How can Informal Discursive Arenas Complement Deliberative Policy Analysis?

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Abstract

Policy arenas are essential elements since these are context and impact variables to the deliberative policymaking process. This article attempts to elucidate the informal discursive policy arena less explored by deliberative scholars. Using qualitative research methods and meta-analysis, the study documented research and provided inputs on the basic question of how the informal discursive arena complements deliberative policy analysis (DPA). To unpack informal discursive is essential to DPA, specifically on its richness, complexity, and diversity that offers new perspectives in the systems, mechanisms, and processes of the conventional DPA. While the informal arena is surrounded by diverse and marginalized groups focusing on interest-based complex issues, it will likely genuinely address the aim for the inclusive representation of policy actors, citizenry, and stakeholders by obliterating formal barriers. Lastly, the study layout lessons from the Global South to support the claim and provide potential research directions to informal arenas vis-à-vis DPA.

Keywords: Deliberative, democratic, informal arena, participatory, policymaking

Introduction

Recent developments in public policy constantly underscore the concept of "public" and "participation" in scholarly discourses of policy analyses, specifically in public policy's critical school of post-positivist, interpretive, and constructivist scholars. However, overwhelming contestations and debates from technocratic or positivist policy analysis traditions continue to argue its command over proper and suitable lenses, approaches, and tools in providing solutions to public problems (Li, 2015). One that criticizes the traditional form is the "deliberative policy analysis" (DPA), which illustrates and applies the critical importance of involving the public sphere, specifically those at the grassroots level, the community, and the target sector in imagining, discoursing, and coming up solutions to address public problems (Fischer, 1992, 2007; Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Hajer et al., 2003; Li, 2015; Li & Wagenaar, 2019; Wagenaar, 2014; Wagenaar & Wenninger, 2020). This post-positivist approach is contested but has also offered a new paradigmatic view and alternatives to policy analysis (Sacramento & Boossabong, 2021). While the "technocratic policy analysis" (TPA) over-emphasized the technical tools and aspects that separate analysis from public engagement (Li, 2015), DPA became an alternative to the traditional school by utilizing rationality in engaging to discourse that can lead to making better and valid judgments about problems of public concern (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Fischer, 2007; Sacramento & Boossabong, 2021). Pivotally, DPA establishes an avenue for the public to participate in policymaking and policy analysis, thus valuing the democratic process (DeLeon, 1992; Li, 2015; Wagle, 2000).

Specifically, an important element of deliberation is the discursive policy arena, where discussions, negotiations, and coming up with alternatives take place (Gerston 2010). In DPA, however, the discursive policy arenas are understood as where the public, among other policy actors, engage in discourses and talks since their participation is an essential element that facilitators generally aim to make the deliberative process fruitful (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Forester, 2013). In recent works, the discursive arenas are viewed from the point of dynamic and complex play and interplay of powers among policy actors (Barnes et al., 2006; Durnova et al., 2013; Wood, 2015) from multifaceted faces of these arenas (Hendriks, 2006a, 2006b; Hendriks & Grin, 2007; Pędziwiatr, 2007; Radaelli et al., 2012), and the socio-political-cultural element that influences the policy analysis' processes and subtleties within these arenas (Barnes et al., 2006; Einsiedel, 2008; Hoppe, 2011; Sangiampongsa, 2021; Wood, 2015). For once, the deliberative process found from the tradition of formal avenues of bringing people together to talk cohesively, engage in discourse, raise thoughts, and address possible solutions over critical issues concerning the society and grassroots communities by pertinent authorities, deliberative practitioners, or those in power (Carpini et al., 2004; Forester, 1999, 2013; Hendriks, 2005; Innes & Booher, 2004). However, it is interesting to rethink the scope of DPA and the discursive arenas beyond the conventionally known setting, context, and set-up of deliberation. As such, does deliberation occur outside the DPA school's formally constituted and conventionally known discursive arenas? Will these deliberations be considered productive toward policy analyses? And, to what extent can these deliberations outside the conventional discursive arenas impact policymaking and addressing public problems?

This article underscores that, though briefly examined, studies in policy analysis, deliberations, and discursive arenas have explored the merit of various faces of the discursive arenas in the process of policymaking (Connelly et al., 2006; DeLeon & Varda, 2009; Esau et al., 2021; Fraser, 2021; Reh, 2012; Schmidt, 2011). However, a deeper take and analysis should be put forward to unveil the potential of informal discursive arenas to policy analysis in general and the DPA school. At the same time, the Western-centric take of previous works is far beyond reflective of the normative conditions and context of the Global South experience. Hence, this paper argues that to provide fruitful and productive insights into deliberation, the informal discursive arenas present not just progressive but also sectoral and grassroots-oriented narratives and discourses leading to an action-oriented aim. Furthermore, the informal discursive arena as both a dynamic element and a contextual attribute to the DPA process is a productive consideration undermined, if not less explored in the discourses of the western developed DPA school. Hence, the informal discursive arena is thus a valuable complementary to and an important consideration in applying DPA in non-western and the global south contexts.

To support this claim, this paper has considered mainly an integrative review research (Snyder, 2019) of literature surrounding DPA, specifically on the scope of the discursive arenas. For Torraco (2005), this method aims to assess, critique, and synthesize literature on a research topic toward surfacing new theoretical frameworks and perspectives. Snyder (2019) supported that, as such, it will provide an overview of the knowledge base and critically review and possibly re-conceptualize a certain topic that may veer towards expanding and contributing to theoretical foundations. This work will first lay out the theoretical groundings of the DPA with specific emphasis and highlight the attributes of the discursive approach in the process. While categorizing, it will then highlight the potentials of the informal discursive arenas while pointing out essential elements that glean towards claiming its effective application, if not workability, in the non-western and the global south context. Imperative for the support, the study will also present concrete cases from relevant research works that pinpoint the potentials of informal discursive arenas to DPA, or at the very least, its ability to initiate and steer primary stages of the policy process. Important to note here that the work establishes the attempt to highlight the idea that focusing and providing ample consideration to the informal discursive arenas constitute a paramount complementary to the DPA approach in general and its application beyond the Western world. The work also makes efforts to present productive directions and perspectives as much as the informal arenas are concerned and towards unveiling other sides and faces of the deliberative approach worthy of consideration.

What is the Link between the Discursive Element and DPA?
DPA's origins can be traced back to the deliberative democracy's school of thought (Bächtiger et al., 2018; Gutmann & Thompson, 2009) and the discursive approach that scholars in political sciences have founded (Durnova et al., 2013; Fischer, 2003; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Li & Wagenaar, 2019). This argumentative turn in policymaking and analysis advanced the empirical and normative aspects of the analytical process in public policy. DPA organizes a deliberation among competing normative positions regarding a larger societal concern or issue to identify or uncover conflicts, forge consensus, and foster interactive communication (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Fischer, 2007; Fischer & Forester, 1993). Essentially, the major concern of DPA rests on what Fischer and Boossabong (2018: 586) call it a "way of grasping a deeper intellectual understanding of the problem at hand by examining what it is a part of." Analytically, the approach

helps organize a participatory policymaking process and improves the understanding and decision-making of diverse participants. Nonetheless, DPA is a method of inquiry based on the systems of dialectic argumentation (Fischer, 2007, 2015; Wodak, 2016).

Primarily, the discursive take on public policy has been foundationally introduced in dealing with the text and context of public problems. Introducing the approach to policy science is a contest, or rather, an alternative to the mainstream technocratic paradigm. Gale (1999) even described that discourse has the power to bind policies together and in providing the semblance of "coherence amongst complex textual elements and competing claims to importance and meaning" (Gale 1999, p. 405). In such a way, policies are produced discursively by utilizing text in a particular context to address specific public problems through the discursive paradigm by settling all competing dominant discourses and views towards consensus temporarily or strategically. It can be noted further that the discursive approach has been particularly fruitful in dealing with textualities (Fuchs & Kalfagianni, 2009; Hastings, 1998); however, the DPA approach has seen the light its usefulness to go beyond textualities. The attributes of the discursive approach toward policy in action have significantly contributed to the developments of deliberation.

Central to the DPA approach, Durnova, Fischer, and Zittoun (2016) highlights the use of discourse in framing and modifying public policies, citing Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action and Michel Foucault's Foucaldian policy analysis. Discourse is instrumental in building consensus, thus, allowing policy actors to interact with each other. The arguments, expressions, convictions, persuasions, negotiations, and contestations are products of this discursive approach that not only provide explanations about how to understand the policy process but also provide different perspectives in examining issues vital to policy action, such as power, legitimacy, and governance (Durnova et al., 2013, 2016). Durnova, Fischer, and Zittoun (2016) even point out two important orientations of the discursive paradigm. This includes the argumentative approach in facilitating policy deliberation, aiming to illuminate social and political meanings in the competing policy discourses and their arguments. And the emotional aspect analytically helps explain knowledge produced through emotions in the discursive process and evaluate judgments that give actors the entitlement to participate in the policy process. The two aspects of the discursive paradigm, both the argumentative and the emotional, have been a significant consideration in the deliberation processes. These bring together the discursive power as a paramount take in deliberations to make policy analysis work.

It can be noted further that among significant works in DPA (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Durnova et al., 2016; Fischer, 2003, 2007; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Forester, 1999; Hajer et al., 2003; Sacramento & Boossabong, 2021), layout the deliberative process that is bounded by organizationally and formally constituting forums, town hall meetings, deliberative polling, amongst others, that requires talking to power and even productively interacting among policy actors, policy analysts, and policy entrepreneurs. Considerably, this has been found productive in the deliberative processes both in Western and non-western contexts (i.e., Boossabong and Chamchong 2019; Chamchong 2020; Bartels, Greenwood, and Wittmayer 2020; Hopkins 2010; Burgess et al. 2007; Flitcroft et al. 2011; Celia, Margaret, and Barnett 2006; Gregory, Watson, and Hartz-Karp 2008; Larrea and Arrona 2019). However, these recent works on DPA and the role of the discursive arena in the process have also signaled a deeper and more serious takeover, considering the informal side way beyond the conventionalities of the DPA process. Take, for

example, the works of Boossabong and Chamchong (2019), Chamchong (2020), Raghunath (2020), Rahmat, Salmon, and Raharjo (2021), Ratanawaraha (2012), and Dore (2014) that does not only pointed out to productive potentials of DPA but have also opened the window further to rethink the roles of deliberative or discursive policy arenas. Such elements underscored, to point out one, are cultural and political normative assumptions that foreshadow the conventional discursive sphere. As such, the DPA, as a discursive, collaborative, and participatory approach to its informal capacities, has something worth examining under representative and networked democracies and beyond, in non-western contexts and the Global South. Essential to note further that the DPA's perplexities revolve around a) who participates in the policy deliberations and policymaking and b) for whom truly are the initiatives undertaken in this process. While scholars continuously argue that DPA is towards inclusiveness and participatory policymaking, it is equally essential to weigh out and examine those elements beyond the DPA fashion and how its principles extend.

Discursive Arenas and the Deliberative Process

Hence, how do discursive policy arenas work? What are the dynamics within? And does the mass public genuinely and authentically vest participation in conventional policy deliberations? Foremost, the DPA approach has claimed and proved that in Western cases, most of the concerned sectors, individuals, and even the general public actively participate in deliberative forums and townhall meetings constituted by policy analysts to address certain public problems that of the community's immediate concern (Dodge, 2014; Fishkin, 2003; Forester et al., 2019; Hopkins, 2010; Stevenson, 2016). Hence, equally important to exploring deliberative functions is to recalibrate DPA scholars on how the deliberative arenas work. As a take-off point, the work of Hoppe (2011) has attempted to explicitly classify the decision or discursive arenas vis-à-vis public problems by specifically pointing out that "citizens and administrators have some discretion to choose among different modes of democratic participation" and that "political leaders, authoritative policymakers and their organizations ought to be explored both as context and impact variables in deliberative-participatory designs" (Hoppe, 2011: 164–165). Hoppe (2011) has provided insight into this work that there is a need to refocus on how governance context work in a participatory and deliberative approach in policy making.

While this work rests vast interest in the discursive arenas, it is crucial to underscore how previous works have attempted to conceptually and categorically explore this area of deliberation (see Table 1). Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs (2004) have articulated that what they mean by the discursive approach is to engage citizens to discourse by treating it as a form of participation. Explicitly, they have also underscored that discourses may be categorically identified as they exist in both normal forms (conventionally in formally constituted structures or institutions) and informal ones that may occur unplanned and convened outside the normal contexts (Carpini et al., 2004). On the other hand, Hendriks and Grin (2007) and Hendriks (2006b; 2006a) presented both the literal and figurative view that discursive arenas are where debates and discourses over critical issues take place. Hence, the social and political pressure that makes a communicative push towards exchanges in discourses, opinions, and contestations makes the discursive arena work (Hendriks, 2006a, 2006b; Hendriks & Grin, 2007). Notably, an attempt was established to present

that formal arenas involve scientific inquiry, arbitration, and consensus, while the unconventional, informal side includes symbolic, rhetorical, and antagonistic kind of informal exchanges (Hendriks, 2006a, 2006b; Hendriks & Grin, 2007). However, Hoppe (2011) has pointed out the importance of the stakeholders and citizens engaging in deliberations and discourses toward addressing public problems. Hoppe (2011) even presented those deliberations and discourses that exist in what is categorized as formal (context including parliament, cabinet meetings, expert committees, inquiry commissions) and informal discursive arenas (existing on popular and professional media, lobbies, activism, boycotts, strikes and other modes of public discontent and protest

Table 1 Conceptual Definition and Categorization of the Discursive Arena.

Author	Discursive Approach	Formal Discursive Arena	Informal Discursive Arena
Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs (2004)	"…an activity concerned about discoursing with other citizens— talking, discussing, debating, and/or deliberating— …as a form of participation."	"…activities such as voting, attending rallies, working for a political party, lobbying, joining and actively participating in voluntary organizations, protesting, and the like." Involving normal processes of government operations in the context	can involve private individuals in informal, unplanned exchanges; those who convene for public purposes but do so outside the normal processes of government operations (for example, in such places as libraries, schools, homes, churches, and community centers); and those who are brought together in settings such as town hall meetings of political representatives and their constituents."
(Hendriks, 2006a, 2006b; Hendriks & Grin, 2007)	"These are arenas (both in the literal and figurative sense) where discussion and debate issues occur in the political domain. Discursive spheres form when social and political pressures generate sites of communication where ideas and opinions are exchanged, debated, and contested."	"…aimed at formal or structured forms of communication, such as scientific inquiry, arbitration or consensus."	"Other spheres promote a more informal exchange of ideas via symbolic, rhetorical or antagonistic means."
(Hoppe, 2011)	"…stakeholders and/or citizens in the official policymaking processes as public spaces where citizens may deliberate.	"…formal discursive and decision arenas (parliament, cabinet meetings, expert committees, inquiry commissions)…."	"…public and not-so-public informal social arenas (popular and professional media, lobbies, activism, boycotts, strikes and other modes of public discontent and protest)…."

However, an issue that Hoppe (2011) and Böker (2017) raised is whether the outputs of deliberations are genuine and authentic when noticeably certain "mini-publics" has incontestably been considered as core actors in the discursive process. Hence, the "mass-public" were shrugged off from the spotlight, or rather disenfranchised in the process where the "mini-publics" are claimed to be representative of the interests of the society at large. Scholars have claimed that the genuineness and authenticity of deliberation are achievable in small forums rather than big ones and with careful consideration of quality rather than quantity (Button & Mattson, 1999; Dryzek, 2001, 2002). However, Parkinson (2003, 191) has cited that it is not just a representation of interest by small groups that simply marks the genuine and authentic legitimacy of deliberation; but also what Böker (2017) contested that the mini-publics have limitations too and that the deliberative process must put emphasis on the political-cultural aspects. Moreso, Parkinson (2003) reiterated, "the interlinkages of communication and representation, authorization and accountability between many such forums that create legitimacy." With these concerns, it is fruitful to leverage that the informal discursive side has complementary and productive contributions towards deliberation that captures dynamics and complexities at the backdrop.

Where does policy deliberation take place? This is an important question in the DPA discourse because policy and the discursive arenas are essential to deliberation. Context-wise, this will tell us who is involved and what problems and issues are being tackled. A pivotal factor to the policy flow, approval, and implementation is the dynamics within the policy arenas that determine what policies to consider and whatnot. Also, the type of arena portrays the participation of the policy actors, the public, and stakeholders.

Corollary to this, it is within these contexts that collaborative and authentic dialogue takes place. It is important in the policy and discursive as it is considered the policymaking process's soul. Innes and Booher (2004) remarked that collaborative dialogues usually occur in small groups to solve problems. Notably, the policy arena consists of different actors and players with differing histories and interests; thus, dialogues must be authentic rather than rhetorical and ritualistic (Innes & Booher, 2004). These authentic dialogues typically require a facilitator's intervention, and the participants must be trained. They even raised an important point that stakeholders are acclimatized to concealing their interests, and engaging in a discursive form of inquiry would be difficult. This is a major challenge since stakeholders tend to cancel out who they think disagrees or is against their interest, defeating the goal of discursive dialogue to explore what is best for the common good.

Hoppe (2011) identifies that a certain aspect in the governance context (political leaders, authoritative decision-makers, and organizations) is neglected and should be explored to understand further and explain DPA's process. These governance contexts under the deliberative and participatory design are considered context and impact variables. Here, the discursive or decision arena is classified into two. First, the formal arena consisting of the parliament, cabinet meetings, expert committees, and inquiry commissions is established and constituted by the government or an organization. On the other hand, popular and professional media, lobbies, activism, boycotts, strikes, protests, and other public discontent modes consist of the informal arena established by common interests or goals that do not necessarily need the recognition merit from an authoritative figure to be legitimately recognized. It is imperative to invest attention in looking into these areas. Also, Hoppe (2011) underscored that these arenas are linked with "the

nature, scope, and timeframe of the issue, the interests and prior beliefs of participants, the consultants or other people responsible for running the deliberative and participatory process, the timing and timeframe of the project itself – all these variables are affected by the institutional, political, policy network and organizational contexts of participatory designs."

Nonetheless, it is interesting to include in this scope the trend of how the academe currently explores both the formal and informal discursive or policy arena. In the recent developments in DPA as a progressive approach to public policy towards democratic participation, most scholars have focused on how the deliberative practices apply to the dynamics within formal institutions like that of the government. Most works trace the deliberative policymaking process involving the policy actors, mini-publics representing the citizens, and some stakeholders.

One interesting work is that of Mihajlović (2016), which examined how policy actors address governance problems within the policy process in the historic city centers of Serbia. Mihajlović (2016) utilized this interpretive paradigm within the context of the policy actors from the city government to consider the behaviors, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes on the topic. Another work is that of Boossabong and Chamchong (2019), which examines the introduction of DPA in Khon Kaen City in Thailand where it identifies the roles of the think tanks and policy actors at the local government's level in designing deliberative forums towards achieving a more authentic, inclusive, and impactful deliberative design. Additionally, Mădroane (2014) analyzed the public consultation session organized by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests using some interpretive approach principles and the DPA. The study even identified that "the critical questioning by the public is aimed at rebutting the corporation's main claim and proposed course of action, but its outcome is conditioned by the institutional context and the steps that follow the consultation session (Mădroane, 2014, p. 232)."

Most notably, Li (2015) even contributed to DPA by proposing the concept of "think tank 2.0," which addresses policy analysts' concerns and extends the process of policy inquiry to public participation, deliberation, and dispute resolution. Here, Li (2015) took the organization's perspective using formal institutions to make sense of and build the proposal's arguments. To highlight, Fischer and Boossabong's (2018) work explicitly traced the practices of deliberative policy analysis using the case of Khon Kaen City in Thailand. Within the municipal and local government's scope, they identified the different stages of the deliberative process from problem identification or agenda-setting, selection and categorization of participants, participatory planning process, big group forums, and policy action or implementation. With these presented, DPA has overwhelmingly focused more on the formal discursive arena and that the deliberative process's exploration is confined to these limits. There must also be an interesting aspect to uncover from the informal and unstructured processes of deliberations.

As mentioned earlier, there are two recent orientations the discursive paradigm highlights, which include the argumentative approach that mainly focuses on unpacking the meanings that revolve around the discourses and unraveling the knowledge produced by emotions within the arguments and discussions Durnova et al. (2016). While DPA is attached to the discursive approach, it is important to address DPA's core principles and goals to elucidate the essentialness of the policy arena's dynamics.

According to Fischer and Boossabong (2018), DPA offers an essential contribution to the policymaking process. Firstly, they mentioned that DPA's interpretive aspect helps further understand the process of policymaking towards defining and reconstructing policy action. Secondly, reason takes the form of judgment since the DPA is a practice-oriented policy deliberation process, in which the deliberative process's emotions and moral aspect are considered. Lastly, discourses are at the DPA's core since it creates storylines, vocabularies, and generative metaphors that are vitally important as an alternative perspective in policymaking (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018). Certainly, DPA's qualities provide representativeness and a more democratic policymaking process. Fischer and Boossabong (2018, pp. 585–586) even underscored that:

> "In this view, collaborative dialogue and democratic deliberation are important for legitimating the shift from government structures to new flexible forms of governance— more effective, accountable, and democratic."

It is essential to highlight that most wicked problems surrounding public policy are complex and complicated and much more difficult to handle by using a one-size-fits-all solution that traditionalists in policy analysis would pursue. Instead, the role and contribution of unpacking the values within discourses and deliberations are crucial to deepen the understanding of issues and concerns confronting the populace and to collectively think and craft solutions that best fit that certain concern. Hence, addressing the conflicts in pluralist societies best needs to integrate consensus-building, collective learning, and deliberative judgment (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Hajer et al., 2003). Fischer and Boossabong (2018: 585) also mentioned that this approach "considers open to new options and opportunities, and function more deliberatively in ways that serve the public good." Practical experiences and local knowledge of the stakeholders or citizens are central to making choices, while it provides an all-encompassing benefit to the sectors involved (Innes & Booher, 2004). DPA also provides an avenue to surface solutions and examine underlying problems beneath the bigger ones. Its attention in policymaking is focused on the everyday situation since it recognizes that dialogues are abundant and can extract efficient and valid solutions to public concerns (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Hajer et al., 2003).

Li (2015) also explained four core principles surrounding the DPA in gist. Firstly, it rejected the so-called value-neutral process and argued that "value" is a core element of the approach. Policy analysts pay attention to these values in the discourses as they provide ideas and meaning to stakeholders and actors' understanding and views about the problem. By this, analysts will be able to forge more democratic policymaking. Secondly, public participation is at the base of policy inquiry. This means understanding the problem should be based on learning the local knowledge, experiences, interpretations, preferences, and values. At the same time, citizens are viewed as the contributor of expertise and analysts. Thirdly, the basic DPA analysis unit is dialogue, argumentation, and deliberation (Li, 2015) since it highlights the importance of communication and interaction among the citizens and stakeholders towards crafting fair, just, and practical solutions. The work of DPA scholars is to "help create forums for citizens and stakeholders to express, argue, deliberate, and negotiate if necessary (Li, 2015: 8)." Lastly, DPA workers' role is not limited to acting as observers, facilitators, mediators, and negotiators at the top policymaking level; rather, they are expected to help assist, mediate, and connect policy actors with the citizens and the stakeholders. At this point, the main beneficiaries of policies will be able to voice their concerns and views to policy actors to develop equally beneficial solutions to issues

and problems. Li (2015) noted that "policy analysts are no longer advisers selling ideas to their clients at the top; rather, to some extent, they are socialized to serve all" (Li, 2015: 8).

Exploring the Informal Policy Arenas

Why is it worth shifting some attention and likewise examining the informal arena? Besides being an unexplored governance context, the informal arena offers unique qualities that demand unraveling and exploration to understand the deliberative process within this kind of sphere further. As enumerated above, most informal groups emerged as products of a coalition, community and people's organization, and interest-based networks. This means that most of these also have legitimate causes and interests to advance, and others must have embodied within their ranks the plight of the marginalized sectors of the society they represent. Since the DPA pursues to become more inclusive and advance participatory decision-making, it is equally important to understand how the policy agenda and decisions work within these groups and how they advance their interests to the formal arena for policy action. Or how does the informal arena commit itself to policy action? It is also interesting to note that the diverse and multifaceted informal policy and discursive arena is also an appealing feature to investigate. Not to mention, the complex and changing problems within that sphere are challenges that scholars of DPA need to build on and unravel. Hoppe (2011) even emphasized a certain type of problem structure and the corresponding types of citizen participation crucial in understanding and explaining policymaking and analysis in the informal arena.

Since unstructured problems (UP) (see Figure 1) that are intractable or 'wicked' are inherent to the informal discursive arena's concerns, Hoppe (2011) points out that only deliberative ways through the equal engagement of citizens and consideration of pluralist views can lead to successfully working on better options for solutions. A colorful view of the problems is significant in this process since a pluralist perspective is necessary for unpacking various views or directions. As such, equality is also a vital requirement. In this case, citizens are granted an equal opportunity for political judgment and mutual learning during deliberations over a problem. An important feature of unstructured problems is that people's participation rests on the people's mobilization or deliberation. This includes people's initiatives or control, corrective referendums, and partnership or hybrid forums.
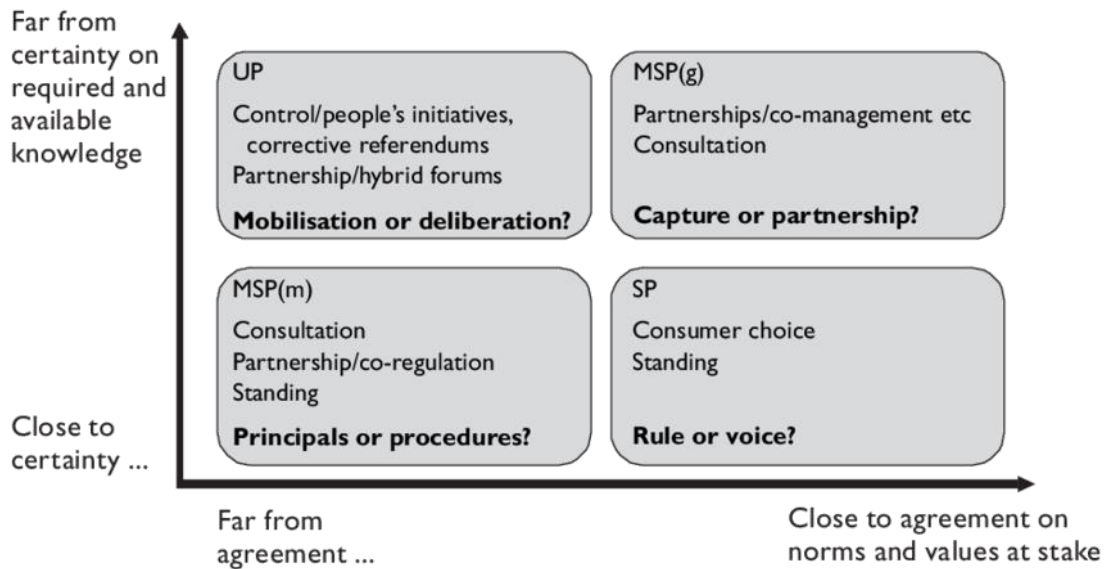
Figure 1 Types of Problem Structures and Corresponding Types of Citizen Participation.
Source: Hoppe (2011)

In terms of exploring the informal discursive arena, some scholars have conducted relevant studies within this context by focusing on its aspects. (Hendriks, 2005: 1, 2005), for example, examine the role of the participatory storyline "to describe the competing narratives associated with a policy issue on who constitutes the 'public' and how 'they' should be represented and involved in the policy process." The study is within the context of citizens' juries and consensus conferences in Australia, where it found that "a more productive deliberative procedure supports or 'speaks to' existing narratives on what constitutes public participation (Hendriks, 2005)." On the other hand, Borg and Paloniemi (2012) focused their study on the cooperative networks of forest conservation where they used the deliberative approach and was able to conclude that "clear leadership, active and determined work for common goals and openness to engage actively new actors assist in creating deliberative processes in cooperative networks." In this case, cooperative networks of forest conservation qualify for an informal discursive arena. Meanwhile, Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk's (2016) work is a recent attempt to explore the informal arena by specifically examining the concept of a "vitality mechanism" that claims to support interactive and collaborative governance. Their study points out that,

> "supported by informal structures or settings that promote interaction among actors, boundary-spanning activities that build and activate relationships among actors, constructive dialogue and deliberation among actors, trust to enhance the performance of networks, and institutionalization of relationships that allow ongoing interaction and discusses the challenges associated with applying them in practice (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016: 108)."

These recent attempts give light to the prospects of exploring further the informal policy or discursive arena in the context of DPA. By exploring, scholars need to consider certain points that are centrally relevant to this exploration. Since argued from the beginning, the first to consider is that exploring the informal arena aims to extend DPA's role in bringing the public closer to the decision and policymaking process. Second, there is a need to systematically understand and discover the processes of deliberative policymaking and its links to the formal arena. There might be a big difference in how deliberations work within these contexts considering sectors' dynamic and complex composition. And lastly, while the formal arena has organically formalized the process wherein certain steps are considered for deliberative policymaking, the informal arena's approach might differ. For example, it is also worth investigating whether facilitators still play a vital role in just as identified in the formal arena or perhaps other laudable mechanisms within the dynamics that further contribute to the DPA literature.

Table 2 points out that to substantiate the informal arenas, incorporate a blanket understanding of the already established DPA. Highly considered essential and imperative, DPA's potential is an important starting ground in engaging a critical and people-centered policy analysis. Moreover, DPA V.2 emphasized that to make DPA more effective in the Global South is integrating the informal side of arenas and deliberations that may become critical to decision-making. Some unique consideration that DPA V.2 reiterates is to assess and understand how informalities may result in policy decisions and alternatives to public problems. It critically considers that in the backdrop of deliberations, there is much more to comprehend that, in turn, will translate or result in action (or inaction). However, contentions towards this extra layer to the DPA approach point to being too messy and lengthy, which may result in some limitations whenever the public needs to decide on and find alternatives to a problem that is an immediate concern. What is clear and worthy to consider that in the process (especially in a non-western context), the role of mediations between and among policy practitioners and the decision-making body's "middleman" or moderators are important, which often influences when, how, and what to decide.

Table 2 Deliberative Policy Analysis V.2

Aspect	Deliberative Policy Analysis	Deliberative Policy Analysis V.2
Advantages	▪ It cultivates a process of policy analysis that is citizen-centered and participatory. ▪ DPA captures public opinion in policy analysis processes, hence inclined towards persuading decision-makers based on facts and tangible narratives on the ground.	▪ It acknowledges that informal deliberation is a crucial complement at the top of the already established conventional DPA. ▪ DPA V.2 incorporates the need to invest attention in the "informal deliberation" in various "discursive arenas," which, at times, is where most "real" decision-making processes exist. ▪ It values the action (or inaction) happening on the backdrop of policymaking, which is assumed to be the first instance where decision/s are concretized.
Limitations	▪ DPA may fall short of understanding the informal side of deliberation as it assumes proper conduct is within formal town hall meetings where the public, practitioners, and analysts talk to power. ▪ DPA can be too messy in implementation as it also factors in complexities and varying dynamics among key actors while subscribing to the idea that there is no linear or definite structure in the policy analysis process.	▪ DPA V.2 may emphasize reiterating the need to understand and consider the informal side of deliberation, especially in the Global South. ▪ DPA V.2 dominantly embarks on the principles and approaches of DPA, identified to be messy and lengthy in implementation. Hence, an additional layer of consideration means an extra blanket of complexity in the process.
Key features in the implementation	▪ In doing DPA, policy practitioners' value public participation and uplifting voices from the ground for those in authority to hear. ▪ Usually, practitioners hold deliberations in formal town hall meetings and forums where they expect the public to be present and those in authority to listen and hear public concerns. ▪ DPA lets the public decide to identify alternatives to address public problems; however, the authority gets the final decision and ceremonially approve alternative based on the consensus of the people.	▪ Same as with the conventional deliberative process, DPA V.2 caters to public opinion, set-up arenas for deliberation, and welcomes authority as decision makers to address public problems. ▪ However, DPA V.2 assumes that the true decision-making process happens against the backdrop of the so-called "formal deliberations." ▪ Informal arenas highlight the venue of staging as the centerpiece of the policy decisions that the public prefers and what those in authority should adhere to. ▪ DPA V.2 values the negotiation process between policy practitioners (representing the need of the public) and middlemen (those executives and mediators of authority) in the decision-making process.

Innovative Directions for DPA and Reflections from the Global South: An Epilogue

For Fischer and Boossabong (2018), the DPA as an approach to public policy helps facilitate judgment and decision-making processes. Regardless of conflicting and contradictory arguments among analysts, deliberation as a key tool in this approach helps in dissecting the immediate consequences of recommended policies and in attaining common points for agreements towards a potential solution for everyone to move forward (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012). Innes and Booher (2004) support this by stressing that despite the challenges and obstacles within this approach, DPA practices are constantly used in the policy arena. While these assertions are based on observations from the formal discursive arena, this paper offered an innovative direction from the informal arena's lens to the deliberative policy approach.

Opening the discussion on the role of the informal discursive or policy arena in DPA contributes a new perspective in looking at deliberative policymaking that inclusively and authentically involves the public's participation. Exploring this area in DPA will be a breakthrough to understanding those sectors, groups, or coalitions outside the "status quo" of policymaking. For example, progressive organizations, coalitions, and groups such as lobbyists, protesters, activists, nationalists, and civic groups. These entities have valid interests and agendas that target some (or maybe most) of society's wicked problems. Hence, creating an opportunity to understand them and their process from the lens of public policy and deliberative policy analysis will enrich the body of knowledge within the discipline. It will likewise help society pursue social justice and find better interventions to the 'wicked' problems.

Taking off from a Global South experience, the conceptualization and developments of the conventional DPA may fall short of the contextual realities, cultural influences, structures, traditions, and other unique non-western considerations. Reframing DPA through the lens of the Global South through integrating essential contextual and cultural potentials is a productive consideration in addressing inequalities in policy analysis and policymaking. With the existing works of DPA scholars plus pronounced consideration of the contemporary paradigmatical developments, the Global South experience complements DPA by reiterating that in deliberations, the process may be unproductive if the public is faced with people with high authority and power. True enough, DPA's critical potentials are important in dealing with wicked public problems, especially in the marginalized societies in the Global South. But railroad the attention towards unique characteristics of informal arenas and informal deliberation is an imperative complement in reframing DPA to become more sensitive and appropriate to the experience of societies with high inequalities.

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