THE MULTIPLE STREAMS FRAMEWORK AND THE 1996 AND 2007 EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN GHANA

Abstract:

The paper examines the formulation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education policy and the Kuffour-led education reforms in the education system of Ghana in 1996 and 2007 respectively. The study is undertaken through the lens of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) developed by John Kingdon in 1984 to underscore how different factors or streams collectively influence the adoption of certain policies. The paper argues that far more than mere pursuit of party manifesto promises, broad problem, policy and political occurrences conspired to call forth the reforms. By so doing, the paper puts the theoretical assumptions of MSF to test and finds that though developed within the context of the American democratic system to explain policymaking, the MSF finds utility in the Ghanaian context as well, making its postulations generalizable.

Keywords: education reform; problem stream; policy stream; politics stream; policy window; policy entrepreneur.

INTRODUCTION

The current tripartite structure of Ghana's education system is the product of a long history of reforms. In the early years following Ghana's independence, the nation was praised as having one of the finest education systems in Western Africa (World Bank, 1986). Notwithstanding, successive governments had always felt dissatisfied with the education system they inherited. In what has now become a tradition, various governments are never shy of effecting reforms in the education system in the bid to make it responsive to the national needs (Tonah, 2009). Braimah et al (2014) posit that education reform in Ghana is inextricably linked with a change in government. The paper assumes that under conditions of ambiguity, where policymakers have a limited time frame to formulate and adopt policies, policy entrepreneurs are required to push for the adoption of specific policies. To this end, the paper argues that the adoption of the Free

27 Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the 2007 Kuffour-led education reforms
28 were as a result ofthe entrepreneurship of Mr. Harry Sawyerr and President John Kuffour who
29 capitalized on the ambiguity and the policy windows that opened in the democratic system to
30 push for the respective policies.

31 Prior to Ghana's entrance into the Fourth Republic in 1992, various reviews and reforms had
32 been undertaken in the education system in 1961, 1967, 1974 and 1987(Tonah, 2009). All,
33 except the 1961 reform, were supervised by military regimes.In spite of the several reforms, little
34 is known about the very processes that preceded the new policies that were formulated.
35 Regarding the secrecy that characterized the education policy environment, Ohemeng (2005:
36 450), for example, hasobserved that "the policymaking environment during this period could be
37 described as a 'closed circuit network' of politicians and senior bureaucrats, with assistance from
38 expatriates." That is, often suspicious of popular participation, military governments always kept
39 the process tight-knit and away from public participation.

40 Having spent the preceding 11 years under military rule, the country returned to constitutional
41 rule and multiparty democracyin 1992. Consequently, the dynamics of politicking changed
42 drastically. Ghana broke ties with the 'culture of silence' that became synonymous with politics
43 for the most part of the 1980s, shedding away the apathetic posture of the citizenry in the
44 process. However, given the country's long years under military dictatorship, institutional
45 arrangements at the time of the 1996 and 2007 educational reforms were weakly developed. In a
46 policymaking environment that mimicked the Darwinian "survival of the fittest", several
47 problems competed for government attention.

48 However, with their new-found voice and freedomfollowing the adoption of the 1992

49 Constitution, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), think tanks, and major stakeholders in the

50 education sector regularly proposed varied solutions to the problems which floated around in

51 search of government attention. Meanwhile, the political system was undergoing aserious

52 metamorphosis in the bid to adapt to the democratic,if not the democratizing,[1]ethos of thenew

53 country. Ambivalence thus characterized policymaking in the early days of the country's

54 democracy. At critical times, the whole processes were hijacked by powerful individuals who

55 used their status and power to push for the adoption of specific policies without recourse to

56 institutional provisions.

57 The literature on the education reform policies of Ghana is inundated with expositions on the

58 lapses in the existing policies that called forth the subsequent reforms.General economic

59 decadence, the downside of the state's pursuit of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), a

60 mass exodus of trained teachers to neighboring countries, especially Nigeria in the wake of the

61 1983 famine in the country, budgetary cuts in supply of teaching aids and textbooks and poor

62 remuneration for teachers are often cited as some of the problems in the education system that

63 have necessitated reforms in the country over the years (Akyeampong, 2010; Little, 2010;

64 Kuyini, 2007; Tonah, 2006; Agbemebiase, 2007; Kadingdi, 2009; Poku et al., 2013).

65 Braimah et al. (2014) and Kuyini (2007) posit that the policy processes of education reforms in

66 the Fourth Republic were informed by economic globalization and ideologically inspired party

67 manifestoes of the two main political parties in Ghana. Although the paper concedes that the two

68 aforementioned issues are important in accounting for the education reforms, the position of the

69 paper is that several other occurrences in the body politic of the state conspired to further shape

70   how the problems in the education system were perceived. Thus the evolution of the two reforms

71   cannot adequately be traced to the conventional party manifestoes alone. Cardinal to the account

72   of the formulation and adoption of the policies is how the problems in the education system were

73   understood and framed, the presence or absence of alternative solutions and the development of

74   wider events not primarily associated with the education system of the country. To all intent and

75   purposes, it becomes apparent that the existing literature suffers a theoretical dearth in the

76   ongoing discourse and methodological issues are largely taken for granted.

77   This paper thus makes a twofold contribution to the literature. Firstly, the paper complements the

78   existing literature by the application of theory to the analyses thereby giving the discussions a

79   theoretical structure. Further, the literature has mostly focused on the implementation and

80   evaluation of the education policies over the years. Thus in its second contribution, the paper

81   restricts itself to the analysis of the agenda setting[2], policy formulation and adoption of the

82   aforementioned reforms thereby broadening existing knowledge of the education reforms

83   pursued in Ghana's fourth republican dispensation. The rest of the paper is thus organized as

84   follows. Firstly, methodological and theoretical discussions are undertaken in the immediate

85   section that follows. Subsequently, the formulation and adoption of the Free Compulsory

86   Universal Basic Education is discussed. The next section focuses on the formulation and

87   adoption of the Kuffour-led reforms. The last section concludes the paper.

88   **METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS**

89   The paper adopts the case study approach in the analysis of the education reforms. Case

90   study as a methodological approach in policy studies is an intensive study of a single case with

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[2] Agenda setting denotes how policy problems reach the attention of policymakers for them to act on them (Brenya and Asare 2011)

91   the view to shedding light on a larger class of similar cases (Gerring, 2007: 20; Meyer, 2001:

92   329). That is, in the bid to understand policymaking under the Fourth Republic, the paper

93   intensively examines how the education reforms were undertaken within the dispensation. The

94   view is that the analyses of the reform processes within the period under consideration would

95   give insight into how policymaking could be understood since the emergence of the Fourth

96   Republic.

97   To this end, the paper adopts an in-depth diachronic case study of the education reforms. Within

98   the Fourth Republic, Ghana has undertaken two different education reforms in 1996 and 2007.

99   Thus, within the single case of education policy reforms, the paper undertakes a diachronic

100 analysis of the two time periods so as to draw on the similarities of the two policies to construct

101 its case. This kind of investigation makes for a considerable degree of time to analyze the reform

102 processes within the case so as to gather information about the formulation process.

103 However, the paper takes cognizance of the challenge that comes with such diachronic case

104 study.Meyer (2001) cautions that the single case study method has limited generalizability and

105 risks information-processing bias. In offsetting this challenge, the paper utilizes process tracing

106 to gather pieces of evidence from several sources to undertake the exercise (Gerring 2007). That

107 is, multiple pieces of evidence are drawn from the wider political system, government documents

108 and the policymaking community to establish how the education reforms were undertaken.

109 Theoretically,thispaper utilizes the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) as put forth by John

110 Kingdon (1995) and further expounded by NikolasZahariadis (2014) to explain the education

111 reforms undertaken in 1996 and 2007. MSF accounts for policymaking under conditions of

112 ambiguity when policymakers are operating under significant time constraints. The theory

113   accounts for the processes that precede the policy implementation stage of the policy process.

114   These activities span from agenda setting to its adoption (McLendon and Vogel, 2008; Deleon

115   2001)). MSF assumes that government is an 'organized anarchy' with a fluid participation which

116   regularly sees participants dropping in and out of the governance process (Zahariadis, 2014).

117   Like the garbage can model put forth by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972), this organized anarchy

118   regularly sees inputs and proposals jumbled up into the policymaking process with each

119   struggling to make it to the institutional agenda.The institutional agenda denotes the issues being

120   considered by government. However, Anderson (2006) has stated that not all issues on the

121   institutional agenda reach the status of public policy. He further observes that the decisional

122   agenda are the salient issues that policymakers have committed themselves to addressing in the

123   polity.

124   Within the Ghanaian political system, the President, who is the head of the government, is vested

125   with the executive powers of the state to hire and fire officials to aid in the administration of the

126   state [The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, Article 58(1)]. Regular reshuffles of

127   government appointees are undertaken by the president at critical times in the bid to assign the

128   best of brains to help carry on the task of governance. The process regularly sees officials being

129   reassigned to new ministries, others shown the exit and new ones coming in to augment the

130   existing team of public officials.

131   Another assumption of MSF is the postulation that order is temporal and that policymakers are

132   always operating under significant time constraints. The theory assumes that policymakers are

133   expected to 'strike while the iron is hot' (Zahariadis, 2014).Thus policymakers have no luxury of

134   time to have a full view and appreciation of the problem at hand before devising a policy to

135   tackle it. Pressing problems regularly demand rapid responses lest citizens lose faith in the

136   capacity of the government. Far from depicting a crisis scenario, the theory rather portrays

137   governments as under constant pressure to respond to citizens demands.

138   The education reforms undertaken in the Fourth Republic harbored these situations. Firstly, the

139   FCUBE policy of 1996 was backed by a constitutional provision which called for its adoption

140   within two years after the coming into force of the national constitution. Further, with the

141   FCUBE outrunning its constitutional mandate in August 2005, pressure mounted on the

142   government to come out with the new direction of education policy for the nation in the 2006

143   academic year which was beginning in September of the same year. These limited time frames

144   meant that the governments were under significant constraints to come out with the policy

145   outlining the new direction of education policies for the country.

146   The framework as well postulates independent yet interrelated processes by which problems,

147   ideas (potential solutions), and politics each flow independently through government, combining

148   only occasionally with choice opportunities to advance issues onto the policy agenda (McLendon

149   and Vogel, 2008, p. 32). These processes are metaphorically described as 'streams' which flow

150   through the policy system. The problem stream has within it all the undesired conditions that

151   citizens want to have rectified by the government. It spans through several sectors and areas of

152   public interest and they are the very conditions for which the citizens voted for the government

153   to have them resolved. It may stem from residual problems that policy feedback makes known or

154   focusing events within the wider political system which draw cognizance from the citizenry.

155   The policy stream is yet another independent process that flows through the political system.

156   Analogous with 'primeval soup' within which several ingredients are constituted, the policy

157   stream consists of all the proposals made in policy communities for tackling the issues that make

158   up the problem stream (Zahariadis, 2014). Through such mechanisms as hearings, papers, and

159   even conversations, bureaucrats, academics and researchers of think tanks who take an interest in

160   the problem make their ideas known to policymakers. The hope is that the latterwill embrace

161   these ideas and run with them in the adoption stage of the policymaking process. However, not

162   all policy proposals make it to the institutional agenda. Seldom do proposals survive the struggle

163   process unaltered. Most policy proposals get combined with other ideas into new proposals, with

164   others losing out altogether. Considerations of technical feasibility and resource economy are

165   measured in choosing one proposal over another.

166   Lastly, there is the politics stream. This stream comprises of the public mood, the activities of

167   pressure groups and even election results and administrative or legislative turnover (McLendon

168   and Vogel, 2008). These have considerable impact on how issues come to be defined as

169   problems, and the sort of solutions that are applied in tackling the issues.

170   Central to the application of MSF are the concepts of policy window and policy

171   entrepreneurs. In the pursuit of national policies, timing is very crucial. The government is

172   constantly bombarded with several problems that the citizens believe must be addressed through

173   public policy. Given that resources are always not enough to address the grievances of the

174   people, the government continually prioritizes the needs of the state and addresses the ones

175   deemed to be of immediate importance to the state first. In another breadth, the government is

176   also keeping an eye on its continuous stay in office. What this means is that it requires unique

177   opportunities for the government to come to pursue a given policy. In the parlance of this theory,

178   such opportune times are referred to as policy windows.Zahariadis (2014) accounts for how

179   windows in the political system opens. He posits, "[w]indows are opened by compelling

180   problems or by events in the problem stream.... In the political stream, a new administration may

181   be ideologically committed to deregulation (Zahariadis 2014: 35)." In Ghana, the emergence of

182   the NPP in 2001 as the party in charge of the two political branches of the government, that is the

183   legislature and the executive, opened a political window that made it feasible for the repeal of the

184   criminal libel law that generally undermined the work of journalists.

185   With regards to policy entrepreneurs, MSF regards them asindividuals with vested interest in

186   seeing a problem resolved. More than mere advocates of a given policy, they are rather power

187   brokers, coalition enablers and manipulators of problematic preferences and unclear technology

188   (Mintrom and Norman 2009 cited in Zahariadis 2014). Such people are always looking for

189   policy windows so as to marshal all the resources at their disposal to couple the streams and push

190   for the adoption of a particular policy by policymakers. By their close monitoring of events in

191   the political system, policy entrepreneurs are the first to detect when a window opens and moves

192   in to take advantage to couple the streams and push for the adoption of a policy.Just like

193   epistemic communities, policy entrepreneurs are highly knowledgeable in certain policy areas

194   and they are able to push for the adoption of such policies when they believe the timing is right.

195   TheMSF was formulated within the United States' political system to explain the domestic

196   policy process. Since its formulation, the theory has found wide applicability in North America

197   and Europe to analyze various sub-national, national and international issues. Zahariades(2014)

198   finds over thirty successful applications of the theory across Europe and North America.

199   However, a survey of the literature finds only a handful of policy issues in Africa that have been

200   analyzed using the theory. Valery Ridde utilized the theory to explain health policy in Burkina

201   Faso (Ridde, 2006). Offin (2011) applied MSF to account for women empowerment in Ghana.

202   However, this limited application of the theory in Africa leaves much to be desired, especially

203   considering the fact that there are numerous policy issues across the continent that demand

204   theoretical expositions.

205   The limited application of the theory across Africa is, however, fairly understandable. MSF was

206   developed to account for policymaking in democratic settings. Africa's political history has been

207   one largely dominated by military and/or autocraticgovernments. Until the democratic wave of

208   the 1980s, military dictatorships pervaded the political landscape. Given the restrictions and the

209   secrecy that policymaking is shrouded in under such regimes, the application of MSF to explain

210   policy making was hampered. However, with the current spate of democratic consolidation

211   across the continent, and in Ghana in particular, the situation is ripe for the theory to be applied

212   to explain policymaking. Moreover, the macro-level systemic focus of the theorymakes the

213   national education reform policies of Ghana a viable policy to be explicated using the theory.

214   Further, the paper draws attention to the ways in which conceptualization of both the policy

215   problem and policy solution were developed, articulated, presented and debated in the political

216   arena. The policies were mainly products of policy recommendations from policy communities

217   who devised policy solutions to tackle the problems that bedeviled the education system of the

218   country. Consequently,powerful individuals especially policy entrepreneurs took advantage of

219   the ambiguity created within the system to push for certain policies. To this extent, the MSF is

220   best suited to explain the emergence of the FCUBE and the 2007 education reforms.

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222 **THE FREE COMPULSORY UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION: 1996 – 2005.**

223 Ghana's education system began to experience foreign interventions following the adoption of

224 the Structural Adjustment Program in the 1980s. The general economic decadence wrought by

225 the economic and political mismanagement of the country during the period had considerable

226 adverse impacts on the education system of the country. In a related development, the inception

227 of the Fourth Republic was a watershed in the nation's political history. Sweeping changes

228 occurred in the political system with direct impacts on the education sector. The 'culture of

229 silence' that came to characterize politicking was broken. It is against this backdrop that the three

230 streams of MSF are constructed.

231 **PROBLEM STREAM**

232 Zahariadis (2014) maintains that there are three mechanisms through which issues come to be

233 framed as problems. These mechanisms are indicators, focusing events and policy feedback.

234 Ghana's return to constitutional rule in 1992 opened up the political space for people to express

235 their grievances about the existing education policy (Tonah, 2006). At the turn of 1980,

236 following many years of economic mismanagement, Ghana was trapped in huge volumes of debt

237 to international public and commercial banks. Threatened with the prospect of economic

238 meltdown, the country turned to the Bretton Woods institutions and called for an intervention to

239 reschedule the debt and maintain Ghana's line of commercial credit (Sawyerr, 1997). In return,

240 the IMF and WB drew up the **SAP** as an action plan which they approved for Ghana to pursue in

241 the quest to structurally adjust the economy on the path of growth.

242   Under theSAP, the government was required to, among other prescriptions, cut back on

243   public spending and other forms of social interventions including subsidies. Thepolicyfeedback

244   from the SAP on the education sector was debilitating (Poku et al., 2013). The portion of Gross

245   Domestic Product (GDP) spent on education fell from over six percent in 1976 to just over one

246   percent. Consequently, most schools had no textbooks, no chalk, and, more often than not, few

247   teachers. In senior secondary schools, mismanagement and inadequate budgets forced boarding

248   schools to close many weeks of the school year (Sawyerr, 1997). The National Education Forum

249   (1999) sums up the effect of the SAP on the education sector of the country:

250   The percentage of GDP allocated to education dropped from 6.4 percent to 1.7 percent. The real levels of
251   financing fell by about two-thirds. Government resources were no longer available to construct, complete
252   or maintain educational facilities. Scarcity of foreign exchange affected the country's ability to purchase
253   textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. At the basic education level, the ratio of trained
254   teachers to untrained teachers fell significantly and low motivation and morale led to ineffective
255   supervision. (National Education Forum, 1999, p. 9).

256   In a country where cost of education provision is heavily subsidized by the government, the

257   decision to cut down on the social interventions as part of the pursuit of the SAP was the spear in

258   the Achilles heel of the education system. The school system was left dejected, as basic

259   resources and materials required for its running were not forth-coming from the government.

260   Harry Sawyerr, Ghana's Minister of Education in 1993 puts it better; "by 1985, the education

261   system was destitute at every level (Sawyerr, 1997, p.3).

262   Further, other focusing events pointed to the fact that all was not well with the education system

263   in the run up to the adoption of the FCUBE. The 1993 academic year saw 42,105 candidates

264   sitting for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE). When the West

265   African Examination Council (WAEC) released the results of the candidates for the examination,

266   the   weakness   in   the   implementation   of   the   1987   education   reforms   became

267 apparent(Agbemabiese, 2007). In a rather disappointing performance, only 1,354 candidates

268 representing 3.2 percent passed and hence were qualified to subsequently sit for the University

269 Entrance Examination. Given the fact that 21.08 percent of the candidates who sat for the

270 examination failed, anger, uproar and criticisms were elicited from the stakeholders of the

271 education system. Parents bemoaned the fact that the education system amounted to wasted years

272 (Braimah et al., 2014). The general discontentment that greeted the release of the SSSCE results

273 compelled the government to set up a committee to look into the education system and make

274 recommendations for reform.

275 In the area of indicators, Braimah et al. (2014) argue that although frantic efforts were made by

276 the government to construct schools in catchment areas, this action was not paralleled with the

277 provision of trained teachers. Although over 100 community schools were built across the

278 country bringing the total government assisted secondary schools to 452 in the 1993 academic

279 year, qualified vocational and technical instructors to tutor the students in these new schools

280 were non-existent. At every level of the education system, teachers left Ghana for other

281 neighboring countries and even overseas where they could earn better salaries. In their stead,

282 untrained teachers took over teaching responsibilities in the classroom (Blunch, 2014).

283 Moreover, teaching and learning materials for the schools were in short supply. Braimah et al.

284 (2014) charge that textbooks for the final year course required for the candidates to prepare for

285 the SSSCE were never supplied, depriving the candidates of the knowledge required for the

286 examination.

287 In sum, the policy feedback of the SAP, coupled with the focusing events of the 1993 SSSCE

288 performance of candidates and the indicators of a shortage of trained teachers and textbooks for

289 studies provided the impetus for Ghanaians to demand a drastic overhaul of the education

290 system.

291 **POLICY STREAM**

292 The policy stream is one of the independent processes that also go on in the run up to the

293 adoption of a policy. Ideas and proposals generated by policy experts, academics and even

294 government circles within this stream rise and fall over the years. However, considerations of

295 technical feasibility, resource economy and value acceptance determine the fate of proposed

296 solutions ultimately making it to the institutional agenda. Within the education system in the run

297 up to the adoption of the FCUBE, government was largely the main actor, championing the

298 development of possible solutions to the problem.

299 Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MoE), the bureaucrats together with

300 government appointees and foreign donor agencies regularly met to fashion out possible

301 solutions to the menace in the education system. The government set up an education reform

302 committee in 1993. With partnership from international donors such as the United States Agency

303 for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, the United

304 Kingdom's Department for International Development and UNICEF, the MoE undertook

305 extensive consultations with stakeholders of the education sector between May 1993 and

306 July1994. (Tonah, 2006). In recounting the role of the donor community in the preparation of the

307 strategy paper, the Minister of Education, Harry Sawyerr intimated that:

308   During the preparation of the paper, UNICEF staff in Ghana took the lead in providing technical and
309   financial assistance to the ministry. Teams of specialists and practitioners, including representatives of
310   other funding agencies, were invited to prepare thematic papers on key sector issues. Funding agency
311   representatives met every month at UNICEF; the head of UNICEF's Human Resource Development
312   Program chaired the meetings. Participants included officials from the ministries of education and

313   finance, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank, the British Council and Britain's Overseas
314   Development Agency (ODA), the European Union, the U.S. Agency for International Development
315   (USAID), the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and other bilateral agencies, including
316   the Swiss, German, Canadian, Dutch, and French. (Sawyerr, 1997)

317 The consultative process that commenced in May 1993 ended with a four-day workshop from 19

318 to 22 July, 1994.The MoE, under the leadership of the Minister, prepared a strategy paper,

319 "*Towards Learning for All: Ghana Basic Education Reforms for the year 2000*", a policy

320 document which sought to be the roadmap to rectify the anomaly in the education system (Little,

321 2010; Sawyerr, 1997). At the workshop, a formal proposal was presented to the government to

322 be considered for adoption as the new education policy of the country. There were five broad

323 recommendations contained in the proposal. They were infrastructural development,

324 management reforms, curriculum change, community participation and improvement of quality

325 personnel to support basic education at all levels (Government of Ghana 1994)

326 **POLITICAL STREAM**

327 Flowing along independently of the two aforementioned streams is the political stream.This

328 stream is composed of such things as public mood, pressure group campaigns, andelection

329 results among others (Kingdon, 1995). As powerful as the stream is, political developments have

330 considerable power in shaping how problems are defined and the sort of solutions devised to

331 meet the problems head on.

332 On December 31, 1981, Jerry Rawlings led a military coup that toppled the democratically

333 elected Limann government. In the 11 years that followed, Jerry Rawlings ruled the country with

334 an iron fist. A moratorium was placed on all forms of political party activities in the country. A

335 'culture of silence' characterized the general political atmosphere of the state (Gyimah-Boadi,

336 2012). However, succumbing to domestic and international pressure, the government

337   inauspiciously outlined measures to return the country to democracy. Consequently, presidential

338   elections were organized and run in November 1992. The National Democratic Congress, with

339   Jerry Rawlings as its standard-bearer won an overwhelming victory such that he was the elected

340   president to lead the country into the Fourth Republic. Being the leader of the country 11 years

341   prior, the government was fully aware of the problem bedeviling the education sector of the

342   country at the inception of the republic.

343   The public mood at the time of the reform was one of dissatisfaction with the state of the

344   education system. Several factors accounted for the discontentment of the citizenry. At the turn

345   of the 1990s, the country was beginning to bear the brunt of the economic crunch wrought by the

346   SAP. The cut in government expenditure in the education system was greeted with disdain.

347   Teachers and pupils alike could not lay hands on basic materials for teaching and learning. More

348   so, the general shortage of qualified teachers to tutor pupils, the disappointing performance of

349   students, and the newfound freedom under the democratic system conspired to ensure that the

350   stakeholders within the education system and the wider populace clamored for a change in the

351   education system (Tonah, 2009).

352   **THE WINDOW OPENS FOR THE POLICY ENTREPRENEUR**

353   Kingdon (1995) describes the opportune times when it becomes ripe for specific policies to be

354   adopted as policy windows. Once the opportunity presents itself, policy entrepreneurs must act

355   quickly to push their pet solutions for adoption lest the chance slips by.In the run up to the

356   Fourth Republic, Rawlings' military government established a National Commission for

357   Democracy. The commission was tasked among others to engage in political education, advice

358   the government on how to develop a participatory democracy, and monitor the government's

359   performance in fostering a democratic environment (IMF, 2000).The commission consulted

360   widely. Between July and November of 1990, the committee held 10 regional seminars on the

361   democratic structure for central government. Several well-meaning Ghanaians contributed to the

362   deliberations of the commission. In March 1991, the commission issued a report.The

363   commission's report particularly noted that education standards had fallen in the country and that

364   many people were also excluded (Little, 2010). The commission's report among others

365   recommended for the adoption of a new constitution.

366   In response, the president accepted the recommendations as a working document. In April

367   of 1991, the president constituteda committee of constitutional experts to formulate specific

368   constitutional proposals. Along with the ongoing constitutional process was the move to organize

369   national elections. Presidential elections were organized in November 1992. On December 29,

370   1992, parliamentary polls were also held. With the parliament duly constituted, the new

371   constitution was ratified in April 1993 as the principal governing document of the country (IMF,

372   2000). The adoption of the constitution opened the window of opportunity to reform the

373   education system. Article 38(2) of the constitution stipulates, "The Government shall, within two

374   years after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of this Constitution, draw up a

375   program for implementation within the following 10 years, for the provision of free, compulsory

376   and universal basic education (Government of Ghana, 1992)." Thus the need for a reform was

377   given a constitutional backing. Zahariadis (2014) maintains that policy windows are of short

378   duration. Sharp (1994), however, disagrees with this observation and maintains that the opposite

379   is instead, the case. In keeping with Sharp's position, the window that was created was long for

380   the government to undertake the requisite reforms in the education sector.

381 However, there was the need for a strong policy entrepreneur to step into the scene and steer the

382 process. Upon the nation's entry into the Fourth Republic, Dr. Mary Grant was appointed the

383 Minister of Education. However, after a year in the ministry, a ministerial reshuffle saw her

384 replaced with Mr. Harry Sawyerr. Mr. Sawyerr was a phenomenal figure in the ruling

385 government. An astute politician, he was hugely placed in government circles. His involvement

386 in African politics dated back to 1963 when he was appointed as the first African to act as Chief

387 Federal Lands Officer for Nigeria. He was once a Member of Parliament in the Third Republic.

388 He served as the Minister of Transport and Communication between 1979 and 1981.

389 The government, sensing the enormity of the task of reforming the education system

390 appointed him as the Minister to spearhead it. That he was of immense help in the formulation of

391 the FCUBE is undisputed (Little 2010). Alsop et al. (2010) observe that he regularly engaged

392 with the international donors and amply demonstrated capacity to push his case always. In all,

393 during his term as the Minister of Education, he committed his time and the Ministry's resources

394 to getting the FCUBE adopted as the working policy and the new reform.

395 **THE KUFFOUR-LED EDUCATION REFORMS: 2007 TO 2010**.

396 The year 2000 was equally historic in the political annals of Ghana. In a politically tense year,

397 the elections that were held in December saw the ruling NDC voted out of power. The

398 Opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won the election and assumed power as the new ruling

399 government. With the new government fully in power, the education sector became a focus of

400 political discourse. The government, desirous of effecting reforms, pointed to several lapses in

401 the existing system so as to elicit consensus from the citizenry for a change. It is within this

402 context that the three streams came to be constructed.

PROBLEM STREAM

The turn of the twenty-first century heralded a regime change in Ghana's political governance. Elections were held in December 2000. Though keenly contested, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) with John Kufour as the standard-bearer won both the presidential and parliamentary elections. According to Braimah et al., "There was the usual coterie by the media that a reform of the school system was inevitable with the change of political power (2014, p. 149)." As was predicted, upon assumption of office, theKufour government made known its intentions of reforming the education system it inherited.With the target date for the FCUBE to terminate its constitutional mandate approaching, plans began in earnest in 2002 to reform the education system.

In the area of policy feedback, the government perceived the FCUBE policy as a carry-over of the 1987 educational reform that was supervised by the military government of the time (Tonah, 2009). It was charged that the implementation of the FCUBE had brought to the fore teething problems in the objective, content, administration, and management of education with the effect that the education system had failed to meet the national expectation in terms of its coverage, quality, equitableness and economic utility (Owusu-Mensah, 2005).

Meanwhile, other focusing events and indicators within the education sector pointed to the challenges that were bedeviling the system. A survey of the various study documents issued by the government between 2003 and 2007recountedmajor challenges with the education system:

422   (1) While, on the average, the government provided 91 percent of education financing, most

423   of this was absorbed by teachers' salaries, leaving very little funds for non-salary

424   expenditure (GoG, 2003)

425   (2) The fluctuating percentages of General Enrolment Ratios (GERs) of 38.7 percent at pre-

426   school, 82.3 percent at primary, 63.3 percent at the junior secondary stage and 17 percent

427   at the senior secondary stage were also identified. Further, the document noted

428   particularly that technical and vocational education were poorly developed since more

429   resources are rather channeled towards the grammar system. Lastly, limited opportunity

430   for transfer among streams was as well identified (GoG, 2002).

431   (3) The deteriorating performance of students in the Senior Secondary Certificate

432   Examination (SSCE) was also observed. In the table below, the annual performance of

433   the Senior Secondary School (SSS) candidates between 2001 and 2005 is compared. The

434   diagram (A), below portrays a deteriorating performance of candidates in the SSSCE

435   with the average percentage pass hovering between forty percent and sixty percent (GoG,

436   2007).

437   Diagram A
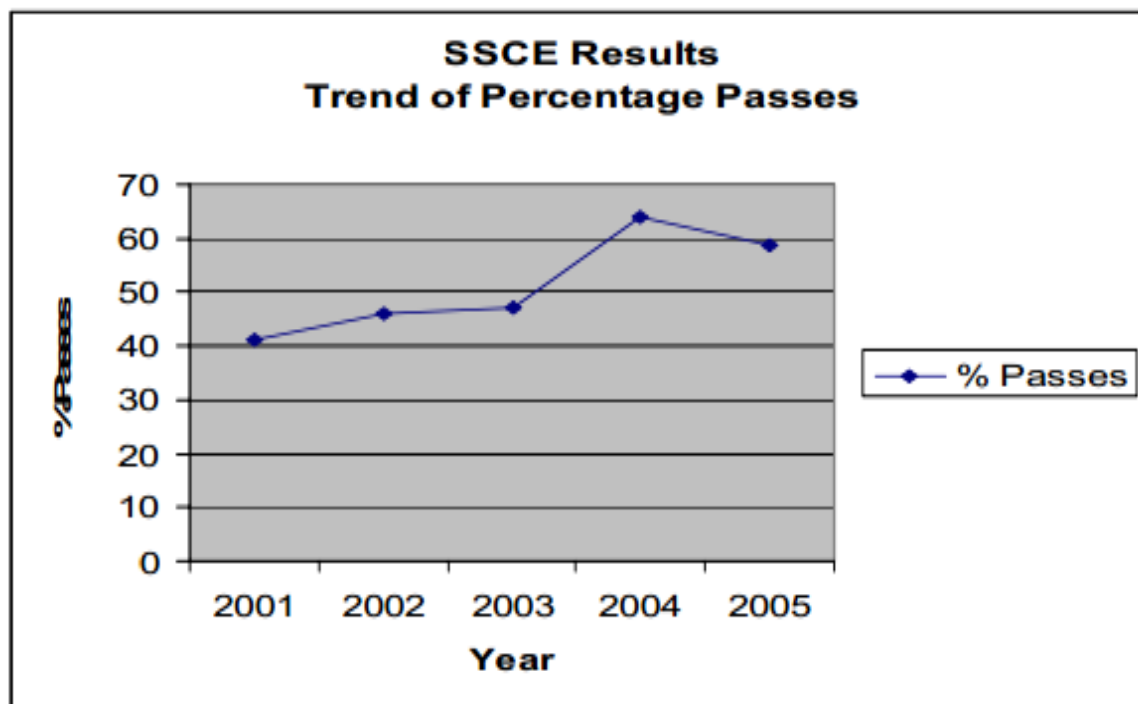
438
439
440   Adapted from the *Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report, 2007*

441   **POLICY STREAM**

442   The policy stream in MSF consists of the proposals developed in policy communities as probable

443   solutions to the issues in the problem stream. The Ministry of Education, the ministry directly

444   responsible for the education sector of the country, commenced a study to ascertain the state of

445   the education sector. After broad consultation with professional education planners, the policy

446   document, *Education Strategy Plan (ESP)* framed within the broader Millennium Development

447   Goals (MDG) was issued. The ministry hoped that upon its adoption by the president, the ESP

448   was to be the roadmap for effecting changes in the education system.

449   Along with the ministry's exercise was the work of a presidential committee to study and

450   make recommendations for reform directly to the president. The 30-member committee under

451   the chairmanship of Professor Anamuah-Mensah was set up by the president to study the

Page | 21

452   education system and make recommendations for reform. Little (2010) observes that as part of

453   its modus operandi, the committee "undertook widespread consultations through visits to

454   institutions, districts, regions, phone-in radio programs, press briefings and submissions of

455   memoranda (p.27)." In 2002, the commission submitted its report titled *Meeting the Challenges*

456   *of the Twenty First Century,* to the office of the president. Among other recommendations, the

457   report recommended a new structure of basic education: two years of kindergarten, six years of

458   primary and three years of junior secondary school. More importantly, the three-year senior

459   secondary school system was to be made up of three parallel streams. These were to be

460   comprised of the regular senior secondary school stream, with the two additional streams to be

461   technical and vocational institutes.

462   After carefully studying the paper, the government issued a white paper outlining the proposed

463   new education reform and structure. The diagram (figure 1) below shows the proposed new

464   structure and other reform contained in the white paper issued by the government.

465
466   Figure

Figure 1 The Analytical Structure of Secondary Education under the New Education Reform
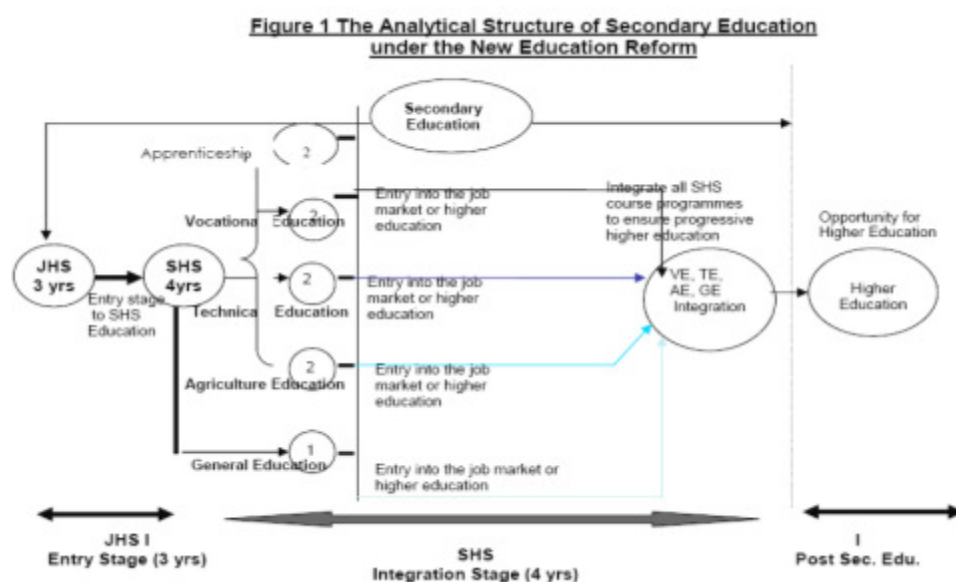
467   Source:*Government of Ghana White Paper on Education Reforms*

468   The white paper took particular notice of the rather smaller percentage of students who were able

469   to advance from the junior secondary to the senior secondary school as was indicated in the

470   Anamuah-Mensah committee report. Consequently, the paper proposed additional reforms which

471   are captured by the diagram B above. The proposed years to be spent in the senior secondary

472   school were increased from three to four years. Moreover, in addition to the three streams

473   proposed by the Anamuah-Mensah report, the white paper introduced two additional streams

474   which were apprenticeship and agricultural educationstreams.Lastly, the paper also proposed a

475   change in the name of the two existing secondary school systems into Junior High School (JHS)

476   and Senior High School (SHS).

477   **POLITICAL STREAM**

478   Within the political stream, several occurrences were shaping the broad political society and the

479   education system in particular.Kingdon (1995) observes that events in government like

480   administrative changes bring with them marked changes in policy agendas (p. 153). With a

481   change in power from Jerry Rawlings to John Kufour came a new direction in the governance of

482   the country. Hitherto, the long standing charge of the NPP while in opposition was that there was

483   lack of transparency in the policies and programs enacted by the existing government.

484   An official government document posited that "both education system and its management need

485   fundamental changes and government has accordingly decided not only to tinker with marginal

486   adjustment to it but to carry out a radical reform of it (GoG, 2005 cited in Tonah, 2009)." That

487   is, in line with John Kingdon's postulation that electoral results have considerable power to

488   shape the political stream, the election of 2000 had a profound impact on the education policy. In

489   his first term of office spanning 2000 to 2004, President John Kufour spearheaded a move to

490   overhaul the education system once the FCUBE outlived its constitutional mandate. However, it

491   took the re-election of President Kufour for a second term from 2005 to 2008to allow him push

492   for the reforms he was clamoring for.

493   **POLICY WINDOW OPENS FOR THE POLICY ENTRAPRENEUR.**

494   "Sometimes, the window opens quite predictably (Kingdon 1995, p. 165)". The foregoing

495   observation by John Kingdon succinctly captures the sort of window that opened in the political

496   system in 2007. The governing constitution which was promulgated in 1992 provided for the

497   country to, within two years of its ratification, draw up and implement a program of action for a

498   free, compulsory universal basic education to last for the next 10 years. Accordingly, the FCUBE

499   was rolled out in 1996 and was slated to run until 2005. Although upon the assumption of office

500   in 2000, the government was desirous of effecting changes within the education system, this

501   constitutional constraint prevented it from taking any action to that effect. However, the re-

502   election of President Kufour and NNP to a second term in office in the 2004 polls presented the

503   opportunity for the government to implement the reforms in the education system for which

504   plans started advancing in 2002. Finally, the window opened with the end of the academic year

505   of 2005/2006.

506   However, Kingdon (1995) remarks that windows stay open for a short period of time and

507   close when not taken advantage of. The window that was opened with the end of the 2005/2006

508   academic year was not taken advantage of. Professor Angela Little explains the reasons behind

509   the government's inability to capitalize on the window the first time it opened:

510   There was a lot of disagreement at cabinet and it took some time before the government issued the white
511   paper on it. It was unfortunate that the white paper was issued sometime in 2004 which was just at the
512   end of the first term of the government then it (finally) took off one year before the end of the second

513   term of the same government. One reason for the delay was the frequent change of ministers (Little
514   2010:28)

515   As a result of the drawback the reform process suffered, the window closed with the

516   commencement of the 2006/2007 academic year. Consequently, the government had to wait for

517   another year when as is expected another window would be opened at the end of the academic

518   year.

519   The president, John Kufour was the policy entrepreneur in the passage of the education reforms.

520   As the chief executive officer vested with constitutional powers to administer the country, he

521   spearheaded the move to carry out the reforms. In 2002, he set up a presidential committee to

522   study the state of the education system of the country and to report directly to him the findings.

523   He regularly reshuffled his education ministers to ensure that he always had the person who

524   shared in his resolution to overhaul the education system at the helm of affairs at the ministry.

525   Little (2010) recounts that five different ministers were appointed to the Ministry of Education

526   all in the bid to find a fitting official to help carry through the reforms. As a chair of cabinet

527   meetings, President Kuffourvociferously defended and pushed through his proposal in the face of

528   apparent opposition to his move.

529   The effort finally paid off when in a news conference held on September 6, 2007, the Minister of

530   Education, Professor Dominic Fobih, announced the take-off of the new education reform with

531   the commencement of the 2007/2008 academic year (*Ghanaian Times*, September 7, 2007). In

532   his speech at the twelfth congregation of the University of Education, Ghana, the president

533   reiterated the message on the commencement of the new education reform with the start of the

534   new academic year which was beginning the following day (*Daily Graphic*, September 10,

535   2007).

536   **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

537   The aim of this paper has been to examine the formulation of Ghana's FCUBE and the Kufour-

538   led reforms in the education system in 1996 and 2007 respectively. Using the MSF developed by

539   John Kingdon, the paper has argued that the entrepreneurship of Mr. Harry Sawyerr and

540   President John Kufour in coupling of the problem, policy and politics streams during the policy

541   windows were instrumental in getting the education systems reformed at the respective times.

542   Resorting to process tracing, the diachronic study of the education reforms drew several pieces

543   of evidence from government documents and other relevant materials to account for the policies.

544   The paper took turns to analyze the two reforms.

545   It has been argued that in the heat of the early days upon the country's entry into

546   constitutionalism, the formulation of the FCUBE in 1996 was less of a product of veto players in

547   the political system and less so of advocacy coalitions. The leadership role played by Mr. Harry

548   Sawyer, a powerful yet non-veto power wielding member of the NDC government was the

549   cardinal factor in getting the FCUBE passed. The paper outlined that the feedback of the pursuit

550   of the SAP, coupled with other focusing events and indicators brought to the fore the various

551   challenges the education system was experiencing upon the inception of the Fourth Republic in

552   1996. Meanwhile, the MoE under the leadership of Mr. Harry Sawyerr led the way in

553   formulating reform proposal which was later pushed for adoption in government by the Minister.

554   With the constitution ratified in the April of 1993, the window opened for the policy proposal to

555   be pushed through and eventually got it adopted in 1996.

556   Turning to the reforms that were carried out in 2007 under the leadership of President

557   Kufour, the paper explained that the alternation in power from the ruling NDC to the opposition

558   NPP following the latter's victory in the December 2000 polls heralded the reforms that were

559   going to be carried out in 2007.It has been established that the Kufour-led reforms was

560   undertaken mainly as part of a long standing commitment of the governing NPP dating back to

561   its opposition days. Pointing to the hasty pace at which the FCUBE was formulated and the

562   problems it exposed in its implementation the paper established that several proposals from the

563   MoE, the presidential committee and the government were proffered.Focusing mainly on the

564   senior secondary school system, the paper posited that the reforms aimed at broadening the

565   existing general secondary school system by introducing four additional streams to augment the

566   existing stream. In getting this policy adopted, the paper outlined the influential role played by

567   President Kufour culminating in him becoming the face of the reform.

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