SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW ARCHIVES
ISSN Online: 3006-4708
ISSN Print: 3006-4694
https://policyjournalofms.com

Climate Justice and Environmental Politics: Examining the North-South Divide with a Focus on Pakistan

Muhammad Younas[1]

[1] MPhil International Relations (2022-2024), School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Email: iamyounasjam@gmail.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i3.1051

Abstract
This article critically examines the intersection of environmental politics and climate justice while focusing on Pakistan as a case study from Global South. This study is based on the theoretical lens of Critical Political Ecology (CPE) which reveals that the current global environmental order is unjust and is shaped by historical emissions of the Global North, geopolitical power asymmetries, and epistemic exclusions. The countries in the Global South have minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) but face disproportionate climate risks because of the structural vulnerabilities and systemic inequities. This analysis of this paper reveals that dominant environmental governance models privilege technocratic and market-based solutions while marginalizing the Southern voices. During the 2022 floods and COP27, Pakistan's experience shows that its vulnerability to environmental impacts provides it with visibility and voice in the international environmental regime within existing institutional constraints. Addressing the current imbalance of environmental costs and benefits is possible through decentralizing environmental governance and addressing underlying power imbalances, socio-political inequalities, and historically rooted injustices.

Keywords: Environmental Politics, Climate Justice, Global North, Global South, Pakistan

Introduction

Climate change has become one of the most pressing issues for humanity in the 21st century. The discourses about environmental degradation suggest that most of the environmental change has resulted from anthropogenic causes and its consequences are unevenly distributed. Environmental politics at the global stage impacts environmental outcomes. Consequences of environmental change are influenced by global power structures and asymmetries in economic development, political influence, and historical responsibility. Global North has historical and ongoing ecological overreach while Global South faces the impacts of climate change disproportionately. This process has led to the development of a normative and political discourse centred on climate justice.[1] Climate justice emphasizes that climate change is not only an environmental and technical problem but a human rights and social justice issue. Climate justice discourse is based on the moral and political view that the countries facing the greatest burden of the climate crisis are the ones who contribute the least to it. Edward A. Page establishes that Global South—including regions such as South Asia, Africa, and Latin America— face the most severe consequences of climate crisis in the form of extreme weather events, resource insecurity, and socio-economic instability

[1] Roser and Seidel, *Climate Justice.*

despite having minimal contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions.[2] Since the Southern states have limited capacity to deal with the consequences of environmental change, these countries demand equitable international climate governance while emphasizing meaningful financial transfers, technology sharing, and differentiated responsibilities.[3] Environmental politics, in this study, is viewed as both a field of inquiry and praxis. In this context, environmental politics is concerned with the investigation of socio-political dynamics underlying environmental decision-making. Environmental politics categorizes structures shaping the environmental outcomes as actors keeping focus on studying actions of states, corporations, NGOs, and communities.[4] Considering the central character of states, environmental politics focuses on the North-South divide as a central lens for interrogation of international climate negotiations and the distribution of environmental burdens. Scholars such as Adil Najam (2005) argue that postcolonial inequities and the systemic marginalization of developing states in global decision-making processes shape the view of environmental politics for the Southern states.[5] The theoretical framework applied in this paper is Critical Political Ecology (CPE), which views environmental science as the backdrop of political processes and states that environmental knowledge and policy are structured by power-laden processes in the global environmental regime.[6] The "objective" ecological facts are constructed by dominant environmental narratives to serve the interests of powerful actors. CPE allows us to question these processes and helps in the analysis of environmental injustice and resistance by providing a holistic framework that includes historical, political, and socio-economic dimensions. Pakistan's position in the international environmental discourse is paradoxical and serves as an ideal example of Global South's vulnerability. Pakistan has contributed less than 1% to global carbon emissions but it is among the top 10 countries, both in short-term and long-term indexes, that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.[7] Pakistan's vulnerability is characterized by glacial melt leading to floods and droughts, rising food insecurity, and changing patterns of precipitation. These crises coupled with structural underdevelopment, governance challenges, and limited adaptive capacity exacerbate the impacts on the population.[8] Pakistan's vulnerability also makes it one of the influential voices from the Global South in the global environmental negotiations. There are three core research questions of this study: (1) How does the environmental politics of the Global North exacerbate climate injustice in the Global South? (2) Why are Global South countries, particularly Pakistan, disproportionately affected by climate change? (3) Why has the objective of climate justice remained elusive for the Global South despite decades of international advocacy? This study utilizes the CPE framework to find answers to the questions raised in this study. The CPE framework helps demonstrate the role of historical emissions, power asymmetries, and institutional biases in shaping climate outcomes. The study suggests the role of local agency, indigenous knowledge, and equitable governance is paramount in drafting meaningful strategies for environmental justice.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Political Ecology (CPE)

The theoretical underpinnings in Critical Political Ecology (CPE) provide a framework that has been used in this study. CPE critiques and expands upon conventional understandings of environmental science and politics. It allows the study of actors, their historical roles, and power

[2] Page, "Climatic Justice and the Fair Distribution of Atmospheric Burdens."
[3] Harris, "Common but Differentiated Responsibility"; UNFCCC, "Doha Climate Change Conference - November 2012."
[4] Dobson, *Environmental Politics*; O'Neill, *The Environment and International Relations*.
[5] Najam, "The View from the South."
[6] Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*.
[7] Abubakar, "Pakistan 5th Most Vulnerable Country to Climate Change, Reveals Germanwatch Report."
[8] The Third Pole, "'We Don't Believe in Net-Zero at the Moment' – Pakistan's Top Climate Official."

relations that cause environmental injustices and the North-South divide. It exposes the political biases and interests in environmental knowledge and policy through examination and analysis of processes in global environmental politics.[9] The field of political ecology formed because of the convergence of political economy and ecological analysis. Political ecology is the precursor of CPE, and its primary emphasis is on the uneven distribution of environmental costs and benefits caused by power structures that govern resource allocation.[10] Early iterations of political ecology were critiqued because they did little engagement with the epistemological dimensions of knowledge production and accepted environmental science as it was. Later, CPE was presented by Timothy Forsyth as an approach that was based on the combination of insights from critical realism, critical theory, and science studies to critically analyse the dominant narratives in environmental politics.[11] CPE builds on the assumption that environmental knowledge is constructed within specific historical, cultural and political contexts. According to a study published in 1994 titled "We Have Never Been Modern", scientific advancements are pursued according to societal requirements and to reinforce existing power hierarchies.[12] It necessitates the inquiry into the process of environmental knowledge production and its impact on the environmental problem. CPE does so by focusing on how environmental science is mobilized to legitimize particular policy agendas, serving the interests of powerful actors. In the international environmental negotiations, Global North prioritizes its interests and marginalizes the Southern perspectives and indigenous epistemologies by using environmental science.[13] CPE is relevant in the context of climate justice as it provides a framework to examine climate disparities through structural inequities and historical responsibilities. According to Timothy Forsyth, Global North has interests in presenting environmental degradation as a technical and ecological issue, but it must be understood as a manifestation of deeper political and economic relations.[14] CPE reveals the process of externalizing the environmental costs onto the Global South through centuries of industrialization and colonial expansion, leading to the institutionalization of ecological injustice.[15] It has led to the formation of unequal power dynamics that are seen in the international climate governance such as in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). CPE observes these dynamics as systemic outcomes of the global political economy. CPE introduces the view that there are no universal ecological laws and policy solutions. It is critical of the imposition of top-down, technocratic strategies on the view that these strategies are drafted without taking the local contexts and socio-cultural diversity into account. It also ignores alternative modes of environmental management. CPE advocates approaches that are decentralized, participatory, and locally informed and have been drafted while recognizing the agency and indigenous knowledge of marginalized communities.[16] CPE aligns with the concept of climate justice as its assumptions align with the principles of equity, participation, and accountability.[17] CPE reveals the hidden agendas and interests of powerful actors in the domain of environmental politics. CPE considers dominant climate narratives such as market-based mechanisms, carbon trading, and technological fixes are essentially perpetuating the very inequalities they claim to address. The example of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

[9] Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*.
[10] Bryant and Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*.
[11] Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*; Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.
[12] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.
[13] Agarwal, Narain, and Sharma, "Green Politics"; Watts, *Liberation Ecologies*.
[14] Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*.
[15] Hattingh, "Whose Climate, Which Ethics?"
[16] Agarwal, Narain, and Sharma, "Green Politics"; Bryant, "Power, Knowledge and Political Ecology in the Third World."
[17] Schlosberg, "Reconceiving Environmental Justice."

shows that the mechanism benefitted the corporations in the Global North and did not deliver mitigation and adaptation benefits to the countries in the Global South.[18] CPE is used to deconstruct such policies and provides a framework that can be used to imagine alternative futures where justice and sustainability are key to policy.[19] CPE allows observation of environmental degradation in its temporal and historical dimensions. It states that the current environmental crisis is result of the processes including colonial exploitation, postcolonial underdevelopment, and capitalist globalization. This lens allows us to understand the disproportionate impacts and allows for a critical exploration of how these patterns of vulnerability are reproduced through global governance systems. It allows exploring how these systems continue to privilege the interests of industrialized nations. By doing so, it provides analytical tools that can be used to explore emancipatory pathways towards environmental equity.

Global North: Architect of Climate Injustice

The historical, structural, and institutional dynamics of the international system suggest that the Global North has functioned as the major contributor to environmental degradation and the dominant force in shaping global environmental policy. Global North has the technological and economic resources that can be used to mitigate and adapt to the environmental problem, but it has prioritized national interest over tackling the issue that threatens human existence on the planet. In this section of the study, Global North's historical emissions, policy responses, and influence over multilateral environmental regimes are examined to assess its role in perpetuating environmental injustice. The issue of climate change emerged with the Industrial Revolution which caused large-scale fossil fuel combustion resulting in an exponential rise in greenhouse gas emissions. Scholars such as Worster (1993) argue that the global environment degraded because of the industrial expansion of the Global North and the trend continues to impose ecological burdens on the Global South.[20] According to careful estimates based on data, Global North comprises less than 20% of the global population and has contributed 70% to the cumulative greenhouse gas emissions.[21] Global North has historical responsibility and Global South forms the climate justice discourse based on an ethical foundation, calling for differentiated responsibilities and reparative justice in international climate agreements.[22] Global North acknowledges the problem but responds with strategic ambiguity, technocratic minimalism, and economic self-interest. A series of landmark summits from the Stockholm Conference (1972) to the Paris Agreement (2015) form the international environmental regime which reflects that the Global North has framed the climate issues as apolitical and technocratic.[23] The solutions provided by these regimes are the result of the Global North's influence and have no substantial impact on dealing with the issue in a way that advances towards a just transition. The solutions include market mechanisms (e.g., carbon trading) and voluntary national contributions (e.g., NDCs) which are neither binding nor include principles of climate justice.[24] Despite having landmark instruments such as the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015), there has not been any meaningful policy development that addresses the structural inequalities that underlie climate vulnerability.[25] The global

[18] Goldman, *Imperial Nature*.
[19] Mart'inez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor*.
[20] Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*.
[21] Abbass et al., "A Review of the Global Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation, and Sustainable Mitigation Measures."
[22] Page, "Climatic Justice and the Fair Distribution of Atmospheric Burdens"; Harris, *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*.
[23] United Nations, "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm 1972."
[24] Najam, "Developing Countries and Global Environmental Governance."
[25] Najam, "The View from the South."

environmental regime has provided financing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to support adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries. There have been concerns in the Southern countries about the scale and execution of these initiatives. Developed countries have consistently failed to fulfil their pledges of annual climate finance which proves that there exists a disparity between rhetorical commitment and actual delivery. Developed countries have been providing financing as loans instead of grants, leading to an increase in the debt burden of economically disadvantaged states.[26] This shows that Global North is reluctant when it comes to climate reparations and justice-based approaches to global environmental governance because such policy changes can challenge the entrenched economic interests of Northern states. Global North's environmental politics is characterized by the externalization of ecological costs. Global South has witnessed a rise in the relocation of pollution-intensive industries coming from the Northern countries, a process described as part of eco-colonialism.[27] Global North supports this trend because it allows their population to maintain energy-intensive standards of living while evading responsibility and perpetuating environmental degradation in Southern regions. International Organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) prioritize economic incentives through liberalization over environmental protection and constrain the policy space of developing countries.[28] Global North leads the media narratives and public discourse on climate change while obscuring the moral dimensions of climate change. Instead of presenting its origins in colonialism, industrial capitalism, and unequal development, the crisis is presented as a universal challenge. Climate crisis presentation as a universal problem is preferred by the Global North to evade political accountability and undermine the climate justice demands of Global South nations. According to Forsyth (2003) and Latour (1994), Global North has used these strategies over time to construct "scientific objectivity" to justify the North's control over environmental decision-making undermining indigenous knowledge systems and marginalizing alternative worldviews coming from the Southern discourse.[29] Global North has been architect of the global environmental governance and has perpetuated climate injustice. Its role is characterized by historical emissions, inadequate policy responses, economic domination, and discursive control. These characteristics of the Global North undermine the agency of the Global South. The current environmental regime at the global level is incapable of transformative climate action due to its limited scope and absence of historically informed, ethically grounded, and structurally transformative policies. Climate justice requires structural changes that can dismantle the very systems of inequality that created the climate crisis. The dynamics presented above suggest that merely employing strategies for emissions reduction and adaptation funding will not be able to achieve the objective. In the following section, Global South's resistance against this injustice despite systemic limitations is discussed.

Global South: Struggler for Climate Justice

Global South stands at the frontline of the climate crisis with South Asia, Africa, and Latin America as the most affected regions concerning vulnerability. These regions face the most acute impacts of climate change in the form of extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, and socio-economic disruptions, despite having minimal contribution to the historical greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.[30] Global South's response to the Global North's climate injustices is characterized by active engagement and resistance against inequitable structure, advancement of

[26] Roser and Seidel, *Climate Justice*.
[27] Bryant and Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*.
[28] Mart'inez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor*.
[29] Forsyth, "Critical Realism and Political Ecology"; Latour, *Science in Action*.
[30] Bandera, "How Climate Colonialism Affects the Global South"; Jaiswal, "Global Environmental Politics and the North-South Divide."

alternative discourses, and mobilization for climate justice. There has been an evolution in the environmental politics of the Global South which showcases differences in its engagement in the historical and contemporary global environmental negotiations. Global South emerged as a political identity on the global stage because of the legacy of colonialism and postcolonial underdevelopment. Developing countries formed the Group of 77 (G77) in 1964 based on common problems and inequitable patterns of international economic relations. China joined the group in 1994 and keeps providing financial and political support to the group without assuming membership. G77+China emphasizes the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) with environmental politics.[31] The coalition of the Global South shares the view that historical emitters should bear a greater burden of mitigation and finance. Global South's engagement in environmental diplomacy developed in three key phases. During the first phase between 1972 and 1992, Southern countries were sceptic about the environmental problem and later started articulating their concerns in the early forums such as the Stockholm Conference and Brundtland Commission.[32] Development and environment were considered linked during the first phase. The second phase ranges from 1992 to 2002 and it is characterized by a sharp focus between North and South on the issue. During this phase, the North was looking for legally binding emission targets, but Southern countries prioritized financial assistance, poverty reduction, and sustainable development in their environmental politics. The third phase started in 2002 and is still ongoing. This phase is witnessing assertive demands for loss and damage compensation, climate finance, and recognition of environmental injustice.[33] The establishment of a loss and damage fund in COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh is the result of assertive Southern diplomacy. Global South faces structural barriers in global climate governance despite diplomatic efforts as individual states and coalitions. The major obstacles include the institutional design and asymmetry in political power. The institutions established under the Bretton Woods system, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Trade Organization (WTO), undermine the developmental sovereignty of Southern states while shaping environmental and economic policies, significantly maintaining a disproportionate influence of the Global North.[34] Climate shocks have a far-reaching influence on Southern states because of their technological dependence and restricted access to climate-resilient innovations.[35] Global South is in the position of ecological debt and dependency because of the economic system that is driven by neoliberal globalization and capital accumulation. Global South serves the consumption patterns of the North by outsourcing fossil fuel-intensive industries and extractive practices.[36] These practices are against the ethical imperatives of climate justice as these result in the reproduction of a global division of labour and allow Global North to avoid environmental responsibility. There is a diverse and dynamic resistance against climate injustice within the Global South. The key actors involved in this resistance include grassroots movements, indigenous resistance networks, and civil society organizations. These actors play a vital role in advancing an alternative vision of environmental governance. For example, movements like La Via Campesina and Fridays for Future (Global South chapters) have built the case for Southern countries by showcasing climate justice and its link with land rights, food sovereignty, and racial and social equity.[37] The movements are critical of state-centric diplomacy because of its inadequacy in achieving Southern goals and demand climate agendas free from corporate interests. The scholars

[31] Harris, "Common but Differentiated Responsibility."
[32] Najam, "Developing Countries and Global Environmental Governance."
[33] Virani, "COP-28 and Pakistan."
[34] Svarstad, Overå, and Benjaminsen, "Power Theories in Political Ecology."
[35] Najam, "Financing Sustainable Development."
[36] Dobson, *Environmental Politics*.
[37] Schlosberg, "Theorising Environmental Justice."

in the Global South have contributed to the environmental justice discussions by providing Southern theorising. Southern scholars challenge Eurocentric frameworks while providing the critique that these frameworks are developed while ignoring the contextual and epistemic diversity of non-Western societies.[38] Academics in the Global South are using Southern reflections on colonial encounters to generate Southern theoretical concepts that can strengthen the South's position in the epistemic domain.[39] Agarwal (1995) contends that indigenous and scientific knowledge should be integrated for sustainable environmental governance.[40] There is growing consensus among Southern scholars on shaping climate adaptation strategies based on indigenous knowledge systems, community-led resilience models, and spiritual-ecological cosmologies. The southern agency has been vibrant, but the challenges persist. There exists an insufficient and inequitable distribution of climate finance. The use of climate finance is difficult for vulnerable countries because of conditionalities imposed by Northern states. Donor-driven priorities are divergent from the local needs. Apart from these constraints, Southern countries also face internal issues such as political instability, weak governance, and internal socio-economic inequalities which hurdle effective environmental action. Global South's response to climate injustice has evolved through phases and has transformed the region from a passive receiver to an active responder. Global South has faced challenges from the hegemonic narratives of Global North but has consistently used diplomatic engagement, coalition-building, and grassroots mobilization to offer an alternative vision that is rooted in equity, historical responsibility, and participatory governance. The systemic barriers are still obstructing the Southern efforts, but the intensification of climate change impacts is transforming environmental politics into a more reparative and inclusive process.

Pakistan: Vulnerability and Politics

Pakistan's geographical location exposes it to severe impacts of climate change despite its limited responsibility in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. According to Gernmanwatch, Pakistan has been among the top 10 most vulnerable countries both in the long-term index and the index for respective years, for almost the past two decades.[41] On the other hand, its contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is less than 1%. Pakistan's example serves as a classic case study for the Global South as it underscores the broader structural inequities at the heart of environmental politics. It showcases that environmental politics is not doing enough as most vulnerable countries face geopolitical marginalization, internal institutional fragilities, and a contested terrain of environmental advocacy. There has been an alarming increase in the scale and intensity of climate-induced disasters in Pakistan. There have been almost 200 climate-induced crises in Pakistan since 2000.[42] The catastrophic floods in 2022 brought international attention to Pakistan with far-reaching impacts that displaced 33 million people, caused damage exceeding $30 billion, and submerged a third of the country.[43] Within the specific context of Pakistan, such events have a recurring pattern because of the intensifying climate stress, including glacial melt, erratic monsoon cycles, water scarcity, and heat waves. Afia Salam stated during an interview conducted for this study, "Pakistan has been in the top 10 ranking of the global vulnerability index for over the past decade and a half… the global community knows that Pakistan is vulnerable".[44] Pakistan's

[38] Dados and Connell, "The Global South."
[39] Kamal, "What Good Is Southern Theorising?"
[40] Agarwal, Narain, and Sharma, "Green Politics."
[41] Abubakar, "Pakistan 5th Most Vulnerable Country to Climate Change, Reveals Germanwatch Report."
[42] Aftab and Ali, "Agrarian Change, Populism, and a New Farmers' Movement in 21st Century Pakistani Punjab."
[43] The Third Pole, "'We Don't Believe in Net-Zero at the Moment' – Pakistan's Top Climate Official."
[44] Salam, Afia Salam's Interview.

vulnerability is obvious to the international community. Pakistan's vulnerability allows it to hold a visible position in international climate governance. During the initial phases, Pakistan has aligned itself with the coalitions of the Global South such as G77+China which has allowed the country to advocate for the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). CBDR-RC is the normative foundation of climate justice and demands climate action with consideration of historical emissions and capacity disparities. The north-south divide is necessary to be understood, as established by Adil Najam, to understand environmental politics from the South which considers "environment" a post-material concern that is central to survival.[45] During COP27, Pakistan served as co-chair and joined the Global South's coalition that was pushing for the establishment of a Loss and Damage fund.[46] According to Afia Salam, Pakistan was, "able to heavily leverage that unfortunate event [the 2022 floods] to bring attention to countries like Pakistan and other countries who do not have the resources to cope with such disasters". Pakistan's vulnerability gives it visibility but does not translate into meaningful structural power in international environmental negotiations. Afia Salam, on a question about Pakistan's influence in the global environmental regime, stated, "I wouldn't say substantial, but in the Global South, Pakistan has played a leadership role". She highlighted the limits of Pakistan's influence. Actors from the Global South are present in international institutions but their presence is treated as symbolic because the institutions and powerful actors remain substantively unresponsive to their core demands. Climate governance in Pakistan at the domestic level shows both promise and contradiction. There exists a growing institutional awareness of the environmental issue with initiatives like The National Climate Change Policy (2012, updated 2021), Framework for Implementation (2014–2030), and afforestation initiatives like the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme.[47] Despite these initiatives, there exist issues of implementation majorly because of the variations in the political will of successive governments. Policy implementation and effectiveness are hampered because of factors including fragmented governance structures, limited inter-ministerial coordination, and politicization of environmental programmes. Moreover, there is also a lack of awareness among the masses which is why climate change is part of low politics within Pakistan. Governments are concerned about winning the next elections and often tend to use environmental projects as vehicles for political branding, lacking long-term oversight or participatory inclusion. Certain ethnonational communities face environmental crises disproportionately within Pakistan. This dimension is often overlooked in the mainstream discourse on the environment in Pakistan. For example, glacial melt from the Himalayas causes socio-economic destruction affecting the communities in Gilgit-Baltistan, Punjab, and Sindh. Ahsan Kamal argues in his work "Saving Sindhu: Indus Enclosure and River Defence in Pakistan" that the communities in the Sindh basin mobilize using cultural identity and scientific evidence against the state-driven infrastructural interventions that cause socio-economic harm to floodplain inhabitants.[48] Civil society views it from the regional marginalization perspective, articulating ecological demands through the lens of political exclusion and historical neglect. This trend has led to activism that enriches the environmental discourse and strengthens Pakistan's narrative internationally. These dynamics show that environmental justice needs to be viewed as a distributive and recognition-based challenge in Pakistan at the national level. Pakistan showcases resilience at the grassroots level. The areas within the country that are underserved by the state face climate crises with community-based adaptation practices, indigenous knowledge systems, and local NGOs. Certain local practices such as the management of forests in the north

[45] Najam, "Developing Countries and Global Environmental Governance."
[46] Virani, "COP-28 and Pakistan."
[47] Mumtaz, "The National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan."
[48] Kamal, "Saving Sindhu."

by the communities and flood early warning systems in Chitral show that the local environmentalism is grounded in vulnerable communities. States in the Global South, including Pakistan, need to integrate indigenous and scientific knowledge for robust and inclusive climate governance to build adaptive capacity beyond donor-dependent frameworks. Pakistan faces structural barriers while facing environmental catastrophes because of the heavy reliance on climate finance. Pakistan's economy is small which puts limits i.e., technical capacity and governance inefficiencies on the country's capacity to tackle the crises. Pakistan's geo-political positioning also reduces its leverage in multilateral spaces. As Afia Salam puts it,

> "One country can't push the needle. It has to be a collective of countries… the like-minded group, the G77+China, the least developed nations need to come together to bear more pressure on the Global North".[49]

The case of Pakistan suggests that the population faces a climate injustice of a multi-scalar nature which includes both national vulnerabilities linked with global asymmetries and localized exclusions resulting in grassroots movements and organizations under ethnonational identities. Pakistan asserts its concerns confidently on the global stage, but its capacity is limited because of the power dynamics and internal challenges. Nevertheless, Pakistan has been struggling against environmental marginalization, postcolonial inequity, and resistance within the Global South.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Pakistan's response to climate injustice shows that the state's policy has been reactive or fragmented, especially in the global environmental negotiations. Climate justice can be achieved through integrated strategies that account for structural inequalities, institutional capacity gaps, and the socio-political context of vulnerability. There needs to be a two-tiered approach to tackling climate challenges: supporting just adaptation measures at the national level and simultaneously drafting robust and assertive strategies to secure fair and sustained support in global climate diplomacy. The institutional landscape of climate governance in Pakistan poses a challenge because it is highly fragmented. According to Afia Salam,

> "The disconnect between federal and provincial authorities has led to inconsistent implementation of climate policies, especially after the devolution of environmental responsibilities under the 18th Amendment."

There is a need for a centralized climate action agenda that is formulated on the base of coherent coordination between ministries—such as Planning, Water Resources, and Agriculture. It will reduce the chances of overlapping mandates and diluted accountability. It will harmonize sectoral policies and streamline planning with the integration of adaptation and environmental justice into economic and development policies. The challenges of adaptation exist in Pakistan because of the absence of climate-resilient infrastructure and planning frameworks. To account for this critical gap, Muhammad Aslam Khan (2022) suggests an anticipatory governance model which provides climate-resilient urban design to tackle the issues of heat stress, flooding, and air pollution in cities like Karachi and Lahore.[50] Adaptation efforts should target vulnerable communities such as informal settlements on a priority basis because these communities are the first to suffer in climate emergencies. The state should prioritize investing in early warning systems, sustainable drainage, and green infrastructure. Considering the limitations of state infrastructure, public-private partnerships, with robust accountability mechanisms, can be considered for such initiatives. Pakistan's constitution and law lack climate justice principles. There is a need to embed these principles in constitutional and legal frameworks. Legal precedent should be created that integrates environmental rights and socio-economic rights. Articles 9 and 14 of the Constitution recognize

[49] Salam, Afia Salam's Interview.
[50] Khan, "Vision of a Sustainable, Smart, and Resilient City."

the right to life and dignity, providing ground for the integration of environmental rights. According to Barritt and Sediti (2019), cases like Leghari v. Federation of Pakistan show that the judiciary has played a progressive role in environmental cases, recognizing climate change as a human rights issue but such jurisprudence is underutilized in Pakistan.[51] A wider utilization of such jurisprudence can empower vulnerable communities and foster a rights-based approach to environmental governance. Pakistan needs to reorient its diplomacy on the international front. It needs to change its approach from reactive to strategic engagement. Cooperation at the international level is necessary and Pakistan can use platforms like G77+China, Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), and SAARC to put forward its demands. The demands should not be limited to climate finance but should also include debt relief and equitable technology transfer. Communities should be engaged through capacity building and local ownership of adaptation programmes, allowing them to utilize indigenous knowledge in the implementation of donor-led projects. Pakistan must move to long-term structural planning based on equity, sustainability, and intergenerational justice instead of policies based on short-term political optics. The pursuit of climate justice will be operational through a transformative action that includes domestic reform and proactive global diplomacy.

Conclusion

The study has examined global environmental politics with a focus on Pakistan utilizing a critical political ecology framework. The study reveals that Global North has an interest in propagating that climate change is a neutral universally experienced phenomenon, but a closer look shows that it is shaped by asymmetries of power, historical responsibility, and geographical positioning. Global South faces disproportionate harm of the environmental change even though it has minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. This trend highlights the role of Global North's colonial extraction, industrial inequality, and indifference towards Global South in global environmental governance in perpetuating climate emergency in the Global South. The case of Pakistan shows that climate injustice has a multidimensional nature. Domestically, Pakistan faces climate risks such as heatwaves, floods, glacial retreats, and changes in seasons and precipitation. Pakistan has limited ability to deal with these problems because of institutional fragmentation, limited adaptive capacity, and donor-driven development models based on universalized solutions. Pakistan serves as a classic example in climate justice debates because of its extreme vulnerability despite its minimal emissions footprint. Pakistan needs to actively engage in climate diplomacy against systemic inequities and improve domestic governance with environmental justice and institutional coordination to bring transformative change. The critical Political Ecology framework highlights the Global North's indifference towards the Global South by depoliticizing and marginalizing Southern narratives and voices. The analysis of this study suggests that Global South needs to draft demands based on historical accountability, epistemic inclusivity, and recognition of socio-cultural diversity. This approach will be a justice-based approach that will shape equitable environmental futures. Technocratic solutions have failed to provide climate justice and there is a need for structural transformation. Pakistan can advance the agenda of climate justice with the visibility and voice that it has attained because of its vulnerability. Pakistan and the Global South need to reimagine environmental politics and diplomacy by giving primary importance to cooperation, strategic engagement, and climate justice advocacy.

Bibliography

Abbass, Kashif, Muhammad Zeeshan Qasim, Huaming Song, Muntasir Murshed, Haider Mahmood, and Ijaz Younis. "A Review of the Global Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation,

[51] Barritt and Sediti, "The Symbolic Value of <i>Leghari v Federation of Pakistan."

and Sustainable Mitigation Measures." *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 29, no. 28 (June 1, 2022): 42539–59. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-19718-6.

Abubakar, Syed Muhammad. "Pakistan 5th Most Vulnerable Country to Climate Change, Reveals Germanwatch Report." *DAWN.COM*, 14:15:11+05:00, sec. pakistan. https://www.dawn.com/news/1520402.

Aftab, Muhammad Yahya, and Noaman G. Ali. "Agrarian Change, Populism, and a New Farmers' Movement in 21st Century Pakistani Punjab." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 23, no. 1 (2023): 85–109. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12526.

Agarwal, A., S. Narain, and A. Sharma. "Green Politics: Global Environmental Negotiations," 1999. https://agris.fao.org/search/en/providers/122412/records/6473697a08fd68d240e.

Bandera, Gerardo. "How Climate Colonialism Affects the Global South." FairPlanet. Accessed October 23, 2023. https://www.fairplanet.org/story/how-climate-colonialism-affects-the-global-south/.

Barritt, Emily, and Boitumelo Sediti. "The Symbolic Value of Leghari v Federation of Pakistan: Climate Change Adjudication in the Global South." *King's Law Journal* 30, no. 2 (May 4, 2019): 203–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/09615768.2019.1648370.

Bryant, Raymond L. "Power, Knowledge and Political Ecology in the Third World: A Review." *Progress in Physical Geography: Earth and Environment* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 1998): 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/030913339802200104.

Bryant, Raymond L., and Sinéad Bailey. *Third World Political Ecology*. Psychology Press, 1997.

Dados, Nour, and Raewyn Connell. "The Global South." *Contexts* 11, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 12–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212436479.

Dobson, Andrew. *Environmental Politics: A Very Short Introduction*. First edition. Very Short Introductions 457. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Forsyth, Tim. *Critical Political Ecology: The Politics of Environmental Science*. London: Routledge, 2003.

"Critical Realism and Political Ecology." *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*, January 1, 2001.

Goldman, Michael. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. Yale University Press, 2005. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1nq3np.

Harris, Paul G. "Common but Differentiated Responsibility: The Kyoto Protocol and United States Policy." *New York University Environmental Law Journal* 7 (1999): 27.

Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics. London: Routledge, 2015.

Hattingh, Johan. "Whose Climate, Which Ethics?: On the Foundations of Climate Change Law." In *Climate Change: International Law and Global Governance*, edited by Oliver C. Ruppel, Christian Roschmann, and Katharina Ruppel-Schlichting, 1st ed., 95–120. Volume I: Legal Responses and Global Responsibility. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2013. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941w8s.9.

Jaiswal, Amrita. "Global Environmental Politics and the North-South Divide." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 76, no. 4 (2015): 816–20.

Kamal, Ahsan. "Saving Sindhu: Indus Enclosure and River Defense in Pakistan." University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Graduate School, 2019. https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/4m90f0686.

"What Good Is Southern Theorising?" In *What Good Is Southern Theorising?*, 25–42. De Gruyter, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110780567-002.

Khan, Mohammad Aslam. "Vision of a Sustainable, Smart, and Resilient City." In *Cities and Mega Risks: COVID-19 and Climate Change*, edited by Mohammad Aslam Khan, 295–338. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022.

Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Nachdr. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015.

We Have Never Been Modern. 3. print. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994.

Mart′inez-Alier, Joan. *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*. Northhampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002.

Mumtaz, Muhammad. "The National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan: An Evaluation of Its Impact on Institutional Change." *Earth Systems and Environment* 2, no. 3 (December 2018): 525–35. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41748-018-0062-x.

Najam, Adil. "Developing Countries and Global Environmental Governance: From Contestation to Participation to Engagement." *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 5, no. 3 (September 2005): 303–21.

"Financing Sustainable Development: Crises of Legitimacy." *Progress in Development Studies* 2, no. 2 (April 2002): 153–60. https://doi.org/10.1191/1464993402ps036xx.

"The View from the South : Developing Countries in Global Environmental Politics." In *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*, by Regina S. Axelrod and Stacy D. VanDeveer, 245–68. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320: CQ Press, 2020.

O'Neill, Kate. *The Environment and International Relations*. Themes in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Page, Edward A. "Climatic Justice and the Fair Distribution of Atmospheric Burdens: A Conjunctive Account." *The Monist* 94, no. 3 (2011): 412–32.

Roser, Dominic, and Christian Seidel. *Climate Justice: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

Salam, Afia. Afia Salam's Interview. Electronic, December 15, 2023.

Schlosberg, David. "Reconceiving Environmental Justice: Global Movements And Political Theories." *Environmental Politics* 13, no. 3 (September 2004): 517–40.

"Theorising Environmental Justice: The Expanding Sphere of a Discourse." *Environmental Politics* 22, no. 1 (February 2013): 37–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2013.755387.

Svarstad, Hanne, Ragnhild Overå, and Tor Benjaminsen. "Power Theories in Political Ecology." *Journal of Political Ecology* 25, no. 1 (January 3, 2018).

The Third Pole. "'We Don't Believe in Net-Zero at the Moment' – Pakistan's Top Climate Official." *The Third Pole* (blog), November 4, 2021.

UNFCCC. "Doha Climate Change Conference - November 2012." Doha: UNFCCC, 2013.

United Nations. "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm 1972." United Nations. United Nations. Accessed January 2, 2024. https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972.

Virani, Faiza. "COP-28 and Pakistan: Pledges Galore, but Any Action?" Brecorder, 17:21:13+05:00. https://www.brecorder.com/news/40277541.

Watts, Richard Peet, Michael, ed. *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development and Social Movements*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203235096.

Worster, Donald. *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.