

Power and policy-making process in a health system

Dr Augustina Koduah
University of Ghana



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Outline

- Public policy
- Policy within the Health system
- Policy process
- Power and the policy process
- Power, contestations and politics: case studies
- Take home messages



Public Policy

- Thomas Dye (1987) famously said – “*Public policy is whatever a government chooses to do or even not to do*”.
 - authorised by the state (parliament, courts, government officials)
and intended to create public value



Health System Policy

- Broad statement of goals, objectives and means that create the framework for activity. Often takes the form of explicit written documents but may also be implicit or unwritten
 - *service delivery; health workforce; health system financing; medical products, vaccines and technologies; health information systems; and leadership and governance.*



Health System Policy

- Policy as intent
 - the vision, goals, understandings, principles, and plans that seek to e.g., guide activities, establish accountability & responsibility
- Policy as practice
 - routine decisions, activities, understandings & actual achievements



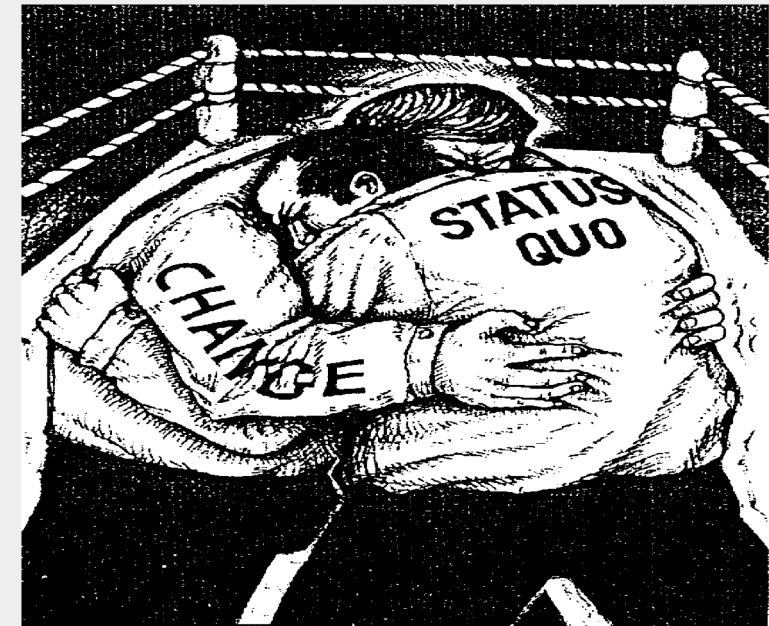
Health System Policy

- Policies are presented in:
 - documents, regulations, laws, ministerial statements etc.
- Policies are constructed and exist in:
 - what happens in practice
 - and in the expectations, principles, understandings that shape practice

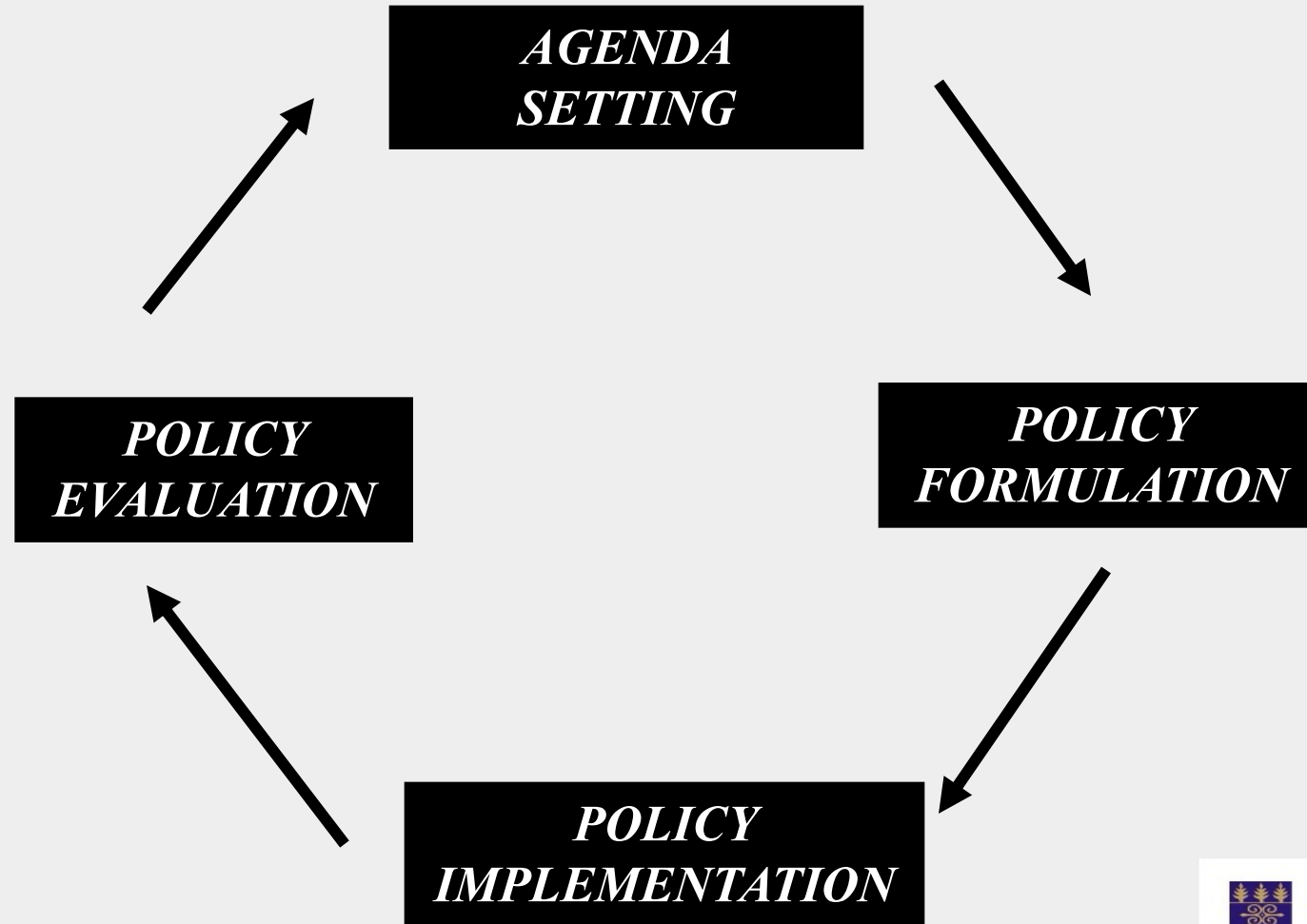


Policy Process

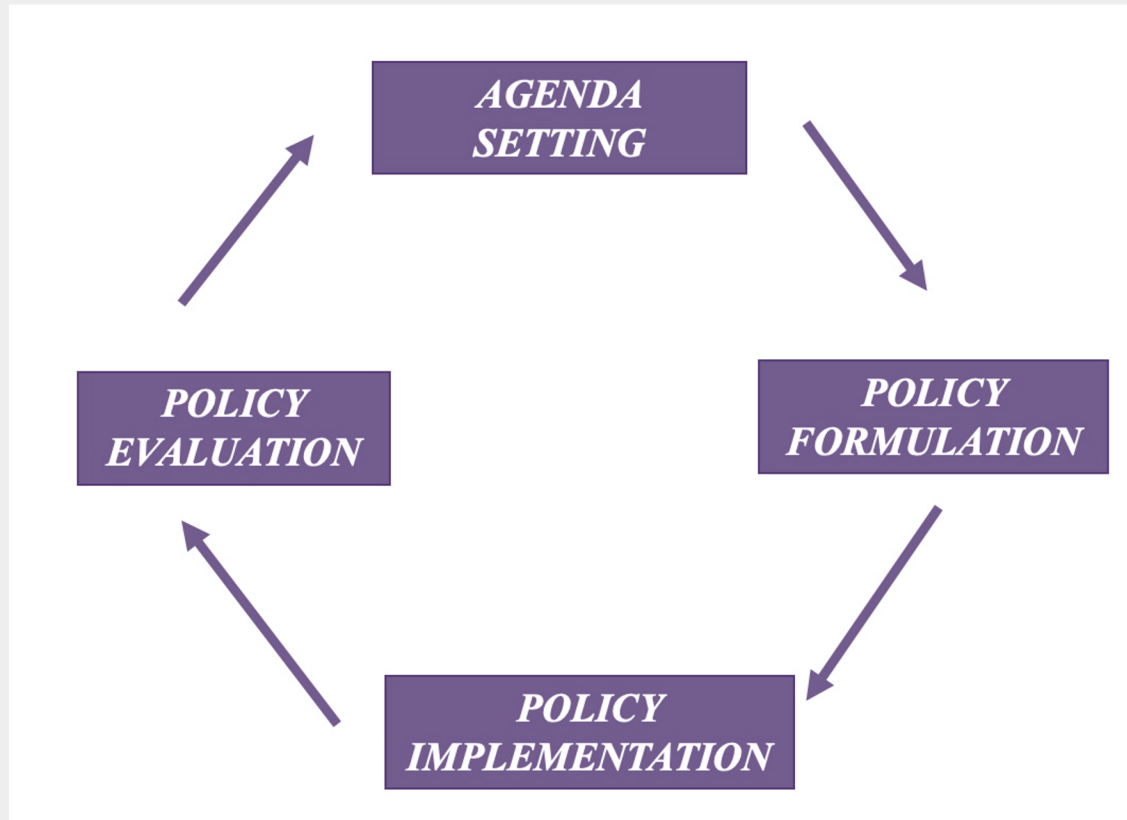
- Policy Process
 - The many and complex sets of decisions, actions, and inter-action entailed in developing policy and putting policy into effect
 - always involve:
 - negotiation, contestation, resistance



Policy Process



Policy Process



Agenda setting

Identification of problems or recognition of issues and setting priorities for what needs to be addressed.

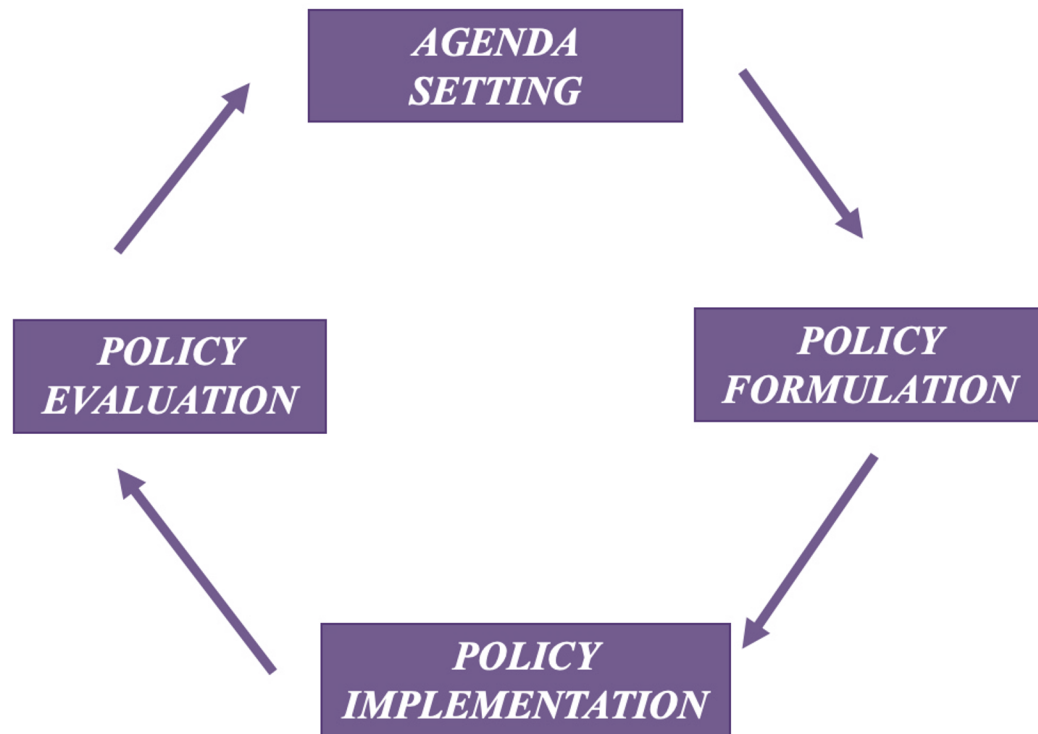
What does, and does not, get onto the policy-making agenda determines what policies are formulated and is influenced by policy actors' interests and concerns.



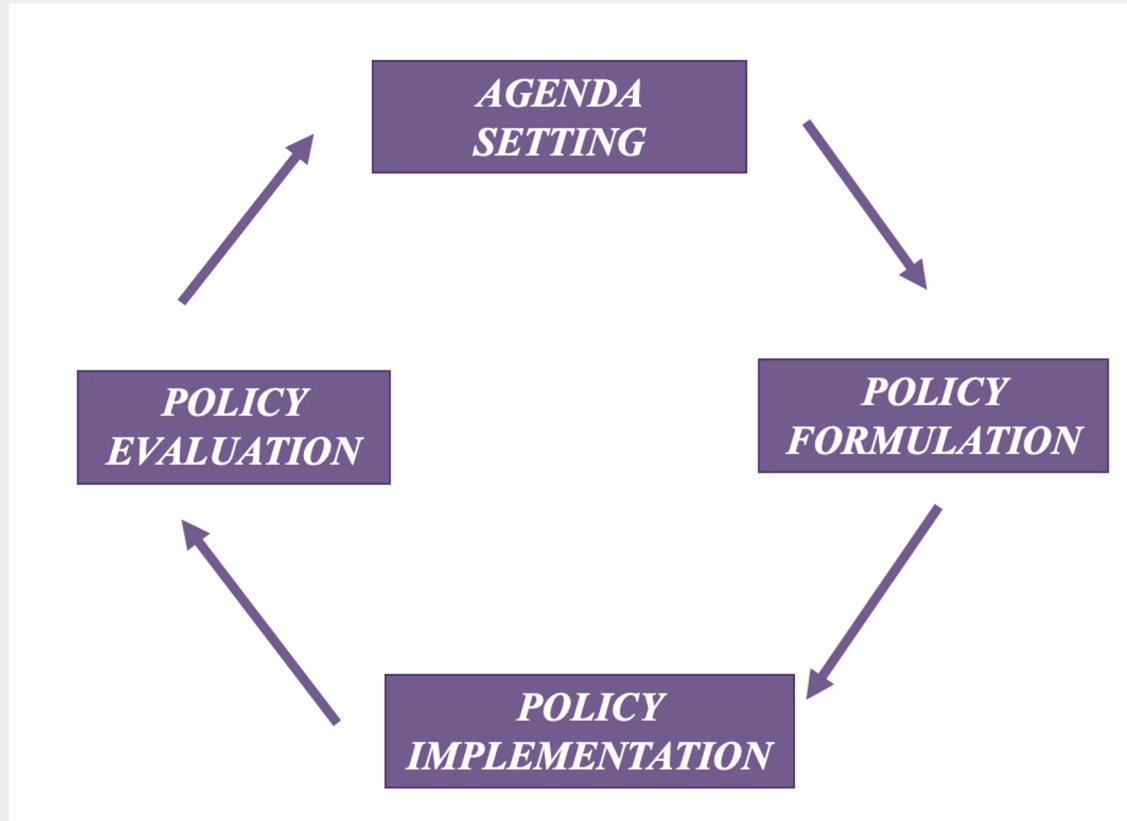
Policy Process

Policy formulation

Actors with formal policy authority making decisions about the details of policy content, using various decision-making strategies, and perhaps involving other policy actors.



Policy Process

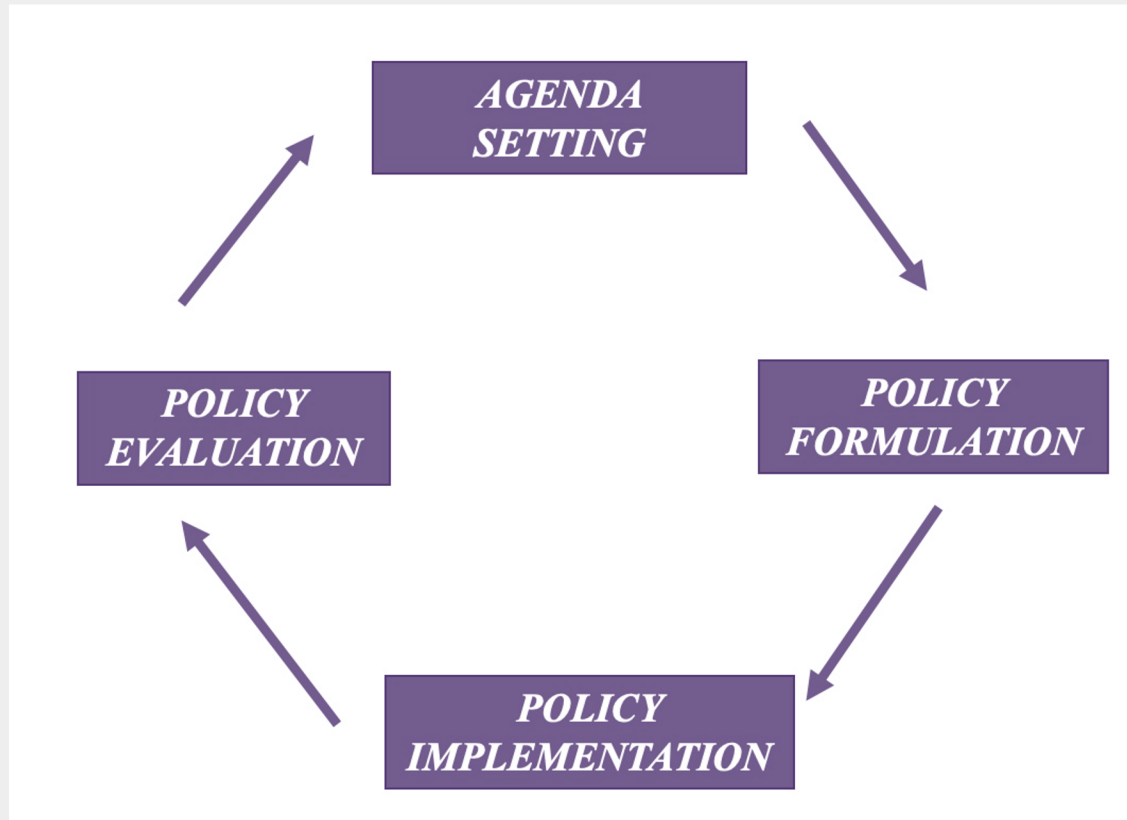


Policy implementation

Implementation of the policy content through various strategies and by various structures and people, including the adaptation or non-implementation of the policy by these policy actors.



Policy Process



Policy evaluation

Assessing the success of the policy, either during its development and implementation (sometimes with a view to influencing this process), or after these periods, as a basis for further policy action.



Power and the policy process

- To make policy, actors (governments, institutions, individuals, groups) need **power**
- They need ***authority to act*** (make policy decisions) and they need the ***capacity to act*** (carry out policy decisions)
- **Capacity** to affect the development and implementation of the policy process directly or indirectly



Power and the policy process

- Problem definition is a supreme instrument of power since there is no one fixed definition and as such policy issues are subject to the interpretative manoeuvres and discursive strategies of policy actors who influence the process.
 - *Problem definition often focuses on explaining how a condition comes about and what strategies might be used as a solution*
- A policy issue therefore can be defined in more than one way and hence policy actors play a key role in interpreting and debating the issues that become the dominant definition.



Power and the policy process

- To make policy decisions and carry out policy decisions
 - One essentially requires some **source of power**, coupled with **the will to use the power** in a politically skillful way that is to **convince those to whom one has access**. (Mintzberg, 1983)



Sources of Power

- Mintzberg (1983) proposes five sources of power:
 - The control of:
 - (1) a resource,
 - (2) a technical skill
 - (3) a body of knowledge
 - (4) legal prerogative, that is exclusive rights or privileges to impose choices
 - (5) access to those who can rely on the other four power sources



Power, contestations and politics: case studies

- To understand policy processes, it is essential to understand
 - (1) the **characteristics of policy actors**, the **powers** they hold and how they deal with and control each other and;
 - Policy agenda influencers (agenda director, advisor, advocates, approver), policy formulators, policy implementers. *Koduah et al 2018*
 - (2) the **interaction domains/venues** through which they are able to do so
 - Bureaucratic and public domains. *Grindle and Thomas 1991*



POWER, CONTESTATIONS AND POLITICS: CASE STUDIES



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Koduah et al. *BMC Health Services Research* (2016) 16:323
DOI 10.1186/s12913-016-1576-2

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Technical analysis, contestation and politics in policy agenda setting and implementation: the rise and fall of primary care maternal services from Ghana's capitation policy



Augustina Koduah^{1,2*}, Han van Dijk² and Irene Akua Agyepong^{3,4}



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Agenda setting and formulation

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Technical policy actors within the bureaucratic arena used their expertise and authority for consensus building to get antenatal, normal delivery and postnatal services included in the primary care per capita payment system.



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Implementation

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Service providers used their professional knowledge and skills, access to political and social power and street level bureaucrat power to contest and resist various aspects of the policy and its implementation arrangements



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Implementation

The context of intense public arena conflicts in an election year added to the high-level political anxiety generated by the contestation. The President and Minister of Health responded and revised the policy

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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

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'The one with the purse makes policy': Power, problem definition, framing and maternal health policies and programmes evolution in national level institutionalised policy making processes in Ghana

Augustina Koduah ^{a, d, *}, Irene Akua Agyepong ^{b, c}, Han van Dijk ^d

^a Ministry of Health, P.O. Box MB 44, Ministries, Accra, Ghana
^b Julius Global Health, P.O. Box 85500, 3508 GA, Utrecht, The Netherlands
^c Ghana Health Service, Research and Development Division, Dodowa Health Research Center, Dodowa, Ghana
^d Wageningen UR (University & Research Centre), Sociology of Development and Change, The Netherlands

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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Agenda setting and formulation

National level decision makers used their power sources as negotiation tools to frame maternal health issues and design maternal health policies and programmes within the framework of the national health sector programme of work.



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Agenda setting and formulation

The power sources identified included legal and structural authority; access to authority by way of political influence; control over and access to resources (mainly financial); access to evidence in the form of health sector performance reviews and demographic health surveys; and knowledge of national plans such as Ghana Poverty Reduction



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Health Policy and Planning, 34, 2019, ii104–ii120

doi: 10.1093/heapol/czz107

Supplement Article



Use of evidence and negotiation in the review of national standard treatment guidelines and essential medicines list: experience from Ghana

Augustina Koduah^{1,*}, Brian A Asare², Edith Gavor²,
Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt³, Edith Andrews Annan⁴ and Francis W Ofei⁵



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Policy formulation

The review process occurred in both bureaucratic and public arenas where various actors with varied power and interest engaged in ways to consolidate their influence with the use of evidence from research and practice.

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Policy formulation

In the bureaucratic arena, a national medicines selection committee inaugurated by the Minister of Health assessed the 2010 edition through technical sessions considering the *country's disease burden, hierarchical healthcare structure and evidence on safety and efficacy and expert opinion*.

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To build consensus and ensure credibility, service providers, professional bodies and healthcare managers scrutinized the assessed guidelines and medicines list in public arenas.

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Policy formulation

In such public arenas, technical discussions moved towards negotiations with emphasis on practicability of the policies

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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Original research

BMJ Global Health

Powers, engagements and resultant influences over the design and implementation of medicine pricing policies in Ghana

Augustina Koduah,¹ Leonard Baatiema,² Irene A Kretchy ,¹
Irene Akua Agyepong,^{3,4} Anthony Danso-Appiah,⁵ Anna Cronin de Chavez,⁶
Timothy Ensor ,⁷ Tolib Mirzoev ⁶



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The Ministry of Health coordinated policy processes, utilising its bureaucratic mandate and exerted high influences over each policy.



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Most stakeholders were highly engaged in policy processes. Whereas some led or coproduced the policies in the design stage and participated in policy implementation, others were consulted for their inputs, views and opinions.



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Policy formulation

Stakeholder powers reflected their expertise, bureaucratic mandates and through participation in national level consultation meetings, influences policy contents and implementation

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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Koduah et al. *Health Res Policy Sys* (2021) 19:16
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-021-00680-7>

Health Research Policy
and Systems

RESEARCH

Open Access

Pharmacy premises licensing policy formulation: experience from Ghana



Augustina Koduah^{1*} , Reginald Sekyi-Brown¹, Joseph Kodjo Nsiah Nyoagbe², Daniel Amaning Danquah³
and Irene Kretchy¹



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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Policy formulation

The Ministry of Health drafted the Bill in July 2010 with the consensus of internal stakeholders. The Bill interrogated by the Parliament Select Committee on Health (with legislative power) during separate periods, and decisions made in Parliament to alter propositions of pharmacy premises regulations.

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Policy formulation

Parliamentarians framed pharmacies as health facilities and reassigned their regulation from the Pharmacy Council to a new agency. The Pharmacy Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana could not participate in the decision-making processes in Parliament to oppose these alterations.

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Power, contestations and politics: case studies

Policy formulation

The laws' contents rested with parliamentarians as they made decisions in venues restricted to others. Legislative procedure limited participation, although non-legislative actors had some level of influence on the initial content.

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Take Home Messages

- To make policy, actors (governments, institutions, individuals, groups) need **power**
- They need ***authority to act*** (make policy decisions) and they need the ***capacity to act*** (carry out policy decisions)



Take Home Messages

- Problem definition is an important way to exercise power
- Problem definition is a supreme instrument of power since there is no one fixed definition and as such policy issues are subject to the interpretative manoeuvres and discursive strategies of policy actors who influence the process.
- the **interaction domains/venues** through which policy actors take decisions and exercise their power is important



- Thank you

