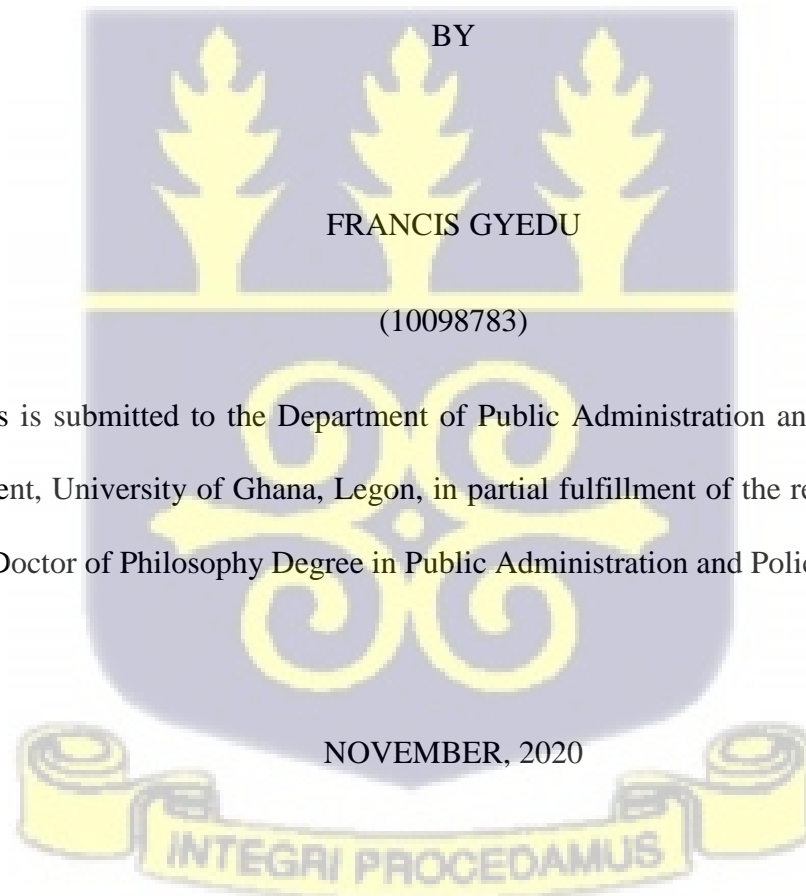


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN GHANA: EXPLAINING THE
CONVERSION OF POLYTECHNICS TO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES**



DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.



Candidate's Signature:

Date: 20th November, 2020

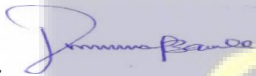
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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.

Principal Supervisor's

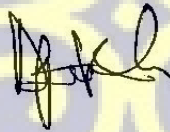
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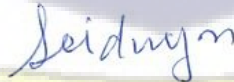
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DEDICATION

To my lovely wife, Mrs. Clara Gyedu and three kids, namely, Krufie, Tokua and Kwaku Akomea.



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ABSTRACT

Governments in developing countries are changing educational policies to ensure better access and quality of education at all levels. The success of educational reforms depends on cooperation among the government, political parties, educational institutions, international development donors, and other stakeholders in the society to formulate and adopt appropriate policies. How to achieve cooperation among these actors has usually become a problem for many developing countries. It is in the light of this problem that this study delves into how cooperation among stakeholders was achieved in Ghana for the conversion of ten polytechnics to technical universities under two different governments. The study is an attempt to understand and explain the dynamics of policy change in the tertiary education sector of Ghana. The study uses the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) theoretical lens which argues that policy change such as the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities occurs through the coupling of relatively separate streams of problems, policies, and politics at critical junctures by policy entrepreneurs. How these three separate streams are joined by policy entrepreneurs for successful governmental agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption in the transformation of polytechnics to technical universities is the critical event that this study sought to understand. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology in the context of an interpretive philosophical paradigm. The study was conducted relying on data collected from semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The study found that the policy proposal for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was conceived and advocated within the polytechnics. However, the policy proposal was taken up by the NDC government and made a key campaign promise during the 2012 electoral campaigns. After the elections, the government created a Technical Committee of policy experts in 2013, made up of Polytechnic Rectors

and other relevant stakeholders, to generate proposals and a roadmap for the conversion to occur. The study also found that the policy proposals made by the experts strived to meet the criteria of technical feasibility, financial viability, and political acceptability to increase the chances of policy making success. Guided by the policy proposals, the policy experts, the NDC government, the Committee of Education in Parliament made up of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the NDC and opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), polytechnic students associations, and polytechnic employees associations cooperated to form a coalition of policy entrepreneurs that pushed the policy proposal through the stages of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption in 2016 to convert six qualified polytechnics to technical universities. When the NPP took over the seat of government in 2017, the same coalition of policy entrepreneurs followed the conversion criteria to convert two polytechnics in 2018 and the final two polytechnics in 2020. The study found that although problems stream, the policy-making stream, and the political stream are separate processes, the actors involved in the processes are not always separate. Polytechnic Rectors who advocated for the problems of polytechnic education to be solved by government were the same actors who generated the solution of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. The study also found that MPs and Ministers in the political stream were members of the parliamentary Committee on Education as policy experts who worked with committees of policy experts outside parliament to fine the process of policy formulation. Government and MPs exercised their authority of legislative adoption of the policy proposals formulated by the policy entrepreneurs. The study supports the views of many scholars, including the originator of the MSF, that there is the need for scholars of the MSF to reformulate the idea that the three streams are independent, and they only join during the

open windows of opportunity for policy making. The study, however, supports, the core theoretical claim of the MSF that there is the need for the coupling of the three streams through bargaining and negotiations among stakeholders to ensure successful and sustainable policymaking. The study found that the use of bargaining and negotiations by the NDC and NPP governments, facilitated by trusted policy experts, ensured cooperation between governing and opposition parties to support and sustain the policy change. In the context of Ghana's constitutional democracy, the study recommends that entrepreneurs of policy change in the tertiary education sector should use bargaining and negotiations rather than coercion, force, and authority to push for the acceptance of their policy proposals. This will ensure appropriate coupling of problem entrepreneurs, policy experts, and political interests to support and sustain policy change.



CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Governments in developing countries are changing educational policies to ensure better access and quality of education at all levels (UNICEF, 2017; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). The success of educational reforms depends on the cooperation among governments, political parties, educational institutions, international development donors, and other stakeholders in the society to formulate and adopt appropriate policies. How to achieve cooperation among these actors has usually become a problem for many developing countries (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). It is in the light of this problem that this study delves into how cooperation among stakeholders was achieved in Ghana for the transformation of ten polytechnics to technical universities under two different governments.

The vital role of education in human development has never been in doubt (UNICEF, 2017). Many scholars argue that educational attainment of a society is an important determinant of its level of economic development (Chipde, Yadav, Ranjan, Prakash, & Kapoor, 2012; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Educational reforms remain a priority on the agenda of governments in developing countries (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Global pressures focus increasing attention on the outcomes of education policy and on their implications for economic prosperity and social citizenship. Just like human liberty to life, education is sacrosanct to the guarantee for fundamental human right (Daniels, 1996).

Across many research works, it has been documented that education provides children, youth, and adults with the power to reflect, make choices and enjoy a better life (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Indeed, the power of education is reflective in its power to break the cycle of chronic poverty and it is a key ingredient in economic and social development (Sbaouelgi, 2017). The task of the educational reform policy entrepreneurs is to mobilize the support of appropriate actors within the political system for the conversion of reform ideas into reality. How educational reform policy entrepreneurs formulated their problems, how policy makers formulated solutions about polytechnic educations, and how politicians in government mobilized powerful political actors in the democratic political system to successfully push through reform proposals are the focus of this study.

Given the significance of education, attempts have been made to undertake major reforms to reflect the socio-economic transformation in a given time. Such reforms in education are informed by significant flaws in the educational system that creates dissatisfaction among stakeholders. The state of an economy and changing population system as well as international reforms can trigger local educational policy changes (Davoodi, Tiongson, & Asawanuchit, 2010). Educational reforms are seen as tools for transformation through which national development is to be achieved (Tapscott & Williams, 2010).

Countries are shaping their destinies in development in their classrooms by making curricular policies that are relevant to the development of their respective countries. That is to say that a country's development is becoming more and more inextricably linked with the educational policies pursued. What a nation wants to be socially, politically, economically,

technologically is largely influenced by the kind of education that is offered to her members (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1978). Granted that education is one of the most important tools for national development it becomes the responsibility of any progressive government anywhere to provide and promote sound educational policies as well as infrastructure that will help its people to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to develop their potentials (Forojalla, 1993).

It is on account of the belief in the benefits of good education that successive governments of Ghana have sought to use educational reform as vehicles for accelerating development (Girdwood, 1999). However, it was realized that even before the attainment of political independence in Ghana, the type of education system inherited from the colonial era did not address the country's critical problems of development (Antwi, 1992). Succeeding governments of the country have attempted to reform the education system. For instance, in the fourth republic alone there have been three major reforms in high school education system and one major change in university education (Aziabah, 2018). The technical universities existing in Ghana today have been born out of the desire of successive governments to industrialise the country in order to bridge the mismatch between tertiary education and employable skills development.

How technical universities emerged from the reform of ten polytechnics that were created since the 1990s to spearhead technical education is the subject of this study. Kingdon (2011) argued that the ability of policy entrepreneurs to successfully put an idea on a government's reform agenda is dependent on the convergence of three independent, but interrelated,

streams; namely (i) the problem stream, (ii) the solutions or policy stream (hereafter referred to as the policy stream), and (iii) the politics stream within a society. This study uses the lens of Kingdon's multiple streams framework to explain the conversion of polytechnics into technical universities in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Development practitioners emphasize the need for problem stakeholders, policy designers, and governments in developing countries to join forces in solving problems that undermine the quality of education in developing countries (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Many theoretical frameworks have been introduced by scholars to provide guidance on how actors could cooperate to shape policy change in the education sector of countries (Sabatier & Weible, 1999; Weible, Heikkila, DeLeon, & Sabatier, 2012; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). However, there has been limited empirical application of promising theories of policy change (Sabatier & Weible, 2007; Kingdon, 2011; Herweg, Hub, & Zohlnhofer, 2015). This reason motivated the study to empirically investigate how a coalition of problem advocates, policy designers, and political entrepreneurs in Ghana joined to try to solve the problems of polytechnic education by converting the polytechnics to technical universities. The study hopes to contribute to the understanding on how cooperation is created among higher education reform stakeholders to improve the quality of education.

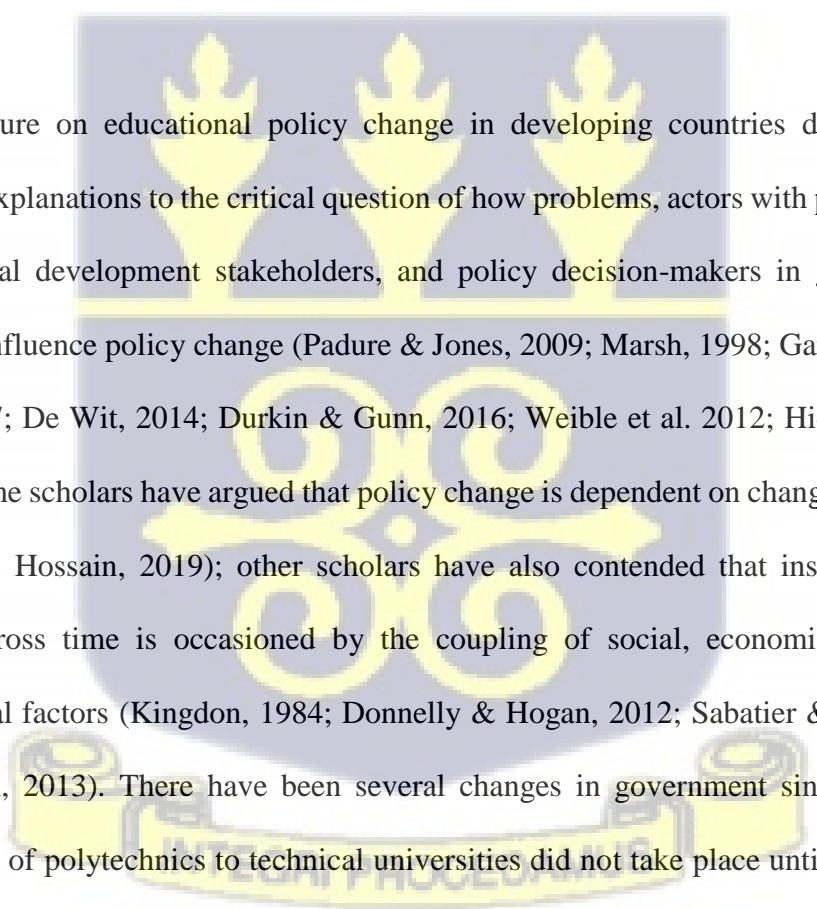
Educational reforms remain a priority on the agenda of governments in Ghana (Antwi, 1992; Annobil, 2017; Aziabah, 2018; Ampratwum, Agyekum, & Adinyira, 2019). Successive governments in Ghana from the pre-independence era till today have all emphasized the

importance of education as a catalyst to rapid national development. Since Ghana's independence from British colonial rule in 1957, many reforms have been undertaken by governments within the educational landscape of Ghana in their attempts to improve the quality of education. The literature on education reforms in Ghana also suggests that Governments created policy advisory committees to help formulate appropriate policy proposals for educational reform (MoE, 2014; Aziabah, 2018).

The idea of converting the polytechnics to technical universities had been recognized as far back as when the polytechnics were recognized by government in 2012 (MoE, 2014). The idea was supported by both the ruling government and the presidential candidate of the main opposition party called the New Patriotic Party (NPP). This idea saw the dawn of day in 2016 when the first six polytechnics were converted into technical universities. The presidential candidate of the opposition NPP criticized the government for adopting a “piecemeal approach” in the conversion of the polytechnics and argued that there should be a wholesale conversion of the polytechnics. When the main opposition party won elections and assumed the powers of government in 2017, they converted two polytechnics to technical universities. Finally, in 2020, the final two polytechnics got converted to technical universities. Why was the “piecemeal approach” to the conversion of the polytechnics also used by the NPP government? Was the Ghanaian economy not viable enough to support the wholesale conversion of the polytechnics?

The conversion of polytechnics to technical universities presents important questions for empirical research and theoretical development. Why did the idea of conversion of the

polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana attract such strong political support and cooperation from governments and opposition political parties? How does a reform idea time come to fruition? Who were the actors in the polytechnics, within government, and the parliament that pushed for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities? How was the strong cooperation among the actors created for governmental agenda setting and policy change? These questions call for empirical research to understand how actors cooperate in a competitive democratic setting to transform ideas of policy change into reality. Aside theoretical interests (Kingdon, 2011), such knowledge will help guide future reforms in higher education.

The image shows a large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest in the background. The crest features three golden torches at the top, a central shield with a golden emblem, and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'INTEGRITY PROGRESS AND FAITH'.

The literature on educational policy change in developing countries does not provide adequate explanations to the critical question of how problems, actors with policy proposals, international development stakeholders, and policy decision-makers in government join forces to influence policy change (Padure & Jones, 2009; Marsh, 1998; Gandara, Ripper, & Ness, 2017; De Wit, 2014; Durkin & Gunn, 2016; Weible et al. 2012; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Some scholars have argued that policy change is dependent on change of government (Hickey & Hossain, 2019); other scholars have also contended that instances of policy change across time is occasioned by the coupling of social, economic, political, and institutional factors (Kingdon, 1984; Donnelly & Hogan, 2012; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Yun, 2013). There have been several changes in government since 1993 but the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities did not take place until 2016. We need to understand how seemingly independent actors with problems, policy proposals, and

political authority come together to set the agenda for policy change, formulate alternative solutions, and adopt a change of policy.

The study argues that the nature of the coalition that is built among policy stakeholders is not only responsible for ensuring the convergence of the problem stream, the solutions stream, and the political stream; but, more crucially, in determining the success or failure of the movement of reform ideas from the agenda stage to the policy adoption stage (Kingdon, 2011). The study adapts the multiple streams theory to explain how agenda setting and policy change are achieved by a coalition of actors from the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream. The power of the coalition to overcome opposition is decisive for the successful adoption of reform ideas. The creation of a winning coalition across the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream is a political process of conflicts and negotiations (Leftwich, 2007).

This study seeks to provide and fill the gap in literature on the conditions of educational policy change in the context of a developing democratic country using the explanatory lens of the multiple streams framework (Kingdon, 2011). In the multiple streams theoretical approach, Kingdon (2011, p. 20) argues that policy change occurs when “The separate streams of problems, policies, and politics come together at certain critical times. Solutions become joined to problems, and both of them are joined to favourable political forces. This coupling is most likely when policy windows – opportunities for pushing pet proposals or conceptions of problems – are open.” The multiple streams framework is elaborated in the next chapter. Using the case of the conversion of polytechnics into technical universities in

Ghana, this study demonstrates the power of the MSF to explain how reform stakeholders from the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream joined forces to make possible agenda setting and policy change. The research objectives and questions that guided the study are provided below.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives in the context of Ghana:

1. Describe the nature of the actors that pushed for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana.
2. Examine how the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was set.
3. Explain how the policy decision for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was formulated and adopted.
4. Make appropriate recommendations for tertiary educational policy change, theoretical development, and future research.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What was the nature of the actors who pushed for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana?
2. How was the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities set?

3. How was the policy decision for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities formulated and adopted?
4. What are the lessons from the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities for policy change, theory development, and future research?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study makes two major significant contributions to understanding education reform in developing countries. In the first place, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on how technocrats, administrators, policymakers, and political actors cooperated within the democratic setting of Ghana to shape tertiary educational reform. Research on the politics of educational reform in developing countries have concentrated mostly on the basic and secondary schools. Research on tertiary educational reform have been the preserve of scholars in developed countries. Country specific knowledge is relevant in bringing out pertinent issues relevant for consideration in formulating education policies at the tertiary level. This study contributes immensely towards the literature on the politics of education reform at the tertiary education level in the context of a developing economy where politics plays a key role in shaping policy directions and outcomes. Policy makers will therefore be guided on the needed skills and consultations required before embarking on a reform at the higher tertiary education level. The study highlights the need for advocates of education reform operating separately in the problem stream, the solutions stream, and the political stream to converge at some point if they are to achieve their mutual or common interests.

Second, the literature on the multiple streams theoretical framework emphasizes the need for problem stakeholders, policy designers, and governments to join forces in solving problems that undermine the quality of education in developing countries. A series of theoretical frameworks have been introduced by scholars to explain policy formation and change. However, the literature shows limited empirical application of the theories of policy change in the higher education sector of developing countries (Sabatier & Weible, 1999; Weible et al. 2012; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). This study provides empirical application of the multiple streams framework to illuminate how a network or coalition of policy entrepreneurs is created to advocate for agenda setting and policy change towards solving specific problems that affected polytechnic education in Ghana. The study therefore makes contribution to the development of the multiple streams framework for the analysis of policy formation and change in developing countries.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Geographically, this study was delimited to a particular country of Ghana. The study covered how politics influenced the policy process in the conversion of all the ten polytechnics into technical universities. They are Accra, Ho, Takoradi, Kumasi, Koforidua, Sunyani, Tamale, Cape Coast, Bolgatanga, and Wa polytechnics that were converted into technical universities. The first six were converted in 2016 by an Act of parliament called, Technical Universities Act, 2016. The other two, namely, Tamale and Cape Coast were converted two years later by an Act of parliament called, Technical Universities (Amendment) Act, 2018. Parliament on Thursday night, April 2, 2020 amended the Technical Universities Act (922) to convert the Bolgatanga Polytechnic and the Wa Polytechnic into technical universities.

The empirical findings are therefore delimited to Ghana. Theoretically, however, the case of Ghana is used to illuminate the universal applicability of Kingdon's multiple streams framework for understanding how an idea's time has come to be put, first, on the government agenda, and, ultimately, receive policy adoption by policymakers to solve identified problems.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Research in social science is normally confronted with myriads of challenges due to the variable it deals with which are unpredictable (Aziabah, 2018). This study, although, very successful was faced with certain limitations in the data collection. A first limitation to the study was the author's inability to interview certain key individuals to unravel how government got the idea of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. Notable were Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, who was the Deputy Minister in charge of Tertiary Education at the time of the conversion of the first six polytechnics. Although Kingdon (2011, p. 71) cautioned that "tracing origins involves one in an infinite regress" because "ideas can come from anywhere;" it would have been ideal to interview this key 'political entrepreneur' who was identified by many interviewees as the major actor in the political stream who moved the idea of the conversion of the polytechnics from the polytechnics into the political stream for successful policy adoption. Instead, the study relied on the views of political actors captured in the Parliamentary Hansards. The data from the parliamentary Hansard provided rich information. The conclusions of the study agree with Kingdon that "A concentration on the origins of initiatives does not make for very complete theory about agenda setting or alternative specification" (ibid). Knowing how the NDC government got

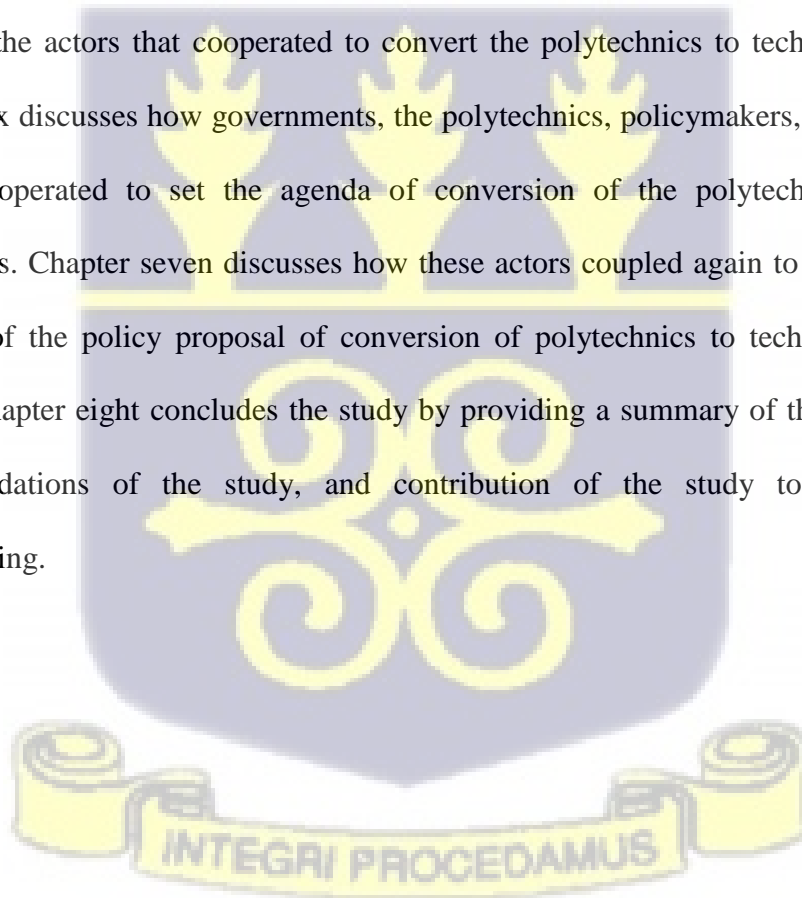
the idea of conversion of the polytechnics would have helped to establish whether or not the politicians in the political stream worked independently from the polytechnic employees in supporting the idea of the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities.

Another possible limitation worth mentioning was financial constraints. The cost of travels to various technical universities across the country for interviews was enormous. Some interviewees invited me on several occasions, but they never had the time for the interview. The financial cost and time constraints prevented me from reaching all and sundry listed for the interviews. Consequently, the results from heads of technical universities were based on availability and time constraint. It would have been ideal to interview the heads of all the technical universities for richer insights.

The final limitation worthy of note was the political sensitivity of the topic which made some of the interviewees feel uncomfortable talking about issues of politics. The polarized nature of politics in Ghana posed a challenge to some of the respondents in giving away certain information that seemed relevant. This situation may have affected the answers given by interviewees for the study, notwithstanding the assurance of confidentiality of responses. Some answers sounded political and tilted towards political orientations of respondents. The ethical clearance given the researcher did not always remove the cloud of fear of possible political victimization expressed by some respondents. The responses given by respondents have been triangulated with documentary reviews to ensure the validity of the information.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

The study is organized into eight chapters. The rest of the chapters is organized as follows. The second chapter concerns itself with the review of related literature on Kingdon's multiple streams framework to provide the theoretical foundation for empirical review and analysis for the study. Chapter three discusses the historical evolution of polytechnic education in Ghana and the problems of polytechnic education. The fourth chapter is devoted to the methodology and the philosophical foundations of the study. This chapter discusses the various instruments used in the data collection, namely, interviews and documentary reviews. The chapter also addresses the ethical issues of the study. Chapter five presents the nature of the actors that cooperated to convert the polytechnics to technical universities. Chapter six discusses how governments, the polytechnics, policymakers, and other interest groups cooperated to set the agenda of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. Chapter seven discusses how these actors coupled again to ensure legislative adoption of the policy proposal of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. Finally, chapter eight concludes the study by providing a summary of the major findings, recommendations of the study, and contribution of the study to knowledge and policymaking.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter defines the key concepts of the study and a review of the literature on theories of public policy change, particularly the multiple streams theoretical framework. The chapter is divided into four parts. Section 2.1 provides the definition of the key concepts of politics and public policy. Section 2.2 provides a brief justification for the choice of the multiple streams theoretical framework used for the study. Section 2.3 presents a discussion of the assumptions and some empirical applications of the multiple streams theoretical framework. Section 2.4 summarizes the chapter. The chapter emphasizes the theoretical argument that the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was an act of policy change that resulted from the coupling of separate actors pushing problems, policy proposals, and political interests. The coupling of these three streams occurred through the intervention of policy entrepreneurs created by political entrepreneurs in the political stream.

2.1 Definition of Key Concepts

This section defines the meanings of the concepts of ‘politics’ and ‘public policy’ used in the study. Various scholars have defined these concepts in different ways. Herweg et al. (2015) note that the lack of precision in providing operational definitions limited the power of Kingdon’s (1984) original specification of the multiple streams framework which this study uses as its theoretical framework. It is therefore important to be precise about the meaning of concepts to ensure clear theoretical and empirical analysis.

2.1.1 The Concept of Politics

Politics is encountered in every country every day, but it has been defined differently by scholars. According to Easton (1965, p. 50), what distinguishes politics from other kinds of social interaction “is that they are predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of values for a society.” Harold and Kaplan (2017) locate politics within the realm of government and defines politics as "the process of making and executing governmental decisions or policies". Leftwich (2007, p. 12), however, broadens the definition of politics: “Politics is best conceptualized as consisting of all the activities of co-operation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources.” Many scholars have endeavored to characterize politics in relation to conflict resolution (Heywood, 2017). The association of politics with conflicts gives it a bad name and a negative character. From the above definitions given by different researchers, three things stand out particularly about the concept of politics, namely: (a) resolution of contentions over values; (b) collective decisions over allocation of resources; and (c) formulation and management of policies. For the purpose of this study, politics is defined as the processes of collective decision-making in the determination of societal values concerning the production, distribution, and use of resources. The definition used is in line with David Easton’s widely known definition of politics as an activity that resolves around “the authoritative allocation of values for a society” (Easton, 1965, p. 50). Politics is found in every human organization. The process of collective decision-making in the determination of societal values involves conflicts, negotiations, and cooperation among the actors due to the diversity of values held by the actors concerning ideas, power relations, social status, sources of authority, and resources (Easton, 1965; Leftwich, 2007).

Wagner (2016) notes that “educational politics, like politics in general, revolves around three entities: people, values and resources”. Freire (1985) is perhaps the most well-known advocate of the relevance of politics in education. In the context of this study in the education sector of Ghana, all the processes of collective decision-making over the conversion of ten polytechnics to attain the value of technical universities fall within the concept and practice of politics. Moreover, group decision-making concerning the allocation of resources to polytechnics and other educational institutions in the country also fall within politics. So, in reality, politics permeates most, if not all, of our daily living, and certainly all the group decisions concerning the education system (Ball, 2017). The bottom line is that all acts of collective decision-making in the determination of values of education are political.

2.1.2 The Concept of Public Policy

This study is an attempt to understand how public policies were made to convert ten polytechnics into technical universities. Public policy as a concept has also received various definitions from political scientists and public administration scholars. However, Thomas Dye, in his book *Understanding Public Policy*, argues that “even the most elaborate definitions of public policy, on close examination, seem to boil down to the same thing” (Dye, 1998, p. 3). The concept of public policy involves two words, ‘public’ and ‘policy’, that have distinct meanings. It is therefore important to understand how the two words come together to give the concept of public policy a special meaning in public administration as a field of practice and study (Anderson, 2011).

According to Anderson (2011, p. 6), “a policy is defined as a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of

concern.” Anderson (2011) emphasizes that “This definition focuses on what is actually done instead of what is only proposed or intended; differentiates a policy from a decision, which is essentially a specific choice among alternatives; and views policy as something that unfolds over time.” What gives public policy its ‘public’ character is the fact that “Public policies are those developed by governmental bodies and officials” (Anderson, 2011). Thomas Dye also locates public policy within the realm of government by stating that “Public policy is whatever government chooses to do or not to do” (Dye, 1998).

There are common features in the most elaborate definitions of public policy. Every public policy is a solution, or a set of solutions, purposively made by government in dealing with a problem. The goal of every public policy is to deal with a problem affecting actors in the government or in the society. Howlett (2014, p. 5) argue that “public policy is driven not just by the need to solve problems, but also by the political need to be seen to address problems – even at the expense of failing to solve the problem itself.” Public policy makers and ‘policy entrepreneurs’ do not only present public policy as a solution; they simultaneously specify the problem intended to be solved by the public policy. A public policy is therefore a problem-solution. The key attributes of a public policy are that (i) it involves politics; (ii) it provides governmental solutions to societal problems; (iii) it involves the expenditure of public resources on implementation; and, (iv) it involves the legitimate and authoritative use of the coercive offices of government to guarantee enforcement against resistance (Dye, 1998; Anderson, 2011; Howlett, 2014). Public policies are typically communicated in legislative enactments or laws; government declarations, orders, proclamations, speeches, budgets; and, judicial decisions.

The study is about understanding how public policies were enacted to convert polytechnics into technical universities. It is basically an attempt to understand policy change. Howlett and Cashore (2009, p. 33) have emphasized “the need to precisely disaggregate different elements of policy in order to construct accurate models of policy dynamics.” Therefore, many scholars have disaggregated the policy process into stages. According to Howlett and Ramesh (2003, pp. 13-14), “the most important advantage of the stages approach as an analytical tool is that it facilitates the understanding of public policy-making by breaking the complexity of the process into a number of stages, each of which can be investigated alone or in terms of its relationship to any or all the other stages of the cycle.” In the context of this study, the disaggregation of policy enactment into policy agenda setting and policy decision-making stage helps to unravel how the coupling of problems, policy proposals (solutions), and politics occurred at each stage to influence the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. It will provide more insight into the dynamics and complexities of policy change in the tertiary education sector of Ghana. This study follows Herweg et al (2015) to disaggregate the enactment of a public policy into two stages, namely (i) the policy agenda setting stage, and (ii) the policy decision-making stage.

According to Birkland (2004, p. 106), in the context of public policy, “An agenda is a collection of the elements of public problems to which at least some of the public and government officials are actively attentive. These elements can include problems, understanding of causes, interpretations of symbols, suggested solutions to problems, and strategic depiction of problems.” Agenda setting is defined as the process by “which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention” (Birkland, 2004,

p. 106). Kingdon (2011, p. 166) distinguishes between ‘governmental agenda’ and ‘decision agenda’:

The *governmental agenda* is the list of subjects to which people in and around government are paying serious attention at any given point in time. ... Within that governmental agenda, there is a smaller set of items that is being decided upon, a *decision agenda*. ... Being on this decision agenda, of course, does not insure enactment or favorable bureaucratic decision, but it is a more active status than being on the governmental agenda.

Agenda setting in this study refers to the ‘governmental agenda’ while the ‘decision agenda’ is treated as part of the process of policy formulation for legislative enactment (Herweg et al. 2015). As soon as the government stated that the polytechnics were going to be converted to technical universities, the issue is considered to have been placed on the governmental agenda. How an issue of policy gets onto the governmental agenda is an important matter for study (Kingdon, 2011).

The policy decision-making stage involves the specification of the problems, the formulation of specific solutions in the form of rules, and the legal legitimation or adoption of the solutions (Herweg et al. 2015). Kingdon (2011) referred to the decision-making stage as ‘policy formation’. Many scholars have disaggregated the policy decision-making stage into separate stages of policy formulation and policy adoption (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl 2009).

In this study, the processes of policy formulation and policy adoption have been analyzed as separate parts of the broad decision-making stage.

2.2 Theories of Public Policy Change

Various theories have been propounded by scholars to explain policy change (Weible et al. 2009; McLendon & Cohen-Vogel, 2008; Kingdon, 2011). The study reviewed some existing theories of policy making and change. The tenets of three of the existing theories used by other scholars to study education policymaking and policy change is presented in Table 1 below. Two main theories of policy change that were reviewed were the Advocacy Coalitions Framework (ACF) originally developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988), and the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) originally developed by Kingdon (1984). The study chose the MSF. Before discussing the MSF, it is important to briefly present the reasons why the ACF (Sabatier, 1998) was not selected in spite of its strong appeal to researchers of policy change (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

According to Sabatier and Weible (2007, p. 189), “The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is a framework of the policy process developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith to deal with "wicked" problems – those involving substantial goal conflicts, important technical disputes, and multiple actors from several levels of government.” The application of the ACF requires a case of policy change with at least two advocacy coalitions (a pro-coalition A and an anti-coalition B) belonging to different policy subsystems. The advocacy coalition should have substantial goal conflicts over policy change due to differences in their policy core beliefs (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Sabatier and Weible (2007, p. 194) remarked that “The

ACF's model of the individual is well-suited to explain the escalation and continuation of policy conflict. As we shall see shortly, it requires further modification to account for de-escalation and agreement.” As we shall see, the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities did not involve substantial goal conflicts between the ruling governments, opposition political parties, and the polytechnics. In fact, when the idea of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was first presented by the ruling NDC government, the idea was supported by the presidential candidate of the main opposition party who stated that all the ten polytechnics should be converted to technical universities at the same time. In the absence of substantial goal conflicts among the main stakeholders of the policy change, the ACF becomes a less suitable theory.

Moreover, “The ACF argues that advocacy coalitions provide the most useful tool for aggregating the behavior of the hundreds of organizations and individuals involved in a policy subsystem over periods of a decade or more” (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 196). The conversion of all the ten polytechnics into technical universities has been less than a decade. The process started in 2012 and ended in 2020. The reform actors were not involved in a policy subsystem over periods of a decade or more. Further, all the members of the Afeti ‘Technical Committee’ and the Committee on Education could not be regarded as policy specialists with policy core beliefs who belong to a strong advocacy coalition where there is “the tendency for actors to view their opponents as, less trustworthy, more evil, and more powerful than they probably are” (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 194). Given the absence of these conditions among advocacy coalitions involved in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, the study turned to the MSF which was found to be suitable.

Table 1: Comparison of Three Theories of Policy Change

Comparison of Policy-Change Theories on Eight Dimensions of Interest			
Dimensions	Theories		
	<i>Multiple streams</i>	<i>Punctuated-equilibrium</i>	<i>Policy innovation and diffusion</i>
<i>Pioneering Work</i>	Kingdon (1984, 1995, 2011)	Baumgartner & Jones (1991, 1993); True, Jones, & Baumgartner (1999)	Walker (1969); Gray (1973); Berry & Berry (1990, 1992)
<i>Original unit of analysis</i>	U.S. national government	U.S. federal government	American states
<i>Theoretical origins</i>	Organizational studies; political science	Evolutionary biology; political science	Rural sociology; anthropology; communication theory; organizational studies; political science.
<i>Policy stage of primary focus</i>	Agenda-setting	Agenda-setting and policy enactment	Policy enactment
<i>Central premise or hypothesis</i>	Agenda change is a product of the convergence of only semi-related streams of problems, solutions, and politics at propitious moments in time.	Policy change is a product of intersecting policy venues and images, which challenge existing monopolies before giving rise to new ones.	Policy adoption is a product of certain factors internal to states (e.g., social, economic, and political conditions) in combination with competitive or emulative pressures between and among states.
<i>Major constructs or concepts</i>	Governmental garbage cans; independent streams; loose coupling; policy windows; policy entrepreneurs	Policy images, policy venues; monopolies; negative feedback; policy stasis; policy punctuation.	American states as a policy subsystem; communication networks; S-curve of policy adoption; intrastate policy determinants; interstate competition and emulation; innovation leaders and laggards
<i>Dominant methodological tradition</i>	Case studies building on elite interviews and archival data	Content analysis of archival data combined with trend analysis using various statistical techniques	Event history analysis
<i>Applications to education policymaking</i>	McLendon (2003a); Mills (2007); Larson (2004); McDermott (2005); Stout & Stevens (2000)	Sims & Miskel; Orr-Bement (2002); Robinson (2004)	Mintrom (1997); Mintrom & Vergari (1998); Cohen-Vogel et al. (2005); Doyle (2006); McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton (2006)

Source: McLendon and Cohen-Vogel (2008, p. 35)



2.3 The Multiple Streams Framework

The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) was developed by Kingdon (1984/2011) from the garbage can model innovated by Cohen, March, & Olsen (1972) in which organizational choice is conceived as a process of “organized anarchy”. In the garbage can model, organizational choice does not arise from an organized situation where there are clear set of procedures for resolving well-defined problems and conflicts through bargaining in which “participants arrive at an interpretation of what they are doing and what they have done while in the process of doing it” (Cohen et al. 1972, p. 2). In contrast, organizational choice resembles more of “organized anarchy” where “an organization is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work” (Cohen et al. 1972, p. 2). Kingdon (2011, p. 86) explains that the logical structure of the garbage can model is that (i) there exist four separate streams of problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities that flow through the organizational system, and “outcomes heavily dependent on the coupling of the streams – couplings of solutions to problems; interactions among participants; the fortuitous or purposeful absence of solutions, problems, or participants – in the choices (the garbage cans) that must be made.” Kingdon (1984/2011) adapted the garbage can model to develop the MSF with a similar logic of decision-making at the level of the government where the success of agenda setting and policy making in the political system are the outcomes of the coupling of three separate streams: problems stream, policy stream, and political stream.

Kingdon (2011, p. 86) acknowledged that the general logic of organized anarchy in organizational decision-making is similar in the two models. In contrast to the unpredictable,

fortuitous, and anarchic coupling of the streams to produce an outcome in the garbage can model, Kingdon emphasized that in the MSF, “We will find our emphasis being placed more on the "organized" than on the "anarchy," as we discover structures and patterns in the processes.” In the “organized” manner organizational decision-making and choice depicted by Kingdon (2011, p. 199) in the MSF, “participants build consensus by bargaining-trading provisions for support, adding elected officials to coalitions by giving them concessions that they demand, or compromising from ideal positions that will gain wider acceptance”. Choice in the MSF is therefore less anarchic compared to the garbage can model.

The main argument of Kingdon’s MSF is that the success of the policy making processes of agenda-setting, the development of policy alternatives, and policy adoption in the political system is the outcome of advocacy and negotiations by ‘policy entrepreneurs’ who “In the pursuit of their own goals, they perform the function for the system of coupling solutions to problems, problems to political forces, and political forces to proposals” (Kingdon 2011, p. 205). The initial focus of MSF was to explain agenda setting and change in the US federal government (Kingdon, 1984), but it has been extended to explain the entire policy making process. Kingdon (2011, p. 221) argues in his updated work, “Thus it seems that we have quite a useful general theory of agenda setting, alternative specification, and policy making.” Scholars have noted that the MSF is one of the most popular and highly cited theories of public policy change in the literature (Cohen-Vogel & McLendon, 2008; Palmer, 2014; Herweg et al. 2015; Zahariadis, 2016). The nature of the three streams and how they become coupled to ensure agenda setting and policy adoption are described and explained below.

2.3.1 The Political Stream

The political stream is the most important independent stream within which policy proposals are moved from the governmental agenda to the decision agenda. It is also the stream within which legislative adoption of policy proposals takes place (Kingdon, 2011). However, the specific nature of the political stream has been a matter of debate among scholars of the MSF in spite of earlier attempts made by Kingdon (2011, p. 145) to “be clear” in the definition of the word “political”. Kingdon defined the word ‘political’ in ‘political stream’ by emphasizing its meaning in the world of practitioners of the art of politics by actors within and around government. Kingdon (2011, p. 145) defined the word ‘political’ as follows:

When I use the word "political" in this context, I use the word in its colloquial Washington sense. Political science defines "political" very broadly, including just about any activity related to the authoritative allocation of values, or to the distribution of benefits and costs. "Political" factors in such parlance are electoral, partisan, or pressure group factors. I employ this more narrow usage here.”

Kingdon went on to define the political stream as “composed of such things as public mood, pressure group campaigns, election results, partisan or ideological distributions in Congress and changes of administration” (Kingdon 2011, p. 145). According to Kingdon (2011, p. 146) the idea of ‘public mood’ “goes by different names – the national mood, the climate in the country, changes in public opinion, or broad social movements. But common to all of these labels is the notion that a rather large number of people out in the country are thinking along certain common lines, that this national mood changes from one time to another in

discernible ways, and that these changes in mood or climate have important impacts on policy agendas and policy outcomes.” Kingdon preferred the label ‘the national mood’.

Herweg et al (2015, p. 438) have remarked that “Kingdon was rather imprecise in sorting out the interactions between the different agents in the political stream;” and, “the national mood is notoriously difficult to pin down empirically.” Zahariadis (1995) advised that when applying the MSF to parliamentary democracies, analysts should consider collapsing the variables of the national mood, interest groups, and the government into the single category of party politics due to the dominant position of political parties in parliamentary systems.

Herweg et al (2015) commented that the suggestion to collapse the variables in the political streams into the single category of party politics “is not entirely convincing” because ‘programmatic parties’ in the parliamentary systems makes it difficult to treat the political stream and the policy stream as independent processes in Kingdon’s original scheme of the MSF. Herweg et al (2015, p. 438) also pointed out that “empirical evidence does seem to suggest that interest groups influence agenda-setting in parliamentary systems quite substantially.” In their conceptual refinement of the nature of the political stream, Herweg et al (2015, pp. 438-439) recommended, “we suggest an alternative way of thinking about the political stream. Just like Zahariadis, we put political parties at the centre of the political stream in parliamentary systems. In contrast to Zahariadis, however, we keep the other elements of the political stream and relate them to the behaviour of parties.” The suggestion does not apply to Ghana’s mixed presidential-parliamentary system of democracy where, unlike parliamentary systems, the office of the president is separate from the political party. Moreover, putting political parties at the centre of the political stream will not make it

possible for scholars to use the MSF to understand the public policy making process in military authoritarian countries where political parties are banned.

This study considers the view of Kingdon (2011, p. 221) that the MSF is “a useful general theory of agenda setting, alternative specification, and policy making.” This implies that the conceptualization of the political stream should consider democratic and authoritarian governments in countries. This study therefore adapts the concepts of the political stream in a way that follows the suggestion of Kingdon that emphasis must be “placed more on the ‘organized’ than on the ‘anarchy,’ as we discover structures and patterns in the processes” (Kingdon 2011, p. 86). Using ideas from the literature on ‘political settlements’ (Khan, 2010, 2018; Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Abdulai & Hickey, 2016), the study conceptualizes the political stream as a social order of political governance characterized by the distribution of state authority between the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the bureaucratic administration, and actors outside the government in the determination of societal values concerning the production, distribution, and use of resources. The definition suggests four dimensions of analysis to understand the authoritative determination of societal values; namely, (i) the bases of state authority held by the actors, (ii) the degree of state authority held by the actors, (iii) the values of the actors towards an issue for authoritative determination, and (iv) the resources of the actors to influence the authoritative determination of an issue.

There are different structures and patterns of political streams flowing in developed and developing countries. Some of the political streams are authoritarian political streams and some are democratic political streams. There are diverse types or patterns of authoritarian

political stream as much as there are varieties of democratic political streams (Levitsky, 1999). The study adapts the typology of political settlements identified by Khan (2010) in developed and developing countries. Khan (2018, pp. 1-2) defines “political settlements as social orders characterized by distributions of organizational power that together with specific formal and informal institutions effectively achieve at least the minimum requirements of political and economic sustainability for that society.” According to Khan (2010, p. 20), “At the highest level, a political settlement is a description of the ‘social order’ that describes how a society solves the problem of violence and achieves a minimum level of political stability and economic performance for it to operate as a society.” We shall see that after the NDC government had passed the Technical Universities Act, Act 922 in 2016, the NPP government amended the Act after winning power in 2017 to reduce the powers of the Governing Councils of Technical Universities to autonomously enter into financial agreements with other entities. The NPP government argued that the autonomy of the Governing Councils in Act 922 would not ensure Ghana’s economic viability. The NPP government amended the Act to ensure that the Technical Universities are sustainable in terms of financial viability, and, ultimately, ensure the government’s political viability.

Khan (2010) argues that the western developed countries are generally characterized by diverse forms of ‘capitalist political settlements’ whiles developing countries are generally characterized by various forms of clientelist political settlements. Clientelist political settlements are based on patron-client networks in which the ruling elites and competing groups use the distribution of benefits to their clients to ensure the continued support of the clients towards the survival of the ruling elites in office. According to Khan (2010, p. 56),

“While all developing countries have clientelist political settlements, these settlements are substantially different across countries, and change over time within a country, while retaining the broad characteristics of a clientelist settlement.” Abdulai and Hickey (2016, p. 50) explain that the key focus of clientelist political settlements “is on how the balance of power between social groups helps ensure that the institutional arrangements that emerge function primarily to distribute goods and status to powerful groups, without the agreement of whom the underlying arrangements would break down.” Khan (2010) identified four main types of clientelist political settlements in developing countries as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Typology of Political Settlements in Developing Countries

		HORIZONTAL DISTRIBUTION OF POWER: EXCLUDED FACTIONS	
		Weak	Strong
VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POWER: LOWER LEVEL FACTIONS	Weak	<p>POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTAL COALITION</p> <p>Low opposition from excluded factions gives ruling coalition stability and long-time horizon. Limited power of lower-level factional supporters ensures high enforcement capability.</p>	<p>AUTHORITARIAN COALITION</p> <p>Initial enforcement capabilities likely to be strong as long as lower levels remain weak, but strong excluded factions mean they are unlikely to remain weak as excluded factions can offer them better terms. Threat of violent overthrow of regime.</p>
	Strong	<p>DOMINANT PARTY</p> <p>Enforcement capabilities become weaker as lower-level factions get stronger or more fragmented. Excluded factions also become stronger if dissatisfied supporters start leaving.</p>	<p>COMPETITIVE CLIENTELISM</p> <p>Characterized by competition between multiple strong factions. Stability can be achieved only with credible mechanisms for cycling of factions in power. Low enforcement capabilities in most cases and short time horizons.</p>

Source: Khan (2010, p. 64)

The political stream in Ghana has been described as competitive clientelism characterized by strong competition between two main political parties that have strong internal factions. Ghana's current fourth republic constitutional democratic governance was established in 1992. Presidential and Parliamentary elections are held every four years with the first election occurring in 1992. Between 1992 and 2020, only the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have won political power. The NDC government started the fourth republic and lost power to the NPP in the 2000 elections. The NPP also governed for two terms and lost power to the NDC in 2008. The NDC governed for two terms and lost power to the NPP in 2016. The NPP has just won its second term of office in the December 2020 elections. The surprising outcome of the 2020 elections is that the two

parties have almost equal number of seats in the parliament. Table 2 below shows the strengths of the NDC governments and NPP governments in parliament since 1992.

Table 2: Parliamentary Seats of NPP and NDC Since 1992

Elections	NDC Seats		NPP Seats	
	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Percentage
1992	189/200	94.5%	0/200 (Boycotted)	0%
1996	133/200	66.5%	61/200	30.5%
2000	91/200	45.5%	100/200	50%
2004	94/230	40.9%	128/230	55.7%
2008	116/230	50.4%	107/230	46.5%
2012	148/275	53.8%	122/275	44.4%
2016	104/275	37.8%	169/275	61.5%

Table 2 shows that political parties excluded from Ghana's winner-takes-all system of government are very strong. The political system is characterized by short terms of rule between the NPP and NDC. Each party has sought to use the distribution of benefits to clients to win votes and ensure their survival in office. It was in the context of this competitive-clientelist political stream that the NDC government made the election campaign promise in 2012 to convert polytechnics to technical universities. From Table 2, after the NDC won the 2012 elections, the NDC government had a majority of MPs (53.8%) to support the passage of the Technical Universities Bill into an Act for the conversion of the Polytechnics to Technical Universities. Similarly, after the NPP won the 2016 elections, the NPP Government had a majority of MPs (61.5%) to support the passage of the Bill to convert the remaining four polytechnics to technical universities. Ruling government in Ghana exercise strong control over their MPs in parliamentary proceedings.

We shall see that the two parties did not rely on the strength of their parliamentary majorities and ideological positions to convert polytechnics to technical universities. Each ruling government used negotiations with the MPs of the opposition party to influence the passage of the Bill converting polytechnics into technical universities. The coalitions of majority party MPs and minority party MPs did not have significant goal conflicts over the policy proposals. Some of the polytechnics were located in constituencies won by the NDC and other polytechnics were located in constituencies won by the NPP. The cooperative behavior of the parties is due to the fact that the governments and MPs viewed the process of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities as one of competitive-clientelist politics: No party wanted to be seen as obstructing the process of distributing benefits to their clientelist voters. Conceptualizing the political stream in terms of political settlements over the determination of values for a society appears to be more useful for explaining the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities (Hickey & Hossain, 2019).

2.3.2 The Problems stream

One of the central insights of the MSF is that problems are not objective facts that a government addresses in a quasi-automatic manner. The question therefore is what makes a problem relevant to receive the attention of government? Herweg et al (2015, pp. 436-437) put the question this way: “When exactly is a problem relevant enough to open a policy window – that is, under what further conditions can policy-entrepreneurs convince policy makers that a problem must be addressed?” The dynamics of political definition of a problem have been studied widely by policy scholars (Baumgartner, Jones, & True, 1998; Nelson 1984; Rein & Schön, 1994; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994; Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Selwyn, 2014).

Kingdon (2011) points out that “There is a difference between a condition and a problem.” People live with all kinds of conditions every day that they do not define as a problem; and, sometimes a condition that had existed for long is suddenly seen as a problem. Therefore, it is the need to first clarify what is meant by a problem. Kingdon (2011, p. 198) defined a problem as follows: “Conditions come to be defined as problems, and have a better chance of rising on the agenda, when we come to believe that we should do something to change them.” Kingdon stated that conditions may be defined as problems in one of three ways: “First, conditions that violate important values are transformed into problems. Second, conditions become problems by comparison with other countries or other relevant units. Third, classifying a condition into one category rather than another may define it as one kind of problem or another” (ibid). A problem is defined by actors in a comparative manner as a situation that depart from desired values.

Defining a problem as a condition that violate important values in a society is a political act that requires the combination of social acuity with skills in conflict management and negotiation (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011; Heifetz & Heifetz, 1994). What is defined as a problem by one person may not be a problem to another person. Problems are always self-evident: “They need a little push to get the attention of people in and around government. That push is sometimes provided by a focusing event like a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem, a powerful symbol that catches on, or the personal experience of a policy maker.” Governments always attend to a long list of problems from diverse actors who have different forms of power.

The intricacies of a problem are very important if the problem is to be put on the agenda of government for the necessary solution: “Problem recognition is critical to agenda setting” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 198). According to Kingdon (2011, p. 104), “Failure to solve or even address a problem, as well as success, may result in its demise as a prominent agenda item. It takes time, effort, mobilization of many actors, and the expenditure of political resources to keep an item prominent on the agenda.” The study introduces the concept of problem entrepreneurs as actors who construct and push problems to policy makers.

What are the conditions that must be met for problem entrepreneurs to succeed in pushing a problem to the agenda of government? For problem entrepreneurs to succeed, Herweg et al. (2015) emphasize that the problem must be seen by government as capable of undermining their hold on political power. Herweg et al. (2015, p. 437) argues that “Whenever a policy maker perceives that his or her re-election is in danger due to a particular condition, they will perceive that condition as a relevant problem.” The resulting hypothesis is that “The more a condition puts the policy makers’ re-election at risk, the more likely it is to open a policy window in the problem stream” (Herweg et al. 2015, p. 437). We shall see that the problems affecting the polytechnics were recognized by government during the year of general election, and the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities as a solution to the problems affecting polytechnic education were usually rushed during election years.

In strong multi-party democratic systems, the hypothesis that policy makers are more likely to attend to vote-winning problems suggests that analysts should pay attention to “core issues

in party competition” (Herweg et al. 2015, p. 437): “The reasoning behind this is that core issues are those that voters regularly care about – among them usually the state of the economy, pensions and the like; policy makers will pay relatively more attention to these issues because they are more important for their re-election than non-core issues” (ibid). Particularly from 2012, the core issue of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was in party competition among the two major political parties that have governed Ghana under the fourth republic – the NDC and NPP. The conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was an issue that tens of thousands of polytechnic students care about – and most of the polytechnic students were potential voters. Problem entrepreneurs whose problems are seen to undermine the survival of a government are usually met by policy entrepreneurs who couple the problems to solutions and attempts to enlist political entrepreneurs for governmental agenda setting and policy decision making.

2.3.3 The Policy Stream

The policy stream refers to what Kingdon (2011, p. 200) calls “the policy primeval soup” in which many ideas float around, bumping into one another, encountering new ideas, and forming combinations and recombinations.” Actors who are affected by a problem may generate a policy proposal as solution. Policy proposals to problems may also be generated by professional think tanks. Finally, policy proposals may also be generated by political entrepreneurs in pursuit of their political interest. Kingdon notes that “The origins of policy may be a bit obscure, hard to predict and hard to understand or to structure” (ibid). Nonetheless, it is important to examine the origins of a policy to understand how the policy came to be coupled to the problem stream and the political stream.

The generation of policy alternatives to a problem is best seen as a political process in which policy alternatives, and the choice of a proposed policy, is contested by actors with different values and forms of power. Kingdon (2011, pp. 200-201) notes both the technical and political nature of policy generation in the following statements:

While the origins are somewhat haphazard, the selection is not. Through the imposition of criteria by which some ideas are selected out for survival while others are discarded, order is developed from chaos, pattern from randomness. These criteria include technical feasibility, congruence with the values of community members, and the anticipation of future constraints, including a budget constraint, public acceptability, and politicians' receptivity. ...In the process of consideration in the policy community, ideas themselves are important.

We shall see that Governments in Ghana usually created 'technical committees' of policy experts to generate policy proposals for solving pressing problems. In 2013, the NDC government created 'The Technical Committee on the Conversion of the polytechnics in Ghana to technical universities' to generate policy proposals for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities (MoE, 2014). The factors that enabled this 'Technical Committee' to get their policy proposals accepted shall be discussed later.

Under what conditions are policy proposals likely to be put on the government agenda, receive decisions, and get implemented? In countries developing and advanced with competitive democracies, policy proposals that were included in an election manifesto, or

perceived to significantly enhance the chances of re-election, are more likely to be accepted by the governing party as a viable policy alternative. Kingdon (2011, p. 175) argued that “when a window opens because a problem is pressing, the alternatives generated as solutions to the problem fare better if they also meet the tests of political acceptability.” Open policy windows include general elections, new budget cycles, and change of government. Election seasons and changes in government are ‘political windows’ frequently used by policy entrepreneurs to successfully push through agenda setting and policy decisions.

Policy proposals that “meet with administration opposition tend to be dropped, even though they might be perfectly logical solutions to the problem at hand” (Kingdon 2011, p. 175). Herweg et al (2015, p. 441) also stated that “parties cannot be ignored in the policy stream. As a consequence, we allow for parties, or their policy experts, to take part in the development and softening-up of policy ideas within a policy community, or to develop their own ideas independently.” The adoption of a policy proposal requires not only technical expertise but also the possession of entrepreneurial skills and access to actors with political power in the political stream. How policy proposals come to be coupled to the problems stream and the political stream during agenda setting and policy decision making is the work of policy entrepreneurs. The role of policy entrepreneurs in pushing policy proposals and coupling the streams is discussed next.

2.3.4 Policy Entrepreneurs and the Coupling of the Three Streams

The role of policy entrepreneurs is central to the coupling of the MSF’s three streams. Policy entrepreneurs, according to Kingdon (2011, p. 179), are “advocates who are willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position in return for

anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive, or solidary benefits.” Kingdon (2011) and Herweg et al (2015) have emphasized that the concept of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ does not apply to only technical experts outside the government. Kingdon (2011, p. 16) explained, “The entrepreneurs are found in many locations. No single formal position or even informal place in the political system has a monopoly on them. For one case study, the key entrepreneur might be a cabinet secretary; for another, a senator or member of the House; for others, a lobbyist, academic, Washington lawyer, or career bureaucrat.” Policy entrepreneurship is not the preserve of ‘pure technical policy experts’ located in the administration domain of the politics-administration dichotomy debate.

Cairney and Zahariadis (2016, p. 101), however, remarked that “The idea of ‘policy entrepreneur’ is vague throughout the policy literature, often referring to exceptional individuals that, by definition, do not share common properties.” For the purpose of this study, the concept of policy entrepreneurs refers to a “coalition” of actors from the three streams (Kingdon, 2011, p. 203) who support a particular policy proposal as a solution to a particular problem. The coalition of policy entrepreneurs may be inclusive of actors from the ‘problems stream’ who have hooked their particular problems to a proposed solution; actors from the ‘policy stream’ who claim that their policy proposal is the solution to a pressing problem; and, actors from the ‘political stream’ who are receptive to using a proposed policy to solve their own pressing political problems in pursuit of their own interests to win political power. Kingdon (2011, p. 182) states that,

During the pursuit of their personal purposes, entrepreneurs perform the function for the system of coupling the previously separate streams. They hook solutions to

problems, proposals to political momentum, and political events to policy problems. If a policy entrepreneur is attaching a proposal to a change in the political stream, for example, a problem is also found for which the proposal is a solution, thus linking problem, policy, and politics. Or if a solution is attached to a prominent problem, the entrepreneur also attempts to enlist political allies, again joining the three streams.

The MSF explains how policy entrepreneurs form and sustain a coalition of actors having diverse problems who are hooked to a proposed solution. The proposed solution is able to simultaneously solve the unique problems of each actor within the coalition of policy entrepreneurs. Kingdon (2011, p. 201) explains that policy entrepreneurs can only succeed if they are able to ensure that,

“A complete linkage combines all three streams – problems, policies, and politics – into a single package. Advocates of a new policy initiative not only take advantage of politically propitious moments but also claim that their proposal is a solution to a pressing problem. Likewise, entrepreneurs concerned about a particular problem search for solutions in the policy stream to couple to their problem, then try to take advantage of political receptivity at certain points in time to push the package of problem and solution” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 201).

Sabatier and Weible (2007, p. 197) had noted that “The recent empirical research still does not explain how coalitions overcome the free-rider problem of collective action to form and maintain coalition membership over time.” The role of policy entrepreneurs suggests that

the proposed solution to a problem must simultaneously help the actors in the three streams to solve their own unique problems. Thus, there will be no free riding among the policy entrepreneurs in pursuit of collective action. It seems that the MSF provides some explanation of how coalitions overcome the free-rider problem of collective action through bargaining and the alignment of incentives to policy proposals.

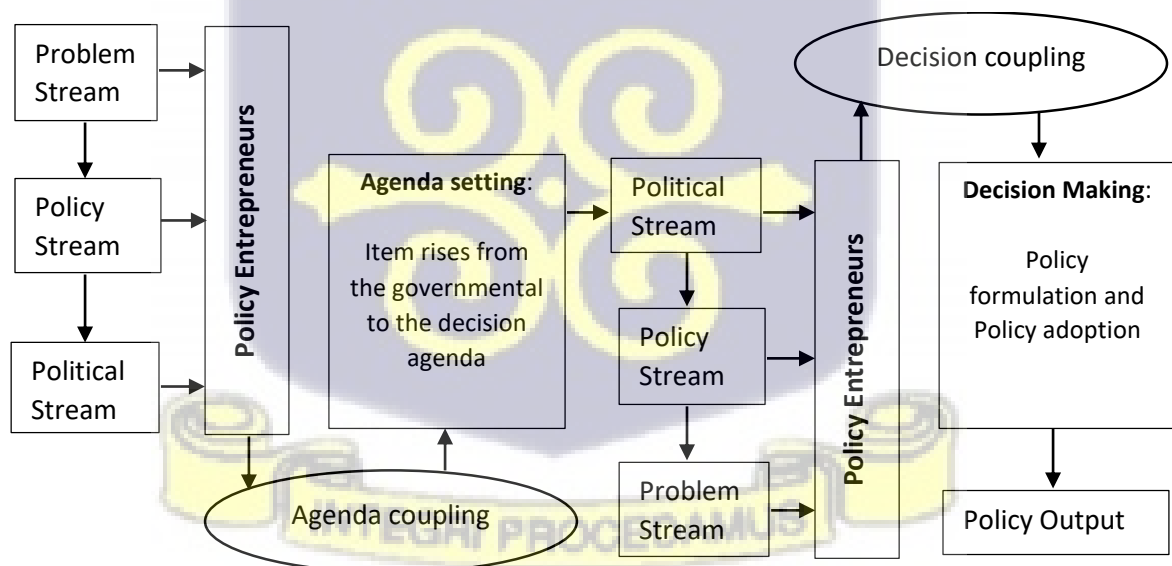
The coalition of policy entrepreneurs may be inclusive of actors from the three streams. Some scholars have therefore adapted the concept of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ by using the concept of ‘collective entrepreneurship’ to clearly differentiate the concept from the idea of the policy stream (Roberts & King, 1991; Herweg et al. 2015). A policy entrepreneur who is a Member of Parliament may be incentivized by the prospects of pushing a proposed policy to solve their unique problem of how to win votes to remain in political power. An elected president may push a proposed policy to gain the support of citizens to strengthen the legitimacy of their government. Some policy entrepreneurs may have also joined the coalition to push a policy proposal in order to obtain financial benefits for economic survival.

The basic idea of the MSF is that a proposed solution advocated by policy entrepreneurs is what couples or coordinates the problems, policy, and political streams for the success of public policy making (Kingdon, 1984, 2011; Zahariadis, 2003; Herweg et al. 2015). Herweg et al. (2015, p. 443) emphasizes, “The coupling process lies at the heart of the MSF as it is the occurrence of a successful coupling that leads to an agenda change.” For a proposed policy to receive legislative adoption there must be the need for the coupling of the three streams at every stage of the policy-making process – at the agenda setting stage, the policy

formulation stage, and the policy adoption stage. Every stage of the policy making process will require the coupling of the three streams by a policy entrepreneur to achieve success.

Herweg et al (2015, p. 201) combines the policy formulation and policy adoption stages into a single ‘decision-making stage’; and, they argue that the movement of a policy proposal from the agenda setting stage to the decision-making stage requires “two coupling processes, one for each policy stage. The first coupling process comprises the agenda-setting (hereafter referred to as ‘agenda coupling’) ...The second coupling process focuses on the decision-making stage – more precisely, on bargaining about the concrete design of the policy proposal (hereafter referred to as ‘decision coupling’).” The model of ‘double coupling’ illustrated in Figure 2 below is accepted and used in this study.

Figure 2: A modified Multiples Streams Framework



Source: Based on Herweg et al. (2015, p. 445)

In Figure 2, following the argument of Kingdon (1984, 2011), policy entrepreneurs perform the function for the system of coupling the previously separate streams “into a single package” of agenda coupling to advocate for governmental agenda setting. After government has made a positive decision on the proposed policies, political entrepreneurs in the political stream are assigned the task of ensuring legislative policy decision-making. The political entrepreneurs create a group of policy experts to generate technically feasible, politically acceptable, and economically sustainable policy proposals for government. The group of policy experts created by political entrepreneurs in the government works closely with the actors in the problem stream to formulate acceptable policy proposals. This results in the ‘decision coupling’ of actors from the three streams into a coalition of policy entrepreneurs to push for legislative and/or executive adoption policy decision making. Thus, the complete linkage of all the three streams into agenda coupling and decision coupling depends on persuasion, bargaining, and negotiation skills of policy entrepreneurs. Herweg et al (2015, pp. 441-442) identified two approaches through which governments in democratic contexts accepts policy proposals for agenda decision and policy adoption:

“Parties, or their policy experts, influence the development of policy ideas in two ways: (1) they may work out proposals themselves in specialised groups of MPs and/or party activists whereby the development of a proposal takes place outside the larger policy community and it is ready for a decision when the party working group comes to an agreement; or (2) they take up ideas from outside experts, bureaucrats,

interest groups or policy communities not directly linked to party politics and present their own proposals and discuss and critique the ideas of others.”

In the context of Ghana, we shall see that the development of policy ideas for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities involved the two ways identified by Herweg et al. (2015). The development of the policy ideas was a long process that involved a Technical Committee made up of polytechnic education experts, bureaucrats (at the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Tertiary Education), and a specialised group of MPs who constituted the Committee on Education in Parliament. MPs who did not belong to any of these groups also made contributions to the formulation of the policy during the ‘Consideration Stage’ of the Bill in parliament. The study tests the hypothesis that,

Policy adoption is more likely, if (a) the proposal is put forward by political entrepreneurs who hold an elected leadership position in government; (b) the proposal was put forward by a governing party or coalition that is not constrained by other veto actors; (c) different viable alternatives embraced by different parties can be combined in one package; and (d) the problem that the policy is supposed to solve is salient among the voters. (Herweg et al. 2015, p. 446)

Beyond agenda setting, the process of policy development must continue to receive the support of policy entrepreneurs from the three streams to ensure the success of policy formulation and policy adoption. After agenda setting, the process of policy making becomes more complex as political contestations over the policy proposal intensify and new actors

attempt to join each stream. New actors may join any of the three streams, especially after a change of government. New actors may also join the coalition of policy entrepreneurs after the agenda setting stage to become associated with a moving success story (Kingdon, 2011). However, the remaining processes of policy making will only be successful if the three streams are coupled by policy entrepreneurs from within and outside the government.

Methodologically, the MSF is praised for its utilization of eclectic and rigorous research methods in trying to understand ambiguous and ill formed phenomena as ones involving agenda change (Cohen-Vogel & McLendon, 2008). Kingdon received praise for his use of innovative panel interviews, policy histories, and case studies, and a sophisticated content-coding system for data analysis (Young, Shepley, & Song, 2010).

In spite of the many strengths of the MSF, some scholars have identified limitations to the explanations MSF can provide to policy makers (Sabatier, 1998; Chow, 2014). Sabatier (1999) argues against independence of the three streams and asked whether the streams are really independent. Robinson and Eller (2010) opine that it would be difficult to ensure such an independence of the streams due to the ever-changing and ambiguous nature of reality. On reflection, Kingdon (2011) seems to concede that it is useful to portray the streams as independent processes for analytical purposes, but in practice the problems and policy streams are sometimes connected as “people often do in fact try to ‘solve problems’,” while some policy experts are “sometimes joined” to the political stream. Kingdon (2011, p. 229) argues that although he still finds it useful to portray the three streams as independent of one another, “these are not completely hard-and-fast-distinctions. Politicians often traffic in the

world of ideas and become immersed in policy detail; and policy specialists often plan campaign and legislative strategy along with the politicians.” He argued that the most critical event is the need for researchers “to understand how independent streams become joined” (Kingdon 2011, p. 229). This study examines how actors in the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream came together to successfully convert the ten polytechnics to technical universities under two different governments.

Despite the above limitations of the MSF, it is argued that the MSF helped to provide answers to the research questions. The elements of the MSF correspond to the processes identified in the polytechnics conversion process. The framework was able to explain how the conversion occurred through the coupling of the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream relevant to policy-making in the polytechnic education sector. Scholars have pointed to the MSF as helping to illumine the systems perspective wrought by Easton (1965), but which was mostly criticized for its ‘black box’ approach to understanding policy. According to some scholars, the MSF attempts to identify causal linkages by providing an answer to the lingering question of how policy change occurs (Zahariadis, 1999). The MSF has the strength of explaining policy outputs at every stage of the policy change process.

2.3.5 Empirical Applications of the Multiple Streams Framework

In recent times, a number of studies have been conducted in order to examine the ability of the MSF to explain policy making and change at both the national and the local levels (Chow, 2014). Notable areas of studies are health care policy, environmental policy, and national defense policy (Cooper, Cibulka, & Fusarelli, 2008; Durant & Diehl, 1989; Kamieniecki 2000; Kaufert, 2000; Oliver, 1991). The framework has also been applied systematically on

studies of policy development across nations (Ackrill & Kay, 2011; Exadaktylos & Zahariadis, 2012; Pollack, 1997).

Many researchers have used the MSF in examining different phenomena of policymaking in the education sector, from the lower level of kindergarten to the higher level of tertiary education (Booth, Schauman, Konrad, Morley, Larsen, & Burges, 2004; Leslie & Berdahl, 2008; McDermott, 2007; McLendon, 2003; Mills, 2007; Ness, 2010; O'Hearn, Landau, & Hoffman, 2005; Portz, 1996). It is important to add that the case study method has usually been used on studies that focused on higher education (Booth et al. 2004; Leslie & Berdahl, 2008; McDermott, 2007; McLendon, 2003).

A case study using the MSF to investigate “multiple streams in EU policy-making: the case of the 2005 sugar reform” was conducted by Ackrill and Kay (2011, p. 80). The study adapted the MSF to analyse the 2005 EU sugar policy reform which occurred after several reforms. Ackrill and Kay (2011) found that pressure for the sugar reform came from several distinct areas relating to issues of ‘duty-free quota-free access to the EU,’ ‘the negative World Trading Organization (WTO) dispute ruling,’ and the practice of cutting support given to African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries since 1992. Ackrill and Kay (2011, p. 86) found that the problems “left an unreformed, trade distorting and protectionist sugar regime looking increasingly anachronistic”. The study concluded that a full understanding of EU sugar reform must integrate all sources of reform pressures. In other words, examining the sources of the problems stream is important for understanding reform processes and outcomes.

Cairney (2007) used the MSF to examine the changing agendas on smoking-related issues in Scotland. He investigated the various strategies adopted by groups and governments to suppress discussion of the prohibition of smoking in public places. The study emphasized the emergence of “new politics” and the ability of groups to influence smoking legislation “as a logical progression from early ministerial commitments” (Cairney, 2007, p. 73). Cairney (2007, p. 86) argued that the MSF is useful in identifying the ‘micro-political’ explanations underpinning policy change which is often lost in broader comparative studies.

Boasiako and Asare (2015) studied the two cases of education policy reforms in Ghana under different governments using the MSF as the theoretical lens. The first policy reform related to Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) under President Jerry John Rawlings of NDC in 1996. The second reform policy was made under President Agyekum Kufour of NPP in 2002/2004. Kufour’s reform was made with the vision to meeting the challenges of education in the 21st century (MoE, 2014). Boasiako and Asare sought to discover “how different factors or streams collectively influence the adoption of certain policies.” (2015, p. 1). Their study concluded that “far more than mere pursuit of party manifesto promises, broad problem, policy and political occurrences conspired to call forth the reforms” (Boasiako & Asare, 2015, p. 13). The study confirmed the theoretical assumptions made by Kingdon (2011) that despite the fact that the MSF originated from the American democratic system to explain agenda setting, “the MSF finds utility in the Ghanaian context as well, making its postulations generalizable” (Boasiako & Asare, 2015, p. 7).

The empirical literature seems to affirm the view of Herweg et al. (2015, p. 435) that “most applications only use the framework for a structured description of processes, or employ individual concepts of the framework, like ‘policy windows’ or ‘policy-entrepreneurs’, without applying the framework as a whole.” Many researchers do not examine the core hypothesis of the MSF that the coupling of the three streams by policy entrepreneurs is critical for policy change. Coupling is a function of the nature of the policy window and the skills and resources of the policy entrepreneur. This study will be among the rare empirical works that systematically applies the MSF to policy change in a developing country.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The study reviewed two main theories of policy change, namely, Advocacy Coalitions Framework (ACF) and the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF). The study adopted the MSF over the ACF for its ability to provide answers to the research questions. Again, the problem of the polytechnic conversion is not “wicked” ones full of conflict as ACF underscores. The ACF model is well-suited to explain the escalation and continuation of policy conflict. Given the absence of these conditions among advocacy coalitions involved in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, the study turned to the MSF which was found to be suitable.

The chapter took a closer look at the various theoretical arguments and discovered that the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was an act of policy change that resulted from the coupling of separate actors pushing problems, policy proposals, and

political interests. The coupling of these three streams occurred through the intervention of policy entrepreneurs created by political entrepreneurs in the political stream.

The chapter again underscored the conditions that warrant the attention of government of policy proposals. The study found out that in both developed and developing countries, policy proposals that were included in an election manifesto, or perceived to significantly enhance the chances of re-election, are more likely to be accepted by the governing party as a viable policy alternative. The empirical literature reviewed seems to affirm the view of Herweg et al. (2015) that scholars only employ individual concepts of the framework, without applying the framework as a whole.



CHAPTER 3

THE EVOLUTION OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

3.0 Introduction

This section concentrates on the evolution of the Technical Universities in Ghana. It shows that the evolution of the technical universities through various reforms in the polytechnic education system since the 1960s was the result of the coupling of the political stream of government and the policy stream of experts constituted into committees to advise governments. Section 3.1 begins with an overview of the political history and geography of Ghana. Section 3.2 looks at the historical development of polytechnic education in Ghana. Section 3.3 presents polytechnic education reform under the fourth republic. Section 3.4 discusses the problems of polytechnic education resulting in the creation of the technical universities. Section 3.5 discusses the differences between Technical University and the Traditional Universities. Section 3.6 concludes the chapter with a summary of the discussion.

3.1 Overview of Ghana

Ghana, which is the site of this study, is an independent country located on the west coast of Africa, surrounded on the west by the republic of Cote d'Ivoire, to the east by Togo, to the north by Burkina Faso and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana as a republican state gained independence from the British on 6th March 1957 and gained the republican status on 1st July, 1960. The Independence Day is celebrated as a statutory holiday to commemorate the freedom from Britain. English is the official language for government business and medium of instruction from Basic School Class three (3) up to the university. However, there are nine (9) indigenous languages that are written, taught, and learnt in schools. Ghana's

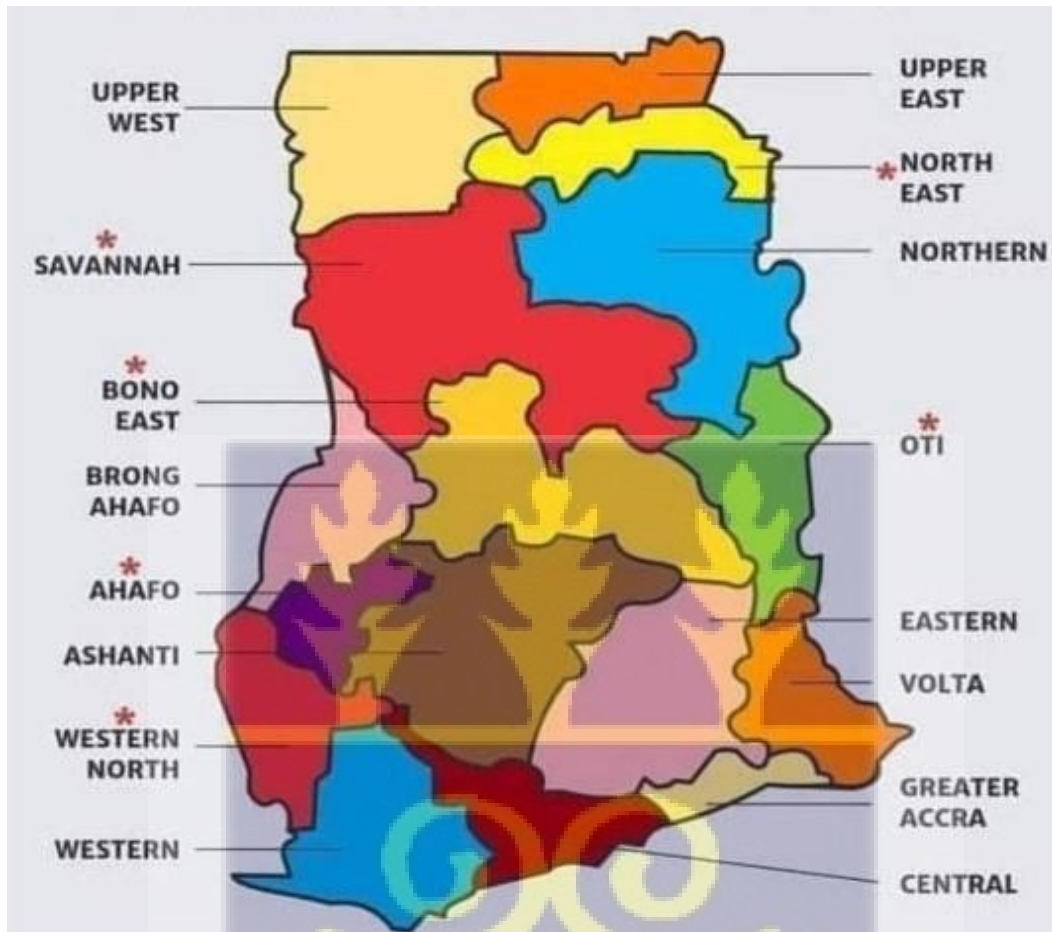
literature rate was reported to have moved from 57.9% in the year 2000 to 79.03% in 2018 (World Development Indicators, 2020).

The population of Ghana for May 2020 is projected at 30, 955,204 (Wals, 2012). Ghana has over 70 ethnic groups with their own local languages and Akans are the predominant ethnic group with over 45.9% of the total population, followed by the Mole Dagbani (16.6%), Ewe (13.9%), Ga-Dangme (7.4%) and Mande (1.1%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). There are three main religions in Ghana, namely, Christianity forming 71.2%; Islamic religion accounts for 17.6%; and Traditional religion accounts for 5.2% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). There are others who are atheist or belonging to other forms of religion forming 5.3% of the population. All these statistics indicate that Ghana is a pluralistic country (Jerven & Duncan, 2012).

Ghana occupies a total land area of 238, 535 square kilometres. It is made up of two major ecological zones, namely, high forest zone stretching over the southern 1/3rd of the country, and savanna zone stretching over a drier northern 2/3rds (Simpasa, Shimeles, & Salami, 2015). Ghana is found on the tropics and has rainy and dry seasons. Ghana is split into sixteen administrative regions, namely, Oti Region, Bono East Region, Ahafo Region, Bono Region, North East Region, Savannah Region, Western North Region, Western Region, Volta Region, Greater Accra Region, Eastern Region, Ashanti Region, Central Region, Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region. Six of the regions namely Savannah, North East, Bono East, Ahafo, Western North and Oti regions were created in 2019 after a referendum was organized in the affected areas in December 2018. Prior to the creation of

the six new regions, each of the ten regions of Ghana had a polytechnic. The map below shows the location of the various regions.

Figure 3: The Map of Ghana showing the 16 Administrative regions.



Source: www.ghanaembassy.dk (2019)

Ghana has rich natural resources such as, gold, bauxite, diamonds, oil, gas, manganese ore, limestone, silica sand and timber. It is also rich in agricultural products including forests and great tracts of savannah land with high agricultural value, cocoa, coffee, however these are not fully utilized (Jerven & Duncan, 2012). Cocoa, timber, gold and oil are the main Ghana export commodities.

The southern part of the country has high population density and low poverty rates (Jerven & Duncan, 2012). Abdulai and Hickey (2016) observed that Ghana is characterised by significant regional inequalities with regards to education, with the three Northern regions lagging in terms of income poverty and human development. It is not surprising that the technical universities in the Southern part of the country were converted first before the technical universities in the norther sector, namely, Tamale, Bolga and Wa polytechnics. Ghana has a total of 216 districts and 275 single member constituencies representing the population in parliament.

3.2 The Historical Development of Polytechnic Education in Ghana

Etymologically, the term ‘Polytechnic’ originated from the Greek word, Polyteknos’- meaning ‘skilled in many arts’. A polytechnic is therefore an institution that provides many skills to its trainees. The concept originated from Germany in the 19th century to promote its industrial drive (Iddrisu, Alhassan, & Kinder, 2014). Historically, Germany and France established technical universities with a well-developed educational system with much emphasis on science and with direct linkage to industry. In the early 19th century, however, England became interested in skills development (Iddrisu et al. 2014).

According to Evans and Honold (2007), the German education system worked closely with industry and treasured the importance of the application of science to industry. Germany with its ‘Technische Hochschule’ had the richest stock of technical manpower in the world. This may account for some of the reasons the Afeti Committee set up in 2013 to develop the roadmap for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities had to travel to Germany to have a firsthand information on the significance and the nature of technical

universities and also to be a source of collaboration for Ghanaian technical universities. According to Evans and Honold (2007), by the close of the 19th Century Britain could not sustain its supremacy in a variety of products due to their inability to develop newer technologies in connection with industrial and chemical engineering.

Ghana has been regarded as a pioneer in African Educational Systems (MoE, 2011). The education system of Ghana has gone through series of reforms in the hope of making it relevant to the needs of the country. These educational policy initiatives include: Education Act of 1961, Education Reform Programme 1987, Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme 1996-2005, GETFund Act 581 (2000), and the education reform in 2008 which added Kindergarten to the basic education, making the basic education 11 years instead of the existing nine (Effah, 2004).

Since the 1960s, governments have relied on policy experts constituted into Committees to advise governments in undertaking various educational reforms. Some of the Committees and reports produced by Committees include the Kwabong Report 1967; Dzobo Committee 1972, which sought to change the structure and content of the educational system; Education Commission Report on Basic and Secondary Education 1987/88; University Rationalization Committee (URC) 1987; and, the Education Sector Review Committee (2001) (Effah, 2004). This suggests that the political stream and the policy stream have usually been coupled to influence education policy decisions under military governments and democratic governments in Ghana.

3.2.1 The Vision for Education in a Newly Independent Ghana: 1957-1966

Many countries at independence sought to reform education to promote economic and social development. Ghana is one such example, and the newly independent government saw education as a catalyst for social and economic development. Political and economic analysts and commentators of development history of Ghana have often compared Ghana to Malaysia and South Korea and have often concluded on how Ghana has lagged behind in terms of development even though these countries started on the same economic footing when they gained independence from British colonial rule around the same time. It is important to note that the plans to use education as a vehicle for accelerated development had been put in motion since independence (Acheampong, 2010).

Two days before declaration of independence from Britain, Kwame Nkrumah made his vision clear when addressing the Legislative Assembly in these words:

We must seek an African view to the problems of Africa. This does not mean that western techniques and methods are not applicable to Africa. It does mean, however, that in Ghana we must look at every problem from the African point of view. ... Our whole educational system must be geared to producing a scientifically-technically minded people. Because of the limitations placed on us, we have to produce, of necessity, a higher standard of technical education than is necessary in many of the most advanced countries of the Western world. (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975, p. 18)

Nkrumah proposed research and advancement in science and technology as a means of finding solutions to the problems of Africa in terms of diseases, poverty and low productivity. This stresses the importance attached to advanced knowledge for development and placed technical education at the forefront towards industrialization (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The statements made by Nkrumah also shows how politics is used to control and direct the activities of education. Nkrumah's vision for technical education made him to transform the existing technical institutes into polytechnics in 1963 (Nyarko, 2011).

Decades after Nkrumah had been overthrown, funding of higher education continued to reduce drastically and affected the polytechnics, universities and research institutions ability to engage in productive research (MoE, 2014). In the mid-1970s, universities expenditure on research and development was about 0.7 percent of GDP and fell further to 0.1 - 0.2 percent of GDP during the economic crisis of the 1980s (Effah, 2003). Funding of higher education suffered during this period also partly because of the emphasis of international development agencies on basic education.

Tertiary education funding lost out to primary education. Educational financing has shifted to secondary school education and, until recently, there was little funding allocated for technical and vocational education. There is more recognition on the important role higher education can play in poverty reduction (World Bank, 2007). But, at the time of independence, Ghana's leaders were fully convinced of the benefits that the focus of higher education research on local development related problems could bring to economic progress. Secondly, science and technology were seen as instruments for accelerating economic

growth. A scientifically literate population capable of contributing to creativity and innovativeness was the answer to poverty and low-productivity (Acheampong, 2010). Thirdly, technical education was to be Ghana's route for accelerating technological and economic growth. The establishment of technical schools and polytechnic institutions was expected to lead to increases in the middle-level technical manpower base of the country. Through apprenticeship schemes with industries, technical education was linked to labour market requirements (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Nkrumah sets the vision for the advancement of polytechnic education in Ghana to be followed by subsequent governments.

3.2.2 Development of Polytechnics into Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

The period between 1966 and mid-1980 witnessed a turbulent period in the political system of Ghana, occasioned by series of military coups sandwiched by short periods of civilian government. There was again economic crisis in the mid-70s occasioned partly by the global increase in oil price and the abysmal performance in the growth of the country's economy (Girdwood, 1999). Political instability and poor economic performance contributed to a downward trend in the quality of education, stagnant school enrolments and a total reduction of GDP allocation to education from 6.4% in the mid-70s to about 1.3% in the mid-80 (Dwomoh, 1994). The education reforms of 1987 under the military government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) was part of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) negotiated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank; with the aim of curtailing the decline in educational expansion and quality of education by a radical transformation in the structure and the content of education in the country (Acheampong, 2010; Gyedu, 2014).

The PNDC government established the University Rationalization Committee (URC) to undertake a comprehensive review of post-secondary education in the country as part of the 1987 Education Reform Programme (URC, 1988). The URC recommended the creation of a unified tertiary sector and reforms in the area of management, academic programmes, governance and funding structures. The committee's reports presented a creative agenda for change in significant scope and magnitude. The implementation of the URC report raised the polytechnics to the status of tertiary institutions in 1993 to offer tertiary programmes (Girdwood, 1999).

3.3 Polytechnic Education Reform under the Fourth Republic

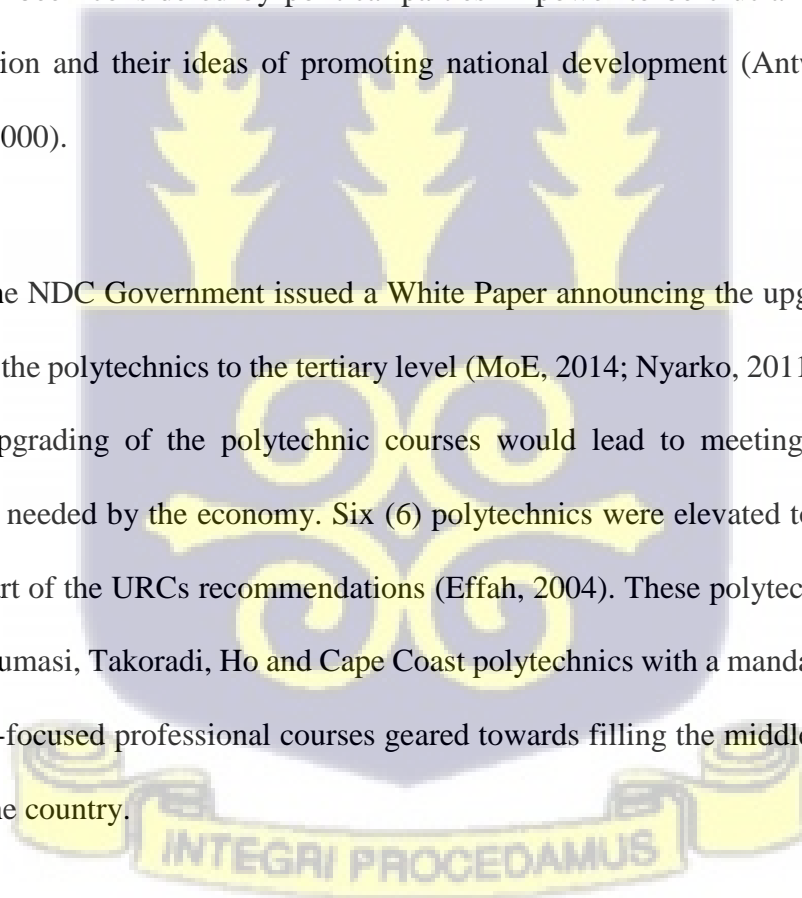
Education reform in Ghana has gone through tremendous changes after independence, with the view of making education more relevant to the socio-economic needs of the people (Aziabah, 2018; Gyedu, 2014). Some scholars have found that the education reforms in the polytechnic sector have always resulted from weaknesses and dysfunctionalities which include poor human capital formation for industrial growth, lack of creativity in the field of employment, low premium on technical and vocational education and training, weak management and supervision, inadequate infrastructural facilities and poorly equipped laboratories and classrooms affecting various levels of the education system .

Empirical and documentary reviews reveal that political competition in Ghana has played a role in the reform of the education system. Ghana is featured by some scholars as a 'competitive clientelist' type of political settlement, whereby the two main political parties, namely, New patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), have since

1992 alternated in government (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). It is important to note that significant changes in the educational system have often been accompanied by political change in government (Aziabah, 2018).

Education reforms affect citizens in every part of the country, and therefore create incentives for the ruling political party to win nationwide electoral gains if the reforms are well received by citizens. Since the introduction of free basic education in the northern regions of Ghana by Kwame Nkrumah after independence, reforms in the education sector in Ghana has historically been considered by political parties in power to be crucial to their increased legitimization and their ideas of promoting national development (Antwi, 1992; Casely-Hayford, 2000).

In 1993, the NDC Government issued a White Paper announcing the upgrading of courses offered by the polytechnics to the tertiary level (MoE, 2014; Nyarko, 2011). It was expected that the upgrading of the polytechnic courses would lead to meeting the middle-level manpower needed by the economy. Six (6) polytechnics were elevated to tertiary status in 1993 as part of the URCs recommendations (Effah, 2004). These polytechnics were Accra, Tamale, Kumasi, Takoradi, Ho and Cape Coast polytechnics with a mandate to run practical and career-focused professional courses geared towards filling the middle-level manpower needs of the country.



Between 1997-2003, four more polytechnics were established in Sunyani, Koforidua, Bolgatanga and Wa to make a total of ten with one in each region. It however appears that little attention has been paid to polytechnic education judging from the resources that are deployed to such institutions (MoE, 2014). The decision to deploy resources to polytechnics has always been in competition with other areas of tertiary education. Low investment in polytechnic education has affected the quality of polytechnic education and undermined the mandates of the polytechnics (Girdwood, 1999).

From 2001 to 2008, Ghana was governed by the NPP government led by President Kufour. In 2007, a new Polytechnic Act, 2007 (Act 745) was passed under the NPP government of President Kufuor, strengthening and expanding the polytechnic mandate to offer high qualifications in the areas of applied science (MoE, 2014; NCTE, 2012). The timing of the reforms suggests that it was partly meant to win electoral votes from the polytechnic fraternity in the 2008 elections. Essentially, the mission of the polytechnics as provided by the Polytechnic Act 2007 (Act 745) was to offer:

- a) tertiary education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science, technology, applied social science, applied arts and any other field approved by the Minister of Education;
- b) opportunities for skills development, applied research and publication of research findings.

Per their mandate, polytechnics were to provide training in middle-level manpower in the scientific and technological areas needed for the national development of Ghana (MoE

2014). The Polytechnics Act 745 (2007) mandated polytechnics to award other certificates and degrees. Polytechnics have supplied Ghana's labour market with the requisite manpower across over 25 programmes at the Higher National Diploma (HND), other Diploma, technician and craft courses and recently a few Bachelor of Technology (B-Tech) programmes (MoE, 2014; Nyarko, 2011).

Even before the promulgation of Act 745, some of the polytechnics had started pursuing BTech programmes with affiliate institutions. Accra Polytechnic was affiliated to University of Cape Coast to offer fashion programme at the BTech level. The BTech programmes were meant to deepen the practical component of the training and deal with the problem of academic progression faced by HND graduates (MoE, 2014). The running of the degree programmes was also meant to improve the image of the polytechnics to attract high quality staff and students (MoE, 2014). Also, in 2007, to improve the quality of graduates produced by the senior secondary schools for the polytechnics, traditional universities, training colleges, and other post-secondary school institutions, the NPP government increased the duration of the SHS from three to four years. The Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER), in its 2016 Ghana Social Development Outlook, noted that the four-year system afforded students a better transition from the junior high to the SHS level. The ISSER report also noted that the 4-year SHS did improve quality of education if one uses the results from the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) as an indicator of quality. Undoubtedly, the 4-year SHS increased the cost of education for parents and guardians of SHS students.

The NDC campaigned in 2008 to reverse the SHS back to three (3) years if elected to power. With NDC taking the reins of government in 2009, more reforms in education were introduced (Aziabah, 2018). The NDC government followed its political campaign promise and reversed the 4-year SHS structure that had been implemented and promulgated into law (Act, 2010) to three years. How to improve the quality of education at the level of SHS has since become a matter of political debate. The important point is that changes in government are usually accompanied by education reforms.

In 2016, the NDC Government converted six polytechnics to technical universities to fulfil its 2012 campaign promise of elevating polytechnics to technical universities. The NPP Government, after taking power in 2017, converted two polytechnics to technical universities in 2018, and the last two polytechnics were converted in 2020. These politically motivated reforms affirm the fact that the frequency of reforms within the education sector in Ghana tends to increase under heightened electoral competition and change of government (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). What has not been investigated by scholars is how the reform agenda is set and policy proposals are adopted.

Balwanz and Darvas (2013) have noted that a lot of policy decisions that affect education in Ghana are taken outside the Ministry of Education. Such a situation is caused by the increasing politicization of education to win votes (Booth et al. 2005). Political actors are often driven by their political manifestoes in agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, and policy implementation processes in Ghana's education sector (Casely-

Hayford, 2011). The next section discusses the problems of the polytechnics that served as the trigger for the conversion to technical universities.

3.4 Problems of the Polytechnics Leading to their Conversion

The Polytechnic Acts, 1992 (PNDCL 321) raised the status of the polytechnics to public tertiary institutions. This upgrading offered the polytechnics the opportunity to award Higher National Diploma (HND) and other related certificates (MoE, 2014). Since the upgrading, the Polytechnics Act 2007 (Act 745) sought to create the opportunity for polytechnics to offer wide range of applied arts and science disciplines at sub-degree, degree, and post graduate degree levels. The polytechnics had suffered several problems. The discussion below focuses on the various problems faced by the polytechnics that provided the problem stream for government consideration.

One major problem associated with the polytechnics was the absence of clear transformation strategy associated with the upgrading process (MoE, 2014; Nyarko, 2011). As earlier indicated, the development of polytechnics as tertiary institutions was based on strategy of elevation of technical institutes by the Nkrumah government in 1963. This strategy of upgrading polytechnics did not specify any qualifying benchmarks in relation to human and material resources before they were elevated. Neither was there any provision made to mentor the polytechnics for a period of time by well-established tertiary institutions. This situation provided a vacuum for the polytechnics to garner experiences for proper development and advancement. The polytechnics did not have clear understanding on their mandate and wallowed in the dark. Ultimately, many polytechnics started drifting from their

technical and career-oriented training mandates (MoE, 2014). Lack of clear and proper direction in their upgrading process thwarted the efforts of the polytechnics and there was the need to clarify what a polytechnic was supposed to be doing. The need for clear mandate signaled the need for reforms.

It is not surprising to note that there are still people at the decision-making levels in the country who did not understand the philosophy and orientation of polytechnic education. The polytechnics were often regarded as second class to the universities. The image of the polytechnics was severely bruised and was unable to attract quality students. The technical university concept was introduced to provide clear direction of the polytechnics as vocationally oriented and industry-focused universities. Again, the conversion was done to fundamentally rebrand and improve public image about technical education (PoG, 2016). It was the lack of understanding of the career-oriented nature of polytechnic studies that had been largely responsible for agitations from the staff of the polytechnics (MoE, 2014).

The polytechnics also faced challenges of poor funding (MoE, 2014). Inadequate funding was particularly a serious problem for the polytechnics. Polytechnics were usually marginalized in the allocation of government resources in relation to the universities. Throughout the 1990s, government expenditure per university student was twelve times higher than the amount spent on a polytechnic student (MoE, 2014). The polytechnics had to depend on the fees paid by students as the major source of funding for the activities. The polytechnics had inadequate infrastructure and students clamoured for space in the

classrooms. All these contributed to the poor state of the polytechnics and eroded its glorious vision espoused by Kwame Nkrumah.

The polytechnics also had low quality of teaching and administrative staff. The employees were mainly made up of senior staff with very few people having postgraduate degrees (MoE, 2014; Nyarko, 2011). In 1989/1990, only 2% of the teaching staff held post graduate qualifications whilst 21% had first degrees. In 2002/2003, 28% of the teaching staff possessed second degrees with majority of the remaining staff possessing first degrees. As one of the conditions for the conversion of a polytechnic to the status of technical university, the road map for the conversion included the availability of quality teaching and administrative staff (MoE, 2014). This was to ensure that the new technical university will not undermine the quality of the education system.

Hard on the heels of the inadequate funding and poor administrative staff was the inability of the polytechnics to recruit and retain qualified staff with relevant practical or professional experience (MoE, 2014). This is because the type of skilled professional, such as electrical engineers, civil engineers and other professionals are also highly sought after by the industry. In this regard, the polytechnics were unable to compete for these staff with industry which was in a better position to offer better conditions of service. The polytechnics suffered acute manpower needs for the development of the students. Converting the polytechnics to technical universities was seen as the surest way to attract quality staff who would build the manpower needs of the country. The establishment of technical universities was going to

redirect the focus of education more towards vocational skills development and applied science and technology which are very critical for national development.

The polytechnic had produced graduates who were seen not to be functional at the various industries in terms of manpower capacity for work. Industrial growth is one of the cardinal priorities of Ghana in order to raise the economic growth. The polytechnics were mandated to churn out products that are job-oriented with the needed entrepreneurial skills to meet the needed demand by the industry and the country as a whole (Bawakyillenuo, Akoto, Ahiadeke, Aryeetey, & Agbe, 2013). As a result, a number of ministries, state agencies, private sector and other development agencies expressed support for the upgrading of the polytechnics to university status to attract more resources and make them responsive. The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) clamored for suitably qualified graduates to increase industrial productivity. In the 2010 Ghana Industrial Policy, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI) did acknowledge the problem of inadequate skills relevant human resource base confronting all the sectors of industrial development in Ghana. MOTI therefore recommended the urgent need to support the polytechnics with appropriate resources to train the labour force needed to promote sustainable industrial productivity and growth (Bawakyillenuo et al. 2013).

Even though the mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates and those needed by firms has been widely acknowledged and reported in Ghana, comprehensive and empirical assessments exploring its nature and extent as well as the underpinning factors of the mismatch are scarce. The World Bank (2007) noted that in Ghana there has been virtually

no empirical research investigating how effectively the skills acquired by graduates are being translated into the labour market. Thus, education policy-making had not been rooted in evidence-based research. Atta-Quayson (2007) has also argued that the educational sector operates on the assumption of an educational system with a structure and content which reflect the socio-economic, environmental, and manpower needs of the country even when such needs have not been empirically assessed.

3.5 Differentiating Technical University and the Traditional Universities

The Technical Universities Act 922 (2016), ranks the technical universities on the same level as the traditional universities. However, it introduces variation in their mandates. The Afeti Committee established in 2013 had outlined the basis for the differentiation of a technical university from the traditional universities (MoE, 2014). In the report of the Committee (MoE, 2014), a technical university is supposed to be a university focused on the application of scientific and technological knowledge to the various fields of learning. Some indicators given by the Committee are reproduced in Table 5 below.

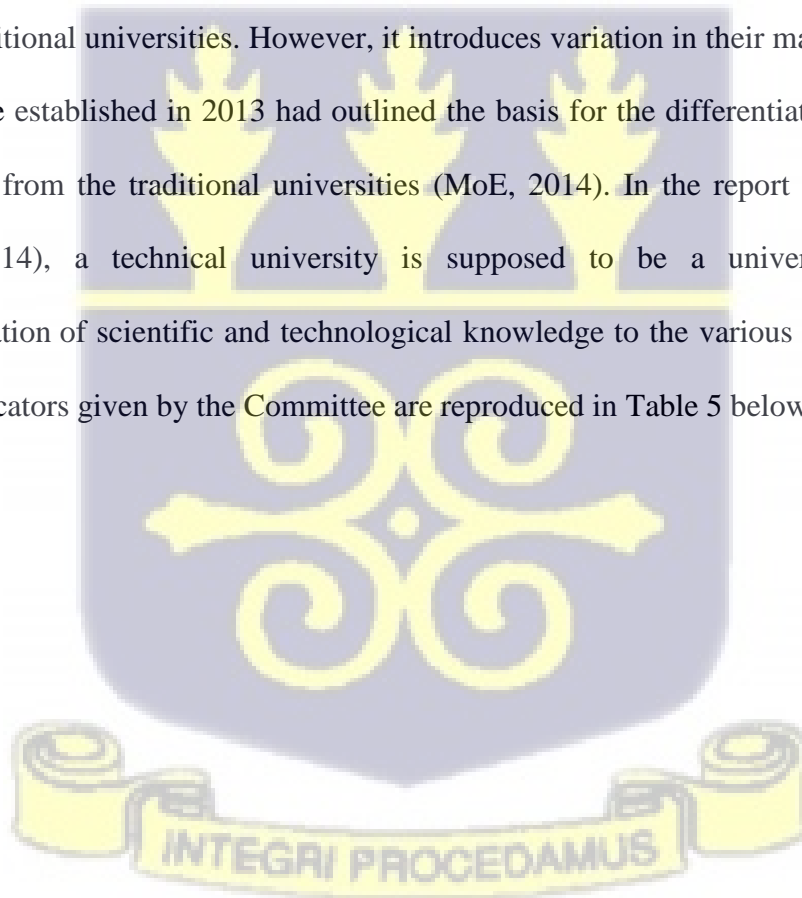


Table 3: Comparison of Technical Universities and Traditional Universities

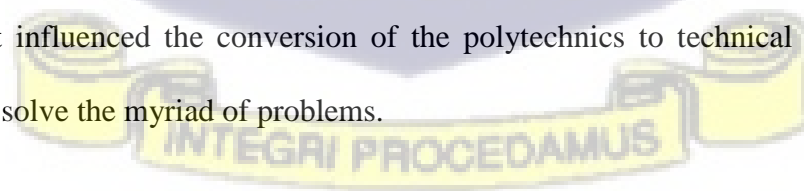
Technical University (University of Applied Sciences)	Traditional University (Classical / Research University)
Teaching and practice-oriented	Theory and research oriented
Applied or strategic research with focus on solving practical problems and providing technology solutions that make production systems more efficient	Integration of research and teaching
Skills-driven or acquisition of employable skills	Knowledge-driven or quest for new knowledge
Focus on technology development, innovation and technology transfer	Focus on fundamental research and cutting-edge technology development
Emphasis on what must be learnt to respond to industry needs and learner interests	Emphasis on mainly disciplinary approach to learning and promotion of scholarship

Source: MoE (2014)

The Technical Universities Act, Act 922, enjoins the technical universities to continue building the technical skills needed by industries for the industrialization of the economy (PoG, 2016). In the Technical Universities Amendment Act, the NAB and NCTE were made the gatekeepers to ensuring that the differentiation is maintained. Time will tell whether the technical universities will remain within their ‘technical’ and career-oriented boundaries of tertiary education and produce quality graduates with the technical and scientific knowledge to push Ghana’s quest for industrial development.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This section has discussed how political decision of governments shaped the evolution of the technical universities from technical institutes inherited from colonial rule. The evolution and direction of polytechnic education has always been initiated by government. However, the governments have always worked with policy experts by creating special committees of 'technical people' to advise the politicians in power. Thus, one can say that there has always been a coupling of the political and the policy streams in shaping polytechnic educational reform in Ghana. This confirms the hypothesis of Kingdon that there is always a partial coupling of the political and policy streams for any policy decision to be made in countries. The problems of the polytechnic and the desire of subsequent governments to use polytechnics as a vehicle to solve the industrial deficit needs of the country provided the problem stream that led to the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. In the problems stream, polytechnics were plagued with a myriad of problems such as underfunding; poor service conditions; negative public perception; incessant strikes by various stakeholders; high staff turnover; lack of physical infrastructural facilities; stagnant academic progression of HND graduates; poor institutional management, and unclear job placements of HND graduates. After the creation of polytechnics by the Nkrumah government, successive elected governments have tried to provide electorally appealing solutions to these problems. The next chapter discusses the nature and power relations of the actors that influenced the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities in an attempt to solve the myriad of problems.



CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the philosophical foundations and methodology for the study. Section 3.1 discusses the subjectivist and interpretivist philosophical foundations of the study. Section 3.2 discusses the qualitative research methodology used for the study. Particularly, it discusses how interviews and documents were collected and analyzed to answer the questions. Section 3.3 discusses the nature of the multiple-case study approach used to analyze the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. Section 3.4 discusses the challenge of quality assurance in qualitative research. Section 3.5 discusses the ethical considerations that informed the data collection. It also discusses how the researcher negotiated access to organizations for data collection. Section 3.6 summarizes the chapter.

4.1 Philosophical Foundation of the Study

The acquisition of knowledge has gone through age-long debate as to the proper means of knowing. Research works are philosophically driven with myriads of paradigms (Burrell & Morgan, 2019). The orientation of the researcher influences the kind of study pursued and the results produced. Guba and Lincoln (1994) noted that a paradigm concerns itself to basic principles that direct the perspective of a researcher about the object of his study. The paradigm influences the orientation of the researcher.

4.1.1 Social Theory and Research Paradigms: Subjectivism and Objectivism

Research is highly determined by how reality is conceived. Epistemology originates from two Greek words, namely, 'episteme' and 'logos'. It is about how knowledge is constructed. Epistemology looks at the existence of reality. For this thesis, epistemology is defined as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology". It relates to 'what and how we can know about' what exists" (Grix, 2018, p. 12). Following Walker (2010, p. 12), "A paradigm is a way of looking at something that represents an established standard, a set of related ideas." Ontology is also defined as the study of "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, its existence, nature, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other" (Grix, 2018). The assumptions of ontology and epistemology make up a paradigm. The paradigm followed by this research is the subjectivist paradigm discussed below.

Subjectivism and objectivism are the two main opposing perspectives that characterize the study of social science approaches. Researchers usually contrasts the subjectivist dimension as against the objectivist or realist ontology. Subjectivists believe that the existence of reality is the construction of human ideas (Chua, 1986; Burrell & Morgan, 2006, 2019). Objectivist ontology, on the other hand, contends that reality exists outside human conception. It is out there to be discovered, and its existence is independent of the knowledge of humans. It can be found by sense observation. It can, therefore, be argued that ontology could be conceived as objectively constructed or socially constructed (Burrell & Morgan, 2006, 2019).

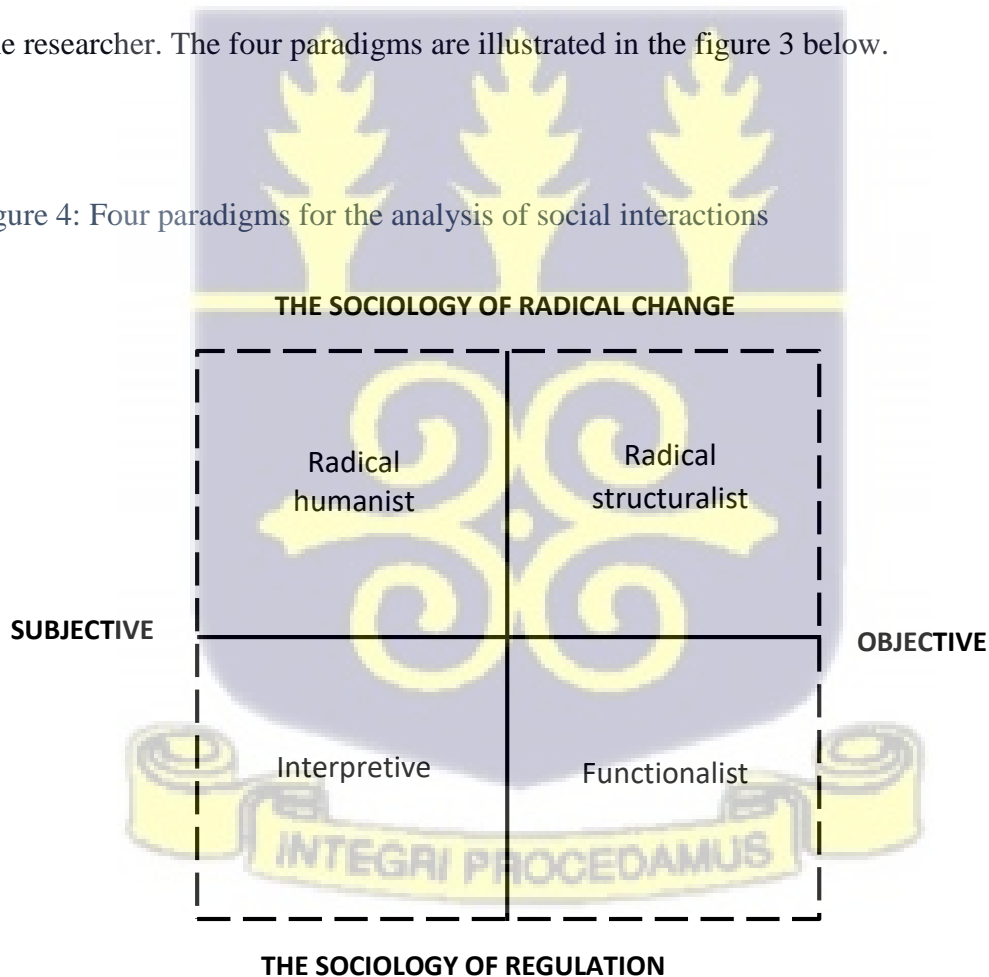
Objectivist researchers belong to a philosophical school referred to as positivism. The term positivism was first coined by Auguste Comte who noted that reality could be observed.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 9), Compe's position paved the way to the basic assumption of positivism that sense experience is the foundation for genuine knowledge acquired only by the use of observation and experiment. The researcher must, therefore find the objective reality rather than interpreting the reality (Wicks & Freeman, 1998). This is the position of objectivism. The researcher must be a neutral observer without biases to be able to document facts and describe them (Wicks & Freeman, 1998).

It is argued, however, by subjectivists that the researcher is an active co-creator of knowledge and not just a mere neutral observer. Human nature is not deterministic as the positivist wants us to believe. The orientation of the researcher becomes the principle upon which the appropriate methodological choices are made (Burrell & Morgan, 2019). Researchers seek to create new knowledge or affirm existing knowledge created by other researchers. Knowledge is subjective to the researcher's construction of social reality using carefully selected evidence or data gathered from diverse sources. The collection of data and the construction of knowledge by a researcher is subjective to the researcher's philosophical and theoretical biases. Constructing knowledge about social reality is therefore a subjective process and not an objective process that is independent of the researcher's biases. For the purpose of this study, the collection and interpretation of data was influenced by the multiple streams theoretical framework (Kingdon, 2011) which seeks to interpret how actors and processes from the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream converged to cooperate and shape the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities.

Social reality like the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities can be analyzed by adopting one of four research paradigms as given by Burrell and Morgan (2006, 2019). The paradigms provide the converging avenue for several researchers of similar orientations. The four paradigms consisting of (i) functionalist, (ii) interpretive, (iii) structuralist, and (iv) radical humanist. They operate along two axes of regulation and radical change, on the horizontal axis, and subjectivism and objectivism on the vertical axis (Burrell & Morgan, 2019). Gioia and Pitre (1990) opined that Burrell and Morgan's orientation to research paradigms is more flexible than the one espoused by Kuhn. Burrell and Morgan's four paradigms help in identifying the type of research one is undertaking and the orientations of the researcher. The four paradigms are illustrated in the figure 3 below.

Figure 4: Four paradigms for the analysis of social interactions



Source: Burrell and Morgan (2019)

Within social science, these paradigms bring out differences in perspectives of scholars about methods, values, thoughts, and operations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Burrell & Morgan, 2019). This study made use of the interpretive paradigm, which views reality as a subjective experience while the research process is viewed as socially constructed within the context of the researcher's theoretical biases. Researchers are viewed as co-creators of meanings (Lee, 1991). Researchers that use interpretive approach will want to dig into the positions, organizations, power relations, and values of actors to interpret actions and outcomes of social interactions. Such researchers use discursive data like interviews to unearth the feelings and the motivation behind actions and outcomes.

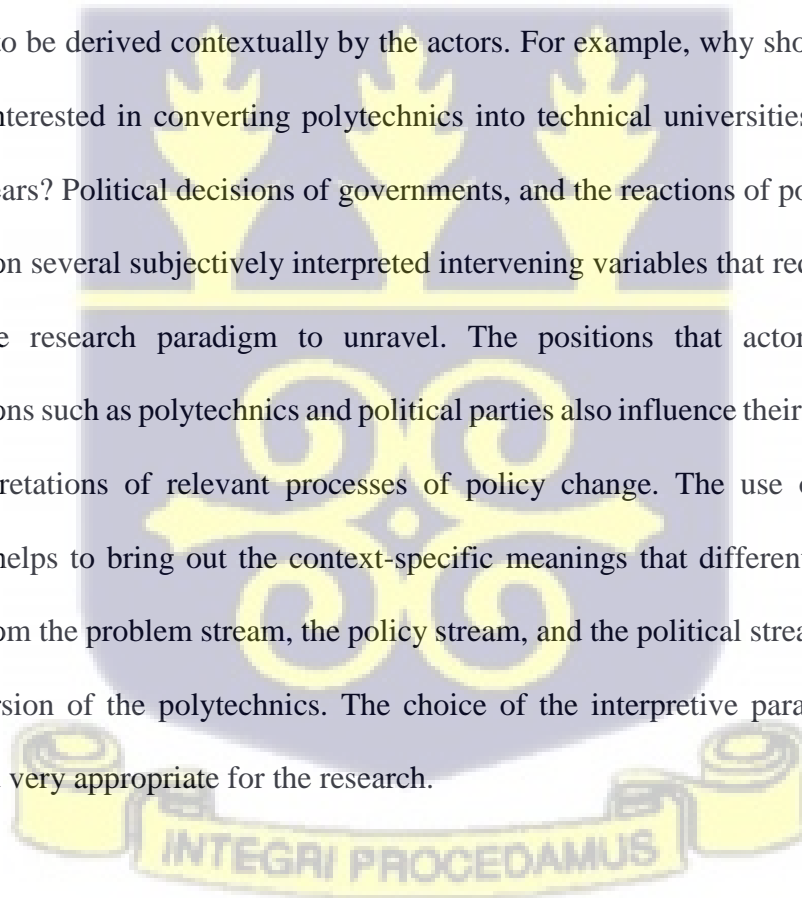
4.1.2 Choice and Appropriateness of Interpretive Paradigm

Out of the four paradigms espoused by Burrell and Morgan (2019), the study used the interpretive paradigm as the most suitable approach for the purpose of the study. Adopting this paradigm allows the researcher to have an inter-subjective relationship with the subjects under review by considering context-specific meanings (Angen, 2000). The phenomenon of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities is humanly constructed and interpreted. Meanings made by the actors involved in the phenomenon of polytechnic education reform were socially constructed. The interpretive approach allows the researcher to investigate the meanings, reasons, and values of actors that influenced their behavior.

Epistemologically, the researcher sees himself as an active participant in co-creating meaning out of the phenomenon under study. Theoretical positions and biases were factored into the analysis of the data collected from diverse sources. The construction of the findings was not based on objective facts sitting independent of the researcher's theoretical biases.

Consequently, the findings of the study are based on the choice of the researcher. The results are analogous to the usage of ‘idiographic approaches’ of a study of qualitative nature that employs the use of interviews and records of the views of the actors (including reports of committee, parliamentary hansard, media reports) who participated in the phenomenon under study – that is, the conversion of the ten polytechnics into technical universities under two different governments through legislative enactments.

Political processes of policy-making are social phenomena that require an interpretive approach to comprehend. Their relation is social in orientation; therefore, meanings of actors are likely to be derived contextually by the actors. For example, why should a government be more interested in converting polytechnics into technical universities during and after election years? Political decisions of governments, and the reactions of policy stakeholders, are based on several subjectively interpreted intervening variables that require the use of an interpretive research paradigm to unravel. The positions that actors occupy within organizations such as polytechnics and political parties also influence their meanings, values, and interpretations of relevant processes of policy change. The use of an interpretive approach helps to bring out the context-specific meanings that different groups of actors brought from the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream to interact over the conversion of the polytechnics. The choice of the interpretive paradigm is therefore considered very appropriate for the research.



4.2 Research Methodology: Qualitative Research Approach

The nature of a research paradigm influences the choice of an appropriate methodology (Silverman, 2005). In the context of the interpretive philosophical paradigm, the study adopted the qualitative research methodology. The qualitative methodology falls within the interpretive paradigm which constructs reality from the lived experiences of human beings in society (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, Hanson, Clark, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Qualitative research is a type of social inquiry that concerns itself with understanding how people derive meanings to pursue a course of action leading to a known outcome (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). The qualitative approach enables a researcher to understand and explore the meanings, incentives, motivations, and idiosyncrasies that shaped the personal experiences of actors. The qualitative approach requires the researcher to be context-sensitive by considering the settings of the participants to understand their actions.

The foundations of qualitative methodology have been heavily criticized by quantitative researchers as lacking 'science' (Lune & Berg, 2016). It means to say that a qualitative approach to research is less robust. The results generated cannot be generalized, and there is also a problem with the reliability and validity of data collected. It is less objective, based on individual idiosyncrasies, and imbued with value-laden axiology (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Grix, 2018; Tracy, 2010). Qualitative research is, however, proven to provide rich data of qualities that cannot be provided by quantitative analysis. Qualitative research can give context-specific meanings, delve into the emotions, motivations, and reasons behind social reality to understand social problems, processes, and outcomes in natural settings (Creswell et al. 2007). The data it provides is rich and deep by dwelling on

a smaller sample to explore and explain important processes and outcomes (Brown, 2010; Denzin et al. 2006; Maxwell, 2008).

The study adopted the qualitative approach for various reasons. In the first place, the study intended to investigate the phenomenon of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities “under a natural setting” (Creswell et al. 2007, p. 246). Understanding the natural settings of relationships among actors within polytechnics, governments, communities of policy experts, and the legislative is important to understand the processes and outcomes of the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. The search into the relationship between politics and public policy is pursued within a particular context of rules and institutions where the activities of policy-making happened. There is a strong correlation between politics and the policies that are made, and these relations could be studied by the use of a qualitative approach to understanding the connection between the two. Secondly, a study seeking to underscore the influences of diverse actors on policies that have already been enacted would employ qualitative instruments of interviews and documentary analysis to investigate and understand various shades of relationships (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

In the third place, the study had to use qualitative instruments to explore the opinions of experts who had adequate knowledge about the policy processes and outcomes in the field of inquiry. This required qualitative purposive sampling method in collecting data (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Gerring, 2006). Additionally, the relationship between politics and policy is shrouded in a maze of inter-relationships which demand an approach with the ability to explain the complexities of power relationships in the natural settings of actors. A

quantitative approach is proven to be incapacitated when it comes to dealing with such complexities in natural settings as quantitative figures do not allow variables to relate dynamically (Gummesson, 2006). Lastly, qualitative methodology has played a leading role in evidence-based policy related studies in the past and present (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006).

4.3 Case Study Research Strategy

Qualitative research has various underlying approaches and methodologies. Some of these approaches include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, case study, cooperative enquiry, historical and clinical approaches (Creswell et al. 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1995). The study employed the embedded multiple case-study research approach (Scholtz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2009). As explained by Scholz and Tietje (2002, pp. 10-11), “Embedded case studies involve more than one unit, or object, of analysis and usually are not limited to qualitative analysis alone. The multiplicity of evidence is investigated at least partly in subunits, which focus on different salient aspects of the case.” The ten polytechnics were converted to technical universities under three phases. Table 3 below presents the three phases of the conversion of the polytechnics.

Table 4: Embedded Multiple Case Study of the Conversion of Ten Polytechnics

Phases of Conversion	Polytechnics	Embedded Multiple Cases
Phase 1 under NDC Government (2012-2016)	Accra Polytechnic	Case 1
	Ho Polytechnic	
	Koforidua Polytechnic	
	Kumasi Polytechnic	
	Sunyani Polytechnic	
	Takoradi Polytechnic	
Phase 2 under NPP Government (2017-2018)	Cape Coast Polytechnic	Case 2
	Tamale Polytechnic	
Phase 3 under NPP Government (2019-2020)	Bolgatanga Polytechnic	Case 3
	Wa Polytechnic	

Yin (1994, p. 45) noted that “Every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry. Here, a major insight is to consider multiple cases as one would consider multiple experiments—that is, to follow a ‘replication’ logic.” Each of the three phases of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities presented a new process of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption. Therefore, each phase of conversion was considered as a case to understand the interactions and convergence of the problems streams, policy stream, and political stream in producing the outcomes of technical universities. This enabled the researcher to learn not just from a single event but three different processes of policy-making and derive firm knowledge about patterns of interactions among the streams. Looking at the study from this embedded multiple case study approach helped to strengthen the validity of the findings similar to the multiple cases used by Kingdon (2011). The case study method is appropriate for a study that answers 'how' and 'why' questions; also when the researcher does not have a direct influence on the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2009). The use of multiple cases enhances in-depth analysis for patterns of interactions.

4.3.1 Methods of Data Collection

Two main qualitative methods of data collection were adopted for the study. These were in-depth open-ended interviews and document analysis (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2020; Creswell, 2014). The interview data collection took a period of three months. Relevant documents were collected when they were made available. Before stepping out to collect data for the study, ethical clearance was sought and approval given by the University of Ghana as a prerequisite for fieldwork. Most of the respondents lived in Accra. A letter of introduction was taken from the University of Ghana to enable me to collect data from the respondents that had been sampled. Visits were made to the respective places of work of the

respondents to seek their consent for the interviews and book appointments dates for the interviews. The interview and document analysis qualitative methods are discussed in turn.

4.3.2 Interview of Respondents

Interviewing is one of the most important data collection instruments in social science research (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al. 2007). They are at the heart of almost every qualitative research (Myers & Newman, 2007). The study employed interviews of respondents who were participants in the process of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. Interviews are useful for collecting primary data due to many reasons. Interviews are useful for gathering historical information from participants of past events like the conversion of the polytechnics. It also enables the researcher to have control over the questions. Through interviews, the researcher can identify the emotions and gestures given by the respondents to help the researcher have a deeper understanding of the information being received from the interviewee (Aziabah, 2018). Interviews afford the researcher an opportunity to provide further clarification on the questions he puts before the interviewee to elicit an appropriate response (Creswell, 2014). Interviews allowed for the confirmation of information in written documents and the filling of gaps found in the written documents (Silverman, 2020).

The study employed the purposive sampling method to select participants for the interviews. The study sampled and interviewed individuals who participated as policy experts, organizational representative in stakeholder meetings, workshops, and conferences organized for the purpose of the conversion of the polytechnics. This ensured that the interviewees had the required knowledge on the subject matter to be able to speak to the research questions authoritatively (Gyedu, 2014; Nsowah-Nuamah, 2005). A participant

from the Ghana Employers Association was selected mainly because the private sector industry are direct recipients of the products from the polytechnics, and the Association was a participant as a stakeholder in the deliberations leading to the conversions. In the language of Kingdon (2011), The interview participants could be described as both ‘problem entrepreneurs’ from the problems stream and ‘policy entrepreneurs’ from the policy stream. A neat separation of actors in these two streams is practically difficult to make.

The researcher adopted the semi-structured in-depth interviews with the aid of an interview guide. The open-ended interview questions served as a guide for conversation during the interview process. Probes were used to solicit more information from the respondents based on the responses given (Myers & Newman, 2007). Participants were asked to share their views on the nature of the reform process, the influence of political relations of power on the policy process, their motivations for participation in the process, their roles in the policy making process, and the outcomes of the conversion process.

Permission was sought from interview participants to audio-record the conversation which they obliged. Participants were assured that confidential information provided would be treated as such and would not be published or shared. On average, the interviews took about 45 minutes to 1 hour at the offices of the respondents. Every interview started was ended successfully with participants staying to the end. A total number of thirteen (13) interviews were done among several institutional-level actors in the tertiary education sector in Ghana. The list of interview participants, their relevant positions and experiences, and the dates of the interviews are provided in Table 4 below.

Table 5: List of Interview Participants

	Name of Interviewee	Relevant Positions/Roles	Date of Interview
1	Professor Emmanuel K. Sakyi	i. Former Rector and first Interim Vice Chancellor of Ho Polytechnic	27 th August, 2019
2	Dr. George Afeti	i. Chairman of the Technical Committee on Conversion of the polytechnics in Ghana to technical Universities. ii. Former Principal of Ho Polytechnic iii. Executive Secretary, National Inspectorate Board iv. Former Secretary-General, Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa	24 th September, 2019
3	Professor Salifu Haruna Mohammed	i. Former Executive Secretary of NCTE and current Commissioner for Tertiary Education-Ghana	26 th September, 2019
4	Mr. Cephas Adjei Mensah	i. Deputy Director - Ministry of Education	30 th September, 2019
5	Professor Nsowah N.N. Nuamah	i. Former Rector and First Interim Vice Chancellor of Kumasi Polytechnic ii. Former chairman for conference of Rectors of Polytechnics	2 nd October, 2019
6	Professor Edmund Ameko	i. Former first Interim Pro Vice Chancellor of Accra Technical University ii. Former Acting Second Interim Vice Chancellor of Accra Technical University	3 rd October, 2019
7	Dr. Jones Ntiamoah	i. Former POTAG Vice Chairman ii. Former POTAG Chairman at the time of the conversion	8 th October, 2019
8	Dr. Michael Okai Addo	i. Lecturer at ATU for over 22 years ii. Former POTAG Chairman iii. Dean of Students	8 th October, 2019
9	Mr. Prosper Agumey	i. Director of Industrial Liaison-ATU	9 th October, 2019
10	Mr Eric DeGraft Otoo	i. Assistant Industrial Liaison Director-ATU	14 th October, 2019
11	Mr. Eugene Abraham	i. Research officer of Ghana Employers Association	15 th October, 2019
12	Mr. Prince Addison	i. SRC president of ATU at the time of the conversion	19 th October, 2019
13	Dr. Peter Arhenful	i. Former Dean of Faculty of Business	22 nd October, 2019

4.3.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis (Patton, 2002) has been one of the useful tools in qualitative data collection in education studies (Silverman, 2020; Aziabah, 2018). Documentary analysis allows the researcher to have access to already existing documents relevant to the subject under study created by actors without the intervention of the researcher (Silverman 2020). Documents that capture discourses between actors are considered by some scholars to be more objective, transparent, and reliable than ‘researcher-provoked data’ like interviews (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000).

Diverse documents were collected and analyzed to answer the questions of the study. The documents included legislative records (Hansards), memorandum submitted to the Committee of Education in parliament, committee report, media reports, and research publications. Particularly, the Hansards of parliament captured the debates and behaviour of Members of Parliaments (MPs) during the processes of policy formulation and adoption. The relevant Hansards were collected and used for the analysis of the processes of legislative policy formulation and adoption. The views of MPs captured in the Hansards removed the need to have interviews with MPs about the legislative processes of policy adoption. Every MP had an equal opportunity to contribute to debates on the floor of parliament. The Hansards captured the views of every MP who contributed to the debates and discussions about the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The Hansards also contain information about stakeholders that interacted with the president, Ministry of Education, and MPs during the policy-making process to influence outcomes.

The Bills that were submitted by the NDC and NPP governments to parliament for passage into law were also collected and analyzed to understand changes that were made

when the three streams converged to negotiate over the reforms contained in the Bills. Comparing the original Bills and the final Acts enacted by parliament helps to examine the relative influence of policy entrepreneurs, political entrepreneurs, and problem entrepreneurs in policy agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption in the context of polytechnic education reform in Ghana. A memorandum submitted by the Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG) to the Committee of Education during the conversion process also helped to understand the problems stream of POTAG and how the problems were handled. The study also found useful annual reports of National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) that captured aspects of the process of the conversion of the polytechnics.

Outside governmental organizations, numerous media reports about the conversion of the polytechnics were also used as sources of data. Different media organizations reporting on the same event about the conversion helped to triangulate the reliability of the media reports. Political party manifestoes were also collected and examined to understand the paths of agenda setting from the broad 'governmental agenda' to the narrow 'agenda decision'. Scholarly articles and books provided information for theoretical and empirical literature reviews to put the empirical analysis in the appropriate intellectual context.

4.3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis requires transparency, rigour, and trustworthiness to meet standards of reliability and validity (Creswell, 2014). The data collected was theoretically analyzed according to themes suggested by the multiple streams framework. Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the interview data was done by following four processes, namely, listening to the recorded interviews, transcription of the interviews

into text form, coding of the transcribed text, and finally, analyzing the coded data. Data collected through interviews must be transcribed, coded, and analyzed to answer research questions (Davidson, 2009; Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005; Witcher, 2010).

According to Oliver et al. (2005), interview transcription can either be natural or denatural. Natural transcription deals with verbatim reproduction of the recorded interview taking into account all aspects of speech impediments, mannerism and accent and other nonverbal cues captured. Denatural transcription takes away all non-standard accents (Oliver et al. 2005). The denatural transcription approach was used because the research questions cannot be answered from the mannerism, accent and other nonverbal cues of interviewees. The interviews were meant to solicit opinions of actors about the influence of actors on the processes or phenomena of conversion of the polytechnics.

The coding of the interview transcripts was done in accordance with the research questions. Relevant opinions found in the transcripts were coded using R1 (research question 1), R2 (research question 2), R3 (research question 3), and R4 (research question 4). The questions had been generated from the multiple streams framework of theoretical analysis. Therefore, theoretical thematic analysis guided the coding and analysis of the interview data.

During transcription, the tape recorder was played several times to keep track of the information received and also take note of important issues for subsequent interview sessions. The continuous playing of the recorded data helped to immerse the researcher into the data (Tracy et al. 2013). It also helped to address any deficiency detected in the earlier interviews through follow-ups to seek clarity on issues that were unclear. Analysis

of data was done interactively with each phase providing important insight for understanding subsequent phases of the conversion programme.

To establish the validity and reliability of the data, copies of the transcribed interviews were sent to some of the respondents to verify if the transcription was a fair reflection of their views during the interviews. The respondents affirmed the validity of the transcribed information received from the researcher (Cohen et al. 2005).

The researcher did not make use of any computer-based qualitative software, such as Nvivo even though it was considered to be useful to facilitate the analysis of the data. The Nvivo is saddled with a lot of limitations. Qualitative software instruments like Nvivo needs time and experience to be able to use it appropriately (Welsh, 2002). The researcher did not have enough time to learn how to use qualitative analysis softwares. Eventually, after frustration in learning the use of the NVivo qualitative analysis software, the manual approach was adopted, abandoning the sophisticated Nvivo software.

4.4 Quality Assurance in Qualitative Research

Maintaining quality standards in research is the most crucial element in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Research validity indicates trustworthiness. Validity and reliability issues in qualitative research have been on the debate table for quite some time now (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Justifying that a research project merits some credibility indicates that it meets some minimum quality standards. For this purpose, quality elements have been factored into this thesis. Issues of quality have revolved around validity explained differently under different traditions of qualitative study. Quality values change with context and current conversation (Tracy, 2010).

To ensure quality standards in qualitative research, Tracy (2010) delineates eight-point qualitative standards, namely, worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. Eisner (1997), on the other hand, suggested structural corroboration, triangulation as well as referential adequacy as guarantees for quality assurance. Silverman (2005) has intimated that qualitative research topic should be ascertained to be appropriate and also investigate the worthiness of the research questions (Creswell et al. 2007). Dixon-Woods et al. (2004, p. 23) have provided a set of questions that should be considered when assessing qualitative research as follows:

Are the questions clear? Are the research questions suited to quality inquiry? Is the sampling, data collection and analysis clearly described? Are the sampling data collection and analysis appropriate to the research question? Are the claims made supported by sufficient evidence? Are the data, interpretations, and conclusions integrated? And does the paper make a useful contribution?

The design of the study responded to all the concerns raised by Dixon-Woods et al. (2004) by following the necessary methodological processes and approaches relevant for a qualitative study. The research questions are directly in line with qualitative characteristics, together with the underlying philosophical, methodological, and theoretical orientations.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) on their part have argued that the ability of the data collected to limit bias is a possible antidote to the solution to the issues of qualitative methodology. This can be done by using information from participants who are

knowledgeable in their fields and have comprehensive views on the issues under study. The thesis relied on the perspectives of political elites, bureaucratic elites, and actors who were actively involved in the whole process of the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. These respondents are ‘insiders’ and experts in their own streams.

The study triangulated multiple data sources gathered from interviews and documentary evidence (Silverman, 2020). The interviews were checked against the hard facts in the documentary data collected. Additionally, factual interview responses were cross-checked from other respondents who answered the same set of questions on the interview guide. This provided an opportunity for convergence of responses as a way of validating and ensuring the reliability of the results. Although Angen (2000) has however argued against triangulation seeking objectivity through convergence, this study applied triangulation not just to indicate convergence but also to show that meanings are contextually created.

4.5 Ethical Considerations and Access Negotiation

The study considered all ethical regulations set up by the University of Ghana. Before the commencement of data collection, the researcher negotiated for access to individuals and organizations sampled for the interviews. For instance, an introductory letter was sent to the Chief Director at the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Accra to inform him about the purpose of the interview and sought his permission to interview him within an immediate time of convenience. The Researcher was referred to interview a Director within the MoE who had actively participated in the conversion process.

Negotiating access to data in an appropriate manner therefore produced richer information for the research. Tracy (2013) indicated that it is essential to gain access from

institutional keepers. Still, more also, the respondents must be willing to cooperate by giving their time. The letters sent to the institutions emphasized the willingness of actors to participate in the study without compulsion. Individual respondents were contacted to confirm the appointment date and venue for the interviews.

Respondents are to be provided with adequate background information about the study to enable them to decide whether they wish to participate or not. Prior to interviews, it is also the requirement of the University of Ghana that the respondents are informed about their rights and even the right to withdraw from the research in the course of the interview. In sum, before the interviews and documentary data collection, appropriate permissions were sought by the researcher, and informed consent was obtained from every individual participant through the signing of the informed consent sheet.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the philosophical foundations and methodology for the study. The interpretive paradigm was the approach the study adopted. The interpretive paradigm is in line with the philosophical underpinnings adopted and the intersubjective nature of the relationship between the respondents and the researcher considering the context of the subjects. The relationship between politics and policy is a social relation which can be conceived by adopting an interpretive approach of data collection and analysis. The chapter has provided the framework for assessing the contribution of the study to knowledge. The thesis followed the due structure and procedures outlined by the University of Ghana for a PhD thesis. It meets all ethical procedural arrangements. All participants were given full information about the study to gain their full consent.

CHAPTER 5

NATURE OF THE ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM FOR THE CONVERSION OF POLYTECHNICS TO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

5.0 Introduction

“One logical way to begin our story is with the players in the game” by discussing “the importance of each participant” and “the resources available to each participant” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 21). This chapter sets out to identify and describe the players in the political system who played the important role of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ in pushing the problems and proposed solutions to set the agenda for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities; supported the policy proposals formulated; and, ultimately, mobilized political support in the political stream for policy adoption.

5.1 Organization of Relevant Actors in the Political Stream

Kingdon (2011, p. 45) noted that “the line between inside and outside of government is exceedingly difficult to draw.” The organization of actors that influenced agenda-setting and policy adoption are those that uses Kingdon’s (2011) distinction between (a) actors that have “a formal decision-making authority” in agenda-setting and policy adoption, on the one hand; and, (b) actors that do not have a formal decision-making authority in agenda-setting and policy adoption. Actors with formal decision-making authority include the government (made up of the president with his cabinet and administrative agencies that had supervisory authority over tertiary education) and members of the legislature.

Actors without a formal decision-making authority in agenda setting and policy adoption include the polytechnics (made up of the Rectors, students, and other employees) and

organized interest groups in society (including political parties, local NGOs, and international actors). The actors had different streams of problems that they sought solutions. Too often, organized interest groups with problems in the society have an unrealistic conception of government as a political actor without problems possessing vast resources to solve all the problems in society. The reality is that every government has its problems to solve. One major problem that faces every government is how to survive in political office. For government to solve a problem presented by actors in the society, the problem should have solutions that concurrently solves some of the problems faced by the government.

How problems and solutions are defined in the domain of policy change to get the support of all actors is important. The policy proposal of converting the polytechnics into technical universities should be capable of addressing some problems faced by the government such as how to win votes to survive in office. Similarly, opposition political parties were more likely to support the proposal if it could help their campaign to win votes. Traditional authorities and citizens in local communities were also more likely to support the proposal if they conceive that the establishment of technical universities would help address problems of economic development that they faced. Thus, the policy proposal intended to solve the problems of polytechnic education should simultaneously be seen as helping to solve other streams of problems facing the government and the society for the proposal to be accepted by all.

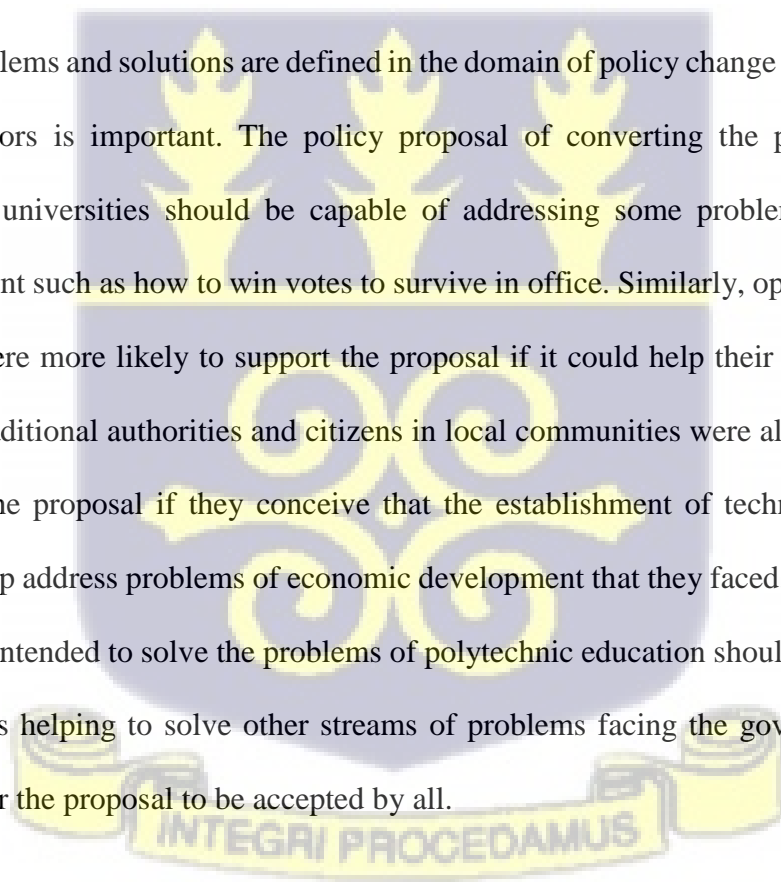
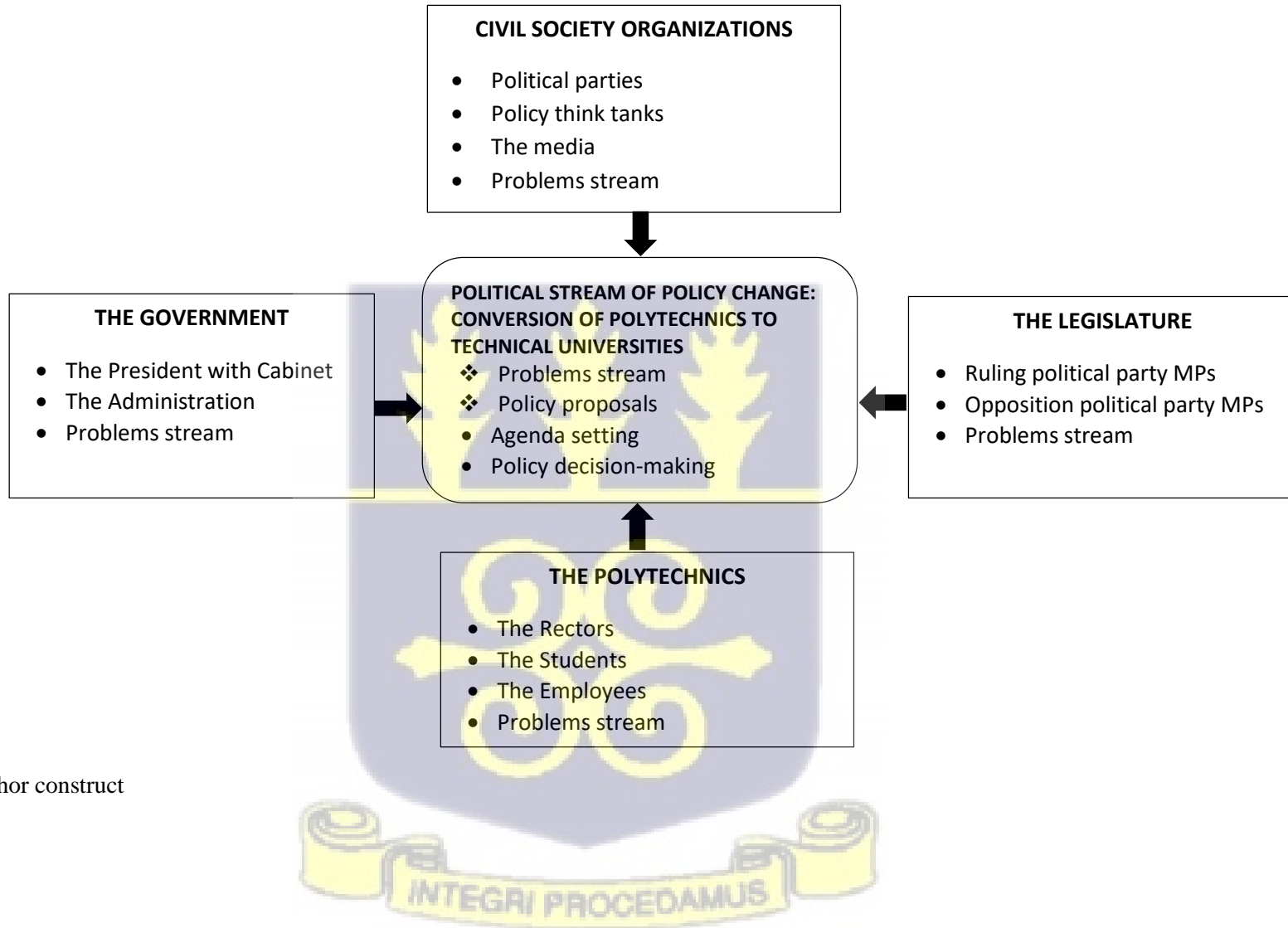


Figure 5: Political Actors, Problems Stream, and the Political Stream of Policy Change



Source: Author construct

5.2 Powers of the Government in the Political Stream

The next drive to be considered in this scheme of events is the power of ruling coalition. Hickey and Hossain (2019) explored the conditions under which reforms are likely to be made to lead to quality improvement in education. They start their analysis from the view that politics is likely the matter in explaining the current situation. A recent review states that education reform is: ‘a highly and politicised process; what gets implemented-and its impact-depends as much or more on the politics of the reform process as the technical design of the reform’ (Bruns & Schneider, 2016).

Officials of government have significant responsibility towards the voters in delivering equitable, effective, efficient and cost-effective system of education. Kosack (2009) identified political will of these officials in relation to policy entrepreneur’s alliance in the provision of basic education and education for all based on illustrative cases from Ghana and Taiwan. Kosack (2009) study posited that quality education can take place either in autocratic or democratic political regimes.

He probed ‘under what conditions might governments be more or less likely to display political will for basic education?’ The first answer lies in the fact that government wants to stay in power and may meet the demands of those voters who want to overthrow him through democratic means or through military regime. For example, the polytechnics were converted by Act of parliament (Act 922) in 2016, the election year. Initially, six polytechnics were converted, agitations started in some other polytechnics, and most probably the bells of political overthrow started ringing and the new government had to give cabinet approval for

the conversion of two other more polytechnics, namely, Cape Coast technical university and Tamale technical university. This goes to buttress the fact that voters have a lot of influence when it comes to political decision in the provision of education.

The fourth republic of Ghana started in January 1993 after citizens adopted the 1992 Constitution in a national referendum, followed by parliamentary and presidential elections in December 1992. Ghana practices the type of political system popularly referred to as the winner-takes-all democracy. This means that the political party that wins more than 50% of the valid votes in the presidential elections does not only form the government, but the President also exercises the constitutional authority to appoint all the 19-member cabinet members, all the Ministers of various sectors of the economy, all the chief executives for the local government authorities (District Assemblies, Municipal Assemblies, and Metropolitan Assemblies), all the chief executives of the public sector organizations, all the board members for various public organizations, all the heads of the tertiary education institutions (including the former polytechnics converted to technical universities), the Chief Justice, and all other justices of the Supreme Court. The President of the Republic wields extensive powers under the 1992 Constitution and has been described as an imperial president (Prempeh, 2008).

Since 1992, there have been seven democratically elected governments under the fourth republic. And there have been three power transitions from incumbent governments to opposition parties following elections in 2000, 2008, and 2016. Elections in Ghana have

become increasingly competitive and ruling governments have felt vulnerable to losing power. This is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 3: Political regimes in Ghana from the pre-colonial period

Period	Governments	Percentage of Votes Won in Elections
1992-1996	National Democratic Congress Government under President Jerry John Rawlings	58.4%
1997-2000	National Democratic Congress Government under President Jerry John Rawlings	57.4%
2001-2004	New Patriotic Party Government under John Agyekum Kufour	53.3%
2005-2008	New Patriotic Party Government under John Agyekum Kufour	52.4%
2009-2012	National Democratic Congress Government under President John E. Atta-Mills (2009-2011)	50.2%
	National Democratic Congress Government under President John Dramani Mahama (2011-2012)	
2013-2016	National Democratic Congress Government under President John Dramani Mahama	50.7%
2017-2020	New Patriotic Party Government under Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo	53.7%

Source: Author construct

Scholars of the MSF have argued that governments are more likely to accept policy changes that either ensures their political survival in office during periods when they feel threatened. In the next chapter, the study shall examine the extent to which this claim is true. Table 6 shows that in 2012 when the NDC government made it a campaign promise to convert the polytechnics into technical universities, the party's survival in office was under serious threat because it had won the December 2008 elections with a razor-thin majority of 50.2% of the votes. And in the 2012 elections the NDC won with only 50.7% of the votes. The 2012 victory of the NDC had to be settled by the Supreme Court after months of legal tussle with the NPP over allegations of vote fraud. In the next chapters, the study will discuss how the

NDC's vulnerability in office impacted on the agenda setting and policy decision-making processes. As already indicated, the NDC government was able to convert six out of the ten polytechnics before it lost power to the NPP in the 2016 elections. Table 6 shows that the NPP won the December 2016 elections with a slightly better percentage of votes (53.7%). Looking at the power alternations between the two parties, the NPP government will feel that its tenure in office is under threat from the opposition NDC. How this impacted on the NPP's attitude towards the conversion of the remaining four polytechnics will also be discussed.

It is important to state at this juncture that both the NDC and NPP have been faced with the problem of how to win votes from electorates to either secure their tenure in government or unseat the government. How to win electoral votes has been a major problem within the problem streams affecting the two parties. The conversion of polytechnics into technical universities became one of the tools used by the parties to solve the problem of winning elections. How each party tried to use the conversion of polytechnics as part of their vote winning solutions shall be discussed later.

Focusing on polytechnic education at the level of tertiary education in Ghana, a review of the empirical data suggests that there were two administrative agencies that played key roles in the processes of agenda-setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption. The administrative agencies are the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). The roles of these two administrative agencies are extensively

captured in the relevant Parliamentary Hansards, media reports, and official reports of various Committees. Although there are other administrative agencies like the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) that have supervisory responsibilities over the activities of the polytechnics, these two other agencies were largely “hidden participants” than “visible participants” (Kingdon 2011, p. 199) in the process of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The powers of the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Tertiary Education are briefly described below.

5.3 Ministry of Education

According to the Civil Service Act, Section 11(2), “A Ministry shall be the highest organization for the respective sector and is constituted of the departments and divisions responsible for the sector.” For the education sector, therefore, the Ministry of Education is the highest organization headed by a Minister appointed by the President and approved by Parliament. The Minister is assisted by Deputy Ministers. The Ministry of Education has the largest percentage of public sector employees among all the sector Ministries with over three hundred thousand employees. The Minister of Education therefore has enormous power and resources.

According to the Civil Service Act, a Ministry shall “initiate and formulate policies taking into account the needs and aspirations of the people;” “initiate and formulate policy options for the consideration of the government;” and, “co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance of the sector.” The initiation of policy

changes with respect to the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities therefore fell squarely on the Ministry of Education. Getting the support of the Minister of Education for policy initiation is a crucial step of the policy-making process in Ghana. Policies are supposed to emanate from the Ministries to the Cabinet. The Ministries are also expected to organize stakeholder consultations on policies as part of the process of policy-making in Ghana. How the Ministry of Education performed these roles of policy initiation, stakeholder engagements, policy formulation, and policy advisory functions in the conversion of the polytechnics shall be discussed in the next chapters. The important point is that the Ministry of Education played a very important role in the processes of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption.

5.4 National Council for Tertiary Education

The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) was created in 1993 through legal enactment by parliament and the president to oversee the “proper administration of institutions designated as institutions of tertiary education in Ghana”. The NCTE has the authority to approve new academic programmes introduced by tertiary institutions in Ghana. The full functions of the Council as spelt out in the establishment Act, Act 454, are as follows:

- a) to advise the Minister on the development of institutions of tertiary education in Ghana;
- b) to enquire into the financial needs of the institutions of tertiary education and advise the Minister accordingly;

- c) to recommend to the Minister for the purposes of the preparation of the annual national education budget:
 - i. block allocations of funds towards running costs; and
 - ii. grants towards capital expenditure of each institution of tertiary education, indicating how the allocations are to be disbursed;
- d) to recommend national standards and norms, including standards and norms on staff, costs, accommodation and time utilization, for the approval of the Minister and to monitor the implementation of any approved national standards and norms by the institutions;
- e) to advise the institutions of tertiary education on the applications for and acceptance of external assistance in accordance with government policy;
- f) to advise the Minister generally on rates of remuneration and other conditions of service of staff of the institutions;
- g) to publish any other functions provided in this Act; and such other functions relating to tertiary education as are incidental to the functions specified in this Act.

Section 1 of the Act establishing the NCTE, Act 454, states that the functions of the NCTE were to be performed by ‘the Council’ comprising the following members:

- a) a Chairman, who shall be a person of wide academic and administrative experience;
- b) one person with extensive experience in university work;
- c) two heads of universities and university colleges in Ghana representing the universities and university colleges on a rotational basis;

- d) a principal of a Polytechnic in Ghana representing the polytechnics on a rotational basis;
- e) a representative of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research;
- f) Chairman, National Board of Accreditation;
- g) Chairman, National Teacher Training Council;
- h) one representative of the Association of Ghana Industries;
- i) one person with considerable experience of school administration in Ghana;
- j) a representative of the National Development Planning Commission;
- k) a representative of the Minister for Finance;
- l) a representative of the Minister for Education;
- m) a representative of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences;
- n) a representative of the Minister for Employment and Social Welfare; and
- o) four other persons at least two of whom shall be women.

The Chairman and members of the Council are appointed by the President, acting in consultation with the Council of State. It appears that the large number of Council members nominated as representatives of professional and industrial organizations will make it difficult for a Government to manipulate the 19-member Council. The study will show that the policy proposals of the Council were influential in the political stream of policy adoption by government and legislators. For instance, while the NCTE proposed that each Polytechnic

should be converted into a technical university after meeting a set of requirements, the NPP government had proposed that all the polytechnics should be converted at the same time. The policy proposal of the Council prevailed and the NPP government converted the polytechnic in phases, based on merit.

Prior to the 2012 agenda decision of the government to convert the polytechnics into technical universities, the NCTE had stated in its 2011 report that the “Council would develop policies and strategies to, among other things, “strengthen Polytechnics to become viable tertiary education options” (NCTE, 2011, p. 3). In partial fulfilment of this commitment, the NCTE reported in 2013 that “To strengthen the mandate of polytechnic education, a committee set up by the NCTE has come out with a report on National Uniform Standard for the Practical Training/Industrial Attachment of Polytechnic Students. The report recommended the establishment of a Skills Development Fund and constitution of Industry Panels to facilitate implementation. The report and a road-map for implementation has been adopted by the NCTE for further consultation with relevant stakeholders” (NCTE, 2013, p. 5). In an interview with the Executive Secretary of the NCTE, he explained the role of the NCTE in the policy process as follows:

There are statutory bodies like the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) set-up for the sole purpose of advising on policy and implementing policy that has been approved. So NCTE...is in a unique position to “shape” or influence tertiary education policies in Ghana. The Minister of Education initiates the process or defers to the NCTE to generate the policy draft which requires approval and ownership by Government (Cabinet).

The power of the NCTE is seen as dependent on the space created by the Ministry of Education within the political stream. The roles played by the NCTE in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities after the agenda decision was announced by government in 2012 shall be discussed in another chapter.

5.5 The Legislature: The Ruling Party and the Opposition Party

Ghana's 1992 Constitution recognized the roles of the ruling party and the opposition party in the parliament of Ghana in policy deliberations. The 1992 Constitution limits the independence of parliament in initiating bills leading to legal enactments. Article 108 of the Constitution states the following;

“Parliament shall not, unless the bill is introduced or the motion is introduced by, or on behalf of, the President—

(a) proceed upon a bill including an amendment to a bill, that, in the opinion of the person presiding, makes provision for any of the following—

(i) the imposition of taxation or the alteration of taxation otherwise than by reduction;

or

(ii) the imposition of a charge on the Consolidated Fund or other public funds of Ghana or the alteration of any such charge otherwise than by reduction; or

(iii) the payment, issue or withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund or other public funds of Ghana of any moneys not charged on the Consolidated Fund or any increase in the amount of that payment, issue or withdrawal; or

- (iv) the composition or remission of any debt due to the Government of Ghana; or
- (b) proceed upon a motion, including an amendment to a motion, the effect of which, in the opinion of the person presiding, would be to make provision for any of the purposes specified in paragraph (a) of this article.

The creation of a university will certainly have financial implications for “the payment, issue or withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund or other public funds of Ghana”. During a debate on the Technical Universities Amendment Bill, this was emphasized by the Minority Leader of Parliament, Mr. Haruna Iddrisu, as follows, “Mr Speaker, the universities today are asking for their research and book allowances. As we elevate them [from polytechnics to technical universities], we must know that it comes with a financial consequence” (Hansard, 20 June 2018, p.1685). Therefore, only the president had the authority to initiate in parliament the policy making process leading to the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities.

5.6 The Polytechnics as Actors in the Political Stream of Policy Change

Prior to the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, each of the ten regions of Ghana had a Polytechnic established. As earlier indicated in the previous chapters, the polytechnics were governed by the Polytechnics Act, 2007, Act 745. The President also appointed the Rectors of all the Polytechnics and the Chairperson, and other members of the Governing Councils. The budgets of the Polytechnics were also approved by the Minister of Finance appointed by the President. The Rectors of the Polytechnics created a powerful association called the Conference of Rectors of Polytechnics to press their interests with the

Government. From the Polytechnics Act, Act 745, the Governing Council for each of the ten polytechnics consisted of the following members:

- (a) the chairperson,
- (b) the Rector of the polytechnic,
- (c) one representative of the Convocation elected by the Convocation,
- (d) one representative of the Teachers and Educational Workers Union,
- (e) one representative of the Polytechnic Administrators Association of Ghana,
- (f) one representative of the Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana,
- (g) one representative of the Polytechnic Students Representative Council,
- (h) one representative of the Ghana Employers Association,
- (i) one representative of the Association of Ghana Industries,
- (j) one representative of a relevant professional body determined by the Minister,
- (k) one representative of the Polytechnic's Alumni Association,
- (l) one representative of the Ministry of Education not below the rank of a Director; and
- (m) one other person, who is a woman.

From the above composition of the Governing Council, it can be inferred that organized interest groups created by students and employees within the polytechnics were powerful actors who could play the role of problem entrepreneurs. On the side of students was the Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students (GNUPS) at the national level. The students in each polytechnic also created their Students Representative Councils (SRCs) and association that championed the interests of students. At the level of the polytechnic employees were numerous organized interest groups including the Polytechnic Workers

Association of Ghana, Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana, and Polytechnic Administrators Association of Ghana. These organized interest groups within the polytechnics were an important source of power that could be mobilized by the polytechnics to back problem entrepreneurs and policy entrepreneurs that supported the proposal to convert polytechnics to technical universities.

In spite of government's control over the Rectors of Polytechnics, the Polytechnics possessed students, lecturers, professors, administrators and policy analysts with the intellectual power to frame the problem in a manner that will be seen by government and the society as legitimate. The polytechnics also had the financial resources to organize media engagements, press conferences, workshops, and seminars to project their problems and solutions to government, members of parliament, and other policy stakeholders. The politically appointed Rectors of the polytechnics also had channels of communication with policy makers in government to influence decisions. Later, we shall see that the Committees created by the NCTE to advise the Ministry of Education, Government, and members of Parliament were loaded with policy experts and consultants who were current and former employees of the polytechnics.

5.7 Civil Society Organizations

Kingdon (2011: 49) noted that although the emergence of items on the governmental agenda cannot be attributed solely to interest groups outside government, "Interest group pressure does have positive impact on the government's agenda, and does so with considerable frequency. A group that mobilizes support, writes letters, sends delegations, and stimulates its allies to do the same can get government officials to pay attention to its issues." In Ghana,

the power of organized interest groups in the society in influencing government's agenda for tertiary education has not received much research attention (Hickey & Hossain, 2019).

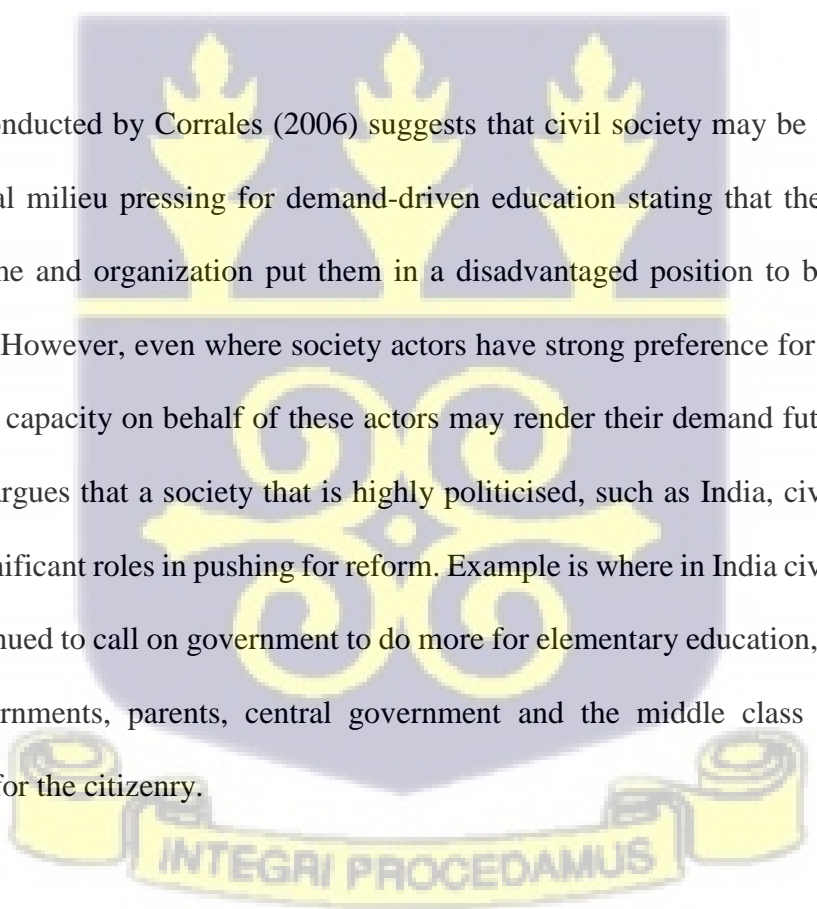
Organized interest groups in the society that the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities and mounted pressure on government to execute the proposal included political parties and traditional authorities. The policy proposal was announced in an election year. While the ruling NDC tried to organize their constituencies and groups to support the proposal wholeheartedly in their campaigns, the NPP also organized their leaders to criticize the “piecemeal approach” adopted by the NDC government to convert the polytechnics in batches. As an alternative proposal, the NPP campaigned to convert all the polytechnics at the same time if voted into power by electorates. Similarly, traditional authorities (chiefs) in local communities hosting the polytechnics exerted pressure on governments to convert their polytechnics into technical universities to accelerate local development.

Local think-tanks did not appear to show a strong interest in the proposal to convert the polytechnics to technical universities. One local think-tank, IMANI Ghana, in its 2016 pre-election report, stated that “Unfortunately, these intentions, however desirable on paper, are not going to have impact even in the short or medium term because of a great lack of capacity to run these schools.”¹ The evidence available suggests that the activities of organized interest groups in the society could be described as hidden participants than visible participants “who receive considerable press and public attention” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 199). The influence and power of local NGOs and international development agencies on the

¹ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Technical-Universities-lack-capacity-to-deliver-IMANI-491078>

government's agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption shall be elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

The civil society is also another important driver in the education policy making arena. However, their ability to influence reform in education based on their incentives and interest may be discounted due to their inability to exert much pressure on the political system. It is argued that the incentives and pressures for educational expansion and improved efficiency in education are weak and sometimes in reverse gear for the poorest and remotely located groups (Corrales, 2006).

The image shows a large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest in the background. The crest features three golden flames at the top, a central golden emblem with a cross-like shape, and a banner at the bottom with the Latin motto "INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS".

A study conducted by Corrales (2006) suggests that civil society may be useful players in the political milieu pressing for demand-driven education stating that the lower levels of their income and organization put them in a disadvantaged position to be considered for education. However, even where society actors have strong preference for more education, the lack of capacity on behalf of these actors may render their demand futile. Little (2011) however, argues that a society that is highly politicised, such as India, civil societies have played significant roles in pushing for reform. Example is where in India civil society groups have continued to call on government to do more for elementary education, a call is made to local governments, parents, central government and the middle class to help provide education for the citizenry.

In Ghana civil societies have raised a lot of eyebrows on the conditions of students on double track system. The government has tried to better the conditions of these students and has

within a short time built more schools to bring the double tract system to a halt. The minister of education at meet the press on 24th July 2019, told the media that it is only the current second years at the senior high schools who will continue with the double tract system in September, 2019 academic year.

The civil society uses the democratic machinery to influence policies of education in developing countries. Analyses of relationship between democracy and education policy tends to reveal that democracy exerts positive influence on government' financial spending on education in terms of access (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Stasavage, 2005). This confirms the assertion by Nelson (2007) that competitive elections may create the need to increase access but not to improve quality due to weak and non-urgent political incentive.

The civil society demand access to education and the politicians capitalise on this desire to provide access to education in line with their demand. Kosack (2012) debunks political and economic explanation to investment in education in developing countries. In his studies conducted in Taiwan, Ghana and Brazil, Kosack concluded that there are two questions that can determine the pattern of education policy, namely, whose support does a government need to stay in power? and what sort of education do those people want? In his studies Kosack (2012), revealed situations where political entrepreneurs help disorganised groups to organise around common interest on education as a way of forming coalitions between popular leaders and rural constituencies (Corrales, 1999).

Hickey and Hossain (2019) argue on the contrary that in forming coalitions to shape policies, developing countries may lack the kinds of organised groups that would constitute a strong

coalition in favour of a better trained citizenry and labour force. Scholars disagree on the kind of power that may be exerted by the civil society in influencing educational reforms. The mentioning of policy entrepreneurs by Kosack (2012) in his study as forming coalition is consistent with proliferation of literature on how teachers organise themselves to affect policies in education. Extensive literature supports the assertion that teachers are the most organised and most vocal group with the power to influence education policy reforms, and that their influence is not always destructive (Béteille, Kingdon, & Muzammil, 2016; Bruns & Schneider, 2016; Kingdon et al. 2014; Moe & Wiborg, 2017; Rosser & Fahmi, 2018).

The civil society power has to contend with civil society groups and the power relations. The power of the civil society groups is great in policy direction in the country. The outcry of certain institutions, such as Imani, 'let my Votes Count' have remained powerful force in the direction of policy in Ghana. They have raised series of concerns about certain government policies. Their concerns have always mattered in the final policy implementation. The extent to which civil societies are able to balance their power relations with policy makers will determine how much influence they may exert on any policy that is made (Kosack, 2012).

The economic structure of the society is also very important to account for the civil society power in the policy making relation in the country (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). The elite exert much influence in the maintenance of a strong balance in the society. Their ideas are so overwhelming since they control a major chunk of power due to their influence in terms of money, power and ideas (Pierson, 1993). They have preferred traditional university

education to polytechnic education and they have regarded polytechnic education as second grade education subservient to university education (Grindle, 2007). The power of the civil society is dependent on these three major elements: civil society groups and power relations, paradigmatic ideas and the economic structure. The combination of these three elements have a lot of influence on the policy direction of education in the country. However, in an interview with the Executive Secretary of the NCTE, he argued that civil society organizations in the education sector are problem and policy entrepreneurs who “*have no direct role in policy making, except by virtue of them being stakeholders who must be heard in the process.*” The role and power of the civil society organizations in the processes of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption shall be empirically examined in the next chapters.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to identify and describe the nature and power of the actors that played critical roles in pushing the problems of polytechnic education, setting the agenda for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities, formulating policy proposals, and mobilizing political support or opposition in parliament during the stage of policy adoption. The chapter identified these actors as government, the legislature, the polytechnics and civil society organizations. Whilst the first two actors are said to have formal decision authority in setting agenda and adopting policies, the polytechnics and civil society organizations have no formal decision authority in making policy decision. They are however able to mount pressure on the government by ringing the bells of elections to drive home their demands. The study found out that governments are more likely to accept policy changes that ensures their political survival in office during periods when they feel threatened. Focusing on

polytechnic conversion to technical universities, the study found out that the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Tertiary Education were the two most important administrative agencies that played key roles in the processes of agenda-setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption. The study again recognises the power of organized interest groups in the society in influencing government's agenda for tertiary education. However, this power exerted by interest group in driving home policy agenda and adoption is yet to receive attention of scholars.



CHAPTER 6

GOVERNMENTAL AGENDA SETTING FOR THE CONVERSION OF POLYTECHNICS TO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

6.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to investigate how the NDC and NPP governments were able to set the agenda decisions of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The MSF argues that the coupling of the three stream – problem stream, policy stream, and political stream – is necessary for the success of agenda setting. The chapter will explore how the three streams were coupled to ensure the success of agenda-setting for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. Section 6.1 discusses the problems of the polytechnics, policy experts, and governments, and how the problems from the three streams were coupled to ensure the success of agenda setting. Section 6.6 explains why the coupling of the three streams occurred to ensure the success of agenda setting by the governments. Section 6.7 summarizes the chapter.

6.1 Agenda-Setting: The problems Stream and Problem Entrepreneurs

Problems do not flow independently of human actors. As Herweg et al. (2015) noted, “if a condition is to become a problem, it has to be constructed in a specific way.” The problem stream is defined to include problems that have been explicitly pushed by ‘problem entrepreneurs’ who advocated for solutions from government. When can one say that a government has set an agenda to consider solutions to a problem? What are the markers or signs that policy-makers in government have started “to perceive a condition as a relevant problem” (Herweg et al. 2015)? In theoretical terms, when is an agenda set for a problem?

Perceptions in the mind are not transparent. In this study, an agenda decision is said to be set by government when the government states in an official document an intention to deal with a specified problem in a particular manner. In the context of this study, the official agenda decision was set by the NDC government when it announced in the 2013 State of the Nation Address the commitment of government to “begin the road map for converting our existing 10 public polytechnics into fully fledged technical universities” (GoG, 2013).

Why was the agenda of the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities set by the NDC government in 2012? Problems of polytechnic education had existed for decades prior to the 2013 agenda-setting. The Afeti Committee Report (MoE, 2014, p. 5) observed:

During the first ten years of their upgrading, not a single year passed without one form of agitation or the other by the students, the teachers or the non-teaching staff. There were demonstrations and boycott of lectures by students to back their demands for *recognition* of the Higher National Diploma, avenues for *academic progression* and *appropriate placement* of polytechnic graduates in the Public Service. The teachers on their part were unhappy about their conditions of service, often basing their discontent on salary disparities between them and their counterparts in the university who possess the same or similar academic qualifications. Much of the discontent and agitations witnessed in the polytechnics in the early years could be partially attributed to the absence of a clear mandate and a common understanding among all stakeholders of the role of the polytechnics in national development.

The reason why government set the agenda in 2013 to convert the polytechnics into technical universities requires explanation. To do so, this study looks at the role of three main groups of problem entrepreneurs whose advocacy in the problem stream resulted in government's agenda setting to convert the polytechnics into technical universities. The groups of actors are (i) polytechnic students, (ii) polytechnic employees (teachers and administrators), and (iii) government. The nature of these problem entrepreneurs and how they shaped the setting of the governmental agenda in 2013 is discussed next.

6.2 Polytechnic Students as Problem Entrepreneurs

The first problem that faced Polytechnic students and graduates was that of poor image among the group of tertiary institutions. Students of Polytechnics are seen as low intellectual quality, inferior to students of the traditional universities, and only fit for middle-level manpower training. This is largely due to the fact that the polytechnics drew students from the technical institutes and vocational schools where the poor performing Junior High School students usually enrol for vocational and technical education. The best of brains from the senior high schools also prefer the traditional universities than the polytechnics. Polytechnics mainly attracted the poor performing senior high school graduates.

During debates about the conversion of the Polytechnics, a Member of Parliament of the opposition NPP, Professor Dominic K. Fobih (Assin South), who was a former Minister of Education, stated, "as we know, students would opt to do degrees, this is because nobody would like to do a diploma; especially, when they come out, they have difficulty in job

placement, salary structures, et cetera.” (PoG, 2016, p. 3802). The problem of getting appropriate job and salary placement for polytechnic graduates was also mentioned by Mr. Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah, a Member of Parliament from the Opposition NPP (Takoradi), who stated in his contribution to the parliamentary debates that “when the polytechnics were created, we had an issue with pay parity in the Public Service. I think that has been one of the major difficulties that the polytechnic students have faced over the years.” To help cure the problem, some of the traditional universities created top-up degree programmes for holders of the Higher National Diploma (HND) from the polytechnics. The problem of job and salary placements for HND graduates resulted in the exodus of these graduates to the traditional universities to do top-up degree programmes: “That is why top-ups have now become more like a fashion than what people actually need those degrees to work with,” Mr. Darko-Mensah added in his contribution to the debates (PoG, 2016, p. 3802).

The proposal to convert the polytechnics into technical universities would therefore enable the polytechnics to offer their own degree programmes to cure the problem of salary disparity for their graduates. Mr. Darko-Mensah tried to point out how the conversion would solve the problem of salary disparity: “Mr. Speaker, I believe that, now that we are viewing them as polytechnic universities, we will ensure that, students that come from these polytechnic universities are never going to be discriminated by the Public Service in the way they are paid, so that they can grow and continue to grow very well.” (PoG, 2016, p. 3809).

Polytechnic students were powerful problem entrepreneurs who pushed for the conversion of the polytechnics into technical universities to solve the problem. Some of the polytechnic students' associations staged demonstrations and boycotted lectures on their campus to showcase their problems. For instance, on Tuesday 1st March 2016, angry students of the Cape Coast Polytechnic were joined by some alumni to stage a protest against their exclusion from the first batch of polytechnics to be converted to technical universities. The students of Cape Coast Polytechnics follow-up with the boycott of lectures. The President of the Students Representative Council of the Cape Coast Polytechnic emphasized, "So we are waiting and until the government tells us what we want to hear we are not going to class...the students will stay at home and enjoy."² Students and alumni of the Cape Coast polytechnic were reported to have "further made appeals to eminent personalities and officials in Government from the Central Region to intervene and ensure the inclusion of Cape Coast Polytechnic in the first phase of the conversion".³ Students associations also used the media to issue statements about their grievances.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students (GNUPS) issued a press statement urging "The agitating groups to calm down and resort to the relevant procedures in resolving the current impasse".⁴ They also urged students groups in "the polytechnic fraternity to desist from introducing and attaching tribal and

² <https://www.pulse.com.gh/communities/student/polytechnic-conversion-saga-c-poly-students-boycott-lectures/tqn59t7>

³ <https://www.modernghana.com/news/678619/conversion-of-polytechnics-to-technical-universities-and-ma.html>

⁴ <https://www.pulse.com.gh/communities/student/polytechnic-conversion-saga-c-poly-students-boycott-lectures/tqn59t7>

political twists to the processes and procedures of converting the Polytechnics to Technical Universities.”⁵ In the press statement, GNUPS further called on “The Ministry of Education, the National Council for Tertiary Education and the Expert Panel to come out clear on the processes leading to the declaration of the institutions listed for the various phases with specific information and details obtained after the assessment of the Polytechnics to clear all perceptions of the general public and ensure adequate transparency in the process of the conversion.”⁶ Attempts by GNUPS to get the leadership of students associations to desist from using political party platforms to resolve grievances were not very successful.

6.3 Polytechnic Employees as Problems and Policy Entrepreneurs

Polytechnics had been upgraded to the status of tertiary institution in 1992. The Polytechnic Acts, 1992 (PNDCL 321) raised the status of the polytechnics to public tertiary institutions. This upgrading offered the polytechnics the opportunity to award Higher National Diploma (HND) and other related certificates (NCTE, 2014). However, the polytechnics have been unable to attract and retain quality teaching and research staff due to a challenge that a Member of Parliament of the opposition NPP, Professor Dominic K. Fobih, described as “as image deficiency among the group of higher institutions that they are part of.” (PoG, 2016, p. 3799) Professor Fobih, explained, “We all know that, in this country, polytechnics have had several challenges. ...The...challenge they have is also the status they form among the hierarchy of higher institutions in this country. Are they below the traditional universities

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

because their heads are not called Vice Chancellors, or because they cannot award first degrees or run undergraduate programmes” (PoG, 2016, p. 3799).

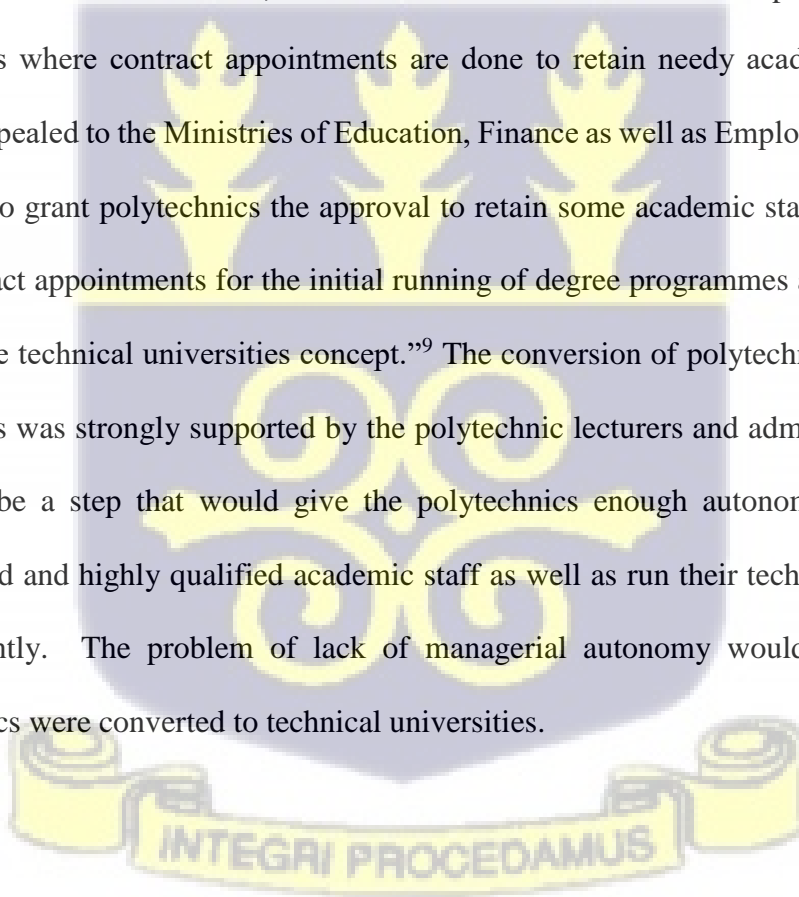
Both the public Universities and the Polytechnics have the same minimum qualification for all teaching staff. However, lecturers, senior lecturers, and professors in the polytechnics did not enjoy the same conditions of service as their counterparts in the traditional universities. Consequently, the polytechnics usually lost their quality teaching faculty to the traditional universities. For instance, Dr. George Afeti, the *Chairman of the Technical Committee on the Conversion of the Polytechnics in Ghana to Technical Universities*, who taught at Ho Polytechnic for over two decades and served as the Rector for over a decade, left to join the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The polytechnics lost their qualified lecturers to the traditional universities due to poor conditions of service.

Many times, the Polytechnic Teachers Association (POTAG) had to resort to strike action to demand for better conditions of service. In 2010, POTAG embarked on a strike action for more than one month to demand for better conditions of service.⁷ The National Labour Commission (NLC) went to court seeking an order to compel the polytechnic teachers to go back to the classrooms and also submit themselves to “compulsory voluntary arbitration”. The court threw out the case on the grounds that “compulsory voluntary arbitration” was foreign to Ghana’s Labour Act. The conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities

⁷ <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/potag-floors-national-labour-commission-in-court/>

was therefore also framed as a solution to deal with the problem of conditions of service for the polytechnic staff.

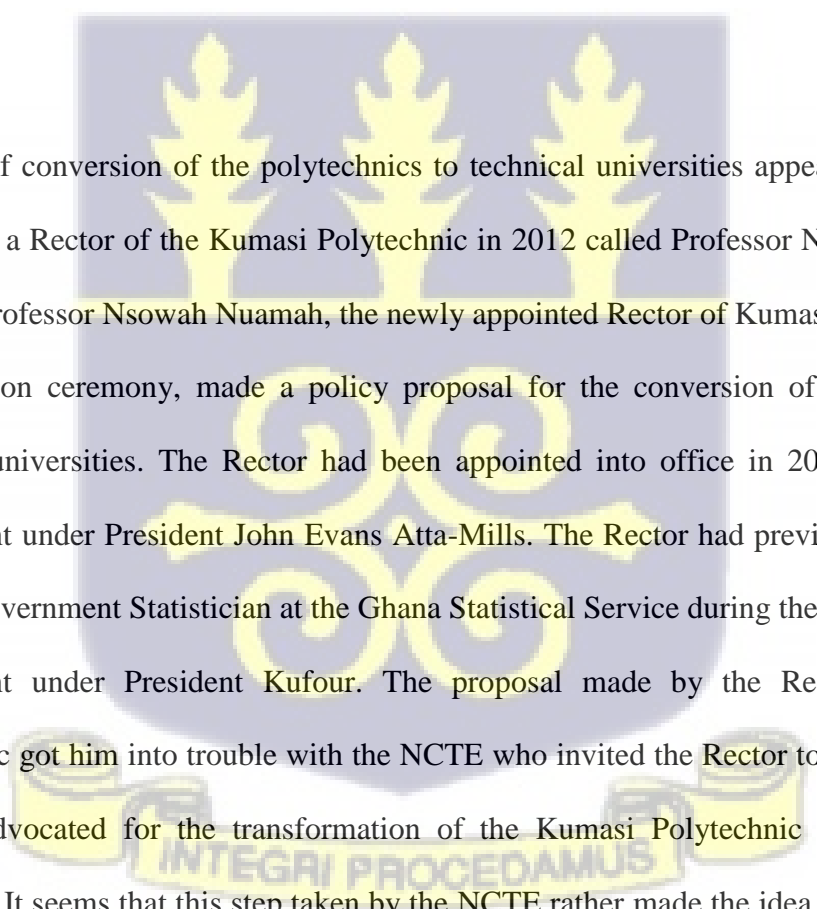
Compared to the traditional universities, polytechnics did not have managerial autonomy to give contract appointments to experienced teaching faculty that were heading for retirement. In 2014, the Rector of the Accra Polytechnic, Professor Sylvester Achio, reported that experienced senior lecturers in the polytechnic were heading for retirement at the time the polytechnic was expanding its newly introduced Bachelor of Technology degree programmes. The Rector said, “We foresee brain drain from the polytechnics to the universities where contract appointments are done to retain needy academic staff”.⁸ The Rector “appealed to the Ministries of Education, Finance as well as Employment and Labour Relations to grant polytechnics the approval to retain some academic staff on at least two-year contract appointments for the initial running of degree programmes and in preparation towards the technical universities concept.”⁹ The conversion of polytechnics into technical universities was strongly supported by the polytechnic lecturers and administrators as they saw it to be a step that would give the polytechnics enough autonomy to retain their experienced and highly qualified academic staff as well as run their technical programmes independently. The problem of lack of managerial autonomy would be cured if the polytechnics were converted to technical universities.



⁸ <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/education/201410/218526.php>

⁹ <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/education/201410/218526.php>

Employees of the polytechnics mainly used dialogues with key stakeholders, media engagements, and protests to ‘sell’ their problems about polytechnic education. They engaged in dialogues with the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education, and the Ministry of Education to push their problems. The Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG) also usually used press conferences with the media to air their grievances. POTAG sometimes acted as a united national association. However, branches of POTAG in the various polytechnics also took independent actions to make known their unique problems. It appeared that POTAG lacked a strong united front to push their problems.



The idea of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities appears to have been mooted by a Rector of the Kumasi Polytechnic in 2012 called Professor Nsowah Nuamah. In 2010, Professor Nsowah Nuamah, the newly appointed Rector of Kumasi Polytechnic, at his induction ceremony, made a policy proposal for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. The Rector had been appointed into office in 2010 by the NDC government under President John Evans Atta-Mills. The Rector had previously served the Deputy Government Statistician at the Ghana Statistical Service during the time of the NPP government under President Kufour. The proposal made by the Rector of Kumasi Polytechnic got him into trouble with the NCTE who invited the Rector to Accra to justify why he advocated for the transformation of the Kumasi Polytechnic into a technical university. It seems that this step taken by the NCTE rather made the idea of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities popular among the Rectors. The Rector of the Kumasi Polytechnic became the chairman of the Conference of Rectors of Polytechnics (CORPS).

In an interview with the Rector, Professor Nsowah-Nuamah, he explained the emergence of the policy proposal to convert polytechnics to technical universities as follows:

When I was going to Kumasi polytechnic, my investiture, my investiture speech, it is there documented, I said, before I leave Kumasi polytechnic, it would be Kumasi technical university. I made it part of my leaving notes. Right from my investiture, anytime I had my congregation, I mentioned Kumasi technical university because I talked about it in my investiture. I don't know how it happened then that during the election 2012 this idea came. In fact, there was a time our polytechnic strategic plan 2012 or something, I have forgotten. The strategic plan was 'Technical University of Kumasi Strategic Plan,' and I was summoned to NCTE Council with Alhaji, my Chairman. Their issue was that why are you calling your university technical university. It was Professor Tagoe and, initially, they wanted us to go and meet the entire Council. They were having Council meeting, but upon second thought they said the Chairman and the Executive Secretary should meet us. They met us in the Executive Secretary's office. ... So nobody, and I tell you even the Ministry [of Education] itself was not interested in the technical university. It was by luck that we had somebody like Okudzeto Ablakwa who thought it was a good idea and so he started pushing. The only time the Ministry stopped was when Mahama went somewhere and said that the Polytechnics were going to be converted into technical universities. That is when it became obvious that it was going to be possible. Then those steering affairs had no option. So that is how the idea was conceived.

From the above, it is clear that the conceiver of the idea did not have a clear plan of putting the idea on the governmental agenda. He conceded that he did not “know how it happened then that during the election 2012 this idea came.” The Rector of the Kumasi Polytechnic could be described as a policy entrepreneur but not a governmental agenda setting and agenda decision-making actor. The Rector credited the former Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. Okudzeto Ablakwa, as the political entrepreneur “who thought it was a good idea and so he started pushing.” In the context of governmental agenda setting and decision-making in Ghana, there is some consensus among actors within the polytechnic fraternity that government is the sole agenda setting and decision-making actor. In an interview with Dr Afeti, a former Rector of Ho Polytechnic and Chairman of the Technical Committee for the Conversion of the Polytechnics, he stated that “the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was a political decision. This is not surprising since the government is the major funder of public tertiary education in Ghana.” In an interview with the Executive Secretary of the NCTE, Professor Salifu Haruna Muhammed, he also stated,

The Government (political authority!) has the sole prerogative of setting policy and putting in place the necessary legislative and regulatory environment for attainment of the policy objectives. For public educational institutions, Government also has the responsibility of setting-up the educational institutions and to provide for their capital and recurrent expenditure. So politics does matter a great deal in education, and rightly so.

Employees within the polytechnics, particularly the Rectors, might have conceived of the policy solutions to deal with the problems of polytechnic education, but they did not see

themselves as having the authority to set the agenda for policy-making to begin. At best, they saw themselves as problem entrepreneurs and policy entrepreneurs.

Thus, in September 2013, when the Ministry of Education set up a Technical Committee to develop a roadmap for the conversion of the Polytechnics to technical universities, the Committee received memoranda from the following problem and policy entrepreneurs: National Secretariat of POTAG, the Accra Polytechnic Branch of POTAG, the Kumasi Polytechnic Branch of POTAG, the Wa Polytechnic Branch of POTAG, and a lecturer of the Takoradi Polytechnic (MOE 2014). The Chairman of the Technical Committee, Dr. Afeti, described the nature of the policy entrepreneurs that participated in the process as follows:

Several stakeholders playing the role of policy entrepreneurs were involved in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. These included Ministry of Education, Polytechnic Rectors, technical education experts, representatives of some traditional engineering universities, professional bodies, civil society organizations, students and opinion leaders. Some of these stakeholders contributed actively to the work of the Technical Committee that developed the road map for the conversion process.



The roles played by the above actors influenced the governmental agenda setting and decision making, the employees of the Polytechnics saw “Government as the architect of the conversion,” according to the Chairperson of the Technical Committee. Many of the above

stakeholders resorted to using the tools of problems and policy entrepreneurship – including strike actions, peaceful demonstrations, and press conferences – to try to influence government to set the agenda to solve the problems of polytechnic education. Commenting on the effectiveness of these problems and policy entrepreneurial strategies, Chairperson of the Technical Committee stated in an interview,

The contributions of the stakeholders and policy entrepreneurs immensely influenced the conversion in a very positive way. In particular, some of these actors argued to dispel the notion of a section of the public that the converted polytechnics would become like traditional universities.

It seems that in the agenda setting process, “When participants recognize problems or settle on certain proposals in the policy stream, they do so largely by persuasion. They marshal indicators and argue that certain conditions ought to be defined as problems, or they argue that their proposals meet such logical tests as technical feasibility or value acceptability” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 199). Later, in the political stream of policy formulation and adoption, participants would use bargaining more than persuasion to build consensus around proposed policies. Kingdon stated that “Consensus is built in the political stream by bargaining more than by persuasion” (ibid). This claim will be examined in the next chapter where the processes of policy formulation and adoption are discussed.

In 2014, POTAG declared a nationwide strike to demand better conditions of service and protest against the non-payment of book and research allowances. The strike lasted for three

months, from May-August 2014, and led to the closure of all polytechnics in the country. The Government, through the National Labour Commission, took POTAG to the High Court in an attempt to compel polytechnics teachers to return to the classroom. POTAG however won the court case. Government in turn froze the payment of the August 2014 salaries of the polytechnic teachers and delayed its payment. In contrast, teachers of the traditional universities, through the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), had similarly embarked on a month-strike which ended in August 2014 to demand for the payment of their book and research allowance by government. The government treated UTAG favourably and did not delay their salaries. Polytechnic teachers and administrators had demanded for the problem of lack of parity of conditions of service with the traditional universities to be addressed by governments.

In October 2014, the Minister of Education, Professor Jane Naana Opoku Agyeman, speaking at the graduation ceremony for students of Accra Polytechnic, blamed the three months strike action as the reason for government's delay in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The Minister stated, "The process has been hampered by the recent strike action that did not favour the arrival of our external partners."¹⁰ This position stands in sharp contrast to a recommendation that had been made to the Ministry of Education by the Technical Committee on Conversion of the Polytechnics in Ghana to technical universities in May 2014. The Technical Committee had recommended the following:

¹⁰ <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/education/201410/218526.php>

To allow for sufficient time to undertake due diligence on the current status of the polytechnics (including careful evaluation of their current academic standing and future study programmes and funding needs) so as to ensure that the conversion process is successful, it is recommended that the effective start date for converting the Polytechnics to technical universities should be September, 2016 (MoE, 2014, p. 15).

The point is that POTAG supported the conversion of the polytechnics into technical universities which they welcomed with opened arms, but governments did not always treat POTAG in a positive manner. In a press conference organized by POTAG in 2015 to support the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, they argued that “with the conversion to technical universities, polytechnics would have enough autonomy and be empowered to run the much-needed technical programmes.”¹¹ POTAG proposed to government that “the entire polytechnic institutions be converted and that gradual process based on identified criteria should not be engaged.”¹² The differing views of POTAG usually fell on the deaf ears of governments. POTAG did not have the authority to set the governmental agenda for the problems to be solved.



¹¹ <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/conversion-of-polytechnics-to-universities-laudable-says-potag.html>

¹² <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/conversion-of-polytechnics-to-universities-laudable-says-potag.html>

6.4 The Ministry of Education as Policy Entrepreneurs

In the previous chapter, the powers of the Ministry of Education in initiating public policy was described. The Ministry of Education had the responsibility of advising government on policy proposals and policy implementation strategies. The Director at the Ministry of Education recalled the crucial role that the Ministry played in the conversion process as follows; *“The initiator of the policy is the Ministry through its regulatory body through NCTE which we know regulate all tertiary institutions. Basically, they were the initiators of the whole idea.”* In another interview, the Chairman of the Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana at the time of the conversion, Dr. Jones Ntiamoah, also noted the important role that the MOE played in the policy making process as follows:

“The Ministry decided to convert the polytechnics. The Ministry had the manifesto of the former government to convert the polytechnics. So, the Ministry was more or less the superintendent and NCTE was to be advisers to the Minister and the institutions were supposed to be implementers more or less when the policies are ready.”

The Ministry of Education also played the role of resolving conflicts among the policy stakeholders. In an interview, a Director of Education described how the Ministry discharged the stakeholder consultation as follows:

First the decision to convert the polytechnics to technical universities was a manifesto pledge and this manifesto pledge is largely informed by people’s opinion. So even though government had that particular manifesto, in rolling out that particular policy there was a wider stakeholder consultation. And so I recall very

well that on the 6th of January 2015, there was a stakeholder consultation on the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities at La-Palm Royal Beach hotel where various stakeholders and then Conference of Rectors, the Vice-Chancellors Association of Ghana, and polytechnic institutions, TEWU, Colleges of Education were all present. In fact, wider stakeholder consultation within the education space met on the work that was given to a Committee to assess the readiness, whether or not the policy itself was implementable.

The Ministry of Education had to deal with challenges of cooperation of actors from both within and outside the Ministry. Some interviewees commented that there is strong cooperation between the MOE, the National Council for Tertiary Education, and National Accreditation Board in helping government to set the agenda for the reform of the polytechnics. The Chairman of POTAG at the time of the conversion of the polytechnics commented in an interview that *“there was more cooperation between the NCTE and the Ministry, but the institutions were not fully engaged in the process.”* A Director of Education at the Ministry of Education supported this observation with the view that *“the initiator of the policy is the Ministry through its regulatory body, through NCTE which we know regulate all tertiary institutions. Basically, they were the initiators of the whole idea.”* Many interviewees shared the view that there appear to have been more cooperation between the Ministry and its agencies than within the Ministry itself.

Some interviewees and Members of Parliament pointed out that during the NDC administration there appeared to be conflict between the Minister of Education and the

Deputy Ministers over the direction of the reform. In an interview with a Rector of one of the polytechnics who played a key role in the conversion process, he stated,

I tell you even the Ministry itself was not interested in the technical university. It was by luck that we had somebody like Okudzeto Ablakwa [Deputy Minister responsible for Tertiary Education] who thought it was a good idea and so he started pushing. The only time the Ministry stopped was when Mahama went somewhere and said that the polytechnics were going to be converted into technical universities. That is when it became obvious that it was going to be possible. Then those steering affairs had no option.

The Chairman of POTAG at the time of the conversion also remarked that “*When the conversion started somewhere in 2013, we had this conference at Labadi beach hotel, the Minister at the time, Okudzeto, was very influential. He virtually handled the whole conversion process.*” A former Rector of the Ho Polytechnic also observed the yeoman role played by the Deputy Minister of Education in helping government to set the agenda for the reforms and pushing through the reforms; the Rector stated,

The NDC government itself, some of the policy entrepreneurs who were supposed to be at the forefront were not convinced about the necessity of the policy. They became policy foot-draggers instead of policy promoters. Some were not convinced about the conversion. They were policy late comers after the training they had. For example, the then Minister was not interested in the conversion. It was the Deputy Minister who was championing the conversion. Within the core policy actors were hesitant and benevolent actors who wanted the policy to go through whether fair or foul

means. The conversion would have been smoother if the Minister herself had given the thing her heartfelt blessing.

However, in an interview, a Director of Education at the Ministry of Education objected to the view that the Minister was not interested in the policy compared to the interest shown by the Deputy Ministers. The Director stated,

Okudzeto was a [Deputy] Minister and his aim was to set for himself the goal they have set for themselves as a target. So, he was the Deputy Minister, and, by extension, he was working for the government. He was there to direct government policy political wise. So it is not about he doing the thing on his own. If it was him alone the thing would not work, if the community doesn't give you the support you cannot work.

There was the strong perception among many interviewees that during the agenda setting stage of the policy-making process, under the NDC administration of President John Mahama, the Minister of Education, Professor Jane Naana Agyemang, was not interested in the idea of converting polytechnics to universities. The Report of the parliamentary Committee on Education acknowledged the supporters of the Bill as follows:

During the consideration of the Bill the Committee was assisted by two Deputy Ministers for Education, Hon Alex Kyeremeh and Hon Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, officials from the Ministry as well as officers from the Attorney-General's Department. The Committee is grateful for their support. (PoG, 2016, p. 3764)

The acknowledgement section of the Report of the Committee on Education seems to reinforce the perception that the Minister of Education did not offer unflinching support to the conversion of the polytechnics to the universities. The Deputy Ministers, however, had the total support of the Presidency to help set the agenda for the reforms. The first phase of the conversion of the polytechnics did not include the Cape Coast Polytechnic located in the capital of the central region where the Minister comes from. Some interviewees commented that the exclusion of the Cape Coast Polytechnic from the first phase of the conversion exercise made the Minister unpopular in her home region.

In contrast, during the NPP administration under President Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, the Minister of Education, Honourable Matthew Opoku Prempeh, took the leading role in setting the agenda for the conversion of the remaining four polytechnics. In the Hansard of 20th June 2018, the parliamentary Committee on Education acknowledged,

The Committee, in considering the Bill, met with the Hon Minister for Education, Dr Matthew Opoku Prempeh, the Minister of State in Charge of Tertiary Education, Professor Kwesi Yankah, the Executive Secretary to the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), Professor Mohammed Salifu, officials of the Ministry of Education, the Attorney-General's Department and representatives of the following stakeholders. (PoG, 2018, pp. 1665-1666)

During the NPP Administration, the Minister of Education appeared to have taken full charge of the agenda setting and policy formulation process to the extent that the leadership of the governing party felt they had not been well briefed by the Minister about the content and

purposes of various sections of the Technical Universities Amendment Bill, 2017, sponsored by the Minister of Education. This resulted in the Minister and the Majority Leader of Parliament disagreeing during parliamentary debates over important sections of the Bill. The disagreements were resolved after the Speaker of Parliament ordered the Minister, the Majority Leader, and other stakeholders to have a winnowing meeting to resolve disagreements. The processes of policy formulation and legislative adoption of the Bill are discussed in-depth in the next chapter.

The role of the Ministry of Education in contributing to policy agenda setting in Ghana cannot be by-passed. However, the Ministry of Education has usually relied on technical experts from within and outside the Ministry to shape policy proposals for agenda setting. The discussion also shows that while the support of the Minister of Education is important for policy agenda setting, the most critical power for policy agenda setting rests with the President of the Republic. The President may decide to remove a Minister who is not willing to support the agenda of the President for a sector Ministry. The role of the President in the agenda setting process is discussed next.

6.5 The President as Problem Entrepreneur and Agenda Setting Agent

It is important to emphasize that the polytechnics were first created in 1963 out of the existing technical institutes inherited from colonial rule. The polytechnics had enjoyed tertiary status since 1992. Polytechnic students, graduates, teachers, and administrators faced many recurrent problems related to inadequate teaching and learning facilities, lack of clear job placement of polytechnic graduates, poor conditions of service for polytechnic teachers,

poor infrastructure, and lack of clear academic and professional progression outside the polytechnics. These problems persisted for over decades before the polytechnics were converted to technical universities. What made the NDC government suddenly give serious attention to the problems of polytechnic education?

The question here is why did government set the agenda to convert the polytechnics to technical universities in 2012? Herweg et al. (2015, p. 437) hypothesized that “The more a condition puts the policy maker’s re-election at risk, the more likely it is to open a policy window in the problem stream.” It appears that the problems of polytechnic education in Ghana did not carry enough power to get the attention of government for solutions until 2012. And the evidence available suggests that the re-election of the NDC government was at risk in the 2012 elections. Until the re-election of the government became at risk, and the government constructed the problems of polytechnic education as an issue of re-election, both the polytechnic students and polytechnic employees lacked the power to put the problems of all the ten polytechnics on the agenda of government for solutions. Agenda coupling was therefore initiated by the NDC government.

This study argues that it was not the seriousness of the problems faced by the polytechnics that made the governments become polytechnic problem entrepreneurs overnight. Rather, the government pushed for the conversion of the polytechnics into technical universities in attempts to solve their different problems of how to win electoral votes to stay in power. In other words, the increasing intense competition for electoral votes after the 2000 and 2008

presidential run-off elections made the two parties to compete among themselves for the votes and support of the over fifty thousand polytechnic students and staff. In other words, the problem of competitive-clientelism that faced the political parties best explains why the NDC and NPP governments successively converted polytechnics into technical universities.

Many scholars have noted that between 2000 and 2020, ruling governments have been characterized by a high degree of vulnerability in power, due mainly to short termism in office as opposition parties have become highly competitive. When Ghana returned to constitutional democratic politics in 1992 after over a decade under military rule, the NDC beat the NPP in the 1992 presidential elections by a margin of about 30 percent. However, the NDC lost power to the NPP in the 2000 elections after the elections went into a presidential run-off between the two parties. The NPP also lost power to the NDC in the 2008 elections which witnessed another presidential run-off between the two parties. The NPP lost power with 40,586 votes less than the NDC. After the 2008 elections, President John Evans Atta Mills died in office in 2011 and his vice president, John Dramani Mahama, led the NDC with few months to the 2012 elections.

Towards the 2012 elections, the opposition NPP made a very popular promise in their manifesto that an NPP government will provide free Senior High School (SHS) education if the party win the 2012 elections. In response, advocates of the proposal to transform polytechnics into technical universities offered the idea to the NDC as a solution to counter the NPP's free SHS. NDC turned to the ten polytechnics which had a total population of

43,113 students as at the 2011 (MoE, 2014). The number of polytechnic students was more than the number of difference of votes between the NDC and NPP in the 2008 run-off.

In the heat of the 2012 election campaigns, it appears that the NDC used the politically propitious moment to hook the problem of how to win votes to the proposed solution of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. Polytechnic Rectors then took advantage of the politically propitious moment to push their new proposal to the NDC government. Kingdon (2011, pp. 201-202) noted that,

Advocates of a new policy initiative not only take advantage of politically propitious moments but also claim that their proposal is a solution to a pressing problem. Likewise, entrepreneurs concerned about a particular problem search for solutions in the policy stream to couple to their problem, then try to take advantage of political receptivity at certain points in time to push the package of problem and solution.

In October 2012, the NDC's John Mahama, at the launch of the party's 2012 election manifesto in Ho, promised to convert the polytechnics into technical universities if voted back into office. In the NDC 2012 manifesto, the party promised to,

Solve the problem of academic progression of polytechnic graduates by introducing degree programmes in all Polytechnics in the country. ... The NDC government will upgrade all Polytechnics into degree awarding institutions that will award both HND and Degrees.” The NDC manifesto further stated that the upgrading of the polytechnics will be done “on a case-by-case basis, [as] the polytechnics may have

to upgrade their facilities and qualification of faculty in order to become degree awarding institutions” (NDC, 2012).

In November 2012, when President John Mahama addressed students of the Koforidua Polytechnic in the eastern region, he emphasized the promise in clearer terms, “You heard me in Ho when I spoke at the launch of our manifesto. Our intention is to improve faculty and infrastructure on all the ten Polytechnic campuses in order that we can upgrade them into fully-fledged technical universities”.¹³ The NDC government became polytechnic problem entrepreneurs but with a different incentive of using it as a vehicle to solve the party’s problem of how to gain votes to win against a strongly competitive NPP. In response, the presidential candidate of the NPP supported the policy proposal.

In 2013, the NDC Government selected a former Rector of the Ho Polytechnic to lead a Technical Committee to design a policy proposal and roadmap for the conversion of the polytechnics. John Mahama led the NDC to win the 2012 elections with 50.7 percent of the votes while the NPP got 47.7 percent. After winning the 2012 elections, the NDC government reaffirmed in the 2013 State of the Nation Address its promise to convert the polytechnics into technical universities.

In the 2016 presidential elections, President John Mahama lost the December 2016 elections to the NPP by obtaining 44 percent of the votes while the NPP got about 53 percent. In

¹³ <https://m.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/politics/201211/147503.php>

2017, the NPP government also set the agenda decision of converting the polytechnics to technical universities. The NPP government continued the NDC government's "piecemeal approach" by converting the Cape Coast and Tamale Polytechnics into technical universities in 2018. Bolgatanga and Wa Polytechnics were the last two polytechnics converted to technical universities by the NPP Government in 2020. Why did the NPP government continue with the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities? And why did the NPP use the same "piecemeal approach" that they had criticized to convert the remaining four polytechnics?

The NPP government's continuation of the policies and strategies of the NDC is due to what Kingdon (2011) refers to as policy "spillovers". Kingdon (2011, p. 203) explains that "Success in one area contributes to success in adjacent areas. ... These spillovers, as we have called them, occur because politicians sense the payoff in repeating a successful formula in a similar area, because the winning coalition can be transferred, and because advocates can argue from successful precedent. These spillovers are extremely powerful agenda setters, seemingly bowling over even formidable opposition that stands in the way." The NDC had successfully used the campaign of conversion of polytechnics to win the 2012 elections. The NPP saw it prudent to support the policy and use conversion of the remaining polytechnics to win votes.



The political windows of competitive elections not only made the NDC and NPP to become polytechnic problem entrepreneurs, but competitive elections also pushed the governments

to solve the problems of polytechnic education that had existed for decades. The study shows that policy spillovers are more likely to occur where politicians are assured of the payoff in repeating a successful formula.

6.6 Explaining the Coupling of the Three Streams for Agenda Setting

Scholars of the MSF have debated how the three separate streams – problem stream, policy stream, and political stream – converge for agenda setting and policy change to occur. The above analysis seems to suggest that it is the political entrepreneurs from the political stream that are responsible for coupling the problem stream and policy experts to the political stream. Kingdon (2011, p. 182) was right in his explanation that,

During the pursuit of their personal purposes, entrepreneurs perform the function for the system of coupling the previously separate streams. They hook solutions to problems, proposals to political momentum, and political events to policy problems. If a policy entrepreneur is attaching a proposal to a change in the political stream, for example, a problem is also found for which the proposal is a solution, thus linking problem, policy, and politics. Or if a solution is attached to a prominent problem, the entrepreneur also attempts to enlist political allies, again joining the three streams.

This study shows that it is the political entrepreneurs that performed the function of coupling the previously separate streams. Political entrepreneurs found that the proposed solution to the problems of polytechnic education would equally function as an effective solution to the

problem of how to win votes. This means for coupling of the three streams to occur, there must be two things; first, at least two separate problems affecting actors outside government, on the one hand, and, political entrepreneurs within the government, on the other hand; and, second, there must be a single solution for the two problems streams.

This study argues that, prior to the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, the problems of polytechnic education in Ghana were not given serious attention by governments for over a decade because the governments did not feel vulnerable to losing power. The next chapter discusses how the NDC and NPP political entrepreneurs were able to mobilize enough power in the political stream to convert the polytechnics to technical universities.

6.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed how the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities was set by governments in the political stream. The discussion suggests that the proposal for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was conceived in the polytechnic arena, but it was the NDC and NPP governments that set the agenda decisions as a viable solution to solving their own problems of winning votes from electorates. The chapter shows that a government must have a strong political incentive to join problem entrepreneurs to provide a solution to a problem. The proposed solution should be capable of solving the critical problem of political survival affecting every government. Ultimately, it was government that coupled the problems stream and policy proposal stream to the political stream to set the agenda of converting the polytechnics to technical universities.

CHAPTER 7

THE POLITICS OF POLICY FORMULATION AND ADOPTION IN THE CONVERSION OF POLYTECHNICS TO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

7.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to answer the question of how governments, political parties, and the polytechnics collaborated to ensure the adoption of the policy proposals to convert the polytechnics to technical universities. Section 7.1 discusses how a ‘technical committee’ of policy entrepreneurs created by the government in 2013, through the Ministry of Education, designed and drafted policy proposals that shaped the content of the Technical Universities Bill formulated by both the NDC and NPP governments for legislative adoption. Section 7.2 discusses how each government mobilized support for the adoption of the popular and unpopular policy proposals. Section 7.3 presents the politics of policy adoption under the NDC government. Section 7.4 presents the politics of policy adoption under the NPP government. Section 7.5 presents the politics of policy negotiations between the ruling party and opposition party in parliament. Section 7.6 discusses how the coupling of actors from the three streams occurred for the success of policy formulation and legislative adoption of the proposals. The final section summarizes the chapter.

7.1 Design and Drafting of Policy Alternatives: The Afeti Committee

In February 2013, President John Mahama announced in the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) that the government was committed to converting the ten polytechnics to technical universities. In September 2013, the Government set up a Technical Committee to undertake consultations and make recommendations for the conversion of the polytechnics into

technical universities (NCTE, 2013; MoE, 2014). The membership of the Committee, led by Dr. George Afeti as Chairman is shown below in Table 7.

Table 4: Membership of the Afeti Technical Committee

	Name and affiliations of Members	Position
1	Dr George Afeti Executive Secretary, National Inspectorate Board Former Secretary General, Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa Former Principal, Ho Polytechnic Member of the Ghana Institution of Engineers (GhIE)	Chairman
2	Cmdr. J. A. C. Combey (Rtd) – Member, Association of Ghana Industries	Member
3	Dr J. V. K. Afun - Member Rector, Ho Polytechnic	Member
4	Prof G. K. S. Aflakpui - Member Rector, Wa Polytechnic Fellow, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences	Member
5	Mr Kwame Dattey - Member Executive Secretary, National Accreditation Board	Member
6	Dr Albert K. Sunnu - Member Senior Lecturer, College of Engineering, KNUST	Member
7	Mrs Divina D. Nkwatabisa - Member State Attorney, Attorney General's Department	Member
8	Prof Mahama Duwiejua - Member Executive Secretary, National Council for Tertiary Education	Member
9	Mr Evans T. Ankomah-Asare - Secretary Assistant Secretary, National Council for Tertiary Education	Secretary

Source: MoE (2014, pp. 1-2)

The Committee came to be popularly referred as the 'Afeti Committee'. It is interesting to note that the Chairman and two other members of the Committee had served as Rectors of polytechnics and therefore possessed rich knowledge about the nature, challenges, and the directions desired by the polytechnics. Dr. Afeti, Chairman of the Committee, was the first Principal of the Ho Polytechnic when the Polytechnics were converted to tertiary institutions

in 1993. According to the January-March 2017 edition of ‘The Informant’, published by the Ho Polytechnic, “Dr. George Mawuse Afeti, the first Principal of Ho Polytechnic has been credited with substantial infrastructural and human resource development of the then Ho Polytechnic. He is hailed for putting in functional institutional frameworks that led to the development and smooth take-off of Bachelor of Technology (BTech) programmes, making Ho Polytechnic a pacesetter in this regard.” Addressing a congregation of the Ho Polytechnic in 2003, Professor Francis Kwami, who was Chairman of the Ho Polytechnic Council, praised the transformation of the Ho Polytechnic into “a visionary institution where strategic thinking had superseded ad hoc decisions”.¹⁴ At the congregation ceremony, the then Minister of State in charge of Tertiary Education, Mrs Elizabeth Ohene, stated that “evidence of government commitment to polytechnic education at the Ho Polytechnic was the massive structures being undertaken under the GETfund,” and that, “this year alone the Fund allocated 1.2 billion cedis to the institution for staff development and research.” The important point is that the Committee was led by a person who was renowned in pursuing the transformation of polytechnics into centres of academic excellence.

Analysis of the data collected also suggest that some members of the Afeti Committee belonged to a strong research network, some had worked within the Kumasi environment, and some had worked in the same Polytechnic. While Dr. Afeti was a former Rector of Ho Polytechnic, Dr J. V. K. Afun was the current Rector of the same Polytechnic. Dr. Albert K. Sunnu and Dr. Afeti had also worked closely together for years at the Kwame Nkrumah

¹⁴ <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/polytechnics-urged-to-focus-on-technical-skills-training.html>

University of Science and Technology in Kumasi as research collaborators (Sunnu, Afeti & Resch 2008, 2018). Professor G. K. S. Aflakpui who was the then Rector of Wa Polytechnic had also previously worked at the CSIR-Crops Research Institute in Kumasi. It is not surprising that the idea of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities emanated from Kumasi where Professor Nsowah-Nuamah promised in 2010 to transform the Kumasi Polytechnic into a technical university.

It appears that the Afeti Committee had been built around a core ‘technical university’ policy advocacy network based in Kumasi. Prof. Aflakpui, Dr. Afun, and Prof. Mahama Duwiejua were also members of the Council of the NCTE, as Government nominees. A member from the National Accreditation Board was added to the Committee due to the requirements for relevant institutional representation. A State Attorney from the Attorney-General’s Department advised the Committee on legal matters. The Committee had a strong linkage to the Polytechnics, the NDC Government, and the NCTE to influence the acceptance of its policy proposals during the formulation of the Technical Universities Bill. The closely related network of Committee members somewhat fits into what Sabatier (1993) refers to as policy ‘advocacy coalition’ where the members of the policy stream is closely related to the political stream than separate. However, the members of the Afeti Committee were not related to the NPP government that later won power and followed the policy advice contained in the Afeti Committee report. The Afeti Committee’s policy stream flowed separately from the NPP government’s political stream. The coupling of the NPP government to the Afeti Committee policy proposals was largely influenced by the NPP government’s incentive to similarly use the conversion of the polytechnics to win votes.

The terms of reference of the Afeti Committee were as follows (MoE, 2014, p. 2):

- i. To review the key characteristics of a technical university
- ii. To highlight the differentiating characteristics of a converted polytechnic as a technical university from a traditional university
- iii. To recommend eligibility criteria for converting a polytechnic to a technical university
- iv. To recommend a strategy for converting the 10 polytechnics to technical universities, with particular reference to whether all the polytechnics should be converted at the same time or on a polytechnic-by-polytechnic basis
- v. To formulate the broad mandate for the converted polytechnics as technical universities
- vi. To suggest suitable names by which the converted polytechnics shall be known
- vii. To make any other recommendations as the Committee may deem necessary.

The Afeti Committee seems to have achieved more than the production of a report containing the roadmap for reform. The Committee submitted its report to the Minister of Education in May 2014. The Committee's recommendations influenced the formulation of the Technical Universities Bill and the Technical Universities Amendment Bill submitted to parliament by the NDC and NPP governments respectively. It is worth stating the methodology used by the Committee to undertake its task. The Committee reported its methodology as follows:

The Committee held eight (8) meetings and received memoranda from stakeholders. The Committee members also had the opportunity to travel to Germany on a one-week study visit to a number of Technical Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. During the study visit, members of the Committee interacted with institutional leaders, the German Rectors Conference and a number of political leaders in the Parliament of the State of North Rhine Westphalia and the Federal

Parliament or Bundestag in Berlin. The Committee reviewed the lessons learnt in the upgrading of the Polytechnics in Ghana to tertiary status in 1992 and the transformation of the “Technikons” in South Africa to Universities of Technology. The Committee also consulted a number of legal documents on polytechnic and higher education in Ghana. (MoE, 2014, p. 2)

The Afeti Committee met with diverse stakeholders of polytechnics education to listen to their views. The Afeti Committee reported that it received memoranda from the following local organizations, associations, and individuals in Table 8 below:

Table 5: Local actors who submitted memoranda to the Afeti Committee

No.	Names of Local Actors that submitted memoranda to the Committee
1	POTAG, National Secretariat
2	POTAG, Accra Polytechnic Branch
3	POTAG, Kumasi Polytechnic Branch
4	POTAG, Wa Polytechnic Branch
5	Baraka Policy Institute
6	Association of Ghana Industries (AGI)
7	ASP Sherry K. Amedorme
8	Mark Kofi Cobblah
9	Kofi Asante-Kyei, Lecturer Takoradi Polytechnic
10	Kosi Kedem, former Member of Parliament (MP, Hohoe South)

Source: MoE (2014, p. 17)

The experiences of other countries and international best practices studied by the Afeti Committee to inform its recommendations became extremely useful source of knowledge to convince stakeholders in Ghana to accept the Committee’s recommendations. The Committee’s report (MoE, 2014, pp. 18-19) shows that the Committee members facilitated the signing of a Letter of Intent between the Ministry of Education in Ghana and the German

Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to obtain the support of DAAD in “the following key activities between the Universities of Applied Sciences in Germany and the converted polytechnics in Ghana:

- i. development of academic and professional partnerships with German Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS);
- ii. institutional mentoring of the converted polytechnics by German UAS;
- iii. affiliation agreements with German Universities of Applied Sciences;
- iv. academic staff exchanges;
- v. study visits for leaders and administrators of the converted polytechnics;
- vi. training of teaching and technical support staff;
- vii. curriculum design; and
- viii. specialised staff development programmes, internships and industrial attachment for lecturers of the converted polytechnics.” (MoE, 2014, p. 18)

The Committee urged the Minister of Education to “take steps to quickly sign a Memorandum of Understanding with DAAD to bring into full effect the content of the letter of intent signed with DAAD in April 2014” (MoE, 2014, p. 18). The Afeti Committee’s work helped the MOE towards obtaining critical resources, institutional mentoring, and training in Germany for the ten Polytechnics in Ghana.

In the report submitted by the Committee to Government, the Committee advised the government to avoid repeating the past mistake of elevation of all the Polytechnics into tertiary institutions in 1993 through “the strategy of *elevation* of technical institutes or by government pronouncement” (MoE, 2014, p. 5). They argued that the transformation of all the existing polytechnics into the tertiary institutions without the prior development of human resource capacity, infrastructure, required equipment, and strong institutional linkages to industry “was one of the critical flaws of the polytechnic upgrading process, the

ramifications of which are still evident in the polytechnic system today” (MoE, 2014, p. 5). Consequently, the Committee advised the government that “each polytechnic should be considered on its merit against an agreed set of eligibility criteria” relating to three key areas, namely (i) institutional standing, (ii) academic staff requirements, and (iii) evidence of collaboration with industry and employers in the delivery of study programmes (MoE, 2014, p. 8). The Committee further recommended that “The Ministry of Education should constitute an Expert Implementation Panel to advise on the eligibility of each polytechnic for conversion to technical university as well as provide technical expertise and support to the institutions during the transition period” (MoE, 2014, p. 15).

While the NDC Government was in a hurry to fulfil its electoral campaign promise of converting the polytechnics to technical universities, the Afeti Committee rather recommended that, “To allow for sufficient time to undertake due diligence on the current status of the polytechnics (including careful evaluation of their current academic standing and future study programmes and funding needs) so as to ensure that the conversion process is successful, it is recommended that the effective start date for converting the Polytechnics to Technical Universities should be September, 2016” (MoE, 2014, p. 15). The work of the Afeti Committee strongly influenced the roadmap for the conversion of the Polytechnics to technical universities. It led to the formulation of policy proposals by the NDC and NPP governments to convert the polytechnics in phases based on the merit of meeting a set of conversion criteria.

The NDC and NPP governments, through the Ministry of Education, conducted many stakeholder workshops and consultations with interest groups at different times (See

Hansards, 19th July 2016, 20th June 2018, and 2nd April 2020 for reports of the parliamentary Committee on Education). However, many interviewees suggested that the reforms pursued by the two governments were largely a reflection of the content of the Afeti Committee recommendations. The POTAG Chairman for Accra Technical University stated in an interview that the stakeholders' consultations organized by governments were only meant to give a semblance of national character to the recommendations that had been made by the policy experts. The Chairman described the stakeholder consultations and workshops organized by the government as follows;

I call it window dressing, it is shambolic in my view because in order to give a certain semblance of national character, they pretended to have invited people from the universities, even unions within the polytechnics to have contributed but at the end of the day, as it is being happening at the end of the conversion, they don't take or accept the ideas and the inputs of these civil society groups. ...Organizations had very little influence except the men and women they believed are the experts whom they constituted to come out with a blueprint for them to be able to do this.

The content of the reform Bills debated and approved by parliament also reflect the recommendations of the Afeti Committee. In spite of the powerful ideas of the policy experts produced in Committee reports, workshops, and conferences, it took intense lobbying of Members of Parliament by some of the policy experts to get the ideas of the technical people accepted in parliament. The former Rector of Kumasi Polytechnic, who could be considered as the brainchild of the idea of technical universities in Ghana, shared his experience of the lobbying in an interview:

I remember at Parliament, Chairman of the Education Committee, the week they were passing the law, I was attending conference but had to rush to Parliament. Then, after some time, I needed to lobby some MPs. I was there moving from place to place both sides [including] even the current Minister. For about thirty minutes they were arguing with me. Sometimes I could stay with them at Parliament before closing at 9pm or beyond. I went to meet the Chairman of the Education Committee in Parliament. And I told him I am leaving [office as Rector] at the end of the year. And the man said, 'So you are not going to enjoy this and you stick out your neck into it?' But I told him that I knew it was something I thought was very essential, that I want to leave Kumasi Polytechnic not as a polytechnic but as a university, and I want to leave a legacy but not for myself.

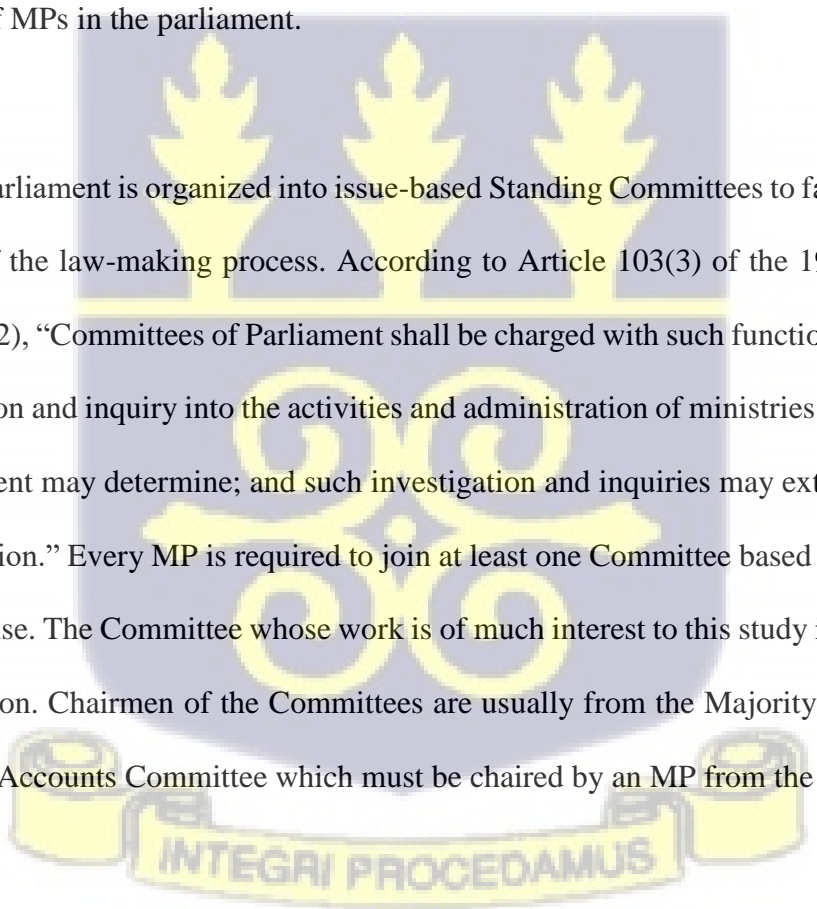
The former Rector stated that the lobbying produced both a positive and a negative effect. On the positive side, it helped to get the MPs to pass the initial Technical Universities Bill in the form that the Rectors and stakeholders desired in 2016. However, the relationships that the policy experts built with the politicians led to the watering down of the 16-point criteria that had to be met for the conversion of the remaining four polytechnics between 2018 and 2020. The former Rector stated, *“Lobbying MPs was a strategy that made possible the passage of the Act. In so doing, however, some of the key recommendations as condition precedent for the polytechnics to qualify as technical universities were diluted.”* Kingdon (2011, p. 199) explains that *“Consensus is built in the political stream by bargaining more than by persuasion.”* The policy stream and the political stream did not form an unconditional advocacy coalition.

A year after the policy experts had lobbied the MPs for the passage of the Technical Universities Act in 2016, the Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic were deemed by the policy experts to have met the requirements for their conversion to technical universities. The Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill was submitted by the newly elected NPP government to parliament in 2017 and it was passed in 2018. The policy experts once again helped the political stream to convert the remaining Wa and Bolgatanga Polytechnics to technical universities in 2020. When the former Rector of Kumasi Polytechnic was asked whether he thought that the conversion of the Cape Coast and Wa Polytechnics were largely influenced by ‘political decisions’ than ‘technical decisions’, he responded, *“No, not really, but there are certain things when politics come into play you may not see whether politics come into play or not.”* Commenting on whether politics should be made to direct education policy, a research officer of the Ghana Employers Association that participated in the stakeholder meetings stated, *“What we need to do is to allow technical people to design policies for you and then you implement. What is not good is to use your political powers to influence policy.”* The idea of separation of policy-making from politics is a common theme among the interviewees although the reality of policy bargaining in the political stream is different, particularly within the corridors of Ghana’s Parliament. The politics of policy bargaining and adoption among the ruling government, the main opposition political party, and stakeholders in the polytechnics are discussed next.



7.2 The Mobilization of Legislative Support for Policy Adoption

The law-making process in Ghana's unicameral legislature is quite a simple process (FES, 2011). Ghana uses the single-member constituency for the election of Members of Parliament (MPs). The leader of parliament is the Speaker of Parliament who is appointed by the President from within or outside Parliament. The party with the largest number of MPs constitute the majority party and appoints the Majority Leader, while the party with the second largest number of MPs appoints the Minority Leader. Both the Majority Leader and Minority Leader have Deputies. The majority and minority parties appoint Chief Whips who ensure party discipline. Since the fourth republic, the ruling party has always had the majority of MPs in the parliament.



Ghana's Parliament is organized into issue-based Standing Committees to facilitate effective scrutiny of the law-making process. According to Article 103(3) of the 1992 Constitution (GoG, 1992), "Committees of Parliament shall be charged with such functions, including the investigation and inquiry into the activities and administration of ministries and departments as Parliament may determine; and such investigation and inquiries may extend to proposals for legislation." Every MP is required to join at least one Committee based on their interests and expertise. The Committee whose work is of much interest to this study is the Committee on Education. Chairmen of the Committees are usually from the Majority party except for the Public Accounts Committee which must be chaired by an MP from the minority party.

A Bill submitted to Parliament for enactment into an Act is required to go through four main stages, namely the first reading stage, the second reading stage, the consideration stage, and

the third reading stage. When a Bill is introduced to Parliament it is given the first reading and referred to the appropriate Committee by the Speaker of Parliament. After the Committee finishes its work, a report is prepared by the Committee and presented by the Chairman of the Committee on the floor of Parliament for the second reading of the Bill. The second reading is the most crucial stage in the life of a bill where the sponsors must mobilize enough support from MPs to get the Bill accepted. It has become the norm for sponsors of Bills to provide various forms of incentives, including financial incentives, to get MPs to support the acceptance of a Bill. In recent times, the norm of giving financial incentives to MPs to support a Bill has come under criticism. The Parliamentary Committee interacts with stakeholders of the Bill to receive inputs, resolve misunderstandings about the Bill, and receive proposals to fine-tune the Bill.

The report of a Committee on a Bill must also include any amendments to the Bill proposed by the Committee. The Speaker invites debates from MPs on the Committee's report and the content of the Bill. During important debates, the Majority and Minority Leaders typically catch the eye of the Speaker to make contributions. After the debates, the Speaker puts the question on the motion for acceptance of the Bill. If the motion for acceptance is agreed to then the Bill enters the consideration stage where proposed changes are made. Following the changes, the Bill enters the third reading after which it is passed or rejected by MPs.

The enactment of a Bill into law normally requires a simple majority of MPs to support its passage. The Technical Universities Bill required only a simple majority of MPs to vote in

favour of it. Table 9 below shows the strengths of the NDC governments and NPP governments in parliament since 1992.

Table 6: Parliamentary Seats of NPP and NDC Since 1992

Elections	NDC Seats		NPP Seats	
	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Percentage
1992	189/200	94.5%	0/200 (Boycotted)	0%
1996	133/200	66.5%	61/200	30.5%
2000	91/200	45.5%	100/200	50%
2004	94/230	40.9%	128/230	55.7%
2008	116/230	50.4%	107/230	46.5%
2012	148/275	53.8%	122/275	44.4%
2016	104/275	37.8%	169/275	61.5%

From Table 9, after the NDC won the 2012 elections, the NDC government had a majority of MPs (53.8%) to support the passage of the Technical Universities Bill into an Act for the conversion of the Polytechnics to technical universities. Similarly, after the NPP won the 2016 elections, the NPP Government had a majority of MPs (61.5%) to support the passage of the Bill to convert the remaining four Polytechnics to technical universities. Ruling government in Ghana exercise strong control over their MPs in parliamentary proceedings. Under the fourth republic, there has never been a time when the members of parliament belonging to the ruling party voted against a bill introduced by the government. During highly politicized debates in the parliament, the MPs of opposition parties had their say in debates while the MPs of the ruling party always had their way to achieve their legislative

objectives. Table 10 below shows the length of time that it took each of the three phases of the conversion of Polytechnics to receive parliamentary passage.



Table 7: Phases of Legislative Formulation and Adoption of the Technical Universities Bills

Phases of Conversion	Period of legislative formulation and adoption of the Technical Universities Bill			
	First Reading	Second Reading	Consideration Stage	Third Reading
First Phase: Conversion of Six Polytechnics to Technical Universities: (i) Accra Polytechnic (ii) Ho Polytechnic (iii) Koforidua Polytechnic (iv) Kumasi Polytechnic (v) Sunyani Polytechnic (vi) Takoradi Polytechnic	7 th June, 2016	19 th July, 2016	25 th July, 2016 26 th July, 2016 27 th July, 2016 3 rd August, 2016	3 rd August, 2016
Second Phase: Conversion of Two Polytechnics to Technical Universities: (i) Cape Coast Polytechnic (ii) Tamale Polytechnic	24 th January, 2018 ¹⁵	20 th June, 2018	27-28 th June, 2018	29 th June, 2018
Third Phase: Conversion of Two Polytechnics to Technical Universities: (i) Bolgatanga Polytechnic (ii) Wa Polytechnic	30 th March, 2020	2 nd April, 2020	2 nd April, 2020	2 nd April, 2020



Table 10 shows that during the first phase of the conversion of the Polytechnics to technical universities under the NDC government, the MPs spend more time dealing with proposed amendments to the Bill at the Consideration stage than during the subsequent phases of the conversion. During the second phase of the conversion of the polytechnics, after the first reading of the Bill the government spent time to interact with stakeholders before proceeding with the second reading. This is because the Amendment of Technical Universities Bill, 2017, submitted during the second phase also contained proposals to claw back some of the autonomous powers that the new technical universities had been given under the first phase. The issues that led to long stakeholder meetings between the NPP government and the Technical Universities from January to June 2018 are discussed below. During the third phase, the MPs spent just a day to complete the processes from the second reading to the passage of the Bill after the third reading. This again confirms the argument of Kingdon (2011, p. 203) about ‘spillovers’ in agenda setting and decision-making where “Success in one area contributes to success in adjacent areas. ...spillovers...occur because politicians sense the payoff in repeating a successful formula in a similar area, because the winning coalition can be transferred, and because advocates can argue from successful precedent.” The next sections discuss how the NDC and NPP governments mobilized supports for the passage of their sponsored Bills in parliament.

7.3 The Politics of Policy Adoption under the NDC Government

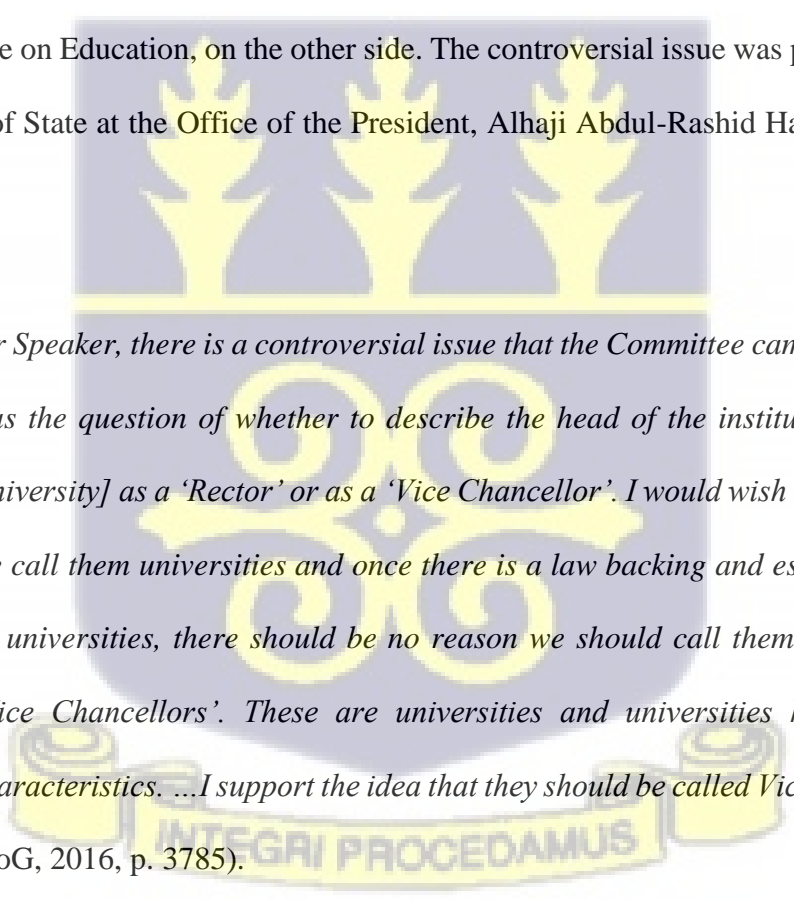
It is important to emphasize that the NDC government had made the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities a major election campaign issue in 2012. The processes of stakeholder consultations and the government’s decision to follow the recommendations made by the Afeti Committee led to the delay in the conversion of the

polytechnics to technical universities. When the NDC government finally started the process of legislative adoption of the Bill the country had entered the election year of 2016. Politically, if the Bill gets converted during an election year it will enhance the credibility of the NDC's 2016 manifesto. If the NDC failed to fulfil its 2012 campaign promise it will be to the advantage of the NPP's campaign to unseat the NDC. In the Technical Universities Bill sent by the NDC government to parliament in 2016, the Bill sought to convert six out of the ten polytechnics to technical universities. To the disadvantage of the NDC, the four polytechnics that had failed to meet the conversion criteria were located in the most economically poor regions of the country where the NDC had won votes than the NPP in the 2012 elections. Students, lecturers, and administrators of the four polytechnics pressured the NDC government to include their polytechnics in the conversion process.

The NPP also seized the opportunity to win votes from among disgruntled polytechnic students and staff. The NPP's presidential candidate opposed the "piecemeal approach" to the conversion of the polytechnics announced by the NDC government. In June 2016, the presidential candidate of the NPP, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, went to the Cape Coast Polytechnic to address the Tertiary Students Confederacy (TESCON) of the NPP at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. He criticised the government's "piecemeal approach" adopted by the NDC government to the conversion of the ten polytechnics, and promised, "when we get the chance in 2017, we are going to make sure we do all together as one".¹⁶ The NPP presidential candidate further promised that if the party is voted into power, his government is "going to make sure that the infrastructures of the polytechnics are fully developed, and that the collaboration between the polytechnics and

industry is strong. That is what is going to make technical education the future of our country... We are not in favour of the piecemeal approach to the conversion. We want all the polytechnics to be considered as one. That is the proper way to go ahead with this policy.”¹⁷ Students’ political groupings on the campuses of the four polytechnics that had been left out of the first phase of the conversion programme tried to make the NDC unpopular in the affected local areas.

The NDC government had to resolve a very controversial issue in the Bill that had created conflict between the Polytechnics and the traditional universities on the one side, and conflict within the government between the Ministry of Education and the parliamentary Committee on Education, on the other side. The controversial issue was presented by the Minister of State at the Office of the President, Alhaji Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, as follows,



Mr Speaker, there is a controversial issue that the Committee came across. There was the question of whether to describe the head of the institution [Technical University] as a ‘Rector’ or as a ‘Vice Chancellor’. I would wish to say that, once we call them universities and once there is a law backing and establishing them as universities, there should be no reason we should call them otherwise than ‘Vice Chancellors’. These are universities and universities have their own characteristics. ...I support the idea that they should be called Vice Chancellors.” (PoG, 2016, p. 3785).

¹⁷ *ibid*

Mr. Pelpou was not only a Minister of State at the Office of the President but he was also the Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee on Education. While the Committee on Education supported the idea that the Rectors of the Polytechnics should assume their preferred new name as Vice Chancellor, the Ministry of Education which sponsored the Bill favoured the maintenance of the title of ‘Rector’. On the conflict over the title of ‘Vice Chancellor, the NPP MP for Old Tafo stated, “it worries me, especially, when the Committee and the Ministry differ on the name” (PoG, 2016, p. 3787). The House was informed that the Conference of Vice Chancellors of the traditional universities were opposed to the use of the title of Vice Chancellor by the new Technical Universities. Ironically, the Minister of Education, Professor Jane Naana Opoku Agyeman, was a former Vice Chancellor of one of the traditional universities (University of Cape Coast). It appeared that the Office of the President, the Committee on Education, and majority of the MPs threw their weight behind the new title of Vice Chancellor. Where persuasion fails, power prevails. To date, the Conference of Vice Chancellors of the traditional universities have not admitted into their membership the Vice Chancellors of the technical universities.

The NDC government tried to redesign the Technical Universities Bill in a manner that would provide enough assurances to the four polytechnics that did not qualify that they would ultimately be converted in future after they met the conversion criteria. The Committee on Education, chaired by an MP from the NDC, proposed that the First Schedule of the Bill should be amended to include the statement “Polytechnics to be converted”, followed by the names of the four polytechnics (PoG, 2016, pp. 3779-3780). One NDC MP stated in his contribution to the debates, “*I believe that the initial proposal of government is to convert all the 10 polytechnics to technical universities, but it is*

because they did not meet the criteria, that the four have been left out. Let us create a window of opportunity for them in the Bill, so that when they meet the criteria, they would also become technical universities” (PoG, 2016, pp. 4181-4182). From the side of the NPP, Mr. William Ofori Boafo, stated, “If the four polytechnics are not eligible now to become technical universities, I would propose that this amendment is dropped” (ibid).

Some NPP parliamentarians dragged their feet in supporting passage of the Bill into law. An influential NPP parliamentarian, Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei (NPP – Old Tafo), found many problems in the Report presented by the Chairman of the Committee on Education. Dr. Akoto Osei argued, “I believe that, as much as I do not want to call for the standing down of the Report, I believe the Committee is not doing this House a favour in the presentation of this noble concept of technical university. So, I urge them to stand it down and rewrite the Report so that, we can all feel strengthened to support it” (PoG, 2016, p. 3788). Many members of the NPP were careful not to be perceived to be opposing the “noble” idea of the government to establish technical universities for communities that lacked them. Dr. Osei did not get the support of his minority leader to push for the rejection of the Committee’s report. However, many MPs from the NPP tried to emphasize in their contributions to the debates that the passage of the Bill will not solve the problems affecting polytechnic education. The Minority leader, Mr. Kyei-Mensah Bonsu, however supported an amendment that contained a provision that assures the remaining four polytechnics of future conversion to technical universities. He tried to provide appropriate grammatical renditions of the proposed amendments that would give assurances to the polytechnics that had been left out of the first phase of the conversion process.

The Deputy Minister for Education, Mr. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, used similar reform experiences of other countries to persuade his colleague MPs that the reform in Ghana was “an idea whose time has come” (Kingdon, 2011). Mr. Ablakwa told the House, “Mr. Speaker, the conversion of our polytechnics to technical universities is not a policy that is unique to Ghana. It is a global concept, other nations have taken this path, two decades and some five decades ago. It is an idea whose time has come.” (PoG, 2016, p. 3810). In using the metaphor of “an idea whose time has come,” the Deputy Minister for Education spoke like a student of Kingdon (2011). The Deputy Minister tried to persuade his MPs to support the reforms because similar experiences of other countries “in Africa (South Africa and Kenya), Europe (Germany and Denmark) and Asia (Japan and India) provided the backdrop for defining the general orientation and key characteristics of a technical university.” One MP from the NPP side rose on a point of order to accuse the Deputy Minister of reading from a foreign material that had not been made available to all MPs in the House. The Speaker ruled out the objection on the grounds that the Deputy Minister “referred to the Committee’s Report and drew the attention of the House to paragraph 2.1 (f) and asked permission of the Chair to quote from the expert Report of the Technical Committee on the conversion of polytechnics in Ghana to technical universities. Nobody objected to it.”

Following the intervention of the Speaker, the Minority Leader also supported the Deputy Minister’s reference to the Afeti Committee Report by saying, “Mr Speaker, I believe that, to the extent that the reference would contribute to enlightening the House. I believe it is worth the while for him to do that” (PoG, 2016, p. 3815). By gaining the crucial support of the Minority Leader, the NDC parliamentarians ultimately succeeded persuading almost all the MPs from the minority side to support the acceptance of the

motion to adopt the Bill and create the technical universities from the polytechnics. However, Mr Joseph Osei-Owusu (NPP – Bekwai) who appeared to be unconvinced that the conversion will deal with the problems affecting polytechnic education tried to move the opposition party to reject the motion. Mr. Osei-Owusu following policy alternative, “In my opinion, what we need now is not to convert them to universities, but investing in the existing ones to serve the purpose for which they were instituted and build on that.” Mr. Ablakwa then rose on a point of order to refer to the support of the presidential candidate of the NPP by asking, “Mr Speaker...I want to find out from the Hon Osei-Owusu whether he is contradicting his flagbearer who says he would convert all the ten polytechnics immediately, and faster than President Mahama is doing?” Incensed by the introduction of partisan politics into the debate, Mr. Osei-Owusu responded, “Mr Speaker, I regret very much that the Hon Deputy Minister has not outgrown the politics of serious business. This is serious business. ... This is not a matter of politics.” The Deputy Minister had thrown what appeared to be an effective political punch but the approach was not allowed in the House. The Speaker ruled out the Deputy Minister as being out of the order of the rules of the game of discourse within the House. Standing on his victory, Mr. Osei-Owusu then went on to urge the MPs to reject the motion by stating that “we should ensure that technical education is technical education and not certificate. I do not find the answer in the Bill, and I pray that it should be rejected” (PoG, 2016, p. 3822). The Deputy Minority Whip, Mr. Ignatius Baffour Awuah (NPP – Sunyani West) quickly intervened to get the Minority side to support the motion by saying, “Mr. Speaker, I wholly support the Motion that we are debating, but that is not to say that, I do not have issues about the Motion.” The Minority Leader then followed with his tacit support, “Mr Speaker, I want to start from where the Hon Deputy Minority Whip ended...I would like to pray the Hon Minister that we should get our bearings right before

we step out in this otherwise noble endeavour.” The Speaker concluded that “The experts have spoken on this subject,” and therefore called the Minister of Education, Prof. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, to wind up the debate. The Speaker then put the question on whether to accept the motion: The Hansard (PoG, 2016, p. 3836) records, “*Question put and Motion agreed to.*” Thus, the leadership of the NDC and NPP in parliament cooperated to support the adoption of the Bill.

When the third reading of the Technical Universities Bill was done on 3rd August 2016 to convert the first phase of six polytechnics into Technical Universities, all the MPs in the house supported the adoption of the Bill. However, it seems that the conflict that had occurred among the Ministry of Education, the Committee on Education, and the Presidency over the title of ‘Vice Chancellor’ was only a sign of major cracks within the ruling NDC government. In the 2016 elections, the NDC lost power to the NPP. The next section discusses how the NPP mobilized support for the adoption of Bills by the legislature to convert the remaining four polytechnics in phases.

7.4 The Politics of Policy Adoption under the NPP Government

It is important to recall that when the NPP was in opposition, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, the presidential candidate of the party, had supported the NDC government’s proposal of converting the polytechnics to technical universities. However, he had criticised the “piecemeal approach” of converting the polytechnics and suggested the alternative of wholesale conversion. After the NPP won the 2016 elections, the new president stated in the 2017 budget statement the NPP government’s commitment to continue with the policy of conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The budget presented by the Minister of Finance on 2nd March 2017 stated,

The Technical University Act, 2016 (Act 922) was enacted by this Honourable House and six polytechnics namely, Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Ho, Sunyani, Koforidua, Polytechnics were converted into technical universities. In 2017, Government will assist the remaining polytechnics through enactment of legislation and re-tooling of their laboratories, renovation of existing infrastructure and the running of accredited Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) programmes to merit their conversion to technical universities. (NCTE, 2017, p. 107)

The dilemma that faced the NPP government was whether to convert all the four remaining polytechnics at the same time, as promised in 2012, or to convert the polytechnic according to the criteria of merit recommended by the Afeti Committee and approved by the NCTE. The NPP government chose the latter approach which resulted in another piecemeal conversion of the remaining four polytechnics: Cape Coast and Tamale Polytechnic were converted in 2018 while Bolgatanga and Wa Polytechnics were converted in 2020.

In 2018, the NPP Government presented to parliament the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017, to seek the support of the House to achieve two main objectives, first, to convert Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic that had “met the conversion eligibility criteria and were granted approval by the NCTE to be converted to Technical Universities;” and, second, to reduce the “autonomy of Governing Councils of the Technical Universities...to enter into agreement or relationship with another institution, whether academic or non-academic and within or outside the country,

and to make variations in the academic programmes without recourse to the Ministry of Education” (PoG, 2018). The former objective could be described as a fulfilment of the agreement reached through the 2016 ‘agenda coupling’ and ‘decision coupling’ (Herweg et al. 2015). However, the latter objective to reduce the autonomy of the Governing Councils of the Technical Universities was a new policy proposal. How the NPP government mobilized the support of actors from the three streams to achieve the two objectives is discussed below in separate sub-sections.

7.4.1 How the NPP Government Mobilized Support for the Conversion of Polytechnics

This section focuses on the conversion of the four remaining polytechnics to technical universities. Presenting the motion for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, Mr. Stevens Siaka, Chairman of the Committee on Education, stated that “A year after the enactment of Act 922, Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic met the conversion eligibility criteria and were granted approval by the NCTE to be converted to Technical Universities.” He urged MPs on both sides of the House to support the motion. The NPP government had abandoned the idea of wholesale conversion of polytechnics and now accepted the proposals made by the Afeti Committee. The Majority Leader under the NPP Government, Mr. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, told his colleagues, “Mr. Speaker, we should be careful. First, if we want to establish universities, we should ensure that the facilities are up to scratch; facilities and the quality of lecturers” (PoG, 2018, p.1689). This was in line with the recommendation of the Afeti Committee that “The conversion of the Polytechnics should be strategically implemented with the requirement that a polytechnic seeking a change in status to technical university should satisfy agreed eligibility criteria and conditions” (MoE, 2014, p. 15). On the side of the minority NDC, the Minority Leader, Mr. Haruna Iddrisu,

responded, “Mr Speaker, so in principle we support this amendment” (PoG, 2018, p. 1686).

The NPP Government had the full support of the MPs from the minority side and the Technical University Teachers’ Association of Ghana (TUTAG) to convert the Cape Coast and Tamale Polytechnics to technical universities. In a memorandum submitted by TUTAG to the Chairman of the Committee on Education, dated 22nd March 2018, the Association stated that they “endorse” the proposed amendment to the First Schedule of Act 922 to increase the list of Technical Universities by the addition of Cape Coast Technical University and Tamale Technical University. The NDC MPs who were now in opposition could not backtrack from their own policy initiative. The Minority Leader even urged the NPP Government to complete the policy initiative by saying, “we would need a roadmap for Wa and Bolgatanga Polytechnics to be upgraded.” In April 2020, during the second reading of the Bill for the conversion of Bolgatanga and Wa polytechnics to technical universities, the MPs from both the NPP and NDC spent just about thirty minutes to do the debates on the motion for the Bill to be passed. The NDC MPs were happy to see the completion of their policy initiative by the NPP Government. Mr. Mahama Ayariga, NDC MP for Bawku Central in the Upper East region where Bolgatanga Polytechnic was located, stated, “Mr. Speaker, let me add my voice to...express my delight that finally, the Bolgatanga Polytechnic is also being converted to a technical university. Mr Speaker, we all appreciate the value and importance of a university in our regions and especially for a region like the Upper East that is the farthest from the capital and many of the centres of learning” (PoG, 2020). Similarly, the NDC MP for Wa Central, Alhaji (Dr) Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpou, “I also rise to support the motion and to say that I am very delighted at this juncture to have the Wa Polytechnic

converted into a technical university” (PoG, 2020, p. 105). The conversion of the remaining four polytechnics to technical universities by the NPP Government was only a “spillover” from the NDC’s policy initiative; and, “spillovers are extremely powerful agenda setters, seemingly bowling over even formidable opposition that stands in the way” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 203).

7.4.2 Negotiating Governance Reforms with Polytechnics and Technical Universities

It is important to emphasize that the Motion sponsored by the NPP Government in 2018 to convert the Cape Coast and Tamale Polytechnics to technical universities was also hooked to solving other problems concerning the governance of the new technical universities. In summary, the NPP Government proposed the following amendments:

- (a) The autonomy of the governing councils of the technical universities to acquire and hold movable and immovable property, sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or dispose of that property should be subject to “consultation with the National Council for Tertiary Education and subject to approval by the Minister”.
- (b) An employee of a Technical University whose appointment is based on the Statutes of a Polytechnic shall be considered as an interim employee, subject to the (i) approval of the harmonized statutes for the Technical University; and (ii) appointment of substantive officers by the Council of the Technical University in accordance with the harmonized Statutes.
- (c) The appointment of the Vice Chancellor, the Director of Finance, and the Registrar of the Technical Universities should be subject to fixed tenures of offices; (MoE, 2018).

The above reforms proposed by the NPP government had two major practical implications if accepted: first, it will mean that all the employees of the Technical Universities were to remain as interim employees until the approval of Statutes for the Technical Universities; and, second, the autonomy of the Governing Councils would be lost. Interim employees of the Technical Universities were not going to enjoy the same conditions of service as pertained in the existing traditional universities. Concerning the autonomy of the Governing Councils, the NPP government argued that although it “recognises the need to grant governing councils some level of autonomy to allow them some flexibility to take decisions on issues affecting the Universities, it noted that such unregulated autonomy has paved way for some governing councils to enter into major financial transactions with financial institutions without consulting the Ministry of Education” (PoG, 2018, p. 1671). There was therefore the need for the NCTE and the Ministry of Education to regulate the decision-making powers of the governing councils of the Technical universities.

In a memorandum submitted by the Technical University Teachers’ Association of Ghana (TUTAG) to the Chairman of the Committee on Education on 22nd March 2018, TUTAG supported the proposed reforms to subject the appointments of the three key officers (Vice Chancellor, Director of Finance, and the Registrar) to a fixed tenure of office. TUTAG however disagreed with the proposed amendment to reduce the autonomy of the Governing Councils. TUTAG also disagreed with the proposed amendment to keep the employees of the Technical Universities as “interim employees” subject to the approval of appropriate Standardized Statutes, TUTAG argued,

It is our view that this amendment is unnecessary and discriminatory. It is our firm believe that such matters are administrative and need not be put in an Act such as this one. ...Institutions such as University of Professional Studies (UPSA), University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) were converted without going through what the amendment seeks to do. Why Technical University? The amended if allowed to fester will amount to the case of “double jeopardy” and also violate paragraph h of subsection 2 of section 63 of the Labour Act, 2003 (ACT 651). (TUTAG, 2018)

During the second reading of the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017, on 20th June 2018, the Chairman of the Committee on Education informed Parliament that the Committee, in considering the Bill, had met with stakeholders to resolve disagreements. The stakeholders within the Polytechnics included the following (i) Conference of Vice Chancellors/Rectors of Technical Universities/Polytechnics (CORP), (ii) Technical Universities Teachers Association of Ghana, (iii) Technical Universities Administrators' Association of Ghana; (iv) Ghana National Union of Technical Students; (v) Technical Universities Senior Administrators Association of Ghana; and, (vi) Teachers and Educational Workers Union of Trades Union Congress. A member of the Committee on Education, Mr. William Agyapong Quaittoo (NPP – Akyim Oda), told the House about the outcome of meetings held with stakeholders. He reported,

Mr. Speaker, we met about eight times with various stakeholders on this particular Bill. Initially, when the Bill was brought to this House, a number of the stakeholders, particularly, the staff of these technical universities were not too pleased with the amendments that were proposed. So, the Committee had to meet all of them on different occasions. Sometimes we had to meet them together for

them to bring out their views for consideration. Mr. Speaker, in a number of these meetings, in fact, there had been heated arguments, but then when we had the opportunity to meet the Hon Minister and his team, we understood why they wanted to have these amendments done....Mr. Speaker, after meeting about eight times, all the disagreements were settled and all the amendments proposed here have now been agreed to by all the stakeholders within the technical university fraternity (PoG, 2018, p. 6).

The Chairman of the Committee reported some of the settlements reached with the stakeholders in the Technical Universities. They agreed that a fixed term of office should be introduced in the Bill for the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, and the Director of Finance. They also agreed that,

Given the peculiarity of each Technical University, it would be difficult to have a harmonized Statute for all the Technical Universities. Alternatively, the Committee proposes a standardized Statutes for all the Technical Universities. In this case, NCTE would be expected to provide core sections of the Statutes which would be applicable to all Technical Universities to ensure consistency. Technical Universities on the other hand, would provide the details of other sections of the statute that are tailored towards their peculiar needs provided they do not conflict with the core sections (standardized part) of the Statutes or with Act 922. (PoG, 2018a, pp. 1680-1681)

Concerning the autonomy of the Governing Councils, the agreement reached among the stakeholders, and recommended by the Committee to the House, was as follows: “The

Committee recommends that governing councils of Technical Universities should consult and seek the recommendation of NCTE (acting as Technical Advisor to the Minister responsible for Education) before taking any major decision that has financial implications” (PoG, 2018, p. 1671). The technical policy stream played a mediating role in linking the actors in the problems stream to actors in the political stream for the effective resolution of conflicts. The role of technical experts in resolving conflict over policy proposals between the technical universities and politicians within government enabled parliament to reach quick decisions in the adoption of the Bill. This appears to support the view of the Director for Industrial Liaison at the Accra Technical University that in Ghana’s political stream and legislative corridors of policy-making, *“organizations had very little influence except the men and women they believed are the experts whom they constituted to come out with a blue print for them to be able to do this.”* Politicians easily couple with their technical people.

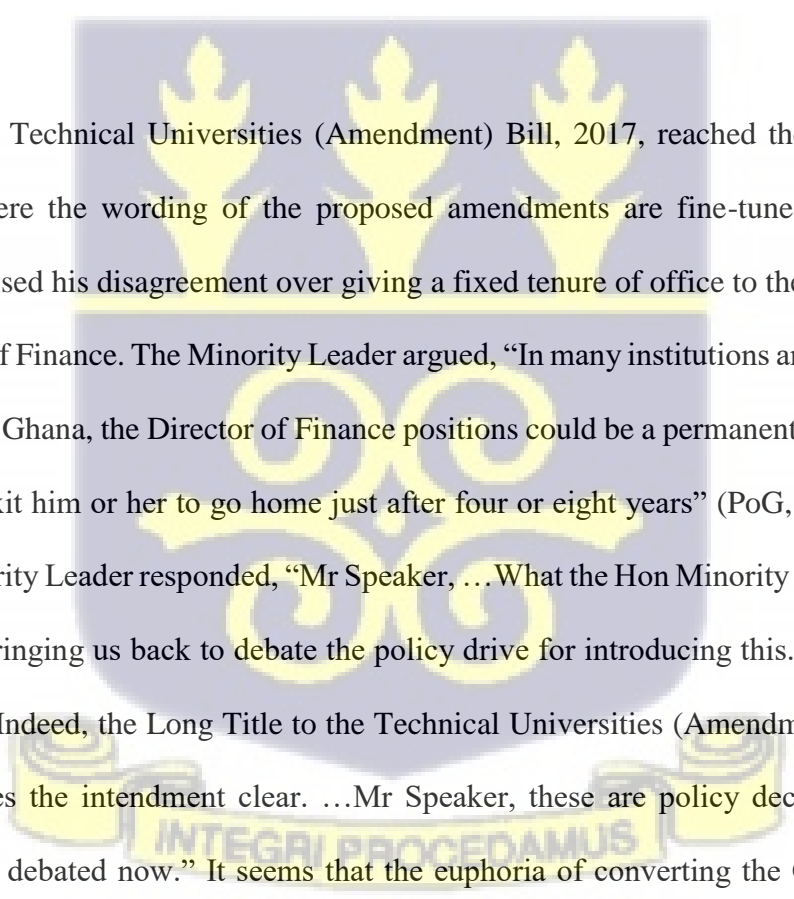
7.5 Negotiations between the Ruling Party and Opposition Party for Policy Adoption

The NPP government had introduced a new agenda decision to reform the governance structures in the Technical Universities. The proposed reforms were included in the same Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (MoE, 2017), intended to convert Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic into technical universities. The long title of the Bill read as follows:

AN ACT to amend the Technical Universities Act, 2016 (Act 922) to convert Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic to Technical Universities; to provide for harmonised Statutes and Scheme of Service for the Technical Universities; to provide for a fixed tenure for the Registrar and Director of Finance; to provide for the enactment of Statutes; to apply the requirements of

the harmonised Statutes and Scheme of Service to persons deemed to have been employed by the Technical Universities and to provide for related matters.

During the second reading stage of the Bill on 20th June 2018, it seems that the minority NDC MPs focused their attention on the conversion of the two polytechnics to technical universities. They therefore gladly supported the motion moved by the Minister of Education for the acceptance of the Bill. As could be read from the long title of the Bill, the approved Bill contained many proposed amendments concerning the governance of the technical universities.



When the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017, reached the Consideration Stage where the wording of the proposed amendments are fine-tuned, the Minority Leader raised his disagreement over giving a fixed tenure of office to the position of the Director of Finance. The Minority Leader argued, “In many institutions and organisations as I see in Ghana, the Director of Finance positions could be a permanent one. We do not need to exit him or her to go home just after four or eight years” (PoG, 2018, p. 2065). The Majority Leader responded, “Mr Speaker, ...What the Hon Minority Leader attempts to do is bringing us back to debate the policy drive for introducing this. ...It is a policy decision. Indeed, the Long Title to the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017, also makes the intendment clear. ...Mr Speaker, these are policy decisions and they cannot be debated now.” It seems that the euphoria of converting the Cape Coast and Tamale Polytechnics to technical universities had been used by the government to achieve governance reforms that were unpopular among employees of the existing

technical universities. It dawned on the minority MPs that not much could be done to reverse a policy decision that they had collaborated to approve.

Mr. Quarshigah, an MP from the side of the minority side submitted, “Mr Speaker, the Hon Majority Leader has indicated that it is a matter of policy. The question is, is it a good policy? ...I would imagine that, as much as it is a policy direction, we need to examine it very carefully” (PoG, 2018, p. 2066-2067). The Minority Leader also drew the attention of the House that, during the second reading stage, he had served notice of his disagreement on the matter of the Director of Finance. The Minority Leader further argued, “Mr Speaker, ...So if we are to follow the Hon Majority Leader’s argument – I may consider other factors but his argument that it is Government and we should just vote on Government policy – No, we would not. ...It is not good enough, but I accordingly abandon it.” Other factors will include the fact that the majority side have the power in their numerical strength to approve the proposed amendments if the minority side failed to collaborate further. Moreover, the process of adoption of the Bill to convert two polytechnics to technical universities was yet to be completed. Thus, if the minority failed to cooperate to complete the process then the majority would create political capital out of it during the next elections. The Tamale Polytechnic was located in a region considered to be one of the strongholds of the NDC, while the Cape Coast Polytechnic was located in a voter-swing region. The Minority Leader abandoned his protest and led his side to collaborate with the Majority side to fine-tune the proposed governance reforms in the technical universities. The minority and majority sides finally agreed with the motion to make the position of the Director of Finance a fixed tenure.

One of the major proposed governance reform issues was the proposal to repeal Section 26 of Act 922, 2016, which gave authority to the Governing Council of each technical university to determine the conditions of service of their employees. The newly elected NPP Government became worried about the potential of the technical universities to determine high wages and salaries for employees that could undermine the commitment of the government to get out of IMF programme by the end of 2018. The government was therefore determined to regulate financial management by the new technical universities through the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC).

The determination of salaries, wages, and allowances with employees of the traditional universities has always been a controversial and highly politicised issue for governments. The Minority Leader shared his experience when his party was in government as follows; “In my previous role as Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, I used to quench some fires at the Ministry of Education relative to University Teachers Association of Ghana, relative to their conditions of service” (PoG, 2018, pp. 2088-2089). The Minority Leader urged the MPs to find an appropriate rendition of the proposed amendments to help the Minister and the technical universities arrive at an amicable settlement. “The Hon Minister may have a practical difficulty... So we should help the Hon Minister,” said the Minority Leader (PoG, 2018, pp. 2088-2090).

The Minority Leader suggested that “wherever we used ‘conditions of service’, we should improve it to ‘terms and conditions of service’ for better elegance.,” and, “we should have a new subclause which defines a collaborative relationship between the council and the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission on all these matters” (PoG, 2018,

pp. 2090-2091). The House accepted the “better elegance” but laboured to find the most appropriate construction of the relationship between the polytechnics and the FWSC. Due to time constraints faced by the House, the Speaker advised, “Hon Members, I proposed to close at 2.00 o’clock and it’s past 2.00 o’clock. I do not intend to extend sitting. What I would suggest to do is for you to go for winnowing on this matter and agree on a term that would satisfy the curiosity and the fears to enable us come back on this matter” (PoG, 2018, p. 2092). The Majority Leader agreed to the suggestion to have a winnowing committee meeting in his office that same day “so that we do the reconciliation on that in order that tomorrow, we may have a smooth passage” (PoG, 2018, p. 2094). The next day, the Majority Leader reported that the winnowing committee meeting had produced an agreement to the effect that the terms and conditions of service of employees of the technical universities should be determined by the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission. The Majority Leader explained, “We were informed by the technical people that, indeed, ...The determination of the salaries is usually referred to the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission which is why we are doing what is expected to be done. Mr. Speaker, so this is in tandem with the existing practice” (PoG, 2018, p. 2144). Reform proposals concerning the governance of the technical universities were adopted through negotiations and collaboration between the Ministry of Education, MPs from the ruling NPP government, MPs from the opposition NDC, and the Polytechnics. The NPP government had used the euphoria surrounding the conversion of the Cape Coast Polytechnic and Tamale Polytechnic to technical universities to simultaneously reduce the autonomy of the governing councils of technical universities as well as push through other less popular governance reforms.

7.6 Explaining the Coupling of the Three Streams for Policy Adoption

How did the polytechnics, governments, political parties, and policy experts collaborate to ensure legislative adoption of the policy proposal to convert polytechnics to technical universities? The above narratives show that after the agenda-setting, it was the NDC and NPP governments that initiated the legislative decision-making processes of policy formulation and adoption. Governments also initiated the coupling of polytechnic problems entrepreneurs (particularly associations of polytechnic students and employees) to the ‘technical’ policy-makers. Governments also created a stream of policy experts, or what the NPP majority Leader referred to as “the technical people”, to advise the Ministers, the parliamentary Committee on Education, MPs, the Polytechnics, and the Technical Universities on appropriate reform directions.

The study also shows that after the coupling of the three streams had occurred, the ideas of the policy experts were used to build trust among actors from the various streams and strengthen the coupling. The Deputy Minister of Education in the NDC government, Mr. Ablakwa, had used knowledge from the Afeti report to urge for the acceptance of the motion to convert the polytechnics to technical universities because “It is an idea whose time has come”. The NDC Government in the political stream coupled their ideas of reform to ideas presented by the Afeti Committee in the policy stream. It made the politicians to appear as policy experts on the subject, and the Speaker of Parliament remarked that “The experts have spoken on this subject” (PoG, 2016, p. 3823). The reference to ideas from policy experts also did “contribute to enlightening the House” (PoG, 2016, p. 3815), as the Minority Leader put it; and, it contributed to soften-up opposition of some MPs to the motion for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. The coupling of ideas between the streams played the role of softening

opposition to policy change. When the NPP majority MPs and the NDC minority MPs were in disagreement over policy proposal concerning the conditions of service of polytechnic employees, the politicians in government used “the technical people” to “agree on a term that would satisfy the curiosity and the fears” of all policy stakeholders. The technical people in the policy stream played the role of building trust and strengthening the coupling of the problems stream and the political stream.

The findings suggest that the problems of financial resource management within the technical universities were linked to the problems of expenditure control faced by the NPP government in the political stream. The technical people of policy makers were used to mediate a solution that was adopted as policy. Herweg et al. (2015, p. 443) noted that the coupling occurs where “a policy-entrepreneur succeeds in coupling the streams into a single package”. This implies that the political stream initiates the coupling, but the policy stream plays an effective role in coupling the problem stream and the political stream to acceptable solutions. The policy stream is more likely to be effective in coupling the problems stream and the political stream if the policy stream is trusted to provide appropriate solutions to the problems facing actors in the separate streams.

7.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter was dedicated to answer the question of how governments, political parties, and the polytechnics collaborated to ensure the formulation and adoption of policy proposals to convert the polytechnics to technical universities. Both NDC and NPP governments sought to use the conversion experience as a means of maximising their votes in the elections. The two political parties needed to negotiate with each other in parliament to ensure the passage of the Technical Universities Bill into Law. The NDC

succeeded in getting the support of the opposition NPP in parliament to pass the first Act (Act 922) that converted the first six polytechnics into technical universities in 2016. It is important to emphasize that the NDC government had made the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities a major election campaign issue in 2012. The NPP criticized the piecemeal approach in the conversion of the polytechnics and seized the opportunity to win votes from among disgruntled polytechnic students and staff.

However, the conversion of the remaining four polytechnics to technical universities spilled over to the NPP Government after assuming power in 2017. The NPP government similarly followed the recommendations of the Afeti Committee created by the NDC government because the proposed solutions were considered by the NPP government to solve the same problem of vote winning. The NPP government did not reject the Afeti Committee recommendations inherited from the NDC government because the MPs belonging to the NPP appear to have formed a policy advocacy coalition during earlier negotiation in parliament for the conversion of the first six polytechnics under the era of the NDC government. This finding suggests that earlier success in policy negotiations among actors from the policy and political streams appear to soften the grounds for future success in negotiating similar policies among the same actors.

The study again recounted how the NPP government was able to negotiate and pass controversial policy proposals by using the technical experts to resolving conflict between the technical universities and politicians within government. The study found out that reform proposals concerning the governance of the technical universities were adopted through negotiations and collaboration between the Ministry of Education, MPs from both ruling and opposition parties, and the Polytechnics. This negotiation was made

possible due to the role the technical people in the policy stream played in building trust and strengthening the coupling of the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream. Negotiations among the same actors in the policy stream and the political stream played the role of softening opposition to subsequent policy change.



CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

8.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explain the politics of the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana. The explanation was guided by Kingdon's multiple streams theoretical framework which argues that policy change occurs through the coupling of problems, policy proposals, and politics by policy entrepreneurs using open windows of opportunity such as elections and change of government. Kingdon (2011, p. 228) argued that "the critical event to understand is how these largely independent streams come together" to influence agenda setting and policy change. The study examined and explained how the streams of problems, policies, and politics were joined by policy entrepreneurs to bring about the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. The study used the interpretive philosophical paradigm and qualitative methodology for the analysis. Primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews and documentary analysis. Documents were collected in the form of reports on official statistics, government records, organizational reports, Acts of parliament, parliamentary Hansards, political party manifestoes, journal articles, books, and other secondary materials. This chapter provides the summary of the main findings, recommendations, the contribution of the study to theory, policy, practice, and conclusion.

8.1 Summary of Key Findings

Problems affecting the education of students in the polytechnics had lingered on for decades prior to the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. How do reform ideas get to the agenda of the government for decisions to be taken? When does an idea's

time come to be attended to by policy makers? How are problems, policy proposals, and politics coupled by policy entrepreneurs to influence governmental agenda setting and policy change? What are the lessons from the findings for theoretical development, policy making, and future research about policy change? These were critical questions that surrounded the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities. A summary of the findings is presented here.

8.1.1 Nature of the Actors in the three Streams

One objective of the study was to identify the nature of the actors in the problems stream, policy stream, and political stream that cooperated to convert the polytechnics to technical universities. The intention was not simply to identify the actors and their influence in the process of policy change, but, more importantly for theoretical development, to examine Kingdon's (2011, p. 227) highly debatable claim that there exist "largely independent streams of problems, policies, and politics running through the system. Each of these streams has a life of its own, and runs along without a lot of regard to happenings in the other streams." This claim has been strongly challenged by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988), Sabatier (1998), Sabatier and Weible (2007), and Robinson and Eller (2010).

In the problems stream, the study found that the polytechnics were plagued with a myriad of problems such as underfunding; poor service conditions; negative public perception; incessant strikes by various stakeholders; high staff turnover; lack of physical infrastructural facilities; stagnant academic progression of HND graduates; poor institutional management, and unclear job placements of HND graduates. The study also found that these problems had been pushed to the attention of governments by students' associations like the Polytechnics Students Association of Ghana; Polytechnic

Employees Associations like the Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG), and Polytechnic Rectors for many years prior to the conversion.

In the policy stream, the study found that policy proposals to deal with the problems of the polytechnics had come mainly from some influential polytechnic Rectors. The polytechnic Rectors were also politically appointed into office by governments. Professor Nsowah-Nuamah of the Kumasi Polytechnic had made the policy proposals for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. The study also found that the 9-member 'Technical Committee' created by the NDC government in 2013 to generate proposals for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was chaired by a former Rector of a polytechnic and included two Rectors of polytechnics who were still in office (that is, Rector of the Ho Polytechnic and Rector of the Wa Polytechnic). Although problems are different from policy proposals, but it appears that the Rectors who pushed problems in the problems stream were the same actors who pushed policy proposals in the policy stream as members of the 'Technical Committee'. In this case, the problems stream and the policy stream did not "run along without a lot of regard to happenings in the other streams" as Kingdon had professed.

The study also found that the members of the Technical Committee that helped to formulate policy proposals for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities had strong links to the political stream as government appointees. Moreover, the members of the parliamentary Committee of Education that helped to fine-tune the policy proposals at the Committee stage and the Bill Consideration stage in parliament belonged to the political stream as elected Members of Parliament (MPs). Some of the MPs were in the ruling government while others belonged to opposition political parties. Thus, the

study found that the policy stream was not “largely independent” from the happenings in the political stream. The findings suggest that while the three streams appear to have operated largely independent of each other during the agenda setting stage which Kingdon’s work (1984) focused on, the three streams were not independent of each other during the policy formulation and policy adoption stages of the policy process.

The study found that the argument by Sabatier that the policy stream and the political stream are more closely related during the policy making process in the form of an “advocacy coalition” (1993), than Kingdon portrayed them in the MSF, appears to hold true. This appears to also support Kingdon’s view that policy “entrepreneurs are found in many locations. No single formal position or even informal place in the political system has a monopoly on them” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 16). The findings show that the policy entrepreneurs came from the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream. This finding also supports the argument by Herweg et al. (2015, p. 438) that there is the need for a refine of the MSF because “Kingdon was rather imprecise in sorting out the interactions between the different agents in the political stream.” In sum, in the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities, the study finds that the three streams did not operate largely independent of each other during the agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption processes. This finding does not undermine the core argument of the MSF that the success of governmental agenda setting and policy decision-making depends on the coupling of the three streams.

8.1.2 How Actors Coupled to Set the Governmental Agenda

The study sought to find out how actors and activities in the three streams became coupled for the setting of governmental agenda. The findings of the study suggest that the policy proposal for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities was conceived in the polytechnic arena, but it was the NDC and NPP governments that set the agenda decisions as a viable solution to solving their own problems of winning votes from electorates. Problems of polytechnic education and policy proposals to solve the problems were coupled by governments in the political stream. This finding supports the hypothesis of Herweg et al. (2015, p. 437) that “The more a condition puts the policy makers’ re-election at risk, the more likely it is to open a policy window in the problem stream.” Ultimately, it was the NDC and NPP governments that coupled the problems stream and policy proposal stream to the political stream to set the agenda of converting the polytechnics to technical universities. The study therefore found that problem entrepreneurs can succeed in influencing governmental agenda setting to deal with their problems if the proposed solutions to the problems can help the government to win lots of votes for re-election into political office. Thus, in the context of the conversion of polytechnics, the political stream was of prime importance for the agenda coupling while the problems stream and policy stream were of minor importance.

8.1.3 How Actors Coupled to Formulate and Adopt Policy Proposals

Scholars using the MSF have argued that it is “a useful general theory of agenda setting, alternative specification, and policy making” (Kingdon 2011, p. 221). The study therefore extended the MSF beyond the agenda setting stage of the policy making process to examine how governments, the polytechnics, policy consultants, and other stakeholders in the reform process cooperated to ensure the success of policy formulation and adoption. In other words, it examined how actors in the problems stream, the policy

stream, and the political stream joined together again to support the processes of policy formulation and adoption for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities.

The study found that it was the NDC government that set up a ‘Technical Committee’ of policy advisors to bring together advocates of problems of polytechnic education, policy specialists, and relevant political actors in government “with the objective of developing a roadmap for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities” (MoE, 2014, p. 2). The study found that the Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Education under the direction of the Deputy Minister of Education in Charge of Tertiary Education, Honourable Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa. The study also found that after the Technical Committee had developed the policy proposals, the Committee of Education in Parliament invited the members of the Technical Committee to educate parliament about the policy proposals to inform legislative decision-making. Therefore, the actors in the political stream, particularly the government and parliament, were the ones who brought together actors in the problems stream, the policy streams, and the political stream to formulate and adopt a Bill for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities.

The study also found that during the conversion of four polytechnics by the NPP government in 2018 and 2020, the government followed the policy proposals that had been made under the NDC government. The study found that Parliament invited ‘the technical people’ in the policy stream to once again educate the members of parliament about the policy proposals contained in the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bills of 2017 and 2020 that converted the remaining four polytechnics under the NPP government. The parliamentary Committee on Education also had meetings with stakeholders who had problems with the proposed changes in the Technical Universities

(Amendment) Bill, 2017. The study therefore finds that the government and legislature within the political stream played the role of coupling the problems stream, the policy stream, and the political stream for successful policy formulation and adoption.

The study also found that in Ghana's legislative system, the government has the sole authority to initiate in the legislature Bills that have implications for government expenditure. The conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities had financial implications for government expenditure as the employees were now going to be treated like the staff of the traditional universities who received higher salaries. Due to the legal rules of public policy making in Ghana, many of the interviewees saw government as the actor with the responsibility of formulating and adopting policies concerning polytechnic education. This contributed to the dominant role of government in initiating policy formulation and adoption in Ghana's education sector. In the absence of government, the actors in the problems stream do not see themselves as having the power and resources to bring together policy consultants, the legislature, and government to formulate and adopt policies to solve problems of polytechnic education in Ghana. The study, however, found that government and MPs used bargaining and negotiations with actors in the problems and policy streams before parliament passed seemingly controversial policy proposals in the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017. The coupling of the three streams depended more on bargaining and negotiations as Kingdon suggested.

8.1.4 Coupling Occurs through Bargaining More than through Persuasion

The study found that the coupling of the actors pushing problems of polytechnic education, actors pushing solutions of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities, and actors pushing political interests of winning elections to successfully set

governmental agenda and adopt policy proposals had occurred through bargaining more than through force and persuasion. The study showed that during the passage of the Bills, the NDC government had majority of MPs in parliament, from 2013-2016, and the NPP government had a majority in parliament, from 2016-2020. However, each government used bargaining and negotiations to win the support of opposition party MPs, students associations, and employee associations. The two governments did not use force and their majoritarian strength in parliament to push through the Bills.

The finding supports the argument of the MSF that in the context of a strongly competitive democratic setting like the US and Ghana, “Consensus is built in the political stream by bargaining more than by persuasion. ...In the political stream, participants build consensus by bargaining-trading provisions for support, adding elected officials to coalitions by giving them concessions that they demand, or compromising from ideal positions that will gain wider acceptance” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 199).

Bargaining and negotiations among the actors seem to have been facilitated by the fact that the creation of technical universities out of polytechnics was seen by stakeholders as a policy that seeks to distribute benefits to the local communities hosting the polytechnics. Therefore, both the governing parties and the opposition parties joined forces to bargain acceptable reform packages with interest groups from the polytechnics. The bottom-line is that in a competitive democratic political stream, the study found that higher education policy reforms occur through bargaining more than the use of threats, persuasion, force, and majoritarian strength in parliament.

8.2 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study as summarized above, the study makes the following recommendations for policy and theoretical considerations.

8.2.1 The Need to meet “Criteria for Survival” in Policy Making

The study shows that policy proposals are more likely to be accepted by government for agenda setting and policy adoption if the proposals meet certain “criteria for survival” like financial viability, technical feasibility, political acceptability, public acquiescence, path dependence, law and value acceptability. The study found that the Technical Committee established by government made proposals that met the criteria for proposal survival. The Technical Committee visited Germany to learn best practices in the management of polytechnics, and also helped to negotiate a Letter of Intent with the German government that assured the Government of Ghana of getting technical and financial support for the ten polytechnics. The Technical Committee also recommended that the new technical universities should be created in September 2016, about three months to the general elections.

Therefore, aside technical feasibility and assurance of financial support from international development partners, the Committee sought to use the ‘open window of opportunity’ offered by the 2016 general elections to give the proposal some political capital to ensure acceptability. The study found that although the NPP government had criticized the “piecemeal approach” used by the NDC government when the NPP was in opposition, but the NPP accepted and used the same piecemeal approach when they realized that a whole conversion approach will not be financially feasible for a new government that had inherited an IMF programme to ensure debt sustainability. In fact, the NPP government realized that the autonomy of the Governing Councils to enter into

financial agreements was creating huge financial problems for the government. The study found that the NPP government used the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill to reduce the autonomy of the Governing Councils of the Technical Universities to enter financial transactions without the approval of the Ministry of Education. The piecemeal approach to the conversion of the polytechnics was also financially viable.

Kingdon (2011, p. 175) argued that “when a window opens because a problem is pressing, the alternatives generated as solutions to the problem are far better if they also meet the tests of political acceptability.” The study recommends that advocates of policy reforms in the higher education sector should ensure that their proposals meet the criteria of political acceptability, economic viability, technical feasibility, and administrative viability to prevent strong opposition during the politics of agenda setting and policy decision-making by parliament and the President. Proposals that do not meet these three “criteria for survival” are not likely to be adopted. Even if the proposal is adopted it is not likely to be sustainable in the long term. Therefore, policy makers must float education policy reform ideas to be debated in the public through stakeholder consultation. Again, there must be by-partisan discussion on the content of education policy reform to guarantee the success of that education reform to forestall the fluid participation of members in government in the event of changes in political administration.

8.2.2 Use of Bargaining and Negotiations for Tertiary Education Policymaking

It is important to recount the finding that both the NDC and NPP governments had to negotiate with each other during the parliamentary decision-making to ensure the passage of the polytechnic Bills into Acts. The study again recounted how the NPP government was able to negotiate and pass seemingly controversial policy proposals to reduce the

autonomy of the Governing Councils by inviting technical experts to help resolve disagreements among MPs and between the technical universities and MPs. The study recommends that governance reforms in the universities should be based on bargaining and negotiations more than the use of force and threats. In the democratic political stream “participants build consensus by bargaining-trading provisions for support, adding elected officials to coalitions by giving them concessions that they demand, or compromising from ideal positions that will gain wider acceptance” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 199). Governments should avoid using the coercive power of the state to force actors within universities to accept reform proposals. There is the need to ensure a peaceful and mutually acceptable coupling of the three streams in a democratic context to ensure successful agenda setting and sustainable policy adoption.

The study also recommends that government in democratic contexts should use the knowledge of technical experts to build trust among the three streams where there are disagreements over the technical details of policy proposals. Kingdon (2011, p. 199) observed that “When participants recognize problems or settle on certain proposals in the policy stream, they do so largely by persuasion. They marshal indicators and argue that certain conditions ought to be defined as problems, or they argue that their proposals meet such logical tests as technical feasibility or value acceptability.” The persuasive arguments of “the technical people” helped to build trust among actors that they are supporting proposals based on sound technical advice. This also suggests that Governments in Ghana’s democratic context should rely more on technical policy experts to shape the content and acceptability of educational reforms.

8.2.3 Strengthen the Policy-Making Capacity of Parliamentary Committees

The study also suggests that the technical knowledge of members of Committees of parliaments should be built to improve the quality of legislative decision making. The Committee on Education relied heavily on the advice of technical experts outside parliament to inform legislative decision making. If the technical capacity of Committees of Parliament is improved, it could help speed up decision-making in parliament.

The study suggests that in higher educational reform policy stakeholders trusted more in the advice of technical experts than that of politicians. As a research officer of the Ghana Employers Association stated in an interview, *“What we should do is to allow technical people to design policies for you and then you implement. What is not good is to use your political powers to influence policy.”* The Majority Leader of Parliament also stated that “the technical people” had helped the MPs to determine how to resolve some disagreements among the MPs over controversial aspects of the Technical Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Technical experts from the policy stream help to build consensus to facilitate the coupling of the three streams.

8.3 Contribution of the Study to Theory, Literature, and Policy Change

First, the study makes enormous contribution to the empirical application of the multiple streams framework originally developed by Kingdon (Kingdon, 1984, 2011) and refined by other scholars (Zahariadis, 2003; Herweg et al. 2015). Herweg et al. (2015) observed that systematic application of the MSF to the policy making process beyond the agenda setting stage is hard to find. This study has applied the MSF to the agenda setting stage, the policy formulation stage, and the policy adoption stage of the policy process. The MSF has been found to be very useful for explaining how actors from the problems

stream, the policy stream, and the political stream came together during these three stages of the policy process to reform the polytechnics to technical universities. The study agrees with Kingdon (2011, p. 221) that “it seems that we have quite a useful general theory of agenda setting, alternative specification, and policy making.” The study has demonstrated that the MSF is applicable to other stages of policy making process.

The study has shown that it was the government that set the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics by coupling its political electoral fortunes to solving the problems in the polytechnic education system. The government hooked its electoral problems to the solution of conversion of polytechnics to technical universities. Thus, problems, solutions, and politics were coupled by government to set the agenda of converting the polytechnics to technical universities. Through the theoretical lens of the MSF, the study has also shown that in Ghana’s competitive democratic environment, actors in the political stream used bargaining and negotiations to couple actors from the three streams (problem entrepreneurs, ‘solution’ entrepreneurs, and political entrepreneurs) into an overarching and powerful coalition of policy entrepreneurs to support the processes of policy formulation and adoption. The study has contributed to the heated debate among scholars over whether or not the three streams are independent as argued by Kingdon (1984, 2011), or the streams are closely related as argued by Sabatier and Weible (2007), and Robinson and Eller (2010). “How independent are these streams, actually?” asked Kingdon (2011, p. 227). The study sees “particularly the policy and political streams, as more closely related” within the coalition of policy entrepreneurs than Kingdon portrayed them (Kingdon, 2011, p. 228).

Moreover, many scholars have noted that Kingdon was imprecise in sorting out the nature of the components and the interactions between the different actors in the political stream (Zahariadis, 1995; Sabatier, 2007; Herweg et al. 2015). The study has contributed to clarifying the nature of the pattern of interactions among actors in the political stream by using the political settlements approach (Khan, 2010). The political settlements approach has also been used by Hickey and Hossain (2019), Abdulai and Hickey (2016) to examine the politics of education reforms in developing countries. Using the political settlements approach to conceptualize the patterns of interactions among actors in the political stream is in line with the suggestion by Kingdon that emphasis must be “placed more on the ‘organized’ than on the ‘anarchy,’ as we discover structures and patterns in the processes” (Kingdon, 2011, p. 86). The study has contributed to the empirical literature on the systematic application of the MSF to processes of policy change beyond the agenda setting stage. The study recommends that other scholars should examine the appropriateness of using the political settlements approach to examine patterns of interaction in the political streams of countries.

The study also contributes to our understanding of the requirements for successful policy making and change in the tertiary education sector. In this regard, first, the study has shown that there is the need for policy proposals submitted to government for agenda setting and policy decision-making to meet the three criteria for survival – technical feasibility, political acceptability, and financial viability. The study shows that policy proposals that meet these criteria are more likely to be accepted and sustained in the event of change of government. Both the NDC and NPP government accepted the policy proposals made by the Afeti Technical Committee because the Committee demonstrated that their proposals met the three criteria for survival.

Further, the study contributes to deepening our understanding of the requirement for successful tertiary education policy making in Ghana's highly competitive democratic environment. The study shows that policymaking in such an environment succeeds if policy entrepreneurs use bargaining and negotiation to couple acceptable solutions to the problems facing political entrepreneurs and problem entrepreneurs. According to Asiedu- Akrofi (1978) actors become committed to decisions they were part in taking. The acceptance of the polytechnic conversion policy proposals by two opposing political parties gives credence to the power of negotiations and participatory decision making. Policy actors are therefore emboldened to walk the path of building strong negotiations through stakeholder consultation in making policies.

8.4 Conclusions

Education reform has been a major characteristic of education history in Ghana. The changing trends in the society calls for continuous reform in the content and structure of education provision and delivery in the country. Polytechnic education has witnessed a number of transitions, from technical institutes to polytechnics and now technical universities. This study sought to examine how policy entrepreneurs used their unique position to bring about the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities through the coupling of the problems of polytechnic education, policy proposals, and incentives of political actors to ensure successful agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption.

In a democratic context like that of Ghana, the study has confirmed the theoretical position of the MSF that "Policy adoption is more likely, if (a) the proposal is put forward

by political entrepreneurs who hold an elected leadership position in government; (b) the proposal was put forward by a governing party or coalition that is not constrained by other veto actors; (c) different viable alternatives embraced by different parties can be combined in one package; and (d) the problem that the policy is supposed to solve is salient among the voters” (Herweg et al. 2015, p. 446). This implies that there is the need for governments and policy entrepreneurs to use bargaining and negotiations with stakeholders to achieve successful adoption of policy proposals that have been put on the agenda of the government.

The study recommends that policy entrepreneurs should ensure that their proposals meet the criteria of technical feasibility, financial viability, and political acceptability to increase the chances of success in the policy making process. The study recommended that policy entrepreneurs must be creative in problem formulation to attract the attention of policy makers. Timing of policy making is of essence; therefore, policy entrepreneurs must pay attention to the opening of policy windows of opportunity in slotting in their pet proposals.

8.5 Research for Further Study

There have been countless reforms in the area of education in developing countries. This study has applied the MSF to understanding policy change in the tertiary education sector of Ghana, particularly the polytechnic sector. The study has contributed to the empirical literature on the systematic application of the MSF to processes of policy change beyond the agenda setting stage. The study recommends that other scholars should examine the

appropriateness of using the political settlements approach to examine patterns of interaction in the political streams of countries.



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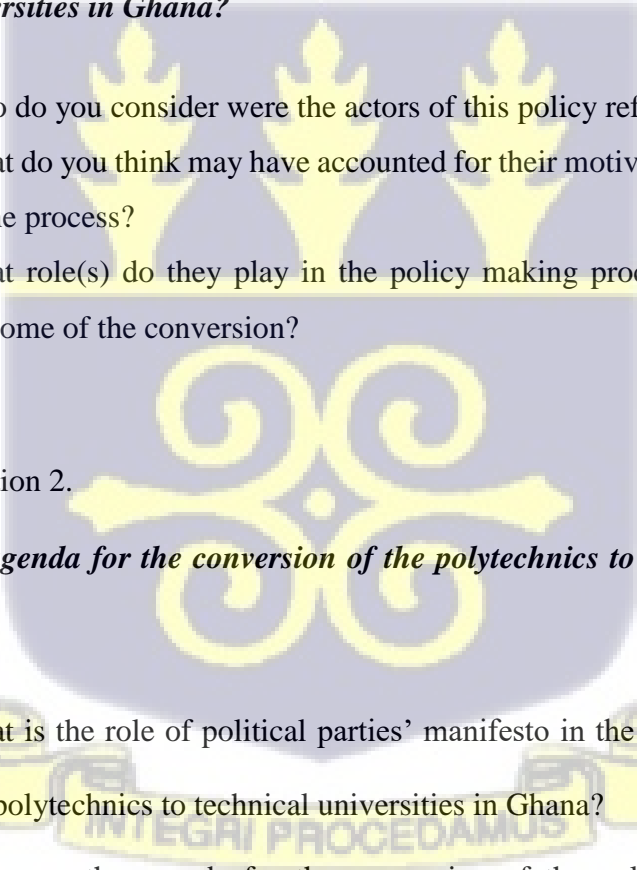
APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear Sir/Madam, I would be grateful if you could provide responses to the interview guide. Every information received will be used for the purposes of academics. I have three research questions and under each of them, I have specific operational questions.

The study is on *“Politics of educational reform in Ghana: explaining the conversion of Polytechnics to Technical Universities”*.

Research Question 1.

What was the nature of the actors who pushed for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana?

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- i. Who do you consider were the actors of this policy reform?
 - ii. What do you think may have accounted for their motivations for participation in the process?
 - iii. What role(s) do they play in the policy making process that informed the outcome of the conversion?

Research Question 2.

How was the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities set?

- iv. What is the role of political parties' manifesto in the conversion process of the polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana?
- v. How was the agenda for the conversion of the polytechnics to technical universities set?
- vi. How did the agenda set sought to provide solution to the problem of the polytechnics in Ghana?

Research Question 3.

How was the policy decision for the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities formulated and adopted?

- vii. How was the policy decision of the polytechnic conversion formulated and adopted?
- viii. What is the nature of the influence of political relations of power on the policy process?
- ix. In your opinion, how do politics shape tertiary education policies in Ghana?
- x. How did policy entrepreneurs use their unique characteristics and technical knowledge to influence the outcome of the conversion?
- xi. How do you assess the politics of Act 922 in its passage?

