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The Green Climate Fund as an Elaborate Scheme of Generating Social Harms

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Abstract

Climate finance is an essential component of climate action globally, but more so in the Majority World which is disproportionately affected by the increasing risks from climate change. Climate finance institutions, such as the Green Climate Fund, are therefore critical to efforts for addressing climate change and delivering climate justice. This chapter draws from zemiology, which is an emerging paradigm in critical criminology, that primarily concerns itself with the analysis and critique of legalized social harms in the context of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century neoliberal capitalism. The chapter highlights how these harms germinate from the operations of state–corporate collusion, where the pursuance of neoliberal outcomes is considered a legally acceptable trade-off for processes and outcomes that address the root causes of vulnerability of those disproportionately affected by climate change. This chapter further argues that these trade-offs emerge from 'paradoxical harms', which are driven by accountability deficits within the climate change governance regime, and which generate social harms for those in the Majority World. The outcome for the

Majority World is climate change responses characterized by blame avoidance and reassignment and shifting of responsibilities for addressing climate change. For the Green Climate Fund, paradoxical harms are rooted in its design structure which contributes to a climate finance system that fails to challenge the structural causes of climate change and instead provides superficial solutions for addressing the climate crisis. Finance channelled through the Green Climate Fund therefore becomes a veil for sustaining apolitical climate solutions and provide ideological cover for exacerbation of climate change while disproportionately allocating impacts to communities in the Majority World.

Keywords: Green Climate Fund, zemiology, paradoxical harms, critical criminology, accountability, institutional design

5.1 Introduction

Unless extremely ambitious plans for mitigation and adaptation are implemented, climate change will push communities to the brink of collapse, for example, through permanent ecosystem losses resulting from a 1.5–2°C rise in temperature (IPCC 2019). International institutions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have a critical role to play in climate justice, for example, through provision of high-level governance on climate change (Michonski and Levi 2010). In the Majority World, these institutions influence structuring of responses and allocation of resources for

enabling these responses. How these institutions are designed determines the effectiveness of climate action.

Institutional design and operations are political, meaning that how institutions are designed can be based on special interests. Understanding institutions' contribution to climate justice therefore requires interdisciplinarity. However, existing empirical scholarship on climate justice is disciplinary and fails to highlight the cross-scalar nature of climate change and climate change responses (Barrett 2013). Consequently, existing research is not strongly grounded in the everyday realities of people who engage with these institutions. Addressing this gap requires interdisciplinary approaches that enable empirical research on climate justice to inform political decisions (Roser et al. 2015). This chapter uses an interdisciplinary lens to highlight how international institutions determine climate justice outcomes in the Majority World.

Using a case study of the GCF, this chapter critically reflects on how choices of trade-offs within international institutions generate specific design structures with implications for climate justice in the Majority World. The analysis is based on a review of GCF documents (e.g. GCF operational policies and guidelines) to assess operations, programming, and funding for climate change action. The chapter builds on the concept of social harms from the theoretical lens of zemiology which has emerged from work on critical criminology (Pemberton 2016).

The analysis pays attention to how policy pathways that are supported by international climate change institutions fail to alleviate and, in some cases, generate social harms for communities affected by climate change, particularly those in the Majority World. It presents the concept of 'paradoxical harms', which arises from conscious choices of costs and benefits. These concepts are used to assess how the GCF's design structure justifies actions at different levels of governance that generate social harms (and hence climate injustices) for local communities in the Majority World. The chapter presents the GCF's design structure as a conscious choice by international-level climate change governance stakeholders based on international-level priorities for climate action. However, the prioritization of international interests over local interests depoliticizes climate change and its impacts, resulting in increased drivers and outcomes of climate change risks.

This chapter contributes to literature on climate justice in the Majority World by highlighting the links between institutions for addressing climate change and the role of legalized 'social harms'. It highlights how institutional designs of climate change institutions involve conscious trade-offs that are likely to generate 'acceptable' disadvantage to specific groups in the Majority World. In doing so, it calls for attention to the need for responsibility for climate justice, focusing on how institutions for addressing climate change in the Majority World should be structured

to ensure that they deliver climate justice for those disproportionately affected by climate change.

5.22 The Green Climate Fund

The GCF was established in 2010 and became operational in 2015. It is currently the largest dedicated climate fund globally. Its overall goal is to channel climate finance to 'developing countries' (most of which are in the Majority World) to support low-carbon and climate-resilient development within the framework of sustainable development (GCF 2011). By 2023, the GCF is expected to have channelled over US$18 billion to the Majority World to support essential climate action (Puri et al. 2020), making it a critical facilitator of mechanisms for delivering climate justice.

The GCF design structure is built around three groups of stakeholders: (i) the Board, whose operations are supported by the Secretariat, GCF's donors who are Minority World country governments, and GCF's recipients in the Majority World; (ii) the National Designated Authorities (NDAs) which represent the Majority World and ensure that GCF funding is aligned with country needs; (iii) accredited entities (AEs) which channel funds to Majority World countries by designing and implementing projects that are GCF-funded (see Figure 5.1). AEs can be international institutions such as UN institutions or regional organizations and national institutions from Majority World countries which are direct access entities. The Conference of Parties (COP) monitors the GCF's work against its mandate (GCF 2011).

Figure 5.1 Here

The GCF's achievement of its mandate strongly hinges on its design structure. Design areas and issues that are particularly important include sources of finance for the GCF which has implications for GCF's capitalization (Cui et al. 2014), decision-making structures (Abbott and Gartner 2011), alignment with international funding principles (Van Kerkhoff et al. 2011), and allocation of finance to the Majority World (Klein and Möhner 2011). However, research on the GCF has identified gaps in the performance against this mandate. For instance, finance allocation within the GCF is found to be skewed towards mitigation, which disadvantages countries in the Majority World whose need for adaptation is higher (Fonta et al. 2018). GCF's slow disbursement of funds and strict compliance requirements also disadvantage direct access entities from the Majority World (IEU 2019). These gaps are usually explained away as necessary for the achievement of the GCF's mandate. For example, the bias towards mitigation financing is seen as necessary for attracting private sector investments through debt-based financing for mitigation. International AEs also have fewer capacity gaps (as compared to direct access entities), which results in easier and quicker project proposal development and implementation.

Research on these gaps fails to consider these design structures as intentional and the outcomes of actions as harms that are imposed on communities in the Majority World. The links between intentions, actions, and outcomes within the global climate governance landscape in framing acceptable outcomes and trade-offs

for climate actions are inadequately explored. Assessments therefore fail to comprehensively highlight the role of GCF in shaping climate justice outcomes in the Majority World. This chapter addresses this gap by engaging with theoretical frameworks in critical criminology and concepts in environmental governance that place the social harms that accrue from the normal operations of the market (in this case, climate finance institutions) at the centre of its analysis. The goal is to highlight drivers behind structural designs of institutions and their roles in generating and sustaining social harms and the implications for climate justice. The next section will outline the theoretical bases of zemiology and its application to this case study.

5.3 Harms and Accountability Gaps

5.3.1 Social Harms in Critical Criminology

The concept of social harms in relation to climate change can be described using emerging theoretical paradigms from critical criminology, specifically zemiology and green criminology. Zemiology was to address criminology's perceived lack of differentiation of nominally legal and structural 'social harms' from crimes that are legally defined in statutes with an identifiable perpetrator (Hillyard 2015). For zemiologists, the legal status of actions can often have little connection to the level of harm generated. Hence, for many criminal justice systems, many petty acts that are low on the scale of harm receive a disproportionate censure while actions that have harmful outcomes for communities are never punished and are instead legalized or

minimized into civil law as opposed to criminal law (White 2013b). Zemiology therefore recognizes that institutional and structural violence can often have further reaching consequences than interpersonal victimization (Pemberton 2016).

Green criminology looks at the influence of human–environment interactions on other humans and non-humans (White and Heckenberg 2014). In the same way as zemiology, green criminology differentiates between green crimes and harms by applying legal-procedural and socio-legal approaches, respectively (Brisman and South 2019). Environmental crimes are actions defined by criminal law as unacceptable, while environmental harms are those considered acceptable within criminal law regulations but cause social harm (White 2018). Harm emerges from state–corporate collusion in pursuit of neoliberal ideals where social harms are considered legally acceptable through state mechanisms (White 2013a; Stoett 2018). Legally defined environmental crimes are addressed by cross-level policing structures (Tomkins 2005). However, these structures cannot sufficiently address environmental harms that are considered legal, thus requiring use of social justice mechanisms to address environmental harms (Hall 2013). Hence, the definition of crime and harm is subject to prevailing political interests resulting in those who are least powerful likely to be disadvantaged.

Social harm theorists grapple with the identification of harms, victims, and perpetrators. Humans and non-humans (i.e. plants and animals) are considered

potential victims from legally accepted actions (Halsey and White 1998). Harms should therefore be assessed using a mix of scientific measurement of environmental risk and the social perception of risks by all stakeholders (Gibbs et al. 2009). Victims exist in socially constituted unequal relationships from which harms arise. Harms also affect different groups with different reserves of capital and resources to be able to respond to harm. Hence, zemiology does not merely focus on acts of violence, but also on denial of social and material resources. The identification of perpetrators requires assignment of responsibility arising from omissions or 'abuse of power' (Hall 2013; White 2011).

The perpetrators of social harms range from state to non-state actors. Some research finds that actions that cause social harm 'are frequently not only state sanctioned but are often in fact actively promoted by states pursuant to their … development goals', which complicates identification of harm perpetrators, as links between actions and effects on individuals or groups are not always straightforward (Hall 2014, 130). Intent also becomes a critical factor in assignment of responsibility and identification of perpetrators. For example, when harms are unpredictable, then it is difficult to assign responsibility for harms due to lack of intent (Potter 2013). Social harm theory is therefore more concerned with whether a harm is preventable as opposed to the presence of intent. Hence, accountability (i.e. contributing to the

causation of a harm), irrespective of intent, should be used in assigning responsibility for harms (White 2011).

5.3.2 Paradoxical Harms and Accountability Deficits

Social harms related to climate change emerge in two ways – directly from the impacts and drivers of climate change, and from the responses to climate change, that is, paradoxical harms. First are the direct social harms emerging from the global capitalist systems which encourage extraction of resources at the expense of environmental and human welfare and cause direct and indirect impacts of climate change, for example, food insecurity and cultural heritage loss due to direct climate risks such as sea level rise in Latin America (Ezcurra and Rivera-Collazo 2018). These harms are generally structurally reinforced at different scales and emerge from the slow normalization of marginalization and oppression of some social groups in society (Christie et al. 2008). The harms are linked to 'various forms of "legitimate" coercion exercised by the state and its agents in the effort to maintain existing institutions, contain social conflict, or forcibly pursue and defend a particular definition of the collective interest' (Soron 2007, 10). Second are harms emerging from climate change interventions, for example, development of urban green infrastructure that displaces and dispossesses local communities (Anguelovski et al. 2019). These are paradoxical climate change harms.

Climate change-related paradoxical harms emerge when actions that are framed as solutions for climate change 'in turn, generat[e] new forms of social and environmental harm' (White 2012, 63). Paradoxical harms are dissimilar to unintended consequences because, unlike the latter, harms are well known (White 2012, 63). This means that the harms are considered acceptable trade-offs for the benefits emerging from the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. Adaptation literature recognizes that addressing drivers to climate change will require systemic transformations in approaches for addressing societal inequalities to actions and systems that enable inclusion of marginalized populations (Pelling et al. 2015). However, some responses to climate change sustain the state–corporate collusions that create climate change and reinforce inequalities across scales (Kammerbauer and Wamsler 2017). Paradoxical harms can also result from structural violence which evolves over the long term and makes it challenging to link paradoxical harms to the perpetrators (Soron 2007).

Layering the concept of scale over understandings of paradoxical harms provides a multifaceted understanding of social harms. Transnational harms are caused by actors at one scale, but experienced by groups at another scale (White 2011). For example, the development of dams for exclusive hydropower production in the Himalayas (as opposed to multipurpose dams) is likely to dispossess local communities of their water rights (Baruah 2012). Temporally, avoidance of political

responsibility for the implementation of the most ambitious adaptation and mitigation actions increases future climate risks. This means that whether (or not) harms are paradoxical depends on the availability of (i) knowledge of sources and nature of adverse risks from climate action and (ii) tools (and systems) to eliminate or limit risks from these climate change actions.

Social harms from climate change and climate change actions result from 'accountability gaps' within global climate and environmental governance (Kramarz and Park 2016; Najam and Halle 2010). Accountability involves a specific set of actors (account holders) demanding that others (agents) report on activities or progress against a given set of expectations, accompanied by rewards or costs for the agents (Biermann and Gupta 2011). Accountability gaps emerge from 'the continued growth of accountability mechanisms without teeth, [leading to] current applications of accountability in … [global environmental governance] run[ning] a real risk of enabling continued environmental degradation rather than protection' (Kramarz and Park 2016, 19). Hence, 'international law remains relatively weak on climate justice, despite hundreds of multilateral environmental agreements and several agencies of global [climate] governance' (Stoett 2018, 2). Accountability gaps also emerge when the distance between decision-makers and the impacts of their actions is too large, which enables them to get away with any negative consequences that may emerge

(Newell 2008). Powerful actors leverage these gaps and misuse their power at the expense of marginalized groups (Grant and Keohane 2005).

Drivers of accountability deficits are structural or cultural. Structurally driven deficits emerge when there are changes in structures of governance mechanisms without accompanying allocation of roles and responsibilities, incoherent policies, and guidelines (Lloyd et al. 2008) and are linked to multiple networks of account holders and agents with diverse interests, which generates negative consequences to third-party account holders such as communities (Krahmann 2016). Culturally driven accountability gaps emerge from the absence of an accountability culture and political commitment towards accountability, which results in under-implementation of policies and underperformance of procedures (Lloyd et al. 2008), and are sustained by 'blame avoidance' where actors fail to take responsibility for their inability to reach targeted goals or any negative consequences that emerge and instead blame it on politics (Bache et al. 2015). Addressing these drivers of accountability gaps requires the design and implementation of context-specific accountability tools. Examples of these include ensuring availability of information, participation, and transparency to achieve legitimacy (Koenig-Archibugi 2004). In climate change governance, accountability principles are used for assigning responsibility for climate change action and ensuring participation and representation of those impacted by climate change in decision-making (Newell 2008).

5.4 Accountability Gaps Created and Used by the GCF

Accountability within the multilateral climate finance landscape is embedded into the GCF's design structure. The GCF's accountability mechanisms are achieved through transparency (e.g. stakeholder participation), certification, monitoring and evaluation, and self-reporting (Scobie 2018). However, although the GCF's structure delivers on international principles of country ownership and fair contribution to climate finance in alignment with the Paris Agreement, it also reinforces structural violence by the Minority World towards the Majority World and perpetuates a culture of blame avoidance within international climate finance. This results in local-level climate injustices. These structures sustain a pre-existing hegemonic relationship between Majority and Minority World countries and between governments and non-government and community representatives, which disadvantages those severely affected by climate change.

5.4.1 Donor Control through Accountability Mechanisms

The GCF's design structure promotes accountability through its pursuit of egalitarian representation and decision-making in three ways – the GCF's relationship to the COP, the structure of the GCF Board, and priority on country ownership. The GCF is 'accountable to and function[s] under the guidance of the COP' (GCF 2011, para. 4). This aims 'to reduce its perceived dominance by donor state interests' (Vanderheiden 2015, 34). Although the GCF Board has full responsibility for funding decisions,

Board members have expressed concern over the unequal relationship between the GCF and the COP, indicating greater control by the COP over the Fund (GCF 2013, para. 182). Researchers question the autonomy of the GCF Board in designing and implementing policies (Recio 2019). This is because the GCF Governing Instrument mandates the GCF to respond to COP guidance (thus making COP guidance legally binding) and grants the COP authority to terminate the GCF (Recio 2019). In the backdrop of the North–South divide in influence at the COP, the power of COP over GCF is worrying. Specifically, Minority World countries have historically been more influential in COP negotiations and their outcomes (Rowe 2015), with some countries having been said to have previously held the COP negotiations hostage (Christoff 2010). This suggests disproportionate Minority World country control over the GCF's operations through the COP.

Second, the GCF Board has equal representation from both 'developed' and 'developing' countries where, until 2019, decision-making was based on consensus. This ensures a fair and balanced representation of countries in GCF policy and resource allocation decisions. The equal representation within the GCF Board has led to a higher preference for the GCF by Majority World countries for channelling of climate finance (Vanderheiden 2015). The seemingly reduced Minority World country decision-making power within the GCF Board contributes to making the GCF unattractive to donor countries, as this reduces the opportunities for donor control as

compared to other bilateral funding options (de Sépibus 2014). However, consensus-based decision-making has led to gridlocks in the adoption of key decisions (Bowman and Minas 2019). This means that the equal representation in decision-making design is not delivering results that accelerate climate action in the Majority World.

The COP–Board collaborative approach to accountability, while ostensibly useful for more transparent and equitable decision-making, has enabled subtler forms of donor control of project activities. First, a methodology for allocating responsibility for financial contributions amongst Minority World countries is still missing (Cui et al. 2014). This means that financial commitments and contributions of Minority World countries to the GCF remain voluntary and pledge-based (Schalatek et al. 2012), which fails to fulfil the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities principle of the UNFCCC (Vanderheiden 2015). This creates leeway for Minority World countries to redirect climate finance to Majority World countries through bilateral Official Development Assistance channels, which have previously exhibited (and perhaps continue to exhibit) greater donor control (Marcoux et al. 2013) and yet still report these flows as climate finance (Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2007). Contribution (or non-contribution) by Minority World countries to the GCF therefore becomes a reputational issue as opposed to a binding commitment, which makes the Fund an ‘empty signifier’ in advancing transformational climate action (Methmann 2010).

Greater donor control has resulted in the GCF's pursuit to engage the private sector. The private sector is an avenue for the GCF to, first, generate more finance to cover the resourcing gap left by Minority World countries' voluntary and insufficient financial commitments and, second, to finance mitigation actions which are not considered a priority by Majority World countries. Minority World countries, through their disproportionate influence in COP negotiations and in the GCF Board, have made funding commitments and financial allocations conditional on private sector finance mobilization (Bowman and Minas 2019). At the basic level, this is necessary to meet COP guidance to the GCF on engagement of the private sector (UNFCCC 2015, decision 7 para 9). However, even though private sector finance can address the current climate finance deficit in Majority World countries (Bowen 2011), the GCF's reliance on private sector finance correlates with its promotion of concessional tools of financing which are not preferred by Majority World countries. The push for privatization of climate change solutions promotes managerial approaches to environmental governance, which have previously left Majority World countries highly indebted to Majority World countries and institutions, with outcomes benefiting donor countries (Roberts and Parks 2009). Greater engagement of the private sector also conflicts with the need for transparency in funding, operations, and outcomes, as private sector actors are averse to having their operations publicly scrutinized (Kalinowski 2020). Overall, these design structures reflect notions such as

those represented in discourses on climate protection, which 'embodies a hegemonic discourse which prevents major changes to the social structures of global capitalism' (Methmann 2010, 350).

5.4.2 Blame Avoidance through Hierarchical Accountability

The GCF's goal is to implement ambitious climate change action by financing programmes that contribute towards countries' Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans (GCF 2019). Pursuance of this goal has led to the GCF's adoption of a design structure that reflects a hierarchical approach to accountability which prioritizes engagement with international and national governments and civil society while overlooking other intrastate civil society actors. These relationships shift the responsibility for implementing and monitoring of projects and programmes to national and regional organizations. For example, national governments, through the NDAs, are the primary decision-makers of the composition of project pipelines. This means that the GCF does not directly engage with communities that are impacted by climate change and which implement the funded projects, for example, non-state actors, subnational governments, and local-level communities (Najam and Halle 2010).

This hierarchical system can also be observed in the GCF's grievance mechanism which individuals and groups can use to report or register concerns for activities that are causing or likely to cause social harms. GCF's AEs are responsible

for informing communities about available channels for expressing grievances. The first line of reporting grievances is to the institutions linked to the AEs, for example, see Conservation International (2021). This reflects the intention to promote greater autonomy and country ownership of projects by the AEs. However, the GCF's Independent Integrity Unit and the Independent Redress Mechanism also have mechanisms through which individuals or groups can report misconduct or grievances (GCF 2020a). These are available on the GCF website and recognize that those wishing to file grievances or complaints may be unable to do so through the AEs. However, these are exclusionary as they require that a complainant be literate and have access to a smart device and an internet connection, both of which are not guaranteed for some of the places that GCF's AEs already operate or should be operating. Board observers have noted that the GCF and its AEs' approaches to capturing and recording grievances could be made more proactive to protect the rights of local communities (GCF 2020b, para. 446). The continued use of GCF's design structure for accountability despite these concerns reflects a conscious trade-off between effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

The distancing between the GCF and local institutions gives AEs greater autonomy to prioritize, design, and implement adaptation and mitigation actions. This reflects the GCF's trust in its accreditation processes based on whether AEs meet GCF standards and can implement set environmental and social safeguards (ESS) that

protect communities from harms. This ensures that GCF avoids being overly prescriptive and allows countries and actors to track progress that is important to them (van der Ven et al. 2016). This distancing also builds the capacity of these institutions to engage with other funds and donors, which diversifies the climate finance portfolio across the landscape. When viewed from an international level, these design structures generate a bottom-up system of accountability and claims-making within the GCF. However, when viewed from the local level, accountability remains top-down and state-driven, where actors seeking to get their concerns heard must do so through state governments (Newell 2008).

Yet, recent assessments of GCF projects and project documents indicate that even though AEs demonstrate their capacity to implement ESS during accreditation, project documents fail to adequately categorize project risk and have limited application of ESS standards and grievance mechanisms (Perrault and Leonard 2017). The reliance on self-reporting for GCF's monitoring and evaluation of project investments and outcomes results in limited timely transparency on project activities and their outcomes, especially for local-level communities (Perrault and Leonard 2017). However, self-reporting has led to misinformation on the (positive or negative) impact of GCF-funded activities (IEU 2018). For example, projects are reported to overestimate the number of beneficiaries (IEU 2021). Although evaluations have

recommended that the GCF work out ways to verify these self-reports (IEU 2020), these mechanisms are still missing.

This hierarchical model shifts responsibility for the implementation and results monitoring onto these actors while avoiding engagement with local-level communities. The GCF's focus on international and national institutions assumes a trickle-down of resources to the local level where climate risks are experienced, and a trickle-up of local knowledge from the local communities to inform national and international climate change processes. This keeps climate change action tepid by making the national government of the receiver country responsible for responding to the multilevel ecological disordering of climate change while ignoring other subnational and local actors who can deliver more effective climate change action (Colenbrander et al. 2018). Consequently, 'the overwhelming preference for applying accountability solely to functional, end-of-pipe concerns such as verification, measurement, and compliance ultimately risks doing little to protect the global environment' (Kramarz and Park 2016, 2).

This opens spaces for blame avoidance which is characterized by the emphasis on a superficial bottom-up system of accountability where the GCF is 'motivated primarily by the desire to avoid blame for unpopular actions rather than seeking to claim credit for popular ones' and where 'the political costs of failure tend to outweigh the benefits of success' (Bache et al. 2015, 71). Working through

international and national accredited institutions translates country ownership into ‘institutional capacity to handle a project’, which results in top-down financialization of climate change adaptation and mitigation as opposed to bottom-up climate responses (Bertilsson and Thörn 2020). Blame avoidance is therefore likely to shift the responsibility for emission and vulnerability reductions and failure to achieve these goals onto national-level actors in Majority World countries. The role of international climate change actors, including the GCF, is therefore reduced to that of facilitation.

5.4.3 The Outcome: Reinforcement of Historical Structural Violence

Together, these design structures contribute to a GCF-led finance system that fails to challenge the structural causes of climate change and provide superficial solutions to addressing vulnerability to climate change. Finance channelled through the GCF has therefore become a veil for sustaining an apolitical approach to addressing climate change and provides an ideological cover for the continued functioning of systems at different scales that cause climate change and disproportionately allocate impacts to Majority World countries. The GCF is therefore complicit in the broader structural ‘aggression[s] by the rich [and powerful] against the poor’ that drive climate change (see Abbott [2008, 8] citing Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni’s speech at the African Union Summit in 2007). It does for the most part take an instrumental stance towards the environment and its degradation in terms of what this means for the

humans who inhabit it (White 2013b). This is demonstrative of how reliant these flows are on hegemonic participants in the GCF and are reflective of geopolitical realities.

The structural violence outcomes of climate action by the GCF are created and perpetuated by processes that intentionally generate trade-offs from different decisions and choose outcomes that benefit global climate governance at the expense of Majority World countries. These are the paradoxical harms of international climate finance, where allocation of finance for climate change is based on the 'greater good' and usually at the expense of local communities in Majority World countries that are most affected by climate change. These harms to these communities are socially accepted within international climate finance, and measures instituted to address them are ineffective because they do not address the root causes of the problem – the structural design of the international climate finance institutions. The drivers of these social harms and ultimately injustices are mainly transnational actors who in this case are Minority World countries.

These outcomes from climate actions align with zemiological concerns that the approach of state legislatures towards these structural harms is to treat them as regulatory issues (Hillyard and Tombs 2004). This generates ineffectual solutions that insufficiently highlight or address the injustices of climate change. This is unsurprising due to the unequal power the GCF's contributor countries, which are

mainly Minority World countries, have over what form interventions for climate change should take (see Farand 2021). These interventions side-line vulnerable communities and other stakeholders in Majority World countries by prioritizing consultation with central-state actors. For the local level in Majority World countries, actions guided by the GCF's design structure result in actions that fail to deliver on local-level vulnerability reduction. National government-driven allocation of finance in Majority World countries is politically informed as opposed to being based on vulnerability (Barrett 2014). This means that in addition to the failure to recognize perpetrators of climate harm in Minority World countries and corporate backers who provide panaceas for intervention through GCF, there is also a misidentification of victims within Majority World countries, which entrenches climate injustices.

5.5 Conclusion

Global efforts for addressing climate change will only be successful if the underlying structural drivers of climate collapse are addressed with meaningful input from the most vulnerable populations in the Majority World. This chapter set out to analyse how GCF's design structure caused social harms. It applies the concept of paradoxical harms which was derived from zemiology and critical criminology. The GCF cannot be compared to the fossil fuel industry or Minority World countries that have the greatest responsibility for causing climate change. However, the GCF bears the responsibility for the paradoxical harms that accrue to populations in Majority World

countries through its funded activities. This is a common feature of the global climate governance architecture, where actions by legitimate institutions generate conscious trade-off choices that are sanctioned at one level but that cause harms at another.

The GCF should be an instrument for amelioration of the harms caused by climate change, yet it fails to challenge the drivers of these harms. Instead, it builds on and exacerbates the inequalities between countries to advance notions of climate protection that align with global climate change objectives. It obscures those responsible and those harmed and the fundamentally unequal and exploitative relationships between them. In doing so, the GCF fails to adequately define the problem – anthropogenic climate change and multiscalar inequalities – with the gravity and urgency it deserves. This chapter has shown that finance allocated through the GCF demonstrates a symptom of wider emphasis on global liberal governance that is built on the inequalities between Minority and Majority World countries. For example, it frames the market (through private sector financing) as the preferred domain to define and seek for the climate crisis. As countries in the Majority World become more unstable through impacts of climate change, they will continue to rely on international climate finance which will reinforce the unequal power relations between Minority and Majority World countries.

The global climate governance system is complex, with networked actors and diverse account holder–agent relationships (Widerberg and Pattberg 2017). However,

how these actors engage with one another has implications for how climate change is addressed and the climate justice outcomes for those in the Majority World. Reduction of trade-offs and the harms that emerge from these governance systems will require an improvement in accountability by climate change adaptation and mitigation institutions. International climate finance institutions, such as the GCF, should be a starting point for accountability improvements. Greater accountability will enable the GCF to justify its actions not just to international-level actors but also to local actors and communities in the Majority World, resulting in improved legitimacy. This can be achieved through the valuation of GCF's impacts that includes both input and output measurements as well as the systemic impacts of interventions (van der Ven et al. 2016). In doing so, responses to climate change can be effective in avoiding the catastrophic effects and losses that communities in the Majority World will face if climate change persists.

International climate finance institutions and communities in the Majority World need to reimagine new pathways through which the climate crisis can be addressed without deepening the harms that we have identified in this chapter. Although research interest on climate finance institutions, such as the GCF, is increasing, future research can focus on understanding how climate finance institutions' design structures can be adjusted to reduce or address the trade-offs that generate social harms for the Majority World. Evidence of the effectiveness of these

alternative pathways to climate solutions in the Majority World that address the climate crisis without compromising the Majority World's development ambitions and adaptation capacity is also urgently needed. This can hopefully then be integrated into future climate finance institutional design processes to ensure climate justice in the Majority World.

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Figure 5.1 Structure of the GCF.

Source: Authors.