

A review of the dissertation thesis “Towards a functional health system governance: the centrality of policies, institutions and actors’ configuration in malaria eradication among under-five children in Ghana.”

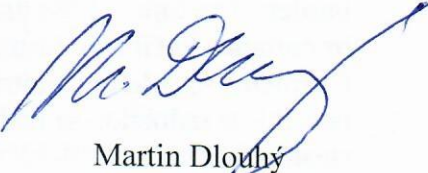
University	Charles University
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Study programme/year	Public and Social Policy, 2024
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Title	Towards a functional health system governance: the centrality of policies, institutions and actors’ configuration in malaria eradication among under-five children in Ghana
Supervisor	Prof. PhDr. Martin Potůček, M.Sc., CSc.
Opponent/Reviewer	prof. Mgr. Ing. Martin Dlouhý, Dr., MSc Faculty of Informatics and Statistics, Prague University of Economics and Business

- 1. Background, objectives.** Malaria is one of the diseases with a major global health burden. The topic of the dissertation thesis (child health malaria policy), its practical importance in Ghana, historical overview and recent developments are explained in Chapters 1-3. Many countries, including Ghana, failed to achieve the MDG target of a two-thirds reduction in under-five mortality by 2015. However, mortality declined steadily between 2000-2020 (Table 3.1). The key research objective is to investigate the interactions between policies, actors, and institutions in the case of malaria among children under five (Section 2.1). The health policy process in Ghana is described in Section 4.4.
- 2. Methods.** The theoretical framework (rights-based theory, policy cycle theory, and political economy theory) is described in Chapter 4. The key strength of the thesis is the use of various methods, which enables the author to study the problem of child health malaria policy in Ghana from different views. First, 41 questionnaires and interviews with health sector professionals (actors) were carried out at the national and regional levels (four selected districts). Second, 200 questionnaires and interviews were carried out with 200 mothers with children (health service users). Third, regression analysis at the national and regional levels was used to identify significant factors affecting mortality from malaria. The number of variables is relatively large compared to the number of observations (2000-2019). I would appreciate it if the data were available, for example, in the appendix.
- 3. Results.** First, some introductory information (data) on the Ghanaian health system would be helpful, such as the number of doctors, beds, and nurses and the share of health financing sources. The main results from interviews show the apparent discrepancy between the intent of health policy and its implementation at the local level, the lack of involvement of some important local actors, and the significant role of politics in the health sector. In Conclusion, the author suggests some general recommendations for malaria policy. I agree with the author that one of the main findings is an imbalance between the central and regional governmental levels.
- 4. Formal editing.** The dissertation thesis is well-structured. The list of references is extensive and shows that the author is well-oriented in the field she studies. However, the references are the major weakness of the thesis. First, there are several citations in the text that are not listed in references, for example, Antwi (2008), Dalaba (2012),

Lenhardt (2015), Couttolence (2012), Salisu (2009), University of Ghana (2018), Ninsin (2018), and others. Second, the author does not cite her work, for example, Amoako and Verter (2022), Amoako, Potůček, and Verter (2023), and others. It is declared at the beginning of the thesis that all literature and resources are listed.

5. **Questions.** (1) Your malaria health policy recommendations are quite general. Can you formulate a specific and easily applicable malaria policy recommendation? (2) Can some country serve as a benchmark for Ghana?
6. **Overall evaluation.** The dissertation thesis has scientific and practical contributions in the area of malaria eradication in Ghana. There is no doubt that the dissertation thesis brings new scientific knowledge and that Martha Amoako proved their professional abilities in public and social policy. **I recommend the dissertation thesis for the defence, and after a successful defence, I recommend awarding Martha Amoako a Ph.D. degree.**

Prague, 30. 5. 2024



Martin Dlouhý