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Research Article

The Subaltern Silence: An Eco-Feminist Analysis of the Global South's Fractured Voice in Climate Negotiations

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Abstract

This paper addresses the persistent fragmentation of the Global South's collective voice within international climate negotiations. Transcending conventional state-centric analyses of competing national interests, this study employs a postcolonial eco-feminist framework to address the central research question: To what extent do internal patriarchal state structures in the Global South undermine the formation of a unified negotiating voice on climate change, and how does this manifest in the national climate policies of Pakistan and Nigeria? The central thesis advanced is that this disunity is a direct manifestation of entrenched patriarchal structures within states in the Global South. These structures grant preeminence to masculinist-coded objectives, such as industrial economic growth and national security, thereby systematically marginalizing the lived experiences and knowledge of the most climate-vulnerable populations, particularly women. Existing scholarship has largely examined the fragmentation of the Global South through the lenses of divergent material interests, North–South power asymmetries, or institutional weaknesses; however, it has rarely interrogated the gendered and patriarchal logics underpinning these divisions. By foregrounding this overlooked dimension, the paper addresses a critical gap in both climate diplomacy and feminist IR literature. Through a comparative analysis of Pakistan and Nigeria, this paper demonstrates that the silencing of these "subaltern" voices precludes the formation of an authentic, unified external position grounded in climate justice.

Keywords: Global South, Climate Diplomacy, Eco-feminism, Postcolonialism, Gender, G77, UNFCCC, Climate Justice, Pakistan, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The international climate regime, institutionalized under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), rests on a geopolitical narrative that divides the world into two camps: the historically polluting Global North and the disproportionately affected Global South (GCE Europe, 2023). This binary, rooted in the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" (CBDR-RC), implies a shared interest and a common position among the nations of the South, born from a collective history of colonial subjugation and a shared present of acute vulnerability to the escalating climate crisis (Jahan, 2012). The Group of 77 and China (G77+China), the principal negotiating bloc for developing countries, was founded on this very premise of solidarity to amplify the influence of the "powerless and vulnerable" on the world stage (Adler & Tanner, 2013). Yet, a central and debilitating paradox persists within the halls of climate diplomacy. Despite the rhetorical power of Southern solidarity, the Global South frequently fails to speak with a single, coherent voice. Its negotiating positions often appear fragmented, contradictory, and undermined by internal divisions (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2024), resulting in outcomes consistently described as "too little and too late". The broad banner of the "Global South" or the "Third World" often conceals profound structural and political fissures that prevent the formation of a cohesive and effective negotiating bloc (Roberts & Parks, 2007).

Conventional international relations theories, particularly from a realist perspective, explain this disunity through the lens of divergent national interests (Williams, 2018). This framework posits that states, as rational actors in an anarchic system, prioritize their own survival, security, and power. From this viewpoint, it is unsurprising that the interests of a major emerging economy and emitter like China would diverge from those of an existentially threatened small island state like the Maldives, or that an oil-exporting nation like Saudi Arabia would actively obstruct mitigation progress (Chan & Dagnet, 2012). While valid, such state-centric analyses are insufficient. They treat the "national interest" as a pre-formed, objective reality, failing to interrogate its construction and overlooking the deeper, structural forces that shape state behavior and produce these very cleavages (Sultana, 2022).

This paper posits a more fundamental explanation for the fragmentation of the Global South's voice, guided by the research question: To what extent do internal patriarchal state structures in the Global South undermine the formation of a unified negotiating voice on climate change, and how does this manifest in the national climate policies of Pakistan and Nigeria? Drawing on a postcolonial eco-feminist framework, this analysis contends that the concept of "national interest" in many powerful Global South nations is constructed around masculinist-coded priorities such as industrial growth, resource extraction for export, and geopolitical standing that mirror the very developmentalist models imposed during the colonial era (Mudgway, 2023). This paradigm systematically devalues, marginalizes, and renders invisible the knowledge, labor, and security of women and other subaltern communities who bear the disproportionate burden of climate change (Alston, 2014). The internal silencing of these voices, whose security is predicated on ecological health and community resilience, makes an authentic, unified external voice rooted in holistic climate justice impossible (Tuana, 2013). The fracture we observe at the UNFCCC is a projection of the gendered power imbalances operating at the national and local levels.

2. Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, critical analysis grounded in a postcolonial eco-feminist framework. This framework is not only presented in the theoretical section but is applied throughout the subsequent analysis: it guides the deconstruction of Global South negotiating blocs, shapes the reading of state climate policies, and informs the comparative interpretation of Pakistan and Nigeria. In other words, eco-feminist and postcolonial concepts are consistently mobilized to interrogate how patriarchal logics structure both domestic climate governance and international bargaining behavior.

The scope is intentionally focused, centering on a comparative case study of two highly climate-vulnerable nations from distinct regions: Pakistan from South Asia and Nigeria from West Africa. These nations were selected through purposive sampling, as they each combine (i) acute exposure to climate risks, (ii) deeply entrenched patriarchal social hierarchies, and (iii) complex development trajectories that juxtapose vulnerability with competing economic priorities. Together, these cases illuminate how gendered power relations are reproduced in national climate policy and projected into international negotiations.

- **Pakistan**, while a low-emissions country, faces existential threats from hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods and droughts (WWF, n.d.). Its state policies reveal a persistent tension between urgent adaptation imperatives and a developmental paradigm that neglects the gendered dimensions of climate vulnerability (Bradshaw, 2022).
- **Nigeria**, as a major oil and gas producer, exemplifies a patriarchal-developmentalist logic intrinsically tied to resource extraction (International Crisis Group, 2023). This model entrenches a conflict between the state's economic reliance on fossil fuels and the environmental security of its citizens, with disproportionate harms borne by women in the Niger Delta (Fisher, 2021).

This comparative design is qualitative and critical, not mixed-method. It does not combine qualitative and quantitative methods; rather, it relies on a systematic comparison of policy documents (e.g., NDCs, climate action plans), NGO and international reports, and secondary scholarly sources.

This comparative methodology thus facilitates a nuanced, context-sensitive analysis: although patriarchal logics manifest differently in Pakistan and Nigeria, the framework enables a demonstration of their shared role in undermining Global South solidarity.

The paper is structured in four sequential parts. First, it elaborates the theoretical framework of postcolonial eco-feminism. Second, it deconstructs the G77+China bloc, analyzing the internal power dynamics that generate fractures. Third, it presents the detailed comparative case studies of Pakistan and Nigeria, guided by the framework's analytical questions. Finally, it concludes by positing that a truly unified Global South voice can only emerge from a "subaltern climate solidarity" that challenges entrenched patriarchal state power from below.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Postcolonial Eco-feminism: Core Tenets

Postcolonial eco-feminism is a critical theory and political movement that emerged from the confluence of ecology, feminism, and postcolonial studies in the late 20th century (Nagdee, 2021). Its foundational thesis is that all forms of oppression are interconnected; specifically, the patriarchal domination of women and

the colonial-capitalist domination of nature are not parallel but mutually constitutive.

phenomena rooted in the same logic of exploitation and control (Sultana, 2022). Thinkers like Vandana Shiva argue that Western models of "development" and scientific progress are built on a masculinist and colonial worldview that severs the holistic relationship between humans and nature. This paradigm reduces nature to a passive resource for extraction and simultaneously objectifies the people of the Global South—particularly women —as targets for development interventions rather than as agents with their own knowledge systems (Bhatnagar & Sharma, 2022). This framework offers a feminist critique of environmentalism, for often ignoring gendered power dynamics, and an environmental critique of feminism, for sometimes overlooking the ecological basis of social justice.

A central target of this critique is the dominant paradigm of "development" itself. From an eco-feminist perspective, many climate "solutions" proposed for the Global South—such as large-scale renewable energy projects, carbon offsetting schemes, or industrial agriculture are often a continuation of colonial-era dynamics under a green guise (Sultana, 2022). This phenomenon, termed "green grabbing," involves the appropriation of land and resources from local communities for ostensibly environmental ends (Asiyanbi, 2015). These projects, typically driven by state and corporate actors, displace local populations and disproportionately harm women, who are often responsible for household food security, water collection, and managing communal lands (Yadav & Lal, 2018). These technocentric approaches ignore the gendered ecological knowledge preserved by women in marginalized communities and perpetuate a model of progress that is fundamentally at war with nature. Postcolonial eco-feminism thus calls for a rejection of this androcentric worldview and a reclamation of woman-centered, subsistence-based visions of life that prioritize ecological harmony and community well-being (Nagdee, 2021). It argues that true climate justice cannot be achieved through solutions that replicate the extractive and patriarchal logics that caused the crisis (Imam, 2023).

3.2 Intersectionality and Compounded Vulnerability

Postcolonial eco-feminism is inherently intersectional, a concept first articulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how overlapping social identities create unique and compounded experiences of discrimination. The framework recognizes that "woman" is not a monolithic category of analysis; the vulnerability of women in the Global South to climate change is compounded by the interlocking systems of oppression based on race, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, and legal status (Kabeer, 2015). The lived reality of a landless, low-caste woman in rural Pakistan, an indigenous woman in a conflict-affected forest region of Nigeria, or a migrant domestic worker is shaped by the interaction of these identities, creating unique and intensified forms of marginalization that are often invisible to mainstream policy analysis (Siar, 2023).

State-centric climate policies, which rely on aggregate national data and focus on broad economic sectors, systematically obscure these intersectional realities. The UNFCCC notes that women and girls bear the brunt of climate impacts, with estimates suggesting they constitute 80 percent of those displaced by climate change (UN Women, 2023). Yet, national climate plans often fail to move beyond acknowledging this vulnerability to implementing policies that address its root causes (Oane, 2020).

3.3 Deconstructing the Language of Climate Diplomacy

A central tenet of this analytical framework is the critical deconstruction of the purportedly neutral language of international relations. Core concepts that dominate climate negotiations, such as "national security," "sovereignty," and "economic growth," are revealed not as objective realities, but as patriarchal constructs (FES, 2021). Historically, their definitions have been forged in relation to the state, the military, and the industrial economy: realms governed by masculine-coded values of control, competition, and production (Mudgway, 2023). This logic systematically devalues and marginalizes the so-called "private" sphere of social reproduction, community care, and ecological stewardship, wherein women's labor is foundational yet systemically unrecognized and uncompensated (Kabeer, 2015).

In its pursuit of legitimacy and power on the global stage, the postcolonial state frequently internalizes this patriarchal-developmentalist model (Sultana, 2022). The "national interest" becomes synonymous with GDP growth, energy production, and geopolitical influence, often at the direct expense of ecological sustainability and human well-being. Realizing such interests necessitates the externalization of environmental and social costs—including pollution, resource depletion, and displacement—onto marginalized lands and bodies, which are disproportionately those of women, indigenous peoples, and the rural poor (Thompson-Hall et al., 2016).

In this capacity, the state functions not as a neutral arbiter but as an active agent of silencing, suppressing the subaltern voices that challenge its developmentalist trajectory (Tuana, 2013). This internal contradiction, between the state's proclaimed interests and the security needs of its most vulnerable populations, is subsequently projected onto the international stage. Consequently, what is often misdiagnosed as a mere failure of diplomatic coordination is, in fact, a structural outcome of patriarchy. The disunity of the Global South is not a diplomatic shortcoming; it is the intended result of a patriarchal system that successfully fractures solidarity from within (MacGregor, 2010).

3.4 Research Gap

While the existing scholarship on international climate negotiations has generated valuable insights, it remains limited in scope in several critical ways. Much of the dominant literature explains the persistent fragmentation of the Global South's negotiating blocs—such as the G77+China—through conventional state-centric paradigms. These accounts tend to emphasize divergent material interests, asymmetrical power relations with the Global North, institutional inefficiencies, or the structural imperatives of global capitalism. Although these explanations are important, they generally neglect how domestic socio-political hierarchies, particularly gendered and patriarchal structures, shape how "national interest" is defined and projected onto the international stage.

Feminist and eco-feminist scholarship has, in turn, illuminated how climate change disproportionately affects women and marginalized communities, and has underscored the epistemic violence embedded in masculinist development logics. Yet, this body of work often concentrates on local and community-level struggles, adaptation practices, and environmental justice campaigns, while paying less attention to how these dynamics scale upward into the realm of formal state policy and global negotiations. The critical linkage between subaltern silencing at the national level and the fragmentation of Global South solidarity at the multilateral level therefore remains

underexplored. Furthermore, postcolonial analyses of climate diplomacy have rightly highlighted the enduring legacies of colonialism and neo-imperialism, but they frequently treat the Global South as a relatively cohesive counter-hegemonic bloc, overlooking the fact that intra-South fractures are themselves structured by patriarchal power relations. This creates a conceptual blind spot: while colonial-capitalist domination is problematized, the patriarchal underpinnings of Global South state behavior often remain analytically invisible.

Finally, there is a striking lack of comparative empirical research that systematically demonstrates how these patriarchal logics manifest in the climate policies of specific Global South states and how they, in turn, distort collective bargaining positions. Case studies such as Pakistan and Nigeria—both highly climate-vulnerable yet embedded in different political economies (agrarian-fragile versus petro-dependent)—are rarely juxtaposed to reveal the gendered contradictions that undercut the pursuit of climate justice in negotiations.

This paper directly addresses these gaps by integrating postcolonial eco-feminist theory with a comparative analysis of Pakistan and Nigeria, thereby linking the micro-politics of subaltern silencing to the macro-politics of Global South fragmentation. In doing so, it contributes both a theoretical reframing and an empirical grounding for understanding why a truly unified Global South voice remains elusive in climate negotiations.

4. Findings: Negotiating Blocs and Competing Patriarchies

The G77+China negotiating bloc is the primary vehicle through which the Global South articulates its demands in the UNFCCC process (Vieira, 2012). However, an eco-feminist analysis reveals that this coalition, rather than being a unified front of the oppressed, is a contested space where internal hierarchies and competing patriarchal logics replicate the very dynamics of domination they seek to challenge. The group's fragmentation is not an anomaly but a structural feature rooted in the divergent ways its member states define their interests (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2024).

4.1 The G77+China: A Postcolonial Alliance of Convenience

The Group of 77 was established in 1964 with the explicit goal of leveraging collective bargaining power to advance the economic interests of developing countries within the United Nations system (Obasi, 2021). Its identity is grounded in a shared history of colonialism and a collective demand for the "right to develop," climate justice, and financial and technological support from the historically responsible Global North (Jha, 2022). In climate negotiations, this manifests as a unified stance on foundational principles like Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) and the need for new and additional climate finance (Jahan, 2012; Nhamo & Mjimba, 2020).

However, this unity is largely a strategic performance that masks a deeply heterogeneous reality. The bloc is a "huge, heterogeneous conglomerate" of over 130 nations, encompassing emerging industrial powerhouses, oil-exporting states, middle-income countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Adler & Tanner, 2013). This diversity translates into starkly different vulnerabilities, emission profiles, and, consequently, fundamentally divergent material interests in the outcome of climate negotiations (Farand, 2023). While the language of Southern solidarity persists, the group is fractured into numerous sub-coalitions, each pursuing its own distinct agenda. These internal fissures are often exploited by external powers, further complicating

the potential for a unified stance (American Progress, 2024).

4.2 The Rise of the Developmentalist Patriarchs: The BASIC Coalition

Among the most powerful of these sub-groups is the BASIC coalition, comprising Brazil, South Africa, India, and China. Formed in 2009, this bloc represents a new center of gravity in global politics, characterized by large populations, significant economic clout, and substantial and rapidly growing greenhouse gas emissions (SEI, 2011). Together, they account for roughly 40% of the world's population and, as of 2005, nearly 29% of total global GHG emissions (Chan & Dagnet, 2012). Their diplomatic posture is driven by a desire to protect their national development pathways, which they see as their sovereign right.

From an eco-feminist perspective, the "national interest" articulated by the BASIC countries is a clear expression of a patriarchal-developmentalist logic. This worldview prioritizes industrial production and economic expansion as the primary measures of national strength (Sultana, 2022). While acknowledging their emissions as a "burden," they are also framed as a necessary byproduct of their "greatest achievement"—economic growth (Chan & Dagnet, 2012). Consequently, they have historically resisted internationally binding mitigation commitments that could constrain this growth, even as their collective emissions have soared. This position effectively prioritizes the accumulation of industrial and geopolitical power—a masculinist-coded goal—over the immediate, existential security of the planet and the most vulnerable nations.

4.3 The Voices of the Vulnerable: AOSIS and the LDCs

In stark contrast to the BASIC bloc, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the LDC Group operate from a position of profound vulnerability, which shapes their entire negotiating strategy. AOSIS, a coalition of 44 low-lying coastal and small island nations, faces an existential threat from sea-level rise (IPCC, 2022). This extreme vulnerability grants them a unique "moral leverage" in negotiations. Their strategy is one of "reverse leadership," where, despite their lack of material power, they seek to influence outcomes by championing ambitious mitigation targets (such as the "1.5 to stay alive" campaign) and pioneering legal and ethical arguments for a dedicated "loss and damage" mechanism to compensate for irreversible climate impacts (Harvey & Ayeb-Karlsson, 2022). Their core interest is not development space but planetary survival, a principle that aligns directly with eco-feminist ethics of care and ecological responsibility.

The LDC Group, comprising 45 of the world's poorest nations, shares this vulnerability but focuses its limited negotiating capital on securing "adequate, predictable, and accessible finance" (Oxfam International, 2023). For LDCs, climate finance is not an abstract bargaining chip but a matter of survival, essential for funding adaptation measures and addressing loss and damage in countries that have contributed negligibly to the crisis but suffer its worst effects (UNEP, 2021). Their position is grounded in a demand for justice and a recognition of their structural powerlessness within the global economic and political system.

4.4 An Eco-Feminist Reading of the Fracture

The primary fracture within the G77+China occurs at the intersection of these competing logics. It is a fundamental clash between the developmentalist patriarchy of the powerful emerging economies and the survival-and-justice-based ethics of the most vulnerable (Okereke & Coventry, 2016). This is most evident in two key areas. First is the

conflict over mitigation versus finance. The most vulnerable countries have increasingly argued that their future depends on immediate, deep emissions cuts from all major emitters, including the BASIC countries. The BASIC bloc, however, has often conditioned its own actions on receiving finance from the North, while simultaneously pursuing high-emissions development paths, creating a deep rift with those whose very existence are threatened by those emissions (Roberts & Parks, 2007).

Second, this conflict is exacerbated by the inequitable distribution of climate "solutions." Mechanisms designed to support the South, such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), have overwhelmingly benefited the more powerful emerging economies. Over 81% of all CDM projects were hosted in the four BASIC countries, which also received the lion's share of clean-energy technology transfers due to their more developed infrastructure and markets (Roberts & Parks, 2007). This dynamic reveals how, even within a framework of "South-South cooperation," patriarchal power structures —where material strength and industrial capacity determine outcomes—are replicated. The powerful benefit at the expense of the marginalized, leaving LDCs and SIDS further behind (Nagarajan, 2019). This internal hierarchy, where the "male-coded" actors wielding material power dominate the discourse and resources, while the "female-coded" actors must rely on moral suasion, prevents the formation of a truly unified front based on the needs of the most vulnerable. Geopolitical competition between major powers like the US and China further exploits these fissures, using climate finance as a tool of influence and compelling developing nations to navigate these rivalries, detracting from a cohesive, justice-based agenda (Belhaj, 2024).

5. Discussion: A Gendered Analysis of Climate Policy in Pakistan and Nigeria

To move from the abstract architecture of negotiating blocs to the concrete realities of state policy, this section provides a parochial, empirically grounded analysis of Pakistan and Nigeria. By examining their national climate policies through an eco-feminist lens, it is possible to see how the internal silencing of women and other subaltern groups directly contributes to the fractured external voice of the Global South.

5.1 Pakistan – The Vulnerable State and the Invisible Woman

Pakistan is a quintessential example of a climate-vulnerable nation. Consistently ranking among the top countries on the Global Climate Risk Index, it faces a barrage of climate-induced threats despite contributing less than 1% to global emissions (The World Bank, 2022). The country is plagued by catastrophic floods, such as the devastating 2022 super-floods that submerged one-third of the nation (Alam, 2022), as well as severe droughts, glacial melt, and extreme heatwaves that threaten its agriculture-dependent economy and the livelihoods of millions. In its 2021 updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Pakistan committed to an ambitious 50% reduction in projected emissions by 2030, but this target is overwhelmingly conditional (35% of the 50%) on receiving international support of over USD 100 billion (Government of Pakistan, 2021). This position reflects the classic Global South demand for climate justice and finance, framing its action as contingent on the historical responsibility of the North (Khan & Khan, 2023).

However, an eco-feminist analysis reveals a deep chasm between this external posture and the internal reality for Pakistani women. Climate impacts are not gender-neutral; they disproportionately harm women due to pre-existing, deeply entrenched patriarchal structures (UN

Women, n.d.). Women constitute a staggering 70% of the rural agricultural workforce (Shakoor, 2023), yet own a mere 3% of agricultural land (Ali, 2023), a disparity that severely limits their economic independence and capacity to adapt to climate shocks. This lack of ownership means they have little to no say in decisions about crop selection, irrigation, or the adoption of climate-resilient techniques, even though they perform the bulk of the labor (Ali & Ahmad, 2024).

The catastrophic floods of 2022 served as a stark illustration of these compounded gendered vulnerabilities. An estimated 8.2 million women of reproductive age were impacted, with hundreds of thousands requiring urgent antenatal and obstetric care (Anwar & Shaukat, 2023). The widespread destruction of health facilities and transport infrastructure rendered maternal and reproductive healthcare virtually inaccessible for these populations. Within displacement camps, the absence of secure, gender-segregated sanitation facilities and adequate lighting exacerbated the risks of gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation, and harassment (Bradshaw, 2022). Prevailing cultural norms restricting female mobility further compounded these dangers, frequently preventing women from evacuating without male relatives and thus confining them to hazardous environments (Aur, 2022). Critically, humanitarian relief efforts were often gender-blind, failing to address specific physiological needs such as menstrual hygiene, thereby compromising both the health and dignity of affected women and girls (Anwar & Shaukat, 2023).

Despite nominal recognition of gender considerations within its policy framework, Pakistan has failed to translate these acknowledgements into transformative action. Initiatives such as the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) and the inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting theme in the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) exist, yet they largely lack substantive implementation. Consequently, the voices of women—particularly those from rural, landless, and other marginalized communities—remain conspicuously absent from policy formulation and implementation processes. This gap ensures that post-disaster relief and rehabilitation programs consistently neglect the unique challenges faced by women, thus perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability (Bradshaw, 2022). This systemic oversight extends to other marginalized populations, notably the transgender community, who are often omitted entirely from disaster management protocols and social protection schemes, rendering them invisible and compounding their suffering. The state's climate response, therefore, perpetuates a patriarchal logic that frames women as passive victims requiring management, rather than as active agents possessing critical knowledge for building genuine resilience. Ultimately, the predominant focus on securing international climate finance, while necessary, serves to obscure the more pressing imperative of dismantling the internal patriarchal structures that create and exacerbate vulnerability in the first place.

5.2 Nigeria – Patriarchy, Resource Extraction, and Silenced Resistance

Nigeria serves as a critical comparative case, exhibiting a similar profile of high climate vulnerability to Pakistan, yet possessing a national interest shaped by a distinct economic driver. The nation is highly susceptible to climate change, contending with desertification in its northern regions and severe coastal flooding and erosion in the south (The World Bank, 2022). Its updated 2021 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) mirrors Pakistan's posture, committing to a 20% unconditional emissions reduction and a 47% conditional

reduction by 2030, contingent on international support (FGN, 2021). However, Nigeria's status as one of Africa's largest hydrocarbon producers introduces a more acute manifestation of the patriarchal-developmentalist logic (Onuoha, 2008). Here, the national interest is predicated upon fossil fuel extraction—a quintessentially masculinist-coded sector associated with state power, capital accumulation, and geopolitical influence. This prioritization has historically precipitated severe environmental degradation and social conflict, particularly in the Niger Delta (International Crisis Group, 2023).

The gendered impacts of climate change in Nigeria are pronounced and directly attributable to entrenched patriarchal norms that govern social roles and resource access (ResearchGate, n.d.). Women, who constitute the majority of the agricultural labor force, face severely curtailed land ownership rights and are often confined to climate-sensitive livelihoods such as rain-fed subsistence farming (Akinyoade, n.d.). This constrained vocational and geographic mobility, a direct consequence of patriarchal structures that bind them to the domestic sphere, structurally limits their adaptive capacity relative to men, who typically possess greater freedom to migrate or pursue alternative employment following climate-related shocks (Odutola et al., 2016).

In the oil-producing Niger Delta, the nexus of patriarchal power and extractive capitalism manifests with particular violence. For decades, women have constituted the vanguard of environmental activism, protesting the contamination of their farmlands and fishing waters by multinational oil corporations (Fisher, 2021). These grassroots movements articulate a potent, alternative eco-feminist vision of development centered on ecological integrity and community well-being (Rahman, 2023). Despite this, they are systematically precluded from formal decision-making processes. Research indicates that women exert negligible influence over environmental management and remediation projects, such as the Ogoniland clean-up, with their concerns and participation consistently disregarded by state and corporate actors (Rahman, 2023). Their resistance is ultimately subordinated to the state's overriding interest in maintaining oil revenues, offering a clear demonstration of a patriarchal state apparatus suppressing subaltern dissent to preserve its core economic model.

Nigeria's policy response mirrors the contradictions seen in Pakistan. The government has adopted a National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2020-2025), which aims to mainstream gender into climate policies across key sectors like agriculture, energy, and water (Nigeria, Federal Government of, 2020). The updated NDC also acknowledges the need for a "whole-of-society approach" and gender mainstreaming (Nigeria, Federal Government of, 2021). Yet, the implementation of these gender-responsive policies has been inconsistent, with significant gaps in funding, coordination, and monitoring. The state's fundamental commitment to expanding the oil and gas sector creates an irreconcilable conflict with a just, gender-transformative climate agenda (Atela et al., 2021). The patriarchal state logic, whether driven by general development goals (as in Pakistan) or by resource extraction (as in Nigeria), consistently prioritizes masculinist economic paradigms over the security and agency of its most vulnerable women.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Gender Integration in the Climate Policies of Pakistan and Nigeria

Feature	Pakistan	Nigeria
Key NDC Mitigation Pledge	15% unconditional & 35% conditional reduction of projected emissions by 2030.	20% unconditional & 47% conditional reduction below BAU by 2030.
Explicit Mention of Gender/Women in NDC	NDC mentions cross-cutting themes of gender and youth but lacks specific, actionable policies.	Updated NDC aims to mainstream gender across all sectors; acknowledges disproportionate impacts and commits to a "whole-of-society approach".
Primary Source Evidence of Gender Integration	Climate Change Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) developed. However, policies are criticized for being gender-insensitive in practice, with women's voices ignored in decision-making and disaster response.	National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2020-2025) was adopted. Implementation is inconsistent, with gaps in funding and coordination, and undermined by the state's focus on oil and gas.
Alignment with Eco-Feminist Principles	**Low:** Policy prioritizes securing international finance while internal patriarchal structures (e.g., lack of land rights for women) that create vulnerability remain unaddressed. Women are framed as victims, not agents.	**Low:** Policy prioritizes patriarchal-developmentalist goals (oil/gas extraction) and silences subaltern women's environmental movements (e.g., in Niger Delta). Gender plans exist but are undermined by core economic Strategy (Sam and Zibima, 2023).

This comparative analysis demonstrates a clear and disturbing pattern. Both Pakistan and Nigeria, despite their different geopolitical and economic contexts, exhibit a profound disconnect between their international climate rhetoric and their domestic gender realities. Both have adopted national gender action plans, but these often remain at the level of policy rhetoric, failing to challenge the underlying patriarchal structures that systematically produce and reproduce women's vulnerability. This internal silencing of subaltern voices is a root cause of the Global South's inability to forge a unified, justice-oriented front in global climate negotiations.

6. Conclusion

In line with the study's aims, this paper set out to (1) explicate the persistent fragmentation of the Global South's voice

in international climate negotiations; (2) advance and operationalize a postcolonial eco-feminist framework that locates this fragmentation in entrenched patriarchal-developmentalist state structures; (3) empirically validate these claims through a comparative analysis of Pakistan and Nigeria—tracing how domestic gendered power relations shape national climate policy and negotiating behaviour; and (4) propose a normative and practicable pathway, termed "subaltern climate solidarity," to reorient national interest toward climate justice and the material wellbeing of the most vulnerable.

This study has sought to explain the persistent fragmentation of the Global South's voice in international climate negotiations. Moving beyond conventional state-centric analyses, it has advanced a postcolonial eco-feminist critique, positing that this disunity is not a simple failure of diplomatic coordination but a manifestation of a profound structural pathology. The analysis demonstrates that the prevalence of a patriarchal-developmentalist logic within Global South states fosters a conception of "national interest" that is fundamentally irreconcilable with the principles of climate justice and ecological survival. This masculinist-coded focus on industrial growth, resource extraction, and geopolitical standing systematically marginalizes the knowledge and silences the voices of the most climate-vulnerable populations, particularly women and subaltern communities.

The comparative analysis of Pakistan and Nigeria offers robust empirical validation for this thesis. In Pakistan, the state's external appeals for climate finance are fundamentally subverted by its domestic failure to dismantle patriarchal norms—such as inequitable land tenure for women —that amplify acute vulnerability to climate shocks. Consequently, its gender action plans are rendered merely rhetorical, with the lived experiences of women in disasters disregarded in favor of top-down, gender-blind responses. In Nigeria, the state's allegiance to a fossil fuel-centric development model necessitates the active suppression of eco-feminist resistance in the Niger Delta, where the very industry fueling the national economy destroys local lives and livelihoods.

In both contexts, national climate policies that are nominally gender-responsive are revealed to be superficial, failing to challenge the entrenched power structures that perpetuate gendered injustice. The fractures evident within the G77+China—pitting the developmentalist ambitions of the BASIC countries against the survival imperatives of AOSIS and the LDCs—are thus understood not as incidental diplomatic disputes but as a macro-level projection of these internal, gendered contradictions onto the global stage. From this analysis, a critical conclusion emerges: a truly unified and powerful Global South voice cannot be forged through traditional, state-centric diplomacy alone. The state itself, often acting as a vehicle for patriarchal and postcolonial power, is frequently a site of oppression and silencing. Therefore, looking to state leaders to spontaneously generate a cohesive front based on the needs of the most vulnerable is a flawed strategy that ignores the internal power dynamics at play.

The path toward an authentic and unified voice lies instead in fostering a "subaltern climate solidarity." This is a political project that must be built from the ground up. It requires intentionally amplifying and centering the knowledge, experiences, and leadership of the most marginalized groups who are already on the front lines of the climate crisis: the rural women managing water scarcity in Pakistan, the indigenous communities defending forests from extraction, and the women activists resisting oil pollution in Nigeria. Such a solidarity would challenge the patriarchal

foundations of the state from within and below. It would work to redefine "national interest" away from abstract economic indicators and toward the concrete, material well-being of people and the planet. This is the only foundation upon which an authentic, powerful, and unified Global South voice can emerge—one that speaks not with the compromised language of state interest, but with the unassailable moral authority of lived experience and the radical vision of genuine climate justice.

In this way, the conclusion directly aligns with the study's objectives: it advances a postcolonial eco-feminist framework to interrogate how patriarchal state structures undermine collective climate diplomacy; it grounds the analysis in comparative cases of Pakistan and Nigeria to empirically substantiate the argument; and it proposes "subaltern climate solidarity" as a normative and practical pathway toward an authentic, unified Global South voice.

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