

“We need to back that dialogue with some action” Programme and Practice of Decent Work in Ghana

by Joyce Abebrese



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Abstract

The rise of globalization and economic growth evolving throughout the last decades brought about several forms of inequality and injustice among the different countries of the world. Not every economic growth can be assigned to decent and productive employment for the people, since it has still not led to a reduction of poverty and informal labour (International Labour Organization (ILO) 1999a). Therefore, the question arises of how to improve the social and employment situation of workers.

In 1999, the International Labour Organization presented its new agenda: Decent Work for all in a global economy (ibid.). The four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda are connected and interdependent to each other¹: 1) Creating employment 2) Guaranteeing rights at work 3) Extending social protection 4) Promoting social dialogue (ILO 2012a).

The question arises which role the trade unions actually played during the implementation process of the Decent Work Programme (DWP). For illustrating the influence of trade unions the example of Ghana was chosen. In this context, a theoretical background based on the neo-institutional concept of Brunsson (1989) needs to be found, stating that distinctions between “talk and action” (ibid.) can be found on a meta-organizational level. Furthermore, this paper operates with the concept of network texture. It aims to detect whether ILO activities, in form of the DWP, can still be solely pushed and promoted through the traditional tripartite stakeholders or whether other civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting the promotion process of the ILO programmes and their success as well.

This summarizing paper at hand is based on a M.A.-thesis presented by Joyce Abebrese at the Ruhr-University of Bochum, Germany. Seven guided expert interviews were held with experts on the topic in Ghana, including different trade unions, the ILO and the GEA. It illustrates that the implementation of the DWP in Ghana was and is still complicated and goes along with several problems and challenges, particularly addressing the actual involvement and influence of trade unions into the agenda setting, as well as the specific challenges arising from the informal economy. The lack of trade union organization in the informal economy and therefore lacking integration of its workers’ concerns into the agenda and policy setting for Decent Work needs to be emphasized. The relevance of the study’s topic concerning changing environments due to globalization is highlighted by stating that a need of a network texture within the national frame, as well as between various partners beyond the single nation-state, could be asserted.

¹ In addition, gender equality is a crosscutting objective (ILO 2012b).

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II List of abbreviations

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
Cf.	Compare
CPP	Convention People's Party
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
e.g.	For example
et al.	Et alia
etc.	Et cetera
DWCP(s)	Decent Work Country Programme(s)
DWP(s)	Decent Work Programme(s)
DWPP(s)	Decent Work Pilot Programme(s)
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (-Stiftung)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
GHS	New Ghana Cedi
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (Paper)
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GUF	Global Union Federation (of trade unions)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ibid.	Ibidem
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research Ghana
MESW	Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare
MMYE	Ministry of Youth and Employment
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNC	People's National Convention
PRSP(s)	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper(s)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
(Ghana) TUC	(Ghana) Trades Union Congress
UN	United Nations
US\$	US-Dollar

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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

The rise of globalization² and economic growth evolving throughout the last decades brought about several forms of inequality and injustice among the different countries of the world. Though, there are doubtlessly various benefits arising from the development of free markets, trade liberalization, and open societies, also the negative side of globalization needs to be stressed out. The gap between industrialized and developing countries still grows and challenges and problems become more obvious (ILO 1999a). Not every economic growth can be assigned to decent and productive employment for the people, since it has still not led to a reduction of poverty and informal labour. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) of the United Nations (UN), there are predominately social problems in the world of work that occur due to the growing global competition and job losses (ibid.). Workers find themselves in a world of “uncertainty and insecurity” (ibid.). Therefore, the question arises of how to improve the social and employment situation of workers. Particularly developing countries have to struggle because they seldom avail of efficient social security and social protection systems to care for the unemployed, diseased, and vulnerable parts of society. In addition to that, Jütting and de Laiglesia (2009, 9) find that “informal employment is the norm, rather than the exception, in most developing countries”. Poverty reduction and creation of decent employment need to be followed in national strategies to achieve a better economic and social development (ibid.).

In 1999, the ILO presented its new agenda: Decent Work for all in a global economy (ILO 1999a). It was based on one of the organization’s most important principles, which includes “to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”(ILO 1999b). At the same time, it includes rights which are above the basic minimum standards, the ILO Core Conventions³. The four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda are connected and interdependent to each other⁴:

- 1) Creating employment
- 2) Guaranteeing rights at work
- 3) Extending social protection
- 4) Promoting social dialogue (ILO 2012a).

Employment, which is decent and productive, should be created and that means that there is a general recognition and acceptance on workers’ rights. Decent employment also

² Globalization in this context is understood as:

[...] the inexorable integration of markets, nation states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is enabling to reach into individuals, corporations and nation-states farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before (Friedman 2000, 9 in Kaufmann 2007, 7).

Furthermore, “globalization has several effects in the world of work: it entails new markets, new products, new competencies and new ways of thinking about business” (Ulrich 1997, 2 in Kaufmann 2007, 7).

³ The ILO Core Conventions are No. 29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138 and 182 (Pries/ Seeliger 2013, 32). For further information on the ILO Core Conventions, see ILO 2004a, 16.

⁴ In addition, gender equality is a crosscutting objective (ILO 2012b).

includes a solid social protection to be secured in terms of disease or retirement. Social dialogue needs to be promoted and highlighted to ensure that discussions and debates between employees and employers take place in a forum, which is secured and helps the stakeholders to understand each other so that both parties can benefit from it. Decent Work functions as a key element to achieve the reduction of poverty, fair globalization, and sustainable development (ILO 2012a). “The overall goal of Decent Work is to effect positive change in people’s lives at the national and local levels” (ibid.), whilst especially the informal economy⁵ in many developing countries shows a high deficit of Decent Work. The ILO finds that in many African countries, farmers and informal economy workers are the groups which are affected most by poverty (ILO 2004b). In sub-Saharan Africa, countries show informal non-agricultural work proportions of more than 80% (Jütting/ de Laiglesia 2009, 18). Workers are less or even not at all socially secured, their incomes are lower and their work is more precarious and less productive than in the formal economy (ibid., 11ff). Most of the newly created employment in the informal economy puts people into a “vicious circle of low pay, high risks and limited mobility” (ibid., 18). In most instances, they do not have the possibility to claim their rights, as their work implicates no formal, written contracts or any other formal arrangements. In terms of employment creation to reduce poverty, the challenge is not simply to create jobs, but to create better jobs, which implies the availability of moderate payment and efficient social protection (ibid., 11).

In fact, there are concrete attempts to support Decent Work in African countries. During the years 2001 to 2003, eight countries started the Decent Work Pilot Programmes (DWPPs) initiated by the ILO. The experiences of the Pilot Countries had been used to prepare Decent Work Programmes (DWPs) for other countries of the 185 ILO member states. One of these Pilot Countries was the West-African state Ghana. Concerning sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to note that this region contains three-quarters of the people living on less than half a dollar a day, which classifies them as ultra-poor (Ahmed et al. 2007 in von Braun 2011, 177). Within this region, emphasis needs to be placed on Ghana. In today’s discussions, Ghana holds the status as an important role model for the economic and social development of other African countries. This is based on its relatively strong economic performance (Raupp 2009) since the implementation of the neo-liberal aligned Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the 1980’s and its commendable democratic political stability (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)). Data from 2010 of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) revealed a rate for informal employment of nearly 82% of the working population (GSS 2010, 1).

Possibly emerging conflicts during the implementation of ILO programmes could be avoided in advance by integrating the different interests of the social partners from the beginning (Hurd 2011, 170). In this context, trade unions play a special role, since they own multilevel functions:

⁵ The ILO’s definition of the term informal economy as stated in the “Resolution concerning decent work and the informal economy” says that

The term ‘informal economy’ refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law, or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs (ILO 2002, 2).

While they are responsible for negotiating the general conditions of work, wages and salaries, for their members, they are as well important agents of making the workers voice heard in society. Trade unions try to influence economic policy making, and they comment on general policies of relevance to their members (Meyer/ Vormawor 1995, 5).

According to Meyer and Vormawor (ibid.), the trade unions' understanding and work contain some more aspects: "They see themselves as important part of the civil society by making a contribution towards the development of the country. They fight for the rights of the workers, for the improvement of the living conditions and for the acceptance of international guidelines and standards". Therefore, it could be concluded that trade unions can be the drivers of change and development. As mentioned earlier, Ghana functions as a role model for most of the other African countries. Hence, the question of whether and how Ghanaian trade unions were and are involved into political strategy setting appears interesting. Is the voice of the workers, as the directly affected people, integrated in the form of trade union involvement into agenda setting? Since Ghana's independence from Great Britain in 1957, the umbrella organization of Ghanaian trade unions, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), regards itself as "the mouthpiece of the entire civil society in the country" (Baah 2004, 47). Baah (ibid.) further states that "the TUC has always maintained that nobody can represent workers better than workers themselves". This refers to the policy setting process of the first Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRS I), in which the Ghana TUC has, according to the author's mind, not fully participated and this failure could have led to a situation "where social and labour market issues regarding decent work, the safety and health of workers, collective bargaining rights, freedom of association and other internationally recognized labour standards would not be addressed in the policy document" (ibid.).

1.2 Aim of the study

Due to the above mentioned facts, it is vital to analyse which role the trade unions actually played during the implementation process of the DWP. This paper at hand will highlight the role of the Ghanaian trade unions during the agenda setting and the implementation process of the Decent Work Programme. The purpose is to find out, whether trade union concerns and activities were implemented in the Decent Work Agenda for Ghana. It further will reconstruct the decisions which have been made to implement the Decent Work Pilot and Country Programme to find out how trade unions were integrated into the agenda setting. The hypothesis is that *the stronger and more influential trade unions are the better Decent Work can become a reality for the working people*, meaning that Decent Work can only be achieved through the integration of strong and influential trade unions. Moreover, the thesis is that *it is time to walk the talk*, meaning that *there are endeavours to integrate the trade unions and their concerns fully into policy setting, but no equal integration between the three constituent partners⁶ can be found*. It is assumed that *there is a high recognition among the three constituent partners concerning the topic of Decent Work. However, no actual attempt from the Government of Ghana (GoG) and Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) is made to realize the programme by bringing it from the boardroom into the society*. In addition, this paper assumes that *it is easier to talk than to act*

⁶ The three constituent partners are the government, the workers, and the employers (Hurd 2011, 170).

and to pretend externally that things are going to be done, although there is a gap between the actual talk and the subsequent action. Furthermore, the concept of network texture should support the research to illustrate the linkages between different organizations within a network. The question is: Are the trade unions able to promote the Decent Work Programme without other organizations, such as informal economy workers associations or support of other promoters? The thesis is *the weaker the stakeholders the weaker the success of programmes or conventions, because they need strong stakeholders to promote them into the (domestic) country.*

In brief, the point of reference during the study will focus on the disparities of programme and practice of Decent Work in Ghana. The research questions are as follows:

- How did the **implementation of the Decent Work Programme** into national strategies in Ghana take place? Is the programme initialized to a large extent? Is it effectively fixed into national strategies?
- Which **role did and do the trade unions** play during the agenda setting and the implementation process of the programme? Were and are they really involved into those processes?
- What are the **problems and challenges** confronting the different stakeholders while promoting Decent Work?
- Which relevance has the topic concerning **changing environments due to globalization**? Is it possible to promote the Decent Work Programme solely with the traditional stakeholders' government, trade unions, and employers' associations?

To reconstruct and understand the positions of the stakeholders, this paper operates with primary data that was gathered through seven guided expert interviews with different specialists on the topic of Decent Work in Ghana. The seven experts interviewed for this study were representatives of different Ghanaian trade unions and Global Union Federations (5), the ILO (1) and the GEA (1)⁷. The interviews were analysed by Mayring's (2007) method of qualitative data analysis in combination with the Grounded Theory approach (cf. Strübing 2008). The primary data was supplemented by secondary data sources, including different kinds of articles, surveys, studies, reports, and websites.

1.3 Conceptual and theoretical embedment

The theoretical background of the (hypo-) theses is to be found in the theory of neo-institutionalism, with authors presenting that within organizations distinctions between 'talk and action' can be found. Furthermore, a conceptual background needs to be found in the rise of a need of a network texture between various partners.

According to Brunsson (1989), the distinctions between 'talk and action' show that organizations pretend to do certain things to the outside, but on the inside they will do it in a different way. They solely promise to do certain things for attaining social recognition and by

⁷The anonymized transcripts of the interviews are in personal property of the researcher but can be requested and hand in later, if necessary.

so doing guaranteeing their resources. Meyer and Rowan (1977, 352f) call this process “decoupling” and Brunsson (1989) differentiates between the status of ‘talk and action’.

Furthermore, this thesis operates with the concept of network texture. It aims to find out whether ILO activities, in form of the Decent Work Programme, can still be solely pushed and promoted through the traditional tripartite stakeholders government, trade unions, and employer associations, or whether other civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting the promotion process of the ILO programmes and their success. Pries and Seeliger (2013, 32) state that ILO minimum standards for instance “will have almost no effect on work and employment conditions if at the local or national level there are no strong collective actors [...] promoting them”.

2 Ghana

The following sections will show the political, economic, and social background of Ghana. In addition, the general concept of informal economy and its particular impact on Ghana will be illustrated. Furthermore, the Decent Work Programme in Ghana and its link to the country’s Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy will be presented to give a short insight into the processes and to link it with the theoretical concept of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda.

2.1 Political, economic, and social background of Ghana

In former times, the state Ghana was called the “Gold Coast”, due to its plenty gold sources (Traeder 1983, 474). It lays between the countries Burkina Faso (North), Togo (East) and Ivory Coast (West) and has its coast in the South to the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana was the first African country to gain independence from the British authority in 1957 (ibid.). The official language⁸ is English and today the country still belongs to the British Commonwealth. The country has a population of almost 25 million inhabitants (The World Bank 2013), which are spread over 10 administrative regions and more than 100 districts (Ghana Districts 2006). Ghana owns role model functions for other African countries, due to its relatively strong economic performance (Raupp 2009) since the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the 1980’s, and its commendable democratic political stability (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)). During the early 1950s, the country was a prime example for successful and nonviolent decolonization and a best practice example of democracy “made in England” (Ansprenger et al. 1972, 8). However, during the 1960s, Ghana under the regency of the first President Kwame Nkrumah (Conventions People Party (CPP)), was observed as a negative example of political development in Africa due to its “quasi-communistic⁹” (ibid., 8) and economic insolvent dictatorship since 1964, when the CPP became the single political party. After the overturn of Nkrumah in 1966 through a military coup, the Western states again detected Ghana as a role model for African democracy in 1969, when Ghana introduced the multiparty

⁸ Besides the official language, several different indigenous languages respectively dialects are spoken in Ghana. The most widespread language is Akan, including different dialects. The mostly spoken dialect of Akan is the Asante Twi (Bodomo 1996, 6). For further information on Ghanaian languages and dialects, see Bodomo 1996.

⁹ Translated from “quasi-kommunistischer” (Ansprenger et al. 1972, 8).

democracy and built its second republic (Bergstermann/ Briku-Boadu 2005, 5). In 1972, a second military coup took place, which led to the formation of the third republic of Ghana in 1979, when again a multiparty election was implemented. Another coup d'état ended this third republic in 1981, including the ban of other political parties and oppositional groups until the year 1992. In 1992 a multiparty political system was launched and since the elections in the same year, Ghana's political parties can be identified as follows: the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and the People's National Convention (PNC) (ibid.). The NDC and NPP are the two dominant political parties in Ghana. Moreover, several small, less influential political parties were formed (ibid.). The peaceful change of government between the NDC and NPP in 2009 showed that Ghana "is a well-functioning democracy" (OECD et al. 2010) and furthermore, "has been hailed as a model for Africa" (ibid.). Since December 2012, John Dramani Mahama of the NDC was elected again for the four-year-period to be the President of the Republic of Ghana by a majority of 50.7% and a voter participation of 79% (Zeit Online 2012).

Besides the country's stable democratic system since the 1990s, Ghana owns the status of a lower middle income country by showing a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about 39.2 Billion US-Dollar (US\$) in 2011 (The World Bank 2013). The country is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, presenting an economic growth of 14.4%¹⁰ in 2011 (Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research Ghana (ISSER) 2012, 1).

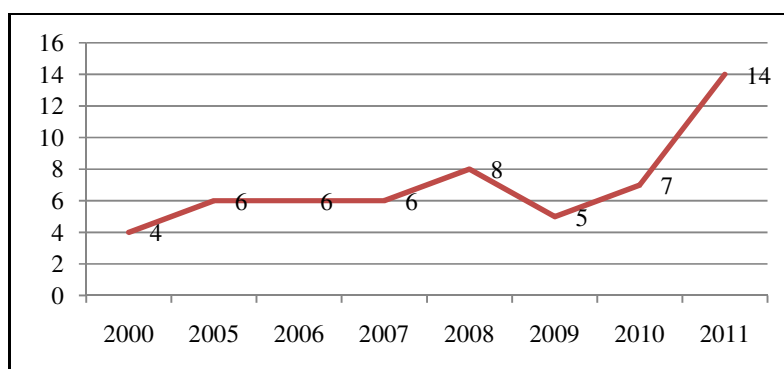


Figure 2.1: Ghana GDP Growth 2000-2011 in percent

(On the basis of Osei-Boateng/Ampratwum 2011, 7; The World Bank 2013)

Figure 2.1 shows that GDP grew since the year 2000 until 2011, with exception of a GDP decline in 2009, due to the global financial and economic crisis and "other domestic fiscal challenges" (Osei-Boateng/ Ampratwum 2011, 6; OECD et al. 2010). On average, a growth in GDP of annually 5% can be observed (ibid.). The service sector contributes 51% to GDP, followed by agriculture with a contribution of 30% and 19% from the industry (Osei-Boateng/ Ampratwum 2011, 7). Ghana is one of the major producers of cocoa and it owns different raw materials like gold and timber. The export of cocoa and gold accounted for over 70% of total export in 2009 (OECD et al. 2010). Furthermore, oil was found in Ghana in 2007 and exports started in 2011, which led to a relatively high increase of GDP during that year.

¹⁰ It needs to be noted that this economic growth in 2011 was mainly caused due to oil exports, which started during that year in Ghana. In 2010, Ghana had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 7.7% (ISSER 2012, 1).

The latest Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) indicates that “seven out of every 10 of the working population aged 15-64 are economically active” (GSS 2008, 5). This relatively strong performance of the country was not always the case. Due to the fact that there were extremely high rates of inflation and the economy performed very badly with GDP declines of 16% during the 1970s and 1980s in Ghana, World Bank and IMF decided to introduce economic reforms named Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)¹¹. These programmes “entailed a cut in social spending, flexible exchange rate, public sector employment and wage reforms, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, trade liberalisation and deregulation, among many other measures” (Akorsu/ Baah 2007, 8). A key objective of the programme was to attract foreign direct investment (ibid., 9). Despite the economic growth since the implementation of SAPs, Ghana’s debt situation registered an increasing debt stock for many years, though joining the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative¹² in 2005. In 2011, the country still had a debt of about 23.6 million New Ghana Cedi (GHS) (12.4 million US\$) (ISSER 2012, 49f). Financial aids by different donors increased during the past two decades, showing grants in 2009 which represent 5.3% of GDP (OECD et al. 2010). The rise of financial help can be ascribed to “economic performance and the goodwill the government enjoys in the donor community” (ibid.).

The underlying hypothesis coming from the World Bank and the IMF concerning the introduction of SAPs in developing countries was “that economic growth would trickle down to the poor” (Tsikata 2007, 55). Although the country has a stable and significant economic growth during the last two decades, this increase largely failed to be translated into sustainable and decent employment. Furthermore, economic growth “has been accompanied by a growing disparity in incomes and an overall escalation in poverty” (ibid., 49). Economic gains since the introduction of SAPs, have not led to an amendment of living standards for most Ghanaians. According to Akorsu and Baah (2007, 1), solely international trade, and therefore economic growth, cannot eradicate poverty. This is why poverty is still a huge problem faced by Ghana’s policy makers. According to data from 2006 of the UN, 28.6%¹³ of the population lives below the national poverty line, which is less than 1 US\$ a day (UN Data 2012). Yet, and important to emphasize, most of the newly created employment can be found in the informal economy (ibid.). Analysis of the data from 2010 of the Ghana Statistical Service revealed a rate for informal employment of nearly 82% of the working population (GSS 2010, 1). Special characteristics of the informal economy are “significant decent work deficits and immense potential for contributing to poverty reduction” (National Policy Group 2003, 27). According to Vormawor (2011), poverty reduction and a sustainable economic development can only be achieved by promoting Decent Work, especially in the informal economy.

¹¹Those so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) included three phases of introduction: The Economic Recovery Programme was the first phase. It included policies to stabilise the economy. The second phase was named the Structural Adjustment phase. One of the major policies implemented during this time was the privatisation of state enterprises. Radical reforms in public sector employment and wages were implemented, which led to mass lay-offs of public sector workers. During the third phase, the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme, the key policy was the liberalisation of trade to integrate the Ghanaian economy into the global economy (Akorsu/ Baah 2007, 8).

¹² The HIPC initiative was launched in 1996 of the IMF and the World Bank to reduce the external debts of heavily indebted countries. For further information on the initiative, see IMF 2013.

¹³ Though the poverty rate is still high, one has to note that the percentage declined during the years 1992 until 2006 (from 51.1% in 1992 and 39.1% in 1998 to 28.6% in 2006) (UN Data 2012).

Within the same year of independence (1957), Ghana became a member of the ILO (Akorsu/ Baah 2007, 8). During the first years of regency under the first Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, 35 ILO Conventions were ratified (ibid.). In 2011 the Fundamental Convention C 138 (Minimum Age Convention) concerning child labour was ratified (ILO 2012b), completing the full ratification of all Fundamental Conventions in Ghana. To this day, Ghana has ratified 50 ILO Conventions, of which 47 are already in force (ILO 2013). It can be concluded that the responsible stakeholders recognized that poverty could not be reduced solely by economic growth and this was the point where the ILO Decent Work framework seemed to become interesting for policy makers in Ghana, as it emphasizes the four pillars of rights at work, opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income, social protection, and social dialogue (Akorsu/ Baah 2007, 5).

2.2 The concept of informal economy and its impact on Ghana

The terms informal sector, informal economy, and other terms related to the phenomenon of economic activities carried out without or with less state observation, are highly debated in the scientific community. There is no clearly definition of what is exactly meant by using the term 'informal economy'. This paper will operate with a definition given by the ILO (2002, 2) saying that

[t]he term 'informal economy' refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law, or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

Furthermore, the ILO suggests rather using the term 'informal economy' than 'informal sector' due to the fact that those activities are not solely be found in a particular sector, but in many different sectors (ibid.). However, the ILO states that this term as well owns the tendency to neglect the "linkages, grey areas and interdependencies between formal and informal activities" (ibid.).

The then so-called informal sector gained first attention through a study carried out during the end of the 1960s respectively the beginning of the 1970s in Ghana by the anthropologist Keith Hart (1973). Furthermore, the ILO did a study on this topic in Kenya. Bringing together the findings of the studies, Hart imposed the term "informal sector". According to Yussuf (2011, 626f), the most important and new aspect in the observation of the informal sector activities was the fact that Hart did no longer see the sector as remainder of traditional subsistence strategies ("the urban traditional sector" (Hart 1973, 68)), in which stakeholders are characterized by neglect and poverty, or "the reserve army of underemployed and unemployed" (ibid.). Instead, he focused on the "complex, organized, and dynamic income generating activities of informal enterprises". Hart (ibid., 67) was the first to distinguish the informal sector from the formal sector by showing the duality of the economy and employment: "Another way of putting this is to say that, denied success by the

formal opportunity structure, these members of the urban sub-proletariat seek informal means of increasing their income” (ibid.). According to the author (ibid., 83), the informal sector provides income opportunities for urban wage-earners as well as for jobless people. By presenting his findings, he left the until then prevailing theory of modernization behind, which was popular during the 1960s and said that informal sector activities would be pushed back by industrialization within the countries (Pries 1997, 46). Pries (ibid.) discussed the two prevailing explanation theories for the existence of an informal sector. The first theory, the modernization theory, states that through industrialization the remains of the pre-modern societies and their income structures, as can be found in the informal sector, will be vanished. The second theory, the theory of dependency, developed during the 1970s and 1980s, says that countries of the developed North and the inhibited countries of the South are not independent from each other (ibid., 46). Pries (ibid., 49) depicted its special characteristic of “dependent industrialization and development in the peripherals”¹⁴ which leads to a steady capital drain into the rich countries of the centre.

Though there are still complications finding an unique definition for the phenomenon of informal economic activities fitting for different contexts, it can be said that in the majority of cases informal employment is linked to various risks concerning health and safety at work, social security and protection in general, and loss of earnings (Jütting/ de Laiglesia 2009, 18). Furthermore, rights at work cannot be realized or claimed. In particular, the most affected groups are young people and women (ibid., 18). The most common thesis within the research is that globalization and resulting fragmented labour markets led and will further lead to a rise of work in the informal economy (Schurman/ Eaton 2012), as the following figure 2.2 illustrates:

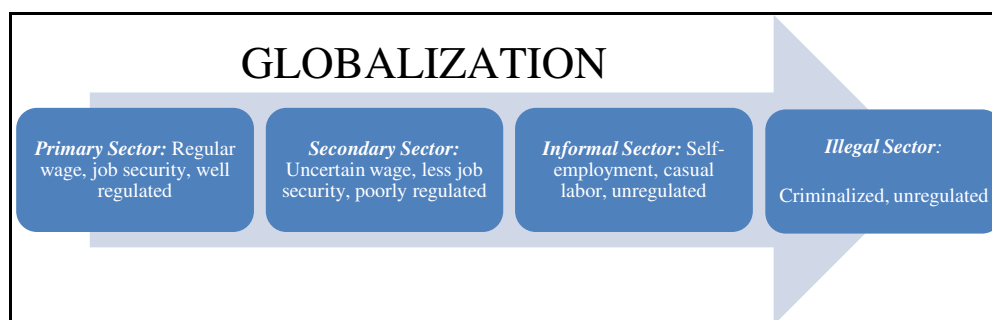


Figure 2.1: Process of informalisation through globalization

(On the basis of Schurman/ Eaton 2012, 9)

The concept of informal economy plays a special role regarding Ghana’s economy. The share of informal employment in the distribution of employment is extremely high. The informal economy observed an enormous growth, since the measures of the SAPs in Ghana forced many people to switch from formal to informal work, due to the fact that the programme included massive cuts in public sector employment (Gockel/ Vormawor 2004, 10). Due to privatizations and drastic reductions in public expenditure, the role of the state as major employer was reduced (Kocer/ Hayat 2011, 22). What the SAPs did, was to largely ignore “the social and economic needs of a large section of the population and over-emphasise the role of the market” (Akorsu/ Baah 2007, 4). Ghana’s population is signified by a rapidly

¹⁴Translated from “abhängiger Industrialisierung und Entwicklung in der Peripherie” (Pries 1997, 49).

growing workforce. Since the enormous growth of job-seeking people, the opportunities to work in the formal part of the economy are exhausted. Therefore, most of the people living in Ghana are employed or self-employed in the informal economy, with less regulations and state intervention (ILO 2006a). Akorsu and Baah (2007, 1) state that the remarkable growth has been matched by increased informalisation of employment and increased income inequality in favour of a few highly-educated, urban-based males engaged in the formal economy at the expense of women, low-skilled workers and other vulnerable groups in the Ghanaian society, particularly those who earn their living in the informal economy.

Since there were less opportunities to work in the formal economy, informal economy employment today makes out more than 80% of the Ghanaian workforce (Osei-Boateng/Ampratwum 2011, 9). “Over half of the employed (55.9%) are own-account workers (self-employed); 20.4 per cent are employed in family enterprises and 17.6 per cent are wage employees” (ibid.).

In brief, in the majority of cases, working in the informal economy means a lack of social security and protection, less financial gains, irregular working times, and long working hours (Jütting/ de Laiglesia 2009, 11f). Most of the people in Ghana living in poverty are employed or self-employed in the informal economy. Due to this, importance rises concerning the improvement of working conditions and social security issues for the Ghanaian people, especially for those working in the informal economy. In this context, it is interesting to note that the two central components of the DWPP, that took place in Ghana during the years 2003 to 2005, were primarily addressed to the informal economy, leading to the next section dealing with the DWP in Ghana and its link to the nation’s Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

2.3 The ILO Decent Work Pilot and Country Programme and the link to the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper(s) in Ghana

The DWPP aimed to assist countries to integrate Decent Work into their national policies as well as into their national structures and society. Ghana shows “the importance of jobs in linking economic growth to poverty reduction” (GoG/ MMYE/ ILO 2006, 3) and it further owns the possibility of being a role model to other countries to show “how decent work can contribute to development efforts and change in the areas of labour and social issues” (ibid.). In 2003, the DWPP started in two districts in Ghana in the Central Region, Ajumako and Winneba¹⁵. This is due to the fact that this region showed a share of poverty, which was higher than the national average. Those districts tested “a local economic strategy that creates and improves jobs for the poor” (ILO 2004b, 3). The constituent partners for the programme in Ghana were the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW)¹⁶, the Ghana Employer’s Association (GEA) and the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC). They first came together in 2002, the implementation of the programme followed in 2003 (ILO 2006c, 51). The basis for the DWPP¹⁷ in Ghana was built up of two main components: “(1) Influencing the Socio-Economic Policy Environment for Poverty Reduction [and] (2) Tackling

¹⁵ Whereas Ajumako is basically an urban district including a large and a various informal economy, the district of Winneba is more indicated by rural informal work, focused on agriculture and services (ILO 2004b, 11).

¹⁶The former name of the Ministry was Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE). For simplification, the MMYE is in this paper further used synonymic with the Government of Ghana (GoG, government).

¹⁷ For further information on experiences of the DWPP in Ghana, see ILO 2006d.

Poverty through the Promotion of Decent Work in the Informal Economy” (National Policy Group 2003, 27). Committees for productive and gainful employment were established and they were supposed to get local government, elected assembly members, as well as local social and business groups together (ILO 2004b, 3). Figure 2.3 is based on an ILO publication concerning the integration of the DWPP into national strategies (ibid., 8), showing the three-stage approach of the policy development.

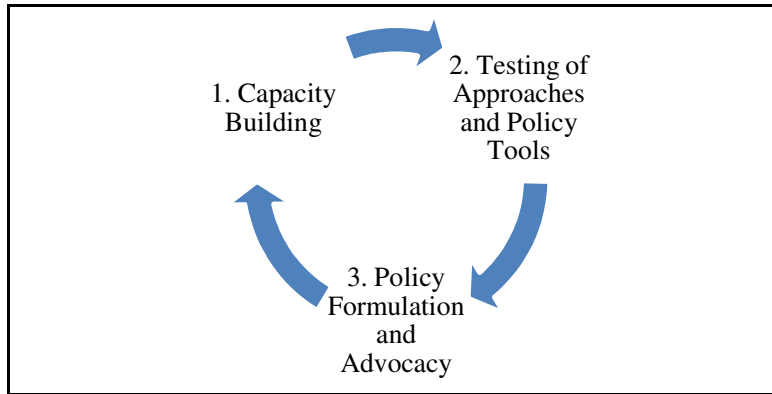


Figure 2.2: Three stages of policy development

(On the basis of ILO 2004b, 8)

The first stage starts with the capacity building of the responsible stakeholders and institutions. The amended capacity is then further used to start the second stage, the testing of approaches and policy tools “in a partnership between national institutions and two pilot districts” (ILO 2004b, 8). Finally, the third stage implies that the experiences been made are used to formulate and advocate policies (ibid.).

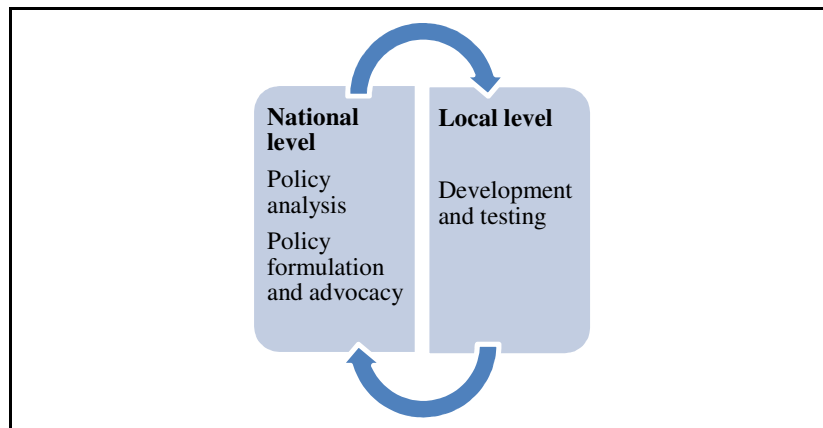


Figure 2.3: Interaction between the national and the local level

(On the basis of ILO 2012a, 10)

Figure 2.4 illustrates the dependence and interaction between the national and the local level concerning the implementation, formulation, and analysis of a policy testing approach, as it works with the DWPP. The social partners, as well as several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), worked together with the ILO to formulate strategies and policy frameworks (ILO 2006a, 10). Experiences made from the DWPP during the years 2002-2005 in Ghana should become the basis for the formulation of the revised Ghana Growth and

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper¹⁸ (GPRS II) covering the period from 2006-2009 to integrate more issues concerning the promotion of Decent Work (ILO 2006a, 4; ILO 2004b; ILO 2006b; ILO 2006c). The GPRS is the national key framework for different policies and for allocating resources of the country. Several programmes and projects are developed or aligned to it (Baah 2004, 45). Ghana needs to prepare those PRSPs as a precondition to access monetary assistance from the IMF and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (ibid.). The GPRS I¹⁹ aimed to stabilise Ghana's economy and to lay the foundation for growth. It was meant to "translate economic growth into broad-based wealth creation" (ILO 2006a, 4). In general, it tended to improve the environment for entrepreneurs, for instance by improving their access to communications and technology. Furthermore, the GPRS I said that Ghana's GDP needed to grow by more than seven per cent per annum to achieve real reduction in poverty (ILO 2006a, 5). Despite its different starting points, several gaps within the strategy were identified, especially in facing employment and the informal economy. Moreover, trade unions and employers claimed more influence to the country's strategy for reducing poverty (ILO 2006a, 8). According to Baah (2004, 46), the TUC initially refused to take part in the formulation of the GPRS I, due to the fact that "it expressed doubt about the Government's commitment to achieving the social development objectives in the GPRS, given that the same structural adjustment policies are being implemented under different names". By stating this, he refers to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)²⁰, which were, according to him, decided in parallel consultations between government and the IFIs²¹ in Washington without any inclusion of civil society. Though having doubts concerning the government's commitment, the TUC decided to take part on the consultation process of the GPRS I to guarantee that the economic policies of the paper were aligned with for example "to enhance people's ability to [...] have adequate incomes through decent employment" (Baah 2004, 47). However, the TUC and other civil society organizations were meant to participate on every stage of the process, the author asserts the opposite. He finds very little possibilities for trade unions and civil society organizations to really influence the formulation of the objectives integrated into the paper. Important to note is that Baah (2004, 49) admits that "the biggest challenge the trade unions in Ghana faced during the consultation process was the inadequate technical capacity to participate effectively in all these diverse areas of policy". Trade unions require more capacity in terms of analytical and policy research (ibid.).

The GPRS I showed different lacks, particularly regarding the content and implementation of issues related to employment and the informal economy (ILO 2006a, 5). The experiences made during the era of the DWPP, helped to formulate a revised Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper²² in 2005 (ILO 2006b, ILO 2004b). The former General Secretary of the Ghana

¹⁸ The first Strategy Paper was named *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* and it covered the years 2003 to 2005 (GPRS I).

¹⁹ The objectives of the GPRS I followed the previous steps in form of Ghana - Vision 2020: The First Step (1996-2000) and the Ghana - Vision 2020: The First Medium-term Development Plan (1997-2000) (Tsikata 2007, 56). For a closer look into the GPRS I, see IMF 2012.

²⁰ The PRGF was a programme initiated under the umbrella of the *Washington Consensus*, including trade liberalization, privatization, and deregulation for the affected countries (Baah 2004, 49).

²¹ Within this paper the term 'IFIs' generally refers to the World Bank and the IMF.

²² The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003-2005) was replaced by the so-called Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2006-2009) (IMF 2012, 15).

TUC, Kwasi Adu-Amankwah²³, demonstrates the general importance of the Decent Work Agenda by stating:

The concept of decent work captures the challenges faced by Ghana. For the trade unions raising productivity and incomes, particularly in the informal economy, are central goals. The GPRS [Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy] does not address these concerns, except in very general terms (ILO 2004b, 9).

By this statement, he emphasizes the failure of the GPRS I to respond to the central aspect in Ghana's labour market: Its informal economy.

As stated before, the revised Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRS II) came into effect in 2006, for a period of three years until 2009, placing more emphasis on growth. The main objective of this renewed strategy was to double "the size of the Ghana economy [...] within the next decade, and bringing the per capita income of the average Ghanaian to middle income level by 2015" (GoG/ MMYE/ ILO 2006, 4) to push social change and an amendment of the quality of life. The focus of the GPRS shifted from poverty reduction strategies and projects (GPRS I), to a support of policies and programmes which create growth to achieve the overall goal of poverty reduction (GPRS II) (GoG/ MMYE/ ILO 2006, 4; National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) (2005)). Prior emphasis was placed on the wealth-creation through private sector growth and employment generation.

Furthermore, the experiences and lessons from the DWPP from 2003 to 2006 were used to create a Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), covering the years from 2006 to 2009. As has been stated before, the informal economy was and still is a crucial challenge for policy makers in Ghana. Due to this, the Country Programme also focussed on this part of the economy. The main areas addressed in the programme were:

- 1) The creation of effective coordination between the MMYE and the social partners and management of a multi-sector employment policy, beginning with the Youth Employment Programme
- 2) The rise of employment, productivity and incomes in specific areas/ sectors
- 3) The reduction of vulnerability among the most vulnerable groups (including e.g. informal economy workers) and the protection of their basic rights (GoG/ MMYE/ ILO 2006, 7).

Since 2010, the key policy framework of the country is named the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) (NDPC 2010). During the time research was made in Ghana, the second Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP II) was still in a drafting process, respectively the draft needed to be approved by the ILO to be published. However, a draft of the programme is available on the internet, saying that the most important identified objectives were "1. Increased employment and decent work opportunities [and] 2. Improved social protection, especially for women and informal sector workers" (ILO no

²³ Since 2007, KwasiAdu-Amankwah is the General Secretary of the African division of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), which is representing 16 million members in 47 countries (Africa Renewal 2011).

date). It targets at heralding a new period of time and wants to avoid failures and lacks of the previous Country Programme (ILO no date).²⁴

3 The Ghana TUC

Trade unions are “pressure groups”, meaning that they are organizations that use the instrument of pressure against other organizations or politics to claim and fight for workers’ rights (Ansprenger 1983, 102). The development of trade unions and their further existence can be indicators of a structural development of a country’s economy and of the political interest to give a voice to the workers’ aims and rights (ibid.).

3.1 History and development of the Ghana TUC

In 1945, the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress(GCTUC) was founded, but the previous fragmentation of Ghanaian trade unions remained. The admission of the GCTUC to International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), in 1951 led to the founding of another organization: the Ghana Trades Union Congress (Ghana TUC) (ibid., 475). The Ghana TUC claimed the exit from the ICFTU and a tight linking to the Convention People’s Party (CPP), chaired by the first President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. After a two years period, the GCTUC and the Ghana TUC united to Trades Union Congress (TUC). Initially, they left the ICFTUC but joined it again in 1954 due to their aim of gaining independence from the British authority in 1957 (ibid., 475). In 1958/ 1959, the TUC changed its structure: the former 64 single unions were centralized to 16 national industrial unions. The reason for this was the TUC’s aim to get a stronger position compared to the single unions. By the agreement to form an alliance with CPP, the TUC gained strength. The Industrial Relations Act was passed in 1958 and the TUC, alongside the CPP, became the only organization with the right to represent workers’ concerns (Traeder 1983, 479; Geiss 1965, 195ff). The Act “gave legal backing to trade unions for the first time. It gave legal recognition to the Trades Union Congress as a corporate body. It made collective bargaining compulsory, and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements legally binding on employers and workers” (Anyemedu 2002, 284). Since then, collective bargaining with licensed trade unions has been made obligatory for private employers. A ‘check-off’-system was launched, which automatically abstracted the union fees from the workers’ wage (Traeder 1983, 476). The TUC gained on power through the closed-shop-principle; however, they became a kind of an ‘enforcement union’ (ibid.). Despite gaining power through the passed regulation, the TUC decreased in autonomy as the law imposed that the work of the TUC had to be aligned with the aims of the government. Hence, a general ban on strikes was passed. Due to the fact of disagreements, the TUC left the ICFTU in 1959 and became an advocacy of an independent African Union Confederation. In 1961, the *All African Trade Union Federation* (AATUF) was founded (ibid.). A conflict of interest between the trade union members and the cooperation of TUC and government appeared. The results were wild strikes, which were not supported by the TUC. The reputation of the Congress suffered among its members, because they did not see their concerns represented by the TUC. The linkage between the TUC and the government was promoted further. In 1965, “the Industrial Relations Act 1965 (Act 229) rec-

²⁴ At the time the research in Ghana was made, the responsible stakeholders gave a short insight into the second Decent Work Country Programme in draft. For a draft of the paper see ILO no date.

ognizes the TUC as the sole representative of the trade union movement in Ghana” (Anyemedu 2002, 286). Since then, every trade union that wanted to apply for a collective bargaining certificate had to apply through the TUC. In 1966, a military coup dismissed President Nkrumah. During this period of military government, the TUC gained back its autonomy. The Congress and its affiliates were democratized during a short time (Traeder 1983, 476). In 1967, the enforcement principle was abolished and trade union membership became voluntarily for workers. Democratization was further developed but from this point in time, the trade unions suffered from a lack of financial support due to the fact of a shrinking number of paying members from 700,000 in 1966 to 300,000 in 1967 (ibid., 477). Nevertheless, the TUC could gain strength and power through different workshops and actions to resume the workers’ trust. The first time since its existence, the TUC tried to gain members in disadvantaged groups, foremost among agricultural workers. The TUC became a member of the government’s advisory board (ibid.). In 1969, political power was assigned to a democratically voted government, which demanded the end of political neutrality of the TUC in favour of the government’s interest (ibid.). The organization lost its position in the advisory board. Consequently, its political influence shrunk. Following several strikes resulting from the claims of the TUC for an increase of the minimum wage, the Industrial Relations Act was renewed in 1971 (ibid.). The TUC was dissolved, all its assets were frozen and the check-off-system was abolished. In 1972, another military coup took place and the new government cancelled the law; however, without reintroducing the check-off-system. Different points of view existed between the government and the TUC, though their relationship was generally based on willingness for cooperation (ibid., 478). Due to the colonial history of the country, British industrial relations practices were used as framework to develop industrial relations in Ghana. According to Kaufman (2004, 520),

[t]rade unions in the United Kingdom were generally recognized as legitimate social actors and the British commitment to voluntarism gave them a fair degree of autonomy in the economic sphere. These same patterns were adopted in those African colonies controlled by the British, such as Ghana [...].

Since 1983, Ghana received financial and structural support from the IFIs World Bank and IMF because of its disastrous economic situation. The state implemented the so-called SAPs, which included reforms of the national economic structure (see section 3.2.1). Besides several positive and negative impacts, the SAPs²⁵ led to a decrease of trade union membership, due to cuts in civil servant/ public service employment, which were traditionally often unionized (Akorsu/ Baah 2007; Anyemedu 2002; Tsikata 2007).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Judicial Government) provided several rights to workers and trade unions. To mention just a few, it guarantees:

- “All persons shall have the right to freedom of association, which shall include freedom to form or join trade unions or other associations, national and international, for the protection of their interest.” (article 21(e))

²⁵Due to the huge amount of ambivalent effects of the SAPs and limited space, this controversial topic of advantages and disadvantages will not be further discussed within this paper.

- “Every worker has a right to form or join a trade union of his choice for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests.” (article 24 (3)) (ibid.).

This indicates that the fundamental rights of collective action are considered in the Constitution providing the workers and the trade unions’ rights to insist upon.

The general challenge of most African trade unions is that a major part of Africans work in the informal economy. Kaufman (2004, 519) states: “Industrial workers, rather than being viewed as oppressed and exploited, are more likely to be seen as among the aristocracy of the workforce”. The challenge is obvious: How to claim for workers’ rights in the formal economy, while most of the people work under worse circumstances in the informal economy?

4 Reference of the theoretical background to the aim of the study

4.1 Reference Neo-Institutionalism

Considering the thesis, stating that *there are endeavours to integrate the Ghanaian trade unions and their concerns fully into policy setting concerning the Decent Work Agenda, but no equal integration between the three constituent partners can be found*, the illustrated concept of the distinction between ‘talk and action’ on a meta-level needs to be analysed in the found context. Furthermore, the hypothesis that *the stronger and more influential trade unions are the better Decent Work can become a reality for the working people*, as well as the assumption that *there is a high recognition among the three constituent partners concerning the topic of Decent Work; though, no actual attempt from the government and GEA is made to realize the programme by bringing it from the boardroom into the society* can also be analysed in this context. As Brunsson (1982, 33) argues, complications and difficulties can be found during the process of taking action after a decision, especially when different stakeholders are concerned and involved. Accounting for the background of agenda and policy setting of Decent Work in Ghana, this aspect needs to be highlighted. By involving different decision makers, in this particular case the government, the employers, and the workers, into the setting, the process can become more complicated and combining this aspect with the theoretical thoughts of Meyer and Rowan (1977): Decoupling can be the solution to include all the concerns of the stakeholders. The stakeholders, respectively the tripartite partners, can agree upon different measures and projects to achieve the goals of the Decent Work Agenda; though knowing that several aspects cannot be achieved. It is assumed that the “inconsistent norms” (Brunsson 1989, 9) of “democratic parliaments or local authorities and other multi-party organizations” (ibid.) can be assigned to the meta-level of the tripartite partners. Besides, the assumption is that they agree upon different measures, which they cannot achieve, solely to fulfil the expectations coming from the close and wider environment.

4.2 Reference Network Texture

The further aim of this paper is to find out whether ILO activities, in form of the Decent Work Programme, can still be solely pushed and promoted through the traditional tripartite stakeholders in form of government, trade unions, and employer associations, or whether other civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting the promotion process of

the ILO programme and its success. The authors Pries and Seeliger (2013, 39) find that “transnational labelling and branding strategies such as [...] ‘Decent Work’ [...] are ties that form part of an emerging transnational texture of labour regulation that increasingly enmeshes and re-embeds the globalised economy”. The conceptual approach of network texture is used to analyse the prevailing situation in Ghana. The assertiveness of the traditional stakeholders will be analysed and the integration of other organizations will be illustrated. The main question to be answered is whether trade unions depend on the support of workers associations operating in the informal economy and international cooperation to involve its workers into the agenda setting, the promotion, and implementation of the programme. The thesis is: *The weaker the stakeholders the weaker the success of programmes or conventions, because they need strong stakeholders to promote them into the (domestic) country.* Putting the thesis in reverse, one can conclude that the promoting stakeholders need to be strong in terms of influence and power to succeed with their aims. Again, the interesting part within the discussion in this paper is the role of the trade unions within decision-making and implementation processes.

5 General findings

5.1 Conclusion Dimension I: Programme of Decent Work

To conclude the findings of dimension I, it can be noted that the experts’ statements on what Decent Work actually includes were very similar. They orientated on the four pillars of the Agenda promoted by the ILO. Solely one expert augmented the view on Decent Work by saying that it also included the workers’ personal need of dignity. Besides, most of the trade union experts found the reason for choosing Ghana as a Decent Work Pilot Country within the fact that the country’s political climate was positive and the economy was stable, though, there were crucial Decent Work deficits to be asserted, particularly in the informal economy. According to them, economic growth has not led to the growth of decent employment, but to the growth of informal economy activities. Important to note is that one of the trade union experts addressed the active trade unions as one reason for the ILO’s choice to take Ghana as a Pilot Country. The ILO found the reason for choosing Ghana within its stable democracy and in its successful ability to implement programmes for the purpose of replication in other countries. A programme was needed to develop projects out of it and to address the informal economy.

5.2 Conclusion Dimension II: Practice/ Implementation of Decent Work

5.2.1. Role and activities of the stakeholders

As to be seen from the analysis of the role and activities of the three constituent stakeholders, trade unions, employers, and government, there had been several activities to inform about and to promote the Decent Work Agenda in Ghana. The bulk of activities can be found on the part of the trade unions, which held several workshops and seminars and initiated a weekly radio programme dealing with Decent Work. All in all, it must be said that the trade unions’ position and role within the Decent Work Agenda was a positive one, although the actual involvement into the agenda setting of the programme needs to be analysed in a more detailed way. It needs to be noted that both, the ILO’s and the

employers' expert, highlighted the role of the trade unions and described them as very organized and influential.

Concerning the governments' activities all of the experts found huge deficits in their work. Its information policy was inadequate, its capacity in terms of acting as an employer lacked, and there was low formal employment creation through the government.

5.2.2. Problems and challenges faced by promoting Decent Work

As one could see from the analysis, the major problems and challenges confronting the Decent Work promotion in Ghana were to be found in the informal economy. The trade unions did not know how to successfully reach out to those workers. The trade union organization level was therefore quite low within the informal economy. Nevertheless, the trade unions revealed the importance of creating structures and organizing attempts. *A lack of capacity and resources* on the part of the trade unions complicated the promotion of the Decent Work principles to the trade union members. The human resource capacity of the trade unions was in one case described as low in terms of promoting the Decent Work Agenda. Furthermore, the experts addressed the *misalignment* between the policies to guarantee a well-functioning implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. They mentioned the government's employment programme for the youth (NYEP) as not sustainable, since there were no structures and alignments with bureaucracy for long-term businesses. Moreover, one expert mentioned the missing link between the country's economic principles and the principles the constituents agreed upon within the Decent Work Agenda. He thought that they were developed separately and made it difficult to integrate the Decent Work objectives in an economy, which was following different aims, such as the growth of the economy with neglect to the rise of the informal economy and a decline of formal employment. Moreover, the trade union experts highlighted the challenge of the crucial dependency on the *IFIs* regarding the country's decisions concerning trade and employment issues. According to the experts, there was still a high relevance of the IFIs prevailing in the country's budget planning. *Infrastructure* was another challenge confronting the stakeholders whilst promoting Decent Work. In the rural areas there were less schools, hospitals and sanitation. Another mentioned aspect concerning the problems and challenges of promoting Decent Work in Ghana was that *Atypical labour weakened the trade unions*. The trade union experts emphasized the different forms of atypical employment, such as casual and contract workers, which were mostly engaged through employment agencies. Those did not allow the workers to join trade unions or to claim their rights. Due to the fact that the labour market in the country was more employer- than employee-friendly, the workers follow the requirements of the agencies. The subcategory *Exclusion/ inclusion of non-TUC members* contains the views of the trade unions, which were not affiliated to the TUC and they claimed more voice within the decision-making processes in the country, since the only representative for workers on the tripartite level was the TUC. The experts concerned the need of a multi-stakeholder involvement, integrating more trade unions also from not-affiliated trade unions and other organizations to extend the workers' voice. Another important aspect was the *Resistance coming from the workers* themselves to organize in a trade union. The experts criticized the way of acting of the employers in the mining sector by saying that there had been attempts to organize mining workers in the past; however, they were not interested at all to join or form a trade union, since they were feared of losing their jobs. They refused getting in touch with the trade unions organizational

attempts. A very important statement was made from the employers' representative by stating that the greatest challenge of promoting Decent Work at the beginning of the programme was that the constituent partners, in particular the trade unions and the employers, did not understand the objectives of the programme. He criticized that the proposal was not fully developed and the understanding of the stakeholders was not clear.

5.2.3. Solutions to better promote Decent Work

To conclude, the trade union experts found the *Inclusion of more stakeholders into policy formulation* as a major subject to improve the promotion of Decent Work in Ghana. They addressed informal economy associations to be more integrated into policy setting and decision-making. Furthermore, they found the necessity to also include trade unions that were not affiliated to the TUC into tripartite decisions, since this was in most cases not considered. They found that the inclusion of more organizations into the setting could expand the special knowledge and the mutual communication of the stakeholders to include more affected people. Moreover the experts mentioned the necessity of *Strengthening the trade unions/workers' movement* for establishing a better promotion of Decent Work. The experts found that workers, who were organized in associations or trade unions, had a better rank and a louder voice to demand their rights. It was assumed that solely by strengthening the trade unions and the workers' movement in general, transformation of social dialogue processes for instance could be achieved.

The experts further proposed to *Create awareness on the issues of Decent Work* among the workers to highlight the role of the principles in their own working life and to amend it. Moreover, the experts addressed the issues of *Change of economic management*, from targeting inflation to targeting employment and to create a more influential role of the government within the trade and economic philosophy by developing a greater public sector and creating a functioning environment for private sector businesses.

5.3 Conclusion Dimension III: Role and activities of the ILO and the stakeholders' attitude towards the ILO and the Decent Work programme

5.3.1. Role and activities of the ILO

The major role and activities of the ILO can be found within the aspect of helping, assisting, advising, and training of the constituent stakeholders, but also of other West African countries to establish a well-functioning Decent Work Country Programme. Furthermore, there were several ILO projects running under the umbrella of the programme in Ghana.

5.3.2. Problems of the ILO

The main problems of the ILO in Ghana could be observed in the areas of staff of the ILO and the Ministry and in the decline of funding for the ILO. The expert criticized that there was no permanent ILO coordinator with expertise for the Decent Work Programme in Ghana. He mentioned that the responsibilities were spread over different countries and this further resulted in a decline of funding, since there was no permanent officer aimed to find more

funding options. Moreover, he addressed the problem of unqualified employees of the MESW to pursue a sustainable development of the DWP's objectives.

5.3.3. Attitude towards the programme/ evaluation

The experts mentioned several negative and positive aspects concerning the evaluation of the DWP. It needs to be noted that the negative aspects outweighed the positive ones, not solely by their frequency of mentions, but also by their importance within the analysis of the empirical data. Concerning the positive aspects, one expert found *improvements* within the social dialogue concerning the involvement of more stakeholders into decision making. Further, another expert found that the *programme was good and its achievements were effective*. With regard to the negative aspects, one can observe a certain ineffectiveness of the programme. The experts mentioned that some issues were neglected during the agenda setting progress, due to the limited involvement of more stakeholders with different expertise. Furthermore, a *re-package phenomenon* was identified by one expert stating that Decent Work had been there before but was now packaged in a new marketing way. Moreover, the fact that people and stakeholders most affected by the programme evaluated the DWP as something that the ILO did, without taking into account the involvement of the concerned people, resulted in a flop of the programme. They criticized the programme as not "country-own enough" (Transcript Interview Expert D, 3, l. 99) to be sustainable and long-term appropriated. This aspect could also be found under the subcategory *Embedding of the programme*, addressing the crucial problem of a missing link between the Decent Work principles and the country's Development Agenda. In addition, one expert found that there was a *distinction between formulation and implementation* of the programme.

5.3.4. Attitude towards the ILO

It was criticized that the ILO did not include trade unions or experts apart from the TUC. As positive adjudged was the fact that the ILO owned an active and effective role in developing declarations after debates of the constituent partners and this further paved the way for working with them for amended tripartite or bipartite relations.

6 Theoretical embedding of the findings: Neo-institutionalism

6.1 Distinction between talk and action on the employers' level

Referring to Brunsson's (1989) concept of 'talk and action' and the difficulties appearing for different stakeholders to keep their promises, the empirical findings of this paper can be related to the employers' promises regarding the efficient promotion of the DWP. As illustrated before, there are different claims of the trade unions concerning the employers' adherence to their promises. A difference between the employers' self-image and the evaluation through the trade unions is visible: The employers' expert highlights the role and activities of the employers in enforcing the government to sign onto the DWP and to inform their members on the Decent Work issues. Though, the trade union experts find less engagement on the part of the employers, since many of them refuse to pay the minimum wage and to meet workers' rights at the workplace. Regardless of the employers' positive talk concerning the promotion of Decent Work principles, their action diverges. In spite of

following their initial talk and the tripartite decisions, the trade unions find resistances resulting from the employers' failure to keep their word and, for instance, to pay the yearly bargained minimum wage.

6.2 Distinction between talk and action on the governmental level

The governmental level owns a crucial importance and impact concerning the analysis of a distinction between talk and action. Since the government is the largest single employer in the country, the trade unions and the employers find an emerging role of the government to create more decent employment in the public sector and thus the government could directly engage in achieving the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. By agreeing to initiate a Pilot and Country Programme in Ghana, the government should be obliged to fulfil the objectives. Though, the different experts find that the resistance and deficient support of the government is the major problem of promoting Decent Work through the stakeholders. Obviously, a distinction between the government's talk and the effective action can be asserted. The government and its decisions still depend on the IFIs, meaning that they are restricted in their freedom of action. The government needs to respond to different expectations of several external pressure groups, as one can conclude from figure 6.1.

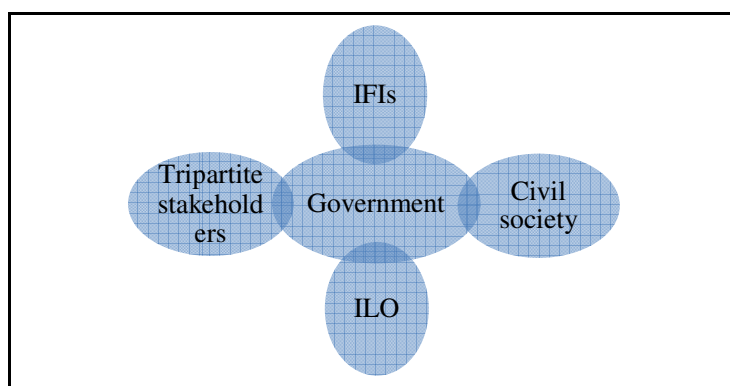


Figure 6.1: External pressure on the government through different groups

The government needs to fulfil differing expectations. If to take for instance the IFIs expectations, according to the statements of the experts it can be concluded that these cannot be aligned with the expectations of the civil society, which are a wider form of the trade unions' claims. The economic principle of the country is still on targeting inflation instead of targeting employment, as the experts' criticize. By doing so, the government can fulfil the expectations of the IFIs but not those of the civil society. According to the experts, instead of investing more financial means into decent employment, particularly in the public and therefore formal sector, the government has its focus in growing the economy without taking into account the growing numbers of informal employment and the resulting social risks. One of the main allegations coming from the trade union experts is the fact that there are less institutions or less financial support of institutions to better identify employers' violations of workers' rights and less possibilities to sanction them. The trade union experts find that the government is not engaged in sanctioning employers who do not pay the bargained minimum wage. If there is no or less effective inspection, the talk cannot be transformed into action. Effective action of the government needs to be financially

resourced, and that is one of the major challenges, since indeed the economy is growing, though, there are fiscal debts to pay and conditions of the IFIs to fulfil. “Because it is one thing agreeing to do ABCD and another thing actually doing ABCD. And it looks to me that there is too much external pressure on our government to do something different” (Transcript Interview Expert D, 4, ll. 164-166).

The experts find that it is easy for the government to agree on the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, though the implementation of the agreements is another issue:

[S]o when there is a Decent Work which will cost, ooh this is nice, but hold on, you know, hold on [...]. [S]o government always say: Oh this is nice! But when it comes to implementation they look at themselves first as government, second as employer, and when they put the employer [...] they always team up with the employers and they take against us (Transcript Interview Expert E and F, 10, ll. 433-440).

The experts recognize a gap between the Decent Work principles and the economic policies of the country. They evaluate the strategy to grow the economy by not taking into account the steady growth of informal employment as a wrong direction. The distinction between talk and action can again be found in the government’s agreement to the Decent Work Agenda and the actual following economic principle:

Grow the economy and [...] it will create jobs, it will create employment and that majority of that employment is then in the informal economy, but then we introduce a policy, trying to make that informal employment decent, and you realize that in Ghana majority of those, who are in the informal sector, are there not because they want to be there. It’s because there are no other options, so if it’s well-embedded in our economic management philosophy, what will have happen is that: whatever jobs come out of our economic growth, our economic development, will it said be decent, you don’t create an indecent job and later trying to introduce a programme to make it decent (Transcript Interview Expert D, 2, ll. 71-78).

With regard to the expectations and claims of the society, the trade union experts indicate that it is time to carry out the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda in an effective way to make the people benefit from it: “The Government of Ghana is supposed to be there to address the issues of the citizens and for that matter, the issues of Decent Work should be removed from the boardroom to the society, so that they become beneficial [...]” (Transcript Interview Expert B, 4, ll. 156-158).

To conclude, the government’s agreement on the DWP and their talk implying promises to the outside can diverge from the effective action in the concerned areas, as one expert summarizes: “It’s good to have nice objectives taken on paper” (Transcript Interview Expert C, 3, ll. 101-102). The trade union experts find the crucial need of the government to walk their talk, meaning that their talk needs to be reflected in effective action.

6.3 Distinction between talk and action on the tripartite level

In the matter of the thesis of this study, stating that *there are endeavours to integrate the Ghanaian trade unions and their concerns fully into policy setting concerning the Decent Work Agenda, but no equal integration between the three constituent partners can be found*, the relation to Brunsson's (1989) concept of 'talk and action' needs to be highlighted. Since the basis of the Decent Work Agenda is supposed to be created in cooperation between the three constituent partners, it could be expected that there is agreed interrelationship between the tripartite stakeholders. However, the assumption was that there was no equal integration of the trade unions. By analysing the empirical material, several distinctions between the theoretical involvement of trade unions and the actual involvement in practice can be asserted. Furthermore, on the tripartite level it is to conclude that it is easy to agree to certain issues, as long as there is no sanctioning mechanism for the trade unions to use for committing the government and the employers to implement their agreements in practice: "The challenge with the tripartite is that we can have the fine ideas, but some, one of the partners, in this case government, need to see through a certain level of implementation and that is what has always been the problem" (Transcript Interview Expert D, 3, ll. 114-117).

The trade union experts find that the time has come to find ways to force the government and the employers to hold their word and to integrate the trade unions' concerns fully into policy setting and policy implementation:

I think it's been over achieved [*note: the expert referred to the social dialogue issue*] and my view is that the trade unions in Ghana over dialoguing, we are dialoguing too much and sometimes you don't know who is listening to us. And that's the point I mean, that it's about time you back that dialogue with certain action. Campaigns to get the policy makers sit on their toes, because you dialogue, oh everything is fine, you agree to do ABCD, but they don't do it, then you continue to dialogue. We need to back that dialogue with some action (Transcript Interview Expert D, 6, ll. 216-221).

The expert concludes that the time for dialoguing and talking is over and there is currently the need to back the talk with action.

Respecting the actual involvement of the trade unions, according to most trade union experts, there has been integration of trade unions into the policy setting and implementation processes for Decent Work in Ghana. However, they criticize their level of real influence and by doing so again the distinction between talk and action, respectively between decision-making and following action, appears:

So capacity, the fact that there are competing social forces, employers' involvement, who have had a bigger say in what goes into the Development Agenda, that I think is the reason why Decent Work Agenda is not that pronounced in this Development Agenda (Transcript Interview Expert C, 4, ll. 157-160).

The expert finds less influence of the trade unions in comparison to the employers' influence to decide what is addressed in the country's Development Agenda. By stating this, he highlights the inequality between the stakeholders' input possibilities, though, the basis of the Decent Work Agenda shall be tripartite consultations and equal integration of their concerns.

In conclusion, the actual role of the trade unions during the agenda setting process of the Decent Work Programme needs to be accentuated. Indeed, the trade union experts reveal that there has been integration and involvement of the trade unions but not to an equal level compared to the influence of the other constituent partners. The major problem is the emphasized gap between initial decisions on the tripartite level as well as the initial talk to follow certain Decent Work principles, and the action in practice. Embedding the empirical findings into Brunsson's (1989, 9) concept of 'talk and action', the "inconsistent norms" of "democratic parliaments or local authorities and other multi-party organizations" can be related to the tripartite level in the setting for a Decent Work Agenda. The initial programme and the subsequent practice differ from each other.

By involving more stakeholders into the setting, the process of decision-making can become even more complicated. The following section illustrates the necessity of a decoupling process for ensuring the integration of all stakeholders' concerns to guarantee the implementation of environmental expectations.

6.4 Decoupling as necessary process for ensuring the integration of all stakeholders' concerns

Decoupling of formal structures and activities on the tripartite level could be the solution to include all the concerns of the stakeholders. Referring to Meyer and Rowan (1977, 357)

[t]he advantages of decoupling are clear. The assumption that formal structures are really working is buffered from the inconsistencies and anomalies involved in technical activities. Also, because integration is avoided disputes and conflicts are minimized, and an organization can mobilize support from a broader range of external constituents. Thus, decoupling enables organizations to maintain standardized, legitimating, formal structures while their activities vary in response to practical considerations.

In this context, the tripartite partners can agree upon different measures and projects to achieve the goals of the Decent Work Agenda, though knowing that several aspects cannot be achieved due to incongruent beliefs of the partners. In particular, the government has to deal with several external expectations of its environment. Besides the duty to fulfil the conditions of the IFIs, the government is supposed to meet the needs of the civil society and the requirements of the ILO. Moreover, the other stakeholders have several expectations concerning the country's economic and social development. Meyer and Rowan (1977, 343) find that "structural elements are only loosely linked to each other and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences [...]". This setting can be related to the level of the tripartite constellation: Consequently to different expectations of the constituent partners, the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda were agreed on paper. Nevertheless, a lack of implementation in the area of real practice can be found referring to the trade unions' statements within the study.

It is assumed that a complete implementation of all the stakeholders' concerns is not feasible within the current way of acting. By way of example, the trade unions' claims concerning the development of the public sector in favour of a reduction of the informal economy are not compatible with the current economic principles of the country to grow the economy without taking into account the growth of informal labour activities.

7 Theoretical embedding of the findings: Network texture concept

7.1 Network texture between various partners in Ghana

"A strong trade unionism alone cannot be the only answer for the sustainable regulation of international labour"

(Pries/ Seeliger 2013, 38).

The analysis of the empirical findings revealed certain solutions to better promote Decent Work with regard to an amended involvement of several more stakeholders into the agenda setting and promotion process.

7.1.1 The need for a network texture between various partners inside Ghana

As to be deduced from the presentation of the empirical findings, the fact that there has been little integration of more stakeholders into the agenda setting for Decent Work in Ghana is mentioned in several cases. The question as to whether the integration of more than the traditional stakeholders government, employers, and trade unions, is necessary to create and implement a proper programme, appears interesting in the context of the concept of network texture. The thesis is: *The weaker the stakeholders the weaker the success of programmes or conventions, because they need strong stakeholders to promote them within the (domestic) country.* The strength of traditional actors could be expanded by involving more different stakeholders into the process. With regard to the position of the trade unions, as one part of the traditional stakeholders, the authors Pries and Seeliger (2013, 29) refer to the "race-to-the-bottom-thesis" including a shift of power in favour of the employers and coming along with a decrease of workers' power to bargain for certain rights with their management. They propose a cross-border network to enforce more workers' rights on the domestic level. These networks should include several forms of stakeholders, such as national actors of labour relations, global trade union networks, political foundations etc., as they argue conventions or programmes "will have almost no effect on work and employment conditions if at the local or national level there are no strong collective actors (whether state agencies, social movements, consumer organisations, unions etc.) promoting them" (ibid., 32). In this particular case of the promotion of the Decent Work Programme inside Ghana, especially the emergence of a domestic network texture needs to be discussed, since formal trade unions are no longer the solely representation of workers within the country. The majority of workers are engaged within the informal economy. Due to this, the necessity of an involvement of more stakeholders, such as informal labour associations, gets obvious:

One of the challenges is that sometimes it is not all inclusive and that also goes a way to affect this whole programme, so when you have an opportunity to meet with the other colleagues, I'm sure they will deal with more specificity as far as the measures that has been put in place by the ILO to address this in terms of the capacity buildings concern [...] (Transcript Interview Expert A, 8, ll. 350-354).

Moreover, other experts mention the fact that the trade unions try to get informal economy workers into their trade unions through their associations, since there are various existing associations in the informal economy:

[W]e want to bring them to the union through their associations, so if you have tomato sellers they have an association, if you have banana sellers, they have an association, so we are bringing the associations to join us but that has been very difficult, so nevertheless, some efforts had been made [...] (Transcript Interview Expert E and F, 3, ll. 115-118).

They emphasize the role of the government in integrating informal economy workers concerns into policy setting processes by stating that:

[S]o if you have associations for traders, associations for farmers, associations for tomato sellers, associations for shoe retailers and so on, government can through this associations bring them to be part of [...] policy, not through the individuals but through the associations, like in the formal economy, government deals with the unions, because we are group of workers (Transcript Interview Expert E and F, 3, ll. 132-136).

Furthermore, one expert of the trade unions highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement concerning the social dialogue:

[T]he social dialogue that is taking place, right, is still at a rudimentary level. It could be better, there is some improvement, because there are new issues being taken on board, there is multi-stakeholder, but multi-stakeholder involvement in agenda setting, in policy formulation is not, is not limited to Decent Work processes, it is a global phenomenon, which is a recognition of the right to participate in decision-making (Transcript Interview Expert C, 7, ll. 273-278).

Trade unions in Ghana are no longer able to represent the major, but only a small percentage of workers. Moreover, the mostly by indecent work affected people are active in the informal economy and are therefore usually not represented by trade unions²⁶.

²⁶ According to Baah (2006, 16), the unionization rate in Ghana's informal economy is very low regarding its percentage of 0.1%.

7.1.2 The need for a network texture between various partners beyond the single nation-state

As Pries and Seeliger (2013, 28) state, the network texture intends to gather several actor groups and make them work together “beyond the territorially bounded power-frame of a single nation-state”. Expert B, as single representative for a Global Union Federation, emphasizes the international role and relevance of the federation by stating that they are active in promoting the ILO Domestic Workers Convention to provide workers’ rights and social protection/ security for domestic workers and “[b]y so doing we are improving on their Decent Work” (Transcript Interview Expert B, 2, l. 89). The ILO expert mentions the importance for cross-border initiatives by stating that he helps and assists other West African countries to develop DWCPs, as he knows the Ghanaian experiences and those help him to assist other countries in their agenda setting and implementation: “Liberia, Sierra Leone, I set up the system and went back and assisted them to develop the project and some part” (Transcript Interview Expert G, 4, ll. 178-179). And the expert further states: “I’ve done for Nigeria, for Sierra Leone, as for Sierra Leone even developed the programme, and then Liberia I put a structure there for them to continue” (ibid., 8, ll. 352-354).

In the context of promoting the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, the role of the FES as promoter needs to be emphasized, since the foundation was engaged during the developmental process of the convention and globally supports the strengthening of domestic workers organization in trade unions and associations (FES 2013). Furthermore, the authors Floro and Meurs (2009, 3) state that the FES “is among the firmest supporters of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda alongside trade unions worldwide. The concept of Decent Work [...] constitutes an important point of reference in our projects [...]”.

Within the promotion of Decent Work the ILO owns the role as an initiator for the Decent Work Programme. Referring to the statements Expert G (Transcript Interview Expert G, 7, ll. 311-315) stating that

ILO’s activities are reducing and the reason is that the funding, you know, ILO is not a funding organization, it’s a UN technical institution to provide support for member countries on labour standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue and the activities will be funded by the host-country or by development, other development partners, but the funding is becoming lighter and lighter and lighter (?), because of the world economic crisis [...],

it gets obvious that the ILO needs dependable partners to perform and promote the Decent Work Agenda, otherwise the Programme can no longer be financed and supported.

Moreover, the GUF-Expert (Expert B) finds that “[t]here is a lack of awareness on the roles of and responsibilities of various partners. Lack of information sharing among key personnel of the various partners” (additional e-mail response received from Expert B). The need of a well-functioning network texture between various partners gets obvious and needs to be highlighted.

7.2 Conclusion theoretical embedment and reference to the hypothesis, thesis, and assumptions

In sum, Brunsson's concept of 'talk and action' and Meyer's and Rowan's concept of decoupling processes to ensure the organization's external legitimacy can be adapted to the empirical findings of this study. While the tripartite stakeholders sign DWP and by doing so declare their acceptance and will for implementation of the objectives, the on-going activities, in particular of the government and the employers, differ from the prior agreements. A clear distinction between 'talk and action' can be discovered. Amongst others, the reason for this lies in the external expectations of several stakeholders confronting the tripartite stakeholders, particularly the government, as Brunsson (1989, 221) argues: "In other words hypocrisy is a fundamental type of behaviour in the political organization: to talk in a way that satisfies one demand, to decide in a way that satisfies another, and to supply products in a way that satisfies a third". The trade union experts adjudge the influence of the IFI's as tremendously important, since they are the country's donors and they set the conditions under which the country has to grow the economy and to reimburse the debts. The process of decoupling (Meyer/ Rowan 1979) seems to be appropriate within the agenda setting process regarding the integration of all stakeholders' concerns, since their expectations and claims differ from each other and a complete integration of all concerns is not feasible in this way of acting. Incongruences of expectations and demands result in the non-achievement of several aspects.

The need for a network texture inside Ghana and beyond the single nation-state is beneficial. This is particularly for the work of the trade unions' integration of informal economy associations into decision making and policy setting, having in mind that the major part of the working people is to be found in the informal economy. Furthermore, the importance of a network texture beyond the single-nation state showed that particularly the ILO Domestic Workers Convention needs to be pushed and promoted into the several affected countries to support the further development of a Decent Work creation. Therefore, the international cooperation between various partners, including traditional stakeholders as well as informal economy organizations and further institutions such as the FES and the ILO, gets crucially important. To guarantee a well-performing output, the awareness and information sharing between the partners should be highlighted and further developed.

The hypothesis that *the stronger and more influential trade unions are the better Decent Work can become a reality for the working people* could be maintained to a limited extent. Regarding the integration and involvement, several problems and challenges occurred within the findings, meaning that amongst other things, some trade union experts criticize the fact that solely TUC affiliated trade unions are part of the consultations and discussions concerning the input into the country's Decent Work Agenda. Therefore, several aspects and expertise knowledge of not-affiliated trade unions are neglected, resulting in exclusiveness for TUC members in input- and decision-making. Moreover, as has been stated before, the several claims of different stakeholders result in a complication of realizing all concerns, thus the trade unions' influence is partially marginal. Hence, the hypothesis could not be completely maintained, but to a limited extent, meaning that not solely the position and strength of trade unions is important in this context, but also the government's will and possibility to really implement the tripartite agreed issues. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the influence and strength of the trade unions in terms of pushing government and employers to make their initial talk follow real action, is a great and important factor in

achieving the Decent Work pillars and therefore more employment options and better working conditions for the working people. The thesis states that *it is time to walk the talk*. The empirical findings illustrated that there are actually *endeavours to integrate the trade unions' concerns into the agenda and policy setting, but the integration does not take place on an equal level*. Although there is a high recognition of the stakeholders on the topic of Decent Work, the trade union experts criticize that the actual attempt of realizing the programme by *bringing it from the boardroom into the society* is not initiated to a satisfying extent. The initially made assumption that *talking is easier than acting* could therefore be maintained through the empirical findings.

Combining the illustrated aspects of the neo-institutional theory with the aspects gathered for the need of a network texture, it is to conclude that the inclusion of more stakeholders into agenda and policy setting could lead to the situation that more talk results in less action. Concerning the integration of more different stakeholders into such processes, Brunsson (1989, 29f) states that complications and difficulties can be found during the process of taking action after a decision:

Inconsistencies in decisions and production may be the result of compromises, whereby the demands of each side are partially, but only partially, fulfilled. Further: talk, decisions and production may be inconsistent with one another, since different groups take part in them at different times, and their strength and external situation can also vary on the different occasions. Also, talk and decisions may be an expression of wishful thinking, and production an expression of what is feasible.

The claim for more integration and involvement of several stakeholders could end up in an even more complicated result, including a less feasible realization of demands.

Briefly, the empirical findings responded largely to the initially posed research questions and reflected assumptions and (hypo-) theses.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Summary of the argumentation and the most important findings

The purpose of the study was to analyse the role of the trade unions during their involvement into the agenda and policy setting processes concerning the implementation of Decent Work in Ghana. The question was whether trade union concerns and activities were implemented in the Decent Work Agenda for Ghana. The presentation of the general findings illustrated that the initial programme and the subsequent practice of Decent Work differed from each other. The initially posed research questions were responded to a large extent. One could reconstruct the **programme setting and implementation** process, regarding the **roles and activities of the three constituent stakeholders** with a special focus on the trade unions. Interesting to note is the fact that the trade unions' expressions about their involvement differed from each other. While some experts were convinced that there was enough involvement into the agenda setting, other experts ascribed more space to involve trade unions' concerns into the agenda. It was illustrated that the implementation of the DWP in Ghana was and is somewhat complicated and goes along with several **problems**

and challenges, particularly concerning the actual involvement and influence of the trade unions into the agenda setting, as well as the specific challenges arising from the informal economy. Furthermore, the problem of implementation was mostly ascribed to the disqualification and reluctance of the government, which was accused by all the interviewed experts for being not consequently enough to really achieve the aims and objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The role of the trade unions was indicated as very active in terms of informing and training their members. However, limited influence was found in terms of integrating their concerns into policy setting, since the GoG needed to fulfil several external expectations and found the most important ones in the claims of the IFIs. Major aspects concerning the problems and challenges of a Decent Work promotion through the three constituent stakeholders were detected in the informal economy, as it included the majority of employed or self-employed workers. The lack of trade union organization and consequent integration of informal economy workers' concerns into the agenda and policy setting for Decent Work, need to be emphasized at this point. The relevance of the study's topic concerning **changing environments due to globalization** was highlighted by stating that a need of a network texture within the national frame, as well as a need for a network texture between various partners beyond the single nation-state, could be asserted. It was presented that inside the country a network texture was particularly necessary between trade unions and informal economy associations to assure the integration of the mostly affected and indigent working people into the agenda and policy setting processes. It was further illustrated that beyond the single-nation state a network texture was needed. This was to ensure that certain rights, in particular referring to the international promotion of the ILOs Decent Work Programme and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, were supported and highlighted by different stakeholders besides the traditional ones. Especially, the institutions FES and the ILO itself, as influencing promoters and supporters of conventions, need to be emphasized within this context.

Notably with regard to the lacking implementation through the GoG, the distinction between talk and action, as it is generally described from Brunsson (1989), could be found. For the government, agreeing to certain aspects and issues concerning the integration and implementation of the four Decent Work pillars is simple, though, in practice the achievement of the objectives is not combinable with other stakeholders' claims, such as the conditions of the IFIs to refund the country's debts. Therefore, it must be stated that the hypothesis *the stronger and more influential trade unions are the better Decent Work can become a reality for the working people* can be maintained to a limited extent. The actual problem of making Decent Work become a reality for the working people could be found in the role and position of the government to actually implement the agreed issues. Thus, not solely the position and strength of trade unions is interesting within this setting, but also the government's will and possibility to really implement the tripartite agreed issues. Despite this fact, the influence and strength of the trade unions regarding their ability to push government and employers to make their initial talk follow real action, is a crucially important factor to achieve the four pillars of Decent Work and therefore more employment options and better working conditions for the Ghanaian labour force. The thesis that *it is time to walk the talk* was indicated through the empirical findings. It was presented that actual endeavours existed to integrate the trade unions' concerns into the agenda and policy setting. Nevertheless, the integration did not take place on an equal level between the three constituent stakeholders. Even though there was a high recognition of the stakeholders on the topic of Decent Work, the trade union experts criticized that *the actual attempt of*

realizing the programme by bringing it from the boardroom into the society and making the majority of working people benefit from it was not initiated to a satisfying extent. The initial made assumption that *talking is easier than acting* could therefore be maintained through the empirical findings. One expert summarized the actual problem of the country's Decent Work promotion: "We need to back that dialogue with some action" (Transcript Interview Expert D, 6, ll. 216-221).

To conclude, this study does not claim any rights for generalization, as it solely includes a limited amount of all possible viewpoints of the different stakeholders. Furthermore, the fact that no qualitative interview with the GoG, as one important constituent stakeholder, was possible, the study neglected the governmental point of view on the topic of Decent Work, its promotion, and the integration and involvement of stakeholders.

8.2 Outlook

Besides the already presented research questions, (hypo-) theses, and assumptions, there are far more starting points and research questions within the illustrated context of promoting Decent Work. As has already been stated, the GoG was not interviewed during the study's research. Therefore, another starting point for a more detailed and comparable investigation could be to interview members of the government for tracing their point of view concerning the integration and role of the other stakeholders and the implementation process. Regarding the further development of Decent Work opportunities, the ILO Domestic Workers Convention needs to be highlighted, since more attention on the topic of Decent Work could create more awareness. Consequently, a better implementation of the objectives could be possible. Regarding particularly the correlation between the stakeholders' government and trade unions in Ghana, one could also include the historical background of the relationship between them. Due to the fact that Ghanaian trade unions were significantly linked to the government's aims until the early 1960s, further research on the historical setting may find resulting connections and points of conflict reaching to the present day.

As has been illustrated, different possible solutions were displayed by the interviewed experts of how to achieve an amendment in the promotion of Decent Work. Nevertheless, another starting point could be to analyse in detail the several possible solutions and to see whether they are feasible. To emphasize more possible solutions, the objectives of the network texture could be analysed more explicit by involving more different stakeholders into the study. By way of example, NGOs and institutions like political foundations could be interviewed and involved into the study. Furthermore, the research questions could be targeted on the affected workers themselves: How do they see the Decent Work Programme? Do they actually know it? How does it affect them? Are there differences to be asserted between the promotion of the programme in the formal and the informal economy? How are workers integrated into the programme setting? In addition, another interesting starting point could be the question of the trade unions' accountability itself to promote Decent Work among their own staff and members.

To conclude, one could see that the landscape of the Ghanaian labour market and political embedment provide several more impulses for starting points and research questions concerning the promotion of Decent Work and the influence of several stakeholders. A crucial importance on the topic of Decent Work is to be found in the context

of workers' involvement into policy setting and the further rise of globalization and informalisation of employment, since those processes could affect the economic, social, and political development of developing countries.

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