

# Grassroots involvement on Global South policy narratives and deliberative action on climate change loss and damage

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper investigates how power and narratives among actors relate to the process of agenda-setting and deliberation in the context of climate change loss and damage. The focus is to understand how grassroots voices manifest their concerns on intensifying economic and non-economic impacts of climate change loss and damage which affect them.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper is based on the case of the Southeast Asia climate change loss and damage workshop in Bohol, Philippines in August 2022. It utilizes lesson drawing as a critical approach by thematic analysis in making sense of the data gathered from the perspectives of participant observers and facilitators.

**Findings** – There are different levels of power and dominant narratives actors in a deliberative process propel in taking a stance over a particular issue towards agenda-setting and policy framing. The power and narratives help actors to maintain and emphasize their position, exercise authority, and to some point, suppress weak voices. Narratives associated with emotions, sentiments, ideologies, and value systems of the grassroots, community leaders, and climate justice movements tend to be devalued by those in a high level of power and authority.

**Originality/value** – Techno-authoritarian domination explicitly hampers a genuine grassroots involvement in the policy process, especially towards agenda-setting of immediate concerns about climate change loss and damage which affect the public. Critiquing actors' power and narratives are productive in identifying and propagating the type of deliberative spaces that speak truth to power.

**Keywords** Climate change, Deliberative action, Grassroots involvement, Loss and damage, Policy narratives, Global South

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Climate change and its devastating impacts have stirred global debates and demands for action (Adedeji *et al.*, 2014; Vincent, 2020). Global South countries relentlessly experiencing climate change effects such as social, political, and economic consequences like worsening poverty, emerging and re-emerging public health concerns, famine, drought, and environmental degradation, among others (Eckstein *et al.*, 2021; de Leon and Pittock, 2017; Pour *et al.*, 2020). While movements point to development aggression as a factor for these devastating events, the Global North (which propels aggressive developments), at the very



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least, took accountability and responded to these issues through climate change mitigation and disaster financing facilities (Anderson and Delisi, 2011; Buhaug and von Uexkull, 2021). However, recent developments in the climate change discussion have taken more grassroots and community-oriented narratives touching on the loss and damage experienced by vulnerable communities (Calliari *et al.*, 2020; Few *et al.*, 2007).

What is mainstreamed in the existing climate financing and response facilities is more of a structural-institutional approach, which widely concerns governmental and bureaucratic-oriented policymaking, mitigation, and response processes at both international and local scales (Griffith-Jones *et al.*, 2020; Peterson and Skovgaard, 2019; Rahman *et al.*, 2020). Meanwhile, the debates surrounding climate change loss and damage are ongoing, anchoring discourses toward response and recovery financing facilities. Accounting for the loss and damage due to climate change not only puts attention to the needed response but to mainstream the context and urgency of these issues touching on basic units of society, especially the marginalized. Attention on these may not have been streamlined in the past because of the generic and broad understanding that addressing climate change is through response and financing initiatives. Global South countries have continuously pushed for a loss and damage facility to vulnerable grassroots communities towards adaptation measures, community (re)building, financing destructions, and other economic and non-economic losses and damages (Chatham House, 2022; Landauer and Juhola, 2019; Mayer, 2017; Toussaint, 2021). Crucial to these, existing movements tackle the non-economic losses overlooked in past climate change responses. Non-economic losses and damages are intangible aspects of the climate change impacts and destructions less regarded in scientific and empirical discussion in technocratic dealings of climate change (Bahinipati, 2020; van der Geest and Warner, 2020; Serdeczny *et al.*, 2016). Hence, it is essential to point out the tendencies of technocratic approaches in suppressing communities and grassroots voices to speak to power on loss and damage impacts from climate change. However, the study maintains that technocratic approaches are not totally disadvantageous in the deliberative process, but it necessitates raising a deliberative and participatory platform in pushing for communities and grassroots voices.

While the interest of the study streamlines the significance of narratives and discursive action of Global South countries to address loss and damage concerns to international platforms (specifically for the developing worlds to listen), this work closely looks into groundworks of this movement by citing the dynamics and narratives of various actors in the workshop and dialogue between Southeast Asian nations conducted in Bohol, Philippines in 2022. The workshop aimed towards achieving a regional understanding and collective statement towards the need for a loss and damage finance facility to be presented in the COP27 convention of the United Nations Climate Change Commission. With participant observation, this paper highlights significant points and important events during the workshop in making way for grassroots and community voices to be heard. This work employed lesson drawing (Cairney, 2011; Rose, 1993) as a method of data gathering and thematic analysis in making sense of policy analysis lessons derived from the case. This study then contends that despite the technocratic and scientific framing of the agenda within the climate change discourse, it is critical to hear the voices from the grassroots. The author argues that critically looking into the landscapes of the deliberative approach, specifically on the deliberative spaces available, is crucial for lifting the voices of the grassroots sector, community leaders, and climate activists. Also, facilitators need to crucially assess agents' power and dominant narratives to take note of (and perhaps, prevent) techno-authoritarian dominion, which results in suppressing weak and disenfranchised voices.

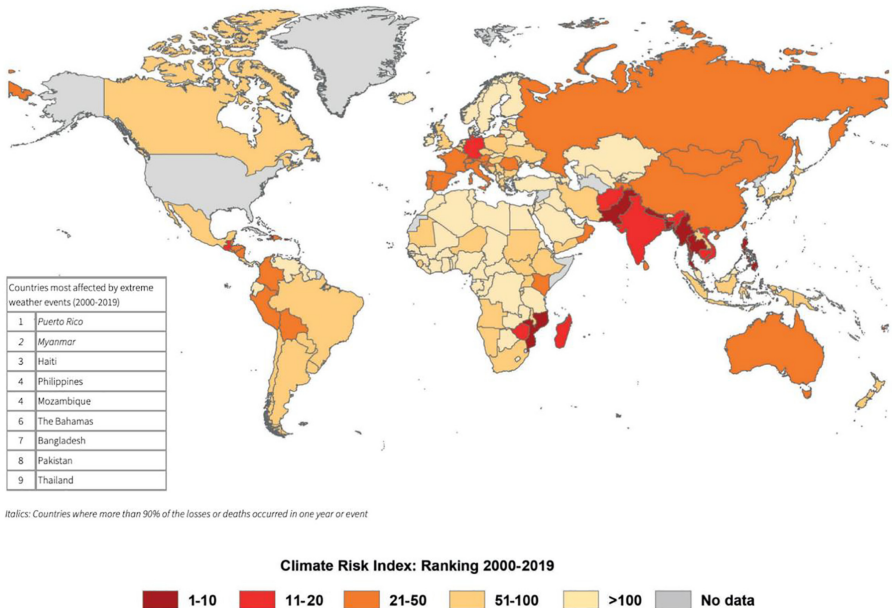
Although concrete actions on the global scale led to adopting the loss and damage clause during COP27 (United Nations Climate Change, 2022), this work emphasizes significant policy analysis on the ground and contributes to this breakthrough. A careful and inclusive

policy analysis agenda on society's basic levels is critical towards bigger goals and movements, which these global loss and damage workshops are doing. In the subsequent discussions, I will revisit how narratives in a deliberative forum (as a policy analysis component) complement the post-positivist and critical paradigms in approaching the discussions on climate change. Then, the work will illustrate the deliberative forum in the loss and damage workshop, drawing significant attention to the diversity of actors posing high and weak power in the dynamics. Observations from the workshop will answer the core question, thus, supporting the arguments reiterating the importance of marginalized voices in technical issues such as climate change while delineating the significance of deliberative policy analysis (DPA) as an approach in the process. Handful points and lessons from this work enrich the discussion and developments over policy analysis and policy design, specifically in dealing with actors in deliberative policy arenas towards agenda-setting and policy making.

### Who suffers the most? An overview of the global climate risk

The recent report of Germanwatch.org on the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) identified that the top 10 countries at high risk of climate-related extreme weather events are primarily from the Global South (Figure 1). The CRI "indicates a level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme events, which countries should understand as warnings to be prepared for more frequent and/or more severe events in the future" (Eckstein *et al.*, 2021, p. 3). In the 2021 report, countries in Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand, are in the top ten list of high-risk countries to the extreme climatological conditions posed by climate change (Table 1).

The evidence shown by the global CRI calls the attention of the international community to invest in priorities towards the extreme impacts of climate change. Not new to the climate



**Figure 1.**  
World map of the  
Global Climate Risk  
Index 2000-2019  
(Source: Adapted from  
Eckstein *et al.* (2021))

CRI (2000- 2019)	Country	CRI Score (average weighted ranking)	Fatalities (in '000)	Fatalities (per 100,000 inhabitants)	Losses (in millions USD)	Losses (per unit GDP %)	Number of events (2000- 2019)
1	Puerto Rico	7.17	149.85	4.12	4,149.98	3.66	24
2	<b>Myanmar</b>	10.00	7,065.45	14.35	1,512.11	0.80	57
3	Haiti	13.67	274.05	2.78	392.54	2.30	80
4	<b>Philippines</b>	18.17	859.35	0.93	3,179.12	0.54	317
5	Mozambique	25.83	125.40	0.52	303.03	1.33	57
6	The Bahamas	27.67	5.35	1.56	426.88	3.81	13
7	Bangladesh	28.33	572.50	0.38	1,860.04	0.41	185
8	Pakistan	29.00	502.45	0.30	3,771.91	0.52	173
9	<b>Thailand</b>	29.83	137.75	0.21	7,719.15	0.82	146
10	Nepal	31.33	217.15	0.82	233.06	0.39	191

Source: Adapted from [Eckstein et al. \(2021\)](#)

**Table 1.**  
Long-term climate risk  
index (CRI): Top 10  
countries highly  
affected in 2009-2019  
(annual averages)

change discourse, the CRI findings even acknowledged that the emergence of loss and damage is not something new to push into the spotlight. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), “loss and damage” generally refer to a term that climate negotiators, workers, and advocates use to substantiate the “consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to, or when options exist, but a community does not have the resources to access them” ([Bhandari et al., 2022](#)). For once, loss and damage have already been there; however, they have been left unaccounted for ([Calliari et al., 2020](#); [Vanhala and Hestbaek, 2016](#)). The public in those high-risk areas is highly vulnerable to extreme climate change impacts that, in turn, alter their social well-being, communities, and homes and, worst, take people’s lives. Nonetheless, the risks these developing countries have been experiencing pose greater susceptibility to further losses and damages in the environment, people’s livelihood, economy, and life of communities ([Page and Heyward, 2017](#)).

Such risks posed by climate change are inextricable from the loss and damage narratives and experiences of the people on the ground. For once, all crises our communities experience are connected to climate change. For example, the release of greenhouse gases leads to a speedy increase in temperature on the planet, resulting in frequent and intensified typhoons, disastrous droughts, and sea-level rise, which most countries from the global south have been experiencing ([Oreggioni et al., 2021](#)). While international communities and national governments instigated mitigating efforts to address such, however, deemed insufficient to address further loss and damage dramatically experienced by the affected public. Numerous confirmations present that most loss and damage from climate change are highly experienced in the Global South. Hence, it is indispensable to say that such policy processes in communities directly affected by climate change losses and damages should be democratically driven. Actors in the policy process should be able to voice their concerns beyond hegemonic interferences and suppression, especially from those powerful actors who act dismissively towards genuine voices.

### Deliberations, narratives, and power of agents

Policy scholars soundly consider the policy process spiral and not always treated as something linear ([Wolf and Van Dooren, 2017](#); [Young et al., 2016](#)). However, technocrat experts always thought linearly in addressing wicked public problems in society.

Considering their “expertise,” these scientifically-oriented innovators and actors in the policy chain consider absolute technical know-how of making things work, thus, quickly imposing which ways the collective should address pressing concerns. True enough, the scientific and empirical evidence surrounding the debates on climate change concretizes an accurate and science-based identification of impacts (violence, risks, and destructions to humanity, environment, and climatological conditions, among others) that the world should be aware and alarmed of. Nonetheless, policy analysts and practitioners should also rethink the ongoing discourses between technocratic paradigms vis-à-vis deliberative-democratic approaches in addressing a public concern. In talks about climate change, policy science maintains the significant contribution of the empirical and positivist approach to establish a critical and complex public problem. However, recent climate change loss and damage developments point to a critical consideration of the social and political dimensions that may have been overlooked (James *et al.*, 2014; Toussaint, 2021).

In leveraging such non-technical and value-oriented considerations, this work investigates the deliberative approach in policy analysis within climate change loss and damage discourse. Also, it highlights how several actors mobilize narratives in debates and discussions. While the policy analysis discussions may lack concrete articulation of narratives and deliberative strategies (Boswell, 2013; van Eeten, 2007; Escobar, 2015), this work has been very keen in focusing on both elements to maneuver a productive and empowering policy analysis critically. The participatory nature of the deliberative approach always complements advancing the voices of the public, especially of the marginalized and disenfranchised sectors (Sacramento and Boossabong, 2021). Identifying the powers of actors through the narratives usually bring and capable of pushing forth will play a critical role in agenda-setting and articulation of policy alternatives to public problems. This assumption might be proven true in a technocratically oriented problem (where experts and those with high power hold core decisions).

Foremost, the very principle of deliberation within the DPA approach is particularly interested in hearing the voices of the public by providing them the power to stir the policy process, empower them to amplify their voices, and let them think of policy alternatives to address their concern (Curato *et al.*, 2018; Fischer, 2010; Mansbridge, 2019). In application to the climate change discourse, mainstream policy science might disregard the essence of fully engaging the public by reiterating that experts and technocrats hold a hand in addressing a technical concern. With the progression of the climate change issues the world has been experiencing, we so far observed from international negotiations, discussions, and policymaking that this issue is not alien to the public and the collective (Vanhala and Hestbaek, 2016). Addressing the climate change loss and damage concerns redirects our attention toward proactively engaging public and grassroots voices in the bigger picture. This is where the potential of DPA can critically articulate in the policy analysis, especially when the public problem ceaselessly demands deliberately engaging the public in finding sound alternatives to their immediate concern. Nevertheless, a critical component of this strategy is understanding and framing actors’ power and the kind of narratives they present to streamline their concerns in the deliberative arena. Sometimes, the power imbalance and high inequalities result in those with high power and expertise dominating deliberations through the narratives they play too well.

### **Hearing narratives from all corners: lensing through the Southeast Asia loss and damage workshop in Bohol, Philippines**

Previous forums, debates, and discourses over climate change, if not highly dominated by technical experts and concentrated by those with high power, lacks the active participation of those people from the primary sectors and from the grassroots of society who are directly

affected (Few *et al.*, 2007; Pettenger, 2016). Climate change financing initiatives mainly focus on building response and recovery facilities, mitigation, and adaptation measures which streamline the role of governments and bureaucracies towards action (Bhardwaj and Khosla, 2021; Bracking and Leffel, 2021; Javeline, 2014). As stated, the call for international bodies to channel some attention to loss and damage finance goes beyond the normative response to climate change crises. Moreso, it moves beyond institutional and structural functions as it puts high regard on the voices of the people on the ground, their authentic and immediate needs, and the non-economic face of loss and damage, which the mainstream may have overlooked. The workshop in Bohol Island, Philippines, aims to consider the importance of diverting the discourse on loss and damage and capture grassroots voices and narratives who directly experience extreme and catastrophic conditions.

The workshop is designed to create a regional understanding of loss and damage by organizing a community-driven event. Through discussion among members of the community highly affected by the impacts of climate change loss and damage together with other actors across Southeast Asia (government leaders, civil society groups, people's organizations, and climate activists), it hopes to see various shapes and forms of loss and damage has taken in the region. It purposively emphasized the active role of women, the elderly, youth, indigenous peoples, farmers, and fisherfolks, among other marginalized groups, in hearing their voices since they are directly affected by climate change loss and damage. Also, these sectors' livelihood and community life are closely linked to the environment. On the other hand, the workshop invited national policymakers, civil society, academia, and the private sector to listen in discussions of the marginalized sectors, especially of the communities in Bohol, Philippines, affected by recent calamities (i.e., super typhoon Yolanda and Odette, sea level rise).

Three important activities were conducted to achieve a community-driven engagement during the workshop. On the first day, talks from experts on climate science, community leaders, and those in the regional negotiating bodies initiated the discussion on climate change loss and damage. This forum aimed to discuss what we collectively mean about "climate change loss and damage," which, at the very least, those involved provided clear images and grasps based on their discussions. The workshop devoted the second day to community immersion to see the situation in communities affected by climate change loss and damage and talk directly to community members about how these catastrophic events have affected their lives. With the on-site experiences and narratives from the locals, the third day of the workshop expected the participants to further discuss and deliberate on the climate change loss and damage issues based on what they have recorded from community immersion and how they can relate it with their background (as civil society, community leader, government bureaucrat, etc.). Toward the end, the workshop called for all the participants to participate in a deliberative forum to discuss their collective stance on climate change loss and damage. What has been keenly recorded from these events, especially during the deliberative forum, is how power relations come into play and how actors mobilize their narratives to push their agenda (Enserink *et al.*, 2022; Fischer and Miller, 2007). Table 2 presents what dominant narratives those actors involved in deliberative workshops have exercised and the type of power actors lean on based on crucial elements relevant to agenda-setting in policy making.

The study identified that essential considerations in the deliberative forum include elements such as the power of agents and the type of dominant narratives they mobilize. Power comes with (a) knowledge and expertise, for instance, technical know-how and background on topics such as climate change that gives an edge to a specific actor (or group). The (b) resources refer mainly to the economic and, at times to the social capital of actors, while the (c) status is mainly viewed from a social and political standpoint. These elements are a crucial consideration in understanding the power dynamics of actors and how they mobilize

**Table 2.**  
Power and narratives  
of actors in the  
deliberative forum on  
loss and damage

Actors	(a) <i>Knowledge and Expertise</i>	Power (b) <i>Resources</i>	(c) <i>Status</i>	Dominant Narratives
Government Bureaucrats, Politicians, Regional Policy Planners, Science experts	<b>High</b> <i>Scientific, Administrative, Legal</i>	<b>High</b> Economic resources, Funding gatekeepers	<b>High</b> Social and political	<b>Logical-rational narratives</b> <i>Legal or institutional and Empirical or scientific</i>
Civil Society Groups, Climate Activists, Professional Groups	<b>High</b> <i>Ideology, Scientific</i>	<b>Medium</b> Funding, economic resources, *social capital	<b>Medium</b> Social and political	<b>Normative Narratives</b> <i>Driven by ideology &amp; belief systems (At times, uses logical-rational narratives too)</i>
Community Leaders, People's Organizations, Indigenous Group Leaders	<b>Medium</b> <i>Scientific, *Ideology, *Socio-cultural, *Sectoral</i>	<b>Medium</b> *Social capital	<b>Low</b> ~Social and political	<b>Normative Narratives</b> <i>(Strong emphasis on ideology &amp; belief systems)</i>
Community Members, Individual Fisherfolks & Farmers	<b>High</b> <i>Socio-cultural, Local knowledge, *Experiential,</i>	<b>Low</b> Economic	<b>Low</b> Social and political	<b>Emotional Narratives</b> <i>(Outright expression of feelings and sentiments)</i>

*Legend: \*relatively high, ~ relatively medium/moderate*  
Source: By author, drawn from observations at the 2022 Southeast Asia loss and damage workshop

the dominant narratives they produce. More so in an Asian context, where the public highly regards authority and power (Sacramento and Boossabong, 2021). Hence, the narrative complements how actors with high to moderate power push their agenda and understand the normative and emotional narratives authentically conveyed by those experiencing the problem on the ground.

In policy analysis, some scholars attempted to mobilize the role of narratives in making sense of a particular public problem (van Eeten, 2007; Fischer and Gottweis, 2012) and on a deeper sense-making and meaning-making (Jones and Radaelli, 2015) while the epistemological development spurred from positivist quantitative paradigm (Jones et al., 2014; Jones and McBeth, 2010). Some have pointed out the logical-rational nature of narratives directing into positivist, scientific, and legal streams (Peterson and Jones, 2016; Roe, 1994; Shanahan et al., 2018), while others have presented the normative nature of narratives that dwells around collective ideologies, belief systems, and values (Carmona, 2015; Fischer and Gottweis, 2012). Emotional narratives, however, are imperative consideration in hearing the genuine voices from below based on what they experienced first-hand and what they have acknowledged as an insistent problem that needs to address (Durnová, 2015, 2018; Newman, 2012). Nevertheless, the type of narratives that various actors persuasively advance is crucial to understanding their plight and genuinely making sense of the complex public problem, such as climate change loss and damage.

Considering that the workshop's primary goal is to reach and craft a collective statement on climate change loss and damage among the regional participants, (mainly from grassroots sectors such as the indigenous people, fisherfolks, and farmers, among others), it is crucial for facilitators to keenly and carefully navigate around the democratic processes of a deliberative

forum. Observations from the loss and damage workshop present that while the workshop tried to immerse the participating actors in pressing realities of loss and damage on the ground for an experiential grasp of the setting, narratives, emotions, and feelings of the locals in their community, however, the deliberative forum posed (a) power imbalance among actors involved. At the same time, grassroots actors have uttered their narrative supporting the call for attention towards climate change loss and damage; however, they have been (b) overruled by domineering narratives from those with high power. Noticeably, those actors from the grassroots have relatively low to moderate power (except in terms of local knowledge, which is high), which mainly matters in advancing, asserting, and negotiating critical agendas they have on hand. Those with high power consider significant advantage based on expertise, resource, and status as a criterion for them “to make their narratives and stance steadfast” and for the “public to keenly listen to their wisdom”.

The levels of power among actors based on various vital elements contradict the type of narratives they dominantly utter. For instance, those government bureaucrats, politicians, regional policy planners, and science experts who have high power in terms of expertise, knowledge, resources, and status tend to navigate around logical-rational (both legal-institutional and empirical scientific) narratives in persuading people to listen and exercise, or perhaps impose, their authority. On the other hand, those with medium power, such as civil society groups, climate activists, professional groups, community leaders, people’s organizations, and indigenous group leaders, advance normative narratives guided by their ideologies, values, and belief systems in advancing their agendas on climate change loss and damage. Other than that, those groups and individuals with less power stick to their emotional narratives, expressing their concerns and experiential realities on the impacts of climate change loss and damage visibly and first-handedly experienced in their communities. The normative and emotional narratives expressed by these sectors include their first-hand experience about how they feel during catastrophic events such as the way they illustrate the tidal waves during storms that damaged their homes and killed lives, the way they handle the king tides and sea level rise, as well as expression of worries towards livelihood, daily subsistence for basic needs, and their future. With these in place, significant hurdles within the deliberative forum include tendencies of those who have more to suppress marginalized voices and to dismiss the normative and emotional narratives that tend to express authentic evidence from below (Hoppe *et al.*, 2013; Ojha *et al.*, 2016).

Using narratives backed by feelings and emotions as crucial to substantiating particular policy concerns is highly criticized by the positivist school, which prefers highly technical and scientific approaches and knowledge. As such, those actors who see themselves with high power tend to suppress and, at worst, dismiss the experiential-backed emotional narratives and ideologically driven normative narratives from the people below. In the workshop, the design has devoted sufficient time for participants to immerse in communities and realize the ravaged conditions brought by catastrophic impacts of climate change loss and damage. When the participants gathered for breakout sessions and deliberative forums to develop a collective statement for loss and damage, the power inequalities and the drive to dominate the narratives led to a clash among actors. This has led to somehow displacing the ultimate objective of having a community-driven deliberation on loss and damage, which sadly has moved towards prettified positioning of high authorities over the issue. Alas, talking to power will not make it that easy when authorities find themselves in a position where they can dominate and, at the very least, see an opportunity to suppress grassroots voices.

While we may consider that climate change loss and damage is an urgent issue that various sector cutting across countries should be concerned about, people in authority and those actors with advanced knowledge and expertise might unconsciously (or even consciously) suppress ordinary voices in making comments on a public problem initially



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thought as technocratic and highly scientific. This goes back to the debate of the mainstream technocratic school versus the critical school in policy analysis (Fischer, 2010). However, we cannot leverage that one approach is superior in climate change loss and damage. Also, we cannot dismiss the fact that technocratic voices do help a lot in highly technical issues, and that is not totally disadvantageous at all. Hence, it brings back into the picture a recent proposition that “assimilating” the two approaches can make policy analysis productive, especially in a complex public problem such as climate change loss and damage (Sacramento and Boossabong, 2021).

### **Grassroots voices vs. techno-authoritarian domination: conceptualizing the “empowering space”**

The previous sections noted how the different levels of actors’ power and the types of narratives stir the policy analysis process. To some point, the inequalities posed by the existing condition in actor relations (concerning their power and dominant narratives) have resulted in posturing some as superior and taking dominance while making others feel inferior. Considering this event links to the very debate of technocratic approaches versus critical approaches to policy analysis, dismissing the necessity of including technocrat experts’ voices in the policy process is inevitable. At the same time, the call to look into people’s genuine experiences and grassroots voices of communities is vital to address climate change as an urgent concern. The workshop attempted to integrate a community-driven deliberative forum by, at the very least, providing an avenue for a democratic-deliberative approach. However, it may have fallen short in ensuring that real experiences and genuine voices be given the platform to collectively manifest and lead the agenda-setting in coming up with a persuasive statement for COP27.

Lessons from the workshop are to draw attention to how narratives and power come to play over deliberating specific issues that need immediate attention in framing the agenda of stakeholders and those in authority to hear. While this work notes the already established guidelines and procedures in ensuring equal voices and participation among actors in the deliberative process (Bartels *et al.*, 2020; Fischer, 2010; Forester, 1999), however, might be constrained by normative realities in the Global South. In the context of high inequalities, the grassroots may lack the drive and potency to assert their voices and the agendas to pursue when techno-authoritarian domination steps in the process. The work acknowledges that there is a power imbalance and diversified types of narratives policy actors are capable of averring. In the same light, it necessitates practitioners to identify and learn that deliberative spaces matter, and it takes diversified types too. A critical contribution to the deliberative literature, besides the role of narratives and power, is to accentuate that beyond the “formal setting” of “forums” and “town hall” meetings as a platform in the western developed deliberative approach (Fischer and Gottweis, 2012), practitioners should better identify and mix and match various deliberative spaces to achieve a productive deliberation and agenda framing.

The work emphasizes that careful consideration in setting up the deliberative space ensures a community-driven and grassroots-oriented policy analysis. Western thought on DPA assumes that putting up the deliberative space addresses technocrat-expert domination and provides for democratic participation (Fischer and Miller, 2007; Li and Wagenaar, 2019). It is true enough that it addresses the issue in their experience; however, supplementing an informal empowering space in the Global South context will further address the issue of genuine involvement and inclusivity. Moving from deliberative space’s original conception, (usually found in town hall meetings, public form, and the like), empowering space links to the necessity of integrating the essence of informal dialogues, emotional narratives, and cultural norms, stories, among others, which may manifest the genuine concerns of the public,

especially of the disenfranchised one. Talking truth to power in the Asian context may entail a unique consideration in view of a prevalent culture of high respect for authority and power. Hence, talking to those with less should be in a considerable space, enabling and encouraging them to rally and address their concerns. While the workshop successfully forwarded a statement to Southeast Asian authorities and the COP27, however, to holistically note and encapsulate grassroots narratives, it may strongly forward experienced-based evidence from those suffering the impacts of climate change loss and damage. Distinguishing the type of deliberative space will further help practitioners stir the process. Nonetheless, this work further calls for an extensive exploration of what we mean by different “deliberative spaces” in the context of policy actors relations.

### Conclusion

The paper has delved into further understanding narratives and power elements in the processes of the DPA approach by employing lesson drawing and thematic analysis as methods. In the light of understanding policy design and problem framing, this work looked into the case of climate change loss and damage workshop for Southeast Asia in Bohol, Philippines. Since the workshop aspires to a community-driven process by engaging grassroots voices, the study vested attention in looking into workshop actors’ power relations and dominant narratives, which are elemental in posing immediate concerns on climate change loss and damage. The work also identified the power among actors and the dominant narratives they emphasize in positioning their stance over issues the workshop deliberated. The findings of this work also showed that the DPA process, which is primarily instrumental in advancing a democratic, participatory, and stakeholder-centered agenda-setting and policymaking, may have missed the contextual realities in the Asian countries constricted by excessive exercise, high inequalities, and high respect of power.

From the findings, the study positions that to holistically conduct agenda-setting is by authentically and genuinely hearing the voices of the grassroots in deliberating public problems such as climate change loss and damage alongside carefully considering tendencies for techno-authoritarian domination. Technocrats, bureaucrats, and experts may, at times, dominate the deliberation of public problems and alternatives to immediate needs (which is not disadvantageous at all times but may suppress grassroots voices). The DPA approach developed in the western context has widely assumed equality and impartiality as defaults in democratic deliberation. However, the non-western world may have posed different value systems and conditionalities, which may hamper the process. The work suggests further exploring the types of deliberative spaces, which may appropriately mix and match with actors’ level of power and types of narratives. Understanding and hearing grassroots voices from those highly affected by the intensifying impacts and results of climate change loss and damage are to fundamentally contemplate that power, narratives, and deliberative spaces matter. Exploring the potential of an “empowering space” will soundly facilitate agenda-setting and deliberations while speaking truth to authorities and actors with high power.

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