP27 negotiations leading up to the establishment of the loss and damage fund; and to offer insights into the coalitions' power to influence the UNFCCC process. The definition of power here is drawn from political ecology and concerns power over agenda setting and, particularly, meaning-making in international climate negotiations (Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2019; Bailey and Bryant 1997).

Consequently, the research questions that will be investigated throughout the thesis are:

- *Which discourses interacted in shaping the decision to establish the loss and damage fund and where does the discursive struggle lie?*
- *What were the discursive strategies employed by the G77 in the negotiations leading up to the loss and damage fund?*

- *Did the decision outcome on loss and damage funding challenge power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC?*

To investigate these questions, the paper employs critical discourse analysis to conduct an analysis of negotiations during COP27 that led up to the decision to establish the loss and damage fund, namely the discussions on Agenda Item 8(f) Matters relating to funding arrangements for addressing loss and damage. The discourse analysis will be carried out in two steps by tracing discourse and discursive struggle in the submissions made by negotiating parties on the matter and how this affected the decision 2/CP.27, and these findings will help gain insight into the strategies employed by G77 during the negotiations. Finally, the findings from the analysis will be discussed in relation to the concept of power as defined in political ecology to explore the question if the decision outcome on loss and damage funding at COP27 challenges the power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC.

### 1.3 Previous research

Although the concept of loss and damage was introduced in the 1990s, previous studies have found unclarity surrounding the definition of the concept (Boyd et al. 2017; McNamara and Jackson 2018). There are particular tensions in how pre-industrial versus post-industrial countries conceptualise loss and damage whereas post-industrial countries have treated the concept as a part of the adaption pillar while pre-industrial countries have differentiated the concept from adaption and treated loss and damage as something happening beyond adaption (e.g., Boyd et al. 2017; Calliari 2016; McNamara and Jackson 2018; Vanhala and Hestbaeck 2016). Previous research has also found tensions connected to discourse surrounding what loss and damage is a case of, whereas pre-industrial has pushed for a discourse that centres liability and compensation claims while post-industrial countries have pushed against discussing loss and damage in relation to liability and compensation (Boyd et al. 2017; Calliari 2016; Calliari et al. 2020; Vanhala and Hestbaeck 2016). Consequently, the subject of loss and damage seems to be connected to sensitive

discourse under the UNFCCC that has created knots in previous negotiations leading to difficulties in reaching clear outcomes of the subject.

Some previous studies have investigated discourses and framings on loss and damage conveyed by negotiating parties in UNFCCC COPs that serve as inspiration for this study. These studies focus on negotiations leading up to the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) at COP19 in 2013 (Boyd et al. 2017; Calliari 2016; Vanhala and Hestbaeck 2016) and thus the research field requires more recent investigation of current discourse and discursive struggle to understand these recent developments. However, these studies provide great insight into the historic discursive process surrounding loss and damage and their analytical frameworks for studying discourse in UNFCCC negotiations, particularly Calliari (2016), has inspired this study.

In a study from 2016, Vanhala and Hestbaeck investigate framings of loss and damage in UNFCCC negotiations focusing on the role of frame contestation and ambiguity in the negotiations leading up to the decision to establish the WIM. Boyd et al. (2017) also provides insights into the negotiations leading up to the WIM by identifying four typologies, or categories, with varying positions on the topic of loss and damage. These typologies differentiate particularly in their views on whether loss and damage are occurring, whether loss and damage should be its own pillar in international climate work, and in how loss and damage should be treated (e.g., compensatory measures and attribution of responsibility). Moreover, Boyd et al. places the negotiating parties on a scale developed from the typologies, where “developed states” are identified as close to the adaption and mitigation perspective and the least “developed states” and small island developing states as in-between the limits to adaption perspective and the existential perspective. (p. 724f).

The analytical framework of this study has primarily been inspired by Calliari’s study from 2016 which employs Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework to conduct a critical discourse analysis to reconstruct the emergence and interaction of discourses on loss and damage under the UNFCCC and how these shaped the content and structure of the WIM. This paper will also conduct a discourse analysis inspired by Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework. However, this study does

not aim to create an overview of the emergence of the discourse as the aim is to focus more carefully on one specific negotiation to gain deeper insights into discursive struggles as well as discursive strategies to overcome these and realise the decision outcome. Another difference is that this study will draw on political ecology to investigate whether the decision outcome challenges power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Political Ecology.

Political ecology is a field within socio-environmental studies that focuses on power relations in environmental governance (Peet et al. 2011). While the focus on different aspects might vary between certain orientations within the field, there seem to be a couple of points of agreement. First, environmental issues are not simply a consequence of policy and market failures but rather a consequence of political and economic structures (Bailey and Bryant 1997; Peet et al. 2011). Thus, political ecology research takes a particular interest in how economic and political systems, such as the capitalistic system, drive environmental change (Peet et al. 2011). According to this perspective, environmental degradation and climate change are consequences of the current economic and political system rather than, for instance, population growth (Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2019; Peet et al. 2011; Robbins 2020).

Another important point emphasised within political ecology is that, as a consequence of unjust political, social, and economic structures, not all are equally affected by environmental degradation and climate change (Peet et al. 2011). Bailey and Bryant (1997) highlight that there are both costs and benefits associated with environmental change and that these are unequally distributed amongst groups due to unjust economic and political structures. Some groups have benefited from activities such as carbon-intensive industry production which has led to climate change and these groups most often have the economic means to escape costs associated with climate change. Contrastingly, those who have not contributed to climate change or benefited from it are often the ones suffering the worst consequences and carrying the largest costs associated with climate change. Consequently, unjust structures in society are further reinforced as the unequal

distribution of costs increases the vulnerability of already vulnerable groups (Bailey and Bryant 1997).

Another key feature of political ecology is the view that the environment is constantly politicized which means that facts and knowledge about the environment are socially influenced. Thus, environmental issues cannot be separated from the political and economic context in which they are created (Bailey and Bryant 1997). This is related to one of the most central claims of political ecology; that many facts and much knowledge about the environment are socially constructed. Consequently, at the centre of the research agenda within the field is to conduct analysis of how power relations, and political and economic interests, shape environmental policy and decision-making (Robbins 2020).

At the centre of political ecological analysis is thus the concept of power. Power is understood as three-dimensional and considers the control over ecological assets, power over setting the environmental agenda, and power over meaning-making (Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2019; Bailey and Bryant 1997). The first dimension of power constituted by control over ecological assets was partly described above in terms of costs and benefits associated with environmental change. It essentially means that some groups have more control over ecological assets through, for instance, ownership of ecological resources or political influence. The second dimension, power over setting the environmental agenda, refers to the fact that some groups have a larger influence in and control over society's prioritisation of environmental issues and, consequently, allocation of financial resources (Bailey and Bryant 1997).

The third dimension of power, power over meaning-making, concerns actors' ability to exert power through discursive means. Political ecology recognizes that there is a biophysical reality but emphasises that there is a social dimension to how environmental issues and solutions are constructed (Forsyth 2003). Consequently, political ecology takes a social constructivist approach to environmental politics and asks how environmental issues are discursively framed (Bailey and Bryant 1997), but also recognising an ecological reality beyond discursive framings (Forsyth 2003). Framings of environmental issues mean that environmental claims

are framed in different ways which has consequences both for what is viewed to be an environmental issue and for the possible ways in which the problem can be discussed and resolved (Forsyth 2003). These discursive framings and narratives also contribute to empowering and disempowering certain actors. Due to unequal power relations, not all framings of environmental issues are accepted equally, and some actors have a larger influence over which framings are brought forward and accepted (Peet et al. 2011).

To conclude, political ecology has been influential for this thesis in establishing the research aims, as the aim is to investigate how actors interact and exert power through discursive means in international climate politics and how this shapes environmental policy, and in terms of the methodological choice for investigating the research questions which will be discussed further below. At the centre of my analysis will be the dimensions of power concerning power over meaning-making and power over the environmental agenda. Finally, I want to note that the emphasis on how language shapes our reality has led to the decision to use the terms pre-industrial and post-industrial when referring to the negotiating parties, instead of using the terms developing and developed which are traditionally used in international climate negotiations. The reason for this is that the terms developing and developed imply a normative path for development which stems from colonialist discourse.

## 2.2 How the theoretical framework aligns with critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is both a set of techniques for conducting structured, qualitative textual investigations and a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Therefore, it is important to be aware of these explicit theoretical assumptions and to consider how these align with one's theoretical and analytical framework (Jørgensen and Philips 2002). As the thesis will employ Fairclough's CDA as a tool for conducting the analysis, this section will make explicit the theoretical assumptions

underpinning Fairclough's CDA and discuss how these align with the theoretical assumptions of political ecology.

Critical discourse analysis builds upon critical linguistic studies and even though there are several approaches to it, these generally share an interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustices, and political-economic cultural change in society (Fairclough et al. 2011). Fairclough describes his approach to CDA as a critical realist approach as he separates between the natural and the social world whereas the social world comes into existence through human constructions while the natural world exists independently. Consequently, a central concern in Fairclough's CDA is the constructive effects of discourse and how discourse, together with other elements such as power relations, shape the social world. However, which constructs or representations of the world are accepted depends on a range of conditions, such as the context, meaning that interpretations of the world are somewhat limited. Thus, Fairclough's form of social constructivism is a moderate one (Fairclough 2010; Fairclough et al. 2011). These ontological assumptions align well with the assumptions underpinning political ecology discussed above, as the theory similarly separates between the natural and the social world and views the social world as moderately social constructivist.

Consequently, Fairclough views discourse to be a semiotic element of constructing the social world rather than it being a neutral instance of language use for conveying information (Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999; Jørgensen and Philips 2002). Fairclough views discourse to be a form of social practice that both forms the social world but is also formed by other forms of social practice. Looking at discourse as a social practice implies that there is a dialectical relationship between a discursive event and the context in which it exists. In other words, discourse is viewed as both being socially shaped by the context in which it is in as well as having the power to socially shape the context. Due to discourse being transformative in the sense that it shapes situations, objects of knowledge, social identities, and relationships, discourse has real social consequences which raise the issue of power (Fairclough 2003; Fairclough et al. 2011).

Thus, another central assumption of Fairclough's CDA is that discourse has ideological effects in the sense that discourses help both in the production and reproduction of unequal power relations (Jørgensen and Philips 2002). By bringing ideology into the investigation of discourse, Fairclough combines the Foucauldian view of power with Gramsci's concept of hegemony (Fairclough 2010; Jørgensen and Philips 2002) which results in a concern both with how discursive practices shape social reality and with the role discursive practices play in sustaining and advancing interests of certain social groups (Jørgensen and Philips 2002). The critical dimension of Fairclough's discourse analysis has to do with revealing the role of discourse in sustaining power and hegemony (Fairclough 2010) by making visible how discourse serves certain goals and is linked to certain actions (Jäger 2001).

However, Fairclough's CDA is not just about revealing a social wrong and its effects as it also has an emancipatory agenda which means that the objective is to contribute to change of the social wrong. Moreover, CDA also clearly stand on the side of those who are dominated and oppressed as a consequence of the social wrong which adds a normative to Fairclough's CDA. Political ecology shares this objective of challenging the role and status of powerful actors, as well as questioning commonly accepted assumptions in dominant discourses on environment and development. A common goal shared by the two theoretical orientations is thus to push equality and create social change through discourse analysis.

To round up the theoretical framework, due to shared theoretical assumptions outlined above and a shared interest in critically investigating how discursive framings and power relations come to shape reality critical discourse analysis seems like an appropriate methodological choice. The specifics of how the analysis will be conducted are outlined in the coming section.

### 3 Methodological framework

#### 3.1 Why critical discourse analysis?

To investigate the research questions, the analysis will focus on the decision to establish the loss and damage fund which was taken during the COP27. The objective of these COPs is to establish agreements for what future international climate politics should concern through negotiations leading up to textual agreements outlining the common future agenda and focus. To track discourse and discursive struggle, the analysis will also focus on the submissions made by negotiating parties on the matter. Due to the nature of the material that will be studied, a tool textual analysis is an appropriate methodological choice for this thesis.

The methodological choice also has to do with the aims of this thesis which are to provide an analysis of the discourses influencing current negotiations and policy on loss and damage under the UNFCCC and provide insight into where the current struggle lies, to offer insights into discursive strategies employed by the G77, the coalition representing pre-industrial countries, in the COP27 negotiations leading up to the establishment of the loss and damage fund, and to offer insights into the coalitions' power to influence the UNFCCC process. As Fairclough's critical discourse analysis concerns uncovering discourse and discursive struggle and how this affects the power structures, the method is an appropriate tool for conducting the analysis.

Finally, as outlined in the theoretical section, the ontological assumptions of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis align with the ontological assumptions underpinning this thesis which motivate the methodological choice.

### 3.2 Critical discourse analysis as a method

As the theory section described some of the ontological assumptions underpinning Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, the intent here is to explore how Fairclough's CDA translates into a methodological tool for investigating the posed research questions.

Fairclough's approach to textual analysis is rooted in his notion of what discourse is, which was outlined in the theory section. Due to Fairclough's notion that discourse is a form of social practice which, in a dialectal sense, both reproduces and shapes the social context in which it exists, Fairclough's framework for CDA aims to investigate this by looking at the communicative event on several interconnected levels. Thus, Fairclough's analytical approach to critical discourse analysis is a three-dimensional framework which investigates the communicative event from three perspectives: the text level, the discursive level, and the social practice (Fairclough 2010). The first level of analysis focuses on the text constituting the communicative event. Through conducting a detailed text analysis inspired by linguistics, the goal is to gain insight into how discourses operate on a linguistic level (Jørgensen and Philips 2002).

At the second level, which looks at the communicative event as a discursive practice, the analysis focuses on how the text is produced (Fairclough 2010). At this level, there are two concepts related to how Fairclough views discourse that become particularly relevant to look at in the analysis: interdiscursivity and the order of discourses. Fairclough's concept of interdiscursivity is inspired by the concept of intertextuality, which refers to the notion that all texts draw on previous texts. Similarly, intertextuality gives attention to a communicative event in relation to previous communicative events by looking at the degree to which a text draws on elements and discourses expressed in other texts (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2010). By looking at the interdiscursivity of a communicative event one can investigate if discourses expressed in previous communicative events are employed, how these are employed, and if there is a change from previous communicative events.

In this context, another central concept of Fairclough becomes relevant, namely the order of discourses which refers to the sum of discourses that are used within a specific context. The order of discourses delimits what can be said within the specific context. However, the order of discourses can be challenged by language users through for instance drawing on new discourses or pushing less prominent ones. Thus, it becomes interesting to investigate discursive reproduction and change by looking at whether the discursive order changes between different discursive events (Fairclough 2010; Jørgensen and Philips 2002).

To uncover interdiscursivity and the order of discourses, it is essential to look at a body of texts rather than just one text to investigate the interrelations between them, changes that have been made throughout the process, and different forms of the same text (Philips and Hardy 2002; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Only when looking at a body of texts, we can discover which formulations and discourses on a matter that has been brought forward by the different parties, how these have discursively struggled over time, and which have been favoured in the end.

The third level of analysis focuses on the communicative event as a social practice. As described in the theory section, Fairclough views discourse to be a form of social practice that both shapes and is shaped by the social context in which it is in. Consequently, a central concern of Fairclough's discourse analysis is to look at the communicative event in relation to its context and investigate whether the communicative event reproduces, challenges, or even transforms the context in which it is in (Fairclough 2010). At this level of analysis, the findings from the first two levels are put in relation to the social context.

### 3.3 The analytical framework

The thesis has discussed the theoretical assumptions and how these translate into the methodological framework of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and this section intends to specify the analytical framework which will be used to analyse the empirical material of this thesis. The discursive event that will be analysed in this case is the decision to establish the loss and damage fund which

was taken during COP27. The main communicative event is thus the COP27 decision 2/CP.27 (UNFCCC 2023) which is the final version of the decision. This document will constitute the core of the analysis and will be investigated in connection with other relevant documents (see Table 1.). The analysis will focus on two of the levels for analysis inspired by Fairclough's framework for CDA, namely the textual level and the discursive level. I will start by carrying out an analysis of all texts at the discursive level to then do a more careful text-level analysis of the main communicative event, decision 2/CP.27, to uncover how discourses were conveyed.

Below, I have outlined how the analysis will be carried out at the two levels of analysis.

### 3.3.1 Discursive level

At this level, attention will be given to how the main communicative event, decision 2/CP.27, is produced by first identifying discourses and discursive struggle in the submissions made by the negotiating parties to then investigate how these were conveyed in the main communicative event. By tracing the discursive process, we can gain insight into which discourses were expressed by the parties, and how these were ordered in the decision outcome.

Thus, the analysis be carried out in two steps; first, the analysis will focus on the submissions made by negotiation parties on Agenda Item 8(f), which later led to the decision 2/CP.27 to establish the fund. The aim here is to provide insight into the discourses currently influencing negotiations and policy on loss and damage under the UNFCCC and where the discursive struggle seems to lie. The second step of the discourse level analysis focuses on the main communicative, namely decision 2/CP.27. The aim is to identify which discourses are prominent in the decision outcome and how discursive struggles were resolved.

Particular attention will be given to the discursive struggle and how it was resolved as this helps identify what sets the discourses apart as well as in identifying how these were conveyed and resolved in the decision outcome, which provides

insight into both discursive strategies employed by G77 and their power to influence UNFCCC process. Moreover, I will pay particular interest to three categories where I expect discursive struggle; the understanding of the issue, how the issue should be addressed, and how the fund should function.

### 3.3.2 Textual level

At this level, the main communicative event, decision 2/CP.27, will be analysed through more careful text analysis. The text analysis will focus on certain wording connected to sensitive discourse pushed by pre-industrial countries under the UNFCCC to investigate the discursive struggle surrounding these topics as well as what strategies G77 had for addressing these issues.

Previous research establishes that pre-industrial countries have pushed discourse on loss and damage that centres around liability and compensation claims (Boyd et al. 2017; Calliari 2016; Vanhala and Hestbaeck 2016). The wording that I will investigate related to liability is “responsibility” and “cause/r” which are highly related to establishing liability. I will also look into how compensation was expressed. I also chose to further investigate how urgency was conveyed through wording as this was a topic for discursive struggle during the negotiations and as it has importance as to how the issue will be addressed and prioritised moving forward.

### 3.3.3 Investigation of power

Finally, the level of analysis concerning the social practice is not specifically included as a step in the analysis. Since part of the discussion focuses on how the decision outcome affects power relations under the UNFCCC, the thesis will investigate whether the communicative event reproduces, challenges, or transforms the context in which it is produced.

To investigate the question of whether the decision outcome on loss and damage funding challenges the power structures in the international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC, I focus on the second and third dimensions of power which

concern power over the agenda and power over meaning-making. Consequently, the question of whether the decision outcome challenges power relations in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC will be investigated by discussing the extent of the G77's power to shape the decision outcome in terms of influence on the agenda-setting as well as meaning-making regarding the issue of loss and damage.

### 3.4 Material

When studying discourse, it is essential to look at a body of texts rather than just one text to investigate the interrelations between them, changes that have been made throughout the process, and different forms of the same text (Philips and Hardy 2002; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Only when looking at a body of texts, we can discover which formulations and discourses on the loss and damage fund that have been brought forward by the different parties, how these have discursively struggled over time, and which has been favoured in the end. Consequently, the material that will be analysed consists of texts derived from different stages of the negotiation process.

The main discursive event that will be analysed is the decision to establish the loss and damage fund, the COP27 decision 2/CP.27 (UNFCCC 2023), which was an outcome of the COP27 discussions on agenda item 8(f) *Matters relating to funding arrangements for addressing loss and damage*. To trace discourses and investigate the discursive struggle that led up to the decision, I will also analyse the submission by Pakistan on behalf of group 77 and China where they asked to add the topic of the loss and damage funding to the agenda (UNFCCC 2022a) as well as submissions made by different parties during the discussions on agenda item 8(f) (UNFCCC 2022b-h).

Type of document	Title	Dates and notes
Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at COP27	<i>Decision 2/CP.27: Funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage.</i>	17/3/2023 Main communicative event.
Proposal for agenda item 8(f).	<i>Re: Draft Provisional Agenda Item of COP 27 &amp; CMA 4.</i>	13/6/2022 Agenda item suggestion from Pakistan on behalf of G77 and China.
Submissions on agenda item 8(f).	<i>New Zealand submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	12/11/2022
	<i>UK submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	14/11/2022
	<i>India submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	14/11/2022
	<i>Canada submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	14/11/2022
	<i>Norway submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	14/11/2022
	<i>G77 and China submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	15/11/2022
	<i>EU submission on Agenda Item 8(f)</i>	15/11/2022

Table 1. Material to be analysed in the critical discourse analysis.

### 3.5 Critical considerations

Discourse analysis emphasises reflexivity, which means reflecting on how one as a researcher produces, reproduces, and maintains discursive realities through one's research (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Thus, it is important for me to reflect on and acknowledge my own position in producing and reproducing discursive realities on loss and damage. Although that my critical discourse analysis will follow a structured methodological framework, discourse analysis as an analytical tool gives room for the researcher's own interpretations. In an attempt to be open about my own position and potential bias, I have outlined the theoretical assumptions underpinning this thesis and discussed how these affect the research aims and approach. I hope that this contribute to more insight into my position and notions as the author of this thesis.

# 4 Analysis

## 4.1 Discursive level

### 4.1.1 Analysis of the submissions made on agenda item 8(f)

#### **The issue**

##### *Recognition of loss and damage*

Looking at the submissions made by negotiating parties, I found that all parties used the term loss and damage. There seemed to be consensus amongst parties that loss and damage is an issue that needs to be addressed to a higher degree than it is today. Consequently, it seems that all negotiating parties recognise that loss and damage is an ongoing and future issue and that it should be addressed.

However, the nature of the issue was described differently by the parties. Parties such as Norway, Canada, and the EU all expressed that there is current funding and that there has been progress made on the issue, while also recognising that more needs to be done. For instance, Canada expressed that they “*... think it's important to recognize the significant progress already been made to date on this issue.*” (UNFCCC 2022e). Norway expressed that there is current funding, even though it is not enough: “*Although we do not agree that there is no finance for Loss and Damage now – it is not enough.*” (UNFCCC 2022f). The EU expressed that they are “*... ready to go beyond our existing engagements on the topic.*” (UNFCCC 2022h) implying that there is current work being done on loss and damage.

Contrastingly, parties representing pre-industrial countries seem to push the discourse that there has not been progress on issues related to loss and damage and that it is important to create a new framework for addressing it. In Pakistan’s

submission on behalf of G77 and China where they asked to add the matter of loss and damage financing to the agenda, they proposed to make “*... this agenda sub-item as a standing one in order to provide a decision-making space on this crucial issue. The space will allow us to discuss and conclude on solutions to address the longstanding gaps in the existing funding arrangements for addressing loss and damage...*” (UNFCCC 2022a). This picture of the current state of addressing loss and damage differs quite a bit from the more positive picture that, for instance, Canada paints in their statement. Since one goal is expressed as including the agenda item to provide a decision-making space for the issue, the statement by G77 and China implies that this currently does not exist. Even though they mention existing funding arrangements for addressing loss and damage, their statement focuses on the insufficiency and gaps of these rather than focusing on the progress of these.

India opens their submission on the issue by stating that they thank the chair for allowing discussions on “*the extremely important Agenda item on this long-pending issue- of LD financing.*” (UNFCCC 2022d). By stating that loss and damage financing is a long-pending issue, they imply that it has not yet been addressed. India further expresses that “*...clear funding gaps exist and such financing is not yet available through any of the existing funding arrangements...*” (Ibid). These statements further highlight their view of the issue, that there are no current funding arrangements for sufficiently addressing issues of loss and damage.

### ***Timeline and urgency***

Another discussion topic where parties pushed different discourses were regarding the urgency of the issue and the timeline for addressing it. Actors negotiating on behalf of G77 and China expressed a higher degree of urgency to address loss and damage and even frustration with the suggestions that post-industrial countries made for how the process to address the issue should look like. In their submission, India expressed that “*On the processes elaborated in the interventions yesterday by my colleagues from the developed world, we would like to differ as there is no more time for more Dialogues, Declarations, Regional Workshops, Mechanisms, Concept Notes, Discussion papers, Networks.*” and that “*Delay in creation of a suitable financial arrangement to address this grim reality,*

*delaying the outcomes of this agenda item or diverting attention to non-existent financial possibilities and ignoring this issue is not an option anymore as the costs are being borne by populations which are least responsible for the cause.”* (UNFCCC 2022d). India made a point of differing itself from the post-industrial countries in terms of how urgently they wanted to resolve loss and damage financing and even went as far as accusing them of delaying the process.

Post-industrial countries expressed that they recognised the urgency to address the issue, however, this was always followed by a “but” in some form. For instance, the UK stated “*Yes, we recognize the urgency, but also need to get it right.*” (UNFCCC 2022c). Similarly, New Zealand stated that “*NZ has said previously we think this is urgent. We committed funding this week to underscore that point. But we also think we need to get this right.*” (UNFCCC 2022b). Norway argued that “*Time is at essence*” but that “*Setting up a new finance facility under the UNFCCC will take several years*” (UNFCCC 2022f). In a sense, Norway used the argument that the issue needs to be resolved urgently to argue against setting up a loss and damage fund. New Zealand also expressed a similar discourse and argued that it would be more efficient to address the issue through current financial institutions. Similarly, Canada stated “*We also recognize the sense of urgency we are dealing with and the need to balance this with being deliberate in our approach to identify and implement practical and sustainable solutions.*” (UNFCCC 2022e). By expressing that urgency needs to be balanced with finding the correct approach, the degree of urgency decreases slightly as something else is related to it as equally important. The argument to balance urgency could be used to delay action on the item.

In terms of which timelines were endorsed, parties continued to differ in how urgently they wanted to see an outcome for resolving the issue. In their proposed draft decision text, G77 and China proposed that the decision to establish the fund should be made at COP27 and that the fund’s governing documents should be approved at COP28 (UNFCCC 2022g). India proposed that the UNFCCC should follow a timeframe that would “*Resolve for a concrete outcome at COP27 itself and if not certainly by COP 28 & 29*” (UNFCCC 2022d).

Parties representing post-industrial countries seemed to push for a timeline where the issue should be decided upon at COP28 or 29, and that parties should rather decide for how the process up until then should look like during COP27. Both the EU and the UK proposed a timeline where they wanted to postpone the decision on funding arrangements to a later COP, which was endorsed by the other post-industrial parties. The UK proposed that the decision for funding arrangements should be made at COP29 (UNFCCC 2022c). The EU proposed that decisions about solutions should be taken at COP28 and COP29 and stated that “*At COP28 we should already be able to take some decisions based on recommendations from the process to date*” (UNFCCC 2022h).

## **How the issue should be addressed**

### ***The current or a new framework***

In the discussions on agenda item 8(f), the parties seemed to have different opinions on whether issues related to loss and damage should, and could, be addressed within current institutional and financial frameworks or not. Pre-industrial countries seemed to argue for the need to establish new institutional and financial arrangements to address the issue appropriately. For instance, India expressed in their submission that there “*... has to be a new and additional funding for addressing (not only averting or mitigating) Loss & Damage*” (UNFCCC 2022d). India’s statement implies that they believe that loss and damage funding gaps cannot be addressed through existing funding arrangements, and thus that they wish to establish new frameworks to address loss and damage. G77 and China also proposed establishing both a new fund and a new Committee to address loss and damage financing in their decision draft text (UNFCCC 2022g).

Contrastingly, parties such as Norway, the UK, and Canada proposed to address loss and damage through existing institutions and funding arrangements. Since Norway argued that it would take a long time to set up a new financial facility, their proposal for moving forward was that it would be more efficient to identify financial gaps and “*...assess which existing institutions and organizations could be best suited to deliver what is needed*” (UNFCCC 2022f). The UK argued in a similar manner that “*... support should build on existing finance ...*” (UNFCCC 2022c) and that shortfalls in current funds need to be addressed.

New Zealand lifted arguments from both discourses. On the one hand, they suggested that COP27 could “*acknowledge loss and damage as a pillar of our work*” (UNFCCC 2022b) which implies that they are positive towards recognising loss and damage as a standalone pillar to address. On the other hand, New Zealand argued against creating a new fund and pushed for addressing loss and damage by improving existing mechanisms and access to existing multilateral funds. The EU also expressed mixed arguments as they stated that they remained open to different solutions. However, they seemed to push more for identifying gaps in current funding arrangements. They summed up their statement by expressing that “... *the EU is here to agree a process to identify solutions...*” and continued by stating that “*We remain open to solutions...*” (UNFCCC 2022h). The EU proposed for what they view as the best way forward where they proposed that the first year should focus on identifying gaps in existing arrangements. They further suggested that the Glasgow Dialogues is a good platform to discuss the issue further.

### ***Loans or not?***

As discussed, the parties negotiating on behalf of post-industrial countries argued that loss and damage financing should be resolved through already existing economic institutions and frameworks. One source of funding that was suggested by the EU was new loans (UNFCCC 2022h). This was something that India opposed arguing that loans would increase vulnerability “*Loans of any kind even if soft loans would increase both the misery and debt of affected communities and vulnerable member nations.*” (UNFCCC 2022d). India further suggested that “*Insurance, if found as an additional viable solution should be subject to the LD funding arrangement, taking the premium load.*” (Ibid). This proposal was not addressed by the other parties during the negotiations. India also went on to propose another solution, that “*Debt cancellation can also be an option which has not been discussed till now.*” (Ibid). India also suggested grant-based funding options as viable. Neither of these proposals was addressed by the other parties. In the draft decision text submitted by G77 and India, they mention Multilateral Development Banks as a source of funding to look into. However, they do not discuss this further.

### ***What role the Glasgow Dialogue should play***

Concerning the discussion about whether to handle loss and damage by establishing new institutional arrangements or integrating it within existing frameworks, different viewpoints were expressed by parties regarding the role that the Glasgow Dialogue should play. In the initial agenda item proposal by G77 and China, they expressed that they wanted loss and damage to be addressed in a separate discussion from the Glasgow Dialogue. They motivated this by stating that the topic of loss and damage differs in its decision-making nature and that the Glasgow Dialogue is a standalone discussion “... *with no clear destination.*” (UNFCCC 2022a).

The suggestion to keep it separate was opposed by Canada and the UK who stated that the Glasgow Dialogue is an important forum for discussion and action on loss and damage. Canada suggests “... *using the Glasgow Dialogue as a basis to guide the work...*” and that “... *we can redesign the Glasgow Dialogue to make sure it delivers concrete outcomes.*” UNFCCC 2022e). This is something that is echoed by the EU and New Zealand. New Zealand agreed that re-calibrating the Glasgow Dialogue to address loss and damage is a good way forward (UNFCCC 2022b).

Interestingly, later in the process G77 and China seem to change their stand on this as they submit a proposed draft decision text where they express how the Glasgow Dialogue can inform the work of a Transitional Committee, a committee that they propose should be formed to address loss and damage (UNFCCC 2022g). The proposal to create a Transitional Committee however is not echoed in any of the post-industrial parties. They rather put forward the Glasgow Dialogue and already existing platforms as sufficient for addressing the issue. The UK proposes holding additional workshops to the Glasgow Dialogue to address the issue but does not mention the option to set up a new committee.

### **How the fund should function**

#### ***Who should receive funding?***

Post-industrial parties seemed to highlight the importance of agreeing on principles on who should receive loss and damage funding to a higher degree than

pre-industrial countries. For instance, New Zealand highlighted that the principle that “*the most vulnerable will be prioritised*” (UNFCCC 2022b) was an important principle that all parties should decide to agree on during COP27 to make the fund efficient. This is echoed by other parties representing post-industrial countries who express that loss and damage is an issue for the most vulnerable countries and that they need to receive support.

Who is to receive financial assistance for loss and damage is expressed differently by parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries. In the draft decision text proposed by G77 and China, they instead express that the loss and damage fund should be created “*for assisting developing countries in meeting their costs of addressing non-economic and economic loss and damage...*” (UNFCCC 2022g). Their proposed definition of funding recipients would perhaps include more countries to be eligible for funding than in the definition proposed by New Zealand and other post-industrial parties. It could open up the option that China and India, for instance, would become eligible for financial support from the loss and damage fund.

### ***Who should pay into the fund?***

I also found different discourses expressed regarding the responsibility to pay into the fund. In G77 and China’s draft decision text, they stated that the funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage should be “*...taking into account historical responsibilities*” (UNFCCC 2022g). India went further and argued that “*Historical cumulative emissions to be the guiding principles and benchmark of further discussions/negotiations and not the current emissions levels. Polluter pays principle is an established global norm within Climate justice. Common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities should be the cornerstone for the way forward.*” (UNFCCC 2022d). Both statements made clear that some carry a larger responsibility for the current climate crisis. However, India more clearly argued that solely historical responsibility should matter in determining who should pay into the fund, which is something that the submission from G77 and China does not mention.

The UK instead argued that all major economies will need to help financially, not factoring in historic responsibility but rather their status today: “*All major economies, must take mitigation commitments in line with keeping 1.5C within reach to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. We must all help developing countries accelerate adaptation efforts. And we will all need to help the most vulnerable countries financially in addressing climate change.*” Thus, the UK also points out that some carry a responsibility to financially help vulnerable countries in dealing with loss and damage. However, they express that all major economies of today are responsible rather than pointing to historical responsibility for causing climate change.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of the main communicative event - *Decision 2/CP.27*

When looking at the main communicative event, which is decision 2/CP.27 adopted at COP27 (UNFCCC 2023), it was particularly interesting to see how the issues parties disagreed on had been resolved, and thus which discourses were most prominent and thus favoured in the final decision. Consequently, the analysis of the main communicative event focused on the topics outlined in the first part of the analysis where parties did not seem to agree.

##### **The issue**

###### ***Recognition of loss and damage***

In the analysis of decision 2/CP.27, I found that loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change was recognised as an issue that UNFCCC needs to address, which was expected as all parties seemed to agree to this. However, I found that a mix of discourses interacted in the description of what the issue is about. In some paragraphs of the decision, discourse from pre-industrial and post-industrial parties was mixed in the same sentence. For instance, the decision included the following writing: “*Acknowledging that existing funding arrangements fall short of responding to current and future impacts of climate change and are not sufficient to address the existing funding gaps related to providing action and support in responding to loss and damage...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 11). In this sentence, the formulation that “*existing funding arrangements fall*

*short*" seem to build on discourse conveyed by post-industrial negotiating parties as they expressed it similarly in their statements. However, the same sentence includes the formulation that current funding arrangements "*are not sufficient*" which stems from pre-industrial discourse as it opens up for establishing new funding arrangements.

The decision also included paragraphs that more clearly originated from the discourse pushed by post-industrial countries, such as "*Recalling previous work under the UNFCCC as part of the consideration of the current state of finance for addressing loss and damage...*" and "*Acknowledging the many institutions and stakeholders involved in financing activities for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage...*" (UNFCCC 2023, p. 11). Both these statements clearly originate from the inputs from post-industrial countries such as Canada, Norway, and the EU which all emphasised current and previous functions for addressing loss and damage.

The decision also included formulations that clearly originated from the discourse pushed by pre-industrial countries, such as "*Acknowledge the urgent and immediate need for new, additional, predictable and adequate financial resources...*" (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12). This statement originates from discourse pushed by G77 and China and India, who argued that the issue was that loss and damage required new financial frameworks for the issue to be addressed. However, the term "new" is coupled with "additional," suggesting the presence of pre-existing financial mechanisms for addressing loss and damage, again implying a mix of discourse in the description of the issue.

### ***Timeline and urgency***

I also found a mix of discourse when it came to how urgency was expressed in decision 2/CP.27. In the decision text, expressions such as "increasing urgency" and "urgent and immediate" were alternated. This finding implies that a mix of discourse stemming from both post-industrial parties, which expressed a lesser degree of urgency, and from pre-industrial, which expressed a higher degree of urgency, was mixed in the final decision.

In terms of what timeline parties agreed to, the deadline for when the Transnational Committee's work should be concluded and presented was set to COP28. However, what should happen after the deadline was expressed ambiguously as it was expressed differently throughout the text. In the decision 2/CP.27 text, it was stated that the Transitional Committee should “*make recommendations...for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-eighth session...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12). In the Annex of the decision 2/CP.27 text, it was stated in one place that the recommendations of the Transitional Committee will be considered at COP28 and in another place that “*The work of the Transitional Committee will be concluded with the adoption no later than at COP 28...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 15). Consequently, there seems to be a timeline for when the Transitional Committee should present their recommendations, but I found ambiguity regarding what should happen with the recommendations.

Another thing that could be interpreted as a down-prioritisation of the issue is that the Secretariat is asked to support and facilitate the work of the Transitional Committee, but that the “*...actions of the secretariat called for in this decision be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources.*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 14). The conditionality could signal that the issue is not as highly prioritised as other issues and could potentially lead to delays in addressing the issue.

## **How the issue should be addressed**

### ***The current or a new framework***

In terms of whether the issue should be addressed within the current financial and institutional framework or by creating a new framework, the final decision opened possibilities for both options, as described above. However, the parties did agree to establish new funding arrangements and, in the context of these new arrangements, a new fund for responding to loss and damage (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12). The need for setting up new funding arrangements including a loss and damage fund was something that was pushed by pre-industrial countries. It was further decided that a Transitional Committee should be established to operationalise new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage, which is also something that pre-industrial parties pushed for.

The structure of the Transitional Committee was further elaborated in the decision. Comparing the structure agreed upon by the parties and the structure proposed by G77 and China in their draft decision text (UNFCCC 2022g), there were some differences in the proposed composition of the committee. The representation from “developing countries” was about the same in the final decision, as it was stated that 14 out of 24 (58,3%) members in the Committee should come from developing nations compared to 20 out of 35 (57,1 %) members as proposed by G77 and China. Thus, the Transitional Committee will consist of fewer members than was initially proposed by G77 and China, but the composition of representatives from pre-industrial and post-industrial countries will be about the same.

However, when it came to representation within the group of “developing countries”, the members that should come from small island developing states and the least developed states were less than in the initial proposal. In the draft decision text submitted by G77 and China, it was stated that 4 members from small island developing states and 4 members from the least developed states out of 35 should be represented in the Committee. In their proposal, the number of members from each of these groups was the same (four each) as the proposed representation from each of the other groups (also four per group) representing “developing countries”. However, in the final decision adopted at COP27, it was decided that small island developing states and the least developed states should have one less representative than the other three groups making up the “developing countries” representation, resulting in them having two representatives compared to three. Thus, these two groups will have less influence than was originally proposed which will negatively impact their ability to influence the Transitional Committee.

### ***Loans or not?***

Decision 2/CP.27 does not state anything specific about loans as a form of financing for loss and damage. Thus, India’s proposal to not include loans as a form of funding was not addressed, nor was their proposal to cancel debts to lessen the economic vulnerability of communities or use grant-based funding options. However, it was decided that international financial institutions such as the World

Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund should be invited to discussions regarding loss and damage financial arrangements, to look at the potential of such institutions to contribute to funding arrangements (UNFCCC 2023, p. 13). Inviting these financial institutions could signal that loans are a possibility for future loss and damage financing as this is an example of tools used by these institutions. However, loans are not mentioned specifically so it cannot be stated with certainty that this is the case.

### ***What role the Glasgow Dialogue should play***

Decision 2/CP.27 includes statements regarding what role the Glasgow Dialogue should play in future work on loss and damage and the work of the Transitional Committee. The decision states that the work of the Transitional Committee on loss and damage financing should inform the Glasgow Dialogues and vice versa (UNFCCC 2023, p. 13). As mentioned, in the proposal to add loss and damage financing to the Agenda at COP27, G77 and China advised against using the Glasgow Dialogues as a platform to resolve loss and damage financing, which later changed in their draft decision text where they, similarly as in the final decision, suggested that the Glasgow Dialogues and the work of the Transitional committee should inform each other (UNFCCC 2022g).

However, I found that G77 and China highlighted suggestions for how the Glasgow Dialogues should be reformed for it to be a suitable platform for addressing loss and damage financing. In the draft decision text decision submitted by G77 and China, they include a paragraph with suggestions for what the Glasgow Dialogue should focus on, where they suggest that the “*Glasgow Dialogue shall focus its discussions on relevant funding arrangements with a broad ranges of experts, with the aim to provide inputs into work of the Transitional Committee on programme priorities which includes non-economic loss, economic loss, slow onset events, extreme weather events*” (UNFCCC 2022g). In the decision 2/CP.27, it is decided that “*...the 2nd and 3rd Glasgow Dialogues will build on the 1st Glasgow Dialogue, held at the fifty-sixth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, and that the 2nd Dialogue shall focus on the operationalization of the new funding arrangements established in paragraph 2 above and the fund established in paragraph 3 above as well as on maximizing support from existing funding*

*arrangements relevant for, inter alia, responding to economic and non-economic losses, slow onset events and extreme weather events, and that they will inform the work of the Transitional Committee”* (UNFCCC 2023, p. 13). Comparing these paragraphs, the text by G77 and China seems to focus more on how the Glasgow Dialogue should be re-shaped than the final decision text did. While decision 2/CP.27 did decide that the Glasgow Dialogue should focus on the operationalisation of funding arrangements for loss and damage, it was also decided that it should build on the first Glasgow Dialogue, which G77 and China previously criticised for lacking a “*... clear destination.*” (UNFCCC 2022a).

## **How the fund should function**

### ***Who should receive funding?***

In terms of deciding who should receive funding, it was not specified further than stating that “*...developing countries that are particularly vulnerable...*” (UNFCCC 2023) should receive loss and damage funding. This is perhaps a result of the meddling of wills expressed by pre-industrial countries, that suggested that “*...developing countries*” should receive funding (UNFCCC 2022g), and post-industrial countries which suggested that “*the most vulnerable will be prioritised*” (e.g., New Zealand’s submission UNFCCC 2022b). However, it results in a quite abstract definition of who should receive funding as being “particularly vulnerable” could be interpreted in many different ways.

### ***Who should pay into the fund?***

Decision 2/CP.27 includes suggestions for potential sources of funding, such as intergovernmental organisations and bi-, multi-, and international financial institutions. The decision also includes a paragraph that states “*Reiterate decision 1/CMA.3, paragraph 64, in which developed country Parties, the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, United Nations entities and intergovernmental organizations and other bilateral and multilateral institutions, including non-governmental organizations and private sources, are urged to provide enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change*

However, it is not stated in binding terms that post-industrial countries must supply financial support as decision 2/CP.27 is urging them rather than commanding them.

Whether historical responsibility should influence financial support for addressing loss and damage is not either mentioned in the decision, which was something that India as well as G77 and China pushed for in their submissions on Agenda Item 8(f).

## 4.2 Textual level

When conducting a closer textual analysis of the decision, one important area of focus was the attribution of responsibility for the causing climate change which has resulted in loss and damage. Establishing responsibility is important as it could later be a ground for who should finance activities for addressing loss and damage. I found nowhere in the decision that responsibility for causing the issue at hand was mentioned. The word itself was not included in any form in the decision text. When conducting the discourse analysis, I found a disparity in this aspect when comparing the submissions made by post-industrialised countries versus the submissions made by pre- and industrialised countries. The latter included the responsibility aspect in their submissions, for instance highlighting the aspect of historical responsibility (e.g., UNFCCC 2022g) as well as India stating that those least responsible for climate change are the ones bearing the costs. India even highlighted the differences in the impacts of climate change that happen in “developing countries vis a vis developed countries (UNFCCC 2022d). On the contrary, post-industrialised countries avoided the responsibility aspect in their submissions, which seems to have been mirrored in decision 2/CP.27. It is also interesting to note that G77 and China, and in particular India, highlighted historical responsibility rather than current and more recent responsibility for causing climate change resulting in loss and damage.

Another interesting finding connected to responsibility was that any mention of cause was avoided throughout the decision text. When describing the issue of loss and damage, the following term was used “*loss and damage associated with the*

*adverse effects of climate change including extreme weather events and slow onset events*”. In this description of the issue, the term “associated with” instead of, for instance, “caused by” is used to describe how the issue has come about. A similar type of wording is used when describing why efforts need to be enhanced in addressing loss and damage: “*... climate change in the light of continued global warming...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 11). Similarly, as in the description of the issue, explicitly stating that climate change is caused by continued global warming is avoided. Establishing cause could be important for attributing responsibility for the issue and, consequently, who should be held accountable to compensate the ones suffering as a consequence. Perhaps avoiding mentioning “cause” is a way to further make sure that certain responsibility is not attributed in the decision. It is interesting to note that the word “cause” is only mentioned once in the submissions on behalf of pre-industrial countries, and it is in a context where India states that the costs are borne by populations which are least responsible “*...for the cause.*” (UNFCCC 2022d).

Perhaps as a consequence of avoiding both the responsibility aspect as well as connecting the issue to what and who caused it, throughout the decision text any mention of compensation is avoided. In the paragraph where post-industrialised countries are urged to provide financial means to loss and damage activities, they are asked to “support” these activities rather than compensate those experiencing loss and damage (UNFCCC 2023, p. 13). As mentioned, since neither responsibility nor cause is established in the decision text, it invites avoiding mentioning compensation as no one is established as a responsible cause of the issue. Using the term “support” further lessens the emphasis on responsibility as supporting someone or something does not imply that you are responsible for the issue but rather that you give help to someone or something (Oxford Dictionary), which the term “compensate” implies as compensation has to do with financially making up for something that you have caused (Oxford Dictionary). It is also interesting to note that the word compensation is avoided in the submissions made by parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries as well. India stated that a financial arrangement needs to be resolved as “*... the costs are being borne by populations which are least responsible for the cause.*” (UNFCCC 2022d). It is not clearly

declared who caused it, but by stating that someone suffers from what someone else caused could be a ground for claiming compensation rather than support.

It is also worth re-visiting which degree of urgency for resolving the issue is expressed in decision 2/CP.27. Throughout the decision, both wording such as “... *increasing urgency...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 11) was used which implies a lesser degree of urgency compared to when wording such as “... *urgent and immediate...*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12) was used. The reason for why the degree of urgency varied throughout the text is probably a consequence from that the negotiating parties pushed for varying degrees of urgency in the discussions on Agenda Item 8(f), which was found previously in the analysis. The importance of establishing urgency in resolving an issue is connected to establishing the degree to which the issue will be prioritised going forward. If the issue ascribed a lower degree of urgency, other issues could be prioritised in terms of financing and time attributed to the issue. By describing loss and damage as an issue of increasing urgency, it could open for the possibility to postpone resolving the issue and not prioritise attributing enough financial resources.

To conclude, the words, terms, and phrases used in the decision text could have great meaning for how the issue of loss and damage is dealt with moving forward. Thus, the possible consequences of the findings in the analysis will be further discussed in the next section, where the effects from how the final decision was formulated will be of focus.

# 5 Discussion

The first aim of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the discourses influencing current negotiations and policy on loss and damage under the UNFCCC and provide insight into where the current struggle lies, which was done in the analysis. The results from the analysis will be discussed and the aim is to explore the second question posed in the thesis, namely what strategies the G77, representing pre-industrial parties, employed in the negotiations leading up to establishing the loss and damage fund. The goal of this section is also to discuss the findings in relation to the research questions posed. Particular focus will be placed on exploring the power of pre-industrial countries in influencing the decision outcome on the matter to investigate the third research question, which is whether the decision outcome on loss and damage funding at COP27 challenges power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC.

## 5.1 The issue

In the discourse analysis, I identified a couple of areas of discursive struggle where parties did not agree. The first point of disagreement I found was surrounding the nature of the issue of loss and damage. All parties seemed to agree that loss and damage is an ongoing and future issue and that it should be addressed under the UNFCCC. However, parties argued differently when it came to what the issue consisted of. I found a divide between how the issue was described by parties negotiating on behalf of post-industrial countries versus parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries whereas post-industrial parties emphasised that progress has been made on the issue and thus that the issue has been and is currently being addressed. According to them, the issue is rather that the current framework for addressing the issue needs to be improved. Contrastingly, parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries pushed the discourse that there has not been progress made on issues related to loss and damage and that a new space under the

UNFCCC needs to be created to address it appropriately, for instance by including the agenda item as a standing one to provide decision-making space (UNFCCC 2022a) and by creating a new financial fund as well as setting up a Transitional Committee to provide a space under UNFCCC to address the issue (UNFCCC 2022g).

When I analysed decision 2/CP.27, I found that the disagreement seemed to have been resolved by including a mix of these discourses. Formulations stemming from pre-industrial parties were included, such as acknowledging that the current work not only falls short but is also not sufficient (UNFCCC 2023, p. 11). However, formulations stemming from post-industrial discourse were also included, such as acknowledging that many institutions and stakeholders are involved in financial activities connected to addressing loss and damage (*Ibid*). Agreeing to include a mix of discourses to describe the issue was perhaps essential in order to be able to reach an agreement.

When conducting the text-level analysis, I looked further into the description of the issue by investigating what words were avoided in the decision text. One interesting finding was that any mention of cause was avoided, particularly in stating who has caused the issue. In describing the issue where the issue stems from, the decision text states that loss and damage are “associated with” the effects of climate change rather than establishing that it is “caused by” climate change. In this case, perhaps avoiding the word “cause” could be a strategy to be able to connect loss and damage to climate change more easily, as scientifically establishing causation can be more difficult than establishing association. However, not establishing who caused the issue could affect how the issue is addressed as it could affect the possibility to hold someone responsible. If someone was established to have caused the issue, it could be used as a ground for claiming compensation for the one experiencing negative consequences.

Another term that I found discursive struggle surrounding was the degree of urgency that was expressed by negotiating parties, whereas parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries expressed a high degree of urgency to reach a decision on new financial arrangements and new space under UNFCCC to address

and work on the issue. Contrastingly, I found that post-industrial countries expressed a lesser degree of urgency as urgency was consequently related to something else put as equally important. For instance, New Zealand and the UK both expressed that the issue is urgent but that we “need to get it right” (UNFCCC 2022b, c). By creating this discursive scale, the pace for resolving the issue could be slowed down. The urgency of the issue was in some cases even expressively used as a reason not to agree to the proposals made on behalf of pre-industrial countries, as when Norway expressed that “*Setting up a new finance facility under the UNFCCC will take several years*” (UNFCCC 2022f).

In decision 2/CP.27, I found that a mix of discourses affected how urgency was formulated, as expressions such as “increasing urgency” and “urgent and immediate” were alternated throughout the text. Allowing various degrees of urgency in the decision text was perhaps essential for being able to settle on a decision. However, it can have consequences for the degree to which a solution for the issue is prioritised. In terms of what timeline was decided upon, I also found ambiguity in this aspect. A timeline was set for when the Transitional Committee should present its work. However, what should happen after that was expressed differently throughout the text. In one paragraph of the decision, it was stated that the Transitional Committee should make recommendations at COP28 for consideration and adaption (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12) while it was stated in the annex that the work of the Committee will be concluded with the adoption no later than at COP28 (*Ibid*, p. 15). Agreeing to include an ambiguous timeline rather than no timeline at all is perhaps a strategy for pre-industrial countries as they will have some kind of timeframe to refer to when pushing to settle on an outcome. However, it could also be used to delay an outcome as post-industrial countries could claim that they have not agreed to decide on an outcome but rather consider the recommendations by the Transitional Committee.

## 5.2 How the issue should be addressed

As mentioned, how an issue is described affects how the issue can be addressed and resolved. As the issue was simultaneously described as an issue of

shortcomings in the existing framework for addressing the issue and as an issue of there not existing an appropriate framework for sufficiently addressing the issue, the actions for addressing the issue stemmed from both these descriptions. It was decided to establish a new financial fund, the loss and damage fund, and to create a Transitional Committee to work on the arrangements to set up this fund and other work on loss and damage. However, the Transitional Committee was also tasked with investigating current sources of funding and coordinating their efforts with existing funding arrangements (UNFCCC 2023, p. 12). Consequently, the issue will be addressed both within the existing framework but also through establishing a new framework.

Perhaps as a consequence of the problem description, the decision included no mention of the critique that India (UNFCCC 2022d) brought forward against using loans as a tool to provide loss and damage funding. The decision neither proposed the financial solutions brought forward by India, such as excusing existing loan debts or favouring grant-based funds. The analysis rather showed that the decision put a lot of weight on banks as a funding opportunity, which could speak for the possibility that loans continue to be a financial tool in addressing climate issues. Perhaps the lack of critique against loans becomes logical in the light of the decision not establishing a chain of guilt and victim. Thus, as discussed in the text analysis, it becomes logical not to use terms such as compensation. Consequently, loans rather than loan forgiveness, grants or compensation could become a way to financially address the issue of loss and damage.

The choice to combine old and new frameworks to address the issue further led to the decision to use the Glasgow Dialogues as a platform and damage and it is worth revisiting how the negotiation process unfolded on this matter. Initially, G77 and China positioned themselves against employing the Glasgow Dialogues as a platform for addressing loss and damage. Perhaps due to post-industrial parties pushing the Glasgow Dialogues as an important platform to address the issue, G77 and China later changed their positions on the matter and in the final decision, the Glasgow Dialogues was highlighted as an important platform for the work on the issue. In this sense, G77 and China's changed position on the matter could have been a strategic move as their ability to push for a Transitional Committee, which

is adding new space for addressing the issue, perhaps required that existing working space was employed as well.

The establishment of a Transitional Committee was a win for the pre-industrial negotiating side. However, the representation of the ones that suffer the worst consequences from climate change shrank in the finally agreed-upon composition of the Committee. The Transitional Committee will include less representation from small island developing states and least developed states than was initially proposed by G77 and China. This will have a negative impact on their ability to influence the future process under the UNFCCC in addressing loss and damage. Perhaps this is a result of how the issue was defined. As found in the text-level analysis, the decision avoided mentioning of who was responsible for causing the issue. Thus, it also avoided establishing that those who suffer the worst loss and damage caused by the issue are the ones least responsible for it. Establishing this connection would have perhaps strengthened their positions in future negotiations on the issue.

### 5.3 How the fund should function

It was decided during the COP27 to establish a loss and damage fund but so far not much has been decided in terms of how the fund should function and this will be discussed further in the Transitional Committee, during the Glasgow Dialogues, in the coming COPs and during other meetings and workshops. However, I did find discursive struggle surrounding some topics related to how the fund should function. The first topic was who should receive loss and damage financing. Throughout the negotiations, I found a divide in how parties wanted to define the future receivers. On the one hand, post-industrialised countries wanted to agree that the most vulnerable would be prioritised (UNFCCC 2022b) while pre-industrial countries used the term “developing countries” (UNFCCC 2022g) to establish receivers. Parties seemed to agree on defining receivers as “developing countries that are particularly vulnerable” as this is the term that was used in the final decision text (UNFCCC 2023).

The agreed definition however is quite vague and can be interpreted in many different ways as vulnerability can concern many areas, for instance, economic vulnerability, social vulnerability, and ecological vulnerability. Consequently, the loosely defined term could cause a lot of struggles moving forward and could even lead to a delay in the realisation of the fund. This could create an issue, particularly for the most vulnerable who lack resources to adapt to climate change and environmental degradation as well as resources to respond to loss and damage. Another issue that could come from a wide definition is that the fund might fail to provide financial support to the most vulnerable. I believe that it could be interesting to further investigate who benefits from a looser definition, especially in the light of the lower representation of small island developing states and least developed states in the Transitional Committee compared to other groups making up the proportion of “developing countries” in the Committee. Perhaps an investigation of the different groups making up G77 and China could be beneficial to understand who is benefitting from what and who has the largest influence on what the group is pushing as a whole. Unfortunately, this study’s material only reflected the position of G77 and China as a whole and the only state belonging to this group that submitted individual statements was India.

This leads the discussion onto the final topic for discursive struggle found in the analysis and that is who should pay into the fund. Throughout the discussions, India in particular but also G77 and China pushed that historical responsibility should be a basis for contributing financially to the loss and damage fund. Post-industrialised negotiating parties did not mention historical responsibility in their submissions which is perhaps not surprising as it would put blame on them. In decision 2/CP.27, historical responsibility is not mentioned. While the decision includes suggestions for a range of possible contributors to loss and damage financing, it does not determine anyone as an obliged contributor. In one paragraph, the decision reiterates and urges developed country parties “*...to provide enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change*” (UNFCCC 2023, p. 13). However, this paragraph does not constitute an obligation to provide financial means.

Something interesting to note in this context, which was found in the textual level analysis, is that any mention of compensation is avoided both in the final decision text but also in submissions throughout the negotiations. This is perhaps a logical consequence as the problem formulation does not establish a causer nor that someone carries a responsibility. However, it is interesting to note that neither G77 and China or India used this term. Perhaps the reason for this is that compensation is connected to sensitive discourse under the UNFCCC (Calliari 2016). Thus, avoiding mentioning compensation might be a strategy of G77 and China to succeed in pushing through the establishment of the loss and damage fund. G77 and China and India claiming historical responsibility are perhaps the closest they can come to pushing claims relating to cause and compensation. However, as the final decision did not mention historical responsibility, they seemed to have put this claim aside too in order to push through a deal. What we are left with in the final text is an urge for support, which seems to fit well with the discourse pushed by post-industrial countries.

## 5.4 Conclusionary discussion

Based on the discussion above, connecting the text and discourse level of analysis, I will now discuss the results in relation to the two final research questions. First, I will present and discuss discursive strategies that I found that G77 used in the negotiations. Secondly, I will discuss the G77's power to influence the UNFCCC process and whether the decision outcome challenges power relations in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC.

### 5.4.1 Strategies

By investigating discursive struggles in the initial submissions and how these discursive struggles were resolved in the final decision text, we can gain insight into strategies employed by negotiating parties representing pre-industrial countries. I found three strategies employed by pre-industrial countries during the COP27 negotiations on loss and damage financing: agree to ambiguous definitions;

avoid certain wording; and adapt their position on matters during the negotiation process.

The decision text contained evidence supporting the first strategy of agreeing to ambiguous definitions. One instance was how the formulations of the degree of urgency varied throughout the decision text. For instance, in one paragraph “increasing urgency” was used to describe the issue while in another paragraph “urgent and immediate” was used. Parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries initially pushed a high degree of urgency but later accepted a mixed degree of urgency in the final decisions. Similarly, they seem to have accepted a more positive recognition of the current framework as an option to address the issue.

The second strategy, to avoid certain wording, I found evidence for both in the submission and in the final decision text. Parties negotiating on behalf of pre-industrial countries avoided using some wording, belonging to discourses that have been sensitive under the UNFCCC, such as compensation or attributing cause. They did put forward the claim of historical responsibility, however, they allowed it to be left out in the final decision text.

The third strategy, to adapt their position on matters during the negotiation process, became evident when G77 and China themselves embraced employing the Glasgow Dialogues as a forum to address loss and damage financing after initially strongly opposing the Glasgow Dialogues as a forum to address the issue in their initial proposal. During the negotiations, parties negotiating on behalf of post-industrialised countries strongly embraced the Glasgow Dialogues as a forum for dealing with loss and damage financing. Perhaps G77 and China chose to embrace the Glasgow Dialogues as a way to ease friction between parties and increase their chances to push through other important matters on the issue.

I would like to suggest a fourth possible strategy, even though it needs to be further investigated. In one instance, G77 and China allowed the interests of two groups within the larger negotiation coalition to step aside in order to push through the interests of the coalition as a whole. Here, I am referring to the composition of

the Transitional Committee that was finally decided upon. Initially, G77 and China sought equal representation from all groups that were suggested to represent “developing countries” in the Committee. However, they finally agreed to less representation from small island developing states and least developed states which are the ones most likely to suffer high costs connected to climate change. Perhaps this was allowed as a strategy to push through the Committee as a whole. However, this needs to be more carefully investigated before anything certain can be said about the matter.

#### 5.4.2 Power

The final aim of this thesis is to provide insight into the G77’s power to influence the UNFCCC process and investigate the question of whether the decision outcome challenges power relations in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC. I here draw on political ecology to understand power. Political ecology defines power as three dimensional; power over ecological assets; power over the environmental agenda; and power over meaning-making (Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2019; Bailey and Bryant 1997). As I am investigating the power of the G77 to influence the UNFCCC process, I will focus on the second and third dimensions of power which concern power over the agenda and power over meaning-making. Consequently, the question of whether the decision outcome challenges power relations in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC will be investigated by discussing the extent of the G77’s power to shape the decision outcome in terms of influence on the agenda-setting as well as meaning-making regarding the issue of loss and damage.

First, I will discuss my findings in relation to the power over setting the environmental agenda, which refers to the fact that some groups have a larger influence in and control over society’s prioritisation of environmental issues and, consequently, allocation of financial resources. Thus, here I am concerned with what the findings in the analysis indicate in terms of the G77’s power to influence UNFCCC’s environmental agenda. The topic of loss and damage is something that has long created a divide between preindustrial countries, represented by the G77,

and post-industrial countries where the latter has been pushing against recognising loss and damage as a third pillar under the UNFCCC as well as creating a specific fund for addressing it. The success of G77 in pushing through the decision to establish a specific loss and damage fund as well as a Transitional Committee to address the issue could be interpreted as them having the power to influence the environmental agenda since it means that the issue of loss and damage will continue to be dealt with under the UNFCCC.

However, as has been highlighted in the discussion, there were still quite many points in the decision where post-industrial countries set the future of the environmental agenda. For instance, post-industrial countries were able to push through that existing financial and institutional arrangements would play a role in addressing the issue, that the Glasgow Dialogues would be used as a platform to address loss and damage financing, and they were also successful in avoiding a decision where they would be obliged to contribute to the fund. Consequently, post-industrial countries had a lot of influence in setting the agenda for how loss and damage will be addressed moving forward. Some things were also left ambiguous, such as the degree of urgency which could cause issues in the realisation of the fund. Another outcome that will particularly influence the power of the most vulnerable in influencing the agenda on the issue is the decided composition of the Transitional Committee.

Secondly, I will discuss my findings in relation to the power over meaning-making, which concerns actors' ability to exert control through discursive means. Thus, here I am concerned with what the findings in the analysis indicate in terms of the G77's ability to influence the discursive framings in the decision outcome. Throughout the decision, I found that framings of the urgency of the issue were mixed as the issue was described with terms both stemming from discourse pushed by pre-industrial negotiating parties and from discourse employed by post-industrial parties. The mixed discourse for framing the urgency implies that both pre-industrial and post-industrial negotiating parties were successful in influencing the framing of urgency in the decision outcome.

However, certain framings of the issue of loss and damage have long been a sensitive topic under the UNFCCC and there has been a divide in how pre-industrial countries versus post-industrial countries frame the issue and I found that these continue to be avoided. Previous research has found that particularly framings around compensation and liability have been particularly contested by post-industrial negotiating parties. In the discourse and text analysis, I found that these framings continued to be contested. The pre-industrial negotiating coalition was able to push through the decision to establish the loss and damage fund. However, the fund was not framed as a compensation mechanism but rather as a financial support mechanism. The term compensation was avoided both during negotiations and in the final decision outcome. The decision text also avoids discussing liability as the question of responsibility for causing the issue is avoided. Framings connected to liability were pushed by pre-industrial parties during the negotiations as they wanted to include text that historical responsibility should be considered. However, any mention of historical responsibility is avoided in the decision outcome.

Consequently, my findings indicate that the G77, representing the coalition of pre-industrial states, were partly successful in their power to influence the environmental agenda as they were able to push through the decision to establish the loss and damage fund as well as the Transitional Committee. However, I found that they were less successful in being able to push through their framings of the issue in the final decision outcome as sensitive framings around liability and compensation continue being avoided.

# 6 Conclusionary part

## 6.1 Conclusions

This thesis aims to investigate three research questions. The first question that the thesis posed was *which discourses interacted in shaping the decision to establish the loss and damage fund at COP27 and where the discursive struggle lie.* I found a particular divide in the discourse pushed by pre-industrial countries versus post-industrial countries. Specifically, differences were found in topics surrounding; the nature of the issue; the urgency of addressing the issue; how the issue should be addressed; and how the fund should function. Consequently, it was surrounding these topics that I found the highest degree of discursive struggle.

The second question investigated in the thesis was *which discursive strategies were employed by the G77 in the negotiations leading up to the loss and damage fund.* I found three strategies that were employed by the G77, the coalition negotiation on behalf of pre-industrial countries: agreeing to ambiguous definitions; avoiding certain wording; and adapting their position on matters during the negotiation process. I also found a fourth possible strategy, to allow the interests of groups within the larger coalition to be put aside to push through the interests of the larger group regarding loss and damage. However, since the material covered in this analysis only included statements from the G77 as a whole, except for India, I cannot draw confident conclusions on this strategy. However, I believe that this could be an interesting aspect to investigate further.

The third question that the thesis aimed to investigate was whether *the decision outcome on loss and damage funding at COP27 challenges power structures in international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC.* My findings regarding this question indicate that the G77 were partly successful in their power to influence the

environmental agenda as they were able to push through the decision to establish the loss and damage fund as well as the Transitional Committee. However, I found that they were less successful in being able to push through their framings of the issue in the final decision outcome as sensitive framings around liability and compensation continued to be avoided.

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