



Peace and governance in Ghana: An analysis of the capacity and role of the police service in Ghana's peace architecture

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the intricate nexus between the police service's functions and the state's peace architecture. The states' pursuit of peace constitutes a non-negotiable endeavour, as it creates a conducive environment for holistic societal development. The structures of national peace architecture clearly demarcate the roles of key institutions. In Ghana, the police service is one of the fundamental institutions in the country's peace architecture. The institution's core function of crime control and prevention constitutes a major institutional framework for maintaining law, order, and peace. Utilising the theories of institutionalism and adaptive structuration (AST), this paper analyses the institutional capacity of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) relative to the country's peace architecture. Employing an explanatory case study design, the analysis blends historical and contemporary data from a target population of 30 purposively selected participants across four regions of Ghana to construct a coherent narrative of the police service's capacity for peace maintenance. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, which enabled the identification, coding, and interpretation of patterns within the qualitative data to construct a coherent narrative. The findings revealed that the GPS does not operate in isolation but serves as a central node within Ghana's integrated national security architecture, coordinating with military, intelligence agencies, and regional security councils to ensure unified, layered responses to threats. However, the findings establish that, despite its acknowledged centrality to peace, the GPS faces significant structural and operational challenges: resource constraints, particularly acute during large-scale events, public trust deficits stemming from perceptions of political interference, and training gaps in specialised areas such as crowd control and human rights compliance. Based on the findings, the paper concludes and recommends that to enhance its institutional capacity, the GPS requires sustained political will, adequate resource allocation, and commitment from all stakeholders. Also, there is a need for a depoliticised funding framework to address resource constraints; the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms to rebuild public trust; and the development of continuous, specialised training programs focused on human rights and public order management to effectively execute its mandate within Ghana's peace architecture.

Keywords: Peace, Capacity, Police, Crime, Governance, Institution, Reform, Security, Ghana

I. INTRODUCTION

The police service constitutes an integral component of governance architecture. The mandate of the police service in crime combat and security maintenance positions it as a critical institution in every sovereign nation. The peace and security of any society are intricately tied to the effectiveness of the police service in fulfilling its mandate, particularly in providing domestic security. Indeed, without security, there can hardly be peace. Security, therefore, serves as an essential precursor for peace, representing "an important variable needed for the government to prosecute its social, economic, and political policies across all areas of the country" (Heywood, 2007, p. 413).

Scholarly discourse indicates that policing in Africa was not a colonial invention; police units of various forms existed in empires and states across Africa long before the continent's partition (Aldred, 1961; Boahen, 1974; Tankebe, 2008; Gyamfi, 2012). Some scholars maintain that "traditional methods of policing [in pre-colonial Africa] were deemed more effective in relation to crime control" (Osisiogu & Mmahi, 2020, p. 149). In the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana),



policing formed an integral part of the governance architecture of pre-colonial states. Professional police corps existed with mandates encompassing the maintenance of law and order, security provision, and the assumption of military functions during defensive and offensive wars (Aboagye, 2010; Boahen, 1974). Given that chiefs and kings exercised political jurisdiction over their respective territories, it was common for traditional rulers in pre-colonial Gold Coast to establish police corps by organising "young and able men into small groups or units with the authority to patrol and enforce the bylaws of the community" (Boateng & Darko, 2016, p. 2). In other instances, the mandates of police and military forces were fused and reposed in professional armies, which were structured to safeguard peace and security within their respective jurisdictions (Mbowura, 2020; Aboagye, 2010).

Historically, the Western form of policing in the Gold Coast is traced to Captain George Maclean's initiative when he established a miniature professional police service in parts of the southern Gold Coast in 1831 (Boahen, 1974). Tasked with maintaining peace, this police corps operated across numerous districts in the southern Gold Coast and received local community approval. Until the withdrawal of the West India Regiment in 1851, the police corps comprised both local militia and the West India Regiment (Gingell et al., 2000). Following the regiment's withdrawal, the police corps consisted essentially of local militia. In 1873, an ordinance was enacted that formalised the police service in the southern Gold Coast, providing new regulations and disciplinary frameworks (Anang et al., 2023). From the 1920s onwards, various ordinances were enacted to address the police service's challenges and enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. By independence in 1957, the Ghanaian police service had undergone numerous institutional reforms to improve its capacity. Similarly, post-colonial governments since 1957 have implemented measures to enhance capacity and redefine the mandate of the Ghana Police Service.

From a historical perspective, the Ghana Police Service has undergone significant metamorphosis since the colonial era. With a history spanning approximately two centuries and a rich historical legacy, one might assume that these extended periods of transformation and reform have rendered the Ghana Police Service capable of fulfilling its mandate to ensure peace and security. This paper critically examines the role of the Ghana Police Service within Ghana's peace and security architecture. It argues that, despite its long history and institutional reforms, the Ghana Police Service lacks the requisite capacity to effectively and efficiently execute its mandate to ensure peace in Ghana. The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 is the review of the literature; Section 3 is the study methodology; Section 4 provides the study findings and discussion; and this is followed by the section 4, which provides the conclusion and recommendations of the paper; and this is followed by the references used and cited in the paper.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The police service is a fundamental component of modern governance, holding a critical mandate to combat crime and maintain domestic peace and security. The stability of any society is intrinsically linked to the effectiveness of its police force, as security is an essential precursor to social, economic, and political development (Heywood, 2007). Without it, sustainable peace is unattainable. While policing in Africa is not a colonial import, with various forms of organised community security existing in pre-colonial empires and states like the Gold Coast (Aldred, 1961; Boahen, 1974; Tankebe, 2008), the modern institutional framework of the Ghana Police Service is a product of historical evolution. In the pre-colonial era, traditional rulers organised young men into units to enforce bylaws, and in some cases, police and military functions were fused within professional armies to safeguard their jurisdictions (Boateng & Darko, 2016; Mbowura, 2020). The Western model of policing in the Gold Coast began to take shape in 1831 under Captain George Maclean, evolving through various ordinances and institutional reforms throughout the colonial period and into independence in 1957 (Boahen, 1974). From the 1920s onward, successive colonial administrations enacted ordinances to enhance the service's effectiveness, and post-colonial governments have continued these efforts, implementing numerous measures to redefine the mandate and improve the capacity of the Ghana Police Service's

Given this long history spanning nearly two centuries of continuous transformation and reform, one might reasonably assume that the Ghana Police Service has evolved into a highly capable institution, well-equipped to execute its mandate of ensuring peace and security. However, despite this extensive institutional journey, there is a persistent gap between its historical development and its contemporary performance. The assumption that longevity and repeated reforms automatically translate into effectiveness is questionable. This paper argues that the Ghana Police Service lacks the requisite capacity to effectively and efficiently execute its mandate for ensuring peace in Ghana. Therefore, this study critically examines the role of the Ghana Police Service within Ghana's peace and security architecture, seeking to identify and analyse the persistent capacity deficits that hinder its performance. The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 reviews the relevant literature; Section 3 outlines the theoretical framework; Section 4 examines the concept of peace; Section 5 analyses Ghana's peace and security architecture; Section 6 is the study design and methodology of the study; Section 7 provides an in-depth analysis of the Ghana Police Service's capacity and role; and Section 8 offers conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To analyse the institutional capacity of the Ghana Police Service relative to its role within the country's peace architecture, drawing on institutionalism and adaptive structuration theory;
- ii. To examine the coordination mechanisms between the Ghana Police Service and other security actors (such as the military, intelligence agencies, and regional security councils) in delivering unified responses to threats;
- iii. To identify the structural and operational challenges confronting the Ghana Police Service, including resource constraints, public trust deficits, and training gaps that impede the effective execution of its peace maintenance mandate

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The extant literature on policing underscores the indispensability of the police service. Proponents of the 'indispensability thesis' argue that the police service plays key roles in maintaining law and order – critical prerequisites for peace and security in societies (Banton, 1964; Wilson, 1968; Brown, 1969, 1988; Reiss, 1971; Bittner, 1970). Given this critical role, the police service's functions in relation to peace and internal security are non-negotiable (Janušauskas, 2013; Bowling & Sheptychi, 2012). As a key institution in state governance architecture, the police service undertakes duties to protect human lives and properties within, and to some extent outside, sovereign borders as part of states' integral security and peace architecture (Bowling & Sheptychi, 2012; Hubert & Mauss, 1964).

2.1 Theoretical Review

This paper employs two complementary theories as its analytical framework: institutionalism and adaptive structuration theory (AST).

2.1.1 Institutionalism

The theory of institutionalism, commonly utilised by social scientists to measure institutional performance across diverse contexts, provides the first analytical lens. Institutionalism constitutes the "general approach to the study of political institutions, a set of theoretical ideas and hypotheses concerning the relations between institutional characteristics and political agency, performance, and change. Institutionalism emphasises the endogenous nature and social constructions of political change" (March & Olsen, 2005, p. 4). It examines how institutional structures stimulate "greater regularity of human behaviour than would otherwise exist and therefore enhance the explanatory and predictive capacity of the social sciences" (Peters, 2000, p. 5). As institutions operate within structures to achieve optimum productivity, institutionalism seeks to measure how the institutional environment, formalised procedures, culture, and social and historical milieus influence the choices and productivity of actors and institutions generally. The theory employs three analytical pillars:

The regulative pillar: codified rules, regulations, and legally-binding regimes

The normative pillar: uncoded values and norms

The cognitive pillar: institutional culture and belief systems of actors

These pillars assess how institutional frameworks animate actor behaviour and determine institutional performance and image. The application of institutionalism to examine the role and capacity of the Ghana Police Service within Ghana's peace architecture is particularly significant. It provides a framework for measuring how regulatory, normative, and cognitive variables shape the work of police personnel and, more importantly, for assessing the institutional performance of the Ghana Police Service as a whole.

2.1.2 Adaptive Structuration Theory

The second theory utilised in this study is adaptive structuration theory (AST), which examines the extent to which technological applications are successfully integrated and how adaptability in institutional activities enhances productivity. Propounded by Poole and DeSanctis (1990), AST "addresses issues of human behaviour in the context of technology based on social structure". The theory rests on three critical pillars of technological usage:

The extent to which institutional or organisational structures are receptive and adaptable to technology

The extent to which technology collaborates with existing structures

The extent to which technology advances or enhances the functionality of society or social structures (DeSanctis & Poole, 1990).

The application of AST to this study is significant because the theory helps to "address issues of group interaction with technology as the basis of human activity" (Poole & DeSanctis, 1990). It enables measurement of the extent to which technology has been integrated into the work of the Ghana Police Service to build robust logical resources, ensuring effective policing in contemporary Ghana. The theories provide an analytical framework that addresses both the institutional and technological dimensions of police capacity within Ghana's peace architecture.



2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Concept of Peace

Societies fundamentally require peace. Peace promotes individual well-being and establishes solid foundations for progress and prosperity. Essentially, societies need peace because it constitutes an integral component of normal social life. Without peace, societies and individuals may drift into a state of chaos tantamount to the Hobbesian state of nature, in which human life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Without peace, as in the Hobbesian state of nature, "humans are in perpetual danger from each other and are incapable of living in harmony" (Gingell et al., 2000, p. 45). The term "peace" invites multiple interpretations. Galtung (1967) provides three conceptualisations of peace:

First, he refers to stability or equilibrium as the traditional conceptual meaning of peace. This conceptualisation carries both individual and social connotations, encompassing "internal states of a human being, the person who is at peace with himself. It also covers the 'law and order' concept ... the idea of a predictable social order even if this order is brought about by means of force and the threat of force" (Galtung, 1967, p. 12). Second, Galtung's (1967) conceptualisation is negative peace: "the idea of peace as the absence of organised collective violence ... violence between major human groups, particularly nations, but also between classes and between racial and ethnic groups because of the magnitude internal wars can have" (Galtung, 1967, p. 12). However, contextualising peace merely as the absence of war presents conceptual problems. According to Einstein, as quoted in Vesilind (2005, p. 43), "peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order – in short of government." Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr. maintains that peace cannot be reduced to the absence of violence because "true peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice" (Coretta, 2008, p. 83). Furthermore, the Dalai Lama refutes the absence-of-war framework, stating that "peace, in the sense of the absence of war is of little value ... peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free" (Irwin, 1995, p. 16).

Third, Galtung's (1967) conceptualisation is positive peace: peace achieved through mutual "cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence" (Galtung, 1967, p. 12). From these conceptualisations, peace connotes tranquillity, harmony between people, and cooperation among individuals, groups, and nations with different interests and viewpoints. In other words, peace encompasses not only "the absence of violent conflict and the presence of respect and understanding between people and communities" (Mustafa et al., 2023, p. 853) but also "negotiation, compromise, and cooperation among groups with different interests and viewpoints" (Mustafa et al., 2023, p. 853). Whatever the conceptualisation, it is axiomatic that peace hinges on several pillars, known as the structures of peace. This conceptual framework, used by the Global Peace Index (GPI) to measure the state of peace in nations, identifies the factors that create peace in societies. There is also a dimension in which peace encompasses peacebuilding. Conceptualising peace within the peacebuilding framework refers to the conditions, measures, and processes undertaken to establish congenial peace. Peacebuilding connotes all measures undertaken to prevent conflict, resolve conflicts, and consolidate peace in post-conflict spaces. According to Boutros-Ghali (1992, p. 33), "the concept of peacebuilding as the construction of a new environment should be viewed as the counterpart of democracy, which seeks to prevent the breakdown of peaceful conditions."

2.2.2 Police Professionalism and Peace

Police professionalism has received substantial scholarly attention. Schneider (2009, p. 24) defines police professionalism as "the increasing formalisation of police work and the accompanying rise in public acceptance of the police." Scholars have employed various assessable variables in measuring police professionalism. Some identify a direct correlation between education and police professionalism, arguing that higher education enhances police professionalism, while lower education diminishes it (Loftus & Price, 2016; Shernock, 1992). According to Rydberg and Terrill (2010), police unprofessionalism, epitomised in excessive force use when dealing with unarmed civilians or suspects, reflects the educational level of police personnel. Other scholars posit a positive relationship between police culture and professionalism, arguing that the police service possesses its own occupational culture that shapes the attitudes and behaviours of personnel, a contagious culture with indelible traits that can corrupt personnel and foster unprofessionalism (Paoline, 2003; Paoline & Terrill, 2014; Manning, 2008).

The impact of training structures on police performance in maintaining security and order has also received attention. Scholars argue that the training regime for police recruits is critical to police performance (Stare & Klun, 2008; Lino, 2004). The quality of police function execution depends significantly on in-service training (Lino, 2004). Adequate professional training not only equips police personnel with the requisite investigative, law-related, and crime-fighting skills but also provides critical thinking capabilities, drawn from institutional repositories, to make apt, circumstantially appropriate decisions that enhance professionalism. In essence, the quality of police work reflects the quality of aggregate training; high-quality training promotes professionalism while low-standard training breeds unprofessionalism (Modise, 2017).

Studies on policing have also addressed police capacity. Some scholars argue that police capacity is a function of technology – high technological advancement improves police capacity, while low or absent technological

advancement erodes it (Bryne & Marx, 2011; Tombull & Cakar, 2015). Given technology's pivotal role in societal progress, its place in security and law enforcement cannot be ignored. Any objective assessment of police capacity in discharging functions effectively must necessarily account for the technological empowerment of the police service (Tombull & Cakar, 2015; Bryne & Marx, 2011). Computerised devices and cameras, for instance, play critical roles in modern crime combat. "Body-worn cameras can help improve the high-quality public service expected of police officers and promote the perceived legitimacy and sense of procedural justice that communities have about their police departments ... body-worn cameras can increase accountability" (Miller, Toliver, & Police Executive Research Forum, 2014, p. v). Furthermore, "recent innovations and implementations which increase the efficiency and effectiveness of policing include network analysis" (Tombull & Cakar, 2015, p. 285). These technologies encompass "GIS, crime mapping, biometrics, fingerprints, DNA research, facial recognition, speech recognition, social media policing, shotspotter detection system, and CCTV" (Tombull & Cakar, 2015, p. 285). It is widely acknowledged that new technologies "have been developed to prevent crime and to improve the performance of the police" (Bryne & Marx, 2011, p. 17). The application of these technological innovations has demonstrably improved police function execution (Bryne & Marx, 2011).

Other studies, particularly in Africa, have established links between police capacity and the retooling of the police service, arguing that logistical challenges constitute the bane of police incapacity in African states, though political interference cannot be discounted (Downie, 2013). The experience factor has also received scholarly attention. Paoline and Terrill (2007) argue that there is no positive correlation between education and police professionalism, suggesting instead that police professionalism is dichotomously related to education level. Rather, police professionalism is acquired through long years of service experience (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). Thus, measuring police professionalism in terms of function execution should necessarily account for years of experience rather than merely educational levels.

2.2.3 Ghana's Peace and Security Architecture

Ghana has historically been referenced as "the oasis of peace" (United Nations Development Program [UNDP] Ghana, 2022, p. 1). The 2021 Global Peace Index (GPI) ranked Ghana as the 38th most peaceful country globally and second in Africa after Mauritius. However, subsequent rankings indicate Ghana's gradual decline from this peaceful status. In 2022 and 2023, Ghana dropped to the 40th and 51st positions, respectively (UNDP Ghana, 2022). Despite this decline, Ghana remained among the world's most peaceful countries and maintained its position as the second most peaceful country in Africa. This retrogressive trend not only challenges Ghana's reputation as an oasis of peace but also necessitates a critical evaluation of Ghana's peace architecture.

Ghana's peace architecture rests on legal and institutional frameworks (UNDP Ghana, 2022). The 1992 Constitution contains provisions specifying mechanisms for maintaining peace, preventing and resolving conflicts, and managing conflicts. Additionally, the Constitution outlines the legal and institutional frameworks of Ghana's peace architecture. The Constitution established the judicial system to ensure peace through the administration of justice, and the legislature with powers to ensure peace through legislation and oversight of the executive. Key ingredients for peace and human rights are enshrined in Chapter Five of the Constitution.

The National Peace Council (NPC) was constituted following consultations with all stakeholders, including political associations, to raise awareness about the use of non-violent strategies in response to conflict through networking, coordination, and campaigning. Given that many issues are often polarised along the political divide, members of the NPC must be seen as people of integrity, high moral standing, and who command respect and authority amongst the citizenry. The NPC was established by the National Peace Act, 2011 (Act 818). This Act also established Regional and District Peace Councils across all regions and districts with mandates to supervise peace.

Below the NPC is the Regional Peace Council (RPC). In consultation with UNDP and the Ministry of the Interior, the West African Network for Peace designed the content and outline of training for RPC members. The importance of the RPC in conflict prevention must be understood in the context of Ghana's national security arrangements. Under the Regional Peace Councils should be the District Peace Councils (DPCs). This level of the architecture has not yet been implemented. The establishment of the DPC is expected to complete the decentralisation of the conflict prevention mechanism, which Ghana urgently needs to sustain its image as a peaceful and stable country.

The National Security and Intelligence Act (ACT 526) of 1996 established the National Security Council, among other bodies. At the national level, the National Security Council is chaired by the President, while at the regional level, the Regional Security Councils (REGSECs) are chaired by the Regional Ministers, whilst the District Security Council (DISECs) is chaired by the District/Municipal Chief Executive. This security apparatus is primarily concerned with the security of the state and disturbances that disrupt law and order. They have been reactive to violent conflicts rather than responding to their early signs. The National Security Council makes decisions regarding most enforcement of the peace, such as imposing a state of emergency and deploying the police and military to suppress violence. The membership of the National Security Council is as follows:

The President

The Vice-President

The Ministers for the time being holding the portfolios of foreign affairs, defence, interior, and finance, and such other Ministers as the President may determine

The Chief of the Defence Staff and two other members of the Armed Forces

The Inspector-General of Police and two other members of the Police Service, one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Police responsible for the Criminal Investigations Department

The Director-General of the Prisons Service

The Director of External Intelligence

The Director of Internal Intelligence

The Director of Defence Intelligence

The Commissioner of Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (now separated to join the Ghana Revenue Authority)

Three persons appointed by the President

Membership of REGSECs and DISECs follows a similar decentralised government department and agency structure.

Other state institutions working to ensure peace include the National Commission for Civic Education, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Houses of Chiefs. With the establishment of the NPC, it is anticipated that there will be a good complement that acts proactively to prevent violence by creating spaces for dialogue and, more importantly, engaging in addressing deep-rooted issues that have often been left unaddressed for decades, thereby providing grounds for inter- and intra-communal feuding and bloodletting. The Ghana Police Service constitutes another key institution mandated to ensure security, law, peace, and order. The Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350) delineates the functions of the Ghana Police Service in Part I: "(1) It shall be the duty of the Police Service to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders, and to maintain public order and the safety of persons and property. (2) Every police officer shall perform such functions as are by law conferred upon a police officer and shall obey all lawful orders and directions in respect of the execution of his office which he may receive from his superiors in the Police Service" (Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350)). These functions establish the Ghana Police Service as a core institution in Ghana's peace architecture, warranting critical evaluation of its capacity and performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper explores the functional role of the Ghana Police Service within Ghana's peace and security architecture. To achieve this objective, the explanatory case study design was employed. This research design was particularly suitable as it enabled the study to interrogate the interplay between the functions of the Ghana Police Service and Ghana's peace architecture. As Kumar (2014, p. 13) observes, the explanatory research design is appropriate for studies that seek to "clarify why and how there is a relationship between two aspects of a situation or phenomenon." Two data components were gathered and combined into a coherent narrative. First, secondary data were collected from documentary sources, including academic journals, books, institutional reports, and policy documents. Second, primary data were collected through the administration of open-ended questionnaires to purposively selected participants. The sample comprised thirty (30) participants, with fifteen (15) drawn from the Ghana Police Service, six (6) from the Greater-Accra Region, three (3) from the Northern Region, three (3) from the Central Region, and three (3) from the Volta Region. The remaining 15 participants were drawn from the public across the same geographical areas: the Greater Accra Region (6), the Northern Region (3), the Central Region (3), and the Volta Region (3). This geographical distribution was intentionally designed to promote diversity of opinions and ensure comprehensive data representation for the study. Data analysis employed thematic analytical techniques, identifying patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from both primary and secondary sources. Triangulation of data sources enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The study findings elucidate the multifaceted, central role of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) within Ghana's national peace architecture. Based on key informant interviews, the results are organised into five primary themes: the GPS's core functions, its collaborative frameworks, and the challenges that impede its optimal effectiveness.

4.1.1 Proactive Crime Prevention Capacity and Internal Security Stabilisation

The GPS's foundational contribution to national stability lies in its proactive, preventative approach to crime and conflict. Informants consistently identified high-visibility policing, strategic patrols, and rapid response as critical mechanisms for deterring crime and preventing localised disputes from escalating into broader security incidents. The



Service's continuous, embedded presence in communities was highlighted as a crucial differentiator from other security actors, who are typically deployed during emergencies. A Senior Police Officer noted:

"Our primary function is prevention. When police visibility increases, crime reduces. In many communities, our patrol presence alone prevents conflicts from escalating" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025). This preventative role was further emphasised by a Security Analyst, who stated, *"The Ghana Police Service is the backbone of internal stability. Unlike the military, which is called in during emergencies, the police are embedded in everyday peace maintenance"* (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025). Another study participant reinforced this, explaining that *"Most communal tensions are detected early through police intelligence before they become violent. That preventive role is critical to Ghana's peace architecture"* (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

Scholarship has extensively examined the training regime of the Ghana Police Service (Mensah & Ayim, 2019; Mensah & Frimpong, 2020; Mensah, 2019; Mensah, 2018). Based on profiling of recruitment processes, demographic characteristics, and training regimes, Mensah (2019) argues that the Ghana Police Service's training regime is unsatisfactory. In their words, "there are some deficiencies that tend to constrain police training. Some of these deficiencies are a lack of modern training facilities, inadequate logistics, inadequate instructors, and a low level of technology, among others". Mensah and Frimpong (2020) further contend that the training regime is one of the morphological factors that impede police efficiency and effectiveness. According to them, "lack of proper equipment/logistics, lack of infrastructure, inadequate number of instructors, lack of motivation of instructors, interference in the recruitment process from top-level management, low level of technology, and poor maintenance culture" collectively conspire to lower police training standards in Ghana (Mensah & Frimpong, 2020, p. 86).

Additionally, in-service workshops can enhance police professionals' skills (Anane-Appiah, 2011), but funding inadequacies and the lack of monetary incentives to encourage further study or participation in workshops have thwarted individual capacity-building efforts. Field data corroborate evidence from extant literature. Thus, the analysis revealed that the Ghana Police Service's current training regime is inadequate. According to participants, police recruits are either rushed through training due to political expediency or the training lacks thorough robustness. As one participant observed:

"The poor police handling of security measures and crime combat in Ghana, in most instances, is picturesque of the inadequate training regime of the service. Newspapers, news portals, and social media networks are awash with the Ghanaian public's perceptions of the inadequacy of police recruits' training in recent times. If the police are trained well in crime combat and crowd control, one would expect that they would apply the skills acquired in the execution of their functions" (Interview with a journalist, Accra, June 17, 2025).

Participants also bemoaned the lack of resources to incentivise individual police personnel to pursue further studies to enhance capacity. All fifteen police participants acknowledged the existence of scholarship packages but noted that human and non-human factors render the scheme unattractive. A police participant enrolled at a university in Accra explained:

"The bureaucratic processes, human factors, and the terms of the scholarship (the bond clause in particular) tend to make the scholarship package unattractive. The result is that many of my colleagues are not able to take advantage of the scholarship package to enhance their capacity. I am a student at one of Ghana's prestigious universities. Although I qualified for the scholarship scheme due to over a decade of service in the Ghana Police Service, I declined to apply for the scholarship for the reasons mentioned above. There are many police students in the University of Ghana, Ghana Communication Technology University, University of Professional Studies, and Ghana Institute of Professional Studies, who are also self-financing their university education. This phenomenon tends to reduce the number of police personnel who enrol in tertiary institutions to enhance their intellectual capacity" (Interview with a police officer in Accra, May 20, 2025).

Consistent with Anane-Appiah's (2011) argument, police participants cited a lack of incentives and funding as key factors hindering efforts to organise regular in-service workshops to keep personnel up to date on modern policing mechanisms. In summary, "all these variables conspire to reduce the institutional capacity and role of the Ghana Police Service to function efficiently to fight the incidences of crime and chaos that erode the peace of the country" (Interview with a police officer in Ho, July 24, 2025). Extant literature has given extensive attention to the anachronistic outlook of the Ghana Police Service. Some scholars argue that the nature, outlook, and capacity of the Ghana Police Service reflect colonial legacies (Aning, 2015; Mbowura, 2020; Boateng & Darko, 2016; Gyamfi, 2012; Tankebe, 2008). Consequently, for the Ghana Police Service to effectively execute its mandate in maintaining law, order, and security, it must practically and psychologically exorcise colonial legacies through robust institutional reforms (Aning, 2015; Mbowura, 2020; Boateng & Darko, 2016; Gyamfi, 2012; Tankebe, 2008).



Empirical field data strongly suggest that the Ghana Police Service continues to retain a colonial outlook and mentality. Some participants believed that the colonial-mindedness of the Ghana Police Service negatively impacts its work architecture. According to one participant, "the use of brute force and lack of political neutrality are some of the nomenclatures inoculated into the service by the colonial regime" (Interview with a civil servant in Tamale, May 18, 2025). Others also acknowledged that while the Ghana Police Service has undergone radical institutional reforms since the colonial era, colonial practices and mentality remain ingrained. As one police participant noted:

"The energetic style of training reminiscent of colonial training methods is still deployed. Though this training method is good, it is overused. On the other hand, little attention is paid to the development of recruits' technical skills. Apart from on-hand technological training in the use of police armaments, little attention is paid to the use of computerized mechanisms to improve the skills of the police in cyber security, data analytics and the use of other technological innovations to improve the capacity of the police to fight crime to maintain law and order in Ghana" (Interview with a police participant, Accra, June 2, 2025).

Thus, the colonial outlook and mindset of the Ghana Police Service constitute key factors inhibiting institutional efficiency. As long as this factor remains unresolved, the Ghana Police Service's maintenance of security, law, and order as an integral part of Ghana's peace architecture will remain problematic and ineffective. In short, as contended by Bukari et al. (2023, p. 3145), the institutional weakness of the "police service is a danger to peace, security and stability in Ghana."

4.1.2 Ensuring Democratic Peace through Electoral Security

Informants unanimously recognised the GPS as the cornerstone of Ghana's internationally acclaimed peaceful democratic transitions. Its role in electoral security, through the protection of polling stations, crowd control, and enforcement of electoral laws, was deemed indispensable. The findings indicate that the services structure, long-term preparation, and professionalism during high-risk election periods are pivotal in preventing the post-election violence observed elsewhere in the region. A police officer stated unequivocally,

"Without the police, election security would collapse. We protect polling stations and ensure political actors comply with electoral laws." A Senior Police Officer elaborated on the operational approach: "Election periods are high-risk. Our preparation starts months ahead with intelligence gathering and stakeholder engagement." A civil society representative further underscored this point, affirming that "The professionalism of the police during elections has helped Ghana avoid widespread post-election violence seen in some countries" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

There exists an ingrained public perception that the Ghana Police Service lacks political neutrality. As Osei-Adubofour (2017, p. 5) argues,

"Ghanaians perceive the police as lacking political impartiality and that this correlates with low public trust and confidence in the police." News portals in Ghana over the past two decades have been inundated with reports of perceived police partiality in political matters, exhibiting a colonial police mentality where police serve as "protectors of government, rather than citizens" (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007, p. 32). This lack of political neutrality "erodes public confidence in the police's mandate to protect citizens as part of measures to combat crime. Undoubtedly, the lack of political neutrality by the police service places barriers in the structure of Ghana's peace architecture for the institution to function effectively in relation to the country's peace agenda" (Interview with a civilian in Ksoa, Central Region, June 18, 2025).

As long as the

"Police work against the rights of the opposition, show overt partiality to the political party in government, or show a perceived posture of lack of political impartiality; it is difficult to guarantee public confidence in the work of the police to ensure law and order" (Interview with a trader in Takoradi, July 31, 2025).

In short,

"The lack of political impartiality creates an inordinate desire of citizens and opposition parties to resort to democratic and undemocratic tendencies (e.g., demonstrations, rioting, political vigilantism, etc.) to fight for their rights, situations which are likely to disturb peace or create the impression that there is no peace in Ghana" (Interview with a civil servant in Tamale, May 18, 2025).

4.1.3 Fostering Grassroots Peace through Community Policing and Conflict Resolution

Beyond law enforcement, the GPS functions as a key mediator and partner in grassroots peacebuilding. Informants highlighted the transformative impact of community policing initiatives, which have shifted public perception of the police from a coercive "force" to a collaborative "service." This paradigm shift has been instrumental in building trust, improving intelligence gathering, and enabling police commanders to intervene effectively in local disputes, such as chieftaincy and land conflicts, before they escalate into violence. A Security Analyst observed,

"Community policing has shifted the police from a force model to a service model. That has strengthened trust and reduced hostility in many areas" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

A Regional Security Council member provided a concrete example, stating,

"Police commanders often intervene in chieftaincy and land disputes before they escalate into violence" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

This collaborative relationship is mutually reinforcing, as a Civil Society Representative explained:

"When communities trust the police, they share intelligence. That cooperation is vital for preventing extremist infiltration and organised crime" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

Agbemabiese (2011) assessed police officer operations in Ghana, arguing that variables such as long working hours, lack of institutional knowledge, and compliance with the Police Act hinder efficiency and effectiveness. Police operations have been characterised by force use (Twumhene, 2022). According to Twumhene (2022, p. x), "incidences of police use of force and reported cases of violence during police-citizens encounters have become a serious matter of concern to every Ghanaian." Mbowura (2012, 2014) provides dimensions of police operations in northern Ghana conflicts, criticising operational laxities and attributing conflict conflagrations and escalations partly to police peace operational inadequacies (Mbowura, 2020, 2014). These apparent operational laxities have contributed to bleak public perceptions of security. According to Akuire (2023),

"Ghanaians' sense of security has deteriorated over the past decade." The analysis results and evidence support the documentary data. That is, all participants acknowledged the presence of police stations in their communities. However, all civilian participants (15) bemoaned police operational measures, citing excessive force in police-civilian encounters, the lack of police visibility in some areas, uncoordinated patrols, delays in responding to calls, and a lack of assistance in addressing security problems encountered. In effect, "the operational measures undertaken by the Ghana Police Service's fight to combat crime to ensure security and enhance peace in Ghana are abysmal" (Interview with a civilian in Kasoa, Central Region, June 18, 2025).

4.1.4 Coordinated Action within the National Security Framework

The findings reveal that the GPS does not operate in isolation but is a central node within Ghana's integrated national security architecture. Informants detailed the Service's critical role in coordinating with the military, intelligence agencies, and regional security councils. This collaborative framework ensures a unified and layered response to threats, in which the police, as the civilian face of security governance, lead day-to-day operations, while military intervention is reserved as a last resort for severe emergencies. A participant during the study described this ecosystem: "Peace architecture in Ghana is not isolated to one institution. The police coordinate with the military and intelligence agencies under the National Security Council." A participant confirmed the operational benefits of this approach, noting that

"Joint operations, especially in counter-terrorism and anti-robbery operations, have strengthened our response capacity." A security analyst summarised the GPS's unique position, stating, "The police are the civilian face of security governance. Their coordination role ensures that military intervention remains a last resort" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

A police officer, during the interview, argued that

".. the Ghana Police Service's leadership in community policing initiatives strengthens the intelligence-gathering process by fostering trust and cooperation between citizens and security agencies, thereby bridging the gap between national security priorities and grassroots realities. This multi-layered coordination framework not only improves rapid response capabilities but also reinforces accountability, as overlapping responsibilities create systems of mutual oversight among security institutions, and the GPS's embeddedness within this collaborative security network underscores its indispensable role in maintaining internal stability while upholding democratic norms and civilian oversight in Ghana's security governance architecture" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

This integrated approach is further institutionalised through formal protocols, joint training exercises, and inter-agency intelligence-sharing mechanisms that enhance operational synergy and reduce bureaucratic fragmentation. Regular coordination meetings under the auspices of the National Security Council Secretariat facilitate strategic alignment, while decentralised structures such as Regional and District Security Councils ensure that responses are context-specific and locally informed.

4.1.5 Persistent Challenges to Functional Effectiveness

Despite its acknowledged centrality to peace, informants identified several structural and operational challenges that constrain the GPS's full potential. Key among these are resource constraints, particularly acute during large-scale events such as national elections; public trust deficits stemming from perceptions of political interference; and training gaps in specialised areas such as crowd control and human rights compliance, which can negatively affect the Service's

public image. A key informant noted logistical constraints, stating, "Logistical limitations, especially during nationwide elections, stretch police capacity.

"A participant highlighted the issue of public perception, noting that "Public perception of political influence sometimes undermines trust in police neutrality." Finally, a security analyst identified a critical area for development: "Training gaps in crowd control and human rights compliance occasionally affect how the police are perceived" (Interview with a Police Officer, Accra, June 17, 2025).

Other studies have examined public confidence and trust in the Ghana Police Service in relation to its mandate, generally underscoring low public confidence due to various factors (Mbowura, 2020; Tankebe, 2012). One key factor eroding police capacity is logistical challenges (Addae et al., 2020; Anang et al., 2023). It is public knowledge that the Ghana Police Service faces challenges such as "inadequate/lack of logistics (such as vehicles, bulletproof vests, reflectors, arms, and ammunition), inadequate personnel ... that hamper the efforts of the Ghana Police Service in carrying out their mandate effectively. These challenges further affected the morale of personnel of the Police Service, which in turn negatively influenced their motivation to effectively carry out their duties (i.e., crime control and prevention)" (Anang et al., 2023, p. 1).

The Ghanaian media landscape is replete with reports of logistical challenges nationwide. For instance, in 2018, it was reported that police in the Eastern Region transported suspects to courtrooms in pickups; in one case, suspects managed to jump from a pickup while being transported to the Kaupe Mampong Magistrate Court for trial (Allotey, 2018). There were also instances of inadequate and malfunctioning rifles conspiring to thwart crime control and prevention efforts (Allotey, 2018). All 15 police participants interviewed unanimously acknowledged confronting logistical challenges that hamper their efforts to combat crime. A sergeant speaking anonymously stated:

"Logistical resources play a key role in the police service's fight to control and prevent crime to ensure peace in Ghana. Some Police Stations in Ghana do not even have patrol vehicles, and in some cases, there is a lack of funds to fuel them. At least, it is ideal that all regional police headquarters are equipped with helicopters, with each police division across the country equipped with drones to enable the police to effectively execute their duties in crime control and prevention to create a conducive, peaceful environment in Ghana" (Interview with a Police Inspector, Cape Coast, July 20, 2025).



Plate 1

Police Carrying Suspects in a Pickup

Source: Citi News Room (<https://citinewsroom.com/2018/06/e-r-police-unhappy-over-lack-of-equipment>)

Technological devices also constitute key logistical resources needed by the police in contemporary crime control and prevention. Mensah and Ennin (2019) identified a lack of technological resources as a key factor in the Ghana Police Service's inefficiencies. While the extant literature offers limited information on the Ghana Police Service's digitalisation of crime-fighting, media publications provide glimpses into the technological factors. Reporting in Graphic Online, Salia (2019) noted that the Ghana Police Service not only digitalised its information systems but also deployed 1,000 cameras across Ghana in 2019 as part of technology-driven crime-fighting measures. Similar reports indicate the digitalisation of crime-fighting measures. For instance, the Motor Transport and Traffic Directorate (MTTD) installed approximately 3,000 intelligent video surveillance cameras at strategic locations in Accra in 2021 to crack down on traffic offenses (Odame, 2021). In another development, the Ghana Police Service activated its surveillance centre in 2023 as part of measures to address traffic offenses (Akuire, 2023).

Field data indicate that digitalisation of the Ghana Police Service is progressing substantially. Twenty-eight participants (84%) claimed that the deployment of technological devices is not only rebranding the service but also positioning it to fight and prevent crime effectively. This proposition aligns with AST, which holds that integrating technological applications and fostering adaptability in institutional activities ensures higher productivity. However, it should be noted that digitalisation remains concentrated in urban centres, with little attention to rural and peri-urban areas. Participants' appreciation of technological integration in crime fighting is significant, supporting Agbozo's (2017, p. 365) view that e-policing, through the "integration of big data and data mining," is crucial to the Ghana Police Service's crime combat efforts.



Plate 2

Police Officer with Camera Equipment

Source: Citi News Room (<https://citinewsroom.com/2018/06/e-r-police-unhappy-over-lack-of-equipment>)

4.2 Discussion

This section employs data from the existing literature and field data to analyse the capacity of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) to combat crime as part of peace maintenance measures. The analysis is organised around the five thematic areas that emerged from the findings, providing a comprehensive discussion of the GPS's role within Ghana's peace architecture.

4.2.1 Proactive Crime Prevention and Internal Security Stabilisation

The findings established that the GPS's foundational contribution to national stability lies in its proactive, preventative approach to crime and conflict, with high-visibility policing, strategic patrols, and rapid response serving as critical deterrents. This finding aligns with extant scholarship on police effectiveness, which underscores that visible policing and community embeddedness are essential for preventing the escalation of localised disputes (Tankebe, 2008). The notion that police presence alone can deter crime is well documented in the criminological literature, supporting participants' assertions that visibility reduces criminal activity.

Furthermore, the finding that the GPS serves as the "backbone of internal stability," distinct from the military's emergency-focused role, resonates with the theoretical framework of institutionalism employed in this study. Institutional theory posits that distinct institutions perform specialised functions within a broader system (Peters, 2000). The GPS's continuous, embedded presence in communities represents an institutional function that other security actors are structurally ill-equipped to perform. This differentiation is crucial for understanding how Ghana's peace architecture operates, with the police serving as the primary, everyday institution for maintaining order. The findings also revealed that community-level intelligence gathering enables early detection of tensions before they escalate into violence. This proactive intelligence function is consistent with the adaptive structuration theory (AST) framework, which emphasises how institutions adapt their structures and processes to respond to emerging threats (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). The GPS's ability to detect communal tensions early reflects an adaptive capacity that strengthens Ghana's overall peace architecture. However, as subsequent discussions will show, this capacity is constrained by structural limitations that require sustained institutional attention.

4.2.2 Ensuring Democratic Peace through Electoral Security

The findings identified the GPS as the cornerstone of Ghana's peaceful democratic transitions, with electoral security emerging as a critical function that has contributed to the country's reputation for democratic stability. This finding is strongly supported by existing literature, which has documented the GPS's role in safeguarding elections and preventing the post-election violence that has afflicted other West African nations (Odame, 2021). The participants'

emphasis on structured, long-term preparation, including intelligence gathering and stakeholder engagement months before elections, reflects institutional maturity that has evolved over successive electoral cycles.

The significance of this finding extends beyond mere operational capability. Electoral security represents a critical intersection between the GPS's functions and the state's broader peace architecture. Democratic peace, as conceptualised in peace studies, requires not only the absence of electoral violence but also public confidence in the impartiality of security institutions during political transitions (Galtung, 1967). The participants' assertion that police professionalism during elections has helped Ghana avoid widespread post-election violence underscores the institution's centrality to democratic consolidation. However, the finding must be contextualised in light of the challenges identified elsewhere in the study. While the GPS has demonstrated commendable capacity in electoral security, the resource constraints and public trust deficits discussed in subsequent sections pose potential risks to future electoral stability. The Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) framework is particularly relevant here, as it highlights the need for institutions to adapt their structures to meet evolving challenges continuously. Sustaining electoral security will require not only maintaining current capacities but also addressing the structural vulnerabilities that threaten long-term institutional effectiveness.

4.2.3 Fostering Grassroots Peace through Community Policing and Conflict Resolution

The findings revealed that the GPS functions beyond law enforcement as a key mediator and partner in grassroots peacebuilding, with community policing initiatives transforming public perception from a coercive "force" to a collaborative "service." This finding aligns with extensive scholarship on community policing, which shows that trust-based relationships between police and communities enhance intelligence gathering, improve crime-prevention outcomes, and reduce public hostility (Boateng & Darko, 2016; Tankebe, 2008). The participants' emphasis on police commanders intervening in chieftaincy and land disputes before they escalate into violence illustrates the preventative dimension of this approach.

The significance of this finding lies in its demonstration of how the GPS contributes to peace architecture at the micro-level. While peace architecture is often conceptualised in terms of formal institutions and high-level structures (Tankebe, 2008), the findings show that grassroots engagement by police personnel constitutes an equally critical component. The collaborative relationship described by participants, where community trust facilitates intelligence sharing to prevent extremist infiltration and organised crime, embodies the principles of adaptive structuration, in which institutional practices evolve through interaction with community structures. Nevertheless, the findings must be interpreted in light of the challenges identified in the literature. While community policing has made significant strides, scholarship has noted that implementation remains uneven across regions, and the model's effectiveness depends heavily on sustained resource allocation and institutional commitment (Mensah & Frimpong, 2020). The training gaps identified later in this discussion, particularly in human rights compliance and crowd control, could undermine the trust-building achievements of community policing if not adequately addressed.

4.2.4 Coordinated Action within the National Security Framework

The findings established that the GPS operates as a central node within Ghana's integrated national security architecture, coordinating with the military, intelligence agencies, and regional security councils to ensure unified, layered responses to threats. This finding is consistent with the institutionalist theoretical framework, which emphasises the role of institutional coordination and clear role differentiation in systemic effectiveness (Peters, 2000). The participants' description of the police as the "civilian face of security governance," with military intervention reserved as a last resort, reflects a mature division of labour that distinguishes Ghana's security architecture from countries where security sector roles are blurred or contested. This coordinated approach has significant implications for understanding peace architecture in Ghana. The integration of multiple security institutions under the National Security Council, with the GPS leading day-to-day operations, creates a layered response system that balances civilian oversight with emergency capacity. The participants' reference to joint operations in counter-terrorism and anti-robbery operations illustrates the practical benefits of this collaborative framework. As AST suggests, institutions that develop adaptive coordination mechanisms are better positioned to respond to complex, multifaceted threats (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994).

However, the effectiveness of this coordination framework depends on each participating institution's capacity. While the findings highlight successful collaboration, subsequent discussions of resource constraints and training gaps within the GPS raise questions about whether the institution is adequately equipped to fulfil its central coordinating role. The layered response system described by participants is only as strong as its weakest link; therefore, addressing the GPS's structural challenges is essential for maintaining the integrity of the broader security architecture.

4.2.5 Persistent Challenges to Functional Effectiveness

The findings identified three interrelated challenges constraining the GPS's effectiveness: resource constraints, particularly acute during large-scale events; public trust deficits stemming from perceptions of political interference;

and training gaps in specialised areas such as crowd control and human rights compliance. These findings are well supported by the existing literature and warrant detailed analysis. The logistical challenges identified in the findings, including inadequate patrol vehicles, fuel shortages, and insufficient technological resources, align with extensive scholarship documenting the resource limitations of the Ghana Police Service (Addae et al., 2020; Anang et al., 2023). The participants' call for helicopters at regional headquarters and drones at divisional levels reflects awareness of contemporary policing technologies. However, as the discussion of digitalisation in Section 4.2.3 noted, technological integration remains concentrated in urban centres, leaving rural and peri-urban areas underserved. This spatial disparity in resource allocation has implications for peace architecture, as it creates differential capacity to maintain order across regions. The perception of political interference identified in the findings resonates with scholarship documenting low public confidence in police neutrality (Osei-Adubofour, 2017; Tankebe, 2008; Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007). As participants noted, when citizens perceive the police as lacking impartiality, there is an increased likelihood of resorting to demonstrations, rioting, and political vigilantism, actions that disturb peace and create the impression of instability. This finding underscores the theoretical proposition that institutional legitimacy is foundational to effective peace maintenance. Without public trust, even well-resourced police institutions struggle to maintain order without resorting to coercive measures that further erode legitimacy.

The inadequacies in police training identified in the findings are extensively documented in scholarship, which has highlighted deficiencies in training facilities, logistics, instructor capacity, and technology integration (Mensah & Ennin, 2019; Mensah & Frimpong, 2020). The participants' observation that recruits are either rushed through training due to political expediency or lack thorough robustness raises concerns about the GPS's long-term institutional capacity. Furthermore, the finding that police personnel often self-finance university education due to unattractive scholarship packages represents a systemic failure in professional development that has cumulative effects on institutional capacity. As the participants noted, the lack of regular in-service workshops and the absence of monetary incentives for further study collectively conspire to reduce the GPS's capacity to function efficiently in maintaining peace.

The five thematic areas discussed above demonstrate that the Ghana Police Service occupies a central and multifaceted role within the country's peace architecture. The findings and discussion reveal an institution that contributes to peace through proactive crime prevention, electoral security, grassroots community engagement, and coordinated action within the national security framework. However, persistent resource constraints, public trust deficits, and training gaps threaten to undermine these contributions. As the institutionalist framework suggests, sustained political will, adequate resource allocation, and commitment from all stakeholders are necessary to enhance the GPS's institutional capacity to effectively execute its mandate within Ghana's peace architecture.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This paper analysed the Ghana Police Service's role within Ghana's peace architecture, establishing the critical importance of crime control and prevention functions in maintaining peace, security, and order. The findings elucidate the multifaceted and central role of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) within the national peace architecture while revealing significant capacity constraints that impede optimal effectiveness. The GPS's foundational contribution to national stability lies in its proactive, preventative approach to crime and conflict. High-visibility policing, strategic patrols, and rapid response serve as critical mechanisms for deterring crime and preventing localised disputes from escalating into broader security incidents. The Service's continuous community presence distinguishes it from other security actors typically deployed during emergencies. As one Senior Police Officer noted: "Our primary function is prevention. When police visibility increases, crime reduces. In many communities, our patrol presence alone prevents conflicts from escalating."

The GPS is unanimously recognised as the cornerstone of Ghana's internationally acclaimed peaceful democratic transitions. Its role in electoral security through the protection of polling stations, crowd control, and the enforcement of electoral laws is indispensable. The Service's structured, long-term preparation and professionalism during high-risk election periods are pivotal in preventing post-election violence observed elsewhere in the region. Beyond law enforcement, the GPS functions as a key mediator and partner in grassroots peacebuilding. Community policing initiatives have transformed public perception from a coercive "force" to a collaborative "service." This paradigm shift has been instrumental in building trust, improving intelligence gathering, and enabling effective intervention in local disputes such as chieftaincy and land conflicts. The findings reveal that the GPS does not operate in isolation but serves as a central node within Ghana's integrated national security architecture, coordinating with military, intelligence agencies, and regional security councils to ensure unified, layered responses to threats.

However, despite its acknowledged centrality to peace, the GPS faces significant structural and operational challenges: resource constraints, particularly acute during large-scale events; public trust deficits stemming from perceptions of political interference; and training gaps in specialised areas such as crowd control and human rights

compliance. These challenges collectively undermine the institution's capacity to fully realise its potential within Ghana's peace architecture. The paper concludes that the GPS needs sustained political will, adequate resource allocation, and commitment from all stakeholders to significantly enhance its institutional capacity to effectively execute its mandate within Ghana's peace architecture. This would not only improve crime control and prevention but also strengthen public trust, consolidate democratic governance, and ensure Ghana's return to its position as an oasis of peace and security in Africa and globally.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the Ghana Police Service within the national peace architecture: First, regarding resource allocation, the government must demonstrate sustained political will by committing to a multi-year, depoliticised funding framework specifically dedicated to police logistics and infrastructure. Such a framework should prioritise the equitable distribution of patrol vehicles, modern communication equipment, and surveillance technology, including drones and closed-circuit television systems across all regions, with deliberate attention to rural and peri-urban areas that have historically been underserved. Furthermore, a dedicated budget line for fuel, vehicle maintenance, and rapid-response equipment during large-scale events such as national elections is essential to prevent the operational strain that currently compromises service delivery during critical periods. Second, to rebuild public trust and address perceptions of political interference, it is imperative to establish independent oversight mechanisms that enhance police accountability and impartiality. This could take the form of a strengthened Police Council with enhanced civilian representation, empowered to investigate complaints of political influence, misconduct, and excessive use of force. Complementing this, the enactment of clear legislative provisions that insulate police operational decisions from partisan political pressures would reinforce the service's neutrality, a cornerstone of its legitimacy. Public education campaigns that transparently communicate police reforms and accountability outcomes can also help bridge the trust deficit identified in the study.

Third, the GPS training regime requires fundamental reform to align with contemporary policing demands. The current deficiencies, such as rushed recruit training, outdated methods, and limited opportunities for continuous professional development, must be addressed by establishing a modern Police Training Academy equipped with simulation facilities, human rights curricula, and specialised modules in crowd control, conflict mediation, and cyber security. In-service training should be institutionalised, with regular workshops and incentives for personnel to pursue higher education without the bureaucratic and financial barriers that currently discourage uptake. The scholarship scheme for police personnel should be reviewed to remove unattractive bond clauses and ensure that capacity-building is accessible and adequately funded. Fourth, while the GPS has demonstrated effective coordination with military and intelligence agencies, formalising these collaborative frameworks through standard operating procedures and joint training exercises would further strengthen the integrated national security architecture. Such formalisation should clarify the roles and escalation protocols between the police and other security actors, ensuring that the police remain the primary civilian-facing institution while enabling seamless support from other agencies when needed. This aligns with the adaptive structuration principle, which holds that clear structures enhance institutional responsiveness.

The implementation of these policy recommendations requires sustained political will, multi-stakeholder commitment, and adequate resource allocation. When effectively executed, these measures would significantly enhance the institutional capacity of the Ghana Police Service to execute its mandate within Ghana's peace architecture, thereby strengthening public trust, consolidating democratic governance, and ensuring Ghana's return to its position as an oasis of peace and security in Africa.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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