Multilateral Climate Finance Coordination: Politics and Depoliticization in Practice

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Abstract

The governance of public climate finance for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries is fragmented on both the international and national levels, with a high diversity of actors with overlapping mandates, preferences, and areas of expertise. In the absence of one unifying actor or institution, coordination among actors has emerged as a response to this fragmentation. In this article, we study the coordination efforts of the two most important multilateral climate funds, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), on the global level as well as within two recipient countries, Kenya and Zambia. The CIF and the GCF are anchored within the World Bank and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, respectively, and represent two diverging perspectives on climate finance. We find that on both levels, coordination was depoliticized by treating it as a technical exercise, rendering invisible the political divergences among actors. The implications of this depoliticization are that both funds coordinate mainly with actors with similar preferences, and consequently, coordination did not achieve its objectives. The article contributes to the literatures on coordination, climate finance, and environmental governance by showing how a response to the fragmentation of climate governance did not overcome political fault lines but rather reinforced them.

Climate finance is a central component of the international climate policy regime and has long been the subject of academic inquiry and political debate (Ciplet et al. 2015; Khan et al. 2020).[1] The climate finance landscape is

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1. In this article, we focus on public climate finance flows from developed to developing countries (see Lundsgaarde et al. 2018b).

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described as institutionally "fragmented" or polycentric (Biermann et al. 2009) or as consisting of different, nonintegrated institutions (e.g., Pickering et al. 2017; Roberts and Weikmans 2017). These institutions include, inter alia, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) institutions and World Bank-affiliated institutions, as well as government ministries in developing and developed countries,[2] operating at both international and national levels. The institutional fragmentation reflects deeper-lying and political forms of division in terms of major actors supporting different institutions and conflicting norms (for different kinds of fragmentation, see Biermann et al. 2009). In this context, a commonly held view has emerged that climate finance coordination is essential to overcoming the adverse effects of institutional fragmentation and maximizing the benefits of climate finance. Yet climate finance flows continue to be largely uncoordinated, with few of the perceived benefits of coordination being reaped (Amerasinghe et al. 2017; Lundsgaarde et al. 2018a). This issue is particularly pronounced in the relationship between the two most prominent multilateral climate funds: the UNFCCC-affiliated Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the World Bank–affiliated Climate Investment Funds (CIF). The funds pursue similar mandates yet largely fail to coordinate with one another, despite commitments to do so (Climate Investment Funds [CIF] and Green Climate Fund [GCF] 2020).

Coordination of international public funding flows like foreign aid and climate finance is often framed as necessary to ensure that funds are used efficiently (lowering costs), effectively (maximizing impact), equitably (reaching those most in need), and sustainably (over the long term) (Bourguignon and Platteau 2015; Buse and Walt 1996). However, coordination of climate finance is often approached as a principally technocratic challenge, leaving its underlying political dynamics unaddressed. In this article, we explore the discrepancy between how climate finance coordination is framed as an apolitical, technocratic issue, while the actual practice of coordination remains fundamentally shaped by political dynamics.

We distinguish between whether an issue is *political* (involving diverging actor preferences) or *politicized/depoliticized* (how it is represented, specifically, whether such divergence is recognized) (Kenis and Lievens 2014). The discussion about climate finance coordination has been depoliticized in ways that circumscribe the possibilities for political choices addressing the key political questions underlying climate finance and shaping institutional fragmentation (see, inter alia, Fawcett et al. 2017; Feindt et al. 2020; Jaeger 2007). This depoliticized framing masks the divergence of actor preferences at work in global climate governance.

We explore climate finance coordination dynamics across both international and national levels. At the international level, we focus our examination of coordination on the two largest and most prominent multilateral climate

2. The term *developing countries* in this article is used as it is understood under the UNFCCC.

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funds, the GCF and the CIF. Studying climate finance coordination dynamics at the international level is crucial, as multilateral funds are an important site of engagement between climate finance contributors and recipients and therefore shed light on the overall principles and patterns of interaction that shape the landscape. At the national level, we examine two countries where both funds are active: Kenya and Zambia. This level is vital for providing a full picture of what climate finance coordination looks like at the level of implementation and in an environment with different dynamics between different recipient country actors (e.g., from implementing ministries). While the international and national levels are distinct, dynamics between multilateral actors level on the international level often translate into national-level dynamics involving these actors as well as domestic ones (as Newell et al. [2018] have shown in the case of agriculture in Kenya).

Our article contributes to three distinct academic literatures. First, regarding the literature on coordination, our analysis underscores how coordination can itself be an arena of political contestation, adding underexplored dimensions to the existing literature, which has disproportionately focused on the synergies and mutual benefits that coordination may confer (Bigsten and Tengstam 2015; Bourguignon and Platteau 2015; Buse and Walt 1996). Second, our findings contribute to the climate finance literature by demonstrating how political divergence over climate finance influences even seemingly apolitical exercises (on how climate finance is depoliticized, see Bracking 2015; Bracking and Leffel 2021). Third, the findings contribute to the literature on global environmental governance (e.g., Biermann et al. 2009; Jordan et al. 2018; Keohane and Victor 2011) by studying a response to fragmentation (depoliticized coordination) and demonstrating how political issues are "rendered technical" (see, e.g., Li 2007).

In the sections that follow, we begin by describing the methodology of our study and the context in which it occurs. Next, we discuss climate finance coordination and how it has been framed in depoliticized terms at the international level between the UNFCCC-aligned GCF and the World Bank–led CIF, as well as at the national level between these funds in Kenya and Zambia. We then turn our attention to actual practices of climate finance coordination on the international and national levels, showing how they reflect political divergences, before offering our conclusions.

Method

Multilateral climate funds play crucial roles for climate finance coordination on international and national levels. Whereas each contributor or recipient country may have its own preferences regarding the purpose of climate finance, multilateral climate funds are well positioned to fill systems-level financing gaps. While we treat the different organizations as distinct entities, we acknowledge that there are variations in preferences within each organization. Furthermore,

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several actors engage with both the GCF and the CIF, but without necessarily pulling them toward similar positions.

We selected the GCF and the CIF because both have coordination as important parts of their mandates, and no other multi- or bilateral actors are as active in terms of coordination. The two funds provide an important window into the ongoing discussion of the key political questions in the climate finance landscape. We collected data on coordination between these funds through document analysis and interviews with stakeholders (especially officials of the two funds). We identified all relevant stakeholders through a detailed and exhaustive mapping of all the actors involved with the two funds at international, national, and subnational levels, using publicly available documents and information. We contacted the two funds as well as additional relevant actors, such as financial institutions and bilateral aid donors, for interviews and additional information on coordination.

The research team employed two unified interview protocols, for the international and national levels, respectively. These protocols included questions mapping the actors and institutions involved and confirming our stakeholder mapping; a discussion of coordination practices, challenges, and conflicts; and, at the national level, a discussion of the history of climate finance in the country. We conducted interviews with all the stakeholders that the detailed mapping exercise identified as playing key roles (including several senior officials of the two funds) and asked the same questions of all interviewees. We reached a point where new interviews provided the same information as earlier interviews, after which we triangulated what we learned in interviews with documentary evidence, as detailed later. We minimized the risk of bias in terms of whom we interviewed through our initial mapping of stakeholders by interviewing all the key identified stakeholders and by asking the same questions of all interviewees. The number of actors charged with climate finance coordination activities in relation to the two funds is limited, so it was possible to cover the involved stakeholders comprehensively.

Data collection at the international level took place between 2017 and 2021. We conducted fifteen interviews with GCF stakeholders located primarily in Songdo, South Korea, and ten interviews with CIF stakeholders located in Washington, DC (see the online Appendix for a list of interviewees). Additionally, we studied all publicly available documentation from the two funds that relate to coordination; examples include meeting minutes, briefs, reports, and project descriptions. We reviewed, first, the collected documents for evidence of organizational strategies, policies, and processes relevant for coordination and, second, project design, review, and evaluation literature relevant to CIF and GCF climate financing in Zambia and Kenya.

At the national level, we focused on Kenya and Zambia and the implementation of GCF and CIF projects as well as broader climate finance coordination in these two countries. We selected Kenya and Zambia because they receive relatively large sums of climate finance and have an active international

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development community operating alongside private-sector actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and think tanks, all of which also play a role in coordination. Selecting two African countries means that fewer case-specific factors may confound our analysis but also limits how much we can generalize our findings to diverging national contexts, such as small island developing states. Using our unified interview protocol, we conducted seventeen in-person, semistructured interviews in Kenya and seventeen in Zambia. We also analyzed national-level fund and policy documents on coordination, sourced from the governments of the two countries; relevant international organizations (including the World Bank and UNFCCC); bilateral aid agencies; and national and international think tanks and CSOs.

To analyze our interview and documentary data, we systematically identified key concepts related to coordination in the data. To explore to what degree coordination was framed in depoliticizing terms, we studied whether the framing of coordination allows for acknowledging contestation and trade-offs between objectives or if some choices are circumvented (see Kenis and Lievens 2014). In particular, we studied framing along three dimensions: the purpose of coordination, divergences over political issues, and costs and benefits to different groups. The purpose of climate finance coordination may be framed in terms of, on one hand, improving effectiveness and efficiency or, on the other hand, furthering explicitly normative objectives, such as equity. Divergences over political issues as well as differences in costs and benefits may be ignored or acknowledged. Along all three dimensions, framings that focus on improving efficiency and/or effectiveness and that ignore divergence and differences in costs and benefits (e.g., framing coordination as making everybody better off) have been considered more depoliticizing than framings that highlight normativity, divergence, and differences (see Remling 2018).

Climate Finance Coordination: Its Politics and Framings

Since the early 1990s, the contestation over climate finance's basic nature and its relationship to development aid flows has shaped the landscape of climate finance (see Table 1). On one hand, actors, especially developing countries and CSOs, have consistently argued that climate finance flows should be new and additional to development aid (Stadelmann et al. 2011) because the former remedies the historical responsibility of developed countries (Ciplet et al. 2013; Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2011; Skovgaard 2021, 153–156). On the other hand, actors from industrialized countries have argued that climate change should be mainstreamed into development activities, complement existing development aid, and leverage existing structures to support efficient and effective finance delivery (Bailer and Weiler 2015). The relationship between the UNFCCC-aligned and the World Bank–aligned climate finance institutions is key to this (Graham and Serdaru 2020). The World Bank and its affiliated institutions promote a more efficiency-oriented perspective and the importance of

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Table 1
Two Perspectives on Climate Finance, Reflected in the CIF and GCF

	Climate Finance as Development	*Climate Finance as Distinct*
General view	Climate finance is similar to development financing; therefore, existing development finance mechanisms should be used and climate change mainstreamed.	Climate finance is distinct from development financing; therefore, we need new delivery mechanisms, which should be highly concessional, developing country led, and additional to development mechanisms.
Overall policy regime	Development policy/World Bank	Climate policy/UNFCCC
Who provides	"Donors"	"Contributors"
Via what bodies	CIFs	UNFCCC funds: GCF, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility
Who implements	MDBs	UNEP, UNDP, MDBs, direct access entities
Concessionality	Moderately concessional lending, some grants for capacity building	Highly concessional lending, grants
Who decides	MDBs develop projects, shaped by contributor-aligned decision-making	Different actors, including MDBs and developing countries, develop projects, the latter also through direct access; high degree of developing country influence
What constitutes "good" coordination?	GCF and CIF playing equal but distinct roles in climate finance coordination	GCF as the centerpiece of climate finance coordination, CIF potentially sunset
At the national level	Zambia as example: CIF funding to coordination mechanisms emphasizes ministries of finance and development planning	Kenya as example: engaged with UNFCCC processes and with a government agency accredited to the GCF

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mainstreaming climate change into development aid. Institutions rooted in the UNFCCC (in which developing countries are highly influential) have emphasized that climate finance should be driven by climate-specific concerns and equity issues, such as historical responsibilities (Persson and Remling 2014). This difference is rooted in the experience of the World Bank in development financing and World Bank funding being more contributor-driven and aligned with developed country preferences (see, e.g., Goldman 2005) than funds under the UNFCCC, which has a higher degree of developing country representation in its decision-making. Furthermore, UNFCCC-aligned funds often make decisions by consensus, or with all countries having an equal vote, whereas the World Bank apportions voting rights based on shares of contributions, giving contributor countries outsized influence.

The contestation between those defining climate finance as a kind of development aid and as distinct from development aid also lies at the center of ongoing discussions on who should coordinate climate finance flows. Who coordinates is key to the fragmentation of climate finance governance, because actors are reluctant to relinquish control to actors with divergent preferences (Pickering et al. 2017).

By "coordination" in the context of climate finance, we refer to practices or processes in which several actors engage to facilitate the achievement of (individual or shared) goals (see Lundsgaarde et al. 2018a, 2018b). These practices and processes typically lie along a continuum of institutionalized interaction, ranging from less intensive efforts of information sharing to more intensive ones of collective implementation (see Orbie et al. 2017). Strong forms of coordination generally entail the conceding of decision-making power and authority to other actors. We argue that the dynamic pattern of formal and informal interactions (Jarzabkowski et al. 2012; Okhuysen and Bechky 2009), whereby actors influence and respond to the influences of others, is essential to coordination, and thus we go beyond formal institutional mechanisms.

The absence of a global actor with a mandate to govern climate finance provision is central to efforts to improve coordination of climate finance. We find that multilateral climate funds and recipient countries are central to these efforts. Contributor countries and CSOs have not played major coordinating roles.

Framing Climate Finance Coordination on the International Level: The GCF and the CIF

The interaction between the World Bank– and UNFCCC-centric governance systems plays out through the two most important climate financing bodies, the GCF and the CIF, with coordination being key to managing interaction between the funds.

The CIF was established by the World Bank in 2008 and operates outside of the UNFCCC framework. The CIF comprises four smaller funds with specific

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topical foci—the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), the Forest Investment Program, the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), and the Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program (SREP)—but that are managed collectively by the CIF Administrative Unit and governed by separate trust fund committees, with members split evenly between contributor and recipient countries. The latter three funds make up the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) within the CIF framework.

The GCF, established in 2010, is an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC. The GCF receives annual guidance from the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) via its board, split evenly between developed and developing countries. Whereas the GCF works with a variety of accredited entities, including national-level actors, the CIF finances only projects proposed by one of five multilateral development banks (MDBs): the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, or the International Finance Corporation. Consequently, recipient countries cannot access CIF finance directly (Masullo et al. 2015). The CIF reaches decisions by consensus, unlike the rest of the World Bank system. Yet, given that the CIF works exclusively with MDBs that prepare project proposals (and operate on the basis of country vote shares), and is hosted by the World Bank, the CIF can be understood as closely aligned with the preferences of the World Bank and the MDBs. The CIF's relationship with the MDBs is crucial for understanding its role: a key objective of the CIF is to catalyze climate action from the MDBs beyond CIF finance, inter alia by leveraging MDB finance and by increasing awareness and knowledge of climate issues in the MDBs (CIF 2019b). The CIF mainly provides concessional loans, with a larger degree of concessionality than typical MDB finance (i.e., loans more favorable due to lower interest rates or longer loan periods; Scott 2017). The more concessional nature of CIF finance reflects how CIF projects are supposed to be riskier and more innovative, and hence more difficult to finance on market or near-market terms, than typical MDB projects (Bloomberg 2019; CIF 2019a).

The CIF founding documents included a "sunset clause" to cease operations once the GCF was operational. A key moment for GCF-CIF contestation emerged in 2019, when the GCF was in the midst of its first replenishment cycle and the CIF called to be recapitalized, thus postponing the sunsetting. Proponents of the GCF were concerned that the CIF recapitalization would divert funds away from the GCF and called for the CIF to sunset. In contrast, the CIF argued for the continued necessity of their existence, citing their close relationship to the MDBs as a key advantage for leveraging funds at scale (CIF 2019b).

The CIF and the GCF reflect the positions of the MDBs and the UNFCCC as well as of the states behind their creation, in the case of the CIF, industrialized countries (including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan), and in the case of the GCF, the UNFCCC member states (i.e., developing countries being a majority). It is difficult to disentangle the extent to which the

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behavior of the CIF and GCF is driven by states, institutional anchoring (MDBs/UNFCCC), or the secretariats of the two funds, as these factors overlap. Yet the behavior of the two funds corresponds well to the preferences of, on one hand, industrialized countries and MDBs and, on the other hand, the UNFCCC and its membership.

Both the GCF and the CIF have coordination as a top priority in their mandates. Both funds are supposed to play catalyzing and transformative roles that influence other funders; coordinating with actors across scales is seen as essential to these roles.

The CIF from the outset defined coordination with and of the MDBs on the international and country levels as an integral part of its activities, reflected in the prominent role of the MDB committees of the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) within its setup (CIF 2011, 2014). The purpose of international-level coordination has been seen as improving and harmonizing the understanding of climate finance within the MDBs and leveraging MDB finance (Clean Technology Fund [CTF] and Strategic Climate Fund [SCF] Trust Fund Committees 2012; CIF 2011, 2014). The emphasis on leveraging and on "exchange of information and experience" (among MDBs) downplays the political divergences and differences in costs and benefits regarding the approaches of the two funds and frames coordination as a technical exercise with the purpose of achieving shared objectives (CIF 2011, 2014). The CIF also stressed the importance of coordination on the recipient country level, especially among MDBs and recipient country institutions, and in the context of the CIF's programmatic approach (CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committees 2012).

The GCF also prioritizes coordination with other multilateral funds, including through the development of fund-to-fund arrangements and promotion of coherence at the national level. The GCF has stressed the importance of coordinating with the CIF, the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environment Facility. This coordination has been framed in technical terms, consisting of utilizing complementarities and "enhanc[ing] efficiencies, thereby freeing up resources for funds to spend more on projects and less on preparatory work" (GCF 2018, 2). The GCF's mandate is unique in that it purports to "promote the paradigm shift towards low emission and climate-resilient development pathways," aspiring to go beyond the activities that other financiers are supporting (GCF 2011, 2). Thus the GCF treats climate finance as distinct from development aid.

That both funds are committed to coordination and frame it in similar technical ways does not mean that they inevitably coordinate. The CIF and the GCF co-published a 2020 report on synergies among climate funds. The report found that increased coordination on the international and national levels was crucial for achieving synergies, with the purpose of reducing costs and improving effectiveness (CIF and GCF 2020). It also identified transaction costs as the main obstacle to this coordination. Altogether, the consequences of

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coordination and the lack thereof were framed in apolitical, utility-maximizing terms, and the causes of lack of coordination were defined in terms of initial costs (time, money) rather than political differences. For instance, the purpose of the report is defined as optimally leveraging synergies to maximize effectiveness and increase efficiency "in the common interest of the international community" (10). Likewise, one lesson from the country case studies in the report is that having a clear leader among the direct access entities or MDBs improves synergies (30), without addressing the power relations that influence and are influenced by whether it is a direct access entity or MDB that leads. Earlier and less prominent reports from the funds have adopted a similar framing of coordination between the two funds, treating it as an apolitical exercise that concerns simplifying procedures, freeing up resources, and identifying complementarities to improve efficiency, thus downplaying the political divergences between the funds (GCF 2018).

The emphasis on complementarity in the 2020 report and previous publications (e.g., GCF 2018) defines the differences between the funds as a benefit that allows them to fill different roles and leaves out that these differences are the result of fundamental political divergences. The GCF was established to be different from the CIF not because states wanted it to play a complementary role but because developing countries were dissatisfied with the CIF. Yet, the joint 2020 report on coordination between the funds (in less depoliticizing terms) acknowledged the differences in funding paradigms and requirements as well as approval processes and defined them as issues to be addressed through a "thorough exchange" between the funds' secretariats (CIF and GCF 2020, 42).[3]

Framing Climate Finance at the Recipient Country Level: Kenya and Zambia

At the recipient level, developing country governments act as important coordinators as they organize climate financing priorities horizontally across ministries and vertically across administrative levels and with local governments (Lundsgaarde et al. 2018a). Governments also engage and coordinate with international funding sources to access funds and implement projects. The ways in which national ministries and climate finance contributors interact, and their respective preferences and strategies, affect how and to what extent CIF and GCF coordination evolves nationally.

In Kenya, climate finance coordination is largely framed as a mechanism for reducing duplication and increasing efficiency in the use of funds, particularly in official documents and policies. The focus is largely on establishing the

3. After the end of the period studied here, the heads of the CIF, GCF, Adaptation Fund, and Global Environment Facility have called for strengthening coordination to utilize complementarities. See "A Joint Statement by the Secretariats of the AF, GCF, GEF and CIFs on Enhanced Complementarity and Collaboration," available at: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/a-joint-statement-by-the-secretariats-of-the-af-gcf-gef-and-cifs-on-enhanced-complementarity-and-collaboration/, last accessed December 14, 2022.

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legal and political framework to enable transparency and information exchange (Kiremu et al. 2022; Tirpak et al. 2014). For example, the Climate Change Act of 2016 mandated the establishment of a Climate Fund at both the national and county levels to coordinate climate finance flows, with a Climate Change Council chaired by the president, and sitting under the National Treasury, established to manage the fund. The act gives the council the authority to "set out procedures and requirements for effective and transparent administration of the Fund, including tracking and accounting of climate change finance."[4] The functions set out within the act, therefore, primarily focus on information sharing and tracking, rather than accounting for the roles and interests of different actors or sources of funding. This is also reflected in Kenya's National Policy on Climate Finance, which states how the fund "can support the mobilization, coordination and tracking of climate finance" and reinforces the purpose of climate finance coordination in Kenya being information sharing rather than reconciling diverging interests.[5] Several of our interviewees also stressed the importance of coordination for avoiding duplication of efforts and for donors to "understand what the government prioritizes" and ensure harmonization and alignment with government priorities.[6]

Lack of emphasis on the politics of coordination was evident in how interviewees framed barriers to effective coordination, with a number of government actors at both the national and subnational levels citing insufficient capacity and resources to enable them to coordinate with development partners. For example, when asked about whether coordination in Kenya is effective, a representative of the National Treasury stated that it was not to a large extent because they "don't have enough resources" and "are limited in terms of the personnel," with additional identified barriers relating to poor tracking systems (Kiremu et al. 2022), insufficient time to engage with partners, and high employee turnover. Similar barriers were identified at the county level, where local-level climate finance arrangements have been deemed ineffective due to inadequate funding and technical capacity (Naeku 2020). A representative of the Climate Change Directorate highlighted how this lack of capacity and resources is fundamentally political, stating that "our ministers feel that this is a waste and is not necessary" and that "we are being supported by the development partners and CSOs, not the government." However, the technical framing of the issue by the National Treasury, the key coordinating body, emphasized the need to build capacity and mobilize resources for coordination, rather than tackling the fundamental lack of political will to mobilize those resources for coordination.

4. Climate Change Act of 2016, Kenya, available at: https://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ClimateChangeActNo11of2016.pdf, last accessed December 14, 2022; quote on 23.
5. National Policy on Climate Finance, Kenya, 2016, available at: https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken190011.pdf. Last accessed December 12, 2022; quote on vii.
6. Interview with Danish international development agency official, August 15, 2022.

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This also moves focus away from how diverging interests may hinder coordination. For example, a representative of the National Environment Management Authority highlighted that coordination mechanisms "need to go beyond bringing everybody to the decision-making table and also manage competing interests." Moreover, the disconnect between the priorities of donors and the government creates tensions between actors and can limit the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms (Newell et al. 2014. The literature has also highlighted how political and economic preferences of national and subnational actors in Kenya can dictate how funding streams are utilized and lead to potential contestation (Barrett 2015; Naess et al. 2015). However, the framing of coordination barriers as technocratic by key government actors, particularly the National Treasury, leads to increased emphasis placed on capacity building, awareness raising at the subnational level, and improvement of tracking systems to drive coordination, rather than exploring how to reconcile conflicting interests.

In Zambia, the coordination of climate finance has evolved through a process with competing preferences by both climate finance donors and recipient government agencies regarding how and by whom coordination should be led (Funder and Dupuy 2022). The CIFs have—through the World Bank—since 2009 supported a national Zambian climate finance coordination mechanism through the PPCR. The declared purpose of this support has been twofold: first, to ensure institutional efficiency in managing the growing influx of climate finance to Zambia, which, according to the dedicated CIF project document, "threatens to overwhelm Zambia's fragile capacity" (World Bank 2011b, 29), and second, to support mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into national and sectoral government development policies and plans. A key success indicator for the PPCR is thus "evidence of strengthened government capacity and coordination mechanism to mainstream climate resilience" (CIF 2012, 13). The formal rationale and purpose of CIF support to climate finance coordination are thus heavily centered on enhancing institutional capacity and efficiency, with no mention of political differences or unequal distribution of costs and benefits for the involved actors.

The CIF has supported that this coordination is led by ministries of finance and development planning, rather than the environment/natural resource ministries that were the original designated authorities under the UNFCCC. This has been justified by the need to mainstream climate concerns into development policy to ensure policy integration and avoid inconsistent programming of development and climate interventions (World Bank 2011b). Fundamentally, this position defines climate finance as a subset of the broader development architecture (see Table 1). During our interviews, World Bank staff said that they did not find it logical that climate financing is separated from development aid and that it was natural that domestic development institutions and donors—with their long-term experience from aid—should be key actors in administering climate finance. The World Bank has furthermore argued that

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day-to-day coordination was best undertaken by a semiautonomous secretariat detached from the established government planning mechanisms, to best accommodate the multiple stakeholders (World Bank 2011a). However, during subsequent interviews, World Bank staff acknowledged that this preference was also tied closely to long-standing donor concerns over corruption and the importance of ensuring donor control over funds, but such issues could not be explicitly stated in dialogues with recipient governments.

United Nations (UN) organizations in Zambia have taken a different approach. With limited GCF representation on the ground, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has facilitated linkages between Zambian institutions and UN climate mechanisms and joining in GCF proposals. In so doing, the UNDP has sought to promote ministries of environment and natural resources as the lead institutions in climate finance coordination and has emphasized the need to integrate the coordination of climate finance—including GCF funds—into existing government coordination mechanisms. The justification is that the ministries with technical know-how are best suited to lead coordination and that coordination mechanisms are more sustainable when embedded in standard government practices (Funder and Dupuy 2022). However, during interviews, UN staff expressed skepticism toward the World Bank's approach and explained that as a global body of governments, the UN system would follow government preferences and planning mechanisms and favor the GCF and other UN-affiliated climate finance mechanisms.

These diverging donor positions vis-à-vis climate finance coordination in Zambia illustrate how broader differences between CIF and GCF actors materialize in recipient countries and become entangled in long-standing competition between World Bank and UN agencies (Moore 2012; Rai and Tanner 2016; Seballos and Kreft 2011). The formal rationales for occupying divergent positions are framed in technical terms, centering on the need for policy integration, avoiding inconsistent programming, ensuring technical competence in coordination, and fostering organizational influence. But while such features are certainly important for climate finance coordination, the technical framing says nothing of the underlying political divergences and differences in costs and benefits for the involved actors.

How Political Dynamics Shape Climate Finance Coordination in Practice

International Coordination Processes

There have been various attempts to coordinate climate finance at the international level, both in general and specifically between the GCF and the CIF, including both formal and informal coordination. For example, the executive directors of each climate fund meet annually in the margins of the COPs, chaired by the GCF's executive director. While both the GCF and the CIF have

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sought to increase coordination, they have ended mainly coordinating with other UNFCCC institutions and MDBs, respectively.[7] At several of the coordination meetings hosted by either the GCF or the CIF and aiming to improve coordination among all climate funds, the other fund has either not participated or done so by telephone only, limiting the possibilities for discussion.[8] Within these two clusters of coordination—the GCF- and CIF-centric ones—coordination has been well functioning.[9] Coordination has been enhanced by the informal coordination emerging from formal coordination structures. For instance, officials who know each other from formal coordination meetings have used WhatsApp or other messaging services as a mode of frequent informal coordination.[10]

With relatively weak coordination *between* the GCF and CIF, and relatively stronger coordination within their respective clusters, the political fault line between these groups of institutions has tended to be reinforced rather than addressed. Despite the formal annual meeting between the GCF, the CIF, and other climate finance CEOs, interviewees stated that operational follow-up was limited between the GCF and CIF. Within each cluster, however, both formal and informal opportunities for coordination are more numerous and more productive, leading to more intensive cooperation.

Furthermore, coordination takes place in technical fora that typically preclude public input and debate about fundamental objectives. Both within the GCF and CIF clusters and between them, it is the responsibility mainly of technical experts rather than politically appointed managers.[11] While the political meetings are short and annual, technical experts responsible for implementation and other practical tasks have more time to coordinate. Yet, technical staff do not have authority to change their organizations' policies or accept trade-offs between wider sets of issues (Egeberg 1999) and cannot address the fundamental political differences between the two funds, making it difficult for them to coordinate. For instance, lack of agreement between the GCF and the CIF regarding "who funds what" and on their comparative advantages are identified as key stumbling blocks for utilizing synergies (CIF and GCF 2020, 32). Furthermore, their involvement means that coordination is "rendered technical" or treated as a technical issue in an allegedly neutral fashion (Li 2007). "Rendering technical" implies that a practice (in this case, coordination) is treated as an instrument for achieving a set of pregiven and undisputed objectives (e.g., efficiency), rather than for discussing diverging objectives and the trade-offs between them (Felli 2015; Kenis and Lievens 2014).

7. Interviews conducted in Washington, DC, and Songdo, South Korea; see the Appendix.
8. Interview with senior CIF official, April 2, 2019; interview with GCF board member, August 20, 2019.
9. Interview with senior CIF official, April 2, 2019; interview with GCF board member, August 20, 2019.
10. Interview with senior IADB officials, April 3, 2019.
11. Interview with senior CIF official, April 2, 2019.

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While the GCF staff sees the GCF's relationship with UNFCCC funds and embeddedness in the UNFCCC as strengths, the CIF staff views the UNFCCC and its politics as cumbersome, often referencing the CIF's strong relationship with the MDBs as more effective for catalyzing finance.[12] Thus, while funds view coordination as imperative, significant disagreement remains about how coordination should occur and with who at the helm. The debate over whether the CIF should have "sunset" when the GCF became operational appears crucial, as it is a widespread opinion within the GCF that this sunset should be activated, a view that runs against the idea of equal coordination between the funds.[13] These political differences reflect divergent views of whether funds should be mainstreamed in development financing processes or constitute a distinct stream of funding.

Not addressing the political contestation that led to the creation of different multilateral climate finance institutions in the first place constitutes a clear case of depoliticization. It also underscores why coordination among these institutions has proven elusive: technical-level discussions based on technocratic and politically neutral framings of coordination have difficulties overcoming the divergences that appear when the GCF and the CIF try to engage in substantial coordination. Thus depoliticization has not overcome the underlying political divergence that shapes the climate finance landscape but ends up reflecting and perhaps even reinforcing these divergences. The resulting outcome of coordination is therefore different from formally stated common goals of improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Domestic Coordination Processes in Recipient Countries

Despite the apolitical framing of coordination in many of Kenya's policy documents, our interviews revealed the fundamental political nature of coordination in the country, driving contestation and fragmentation. For example, although the majority of climate finance in the country comes from bilateral contributors, our interviews indicate that the national government prioritizes coordination with multilaterals like the GCF, perhaps because of promises of large amounts of multilateral climate finance (Odhengo et al. 2019). The National Treasury, which holds the mandate for climate finance coordination, is also the designated national authority for both the GCF and the CIF. Despite this, provision of finance through the GCF is prioritized, meaning that the CIF and bilateral contributors are often sidelined and left out of formal coordination mechanisms.

Second, despite the existence of government-led coordination working groups, several development partners highlighted that the climate finance

12. Interview with senior CIF official, April 2, 2019; interview with senior GCF official, May 2, 2019; interview with civil society experts, April 4, 2019.
13. Interview with senior GCF official, May 20, 2019; interview with senior GCF official, May 2, 2019; interview with GCF board member, August 20, 2019.

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working group has not met in several years. Government bodies give primarily technocratic reasons for this, such as a lack of time, capacity, and resources. However, our interviews reveal fundamental political reasons for this lack of coordination, with the key barrier here being multiple interests within the climate finance landscape, particularly between governmental actors and development partners, such as the World Bank. For example, an interviewee from the Climate Change Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources stated that development partners "already come in with a fixed mind-set of what they are going to do," rather than aligning with government objectives. This leads to two parallel processes of coordination—one for multilateral funds and one for development partners (Mutimba and Wanyoike 2013). Within this context, CSOs, such as the Climate and Development Knowledge Network and the Panafrican Climate Justice Alliance, fill coordination gaps by compensating for the lack of government capacity and contributing to information sharing between these two parallel processes.

Furthermore, several Kenyan government representatives emphasized that they favor direct access, as operationalized by the GCF, as it grants them greater influence over what projects are implemented and whose preferences they serve, rather than going through MDBs. Our data also revealed a lack of commitment from higher levels of government hampering coordination and delaying the establishment of the National Climate Fund. This fund would have held the mandate for coordinating climate finance across the country.

In Zambia, the diverging preferences between the World Bank and UN organizations on climate finance coordination have also—despite the technical framings of these preferences—in practice contributed to a highly politicized climate finance coordination landscape. As discussed, a particularly contested issue has been the question of who should lead the process and whether it should be anchored in government planning mechanisms (van Mossel 2018; van Rooij 2014). This situation has been compounded by the diverging preferences of domestic government agencies, in which ministries of finance and planning have aligned with the World Bank and CIFs to lead climate finance coordination, whereas ministries of environment and natural resources have aligned with UN agencies (Funder and Dupuy 2022).

The efforts by these different actors to pursue their preferences has complicated attempts to consolidate climate finance coordination mechanisms in Zambia. For example, during our interviews, representatives of the involved organizations frequently referred to the fate of a CIF-funded Climate Finance Secretariat established in 2013. The secretariat was eventually disbanded, as opposing government agencies and donors chose not to engage with it and thereby undermined its legitimacy. This included the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, which instead continued to operate a competing UNDP-financed coordination unit. While the current CIF-supported coordination mechanism anchored in the Ministry of National Development Planning has greater support, it also remains contested. In interviews, some donors and

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government staff recounted how they were only waiting for the legal provisions for the current coordination mechanism to expire, after which they would propose an alternative arrangement. During interviews, staff in ministries of environment and natural resources explained how they saw the current arrangement as an artifact of development aid and that climate finance should instead be coordinated by their agencies as a separate domain.

Conclusions

Depoliticization obscures the political divergence at play in the climate finance landscape. The divergence over the extent to which climate finance should be distinct from development aid is reflected in the diverging approaches of the GCF and CIF to inter alia concessionality and developing country influence. Climate finance coordination is undertaken to address the consequences of this divergence in the shape of institutional fragmentation, but depoliticized efforts to improve coordination have been unable to address the fundamental aspects of climate finance fragmentation. Rather, at both the international and recipient country levels, we found that actors coordinated mainly with other actors sharing their preferences, while pursuing their diverging preferences within these distinct coordination fora. As such, coordination can be said to reinforce political fault lines rather than overcoming them.

At the international level, coordination has taken place mainly within distinct clusters centered around, respectively, the GCF and the CIF, with the former coordinating with UNFCCC funds and the latter with MDBs. Attempts at coordination between these two multilateral climate funds have proven largely unsuccessful. This limits the potential of the GCF and the CIF to achieve their transformational and catalyzing mandates. At the domestic level, these distinct clusters influenced how different ministries coordinated with diverging sets of international partners. In Zambia, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning coordinated mainly with World Bank funds, such as the CIF, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources mainly with UNFCCC funds, such as the GCF. Hence the landscape of coordination remains contested as different ministries seek authority as the "leaders" of coordination. This in turn leads to overlapping donor-funded projects that local authorities argue do not align with local development plans but strain local staff resources. In Kenya, this pattern is less apparent, but government actors appear to favor coordination with UNFCCC-related climate funds, such as the GCF, over the CIF and bilateral sources of climate finance owing to perceptions of the country ownership model of the GCF being more suited to local needs. While it is possible that our findings have been influenced by the selection of just two (African) countries as cases, and that other dynamics are at play in other countries, the fact that we have identified similar dynamics at the international level and in two countries indicates that they are widely present.

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The article contributes to three distinct literatures. First, regarding the literature on coordination, our findings demonstrate that coordination itself constitutes an arena of deep political contestation. Thus we identify an important dimension of coordination that this literature and its focus on synergies and mutual benefits often overlooks. Second, the findings contribute to the climate finance literature by deepening our understanding of how contestation over the purpose of climate finance plays out, including in activities intended to circumvent this contestation. Third, the findings contribute to the literature on environmental governance by demonstrating how a response to the fragmentation of climate governance did not overcome the obstacles of fragmentation but led to essentially political issues being rendered technical.

The findings provide new knowledge relevant to climate finance practitioners regarding how to address the key political questions that underlie the issue of climate finance coordination. Given that depoliticized coordination did not overcome the consequences of institutional fragmentation, it is worth exploring the possibility of repoliticizing aspects of climate finance coordination. Repoliticization can take many possible shapes, including acknowledging the existence of opposing views (Kenis and Lievens 2014) as well as conducting politics in public and in a way that is clearly deliberative (Hay 2014). Yet, it is a topic of scholarly debate whether the stability of depoliticization or the conflict of repoliticization is more conducive for climate action (Paterson et al. 2022). While scholars, such as Bracking (2015), have argued that depoliticization of climate finance favors incumbents and limits choice, a common view among practitioners (including our informants) is that repoliticization can lead to time-consuming political discussion. If other climate finance deliberations under the UNFCCC are any guide, it may take several years to reach agreement. Given the urgency of financing climate action in developing countries, depoliticized coordination may thus be the only viable way forward. Nonetheless, given that depoliticized coordination does not deliver on its promises, we argue that important political decisions are to be made regarding the extent to which climate finance should or will be repoliticized. Such repoliticization could be experimental and focus on explicitly political framings (that highlight differences regarding the purpose of climate finance) or could move more of the coordination to political levels capable of addressing political issues.

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