

Variations in Police Performance in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Domestic Policing in Ghana

Festus Aubyn

Abstract

The Ghana Police Service is constantly criticised by the Ghanaian public for poor performance and an inability to deal effectively with rising crime rates. Media reports and scholarly research have corroborated these criticisms, citing instances of police brutality, corruption, negligence, ineffectiveness and complicity in crimes. However, with few exceptions, the same police are widely applauded in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their professionalism, outstanding performance, and contributions to restoring peace and the rule of law. This raises the question of why the police's performance at home differs from its performance in peacekeeping contexts. This article analyses the factors that underpin the perceived variations in police performance at home and internationally. Based on in-depth interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders and the application of assemblage theory to the empirical evidence gathered, it argues that perceived variations in performance have nothing to do with the technical competencies and knowledge of police personnel. Rather, this discrepancy can be explained by factors including: the effects of the colonial legacy on the police; different mandates/tasks in mission and in Ghana; distinct socio-cultural and political dynamics that influence policing; different legal frameworks and principles that govern domestic and international policing; limited availability of human and logistical resources and funding for domestic policing; and different methods for dealing with indiscipline and corruption.

Keywords: policing, UN peacekeeping, assemblage theory, Ghana

Résumé

La Police Nationale du Ghana est constamment critiquée par le public ghanéen pour ses piètres performances et son incapacité à lutter efficacement contre la hausse de la criminalité. Les rapports des médias et les recherches universitaires ont corroboré ces critiques, citant des cas de brutalité policière, de corruption, de négligence, d'inefficacité et de complicité dans les crimes. Cependant, à quelques exceptions près, ces mêmes policiers sont largement applaudis dans les opérations de maintien de la paix des Nations Unies pour leur professionnalisme, leurs performances exceptionnelles et leur contribution au rétablissement de la paix et de l'État de droit. Ainsi, nous nous demandons pourquoi les performances de ladite police dans son pays diffèrent de celles qu'elle obtient dans cadre de maintien de la paix. Cet article analyse les facteurs qui sous-tendent les variations perçues dans les performances de la police aux niveaux national et international. Sur la base d'entretiens approfondis menés avec les parties prenantes concernées et de l'application de la théorie des assemblages aux preuves empiriques recueillies, l'article soutient que les variations perçues dans les performances n'ont rien à voir avec les compétences techniques et les connaissances des policiers. Cet écart s'explique plutôt par des facteurs tels que : les effets de l'héritage colonial sur la police ; les différents mandats/tâches en mission et au Ghana ; les dynamiques socioculturelles et politiques distinctes qui influencent le maintien de l'ordre ; les différents cadres et principes juridiques qui régissent le maintien de l'ordre aux niveaux national et international ; la disponibilité limitée des ressources humaines et logistiques et des fonds pour le maintien de l'ordre au niveau national ; et les différentes méthodes pour traiter l'indiscipline et la corruption.

Mots-clés: maintien de l'ordre, maintien de la paix de l'ONU, théorie de l'assemblage, Ghana.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/contjas.v9i1.2>

Festus Aubyn (festus.aubyn@gmail.com) is the Regional Coordinator of Research and Capacity Building at the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). He leads the design, development, and implementation of all WANEP research activities and capacity building programmes. Before joining WANEP in November 2020, he worked with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) as a Senior Research Fellow for almost a decade. He is also currently an adjunct lecturer at the KAIPTC, Webster University Ghana and the Ghana Armed Forces Staff and Command College, and has several scholarly publications to his credit. Aubyn's research and teaching focuses on the dynamics of conflict and peace in Africa, peace operations, terrorism, violent extremism, and emerging security threat

Introduction¹

This paper interrogates the perceived variations in police performance in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations and domestic policing in Ghana. The Ghana Police Service (GPS) is a crucial pillar in maintaining Ghana's stability. The country's reputation as a peaceful bastion of democracy on the African continent can be partly attributed to the significant role the police play together with other security actors. However, over the past decades, the effectiveness of the GPS has come under increasing public scrutiny. Most Ghanaians believe the police are unprofessional and corrupt (Atuguba, 2007), and various research and commissions of inquiry reports have corroborated this opinion. Boateng and Darko (2016), for instance, describe the police as corrupt, brutal, unaccountable, repressive and poorly performing. Tankebe (2008b) highlights the GPS's abusive behaviour and use of repressive methods to elicit compliance of citizens. The Afrobarometer results in 2017 mention the GPS as the most corrupt state institution in Ghana (Afrobarometer, 2017). Additionally, a report by Transparency International and U4 authored by Kaunain (2018) cites several reported cases of police brutality, corruption, negligence and impunity across the county.

In contrast, the same police are widely applauded abroad in UN peace operations for their performance and commitment to their duties. With few exceptions, Aning and Aubyn (2013) point out that Ghanaian police personnel who served in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Haiti, Cambodia and East Timor received commendations from the host states and medals from the UN for their high sense of professionalism, outstanding performance, and contributions to restoring peace, the rule of law and consolidating state authority. They stand out for their good report writing, communication, training facilitation and mentorship skills, hospitality, empathy, and ability to interact effectively with the local population to elicit vital information for the missions under which they serve (Aubyn et al, 2015). Indeed, in the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the African Union–UN mission in Darfur (UNAMID), their commitment earned them influential leadership and mid-level positions (Aning & Aubyn, 2013).

This paper unpacks the reasons behind this contradiction between police performance at in Ghana and in mission and, more significantly, interrogates what empirical evidence there is to explain it. It argues that the perceived variation in performance has nothing to do with the technical competencies of police personnel. Rather, it can be explained by the different environments in which the police work; the different mandates/tasks at home and internationally; the varied legal regimes; historical factors; requisite resources that inform and stimulate police performance; and the multiple heterogenous entities such as the government, politicians, traditional authorities, the UN, and the local population that the police interact, cooperate, and sometimes compete with to perform their functions in.

To interrogate these factors systematically, the paper first examines the assemblage concept, and how it can help us to understand why police officers operate differently in peace operations and at the domestic level. Next, the paper examines domestic and international functions of policing, respectively, before analysing the perceived variations in police performance. The paper concludes by discussing the pitfalls of comparing police performance at home and abroad. The paper is based on in-depth interviews conducted with police personnel, former peacekeepers, citizens and experts in Accra, Tamale, Yendi and Tolon in Ghana between February and October 2019. It also draws on primary data gathered through telephone interviews with police officers serving in UN missions in Haiti, Sudan and South Sudan.

The security assemblage

The concept of assemblage provides a useful lens through which to explore perceived variations in police performance in Ghana and peacekeeping missions. As an ontological concept, originally developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), it provides a framework for understanding social complexity by emphasising fluidity, exchangeability, and multiple functionalities of entities and their connectivities. It opposes the organismic metaphor of entities, which are characterised by dependent relations between their component parts and rather focuses on how the heterogeneity of component parts are not stable and fixed, as they can be displaced and replaced within and among other entities through relations of exteriority (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009). These deliberations can help to capture how police officers depart from local networks within which they are enmeshed and produce different effects in new relational networks abroad.

¹ This article is an output from the research programme Domestic Security Implications of Peacekeeping in Ghana (D-SIP), funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supported by the Danish Fellowship Centre.

According to Acuto and Curtis (2014), there is no unified or single assemblage theory, because the concept of assemblages is used from diverse and dispersed perspectives within different disciplines and scholarly traditions. In security studies, the notion of assemblages helps to explain how multiple social entities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutional expressions, practices and forms of security governance (Dupont, 2004). This makes security assemblages a suitable framework for exploring the complexification of policing in Ghana and abroad, where a plurality of actors with different forms of power and resources at their disposal interact across a spectrum of societal configurations to produce effects and transformation in relation to security governance (see Albrecht, 2022a).

Two central features of the assemblage are useful in the context of this paper. The first feature is the relations of interiority versus exteriority. Relations of interiority refer to components in a security assemblage that have no independent existence apart from their relation to each other. However, DeLanda (2006) argues that while components do interact with one another, they also have an existence that is, in principle, independent of these interactions. This is the idea of relations of exteriority which refers to how the components of a security assemblage may be detached and plugged into a different assemblage in which their interactions are different (DeLanda, 2006).

The relations of exteriority can be seen clearly in the case of policing in Ghana and UN missions, respectively. Policing in Ghana is constituted by a security assemblage that brings together the police and numerous other entities, including the government, politicians, and traditional and religious authorities in a contingent whole. Police performance is informed by the complex interactions between these entities. For example, the police depend on the government to provide the required resources for them to work effectively. At the same time, the government often interferes in police operations in a way that affects the efficient discharge of the GPS' s constitutionally mandated duties. Similarly, the police rely on support and information from citizens and the traditional authorities in the communities to perform their functions. However, like the government, traditional authorities regularly interfere in police work, which affects the GPS' s professionalism and performance. Interaction between the GPS and other entities is therefore not always smooth, as relations are at times characterised by competition, differences and contestation.

This is not the case in the peacekeeping environment. Here, the entities that make up the security assemblage are different: the police interact with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations and host state officials and citizens in the performance of their work. When the GPS is detached from the domestic security assemblage, it goes through a process of deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation. Deterritorialisation is the process by which an ensemble of relationships, called a territory, loses its current organisation and context. The altered relationships then reconstitute a new territory by becoming reterritorialised, causing an entirely new assemblage to emerge. In this sense, the peacekeeping context becomes the space for deterritorialisation where the performance of the police is transformed due to its encounter with new relationships, interactions, values and norms. In other words, peacekeeping is the entrance to a new territory that leads to new forms of policing, practices and forms of authority.

Another useful feature of the concept, illustrating variations in police performance, is the material relations and elements that make up the security assemblage. As argued by Abrahamsen and Williams (2009), the notion of an assemblage does not only capture the agency of human actors, but also the various technologies, ideas, norms and values that inform and stimulate actors and practices. The material notion of security assemblages allows us to make visible the specificity of the normative frameworks and the resources available to the GPS to perform its functions in Ghana and peacekeeping missions. For example, the normative frameworks that govern police work in peacekeeping are UN policies and international legal standards that are rarely manipulated for political or personal gain due to the strict enforcement and strong sanction regime that punishes violations. In contrast, the constitutional arrangement that governs the police in Ghana makes it easy for political and social actors to interfere with the work of the GPS. Additionally, unlike the peacekeeping context, the resources for police work at the domestic level are very limited, which influences how the GPS can perform its functions.

The domestic context of policing in Ghana

The GPS is a single cohesive unit with a centralised organisational structure at the national level and affiliates at the regional, district, divisional and community levels. It was established under Article 190 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. However, its origin can be traced to the colonial period in the Gold Coast (Ghana's name before independence in 1957). The British colonial authorities led by Captain George MacLean introduced formal policing comprising 129 men in 1821 (Gillespie, 1955; Teku, 1984; Pokoo-Aikins, 2002). The primary duties of the Gold Coast police centred around protecting the interests of colonial authorities against the indigenous population who opposed British rule (Appiagyei-Atua, 2006). After independence in 1957, President Kwame Nkrumah rebranded the Gold Coast police and changed the name to the Ghana Police Service (Tankebe, 2008a). Following various institutional and policy reforms by successive governments since independence, the police today have a statutory duty to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders and to maintain public order and safety of persons and properties. In Section 1 of the Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350), the functions of the police are defined as follows:

- The protection of life and property;
- Prevention and detection of crime;
- Apprehension and prosecution of offenders;
- Preservation of peace and good order; and
- Enforcement of all Laws, Acts, Decrees, and other regulations with which it is directly charged.

Discharging these statutory functions has been challenging for several reasons including the legal, political, socio-cultural and economic context within which the police operate. Politically, the police work under a legal regime that sometimes has a negative impact on their professionalism. The 1992 constitution gives the president the power to directly appoint the senior leadership of the GPS, including the inspector-general of police (IGP). The Ghana Police Council is also chaired by the vice-president, with its membership including the attorney general and the minister of the interior, who are part of the ruling party.

The concentration of executive powers and oversight over the GPS has unduly influenced its internal governance, operations and behaviour of personnel. As a state institution whose loyalty should be to the state, the police have become a 'puppet' used by successive governments since 1992 to pursue their parochial interests and intimidate political opponents. Consequently, the police have been politicised, leading to a lack of credibility and public trust, corruption, and indiscipline (see Albrecht, 2022b). The extent of politicisation has manifested in different ways, including the appointments and dismissal of IGPs, recruitment and promotion of unqualified personnel without due process, and delays in promotion (Interview, senior police officer, Accra, August 2019). For example, the former IGP, David Asante-Apeatu, was dismissed on 22 July 2019 after his executive secretary, Chief Superintendent Peter Toobu resigned to run as a parliamentary candidate of the opposition at the time, NDC, in the Wa West Constituency of the Upper West Region, which he won (Peacefmonline, 2019).

The legal dilemmas and political interferences are further complicated by the hybrid nature of security and justice provision in Ghana, where the state shares its authority with traditional structures in delivering key services to the population including security and justice (Otumfuo, 2004). This is especially the case in places where the state is incapable of providing basic security, and in rural and semi-urban areas where local customary practices and relationships shape everyday social life (OECD, 2010). The provision of security and justice therefore does not rest exclusively with the state, which in most instances has not penetrated local communities and is perceived as an imposition. The traditional authorities play key arbitration and mediation roles in dispensing justice and resolving conflicts within their communities (Boafo-Arthur, 2006; see also Abdallah & Aning, 2022).

These legal, political, socio-cultural and resource challenges – combined with significant under-funding resulting in insufficient personnel and resources – have had a great impact on the GPS's ability to perform its function successfully. As result, Ghanaians are often dissatisfied with the GPS's conduct, integrity and effectiveness. For instance, the public bemoans the inability of the police to bring to justice the killers of the Abuakwa North member of parliament, Joseph Boakye Danquah Adu, who was murdered in 2015 (GhanaWeb, 2020). Similarly, the GPS received public backlash after it failed to rescue three kidnapped girls in Takoradi after almost a year in 2019 (GhanaWeb, 2019a). Simply put, the GPS has not been able to meet the challenges

expected of it in a democratic society, clouding the positive contributions it makes towards ensuring that Ghana is safe and secure

The plurality of actors with different forms of power and resources who interact, and sometimes compete with the police results in institutional expressions and practices that determine how policing is delivered locally. These institutional expressions and practices are not static. They evolve in the peacekeeping context due to the transformations that occur from shifting relationships, and new interactions, values and norms (Albrecht, 2022b). The next section looks at policing in the context of UN peacekeeping to show how the detachment of the police from local networks produces different effects that lead to transformed forms of policing abroad.

The Ghana Police Service in UN peace operations

The GPS' s participation in UN peacekeeping dates to the 1960s when Ghana first deployed police and military personnel to the UN Operation in the Republic of Congo (ONUC). Since then, the contribution of the GPS has expanded significantly in scope. Men and women of the GPS have served in UN missions in Liberia, Côte d' Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Cambodia, Namibia, Bosnia, Guinea Bissau, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti, Cambodia and East Timor (Aning and Aubyn, 2013). Ghana contributes both individual police officers (IPOs) and formed police units (FPUs) across different UN missions (United Nations, 2020). In missions, IPOs are integrated into the broader mission structure under the police component. They work with police personnel from other countries, personnel of other UN agencies, authorities of the host state and other stakeholders. In turn, FPUs are deployed as a group that operates under the supervision of an operational commander, but with directives from the head of the police component and FPU coordinator.

In the mission, Ghanaian police officers perform various roles to support the implementation of UN Security Council mandates. They serve as community policing officers, patrol officers, training officers, gender advisors, reform and restructuring officers, logistics and transport officers, planning officers, quick impact project officers and administrators (Caparini et al, 2015; Aubyn, 2015; Aubyn et al, 2015). Some of their roles include confidence building patrols, training and mentoring, observation, monitoring and reporting on criminal cases to the host countries' police authorities and UN headquarters (Interviews, Ghanaian police peacekeepers in Sudan, South Sudan and Haiti, via telephone, April 2019). Others include undertaking logistics and procurement activities, collating and compiling personnel information for the mission headquarters, preparing proposals and supervising the implementation of quality improvement projects such as the construction of clinics and classrooms (ibid).

In these missions, Ghanaian personnel are well noted for their professionalism, leadership qualities, communication and interpersonal skills, proficiency in the English language, report writing skills, training facilitation skills, investigation skills and project management capabilities (Ghanaweb, 2019b; Effah, 2020). Indeed, in some of the missions, their commitment and technical competencies have earned them influential mid-level leadership positions and approbation from the host government. In UNMIL, Ghanaians were highly regarded by the Liberian government and the local population (Boatin, 2007). Interview responses during fieldwork indicate that Ghanaian police personnel are seen as hardworking, as well as being good mentors, communicators, trainers, gender advisors and project managers. Equally, in UNAMID, the position of police commissioner was in 2010/11 held by a Ghanaian, James Oppong Boanuh, who is the current IGP of Ghana. His achievements in promoting the rule of law, human rights, gender mainstreaming, and capacity-building of host state law enforcement agencies did not only lift the flags of Ghana but encouraged the deployment of more police personnel to the mission (UNAMID, 2020). In December 2018, the UN awarded medals to 165 officers of the Ghana FPU for their work in Bentiu, South Sudan (GhanaWeb, 2019b). In August 2019, the police adviser to the UN secretary-general, Luis Carrilho, also commended the GPS for their commitments and contributions towards peace operations in the world and requested for the deployment of more officers, especially women and professionals (*Nyarko-Yirekyi, 2019*). As a testament to how the GPS is revered abroad, Superintendent Phyllis Ama Tebuah Osei, a Ghanaian who was working with the UN Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), received the annual UN Female Police Officer of the Year Award in November 2018 (United Nations, 2008).

The police officers interviewed attributed their performance abroad to the transparency and accountability of the UN system, in which policies are enforced much more consistently than at home (Interview, senior police officers, Tamale and Yendi, March 2019; Interviews, Ghanaian police peacekeepers in Sudan, South Sudan and Haiti, via telephone, April 2019). Corruption is minimal and there is some level of discipline among personnel. Resources are adequate and, unlike the domestic context, political and social interference in police

work is limited – there are only a few examples in Darfur and other missions where the host government has restricted the movement of UN personnel (Caparini et al, 2015). Communication to police personnel at all levels within and outside the mission headquarters is often done using electronic channels like emails, allowing for a swift response to urgent and emergency situations. This is unlike the domestic level where the customary paper-based communication sometimes delays response to issues at the local level. The strict application of sanctions and rules governing police conduct also positively influences attitudes and behaviour of personnel who do not wish to be blacklisted or repatriated. According to most personnel interviewed, the higher salary for peacekeeping work – up to five times of that earned at home – boosts morale and motivates personnel to work harder to ensure that their contracts are extended.

The differentiated performance at home and in the peacekeeping brutality that characterised colonial policing led to what Killingray (1991) describes as the GPS's unpopularity and lack of credibility and trustworthiness. Despite rebranding and reform exercises, the GPS today continues to exhibit the traits of colonial policing where the lives and properties of the wealthy political and ruling class are secured before those of the general population. The GPS continues to employ repressive measures and other paramilitary tactics to discharge its duties. While many communities lack an effective police presence in the midst of increasing crime rates, some government appointees have no less than two police personnel serving them as personal assistants and bodyguards (Interview, police officer, Accra, February 2019). The colonial traits which include illegal arrests and detentions, excessive use of force and violence, and failure to respond to citizens' complaints are still prevalent in today's policing (Boateng & Darko, 2016).

Conversely, in UN peace operations, the GPS is generally seen as neutral with no historical attachments to the people in the country that hosts the mission. Except for missions with executive mandates, the GPS often plays a secondary role in support of the host nation's law enforcement agencies to maintain law and public order. The GPS is also deployed to post-conflict or fragile settings that often are characterised by widespread human rights violations and a breakdown of regular law enforcement (Interviews, Ghanaian police peacekeepers in Sudan, South Sudan and Haiti, via telephone, April 2019). The local population commonly find themselves in a very vulnerable state, needing assistance to survive. Hence, how they perceive the GPS is largely determined by the kind of support they receive from them. As is often the case with anyone in a perilous situation, any support is highly appreciated. A police officer interviewed noted that:

Ghanaian police are generally friendly and approachable. The host nation's people like us because we sometimes support them financially to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education from our own resources. Because of their vulnerability, they appreciate the little things that we do to help them. This is not the case at home where people expect more from the police and will never appreciate the sacrifices, we are making to maintain law and public order. (Interview, police officer, Tamale, March 2019).

Unlike the peacekeeping context, people expect more from the police locally and their excesses are sometimes blown out of proportion due to their negative historical record. Relating this to the assemblage concept, it could be argued that the shifting relationships of the police – the deterritorialisation from the domestic setting and re-territorialisation in the peacekeeping context – produces different perceptions of the public about the police and their qualities. As the GPS leaves the domestic relational networks and enters the peacekeeping environment, negative historical connections are lost, and new assemblages emerge as Ghanaian police officers are seen in a fresh light. This favourable perception in turn encourages and reinforces positive behaviour. Therefore, it is not only about police officers underperforming at home but rather how their colonial past continues to obscure the Ghanaian public's perception of them.

Varied legal regimes

Unsurprisingly different legal regimes govern policing when conducting mission work in South Sudan, for instance, and law enforcement at home. The legal frameworks governing police functions in peace operations are found in the UN Charter, UN Security Council mandates, international human rights and humanitarian laws, various UN peacekeeping policies, mission/force agreements and memoranda of understanding between the UN and police contributing countries (United Nations, 2008; Interviews, Ghanaian police peacekeepers in Sudan, South Sudan and Haiti, via telephone, April 2019). These are international legal standards which are rarely manipulated for political or personal gains by peacekeepers. The nature of the laws also enables the police to perform their functions independently and professionally with few cases of UN and host states' political interferences. Likewise, the legal frameworks make mission structures fairly independent, oversight bodies accountable and sanction regimes enforceable.

By contrast, the constitutional arrangement that governs the GPS locally makes it easy for political actors such as government appointees, members of parliament, political party executives and assembly members to interfere with the GPS's professional work. As indicated earlier, the IGP has no security of tenure which means that he/she can be fired at any time by the president. Additionally, the Police Council which provides oversight responsibilities is not an independent police entity (Republic of Ghana, 1992). The promotion of the top leadership of the GPS is done by the president in consultation with the Police Council. These constitutional arrangements have not helped in engendering public trust and ensuring absolute police independence and fair application of the law, especially with respect to opponents of ruling governments (Boateng, 2012; 2013). Commenting on the situation in a symposium organised by the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) in Accra on 31 October 2018, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Benjamin Agordzor lamented that:

I get worried when I hear people lambast the police for failing to arrest political vigilantes. The police have every power to clamp down on them, but how do you expect us to act when our hands are tied under the very laws that govern our operations? In Ghana, the IGP is appointed by the President and therefore becomes a party member, hence his loyalty is divided and cannot be trusted because he is clearly monitored by the President to work to his advantage. The Ghana Police Service and the other security agencies cannot be professional unless there is an immediate reform of the Constitution. (Acquah, 2018)

It is quite rare for a police officer to make such a profound statement due to fear of victimisation or political witch-hunting. Its boldness, coming from a serving senior officer, shows the extent of political interferences in police work. A year after that statement, ACP Agordzor was interdicted and charged with treason for his alleged role in a coup plot to oust President Nana Akuffo-Addo, which he has described as political persecution over his outspokenness (Acheampong, 2019). Theoretically, this is a clear case of how the material relations/element within an assemblage, in this case manipulated legislative frameworks at home, informs police actions and behaviours. For fear of victimisation and job security, the constitutional arrangement sometimes negatively influences police actions and professional ethics. This is not the case in the peacekeeping context where international legal frameworks mainly dictate the actions and performance of police personnel.

Different mandates in Ghana and abroad

Another core factor distinguishing the performance of police personnel at home and internationally is the different mandates and tasks in the two settings. As indicated in the previous sections, the mandate of the police at home is more centred on crime control. They perform this role by preventing and detecting crime, apprehending and prosecuting offenders, and protecting life and property to preserve peace and public order. However, in the peacekeeping context, the roles are not centred on domestic crime control in the host state. Moreover, unlike the domestic context which stays stable in terms of mandates, the police implement UN Security Council (UNSC) peacekeeping mandates which usually vary considerably due to the different types of post-conflict settings in which missions operate.

The specificities of functions in the domestic and peacekeeping context mean that police personnel have different types of contact with the local population in the performance of their roles: they have much more direct contact with ordinary citizens in handling crimes and disputes at home than they do in peacekeeping. As a result, they get enmeshed in local social relations and dynamics, such as competition with actors such as traditional authorities, which can impact negatively on how they perform their mandated tasks (see Abdallah & Aning, 2022).

Unique environment factors

The environment within which the GPS operates at home and abroad are fundamentally different. The peacekeeping environment is normally a post-conflict context, while the environment at home is not. The socio-cultural, political and societal dynamics are also different. Locally, the GPS operates within a cultural setting which is characterised by a hybrid form of political governance made up of formal (state) and informal (traditional and religious) governance systems (Aning et al, 2018; Aning and Aubyn, 2018).

In most parts of Ghana, particularly in the five northern regions (Upper East, Upper West, Northeast, Savannah and Northern Region), people depend on the traditional justice system to solve their problems due to its restorative nature. Some chiefs have even warned their people not to report any case to the police without passing it through the palace – residence of the chief – first for approval. Failure to do so could lead

to social isolation and fines. In some communities, it is practically impossible for the police to arrest suspects without going through the chiefs or assembly members because of possible attacks or resistance by community members. As indicated by one interviewee:

In the northern part of Ghana, it appears the chiefs are competing with the police for power and jurisdiction over certain matters. The chiefs see the police under them and therefore expect them to respect their decisions to deal with cases in their communities. Some think that the police are taking over their daily bread because people present money, sheep and cows to the palace when they default in cases being adjudicated by the chief. (Interview, community member, Tamale, March 2019)

The hybrid nature of security and justice provision in Ghana has made interferences by traditional authorities (kings, chiefs, clan heads, etc), and religious authorities (clergy, pastors and imams) a recurrent feature of policing. In some instances, ongoing investigations are truncated, suspects released and reported cases withdrawn following the request of these actors. Failure to grant their requests can sometimes trigger impromptu transfers of personnel and an uncooperative attitude by community members that further frustrates the work of the police (see Abdallah & Aning, 2022).

In contrast, UN policing is not shaped by the socio-cultural setting or politics of the host state but is based on international legal frameworks and policing standards. Ghanaian police officers are only accountable to the UN and not to the host state government and its people. There is no interference from chiefs, politicians, friends, or family members, because UN police do not directly handle criminal cases which is the work of the host state law enforcement agencies (except in executive missions). UN police can perform their mandated tasks except for a few instances where their movement is restricted by the host state government.

In sum, the socio-cultural context in a mission favours police professionalism and mandate delivery more than is the case at home. In the domestic context, the police are accountable to the appointing authority which, through the Ghana Police Council, is the president. Therefore, the evaluation of the GPS by the government and the local population may differ from the UN's self-evaluation and assessment of a host nation and its people. Naturally, the differences of the two contexts will lead to varied appreciation and evaluation of police performance due to the different values and norms embedded within the sociocultural settings that officers operate in.

Availability of resources

The availability of resources to enhance police efficiency, commitment and professionalism varies at home and abroad. In UN missions, resources in terms of finances, personnel, vehicles, communication gadgets and other modern technologies are readily available to facilitate police work. At the domestic level, the GPS is not adequately resourced to carry out its work efficiently, and lacks funding, personnel, vehicles, weapons, office space and accommodation facilities. Lack of funding affects almost every aspect of their work from recruitment to remuneration to safety to performing basic duties. In the words of a senior police officer: "Police personnel are ready to do the work but there are no logistics and equipment to work with" (Interview, police chief superintendent, Tamale, March 2019). They sometimes work under dire circumstances, as explained by a police officer, who had an accident that made him immobile:

Working here in the northern region as a police officer is difficult. I had a fatal motor accident on the road from Tolon to Tamale when I was chasing a criminal. The station had no car, so I had to use a motorbike when the case was reported. On my way, I had an accident which affected my legs, causing me to use crutches for several months. (Interview, police officer, Tolon, March 2019)

Such logistical difficulties not only make police work dangerous, but also commonly lead to low morale and corruption, especially on the roads. They also greatly affect officers' ability to do their work effectively. For example, due to the limited vehicles and equipment, response time to crime and crisis situations is very slow compared to the UN missions. A police officer interviewed noted that:

Vehicles in the peacekeeping mission are many but in Ghana, they are very limited. Even the available ones are not properly serviced so they break down often. You see people are ready to do the work but there are no logistics to work with. In the whole of the Northern region, we have less than 20 vehicles, so how can our response rate to crime be timely? Besides, the workload is higher in Ghana than the peacekeeping missions, but the irony is that there are more resources to work with in the mission than at home (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, March 2019).

Sometimes, citizens use their cars, pay for the transportation cost of police personnel and fuel police vehicles before officers can attend to their reported cases (Interview, security expert, Accra, February 2019). This is not the case in missions where vehicles are available to facilitate police work.

Apart from vehicles, the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has not been streamlined in police work in Ghana due to lack of adequate computers and modern electronic software. The operations of the police continue to be mostly paper based or manual with different levels of approval before dealing with a case can be taken forward. As a result, urgent information, and requests from the headquarters in Accra sometimes reach the regions, divisions and district police stations after the response date has expired (Interview, police officer, Tamale, March 2019).

A limited number of personnel in the domestic setting has also created a security gap in terms of police to civilian ratio. The GPS currently has about 33,000 personnel. Although current statistics are unavailable, the police to civilian ratio was one police officer to 848 civilians as of August 2018 (Kwakofi, 2018). This gives an idea of the low police–civilian ratio, compared to the UN minimum requirement of one police officer to 500 civilians. With the population of Ghana now estimated to be over 29 million, the minimum strength of the police should have been 56,000 personnel (ibid). There is therefore a deficit of 23,000 personnel. As a result, the police are overstretched, have limited presence across the country, and are unable to respond adequately and swiftly to crimes. Personnel are also not regularly trained to enhance their skills and knowledge on modern ways of policing. In UN peacekeeping, police personnel are drawn from different police contributing countries to work as a cohesive whole. With few exceptions, the minimum number of personnel are usually available to implement the mandate of the police component. Additionally, peacekeepers receive regular in–mission training after their pre–deployment and induction trainings, which enhance their ability to perform credibly.

In terms of the remuneration and work incentives, almost all the police personnel interviewed claimed that they are motivated to perform better in the peacekeeping missions than at the domestic level. On average, Ghanaian police peacekeepers receive about USD 150 per day, amounting to about USD 4,500 per month (Aubyn et al, 2019). For some personnel, this is four or five times more than they earn at home. Given that most police personnel are deployed for at least a year, the cumulative amount of money they return home with as reward from peacekeeping is significant. The monetary incentives serve as a morale booster to work harder and even get extensions despite the mission stress.

Indiscipline and corruption

Acts of police indiscipline in Ghana have been recorded in recent years with some personnel being complicit in criminal matters. Several police officers have been implicated in armed robbery cases across the country. In an interview with a senior police officer, he attributed indiscipline within the GPS to political interferences in the recruitment of personnel. He described the situation as follows:

Today, politicians and government appointees often determine who must be recruited into the police. They do not care whether the person is qualified or not. Members of vigilante groups are just being recruited without proper background checks and qualifications. Can you imagine that some are even mentally unstable, and others cannot even express themselves in English? When they join the service, their loyalty is to the ruling government and the politicians who brought them and not to the GPS. Some of them become so powerful that you cannot handle them due to their strong political backing. (Interview, senior police officer, Accra, Feb 2019)

Political patronage, favouritism and nepotism also influence police postings, promotions, recruitments, and response to crimes (Interview, senior Police officer, Tamale, March 2019). In UN missions, however, appointments and deployments are primarily based on people’s competence and technical knowledge (Interviews, Ghanaian police peacekeepers in Sudan, South Sudan and Haiti, via telephone, April 2019). Peacekeepers are deployed from their home countries after passing the UN selection assistance test (SAT) and going through medical and pre–deployment training (Aning and Aubyn, 2013). While who is allowed to take the test in the first place is often manipulated, the UN decides who is chosen for a deployment, ensuring that from the pool of candidates, the most qualified police officers irrespective of their ranks are selected to represent Ghana in peace operations.

Unsurprisingly given its recruitment techniques, corruption is widespread in the GPS at the domestic level (CHRI, 2007; Boateng, 2013). The media often report alleged cases of police conniving or accepting bribes to free criminal suspects and traffic offenders, and personnel paying monies to get selected to peacekeeping missions. In the peacekeeping setting, on the other hand, the UN systems are fairly transparent and hold all personnel to account. Police personnel do not deal directly with criminal cases, so there is less corruption,

allowing them to perform their duty with greater credibility. The sanction regime in the peacekeeping missions is also more severe than at home, where personnel tend to receive little or no punishment for gross misconduct or incompetence. Additionally, unlike missions where the laws are strictly enforced, the systems in Ghana are easily altered to suit individual officers' interests. In the long run, indiscipline and impunity becomes the order of the day, weakening the professional ethics and effectiveness of the GPS.

Conclusion

The variations in police performance during peacekeeping and in Ghana are understandable given the difference between the two environments: one is a post-conflict context, and the other is not. In the peacekeeping context, the police operate in fragile settings that are often characterised by widespread human rights violations and a breakdown of law and public order. The police therefore implement UNSC mandates which usually differ depending on the setting. In the domestic context, the police mandate stays stable, centred mostly on crime control as captured in Section 1 of the Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350). The specificities of mandates also mean that the police have more contacts with ordinary citizens in the performance of their roles at home than they do in peacekeeping. All these dynamics influence how policing is conducted in the two contexts.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural, political and societal dynamics are different in the two contexts. The concentration of executive powers and oversight of the police at the domestic level has unduly influenced its internal governance systems and operations, leading to politicisation, corruption, indiscipline, and general lack of credibility and public trust. The hybrid nature of security and justice provision has also made interferences by traditional and religious authorities a recurrent feature of domestic policing. In contrast, policing in the peacekeeping context is not shaped by the socio-cultural setting or politics of the host state but rather based on international legal frameworks and policing standards.

Drawing insights from assemblage theory, it could be seen that the multiplicity of actors who influence police performance and behaviour differs in both contexts. When the police are separated from their local assemblage and plugged into a new assemblage in the peacekeeping missions, the new interactions, principles and norms transform their practice. The peacekeeping environment favours police professionalism and effective mandate implementation more than at the domestic level. In addition, the resources available to the GPS to perform its functions effectively also differs significantly in the two. All these differentiations cause the police to perform differently in both contexts, which goes to support the argument that the perceived performance variations have nothing to do with the knowledge and technical competencies of police personnel.

References

- Abdallah, M., & Aning, K (2022). Domestic peacekeeping practices in the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 9(1).
- Abrahamsen, R., & Williams, M. C. (2009). Security beyond the state: Global security assemblages in international politics. *International Political Sociology*, 3, 1–17.
- Acheampong, K. (2019). I'm being persecuted Agordzor. *Starr FM*. 5 Nov. <https://starrfm.com.gh/2019/11/im-being-persecuted-agordzor>
- Acquah, E. (2018). Political vigilantism Police can't act, laws on appointments need reforms – ACP Dr Agordzor. *Graphic Online*. 2 Nov. <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/political-vigilantism-police-can-t-act-laws-on-appointments-need-reforms-acp-dr-agordzor.html>
- Acuto, M., & Curtis, S. (eds.) (2014). *Reassembling international theory: Assemblage thinking and international relations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Afrobarometer (2017). Summary of results: Afrobarometer round 7 survey in Ghana. Accra: Ghana Center for Democratic Development.
- Albrecht, P. (2022a). Introduction: Assembling policing and peacekeeping in Ghana. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 9(1).
- Albrecht, P. (2022b). Assembling Community Policing: Peacekeeping and the Ghana Police Service's Transformation Agenda. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 9(1).
- Aning, E. K. (2006). An overview of the Ghana Police Service. *Journal of Security Sector Management*, 4, 1–37.
- Aning, K., & Aubyn, F. (2013). Ghana. In Bellamy, A. J., & Williams, P. D. (eds.), *Providing peacekeepers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 269–290.
- Aning, K., & Aubyn, F. (2018). Challenging conventional understanding of statehood: West African realities. In Aning et al, (eds.), *Exploring peace formations: Justice and security in post-conflict states*, London: Routledge, 24–38.
- Aning, K., Brown, M. A., Boege, V., & Hunt, C. T. (eds.) (2018). *Exploring peace formations: Justice and security in post-conflict states*. London: Routledge.
- Appiagyei-Atua, K. (2006). Bumps on the road: A critique of how Africa got to NEPAD. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 6(2), 524–548.
- Atuguba, R. (2007). The Ghana Police Service (GPS): A practical agenda for reform. *The Institute of Economic Affairs Policy Analysis*, 3(1), 1–16.
- Aubyn, F. (2015). Policing and peace operations in Africa: Reflections on MINUSMA. KAIPTC Occasional Paper 39. Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.
- Aubyn, F., Aning, K., Edu-Afful, F., Birikorang, E., & Albrecht, P. (2019). The many implications of UN peacekeeping: Ghana's peacekeeping efforts abroad have an impact at home. DIIS policy brief. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Aubyn, F., Edu-Afful, F., Allotey-Pappoe, S., & Nelson, S. (2015). An assessment of police pre-deployment training: Ghana study. KAIPTC Occasional Paper 40. Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.
- Boafo-Arthur, K. (2006). Chieftaincy in Ghana: Challenges and prospects in the 21st Century. In Odotei, I., & Awedoba, A. (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 145–168.
- Boateng, F. D. (2013). Restoring the lost hope: A multidimensional approach for building public trust in the police. *The Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies*, 13, 48–60.
- Boateng, F. D. (2012). Public trust in the police: Identifying factors that shape trust in the Ghanaian police. IPES, Coginta and DCAF working paper series 42. Geneva: Coginta.
- Boateng, F. D., & Darko, I. N. (2016). Our past: The effect of colonialism on policing in Ghana. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 18(1), 13–20.
- Boatin, K. (2007). Of science, security and police (3). *GhanaWeb*. 8 July. <https://mobile.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Of-Science-Security-and-Police-3-126672>
- Caparini, M., Aubyn, F., Davies, O., Dessu, M., & Peter, M. (2015). The role of the police in UNAMID. ISS monograph 190. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.
- CHRI (2007). The police, the people, the politics: Police accountability in Ghana. CHRI report. Accra: Commonwealth Human Right Initiative.
- DeLanda, M. (2006). *A new philosophy of society*. London: Continuum.

- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dupont, B. (2004). Security in the age of networks. *Policing and Society*, 14(1), 76–91.
- Effah, K. (2020). 4 Ghanaian police peacekeepers receive UN medals for excellence; 12 are women. *Yen*. 21 Jan. <https://yen.com.gh/144425-24-ghanaian-police-peacekeepers-receive-un-medals-excellence-12-women.html>
- GhanaWeb (2019a). Takoradi missing girls: Police yet to identify discovered bodies. 3 Aug. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Takoradi-missing-girls-Police-yet-to-identify-discovered-bodies-769036>
- GhanaWeb (2019b). UN honours 165 Ghana police personnel. 2 Jan. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/UN-honours-165-Ghana-police-personnel-712358>
- GhanaWeb (2020). DOSSIER: Abuakwa North MP killed. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/dossier.php?ID=308>
- Gillespie, W. H. (1955). *The Gold Coast police: 1844–1938*. Accra: Government Printer.
- Kaunain, R. (2018). Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ghana. U4 helpdesk answer 2018:21. Berlin: Transparency International.
- Killingray, D. (1991). Guarding the extending frontier: Policing the Gold Coast, 1865–1913. In Anderson, D. M., & Killingray, D. (eds.), *Policing the empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 106–125.
- Kwakofi, E. (2018). Gov't working to address 23,000 police deficit – Ambrose Dery. *Citifmonline*. 22 Dec. <https://citifmonline.com/2017/12/govt-working-to-address-23-000-police-deficit-ambrose-dery>
- Nyarko-Yirenkyi, A. (2019). Ghana Police Service lauded for global peacekeeping role. *AllAfrica*. 28 August. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201908280671.html>
- OECD (2010). *The state's legitimacy in fragile situations: Unpacking complexity*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Otumfuo, Osei Tutu II (2004). Traditional systems of governance and the modern state. Keynote address presented by His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene at The Fourth African Development Forum, Addis Ababa, 12 October.
- Peacefmonline (2019). Listen to Kweku Baako on why Asante-Apeatu was 'sacked.' 24 July. <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/politics/201907/387669.php>
- Pokoo-Aikins, J. B. (2002). *The police in Ghana, 1939–1999*. Accra: Ghana Police College.
- Quantson, K. B. (2006). *Reform of the Ghana Police Service*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Republic of Ghana (1992). *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Press.
- Tankebe, J. (2008a). Colonialism, legitimation, and policing in Ghana. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 36(1), 67–84.
- Tankebe, J. (2008b). Police effectiveness and police trustworthiness in Ghana: An empirical appraisal. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 8(2), 185–202.
- Teku, M. K. A. (1984). *An evaluation of records management practices in the Police Headquarters Registry*. Accra: University of Ghana Press.
- UNAMID (2020). Commissioner James Oppong-Boanuh on UNAMID's policing strategy. 30 Sept. <https://unamid.unmissions.org/interview-0>
- United Nations Police (2018). UN police officer Phyllis Osei from UNSOM wins female peacekeeping award. 19 Nov. <https://police.un.org/en/un-police-officer-phyllis-osei-unsom-wins-female-peacekeeping-award>
- United Nations (2008). *United Nations peacekeeping operations: Principles and guidelines (“the Capstone Doctrine”)*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2020). Summary of troops contributing countries by ranking: Police, UN military experts on mission, staff officers and troops. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/02_country_ranking_32.pdf
- Ward, W. B. F. (1948). *A history of Ghana*. London: Allen & Unwin.