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THE ANTHROPOCENE COLLAPSE IN AVATAR MOVIE (2009) DIRECTED BY JAMES CAMERON

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Abstract

This research examines the Anthropocene Collapse in Avatar (2009) directed by James Cameron, focusing on the causes of company exploitation and the impacts of company exploitation on the indigenous people of Pandora. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study finds that Avatar vividly depicts the Anthropocene era, where human dominance over the environment is driven by economic and technological advancement. The analysis reveals that the Resources Development Administration (RDA) employs a systematic approach to exploitation, starting with understanding the Pandora ecosystem, developing advanced technology, and conducting diplomacy with the indigenous Na'vi. However, when diplomacy fails, RDA prioritizes protecting company assets and resorts to violence, leading to a brutal clash with the Na'vi. The film critiques the use of technology as a tool for exploitation, where moral considerations are ignored in favor of profit-driven motives. This leads to large-scale deforestation, habitat destruction, and loss of life, ultimately accelerating ecological collapse. Avatar reminds as a warning about the consequences of unchecked company greed and environmental destruction, urging audiences to reflect on the importance of sustainability and harmonious coexistence with nature.

Key words: Anthropocene collapse, Avatar, Company

A. INTRODUCTION

Nature has a significant and close relationship with humans life. Humans live with everything that exists in nature. For some time, humans use of nature has remained within reasonable limits. Humans slowly begins to feel that nature is not successful in fulfilling their needs or desires. The desire to have everything and be the best is the basis of these exploits. Humans take over natural mechanisms and trigger ecological damage. This gives rise to a series of events that will lead to natural destruction and mass extinction.

According to Raja (2018 : 7-9), humans developed brains to process and interact with the natural world around them to survive. During the Pleistocene, also known as the Ice Age, humans lived a nomadic lifestyle due to the extreme



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cold that made agriculture impossible. They survived primarily by hunting. However, as the Earth transitioned into the Holocene, humans gradually shifted from a nomadic lifestyle to one that relied on agriculture. During this period, humans began to expand their activities, including establishing industries and opening mining sites. y. The Holocene marks a time of significant change for the Earth and humanity. However, as time went on, human activities increasingly altered the natural environment on a large scale. Based on Waters et al. (2016:6), these changes have led to drastic climate shifts, extensive burning of fossil fuels, global warming, and the extinction of many species. As a result, the era can no longer be classified as the Holocene. This has led to the designation of a new era, the Anthropocene.

Anthropocene is a term coined for a new era, where humans begin to have a drastic impact on ecology and the earth. Humans are the main drivers in giving impacts in the anthropocene. The Anthropocene has been known for a long time by scientists. According to Raja (2018: 10), The term anthropocene was first mentioned by a geologist and atmosphere named Paul J. Crutzen together with a biologist named Eugene F. Stoermer in early 2001 due to the increasingly warming climate caused by humans. The Anthropocene has emerged as a powerful term in Science and Humanities to understand the long-term impact of humans on the Earth through the idea of new geological potential. Humans are at the top of the chain in the Anthropocene, so they have a big role in influencing the process of natural evolution. Humans by using their minds, can produce advanced science and technology in processing, exploring, and utilizing nature. Humans influence is increasingly dominant and arbitrary.

Many human actions can be categorized in the Anthropocene era, this can be seen in in real life such as the burning of forests for housing development and for personal interests. Humans dissatisfaction in the Anthropocene era is not only in the form of forest burning, but also environmental pollution, deforestation, and threats to flora and fauna. Living in the Anthropocene era means that living things and the environment will experience a new evolutionary process and even face new types of risks. Ambitious humans desires are the gateway to the Anthropocene world. Humans seem to dig their problems with an ambitious desire to have everything. Humans who carry out activities that damage nature are usually assisted by something big, such as a company.

Humans who carry out activities that damage nature are usually assisted by something big, such as a company. A company is a body formed by a group of people to run a business, commercial company, or industrial company. Companies also do not only focus on producing a product but also provide services. For companies that are in contact with nature, they should have a great sense of responsibility towards nature because it is not only plants that will be harmed by an activity carried out by the company.

From the above description, it can be concluded that company actions in exploiting nature have been excessive. In the Anthropocene era, companies exploit nature for pleasure, personal gain, and wealth. This relentless exploitation has caused significant environmental degradation, prompting some environmentalists and academics to oppose it through their works. One way to do

this is through ecocriticism, a field of study that examines the relationship between literature, culture, and the environment. Ecocriticism critically analyzes how nature and environmental issues are represented in cultural texts, such as literature, film, and art, and seeks to raise awareness of nature issues by challenging anthropocentric worldviews. For example in literature work, the *Avatar* movie, first released in 2009, is a prominent example of a work of ecocritical themes. *Avatar* voices strong resistance to the tendency to destroy or damage by depicting the struggles of the indigenous people of the planet Pandora and the forces of colonization and resource exploitation. The film depicts the beauty and connection of nature, emphasizing the importance of respecting and preserving ecosystems. Through its narrative, *Avatar* criticizes the uncontrolled exploitation of nature and advocates a more harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The data for this study collected from the script. The script later be analyzed from the theme, moral message, narrative, script, representation, and other elements that are likely to be included in the study. This data used to show how exploitation causes the collapse of the Anthropocene as depicted in the Avatar movie 2009. The analysis conducted using the conceptual framework of Ecocriticism and Ecosocialism. To collect data, the researcher use a script of movie as a research object using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods is method focused on exploring and understanding human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena by collecting data, analyzing data and making in more flexible explanation about the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 51). This method helping the researcher to explain the meaning of literary work. Several steps of approach will be taken by researcher which will continue to use the theory of ecosocialism as a basis.

The first step is to watch Avatar 2009 repeatedly to review the movie and gain a understanding. This activity is carried out so that researcher can understand and has familiarity with the narrative, themes, and critical elements relevant to the study. The second step is to collect data, the researcher will identify and highlight scenes, characters, and dialogues that align with the research questions.. In this section, researcher will begin to highlight and selection using the movie's script to pinpoint key moments of significance. The next step is to classification this will be done by categorizing and adjusting the selected parts to the research questions of the study. This classification step ensures a clear structure for analysis and helps focus on the study objectives. Data Analysis is the last step, namely analyzing the data obtained. This step will be carried out by interpreting, evaluating, and then presenting the data obtained. This step also aims to conclude the final results of the entire process that has been carried out previously in collecting data.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

- 1. Research Finding
- a. The Company Exploitation of Pandora's Resources Contribute to The Anthropocene Collapse.

In the 2009 Avatar movie, the depiction of Pandora, the Na'vi Tribe, RDA, and unobtanium present the reality of the problem of resource exploitation in the real world. Pandora can be represented as an area that is still natural and rich in resources, while the Na'vi tribe is the native tribe that lives in the area. The native tribe has a strong bond with the land they live on, the native tribe lives in harmony with nature and has spiritual values for their land. In the real world, RDA is a company engaged in the mining sector to make a profit often forgetting the ecological and social impacts. Unobtanium is depicted as a mineral with a very high price, if represented in the real world then it is gold, petroleum, nickel, and other natural resources that have a high price and are very much needed in the industry. To carry out the Plan, the RDA sent scientists to gain the trust of the Na'vi and the military to show power so that the Na'vi tribe would follow the company's wishes. Scientists and military forces use their methods to help the RDA mine unobtanium and approach the native tribes. The military led by Colonel Quatrich uses armed forces ready to use violence when things threaten the company. Scientists use their abilities to develop advanced technology to discover more about Pandora and the Na'vi Tribe.

This research discusses from two points of view, namely scientists and the military contributing to the exploitation of Pandora. From the perspective of scientists, as follows:

1. Understanding the Pandora Ecosystem

(pages, 16)

SELFRIDGE:

This is why we're here. Unobtanium.

Because this little gray rock sells for twenty million a kilo. No other reason.

This is what pays for the party. And it's what pays for your science.

Comprendo?

He places it back in the magnetic field. SELFRIDGE:

Those savages are threatening our whole operation. We're on the brink of war and you're supposed to be finding a diplomatic solution. So use what you've got and get me some results.

98

This dialogue shows a character named Selfridge who is talking about a mineral called Unobtanium from Pandora which is very valuable. Selfridge, a representative of the RDA, says that their main purpose of coming to Pandora is to mine Unobtanium. RDA wants scientists to use everything they have and do whatever they can to support the company's economic interests without considering the interests of the ecosystem and also the indigenous peoples on Pandora. Overall, this dialogue is a powerful representation of how capitalism uses science not to understand or protect ecosystems, but as a tool to facilitate the exploitation of resources for one party's benefit.

2. Creating Advanced Technology for Mimicry

(pages 13)

NORM

Grace Augustine is a legend.

She's the head of the Avatar Program, and she wrote the book -- I mean literally wrote the book -- on Pandoran botany.

MAX

(low, over his shoulder)
That's because she likes plants better
than people

In Avatar 2009, the Avatar Program is a form of mimicry, where humans not only imitate but also integrate with other species to survive in an alien environment. In Avatar (2009), the Avatar Program is a form of mimicry, where humans not only imitate but also integrate with another species to survive in an alien environment. This adaptation provides several advantages, such as enhancing communication with the indigenous Na'vi and increasing the efficiency of resource exploration. By mimicking the Na'vi, humans gain deeper ecological understanding and physical adaptability, allowing them to navigate Pandora's unique ecosystem more effectively. This illustrates how modern technology continues to develop to imitate natural processes but still faces moral challenges regarding its purpose for sustainability or industrial interests.

3. Scientists Conduct Diplomacy with Indigenous People

(Pages, 27) GRACE We don't. They contact us.

If they see us taking our samples, treating the forest with respect –

(pointedly to Jake) Not trampling everything in sight -- they may reach out to us.

In this conversation, Grace explains that to gain the trust and cooperation of the Na'vi, humans must also respect the ecosystem of Pandora. Diplomacy here is carried out with an approach full of understanding and respect for the Na'vi's way of life and environment. The sentence "If they see us taking our samples, treating the forest with respect... they may reach out to us" shows that the Na'vi will be more likely to open communication or cooperate with humans if they see that humans do not only want to exploit nature but also respect and maintain its sustainability. This illustrates that the diplomacy of scientists in this film is not only about communication or negotiation but also about ethics in interacting with other worlds, in a sustainable and understanding way. Scientists act as a "bridge" between two very different worlds, the human world and the Na'vi world to allow the RDA to explore and exploit Pandora in a safer and more controlled way. Grace aims to bridge the gap between human technology and the ecological wisdom of the Na'vi, in the hope that a more ethical approach will lead to a more just and sustainable solution for both parties.

Those are some of the ways scientists contribute to the company's exploitation of Pandora. Meanwhile, from the military side they did the following:

4. Protecting Company Assets

(Pages 9-10)

QUARITCH

... You are on Pandora, ladies and gentlemen.

Respect that fact every second of every day.

JAKE ROLLS IN, watching from the back.

COLONEL QUARITCH raises his hand and points out the window, toward the dark treeline.

OUARITCH

Out beyond that fence every living thing that crawls, flies or squats in the mud wants to kill you and eat your eyes for jujubees.

The room gets very quiet.

QUARITCH

We have an indigenous population of

humanoids here called the Na'vi. They're

fond of arrows dipped in a neurotoxin which can stop your heart in one minute.

We operate -- we live -- at a constant threat condition yellow

Colonel Quatrich is a representative of the military, in this dialogue he said that Pandora is a dangerous environment and threatens safety. Giving such a sentence makes the idea that the use of military force is to protect the assets of the RDA. In the context of the RDA, the presence of the military is not to maintain

peace, but to ensure that the unobtanium extraction operation runs without interference, especially from the native Na'vi who reject the exploitation of their land. The RDA not only uses advanced technology to mine Pandora, but also uses armed force to control the territory and prevent resistance and ensure that the company's profits are maintained. Militarization is a classic strategy used by capitalists. The dominant group uses violence to suppress resistance from the lower class. This dialogue shows that Pandora is just a place to be conquered. Quatrich creates a narrative that the Na'vi must be fought rather than collaborated with because according to the RDA and the military, their existence is a threat.

5. Resorting to Violence when Diplomacy Fails

(Pages 107)

QUARITCH

Alright, let's get this done. Give me forty millimeter gas rounds, right in the front door.

GUNNER

Roger. CS forties. Going hot.

QUARITCH

Fire.

On the Dragon's stub-wings the 40mm ROCKET LAUNCHERS open up with a BARRAGE of leaping fire which FLASHES down and --

K-WHOOM!K-WHOOM! -- the inside of Hometree ERUPTS with multiple EXPLOSIONS of TEARGAS.

THE GAS rolls across the confused villagers. They begin to cough and gag

It can be seen when diplomacy fails, the military members led by Colonel Quatrich immediately take over. The military takes to violence as a way to deal with threats. Quatrich orders his members to fire tear gas and rockets in order to destroy their homes and to make the natives feel threatened. When Quatrich feels the number of the Na'vi tribe is increasing, the only way to maintain their security is to use continuous attacks.

The military forces controlled by the Resources Development Administration (RDA) apply various forms of violence against the Na'vi tribe and the Pandora ecosystem. They carry out brutal acts of organized military attacks, such as bombing and destroying Hometree using fighter jets and missiles to drive the Na'vi out for mining interests. In addition, they rely on advanced technology such as automatic weapons in direct confrontations with the natives. Physical violence is also seen when the Na'vi who try to defend their territory are attacked using firearms and tear gas. In addition to direct attacks, the RDA also carries out structural violence by destroying the Pandora ecosystem, including carrying out large-scale deforestation with heavy vehicles and blowing up forest areas. They even destroy the Tree of Souls, which has deep spiritual meaning for the Na'vi. Not only using military force, the RDA also uses propaganda and manipulation by depicting the Na'vi as a primitive society that is considered not entitled to defend their land. Through various forms of threats and intimidation, they try to suppress resistance and strengthen their dominance over Pandora. This film clearly

criticizes how systematic violence and military technology are often used to pursue economic gain and resource exploitation, which reflects the real world reality of colonialism, imperialism, and environmental destruction.

6. Clashing with RDA

(Pages 124-125)

SELFRIDGE

This thing is completely out of control!

Quaritch ignores him, turning away to focus on ordnance loading. SELFRIDGE

Listen to me! I am not authorizing you to turn the mine-workers local into a freakin' militia!

QUARITCH

I declared threat condition red. That puts all on-world assets under my command.

SELFRIDGE

You think you can pull this palace coup

shit on me?! I can have your ass with one call –

Quaritch grabs him and PINS him against the side of an ampsuit. QUARITCH

You're a long way from Earth.

Selfridge is paralyzed. Physical force -- against him?

Quaritch releases him and walks away.

QUARITCH

(to his men) Get him out of here. Several troopers converge on Selfridge.

SELFRIDGE

You touch me you're so fired.

From this dialogue, it can be seen that there is a difference of opinion about what is happening between the military and the RDA, Quatrich and Selfridge. Selfridge, who represents the RDA, opposes the use of excessive military violence and does not want to turn the miners into armed military members. Meanwhile, Quatrich, a representative of the military, tries to take control of the situation and ignores Selfridge to show his power. This scene illustrates the clash between economic interests and military control. Selfridge only wants to secure financial gain without causing major conflict, while Quaritch is more concerned with physical security and military control, even if it means using violence against anyone who hinders his goals.

b. The Company Exploitation Affects the Indigenous and Lead to Anthropocene Collapse

In the *Avatar* movie 2009, company exploitation by the Resource Development Administration (RDA) causes severe damage to the indigenous Na'vi people and the nature of Pandora. The RDA's primary goal is to extract the

valuable resource, unobtanium, without regard for the ecological impact or the rights of the indigenous people who have lived in peace with the environment for centuries. This situation has led to a wider critique of the 'Anthropocene'. This term describes the current geological period, which is considered to be a time when human activity has become the dominant influence on climate and the environment. In the *Avatar* movie 2009, the RDA's destruction of Pandora's environment symbolizes the unsustainable practices of resource extraction and environmental degradation that have led to the collapse of the ecosystem. The war between humans and the Na'vi to protect their land from greed and exploitation and to fight the Anthropocene. This study examines the impacts of each of the operations carried out by scientists and the military on Pandora and its indigenous people, from a scientist's perspective, as follows:

1. Creating Technology for Exploitation

(Pages 16)

SELFRIDGE

This is why we're here. Unobtanium. Because this little gray rock sells for twenty million a kilo. No other reason. This is what pays for the party. And it's what pays for your science. Comprendo?

This dialogue shows that the RDA uses the advanced technology created by scientists, namely Avatars, only for personal gain. The main purpose of the avatar program is for scientific research. Selfridge shows how the company views the avatars as a means to exploit unobtanium, without regard for the impact on the environment or the Na'vi society. This avatar technology illustrates the tension between scientific knowledge that aims to understand and appreciate nature, and capitalism that often uses technology to gain financial gain without considering its impact on the ecosystem. This shows how scientists who initially have good intentions in their research are forced to collaborate in a larger system that prioritizes exploitation and destruction for material gain. scientists use avatar technology to interact with the Na'vi, but at the same time, corporations and the military use the technology to oppress and destroy the Na'vi habitat in order to extract unobtanium.

2. Moral Disregarding

(Pages 105)

SELFRIDGE

Their damn village is sitting right over the richest unobtanium deposit for a hundred klicks in any direction. Which sucks – for them -- because they need to relocate.

JAKE

(taking that in) Does Augustine know about this? SELFRIDGE Yeah, she does, and she's on the next ship back if she tries to cock-block me on it SELFRIDGE surveys the airfield, where crews swarm over the gunships, loading ordnance.

He turns as JAKE and GRACE charge toward him.

GRACE

Parker, wait. Stop! These are people you're about to – SELFRIDGE

They're fly-bitten savages who live in a tree! Look around – I don't know about you but I see a lot of trees. They can move. GRACE

For God's sake, there are children in there. Babies

The dialogue clearly illustrates the moral disregard shown by the RDA representatives in their efforts to mine unobtanium. Selfridge maintains his indifference and continues to attack even though he knows there are children and babies there. Selfridge even calls the Na'vi "fly-bitten savages" and belittles their lives by saying that they "just live in trees and can move somewhere else." This is evidence of moral disregard when business interests and resource exploitation make them forget about human values. Selfridge's moral disregard reflects how extractive capitalism often justifies violence and destruction for the sake of profit, without considering the lives and well-being of the people affected.

3. Destroying The Habitat of Indigenous People

(Pages 107)

IN THE DRAGON'S COCKPIT, Quaritch laughs as arrows CLINK

against the armored windows.

AMID CLOUDS of teargas, the Omaticaya run, stumble, collapse.

EYTUKAN

(yelling/subtitled)

Everybody outside! Go to the Forest.

The villagers pour out of Hometree. Everyone is yelling. Piercing SCREAMS in the boiling gas.

JAKE, eyes streaming, struggles with his bindings. KA-WHOOM! An INCENDIARY ROUND explodes inside the Commons. FLAMES ROAR through the base of Hometree.

This scene depicts Colonel Quaritch coldly watching the destruction they have wrought, while the Na'vi people struggle to survive under tear gas and heavy gunfire. This scene shows how the military is used as a tool by the RDA corporation to oppress and expel indigenous people from their land, without considering the suffering they have experienced. It also emphasizes that structural

104

violence is often used by capitalist powers to control natural resources, even if it means destroying the ecosystem and communities that have long lived there.

4. Deforestation

(Pages 94)

EXT. WILLOW GLADE

THE JUGGERNAUT grinds to a stop. But the ROAR of engines continues because –

MORE DOZERS and TRACTORS advance nearby, crushing the forest before them. Trees are slashed down by the PLASMA CUTTERS. Terrified animals flee before the onslaught

This scene clearly shows the massive deforestation carried out by the RDA using the military and heavy technology to destroy Pandora's forests. Bulldozers and giant machines level the land, cut down trees with plasma cutters to clear the land, and force wildlife to flee, reflecting how brutal exploitation of the environment occurs without considering the life of the existing ecosystem.

In a real-world context, this scene represents the deforestation caused by capitalism, where large companies often use industrial and military power to clear land for mining or plantations, ignoring the ecological and social impacts. This deforestation is part of corporate imperialism, where natural resources from areas inhabited by indigenous communities are seized for the benefit of a handful of economic elites.

UNF

5. Causing Death (Pages 109-110)

EYTUKAN. A large shard of wood is driven through him like a spear. He recognizes her as she kneels over him. EYTUKAN (subtitled)
Daughter -- take my bow. Protect the People.

Daughter -- take my bow. Protect the People. In his last living moment he places his bow in her hands. She collapses over him, her face crumpling in grief. when the dozers get there.

The dialogue above illustrates the impact of military exploitation carried out by the RDA on the Na'vi tribe, culminating in the destruction of Hometree and the death of their leader, Eytukan. This moment shows how military power is used to oppress indigenous people for the sake of the company, without considering their lives or cultural values. Neytiri experiences a profound loss, while Quaritch, as a symbol of militaristic capitalism, coldly ignores the suffering caused. In the perspective of Ecosocialism, this reflects how capitalism destroys the relationship between humans and nature for economic gain. From the perspective of Marxism, this shows the exploitation of the ruling class against groups that do not have the military or economic power to fight back. Meanwhile in ecocriticism, the destruction of Hometree not only has an impact on humans, but also on the ecosystem that is part of Na'vi life, highlighting how modern colonialism often ignores environmental balance for the sake of materialistic interests.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that *Avatar* (2009) serves as a critique of the Anthropocene era, exposing the consequences of corporate greed, technological dominance, and environmental destruction. The film depicts how the Resources Development Administration (RDA) exploits Pandora's natural resources through large-scale deforestation and militarized oppression of the Na'vi. This reflects real-world industrial activities prioritizing financial gain over ecological preservation, often leading to environmental degradation and social inequality.

A key element of the film is mimicry, represented through the Avatar Program. It enables humans to change their bodies to the same as Na'vi bodies to interact with the indigenous population and navigate Pandora's harsh environment. This technological adaptation offers several advantages, such as improved communication and ecological awareness. However, the film raises an ethical dilemma of whether such advancements are meant to foster coexistence or merely serve as tools for exploitation. This theme mirrors real-world concerns about how technological innovation, including bioengineering and artificial intelligence, can support environmental sustainability or be used for resource exploitation driven by profit-oriented motives.

Additionally, the film highlights the militarization of resource conflicts, showing how diplomacy is often disregarded in favor of brute force. Initially, RDA attempts negotiations, but when these efforts fail, they resort to large-scale violence, destroying the Na'vi's sacred sites like Hometree and the Tree of Souls. This parallels historical and modern instances of indigenous displacement and environmental destruction caused by corporate and governmental interests. The film serves as a warning against unchecked industrial expansion and urges humanity to find a balance between technological progress and environmental responsibility. The study's findings emphasize that the Anthropocene Collapse, as depicted in Avatar, is not merely a fictional concept but a pressing reality that demands urgent attention.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The 2009 film Avatar, directed by James Cameron, presents a conflict between humans and the indigenous Na'vi people of Pandora. The story centers around humans exploiting Pandora's resources, particularly the valuable mineral Unobtanium, leading to the destruction of the land and ecosystem. With advanced military power and technology, humans disregard the Na'vi's connection to their environment and the spiritual and ecological values that it holds. The film strongly critiques the Anthropocene, an era where human interests dominate and exploit nature for economic gain without regard for ecological balance or sustainability.

Through an ecosocialism lens, Avatar critiques the capitalist system, showing how it destroys both indigenous cultures and the environment in pursuit of profit. From a Marxist perspective, the film demonstrates how the ruling class uses military power, technology, and control over resources to oppress weaker communities. In the context of Ecocriticism, the film challenges the anthropocentric worldview, where nature is seen as a mere resource to be exploited for human benefit, often without consideration of long-term consequences. Ultimately, Avatar serves as a warning about the dangers of unchecked resource exploitation and the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship with both nature and society, urging us to embrace sustainability for a better future.

Based on the study's findings, the researcher suggests raising awareness about the importance of protecting the environment and indigenous rights. Governments and companies should create policies to prevent excessive exploitation of ecosystems and indigenous lands, promoting sustainable practices such as renewable energy and eco-friendly production. For future research, the focus should be on exploring the social and cultural impacts of environmental damage on indigenous communities and analyzing effective global solutions for sustainability. This research aims to offer insights for creating better policies and actions to protect both the planet and its people.

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