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THE ROAD TO CLIMATE JUSTICE

A discursive analysis of global climate governance
between 2015 and 2022

Victoria Sandholm

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Supervisor:	Ulrika Möller
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“Kyoto is without a doubt only the first step. We will have to do more to fight this rapid increase in temperature on our wonderful blue planet earth” - Klaus Toepfer, Head of UNEP, 2005

“At any time, the way an issue is dealt with depends largely on the balance of competing discourses” - Dryzek, 2022

Abstract

There is an urgent need for effective global climate governance addressing the pressing threat of climate change. Based on the institutional power of language, various research has examined the development of global climate governance through discursive lenses, however, the recent period has not yet been examined. Thus, this thesis aims to examine to what extent there has been a shift or replication of the earlier identified discourses of *ecological modernization*, *civic environmentalism*, and *climate justice* within the Conferences of the Parties (COP) through the period of 2015 and 2022. The aim is also to examine whether the found development is associable with the outcome of COP 27 and thus contribute to an understanding of the process of political negotiations. The study conducts a qualitative textual analysis of data produced within the COP through the examined years. This is based on an analytical framework containing three dimensions of how each discourse frames the problem, solution, and agency of climate change. The results show a continuity of the earlier identified discourses throughout the examined period. However, it also reveals a shift where the discourse of climate justice has gained traction over time, which is associable with the political outcome of COP 27. The findings of the study contribute to new understandings of discourse structuration through the examined period and the ongoing debate on global climate governance. It also contributes to understanding the association between discursive developments and political actions in discovering how a discursive shift may be linked to a political outcome.

Keywords: International relations, climate governance, climate justice, civic environmentalism, ecological modernization.

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1. Introduction

Almost a decade after the 2015 Paris Agreement, the climate crisis is as urgent as ever. However, reaching an effective climate change treaty remains a critical task (Sterman et al, 2015; Hoffman, 2011). The pressing crisis of human-caused temperature rises goes over national borders and demands internationally organized action (Heywood, 2014). Thus, global climate governance represents one of the most intense missions of the present day (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2012; Depledge, 2004). The Conferences of the Parties (COP), working as the main decision-making body in global climate governance, aims to steer the direction of climate change mitigation. This is carried out through complex negotiations with the goal of reaching an extensive agreement efficient enough to conquer the crisis with ratification from all states (Bernstein, 2001; Death, 2010; Sterman et al, 2015). Already 50 years ago there was a scientific consensus on the effects of climate change. However, advancement in global climate governance has been modest, failing to produce an effective response (Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom, 2015; Badullovich, 2020).

The latest climate conference held in Egypt in 2022 (COP27) has likewise been construed as a disappointment as it did not improve the likelihood of reaching the 2-degree target. Yet, it has also been viewed as a breakthrough with its initial focus on “loss and damage”. For the first time, COP 27 demanded developed nations to compensate vulnerable states for the consequences caused by climate change. This marked a shift from previous treaties in compensating the nations that have been most affected by climate change despite contributing to it the least, a debate that has been on the radar for decades (Maizland, 2022; UNFCCC, 2022). How can this advancement be understood?

The study of global climate governance is extensive. One orientation is focused on discursive power, conducted from the departure that the development of climate politics depends on the specific social construction of the problem, constructed by language (Hajer, 2002; Dryzek, 2022). Discourses, defined as “shared ways of comprehending the world embedded in language” obtain an essential role in shaping how issues such as climate change are interpreted and acted upon (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2010). In this, it is acknowledged that the COP meetings contribute to the dominant discourse of climate change, setting the tone for the work of mitigating climate change on the international level and the overall interpretations of the climate change crisis. Discourses and their power over politics are hence widely recognized in

conditioning the way that the climate crisis is defined and interpreted (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Nisbet, 2009).

A wide range of research has examined global climate governance through discursive lenses, where the period leading up to the 2015 Paris Agreement has been characterized by a struggle of different discourses fighting over salience (Bernstein, 2001; Hajer, 1995; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019). However, the period after 2015 and onto the present day is yet to be examined. Through the (almost) decade from which the latest study was conducted, the societal landscape has experienced various developments. For example, the number of natural disasters, along with the overall public awareness of climate change, has increased. At the same time, environmental questions have experienced a growing political divide of polarization, with protesting for saving the climate on one side, and an expanding climate change scepticism on the other (Falkenberg et al, 2022; World Meteorological Organization, 2021). Based on the theoretical assumption that discourses are products of the landscape in which they are created (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002), previous research may now be considered outdated. Therefore, it is relevant to analyze which direction the climate governance discourse has taken in the post-Paris era. Followingly, the research problem of this study takes stances on the development of global climate governance and the discursive impacts on such course, with the aim to examine which direction the global climate discourse has taken on the road to 2022.

As the power of language is widely acknowledged (Dryzek, 2022; Wu et al, 2021; Hajer, 1995; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019), examining the discursive development can contribute to an understanding of global climate politics. Despite this, previous research has primarily provided descriptive accounts, describing general discourses with no explanatory ambition. Therefore, this study also aims to take an explanatory approach on the discursive development leading up to COP 27. If the outcome of the negotiation is preceded by a discursive development that, in principle, is consistent with that outcome, this can contribute to an understanding of the processes of political negotiations.

The contribution of this study is twofold: firstly, it works as an upgrade to earlier research by adding a new timespan that has not yet been examined. Secondly, it contributes with an explanatory perspective connecting discursive developments with a political outcome, which earlier research lacks. In summary, the departure of this study can be summarized in the following questions: What direction has the global climate discourse taken since Paris? Is there a discursive trend that can be tied to the fallouts of COP 27?

1.2 Aim & research questions

The aim of this study is to examine the development of the global climate governance discourse between the period of 2015 and 2022 in relation to whether there has been a shift/ and or replication compared to the discourses identified by previous research. The study therefore approaches the Conferences of the Parties (COP) and seeks an understanding of how climate change is constructed as a problem of global governance through discourse structuration in this period. The aim is also to, by mapping the discursive development, examine whether this is associable with the outcome of COP 27 and thus contribute to an understanding (i.e., one element of explanation) of the particular outcome of COP 27. The study takes a descriptive perspective in mapping the discursive development through the examined years, a comparative perspective in comparing the development with earlier years, and an explanatory perspective in examining whether the discursive development is associable with COP 27. Followingly, the research questions of the study are:

- 1. Which main discourses can be identified in global climate governance between the years 2015 and 2022?*
- 2. What are the main differences and similarities in the post-Paris pattern of discourses compared with the pre-Paris pattern identified in previous research?*
- 3. Is the discursive development associable with the fallout of COP27? In that case, how?*

1.3 Delimitations

Global climate governance is delimited and operationalized to include the negotiations and outcomes produced within the Conferences of the Parties. This since the COP is the main decision-making body for mitigating climate change on the international level, representing the “regime” of global climate governance. Along with previous studies in the field, the study is thus based on the conceptualization of the COP as political sites in which agendas, norms, and knowledge correlated with climate change are set, leading to forms of governance. The study hence examines different political rationalities within the COP, shaping interpretations and actions taken to the climate crisis (Campbell et al, 2014; Haas, 2002; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019; Death, 2010). The study is further delimited to examine climate governance through

negotiations and is not focused on single states. This since the way in which climate change is framed within the COP influences how states address it domestically (Schroeder & Lovell, 2012). The study is also delimited to merely include the timespan of 2015 until 2022. This since the period before already has been examined thoroughly. The study however relates to the period before 2015 in its comparison with the results from previous research, which enables the identification of a potential development (i.e. shift and/or replication) that can be correlated with the outcome of COP 27. Lastly, the study is delimited to solely consider the discursive development of global climate governance. This is based on the constitutive power of language, influencing how issues are interpreted and how politics are outplayed (Dryzek, 2022). The study is directed into the discursive orientation of the field; however, it is important to consider that there are other factors influencing the outcomes of the negotiations, which are more thoroughly addressed in section 2.1.2. The purpose of the study is to contribute to an understanding of a connection between a discursive shift and/or replication that are associable with the specific outcome of COP27. However, the study does not claim to offer a complete explanation of the factors influencing this outcome. The ambition is to offer one part of understanding, not to argue that the discursive orientation offers the whole explanation in a causal sense.

1.4 Outline of the study

The following part of the study is constructed as follows: Initially, a chapter where the previous research field that the study is placed within is presented. In this, the scientific relevance and contributions of the study are accounted for in-depth. Followingly, the methodological chapter presents the methodological design of the study. This includes a presentation of the conducted analytical framework and an outline of the examined data. After this, the results coming from the analysis of the empirical data are presented. This is followed by a chapter where conclusions are drawn based on the findings, which answers the research questions of the study. Lastly, a discussion chapter represents the finalization of the thesis. This includes deliberations on potential limitations of the findings, contributions to the existing field and theory, and proposals for future research and scholarship in the field.

2. Research overview and theoretical departure

This chapter aims to describe as well as problematize earlier literature in the field to clarify the scientific research gap, relevance, and contribution of this study. The study is placed broadly within the field of international politics, and more specific to the field of climate governance discourses influencing the former. Thus, the outline of the chapter includes a discussion of global climate politics, the history of international climate negotiations, the previous studies of global climate negotiations, and finally, which discourses that the literature has found prominent before the Paris Agreement in 2015. The chapter is finished with a summary that clarifies the research gap and the contribution of this study to the present knowledge of the field.

2.1 Global climate governance

Global climate politics has been a wide subject of investigation in political science and international relations research (Connelly et al, 2012; Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016). Climate change is a transboundary problem, craving collective action which cannot be solved nationally. Studies in the field often illustrate climate change as a typical example of a collective action problem or a social dilemma of global politics, visualizing the conflict between the self-interested state and the collective good (Ostrom, 1990; Zannakis, 2009). Applying the classical game theoretical frame of “the tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968), the atmosphere of the earth is referred to as a “common pool resource”. This means that it is shared by everyone, and no state can be excluded from using it. However, if one pollutes it, it has effects on all (Lundqvist, 2017). Without rules and expectations, states will hence be incapable of creating the mitigation needed to fight climate change. The literature on international relations often relates this to the theory of realism¹, viewing states as self-interested, always putting the national interest first (Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom, 2015). The difficulties of climate change action hence result in a tendency of states to prioritize treaties that minimize their own commitments while maximizing others, commonly referred to as freeriding. Various research in the field therefore agrees that to manage collective action problems, intervention by a third party is needed (Connelly et al, 2012; Mansbridge, 2014).

In contrast to the classical theory of rational choice, research has shown that achieving collective action is possible in small-scale dilemmas based on factors such as reciprocity, trust,

¹ Realism is not an exclusive theory of international relations. Other prominent theories are liberalism, marxism, constructivism and feminism. However, realism is often used to explain actions of states based on self-interest (Heywood, 2014).

and reputation (Ostrom, 1990; Smith & Mayer, 2018; Frey & Meier, 2004). However, there is a consensus that the more large-scale the problem gets, the more difficult it is to achieve collective action without intervention by a third party (Bendor & Mookherjee, 1987; Jagers et al, 2020; Cook & State, 2017). The large-scale collective action problem of climate change is thus confronted with a task of complex multilateral cooperation with the influence of multiple actors as no supranational power exists in the international arena (Heywood, 2014; Haas, 2002).

The United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) contributes to global climate governance by creating themes in international relations and is thus referred to as the “climate regime” with the objective to regulate human interference with the climate (Haas, 2002). Within this, the main decision-making body is the Conference of the Parties (COP), which, since its beginning in 1995, is held annually. These conferences, to which almost all countries of the world send a delegation, aim to steer the direction of global climate governance, and actively mitigate climate change through complex negotiations (Dryzek, 2022; Bernstein, 2001; Death, 2009). Since the COP are political sites in which the boundaries of climate politics are imagined and reproduced, these provide sites where global climate governance can be empirically examined (Death, 2019). Various studies have been examining global negotiations, national strategies, as well as scientific reports from the intergovernmental panel on climate change (Wardekker & Lorenz, 2019; Hulme, 2008; Death, 2019). However, the COP meetings are argued to have a leading role in forming global climate governance and thus deserve careful evaluation, as they have both direct and indirect influence on states' actions towards sustainable development (Haas, 2002; Depledge, 2004).

2. 1. 1 The history of international climate negotiations

The initial environmental conference held by the UN was situated in Stockholm in 1972, where knowledge of the degradation of the environment caused by humans was beginning to be recognized. After this, the 1987 Brundtland report “Our common future” provided the mainstream framework for understanding environmental issues, and the concept of sustainable development was developed (Lundqvist, 2017). In 1992, the Rio “Earth Summit” was the first international conference to give significant attention to climate change, urging developed states to reduce emissions (Heywood, 2014). This was also where the adoption of the convention that, since this time, has been the framework for international climate politics, took form. The UNFCCC establishes principles for international cooperation on climate change and has a near-

global membership with ratification from all member states of the UN, with the overall ambition to mitigate the human-made carbon footprint (Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom, 2015; ENB, 2022). In 1988, the IPCC (International Governmental Panel of Climate Change) was established to provide scientific advice regarding climate change to the international community. After intense negotiations, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 came to be the first binding international agreement committing developed states to reduce emissions, often referred to as a big come-through for the work of mitigating climate change (Heywood, 2014; Dryzek, 2022).

Nevertheless, the following conferences showed challenges in achieving effective action on climate change, visualizing the mismatch between the self-interested state and the collective interest of the international community (Heywood, 2014). The Copenhagen Conference of 2009 was expected to serve as a turning point for global climate politics, enforcing legally binding treaties. However, the conference was seen as a failure as it resulted in a non-binding agreement (Driesen, 2011; Bäckstrand, 2012). The meeting showed difficulties in negotiating where the US resisted any obligations. The earlier hard work of climate change mitigation was therefore by Copenhagen (2009) broken down, and scholars interpret this as the end of the UN's universal approach to climate treaties, as it enforced de-centralized policymaking, marking the rise of a multilateral climate order (Bäckstrand, 2012). Hence, there is a consensus in the literature that after the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, there has been a shift in the power balance becoming characterized by fragmentation (Roberts, 2011).

The Paris Agreement in 2015 broke this trend by implementing a legally binding treaty. The agreement enforced obligations on all member countries; however, left every state with full power over domestic policy formulation (Dimitrov et al, 2019; Dryzek, 2022). The agreement aimed to increase the ability of countries to act on the impacts of climate change based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities, in light of different national circumstances” (ENB, 2022). Disappointingly however, the national contribution plans have not yet resulted in the mitigation needed (Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016). Since the Paris Agreement and into the present day (2022), there have been seven Conferences of the Parties. However, the need to reduce emissions is still urgent. This study will further examine the negotiations during the period after the Paris Agreement and into 2022 through a discursive framework.

2. 1. 2 The study of climate negotiations

Examining global climate politics through discursive lenses is not the exclusive way of doing the task (Dryzek, 2022). The COP has been the subject of investigation for a wide range of research discussing several factors influencing the development of the negotiations. The literature relates the difficulties of arriving at an inclusive climate change agreement with the theory of collective action, proposing that states are collectively better of reducing all emissions, however, self-interest results in resumed emissions among all (Eckersley, 2012; Sterman et al, 2015; Schroeder et al, 2012; Barret & Dannenberg, 2012; Heywood, 2014). Besides this, factors shown to influence the outcome of climate negotiations include international power structures, scientific knowledge, social movements, conflicting interests, as well as questions of justice.

International relations studies have focused on the capacity of multilateral negotiations to actively respond to climate change. Some have expressed that it is impossible to get consented decision-making among the almost 200 party members of the complex negotiations, while some examines theoretical presumptions on how to move forward (Low & Murina, 2010; Eckersley, 2012). Another orientation of studies has discussed scientific uncertainty as one reason for the slow development (Sterman et al, 2015). For example, the study by Barret & Dannenberg (2012) shows that uncertainties about the effects of climate change have negative influence on international cooperation. However, framing the effects of climate change based on scientific certainty is shown to improve collective action (Barret & Dannenberg, 2012).

A range of literature addresses the role of non-governmental actors influencing the fallouts of the COP as informal parts of governance (Hjerpe et al, 2008; Gulbrandsen & Andresen, 2004; Depledge, 2004; Auer, 2000). For instance, Schroeder & Lovell (2012) reveals an increase in the attendance of non- and inter-governmental organizations in the negotiations and demonstrates, alongside other literature, that organizations have an influence on the climate regime (Schroeder & Lovell, 2012). Further on, organizational factors are found to influence the outcome of the negotiations. Depledge (2004) discuss how inefficient outcomes often are a consequence of structural factors (Depledge, 2004). However, even the best-organized negotiations can fail if the will to reach an agreement is absent. Disagreement on how to set priorities has been a challenge since states have different views and self-interests. For example, the US has been known for its climate change skepticism, having priorities correlating more

with economics than with climate mitigation, a trend that has been growing globally, also affecting the difficulties of achieving a comprehensive agreement (Hoffman, 2011).

Scholars have furthermore discussed the complexity between small and large, developed and developing countries trying to collaborate, causing a long debate regarding justice and responsibility of climate action (Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom, 2015; Schroeder et al, 2012; Heywood, 2014). Studies elaborate on high difficulties in justice where developing states have downsized their delegations to the COP, whereas developed and larger states have increased their delegations. This reflects differences in priorities by different states. However, it also reflects differences in capacities. Developing states cannot afford to send large delegations, and this capacity gap limits the negotiation power of developing countries, making their participation less effective. This means that there is an inequality of participants in the negotiations, affecting their outcome (Depledge, 2004 & Schroeder et al, 2012).

Finally, one line of scholarship has focused on the framing and discourses of climate change (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Flottum & Gjerstad, 2016; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019). The studies of international politics through a discourse-centered approach rest on the contention that language matters and that the way climate problems are framed through discourses shapes interpretations and responses to the issue. Discourses are especially powerful in situations that lack formal coordination such as global governance, where language is influencing norms and power relations (Dryzek, 2022). The discursive orientation of the field contributes to the broader literature by putting emphasis on that the dealing of issues such as climate change depends largely on the balance of competing discourses. This as Dryzek (2022) expresses, “the existence of competing understandings on issues is why we have climate politics (or any politics) in the first place” (Dryzek, 2022). The discursive orientation is not the only way of examining climate negotiations, however, it affects all orientations outlined above by defining how climate change is constructed and interpreted, affecting environmental affairs. Accordingly, this study contributes to the discursive orientation of the field by mapping the discursive development of the COP from 2015 and 2022.

2. 2 Climate framing & communication

Following the constructivist research tradition, the theory of framing refers to how the way in which an issue is portrayed affects how attitudes and actions towards the same evolve (Pettenger, 2007; Bergström & Boreus, 2012). Researchers explain the power of framing as the

power of emphasizing certain attributes over others, with consequences of shaping how issues are understood (Badullovich et al, 2020; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Wardekke & Lorentz, 2019). This is explained as an unavoidable reality of the communication process, especially applied to policymaking (Nisbet, 2009). The framing of an issue followingly has the power to shape discourses of this phenomenon. Therefore, a wide range of research has examined the consequences of climate change communication and since the first reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the challenges of climate change communication has been addressed (Badullovich et al, 2020; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014; Flottum & Gjerstad, 2015).

Research on framing has commonly examined the power of the media in shaping the representation of climate change, influencing public perceptions (Vu et al, 2019; Schmidt et al, 2013; Schafer & Schlichting, 2014; Shehata & Hopmann, 2012; Boykoff, 2011; Strömbeck, 2014). For example, studies have compared different media frames of climate change and their effects (Schmidt et al, 2013; Schafer et al, 2015; Feldman & Hart, 2021). Research has focused on how frames can have different effects on different groups, dependent on for example individual values (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Badullovich et al, 2020). Climate change has over the years been characterized by struggles over meaning. For example, studies have discussed various frames of climate change having different effects, being framed as for example a threat to public health, the economy, human rights, the nation's security, fear, ethics, morality, as an apocalypse, or an opportunity. Studies have also examined how the framing of policymaking shapes interpretations of climate change, where it has been used as a strategic tool for spreading environmental awareness, pro-environmental attitudes, and policy acceptance (Dickinson et al, 2013; Wardekke & Lorentz, 2019). Various studies have thus focused on the effects of the framing of climate change on public perceptions (Feldman & Hart, 2021; Badullovich et al, 2020; Hulme, 2008; Nerlich et al, 2010). However, studies examining the correlation between discursive framings and political outcomes are lacking.

2.3 Discourses of climate governance

Both the concept of discourses and framing are related to power in a similar way in influencing how issues are understood. However, while framing refers to how issues are portrayed, discourses refer to a shared meaning of a phenomenon, which is defined by typical frames, representations, and attributes by language (Adger, et al, 2001; Pascoe et al, 2019; Dryzek, 2022). Discourses are explained as “specific ensembles of ideas, concepts, and categorizations

that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices” (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007). The multidisciplinary field relating to discourse theory examines the relationship between language and social phenomena. Research often draws on the Foucauldian (Foucault, 1972) view on discourses, emphasizing the discursive power in establishing certain views of an issue, and thus constituting specific ways of representing the world. Discourses are hence more than just language, they are systems that produce meaning, common sense, and knowledge (Zannakis, 2009; Death, 2009; Hajer, 1995; Bergström & Boreus, 2012). According to discursive theoretical assumptions, discourses are in constant change, related to the social context in which they are constructed. As the contest over meaning is ubiquitous, the examination of discursive replications must therefore be understood as happening in interaction with its specific context (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002; Dryzek, 2002).

There is a consensus in the literature that discourses are essential in conditioning the way that climate politics is defined, interpreted, and addressed (Dryzek, 2022). Understanding different social realities of climate change as a phenomenon thus helps explain how climate change exists in institutional arrangements (Hajer, 2002). The discourse of global climate governance holds power over rules and norms of climate change mitigation and creates standards of appropriate behaviour, where policymaking is explained as a product of discursive struggles (Adger et al, 2001; Pettenger, 2007; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019 & 2007). Hence, various research has emphasized the power of language in climate governance, however, few studies have taken an explanatory perspective (Pascoea et al, 2019; Pettenger, 2007; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2012; Dryzek, 2022).

2.3.1 Prominent discourses on the road to 2015

Various research has provided efforts to map and interpret discourses of global climate governance in different phases in time. Competing discourses have been reflected, visioning different ways of framing climate politics. There have been multiple narrative debates of local versus global, north versus south, public versus private, decentralization versus centralization, and economic growth versus environmental integrity (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019).

The three decades after the first environmental conference in Stockholm (1972) was characterized by the emergence of liberal environmentalism emphasizing market-based approaches of privatization, free trade, and economic growth (Bernstein, 2003). Hajer (1995) expresses that *ecological modernization* emerged in the late 1990s and gained hegemonic status

as the dominating discourse of global climate governance in highly industrialized countries after (Hajer, 1995). The discourse consists of liberal and market-driven narratives and followingly promotes technology, investment, and trade. Ecological modernization represents a decentralized and liberal market order seeking to reinvent capitalist society by highlighting the benefits of economic growth, where the focus lies on cost-effectiveness rather than social justice. The central component of the discourse is by Lundqvist (2017), described as a viewed compatibility between economic growth and climate protection. Hence, economic growth equals development for the environment because of resource effectiveness by technology and vice versa² (Lundqvist, 2017). Rather than framing climate change as a threat, ecological modernization portrays the crisis as an opportunity to create green jobs and develop technology (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019).

Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2007) finds increased representations of the discourse of ecological modernization after the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. According to the discourse, climate change is caused by a diversity of interrelated problems. Its solutions are therefore portrayed through polycentric governance with non-state actors as important agents, not governmental. Followingly, the UN is framed as a forum for consensus building rather than a primary institution (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007; Hajer, 1995). The ingrained focus on economic growth has grounds within industrialism as the base for a healthy society. Dryzek (2022) refers to this as “Promethean”, the belief that human technology can overcome any problem, including climate change. The view that economic growth and ecological sustainability can be brought together in a win-win situation has throughout time led to a range of political support by for example George W. Bush and Trump, portraying economic growth as the first task of the political system. Hence, this was the base for the US withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2001 (Dryzek, 2022).

In similarity to Bernstein (2001) and their earlier study from 2007, Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2019) finds, almost two decades after their first study, a reproduction of ecological modernization underpinning the new climate regime leading up to the Paris Agreement of 2015. Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2019) developed their study from 2007 with “*The road to Paris: contending climate governance discourses in the post-Copenhagen era*” (2019), examining whether earlier identified discourses were replicated in the lead up to the Paris

² The view that economic growth can correlate with environmental sustainability is commonly referred to as green growth (Lundqvist, 2017).

Agreement (2015). The study finds a subtle shift in the discursive landscape where replications of ecological modernization have increased after the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 and onto the Paris Agreement of 2015, which the authors express may affect how climate governance will be enacted after the Paris Agreement (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019).

The road to Paris was also contested by a radical discourse, showing a shift in the discursive landscape. The discourse of *civic environmentalism* increased after the Copenhagen Accord (2009), framing the climate crisis as a structural problem caused by the economic and ideological forces of the capitalist system (Heywood, 2014). The discourse emerged based on an increased scepticism of capitalism, underlining that there is an essential conflict between climate protection and economic growth, as well as justice and debt by the north and south (Lundqvist, 2017; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019). The literature on the discourse expresses that its language is associated with participation and stake-holding, where decision-making must include the perceptions of the citizenry, emphasizing legitimacy and transparency towards the same (Jarrell et al, 2013). The discourse thus portrays inclusion, transparency, and public participation as essential attributes for sustainable development, moving away from top-down regulation (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; DeWitt et al, 2006). The discourse emerged with focus on building more effective policymaking in which groups affected by environmental problems should have a voice in its solutions. This represents a bottom-up approach, emphasizing that the inclusion of marginalized groups is vital in sustainable development (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019). The differences between ecological modernization and civic environmentalism are illustrated as a dispute between two camps, one favoring capitalism and one showing hostility towards the same. An example of the discourse of civic environmentalism drawn in the literature is for example the movement “Fridays for the Future” constituted by the climate activist Greta Thunberg (Dryzek, 2022).

As the road to 2015 was characterized by a discursive struggle between ecological modernization and civic environmentalism, Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2019) emphasize a need for research adding knowledge from 2015. The authors also question whether the rise of the critical eco-social narrative will challenge the liberal eco-modernization domination of climate governance in the years to come and if the future will be able to deliver a more coherent discourse, not characterized by struggles over meaning (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019).

In similarity with the findings of the discourse of civic environmentalism, a range of research has been emphasizing frames of *climate justice* (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014; Caney, 2010; Page, 2011). The debate on climate justice and the differentiation between developing and developed countries began already in 1972, where developing nations were pushing for justice on account for their small contribution to the crisis. This discourse has increased in the decades after, not only in the academic debate but also in the movements of non-governmental organizations and civil society (Schlosberg & Collings, 2014). According to Posner & Weisbach (2010), justice plays a crucial role in the debate on climate change. This regards how the responsibility and costs of mitigating climate change should be allocated in a fair way (Posner & Weisbach, 2010). In similarity, Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom (2015) expresses a need to view climate change action in terms of who should do what based on ethical factors (Brulde & Duus-Otterstrom, 2015). Studies have thus focused on the debate between developed and developing states and the historical responsibility of the crisis (Wu et al, 2019). Climate justice gained power after the Copenhagen Accord (2009) and has been reproduced by state and non-state actors on the road to Paris (2015) (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019). The core narrative is that those who are the least responsible for climate change are the ones suffering its worst consequences, while also holding the least capacity of mitigating its effects. Hence, the discourse of climate justice portrays the crisis through the historical responsibility of developed states in ethical terms, and a focus on that developing countries are less able to handle climate disasters than developed (Roberts, 2011).

The discourse of climate justice and civic environmentalism share overlapping attributes in their criticism of developing states as the cause of the crisis and that the solution should include support from developed to developing states. This differs from the discourse of ecological modernization which does not frame the responsibility on any single actor and portrays climate mitigation as an opportunity for economic growth.

2. 4 Summary of previous findings

According to previous studies, the recent decades have experienced a discursive struggle of different narratives of climate change fighting over salience. In summary, three discourses have been found prominent over time. Firstly, the most prominent is a discursive struggle between *ecological modernization*, focusing on liberal market capitalism, trade, and investment, versus *civic environmentalism*, aiming to critique the belief in green growth and emphasizing the inclusion of civil society. The discourse of ecological modernization dominated in the 1990s

and up to the Kyoto Protocol (1997), followed by a contesting growth of civic environmentalism. The period after Copenhagen (2009) leading up to the Paris Agreement (2015) was characterized by a discursive struggle of fragmentation and decentralization, with leaders defending market-based solutions, capitalism, and investment, whilst protesting defenders of civic environmentalism at the same time flowered (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019; Bernstein, 200; Hajer, 1995; Lundqvist, 2017).

The literature also reveals a growing trend of *climate justice* overlapping the identified discourse of civic environmentalism (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). There has been a debate on who should pay the cost of climate change mitigation based on historical factors, and the debate between developing and developed countries of the north and south has turned into complex ethical deliberations. For example, terms of “loss and damage” associated with climate change were added to the Paris Agreement (2015), however only to the non-binding commitments (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019). In summary of the discourses that previous research has found prominent on the road to 2015, a chart summarizing their main framings and attributes concerning the problem, solution, and agency of climate change is presented below.

DISCOURSES	<i>Problem</i>	<i>Solution</i>	<i>Agency</i>
<i>Ecological modernization</i>	Climate change is a mix of coherent problems	Technology and market-based solutions. Economic growth can correlate with climate mitigation	No single actor in focus. All should act and are responsible
<i>Civic environmentalism</i>	Climate change is a structural problem mainly caused by capitalism	Emphasizes bottom-up solutions. Compensation to developing states	Inclusion of civil society and marginalized groups, ex local movements, NGOs
<i>Climate justice</i>	Climate change is caused by developed countries through history	Compensation from developed to developing states	Main focus on the distinction between developing and developed states, where developed should act and developing are the victims

Table 1. Discourses of global climate governance.

2. 5 Interdisciplinary relevance

Based on this chapter of previous research and literature in the field, the interdisciplinary relevance of this study is twofold. Firstly, there is a gap in the literature regarding the recent decade of climate governance discourses. As the literature shows a trend of an increased struggle between discourses and various fragmentations in the time leading up to 2015, it is relevant to examine whether there has been a trend of continuity and/or shift into the present day. For example, Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2019) expresses a wish for a balancing act in the upcoming years, making it relevant to study whether this has happened. Since discourses are embedded in the context in which they are created (Jorgensen & Philips, 2022), and as the landscape in which the presented studies were produced no longer exists, the present research

is outdated. This visualizes the relevance of adding new research on the discursive development that has taken place from 2015 to 2022.

Secondly, the literature lacks an explanatory angle regarding the influence of discourses on policy outcomes. Numerous studies put emphasis on the constitutive effects of climate discourses on politics, institutions, and public perceptions (Wu et al, 2019; Adger et al, 2001; Pettenger, 2007; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019 & 2007; Dryzek, 2022). However, the correlation between a discursive development and a political fallout lacks examination since most previous studies have been done with descriptive ambitions or examined discursive effects on public perceptions or attitudes. The contribution of this study to the existing literature is thus the addition of knowledge on global climate discourses in the period between 2015 and 2022, but also the contribution to the understanding of whether, and how, this development is associable with the fallout of COP27. Thereby, the study combines orientations that the earlier literature lacks.

3. Methodological design

In order to answer the aim and research questions of the study, a qualitative text analysis with the use of discourse categorizations is applied to the chosen data. In this chapter, the methodological design and data of the study are described. Firstly, the choice of research method is defended based on its correlation with the aim of the study. This is followed by a specification of the analytical framework used to examine the data. An outline and justification of the chosen empirical data succeed this. The chapter is finished with a clarification of the criteria for interference based on the research findings.

3.1 Choice of method

Based on the constitutive power by language in shaping reality and the discursive power institutionalized in global policy arenas (Pettenger, 2007; Esaiasson et al, 2017), this study takes stances on the discourses identified by earlier research and examines to what extent these are replicated in the period of 2015 until 2022. The findings in the data are thus mapped onto and compared with the discourses outlined in the chapter of previous research. The study is therefore based on a qualitative design with the use of text analysis as method, studying language as a particular way of understanding the world (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). The qualitative methodology was chosen based on that the wanted content within the data rests partly hidden beneath the surface which is reachable with the use of an in-depth text analysis, not possible by quantification. The choice of method relies on the aim and research questions of the study to facilitate the identification and understanding of discursive representations in text. To identify the discourses, the analysis thus seeks particular frames, wordings, attributes, and meanings in text based on a series of questions systematically “asked” to the data. The method also makes it possible to compare differences and replications of the identified discourses over time with the findings from previous research (Esaiasson et al, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Following the constructivist scholarship, the qualitative text analysis, in line with discourse theory (Jorgensen & Philips, 2022), puts emphasis on interpretations of a governed social reality constitutionalized through texts, and the method is hence focused on studying the ways in which language is used to construct meaning (Bryman, 2018). Followingly, the study lies on the constructivist assumption that the world is based upon subjective interpretations affected by framing. It therefore belongs to the research tradition of interpretivism, seeing the

ontological reality as subjective and is based on the epistemological assumption that knowledge is always affected by interpretations (Esaiasson et al, 2017). Reality is seen as socially constructed, in which the analysis of communication and meaning becomes central, which further defends the choice of method. It is therefore not the climate crisis itself that is central but the way that the examined data makes sense and therefore frames, this phenomenon through language (Dryzek, 2022; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Jorgensen & Philips, 2002).

3. 1. 1 Categorization of discourses

To find replications of the discourses in the empirical data, it is vital to translate the fundamental concepts of each discourse into a coherent framework guiding the analysis. Therefore, the text analysis is conducted which basis on a discourse categorization. According to Bergström and Boreus (2012), a categorization is beneficial since this creates simplified versions of the discourse portrayed. To operationalize the discourses, it is thus necessary to transform them into categories, which refer to the key characteristics of the discourses. This makes it possible to compare the empirical data with a prepared list of the key concepts of each discourse. Hence, this works as an operationalization of the examined discourses and as indicators of how these can be found in the examined data (Bergström & Boreus, 2012). Worth noting is that reality is always more multifaceted than what the categorizations imply as they are not an actual portrait of reality. Hence, it is possible that the discourses overlap more in reality than what is seen through this discourse categorization. However, the division makes it possible to empirically find the discourses in the texts and to compare replications over time. This is thus a simplified version of reality where the discourses are drawn to their most simplified point to make them measurable and to ensure the validity of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The study is based on a deductive onset. This since the data is analyzed based on categorizations prescribed beforehand through the analytical framework. Inferences are thus made based on earlier identified discursive frames deciding what is searched for in the empirical data, rather than an open examination. This makes it possible to compare the result with findings from earlier research and to discuss the findings based on theoretical assumptions. The use of the deductive onset also decreases the potential influence of subjective interpretations from the researcher. This increases the intersubjectivity of the study, as it strengthens the possibility to re-conduct the study on other data with similar findings (Bergström & Boreus, 2012). The distinctively designed analytical framework also increases

the objectivity and transparency of the analysis. This is also supported by using empirical citations from the data throughout the analysis, increasing the transparency of the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This defends how the study strives for as much objectivity and transparency as possible, despite its basis on the research tradition of constructivism, which is the base for the discursive research tradition (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002).

Discourses are seldomly totally fractionated. Instead, they are partly overlapping which leads to potential difficulties in separation. According to the literature on qualitative text analysis, a division of discourses into ideal types is often used to study discursive framings (Bergström & Boreus, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Since the use of ideal types optimally should be mutually exclusive, this study is instead based on a categorization of the key concepts of each discourse. Since there are overlapping elements of the examined discourses, for example, both climate justice and civic environmentalism critiques capitalism and emphasizes justice to developing states, a classification rather than a division of ideal types is chosen suitable for this study.

3.2 Analytical framework

To find discursive replications in the examined data, there is a need to concretize the problem of the study into specified questions asked to the data. The study is thus conducted through an analytical framework of questions constituting the building blocks of the analysis, working as empirical indicators of the research problem. The set of questions is systematically applied to the data, followed by a comparison of the rationalities coming from the material with the discourse categorization. This in turn makes it possible to identify replications of the examined discourses in the empirical data over time (Bergström & Boreus, 2012; Esaiasson et al, 2017). The analytical questions are presented in the table below:

ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS
PROBLEM	<p><i>How is the problem of climate change framed?</i></p> <p>This question focuses on how each discourse frames and portrays the problem of climate change. This includes what factors that are seen as the causes of the climate crisis.</p>
SOLUTION	<p><i>How is the solution for climate change framed?</i></p> <p>This question focuses on how each discourse frames and portrays the solution for the climate crisis. Hence, what is seen as the preferred cause of action, and by which means and methods can the climate crisis can be solved? This includes the practical means of how governance should, in the view of each discourse, be adopted.</p>
AGENCY	<p><i>Which actors are attributed with agency?</i></p> <p>This question focuses on which actors and/or groups that are assigned with “agency” in the view of each discourse. Which agents are in focus and how are they represented? This includes what actors that are portrayed as victims and/or attributed as the cause of the problem and responsible for acting on solutions.</p>

Table 2. Analytical questions.

The analytical framework constitutes a set of key concepts that classifies the identified discourses of global climate governance into three categories; how the discourse frames the problem of climate change, the solution and cause of action, and which actors and/or groups that the discourse attributes with agency in these respects. This is further specified at the operative level giving examples of how the discourses can be found in the empirical data. The analytical framework hence clearly stipulates what is searched for in the analysis. The analytical framework of questions and discourse categorizations is presented below.

	THEORETICAL LEVEL			OPERATIVE LEVEL
<i>DISCOURSE CATEGORIZATION</i>	<i>Problem</i>	<i>Solutions</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Example-frames</i>
ECOLOGICAL MODERNIZATION	Climate change is a mix of coherent problems	Technology and market-based solutions. Economic growth can correlate with climate mitigation	No single actor in focus all should act on and are responsible	Emphasis on policies based on technology and market. Belief in green growth. Not framing the problem based on one type of actor
CIVIC ENVIRONMENTALISM	Climate change is a structural problem mainly caused by capitalism	Emphasize bottom-up solutions. Compensation to developing states	Inclusion of civil society, ex local movements& NGOs.	Emphasis on solutions from the grassroots, ex social movements and activism
CLIMATE JUSTICE	Climate change is caused by developed countries throughout history	Compensation from developed to developing nations	Focus on the differences between developing and developed states, where developed should act and developing are victims	Emphasis on the unjust impacts of climate change. Compensations and support based on historical responsibility

Table 3. Analytical framework.

Worth noting is that the analysis is based on interpretations of reality guided by the researcher that sometimes lies implicitly hidden beneath the surface of the text, which is always the case in the discursive research tradition (Esaiasson et al, 2017). For example, representations

relating to the solutions to climate change can implicitly give answers to how the problem of climate change is portrayed. Therefore, the preciseness of the analytical framework and the use of clearly stipulated citations throughout the analysis helps to increase the transparency of the analysis and defend how the findings are arrived at. It increases the validity of the study as it clarifies what the study searches for, as well as its reliability, as it makes it possible to copy the analysis on other data (Bergström & Boreus, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The presented citations are a representative sample of all citations found through the analysis. The choice of citations are aimed to represent the main findings of the analysis and thus constitutes typical quotes in which each discourse is found. It is aimed to include as many quotes as possible to increase the transparency of the findings, however, all citations found are not accounted for in the presentation of the analysis but are reconciled in the bibliography.

Worthy of mention is also that this framework is not unique and has similarities with earlier frameworks applied in the field (see for example Johansson, 2020 and Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019). However, this is a conscious choice since it makes it possible to relate the findings of this study with the findings of previous research. Finally, the analytical framework was first tested on a small sample of data through a pilot study. This led to a re-precision of the framework, which contributed to the improvement of the quality of the final study.

3.3 Data

In line with previous research in the field (Death, 2010; Campbell et al, 2014; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019), this study approaches the UN climate summits of the COP as empirical sites where the discourse of global climate governance take form. This makes it possible to study the empirical reality of climate governance discourses (Bergström & Boreus, 2012). The empirical data of the study therefore consists of textual data produced by the UN and its member parties within the context of the COP between the years of 2015 and 2022. The textual analysis is based on three primary sources of data from the conferences. These include:

- 1. Position papers, submissions, and statements by state and non-state actors.*
- 2. Summaries of the sessions made by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB).*
- 3. Official treaty texts including the decisions made.*

3.3.1 Selection of data

The varied data sources are chosen since they are considered to capture the context and content of the COP. The choice of including a triangulation of data is based on the utility of analyzing

multiple sources to gain an extensive and representative interpretation of the global climate discourse within the COP and thus to increase the reliability of the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The data sources are equivalent to previous research to make a comparison with previous findings from before the Paris Agreement feasible. The chosen data sample hence partly replicates the sources used by Bäckstrand & Lövbrand (2019) to ensure valid results regarding a continuity and/or replication over time in relation to previous findings. However, it is worth noting that this study does not offer a comparison in statistical terms. An examination is done on a potential development over time in which a comparison with earlier research is needed, with the aim of finding a trend rather than conducting a technical comparison.

The chosen statements and submissions pursue a representative inclusion of nations and non-state actors throughout the examined period. This to decrease the risk of biased results by the influence of only one type of nation and/or actor and to increase the generalizability of the findings. Each COP has been represented with data from an alliance of small and/or developing states, as well as a coalition of developed and/or western states and NGOs. Thus, there is a variation in the inclusion of state submissions in the data throughout each COP, however, the grouping of nations is similar. This since the aim of the study is to examine the COP as a context and not particular expressions or views by nations. Furthermore, there is a weighting included in the different types of data. Since the official treaty text is where the outcome of the COP is formulated, this data is considered to constitute the heaviest significance for the result. This since the discourse must be shown in the actual treaty text to be implemented as a political decision and therefore to be associable with a political outcome, especially concerning the third research question of the study.

The data search was done on the official website of the UNFCCC, holding all official documents constituted within the COP. This was used together with the ENB website providing summaries of each COP. All data used are primary sources of official documents openly reachable and are therefore considered to be credible and authentic according to the criteria of resource criticism (Esaiasson et al, 2017). The data has been analyzed twice, firstly to examine its content in a big picture and secondly to apply the analytical framework in an organized way to capture the sought discourses.

In relation to data access, the ideal situation would be to examine all data produced within each COP. An alternative method could thus be a comprehensive analysis of a larger sample of data

with a mix of statistics and in-depth text analysis. However, since this study aims to conduct a deep understanding of discursive representations through text and not statistical measurements, it is presumed that the representative inclusion of data ensures non-biased findings with generalizable claims. A deficiency in the data availability is that the UNFCCC does not include an exact replication of data from each year of the COP. However, this is handled by including a representative sample of similar groups of nations.

3.4 Criteria for interference

The study is guided by three research questions answered dependent on the findings deriving from the application of the analytical framework on the empirical data. To structure the analysis, there is need for a clarification on how the findings should look to arrive at one conclusion rather than another. Therefore, the criteria for interference are discussed below.

1. Which main discourses can be identified in global climate governance between the years 2015 and 2022?

This question is of descriptive character mapping the discourses in the data. The findings answering this question are thus a description of discourses found in the data structured by the analytical framework and does therefore not include any critical judgments.

2. What are the main differences and similarities in the post-Paris pattern of discourses compared with the pre-Paris pattern identified in previous research?

The second question aims to compare the findings derived from the first question, with findings from earlier research. This to understand which direction the discourse has taken over time, examining a time sequence of whether the sought discourses of global climate governance have been replicated and/or shifted through the examined period. The question can have two possible answers dependent on the findings. Either, the result could show a replication of the discourses found in previous research and thus a trend of continuity, or the result could show a shift in the discursive landscape. The first two questions contribute to the first research gap that motivates this study: the discourse structuration in the period of 2015 and 2022, alongside if there is a trend of continuity or shifts compared to the years before 2015. The findings of the first two questions followingly leads to an answer to the third.

3. Is the discursive development associable with the fallout of COP27? In that case, how?

For the findings to show coherence with the outcome of COP 27 and hence an affirmative answer to the research question, the result should show an increase in framings correlating with

the discourse of climate justice gaining influence over time. The discourse does not have to constitute the hegemonic discourse. However, the result should reveal an increase in replications of climate justice compared to the other examined discourses on the road to 2022. If the result reveals it doubtful to discover the discourse of climate justice, there is not considered to be an association with explanatory power of the outcome of COP 27. In that case, other factors may have influenced this outcome. Followingly, the answer to this question is what contributes to the second research gap of this study: the examination of a potential association between a discursive development and a political fallout.

4. Analysis of results

This chapter presents a summary of the results from the analysis of the examined data. The presentation is divided in two periods named “The Paris Agreement and its implementation” (2015-2018), and “The road to climate justice” (2019-2022). Each analysis begins with a factual summary of each COP, followed by a presentation of the main findings deriving from the application of the analytical framework on the data. The analysis is structured in line with the analytical framework in accounting for findings related to the questions of problem, solution, and agency in term. The analysis is presented and clarified with the use of citations with information on where the citations derive from and what discourse can be found in them. Each period is completed with a summary aiming to clarify the main findings of the analysis.

4.1 The Paris Agreement and its implementation 2015 – 2018

COP 21 occurred in Paris, France, in 2015. The meeting was the first to result in a legally binding treaty, aiming to keep the global average temperature below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Since the agreement joined all nations under a legally binding treaty, it was seen as a landmark in developing a multilateral climate regime (UNFCCC, 2015). The agreement required all nations to adopt national adaptation plans correlating with the goals of the agreement based on their national circumstances. The “Paris agreement work programme” was also launched, with the aim of implementing the operational details of the agreement in the conferences to come (ENB, 2015). Followingly, the main aim of COP 22, COP 23, and COP 24 was to operationalize the decisions made under the Paris Agreement.

COP 22 was held in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2016 focusing on implementing the Paris Agreement and the multilateral cooperation it aimed for (UNFCCC, 2016). The meeting was the first to take place after the US election of Donald Trump, which created uncertainties about a potential US withdrawal, casting shadows over the negotiations (ENB, 2016). COP 23 was held in Bonn, Germany, in 2017 under the Presidency of Fiji. The meeting conducted the world to advance the ambitions amplified in the Paris Agreement following the concept of “one conference, two zones”, one holding talks between governments, and one holding side events (UNFCCC, 2017). The US's final decision to withdraw from its obligations under the Paris Agreement however showed substantial difficulties in negotiation under the influence of ideological polarization (ENB, 2017). The finalization of the Paris Agreement was implemented at COP 24 held in Katowice, Poland in 2018 (UNFCCC, 2018). In its end, the

Katowice climate package was adopted, including most of the issues determined in the Paris Agreement. The meeting once more surfaced negotiation problems as the ongoing discussion on responsibility was debated. Developing states proposed flexibility in mitigation efforts based on their deficient capacities, while developed states debated for a common rule holding all nations responsible to act (ENB, 2018).

1. Problem

The multilateral approach as the base for the Paris Agreement implicitly correlates with the discourse of **ecological modernization** regarding portraying the problem as caused by multiple actors. Several expressions regarding a viewed correlation between the resilience of ecological systems, climate mitigation, and economic growth also correspond with the discourse of ecological modernization. One example is the following phrase “Building the resilience of socioeconomic and ecological systems, including through economic diversification and sustainable management of natural resources” (UNFCCC, 2015:27).

Frames relating to minimizing the consequences of climate change in that “Parties recognize the importance of averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change” (UNFCCC, 2015:7), shows signs of the discourse of **climate justice** beginning in the Paris Agreement. However, the official treaty of COP 21 does not represent the problem of climate change based on historical responsibility by developed states, but rather through differences in the capacities of developing and developed nations. The Paris Agreement correlates the problem of climate change mainly with ecological modernization, which is a trend that continues from 2015 to 2018. The discourse of climate justice is however distinctively more visible in statements by developing nations in portraying the cause of the crisis to be developed states, illustrated in the following statement:

Africa is the least contributor to global emissions, and thus to the problem of climate change. Yet it is the most affected continent by climate change repercussions and most vulnerable to its adverse effects (Statement on behalf of the African group of nations, 2015:1).

The discourse of climate justice is prominent in statements by developing nations framing the cause of the climate crisis to be developed states, a trend visible through COP 21-24. In 2017, a statement on behalf of the least-developed countries reads as follows:

The LDCs are particularly vulnerable to these climate impacts. Yet we contribute negligible emissions and feel the most devastating impacts of climate change acutely (Statement on behalf of the least developed countries, UNFCCC, 2017:1).

Another example is where the statement on behalf of Climate Justice now expresses that “Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money” (UNFCCC, 2018:1), showing how the problem is seen as caused by developed nations. Representing the problem of climate change in relation to the ones suffering the worst consequences caused by the western world is growing over time within statements by developed nations as well, of which one example is the following statement by the European Union in 2017:

Climate change is already dramatically impacting our lives, most of all those in small islands and other vulnerable communities. I want to sincerely thank you – President, your team and the entire country of Fiji – for making us understand and feel what climate change means for island states, for places that are affected the most (UNFCCC, 2017:2).

Relating the problem of climate change to the historical actions of developed states and its extreme effect on developing states is growing in statements from developed nations from COP 23 and onwards, showing an increase in the discourse of climate justice in this type of data.

2. Solution

The focus on a multilateral solution as the base for the Paris Agreement correlates with the discourse of **ecological modernization** in emphasizing that all should act on climate governance, which is a trend that continues from COP 21 to COP 24. For example, it is stated in COP 21 that “...civil society, scientists, businesses and industry from all around the world to rally public attention, network and share best practices” (ENB, 2015:45), and that the meeting shall “Enable opportunities for coordination across instruments and relevant institutional arrangements” (UNFCCC, 2015:5).

Attributes relating to ecological modernization are visible from COP 21 to COP 24. For example, the discourse is visible in the belief in green growth as a solution. To illustrate, it is stated in 2015 to “make finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions” (UNFCCC, 2015:7), and in 2016 that “This will help our climate but also our economies as we transform our energy systems, invest in green growth, and nurture innovation” (Statement on behalf of the European Union, UNFCCC, 2016:1). The discourse is also

prominent in portraying technology as part of a solution. To illustrate, it is stated in 2015 that “...the importance of fully realizing technology development and transfer in order to improve resilience to climate change” (UNFCCC, 2015:9), in 2016 that “The transition to clean energy provides vast economic growth potential and the transition to clean energy is inevitable” (UNFCCC, 2016:5), and in 2018 to “...further invite parties and the climate technology center and network to enhance the provision of support for strengthening the capacity” (UNFCCC, 2018:8). Finally, the discourse of ecological modernization is prominent in framing solutions on the private sector. To illustrate, it is expressed in 2015 to “enhance public and private sector participation in the implementation of nationally determined contributions” (UNFCCC, 2015:5), in 2016 that “The role of the private sector in adaptation finance needs to be further enhanced” (UNFCCC, 2016:17), and in 2018 that “...support for the work program should come from a variety of sources and the private sector, as appropriate” (UNFCCC, 2018:8).

As the Paris Agreement reflects a bottom-up approach, the “exercise of a political leadership that meets national and local needs” (ENB, 2015:45) shows frames of solutions relating to the discourse of **civic environmentalism**. An emphasized importance of the participation of local actors and groups in climate solutions, which is visible throughout COP21 to COP 24, also shows frames correlating with civic environmentalism. To illustrate, it is expressed in 2015 that “...action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities, and ecosystems” (UNFCCC, 2015:6), in 2016 to “Draw upon the expertise from relevant institutions, organizations, frameworks, networks and centers outside the convention, including at the intergovernmental, regional, national and subnational levels” (UNFCCC, 2016:13), and in 2018 that “Non-party stakeholders are considered crucial to help raise ambition both by increasing the transparency of the negotiation process and as important contributors to climate action” (ENB, 2018:33).

Throughout COP 21 to COP 24, there are traces of the discourse of **climate justice** regarding how solutions are portrayed. This since the official treaties emphasize that developed states should contribute to development. However, this is referred to as “voluntary” and “noted” and is not visible in actual outcomes. For example, COP 24 is “Noting the particular support needs of the least developed countries with respect to addressing climate change” (UNFCCC, 2018:7). Similarly, COP 23 states that:

Reiterates that developed country Parties shall biennially communicate indicative quantitative and qualitative information as applicable, including, as available, projected levels of public financial resources to be provided to developing country Parties, and that other Parties providing resources are encouraged to communicate biennially such information on a *voluntary* basis (UNFCCC, 2017:35).

The phrase “loss and damage” is included in the official treaty texts from 2015-2018, as well as in some statements, but not in any binding decisions. To illustrate, COP 22 “acknowledges the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change” (UNFCCC, 2016:14). The treaty also invites parties to establish loss and damage contact points:

Inviting interested Parties to establish a loss and damage contact point through their respective UNFCCC national focal point, with a view to enhancing the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change at the national level (UNFCCC, 2016:11).

The discourse of climate justice is however more distinct in statements, where states and non-states actors portray solutions based on historical responsibility and justice. To illustrate, the African group of nations expresses in 2015 that “Equity is central to achieving ambition: the burden of emission reductions should not be a shift to developing countries” (UNFCCC, 2015:2). Following this line, the least developed states express in 2017 that “Pre-2020 ambition, action, and support for developing countries is vital to this effort” (UNFCCC, 2017:3). It is distinct in various statements that developed states are framed as responsible to act on solutions, for example: “of course, developed countries must continue to take the lead, and developing countries will need support to make this happen” (Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, 2015:2).

From COP 23 in 2017 and onwards, the result reveals an increase of representations correlating with climate justice also in statements from developed nations, which before was mainly expressed in statements by developing nations being most vulnerable. To illustrate, Finland expresses in 2017 that “Climate finance to developing countries is essential for achieving the Paris goals” (Statement on behalf of Finland, UNFCCC, 2017:2), and Sweden in 2018 that “We believe developed countries must lead the first step of a global transition, encouraging and supporting others to move forward” (Statement on behalf of Sweden, UNFCCC, 2018:3).

This is however also mixed with a belief in economic growth to correlate with climate mitigation. For example, Japan expresses in 2017 that:

Japan, aiming at achieving significant emissions reduction, is going to take on the challenge of developing cutting-edge innovations ahead of the world and contribute to the best of our ability to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. Through all these efforts, Japan will accomplish further economic growth (Statement on behalf of Japan, 2017:1).

This shows that the discourse of **ecological modernization** is still prominent regarding what is portrayed as the solutions to the climate crisis, mainly in statements by developed states.

3. Agency

Regarding agency, emphasis on the importance of including sub-national and non-state actors in climate governance correlates with the discourse of **civic environmentalism**. This is prominent throughout COP 21 to 24 in “Emphasizing the role of local communities” (UNFCCC, 2017:11) and “Beyond UNFCCC institutions, non-party stakeholders are key components of the future of climate action (ENB, 2017:31). This is prominent in both the official treaties and in statements by state and non-state actors, for example:

The crucial, growing role of non-state actors in relation to climate and the 2030 Agenda is becoming increasingly evident, and the process is unstoppable (Statement on behalf of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Easter Europe, UNFCCC, 2016:1).

A distinction between developed and developing states is prominent where developing states are widely framed by their vulnerability and as victims of the consequences of climate change, correlating with the discourse of **climate justice**. The distinction between developed and developing states is visible in both the official treaty texts and in various statements. To illustrate, the official treaty in 2018 is “...recognizing the specific needs and special situations of the least developed countries” (UNFCCC, 2018:9). Similarly, the executive secretary begins the Paris Agreement with “It is an agreement of conviction. It is an agreement of solidarity with the most vulnerable” (UNFCCC, 2015:1).

Despite the prominence of climate justice, the official treaties do not correlate the difference between developed and developing states based on historical responsibility, but only to the differences in capacities here and now. For example, COP 21 states that “Each country determines its fair contribution, according to its respective capabilities and in light of its different national circumstances” (ENB, 2015:43). The official agreements thus mainly express

that all states should contribute, which correlates with the discourse of ecological modernization, however, based on their circumstances to do so:

Balance between the leading role of developed countries and growing responsibilities of developing countries according to their resources and level of development; and credible, with the current level of ambition as the floor (ENB, 2015:3).

Again, the special circumstances of developing states are highly prominent in statements made by the same, revealing a distinct trend of climate justice in this data. To illustrate, statements by developing nations stipulate that “...developed nations should take the lead” (Statement on behalf of the African group of nations, 2015:3) and “...particularly for small island states whose very existence is threatened by powerful storms, poisoned oceans, and rising seas” (Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, UNFCCC, 2016:1) highly correlates with the discourse of climate justice. Framing the action by developed states based on historical responsibility is mainly visible in statements from vulnerable nations, showing the discourse of climate justice. One clear example is:

For too long, this process has let down the vulnerable and the young—the very people who are least responsible for creating the climate crisis that threatens civilization, as we know it (Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, UNFCCC, 2016:1).

Portraying developing states as the vulnerable victims and developed states as the ones responsible to act is growing from COP 23 in 2017 also in statements from developed nations. For example, Japan expresses in 2017 that “...it is very significant for Fiji to assume presidency, representing island countries, which are vulnerable to the impact of climate change” (Statement on behalf of Japan, UNFCCC, 2017:1), and Sweden in 2018 that “We believe developed countries must lead the first step of a global transition, encouraging and supporting others to move forward” (Statement on behalf of Sweden, UNFCCC, 2018:3), correlating with the discourse of climate justice.

Summary of analysis COP 21 – COP 24

Beginning in the Paris Agreement, the frames found in the official treaty mainly correlate with the discourses of ecological modernization with its base on multilateralism. The prominence of ecological modernization is a trend that is followed in the next-coming conferences in portraying green growth, technology, and the market as solutions to the climate crisis. The continuous trend of a bottom-up approach emphasizing the inclusion of actors on sub-national

and non-state levels also reveals the prominence of civic environmentalism throughout. COP 21 to 24 acknowledges the different circumstances of developed and developing states, correlating with the discourse of climate justice. However, framings of different responsibilities are not correlated with historical responsibility of the problem in ethical terms in the official treaties and is therefore not totally associable with the discourse of climate justice. Hence, it is possible to conclude that representations relating to the discourse of climate justice had begun in the Paris Agreement, but not in any binding text.

A distinct trend in the examined period is that the discourse of climate justice is prominent in various statements by state representatives and NGOs, especially by developing and small island states, emphasizing their small contribution to the crisis not being fair to the wide effects on vulnerable nations. This trend is increasing on the road to COP 24 where more attributes related to climate justice also are used by developed states, acknowledging the effects on vulnerable nations and that developed states are responsible to offer compensation based on this. However, expressions of a solution based on the belief in economic growth coupled with climate mitigation reveal that there are still representations correlating with ecological modernization.

Although the Paris Agreement showed a historical decision for multilateral climate governance, the US election of 2016 showed difficulties in an implementation based on multilateralism. This is shown in various critiques: “No person has the right to make decisions on behalf of billions based solely on ideology” (ENB, 2016). The analysis shows this political polarization where statements by the European Union display increasing signs of climate justice. In contrast, the US shows growing signs of ecological modernization under the influence of the new election, revealing a discursive struggle with the influence of ideological polarization.

4.2 The Road to Climate Justice 2019 – 2022

COP 25 was situated in Madrid, Spain in 2019 (UNFCCC, 2019). The meeting was supposed to conclude negotiations on key issues such as the “Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage” and finance. However, the meeting exposed troubles in collaboration resulting in a lengthy discussion failing to deliver what was aimed. The next-coming meeting of COP 26 was held in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2021 (UNFCCC, 2021). The conference was the first to take place in person after the COVID-19 pandemic upholding the negotiations for 2020,

showing that while the health crisis was still urgent, climate change still proved deadly. During the conference, the question of support relating to loss and damage was firmly pushed for by developing states. However, developed states did not give an adequate answer to this wish, and the meeting did not reach a concrete solution (ENB, 2021).

In 2022, COP 27 was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. The delegates of the meeting gathered in the backdrop of multiple crises of war, energy, and inflation. The consequences of climate change were seen through heatwaves and storms, with which only the wealthiest nations could still cope (ENB, 2022). Based on the need to protect the most vulnerable hit hardest by climate disasters, the conference was the first to, in its adopted decisions, address “loss and damage”. Hence, the conference was seen as a breakthrough in creating a specific fund addressing the massive historical causes made (UNFCCC, 2022).

1. Problem

Coming from a growing climate justice movement in 2019 addressing the responsibility of the western world, Climate Justice Now expressed that “a historic movement of climate justice is rising” (ENB, 2019:3). COP 25 raised its response to this respect in that “the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change will now be equipped with an implementation arm” (ENB, 2019:26), showing that the discourse of **climate justice** had gained some progress. Thus, the problem is portrayed as caused by developed nations having the biggest emissions:

Loss and damage are an issue where vulnerable countries need confidence of support, especially in view of the fact that high emitters’ low emission reduction ambition will confront them with ever increasing climate change impacts (ENB, 2019:26).

Throughout COP 25 to COP 27, the problem of climate change is framed in relation to the historical responsibility of developed nations, correlating with the discourse of **climate justice**. For example, developing nations refer to developed states with words such as “immoral and unjust” (Statement on behalf of Barbados, ENB, 2021:5). To illustrate, developed states are critiqued for being a “...history of broken promises, calling on all countries to reach net zero by 2050 is anti-equity and unilateral carbon border adjustments are discriminatory, financial support for loss and damage should be added” (ENB, 2021:4). There is an increasing trend of accusations towards developed states, illustrated in the following citation:

Climate change impacts are intensifying, and Africa remains the most affected continent and least responsible for the problem (Statement by the republican of Gabon on behalf of the African group, UNFCCC, 2022:1).

The problem of climate change is also correlating with the discourse of climate justice in statements by developed states. For example, Boris Johnson acknowledges in 2021 that “For 200 years the industrialized countries were in complete ignorance of the problem that they were creating” (Boris Johnson, UNFCCC, 2021:2). The Secretary-General also expresses the historical responsibility of the problem in COP 2021 “...we are still waiting for transformative movement from most G20 countries, which represent more than three-quarters of global emissions” (The Secretary General, 2019:1).

In COP 27, the problem of the climate crisis is thoroughly framed with narratives relating to the discourse of **climate justice**. This is shown by attributing the cause of the problem to developed states based on justice. To illustrate, COP 27 “Welcomes the consideration, for the first time, of matters relating to funding arrangements responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change” (ENB, 2022:5). Focus is thus put on the historical causes of climate change. For example, “For decades, communities all over the world, very often the most vulnerable people, have been dealing with a continuous stream of crises - facing impact after impact of climate change” (UNFCCC, 2022:5). The historical responsibility of the problem and its unjust consequences is also clearly prominent in various submissions at the final conference. To illustrate, the climate action network states “...historical emitters to block and delay real action to address the consequences of your own lack of action is resulting in loss of life, loss of livelihoods, and suffering at a scale unimaginable to us” (Climate action network, 2022:1), and the alliance of small island states that “While they are profiting the planet is burning” (Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, 2022:1).

2. Solution

Emphasis on including stakeholders in the solutions for the climate crisis shows that the discourse of **civic environmentalism** is still prominent, which is a trend that is followed through COP 25 to COP 27, both in the official treaty and in various statements. To illustrate, Singapore expresses in 2019 that:

We need to work hand in-hand with all stakeholders to co-create and co-deliver solutions to solve our environmental challenges. We are committed to work with our stakeholders to

deliver a better and more sustainable future (Statement on behalf of Singapore, UNFCCC, 2019:8).

The official treaty states in 2021 that “climate change requires multi-sectoral, transformative change, stressing the importance of non-party stakeholders in climate action (ENB, 2021:35), and in 2022 that “...solutions to the climate crisis must be founded on meaningful participation of all stakeholders” (UNFCCC, 2022:6). The result reveals an increasing trend in framing the solution to climate change based on support from developed nations in ethical terms. This trend is correlating with the discourse of **climate justice** and is increasingly expressed by both developing and developed states. For example, the cause of action is referred to as a “...just transition” (UNFCCC, 2019:4). Solutions are correlated with the historical responsibility of the crisis, for example, the Alliance of Small Island States expresses in 2022:

This is the new dynamic pathway of justice, where the polluter pays; that we bring to the process of climate diplomacy. It would be right for the major polluters, particularly those with historical responsibility to follow this worthy example (Statement by the Alliance of Small Island States, UNFCCC, 2022:3).

The official treaty documents “Recognizes the need to ensure just transitions that promote sustainable development” (UNFCCC, 2021:7), showing the discourse of climate justice, however as earlier mentioned, it is merely included as recognition and not in the outcome until 2022. The discourse of climate justice is distinctively prominent in COP 27, where the official treaty document dedicates a specific heading to “Pathways to *just* transition” (UNFCCC, 2022:6), and climate justice is thoroughly expressed as the cause of action in “Noting the importance of climate justice, when taking action to address climate change” (UNFCCC, 2022:1).

Although the discourse of climate justice is shown to increase from COP 25 to COP 27, solutions based on market and private measures are still prominent, correlating with the discourse of **ecological modernization**. To illustrate, the EU expresses in 2019 that “We want to secure an operational outcome for market measures. We want to ensure that these market mechanisms create strong incentives to reduce emissions now and in the future” (Statement on behalf of the EU, UNFCCC, 2019:1). Equally, Singapore expresses in 2019 to “Recognize that sustainable development and free trade can be enablers for climate action, particularly, if we harness the power of finance, technology, and innovation” (Statement on behalf of Singapore, UNFCCC, 2019:3).

3. Agency

Throughout 2019 to 2022, the inclusion of the civil society, stakeholders and non-state actors correlates with the discourse of **civic environmentalism**. For example, the official treaty of 2019 “acknowledges the important role of non-Party stakeholders in contributing to progress” (ENB, 2019:30). Another example is when the EU expresses that “the involvement of non-state actors is essential for achieving progress” (Statement on behalf of the EU, UNFCCC, 2019:2).

Emphasis on the vulnerability of developing states as the victims of the crisis is increasingly prominent from COP 25 to COP 27. The vulnerability of developing states is widely acknowledged as “...the future is a death sentence for the people in vulnerable countries” (ENB, 2021:7). The agency is also increasingly focused on how the actions of developing and developed states should differ based on capacity. To illustrate, COP 25 “emphasizes the continued challenges that developing countries face and recognizes the urgent need to enhance the provision of support to developing country Parties” (UNFCCC, 2019:3), and COP 27 “Notes with concern the growing gap between the needs of developing country parties (ENB, 2022:4), correlating with the discourse of **climate justice**. Developed states are also increasingly accused as the villains of the causes behind the crisis and the ones responsible to act on its solutions based on ethical factors. Putting the responsibility of action on developed states is increasing from COP 25 to COP 27, also showing a growing trend of climate justice. To illustrate, it is expressed in 2021 that “...the developed world has the responsibility to fund climate action in developing countries” (ENB, 2021:5), and in 2022 that “we in the developed world must recognize the special responsibility to help everybody else to do it” (UNFCCC, 2022:1).

In 2022, climate justice is revealed in all data holding official documents, the decisions, and submissions by various actors. Agency is in COP 27 clearly put on the world’s biggest emitters, revealing prominent frames of climate justice in 2022. “It is developed countries' responsibility to lead on climate action” (ENB, 2022:4). Focus is distinctively put on justice for those suffering the worst, which clearly shows attributes relating to the discourse of climate justice. To illustrate:

Human activity is the cause of the climate problem. So human action must be the solution CJ
- And action to rebuild trust – especially between North and South. CJ - Developed countries
must take the lead (Secretary-General's remarks, UNFCCC, 2022:1).

Framing developed states as the group causing the crisis and responsible to act on solutions is also prominent in various statements. For example, Australia expresses at COP 27 that “We need greater action and ambition to come from developed countries with the greatest responsibility and capacity” (Statement on behalf of Australia, UNFCCC, 2022:3), and the general secretary that “...those suffering the most – namely, Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States – need urgent funding” (General secretary’s remark, UNFCCC, 2022:1), revealing the discourse of climate justice.

Summary of analysis COP 25 – COP 27

The results reveal an increase in representations of the discourse of climate justice in the language used from COP 25 to COP 27. Developed nations are to a greater extent framed as the ones causing the crisis who should also act on solutions to help the victims being developing states. Similar expressions correlating with climate justice are increasing by developed states and in the official treaty, portraying the problem distinctively on historical causes by developed nations, which before mainly was visible in statements by developing nations. In COP 25 and COP 26, accusations towards developed states based on the responsibility of both problem and solution is prominent in all types of data. However, the solutions to the climate crisis are still somewhat correlated with the discourse of ecological modernization with traces of a belief in green growth, focus on the market, and technology. Civic environmentalism is also still prominent in terms of solutions and agency.

With distinction, the main focus of COP27 is to address the losses and damages caused by climate change, which the executive secretary referred to as “moving us forward” (UNFCCC, 2022). There are representations related to civic environmentalism and ecological modernization, however, climate justice stipulates the most prominent discourse, both in the official treaty and in statements. In correlation with the outcome of this meeting, the most prominent discourse throughout the data is climate justice. This in regards of both the problem, solution, and agency of the climate crisis. The problem is thoroughly attributed to the historical responsibility of developed states, who are also framed as responsible to act, where the cause of action is referred to with wordings such as a “just transition”. The agency clearly focuses on how developed states shall help developing states who have contributed the least to the climate crisis, being framed as the victims. In relation to previous research findings, this shows a shift in the discursive trend where focus is increasingly put on the historical responsibility of developed states in ethical terms, not only in acknowledging different capacities here and now.

Finally, one clear example of this is shown in the following citation: “It is a moral imperative. It is a fundamental question of international solidarity -- and climate justice” (UNFCCC, 2022:1). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there has been an increase of the discourse of climate justice on the road to COP 27, and that the discourse is distinctively prominent in 2022.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine the development of the global climate governance discourse between the period of 2015 and 2022, as well as to examine whether this development was associable with the outcome of COP 27. Followingly, this section provides a presentation where the research questions are answered based on the findings of the analysis. The questions are answered separately in a chronological order; however, they all relate to each other, where the first two questions leads to an answer to the third. The conclusions are further discussed and elaborated in the finishing chapter of the thesis.

1. Which main discourses can be identified in global climate governance between the years 2015 and 2022?

The findings reveal representations of all examined discourses in the data through 2015 and 2022. Beginning in the Paris Agreement, the findings mainly correlate with the discourse of ecological modernization. This is shown in the inclusion of various actors in the solution for climate change and the belief in green growth and market- and private-based solutions. This trend is followed throughout the examined years, however somehow diminishing in importance on the road to 2022. The discourse of civic environmentalism is also prominent as a trend that is continued throughout the examined years in emphasizing the inclusion of non-state and sub-national actors in climate governance. The phrase “loss and damage” is mentioned in the Paris Agreement, which is a sign of the initiation of the discourse of climate justice, however, the official texts do not correlate this with the historical responsibility of developed states.

The result reveals a distinction between developing and developed states and a strong emphasis on the vulnerability of climate change for the latter. This correlates with the discourse of climate justice, which is a trend that is increasing from 2015 to 2022. From 2019 and onwards, a growing emphasis on the historical responsibility of the problem and that the agents that should act are developed states also reveals an increase of the discourse of climate justice. The trend of climate justice is distinctively prominent in statements and submissions. Throughout the examined period, the statements from developing states are clearly correlated with climate justice, and from COP 23, there is an increasing trend of this language also from developed states. Focus on economic growth and inclusion of various stakeholders in the solutions for the climate crisis reveals a resumed prominence of the discourses of ecological modernization and civic environmentalism on the road to COP 27. However, climate justice is distinctively increasing in all data from 2019 regarding both problem, solution, and agency, resulting in a

thorough representation of the discourse in 2022. This is shown in increased representations correlating with loss and damage, and more emphasis on historical causes of the problem and responsibility of developed states to act also expressed by developed states and in the official treaty texts.

2. What are the main differences and similarities in the post-Paris pattern of discourses compared with the pre-Paris pattern identified in previous research?

In summary of the findings presented in the chapter of previous research, the key findings of the pre-Paris pattern of discourses discovered a contesting prominence of the discourse of ecological modernization and civic environmentalism. The discourse of ecological modernization was dominating on the road to the Kyoto Protocol (1997), followed by a growth of civic environmentalism, and the period after the Copenhagen Accord (2009) was characterized by this discursive struggle (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007 & 2019; Bernstein, 2001; Hajer, 1995; Lundqvist, 2017). Previous findings also showed an initiation of the discourse of climate justice overlapping the discourse of civic environmentalism on the road to Paris (2015), however not in any political outcomes (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019).

Relating the results of this study to the findings of the pre-Paris pattern, the findings presents a continuity of the discourses of civic environmentalism and ecological modernization in global climate governance through the examined period. However, the findings also reveals that there has been a discursive shift since 2015. This since the findings shows an increase of the discourse of climate justice gaining influence over time. This shift reveals a significant difference compared to the period before the Paris Agreement, where the discourse of climate justice was less salient. In total, the main difference between the pre-Paris and the post-Paris pattern of discourses is that the trend has shifted to be more significantly influenced by the discourse of climate justice.

3. Is the discursive development associable with the fallout of COP27? In that case, how?

On basis of the first part of the study, the results reveal increased representations correlating with the discourse of climate justice throughout the examined years and a distinct prominence of the discourse in COP 27. Thus, the examined discursive development *is* associable with the fallout of COP 27. This is based on several reasons and in several ways. As the findings reveal,

the trend has gone from a hegemony of ecological modernization, towards an increase of climate justice in the framings of both the problem, solution, and agency of climate change. COP 27 shows representations of climate justice in all data sources, emphasizing the historical responsibility of climate change from the Western world. Climate justice is distinctively visible in statements from developed and developing nations, in the official treaty, and in the summary by the ENB. For example, the official treaty dedicates a heading for “pathways to a just transition”, and the action to solve the climate crisis is framed as a “moral imperative of international solidarity and climate justice” (UNFCCC, 2022). In conclusion, the analysis shows that the discourse of climate justice has increased on the road to COP27, which correlates with the outcome of the meeting. The outcome of COP 27 can therefore be better understood by considering this discursive shift, where the influence of climate justice has increased in global climate governance.

6. Discussion

This study has examined discursive representations within the conferences of the parties between 2015 and 2022. It has thus contributed to an understanding of how climate change is framed on an international level, as well as how a growing trend of climate justice discourse has evolved in a political outcome. As a finishing remark of the thesis, a discussion is presented. This includes critical issues and eventual boundaries of the results. It also includes a discussion of how the results contribute to existing research and theory of the field. A discussion about proposals for future research finally forms the end of this thesis.

6.1 Critical issues and eventual boundaries of the results

Throughout the analysis, the result showed a notable variation dependent on actor as a component. The representative inclusion of different groups of actors diminished the risks of biased results based on this. However, the variation among nations is still an interesting finding as it clearly affected the results of the study, which brings reason for further discussion. The discourse of climate justice was, in comparison to other data, emerging earlier in statements from developing and small island nations. This identified difference reveals a discursive fight over hegemony and which narrative that should be salient (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). It also demonstrates how ideological differences of nations with different interests influence a discursive struggle. A discursive journey is thus revealed, in which the perspective has shifted from the hegemonic narrative of developed nations to representing the crisis on that of developing nations, influencing the fallout of COP 27.

Regarding potential boundaries of the results and the qualitative and interpretative basis of this study, it is worth noting that the findings are not fully generalizable. It would therefore be interesting to further elaborate and contribute to the study with a statistical design, quantifying discursive representations from more countries to get a more general result.

6.2 Contributions to existing research and proposals for the future

The study has contributed to the knowledge of discourse structuration in global climate governance between 2015 and 2022. It is also a contribution considering the lack of studies examining a correlation between a discursive development and a political outcome. Apart from the addition of the new understandings, the study has also verified earlier debates in the field. The findings align with the research field of international relations and the lengthy discussion

on how to conduct an efficient and inclusive international climate regime. Relating to the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968), the findings visualize the longstanding difficulties in climate change action, where the need for all countries to reduce emissions is in contrast with the incentives of the ego-centric state (Connelly, 2012; Mansbridge, 2014). The need for intervention by a third actor is thus still prominent. However, the study also challenges the classical theory of realism and collective action portraying states as rational, self-interested, and non-cooperative, into which the scholarship of international relations may gain insights. This in revealing increased narratives of ethics, morality, and willingness to support others, which shows that ethical factors also play a role in achieving large-scale collective action, despite its challenges. This since the perspective has shifted from an egocentric narrative towards acknowledging responsibility in moral and ethical terms. The effects of this discursive shift are not possible to determine yet, which is up to future research to examine. However, with a basis on the power of language, the increase of narratives based on ethics shows a shiver of hope for international cooperation on the urgent collective action crisis of climate change.

Further on, the study has contributed to the discursive approach to “the politics of the earth” in two respects. First, how discourses change over time, and second, their effects on political outcomes (Dryzek, 2022). The examined shift shows an example relating to discursive theory discussing the ever-changing character of discourses dependent on the landscape in which they are produced (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). As the societal landscape will continue to change, there is hence a need for future research examining how the discourse will evolve in the years to come, extending the scholarship in the field. As the study shows how the way we think and act upon concepts such as climate change transforms, the future narrative of discourses, together with its consequences for politics, is something that craves future examination. Will climate justice evolve to become the hegemonic discourse in the coming years? Will climate justice be the new norm that states get incentives to follow? As the study has contributed to an understanding of how the process of political negotiations works, it will also be interesting to examine the discursive development in future years in relation to what happens politically in the international arena and the power relation discourses give rise to. Since the power of discourses and framing is widely acknowledged, other effects of this discursive shift should also be examined, for example its effect on the societal landscape and public perceptions of climate change in the portrayal of reality. Which reality will this shift create?

Finally, future research should take stances on the association between a discursive trend and a political outcome. For example, scholars could compare differences between nations. Methodologically, the study could be further developed using a mixed method, quantifying discursive findings in more data, together with an in-depth text analysis, which would increase the generalizability of the findings. The scholarship in the field should also be extended with more causal claims on the effects of discourses. This could be elaborated with the basis of for example a process-tracing study. To sum up, I however leave this to future research to examine.

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