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Theory and Methods

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

For most of the history of climate change policy, the focus of action has largely been to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Given that industrialized countries have contributed the most historically and in per capita terms to the warming of the planet, policy has therefore been largely focused on the developed world. However, we have seen a remarkable shift over the last decade, with developing countries rapidly adopting and implementing new climate policies of their own. This is due in part to the unilateral commitments to mitigate emission in a number of developing states – those that were not required to make emissions reductions under the Kyoto Protocol. This is also due to the nature of the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, which overturned the dichotomy between developed and developing states in terms of responsibility for cutting emissions. There have been numerous analyses exploring these dynamics (e.g., Dubash 2021; Held et al. 2013; Hochstetler 2021; Hochstetler & Viola 2012). We complement these explanations and suggest that the growing number of climate policies in the Global South has also been driven by the increasingly destructive and unignorable ways that climate change is impacting these countries' economies, infrastructure, community cohesion, and food security.

This chapter surveys the existing theoretical landscape and presents our approach as we begin to explain how and why countries respond (or fail to respond) to climate change loss and damage. We derive a broad-based analytical framework that incorporates considerations of: (a) a state's vulnerability to climate change impacts; (b) international engagement on the issue; (c) national institutional factors; and (d) the role of ideas, including knowledge and norms. Rather than treating "national interests" as a given or fixed object, we take an approach which centers on understanding where and how policymakers apprehend different ideas of what climate change loss and damage is and how

and why it matters in their jurisdiction. We interrogate these countries' conceptualizations of some of the opportunities and barriers associated with loss and damage policymaking. We also highlight some of the distinctive features and challenges of developing loss and damage policy at the national level. In doing so, this framing chapter contributes to more general debates about what the drivers and barriers to climate change policy development are while also noting the contextual nature of loss and damage policymaking. We then outline the methodological approach of our study before the book turns to the individual cases.

2.2 CLIMATE CHANGE LOSS AND DAMAGE POLICY ADOPTION: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

This chapter – and indeed this entire collection – draws on the wide-ranging and now well-established literature on climate change policy adoption. The lion's share of scholarly attention has been focused on climate change mitigation policy efforts and has sought to identify the drivers of climate action and inaction in terms of abatement (e.g., Aklin & Mildenberger 2020; Drews & van den Bergh 2016; Dubash 2021; Gaikwad et al. 2022; Held et al. 2013; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010; Meckling et al. 2022; Mildenberger 2020; Nascimento et al. 2022). There has also been some comparative work on the adoption of adaptation policies (Adger et al. 2006). Together this research has developed and tested explanations focused on different units of analysis, from the individual (including voters, civil servants, experts, and politicians, e.g., Drews & van den Bergh 2016; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010; Stokes 2016; Valin & Huitema 2023) to the institutional (Finnegan 2022; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010; Held et al. 2013). It has examined units of analysis at different scales of governance, including not only the global but also the local/sub-state level (Huitema et al. 2016; Stokes 2016), the national level (e.g., Dubash 2021; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010; Held et al. 2013; Hochstetler 2021; Hochstetler & Viola 2012), and the regional level (e.g., Massey et al. 2014). It has also examined different forms and effects of political systems and institutions, with a particular focus on the distinctions between autocracies and democracies (Chesler et al. 2023; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010; Held et al. 2013), between corporatist and pluralist systems (Meckling et al. 2022; Mildenberger 2020), and between proportional representation and majoritarian electoral systems (Finnegan 2022). Finally, explanations have also been tied to varying levels of economic development (Held et al. 2013; Massey et al. 2014) and to state capacity (Meckling & Nahm 2018, 2022).

In their path-breaking study, which systematically compares domestic politics of climate change, Harrison and Sundstrom (2010) argue that decisions about whether to ratify international agreements and to adopt national policies to mitigate climate change are fundamentally domestic political decisions.

TABLE 2.1 *Overview of potentially relevant factors in loss and damage policymaking*

Potential drivers of/ barriers to loss and damage policymaking	**Factors**
Climate risks and impacts	Risk profile and experience of climate-related impacts
International engagement	Activity within international organizations
	Financial incentives from international/regional funds
	Policy diffusion
Institutional context	Prioritization among relevant government stakeholders
	Institutional capacity
	Pressure from civil society and/or business actors
Ideational context	Availability of scientific research and other forms of knowledge
	Normative landscape
	Relevant identities

They point out that "when international meetings conclude, actors return to their domestic constituents" (Harrison & Sundstrom 2010, p. 2). Their detailed and structured approach was invaluable in establishing the foundations for today's comparative political economy of climate change literature. We follow in their footsteps to make a similar case for the relationship between international and national-level loss and damage politics and governance. We reverse the lens of previous scholarship on loss and damage by foregrounding domestic politics and treating international influence as one of a series of critical factors in accounting for the centrality of loss and damage within domestic policymaking.

In some ways, loss and damage governance, at least in the way it is conceived at the international level, is a comparatively new area of climate change policymaking. In other ways, as the research presented here shows, the types of interventions that we are beginning to think of as loss and damage-related have long been practiced in some contexts but are more likely to have been labelled as practices of disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, or climate change adaptation. Table 2.1 presents the range of potentially relevant factors in explaining policy adoption in the case of loss and damage. Section 2.3 discusses how these theoretical arguments apply in this specific area of climate governance.

2.3 CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS AND IMPACTS

For those working from a climate risk perspective, climate impacts are the materialization of climate risk. According to this formulation, risk results from the interaction between three factors: a hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.

This is represented through the simple on paper (and complex in reality) equation of climate risk = hazard × exposure × vulnerability. The emphasis in this understanding is that climate risk is the product of both planetary warming and the material and social construction of our societies.

For many years, the literature on climate change policy adoption failed to consider how climate change-related events – such as severe floods, heatwaves, and damaging storms, as well as slow onset events, such as sea-level rise – influenced the adoption of climate change policy. This changed in the early 2010s, when scholars began to incorporate climate pressures into their analyses, suggesting that those who are vulnerable to climate change risks may be more likely to demand government action and change their personal behavior (see, e.g., Gaikwad et al. 2022; Kim & Wolinsky-Nahmias 2014; Massey et al. 2014). The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (known as *SREX*) even framed these pressures as a primary driver in the adoption of climate change adaptation policies (Field et al. 2012).

Since then, studies have increasingly incorporated measures of vulnerability to climate change in explaining variation in public opinion and in policy action. Political science research has examined the vulnerability of communities and political groups to both costly climate policy (e.g., by considering the impacts of mitigation efforts on coal communities) and the vulnerability of communities to the physical impacts of climate change (Gaikwad et al. 2022). Studies on how physical vulnerability to climate change shapes political behavior have predominantly focused on the US and the EU (Massey et al. 2014; Soni & Mistur 2022; Zahran et al. 2008) but recent research is also incorporating evidence from developing countries. This has helped to strengthen our understanding of how vulnerability shapes distributional politics and compensatory mechanisms (Gaikwad et al. 2022), as well as how climate vulnerability shapes the bargaining power of weak states in the international negotiations (Genovese 2020), the allocation of aid for adaptation (Betzold & Weiler 2017), and the revaluation of assets (Colgan et al. 2021).

There is also a growing body of research that investigates the role that "natural" and/or climate disasters, as a form of exogenous shock, have played in shaping public opinion. For example, a recent study examining the US from 1980 to 2018 found that the frequency of disasters significantly drives public support for environmental spending and that different types of disasters have heterogeneous impacts, with wildfires and severe winter weather events being the most impactful (Soni & Mistur 2022). Yet research on the linkages between climate change impacts and public opinion, political behavior, and policy adoption in advanced capitalist democracies is inconclusive (Bergquist & Warshaw 2019; Demski et al. 2017; Egan & Mullin 2012; Howe et al. 2019; Lujala & Lein 2020). Furthermore, there has been almost no research on the distinction between extreme weather events and slower moving environmental changes driven by climate change (but see Lujala & Lein 2020).

Another gap in the literature concerns the ways in which political leaders and policymakers specifically are influenced by experiences of climate change impacts. Focusing on Latin American countries, a comparative study by Edwards and Roberts (2015) found that concern for climate change impacts has led some political leaders and citizens to take action both nationally and in UN climate negotiations. Critical research in geography and disaster risk studies, which tends to offer a wider understanding of the influence of disasters and the ways in which disaster politics unfold, also points to the importance of governance (Pelling & Dill 2010; Weichselgartner & Kelman 2015). For example, Kelman suggests that the majority of "natural" disasters are created or exacerbated by human choices and that by considering the social, political, and economic dimensions of the causes and implications of disasters, political leaders can improve decision-making around natural hazards (Kelman 2022).

This set of existing theoretical propositions and scientific advances in understandings of climate risks and their materialization, in particular presented in the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, suggests that the risks and impacts of extreme weather events and slow onset hazards can shape the landscape for climate change policymaking, with countries becoming motivated to act. In this book, we seek to explore how a country's risk profile and experience of climate change-related impacts shape the context within which policy stakeholders understand, formulate, and/or adopt (or fail to adopt) nationally appropriate policy responses to loss and damage. We query whether heterogeneous types of impacts mobilize different types of institutions, actors, and resources. While our research design does not allow us to make claims about causality or even identify correlations between disasters and policy development across contexts, our approach takes note of the ways in which the material realities of these types of disasters are inseparable from the ways in which loss and damage comes to be identified and understood by stakeholders. We suggest that the common, intersubjective acknowledgment of loss and damage among key stakeholders might enable an articulation of these physical impacts and material realities as a policy problem – it is only then that the problem can be addressed.

2.4 INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Existing theoretical accounts of climate policy adoption look to international organizations (IOs) as key drivers in shaping the context within which national policymakers consider taking action. As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of loss and damage is in many ways a product of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regime and was embedded in 2013 in the UNFCCC itself and in 2015 with a separate article in the Paris Agreement. Rather than understanding influence as only working in a top-down manner, we find that policymakers at the national level are not only looking to international developments in their policy engagement but are also seeking to shape understandings of the concept at the international level.

2.4.1 Engagement with IOs

Previous research on climate policy adoption has treated the role of international engagement as a driver of climate policy uptake in different ways (Schipper 2006). For example, in examining efforts to ratify the Kyoto Protocol at the domestic level, Harrison and Sundstrom (2010, p. 4) note: "It goes without saying that ratification of the Kyoto Protocol would not be on the domestic political agenda if it were not for prior international negotiations"; yet the authors treat the international context as a background factor exogeneous to domestic efforts to advance climate action. This makes sense given that in the early stages of the development of the international climate regime there was a clearer temporal distinction between efforts at the international and national levels. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, the paradigm for action has shifted from top-down targets for a subset of developed countries to bottom-up national commitments for all countries, referred to as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with a collectively agreed goal of limiting warming to well below two degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. The bottom-up nature of global climate governance is also shaping the landscape for action on adaptation. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process was established under the Cancun Adaptation Framework. It enables parties to formulate and implement NAPs as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and promotes the development and implementation of strategies and programs to address those needs. Massey et al. (2014) see efforts by IOs, such as the UNFCCC, as an external driver of climate adaptation policy adoption.

Similar trends are emerging in relation to loss and damage, with developing countries calling for loss and damage needs assessments in the UNFCCC negotiations. Recent research has traced how mentions of loss and damage are increasing in the NDCs and highlights the diverse ways in which countries understand this concept at the national level (Calliari & Ryder 2023). Calliari and Ryder (2023) find that countries are not simply adopting the framing of loss and damage elaborated by the UNFCCC but are instead actively shaping the concept by advancing certain understandings that are consistent with the challenges experienced in their national context. They outline an emergent two-level ideational game, whereby countries attempt to shape the global agenda by advancing certain framings of the loss and damage problem and solution space. This work complements their approach through the shift to the national level and the exploration of some key case studies in more detail to understand the diversity of conceptualizations of this policy problem both within and across countries.

2.4.2 Financial Incentives from International Funds

Previous research on the uptake of climate policy has suggested that when the push from IOs to stimulate policy action is accompanied by financial incentives

there is a greater likelihood of domestic political action. Some research has also noted that countries that are more exposed to climate change risks receive more adaptation aid, both on a per capital and as a percentage of all adaptation aid (Betzold & Weiler 2017), but this is an open question, with recent work querying whether funding reaches the most vulnerable (Garschagen & Doshi 2022). Financial support from international grants or funds could serve as a key driver of loss and damage policy adoption. At the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022, there was an agreement to establish new funding arrangements for loss and damage, including a fund, which marked a historical moment in the history of the UN climate regime. Over the course of 2023, a Transitional Committee met to shape the contours of this new fund and agreed to negotiate with the World Bank to host the fund for an interim period of four years. This agreement was affirmed on the first day of COP29 in November 2023, and countries including Italy, Germany, the UK, the US, and the UAE all pledged finance for the capitalization of the new fund.

Although this is in many ways a huge step forward in addressing loss and damage, many of the critical details still need to be resolved by the board of the new fund before this capital materializes, including questions around how potential recipients will be identified and how they will access their funding. Certainly in the past there has been a lengthy lag time between institutionalization and implementation for UNFCCC initiatives. For example, while the decision to establish the Green Climate Fund was taken in 2010, the fund became fully operational only in 2015 (Schalatek 2023). As such, we would not expect top-down financial incentives to be a primary driver of domestic loss and damage policymaking at this stage. However, our methodological approach is alive to questions about how national-level policymakers may be responsive to opportunities for attracting additional finance and how this can affect policy development, implementation, or even rejection.

2.4.3 Policy Diffusion

Policy diffusion is a form of interdependent policymaking among jurisdictions at the same or across different levels of governance (Kammerer & Namhata 2018; Paterson et al. 2014; Schoenefeld et al. 2022). The study of diffusion of adaptation policy is still in its early stages, and this book represents a first effort to understand whether and how diffusion processes may play a role in specific jurisdictions in the governance of loss and damage (Schoenefeld et al. 2022). Policy scholars have identified different mechanisms for diffusion, including those related to learning, competition, coercion, and emulation (Shipan & Volden 2008) as well as typologies of pathways of policy diffusion (Blatter et al. 2022). Previous research into national climate governance has tended to separate international factors, treating them as either prerequisites or external to national-level policymaking. We argue instead that diffusion is

an integral factor when studying the early stages of loss and damage policy adoption.

Our approach recognizes that the policy process is composed of different stages, starting with the definition of an issue, that only later culminates – but not always – with the adoption of a policy. In this book, we join recent scholarship stressing the benefit of focusing on policymaking stages prior to adoption (Gilardi et al. 2021). As outlined in Chapter 1, loss and damage as a policy domain was first brought into climate negotiations by the Alliance of Small Island States in the early 1990s, but it was two decades before it was institutionalized in the UNFCCC and even later that it was embedded in international climate law in the Paris Agreement. A key enabler for its institutionalization was the decision by Parties to avoid discussions around a stringent definition of loss and damage, whose distinction from adaptation still remains unclear (Calliari 2016; Vanhala & Hestbaek 2016). This book points to the centrality of issue definition in the diffusion process and the way diffusion plays a key role in issues of definition. Loss and damage might prove a difficult concept to neatly translate from the international to the national level through processes, for instance, of learning or emulation, and even to reject *tout court*. Our analysis is open to understanding how policy frames elaborated in the UNFCCC context might affect the way the issue is understood and discussed at the national level, including which elements of the frame are embraced and which are rejected, and whether this results in policy adoption.

2.5 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Comparative political economy literature on climate change highlights how a range of domestic political institutions influence climate policy outcomes. Rather than an exclusive emphasis on policy adoption and outcomes, there has been a shift of focus onto the proliferation and consequences of climate institutions. Recent studies on climate policy adoption have examined both the emergence of new institutions and the layering of climate change-related objectives on to existing institutions (Dubash 2021; Mildenberger 2021). This section briefly introduces some of the key insights and debates that have emerged in the literature on the political economy of climate change mitigation. We see some of these dimensions as less relevant in accounting for the emergence of loss and damage policies, given the nascent stage of policymaking on this issue. Specifically, we suggest that actors' calculi of the distributive politics of loss and damage have not yet crystalized for either those actors themselves or for scholars of loss and damage governance. The full breadth of potential "winners" and "losers" of climate change loss and damage policies are not yet apparent and the complexity of time horizons and short- and long-term interests of both potential allies and opponents have yet to receive scholarly attention. We make a modest contribution on this front by beginning to outline some of the potential institutions and dynamics that may be at play. In our

empirical work, we were led by the policymakers and other stakeholders we interviewed and sought to cognitively inhabit their contemporary policymaking landscapes. As such, we develop a portrait of in situ loss and damage policy processes and only discuss the institutions that those involved in our research discussed or identified.

2.5.1 Political Regime Type, Electoral Systems, and Interest Mediation

There are open debates in the literature on the ways in which institutions shape the likelihood of countries adopting effective climate change mitigation policies. For example, there continue to be disagreements over how a country's particular political regime shapes the likelihood of their adoption of effective climate policies. Democratic regimes have long been assumed to facilitate the collective action needed to address problems like climate change. Scholars have argued that electoral accountability means that governments will enact policies that result in lower GHG emissions than their authoritarian counterparts; that democracies are more likely to cooperate in international environmental treaties; that free speech and freedom of the press help to enhance the quality of information about climate change in society; that a robust civil society plays an important role in mobilizing on the issue; and that respect for human rights and the rule of law allow individuals to access justice when environmental rights are violated (Bättig & Bernauer 2009; Clulow 2019; Finnegan 2022; Fiorino 2018; Li & Reuveny 2006; von Stein 2022).

Recent research is, however, challenging the assumptions underpinning the theory that democracies are more likely to implement climate policy. For example, Mildenberger (2020) shows how institutions that promote collective action also facilitate the accommodation of those who lose out from the adoption of climate policies in distributional terms. He shows how the institutionalized inclusion of carbon-dependent actors in policymaking processes can reinforce the privileged influence of these economic interests. New methodological approaches and measures of the relationship between regime type and levels of GHG emissions also suggest that regime type may not be as critical as once thought. For example, recent research finds no evidence that regime type matters on emissions of CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O, the three most critical GHGs driving global warming, suggesting that research on the politics of emissions should focus on factors other than regime type (Chesler et al. 2023). Povitkina (2018) finds that the benefits of democracy for climate change mitigation are limited in the presence of widespread corruption that reduces the capacity of democratic governments to achieve their climate targets.

Another dimension deemed important in recent work on the political economy of climate change concerns the nature of the electoral system. For example, proportional representation (PR) electoral systems – where seats allocated in a legislature are proportional to vote shares – can be useful in

insulating political leaders from electoral backlash when adopting costly climate policies as compared to systems with majoritarian rules (Finnegan 2022; Meckling et al. 2022). PR rules tend to dampen electoral competition and, through the generation of coalition governments, tend to obscure responsibility for policymaking outcomes, which in turn makes it more difficult for voters to punish politicians that push through policies that may have high short-term costs (Finnegan 2022).

Scholars have also argued that the systems for the mediation of political interests, including business, civil society organizations (CSOs), and social movements, can shape a government's ability to overcome opposition to climate policy. Finnegan (2022) finds that corporatist systems that grant routinized, privileged policymaking access to associations representing business and labor interests positively facilitate bargaining between the government and powerful economic actors over compensation. This interest group intermediation can, Finnegan suggests, not only protect vulnerable actors who may lose out as a result of policy change but also be useful for governments seeking to overcome opposition to climate policy from affected industries. Meckling et al. (2022) argue that countries with corporatist systems can establish long-term compensatory arrangements that ease the burden of energy transitions for those most affected. By contrast, in pluralist political systems, interests compete for influence, making it harder for the government to act in concertation with business and labor interests.

Yet this pro-corporatist account has been disputed. Mildenberger (2020) shows how climate policy preferences transcend the traditional left–right cleavages with both labor and business interests and allows for the "double representation" of opponents to decarbonization in the policymaking process. He argues that this is the most important feature of climate policy conflict, complicating the assumptions that democracy and corporatism will result in better climate policy outcomes. Mildenberger (2020) suggests that corporatist carbon polluters enjoy more consistent access to government policymakers over time and that in pluralist systems the influence of these types of actors is more variable.

2.5.2 Institutional Capacity

The literature on climate change adaptation policies suggests that institutions play an essential role in shaping the capacity of societies to cope with, adjust to, and prepare for global changes, including climate change. Acting both as limiting and as enabling factors, institutions determine not only the way societies will be affected by short- and long-term impacts but also their ability to respond to different stimuli, by mobilizing both material and immaterial resources. As such, institutions have long been acknowledged as crucial determinants of adaptive capacity (Engle 2011; Smit & Pilifosova 2001).

Recent research on climate policy regarding the energy transition has focused on the role of state capacity, with a particular interest in the ways in which

strong bureaucracies can enhance the likelihood of effective policy adoption, development, and implementation. Meckling and Nahm's (2018, 2022) work on state capacity points to the advantages of Weberian bureaucracies in equipping the state with the ability to withstand pressure from powerful organized interests such as the energy and energy-intensive manufacturing industries. These systems are characterized by their autonomy from political interests through the establishment of strong mandates, high levels of expertise, low levels of political appointees, hierarchical structures, and meritocratic recruitment processes. Civil servants in such bureaucracies are better insulated from business and public opposition to climate policies than politicians reliant on voter support (Finnegan 2022). Meckling and Nahm (2022) suggest that bureaucratic capacity alone cannot explain variation in meeting emissions goals in advanced democracies given the relative uniformity of bureaucratic systems across these types of countries. Instead, they show how an understanding of *strategic* state capacity can be useful, by which they mean "the ability of the state – defined here as the executive and/or the legislature – to mobilize or demobilize interest groups in pursuit of official policy goals" (Meckling & Nahm 2022, p. 495).

Much of the adaptation literature has focused on formal public institutions (IPCC 2014). However, there is an increasing recognition of the need to understand dynamics among a diversified set of actors – including CSOs, epistemic communities, and the private sector. The concepts of polycentric (Ostrom 2010), multi-level (Corfee-Morlot et al. 2009), and network governance (Luthe et al. 2012) are all examples of an increasing attention to the role of collaborative arrangements for the effective management of climate change impacts.

While recognizing national governments as the primary respondents when it comes to climate impacts, we therefore explore the role of a wider set of actors in framing and managing loss and damage policies. This includes actors at the national level, like CSOs and meteorological offices, as well as regional and international organizations. We do not treat national governments as homogenous entities as we unpack the complexity of interministerial and interdepartmental cooperation and coordination as well as the power dynamics among them.

2.5.3 Pressure from Civil Society and/or Business Actors

In the realm of environmental politics, and climate change in particular, scholars have traced the influence of both international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International, and locally based NGOs and businesses (Betsill & Corell 2007; Downie 2014). Thus far, existing research on loss and damage governance has identified how NGOs have sought to influence global governance processes (Allan & Hadden 2017), but research on how other non-state actors – such as businesses, particularly the insurance industry – have been involved in these processes has been largely missing. Also overlooked in existing research is how

private actors and CSOs seek to shape the agenda in relation to loss and damage at the national level. Our research takes a small step forward in beginning to explore the role of non-state actors in this area, but we recognize that our contribution is modest. We sought out representatives of non-state actors, particularly NGOs, across all of the case studies and include a discussion of their activities and influence where it was raised by research participants. Our case studies paint a mixed picture. Some of our case studies show that civil society plays a crucial role in pushing the loss and damage policymaking agenda, with varying degrees of success. In other cases, loss and damage was not a priority for CSOs or their influence was negligible.

2.5.4 The Institutional Politics of Loss and Damage

The literature on climate policy and institutions has focused disproportionately on the advanced democracies (with some focus on emerging economies, see, e.g., Urpelainen 2022; Hochstetler 2020) and almost exclusively on mitigation policies (with some key exceptions from the literature on climate adaptation policy). In this book, we raise a series of questions about whether and how these institutional features will shape the likelihood, pace, and trajectory of loss and damage policymaking. We suggest that while these factors may help to explain policy variation in mitigation policy we should be wary of translating findings across these distinct domains of state activity. We return to considerations of how these institutions might matter in the book's conclusion. In our research design, we took an open approach to exploring the influence of various institutional features on loss and damage problem apprehension and policy development, keeping in mind that the domestic politics of loss and damage is still in its embryonic stages. While we can begin to consider and speculate on the distributive consequences of various facets of loss and damage policymaking, we also suggest they are heavily context-dependent and culturally defined. Our contribution focuses on deepening our understanding of these contexts in an empirically grounded way to allow us to begin to generate insights about how loss and damage policies are starting to emerge and the institutional politics that are involved.

2.6 IDEATIONAL CONTEXT

We follow Hall and Taylor's (1996, p. 938) articulation of sociological institutionalism to understand institutions not only as the "the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy" but also more broadly as the "symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action." (p. 947). As such, we see the ideational context as potentially playing a crucial role in shaping loss and damage policy outcomes. This echoes research on climate change mitigation, which has

explored how climate change as a "governance object" has been constructed (Allan 2017) and how shifts in ideas have shaped institutional and policy development (Meckling & Allan 2020).

In each of our case studies, we consider three types of ideas that can affect the way policymakers think about loss and damage. First, we examine the availability of scientific knowledge about climate change impacts in each setting. Second, we turn to the way identities might matter when engaging with loss and damage as a concept. This could include relevant national identities such as those linked with being an emerging economy or falling into the Small Island Developing State (SIDS) category or being seen as a leader in relation to gender equality or human rights. This could also include the navigation within domestic politics of other types of collective identities such as belonging to Indigenous communities. Third, we look at normative considerations in policy innovation, which may include the influence of norms of global fairness and responsibility, different types of development paradigms, and norms of environmental protection or human rights approaches in decision-making related to loss and damage. Where relevant, we also consider ideological values, for example, along a typical left–right spectrum, and the ways in which they may play a role in policymaking.

2.6.1 Availability of Scientific Research and Other Forms of Knowledge

There is now a rich literature exploring the role of knowledge in environmental policymaking (Ascher et al. 2010; Rayner 2012) and in the construction of climate change as a "governance object" (Allan 2017). Research in the field of science and technology studies has pointed to the interrelationship between politics and knowledge production. Some early studies of climate policymaking suggested that individuals in developing countries may have limited access to credible information about climate change and are correspondingly less motivated to take action (Held et al. 2013). Some studies targeted knowledge among the broader electorate while others focused on the knowledge held by politicians and policymakers (Harrison & Sundstrom 2010, p. 4).

A key insight emerging from the literature on loss and damage is the discrepancies in our knowledge of climate risks and actual loss and damage. Barnett et al. (2016) argue for the development of a science of loss that requires three forms of knowledge: (a) an understanding of value, including what people value highly, the ways in which things come to be valued, and how values vary over space and time; (b) the climatic and social drivers of undesirable changes that put the things that people value at risk; and (c) should losses arise, the means and extent to which suffering can be minimized and managed. In a wide-ranging survey of forms of loss, Tschakert et al. (2019) highlight that most accounts about lived experiences of harm are from rich countries. They argue that this constitutes a form of epistemological injustice whereby certain

forms of harm among the poorest people are underrepresented in our scientific knowledge (Tschakert et al. 2019).

2.6.2 Identities

The concept of identity has become a cornerstone of constructivist thinking and a precursor to understanding how and why states' interests can change over time. Recent work has explored the relevance of these ideas to climate change politics (Sikkink 2023). Several earlier studies examine how the interests of states are shaped by their identity and how states' identities can change when interacting within the international system (Alexandrov 2003; Berenskoetter 2017). Scholars of global environmental politics have drawn attention to the ways in which a state's behavior is influenced by its desire to cultivate a particular identity, even at the expense of its material interests or physical security. In this book, we explore whether states' perceptions of their national identity (e.g., being a middle-income country or a SIDS) in the international sphere or the pursuit of specific development paradigms (being a tourism economy or green economy leader) affects the way and the extent to which they engage with loss and damage as a policy domain.

2.6.3 Normative Landscape

At the global level, recent research has raised questions about the potential for norms to play a more significant role in the politics of climate change. Sikkink (2023) argues for more research on norms and norm cascades in the politics of climate change. She notes that norms "can become part of state and subnational identities, which in turn influence behavior" and further suggests that norms and norm-underpinned identities "explain why some policy makers take costly action and how the very idea of what is rational is changed by the beliefs of some actors" (2023, p. 1). For those studying the role of norms, the focus has been disproportionately on norms in relation to mitigation and specifically anti-fossil fuel norms (Green 2018; Sikkink 2023; Van Asselt & Green 2023) though others have deployed the norm cascade idea to, for example, strategies to trigger a "participation cascade" in relation to decarbonization efforts (Busby & Urpelainen 2020).

The normative debates about loss and damage at the international level have been fairly clear-cut, with advocacy groups arguing that the international response to loss and damage is a paradigmatic example of the global injustice of climate change. Representatives of developed states have consistently refuted a framework that ascribes liability or prescribes compensation as an appropriate response to climate-related losses (Allan & Hadden 2017; Vanhala & Hestbaek 2016). Meanwhile leaders from the Global South have argued that they have done the least to contribute to historic emissions and yet bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change. These norms of global fairness and

responsibility have loomed large in climate negotiations since the early 2010s, without much sway in terms of material outcomes until the early 2020s, when there was an agreement at COP27 to establish a fund to respond to loss and damage. Previous research has highlighted how different framings of loss and damage – a risk-centered perspective versus a harm-focused approach – have implications for the types of policies and institutions that are seen as appropriate and desirable for effective governance (Vanhala & Hestbaek 2016). However, there has been little research to date showing how these normative framings translate to the national level.

Norms also play a key role in explaining support for climate-related policies at the national level. In the tradition of comparative environmental politics, this is often discussed in terms of the values of the population or relevant policymakers (Bechtel et al. 2019; Cole et al. 2022; Drews & van den Bergh 2016). A classic framework would explore ideological values along a traditional left–right spectrum. While "green" issues can often cut across this spectrum, political parties on the left tend to be more willing to pursue the kinds of regulatory or tax interventions that curb the growth of GHG emissions. How this translates into the politics of climate change loss and damage is less clear.

2.7 LIMITATIONS

An important limitation of our study is that our research design does not allow us to disentangle the relationship between regime type and the take-up of climate policy, or the interaction between different levels of economic development and engagement on loss and damage by national governments. We also lack population-level data on attitudes toward climate change and climate policy in most of our country case studies.

Existing research has suggested that different types of political systems – regime type, electoral systems, interest mediation systems, and party systems – shape the context for the setting of climate policy. Regime type, discussed earlier, may be important in the question of how and why countries develop loss and damage policies, but our research strategy does not able us to speak to this. It is worth noting that debates on the impact of democracy and society on environmental protection have so far been inconclusive. The evidence has been mixed on the types of domestic institutions that will best enable countries to take decisive and positive action on a problem of the nature and scale of climate change. Some scholars and practitioners are skeptical that democratic institutions are necessary or even desirable, suggesting that authoritarian regimes may be better placed to take the sorts of rapid, decisive, and possibly unpopular action that is required given the urgency of the climate crisis (Beeson 2018; Gilley 2012). However, this argument is complicated by evidence that suggests that economic growth is a greater source of legitimacy for authoritarian regimes than environmental protection and that it may be corruption rather than regime type that matters in explaining policy adoption and

implementation. For both elected and nonelected leaders, there is an incentive to invest in short-term socioeconomic programs that provide tangible benefits to the population rather than in long-term, far less visible projects concerned with climate change.

At the heart of loss and damage governance there are questions about what is seen as valuable, by whom, and why. In this book, we suggest that accountability, the free flow of information, and civil rights and freedom of expression are critical for effective and legitimate policymaking. We see participatory, deliberative processes as being most likely to result in effective loss and damage governance. Recent research on the attributes of effective adaptation activities has found that collaborative decision-making and the sharing of physical and informational resources are important (Owen 2020). Our research design does not allow us to disentangle these types of effects given our small number of case studies, but we do highlight insights from the research that may be useful in formulating initial hypotheses on the potential mechanisms that may be at play within different types of political regimes.

Similarly, our research does not allow for systematic comparison of the relationship between levels of development – as expressed by measures like gross domestic product (GDP) per capita – and loss and damage policymaking. Levels of development have been put forth as a key factor accounting for the adoption of climate change policy. Studies have tended to focus on mitigation efforts, with some recent attention on adaptation policymaking, and have found that higher levels of economic development allow a state to develop the material and technological capacity to respond to climate change (e.g., Held et al. 2013; Massey et al. 2014). This picture has been complicated by Madden (2014) arguing that GDP per capita has had a modestly negative relationship with major climate policy adoption; Bättig and Bernauer (2009) finding that economic growth has no significant effect on policy output; and Kim and Wolinsky-Nahmias (2014) highlighting that a population's attitude toward climate change is not straightforwardly related to national affluence. Rather than looking at development levels, we focus on the way the "development paradigms" pursued by countries affect loss and damage policymaking (discussed in Section 2.6).

Finally, scholars of public policy have argued that understanding public opinion is essential for designing effective climate policies and for shaping behavior change at the individual level. Some have argued that individuals in developing countries are less likely to hold post-materialist "green values" and are therefore less likely to see climate action as a priority (Held et al. 2013). Others have suggested that a sense of historic injustice and mistrust of developed countries may be contributing to an unwillingness to cooperate on climate change (Edwards & Roberts 2015). Emerging research on how vulnerability to climate change impacts is shaping public opinion and political behavior may be important for understanding the likelihood of state's adoption of policies to address loss and damage (see Gaikwad et al. 2022).

2.8 OUR APPROACH

Given that climate-related loss and damage is a new area of governance, we take an abductive approach in our research design, that is, one that moves iteratively between existing theoretical explanations – developed to account for mitigation and adaptation policies – and the qualitative data generated through our case studies. We center on the perspectives of key policy stakeholders and explore how loss and damage is being thought about in specific contexts. Our interest lies in understanding how and why policymakers have understood the problem of loss and damage in the ways that they have and how ideas circulate among institutions and across scales of governance. We seek to explore how these ideas are then put into motion (or not) by those in power.

In terms of the outcome of interest, we look at the adoption of national policies and programs to address climate change loss and damage. Yet this deceptively simple outcome raises several critical issues. We address the two we see as most important here. First, how do we identify a loss and damage policy when we see one? Policies, strategies, or programs that refer explicitly to climate change loss and damage would be one obvious operationalization strategy. We refer to these as "explicit" loss and damage policy measures. However, this would overlook a broad range of measures and activities that seek to grapple with the types of issues one might think of as a loss and damage governance response when translating this concept from the international level – for example, measures dealing with early warning systems, human mobility, or mental health impacts from climate-related events. We consider these as "implicit" loss and damage policy measures. This explicit/implicit distinction poses challenges when seeking to conceptualize and operationalize our outcome of interest. To grapple with this, we draw on a sociological institutionalist approach to reconstruct *in situ* understandings of what a loss and damage policy response is. In doing so, we are interested in the processes of meaning-making that are at play within jurisdictions over what the policy problem of loss and damage entails and how best to respond to it.

However, unlike most approaches to sociological institutionalism, we bring in an understanding of how material politics – the ways in which the material realities of climate change impacts – make themselves known in domestic politics. In doing so, we are able to explore both the subjective and material elements that create the conditions for loss and damage to become a policy object at the national level. In other words, we turn attention to the policy actors and the material, institutional and normative frameworks within which they are situated as they identify and make sense of loss and damage as a problem that requires a policy response. We explore (a) relationships between national-level institutions to understand where authority lies and how this shapes loss and damage policymaking and (b) how the situatedness of policy actors shapes their understandings of loss and damage and what kinds of loss and damage policies are required.

A second critical issue in our methodological approach is ensuring that due attention is paid to the various stages of policy development rather than only privileging those jurisdictions which have been leaders. We are as interested in countries in which we might expect to see loss and damage policy discourses and discussions, given their vulnerability to climate change impacts, but where those debates are absent and also jurisdictions which have seen policies that "failed to launch." In this way, we are seeking to correct a selection bias issue in comparative climate politics which tends to focus on those policies that were ultimately successfully adopted. Our research shows that there is much to learn from legislative bills that get "stuck" in the process. Our holistic approach looks not only across institutions but also at how they change over time, which helps us to avoid problems of selection bias.

The outcome of interest – domestic policies or programs that deal with loss and damage – is not straightforward. The range and complexity of climate policies – to say nothing of other areas of policymaking that touch on climate change adaptation, disaster risk management (DRM), natural resource management, or social and economic development – present a significant challenge in studying the uptake of loss and damage measures. Our approach offers a way forward in that we draw attention to different actors and the jurisdictions and institutions within which they are situated. These agents can all play a role in framing loss and damage at the national level and diffusing certain conceptualizations of it or putting barriers to policy development in place.

We have used an iterative approach for our data-gathering and analytical strategy. We began first by undertaking a document analysis to understand whether and how states mentioned loss and damage in their submissions to the UNFCCC. We examined, for example, their first, second, and/or third national communications, as well as their NDCs and NAPs. We also looked at specific government reports and general reports on loss and damage governance, drawing on the World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal, Climate Action Tracker, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's research and publications. We also consulted academic literature on each country and sought out gray literature produced by research organizations and CSOs both within and beyond our case study countries.

We then undertook a large number of semi-structured interviews: seventy-five in total across the seven countries between 2019 and 2023, supplemented by interviews with UNFCCC stakeholders. We primarily targeted civil servants and politicians who are involved in processes of policy development but, given that the process of policy formation can be influenced by a wide range of non-state actors, we also broadened our research participants to include the business sector, civil society, donors, and epistemic communities, where possible. We asked our research participants about their understandings of the impacts of climate change for their area of policy and practice and how those impacts were relevant (or not) for their institution. We also asked specifically about loss and damage – whether the term held relevance to the stakeholder

and what it meant within the policy landscape, how it might appear in policymaking, and their understandings of the distinctions between adaptation, DRM, and loss and damage. We explored their engagement with regional and international organizations and we asked about what kinds of knowledge they draw on and where key gaps lie.

We came to the case studies with an understanding of developments at the international level and then undertook an open coding of the interview data to not only explore existing topics (such as slow onset events, noneconomic losses, and migration) but also identify new framings or conceptualizations within each jurisdiction. We then explored the interrelationship between the themes we had identified and the existing accounts of climate policy adoption we have identified in this chapter.

Our final step after the fieldwork analysis was to come back to the country's national laws, plans, and policy documents. This allowed for a deeper understanding of these documents in light of our interview data. It also enabled us to expand our analysis to include policy areas and related documents that were referred to in the interview data. As our learning advanced, the pool of relevant documents to be analyzed grew to include strategies, policies, and plans related to environmental management; climate change adaptation, including sectoral policies explicitly addressing climate change impacts; DRM; and sustainable development.

In most of our case studies (Antigua and Barbuda, Ethiopia, The Bahamas, Chile, and Bangladesh), research was undertaken collaboratively with local experts and researchers. Some of these collaborations were borne from limitations on the editors' and authors' ability to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that extensive fieldwork was not possible for some of our case studies (the editors undertook ethnographic fieldwork in Antigua and Barbuda, Tuvalu, and Peru in the year before the pandemic and this data informs those chapters). However, we found that working with local partners brought a new dimension to the study: It was fundamental for gaining an in-depth understanding of the political, social, and cultural context of our case study countries and helped us to unpack local dynamics and complexities in a collaborative way. It also helped to create networks with local institutions that can facilitate the uptake of the project's insights at the national and local level.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined existing theoretical approaches that have been developed and tested to account for the uptake of climate policy in the field of mitigation and adaptation. In this chapter we have sought to conceptually explore the extent to which these approaches may provide analytical leverage in explaining policy adoption and innovation in relation to addressing climate change loss and damage.

Based on this literature, we might anticipate that a critical driver of climate policy development in this realm would be a country's experience of climate hazards and the material context within which policymakers are acting: For countries already experiencing key climate change impacts and reaching limits to adaptation, it would be reasonable to anticipate greater attention to loss and damage policy. With respect to international engagement, we might anticipate that policymakers that have been involved with developments within the UNFCCC on loss and damage, for example, those involved in the negotiations or sitting on the Warsaw International Mechanism Executive Committee, will push for domestic-level action on the issue. However, we also expect engagement with the international level to be a two-way street given the still shifting terrain on loss and damage. Because of the slow pace of movement on climate finance for loss and damage, we do not yet expect to see financial incentives as a key driver of domestic action but we anticipate that this will change rapidly with the agreement and operationalization of a loss and damage fund at COP28 in 2023. We would expect institutional perspectives on the issue to shape national-level engagement contingent on sufficient institutional capacity and resources. Finally, we would expect policymakers to be more likely to pursue loss and damage policies in those jurisdictions where there is more scientific knowledge and better data available on climate risks and/or where there are normative underpinnings suggesting that loss and damage policies are an appropriate behavior in line with a particular ideological, normative, or identity-related framing.

The book contributes to efforts to broaden research on climate policy in the Global South by studying countries that are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, including SIDS, least developed countries, and emerging economies. Often these countries are overlooked in research on climate policy or are deemed insufficiently "strategic" in terms of case selection strategies given their relatively small populations, perceptions about their peripheral geopolitical roles, and/or their unique social or material circumstances. Here we seek to combat what has been coined an "epistemological injustice" in the literature on climate change losses, whereby we know least about loss and damage in the poorest countries which stand to lose the most (Tschakert et al. 2019). We follow Dubash (2021) in selecting cases based on a diverse case design, aimed at enabling exploration of patterns in relation to loss and damage policy development and the drivers of policy adoption. Our set of cases is not representative of global diversity but is constructed to capture some diversity among countries vulnerable to climate change impacts.

The following chapters present the individual cases, which reveal the richness and breadth of loss and damage policy debates at the national level and provide us with a wide range of variation in terms of types of climate hazards being faced, political regime type, GDP per capita, and institutional and ideational landscapes. The book advances understanding

of how policymakers across sectors conceptualize loss and damage, identifies the barriers and constraints in policymaking across countries, and traces the wide range of policies that are being deployed to grapple with different types of climate impacts. In doing so, the book seeks to begin to show the way to more effective governance of loss and damage now and in the future.

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