

Johanna Baues/
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Alliance of Small Island States

**An example of a
successful international
climate alliance**

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Heft 63

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A. Introduction

We are at a time when the world is facing many different crises. One of these major global challenges is climate change. Even though this is a worldwide crisis, some regions of the globe are more endangered by the threads of climate change than others. This is particularly true of small-island states, also known as SIDS in the UN context. These islands are most affected by climate change as they are not landlocked and desperately rely on the health of the marine environment, not only for their economy but also the safety of their people from climate catastrophes. Ultimately, these will be the first states to be uninhabitable and vanish if the climate continues to change in the way that it has in the last century.

Since we are talking about a global problem, a common global approach is needed to solve it. This can be achieved, for example, through joint cooperation in an intergovernmental organization such as the UN. However, how do small island states make themselves heard in a global capitalist world in which not everyone is equally affected by the climate crisis? Against this backdrop, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) was founded to fight climate change together.

To approach the topic, we followed AOSIS for a year and tracked their previous milestones and current actions in their own struggle to make themselves heard and ultimately secure their existence. In the following, we want to approach the following research question: **“What strategies do Small Island Developing States (SIDS) use to overcome their lack of structural power and increase their leverage in the global fight of the climate crisis?”**

To do this, we proceed as follows. Firstly, we talk about the AOSIS itself, the main actors in our research; then we define the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which publishes the main scientific documents on climate change. This is followed by the theoretical basis of our work, in which we explain the different power strategies that AOSIS uses to make itself heard in international negotiations and to achieve its goals. This is followed by the analysis section of our work, in which we examine which strategy AOSIS pursues and how they achieve the most success. This includes our media analysis, where we look at the podcast project and the AOSIS fellowship program. This is followed by our empirical observations from our research year of April 2023 to April 2024, where we first examined the oral hearings of AOSIS from the “Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law” in front of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Then we analyze the appearance of AOSIS at the Conference of the Parties 28 in Dubai in December 2024. Finally, we draw our conclusions from our research and return to our research question.

B. Alliance of Small Island States

The Alliance of Small Island States, AOSIS in short, is a collective of 39 states which have a similar topographical location and can thus expect a similar level of threat imposed by climate change. In 1990, the alliance was formed, during the second World Climate Conference in Geneva, with most of the current member states being islands, classified by the United Nations as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), aiming to stand united for the protection of the earth and its climate. Due to the socioeconomic standings of these small islands, the individual member states do not have a substantial amount of structural or economic power at UN meetings. When they work together, they have the backing of approximately one fifth of the UN member states. With this appearance as a unified negotiator, they can exert more influence, which became apparent after the Second World Climate Conference, shortly after their establishment (cf. Gayoom, n. d.). One of the major accomplishments for example took place at the UN General Assembly in 1991. Vanuatu made a contribution on behalf of the AOSIS to establish a department, specifically tailored to the analysis and prevention of climate change (cf. United Nations, 1991). With the help of their participation, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in short UNFCCC, was adopted a year later, and finally came into force in 1994 (Betzold, Castro and Weiler, 2012, p. 594).

The UNFCCC has since then held annual climate conferences, namely the Conference of Parties (COP), at which important agreements in relation to climate change and how to deal with it are adopted, for example the Paris Agreement in 2015 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2008. Especially at these conferences, the AOSIS member states act together towards establishing a better protection of all SIDS and countries most endangered by climate change. They also operate as a conglomerate with an individual state hosting the head chair of the Alliance, which is rotated every two to three years, the current head chair being Samoa.

Recognizing their limited influence individually, these nations united together to form a powerful bloc in climate-change negotiations, primarily focusing on the regions of the Pacific, Caribbean, and Indian Ocean, where most of the member states are located. The primary objective of AOSIS is to unify the voices of these vulnerable states to ensure their sustainable development and environmental protection. Key goals include advocating for substantial reductions in global greenhouse-gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, promoting adaptation and resilience by securing financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives, ensuring access to international financial mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and raising global awareness for the existential threats faced by small island nations (cf. AOSIS, 2019b).

AOSIS operates mainly within the framework of the United Nations, acting as a negotiating bloc at the UNFCCC and other relevant international forums. All member states of the AOSIS work together on the global stage in negotiations to propose and support unilateral agreements and commitments, while further exchanging knowledge between the member states. They also seek partnerships with other countries, international organizations and NGOs for support. Through various capacity-building initiatives, the AOSIS strengthens the ability of its member states to collectively fight climate change and advocate for their rights. By doing so, they are amplifying the voices of their member states, marking the AOSIS as a crucial advocate for immediate action against climate change, emphasizing the harsh reality these countries face if climate change is not addressed in a meaningful manner. They furthermore hold strategical meetings in preparations for the upcoming Conference of Parties (COP) each year. Here, they come together to form a coherent plan on what they want to advocate for at the upcoming

international climate conferences. Each member state has its own concerns that it would like to raise in negotiations to improve the country's situation. However, many countries prioritize individual concerns in order to form a more cohesive acting plan to further strengthen their negotiation power as an alliance. These meetings are normally held around the time of the Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany.

The AOSIS therefore combines an extraordinary situation in which survival is at stake. Extraordinary situations sometimes require creative measures, which is how we came across the Commission of Small Island States, or COSIS for short, in our research. Member states of COSIS so far are Antigua and Barbuda, Tuvalu, Palau, Niue, Vanuatu, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Kitts and Nevis, but the commission is open to all members of AOSIS (Commission of small island states, 2021).

On 12 December 2022, this commission submitted a request for an advisory opinion to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg Germany. The legal questions to be answered are as follows:

“What are the specific obligations of State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the “UNCLOS”), including under Part XII:

(a) to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment in relation to the deleterious effects that result or are likely to result from climate change, including through ocean warming and sea-level rise, and ocean acidification, which are caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere?

(b) to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change impacts, including ocean warming and sea level rise, and ocean acidification?” (International Tribunal for the Law of the sea, 2022)

We will refer to this request for an advisory opinion again in the following. This requested advisory opinion was also negotiated throughout the course of our project, and after the end of our research year, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea provided its advisory opinion.

At the same time, a similar advisory opinion was requested at the International Court of Justice, to gather as much attention as possible for their situation and to be shown many different legal ways to fight for their concerns (Guterres, 2023).

In summary, the AOSIS is an association of many small-island states that are fighting the same battle for survival in relation to climate change due to their similar geographical location. Due to their similar conditions in terms of location and economy, they use an alliance to improve their status in world politics. That alone is not enough. Below we will look at the other key success factors that have led AOSIS to where they are today, one of which is their constant insistence on scientific facts.

C. IPCC

The IPCC, short for Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is a major body founded by the UN General Assembly dedicated to the scientific assessment of climate change and its consequences. It was founded in 1998 by the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization, with the aim to provide major political players with comprehensive and scientifically sound information on the trajectory of climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019).

In the following, we briefly explain the structure of the IPCC. The IPCC has since then contributed to global climate policy through regular reports on the matter. However, the IPCC does not impose concrete solutions or precise political actions for the members of the UN. The reports of the IPCC do not consist of data they themselves collected, but these reports are rather a result of the analysis of the evaluation of existing data and literature. Therefore, the IPCC plays a significant role in the global fight against climate change by raising awareness of the trajectory and threat of climate change. The establishment of the IPCC was first endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1988, with its task being to prepare a comprehensive review on the current state of climate change, with a special focus on social and economic impacts and what potential response strategies have to look like for future climate conventions. Since then, the IPCC has made a total of six assessment cycles and thus published a report for each one of them. It has also produced a range of Methodology Reports, Special Reports and Technical Papers, in response to requests for information on specific scientific and technical matters from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), governments and international organizations (cf. Deutsche IPCC-Koordinierungsstelle, 2024).

The IPCC also plays an important role for AOSIS, as it is used as a scientific basis for its actions at international climate negotiations, as seen by their presentations at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (cf. Cooley, S.: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, day 1 part 2 p.6).

Even though some states criticize the findings of the IPCC reports, they are the most scientifically accurate climate studies that exist. The researchers and authors of the IPCC reports do not actually conduct their own research; it is rather a collection of more than a thousand individual climate studies, which are combined and published in different reports. Governments propose scientists to work on an IPCC report to the IPCC Board. From these proposals, the IPCC Executive Board makes a final selection of the scientists and divides them into three different working groups covering different areas of climate science. These three working groups then prepare their reports separately, and these findings are then summarized in an overarching Synthesis Report. Once this basis has been established, the scientists sit down together and write the Summary for Policymakers (SPM). This outlines the most important findings for political decision-makers and is usually thirty pages long. Before the SPM can be adopted, this report must be submitted to the member governments, and they must approve the written report, although the governments can still make changes to the wording during this process. However, the authors of the report must still ensure that the scientific basis of the report is not violated (cf. Deutsche IPCC-Koordinierungsstelle, 2024).

The Executive Committee of the IPCC consists of approximately 30 members from various countries and regions around the world. These include the Chair, several Vice-Chairs and the members of the Executive Committee, all of whom are generally experts in the field of climate science. The election of the Executive Committee takes place during the meetings of the IPCC Parties. Each country has the opportunity to nominate candidates. The Executive Board

is elected in a multi-stage process. The member states vote for the proposed candidates, and the election is often based on consensus or the majority principle. Once elected, board members usually serve for a fixed term, often up to six years, and can be re-elected (cf. Deutsche IPCC-Koordinierungsstelle, 2020).

The AOSIS have representatives from their country functioning as authors in the IPCC reports (cf. AOSIS, 2023a). This means that the AOSIS is not only aware of the best available science but is also actively involved in the further research and development of mitigation and adaptation to climate change from its own ranks.

In our analysis section, we take a closer look at how the instrumentalization of scientific facts helps AOSIS in its work.

D. Leadership Theory

Now we come to the theoretical basis of our research.

We use de Águeda Corneloup and Mol's theory from their paper: 'Small island developing states and international climate change negotiations: the power of moral "leadership"' (Águeda Corneloup and Mol, 2013) as the basis for our research year. This gives us a theoretical basis on which we can analyze and interpret the observations of the activities and strategies of AO-SIS that we observed. The goal of this section is to explain the different kinds of leadership concepts according to de Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013). This will allow our observations to be analyzed more systematically as the work progresses.

The states in the alliance are not only the countries most affected by climate change. They also share the fate of being marginalized by their size and geographical position and having little structural power. Structural power follows through the possession of resources, economic wealth and political power. Structural leadership is very common among rich industrialized countries that can achieve their economic or ecological goals efficiently through it.

An example of using structural power to tackle climate change would be investing in research and carbon-neutral innovations for mitigation or adaptation.

With of the lack of structural power often comes a lack of leverage in global negotiations.

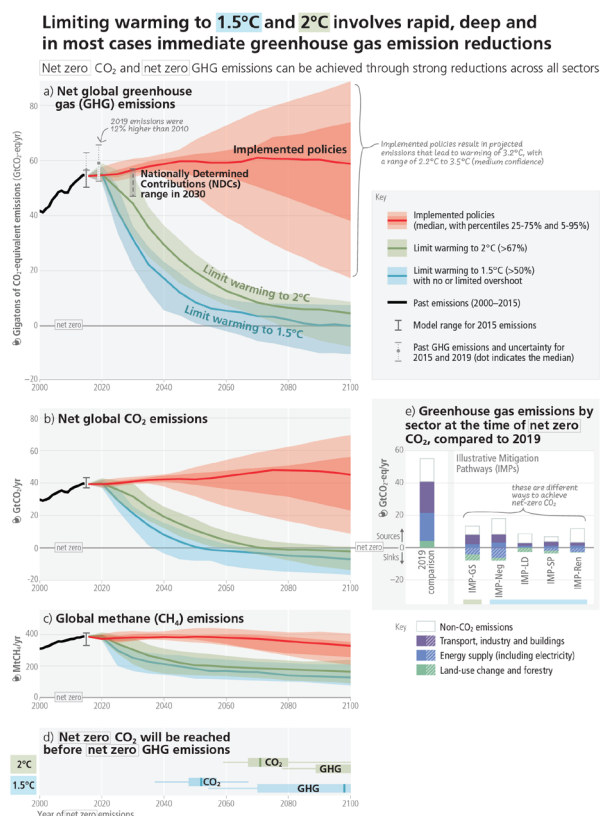


Figure 1: "Global emissions pathways consistent with implemented policies and mitigation strategies" Source: IPCC Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers, P. 22

The SIDS lack the economic means to achieve certain goals internationally, especially against large wealthy states.

Furthermore, for many countries, counteracting the climate crisis is more likely to lead to a policy of renunciation and an inhibition of consumption, which goes hand in hand with a costly change in the economy. This in turn can lead to a reduction in the structural power of industrialized countries.

Looking at Germany's contribution to combating the climate crisis, for example, far too few resources and funds are being invested compared to the capacities that Germany has as an industrialized, developed country.

This was also stated by the German Federal Constitutional Court in April 2021 (cf. Bundesverfassungsgericht, 2021).

If we compare this decision with the findings of the IPCC, a clear picture emerges because Germany is not an isolated case. It shows that many developed countries are not using their structural power sufficiently to intervene in the climate crisis.

The panels a) b) and c) from Figure 1 from the IPCC Synthesis Report of 2023 show how CO₂ emissions will develop globally if the regulations currently implemented by countries are continued. This is compared to a limit of 1.5 degrees and 2 degrees Celsius warming.

The policies in the Figure refer to policies that were implemented by the end of 2020. The red lines therefore are similar in all categories: greenhouse-gas emissions (GHG), CO₂ emissions and global methane emissions. The policies are not enough to reach 2°, 1.5° or net zero. The green lines show the pathway to limit warming to 2°C, and the blue lines show the pathway to 1.5°C. A significant reduction in all emissions is needed to comply with the Paris Agreement, from the COP21 in 2015. The Paris Agreement states under Art. 2, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph (a), that the overarching goal is to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and the countries shall “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.” If these developed states do not use their structural power sufficiently, and the SIDS do not have enough structural power, the SIDS will have to use other strategies to assert their interests in relation to the global climate crisis.

De Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013) introduce four further leadership strategies that AOSIS uses to strengthen its position in international negotiations. The aim is to increase the power of the individual areas and thus pursue a leadership strategy in order to achieve individual goals in the individual fields and in relation to the climate debate. In the following we explain the four theoretical approaches: intellectual leadership; entrepreneurial leadership; environmental leadership and moral leadership.

I. Intellectual Leadership Strategy

For intellectual power and leadership strategies, we directly use the definition of De Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013) “[...] intellectual leadership strategies refer to new scientific concepts and ideas to justify a position, to the use of scientific arguments and to the mobilization of support of the scientific community.” (ibid. p.285).

To contextualize this strategy, we must look at the epistemic communities which the intellectual leadership strategy is based on, epistemic meaning relating to knowledge (cf. Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The definition of epistemic communities is, as described by Peter M. Haas: “[...] is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.” (Haas, 1992, p.3).

An epistemic community is formed by professionals from various disciplines who come together around several key elements such as common normative beliefs that guide their social actions; collective causal beliefs based on their analysis of issues within their field, linking policy actions to desired outcomes; shared criteria for evaluating knowledge relevant to their expertise and an unified policy focus, with practices aimed at addressing specific issues, motivated by the belief that these efforts will improve human welfare (cf. Haas, 1992).

Science plays a major role in the history of AOSIS negotiation strategies. AOSIS uses an “appeal to common sense”, which is done by arguing with science. This intellectual power serves as the basis for many strategic considerations and global negotiations.

Probably the most internationally relevant epistemic community that is close to AOSIS are the authors and scientists who conduct climate research, which is summarized in the international organization of the IPCC.

More than 20 authors from 10 AOSIS member states are involved in the compilation and research for the IPCC. In 2023, for example, “our very own AOSIS colleague Dr. Adelle Thomas of the Bahamas was elected as Working Group 2 Vice Chair” (AOSIS, 2023) as AOSIS proudly presents, showing their dedication to science and stopping climate change. In addition, including scientists from their own states may allow research to directly address the problems of SIDS and shed more light on the situation of AOSIS members, which can be an advantage in negotiations.

However, AOSIS is not only based on the work of the IPCC. The alliance itself is in constant contact with various experts from its member states in order to continue researching climate change and working on possible solutions.

More details on the cooperation with researchers and the handling and instrumentalization of science to generate more intellectual power follow in the analysis.

It is therefore important for this strategy to use science in order to reach an equal level of knowledge with other parties, as well as to back up one’s own motives and concerns with facts. If the party’s own goals and demands are in line with international scientific standards, then the party appears credible and reasonable.

II. Entrepreneurial Leadership Strategy

The entrepreneurial leadership strategy has two aspects. The first aspect relates directly to negotiations, where the party gains influence through its diplomatic efforts, tactics, and skills, such as setting the negotiation agenda and highlighting important issues. The second aspect involves activities outside the concrete negotiations, including organizing events, running promotional campaigns, participating in discussions, making announcements at related summits, and using various methods to shape the dialogue (cf. de Águeda Corneloup and Mol, 2013). The challenge is to always stand out with new innovative ideas and thus draw attention and focus to themselves and their circumstances in the leverage and to shape the discourse.

In terms of the first aspect, to influence direct negotiations, AOSIS always manages to shape the discourse by actively contributing proposals and presenting its point of view, often directly affected by the problems of the climate crisis. This is shown in many examples, the most important one might be as stated above in Chapter 2. They achieved the establishment of the IPCC by being consistent and insisting on their demands.

The second aspect, which revolves around the public, can be shown in an example from the media work of the AOSIS, their most famous campaign: “1.5 to stay alive”.

The AOSIS invented this slogan during COP15 in 2009, referring to the results of scientific research. They insisted that 2° C above pre-industrial levels was too much and that they could only survive at a maximum of 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels. The slogan was spread very widely as a campaign and was used everywhere, even from non-affiliates in press conferences, for example, but also in activism and demonstrations. This campaign brought AOSIS recognition beyond the international negotiating context within the UN. They also reached “normal” citizens and created awareness for their situation and SIDS-specific problems all around the world.

AOSIS demonstrated a firm commitment to advocating for stricter temperature-increase limits and maintained their stance right up to the end of the negotiations in the COP15. Consequently, the target of 1.5 °C remained included in the negotiating text, along with the 2 °C limit, until the formal process ultimately stalled and required an alternative approach (cf. de Águeda Corneloup and Mol, 2013).

Entrepreneurial leadership is therefore characterized by the fact that the discourse can be sustainably shaped by innovative ideas and constant involvement in the discourse and leverages. AOSIS is particularly characterized by its diverse and creative undertakings, a few of which we will discuss separately.

III. Environmental Leadership Strategy

Environmental leadership strategies are grounded in the national policies and practices implemented by a negotiating country, serving as evidence of their ambition, legitimacy, and effectiveness of climate-change limitation efforts (cf. Andersson and Mol, 2002).

Demonstrating high levels of ambitions and effective implementation enhances the legitimacy of international negotiation positions and as a result increases leverage in these negotiations. In environmental politics, parties aim to garner support for their conceptualization of reality and their interests (cf. de Águeda Corneloup and Mol, 2013).

One example in relation to climate negotiations can be the countries' own domestic mitigation-concept implementation. In the CCPI (Climate Change Performance Index), scientists compare the climate-change performance of all countries that transparently publish their data through the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) submitted to the UNFCCC, among other sources from internationally recognized institutions. The CCPI evaluates 14 indicators from four categories: GHG emissions (40% of overall score), renewable energy (20% of overall score), energy use (20% of overall score), and climate policy (20% of overall score) to make a transparent ranking (cf. Germanwatch, 2023). In their latest rating from 2024, they found that “no country was strong enough in all categories to achieve an overall *very high* rating. Therefore, the top three places continue to remain vacant.” (Germanwatch, 2023). Those results also underline the climate findings of the IPCC synthesis report, as seen above.

Denmark holds the fourth place as the country with the highest ranking. Therefore, they prove their high ambitions for creating a better environment and taking action. For example, one of the greatest achievements of the country was reducing their GHG emissions between 2005 and 2018 by 23 %, which resulted in performing better than the EU as a whole in that period of time (cf. Simões and Victoria, 2021). As a result, Denmark enjoys a high global reputation and is perceived as very authentic when it comes to climate issues. It creates the image that it is not only committed to fighting climate change externally but is also taking action and making a difference at home. This high reputation is not only reflected in international recognition, for example the country is ranked second by Earth.orgs global Sustainability Index (cf. Mulhern, 2021), it also leads to greater negotiating power in international climate negotiations. Therefore, increasing environmental power is a useful tool for achieving set goals and an efficient strategy for environmental leadership.

This strategy is also of interest to AOSIS. Even though the small island states are already low emitters, they launched the SIDS Package in 2019, the aim of which is for all AOSIS member states to achieve net zero by 2050 despite their status as developing countries (cf. AOSIS, 2019a). This also underlines our findings in comparison to de Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013). When they wrote their paper, they found that only a few SIDS had sent in their NDCs to the UN (p. 288). That has changed. At this point in time, in 2024, all 39 countries have submitted their NDCs and made their progress transparent. We therefore think that the dynamics have changed, and the environmental power has increased. We will examine this in the analysis section.

IV. Moral Leadership Strategy

The moral-leadership strategy differs from the other strategies as it is rather new and based on emotions. At the heart of this strategy is a storyline told by the party, which runs through all the other strategies and is intended to generate emotions in the other parties. This not only creates a very concrete picture of the respective situation, but it also makes their situation and their point of view more tangible and human and, at best, is met with empathy.

According to de Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013), Small Island Developing States craft a clear and direct narrative regarding climate change, characterized by specific themes, interests, and alliances that set them apart from the discourses presented by other negotiating groups. For example, the AOSIS' discourse differs particularly from the structurally leading north, such as the EU, due to their completely different suffering from the climate crisis. Central to AOSIS' storyline is the acknowledgment of their minimal contribution to climate change, their significant vulnerability in terms of ecosystems and livelihoods, and the pressing need for urgent action. Throughout time, the small island developing countries successfully established strong, distinctive, and impactful presence in the climate-change discourse through their narrative.

Another important part of this strategy is to illuminate the problem in different ways. For example, AOSIS has succeeded in ensuring that climate change is no longer only a UNFCCC issue but is also addressed in other UN bodies. As a result, they have succeeded in creating awareness that the dimensions and impacts of the climate crisis are also an international peace and security issue, and the climate issue therefore was discussed at the UN Security Council for the first time in 2009. They also managed to establish a link between the issue of climate change and human rights and to redefine the issue of the crisis. This gives a new importance to the problem and a better understanding of the extent of the situation.

The lively storyline of AOSIS creates a clear picture of how these countries are affected. The circumstances and living conditions of the citizens become clear and create an emotional narrative style, as well as a new definition of the dimension of the crisis, which ensures a clear moral standpoint in the negotiation. This particular situation marks them out as special victims of the climate crisis and gives them a moral high ground on the basis of which they are more likely to demand things from parties that are less affected or more responsible for the crisis.

As the AOSIS are the inventors of the moral-leadership strategy, we will pay particular attention to this in our analysis. We are particularly interested in how AOSIS uses emotions and stories and what these trigger in the other parties.

AOSIS uses a combination of different strategies to shape the climate-change discourse and assert its interests in international negotiations. We now analyze the current strategies of this climate alliance and determine to what extent the theory of de Águeda Corneloup and Mol (2013) fits our empirical findings and what makes AOSIS successful in highlighting its work against the climate crisis.

E. Media analysis

In the course of our research, we selected two research areas. The first field is media. Here, we focused on AOSIS projects that already existed before our active research year. Our motivation here was to find innovative methods that made AOSIS stand out from other alliances or international players, to such an extent that they are still very topical today and actively help to shape the international discourse and in the long run serve to give AOSIS more leverage.

The second area is the direct empirical observation of events in which AOSIS actively participated during the course of our research.

We start with media analysis and thus with two innovative AOSIS projects. We begin with a brief explanation of the respective project and then follow with a concrete research approach. This is followed by the analysis on the theoretical basis, in which we will examine which strategies are pursued and implemented in which way in the projects. In the end, it can be determined which power types were accumulated the most and thus which strategy is pursued and leads to more negotiating power.

The two projects we are looking at are the 2021 podcast and the fellowship program. We are starting with the podcast.

I. Podcast

One of AOSIS's actions to achieve its goals and gain more leverage in international negotiations is to use new communication channels to reach new target groups and spread its concerns further into the world. One particularly innovative creation was their podcast project. A podcast is an audio format that is made available to a wide range of listeners via various streaming services. The podcast was published from August to November in 2021 as part of a preparatory campaign for COP26. The host of the podcast is Andy Liburd. In the trailer for the podcast, it is stated that the podcast gathered "the voice of leading experts on the frontlines of the Charge to combat the effect of the climate change." (Liburd et al, 2021, EP.1, 0:28 – 0:33). The podcast contains eight episodes plus a short trailer. The episodes are between 40 and 60 minutes. The first one was published on 6 September in 2021, and the last was published on 29 October in 2021. Different experts are featured in each episode. They come from diverse backgrounds such as politics or activism or entrepreneurs, all with a connection to small island states (cf. Liburd et al, 2021). These people thus underline the goals of AOSIS and contribute significantly to the strategies of AOSIS. A closer look at this topic will follow later in the analysis and evaluation. Now presenting the research approach.

We first listened to all the individual episodes. We looked at the keywords from each individual episode, both thematically and those mentioned particularly frequently. We were then able to code the content of the podcast and search specifically for keywords to find patterns. This was particularly useful in relation to the analysis of the moral-power strategy. Through the coding, we were able to determine how this project attempts to pursue different strategies through rhetoric, which create different external effects.

We identified ten main keywords: "*survive*"; "*vulnerable*"; "*human/civil right*"; "*help*"; "*science*"; "*urgent*"; "*climate change*"; "*action*"; "*crisis*"; "*now*".

These keywords were sorted into three of the strategies that we could most closely associate with the podcast project. We focused mainly on basic associations related to the words. The breakdown is as follows: The keywords "*survive*"; "*vulnerable*"; "*now*"; "*urgent*" and "*crisis*" are part of the moral-power strategy. The keywords "*human/civil right*" and "*action*" belong to the entrepreneurial-power strategy, and the keywords "*science*" and "*climate change*" belong to the intellectual-power strategy.

We counted these keywords and placed them in the context of each strategy. We have done this quantification to further investigate the selected keywords and emphasize their frequency. However, we do not intend to make a linguistic analysis in the following, but only heuristically address the effect of the podcast and the context of each episode on listeners.

Entrepreneurial strategy:

To begin with, it should be noted that the whole podcast project itself is new and innovative. AOSIS is the first alliance to use this communication channel to improve its position in international negotiations. This opening up of new communication channels not only leads to a greater reach in general, through the various audiences, but also carries their concerns globally to all sections of the population. This can lead to potential new supporters who could support AOSIS in a variety of ways.

One example would be the acquisition of new activists who fight for the interests of AOSIS; this can create advocates for AOSIS in new countries. Based on the newly learned

content and the empathy created for the island states, people could call on their government to become more involved in the negotiations in favor of the small island states.

Throughout the podcast, there are 17 guests from all different backgrounds who talk about their experience as islanders or part of the AOSIS in some way and climate change and how they are affected.

This not only highlights the different and numerous dimensions of the problem but also brings together many people with different positions. This provides a platform to offer different approaches to solving the crisis. These come from a wide variety of perspectives and represent the diversity of AOSIS and its commitment to working with everyone to solve the problem and fight the crisis in many different ways. A keyword that is frequently used in this context is the word “*action*”, which indicates that someone is involved, or the listener is being asked to become active themselves. The word is used 55 times in total, with Episode 7 “Activism Now” where it is the most frequently used (18 times).

One of the many examples is Episode 4: “Adapt to Survive”, in which Dr. Dominique David Chavez is invited, among others. She is a professor at Colorado State University and specializes in indigenous natural resources. In her segment of the episode, she focuses on the connection between science and tradition and how the crisis can only really be tackled if the two work together (cf. Liburd et al., 2021, EP. 4, 33:00 f.).

AOSIS has been working on linking the climate crisis with human rights since 2007. The first time this was achieved was in 2007 by the UN Human Rights Council (cf. Adelman, 2015). Since then, it has been important to the Alliance that these two issues are considered together internationally because: “For SIDS, linking human rights to climate change is a matter of survival. The language of rights strengthens their demands in the UNFCCC for climate justice in the form of restitution, compensation and rehabilitation.” (Adelman, 2015). Throughout the podcast, the terms “*human rights*” and “*civil rights*” were used a total of 15 times in the context of climate change.

Intellectual strategy:

If we focus on intellectual power, it becomes clear that the content of the podcast is largely based on scientific findings. The range is broad, and various areas are discussed from a scientific perspective. Most of the guests from the podcast are very renowned scientists in their fields, such as Dr. Ardelle from the IPCC authors. A total of nine scientists were invited for different episodes of the podcast to talk about their specialized knowledge in the context of climate change. By inviting scientists and working on complex topics, AOSIS and its concerns appear comprehensible and meaningful. This underlines one of the main strategies to always refer to science and back up their claims with a factual basis according to Liburd et al: “AOSIS can never be challenged of the Science. We always followed the science!” (Liburd et al., 2021, EP. 2, 13:40 f.).

A decisive factor here is the simple language despite complex scientific contexts. The moderator always summarizes what the guests have said in a simple form and thus ensures an inclusive atmosphere.

For example, in the first episode, entitled: “1.5 to stay Alive!”, Dr. Adelle Thomas, a climate scientist and former co-author of the IPCC was invited and interviewed about the consequences of climate change in relation to the small island states. She gave a detailed answer on how the crisis will affect the immediate environment of the states, for example through an increased incidence of hurricanes. Following her answer, presenter Andy Liburd summarized

the science in simpler language: “[...] so let’s break this down a bit as Dr. Thomas says [...]” (Liburd et al., 2021, EP. 1, 06:23 f.).

This makes this complex topic more accessible so that everyone can understand the issues.

In total, the word “*science*” is mentioned 49 times and the words “*climate change*” a total of 282 times. This not only reflects the content of the podcast, which is about climate change and how it affects small islands, it also indicates a scientific approach that gives listeners the feeling of authenticity through facts.

Moral strategy:

The podcast uses various mechanisms to create empathy with the listener. One example is the detailed explanation of the problems of climate change, some of which are reflected in the very personal stories of the numerous guests.

In the very first episode, for example, Dr. Thomas tells how her grandparents suffered from Hurricane Dorian in their home country in 2019 (c.f. Liburd et al., 2021, EP. 1).

Empathy for the AOSIS is created not only by the detailed explanation of concrete dangers for small island states due to acute climate change, but especially by the various guests on the podcast. A total of 17 guests were invited, all from different backgrounds. However, they all have a connection to small islands. Activists such as Okalani Mariner from Pacific Climate Warriors (EP. 7), who talks about her ambitions, and fisherman Mitchell Lay (EP.6), who talks about his living conditions, paint a vivid and comprehensive picture. There are dramatic stories that deal with survival, but also inspiring, hopeful stories that trigger positive feelings in the listener.

We have filtered out six keywords that are particularly likely to arouse empathy and emotion in the audience. These would be “*survive*”, which portrays the threat of climate change as a struggle for ensuring their existence. This word is used seven times in the entire podcast.

Then “*vulnerable*” illustrating the situation of the small island states which is repeated fifteen times, this is a clear framing of the geopolitical situation of the AOSIS states.

The most frequent keyword of all is “*now*”, used 431 times. However, we must differentiate here between “*now*” as a filler word and “*now*” as a point in time. Throughout the podcast, the time “*now*” is frequently used to emphasize the urgency for immediate action to stop climate change and underline the seriousness of the situation.

This is followed by the word “*urgent*”, which is mentioned three times in the podcast. Similar to the word “*now*”, a necessity is conveyed here, underlining the threatening nature of the problem.

The word “*crisis*” is used to describe the entire climate situation. It is a stronger framing than climate change and shows the seriousness of the situation for the island states. Here, too, the listener gains the impression that the situation is serious and that there is a need for action. The word is used a total of ten times.

Finally, the word “*help*” is mentioned a total of 64 times in the podcast. It occurs both in the context of innovations that facilitate adaptation or mitigation, as in Episode 3, which focusses on the green economy. However, the word is also used as an imperative and is intended to encourage the listener to take action or explain how other parties could help. An example of this would be the final episode about COP26.

Overall, it can be said that the listener feels empathy for the AOSIS, and the situation in which the inhabitants find themselves is portrayed as very dramatic and vivid.

In the end, it becomes clear that the podcast project plays into many strategies and can

increase many types of power for AOSIS. In conclusion, it is difficult to say which strategy is used the most here, as it is the interplay of the individual power types that makes the podcast successful. The moral-power strategy has the most keywords filtered out. It is also fair to say that the other two power types, entrepreneurial and intellectual, also lead to an increase in moral power.

By using new media, moral power can be used in the first place, and various people who were previously unreachable can now establish a connection to AOSIS. The scientific facts from the intellectual-power strategy also provide the basis for creating a moral high ground and thus moral power.

II. Fellowship Program

Another way in which the AOSIS is trying to implement and manifest their leadership strategy is their own program for youth development, named the “Fellowship”. This youth program leans into the fact that the AOSIS states need to ensure that they have highly qualified personnel in their own countries for future climate negotiations and the development of their own countries. First, we will dive into what the Fellowship Program is, and in the following, we will analyze how this program fits into the respective leadership strategies. For this, we will analyze all available data from the official AOSIS statements about the program and take two of the alumni of this program as an example of the effectiveness of the program. With this approach, we will try to solidify the impact this effort has on the work the AOSIS undergoes on a global scale.

The Fellowship Program by the AOSIS is an initiative that tries to deepen the leadership skills and the diplomatic capacity of the representatives of the member states. The program trains the participants in various fields to prepare them to be future leaders in their respective scientific field, either in a more political or a more scientific role.

The AOSIS describe their Fellowship Program as follows:

“Each year, 10 Fellows from AOSIS member states, undertake a year of education and diplomatic training at the United Nations in New York, to prepare them to become leaders in their countries on climate change, sustainable development and oceans.

For almost a decade, the AOSIS Fellowship has been training the next generation of AOSIS leaders and environmental experts. This unique SIDS-designed program brings early career professionals from AOSIS member countries to New York for one year to participate in environmental diplomacy with their country’s delegation at the United Nations Headquarters and at international negotiations. The program provides Fellows with the unique opportunity to gain real-world UN experience while participating in a world-class training program. Since 2018, the Fellowship has been made possible by the support of the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security.” (AOSIS, n.d.).

Following this self-descriptive depiction by the AOSIS, we will use this as a basis for our analysis with our theoretical basis in mind; hereafter we will use the entrepreneurial and intellectual leadership strategy specifically.

Entrepreneurial Strategy:

The previously mentioned program is thus a clear indicator of the entrepreneurial leadership by the AOSIS. They have built a unique youth program across more than thirty countries that aims to deepen the expertise of the AOSIS diplomats and also strengthens the connection and partnership of the AOSIS member states, as these Fellows spend valuable time and education together to form a bond between the corresponding nations. It enables AOSIS to have many young, well-trained people who stand up for their interests at an international level. Many of these Fellows from earlier years are now diplomats from their countries of origin and represent them at international climate negotiations.

The basis of the Fellowship Program shows the commitment the AOSIS makes to a prominent climate and environmental science, as the Fellows not only practice how to act as a diplomat at international negotiations but also in the respective scientific fields necessary to combat climate change (cf. AOSIS, n.d.). Once the Fellowship concludes, 90% of the participants head

back to their home nations to contribute to their countries, either by working in government or with public organizations. Two alumni have chosen to stay in New York to aid their missions at the United Nations. More than half of the AOSIS Fellowship graduates remain involved in the climate discussions at the United Nations. This fact underlines the Fellowships' part in the intellectual leadership the AOSIS expresses on a global scale in their ambitions to combat climate change.

Intellectual Strategy:

Many of these alumni have risen to significant positions in their governments, such as becoming Ministers of Environment, Directors of Multilateral Affairs in foreign ministries, or CEOs of public-private trust funds (cf. AOSIS, n.d.). The fact that most of the Fellows return to their home countries to work in significant avenues towards combating climate change highlights their efforts regarding the environmental leadership the AOSIS embeds in their appearance on the global stage (cf. Cooley: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023). A prime example of this is the 2022 Fellowship Alumni Lisana Dyer, who works at the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Climate Resilience in her home country the Commonwealth of Dominica, where she is the Project Coordinator for Dominica's National Adaptation Plan. The plan upholds the ambitious attempt of the Commonwealth of Dominica to be world's first climate-resilient nation (cf. AOSIS, 2022a), as this National Adaptation Plan concluded in Dominica's Nationally Determined Contribution in 2022, where they plan a total greenhouse-gas emissions reduction of 45% below 2014 levels by 2030 (cf. The Commonwealth of Dominica, 2022).

Another prominent figure which highlights the success and effectivity of the program is Zachary Phillips, who is now working in the Attorney General Chambers in the Ministry of Legal Affairs of Antigua & Barbuda (cf. AOSIS, 2022b). He also represented his home country and furthermore the AOSIS in the first round of oral proceedings regarding the submitted request for an advisory opinion by the COSIS (cf. Phillips: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

While Zachary Phillips and Lisana Dyer are prime examples of the immediate success of the Fellowship program, almost all the Fellows are continuing to work for their home countries in the fields they were educated in. The whole program thus shows AOSIS' commitment to upholding their values and being a frontrunner on combating climate change and its disastrous consequences.

In conclusion, we can state that the Fellowship Program fits the most into the category of the intellectual power. The AOSIS has built a top-flight program to further strengthen the connection between their efforts to combat climate change and the adjacent scientific fields. Furthermore, they are building an epistemic community between the scientists and diplomats of all AOSIS member states. In turn, these researchers also collaborate with other researchers from the more global epistemic communities, helping AOSIS researchers to establish connections and work with them on an international level, as shown by their recent appearance at the ITLOS, where Fellow alumni Zachary Phillips worked closely with renown scientists working on the IPCC report, such as Dr. Sarah Cooley.

F. Empirical observations

In the following, we will discuss our empirical observations of two events in which the AOSIS participated during our research, these being their request for an advisory opinion before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and their participation at the Conference of the Parties no. 28 in Dubai 2023 (COP28).

We chose these two avenues as they were both major events in recent international climate negotiations and because they both clearly outline the strategies used by the AOSIS, the efforts at the ITLOS being particularly interesting, as it was an innovative approach by the AOSIS regarding the role that international law playing in combatting climate change and the COP28 being the major outlet for annually global climate negotiations by the UN.

We will start with their appearance before and at the ITLOS and will analyze this innovative approach with regard to the aforementioned leadership strategies. We will conclude that part in comparing what they wanted to achieve by going into the oral hearings on that matter at the ITLOS with the final advisory opinion given by the judges of the court.

We will then continue with their appearance at the COP28. We will give a brief overview of the importance of this particular COP, followed by a concrete research approach on the aforementioned theoretical basis. We will analyze which strategies are pursued and how they are implemented at the COP. At the end, we will discuss their success at the COP and give an overview of the most important strands of strategies and how they affect their negotiation power.

Our analysis is based on our participant observation of these two events. We have recorded these observations in our own memory log, which we also refer to. Nevertheless, we draw on other data, such as logs of these events or reports, in order to be able to work with the actual wording and arguments in the more precise analysis in order to be able to analyze them better. We did this for both our participation in ITLOS and our participation in the COP. We took part in both events as observers, but also spoke to the people who were present at these events.

I. International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

In the following part, we will analyze the AOSIS in its appearance at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). This was an enormous step by the AOSIS in fighting climate change as they tried to link international law systems closer to science and to word the UNCLOS in a way that it forces member states to fight climate change. For this, the AOSIS established the Commission of Small Island States (COSIS), as the AOSIS was not allowed to request an advisory opinion at the ITLOS. After the establishing of the COSIS, they filed a request for an advisory opinion. After a long period where the member states could file their written statements, on the 9 September in 2023 the first oral hearings began.

Furthermore, we will talk about their strategies leading up to and at the first oral hearing for their request for an advisory opinion by the court and what came of it. We mainly focus on the intellectual, entrepreneurial and moral leadership aspects of their strategy, as the environmental leadership is of no real importance in this part because the basis on which this court judges are international legal rules, therefore, the domestic involvement of AOSIS at this point is to be assessed more in the background and plays no particular role in the hearings. We will start the analysis with the role of intellectual leadership and the role of the AOSIS-adjacent scientists, then we will discuss the entrepreneurial leadership carried over by the creation of the COSIS, and lastly, we will finish off with the moral leadership presented by various displays of cultural goods of the island states.

As a conclusion, we will discuss what leadership power resonated the most with their appearance at the ITLOS. For this, we analyzed how the COSIS approached this oral hearing and with whom they attended. Further, we discuss the role the people they invited to speak on behalf of the COSIS play and how this is interconnected with the renowned science revolving around the IPCC. Here, we will also take a close look at the organization of the COSIS itself and who the people are who are affiliated with this organization, especially those beyond the people residing in one of the countries who founded the COSIS. Lastly, we will analyze the speech patterns regarding how they convey their moral superiority on the matter of their actions for the goal of combating climate change. For this, we take certain arguments that they continually made during the first two days of the oral hearing, as these are the days on which the applicant COSIS, and thus also AOSIS, commented on the situation.

Intellectual strategy:

At the start of the first oral hearing at the ITLOS, the COSIS had the first two days to themselves. On these two days, they made it abundantly clear that they were to back everything that was said by them with scientific evidence as shown by the people they chose to represent them, for example Sarah Cooley (cf. Cooley: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023), who works as a co-author for the IPCC. Not only did they choose a wide range of scientists to speak on their behalf, also their legal team had a range of international lawyers representing them. With that, they had built their own epistemic community to support them in their endeavor to fight climate change.

This is a strong demonstration of their intellectual leadership, as they not only have the predominant scientific consensus on their side, but also use innovative measures to combat global warming. As this is not an ordinary request for an advisory opinion, but rather a first in the manner the questions by the COSIS were constructed, as can be read in the following:

“What are the specific obligations of State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the “UNCLOS”), including under Part XII:

(a) to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment in relation to the deleterious effects that result or are likely to result from climate change, including through ocean warming and sea level rise, and ocean acidification, which are caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere?

(b) to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change impacts, including ocean warming and sea level rise, and ocean acidification?” (COMMISSION OF SMALL ISLAND STATES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, 2022).

This is the first time where they tried to make international law more accurate in a way that it gives precise instructions on how to protect the climate and environment. In the case of most international law, concrete measures the states need to establish is never clear, as for example the UNCLOS under Part XII Article 194 S. 1 only states that member states need to “prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from any source, using for this purpose the best practicable means at their disposal and in accordance with their capabilities, and they shall endeavor to harmonize their policies in this connection” (United Nations, 1982, p.1).

Here, the COSIS also made it abundantly clear that the UNCLOS must be laid out in a way that the countries which affect the global climate the most should do more work on fighting the climate crisis than those smaller countries that barely contribute to global CO₂ emissions, as laid out by G. Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda at the first oral hearing of the advisory opinion (c.f. Browne: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

This seems to be a consistent approach to combating climate change with innovative strategies by the AOSIS, as they also have agreed to help in a similar request for an advisory opinion at the International Court of Justice (c.f. International Court of Justice, 2023).

Entrepreneurial strategy:

If we take a closer look at the organization of COSIS established by the AOSIS member states, we can clearly see the approach of the entrepreneurial leadership. The COSIS not only consists of diplomats and scientists from the AOSIS member states, but also consists of known scientists and lawyers of the executive board of the COSIS, for example Payam Akhavan and Sarah Cooley (cf. COSIS, 2021). This approach of taking in “outsiders” into their own organizations set a precautionary act in entrepreneurial leadership for international cooperation and further builded their epistemic community. With this, they took measures to ensure the AOSIS member states had an outlet to approach the international courts with matters relating to global warming. This came not only alone but with countless preparation meetings not only for the hearings at the ITLOS but also for the upcoming COPs, which we will take a closer look at later. These meetings, like the meetings of AOSIS leaders on the verge of the UN General Assembly in November 2023 (cf. AOSIS, 2023b), are of a strategic meaning to ensure all the member states agree so they can act as one on the international stage. These lay the groundwork to their success at the global climate negotiations, as indicated by the COP 21 with the adoption of the Paris Agreement and continued over the following years.

To further ensure this success on building global cooperation with leading scientists and lawyers, the AOSIS also needs to focus on building a repertoire of their own diplomats and experts in certain fields. In tackling this side of the entrepreneurial leadership, the AOSIS implemented the aforementioned Fellowship program, which already showed success as one of the Fellows who previously underwent the traineeship, Z. Phillips, acted as a speaker on the behalf of the COSIS (cf. Phillips: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023) at the first oral hearing and also works as a member of the Attorney Generals' Chamber in the Ministry of Legal Affairs in his home country Antigua and Barbuda (cf. AOSIS, 2022b). This sets the perfect example of their successful entrepreneurial leadership as they keep on finding new ways to incorporate innovative systems to ensure their diplomatic strength on the global stage, furthermore increasing the cooperation between the AOSIS member states, but also increasing the pressure they put on other countries to implement similar systems of cooperation in the means to fight global warming. Their most important success in this regard is the invention and establishing of the UNFCCC, which in hindsight has a massive effect on future climate negotiations and hosts an outlet for climate specific negotiation. The AOSIS itself had an essential part to play in laying the groundworks for the UNFCCC, as they held countless proposals to implement such a system into the UN and also vigorously have made appeals as to how the UNFCCC should function and work in the beginning (c.f. Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1991).

Moral strategy:

Now we come to a strategy which AOSIS uses on most stages to bring their message of fighting the climate crisis and preserving their homelands across, the use of morality. Here, we analyzed the speech patterns that were consistent over the first two days of the oral hearing. In particular for this moral-power analysis, we take a closer look at three main strands of arguments, which are:

- 1) *"Each time they mention that not only their countries are being destroyed, but rather the loss and destruction of an entire culture"*.
- 2) *"A speaker mentioning the destruction of their homes and the efforts the Island States undertake to protect their home, while mentioning that developed countries undertake too little or no effort to combat this fact"*;
- 3) *"Each time they mention that they are not being listened to by everyone else for a long time"*.

1) *“Each time they mention that not only their countries are being destroyed, but rather the loss and destruction of an entire culture”.*

The first strand of arguments being displayed in two different ways we will present for example the statements given by Ms. Naima Te Maile Fifita from Tuvalu. The first way this moral power was displayed was by wearing their traditional clothing at the first oral hearing, as Ms. Naima Te Maile Fifita did, as she wanted to express her culture at the court to connect the rather abstract matters of law with a more emotional fact, that everything done by this court will affect real people and cultures (c.f. Fifita: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023). She tried to further strengthen this new connection by explaining in detail why she was wearing these clothes and why this is an important part of the culture in Tuvalu and the importance of this cultural aspect to the Tuvaluan people (c.f. Fifita: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023). She used this display to show parts of the cultures that will be lost if global warming is not stopped in the imminent future, not only the culture of Tuvalu, but in all the Small Island States and those states most affected by climate change. It did not end at the display of cultural clothing; the COSIS presenters used images of their home countries and the destruction that climate change brings upon their homelands. This was used to bring a visual display of the impact this decision of the court will have on the world and what other countries who affect the climate the most are actively destroying (c.f. Fifita: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023). This display was further used to demonstrate which countries are most affected by the global warming and who is less affected, which in most cases means smaller countries, who are in the case of the Small Island States, not landlocked. The least affected in that regard are mostly bigger and economically better-off landlocked countries, like most EU states.

If we then take a look at the mentioning of their culture being destroyed or lost, we can concur that a total of eight statements were made with regard to this aspect, as indicated by K. Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, he pointed out in his speech: “Nevertheless, displaced Tuvaluans and the generations who follow them will suffer a loss of place, property, identity, culture, lifestyle and tradition tied to the islands.” (Natano: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 12). This was only the first time that this was mentioned; it was made more clearly by N.T.M. Fifita. She not only spoke the most about the importance of her people’s culture to their islands’ society, but rather made it a point to directly interconnect the culture of some Pacific islands to their homelands, as indicated by the following passage: “In some Pacific cultures, the word for placenta, island and soil are the same: fenua. All of these terms represent home and connection. The island and the islander are one and the same. The relationship between the two is a deeply spiritual and reciprocal bond reliant on the other’s existence, a bond that shapes every aspect of a Pacific person’s individual and collective identity. Likewise, land and culture are inextricably linked. Thus, forced migration to a foreign land represents a ‘threat to the continued identity and culture of a people’, essentially a form of extinction. Though standing optimistic and resilient, a solemn question lingers for those facing potential climate induced statelessness and upheaval: what will become of us absent our island home?” (Fifita: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 31). Other statements regarding the loss of culture were also made by Loughman, Cooley, Maharaj, thus indicating a special focus on the connection of the loss of those countries with a loss of identity and culture of an entire people.

2) *“A speaker mentioning the destruction of their homes and the efforts the Island States undertake to protect their home, while mentioning that developed countries undertake too little or no effort to combat this fact”.*

The second strand of arguments which they followed during their hearings to display their moral power was shown by the way they transported their message through the statements they made at the ITLOS.

The speakers on behalf of the COSIS made it a point to illustrate the contrast between what the small islands states are going through because of climate change and what the developed nations and main polluters are failing to do against it. As G. Browne pointed out: “It is no exaggeration to speak of existential threats when some of these nations may vanish in the foreseeable future because of rising sea levels. The scientific evidence leaves no doubt that this situation has arisen because of the failure of major polluters to effectively mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. This inaction, this failure of political will, has brought humankind to a perilous juncture with catastrophic consequences. It is because of this reality that COSIS has brought this vital matter before you.” (Browne: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 4).

3) *“Each time they mention that they are not being listened to by everyone else for a long time”.*

He not only points to this matter by saying that the main polluters are not only failing to address the climate change, caused in majority by the pollution they create, but also focusses on the fact that the small island states have been ignored on this matter for years, as they “have patiently listened and waited (...) ardently urged and pleaded, but with little avail.” (Browne: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 6).

In his closing appeal to the court, he also stated that the small island states may be the first to fall due to climate change and the consequential climate catastrophes, but after that, the rest of the world, and in particular the main polluters, will not be left uninjured by the global rise in temperatures, as he said that: “Small island States may be the first to fall – through no fault of our own – but we will not be the last, for no country on Earth can escape the deadly grasp of climate change.” (Browne: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 9)

The statements made by G. Browne were not the last as he was only the first speaker on behalf of the COSIS at the first oral hearing at the ITLOS, as many after him over the course of the first two days of the hearings had used similar drastic language to amplify their message and the subsequent display of moral superiority. As pointed out by the following speaker Natano, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the population of his home country will be forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in another country if the pollution caused by the developed countries is not drastically stopped (c.f. Natano: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

Here, we can determine what the main focus of most of the speeches given by the COSIS was. They conveyed the impact climate change will have on the small island states and what will be lost culturally if there are no changes in the amount of pollution caused by the developed countries, while also pointing out the strong difference between what each country is doing to combat climate change, with the small island states being ambitious and doing what they can to combat the impact of the climate change and the main polluters failing to fulfil their

obligations in relation to their economic power. This main focus further amplified their moral power when addressing climate change in global climate change conferences.

At the end of this part, we will analyze how successful the COSIS endeavor was at the ITLOS with the publication of the advisory opinion given by the judges of the ITLOS. Here, we compare key requests made by the speakers of the COSIS with the statements given by the judges in the advisory opinion published on 21 May in 2024. We will not compare the request word for word, but rather as a combined argument as more speakers made the same or similar requests as to how the UNCLOS needs to be interpreted. We combined these requests or rather interpretations of the UNCLOS in six key arguments, in which COSIS was successful regarding how the judges interpreted the questions submitted. These key arguments are now to be compared with the outcome of the COSIS request by the ITLOS; we want to enable a direct comparison.

These key arguments are as follows:

“GHG emissions originating on the land have to be classified as also part of pollution of the marine environment within the meaning of article 1 (1) (4) of the UNCLOS” (c.f. Akhavan: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

Regarding the first strand of arguments, the judges interpreted the proposed question (a) as following under (a) and (b) in the advisory opinion as: “Anthropogenic GHG emissions into the atmosphere constitute pollution of the marine environment within the meaning of article 1, paragraph 1, subparagraph 4 of the Convention.” And “In terms of specific sources of pollution, marine pollution from anthropogenic GHG emissions can be characterized as pollution from land-based sources, pollution from vessels, or pollution from or through the atmosphere.” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, 2). Here, we see a clear indication that the main point the COSIS made about the land pollution being part of the pollution of the marine environment was also interpreted in the same way by the judges, thus connecting the necessity of the reduction of land-based GHG emissions with those originating from sea vessels.

“In regard to combating pollution of the marine environment, the best available science has to be considered as part of the solution” (c.f. Amirfar: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

When looking at the suggestion that the best available science needs to be used when addressing the reduction of pollution of the marine environment as stated by Amirfar (c.f. Amirfar: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023), this was addressed in the answer (b) from the advisory opinion by the court, regarding question (a) and answer (e) regarding question (b), which states the following: “best available science and relevant international rules and standards contained in climate change treaties such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, in particular the global temperature goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and the timeline for emission pathways to achieve that goal” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 2) “In taking such measures, States Parties shall take into account, inter alia, the best available science and relevant environmental and economic factors” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 5).

“The measures objectively necessary for an individual State Party to meet that standard under article 194(1) (UNCLOS) will differ based on the scientific evidence particular to that State, including as to its best practical means and capabilities” (Amirfar: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023, p. 32).

Another key argument regarding the due diligence the states need to make was always interpreted by the COSIS such that less-developed states need to take measures only according to their own capabilities as stated by, for example, Amirfar (c.f. Amirfar: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023), was answered by the judges in answer (c) regarding question (a): “The standard of due diligence is stringent, given the high risks of serious and irreversible harm to the marine environment from such emissions. However, the implementation of the obligation of due diligence may vary according to States’ capabilities and available resources” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 2).

“The results of the surveillance of the pollution of the marine environment under *inter alia* Articles 204 to 206 must be published and made available to all States through international organizations” (c.f. Okowa: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

Connected to the previous interpretation was the question of the sharing of assessment made with regard to *inter alia* articles 204 to 206, the judges interpreted the question (a) in their answer (k) as: “The results of such assessments must be published and made available to all States through international organizations” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 3).

“The duty to protect the marine environment under Article 192 UNCLOS needs to go beyond protection and preservation and needs to include the restoring of the marine environment” (c.f. Webb: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

In the matter of interpreting article 192 of UNLCOS to make it a broader statement, which not only includes protection and preservation of the marine environment but more so the restoration of the marine environment, the judges came to the same interpretation in their answer (b) in regards to question (b): “Where the marine environment has been degraded, this obligation may call for measures to restore marine habitats and ecosystems” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 4)

“The Paris Agreement and the UNCLOS are aligned in a way that it gives the UNCLOS a specific goal of reducing global average temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels” (c.f. Webb: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023).

Lastly, regarding the question whether the Paris Agreement has any directional influence on the UNCLOS and its parties as stated by P. Webb (c.f. Webb: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023), which some states questioned in the beginning, the judges made the observation that: “Under article 194, paragraph 1, of the Convention, States Parties to the Convention have the specific obligations to take all necessary measures [...] taking into account, *inter alia*, the best available science and relevant international rules

and standards contained in climate change treaties such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, in particular the global temperature goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C” (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, 2024, p. 2). As pointed out by the judges, the Paris Agreement and the UNCLOS are factually intertwined in terms of achieving the goal of limiting the global temperature increase.

To the question whether the UNCLOS and its necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic GHG emissions and to endeavor to harmonize their policies under article 194, paragraph 1 needs to go beyond what is agreed to in the Paris Agreement. As P. Akhavan said that some submitted written statements raised this exact question and that the answer by the COSIS on this matter should be obvious in relation to the fact that it needs to go beyond the Paris Agreement (c.f. Akhavan: INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA, 2023). Here, however, the judges refrained to comment and left it entirely out of their Advisory Opinion.

To conclude, here we can see a clear indication of what the main strategy was for their efforts at the ITLOS, being the moral-power aspect, shown by the three strands of arguments with which we analyzed their speech patterns particularly on the first day. They made most of their effort to connect the broader and more abstract matter of international law to the real life of the people affected and the culture these people have, while maintaining a scientific approach as to why these cultures are being lost due to climate change. These statements, always made with a subtle hint at who is mostly to blame for the growing emissions and the underlying climate change affecting the Small Island States.

Ultimately, we can acknowledge that many, if not almost all, of the interpretations given by the COSIS in their written and oral statements were in alignment with what the judges stated in their advisory opinion, making the COSIS effort to further specify the UNCLOS regarding the necessary actions in combatting climate change a success.

This success can mostly be attributed to their display of moral leadership and to how they conducted themselves within the first two days of the oral hearing. The effort to amplify their success with the display of moral leadership can be seen in all of their endeavors, as we have already shown and we will continue with in the next part.

II. Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties is an annual meeting of all members of the UNFCCC since 1995. The Conference is the main decision-making body of the Convention. The members look at the progress made so far in fulfilling the agreement and how it can be further developed. The aim is to examine what other instruments, such as legal regulations, are needed to further promote the implementation of the Convention (c.f. UNFCCC, 2019).

The COP is hosted by the presidency of the country in which the conference is held each year, rotating with each COP. However, the President's task is not only to organize the COP; he also works together with the country delegates to reach an agreement at the end, as only consensually adopted topics can be agreed upon (c.f. UNFCCC, 2020).

COP 28 took place from November 30 to December 13, 2023 in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The president was Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (c.f. COP28, n.d.). This COP was the largest to date with more than 85,000 participants, and it was also the conference to adopt the first Global Stocktake showing the countries' process towards the goals of the Paris Agreement. The goal of the Global Stocktake is to show the progress of each country and where there is still room for improvement. On the basis of this data, the parties should jointly decide on a pathway at the COP that leads to the fulfillment of these goals (cf. UNFCCC, 2023).

Another characteristic of this COP was the number of oil lobbyists who were able to take part in the conference. At least 2465 lobbyists were guaranteed participation. This is a new record compared to previous conferences (cf. Corporateeurope.org, 2023).

This not only influences the general mood of the event but can also change the outcome of the conference.

One of the main discussions at this COP was the decision between a fossil-fuel phase-out, i.e. a complete phase-out of fossil fuels, or a phase-down, a slow reduction of fossil fuels.

We attended the second half of the COP starting on day eight and stayed until the last, day twelve. We had 'observer status' and were able to listen in on negotiations that were not open to the general public and press. However, we could not go into the private negotiations. Thus, mainly these semi-public negotiations, in which AOSIS or associated states participated, and the large final negotiations, which are open to the public and can be viewed online, provide our research basis.

We acted as silent observers and took notes from the audience on the statements made by AOSIS and the reactions to them. With these results, we will try to classify which strategy was most likely to be pursued and which different types of power were used by AOSIS.

To begin with, the AOSIS objectives for COP28 need to be set out in order to examine how the COP has gone for AOSIS. Minister Cedric Schuster, from the AOSIS Chair, explained these in a press conference.

The main goals of the COP28 for the AOSIS, which we will focus on can be described as follows:

- 1) Work towards a global just transition by promoting a transition to clean and renewable energy and phasing out of fossil fuels
- 2) The Global Stocktake must include a decision that lays out an action plan charting a clear path for implementation to limit warming to 1.5°C, thus keeping the 1.5 goal alive

Moral strategy:

If you look at the clothing of the AOSIS delegates alone at the beginning, you will notice that although they are elegantly dressed for the event, they always incorporate parts of the island costumes. For example, lead negotiator Anne Rasmussen often wore a Hibiscus, a native flower from her home Island, in her hair and AOSIS Chair Minister Cedric Schuster wore a traditional flower necklace around his neck. This is similar to the ITLOS appearance. The strong connection to the island culture and the solidarity with it is clear from the clothing alone.

This is also constantly reflected in their spoken contributions. The origin and situation of the islanders is always the focus.

We were able to partake in the following session, which was not publicly accessible; therefore, this paragraph has been created from our own notes.

A draft was discussed at the meeting of the Heads of Delegation for the first Global Stocktake. AOSIS intervened and expressed its concern that the draft for the Global Stocktake does not take sufficient account of the small islands, thereby drawing more attention to them and their particular situation. Their objection is raised regarding what it considers to be insufficient commitment to the 1.5° C. target. Throughout the negotiation, the AOSIS stressed the importance of the 1.5° C. limitation. Their negotiators were straightforward with their demand of staying within that range and underlined the consequences for their homes if the goal were not be reached. They often used the word “suffering” to emphasize the consequences they will have to face if the goal is not reached, combining the scientific fact of remaining within a temperature increase of 1.5°C., with the morality that lies within the consequences of not reaching this particular goal.

Particularly in the discussion about the fossil-fuel phase out vs. phase down, it becomes clear how AOSIS moralizes its verbal contributions through figurative metaphors. In the same negotiation, the spokesperson from Palau spoke for AOSIS about the need for strong language, otherwise they would drown.

Another vivid example of AOSIS framing to generate moral power is the negotiation over the submission of the Global Stocktake text on day 12. Many countries were unhappy with the resulted draft text, and the AOSIS issued the following statement on the text at a press conference: “We will not sign our death certificate.” (AOSIS, 2023c), hereby showing that the current trajectory in combatting climate change is not sufficient and will in fact mean the loss of most of the island states to sea-level rise, and in turn mean the ‘death’ of their homes. Therefore, they refuse to agree to those conditions currently laid out to them and prevail the other countries to follow their example in not signing off on this, as it would be morally wrong to agree to the extinction of their homes.

The last and probably most impressive example at this point is the final statement by Anne Rasmussen in the final plenary session of COP28. She stated that they had a clear goal, on which all people from their home depend:

“AOSIS at the beginning of this COP had one objective, to ensure that 1.5 is safeguarded in a meaningful way. Our leaders and Ministers have been clear. We cannot afford to return to our islands with the message that this process has failed us.” (Rasmussen, 2023).

This was well received by many of the attendees, as the AOSIS received a standing ovation following her speech, lasting several minutes. This was clearly a meaningful moment for the AOSIS, as some members of their delegation started to cry, showing how much emotions are involved in their struggle to combat climate change, further emphasizing their determination.

Intellectual strategy:

AOSIS always refers to science in its goals and demands.

This is evident in many of their statements and contributions. Not only do they have renowned scientists in their team, they also repeatedly emphasize that their demands are based on scientific findings: “We are guided by the best available science from the IPCC, which makes it clear that the 1.5C goal is still in reach, but we must take urgent steps to achieve it.” (Schuster, 2023).

On this basis, they appear to be “the voice of reason” and a voice for science. In this way, they legitimize high demands that appear to be necessary and the only sensible thing to do based on scientific facts: “We reference the science throughout the text and even in this paragraph but then we refrain from an agreement to take the relevant action in order to act in line with what the science says we have to do. It is not enough for us to reference the science and then make agreements that ignore what the science is telling us we need to do. This is not an approach that we should be asked to defend.” (Rasmussen, 2023).

This rhetoric makes it seem as if the other parties who are not aligned with the demands and goals of the AOSIS, are acting irrationally and against the facts.

The constant repetition of scientific facts and the involvement of experts gives the impression that AOSIS’s demands are logical and therefore legitimate. Thus, by increasing intellectual power, leverage can be increased.

Environmental strategy:

Small island states produce the least CO₂ globally, but still suffer the most from the consequences of climate change.

The AOSIS Chair’s Statement on SIDS Priorities at COP28: “This is a global mission for the greater good. SIDS have been making significant strides on climate action, but we must be realistic. We account for less than 1% of global emissions. The developed countries which contribute 80% of the world’s carbon emissions must raise their ambition. They must lead on fossil fuel phaseout. Phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and making deep, drastic cuts to ensure we reach net zero by 2050 is of the essence. This is a matter of survival not just for our islands, but our world.” (Luteru, 2023).

This shows that they are clearly exercising an environmental-leadership strategy compared to the other parties. On this basis, they are trying to persuade the other parties to agree to their demands. An example of this is a statement made by AOSIS Chair Minister Cedric Schuster in a press conference at the COP on December 4, 2023: „AOSIS calls on major emitters to enhance their commitments, including aligning their NDCs with the 1.5-degree goal, leading the way on fossil fuel phase out, phasing out all inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and ensuring peaking of global emissions before 2025 and halving them by 2030, transitioning to global net zero global emissions by 2050, with developed countries taking the lead.“ (Schuster, 2023).

The structural leaders are addressed here. The AOSIS uses its economic and environmental position to explain why these countries should take the lead in the climate-change fight. In doing so, it becomes clear that this is not just a moral argument because it is said that these countries have more power due to their geographical conditions and capital and that it would therefore be necessary and logical to use this structural power. This moral question is undercut by the SIDS’ own conditions and constant efforts at the same time.

Let us now return to the AOSIS goals for COP28.

The two broad main goals were first, to form a global just transition to clean and renewable energy and phasing out of fossil fuels, and second, to keep the 1.5°C goal alive and agree on a clear path for the countries in the first Global Stocktake. As indicated above, AOSIS has placed particular emphasis on both of these goals in most of its contributions and is very committed to putting them on the agenda again and again so that their concerns are always in focus.

After the COP, the AOSIS drew up an overview in which all the sub-goals and the implementation, or non-implementation, and the resulting consequences are broken down (c.f. AOSIS, 2024). The following AOSIS assessments are taken from this report.

Even if not all of AOSIS's goals were achieved, they still define it a successful conference: "COP28 can be viewed as successful for AOSIS in critical areas, particularly as we achieved our main goal of keeping 1.5 alive and secured stronger text on adaptation." (AOSIS, 2024).

In retrospect, the media impact in particular is seen as very important: "Our push in the media to phase out fossil fuels facilitated the unprecedented outcome of a decision to "transition" from fossil fuels. Progress comes in phases. AOSIS maximized on valuable media relationships and strategy to amplify our messaging and influence decisions to move our countries to safer ground." (AOSIS, 2024).

Two major topics are addressed here. The first relates to one of the goals for the COP. AOSIS did not succeed in achieving a fossil-fuel phase out; therefore, the second main goal from the beginning was always targeted and introduced but could not be fulfilled.

However, their efforts were not in vain, as a consensus was reached to transition away from fossil fuels. This is an important first step for AOSIS and is closely linked to its first main goal of keeping 1.5 alive; this can be therefore seen as a small success for the AOSIS.

The second issue addressed here is the media presence of AOSIS. Even if this was not a set goal at the beginning of the COP, among other things, the many moral and emotional word contributions and public appearances of AOSIS have enabled them to increase their media reach. This provides more potential allies who can support AOSIS. AOSIS claims that this increased media presence has given them more visibility and power in the negotiations.

In summary, the AOSIS pursued several leadership strategies at COP28. They gathered environmental power by comparing their structural conditions with those of other countries and then contrasting this with their CO₂ emissions and ambitions in the climate-change fight. Then they always used their intellectual power in the negotiations by arguing with the latest science and appealing to the other parties involved to listen to these internationally recognized facts.

And finally, these two accumulations of power also served their main strategy, the moral-leadership strategy. AOSIS succeeded in creating lively and authentic storytelling, starting with cultural dress and the reports of the domestic conditions, to vivid metaphors to illustrate the situation of the SIDS.

The intellectual and environmental power creates a basis on which moral statements can be made and are perceived as legitimate by others, as AOSIS backs them up with various facts and figures. These underline the situation of the islands and, in combination with moral appeals, lead to a very strong moral-leadership strategy.

G. Conclusion

At the end of this paper, we return to the in-depth research question and provide an answer.

“What strategies use Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to overcome their lack of structural power and increase their leverage in the global fight of the climate crisis?”

In the theory section of this paper, we presented four leadership approaches that can be used as an alternative to structural power.

Firstly, we introduced the intellectual-leadership strategy, which is based primarily on close cooperation with the scientific community and works with constant references to science. The AOSIS gathers a great deal of intellectual power through its close cooperation with scientists. Senior members are either from a scientific field themselves, such as sustainability, or they work with experts of that field to ensure that they are always up to date on the newest science. The best examples of this approach are their establishing of the COSIS and the Fellowship Program with the Fellowship being an outlet where they train young people to be future leaders in their respective fields and the COSIS where they gathered leading scientists from around the globe to help them in their endeavor in front of the ITLOS regarding their request for an advisory opinion.

Secondly, we look at the entrepreneurial leadership strategy, where the party tries to stand out above the other parties by constantly striving for new innovations and continuously involving itself in the discourse in order to draw the focus of negotiations to itself.

Here, the AOSIS can clearly gather entrepreneurial power through the diverse projects it implements, shown by the establishment of the Fellowship Program or opening new forms of communication channels for example their Podcast “Islands on Alert”, which they use to create a greater reach on their issues to a broader range of population, or the establishment of the COSIS, where they build a committee of legal experts and leading lawyers from around the globe to combat climate change through international law in an innovative way.

Thirdly, we look at the environmental leadership strategy, which consists of leading by example in one’s own country. Here it can be clearly stated that AOSIS invests much money and energy in meeting climate targets and is therefore clearly a pioneer. However, the island states of AOSIS have a smaller surface area and population than other states and therefore generally produce less CO₂ than most other states, an example here being the Dominican Republic striving to be the first climate-resilient nation, which is being worked on by Fellowship alumni Lisana Dyer, further connecting their different approaches in leadership.

Finally, there is the moral-leadership strategy. This is characterized in particular by lively and emotional storytelling. The AOSIS are pioneers in this area and incorporate their island culture and emotional storytelling into all their projects and appearances.

In the course of our evaluation, we identified a clear difference between the moral-leadership strategy and the other three mentioned strategies. The other strategies serve as a basis for the moral-leadership strategy and only through their influence make moral power strong. In almost all AOSIS projects we took a look at, moral power is perceived more strongly than the others, and the picture that emerges is that AOSIS pursues the moral-leadership strategy most vigorously. However, it has also emerged that the others, intellectual, environmental and entrepreneurial power, serve as a basis for moral power to be perceived as legitimate by others. A good example of this would be AOSIS looking for innovative ways, such as a podcast or the creation of a commission for the ITLOS (entrepreneurial power) to reach a greater audience for

their perspective and most importantly to keep the focus on the AOSIS and their demands in international discussions and climate negotiations. In the communication during international negotiations, AOSIS used scientific facts for their approach and concerns (intellectual power) and at the same time to set a good example at home in terms of climate protection and the realization of the UN Climate Goals (environmental power) in order to make moral appeals to other international actors (moral power) in these negotiations. In the end, this interplay of different strategies results in increased leverage.

Overall, it makes sense to say that AOSIS clearly pursues the moral leadership strategy and has achieved high goals with it (cf. empirical observations). However, this answer would be too short-sighted because only the harmonious composition of the other strategies is a prerequisite for AOSIS to be a moral leader.

It would be interesting for future research to examine the mutual prerequisites of the individual strategies more closely and to go into the legitimization aspect in more detail.

Furthermore, AOSIS is an active political alliance, which allows for further observation and investigation of its impressive success.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that AOSIS achieves very impressive results in political negotiations despite its difficult structural circumstances and the acute dangers posed by climate change. This is probably due to its unique negotiation tactics and appearance, which is characterized by a mixture of different power strategies, which is particularly shown by moral storytelling and has made a lasting impression on us throughout our research.

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