

# UGBS 105

## Introduction to Public Administration

Session 10—Public Policy Making: Part 2 - Actors and Procedures in Ghana

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# UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

College of Education

**School of Continuing and Distance Education**

2014/2015 – 2016/2017

# Session 10

## Public Policy-Making: Part 2- Actors and Procedures in Ghana

# Session Objectives

- ✚ **At the end of the session, you should understand:**
  - i. The legal process of public policymaking in Ghana
  - ii. The nature of state and non-state actors involved in public policy-making in Ghana
  - iii. The relative power or influence of state and non-state actors in the process of public policy making in Ghana
  - iv. The challenges of forma-legal policymaking in Ghana

# The Influence of Actors in Public Policy-Making

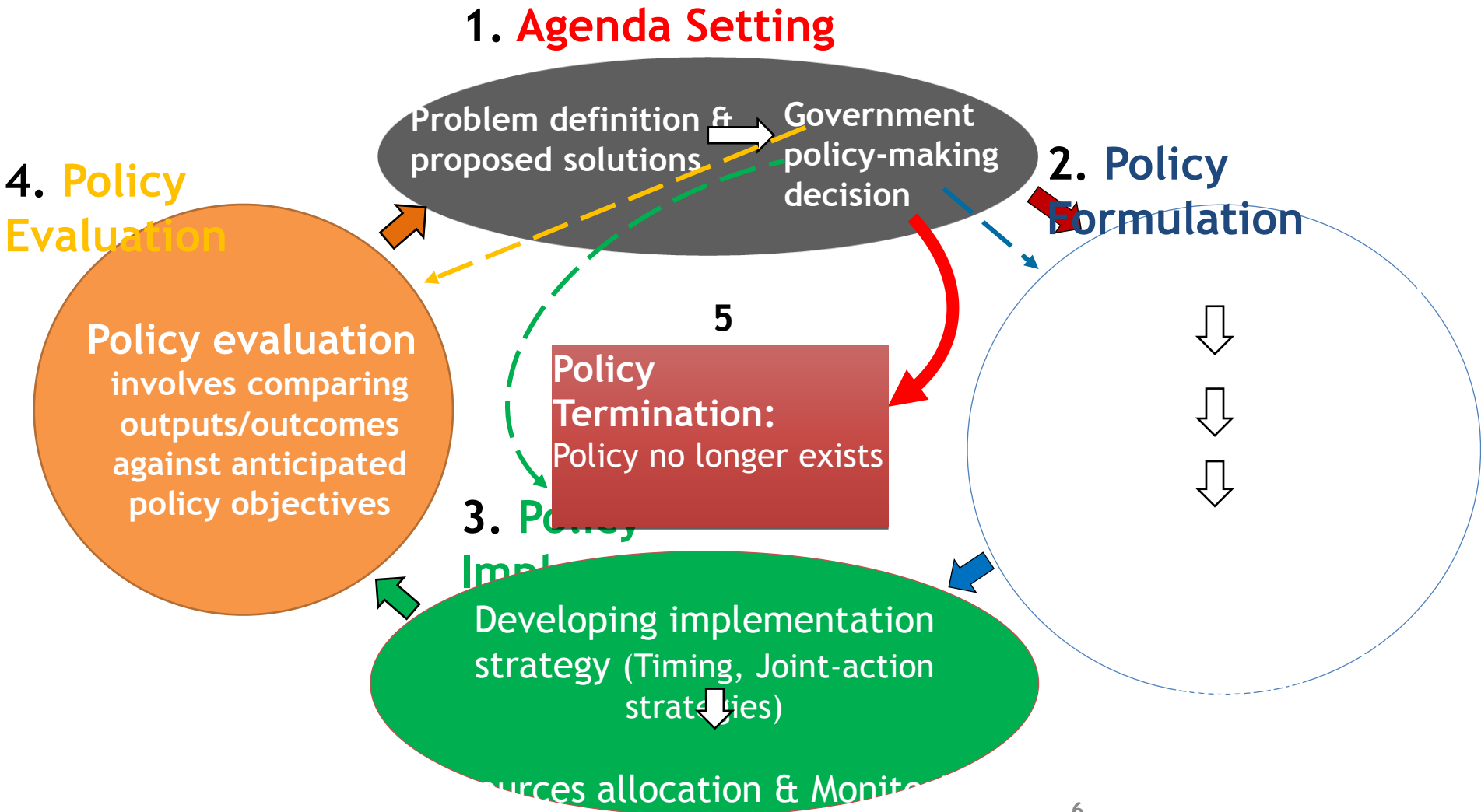
- The key focus of our discuss is to answer the following question that was asked in the previous session: **Do state actors have more power than non-state actors in influencing the content of a public policy in Ghana?**
- This is the important question that has brought as back to discuss the influence of actors involved in public policy making in Ghana, within the specified legal procedures
- But let us briefly recap what we mean by public policy and the stages involved in the making of public policy

# What is a Public Policy?

**Definition:** For the purpose of this course, a public policy is defined as a purposive course of action or inaction accepted by a state actor *to* deal with a problem or a matter concerning the well-being of some or all citizens

- It is important to note the following issues when defining the concept of public policy:
- First, Government is only one of the numerous actors within any state. Government is NOT the only actor within a state that has been given the legal mandate to make a public policy
  - Second, there are many independent state agencies that have been given legal mandates to make appropriate public policies

# Five Stages of Public Policy Making



# Actors Involved in Making a Public Policy: Where do policy ideas and interests come from?

→ The people involved in the making of a public policy shall be divided into two categories, namely:

- 1. State actors:** These are the officials within the state who play a role in the making of a public policy. They include the President, Member of Parliament, Civil Servants, the Attorney-General, and many other public office holders. These actors are sometimes referred to as *official actors*
- 2. Non-State actors:** These are people who do not hold any office within the state but play a role in the making of a public policy. They include the private media, non governmental organizations, international development agencies, and individuals acting in their private capacity. These actors are sometimes referred to as *unofficial actors*



# Actors, Interests and Power in Policymaking in Ghana: Do state actors have more power than non-state actors in influencing the content of a public policy?





# Policy Universe, Policy Subsystem and Policy Network

→ The concepts of ‘Policy Universe’, ‘Policy Subsystem’ and ‘Policy Network’ are important for understanding the influence of actors on the content of public policy making

○ **Policy Universe** is “a fundamental unit containing all possible international, state, and social actors and institutions directly or indirectly affecting a specific policy area” (Howlett and Ramesh 2003:53)

○ **Policy Subsystem** is a space where relevant actors discuss policy issues and persuade and bargain in pursuit of their interests and ideas (Howlett and Ramesh, 2003)

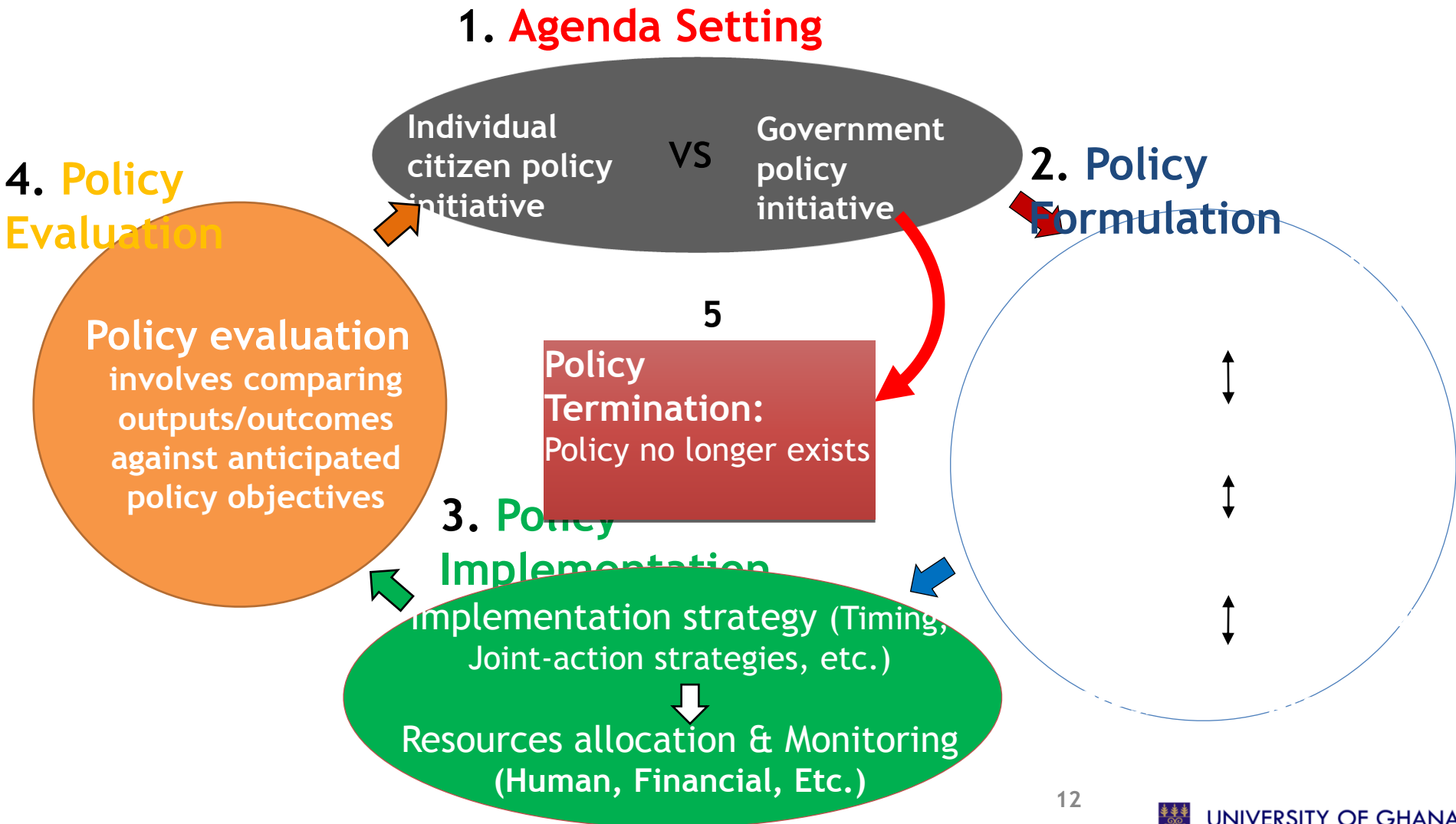
# Policy Network

- A **Policy Network** (also called a ‘policy community’) is an *community of experts* that comprise a ‘small number’ of participants with mutual commitment to support the spread of certain ideas and practices (e.g. free market capitalism, democracy, gender mainstreaming)
- A policy network may comprise both local and international actors. It is loose network with no clear leadership but with some mutual dependence
- A policy network may become an *interest-based* policy advocacy coalition (e.g. the coalition on domestic violence)

# The Power of Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana

- ➔ To assess the relative power of state and non-state actors in influencing the content of a public policy in Ghana, we first have to understand the legal procedures involved in making a formal-legal public policy in Ghana
- We shall see that in Ghana's democratic environment, the legal processes involved in the making of a public policy somehow makes some actors more powerful than others in influencing the content of a public policy

# Procedures of Formal-legal Public Policy Making in Ghana



# The Power of Non-State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana

- The non-state actors that we shall look at include:
- The individual private Ghanaian citizen
  - The local private media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
  - International Development Agencies (IDAs)

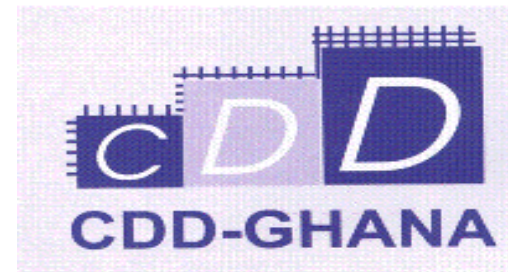


# The Power of Non-State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: The Private Ghanaian Citizen

- The private citizen may initiate a policy issue but cannot directly introduce the policy to parliament for legal adoption
- Private citizens must rely on the willingness, cooperation and support of the appropriate sector Ministry, the Presidential-Cabinet, the Attorney-General's Department, Parliament, and the President to transform a policy idea into a formal-legal public policy
- The private citizen may provide technical, human and financial support for the making and implementation of any public policy
- In Ghana's democracy, the citizen-voter is legally permitted to protest or petition against any policy issue. Petitions may be sent to the relevant Ministry or Parliamentary Committee dealing with the policy

# The Power of Non-State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: The Private Media and Local NGOs

- The media has become very influential in public education and mobilization of public support or opposition to a public policy agenda or bill
- The political power of the private media in Ghana in influencing the making of a public policy is usually not clear
- But there are clear cases where local NGOs like IEA-Ghana have influenced the drafting and enactment of a public policy such as the 2012 Presidential Transition Act



The Institute of Economic Affairs  
*A Public Policy Institute*



# The Power of Non-State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: International Development Agencies (IDAs)

## The World Bank Office in Ghana



- The legal position of IDAs is not significantly different from the legal position of the individual Ghanaian citizen when it comes to influencing the content of a public policy
- However, Ghana's dependence on IDAs for about 40% of its annual budget income opens the door for IDAs like the World Bank and IMF to use aid conditionality as a tool to influence the content of national economic policies

# The Power of State Actors to in Public Policy Making in Ghana

→ The state actors that we shall look at include:

- Public Sector Ministries
- Parliament/Legislature
- The President/Executive

✚ *The emblem of the Ghanaian State*





# The Power of State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: Public Sector Ministries

- A public sector Ministry may initiate a policy issue but cannot directly introduce the policy to parliament for legal adoption
- A public sector Ministry is required to rely on the willingness, cooperation and support of the Presidential-Cabinet, the Attorney-General's Department, Parliament and the President to transform a policy idea into a formal-legal public policy
- Public sector Ministries are usually required to provide technical support for the analysis and drafting of public policies. Chief Directors and senior Civil Servants usually accompany Ministers to present and defend policy bills before relevant Committees of Parliament
- Senior Civil Servants in the Public Sector Ministries sometimes use their technical expertise to shape the content of public policies.



# The Power of State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: Parliament

## *A partisan rubber stamp?*



- Parliament has been given the constitutional authority to approve or reject any policy bill introduced into the House for passage into a formal-legal public policy
- Members of Parliament do not have the power to initiate policy bills with financial implications
- Under Ghana's Fourth republic democracy, some have questioned the power of Parliament whose majority members have been controlled by ruling governments





# The Power of State Actors in Public Policy Making in Ghana: The Executive

✝ *A ruling Leviathan or a political and economic dependent Executive?*



- The Executive has monopoly over the making of formal-legal public policies that have financial implications for the country
- The dependence of the Executive on powerful IDAs - including the World Bank - for over 40% of its annual budget income has raised questions over Government's real ownership of national development policies that usually require the prior approval (or green flags) of external aid donors like the World Bank

# Summary of the Actors that Influence Public Policy Making in Ghana: State and Non-State Actors



# Conclusion: Legal Procedures, Political Authority and Economic Resources Matter in Ghana

- ✚ Actors and procedures in Public policymaking in Ghana's multi-party democracy.



- In Ghana's democracy, in theory, all actors within the policy universe have the potential to influence the process and content of public policy making
- In reality, however, it appears that cumbersome legal procedures, veto points of political authority and availability of economic resources privileges the interests of powerful well-informed actors